

## DETERMINANTS OF ELECTORATES POLITICAL VOTING CHOICE DURING GENERAL ELECTIONS AND CHANCES OF WINNING BY A POLITICAL CANDIDATE: A CASE OF 2023 ABIA STATE GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION

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### ABSTRACT

*This study was carried out to uncover the relationship between electorates' political voting choice during general elections and chances of winning by a political candidate: A case of 2023 Abia State gubernatorial election. The objectives of the study include, to: examine the relationship between election campaign promises, investigate the relationship between financial suitability of a political candidate and ascertain the relationship between personality of political candidate and chances of winning by a political candidate. This study adopted a descriptive research design. The target population of the study comprises the eligible electorates in Abia State, Nigeria. Primary data was used for the study. The questionnaire administered to the electorates contained measures of electorates' political voting choice during general elections and chances of winning by a political candidate. Out of 400 questionnaires distributed, 356 respondents participated in the survey; only 334 copies of questionnaire were validly filled and returned for the final analysis. For data analysis, correlation coefficient was used to facilitate the analysis. This study recommends that political parties and their political candidate should always endeavour to fulfil or keep to their election campaign promises after voted into office. The study also recommends that political parties should always ensure that their political candidates are financial suitable. Finally, the authors recommended that political parties should ensure that a political candidate who is their flag bearer is one whose personality and reputation is not in doubt. The Rational Choice Theory by Downs (1957) was employed in this study to explain the electorate voting choice.*

**Keywords:** *Electorates Political Voting Choice, General Elections, Political Candidate, Gubernatorial Election, Abia State*

### INTRODUCTION

Every four years in the election period in Nigeria, millions of Nigerians go the ballot box to exercise their franchise for their preferred political candidates and their political parties. And in any electoral system, there are many political stakeholders who determine the success of every election. These political stakeholders include the government, electoral umpire, politicians, civil society organizations, election observers, and the electorates. Among these political stakeholders, electorates remain one of the most powerful forces that can elect political candidates who will rule them. Often times, there are factors that can

propel electorates to make their choice in electing political candidates, such factors include: election campaign promises made by political candidate, financial suitability and personality of a political candidate.

Electorates are individuals who are eligible or entitle to vote for any political candidate of their choice for any political position during elections in a country. According to Aristotle “man is by nature is a political animal”. This simply means that man cannot do without politics and that every man has right to participate in an election either as a political candidate or an electorate. However, the electorate can either be partisan or nonpartisan electorates, that is, they are free to belong to any political party of their choice or not to belong to any political party. In some countries, some electorates are not allowed to join or belong to any political party due to their duty or profession as stipulated in some relevant laws of such country.

A political candidate is a person who is actively and professionally involved in politics, especially as an elected or as an appointed member of a political party or a person who takes politics as a career. According to Wikipedia, a politician is a person who has political power in the government of a state, a person active in party politics or a person holding or seeking an elected office in government. In most times, they are sponsored by their parties to contest in different elective offices.

In a democratic certain, majority decides who wins and governs the state, therefore electorates are in the majority and also in a better position to determine who will be in charge of the affairs of the state. They have enormous powers to change the society for good or bad through the choice they made during elections.

In marketing, electorates are seen as consumers/customers who always make a demand better from the marketers. Companies are the ones who produce products or services but however, production cannot be complete until the products/services are in the hands of final consumers, because they are the reasons why production takes place in the first instance without them production and marketing will not occur, as such they are seen as kings. The same thing happens in an electoral system. In an ideal environment, government and electoral umpire conduct elections and electorates decide who will win through ballots if giving a level playing field.

Aniuga and Ogba, (2021) argued that the world market has become so diversified in this modern days and that consumers have more interests in new things, because their needs and tastes are constantly changing. Therefore, these changes in their consumption pattern calls for organisations to adapt the use of innovation, as possible and significant way to satisfy their consumers. In market environments, firms compete for consumers, most especially in technology evolving global markets (Nemati, Khan and Iftikhar 2010, Ajimati, 2012, Aniuga and Ogba, 2021). In this regard, electorates are more interested in who shall govern them as a people because they are no longer satisfied with the kind of set peoples who have been ruling them for many decades and because of this dissatisfaction they want new credible political candidates or politicians who shall be in charge of the state’s political and economic affairs.

