

**VOTERS APATHY AND DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION  
IN NIGERIA (A CASE STUDY OF 2023 GENERAL  
ELECTIONS)**



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**FEBRUARY, 2025**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE  
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, FACULTY OF  
SOCIAL SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN  
CITY, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELOR OF  
Science (BSc) DEGREE IN POLITICAL SCIENCE**

**FEBRUARY, 2025**

## CERTIFICATION

We the undersigned certify that this research work was carried out by **Chukwuyem Gloria NAYABA** in the Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City.

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**Dr. Kingsley Omoruyi**  
*(Project Supervisor)*

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*(Head of Department)*

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**Date**

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to God Almighty and the Holy Spirit, who has indeed been my sufficient, helper, guidance, provider and counselor.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I wish to thank God Almighty the one behind my success. I also wish to acknowledge my supervisor Dr. Kingsley Omoruyi of the University of Benin, Benin City, for always taking out time to go through my work and also sharpening my skill in my research.

I also wish to thank my course advise Mrs Ruth Omoruyi and my HOD Dr G.O. Igiebor for their never ending support and encouragement.

I am forever indebted to my parents Mr and Mrs Nayaba who laid the foundation strong for my education and also pioneering my dreams to come through.

I also wish to acknowledge my lovely siblings; Blessing Nayaba, Faith Nayaba, Victory Nayaba and Destiny Nayaba for their selfless effort rendered, I want to thank you for been dependable, caring and understanding and I will always remember you all.

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## ABSTRACT

This study was carried out on the findings on voters apathy and democratic consolidation in Nigeria a case study of 2023 general elections. The study was carried out to determine the level of voters apathy in the 2023 general elections in Nigeria, identify the causes of voters apathy in the 2023 general elections in Nigeria, and ascertain the effects of voters apathy on democratic consolidation in Nigeria. The survey design was adopted and the simple random sampling techniques were employed in this study. The population size comprised of residents of Emohua Local Government Area. In determining the sample size, the researcher purposefully selected 147 respondents and 141 were validated. Self-constructed and validated questionnaire was used for data collection. The collected and validated questionnaires were analyzed using frequency tables, and mean scores. While the hypotheses was tested chi-square statistical tool. The result of the findings reveals that the level of voters apathy in Nigeria is high. Furthermore, the study revealed that the effects of voters apathy on democratic consolidation in Nigeria includes: political apathy mitigates the idea democracy, poor turnout of voters, poor leadership structure, increases corruption, conflicts, bad government. Therefore, it is recommended that there is urgent need for political education in Nigeria especially the people in the riverine and rural areas. Political education should not be limited to the school system. Both formal and informal approaches should be adopted to orientate the citizens on the need for active participation in the political system. There is the need for mass political enlightenment through the media, adult education programme and civil associations. The citizens should be conscious of the danger of their political apathy. To mention but a few.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the study

Nigeria as a democratizing polity is grappling with myriads of socio-political challenges which have over the years constrained efforts and process towards democratic consolidation and national development. Notably, among these problems is crisis of election process. Today, election crisis constitutes one of the daunting challenges in the country's multi-party democracy. Hence, it manifests in dysfunctional election management, logistic inadequacies, violence and apathy. In a specific sense, voter apathy represents an ugly trend in Nigeria's electoral democracy. It is an unpleasant situation which had in the recent years elicited serious concerns among scholars, electoral practitioners and election observers with regards to its adverse effects on the country's fractured democratic process.

In a generic sense, voter apathy is a global phenomenon. Cross sectional analysis of electoral democracies has shown that the percentage of citizens who vote in elections vary considerably across countries (IDEA, 2005). In advanced democracies such as United States, the percentage of voter turnout has been fluctuating since 1960 with reference to 62.8 percent in 1960, 52.8 percent in 1980, 53.3 percent in 1984, and 50.3 percent in 1988 then rising to 55.2 percent in 1992 and fell to 50.3 percent in 2000 and rise to 55.5 percent in 2004. It however recorded an exponential rise in 2008 with 60 percent. And, it was 57.5percent in 2012 and 58.1 percent in 2016

presidential elections. (Ethridge and Handelman, 2012, and Anderson, 2017). In Europe, there has been persistent trend of voter apathy since the 1990's and incidences of lower voter turnout in North and South American countries and African continent (IDEA, 2005). This global electoral challenge has over the years stimulated national discourse and scholarly literature on the best modalities to sustain voter's interest in liberal democracy.

Globally, voter apathy is a destabilizing and worrisome trend in democratization programmes, especially among the developing polities of Africa and Latin America (Andriani & Escudero-Loaiza, 2021; Bukusi, 2022; Dupuy & Prakash, 2022; Dobbs, 2021; Manoel et al., 2022; Obiagu et al., 2021). As voter apathy spreads globally, so are its tremendous impacts spreading on developing democracies. According to Fagunwa (2015) the decrease in voters' participation appears to be a general phenomenon across the globe. In the same vein, Blais (2000), Gray and Caul (2000) also pointed out that the fall in electoral participation is apparent in most democracies. In fact, Moliki and Dauda (2014) stated that there is a universal confirmation of voter apathy, that is, absence of citizens' participation and passionate unconcern towards civic obligations and political activities.

## **1.2 Statement Of The Problem**

Election remains meaningful when people massively participate and voter turnout indicates inclusiveness and significant participation. Voters' involvement in politics is an indicator of a healthy democracy. It also expresses citizens' interest in the

political process of a nation and enhances people's indispensability in the development agenda of the state. Thus, election is a means that allows citizens to choose who should represent them in government which is fundamental for development and sustainable democracy. Hence, immense voter turnout is a major prerequisite for the deepening of a democratization process. It measures the rate of inclusiveness and participation of people. Invariably, low turnout may indicate several abnormal signs that may hinder progress in the practice of democracy.

Since 1999, Nigeria's electoral process seems to lack credibility, transparency and highly trapped in controversial unacceptable circumstances. Obviously, from 1999-2023 general elections, Nigeria tend to witness gross decline in voter turnout (Akiyemi, 2023). This could be attributed to the growing inadequacies and unfair conduct of the state officials and crude manoeuvrings that characterized electoral process in Nigeria. Only an unimpressive percentage of the voting population tends to vote. For instance, Nigeria has a population of over 200 million people yet only 84 million voters were registered recently. Only 35% of eligible Nigerians balloted in the recently conducted 2023 general elections. Logically, instead of majority rule, there seems to be minority rule in Nigeria. This is despite the fact that democracy and democratization are hinged on the basic assumption of majoritarianism while at the same time not denying the minority the space to express their views.

Democracy that is not founded on the ultimate will of the people is doomed. Democracy seems to be a failed process when citizens are unconcerned about who

emerged victorious in an election (Adekoya, 2023). This simply means that low turnout in 2023 general elections does not only expose the fractured relationship between the government and citizens but it also demonstrates the failure of governance in Nigeria since 1999. This study therefore seeks to revisit voters apathy and democratic consolidation in Nigeria a case study of 2023 general elections.

