

Principle Component Analysis of Factors Determining Voter Abstention in South Eastern Nigeria

by

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Abstract

Voter turnout is the springboard of election as an election is to democracy and it is a major yardstick to measure democratic performance. Since 2003, the Nigerian democracy has been underperforming and in the recent election, the South Eastern region of the country has witnessed a sharp increase in voter abstention. This study investigates the underlying factors responsible for the increasing level of voter abstention in South Eastern Nigeria. The exercise engaged an extensive literature review, a questionnaire survey, descriptive analysis aided result interpretations, and thus, it identified twenty factors summarized into eight factors using Principal Component Analysis (a statistical procedure that uses an orthogonal transformation to convert a set of observations of possibly correlated variables into a set of values of linearly uncorrelated variables) that influence voter abstention in the region. Hence, the examination finds that socioeconomic status, social trust and weak institutional framework, unemployment, registration challenges and demographic factor, corruption and inadequate security, deception and intimidation, social connection and poverty influence voter abstention in the region. The study notes that the increasing level of voter abstention could impact negatively on the Nigerian democracy and contends that economic hardship, governance failure, and weak electoral institutions characterized by malpractices in the electoral process disenfranchises many citizens from exercising their right to vote.

Keywords: voter abstention, principal component analysis, factors, voting, Nigerian elections.

Introduction

African nations recorded high voter turnout following the wave of democratization in the continent from the mid-1980s (Huntington 1991). However, Nigeria, Egypt, Mali, and Côte d'Ivoire were exceptions. In 2001, Nigeria, with 49.7% voter abstention was one of the countries that had the highest level of voter abstention in the world. Côte d'Ivoire (63.0%) and Mali (78.7%) recorded the highest level of voter abstention. Nigeria was ranked 157th of 169 countries based on the level of voter turnout (Pinto, Gratschew & Sullivan 2001). Moreover, voter abstention has been increasing in Nigeria since 2003 (see Table 1) with the highest being the 2015 election which recorded 56.4% voter abstention and a much higher voting age abstention of 67.9%.

Table 1. Nigerian population, registration, and voter abstention (1999 to 2015)

Year	Voter Abstention	Total Vote	Registration	VAP Abstention	Voting Age Population (VAP)	Population
2015	56.35%	29,432,083	67,422,005	67.9%	91,669,312	181,562,056
2011	46.32%	39,469,484	73,528,040	51.68%	81,691,751	164,798,232
2007	42%	NA	61,567,036	NA	71,004,507	144,998,281
2003	30.92%	42,018,735	60,823,022	34.67%	64,319,246	132,581,484
1999	47.74%	30,280,052	57,938,945	43%	52,792,781	119,826,230

NA= Data not available, VAP=Voting age population

Source: Computed from INEC website (<http://www.inecnigeria.org/>).

The declining level of voter turnout in Nigeria is a major cause for concern because it has been argued that elections are the bedrock of democracy and the length and breadth of participation in elections is one key measure of democratic performance. Thus by implication, the Nigerian democracy has been performing poorly. Electoral participation tends to have patterns that indicate peoples' perception of the social, economic, and political experiences and backgrounds of the electorates from one election to another. Peoples' preference or dislike for a political activity such as elections are reflected in the level of voting and other electoral activities but the reasons why this happens are not reported in the election results. Thus research is often needed to uncover the factors responsible for it. Consequently, it is pertinent that the drivers of voter abstention in Nigeria should be investigated in order to develop measures to check it.

Efforts have been made to study electoral and political participation in Nigeria (Adeleke 2013; Agu, Okeke, & Idike 2013; Ahmed & Taiwo 2015; Ayanda & Braimah 2015; Falade 2014 etc). Most of these studies have focused particularly on the Southwest geopolitical zone of the country (Adeleke 2013; Agu et al. 2013; Falade 2014) while few have focused on a national scale (e.g. Taiwo & Ahmed 2015).

A look at the level of voter turnout at the geopolitical zones of Nigeria (Table 2) shows that all zones witnessed a decrease in voter turnout from 2011 to 2015 except the Southwest Zone perhaps for the reason that most of the studies on political participation were done in that region. The Southeast Zone experienced the largest decrease in voter turnout from 2011 to 2015 (Table 2) yet there has been little effort to study this zone. Consequently, this examination aims at assessing the factors responsible for voter abstention in South Eastern Nigeria. It achieves this aim by engaging in an extensive literature review to identify the factors of voter abstention in Nigeria and then narrows it down to the Southeast Zone. It draws on public perception to scale the various factors identified and uses statistical techniques to uncover the underlying dimensions of the factors.

Table 2. Voter turnout in geopolitical zones of Nigeria

Zone	2015 (%)	2011 (%)
North Central	43.47	49
North East	45.22	56
North West	50.09	56
South East	40.52*	63
South South	57.81	62
South West	40.26	32

Source: Ayanda and Braimah (2015)

Literature Review

Election represents the machinery for the distribution of power within society; on national as well as regional levels. It also drives the political, societal and economic development of society (Begu 2007). The level of electoral participation of the citizens determines, to a degree, the success of the electoral system (Falade 2014). Whilst there are various ways to participate in democratic politics, voting is the most visible and widespread form of citizens' engagement in the electoral process (Begu 2007). Thus the most commonly reported indicator of the level of participation is voter turnout (Pinto et al. 2001). The vote is the primary thing for citizens to make their governments accountable. If a great portion of citizens does not make their opinions, elections would generate no incentives for politicians to execute policies in the interest of the people (Agu et al. 2013).

