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A SURVEY OF ELECTORAL VIOLENCE AND DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION IN SOUTH EAST ZONE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the electoral violence and democratic consolidation in Nigeria with special focus in South East Geopolitical Zone. The study was undertaken to identify the factors posing challenge to democratic consolidation in Nigeria particularly in this forth republic with the aim of proffering solutions to that effect. The study adopted survey design method. The multi-stage sampling technique was used select (320) respondents as the sample size from the five states of the South East Zone. Frustration aggressive theory propounded by Bentley (1975) was adopted as the frame work of analysis. The data generated was analyzed using simple percentage and linear regression. The findings indicated that corrupt tendencies among the INEC Officials who connived with desperate politicians to engage in electoral corruption have negatively affected democratic consolidation. It also revealed that inadequate enlightenment among the citizens equally undermined the democratic consolidation particularly in South East Zone of Nigeria. Arising from the findings, therefore, the paper recommended: that those found to be involved in any forms of electoral corruption should be made to face the law so as to serve as a deterrent to others. Also, government should be serous with enlightenment campaign what expand to all part of rural areas in the country in order to keep the people abreast and updated about the political development in the country. That any electoral officer or adhoc staff caught involved or encouraging any forms of electoral practice should be jailed without any option in Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Globally, election is not just the casting of votes to elect leaders, but is equally an avenue through which the citizens actively participate in governance in democratic system of government. The electoral system as an institutionalized provision, provides the guide for election conducted, to achieve the purpose both the legal and practical realities of the election (Abdullahi, 2015). The electoral system shapes and sustained the political behaviour of its citizens (Okolo, 2002). Therefore, Election enables citizens (voters) to select the leader of their choice and which they hold accountable for their performance in office. Abegunde (2017) pointed out the four conditions necessary for the conduct of a free and fair election to include: an independent judiciary to interpret the electoral laws; an honest, competent nonpartisan electoral body to manage the elections; a developed system of political parties; and a general acceptance by the political community on the rules of the game.

Modern democracy relies on popular participation and free, fair and credible elections devoid of any form of irregularity (Egbueze and Ojirika, 2022). The outcomes of elections can impact voters' and the citizens' reactions and actions. It is based on that the free, fair and credible elections are essential the hallmark in achieving democratic consolidation and promote good governance (George, 2007). Voting is a formal expression of preference for a candidate for office (Daniel, 2017). Voting is the heart of democracy; our votes are our voices, and collectively a country's vote is its voice. Therefore, the conduct of an election determines to a large extent the level of political support to any given society or country including Nigeria. Voting and effective Political participation and good governance in any given country depends rely so much on the effectiveness and efficiency of the electoral system practice in a given country (Lindberg 2008).

A credible electoral system guarantees the emergence of a good leader, a leader that is adjudged as the choice of the people been freely elected and massively supported by the people; and therefore represent the will and voice of the majority of the people. Whereas, weak electoral system impregnates electoral violence, use of force and intimidation election rigging, killing

which undermines the cardinal principle of democracy (Iwu, 2022). Electoral violence negates the concept of democracy as espoused by Abraham Lincoln as 'the government of the people, by the people and for the people' many years ago. The above definition implies that democracy is based on popular participatory practice of representative government of the people.

Undoubtedly, right from independence 1960, Nigerian elections have often characterized by intense dispute among the political parties and candidates which often led to the use of violence to influence voters and protest in the wake of election results. For instance the 1962 election crisis metamorphosed to the 1967 1970 civil war that claimed more than a million lives. The 1979 and 1983genral election was tainted with electoral malpractice and vote rigging resulted in electoral violence with the military takeover in 1983 by Gen. Buhari With the return of forth republic after many years of military rules in 1999. There have been magnitude of electoral violence recorded at its highest rate in 2011 with the clashes between supporters of the then-ruling PDP and the Congress for Progressive Change – which later submerged into the APC - claimed an estimated 800 lives following the election of President Goodluck Jonathan Aniekwe, and Kushie, 2019) Likewise, hundreds are reported to have died during the following elections in 2015 and 2019.