### **1.3 Objective of the study**

The main focus of this study is to examine voters apathy and democratic consolidation in Nigeria a case study of 2023 general elections. Specifically the study seek:

- i. Determine the level of voters apathy in the 2023 general elections in Nigeria.
- ii. Identify the causes of voters apathy in the 2023 general elections in Nigeria.
- iii. Ascertain the effects of voters apathy on democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

These research questions will be answered in this study:

1. What is the level of voters apathy in the 2023 general elections in Nigeria?
2. What are the causes of voters apathy during the 2023 general elections in Nigeria?
3. What are the effects of voters apathy on democratic consolidation in Nigeria?

### **1.5 Research Hypotheses**

The following hypothesis will be tested in this study:

**H<sub>0</sub>:** The prevalence of voters apathy in Nigeria is low.

**Ha:** The prevalence of voters apathy in Nigeria is high.

### **1.6 Significance of the study**

This study (voters apathy and democratic consolidation in Nigeria) will be a tremendous benefits to Nigeria citizens in sensitizing their political perception and mentality. It will help expose the people to their right and obligations in the process of steering the affairs of the country at large. This study would also help to ensure popular participation among the residents of Nigeria citizens so as to facilitate an effective and collective governing.

Henceforth, this research will serve as a reference to scholars who will be carrying out research in similar topic makers

### **1.7 Scope of the Study**

The scope of this study borders on voters apathy and democratic consolidation in Nigeria a case study of 2023 general elections. However the study will be delimited to Emohua Local Government Area.

### **1.8 Limitations Of The Study**

As every human endeavor is once faced with a constraint, the same was tenable during the period of this study. In the course of carrying out this study, the researcher experienced some constraints, which included time constraints, financial constraints, language barriers, and the attitude of the respondents. In addition, there was the element of researcher bias. Here, the researcher possessed some biases that may have been reflected in the way the data was collected, the type of people interviewed or

sampled, and how the data gathered was interpreted thereafter. The potential for all this to influence the findings and conclusions could not be downplayed. More so, the findings of this study are limited to the sample population in the study area, hence they may not be suitable for use in comparison to other tertiary institutions in other , states, and other countries in the world.

### **1.9 Definition Of Terms**

**Election:** This is the system of selecting leaders and political representatives in a state through campaign and election.

**Democracy:** The concept democracy originated from Greek, which means ‘demos’ implies common people, the masses, and ‘kratos’ which means ‘power’. Democracy can be seen as political system which enables the self rule of a country’s population in which the will of the majority of the people is the law of the land in every regard. There are three basic principles of democracy which includes universal participation, political equation and majority rule. Janda et al (1999) this three (3) principles are widely recognized as necessary in democratic decision making.

**Democratic Consolidation:** Francis (1999) defined democratic consolidation as an ongoing process and lead in struggles to consolidate and extend the realization of democratic principles. The word consolidation means to make a position of power stronger. In other words, democratic consolidation can be seen as a process of strengthening democratic system in a country.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter is focused on critically examining relevant literature that would assist in explaining the research problem and furthermore recognize the tefforts of scholars who had previously contributed immensely to similar research. The chapter intends to deepen the understanding of the study and close the perceived gaps.

#### **2.1 Conceptual Framework**

##### **2.1.1 The Concept of Election**

Election, the formal process of selecting a person for public office or of accepting or rejecting a political proposition by voting. It is important to distinguish between the form and the substance of elections. In some cases, electoral forms are present but the substance of an election is missing, as when voters do not have a free and genuine choice between at least two alternatives. Most countries hold elections in at least the formal sense, but in many of them the elections are not competitive (e.g., all but one party may be forbidden to contest) or the electoral situation is in other respects highly compromised.

In a democracy, elections serve as an important mechanism and viable means that ensure orderliness in the process of leadership succession and change. It gives legitimacy and political authority to every administration. Elections play dominant roles in a democracy and these roles are hugely circumscribed in terms of portraying

the popular will, inculcating political changes and actualization of regimes legitimacy. Schumpeter (2007) notes that democracy ensures that the people have the opportunity of accepting or refusing the men who are to rule them, this means that democracy is all about conducting elections and choosing political leaders. Elections ensure how popular a government is and it reveals the social pact that exist between the govern and the governed and this illustrates the basis of political authority, legitimacy and citizens' obligations. It also helps to shape and sharpened political accountability between the governors and governed via reciprocity and exchange. As Sandbrook (1988) posit: Elections and the struggle for power are essential because it gives the oppressed classes the chance to put the question of alternative ideologies on the agenda and therefore constitute an important stage in the socialist quest to extend democratic control to the social and economic as well as political sphere. However, for elections to thrive there should be the establishment of a well defined, competent, relatively independent and non-partisan electoral body that will be responsible for the conduct of elections. There is need for the existence of impartial judiciary that will interpret electoral laws and as well as adjudicate on electoral matters. Mass media devoid of influence from the politicians should be instituted together with police force that will help supervise the conduct of an election. Jinadu, (1995) and Adejumobi, (1997) concur that: There should be electoral laws guiding the conduct of an election, organization of political parties, voters' registration, nomination of

candidates for elective public office, balloting , ballot-counting and the declaration of election results as this will give credence to the success of elections.

### **2.1.2 The Concept of Democracy**

There is no universally accepted definition of democracy. Various scholars have different definitions and interpretations on the conceptualization of democracy. The term democracy is derived from two Greek words: “demos” meaning ‘people’ and “Kratos” which means ‘rule of’ (Falade, 2014). Put together, democracy is the rule of the people. In his classic definition of democracy, Lincoln (1868) defines the concept as “the government of the people by the people and for the people”. That is to say, people are central in any democratic process. Without giving people the power to decide who become their political leaders, as well as hold their political leaders responsible, democracy would be a mirage. According to Appadorai (2004), democracy is a system of government under which the people exercise the governing power either directly or through representatives periodically elected by themselves. Democracy demands from the common man a certain level of ability and character; rational conduct and active participation in the government; the intelligent understanding of public affairs; independent judgment, tolerance and unselfish devotion to public interest, democracy believes in the principles of mutual discussion and persuasion. In a democracy, there is equality for all; every man has one vote; the opinion of everybody counts (Mahogan, 2017). Diamond, Liuz and Lipset (1989) believe that democracy as a system of government entails healthy competition

between parties for an all effective positions of governance, devoid of violence for all encompassing levels of political participation in the selection of leaders through the conduct of periodically free and fair elections, and the observation of fundamental human rights. The foregoing definitions and conceptualizations imply that democracy is essentially a people-centered form of government.

### **2.1.3 Concept of Voters Apathy**

The explanation of the concept of voters apathy would be difficult without having the understanding of what democracy entails. The concept of democracy however implies that ultimate authority of governance should rest with the people themselves. When this roles is sought to be implemented through the mechanism of representative democracy, it is possible that people may become inactive after choosing their representatives, community expands geographically and it includes a large population like Nigeria with over 180 million and a variety of composition in terms of race, religion, language and culture the distance between the people and their representatives is likely to widen. This has made Schumpeter (1954) to argue that the classical theory of democracy in which it was stated adult citizens contributed to the making of public policy was deficient to the point that it could not explain the concept of popular participation in modern terms. He goes on to argue that running of government and framing of public policies is the task of professional politicians , the role of ordinary citizen is confined to voting for the politicians, the political parties and the programmers of their choice at the time of periodic elections.

