

## Investigation into Negative Activities towards Electoral Process in Nigeria and the Needs for proper Education and orientation

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### ABSTRACT

*The Paper investigated negative activities towards Electoral Process in Nigeria and the needs for Education especially negative attitude of populace, activities of the mass media and use of electoral materials. This Paper adopted descriptive survey design which allowed the researchers to have vivid descriptions and explorations of these negativities. The study was carried by using research questions and simple mean statistical analysis with 2.50 as the cut-off point. This indicates that item with a mean value of 2.50 and above was of Agree while item with a mean value below 2.50 was of Disagree. Hence it was agreed, with 7 out 10 items and a cluster mean of 3.01 above 2.50 cut off mark, that attitude of the Populace towards elections was negative. It was also agreed, with 6 out 10 items and a cluster mean of 2.99 above 2.50 cut off mark, that activities of the Mass Media towards election were negative. It equally agreed, with 7 out of 10 items and a cluster mean of 2.89 above 2.50 cut off mark, that activities of the people towards the use of electoral materials were negative. To proffer solutions, the Paper suggested proper education in related areas such as advocacy, peaceful conduct and best practices. It therefore recommended that seminars and workshops should be organised, proper fund be allocated to electoral body and a special court be established in order to try electoral offenders.*

**Keywords:** Negative activities, electoral process, education and mass media

### INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria many souls have been maimed, killed and short changed due to massive rigging, material manipulations, electoral monopoly, and escalation of figures and delay of voting time. These have resulted to greater problems and enormous confusions in Nigeria electoral process. Before and since independence Nigeria has been faced with impossibilities and immaturities in conducting free and fair elections. It has been a controversial issue and greatly affected good governance, socio economic and political development of the nation.

The situations, therefore, indicated that many Nigerians have lost interest and confidence in totality about electoral process and procedures, hence they show apathy and adamant towards democratic and political progress in the system, the only hope is God intervention. As testified by Adigwe (1995) that the masses have lost confidence in electoral process purposely for imbalanced socio economic development and wide margin of political differences where rich people are growing richer day by day and poor who are growing poorer and poorer every minute.

This paper tried to investigate and assess people's negative attitude to Electoral Process in Nigeria especially the electorates, mass media and electoral materials. Through experiences, mere watching and deep observation, it showed that majority declined voting because of their beliefs that it cannot be free and fair. According to Olasunkanmi (2010) election process in

Nigeria has turned to violence, rigging, political crises, nepotism and mismanagement leading to high level of political aggrandisement.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Electoral process in Nigeria has been bedevilled with a lot of problems stemming from pre and post election doggedness; it has been labelled as a notorious cancer worm threatening the corporate existence of Nigeria where election results are tutored and nurtured in accordance to dictation of the government of the day. This has led to demoralisation by the electorates for their hopes have been doused and so they lost confidence and transparency in Electoral Process. Ojiako (2001) illustrated that electorates are frustrated especially in situations where polling centres are opened lately, voting materials are delivered lately, ballot papers are short changed intermittently and elections results are tampered with lawlessness which lead to destruction of life and properties. In a situation like this people entertain fear of being attacked or maimed and in the process demoralised and frustrated.

#### **Negative activities by the Populace**

Okoye (2000) lamented that people especially those that are desperate to win election at all cost threaten, intimidate, and snatch ballot boxes in order to cause and create unnecessary tension in the environment that will breed violence. This situation then gives opportunity to people resorting to unprofessional and illegal means to protect their votes as this, in most cases, lead to violence and clashes.

Henry (1996) quarried that It is unfortunate that deliberate actions of disobedience and disregard for rules and regulations are perpetrated by people who are knowledgeable about electoral process publicly, forcibly and physically prevent eligible voters, candidates and officers from performing their civic duties, for they know that the swing of the pendulum won't be favourable. Okoye (2000) posited that weak electoral laws, corruption and malpractices during election make people feel desperate enough to seek any means of revenging against electoral processes, and there is perceived weakness in mechanised put in place to redress electoral injustice

#### **Negative activities by the Mass Media**

Sensational media reporting arouse the population emotion and the danger is that such reportage may elicit emotional violent and response. Media collaborates with desperate candidates and government of the day to win elections at all cost. According to Daze (2005) manipulation of media has been a weapon for the promotion of electoral malpractices, narrow aggrandisement and cheap political gains. It has also been employed to pluralise and polarise national differences in order to achieve electoral and political egoism.