Prior to 2023 general election, Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) and INEC Election Result Viewing Portal (IReV) are two technological innovations introduced for enhancing the transparency of election results and boosting public trust in electoral outcomes of elections in Nigeria. INEC asserts that these technologies will address the ten most pervasive weaknesses in Nigeria's election result management process which include falsification of votes at polling units, falsification of number of accredited voters, collation of false results, mutilation of results and computational errors, swapping of results sheets, forging of results sheets, snatching and destruction of results sheets, obtaining declaration and return involuntarily, making declaration and return while result collation is still in progress and poor recordkeeping.

Prior to the 2023 general election, the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) vows to deploy Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) into electoral system to be use in subsequent election in Nigeria. This action was welcomed by all Nigerians as a positive innovation in the country's electoral system. Prior to the 2023 general election, BVAS had used

for the conduct of governorship election in Ekiti and Osun states and has been described as the best innovation in the conduct of election. Based on the outcome and success recorded in the use of BVAS, the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) declared that the commission will deploy the BVAS in the conduct of general election in 2023. In order to give the use of BVAS a legal backing. The new electoral law was signed into law by president Buhari in 2022. The whole of the deployment and signing into law the new electoral acts is to enhance the democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

In conjunction with the above, prior to the 2023 election, candidates and leaders of 18 registered political parties agreed in September 2022 under signed a peace accord committed to a peaceful campaign. According to the leader of the National Peace Committee, the accord calls on all parties to refrain from using "violence, incitement and personal insults" against opponents, which has marred electoral campaigns in previous election in Nigeria yet, the 2023 general election was characterized by violent, rigging, manipulation of the figures of results, killing and destruction of properties worth of billions of Naira in different parts of the country. Thus, this paper sought to examine the effect electoral violence on the democratic consolidation in Nigeria with special focus in South East Region between 1999- 2023 general election.

Statement of the Problem

Right from independence, Nigerian elections have often characterized by intense disputes between political parties and candidates often resulted in the use of violence to influence voters and protest in the wake of election results. In the South East particularly, several incidence of electoral violence were recorded before the 2023 election appeared higher than the previous electoral violence experienced between 1999 to 2019 general election.

During the gubernatorial and the run-up elections in South East, the rate of electoral violence perpetuated in the South East particularly targeted against INEC offices and some officials accounted for the highest proportion of electoral violent witnessed in other geopolitical zone in the country. Prior to the 2023 general election, several offices and equipments and other electoral materials were burnt and destroyed by unknown faces believed to be sponsored by opposition parties who were not comfortable with level of mass support and the growing of popularity of the

Labour Party Presidential flag bearer Mr. Peter Obi Thus, in order not to pre-emptive the outcome of this study, two specific objectives were formulated to guide the study.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of examine the effect of electoral violence on consolidation of democracy in Nigeria with special focus on the South East Region of Nigeria Between 1999-2023.

(i) To examine the extent to which electoral violence has affected the democratic consolidation of between 1999-2023 in South East of Nigeria

(ii) To ascertain the extent to which electoral violence has affected good governance between 1999-2023 in South East of Nigeria

Hypotheses

$H_0$1: Electoral violence has not negatively affected the democratic consolidation between 1999-2023 in South East of Nigeria

$H_0$2: Electoral violence has not negatively affected the good governance in Nigeria between 1999-2023 in South East of Nigeria

2. CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Election Violence

Violence has been defined as a situation in which there are a lot of problems that must be dealt with quickly so that the situation does not get worse or more dangerous (Lawal, 2017). Election violence can therefore be perceived as a situation in which there are a lot of problems emanating from the conduct of elections that must be dealt with quickly so that the situation does not lead to political and or democratic instability (Joshua and Jegede, 2013). These problems may come in form of election malpractice, intimidation of voters, attack of voters by party supporters, hijacking of ballot boxes, rigging of election results, ballot stuffing (Paul and Pedro, 2018). All these problems are capable of causing election crises and crises emanating from elections are capable of truncating democracy globally, and especially in the African continent, violence has become a phenomena occurrence associated with the Electoral Process in democratic practices (Paul and Pedro, 2018). Nigeria however has had its own fair share of incidence of Electoral

violence since Independence in 1960. From one election to the other, power hungry politicians have devised and instigated violence in the electoral process to acquire political power at whatever cost possible (Lawal, 2017).