Moreover, low voter turnout prevents elections to properly do their three major purposes which are the accountability effect, legitimacy effect and representative effect (Agu et al. 2013). The accountability effect is that elections serve as a tool for making politicians accountable by the threat of not being re-elected. The legitimacy effect relates to electing capable persons for public office and the representative effect refers to the preferences of the majority of the citizenry. Significantly, the accountability effect is crucial because it affects the electoral incentives facing politicians.

This is because political officials try to perform excellently when they perceive that they would not be re-elected (Agu et al. 2013). Consequently, elections are tools for shaping elected officials to work in accordance with vox populi (Agu et al. 2013). Accordingly, voting is conceived as the most fundamental democratic instrument the citizenry can use to shape and reshape policies in their country to the betterment of their well-being.

Some factors have been as the drivers of voter abstention. Violence and the capacity to create violence is one of the drivers. In this respect, Kasara (2014) noted that where politicians do not have a large support in Kenya, violence is used to redistribute voter turnout in areas typically as the Kenyan Rift Valley region where there is a high tendency for people to move in fear of violence. In line with this, some voters may vote tactically for the political party with the highest capacity to cause violence because they prefer peace to voting for the party whose policies they most prefer (Wantchekon 1999). Also, poor and unpopular candidates can use violence to stifle the turnout of non-supporters of their parties because public condemnation of violence makes intimidation pricey for the opposition (Collier & Vicente (2012).

Besides, electoral participation may be affected by the degree to which information regarding election is available to the public, and the ease with which potential voters can access information (Van Egmond 2003). Sobbrío and Navarra (2010) indicate that people who are independent or less informed turnout the less while Franklin (2002) remarks that awareness can spur mobilization and broad participation of the citizenry in electoral activities. Adeleke (2013) asserts that there is need to sustain consciousness on the significance of politics devoid of violence to stimulate participation even among women.

Socio-demographic and socioeconomic factors influence voter registration and turnout of citizens. While adults tend to participate more, young adult of voting age do not participate much in voting (Hooghe & Dassonneville 2013). The concentration of income and wealth in an area often increases political influence which spurs participation (Solt 2008). Further, the citizens with a better level of education and a higher degree of satisfaction (social trust) with the political system tend to participation more (Falade 2014; Sobbrío & Navarra 2010; Solt 2008).

There has been a consistent decline in voter turnout in Nigeria. The factors driving this have been attributed to undemocratic practices in the country. It is argued that elite political actors marginalize the masses thus restraining even participation and by implication hinder the Nigerian democracy from consolidation (Omodia 2009). Falade (2014) notes that scores of Nigerians do not engage in the electoral process for the reason that the political system discourages mass participation. This is spurred by the unfair practices such as rigging, deception, intimidation, manipulation, sentiments, money politics, ignorance, corruption (Agu et al 2013; Arowolo & Aluko 2012; Falade 2014), unemployment (Agu et al. 2013), violence (Adeleke 2013; Agu et al. 2013) and uncertainties that characterize the political system (Arowolo & Aluko 2012; Falade 2014; Innocent & Nwaoha 2014).

Studies on electoral and political participation have been concentrated in nearly one region of the country particularly the Southwest zone (Adeleke 2013; Agu et al. 2013; Falade 2014) while a few (Ayanda & Braimah 2015; Taiwo & Ahmed 2015) has focused on national scale. However, there is little research on the southeast zone which witnessed the highest level of voter abstention, particularly in the 2015 election. Consequently, this study will focus on the southeast zone with the aim of identifying the factors driving voter abstention in the region.

Theoretical Engagement

The springboard of democracy is election and voting is an essential facet of electoral and political participation in a democracy. Voter abstention refers to the nonparticipation in voting by the people of a democratic state or in any political, social organization. Elections can occur in various settings, such in selecting a leader in a country, business organization, socio-cultural group, etc. Refraining from voting in any of these situations is what voter abstention implies. Voter abstention indicates the level of citizens' nonparticipation in elections in a country while voter turnout indicates the level of participation in voting.

Political participation has been explained by various theoretical accounts however the models which their suppositions align with the factors of voter abstention in Nigeria are the socio-economic model, psychological resources model, and the social connectedness model which this work is anchored to. The socioeconomic model is one of the earliest attempts to theorize political participation and was expounded by (Verba & Nie 1972). The theory indicates that socioeconomic status (SES) can determine individual participation in political activities such as voting. The model suggests a high level of socioeconomic resources such as education and income are more related to increased participation in political activities (Leighley & Nagler 1992; Verba, Schlozman & Brady 1995). Also, SES is considered as the primary factor that drives the variation in rates of political participation across racial and ethnic groups (Verba et al. 1995). Studies indicate that individuals with high level of education, income and occupational status tend to campaign more, organize more, contact more and vote more than those with low socioeconomic status (Conway 1991; Kenny 1993; Leighley & Nagler 1992; Verba et al. 1995; Vitak, Zube, Smock, Carr, Ellison & Lampe 2011; Weaver & Bagchi-Sen 2015). Even though the themes of the theory were developed in the US and Europe, some research in Nigeria has argued that socioeconomic resources influence political participation (Agu et al. 2013; Taiwo & Ahmed 2014).