Electoral Commission of Zambia (2014) reiterated that the mass media has three major roles to play in electoral processes; these are watch dog, voter's education, peace building and conflict resolutions but these responsibilities have been negated, neglected and cornered by desperate political agitators in the society. Educational Consultant (2009) lamented that the mass media has refused to expose error of commission and omission by those in power in their pursuit to cling to power at all cost. It has failed in alerting citizen about electoral malpractices so that they may be rectified. It has also failed to expose those schemes being perpetrated by those in the corridor of power to the disadvantages of those outside.

The Mass Media has derailed in its capacity to educate the citizens and the entire society in particular stories and events that actually explain national situation in reference to electoral processes (Ologbenla 2011). Also, it has refused to explain simple terms, specific legal and administrative issues which is seen to be fundamentals for any election undertaken, to be free

and fair. Ojiako (2001) emphasised that Mass Media reneged in its professional role to provide plain platform for all candidates and their parties to present their achievable manifestos to the public. Moreover, the Press has refused to expose parties and candidates that instigate or have the propensity to cause violence and maiming.

### **Negative Activities towards the Usage of Electoral Materials**

Electoral materials during and after elections are not properly distributed and accounted for due to manipulations, destructions and mutilations, these lead to late announcement of results, violence and destruction of properties. As explained by Omoje (2007) that the situation may become worst where it is noticed that state resources, properties and materials meant for elections are being manoeuvred by the governing party and others for electoral gain and other logistic apart from elections that it is met for.

Ologbenla (2011) lamented that sensitive electoral materials like ballot papers, result sheets, ballot boxes, polling units and collating centres are not given proper attention such as serial numbering, colour coding and security coding these paved way for electoral fraud and malpractice whereby the materials are tampered with and easily compromised. Ojiako (2001) lamented that materials have mysteriously disappeared in getting to the polling unit while in some areas the elections materials are destroyed by political thugs who engage themselves in free for all fight which may result to violence and destruction of lives and properties.

### **Socio-Political Implications**

Negative activities towards electoral process in Nigeria have affected its socio-economic and political development in different ways. For example failure of the electoral umpires to conduct free and fair elections has led to bad governance, poverty, immorality, poor social amenities and high levels of unemployment. As supported by Okey (2014) that failure to conduct free and fair elections by electoral body in Nigeria not only lead to bad governance, it also creates problems of social and moral decadence, insecurity and corruption.

In addition wrong attitude towards electoral process in Nigeria has had the consequences of encouraging the ruling class elements by actions and measures to weaken and subvert socio-economic and political development. Adeoti and Olaniyan (2014) elaborated that revenue that could be used to provide infrastructure and amenities needed by the populace are used for funding elections, this has led to continuous borrowing and deficit in budgeting. Most multinational companies close their business and relocating to other countries with more favourable environment due to political instability and election manipulation.

Electoral process always witness prolong legal challenges, rancour and tarsus thereby, creating problems of legitimacy, nullification and impeachment derailing political image and development. As lamented by Oyebode (2006) that one is constrained to say that the way and manner the judiciary has acted with regard to election has not been altogether assuring and palatable in terms of the growth and development of the nation's process and the fortunes of democracy generally.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Theoretical framework of this study is based on favouritism that is an inclination to favour some person or group. Hornby (2012) described favouritism as a treat with partiality and to show more favour to one person group than the other. This is the attitude of mind in which one is favoured in the alternative over others. It is an unfair treatment of a person or group on the basis of prejudice at the expense of others. Collins (2002) described it as the practice of giving unfair preferential treatment to person or group at the expense of another.

In his own social theory of favouritism Aronson, Wilson and Alkert (2010) proposed that intergroup competition and sometimes intra group friction arises when two groups have opposing claims to resource control where alternative measures are always approached in order to jeopardise efforts of the opposing group. Bourhis and Gagnon (2001) posited that human are species that are joined together in groups by their very nature, they Hornby (2012) maintained that human had innate tendency to favour their own group over others in order to arrogate power.

In his own theory of favouritism Guttman (2000) stated that when people are competing with one another for survival, they always want people like them to be favoured, survived and succeeded so that they can pass their success to them instead. Henry (1996) asserted that people will stick to more internal(deposition) attributions for event that reflect positively on groups that they belong to and refrain from more external (situational) attributions or event that reflect negatively on their groups.

In essence, it must be concluded that negative activities of the aspirants and electorates are based on the concept of give and take for the survival of an individual or group. Favouritism is a theory of state of mind which affects human behaviour, attitude and posture. Favouritism before, during and after elections may lead to different types of electoral malpractices that breed violence, destructions and deaths.

