

UNDERSTANDING VOTING BEHAVIOR IN NIGERIA: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE ROLE OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS AND TRIBAL AFFILIATIONS IN THE 2023 GENERAL ELECTIONS

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Abstract

In the general elections of 2023, the study looked at how socioeconomic status and tribal ties affected Nigerians' voting patterns. The study adopted a quantitative research method and gathered data from 255 participants in three local governments in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) of Nigeria. The average age of respondents was found to be 30 years and 8 months ($SD = 10.37$), with the minimum and maximum age being 18 years and 71 years, respectively. Findings revealed that ethnic affiliation had a significant influence on voting behaviour [$F(3, 251) = 6.26; p < .01$]. Also, socioeconomic status has a significant influence on voter behaviour [$F(2, 252) = 80.11; p < .01$] and voter decision [$F(2, 252) = 63.18; p < .01$]. Based on the results, it was determined that socioeconomic status and ethnic affiliation were significant determinants of voting behaviour. As a result, it was suggested that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the National Orientation Agency (NOA) work to employ strategies to encourage Nigerians to vote in future elections, equally across all ethnic groups. This will help ensure equal orientation and knowledge of voting participation.

Keywords: voting behaviour, socio-economic status, ethnic affiliation, Nigeria, election
Introduction

The 2023 general elections in Nigeria took place on February 25 for federal executive and legislative positions, while the state executive and legislative

elections took place on March 18. Since the return of democratic governance to Nigeria in 1999, there have been seven cycles of general elections, as of this writing. Nigeria's transition to democratic governance in 1999 reflects a significant departure from its history of military rule, heralding a period of uninterrupted democratic governance. Since independence, democracy in Nigeria has been “fragile and fluctuating” (Hoofmann and Wallace, 2022). Notwithstanding the fledgling nature of Nigeria’s democracy, a series of presidential elections have taken place, each serving as a critical milestone in its democratic journey.

Liberal democracies such as Nigeria rely on elections as the cornerstone of representative governance, and voting is the primary method of citizen participation in these systems. Dalton (2006) asserts the pivotal role of voting in linking individuals to governance or political administration and endorsing popular sovereignty. One of the main principles of democracy is that the preferences of citizens should influence the election of representatives, who then shape policies (Powell 2000). This framework assumes that a participating electorate is necessary for democracy to function properly.

Thomas Hobbes and John Locke's theories of the social contract, which emphasise the fundamental ideas of the state of nature, find support in Aristotle's claim that humans are fundamentally political. These theories elucidate the fundamental human impulse for survival, prompting individuals to relinquish certain intrinsic rights to a governing authority or collective entity that ensures their continued existence. Within this framework, it becomes apparent that the establishment of governance, order, and rule constitutes a natural predisposition to the human condition. However, empirical observations across time suggest that although humans are naturally inclined towards governance, especially democratic forms, different factors impact their choices when it comes to sacrificing their inalienable rights.

Moreover, despite the inherent relevance of elections in upholding democratic principles, recent trends indicate a worrying decline in voter electoral participation across diverse socio-political landscapes (Ezrow, L., & Krause, W., 2023). The inaugural democratic election of 1999 witnessed a robust turnout of 52.3 per cent, which marginally escalated to 69 per cent during the subsequent 2003 electoral event. But this trajectory has been tarnished by a steady decline in voter turnout, which peaked in the 2015 elections with 43.7 per cent of the vote. Before the 2023 electoral event, the 2019 elections registered a recordlow voter turnout of 34.75 per cent. During this electoral cycle, a paltry 28.6 million votes were cast out of a pool of 82 million eligible voters. The eventual victor,

President Muhammadu Buhari, secured re-election with a marginal tally of just over 15 million votes in a nation boasting a population exceeding 200 million

individuals, where more than half of the populace falls within the voting age bracket.