In every four years’ election cycle, Nigerians go to general elections. As a multiparty state, a lot of political parties who are duly registered, qualified and certified, and equally meet up with all the necessary requirements according to INEC electoral guidelines are

allowed to participate during primaries and general elections. Primary elections are the period where each party will select or elect delegates who will in turn will select political candidates either by consensus or elect who will represent them during general elections. This particular process determines how electorates and politicians will make their choice in the general elections. At this point, if they make good choice in electing credible candidates who will bear their party flags during the primaries, it marks the beginning of their success otherwise if they choose or make wrong decision other parties who chose credible political candidates will win the election all things being equal.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Since Nigeria returned to democratic rule in 1999, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has been the dominant party in Abia State. The party has produced all the state governors so far except Theodore Orji, who was elected in 2007 under the platform of Progressives Peoples Alliance (PPA). Orji eventually returned to the PDP and was re-elected for a second term on the platform of the PDP.

On March 18, 2023, the people of Abia and 27 other states in Nigeria went to the field to elect their governors and state houses of assembly lawmakers who will lead them in the next four years. In Abia State, eighteen (18) political candidates were fielded by their parties to contest for the governorship position. The candidates of the All Progressives Congress (APC), All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), Labour Party (LP), and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) were seen as the frontline governorship contestants for the March 18 election. A political expert, Ademola Oni in 2023 was of the opinion that the election in the state will be a two-horse race between Okey Ahiwe of the PDP and Alex Otti of the LP.

However, the outcome of the March 18, 2023 gubernatorial and state house of assembly elections in Abia has brought a paradigm shift to what may be described as the new ways of voting in the state. Today, Labour Party through Governor Alex Otti is in charge of Abia State affairs. It was made possible because the electorates decided to come out en masse to cast their ballots to the political candidate of their choice and equally guide and guard them. Before now you hear that political power belongs to the electorates but they fail to realize that before they take such powers, that they must be ready to take a bold step and do the necessary things. They must avoid some certain characteristics that are inimical to the state and that are capable of destroying the electoral process, like vote buying, thuggery, political violence, snatching of ballot boxes, etc.

However, if they can shun these social vices and make use of their valid permanent voters' card (PVCs), they can elect credible and honest political candidates of their choice considering the enormous power bestowed in them. But more often than not, the electorates fail to realize the amount of power and authority they have. Before the kickoff of electoral process, some electorates do refuse to revalidate their PVCs and those who recently turn to age of voting are not willing go and register and get their PVCs, likewise those who lost their own cards, they equally ignore to obtain a fresh one. They portray such behaviour due to previous elections in the state where many electorates have lost interest in the election of the state as they believed that their votes were not counted after the exercise and that politicians don't normally keep to their election campaign promises. Because of this mindset, they always ignore to do all the necessary things required of them to enable them participate actively during elections in the state thereby given the politicians the opportunity and power to do whatever they want during and after the elections.

Aniuga, et al (2022) opined that the future of Nigeria belongs to electorates and if they really want to be the leaders of tomorrow they crave for, they must be ready to vote in to power credible leaders who will assist them to realize their potentials otherwise, they will keep on serving the old politicians who do not care about their future. They posited that if they want to live better their lives, to have good quality education, decent employment, secure environment and better tomorrow, that time is now, to take back Nigeria as they demonstrated during the End Special Anti-Robbery Squad (ENDSARS) protest saga in 2020.

They further stated that if the electorates failed to get it right during 2023 general elections, that they should be assured that they shall continue to suffer until they get it right; as poverty, insecurity, poor quality education, massive unemployment, poor healthcare system, bad roads, poor electricity supply, scarcity of petrol, kidnapping, assassination etc. do not know any tribe, state or local government of origin, region, religion, geopolitical zone, senatorial constituency and political friends, Aniuga, et al (2022).

However, unlike the presidential election of February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023 where some youths of Nigeria played politics of vote buying and selling, tribalism, religions, apathy, empathy, thuggery, assassination, bitterness and favoritism, Abia State electorates said 'enough is enough to bad governance' and went out in their numbers and voted out those they called 'bad peoples' who have been in government in the state since 1999 without any democratic dividends to the citizens of the state and then enthrone this current administration who have sworn to bring economic developments to every doorstep of every Abians and other people doing businesses in Abia State.