Furthermore, psychological resources model contends that individuals' psychological orientation such as political interest, political efficacy, trust in government (Falade 2014; Sobbrío & Navarra 2010; Solt 2008), and civic duty are important determinants of political participation (Leighley & Vedlitz 1999).

The steadiest results from these sets of indicators are the considerable connection between political interest and efficacy on involvement in electoral politics (Leighley & Vedlitz 1999; Rosentone & Hansen 1993). In addition, there are other factors such as the fear of violence (Adeleke 2013; Falade 2014; Kasara 2014; Trelles & Carreras 2012) and social trust (Falade 2014; Ibrahim et al. 2015; Solt 2008) which this model did not lay emphasis on but were drawn from literature.

Social connectedness model is founded on the nature of individual's relationship to the larger society. Earliest conceptions on this model isolate anomie, alienation, estrangement, prejudice, and apathy as factors that hinder political participation (Leighley & Vedlitz 1999; Putnam 1995). Contemporary proponents of this model contend that political participation is a function of the connectedness of the individual citizen and the larger political and social community. This contemporary notion adopts structural or behavioral factors such as organization involvement, church attendance, home ownership, and marital status as indicators of social connectedness (Leighley & Vedlitz 1999; Putnam 1995).

Methodology

Geographically, the study area is located within the confines of latitude 4⁰ 45' N to 7⁰ 15' N of the Equator and longitude 6⁰ 40' E to 8⁰ 30' E of the Greenwich Meridian. The area is enclosed by the South-South Geopolitical Zone in the west, south, and east and shares border with the North Central Zone in the north. The area has five states namely Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo states. Anambra State occupies the western stretch of the zone; Enugu lies in the north, Ebonyi in the North East, Imo, and Abia State occupy the southern part of the zone. These five states [Abia (79.2%), Anambra (75.7%), and Ebonyi (74.7%), Enugu (73.5%) and Imo (73.0%)] have a high level of voter abstention and have all been selected for this work. In each of these states, the Local Government Areas (LGA) with the largest population was selected. Places with a large population in Nigeria tend to have a high level of voter abstention (Taiwo & Ahmed 2015). From each LGA selected, three wards were selected systematically from the list of wards in each LGA to ensure that there is even coverage throughout the wards as shown in Table 6.

Table 3. The outlook of voter abstention in the 2015 presidential election in the South Eastern Nigeria

States	Population (2015 estimates)	VAP (2015 estimate)	RV (2015 election)	(VC) (2015 presidential election)	VAP- RV	(NVP) RV-VC	% NVP	VANP (VAP- VC)	% VANP
Abia	3,728,827	1,883,058	1,396,162	391,045	486,896	1,005,117	71.99	1,492,013	79.23
Anambra	5474980	2,764,865	1,963,173	670,675	801,692	1,292,498	65.84	2,094,190	75.74
Ebonyi	2,852,856	1,440,692	1,074,273	363,888	366,419	710,385	66.13	1,076,804	74.74
Enugu	4,282,450	2,162,637	1,429,221	573,173	733,416	856,048	59.90	1,589,464	73.50
Imo	5,147,011	2,599,241	1,803,030	702,964	796,211	1,100,066	61.01	1,896,277	72.96

NB: VAP= voting age population, RV= registered voters, VC=vote cast NVP= non-voters' population
VANP =voting age non-voters population

Source: Computed based on the 2015 presidential election results announced by INEC

Questionnaire Design

The factors responsible for voter abstention were drawn from the extensive literature review. The questionnaire was designed to seek the opinion of citizens on why people refrained from elections. The question was posed thus: 'how do you consider the following as the reasons why people do not vote during the election?' The variables were listed with four response categories namely *strongly agree*, *agree*, *disagree* and *strongly disagree*. Education level was not included in the list but was obtained by checking to see the response of the respondents in the bio-data section of the questionnaire. All the variables are itemized in Table 6.

Questionnaire Administration

500 copies of the questionnaire were administered proportionally based on the voting age population in all the selected wards (see Table 3 & 5) to elicit electorates' perception on the factors of voter abstention. However, only adult citizens who were 19 years old or over responded to the questionnaire that is, those who were eligible to vote in 2015. The questionnaire administration took place from January to March 2016. Respondents were drawn based on the voting age population in the study area using the 2015 estimated population of each state. This is done because the last general election in Nigeria was in 2015 and it is expected that the voting age population at that year were eligible to participate in the electoral process. Going by the 2015 general elections, the voting age population of Nigeria was 91,669,312 which are 50.5% of the total estimated population for that year. Thus in general, it is expected that 50.5% of the population in the study area were eligible to participate in the last election. This examination adopts the voting age population of the study area as the sample frame thus accounting for all those who are eligible to vote. Sample size determination was based on Taro Yamani's framework. The estimation of the sample size is made through the formula, Yamani (1967):

$$n = \frac{N}{I + N(e)^2} \quad (1)$$

Where n is the sample size, N is the population, I (1) is a constant, and e is the error limit (0.05). The voting age population of South-eastern Nigeria was 22,816,766 and the sample size is 400. This was distributed proportionally across all states in the study area. A 25% overflow in sample size was made to make up for any unreturned questionnaire in the course of data collection. The overflow is distributed proportionally across all the sampled LGAs. The sampling results are detailed in Table 4. Systematic sampling was used to select respondents in the Wards based on the number of residential units in each ward.