Thus, amidst the celebration of democratic progress, concerns have arisen regarding the declining trend in voter turnout across successive electoral cycles in Nigeria. It is apt to suggest, therefore, that the electoral landscape of Nigeria, the most populous and largest economy in Africa, has been marked by a complex interplay of factors shaping voter behaviour and electoral outcomes. It is indeed imperative to examine the motivation for voters' participation in general elections in Nigeria. Interestingly, it is often the case that the economic conditions, the political even Karl Marx lauded the economic substructure as the decisive factor for the political superstructure. Therefore, it is impossible to completely rule out the importance of economic factors in influencing voter behaviour when analysing the reasons for political participation.

Following the general elections in 2023, it will be crucial to critically analyse voting patterns to understand the fundamental forces that influence Nigerians' political engagement and decision-making. This article seeks to delve into the intricacies of voter behaviour in Nigeria, with a specific focus on the role played by economic conditions and tribal affiliations in shaping electoral outcomes. Through a rigorous analysis of historical data and pertinent factors shaping electoral participation, this study aims to unravel the underlying dynamics influencing voter behaviour. We seek to understand the complex nature of voter engagement in Nigeria by examining a variety of factors, including demographic shifts, perceptions of electoral integrity, electoral reforms, and socioeconomic conditions.

Understanding the nuances of voter turnout trends is paramount for policymakers, electoral authorities, and civil society actors seeking to strengthen democratic processes in Nigeria. This research adds to broader discussions on electoral reform initiatives, democratic consolidation, and the promotion of inclusive civic engagement in Nigeria's changing political landscape by illuminating the opportunities and challenges associated with voting.

Literature Review

Indisputably, Nigeria is one of the most heterogeneous countries globally, characterised by a population exceeding 228 million, as documented by Worldometers in 2024. In addition, it is the most populous country of African descent, with a mosaic of more than 250 ethnic groups and multiple subgroups, as confirmed by Olayode in 2015. Despite the rich diversity delineating Nigeria's societal fabric, its political landscape remains predominantly under

the influence of three major ethnic groups: the Yoruba, Hausa, and Igbo (Isaq, Adebisi, & Bakare, 2015).

The electoral landscape of Nigeria continues to be marred by a plethora of challenges, ranging from political apathy and electoral malpractices to violence and voter intimidation, as well as partisanship by security personnel. The electoral process remains compromised due to recurrent instances of incumbency abuse, journalist harassment, and operational shortcomings, even in the face of significant progress towards democratisation. Furthermore, malfeasances such as the lack of dysfunctional public awareness, paucity of information dissemination, interference with the judiciary, and delays in judgements of electoral disputes exacerbate the electoral environment's fragility (EU, EOM 2019).

One wonders why Nigerian elections are still plagued by several problems given the enormous leaps in technology and personal awareness that have occurred in the twentyfirst century. What factors guide voters' choices in Nigeria?

Obani and Odalolu (2019) opine that the voting traits of citizens differ from one country to another; however, these are dependent on the "socio-economic and political characteristics of such people or countries" (Obani & Odalolu, 2019). For them, voters accept unscrupulous politicians due to tribal affiliations. The claim made by Ajiboye (2015) that "the socio-economic deprivation and lack of political education of the people provide the basis for an electorate that is amenable to manipulation using material and monetary inducement" is not totally without merit. The focus on analysing voter behaviours is quite salient, as George-Genyi noted in his study that "effective political participation and the voting behaviour of citizens tantamount to the effectiveness of the political process" (George-Genyi, 2015).

Voting Behaviour

Voting behaviour is a central aspect of citizens' involvement in politics, particularly prominent in First World economies that opt for democracies due to their perceived simplicity and accessibility (Tessler *et al.*, 2008). It is a scientific examination of electorate behaviour within a constituency, providing insights into sociological dynamics, motivators, and voting patterns (Antunes, 2008).

Among various forms of political engagement, voting is often viewed as the simplest, most cost-effective, and readily available option (Onah, 1997). Analysis of voting patterns typically delves into understanding why individuals vote as they do and how they make their decisions. Voter motivations and considerations vary greatly, as seen in China, where local election participation may be motivated by a desire to punish corrupt officials (Shi 1999).