This landmark achievement by the electorates was never a rollercoaster. Some electorates and some INEC Ad-Hoc staff played key vital roles to ensure that the peoples' mandate was never overturned by some greedy politicians in the state. Today, if not the determination and energy the electorates showcased during the last general elections, Abia State would not have been enjoying the kind of democratic dividends they are currently enjoying today. Hence, this study: electorates political voting choice during general elections and chances of winning by a political candidate: A case of 2023 Abia State gubernatorial election.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The major objective of this study is to examine the relationship between electorates' political voting choice during general elections and the chances of winning by a political candidate: A case of 2023 Abia State gubernatorial election.

Specifically, this research wants to:

1. Examine the relationship between election campaign promises and the chances of winning by a political candidate.
2. Investigate the relationship between financial suitability of a political candidate and the chances of winning by the political candidate.
3. Ascertain the relationship between p personality of political candidate and chances of winning by a political candidate

### **Research Hypotheses**

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between election campaign promises made and the chances of winning by the political candidates.

- H<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between financial suitability of a political candidate and the chances of winning by the political candidate.
- H<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between personality of political candidate and chances of winning by a political candidate.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### Electorate Voting Choice

Voting is a formal indication of a choice between two or more candidates or courses of action expressed typically through a ballot or a show of hands. Voting is one of the most fundamental aspects of civic engagement. Many political scientists link voting with the vibrancy of the democratic process and argue that declining voting rates may be indicative of a “democratic deficit”. Because political participation can also influence public policy, others are concerned that lower participation could result in policies that are not necessarily representative of key constituencies like those who tend to vote less frequently. As a result, the voter turnout rate is used as one indicator of civic engagement. Voting is also the key mechanism of consensus building in a democratic society (Lipset, 1960 cited in Umar, Salihu,, Onyekachi, and Aaron (n.d) ).

Electorate voting choice is a set of personal electoral activities, including participation in electoral campaigns, turnout at the polls, and choosing who to vote. Understanding electorates’ choice can explain how and why decisions were made either by public decision-makers, which has been a central concern for political scientists (Goldman: 1966; (Lipset, 1960 cited in Umar, Salihu,, Onyekachi, and Aaron (n.d) ). Through the voting choice, we can know the will of the people and the way they want to have it. Voting is defined by Universal Declaration of Human Right as “the fundamental right of all citizens over the age of eighteen”. Voting is the expression of a person’s choice for a candidate or a group of candidates’ as well as the person’s choice of one political system rather than the other (Blais, and Neil, (2004), (Lipset, 1960 cited in Umar, Salihu, Onyekachi, and Aaron (n.d). The analysis of voting pattern focused on determinants such as, why people vote and how they make decisions. Social scientists look at the socio-economic determinants such as support of political parties, occasions, ethnicity and gender, correlation between the classes, age and vote. Others are political programmes, electoral campaign, issues and popularity of leaders of the political parties contesting elections” (Leadnum, 2006).

### Election campaign Promises

Election campaign promises matter if and only if candidates’ payoffs from reneging on their campaign election promises are different from their payoffs from fulfilling those promises. That is, we obtain different election outcomes following a failure to fulfill a promise than after a promise has been fulfilled. For the outcome of future elections to differ following fulfillment or nonfulfillment of promises, electorates’ strategies must depend on the relationship between an election campaign promise and the policy choice of a candidate: electorates’ actions must depend on the candidates’ promises. Politicians seeking office make promises. This is presumably done in the belief that such promises will alter electorates’ beliefs about the policies the politician will implement if elected and about the capabilities of the politicians. The flip side of the coin is that these promises may later come back to work against and haunt an office holder seeking reelection, so candidates must fulfill their promises in anticipation of future elections Aragonès, Palfrey and Postlewaite. (2007).

