Comparative Analysis of Voters Perception of Rigging Behaviour among Nigerian Politicians: Edo State as a Focal Point

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Abstract

Nigeria sovereign nation, more than anything else, the greatest obstacle to the nascent democracy is the neglect of free, fair and credible election for Nigerian citizens in nation building, as evidenced by the spate of armed robbery attacks, political assassinations, religious conflicts and voters perception of rigging behaviour among politicians in Nigeria coupled with the seeming helplessness of security agencies to handle criminal acts. The focus of this paper is to comparatively analyze Voters Perception of Rigging Behaviour Among Politicians in Nigeria, Edo State as a Focal Point. Political activities all over the world and particularly in Nigeria often provide the philosophical drive, and in some cases, the front-line troops for social change, including revolutions and, occasionally centre of excellence. Whenever the word voting or election is mentioned in Nigeria, what quickly comes to the mind of Nigerians is rigging among politician. Accordingly, election or

voting in Nigeria is the illegal manipulation of election procedures, through fraud related to ballot box fixing and connivance between electoral officials and party agents to influence the result of an election. It has become malignantly a progressive phenomenon in the Nigerian democracy process and a means to ensure electoral success, while subverting contemporary notions of "credible" "free and fair" democratic standards or a minimum, regalia honest, conduct of elections in the selection or conditions between choices. Therefore, the development of political and administrative institutions in Western Europe has shown that other countries that have modernized or developed politically and those new and old nation states that strive towards modernization or development have developed political system. In the course of this study, the Comparative Analysis of Voters Perception of Rigging Behaviour Among Politicians in Nigeria were brought to the fore while the objectives of the study were well spelt out. Hypotheses were postulated and the Political Economy Theory was used to explicate the works. Data were obtained from both primary and secondary sources. From the primary sources, the survey method, that is, the use of questionnaire were designed and adopted. Data obtained from this method were analyzed with the aid of Simple Percentage. Thereafter, the five researchable hypotheses were tested and accepted while the null hypotheses were rejected. The implication is that there was relationship between the dependent and independent variables. Generally, the paper brought to focus that effective monitoring of voting procedures/processes in Nigeria is a task that must be done with collective efforts of all stakeholders for the growth and development of Nigeria. In a nutshell, this paper suggests policy prescription and recommendation which are aimed at repositioning nation-state. Finally, this paper however, painstakingly appraises several of these issues and concludes that all stakeholders in the federal polity should thread softly, be objective, rational, altruistic

and magnanimous in order not to make the existence of true federalism (social, education, political and economic cohesive existence of the people, peace and tranquility) a fleeting illusion and a mirage.

Key Words: Stakeholders, Voters, Rigging, Behaviour, Federal, Government

Introduction

Nigeria sovereign nation, more than anything else, the greatest obstacle to the nascent democracy is the neglect of free, fair and credible election for Nigerian citizens in nation building, as evidenced by the spate of armed robbery attacks, political assassinations, religious conflicts and education funding coupled with the seeming helplessness of security agencies to handle criminal acts (Uhunmwuangho and Epelle, 2011). The situation is worsened by the increasing number of voters perception of rigging behaviour among Nigerian politicians some of whom are ready recruits for criminal activities (Nigerian Tribune, 2002). The above statement from an editorial comment by a national daily in Nigeria indeed epitomises the central focus of this paper, the aim of which is to analyze voters perception of rigging behaviour among politicians in Nigeria, Edo State as a Focal Point.

Political activities all over the world and particularly in Nigeria often provide the philosophical drive, and in some cases, the front-line troops for social change, including revolutions and, occasionally centre of excellence. Whenever the word voting or election is mentioned in Nigeria, what quickly comes to the mind of Nigerians is rigging among politician. According to Forest (1995), election or voting in Nigeria is the illegal manipulation of election procedures, through fraud related to ballot box fixing and connivance between electoral officials and party agents to influence the result of an election. It has become malignantly a progressive phenomenon in the Nigerian democracy process and a means to ensure

electoral success, while subverting contemporary notions of "credible" "free and fair" democratic standards or a minimum, regalia honest, conduct of elections in the selection or conditions between choices. Therefore, the development of political and administrative institutions in Western Europe has shown that other countries that have modernized or developed politically and those new and old nation states that strive towards modernization or development have developed political system. The different methods of election rigging includes ballot box stuffing ballot-box-hacking collusion between electoral staffs and party agents, illegal printing of voters card, falsification of result and inflation of votes rind voters register (Zimako, 2010). The word rigging in Nigeria is widely synonymous with election fraud, with little in-depth coverage devoted to bid rigging or the free enterprise related price rigging. This is partly as a result of the real and perceived violent, chaotic and corrupt nature of the elections conducted in 1959, 1964, 1979, 1983, 1999, 2003, 2007 (Forest, 1995).