Perception study is one of public opinion poll methods that is a very vital tool for decision making and drawing modalities for resource allocation (Burnham, Lutz, Grant & Layton-Henry 2008; Cook, Herbst, Blumenthal, MKeeter & Greenberg 2011). Perception study has been used for strategic planning, managing resources, and gathering of primary data and as a feedback mechanism. The questionnaire survey is best used for perception studies especially in quantifying people's perception about an idea, issues of concern, projects, programs, or cultural practices by scaling structures responses the research participants will indicate as they perceive it. Of the 500 copies of a questionnaire administered only 398 (79.6%) were returned and aided the analysis.

Table 4. Sample Size distribution

State	Sampled LGA	2006 Pop.	2015 Pop. estimate	VAP (2015)	LGA SS+*
Abia	Aba South	427,421	560,129	282,865	104 +26
Anambra	Idemili North	431,005	564,826	285,237	105 + 26
Ebonyi	Izzi	236,679	310,164	156,633	58 + 14
Enugu	Nsukka	309,448	405,527	204,791	75+ 19
Imo	Mbaitoli	237,474	311,206	157,159	58 + 15
Zonal Population	22,816,766	1,642,027	2,151,852	1,086,685	400+100=500

NB: POP= population VAP = voting age population, SS= sample size, *= overflow (25%)

The questionnaire was administered to one respondent in any selected household. A household consists of one or more people who live in the same dwelling and may consist of a single family or some other grouping of people (Haviland 2003). The household is the basic unit of analysis in many social, microeconomic and government models (Sullivan & Sheffrin 2003).

Table 5. Questionnaire administration scheme

State	Selected LGA	Total RU	No. of Ws	Sampled Ws	RU	I	No. of RES	RQ
Abia	Aba South	92437	13	Aba Town, Eyimba, and Asa	7111	55	130	109
Anambra	Idemili North	94121	14	Abatete, Nkpo I and Uke	6723	51	131	104
Ebonyi	Izzi	43220	14	Egbeagu III, Agbaja Offia Onwe and Ezza	3087	43	72	53
Enugu	Nsukka	63 603	20	Inyimagu Ugbuhu Ihe, Agabmerie, Edem-Ani	3180	34	94	76
Imo	Mbaitoli	50726	12	Ifakala, Orodo B, and Ubomiri	4227	58	73	56
Total		280504	73		2438		241500	398

NB: RU: residential unit, Ws= wards, I= sample interval, RES=respondents, RQ=returned questionnaire

Method of Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using descriptive tools namely; percentages, means, and totals. Principal component analysis (PCA) was used to summarize the variables accounting for voter abstention into few underlying dimensions. The descriptive analysis was used to better interpret the PCA results. PCA is a statistical procedure that uses an orthogonal transformation to convert a set of observations of possibly correlated variables into a set of values of linearly uncorrelated variables called principal components (Anyadike 2009; Obeta & Nwankwo 2015; Orakwe & Chukwuma 2015; Vialle, Sablayrolles, Lovera, Jacob, Huau, & Vignoles 2011). PCA combines a large number of indicators into fewer, more analogous groups, each group defining the underlying dimension in the contributing variables forming the group (Anyadike 2009; Obeta & Nwankwo 2015). To do this, it is essential to estimate the number of significant factors present in the data. Specifically, a matrix of pair-wise correlations among indicators is collapsed into eigenvectors, which, in turn, are sorted in descending order of their corresponding Eigen values (Vialle et al. 2011; Obeta & Nwankwo 2015) indicating the relative contribution each variable has on voter abstention.

The analysis was based on the correlation matrix, which is the covariance matrix of the synchronized variables, to eliminate the scaling effect. The variables were computed as the sums of squares of deviations divided by N-1 (where N is the valid number of cases). Significant principal factors (PCs) with Eigen values greater than unity (i.e., PCs explaining more than the variance of one indicator) were extracted. Orthogonal rotation using variance maximization (varimax) was used to maximize the variance of the squared component loadings for each component, repartitioning the loadings towards higher components, thus improving interpretation (Anyadike 2009).

The basic computations were effectively and swiftly done using the Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program version 20 as suggested by Anyadike (2009). The variables were coded as 4=strongly agree, 3=agree, 2= disagree and 1=strongly disagree in the SPSS environment.

Results and Discussion

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The respondents were between the ages of 19 to 60 years. Furthermore, 62 respondents were between 19 to 30 years, 123 (30.9%) respondents were between 31 to 40 years, 185 (46.5%) of the respondents were between 41 to 50 years, 28 of the respondents were between 51 to 60 years. Of the 398 respondents, 248 were males while 150 were females. Married respondents were 240, single respondents were 158. Also, 61.3% of the respondents have secondary school education, 36.7 have a higher education while 2.0% have primary school education.