### **Financial Suitability of a Political Candidate**

Biezen (2003). Contended that in order to carry out some core activities, that political parties need appropriate funding. He maintained that the relationship between money and politics, however, is controversial and much of the debate on the role of money is concerned with the improper influence of money on the democratic political process and with the illegitimate personal enrichment of politicians. While the shady aspects of finance and politics should not be ignored, the relevance of money extends beyond illegitimate sources that flow into party coffers and the pockets of politicians. The scope of political finance has a wider relevance in the context of the functioning of democracy and should thus be seen as broader than merely involving illicit transactions. More generally, political activity involves expenses which should be seen as the necessary and unavoidable costs of democracy. Because money is one of the most essential resources for political parties, which are the principal protagonists of modern democracy, it plays a critical role in the democratic process. In order to function properly, political parties need to maintain their party organisations, to employ party personnel, to conduct election campaigns and to communicate with the electorate at large. Therefore, one of the important factors which might be significant for one's voting choice is how financially suitable a political candidate is, as financial suitability has always been a political matter of consideration in the mind of some electorates. Some electorates usually see a political candidate in Nigeria who is financially suitable as one who might not after voting into power start engaging in looting of public treasury in order to become wealthy and affluent in the society.

### **Personality of a Political Candidate**

Personality refers to an individual's reputation and characteristic patterns of thought, emotion, and behavior, together with the psychological mechanisms – hidden or not – behind those patterns (Funder, 2004, cited in Okafor, 2017). Mayer, (2007) cited in Okafor, (2017) observes that personality refers to the organised, developing system within the individual that represents the collective action of that individual's major psychological subsystems. Thus, political candidate personality refers to those characteristics of the person that account for consistent patterns of feelings, thinking, and behaving (Pervin, Cervone & John, 2005 cited in Okafor, 2017). The political life of a country is predicated upon the dominant personality of the political participants (Adebayo & Ogunleye, 2008). Thus, the political breath of a nation is the breath of the nation's political actors. In Nigeria, the impunity with which electoral malpractices are plotted and the resultant postponement or declaration of elections as "inconclusive"; the apparent insensitivity of political representatives to the plights of their constituencies, and the exposed cases of financial corruption (Alamu, 2016 cited in Okafor, 2017) are clear indications that the political breath of the nation is undemocratic. Moreover, the prolonged military rule, the significant participation of retired military personnel in Nigerian politics, and the accompanying authoritarian leadership tendencies seem to reinforce a culture of servant-lord relationship. Thus, political followers, supporters and subordinates seem to be perceived as mere instruments for personal aggrandisement rather than partners in political progress.

On March 18, 2023, the people of Abia state and 27 other states in Nigeria elected their governors and state houses of Assembly Lawmakers who will lead them till 2027, all things being equal. In Abia State, 18 candidates are contested for the governorship position. The candidates of the All Progressives Congress (APC), All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), Labour Party (LP), and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) were seen as the



frontline governorship contestants for the March 18 election. A political expert, Ademola Oni, however, was of the opinion that the election will be a two-horse race between Okey Ahiwe of the PDP and Alex Otti of the LP (Amata, 2023).

The former Governor of Abia State, Ikpeazu during the buildup of gubernatorial election in the state argued that Peter Obi's personality and popularity will not help the LP governorship candidate, Alex Otti to win the gubernatorial election not even with the support he is receiving from the Obidient Movement in the state. However, after the outcome of the gubernatorial election, Ikpeazu acknowledged that personality and popularity of Peter Obi, the LP presidential candidate and Obidient Movement affected most of the results from the South East, Abia State inclusive in the just concluded general elections in Nigeria. Earlier before the gubernatorial election, a political analyst, Ademola Oni, said before the gubernatorial in Abia state that the support from the Obidient Movement and the open campaign for Otti by Obi will a boost to the candidate of LP who had been trying his luck at the number one seat in the state since 2015. He added that if the people of Abia continued the same voting pattern as seen in the presidential and National Assembly elections, then it might mean a landslide victory for the LP candidate. "But PDP will put up a strong contest to ensure they don't lose out on everything in the election," he said. Following the prediction of Ademola Oni, the Labour Party governorship candidate, Alex Otti won the election with combinations of his political influence in the state and support from the Obidient Movement.

### **Empirical Review**

Aniuga et al (2022) carried out a study on effects of political marketing on political attitude among youths in Nigeria. They adopted a descriptive research design and used questionnaire as instrument of primary data collection. They data collected were analysed using linear regression through the use of E-view version 22.0. They study revealed that socio-economic factors has a positive and statistically significant effect on youth voting attitude during presidential election in Nigeria; that choice of presidential candidate has a positive and statistically significant effect on youth voting participation during presidential election in Nigeria; that money politics has no significant effect on youth participation during presidential election in Nigeria and that tribal/regional politics has a positive and statistically significant effect on youth participation during presidential election in Nigeria. Following the above results, they recommended that Nigerian youths should be encouraged to participate in Nigeria politics as it has been shown that they play very positive significant role in deciding who will govern them through ballot.