Generally, Political Participation is the basic principles of democracy. Political participation is therefore the active involvement of individuals and groups in the governmental processes affecting their lives. (Gauba 2007). Put differently when citizens themselves play an active role in the process of formulation and implementation of public policies and decisions, their activity is called political participation. McClosky (1968) posits that political participation involves those activities by which members of a society share in the selection of rulers and directly and indirectly in the formation of public policy. He goes on to state that the most active form of political participation are formal enrolment in a political party, canvassing and registering voters, speech writing and speech making working in campaign and competing for public offices. Gauba (2007) identified conventional mode of political participation to include among others voting, standing for office, campaigning for political party or contributing to the management of a community project etc. He concludes by saying that an act of opposition or public protest also involve political participation such act include signing petition, attending peaceful demonstration, joining a protest march, civil disobedience and political violence are all forms of political participation. Gauba, (2007), Aytac & Stokes (2019) have explained various forms of political participation without necessarily differentiating them from voters participation. Although, they have help us to understand that voting is part of these forms of political participation but their argument can be said to be insufficient because they have not adequately explained and conceptualizes voters

participation. Hence, voters participation entails every efforts made by the electorates during the electioneering process to get their names registered with or without the motive of exercising their franchise on the election day but aimed to use the voters card for other personal purposes. Also, it is a process whereby parts of the electorates who duly registered their names during the registration process cast their votes on the Election Day for the candidates of their choice. It is somehow different from voters' turnout because not every voters that registered their names finally participate during election, Aytac& Stokes, (2019). Leighley&Nagler, (2014) attributed people's willingness to go to the polls to psychological factors, which in turn were shaped by a person's family socialization, schooling, and their organizational experiences in adulthood. A study that remains influential is the American Voter (1960). Aytac& Stokes, (2019) described "motivational forces "and psychological influences that affects the likelihood that an individual will vote " . Engagement with politics, interest in campaigns, and strength of partisan ties were predictive of turnout behaviour. Those who agreed strongly that voting is a duty were likely to vote, although some who expressed any lukewarm agreement also voted. Some people who did not vote were kept from doing so by legal barriers, it is possible they have moved and had not registered in their new communities or by practical obstacles. Also, they must have stuck at work from before the polls opened until after they closed. A sense of personal efficacy-more widespread among the highly educated than among those with little education that is, was predictive of

participation, as were interest in the campaign and the perception that the election outcome was important. Education encourages participation, in large part because it cultivates interest in politics and a sense of personal efficacy. Education explains more variation in participation than income, but high-income individuals are more likely to vote than low-income ones. Middle-aged people are more likely to vote than the young, and voting tends to become habitual, (Leighley&Nagler, 2014 in Aytac& Stokes, 2019).

#### **2.1.4 Democratic Consolidation**

Democratic Consolidation has no mono-causal way of defining it. The appropriate place to begin the conceptual elucidation on democratic consolidation is perhaps the operationalization of the concept of democracy itself. Therefore, democracy in this study stands for a people-centered system of government, which entails periodic popular elections, in which the sanctity of the electoral process is strictly guaranteed. Implicit in this position is the connotation that democracy not only allows mass participation, by way of encouraging the electorate to participate in the selection of their representatives, but also that democracy is nourished by transparency and accountability in public administration (Yagboyaju 2013). It should be emphasized that democracy thrives better in many parts of the world where there are also strong democratic institutions. In other words, democratic principles thrive and are more effective when they are supported by strong institutions of modern government (Yagboyaju2013). Therefore, when Yagboyaju, cites Ake (1996) as opining that

democracy is about principles rather than about institutional forms, there appears to be a contentious issue in this proposition. According to Ogundiya (2009) cited in Akubo and Yakubu(2014), democratic consolidation is about regime maintenance and about regarding the key political institutions as the only framework for political contestation and adherence to the democratic rules of the game. Democratic consolidation should therefore consequently connote consistent and sustained practice of democratic principles (Yagboyaju, 2013). Beyond conceptual orthodoxy however, democratic consolidation might as well be noted as when democracy is being consolidated (when democracy is being consolidated in defence of the people centeredness of the precepts of democracy). Democracy is therefore, a system of government and a system of defence. It is a system for defending the powers of the people against usurpation by political goons. Democracy defends the hopes of a people against onslaught by sundry intruders. Therefore, in the context of developing democracies, the stronger the defence mechanisms of democracy the nearer the tendencies of the system towards democratic consolidation. Hence, democratic consolidation critically refers to the growing of the defence mechanisms of democracy. Consequently, democratic consolidation is a process. It is not an accomplishment. Some scholars tend to view democratic consolidation as a realization – an achievement. According to Valenzuela (1990) cited in Akubo and Yakubu (2014), the building of a consolidated democracy involves in part an affirmation and strengthening of certain institutions, such as the electoral system,

revitalized or newly created parties, judicial independence and respect for human rights, which have been created or recreated during the course of the transition. In this context, democratic consolidation becomes a post-transitional condition, curiously akin to some developmental fixity. Yagboyaju (2013) further opines that democratic consolidation could be said to effectively prevail in most mature and advanced democracies of the world, where many of the prominent democratic principles largely constitute the political culture. But democratic consolidation is a lot more than all of this. In fact, democratic consolidation is a feature of all democracies. While the need for building the defence mechanisms of democracy may be more pronounced in emerging democracies, all democracies are prone to attacks that necessitate the fortification of democracy. It is this process of fortification that is democratic consolidation. Democratic consolidation therefore is not an end in itself. Hence, the issue of a consolidated democracy is out of consideration. This is because, assuming that such a state is attainable, the subsequent development will invariably translate to a different type of monstrosity which would be anathema to strong democratic ideals. Democratic consolidation is the identifiable phase in the transition from authoritarian rule to civil rule and by extension, democratic systems that are germane and fundamental to the establishment and entronement of a stable, institutional and enduring democracy (Schedler, 1998). Achieving democratic consolidation therefore calls for the entronement of democracy as a system of organizing both the society and

government and thereafter creates concomitant institutions, culture, ethics, support system and the 'will' that are crucial in making it stable, efficient and responsive (Oni, 2014). It is important to mention that the process of democratic consolidation requires nurturing democratic values and ethos, principles and institutions in a sense that prevents a reversal to an authoritarian regime. Diamond (1994) cited in Oni & Oladejo, (2018) noted that attaining democratic consolidation rests upon a strong and dynamic civil society whose responsibility is to check repeated abuses of power; hold public officials accountable for their actions and inactions in the management of public resources and also serves to mitigate political conflicts. However, civil society is not an end in itself but a means to an end, as Diamond (1994) instructively noted that 'a vibrant civil society is probably more essential for consolidating and maintaining democracy than for initiating it'.