Ethnicity and Voter Behaviour

In contemporary heterogeneous communities, ethnic group affiliation serves as a foundational component of individual ethnic identity. Ethnicity, like other constructs within the realm of social science, encompasses multifaceted definitions. Afkhami (2012) explains that ethnicity is a collective identity based on shared ancestry, heritage, religion, culture, nationality, language, and geographic origins. Nnoli (1978) further posits that ethnicity is a social construct intertwined with interactions among members of diverse ethnic backgrounds.

The terms "ethnicity" and "ethnic nationalism" or "ethnonationalism" are at times used interchangeably, although the latter denotes a more fervent manifestation of ethnic identity. While ethnicity is commonly defined within the context of a nation-state, ethnic nationalism seeks sovereignty or statehood for a specific ethnic group. Both concepts are pertinent to the Nigerian context, as various ethnic groups have articulated aspirations for autonomy from the federal government, a sentiment epitomised by the civil war. Ethnic nationalism, characterised by an impassioned allegiance to an ethnic group, often manifests in assertive and competitive behaviour.

Ethnicity is a complex social phenomenon intricately linked with interactions among individuals from various ethnic backgrounds. Ethnic groups are distinguished by common linguistic or cultural characteristics (Nnoli, 1980). Mudasiru (2015) contends that ethnicity forms the bedrock of African society, shaping its communities, cultures, economic structures, and political systems. Moreover, ethnicity plays a crucial role in shaping the perceptions of Africans, providing them with a framework for interpreting the world around them and imbuing their lives with meaning and understanding, despite the pervasive influences of Westernisation and cultural amalgamation since colonial times.

Mudasiru emphasises several critical roles of ethnicity in African society. Firstly, ethnicity fosters a sense of security both for the group as a collective entity and for its members, engendering solidarity and readiness to defend against external threats to their existence and sovereignty. Secondly, ethnicity establishes a common ancestry and historical narrative that underpins the identity of each ethnic group, contributing to a sense of shared heritage among its members. Third, ethnicity serves as a marker of identity by providing a shared language, which facilitates communication and fosters a sense of belonging among group members. Finally, ethnicity acts as an organisational force, uniting people in collective endeavours and reinforcing communal bonds, thereby promoting a sense of family and togetherness within the group (Mudasiru, 2015).

Socio-economic factors and voting behaviour

A series of studies have been carried out to examine the role of socio-economic factors in voting behaviour. For example, Jost (2021) investigated the impact of social class on voters' voting intentions in England. It was discovered that the less affluent reported the highest voting intention, compared to those with high affluence. Also, Ramaekers et al. (2023) examined the role of social class in the voting behaviour of citizens working on a panel of data in selected European countries. It was discovered that voting behaviour was related to the social class of citizens. In another study, Kulachai et al. (2023) examined factors influencing voting decisions through a comprehensive literature review. Socioeconomic status was identified as a variable that consistently influences the voting behaviour of individuals. Bornschieer et al. (2021) observed a similar pattern.

In Turkey, Akarca's (2019) study covering 1950–2019 confirmed economic voting, highlighting weakened effects with more parties and ideological distance. Deniz et al. (2021) employed panel data analysis covering the period from 2002 to 2018 to explore the fluctuations in a party's vote shares over time. Their findings highlighted the significant influence of economic conditions on these variations, indicating that voters tended to reward or penalise parties based on economic developments. Furthermore, evidence from survey-based studies also supports economic voting theory, as demonstrated in Baslevant et al.'s (2005), Kalaycoglu's (2014), and Aytac's (2020) work, showing that electorates are more inclined to support the party to reward growth or, more broadly, good economic conditions.

Theoretical Framework

Rational Choice Theory (RCT) is instrumental in elucidating voting behaviours, economic decisions, and social phenomena. According to Elster (1989), RCT explains people's propensity to choose behaviours that they believe will maximise overall utility. Similarly, Friedman (1953) explicates rationality within RCT as the optimisation of personal benefits through the balancing of costs and benefits. Emergent from the behavioural revolution in American political science during the mid-20th century, RCT applies empirical methodologies to scrutinise human behaviour. RCT was first applied to electoral behaviour and political party competition by Downs (1957), and Hinich and Munger (1997) improved the framework.

At the core of RCT lies the assumption of individualism, positing individuals as primary agents in societal decision-making processes. People are seen as self-interested, logical agents who are motivated to maximise their utility and so contribute to the outcomes of society as a whole (Ogu, 2013).