Mikidadi (2017 cited in Aniuga et al, 2022) examined the attitude of voters towards elections in Tanzania and revealed that 73% of respondents perceived participating in election was important. He recommended that action should be taken to cultivate positive attitudes of citizens to motivate them to turn out to vote during elections in the country.

Achans, Benson and Zuure, (2021) said that in world, and most especially emerging continent like Africa, that researchers seem not to have sufficiently explained the underlying factors that influence electorates' choices. Thus, studies often reveal a myriad of factors that determine this behavior of voters. While some scholars posit rationality as the underlying factor, others suggest idiosyncratic factors in that regard. These conflicting positions indicate that the motivation of electorates' choices is multifaceted. In Ghana, few studies have investigated the phenomenon in the Northern part of the country. This study,

therefore, explored the phenomenon with regard to elections in the Kumbungu Constituency of Northern Ghana. Methodology: Underpinned by the three dominant theories; the sociological model, the psychological model and the rational-choice theory, the study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-method design to gather data thereof. A combination of purposive sampling methods was employed to select information rich cases. The selection of the study region and constituency was based on critical case sampling. Purposeful random sampling was used to select respondents for the survey and interviews. A total of 164 respondents were randomly selected for the survey. Ten key informant interviews were also conducted. Qualitative data were analysed using content and thematic analysis. Quantitative data were analyzed using Predictive Analytic Software by employing descriptive statistics and regression. Findings: The findings indicate that the voting behavior of electorates are not primarily influenced by stable and distinctive factors, such as ethnic or regional ties, but rather the electorate make voting decisions based on conscious evaluation of government performance, economic conditions, and campaign issues. Also, the developmental impact of government programs, ethnicity and ideological leaning of voters do play a role. Therefore, politicians need to heed this in their effort to win the hearts of voters. Recommendation: This study recommends that ruling political parties should always endeavor to promote and foster policies and programs that improve the living standards of the Ghanaian electorates if they desire to retain and cling on to political power

Obani and Odalonu (2019) posited that election has become the most acceptable means of changing leadership in any given political system. It evaluates the acceptability of government and political leadership by citizens. Thus, attitude of the voters/electorates during or before any election varies from country to country depending on socio-economic-political characteristics of such people or country. The study therefore, interrogates election and voting behaviour in Nigeria. The study is guided with these research questions; Are there reasons for participating in election as a voter in Nigeria, are there factors that influence voting behaviour during election in Nigeria? The study is a qualitative and quantitative research that relied on primary and secondary sources of data collection. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics to show the impact of voting behaviour on election in Nigeria. The study found that multiple factors influence how people vote during election. Also, there are reasons why people vote, that is voting pattern runs inline in order to satisfy those religious/ethnic interest and personal immediate economic needs. Voters' accept gratification from politicians to vote for them even when they knew that such persons are not credible. The study recommends a total overhaul of the electoral system; education/creation of awareness to the Nigerian citizens, and to make the elective positions less lucrative and attractive than what is currently obtainable. In this way, those negative factors that influence the voting pattern in Nigeria can be controlled.

Ojekwe (2016) carried out a study to examine the effect of political ad campaigns of the All Progressive Congress gubernatorial candidate in Lagos State, Akinwunmi Ambode. Specifically, the researcher was seeking to understand the effectiveness of political ad campaigns in shaping the voting behaviour of Nigerian voters. A field survey of eligible voters in Lagos State was carried out to further ascertain the efficacy of political ad campaigns on the electorate. The researcher contended that in recent times, that the use of political ad campaigns has become increasingly popular, as was noticed during in the 2015 gubernatorial elections in Lagos State. Questionnaire was used as an instrument to collect



primary data. 180 questionnaires were validly filled and return which was used for the analysis. Findings from the study showed that political ad campaigns do not have a strong effect on the electorate's voting behaviour but still play a role in the electoral process. The study concluded that political candidates and parties should focus on other election campaign strategies. Based on the result, it was recommended that further studies be conducted to better understand other factors that influence voting behaviour since political ad campaigns do not have a strong effect on the electorate's voting behaviour.