Fundamentally, democratic consolidation is characterized with the following indices:

- (a) it is a phenomenon that precedes democratization or democratic transition.
- (b) it reflects in the capacity of government and governance to respond promptly and proficiently to the anxieties and expectations of the masses.
- (c) it reflects in institutionalized and efficient system of checks in governance and state institutions against abuses, infractions and corruptions.
- (d) it reflects in reasonable extent of patriotism, awareness and enthusiasm among the citizens to identify with the affairs of the state and engage constructively with the persons in government on issues of public importance.

(e) it reflects in the existence of an independent and efficient judicial system in the process of administration of justice.

(f) it reflects in transparent, credible and free election process at the level of state, and within political parties and other social institutions where the values of liberty, rule of law, discipline and tolerance were upheld.

(g) it reflects in the existence of state institutions that were accountable, effective and responsive in its conduct and service to the state.

(h) it reflects in the civility and sensitization of civil society organizations to advocate on issues of public interest.

(i) it reflects in inclusive and participatory process of state policies in deference to the socio-economic realities and expectations of the state.

(j) it reflects in foreign policy options and diplomatic engagements that protect rights, guarantee safety and explore potentials of the citizens within the country and across various continents of the globe. In reference to varied perspectives of scholars and assumptions of this discourse, election remained one of the fundamentals of democratic consolidation.

### **2.1.5 Determinants of Democratic Consolidation**

The existence of the democratic state, a democratic society and the presence of neighbouring democratic states are essential for democratic consolidation. The democratic state is the bedrock of democracy as it offers the institutional structure that enables democracy to flourish. Such a state must be based on certain principles

and rules that are essential for a worthwhile democracy. These include, the existence of several political parties representing divergent interests, freedom of the press and of information, and the independence of the judiciary. Other determinants are the organisation of free, fair and regular elections, the alternation of power, separation of powers, etc.

Although the above are necessary for a viable democratic foundation, democracy can only be successfully consolidated by democratic values which are realizable within the framework of a democratic society. These values which are endless include the recognition and safeguarding of universal nature of human rights, primacy of civil as against primordial interests and institutionalization of political power. There must also be the presence of neighbouring democratic states which will serve as an insurance against hostility from undemocratic forces on those states. This is based on the assumption that political pluralism may be easily consolidated when it extends to other neighbouring states. Democracy goes beyond political participation. It also includes the satisfaction of the basic demands of the people. The capacity of a democratic state to meet those demands depends on the availability of resources.

#### **2.1.6 Impediments to Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria**

In Nigeria, democratic consolidation has been a problematic endeavor over the years because elections have always been bereft of democratic ideals. According to Ibeanu (2007: 3): the electoral process as currently constituted in Nigeria is psychologically alienating from the vast majority of the people who are largely outsiders and are only

periodically inserted in the process when they cast votes. At the same time, this alienation is underscored by the fact that even when these vote casters have completed the ritual of voting, the outcome bears little semblance to what they chose in their ballots. Election rigging has dealt a huge blow to democratic consolidation in Nigeria. Elections conducted by the country's electoral body (INEC) since 1999 when Nigeria embraced democratic rule after many years of military dictatorship have not met with the expectations of Nigerians due to various forms of electoral manipulations. These have made elections in the country far from being free, fair and credible. Election rigging has not only marred democratic consolidation in Nigeria, but has also disenfranchised many Nigerians. It has promoted the imposition of unqualified and corrupt individuals on Nigerians who have no regard and respect for the principle of democracy. This lack of respect for adult suffrage and human rights violation have been a major obstacle to democratic consolidation in Nigeria. Even though Essis (1994) observed that there is no perfect democracy, she however highlighted three "constants of democracy", which are (i) universal adult suffrage which sets the basis for the legitimacy of power and allows, through free and fair elections for political alternation without which there can be no real democracy; (ii) the legal state which protects the citizens by guaranteeing individual freedom, defines the necessary equilibrium between the different authorities in the state; (iii) the respect for human rights which constitutes a guarantee against all despotic powers. It is evident today in the Nigerian democratic process that adult suffrage is

not important, as the electorate's votes do not count in deciding election outcomes.

Violation of human rights is still part of the country's political process.

Lack of adequate security in Nigeria is one of the major obstacles to the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria. This informs Dauda and Avidime's submission that the security situation in Nigeria is a major challenge to the consolidation of democracy. They note that "the tense security situation in all parts of the country makes nonsense of whatever efforts have been made to justify the sustenance of our democratic experiment since the environment is uncondusive for foreign investments and endangered by bad governance and political instability". (Dauda and Avidime, 2007: 18). According to the duo, the problem of youth unemployment cannot be divorced from the current security challenges in Nigeria which poses a threat to national security. Ethnicism is another obstacle to democratic consolidation in Nigeria. The problem of ethnicism in Nigeria's political process cannot be divorced from socio-political instability in the country. Frequent ethnic induced turbulences in Nigeria and the clamour for the presidency by the various ethnic nationalities in the country indicate that the Nigerian society is still balkanized by tribal sentiments (Victor, 2002). The various ethnic nationalities in Nigeria encourage and promote ethnic interest, thereby making the creation of a common identity problematic. This poses a threat to democratic consolidation in Nigeria. Poverty also makes the consolidation of democracy a herculean task in Nigeria. Poverty is a consequence of unemployment which is part of the Nigerian society.

Any society that is characterized by poverty cannot develop, and such a society is always unstable. Poverty and unemployment have posed serious hindrance to the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria. It is estimated that over eighty percent of Nigerians are poor, and this level of poverty accounts for part of the security challenges in Nigeria today, because the unemployed and poor youths carry arms against the state and its citizens. As a result of poverty, many Nigerians are easily brainwashed during elections, as they become victims of various forms of inducements and gratification. This is a barrier to Nigeria's quest for democratic consolidation. Corruption is another major impediment to the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria. The Nigerian state is synonymous with corruption. Events in Nigeria since the country's democratic experiment in 1999 have shown that corruption is a clog in the wheel of Nigeria's democratic project. It has devastated and eroded the fundamental values and principles of democracy in Nigeria. Kwasau (2013: 186) observes that: Corruption has reached a high crescendo such that an average Nigerian now possibly associates democracy with it. The consequences of political corruption are potently manifest cyclical crisis of legitimacy, fragile party structure, institutional decay, chronic economic problem and unemployment, and above all general democratic volatility. Godfatherism in Nigerian politics which negates all tenets of democracy also poses a threat to the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria. Godfatherism prevents the selection of competent and qualified candidates for elective position. The so-called Godfathers achieve their goals with

money and where this method proves unsuccessful, they unleash violence both as deterrence and punishment. Elections can never be free and fair, and governance cannot be accountable and transparent under the politics of Godfatherism. In Nigeria, since the enthronement of democracy in 1999, the politics of Godfatherism has created doubts about the legitimacy of the electoral process and those produced by the same electoral process. Godfatherism is one of the biggest dangers to democratic consolidation as it promotes the exclusion and denial of legitimate entitlements of the electorate. Gambo sees the activities of Godfathers as inimical to the tenets of democracy. According to him, under the politics of Godfatherism, “there is total absence of culture of accountability, and this negates one of the critical attributes of democracy which is a responsible and accountable government. Good governance predicted on rule of law, due process, accountability and transparency in the management of public space is precariously compromised” (Gambo, 2006: 99). Ayoade also notes that: Godfatherism has created more problems than enough. It has created doubts about the legitimacy of the electoral process and the elected. It therefore creates an environment that delinks people from the state. The opposition tends to refuse to obey what conscience forbids. They therefore react by becoming apathetic or, at the other extreme, violent. Those that remain apathetic do so only because they do not hold strong political views, while those who turn violent cannot accommodate the blatant disregard of rules (Ayoade, 2006).