Election Violence in Nigeria

Right from independence, most of the general elections conducted in Nigeria started from 1964/1965, 1979, 1983, 1993, 1999, 2003 2007, 2011 2015,2019 and 2023 have been characterized by violence. This violence manifested in 1964/1965, which eventually led to the termination of the first republic and to the Nigeria/Biafra civil war. Also, in 1983, the violence took it turn and was so much especially in the South Western Nigeria (old Ondo and Oyo States) to the extent that the military had to intervene, which brought to the end of the second republic (Arowolo and Lawal, 2009). Records indicated that during the 1979 general election, it was the fraud of National Party of Nigeria (NPN), that repeated in 1983, that eventually led to the sacking of the republic in December 31, 1983 By General Muhammadu Buhari due to deep rooted violence and electoral corruption. The third Republic also failed to be conclusive because of the political violence and controversy surrounding the conduct and result of the elections. However, Babangida (1993) affirmed that the June 12 Presidential general election was the fairest ever; it was annulled by the same Military Administration which he presided over (Galtung, 1999). Also, in 1983, the violence was so much especially in the South Western Nigeria (old Ondo and Oyo States) to the extent that the military had to intervene, and that also marked the end of the second republic (Arowolo and Lawal, 2009). From 1999, with the passing of new federal constitution, Nigeria moved to civilian rule under democratic elections in 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011. In 2003, at least one hundred people were killed and many injured during federal and state elections in Nigeria (Adejumobi, 2010). In 2007, over 300 people were killed in the course of presidential and gubernatorial elections. The crisis in Oyo and Osun States was not different from that of Ondo and Ekiti States. In Sokoto State, there was crisis that emanated from disputed gubernatorial election result. In Kogi State, It was a theatre of war etc. (Adejumobi, 2010).

Electoral Violence in South East Region

Incidents of election-related violence in states of South East rose sharply from 2021, more than the previous year. In the run-up to the elections, violence specifically targeting INEC peaked in the South East, which also accounted for the highest proportion of violent events targeting opposition LP and All Progressives Grand Alliance supporters. LP presidential candidate Peter Obi hails from the South East: the former governor of Anambra state Obi defected from the PDP to the LP in 2022, and has since attracted considerable support among the younger segments of the Nigerian electorate. The region is also home to the separatist insurgency spearheaded by IPOB, which blames the federal government for marginalizing the South East and the ethnic Igbo population. Since the arrest of its leader, Nnamdi Kanu, IPOB has been increasingly active in Anambra, Enugu, and especially Imo. Armed separatists, operating under the banner of the militant ESN organization, have targeted police stations and patrols, including operatives of the Ebubeagu security outfit (see more on this actor below). Igbo elders and Obi's allies have raised concerns that call for boycotting the elections and attacks by non-state armed groups may affect voter turnout in the region.

Between January 2021 and February 2023, 44 incidents of electoral violence involving INEC offices and staff were recorded in South East Zone. The frequency of these incidents in the 12 months before the 2023 election (23 events) is higher than during the same period between 2018 and 2019 (11 events), before a post-2019 election spike, with more than 40 events recorded between February and March 2019 alone. The spike of violence targeting INEC offices in 2019 shows the potential for violence following the 2023 elections and into the gubernatorial voting period. The South East recorded the highest share of electoral violence targeted against INEC offices and staff in the run-up to the 2023 elections. Over two-thirds of the total events recorded between 2021 and 2022 were in the southeastern states, especially in Imo, Enugu, and Anambra. Nigerian police have blamed attacks on the polling stations and INEC staff in the South East on the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB).Several protests by voters in Enugu and Anambra against perceived problems with INEC operations, alongside mobs and unidentified gunmen ransacking election offices, may reveal wider discontent with the electoral process.