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **This Study is anchored on the Rational Choice Theory**

The Rational Choice Theory by Downs (1957) is the theory that was employed in this study to explain the electorate voting choice. The underlying assumption of the Rational choice theory is that voting is a conscious rational act where individual voters weigh the advantages and disadvantages of the options available before determining their voting choices. Consequently, upon a careful evaluation of the costs and benefits, a person will vote for the party or candidate with programmes and policies that best serve and reflect one's own self-interests (Autunes, 2010 cited in Achans, et al, 2021). In one breadth, a voter may consider educational policies during one election cycle, but their interest may change into health and immigration policies in subsequent elections. It is these unaligned voters whose interests are constantly changing that are partly responsible for the alternations in electoral outcomes and for determining the winners and losers of elections. This study anticipated that the rational-choice perspective was helpful in explaining voting patterns in areas or polling stations noted for swing voting. Rationality as a model is of great essence when one is seeking to understand the theory of rational choice and it is noteworthy to shed light on the fact that rationality, based on Down's economic theory, hypothesis that voters and political parties to a large extent behave in a similar manner, at least based on their wishes, values and interests. Therefore, rationality as a term is applied based on the inference that the methods or mediums employed are suitable to the objectives and by extension, elections function as a medium used for selecting a government and for that matter, rational behavior in an electoral period is aimed towards this objective and nothing else. The Rational Choice Theory also takes into account that what voters essentially prioritize is not ideology but rather the tangible or material actions governments undertake. This, however, does not imply that voters are entirely abreast with or well-informed about all government proceedings and decisions as it takes a great deal of effort to completely comprehend and assess the outcome of all government policies (Farber, 2010). The rational choice theory further posits that there is a higher chance of voters more likely to vote if the gains arising out of the choice, they make far exceed the losses. In making the decision as to whom to vote for between a number of candidates, "the voter must determine what the difference to their interests, resulting in victory (or loss) of candidate A, B or C. If this analysis does not expect significant differences associated with victory or defeat of any candidate, the potential benefit of voting is zero and the higher the probability of not participating in the elections" (Antunes, 2010).

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted a descriptive research design. Descriptive studies attempt to observe and report phenomena the way they currently are. The target population of the study comprises the eligible electorates in Abia State, Nigeria. Number of registered voters in Abia State are 2,120,808 but the number of electorates who collected their PVC are

1,949,197. Therefore, the eligible electorates in Abia State are 1,949,197 according to INEC report of February, 2023. Primary data was used for questionnaire. To administer the questionnaire, Abia State was divided according to the three senatorial districts in the state and a random sampling technique was deployed to generate the data. And in each three senatorial zone, three local government areas were selected totaling (9) nine local government areas in the state. The three senatorial include; Abia Central, Abia North and Abia South. However, since the population of eligible voters was known, the researchers used Taro Yamene's formula to derive at population sample size of 400. But, only 356 respondents accepted to participate in the survey. Out of 400 questionnaires distributed, 356 respondents participated in the survey; only 334 copies of questionnaire were validly filled and returned for the final analysis. The items on the questionnaire were drawn based on 5-point Likert scale of Strongly Agreed (SA) = 5, Agreed (A) = 4, Undecided (U) = 3, Disagreed (D) = 2, and Strongly Disagreed (SD) = 1. The questionnaire administered to the electorates contained measures of electorates voting choice during general elections and chances of winning by political candidates. For data analysis, correlation coefficient was used to facilitate the analysis of objectives 1 and 3

### Testing of Hypotheses

**Hypothesis One:** Relationship Between Election Campaign Promises Made to Electorates by a Political Candidate and Their Chances of Winning.