### **2.1.7 Voters Apathy: A Recurring Trend in Nigeria's Electoral Democracy**

It is obvious that the whole people who registered for 2019 general elections were 84 million. However, when we assess past elections in Nigeria the number of registered voters for 2019 appeared to be the largest. In 2015, we had 68 million eligible voters; 73 million in 2011; 61 million in 2007; and 60 million in 2003; whereas in 1999 was 57 million registered voters. The next question to ask is: where are the voters? Does it mean that Nigerians are only interested in registering as voters and are not interested in the actual process of selection? Or, does it correlate with the popular saying that, votes don't count in Nigeria? Akiyemi (2019) identified the following possible important factors discouraging Nigerians from participating in their country's electoral processes. They are: Bad governance: The practice of politics and governance in Nigeria appears disappointing. Generally, governance could arouse or kill the interest of the eligible voters. First, the fundamental duty of every government is to provide security for citizens within its province. Odigbo and Okafor (2019; p.4) noted that the safety of lives and personal property of the citizens assumed top priority position in the government agenda. It implies that nothing must distract government from performing this responsibility. It is anticipated that government will make available a favorable political environment which is free from any form of intimidation, harassment and bullying. However, this appeared to be absent in the Nigerian state as so called political sponsors and leaders force their will on the people (Onwuama, 2019). According to Odigbo and Okafor (2019) and

Onwuama, (2019) the negative attitude of do or die affair of politicians accounted for the reasons why security agencies appeared to be used for the abuse of the electoral law. For instance, the militarization of elections in Nigeria encouraged violence, killings, intimidation and rigging for selfish ambition. This has led to lack of interest and apathetic attitude of eligible voters to the democratic process. Economic security and social welfare are other aspects of governance which consists of establishing employment opportunities, reducing inflation, eliminating hunger and starvation and improving the standard of living. As common to other expectations of the state, provision of welfare (quality medical facilities, sound education, motor-able roads, portable water supply, and constant power supply among others) in Nigeria has been a mirage. Apathy results from the inability of the government to meet the needs of the citizens. Justice system in Nigeria: Ordinarily, the judicial arm of government is regarded as the light at the end of the tunnel for the less privileged citizens. The reverse is the case in Nigeria where the judiciary is seen as highly corrupt. Laws made in Nigeria seem to be for the common citizens while the politicians appear to be living above the law. Non obedience to the rule of law is in the nature of Nigeria's political system. Voter apathy possibly can come from the inability of the government to offer justice for all and sundry. For instance, the Supreme Court on Tuesday 14th January, 2020 nullified the election of Emeka Ihedioha of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) as the governor of Imo State and at the same time the apex court declared Hope Uzodinma of the All Progressives Congress (APC) as the

winner of the March 9, 2019 governorship election in the state. Incidentally, the judges did not provide the details of the new votes scored by each of the candidates after the addition of the results from the 388 polling units. This controversial judicial decision appeared not to be generally accepted by the citizens of Imo State hence, the name tag “Supreme Court Governor”. According to a report from INEC, Mr Ihedioha polled 273,404 ahead of his closest rival and candidate of the Action Alliance, Uche Nwosu, who the electoral body said scored 190,364 votes. By the INEC result, the candidate of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), Ifeanyi Ararume, came third ahead of Hope Uzodinma of the All Progressives Congress (APC) with 114, 676 while the latter polled 96,458 (Yahaya, 2020). Lastly, the unfulfilled promises of politicians at campaign rallies and inability to perform as soon as they assumed office encourage lack of trust in elected officials. This is due to high level of corruption and greed associated with politicians and other government officials and as a result apathy becomes the outcome. Electoral violence: Undeniably, elections in Nigeria are characterized by uncertainties, as a result of fear of election-related violence. According to Atuobi (2013) in Ekanem and Okafor (2018), election-related violence can take place in various stages of the electoral process. It could occur, before, during or after elections and this has always ignited voters’ apathy. Burchard (2015) explained further that it includes any intimidation or threatening action that emanate from the electoral process. It could occur before, during and after the elections, especially when the outcome of the election is being

announced. By extension, electoral violence includes series of behavior that ranges from the exchange and distribution of hate-speech leaflets, the forced displacement of specific group of voters, political assassinations, protests, riots and targeted violent attacks. During the 2015 general elections, hate speeches and provocative statements were associated with campaign across the nation. A Northern Nigerian group warned the people on 14th October, 2014, to desist from supporting President Jonathan and the People's Democratic Party, PDP in 2015 general elections otherwise such supporters would be regarded as enemies of the North. Edwin Clerk, Ijaw Ethnic Leader (Jonathan's ethnic group) replied the Northern Elders Forum that "we cannot continue to feed this country and we are not ruling the country." Asari-Dokubo, former militant leader and founder of Niger Delta Peoples' Salvation Front (NDPSF) threatened violence if former President Jonathan was not re-elected. Asari warned that "2015 is more than do-or-die. It is our very survival that is being challenged, and we must tell them. You are a man and I am a man we are going to meet in a battlefield" (as cited in International Crisis Group, 2015:4). Ekanem and Okafor (2018) added that in May, 2012, current President Buhari threatened the nation that "God willing by 2015, something will happen. They either conduct a free and fair election or they go a very disgraceful way. If what happened in 2011 should happen again in 2015, by the grace of God, the dog and the baboon would all be soaked in blood." Tinubu, the APC leader also added that, "the APC is prepared to thrust the PDP and Jonathan out from power ....for every action there is an equal

reaction” (in International Crisis Group, 2015, p.7). Akpabio, the then Governor of Akwa Ibom State reacted that “the APC and its agenda to take over power by all means will die! And PDP is determined to continue (Thisday, 25 July 2014 as cited in International Crisis Group, 2015:7). All these violent statements by unscrupulous politicians scared eligible voters away from the pooling units.

Weak Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs): The weak EMBs foster voters’ apathy and encouraged lack of trust in INEC. Ekanem and Okafor (2018) defined the electoral management bodies as those agencies involved in the administration of elections. Here in Nigeria, it comprises the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Security agencies, as well as the tribunals. Ende (2013) in Ekanem and Okafor (2018) lamented that the bottom line of the problem is simply poor management typified by lack of independence, political attachment, corruption, ingrained Nigerian culture and inadequate capacity. Experience indeed reveals that successive electoral commissions in the country have either been pro-ruling party or they engaged in the manipulation of election result in favour of the highest bidding contestants. In most cases, it is feared that INEC officials collaborated with politicians to rig election. This presented the citizens with the impression that their votes do not count and as such going to the polling unit viewed as waste of time.