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

This study investigated negative activities of the populace, mass media and material in as well as their implications to Electoral Process and the needs to educate and enlighten the populace for socio-economic and political changes.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The result of this study will help both the populace, the INEC and various Governments to understand better how to manage people and material effectively during election periods.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

Specifically, the objectives of the study are:

1. To investigate negative attitudes by the Populace towards Electoral Process during elections.
2. To investigate negative activities by the Mass Media towards Electoral Process during elections.
3. To investigate negative activities towards the use of Electoral Materials during Electoral Process.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The following research questions are posited for proper and thorough investigation.

1. Do attitudes of the Populace towards elections affect Electoral Process?
2. Do activities of the Mass Media towards elections affect Electoral Process?
3. Do activities towards the use of Electoral Materials affect Electoral Process?

### **METHODOLOGY**

This Paper adopted descriptive survey design which allowed the researchers to have vivid descriptions of negative activities of the populace, mass media and use electoral materials towards electoral process in Nigeria. These will give greater opportunity to the researchers in providing solutions to these negative activities and attitude through proper education and recommendation.

### Population

The Population for this investigation comprised all staff of Federal College of Education, Pankshin. The sampled size of this study were 100 staff (academics and non- non academics) who were drawn through simple random technique of balloting with replacement from the 5 schools within the College, where 10 were academics and 10 non-academics. The sampled size had participated and had one or two experiences in the previous elections conducted by the Electoral Commission.

### Instrument

The Instrument used by this study was structured questionnaire. The structured questionnaire used was based on 30 related items relevant to electoral process which completely emphasised on the experiences and information gathered from previous elections as reflected in the 3 research questions. Four point response scaled was used and weighted according to the following scale of measurement: Strongly Agree (4) Agree (3) Disagree (2) Strongly Disagree. The instrument was face validated by four experts in political science from social studies department, FCE Pankshin. Degree of reliability of the instrument was established using Alpha which yielded a reliability coefficient of 8.83. The instrument was carried out by the researchers within the premises of the College for good two days. The data collected on the study was analysed by simple mean statistic.

### Method of Data Collection

The Instrument for the study was distributed by the researchers within the premises of the College for good two days. 100 copies of the questionnaire were administered on the respondents by the researchers. Out of 100 copies of this questionnaire distributed 95 were duly retrieved given 95% return rate.

### Method of Data Analysis

The Data collected on the study was analysed by using simple mean statistics with 2.50 adopted as the cut-off point. This indicates that questionnaire value with a mean value of 2.50 and above was of Agree while any item with a mean value below 2.50 was of Disagree as presented below.

## RESULTS OF THE FINDINGS

**Table 1. Mean responses of attitudes of the Populace towards Electoral Process**

S/No	Negative Attitudes of the Populace towards Electoral Process	Response						
		SA	A	D	SD	Total N=95	$\bar{X}$	Remark
1	Snatching of ballot boxes	37	23	20	15	95	2.86	Agree
2	Tamper with results	40	20	12	18	95	2.76	Agree
3	Show partiality	19	21	24	31	95	2.29	Disagree
4	Fight and quarrel	42	20	13	20	95	2.88	Agree
5	Intimidate others	15	10	30	40	95	2.00	Disagree
6	Time wasting	14	19	20	42	95	2.05	Disagree
7	Reject defeat	45	20	14	16	95	2.98	Agree
8	Apathy by voters	43	33	11	08	95	3.16	Agree
9	Delay results	43	22	16	14	95	2.98	Agree
10	Protest	45	25	10	15	95	3.05	Agree

Data in table 1 above indicates that item 1, 2, 4,7,8,9 and 10 each has mean values above cut off point of 2.50 showing and agreed upon that the Populace snatched ballot boxes, tampered

with results, rejected defeat, apathy by voters, delayed results and protested. The other identified item 3, 5 and 6 each has mean value below 2.50 cut off point indicating and disagreed upon that the Populace showed partiality, intimidated others and wasted time as illustrated in chart 1 below.