**Table 1**

S/N	Options	X points	Y points	XY	X <sup>2</sup>	Y <sup>2</sup>
1	Strongly agree	5	120	600	25	14400
2	Agree	4	128	512	16	16384
3	Undecided	3	20	60	9	400
4	Disagree	2	19	38	4	361
5	Strongly disagree	1	47	47	1	2029
	<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>1257</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>33574</b>

**Source:** Field Survey, 2024

$$r = \frac{(n \sum xy - (\sum x)(\sum y))}{\sqrt{[n \sum (x)^2 - (\sum x)^2][n \sum (y)^2 - (\sum y)^2]}}$$

$$r = \frac{5(1257 - (15)(334))}{\sqrt{5(55 - (15)^2)[5(33574) - (334)^2]}}$$

$$r = \frac{6285 - 5010}{\sqrt{275 - 225}[167870 - 111556]}$$

$$r = \frac{1275}{\sqrt{50 \times 56314}}$$

$$r = \frac{1275}{\sqrt{5409930}}$$

$$r = \frac{1275}{2325.8611}$$

$$r = 0.55$$

$$t_{cal} \sqrt{\frac{n-2}{1-(r)^2}}$$

The correlation coefficient = 0.55 as shown above is an indication that there is a very strong positive relationship between election campaign promises and chances of winning by political candidates. However, there is a need to equally estimate for the significance of coefficient and ascertain whether the claim of the null hypothesis would remain valid after the test. Test for t–test of significance was adopted as follows:

$$t_{cal} \sqrt{\frac{n-2}{1-(r)^2}}$$

Substituting the value of correlation coefficient  $r = 0.55$  in the above formula. We obtain the result.

$$cal \sqrt{\frac{5-2}{1-(0.5481)^2}} = T_{cal} = 2.07$$

But  $t_{0.05, 2.07} = 2.35$ . therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted since  $T_{cal} 2.07 < 2.35$  and the alternative which suggested that election campaign promises is significantly relate to the chances of winning by a political candidate is rejected.

**Hypothesis Two:** *The Relationship between Financial Suitability and Chances of Winning by a Political Candidate*

**Table 2**

S/N	Options	X points	Y points	XY	X <sup>2</sup>	Y <sup>2</sup>
1	Strongly agree	5	143	715	25	20449
2	Agree	4	93	372	16	8649
3	Undecided	3	18	54	9	324
4	Disagree	2	43	86	4	1849
5	Strongly disagree	1	37	37	1	1369
	<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>1264</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>32316</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

$$r = \frac{(n \sum xy - (\sum x) (\sum y))}{\sqrt{[n \sum (x)^2 - (\sum x)^2] [n \sum (y)^2 - (\sum y)^2]}}$$

$$r = \frac{5 (1264 - (15) (334))}{\sqrt{[5 (55)^2 - (15)^2] [5 (32316) - (334)^2]}}$$

$$r = \frac{6320 - 5010}{\sqrt{[275 - 225] [161580 - 111556]}}$$

$$r = \frac{1310}{\sqrt{50 \times 50024}}$$

$$r = \frac{1310}{\sqrt{2501200}}$$

$$r = \frac{1310}{1581.5182}$$

$$r = \frac{1310}{1581.5}$$

$$r = 0.83$$

The correlation coefficient = 0.83 as shown above is an indication that there is a very strong positive relationship between financial suitability of a political candidate and chances of winning by the political candidate. However, there is a need to equally estimate for the significance of coefficient and ascertain whether the claim of the null hypothesis would remain valid after the test. Test for t–test of significance was adopted as follows:

$$t_{cal} \sqrt{\frac{n-2}{1-(r)^2}}$$

Substituting the value of correlation coefficient  $r = 0.83$  in the above formula. We obtain the result.

$$cal \sqrt{\frac{5-2}{1-(0.828)^2}} = T_{cal} = 3.1$$

But  $t_{0.05, 3} = 2.35$ . therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected since  $T_{cal} 3.1 > 2.35$  and the alternative which suggested that financial suitability is significantly related to the chances of winning by a political candidate is accepted.

*Hypothesis Three: Relationship between Personality and the Chances of Winning by the Political Candidates*

**Table 3**

S/N	Options	X points	Y points	XY	X <sup>2</sup>	Y <sup>2</sup>
1	Strongly agree	5	172	860	25	29584
2	Agree	4	111	444	16	12321
3	Undecided	3	9	27	9	81
4	Disagree	2	31	62	4	961
5	Strongly disagree	1	11	11	1	121
	<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>1404</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>43068</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

$$r = \frac{(n \sum xy - (\sum x) (\sum y))}{\sqrt{[n \sum (x)^2 - (\sum x)^2] [n \sum (y)^2 - (\sum y)^2]}}$$