Politics of election postponement: On 16th February, 2019, INEC suddenly announced the postponement of scheduled elections. The general elections was rescheduled for 23rd February (presidential and legislatures) and March 9th

(governorship and state legislators) respectively. The electoral commission cited logistics as the reason for the postponement. This contradicted INEC's earlier position that the system was adequately prepared to host the election as planned. Nigeria's electoral history is replete with poll postponements since the military era. For example, under Ibrahim Babangida, Nigeria's military president from 1985 to 1993, multiple elections were postponed in 1991 and 1992. The annulment of the June 1993 elections by Babangida in June 1993 led to a series of events that culminated in the collapse of Nigeria's third republic. Under Attahiru Jega, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) postponed elections twice in 2011 and 2015. In 2011, the reason given was the late deployment of electoral materials. As a result, the National Assembly Elections scheduled for April 2 were postponed by two days, after voting had already commenced in some states. They were subsequently delayed again, which led to presidential and state elections also being pushed back. While in 2015, INEC delayed elections by six weeks from the originally scheduled date of February 14 citing security challenges posed by the Boko Haram insurgency. Indeed, the implication of this election postponement is that it appears to have produced voter fatigue and apathy, especially among those who traveled long distances within and outside Nigeria to cast their votes. For instance, citizens living abroad travelled to different states just to vote only for them to wake up in the morning to hear about the ugly news. This action of INEC without apologies angered many eligible voters and the resultant effect is total decline in

2019 general elections. Many could not afford to travel again for voting. According to Kazeem (2019) the postponement will affect international election observation missions already in the country. The United Nations, ECOWAS, the European Union as well as the International Republican Institute (IRI) and the National Democratic Institute (NDI) all election observers were disappointed after being on ground. The sudden postponement of the election was a cankerworm that shook the nation from the micro to the macro economy.

### **2.1.8 Implications Of Voter Apathy On Democratization Project In Nigeria**

Democratic system encourages decision-making in line with the principle of majorities. Decision making in a democratic setting is indispensable and necessary. Obiora (2008) noted that democracy is a system of democratic government in which decisions are arrived at by securing the agreement of the majority of the participants. This implies that the purpose of the majority will always triumph. Without a doubt, Nigeria has successfully transited from non-democratic regime to a democratic administration for two uninterrupted decades. However, it is illogical when majority of the citizens decides not to cast their votes and sit-back at home on Election Day. This action of the citizens appears to be a threat to the democratization process which negates the very principle of democracy. When majority of eligible voters do not exercise their civic duty they invariably do so by empowering the minority to make that decision on their behalf in a country of over two hundred million citizens. Minority rule in Nigeria contradicts democratic principles and as such the

democratization project in Nigeria suffers from debilitations. Abraham Lincoln believes that democracy is the government composed of the people, established by the people and for the benefits of the people. This refers to the selection of government from among the people and to provide the essential needs of the citizens. This corresponds with the view of Franklin D. Roosevelt, former American President who said: “Let us never forget that government is ourselves and not an alien power over us. The ultimate rulers of our democracy are not a President and senators and congressmen and government officials, but the voters of this country. Hence, the people have spoken with their vote, the type of government they want and should never be victimized for casting their vote; either they voted for or against the current government at the federal or state levels. Just like Frenchman, Joseph de Maistre said, “Every country has the government it deserves”. The dominance of voter apathy in Nigeria is an indication that there is a disconnection between the people and the selected government. Persistent apathy makes the government an alien power over the citizens. This development will lead to lack of legitimacy on the path of government and as well as produce weak institutions. A poor voters’ turnout is a sign that the outcome of the election does not represent the choice of the majority but the minority. Probably, Salau (2019) underscore that democracy is a game of numbers. As such, the government draws its power and legitimacy from the number of votes cast in an election. An undeniably fact is that voter apathy is weakening the democratization process in Nigeria.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

Rational Choice Theory The rational choice theory of election, also known as rational action theory, is a theory for understanding and often modelling social economic as well as individual behaviour. It is the main paradigm in the currently-dominant microeconomics school of thought. It is also central to modern political science, as well as other disciplines such as sociology and philosophy. The proponents of this theory are Down, (1957) and Arrow, (1986). According to these duo, the Rational Choice Theory of Election identifies that political behaviour and voting pattern of the electorates is a rational choice based on some indicators such as economic benefit, resources allocation, distribution of goods and services, allocation of juicy political offices and favour (Downs, 1957; Arrow, 1986). Rational Choice Theory of Election is either evaluative or non-evaluative according to Downs (1957) and Arrow (1986). Evaluative is the process of measuring and evaluating the performances of regimes to determine whether they deserve voters' choice or not and, in this regard, rationality is based on performance measurement. The non-evaluative is based on clientelistic considerations such as favouritism, patronage, ethnicity, religion, regionalism and family. The proponents of this theory observed that elections in African countries are mostly considered on clientelistic rationalism where the ethnic, religious and regional cleavages are given much consideration. They also identified what they called "Swing votes" in developing democracies like Nigeria where they analysed that ethnic, religious, patronage and clientelistic

satisfaction of the voters when measured with evaluation of performances of the leaders in office can influence the outcome of an election. The theory is directly applicable within the context of this study. This is because the study seeks to examine the exact factors that determines the voter's choice during the 2011-2019 presidential elections in Nigeria. In other word, rational choice theory is relevant to this study because the study is concerned with whether voter participation during the 2011-2019 presidential elections of the fourth republic is contingent on both the evaluative factors that is, the performance measurement of the regime or the political leaders in the Nigerian State. Also, the study examines whether voter choice or participation is determine by nonevaluative factors such as favouritism, ethnicity, and religion. Finally, the theory is relevant to this study because it seeks to make findings on the exact factors affecting voter participation or turnout recorded during the 2011-2019 presidential elections conducted in spite of the democratic transitions experienced in the country and how this have help to influenced democratic consolidation and how democratic consolidation have help to influenced the rational choice and voters participation in the country. (Animashaun, 2015).

### **2.3 Empirical Review**

A study conducted by Okafor, Odigbo, & Okeke (2022),asserted Voter apathy is a subdivision of political apathy and has become one of the foremost democracy quandaries especially in developing politics. Participation in politics is an important part of decision making in a democratic setting. Therefore, when voters do

not come out to participate in voting, it definitely impacts negatively on the electoral process and sometimes undermines the outcome of an election. It may mean that the majority who did not vote indirectly empowered the minority who voted to make decision on their behalf. This paper argues that the increasing manifestation of voter apathy in the last two decades of Nigeria's democracy leads to a poor democratization process and governance failures in the Nigerian project. It has promoted a condition in which individuals still remain more powerful than institutions. The paper employed documentary methods for data collection, while anchoring its discourses on the decision making theory as theoretical framework. The paper concludes that if the increasing level of voter apathy is not controlled in the country, it will continue to constitute a challenge to democratic consolidation in Nigeria. It recommends among other considerations that the Electoral Management Body (EMB) needs to critically inspire citizens through massive enlightenment and must restore trust and confidence in the electoral process by ensuring that people's verdicts are not thwarted by any means.