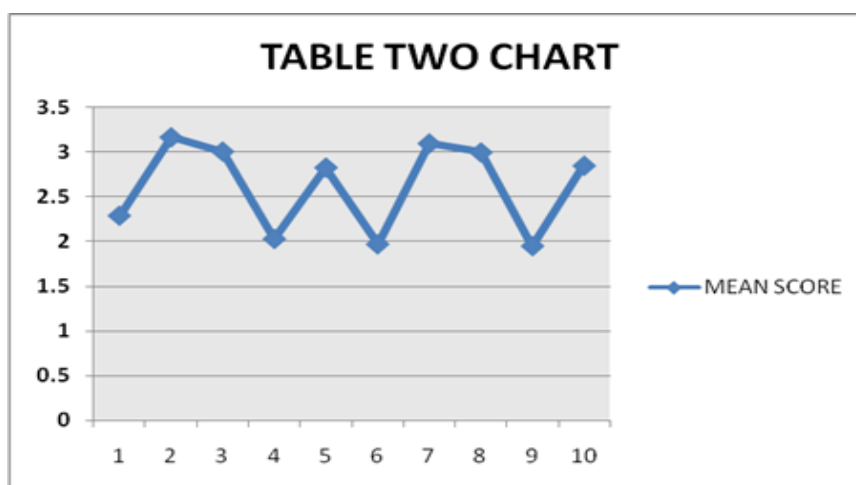


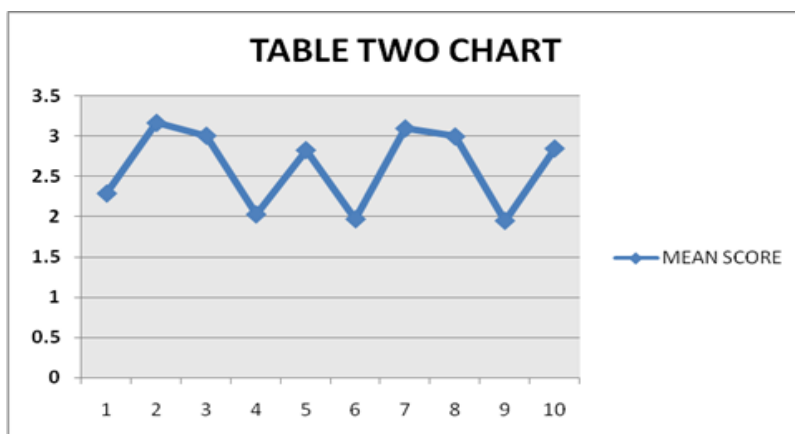
Chart 1

**Table 2. Mean: Responses of Negative activities of the Mass Media towards Electoral Process**

S/No	Negative Activities of the Mass Media towards Electoral Process	Response				Total N=95	$\bar{X}$	Remark
		SA	A	D	SD			
1	Instigate malpractices	10	20	43	32	95	2.29	Disagree
2	Are biased	46	29	11	09	95	3.17	Agree
3	Unbalanced reports	35	36	14	10	95	3.01	Agree
4	Fail to expose offenders	15	12	29	39	95	2.03	Disagree
5	Not peace builder	35	29	11	20	95	2.83	Agree
6	Fail to promote view of others	43	27	13	12	95	1.97	Disagree
7	low level of sensitization	46	26	10	13	95	3.10	Agree
8	Assassination of character	40	30	10	15	95	3.00	Agree
9	No adequate coverage	10	15	46	24	95	1.95	Disagree
10	Protect electoral offenders	44	26	12	13	95	2.85	Agree

Data in table 2 above indicates that item 2,3,5,7,8 and 10 each has mean values above cut off point of 2.50 showing and agreed upon that Mass Media were biased, unbalanced, not peace builder, low level of sensitization, assassination of character and protected electoral offenders. The other identified item 1, 4, 6 and 9 each has mean value below 2.50 cut off point indicating and disagreed upon that Mass Media instigated malpractices, failed to expose offenders, failed to promote view of others and had no adequate coverage as indicated in chart 2 below.