The Factors of Voter Abstention in the Study Area

From the analysis, the PCA predicted 67.1% of the factors responsible for voter abstention and summarized the factors into eight unique underlying dimensions contained in each of the components (Table 7) which in order of magnitude are as stated below:

- Socioeconomic status
- Lack of trust in the electoral process
- Social trust and unemployment
- Registration and demographic factor
- Corruption and inadequate security
- Deception and intimidation
- Indigene status
- Electoral manipulation and poverty

Component One

This component has an Eigen value of 2.6 explaining 13.1% of the factors of voter abstention. It loads significantly on X13 (.9) [I earn low income so I can't afford to vote], X16 (1.0) [Education level], and X20 (-.9) [I do not vote when I was single]. This component can be termed the influence of *socioeconomic status*. Variables X13 and X16 have a positive relationship with the component while X21 has a negative relationship with the component.

This implies that the lesser income people earn, the lesser they participate in voting and the lower the education level, the less they vote. Also, marital status is inversely related to voter abstention implying that married citizens do not necessarily vote more. From the survey, 56.8% either strongly agreed or agreed while 43.2% either strongly disagree or disagree that their low level of income influences their decision not to vote. Furthermore, the survey shows that the highest level of education attained by the majority (61.3%) of the respondents is a secondary school education.

Thus this component confirms two paradigms. First, it is in tandem with the socio-economic model which stipulates that citizens with better education, income, and occupational status develop psychological orientations that spur their participation in political activities especially voting (Verba et al. 1995). Secondly, it also lends credence to the pessimist of the socio-economic model. For instance, Cho, Gimpel, and Wu (2006) contend that there are situations where individuals with high SES refrain from voting while lower SES individuals participate but further argue that SES can powerfully spur participation in the presence of an external threat. In this sense, Rosema (2007) indicate that how well wealthy people are represented at the polls can make them vote in order to have a political voice (efficacy) in the government. Thus by implication, in the Nigerian context, even though low socio-economic status influence people not to vote, there are also Nigerians who are at the upper rung of the socio-economic ladder yet they do not vote while some of them who vote does that perhaps for their person aggrandizement.

In addition, while the majority (62.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed that they do not vote when they were single conversely the component reveals that being married does not automatically spur citizens to vote. However, marital status could have a huge bearing on party politics. In the Nigerian context, Liebowitz and Ibrahim (2013) argue that marital status is given consideration when political parties choose who runs for election on their platform. Single aspirants are often considered as morally unqualified due to societal scrutiny which adjudges unmarried political aspirants as irresponsible though women have been affected the most (Liebowitz & Ibrahim 2013).

Table 6.Respondents perception of the factors of voter abstention (%)

Variables	Label	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I don't vote because elections are often rigged	X1	71.61	21.11	5.276	2.01
I don't vote because politicians are deceptive	X2	55.53	37.19	6.03	1.26
I don't vote because electorates are often intimidated	X3	30.9	33.67	26.38	9.05
I don't vote because elections are full of manipulation	X4	64.57	30.65	3.266	1.51
I don't vote because politicians buy votes	X5	33.42	30.4	28.14	8.04
I don't know the importance of voting	X6	4.77	6.03	8.79	80.4
I don't vote because there is corruption in the electoral process	X7	46.23	39.2	9.55	5.03
I am not interested in voting because I am unemployed	X8	38.94	36.68	12.81	11.56
I don't vote because election causes violence	X9	38.69	47.24	7.54	6.53
I don't vote because I don't trust government	X10	40.95	36.68	13.82	8.54
I don't vote because I am poor	X11	25.63	24.62	27.64	22.11
I don't vote because I am not an indigene	X12	8.79	14.07	24.12	53.02
I earn low income so I can't afford to vote	X13	35.43	21.36	20.85	22.36
I refrain from voting because of inadequate security	X14	26.63	28.64	23.62	21.11
I don't like to vote because I don't like Nigeria Education level	X15 X16	8.79 Higher Education	13.57 Sec Sch	35.43 Pry Sch	42.21 No formal education
		36.68	61.31	2.01	-
I don't vote because I don't trust the electoral process	X17	69.1	24.87	4.52	1.51
I don't vote because I don't have voter's card	X18	40.45	30.65	5.276	23.62
I do not vote when I was younger	X19	27.14	41.71	20.85	10.3
I do not vote when I was single	X20	62.31	4.52	2.76	30.4

Component Two

With an Eigen value of 3.0 accounting for 9.8% of the factors, this component loads heavily on X1(1.0) [I don't vote because elections are often rigged], and X17 (1.0) [I don't vote because I do not trust the electoral process]. It can be termed the influence of *lack of trust in the electoral process*. This component shows that citizens' lack of trust in the electoral process spurs their indifference to voting. As the survey indicates, 71.6% and 69.1% of the respondents strongly agreed that lack of trust in the electoral process and election rigging spurs voter abstention.

This indicates that there are faults in the electoral and its allied institutions. A free and fair electoral process is a function of the electoral institution. Thus the lack of trust in electoral institutions can sway citizens away from voting and further erode citizens' perceptions of the legitimacy of other political institutions (Birch 2010). Agu et al (2013) assert that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) of Nigeria had failed in its role as an independent, proficient and impartial arbiter of the electoral process. Further, these authors argue that INEC as the chief electoral institution in Nigeria has not managed the electoral process properly and it favors of the incumbent to manipulate the system. Consequently, the majority of the citizens have swayed away from voting (Agu et al. 2013).