Concept of Democracy

Democracy may be described as a system of government under which the people exercise political rights, either directly or through their representative periodically elected by themselves (Appadorai, 1975). Democracy ensures fundamental human rights, respect for the rule of law,

equality of persons, popular participation, competition, multiparty system as well as the machinery for political and economic development of a society (Adeyemo, 2008). This conception of democracy as a mode of rule narrowly distinguishes it from other types of government where small minorities dominate the majority. This is for example, the case of theocracy, where only the priest rule, monarch, where only royal family or dynasty rules, aristocracy, where only an elite usually of landed property rules, oligarchy, where a few families rule, and of course, military dictatorship, where an omnipotent command of the armed forces rules (Bako, 1997).

Democratic Consolidation

A democratic consolidation can be achieved when the people come to accept that a democratic regime is the most appropriate for the society, better than any other realistic alternative they can imagine (Ajayi, 2005). According to Beethan (1999) believes that democracy can best be said to be consolidated when we have good reason to believe that it is capable of withstanding pressure or shock without abandoning the electoral process or the political freedom on which it depends including those of dissent and opposition. The process of democratic consolidation begins with the inauguration of a new regime after a free and fair electoral process (Lawal and Abe, 2010). It is a longer and more difficult process than the transition itself. To scholars, it means an identifiable phase in the process of transition from authoritarian to democratic systems that are critical to the establishment of a stable, institutional and lasting democracy (Lawal and Abe, 2010). Holistically, democracy can be said to be consolidated when its probability of breakdown is very low or on the other way round, that is, its probability of survival is very high. In other words democratic consolidation reaches a closure when all relevant observers, including major political actors, the general public and the academic experts expect the democratic regime to last into a foreseeable future, thereby having the capacity to build dams against a reverse wave (Baker, 2000)..

Review of Empirical Studies

Ogunbodede and Adelakun (2018) studied election violence and its implication on democratic consolidation and development in Nigeria. The main objective of the study is to identify the effect of the election violence and its implication on democratic consolidation in Nigeria with the view to proffer solution in the lingering crises that has characterized the conduct of election at all

levels in Nigeria. The paper adopted survey design method. Simple random sampling technique was utilized while total simple size of 250 was drawn from the population of the targeted area. The data generated from the study was analyzed with the inferential statistics of simple percentage. The findings revealed that indicators of democratic consolidation are conspicuously absent in Nigeria. Conclusion reached by the paper is that democracy is yet to be consolidated in Nigeria, as it can only be possible in elections devoid of violence and or conducted in peaceful environment. The paper recommended that government should put all the machinery in motion to sustain the democracy in Nigeria.

Abdulmumin and Abimiku (2019) conducted survey research on electoral violence and its implication on the participation of the citizens in election in Nigeria. The paper centered on critical challenges that have negated the popular participation of the people in the selection of the choice of the leaders. The study adopted survey design method. A sample size of 400 respondents was drawn through stratified sampling technique from Jos-North LGA of Plateau state. The study utilizes both primary and secondary data. The data generated from the study was analyzed using simple percentage to analyze the response on the electoral violence and its implications on the peaceful election in Nigeria while chi-square was used to test the hypotheses formulated in the study. The findings indicated that factors responsible for electoral violence in Jos-North LGA of Plateau state include: ethnicity, religion, electoral fraud as well as ignoble role of electoral umpires in electoral violence. Based on these, the paper recommended among others, public sensitization, criminalization of electoral violence, and prosecution of INEC officials who compromised electoral law

Igiebor (2020) surveys on the impact of electoral violence on voter participatory behaviour in the electoral process The study adopted a survey design method, The multi-stage sampling technique was used to select six thousand, two (6,000) respondents across the six geopolitical zones of the country. The data were analyzed with the aid of the Chi-Square and Yule's Q to test and determine the degree of association inherent in the stated hypotheses. The study discovered that voter participation in the electoral process is hampered by widespread violence and feeling of insecurity resulting in abstention and apathy. Consequently, some policy implications become imperative. For example, the government is advised to set in motion mechanism to forestall outbreaks of violence and ensure prompt prosecution of electoral offenders; The INEC should conduct transparent and credible elections; the political parties should conduct democratic

campaigns, primaries and general elections; while the electorates are advised to choose candidates based on competence, and resist the temptation to sell votes. Succinctly, the realization of fairness, credibility, violence free elections, and effective voters' participation in the pursuit for democratic consolidation entails the collaboration of all stakeholders in the Nigerian democratic project.