RCT's strengths reside in its utility as a deductive tool for political analysis, offering a comprehensive framework to comprehend human conduct (Becker, 1976). Rogowski (1997) underscores its methodological rigour and broad applicability to diverse social phenomena, while Hirshleifer (1985) regards it as a universal lingua franca of social science. Ogu (2013) further extols its generality, predictability, and parity.

However, critiques of RCT abound. Firstly, the intricate nature of human interaction and social dynamics may not be entirely captured by RCT, necessitating consideration of alternative theoretical paradigms. Second, obstacles like ambiguity and informational asymmetry may make it difficult to make rational decisions. Moreover, entrenched social norms and habits may exert considerable influence on individual actions, potentially undermining rational calculations. Finally, the construction of standards for rationality within RCT may be subject to arbitrariness and a lack of universality (Ogu, 2013).

Methodology Design

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design. As opposed to a longitudinal research design, which enables data collection over time, this one-time approach allowed the researcher to collect data. The study unravelled the role of economic conditions and tribal affiliation in the voting behaviour of eligible voters in the 2023 general elections in Nigeria. The dependent variable is voting behaviour, while the independent variables are economic conditions and tribal affiliation.

Population and sample

The study was carried out among eligible voters in Abuja, Nigeria. To be eligible for this study, an individual must meet three requirements: they must be at least eighteen years old, literate, and willing to participate in the study. Purposive sampling was utilised in this study. A sample size of 255 was determined with a 95% confidence interval, a 5% margin of error, and a 10% response distribution (Raosoft, 2024).

Instrument

Section A: The participants had to answer questions about sociodemographic factors in this section. Socio-demographic variables such as sex, age, educational qualification, socio-economic status, location of residence, and tribe.

Section B: Voting Behaviour Scale

This section consisted of an eighteen-item voter behaviour scale developed by Sener et al. (2023). The scale was designed to assess individuals' participation in the election process. In this study, the scale was adapted to fit the population as it measures the extent to which Nigerians participated in the election process in 2023, ranging from campaigns to followup with manifestos of candidates at national, state, and local levels. The scale has two dimensions: voter decision and voter behaviour. Responses to the scale items ranged as follows: SD (strongly disagree), D (disagree), U (undecided), A (agree), and SA (strongly agree). A sample of an item is, "In elections, I prefer to vote for a political party and/or candidate according to my emotional affiliation or commitment." The scale developers reported an internal consistency of 0.78. In this study, the scale was discovered to have an internal consistency of 0.89.

Procedure

The researcher was able to gather data through a purposive sampling procedure. To eliminate any doubt about the purpose of collecting data from participants, the researcher first presented an introduction to potential participants, who met at three major locations in the Federal Capital Territory: the headquarters of the Abuja Municipal Local Government Area, the Bwari Local Government Area, and the Gwagwalada Local Government Area. Before administration, the researcher was able to submit a miniproposal to the local government chairman and its executive, informing them of the purpose of the data gathering, which was a vet. The researcher was granted permission to carry out the data collection. Using convenience sampling, data gathering and retrieval took a total of 19 days. Due to the approval from the executive arm of the selected local governments, the researcher had smooth sessions with the participants. None of the chosen participants were forced to participate in the study.

Data Analysis

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were utilised in the analysis of the data collected. Descriptive statistics were used to examine the simple frequencies and percentages of sociodemographic variables, whereas inferential statistics were used to test the stated hypotheses. Hypotheses were tested using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Results

This section presents the result of gathered data on voting behaviour, socio-economic status, and tribal affiliation among eligible voters during the 2023 general election in Nigeria. Data was gathered from 255, and the results are presented in sub-sections.