Table 7. PCA Result from SPSS

Rotated Component Matrix^a								
	Components							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
X1	.03	.97*	-.03	.03	.02	.04	.02	.03
X2	.03	.11	-.07	.11	.07	.63*	.17	.26
X3	.00	-.01	.09	-.02	-.05	.63*	-.04	-.07
X4	.07	-.04	.01	.07	.30	.12	.24	-.55*
X5	.05	.00	-.13	.17	.33	-.21	-.41	.21
X6	.03	-.03	.00	.07	-.30	-.43	.31	.06
X7	.01	-.11	-.04	-.09	.69*	.10	.12	.07
X8	-.02	.01	.98*	.05	.00	.04	-.03	.02
X9	-.02	.20	.03	.06	.43	-.36	.04	.34
X10	-.04	-.04	.98*	.03	-.01	.02	.02	.03
X11	-.05	.01	.06	-.06	.12	.14	.10	.71*
X12	.03	.04	-.03	.09	.06	-.03	.70*	.04
X13	.91*	-.03	-.03	.02	-.02	.03	-.01	-.03
X14	-.06	.12	.06	-.08	.52*	.02	-.23	-.26
X15	-.10	-.03	-.01	-.54*	-.04	-.11	.43	-.03
X16	.95*	.04	-.00	.02	-.00	-.01	.01	-.05
X17	.00	.97*	-.00	-.01	-.00	.03	.00	.02
X18	-.05	.06	.04	.86*	-.11	-.06	-.05	-.07
X19	.04	-.06	.04	.77*	-.03	.01	.26	-.03
X20	-.93*	-.02	.03	-.01	.01	.00	-.01	.02
Eigen value	2.62	1.96	1.95	1.70	1.26	1.22	1.18	1.13
% variance	13.09	9.81	9.76	8.52	6.30	6.11	5.89	5.63
% cumulative	13.09	22.90	32.67	41.18	47.480	53.59	59.48	65.11

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
 a. Rotation converged in 15 iterations.

Component Three

This component has an Eigen value of 2.0 and accounted for 9.8% of the factors of voter abstention. It loads significantly on X8 (1.0) [I am not interested in voting because I am unemployed] and X10 (1.0) [I don't vote because I don't trust government]. This component indicates that unemployment and lack of trust in government influence voter abstention. As the survey indicates, 75.6% and 77.6% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that unemployment and lack of trust in government spur voter abstention respectively. Thus it can be called the influence of *social trust and unemployment*. The findings are in tandem with some earlier studies in Nigeria which indicate that voter abstention is a function of the high rate of unemployment (Agu et al. 2013; Falade 2014) and lack of trust in government (Falade 2014; Ibrahim et al. 2015). Agu et al (2013) argue that the high level of unemployment discourages many Nigerians from voting and has also made citizens feel less attached to the country and as a result, most of them feel it was needless to vote since elected officials do not care about their well-being.

Conversely, unemployment can even encourage some young poor people to vote and partake in campaigns. Chidiebere, Iloanya and Udunze (2014) argue that Nigerian politicians use unemployed youths for their various electoral campaigns. Okafor (2015) asserts that all electoral related violence in Nigeria is chiefly carried out by the youth who are in the service of politicians for financial rewards. Some poor individuals see elections as means to make money which has encouraged vote buying in West African elections (Bratton 2008). A study by Falade (2014) indicates that 80% of the respondents had no confidence in their political leaders noting that they are corrupt and untrustworthy. Rudolph and Evans (2005) argue that political trust or more closely social trust has important attitudinal and behavioral consequences for democracy. In the same vein, Solt (2008) remarks that people tend to participate more as their social trust in their government improve.

Component Four

The component loads heavily on X18 (.9) [I do not vote because I do not have voter's card] and X19 (.8) [I do not vote when I was younger]. It has an Eigen value of 1.7 and explained 8.5% of voter abstention. From the survey, 71.1% of the respondents either strongly agree or agree that they do not vote because they do not have voters card while 68.9% the respondents strongly agreed that they do not vote when they were younger. Thus this component can be called the influence of *registration and demographic factor*. This confirms the finding of (Evans 2004; Howe 2006; Milbrath 1965) who stated that the relationship between age and turnout is curvilinear as participation initially increases with age and then progressively declines after middle age. Blais (2000) argue that age has by far the strongest influence on an individual's tendency to vote among socio-demographic variables.

In the same vein, a study shows that the overall turnout rate for 22 European countries in elections between 1999 and 2002 was 70% compared to 51 % for electors aged less than 25 years. The high level of voter abstention among young people is a function of their characteristics including the level of political interest and civic duty (Fieldhouse, Tranmer & Russell 2007).

In Nigeria registration provides a platform for election rigging for some politicians. Agbaje and Adejumobi (2006) contend that unbridled electoral malpractices are replete in Nigeria, including cases of hoarding of registration forms and voters' cards with the aim of selling them to politicians, and creating artificial scarcity of registration materials. Agbaje and Adejumobi (2006) remark that the voter registration process is manipulated in several ways such as multiple registrations, refusal of registration to opposition supporters, registration of underage persons and falsification of the voters' register which represent the chief schemes in election rigging. As a result of this, the smart card reader was introduced in the 2015 general elections to authenticate voters' cards issued by INEC. There were controversies on the use of the card before, during, and after the election. However, it has been observed that the use of card reader in the election to some extent curtailed double voting and rigging. Consequently, some authors (Agbu 2016; Alebiosu 2016) have advocated the continuous use of card reader and other relevant technologies in Nigerian elections.