Ebegbulem (2017), opined that since the fall of authoritarian and dictatorial regimes in West Africa, the subregion has witnessed democratic change with the installation of multi-party political systems in almost all the countries. Today, democracy sits on the horn of a dilemma in many countries in sub-Saharan Africa, including Nigeria. The tactics and tantrums of political actors in Nigeria and the shortcomings of the political process has showcased the inadequacies of democracy

and its practice as a political ideology in Nigeria. Free and fair election which is one of the features of true democracy has eluded Nigeria since the advent of her nascent democratic dispensation. For democracy to thrive and consolidate in any political system, periodic elections should be free and fair, such that it will not be impossible to replace an incompetent and unpopular government from power. The weakness of the electoral umpire in Nigeria as shown in the series of controversies, litigations and court decisions on election matters that trail successive elections, and the behavior of the political class has cast doubt on sustainable democratic consolidation in Nigeria. This paper looks at the meaning and content of democracy, and highlights the challenges and prospects of democratic consolidation in Nigeria under the prevailing socio-economic and security challenges. The paper examines the link between democratic consolidation and credible elections, and how the growth and sustenance of democratic consolidation is threatened by electoral fraud and visionless leaders. Finally, the paper discusses the imperative of good governance, and the argument it advances is that without this imperative, socio-economic and political instability will pose as a feature of Nigerian democracy.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, we described the research procedure for this study. A research methodology is a research process adopted or employed to systematically and scientifically present the results of a study to the research audience viz. a vis, the study beneficiaries.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

Research designs are perceived to be an overall strategy adopted by the researcher whereby different components of the study are integrated in a logical manner to effectively address a research problem. In this study, the researcher employed the survey research design. This is due to the nature of the study whereby the opinion and views of people are sampled. According to Singleton & Straits, (2009), Survey research can use quantitative research strategies (e.g., using questionnaires with numerically rated items), qualitative research strategies (e.g., using open-ended questions), or both strategies (i.e. mixed methods). As it is often used to describe and explore human behaviour, surveys are therefore frequently used in social and psychological research.

#### **3.2 Population of the Study**

According to Udoyen (2019), a study population is a group of elements or individuals, as the case may be, who share similar characteristics. These similar

features can include location, gender, age, sex or specific interest. The emphasis on study population is that it constitutes individuals or elements that are homogeneous in description.

This study was carried out to examine the voters apathy and democratic consolidation in Nigeria a case study of 2023 general elections. Hence, the population of this study comprises of residents of Emohua Local Government Area.

### **3.3 Sample Size Selection Technique and Procedure**

A study sample is simply a systematic selected part of a population that infers its result on the population. In essence, it is that part of a whole that represents the whole and its members share characteristics like similitude (Udoyen, 2019). In this study, the researchers adopted the simple random sampling (SRS) method to determine the sample size.

In this study, the researcher adopted a convenient sampling method to determine the sample size. Out of the entire residents of Emohua Local Government Area, the researcher conveniently selected 147 participants as the sample size for this study. According to Torty (2021), a sample of convenience is the terminology used to describe a sample in which elements have been selected from the target population on the basis of their accessibility or convenience to the researcher.

### **3.4 Research Instrument and Administration**

The research instrument used in this study is the questionnaire. A survey containing series of questions were administered to the enrolled participants. The questionnaire

was divided into two sections, the first section enquired about the responses demographic or personal data while the second sections were in line with the study objectives, aimed at providing answers to the research questions. Participants were required to respond by placing a tick at the appropriate column. The questionnaire was personally administered by the researcher.

### **3.5 Method of Data Collection**

Two methods of data collection which are primary source and secondary source were used to collect data. The primary sources was the use of questionnaires, while the secondary sources include textbooks, internet, journals, published and unpublished articles and government publications.

### **3.6 Method of Data Analysis**

The responses were analyzed using frequency tables, and mean and standard deviation, which provided answers to the research questions.

In using the mean score, the four points rating scale will be given values as follows:

SA = Strongly Agree	4
A = Agree	3
D = Disagree	2
SD = Strongly Disagree	1

### **Decision Rule:**

To ascertain the decision rule; this formula was used

$$\frac{4+3+2+1 = 10}{4 \quad 4} = 2.5$$

Any score that was 2.5 and above was accepted, while any score that was below 2.5 was rejected. Therefore, 2.5 was the cut-off mean score for decision taken. While the hypotheses will be tested using Chi-square Statistical Tool.

### **3.7 Validity of the Study**

Validity referred here is the degree or extent to which an instrument actually measures what is intended to measure. An instrument is valid to the extent that is tailored to achieve the research objectives. The researcher constructed the questionnaire for the study and submitted to the project supervisor who used his intellectual knowledge to critically, analytically and logically examine the instruments relevance of the contents and statements and then made the instrument valid for the study.

### **3.8 Reliability of the Study**

The reliability of the research instrument was determined. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. A co-efficient value of 0.68 indicated that the research instrument was relatively reliable.

According to (Taber, 2017) the range of a reasonable reliability is between 0.67 and 0.87.

### **3.9 Ethical Consideration**

The study was approved by the Project Committee of the Department. Informed consent was obtained from all study participants before they were enrolled in the study. Permission was sought from the relevant authorities to carry out the study. Date to visit the place of study for questionnaire distribution was put in place in advance.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the analysis of data derived through the questionnaire and key informant interview administered on the respondents in the study area. The analysis and interpretation were derived from the findings of the study. The data analysis depicts the simple frequency and percentage of the respondents as well as interpretation of the information gathered. A total of one hundred and forty-seven (147) questionnaires were administered to respondents of which only one hundred and forty-one (141) were returned and validated. This was due to irregular, incomplete and inappropriate responses to some questionnaire. For this study a total of 141 was validated for the analysis.

#### **4.2 Data Presentation**

The table below shows the summary of the survey. A sample of 147 was calculated for this study. A total of 141 responses were received and validated. For this study a total of 141 was used for the analysis.

**Table 4.1: Distribution of Questionnaire**

<b>Questionnaire</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Sample size	147	100
Received	141	96
Validated	141	96

**Source: Field Survey, 2023**

**Table 4.2: Demographic data of respondents**

<b>Demographic information</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>percent</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	87	61%
Female	54	39%
<b>Age</b>		
20-24	17	12.1%
25-30	33	23.4%
31-35	35	24.8%
36+	56	39.7%
<b>Religion</b>		
Muslim	56	40%
Christian	85	60%
<b>Education</b>		
Dropout	30	28.3%

Basic Education	10	7.0%
Secondary Education	39	27.6%
Tertiary Education	62	44.0%
<b>Occupation</b>		
Student	30	21.2
Self-employed	82	58.1
Employed	20	14.2
Unemployed	9	6.3
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	30	21%
Married	59	42%
Separated	10	7%
Divorced	19	13%
Widowed	23	16%

**Source: Field Survey, 2023**

### **4.3 ANSWERING RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

**Question 1:** What is the level of voters apathy in the 2023 general elections in Nigeria?

**Table 4.3:** Respondents on question 1

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
High	70	50
Low	36	26
Undecided	35	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field Survey, 2023**

From table 4.3 above, 50% of the respondents said high, 26% of the respondents said low, while the remaining 24% of the respondents were undecided.