Given *a priori* expectation, the correlation coefficient is expected to be:  $r > 0$

$$r = \frac{5(1404 - (15)(334))}{\sqrt{[5(55) - (15)^2] [5(43068) - (334)^2]}}$$

$$r = \frac{7020 - 5010}{\sqrt{[275 - 225] [215340 - 111556]}}$$

$$r = \frac{2010}{\sqrt{50 \times 103784}}$$

$$r = \frac{2010}{\sqrt{5189200}}$$

$$r = \frac{2010}{2277}$$

0.88

The correlation coefficient = 0.88 as shown above is an indication that there is a very strong positive relationship between election personality and chances of winning by political candidates. However, there is a need to equally estimate for the significance of coefficient and ascertain whether the claim of the null hypothesis would remain valid after the test. Test for t-test of significance was adopted as follows:

$$t_{cal} = \sqrt{\frac{n-2}{1-(r)^2}}$$

Substituting the value of correlation coefficient  $r = 0.88$  in the above formula. We obtain the result.

$$t_{cal} = \sqrt{\frac{5-2}{1-(0.8827)^2}} = T_{cal} = 3.685$$

But  $t_{0.05, 3.7} = 2.35$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. Since  $T_{cal} 3.7 > 2.35$  and the alternative which suggested that personality is significantly relate to the chances of winning by the political candidates winning is accepted.

## DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

The outcome of the correlation coefficient results showed that all indicators are positively related with electorates' political voting choice and chances of winning by a political candidate. This means that election campaign promises, financial suitability and personality of a political candidate matter to the electorate as far as their voting choice are concerned. The findings of this study are consistent with the Rational Choice Theory. Predictive indicators, financial suitability, personality, are statistically significant determinants factors of voting choices (Faber, 2010). However, the result of election campaign promises was not statistically significant, this means that there could be a relationship between election campaign promises and chances of winning by a political candidate but it does not automatically guarantee chances of winning by a political candidate. Before the buildup of 2023 gubernatorial election in Abia State, all the gubernatorial candidates made a lot of promises to the electorates while they were campaigning. But due to perceive administrative failures of the paste and outgoing government in the areas of infrastructural developments, economic development and workers' welfare, the electorates never believed in the election campaign promises made by some of political candidates and their political parties. The incumbent governor before the election, promised civil servants in the state automatic promotions and equally promised secondary teachers that they were going to implement the federal government new retiring age of sixty five (65) years if only they will vote for their candidate in the upcoming gubernatorial election, 2023 but the electorates rejected the offers by not voting for them because this was not the first time they have made such election campaign promises but instead they decided to test another political party and their candidate whom they believe might be different from the previous governors and who is more credible, financial suitable and whose personality is not in doubt and who will keep to their election campaign promises after taken over power.

## CONCLUSION

In every general election in Nigeria, millions of eligible Nigerians go the ballot box to exercise their franchise for their preferred political candidates and their political parties. In an electoral system, there are many political stakeholders who determine the success of every election. These political stakeholders include the government, electoral umpire, politicians, civil society organizations, election observers, and the electorates. Among these political stakeholders, electorates remain one of the most powerful forces that can elect political candidates who will rule them over a period of time. The outcome of the correlation coefficient results showed that all indicators are positively related with electorates' political voting choice and chances of winning by a political candidate. This means that election campaign promises, financial suitability and personality of a political candidate matter a lot to the electorate as far as their voting choice are concerned. The findings of this study are consistent with the Rational Choice Theory. Predictive indicators, financial suitability, personality, are statistically significant determinants factors of voting choices (Faber, 2010). However, the result of election campaign promises was not statistically significant, this means that there could be a relationship between election campaign promises but it does not automatically guarantee chances of winning by a political candidate.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

This study recommends that political parties and their political candidate should always endeavour to fulfil or keep to their election campaign promises after voted into office because fulfillment or nonfulfillment of election promises will determine whether the electorates will vote again for a particular party and their political candidate or not. The study also recommends that political parties should always ensure that their political candidates are financial suitable because the result showed that financial suitability of a candidate is one of the important factors which is significant for electorates' voting choice. This is because financial suitability of a political candidate has always been one of matters of consideration in the mind of some electorates while voting during an election. Finally, the authors recommended that political parties should ensure that a political candidate who is their flag bearer is one whose personality and reputation is not in doubt as it is one of criteria the electorates consider while voting for any political candidate.

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