Theoretical Framework

The study anchored on frustration aggression theory. Frustration aggression theory tends to explain the reasons behind the aggressive nature of people in certain situation. In line with this paper, electoral violence is a product or the negative outcome of people's feeling resulting from election fraud. Election violence is an action that is mostly influenced and carried out by group(s). The theory holds that the main source of human violence is the frustration resulted from the competition towards a goal..

The rationale behinds the adoption of the Frustration Aggressive Theory is base in the fact that Frustration motivates anger that disposes men into aggression irrespective of its instrumentalities which lead to violence. Men who are frustrated have an innate disposition to do violence or cause crisis to its source in proportion to the intensity of their frustration. According to Gur (1970), the potential for collective violence varies strongly with the intensity and scope of relative deprivation. This relative deprivation (frustration) predicts collective violence by social groups. When people perceive that they are being prevented from achieving a goal, their frustration is likely to turn into violence. The closer one gets a goal, the greater the excitement and expectation of the pleasure and vice versa. Unexpected occurrence of the frustration also increases the likelihood of aggression. From the foregoing, it is understood that electoral violence does not just happen without any reasons leading to its occurrence. It manifests when group(s) is frustrated.

The relevant of the theory to this study is that the theory has lay bare as to why most of the elections that were conducted in Nigeria particularly in south east region in this forth republic from 1999 to this 2023 were characterized by violence that has been threatening the democratic consolidation in Nigeria. The theory as adopted and utilized in this study, therefore will enhance scientific understanding and stand as operational tools to further explain the circumstances

surrounding electoral violence between 1999 and 2023 in Nigeria and its implication on democratic consolidation.

Methodology

The descriptive survey design was adopted in this study on electoral violence on the consolidation of democracy in south east zone of Nigeria from 1999 - 2023. The study was carried in South East Geopolitical Zone which comprises Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo State. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to drawn the sample size of 320 respondents from the study area. Both primary and secondary data were utilized in the collection of data for the study. The primary source of data was based on structured questionnaire, while the secondary source included examination of textbooks, journals, newspapers, magazines, internet etc. The data collected were analyzed using simple percentage and linear simple regression through SPSS package model 23.

Data Presentation and Result

Characteristics of the Respondents

Out of the 320questionnaire issued to the respondents, 300 were retrieved which presented 93.7% was finally retrieved and presented. From the 300 respondents, 185 respondents representing 61.7% were male. While 115 of them were females representing 38.3%; showing that men are more likely to take part in study than women. The age bracket between 18 and 28 years 125 representing 41.7 % of the respondents, between 29 and 37 years 95 representing 31.7% of the respondents while those between 38 and above years were 80 representing 26.7% of the respondents in the study. Finally, the study shows that 192 respondents representing 64% had secondary education, while 108 of the respondents representing 36% had tertiary education. This distribution entails that majority of the respondents are enlightened.

Table1: The responses from the respondents on whether electoral violence has affected the democratic consolidation of between 1999-2023 in South East Zone of Nigeria

s/n	ITEMS	N	SA	A	D	SD
1	Ineffective electoral system leads to violence in south east of Nigeria	300	140 (46.7)	110 (36.7)	35 (11.7)	15 (5)

2	Inadequate of voting education contribute to electoral violence	300	150 (50)	120 (40)	20 (13.3)	10 (3.3)
3	Tribal sentiments contribute to electoral violence in south east of Nigeria	300	140 (46.7)	130 (43.3)	20 (6.7)	10 (3.3)
4	Ethnic politics contribute to electoral violence in south east of Nigeria	300	135 (45)	125 (41.7)	25 (8.3)	15 (5)
5	Religious intolerance contributes to electoral violence in south east of Nigeria	300	120 (40)	130 (43.3)	35 (11.7)	15 (5)
6	Votes buying undermines the good governance in south east of Nigeria	300	130 (43.3)	100 (33.3)	40 (13.3)	30 (10)