Table 1: Demographic distribution

SN	Variable	Frequency (n = 255)	%	Mean (SD)
1	Age Minimum: 18 Maximum - 71			30.88 (10.37)
2	Gender Male Female	157 98	61.6 38.4	
3	Tribal affiliation Yoruba Igbo Hausa Others	75 73 76 31	29.4 28.6 29.8 12.2	
4	Educational Qualification Primary Secondary National Diploma/Education Certificate Higher National Diploma/University Masters	4 53 104 76 18	1.6 20.8 40.8 29.8 7.1	

5	Socio-Economic Status (SES)			
	Low			
	Middle	92	36.1	
	High	115	45.1	
6	Local government area of residence			
	Abuja Municipal (Urban)			
	Bwari (Semi-Urban)	82	32.2	
	Gwagwalada (Rural)	87	34.1	
		86	33.7	

Table 1 presents results on the frequency distribution of respondents' demographic information. The average age of respondents was found to be 30 years and 8 months ($SD = 10.37$), with minimum and maximum age being 18 years and 71 years, respectively. Gender distribution revealed that 61.6% of respondents were male, while the remaining 38.4% were female. In addition, there was fairly distributed tribal affiliation of respondents, as 29.4%, 28.6%, and 29.8% were of the Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa ethnic groups, while the other 12.2% belonged to other minority tribes, outside the aforementioned major ethnic groups. According to educational qualifications, more of them (40.8%) indicated to have a national diploma. Holders of a national certificate of education were in the lead, with 29.8% holding a higher national diploma or university certificate, while only 4 (1.6%) held a primary school certificate. More of the respondents, 115 (45.1%), belong to the middle socioeconomic group, with 36.1% and 18.8% indicating to be in the low and high social class, respectively. Finally, there was a fair distribution of local government residences of participants, cutting across; Abuja Municipal (Urban), Bwari (Semi-Urban), and Gwagwalada (Rural) local government areas. **Table 2: Descriptive: Voting Behaviour**

Voting Behaviour	Frequency	%
Mean = 41.26	(n = 255)	(100)
SD = 10.19		
Low	117	45.9
High	138	54.1

Table 2 presents the results of a descriptive of the voting behaviour of residents in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. With a mean score of 41.26 (SD = 10.19), more of the respondents, 138 (54.1%), reported high-level voting behaviour, while 117 (45.9%) had a low level of voting behaviour.

According to the first hypothesis, voters' behaviour in the general election of 2023 in Nigeria will not be significantly influenced by their ethnicity. This was tested using a oneway analysis of variance (ANOVA), and the result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: One-Way ANOVA summary table showing results on the influence of ethnicity on voter behaviour ANOVA

DV		SS	df	MS	F	p
Voting behaviour	Between Groups	886.90	3	295.64	6.26	< .01
	Within Groups	11849.99	251	47.21		
	Total	12736.90	254			
Voting decision	Between Groups	105.71	3	35.24	1.06	> .05
	Within Groups	8381.72	251	33.39		
	Total	8487.44	254			

Table 4.3 presents results on the influence of ethnicity on voter behaviour among residents in the Federal Capital Territory (Abuja), Nigeria. It is shown that ethnicity has no significant influence on voter decision-making [F (3, 251) = 1.06; p > .05]. However, it is shown that there exist significant ethnic differences in voter behaviour [F (3, 251) = 6.26; p < .01]. Further descriptive and post hoc analysis is presented in Table 3.1 and Figure 1.

Table 3.1: Post-hoc and descriptive analysis summary table showing results on ethnic differences in voter behaviour

SN	Ethnicity	1	2	3	4Mean	SD
1	Yoruba	-			22.17	6.97
2	Igbo	3.35*	-		25.52	8.19
3	Hausa	.82	4.17*	-	21.35	6.13

4	Others	1.67	5.02*	.85	- 20.50	4.42
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Table 3.1 and Figure 1 show that individuals from the Igbo ethnic group reported the highest voter behaviour (mean = 25.52; SD = 8.19), followed by the Yoruba ethnic group (mean = 22.17; SD = 6.97), while individuals from other minority ethnic groups reported the lowest voter behaviour (mean = 20.50; SD = 4.42).

The findings negate the stated hypothesis.