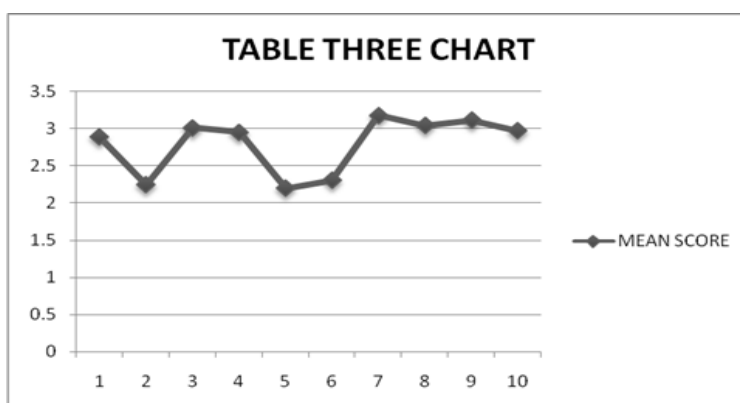




**Table 3. Mean response of activities towards the usage of Electoral Materials**

S/No	Negative activities towards the usage of Electoral Materials	Response						Remark
		SA	A	D	SD	Total N=95	$\bar{X}$	
1	Not adequate	40	23	14	18	95	2.89	Agree
2	Poorly printed	18	12	41	24	95	2.25	Disagree
3	Not secured	38	31	15	11	95	3.01	Agree
4	Poorly funded	44	22	10	19	95	2.95	Agree
5	Not computerised	19	11	35	30	95	2.20	Disagree
6	Not electronic	14	16	41	34	95	2.31	Disagree
7	Not correctly recorded	46	30	10	09	95	3.18	Agree
8	Poorly protected	42	28	12	13	95	3.04	Agree
9	Cheaply destroyed	42	32	11	10	95	3.11	Agree
10	Easily manipulated	42	26	10	17	95	2.97	Agree

Data in table 3 above indicates that item 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9 and 10 each has mean values above cut off point of 2.50 showing and agreed upon that usage of electoral materials were not adequate, not secured, poorly funded, not correctly recorded, poorly protected, cheaply destroyed and easily manipulated. The other identified item 2,5 and 6 each has mean value below 2.50 cut off point indicating and disagreed upon that electoral materials were poorly printed, not computerised and not electronic as displayed in table chart below.



## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

From the findings in Research Question 1, it is agreed that negative attitude of the Populace towards elections actually affected Electoral Process as indicated in table 1 chart above, where 7 out of 10 items, with cluster mean of 3.01 is above 2.50 cut. This outcome therefore supported Okoye (2000) that people especially those that are desperate to win election at all cost threaten, intimidate, and snatch ballot boxes in order to cause and create unnecessary tension in the environment that will breed violence.

The outcome of research findings in Research Question 2, agreed that negative activities of the Mass Media towards election actually affected electoral process as indicated in table 2 chart, where 6 out of 10 items, with cluster mean of 2.99 is above 2.50 cut off mark. This finding corroborated Electoral Commission of Zambia (2014) stated that the mass media has three major roles to play in electoral processes; these are watch dog, voter's education, and peace building and conflict resolutions but these responsibilities have been negated, neglected and cornered.

The result of findings from Research Question 3, agreed that negative activities of the people towards the usage of Electoral Materials actually affected Electoral Process as indicated in table 3 chart above, where 7 out of 10 items, with cluster mean of 2.89 is above 2.50 cut off mark. This result thereby buttressed Omoje (2007) asserted that the situation may become worst where it is noticed that state resources, properties and materials meant for elections are being manoeuvred by the ruling party and others for electoral gain and for other logistic apart from election matters

### **Needs for Proper Education and Orientation**

From all indications and results emanated from this study it can be summarily agreed and concluded that the populace attitude, mass media activities and use of electoral materials during electoral processes actually showed negative outcome, so there is needs for proper Education and orientation. Education as defined by Dakun (2009) can be regarded as the bedrock of attitudinal and behavioural changes towards the society. Education as defined by Webster (2002) is a means of persuading or conditioning a person to feel, believe or act in a desire way or to support a position. As explained by Okoye (2000) Ojiako, (2001) and Graber (2001) Education in electoral process can be achieved and sustained through proper advocacy, limited intimidation, peaceful conduct, total justice, threat and violence reduction, best practices, lower level of inducement and bribery, abstinence from ethnicity and favouritism, materials protection, etc.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Seminars and workshops should be organised in order to enlighten, sensitise, advocate and inform the populace about basic processes and procedures involve in achieving free and fair elections.
2. Media houses should be professional, assertive, educated and give proper training and retraining to staff for effective election coverage.
3. Funding of electoral body and other allied bodies should be given special attention in order to reduce shortage of personnel, sensitive materials drastically electoral fraud and malpractices.
4. Electoral offensive court should be specially established in order to prosecute jail and sentence electoral offenders as deterrents and lessons for others. Also, electoral laws should be strengthened.



5. Security for voters and protections of electoral materials should be adequately provided in order to reduce electoral violence, intimidations and demonstrations.

## **CONCLUSION**

From all indications it must be summarily concluded that negative attitude of the populace, negative activities of the mass media and negative utility of electoral materials actually affected electoral processes, so it must be agreed also that there were needs for proper education and orientation in areas such as proper advocacy, limited intimidation, peaceful conduct, total justice, threat and violence reduction. In addition it was recommended that seminars and workshop be organised, enough fund be provided, electoral offensive court be organised and adequate security organised before, during and after election for better electoral process.

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