Source: Field Survey, 2023

From the table 1, it was indicated in the first option that 140 representing (46.7%) strongly agreed, 110 respondents representing (36.7%) agreed, 35 respondents representing (11.7%) disagreed while 15 respondents representing (5%) strongly disagreed. In the second option, the responses indicated that 150 respondents representing (50%) strongly agreed, 120 respondents representing (40%) agreed, 20 respondents representing (13.3%) disagreed while 10 respondents strongly disagreed. Also, the response from the third option revealed that 140 strongly representing (46.7%) agreed, 130 representing (43.3%) agreed, 20 respondents representing (6.7%) strongly disagreed while 10 respondents representing (3.3%) strongly disagreed. More so, in the forth option, 135 respondents representing (45%) strongly agreed, 125 respondents representing (5%) agreed, 25 respondents representing (8.3%) disagreed and 15 respondents representing (6.7%) strongly disagreed. In the fifth option, it shows that 120 respondents representing (40%) strongly agreed, 130 respondents representing (43.3%) agreed, 35 respondents representing (11.7%) disagreed while 15 respondents representing (5%) strongly disagreed. The sixth option revealed that 130 respondents representing (43.3%) strongly agreed, 100 respondents representing (33.3%) agreed, 40 respondents representing (13.3%) disagreed while 30 respondents representing (10%) strongly disagreed.

Table2: the response of the respondents on whether electoral violence has negatively affected the process of good governance between 1999-2023 in South East of Nigeria

s/n	ITEMS	N	SA	A	D	SD
7	Bribery contribute to poor governance in south east of Nigeria	300	140 (46.7)	130 (43.3	20 (6.7)	10 (3.3)
8	Inter-party conflicts retard good governance in south east of Nigeria	300	110 (36.7)	120 (40)	40 (13.3)	30 (10)
9	The use of thugs contribute to electoral violence in south east of Nigeria	300	130 (43.3)	110 (36.7)	40 (13.3)	20 (6.7)

10	The winner takes all syndrome contributes to electoral violence in south east of Nigeria	300	130 (43.5)	130 (43.3)	25 (8.3)	15 (5)
11	Rigging of election contribute to undermines good governance in south east of Nigeria	300	140 (46.7)	140 (20)	35 (11.7)	5 (1.7)
12	Manipulation of election results contribute to electoral violence in south east of Nigeria	300	150 (50)	110 (36.7)	30 (10)	10 (3.3)

Source: Field Survey, 2023

From the table 2, it was observed in the seventh options that 140 respondents representing (46.7%) strongly agreed, 130 respondents representing (43.3) agreed, 20 respondents representing (6.7%) disagreed while 10 respondents representing (10%) strongly disagreed. In the eighth option, the responses indicated that 110 respondents representing (36.7%) strongly agreed, 120 respondents representing (40%) agreed, 40 respondents representing (13.3%) disagreed while 30 respondents representing (10%) strongly disagreed. Also, the response from the ninth option revealed that 130 respondents representing (43.3%) strongly agreed, 110 respondents representing (36.7%) agreed, 40 respondents representing (13.3%) strongly disagreed while 20 respondents representing (6.7%) strongly disagreed. More so, in the tenth options, 130 respondents representing (43.3%) strongly agreed, 130 respondents representing (43.3%)agreed, 25 respondents representing (8.3%)disagreed and 15 respondents representing (5%) strongly disagreed. In the eleventh options, it shows that 140 respondents representing (46.7%) strongly agreed, 140 respondents representing (46.7%) agreed, 35 respondents representing (11.7%) disagreed while 5 respondents representing (1.7) strongly disagreed. The twelfth options revealed that 150 respondents representing (50%) strongly agreed, 110 respondents representing 36.7%) agreed, 30 respondents representing (10%) disagreed while 10 respondents representing (3.3%) strongly disagreed.