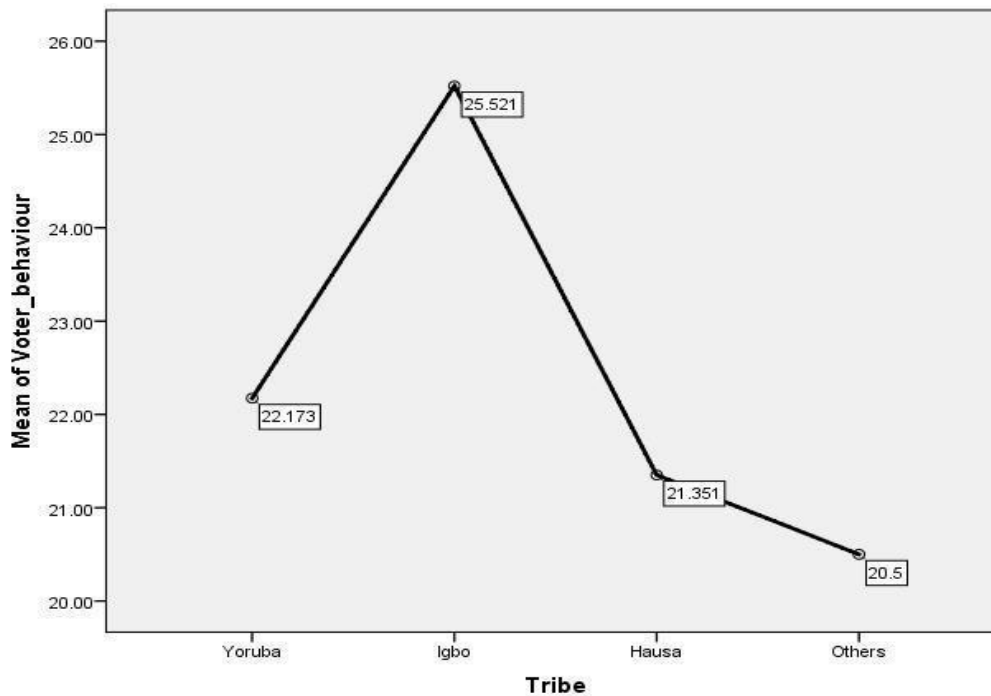


Figure 1: Ethnicity and voter behaviour

The second hypothesis put forth the idea that socioeconomic factors would not significantly impact voter behaviour or decision-making in Abuja, Nigeria. This was tested using a one-way analysis of variance, and the result is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: One-Way ANOVA summary table showing results on the influence of socioeconomic status on voter behaviour

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Voterbehaviour	Between Groups	4950.64	2	2475.32	80.11	< .01
	Within Groups	7786.26	252	30.90		
	Total	12736.90	254			
Voterdecision	Between Groups	2834.55	2	1417.28	63.18	< .01
	Within Groups	5652.88	252	22.43		
	Total	8487.44	254			

Table 4 presents results on the influence of socio-economic status on voter behaviour among residents of Abuja, Nigeria. It is shown that socio-economic status has a significant influence on voter behaviour [$F(2, 252) = 80.11$; $p < .01$] and voter decision [$F(2, 252) = 63.18$; $p < .01$]. Further analysis is presented in Table 4.1 and Figures 2 and 3.

Table 4.1: Post-hoc and descriptive analysis summary table showing results on socioeconomic status differences in voter behaviour

SN	Ethnicity	1	2	3	Mean	SD
Voter behaviour						
1	Low	-			18.69	5.25
2	Middle	8.86	-		27.55	6.23
3	High	.02	8.84		-18.71	4.27
Voter decision						
1	Low	-			18.50	3.89
2	Middle	6.08*	-		24.58	5.75
3	High	1.54	7.62*		-16.96	3.30

Table 4.1 presents results on socio-economic status differences in voter behaviour (voter behaviour and decision). It is shown that the higher voter behaviour (mean = 27.55; SD = 6.23) and decision (mean = 24.58; SD = 5.75) were among individuals from middle socioeconomic class, while the least voting behaviour (mean = 18.69; SD = 5.25) was among those with low SES, while the least voting decision was among those in high social class (mean = 16.96; SD = 3.30). This negates the stated hypothesis.