Today, most elections conducted usually follows allegations of rigging with party officials sometime defending themselves by the notion, that the complaints are null as a result of the involvement of all parties in the act and that opponents were complaining because they were out-rigged. In 1956 - 1966, there were instances of election rigging which is related to the ballot-box system employed and also because of the number of illiterate voters who voted, it was perceived that the electoral outcome was impeded but this was in contrast to the 1964 election where their perception of mass-rigging in all regions of the federation. A follow up election in 1965 left in doubt the suppose victory of the Western Region Premier's party throwing the rigging into crises (Zimako, 2010). The rigging habit of Nigeria politicians have been of great concern to Nigeria in general and Edo State politicians in particulars. The big question now is, what is the "voter's perception of rigging behavior among Nigerian politicians" especially in Edo State.

Problems

Rigging, which comes in different forms have been seen as a legitimate way of winning elections by Nigerian politicians. This have led to many problems. When an election is rigged, choices of the citizens are invariably annulled and the government that emerges cannot represent, protect and effect the interest and aspirations of the people, a government that takes over power through fraudulent electoral processes cannot claim to be democratic or legitimate and the overall net effect of this leads to apathy, leadership crisis, political violence assassination galore and poor political culture (Attahiru, 2007). It has also led to high amount of money spent on return elections, dis-enfranchising of eligible voters, high rate of insecurity in the country, loss of life and property etc. Hence, there are motivations behind the study of the "voter's perception of rigging behaviour among Nigerians politicians".

Most of the nullification and cancellation was as a result of rigging perpetuated by some or all of the various actors, the politicians. However, despite the glaring cases of fraud at the election which necessitated the nullification and cancellation of these results, curious enough, not a single perpetrator has either been apprehended or persecuted.

Worried by this development, many have asked, is it that electoral crime is not a punishable offence? Are there no provision in our "law hooks" (constitution) on how to deal with those who commit crimes during elections? Or are these criminals invisible? If the tribunals could affirm that the irregularities necessitating the nullification of these elections and the call for a fresh election were actually committed, can't they also identify the perpetuator and met-out punishment on them accordingly to serve as deterrent (Attahiru, 2007).

These and many more are questions that have bogged the minds of voters and political observers who are of the opinion that something must be wrong somewhere.

The major problem is the boldness and audacity of those who engaged in the unwholesome practice of rigging and it is a direct consequence of the fact that although rigging has featured in virtually all the elections held in the country since independence except maybe 1993 elections, no single individual has been known to have been apprehended, persecuted and duly punished. Even when the culprits are apprehended on Election Day, they are quickly released when; their masters the politicians step in to secure their release. It is against this background that the following hypothetical questions needs to be answered:

1. What is the concept of Voters Perception of Rigging Behaviour?
2. Are all elections in Edo State characterized by rigging?
3. Is Rigging a normal way of securing office?
4. Can voters rejection of incentives from politicians during election be stopped?

Objective

The specific objectives are:

1. To ascertain whether the people understand the concept of rigging.
2. To examines whether the environmental background leads/contribut to election rigging.
3. To find out whether elections in Edo State are characterized by rigging.
4. To examine whether educational background contributes/leads to rigging.
5. To find out if Rigging election is a normal way of securing office.

Hypotheses

In order to achieve the above objectives, the following research hypotheses were formulated:

1. There is no significant relationship between the people understanding the concept and election rigging in Nigeria
2. There is no significant relationship between environmental background and election rigging behaviours.

3. There is no significant relationship between elections in Edo State and election characterized by rigging.
4. There is no significant relationship between educational background and rigging behaviour in Nigeria.
5. There is no significant relationship between Rigging election and normal way of securing office.

Theoretical Exposition

The particular theory that can sufficiently act as guide for the analysis of issues in this paper is Political Economy Theory. The political economy approach which is based on dialectical materialism was presented by Ekong (2007), Ake (1981), Aja (1998) and Chikendu (2002) to explain electoral malpractices and voters perception rigging behaviour.