**Question 2:** What are the causes of voters apathy during the 2023 general elections in Nigeria?

**Table 4.4:** Respondents on the causes of voters apathy during the 2023 general elections in Nigeria

<b>S/N</b>	<b>ITEM STATEMENT</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>S.D</b>	<b>DECISION</b>
		<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>			
1	Educational background	94	19	14	14	3.4	4.5	Accepted
2	Nature of jobs	81	40	18	02	3.4	4.4	Accepted
3	Political violence	86	15	26	14	3.2	4.3	Accepted
4	Dishonesty of politicians	99	21	12	09	3.5	4.5	Accepted
5	Government not providing basic amenities	78	43	14	06	3.4	4.4	Accepted

**Source: Field Survey, 2023**

In table 4.4 above, the causes of voters apathy during the 2023 general elections in Nigeria, the table shows that all the items (item1-item5) are accepted. This is proven as the respective items (item1-item5) have mean scores above 2.50. This depicts the causes of voters apathy during the 2023 general elections in Nigeria.

**Question 3:** What are the effects of voters apathy on democratic consolidation in Nigeria?

**Table 4.5:** Respondents on the effects of voters apathy on democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	X	S.D	DECISION
1	Political apathy mitigates the idea democracy	99	21	12	09	3.5	4.5	Accepted
2	Poor turnout of voters	78	43	14	06	3.4	4.4	Accepted
3	Poor leadership structure	86	15	26	14	3.2	4.3	Accepted
4	Increases corruption	99	21	12	09	3.5	4.5	Accepted
5	Conflicts	78	43	14	06	3.4	4.4	Accepted
6	Bad Government	81	40	18	02	3.4	4.4	Accepted

**Source: Field Survey, 2023**

In table 4.5 above, on the effects of voters apathy on democratic consolidation in Nigeria, the table shows that all the items (item1-item6) are accepted. This is proven as the respective items (item1-item6) have mean scores above 2.50. This depicts the effects of voters apathy on democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**H<sub>0</sub>:** The prevalence of voters apathy in Nigeria is low.

**Table 4.6:** The prevalence of voters apathy in Nigeria is high.

<b>Options</b>	<b>F<sub>o</sub></b>	<b>F<sub>e</sub></b>	<b>F<sub>o</sub> - F<sub>e</sub></b>	<b>(F<sub>o</sub> - F<sub>e</sub>)<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>(F<sub>o</sub>-F<sub>e</sub>)<sup>2</sup>/F<sub>e</sub></b>
Yes	70	47	23	529	11.3
No	36	47	-11	121	2.6
Undecided	35	47	-12	144	3.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>141</b>			<b>17.0</b>

**Source:** Extract from Contingency Table

$$\text{Degree of freedom} = (r-1) (c-1)$$

$$(3-1) (2-1)$$

$$(2) (1)$$

$$= 2$$

At 0.05 significant level and at a calculated degree of freedom, the critical table value is 5.991.

### Findings

The calculated  $X^2 = 17.0$  and is greater than the table value of  $X^2$  at 0.05 significant level which is 5.991.

**Decision**

Since the  $X^2$  calculated value is greater than the critical table value that is 17.0 is greater than 5.991, the Null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis which states that the prevalence of voters apathy in Nigeria is high is accepted.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter summarizes the findings on voters apathy and democratic consolidation in Nigeria a case study of 2023 general elections. The chapter consists of summary of the study, conclusions, and recommendations.

#### **5.2 Summary of the Study**

In this study, our focus was to examine voters apathy and democratic consolidation in Nigeria a case study of 2023 general elections. The study specifically was aimed at to determine the level of voters apathy in the 2023 general elections in Nigeria, identify the causes of voters apathy in the 2023 general elections in Nigeria, and ascertain the effects of voters apathy on democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

The study adopted the survey research design and randomly enrolled participants in the study. A total of 141 responses were validated from the enrolled participants where all respondents are residents of Emohua Local Government Area.

#### **5.3 Conclusions**

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher made the following conclusion.

- i. The level of voters apathy during the 2023 general elections in Nigeria is high.
- ii. The causes of voters apathy in the 2023 general elections in Nigeria includes: educational background, nature of jobs, political violence, dishonesty of politicians, government not providing basic amenities.

- iii. The effects of voters apathy on democratic consolidation in Nigeria includes: political apathy mitigates the idea democracy, poor turnout of voters, poor leadership structure, increases corruption, conflicts, bad government.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proffered.

- i. There is urgent need for political education in Nigeria especially the people in the riverine and rural areas. Political education should not be limited to the school system. Both formal and informal approaches should be adopted to orientate the citizens on the need for active participation in the political system. There is the need for mass political enlightenment through the media, adult education programme and civil associations. The citizens should be conscious of the danger of their political apathy.
- ii. The Independent National Electoral Commission should put in place machinery that will ensure mass participation of the electorates during future elections in Nigeria. INEC should be more transparent and impartial at every stage of the electioneering process. The electoral process should be devoid of sentiment, favoritism, fraud, violence and intimidation. Anyone who violates electoral procedure and policies should immediately be brought to book.
- iii. Political class must not see public office as avenue of siphoning public fund. Public offices should be used to serve the people. Also, government should increase their involvement in the rural development. In this regard, provision of

basic amenities such as roads, electricity, pipe-borne water, schools etc should be vigorously pursued. This will make life very easy for the rural dwellers and increase their participation in the business of politics. Invariably, this will help to install sanity and confidence in the electoral process and thereby enhance political participation in the rural areas and communities.

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**APPENDIXE**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**PLEASE TICK [√] YOUR MOST PREFERRED CHOICE(S) ON A QUESTION.**

**SECTION A**

**PERSONAL INFORMATION**

**Gender:** Male [ ] Female [ ]

**Age:** 20-24 [ ] 25-30 [ ] 31-35 [ ] 36+ [ ]

**Religion:** Muslim [ ] Christian [ ]

**Education:** Dropout [ ] Basic Education [ ] Secondary Education [ ]

Tertiary Education [ ]

**Occupation:** Student [ ] Self-employed [ ] Employed [ ] Unemployed [ ]

**Marital Status:** Single [ ] Married [ ] Separated [ ] Divorced [ ] Widowed [ ]

**SECTION B**

**Question 1:** What is the level of voters apathy in the 2023 general elections in Nigeria?

<b>Options</b>	<b>Please Tick</b>
High	
Low	
Undecided	

**Question 2:** What are the causes of voters apathy during the 2023 general elections in Nigeria?

<b>S/N</b>	<b>ITEM STATEMENT</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
1	Educational background				
2	Nature of jobs				
3	Political violence				
4	Dishonesty of politicians				
5	Government not providing basic amenities				

**Question 3:** What are the effects of voters apathy on democratic consolidation in Nigeria?

<b>S/N</b>	<b>ITEM STATEMENT</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
1	Political apathy mitigates the idea democracy				
2	Poor turnout of voters				
3	Poor leadership structure				
4	Increases corruption				
5	Conflicts				
6	Bad Government				