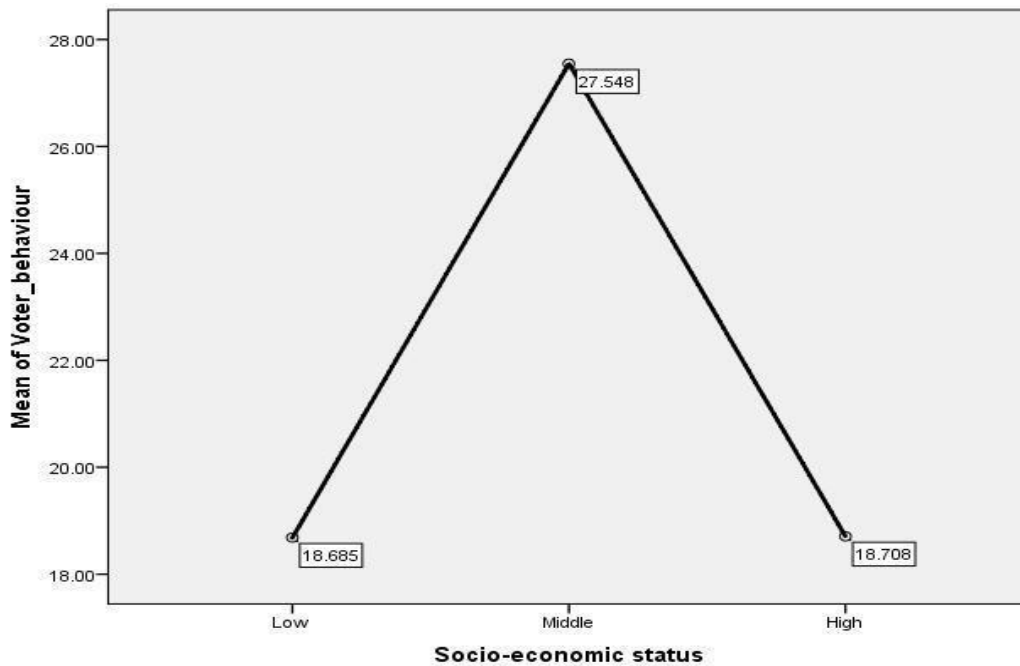


Figure 2: SES and voting behaviour

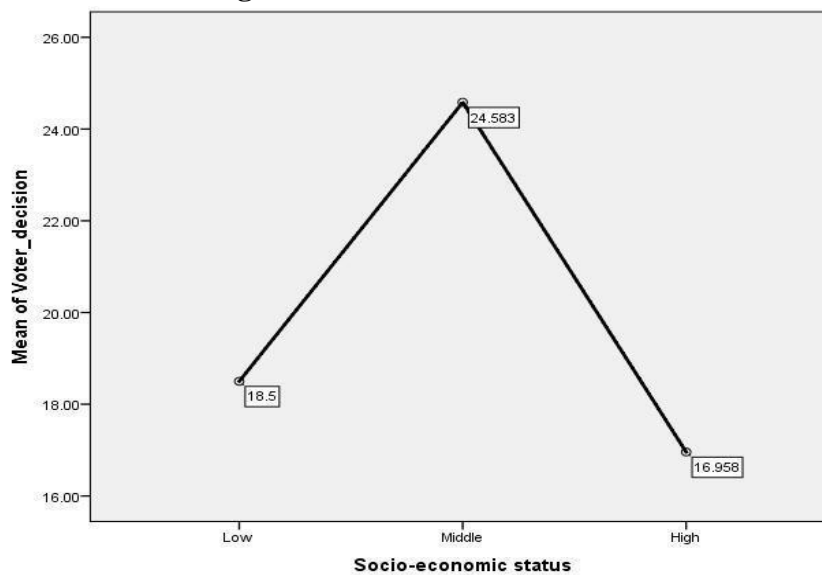


Figure 3: SES and voting decision

Hypothesis three stated that educational qualification will have no significant influence on voting behaviour. Table 5 presents the results of the one-way analysis of variance that was used to test this.