Ekong propounded the theory of dialectical materialism which places primacy on material or economic conditions of society. It is based on the belief that man is dominantly motivated by economic needs - labour is the essence of material existence hence, economic activity is man's primary concern, according to Aja (1998), the thrust of this perspective is on how the understanding of economic structure as defined by the relationship between employers and working class in the process of production to Marx; every political system corresponds and reflects its kind of economic structure. Marx placed emphasis and premium on the production base i.e. sub-structure, saying that this determines the super substructure, one easily understands the nature of internal relations, how a society organize, manages, and reproduces itself, the causes of tension (rigging) conflict or contradictions in any given society and the bearing or direction of social change. Thus, Marx believes that the primary cause of tension and other social dislocation in the society is economic factors.

Aje (1998) opined that understanding of economic process or structure makes it easier to understand the nature of politics, culture, national security; social psychological consciousness, ideological inclinations etc. Using the political economy approach Karl Marx analyzed

and justified the root causes of conflicts and contradictions in human societies.

According to Oddih (2004), Obasi (1998), Follet (2002); some of these are legacies from colonialism which colonialism created and which leads to electoral malpractices.

(a) Incorporation of African economy into global capitalist system with its concomitant dependent relationship and disarticulation of African economies.

(b) Underdevelopment of African economies, states and communities. Establishment of institutions, process and linkages that made neocolonial tie inevitable which have led to the continued dependence and exploitation.

(c) Nurturing an indigenous bourgeoisie that constituted, another exploitation class.

(d) Institution and legitimization of corruption and ethno/religious conflicts as a way of life through divide and rule policy.

Methodology

This paper adopted a descriptive survey method. The survey was based on selected public servants from the eighteen Local Government Areas of Edo State which is the focal point. The population of the study consist of 250 base on two categories (Senior and Junior) staff of the Local Government Areas in Edo State (see table one). Out of this number, one hundred and seventy of them met our criteria and therefore form our sample size as can be seen in table one below:

TABLE 1: POPULATION OF STUDY

S/No	Local Government Areas	Category of Respondents	No. of Returned Questionnaires	No. of Not Returned/ Invalid Questionnaires	Total No. of Sampled Respondents
1.	Uhunmwonde	Senior Staff	16	6	31
		Junior Staff	5	4	
2.	Orhionmwon	Senior Staff	17	8	31
		Junior Staff	4	2	
3.	Egor	Senior Staff	18	7	32
		Junior Staff	4	3	
4.	Ikpoba-Okha	Senior Staff	15	7	31
		Junior Staff	6	3	
5.	Oredo	Senior Staff	17	6	32
		Junior Staff	5	4	
6.	Ovia South West	Senior Staff	17	8	31
		Junior Staff	4	2	
7.	Ovia North East	Senior Staff	18	7	31
		Junior Staff	4	3	
8.	Esan Central	Senior Staff	16	6	31
		Junior Staff	5	4	
TOTAL			**170**	**80**	**250**

Source: Field Survey 2019.

Both Primary and Secondary sources of data were explored in trying to generate data for this study The specific information required for the study was Voters Perception, Rigging Behaviour, Attitudes, Inducement in administrative mechanism put in place among others. The questionnaire

formed the main instrument used in generating primary data, while documented information on prints that are relevant to this study, constituted the secondary source of generating data. To compliment the information received through the questionnaire, respondents were also interviewed. As the research is based on attitude and opinions, the statistical tools employed in analyzing responses include, tables and simple percentages. All the one hundred and seventy copies of the questionnaire distributed to the respondents studied were duly completed and returned in a useable form. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for the data analysis.

Data Analysis

Of all the one hundred and seventy respondents, eighty (47%) of them are married; fifty (29%) are single while twenty one (13%) are divorced and the remaining nineteen (11%) are either widow or widowers. Thirty (18%) of them are within the age bracket of 18 – 25, Fifty (29%) are between the age bracket of 26-35; while eighty (47%) are within the age bracket of 36-45 and the remaining forty six years and above are ten (6%).