However, many people always register in order to escape any government action against non-voters and perhaps to use the voters' card for identification purposes and bank transactions (Agu et al 2013). Similarly, in the US, Power (2009) notes that evasion is a felony punishable under law and registration is prerequisite for getting federal student loans, job training from the government for adult males. A similar situation is found in Brazil where voting is compulsory for adult literate citizens. Although registration is a criterion for certain government programs, Power (2009) note that citizens calculate the importance of registration by assessing whether they will need to transact with the governments in the future in order to obtain enviable benefits.

Component Five

This component loads significantly on X7 (.7) [I don't vote because there is corruption in the electoral process] and X14 (.6) [I refrain from voting because of inadequate security]. It has an Eigen value of 1.3 and explains 6.3% of the factors. The survey shows that 85.4% of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that voter abstention is spurred by corruption in the electoral process while some 55.3% either strongly agreed or agree that inadequate security causes indifference towards voting. This is termed the effect of *corruption and inadequate security*. Corruption is a common factor that has been attributed to the challenges in many facets of Nigerian politics. Agu et al (2013) observe that corruption and class materialism among the political elites have consistently disenfranchised and disenfranchised voters' turnout.

It has been identified as one of the causes of political violence (Adeleke 2013) and an impediment to good governance (Arowolo & Aluko, 2012). Agbaje and Adejumobi (2006) note that corruption and other resilient factors such as ethnicity, religion, and regionalism have reduced electoral politics to a theater of war in Nigeria. The violence associated with the electoral process that had created an atmosphere of fear in the electorate is also responsible for voter abstention (Agu et al. 2013).

Insecurity can be a bane to voter turnout. Trelles and Carreras (2012) find that the level of electoral turnout is lower in the most violent regions of Mexico. Also, inadequate security creates room for politicians to manipulate the electoral process through violence. Onapajo (2014) argue that incumbents use violence to rig election in Nigeria. The fear of violence has discouraged many people to turnout on Election Day. Electoral violence is directly linked to the electoral process and takes on various forms including assassination, kidnapping, arson, looting, ballot-stealing and armed attacks on voting and collation centers (Nwolise 2007; Omotola 2010). It is particularly targeted at voters, candidates, election observers, electoral officers, the media, electoral information (e.g. registration data, voting results, campaign materials), electoral facilities (e.g. ballot boxes, polling stations) and electoral events (e.g. campaign rallies, voter-education exercises, vote-counting exercises) (Fischer 2002, p. 9). Many people particularly women prefer to stay away from exercising their suffrage than falling prey of deadly electoral tugs (Adeleke 2013; Bratton 2008; Okafor 2015).

Violence is sometimes an alternative to holding fair elections in new democracies and it could have electoral benefits. In Kenya, Kasara (2014) show that politicians benefit electorally by displacing voters in areas that are electorally pivotal and contained more migrants such as the Kenya Rift Valley region using violence. Klopp (2001) argues that Kenyan politicians used the ethnic clashes that took place in the 1990s to oust probable opponents and secure their electoral areas. Similarly, in Zimbabwe, Bratton and Masunungure (2007) state that the Mugabe government annihilated informal settlements in a number of urban areas during Operation Murambatsvina ‘Clean-Up’ to eliminate likely opposition party supporters.

Collier and Vicente (2012) argue that poor and unpopular candidates are most likely to use violence to restrain the turnout of supporters of other parties. Similarly, García (2009) finds that political violence suppressed turnout in violent municipalities in Colombia. Also, politicians may benefit electorally from the violence that shapes citizens’ voting preferences even when people are not forced to support a specific candidate. Wantchekon (1999) argue that voters can vote strategically for the political party with the greatest ability to cause violence because they prefer peace to voting for the party whose policies they most desire.

Component Six

This component loads significantly on X2 (.6) [I don't vote because politicians are deceptive], X3 (.6) [I don't vote because electorates are often intimidated]. It has an Eigen value of 1.2 and explains 6.1% of the factors. From the survey, 92.7% either strongly agree or agree that the deceptive schemes of politicians spur voter abstention. Besides, 64.6% of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that intimidation of electorate causes voter abstention. It is called the influence of *deception and intimidation*. Studies confirm that politicians are very deceptive especially during electioneering campaigns. The failure of the Nigerian political leaders to make good their promises during campaigns has discouraged many citizens from voting (Falade 2014). Some authors argue that election victory in Nigeria is a function of the level of intimidation and rigging (Agbaje & Ajetumobi 2006; Arowolo & Aluko 2012). The high level of harassment, maiming, and intimidation discourages many women from participating in Nigerian politics (Adeleke 2013; Arowolo 2010). Agbaje and Ajetumobi (2006) argue that the widespread of voter intimidation in Nigerian elections is aimed at enormous electoral fraud, with the snowballing effect of bad governance emanating from bad leadership (Arowolo & Aluko 2012).