TEST OF HYPOTHESES

Test of Hypothesis One

$H_0$1: Electoral violence has not negatively affected the democratic consolidation Nigeria between 1999-2023 in South East Zone of Nigeria

$H_0$1: Electoral violence has negatively affected the democratic consolidation between 1999-2023 in South East Zone of Nigeria

Table 3 **Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Bata	t	sig
1	.927[a]	.859	.858	.32021	927	6209	000

From the table 3, the result shows that correlation coefficient (R) which has the value of 0.927 indicates that the linear correlation has strong positive relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variable. R-square is the coefficient of determination of the correlation has the value of 0.859 i.e. 86% approximately. This represents 86% of the total variation in the dependent variable, Electoral violence in the South East was explained by the independent variable, Electoral violence on the consolidation of democracy in the south east of Nigeria The above result shows that p-value (0.001) is less than (0.05) level of significance. The coefficient of 0.927 and the t-value of 06209 also show that the impact is positive. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative hypothesis was upheld and concludes that the electoral violence has negatively affected the consolidation of democracy in the South East of Nigeria.

Test of Hypothesis Two

$H_0$2: Electoral violence has not negatively affected the process of good governance in between 1999-2023 in South East Zone of Nigeria

$H_0$2: Electoral violence has negatively affected the process of good governance in between 1999-2023 in South East Zone of Nigeria.

Table 4 **Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Bata	t	sig
1	.930[a]	.864	.824	.30070	0930	15.657	000

From the table 4 the result revealed that correlation coefficient (R) which has the value of 0.930 indicates that the linear correlation is positive and strong between the dependent variable and the independent variable. R-square is the coefficient of determination of the correlation which has the value 0.86 i.e. 86% approximately. This means that 86% of the total variation in the dependent variable, the electoral violence was explained by the independent variable. The above analysis indicated shows that p-value (0.001) is less than (0.05) level of significance. The coefficient of 0.930 and the t-value of 15.6571also show that the impact is positive. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative hypothesis was upheld and concludes that the electoral violence has negatively affected the process of good governance in the south east of Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

In hypothesis 1, it was found that correlation coefficient (R) value of 0.927 indicates that the linear regression has strong positive correlation with the dependent variable and the independent variable. R-square is the coefficient of determination of the correlation has the value of 0.859 i.e. 86% approximately. This represents 86% of the total variation in the dependent variable, Electoral violence in the South East was explained by the independent variable, Electoral violence on the consolidation of democracy in the south east of Nigeria The above analysis indicated shows that p-value (0.001) is less than (0.05) level of significance. The coefficient of p. value is 0.927 while the t-value of 06209, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative hypothesis was upheld indicating that electoral violence has negatively affected the process of democratic consolidation in the South East of Nigeria.

In hypothesis 2, the finding also revealed that correlation coefficient (R) which has the value of 0.930 shows that the linear correlation has strong positive relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variable. R-square is the coefficient of determination of the correlation which has the value 0.824 i.e. representing 82% which means that 82% of the total variation in the dependent variable, the electoral violence was explained by the independent variable. The above analysis indicated that p-value (0.001) is less than (0.05) level of significance. The coefficient of 0.930 and the t-value of 15.6571also show that the impact is positive. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative hypothesis was upheld and concludes that the electoral violence has negatively affected the process of good governance in the south east of Nigeria.

Conclusion

Arising from the findings, this paper on the “electoral violence and its democratic consolidation with special focus in South East Nigeria. Therefore, the paper concluded that electoral violence has negatively affected the democratic consolidation in South East Zone of Nigeria. The study also, concluded that corrupt tendencies among the electoral officials and adhoc staff who always conniving with politicians are the major cause of electoral violence in the South East Zone of Nigeria. Also, the paper reached the conclusion that the use of thugs, bribery, and winner takes all are some of the factors that have contributed in a large measure to instigate electoral violence

in the South East of Nigeria which invariably has undermined the democratic consolidation in South East Zone in particular and Nigeria in general.

Recommendation

Arising from the findings, the paper made the following recommendations to include: that government should be realistic on enforcement of electoral law which prohibited bribery and vote buying in Nigerian political system. That those found to be involved in any forms of electoral corruption should be made to face the law so as to serve as a deterrent to others. Also, government should be serous with enlightenment campaign what expand to all part of rural areas in the country in order to keep the people abreast and updated about the political development in the country. That any electoral officer or adhoc staff caught involved or encouraging any forms of electoral practice should be jailed without any option in Nigeria

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