TABLE 2: Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between the people understanding the concept and election rigging in Nigeria

Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	110	65
No	60	35
Total	170	100

Source: Statistical Analysis

Table 2 shows that 110 (65%) of the total respondents agreed that understanding the concept and election rigging in Nigeria have more relevance and impacted negatively on people enjoying the dividends of

democracy in Edo State in particular and Nigeria in general, conversely responsible for the lack of attitudinal change, voters apathy and fragrant disregard for rules and regulations.

Therefore, the hypothesis one which states that there is no significant relationship between the people understanding the concept and election rigging in Nigeria is accepted.

TABLE 3: Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between environmental background and election rigging behaviours.

Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	105	62
No	65	38
Total	170	100

Source: Statistical Analysis

Table 3 shows that 105 (62%) of the respondents agreed that there is correlation between environmental background and election rigging behaviour which led to undue low turn out during election and financial inducement, while 65 (38%) were not satisfied or disagreed.

TABLE 4: Hypothesis 3

There is no significant relationship between educational background and rigging behaviour in Nigeria.

Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	120	71
No	50	29
Total	170	100

Source: Statistical Analysis

Table 4 shows that 120 (71%) of the respondents agreed that educational background has no relationship with rigging behaviour in Nigeria which substantially led to economy drawback and also hampered significantly on political actualization while 50 (29%) disagreed with the opinion.

Therefore, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between educational background and rigging behaviour in Nigeria is accepted.

Findings Based On Hypotheses

Based on the analysis of the hypotheses, all the research hypotheses were positive which implies that (**H_r) 1-3** were accepted.

More so, the study revealed that Voters Perception of Rigging Behaviour among Politicians in Nigeria could impact negatively on developmental strike on the Pubic Administration.

1. Furthermore, this paper have highlighted several challenges and solutions as per the findings in the hypothesis carried out in the research. However, again, it was found that, the application of necessary mechanism in checkmating election rigging charting and planning Public Services and eliminating all sorts of rigging behaviour was not put in place.
2. It was revealed that a clear understanding of the concept of election rigging which would effectively, efficiently and economically enhance the process of public service delivery.
3. It was also revealed according to some findings that the focus should rather be placed on the day-to-day voters education by Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) through the use of pamphlets, town criers and National Orientation Campaign to the populace before election.
4. Effective law on voters perception on rigging behaviour should be in place to ensure that perpetrators are dealt with (Akintoye and Uhunmwuangho, 2018).

5. Transparency or openness appears to be the desideration to the stop of rigging behaviour among Nigerian politician.
6. Power and wealth seems to be the driving force of rigging behaviour among Nigerian politicians.

See figure 1 below for more details of Nigeria Political map.



Figure 1: Political map of Nigeria

Source: Wilkipedia catched 20 November, 2018.

Conclusion and Recommendations

For the high point of this study, data were collected from eight selected Local Government Areas of Edo State. Comparatively, this study investigated Voters Perception of Rigging Behaviour among Nigerian Politicians, with particular reference to Edo State as a focal point.

Data obtained from this method were analyzed with the aid of Simple Percentage. Thereafter, the three researchable hypotheses were tested and accepted while the null hypotheses were rejected. The implication is that there was relationship between the dependent and independent variables. Generally, the paper brought to focus that the inability of law enforcement agents to bring the victims of electoral crimes to book has contributed and is an encouraging factor for the increase in rigging behaviour. In a nutshell, it was discovered that some voters do not understand the idea or the expense of rigging and the negative effects on the nation but see rigging as just hijacking and ballot stuffing (Aje, 1998). Hence: rigging has taken over the place of free, fair and credible election in the country.

Recommendations

From strictly comparative point of view, both efficiency and effectiveness are abstract measures of rigging behaviour.

On the basis of the findings and research on the voters perception of rigging behavior by Nigerians politicians; voters, electoral agents, law enforcement agents, policy makers, educational institutions etc have a role to play in the eradication of rigging and must engage in its eradication process.

It is strongly recommended that the law enforcement agents should ensure that riggers big or small be brought to book and made to face the rot of the law as this will deter others from rigging.

Policy makers should make more stringent law which the politicians cannot easily jump out of and laws on compulsory eradication of rigging.

Government, policy makers must ensure the compulsory education of voter on the different types and methods of rigging before election.

Any politician found giving incentives (gifts) during election period should be automatically disqualify. Incentives given to political office holders should be reduced and that of civil servants, permanent secretaries etc be increased as this will reduce competition of political office holders thereby reducing rigging or crime.

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