Table 5: One-Way ANOVA summary table showing results on the influence of educational qualification on voter behaviour

ANOVA		Sum of Squares		df		Mean Square	F	p
Voting behaviour	Between Groups	601.30	5	120.21	2.47	>.05		
	Within Groups	12095.60	249	48.58				
	Total	12736.90	254					
Voting decision	Between Groups	160.54	5	32.11	.96	>.05		
	Within Groups	8326.89	249	33.44				
	Total	8487.44	254					

Table 5 presents results on the influence of educational qualification on voting behaviour among residents of Abuja, Nigeria. It is shown that educational qualification has no significant influence on voting behaviour [$F(5, 249) = 2.47; p > .05$] and voting decision [$F(5, 249) = .96; p > .05$]. This confirms the stated hypothesis. **Discussion, conclusions, and recommendations**

Discussion

The study evaluated how socioeconomic status and tribal affiliation affected Nigerians' voting patterns in the country's general elections of 2023. Two hypotheses were generated and tested using a one-way ANOVA. It was discovered that ethnicity has no significant influence on voter decision-making. However, it is shown that there are significant ethnic differences in voter behaviour. Specifically, individuals from the Igbo ethnic group reported the highest level of voter behaviour, followed by the Yoruba ethnic group, while

individuals from other minority ethnic groups reported the lowest level of voter behaviour.

About the findings, Nnabuihe et al. (2014) examined the role of ethnicity in the electoral behaviour of Nigerians. After a theoretical submission revealed the significant influence of ethnicity on Nigerian elections, the term "ethnic voting" was created. Also, GutierrezRomero (2024) examined the effects of ethnicity on political participation and voting. It was found that ethnicity contributes to partisan politics. In addition, Ahmad (2023) reported in their study that ethnicity contributed significantly to voting behaviour in Pakistan. Using data from the 2015 presidential election, Isiaq et al. (2018) investigated the role that ethnicity played in voting behaviour in Nigeria. An ethnic voting pattern was found in the 2015 general election in Nigeria.

It was also discovered that socioeconomic status has a significant influence on voting behaviour, with individuals in the middle class reporting the highest level of voting behaviour, while those in the lower social class reported the lowest level of voting behaviour. Similarly, Jost (2021) examined the role of social class on the voting intentions of voters in England. It was discovered that the less affluent reported the highest voting intention, compared to those with high affluence. Also, Ramaekers et al. (2023) examined the role of social class in the voting behaviour of citizens working on a panel of data in selected European countries. It was discovered that voting behaviour was related to the social class of citizens. In another study, Kulachai et al. (2023) examined factors influencing voting decisions through a comprehensive literature review. People's voting behaviour is consistently influenced by their socioeconomic status. Bornschieer et al. (2021) reported a similar trend.

Conclusions

The following conclusions were drawn based on the findings of the study:

First, it is determined that, in the general elections of 2023, Nigerians' voting behaviour (and decisions) were significantly influenced by their ethnicity. In other words, there exist significant differences in voter behaviour across the major ethnic (Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba) and minority ethnic groups in Nigeria. It suffices to state that ethnicity determined the voting behaviour and decisions of individuals in 2023.

Also, this study concludes that the socio-economic status of Nigerians was a significant determinant of voting behaviour during the 2023 general election. Specifically, individuals in the middle social class reported the highest voting behaviour, while individuals in the high and low socioeconomic classes reported the lowest voting behaviour.

Furthermore, this study finds no evidence that educational attainment has a substantial impact on Nigerians' voting patterns or choices in the general elections of 2023. In other words, the educational level of Nigerians did not determine their voting behaviour or decisions.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

1. First, in the general election of 2023, it was found that Nigerians' voting decisions and behaviour were significantly influenced by their ethnicity. It is therefore recommended that the National Orientation Agency (NOA) as well as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) endeavour to utilise means of encouraging Nigerians to participate in subsequent elections, equally across all ethnic groups. This will help ensure equal orientation and knowledge of voting participation.
2. It is also advised that the Nigerian government make investments in the empowerment and education of its people, making it more difficult for politicians to buy votes from voters who disregard the importance of casting ballots based on the candidates' platforms and qualifications.
3. Furthermore, it is suggested that additional empirical research be conducted to investigate other variables influencing voters' voting habits. This will help make more practical recommendations regarding healthy participation in the electioneering process.

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