Component Seven

This component loads significantly on X12 (.7) [I don't vote because I am not indigene]. It explains 5.9% of the factors with an Eigen value of 1.2. It is termed the influence of *indigene status*. This exercise suggests that settlers are most unlikely to participate in politics of their host communities in Nigeria. However, from the survey, 77.1% strongly disagreed or disagreed that being non-indigene influences voter abstention. This goes to show that 'indigeneship' is a rare factor of voter abstention. Yet a typical ideological disposition towards this stance was played out in Lagos State during the 2015 general election when the Traditional Ruler (King) of Lagos State placed curse on the Igbo people in the state should they vote the opposition party for the reason that Igbo people cannot be allowed to dictate who should rule in a Yoruba land. Cox (1997) argues that partisan or ideological preferences can influence individuals' decision to vote or to abstain strategically. In such a situation, an Igbo person may decide to refrain from voting in lieu of voting for the opposition party in order to evade the monarchical spell.

The idea of "non-indigenes should not be allowed to partake in political affairs of their host community", spans across various parts of Nigeria. Calvocoressi (2006) states that shortly after independence, the attempt by the Igbo people in northern Nigeria to win parliamentary seats in that region annoyed the northern Hausa/Fulani which resulted in the political bicker between the two ethnic groups. Besides, there are similar experiences in Igbo land as well. The participatory posturing that non-indigenes in Nigerian parlance, "strangers" do not have a say in the affairs of the host community, often discourages settlers from political participation as much as, voting (Arowolo & Aluko 2012).

Although strangers are not restricted from voting by the law, the social disconnection between them and the indigenous people may cause frictional effects on electoral participation. Ibrahim et al (2015) assert that political socialization was among the major factors that determined the voting behavior and political participation of Nigerians in the 2015 general election.

Component Eight

This component loads heavily on X4 (-.6) [I don't vote because elections are full of manipulation] and X11 (.7) [I don't vote because I am poor]. It has an Eigen value of 1.1 and explains 5.6% of the factors of voter abstention. Based on the survey, the majority (95.2%) of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that electoral manipulation spurs voter abstention. In addition, 52.3% of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that poverty was their reason for abstention from voting. It is termed the influence of *electoral manipulation and poverty*. In line with this component, some authors have argued that the poor often feel that government and political leaders have not done enough to alleviate them from penury which spurs their indifference towards electoral participation (Agu et al. 2013; Falade 2014). On the contrary, Bratton (2008) notes that poor citizens can be swayed to vote if there are monetary or material incentives to not only vote but also to vote for a particular candidate against their choice. Besides, Gans-morse, Mazzuca, and Nichter (2014) argue that political parties adopt a clientelist strategy to buy political support and participation in areas considered as passive by giving them some incentives often material inducement. In the same vein, Vincente and Wantcheckon (2009) contend that clientelism and vote buying is widespread in West African elections and have even gained acceptance but it is consequential for democratic development in this African sub-region.

Research has also shown that even though poor citizens register more in elections perhaps to access government services (Power 2009), they, however, turnout lesser than relatively wealthier citizens (Nickerson 2015). By implication, people in wealthy areas tend to participate more because economic resources are easily converted to political resources (Solt 2008) although this is most applicable at the aggregate level where collective political goals are pursued. At the individual level, economic resources may not adequately explain the decision to vote or to abstain (Vitak et al. 2011).

Studies by (Adeleke 2013; Agu et al. 2013; Arowolo 2010; Arowolo&Aluko 2012; Falade 2014) all confirm that manipulation of the electoral process through various machinations by political elites spurs voter abstention in that it subverts the will of the people and makes them feel irrelevant to the political process and thus create a feeling of indifference towards voting. In line with this, Omodia (2009) argue that political elites manipulate electoral process both at the intra and inter-party level to their interest–power acquisition which has impacted depressingly on the Nigerian political system.

Conclusion

This study concludes based on the observation that voter abstention has become a major cause for concern in Nigeria and it could impact negatively on the consolidation of the Nigerian democracy. It contends that the malpractices in the electoral process and systems disenfranchise many citizens who detest such acts and encourage bad leaders who want power at all cost to lay hold of the mantle of leadership thereby steering the country towards a calamitous path. It further argues that the factors responsible voter abstention are not unconnected with institutional and leadership failure which results in bad governance thereby breeding feelings of no trust and dissent in the citizenry which spurs their indifference towards participation in voting as much as in politics and governance. The juicy nature of political positions makes corruption to be highly appreciated and embraced in the polity and has also made political aspirants to use violence to manipulate the electoral process in order to win elections. Also, they make white elephant manifestoes thereby raising the hope of the people for a tremendous change when such promises cannot be fulfilled.

Therefore, the examination suggests that politicians should avoid making unachievable political manifestoes in a bid to win the election. Adequate security measure should be made to ensure the safety of voters during election periods. There should be a strong synergy between the electoral umpire and the law enforcement agencies to award justice to violent politicians. Legislation should be made to punish political candidates that make false promises. Voter education needs to be intensified. The Early education of the citizens on the importance of voting particularly at the secondary school level can help in the reorientation of young people on the need to participate in the electoral process before they are eligible to vote. Electoral debates should be legitimized to enable voters to decide on the best candidate. Social integration should be pursued by the government at all levels to spur broader participation by non-indigenes in their host community. The use of technology will limit electoral fraud thereby raising the trust of the people in the electoral process.

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