

THE ROLE OF SECURITY AGENCIES IN A FREE, FAIR AND CREDIBLE ELECTION (A CASE STUDY OF 2023 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION)

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of security agencies in a free, fair and credible election. Faced with the problem of the police having not only failed to properly carry out their election responsibilities but have themselves ended up being a central element of the security challenges connected with the conduct of elections in Nigeria, the study was guided by the following objectives; To study how the security agencies curb electoral violence before, during and after elections. To understand the impact of electoral violence and insecurity on the electoral participation in Nigeria. To highlight the challenges faced by the security agencies in curbing electoral violence in Nigeria. The study employed descriptive and explanatory design, questionnaires in addition to library research were applied in order to collect data. Primary and secondary data sources were used and data was analyzed using statistical package which was presented in frequency tables and percentage. The respondents under the study were 30 security agents deployed during the 2023 presidential election. The study findings revealed that there is a significant impact [security agencies] has on [free, fair and credible elections]. Linear regression significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed), 0.00 indicates the significance of interaction between two variables an indication that the significant is under the range of 0.0 and 0.05. Using the above findings, it implied that there is a strong relationship between [security agencies] and [free, fair and credible elections]. Key recommendations from the study are; Security agencies should maintain a high level of professionalism and impartiality in their operations during elections. They should uphold the rule of law and demonstrate fairness and neutrality in their actions. This includes avoiding any form of political bias, refraining from undue influence or interference, and treating all political parties, candidates, and citizens equally. Building and promoting a culture of professionalism within security agencies will enhance public trust and confidence in their role during elections. Effective coordination among different security agencies is crucial for addressing electoral violence comprehensively. Security agencies should establish mechanisms for sharing intelligence, coordinating operations, and exchanging information in real-time. This collaboration should extend to engagement with election management bodies, civil society organizations, and relevant stakeholders. Regular joint training exercises and joint operation planning will enhance synergy, streamline efforts, and improve overall security preparedness. Security agencies can play a vital role in promoting voter

education and engagement initiatives, by partnering with election management bodies, civil society organizations, and community leaders, they can as well help educate voters on their rights and responsibilities, the electoral process, and the importance of peaceful participation. These efforts should specifically target marginalized groups, emphasizing inclusivity and equal participation. Increasing voter education and engagement will contribute to reducing tensions, preventing misinformation, and fostering a peaceful electoral environment.

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

The intrinsic connection between the effective conduct of free, fair, credible and acceptable elections and the institutionalization and consolidation of democracy in a country is commonly acknowledged. This occurs from the idea that in a democracy, the duty of individuals is to create a government, and elections are the institutional structures/plans for arriving at political decisions where people are vested with the power to decide by means of competitive struggle for the people's votes. Elections are therefore usually viewed as a procedure for regulatory competition for political power with competition for votes. For that reason, elections are the basic foundation of democracy (Report of the electoral reform committee, 2008). The electoral system of any given nation plays an essential function in maintaining and moulding the political behavior of its people (Okolo, 2000). The method and way elections are carried out in a nation goes a long way to identify the degree of political culture, political involvement and good governance in that nation. These assertions provide a hint to the significance of a credible and transparent electoral system in a nation.

It has been established that the very best method for the emergence of political leadership in contemporary world is via the electoral process. Many nations are continuously improving and/or reforming their electoral processes to ensure the emergence of the right kind of political leadership. In Nigeria, the process of reforming the electoral process has been a reoccurring one. Since the return of democracy in 1999, which introduced the fourth republic after several years of military rule, the electoral legislation guiding the conduct of elections has been amended virtually after every election leading to the enactment of the 2001, 2006 and 2010 electoral acts and the most recent one in 2022 (electoral reform). There are a lot of obstacles with the conduct of elections in Nigeria from the 1999 election to the 2023 general elections (Abdulahi, et.al., 2016; Akpan, 2017). Another factor that has been recorded is that, elections in Nigeria are continuous tales of violence, fraud and negative blood. The obstacles include to name a few things irregularities, which place the credibility of the whole electoral process in doubt; issues with the legislative structure which places restrictions on the electoral process; a number of organisations are not performing their duties to guarantee credible, free and fair election. The electoral system does not provide space for inclusiveness; lack of independence of electoral commissions; long process of election conflict resolution; irresponsible behavior by politicians

and followers materializing in thuggery and violence; lack of effective democratic institutions and monetisation of politics (Adebayo, 2016; Ikyase, et.al., 2015). For that reason, money does not just establish that contest in electoral politics in Nigeria, however it likewise drowns votes and voices as godfathers openly confess about shady deals, financing or funding elections for godsons and buying electoral success. The outcome of the obstacles is that the votes of the people do not count. In spite of the implementation of the several electoral reforms with the aim of recommending ways to restore sanity to the nation's electoral process, election violence has been the significant bane of Nigeria's democratic sustainability since the emergence of the fourth republic in Nigeria.

Without gainsaying, elections are at the core of the democratic process, for that reason, elections that are without pressure, inappropriate influence and worry is sacrosanct. To attain this (i.e., free, fair and credible elections), continuing initiatives are being made by state, non-state actors and international organizations to guarantee free and fair conduct and administration of elections in a bid to guarantee and ensure credibility. Underscoring the utmost importance of credible elections around the world, USAID and other relevant international agencies over the last thirty years have relentlessly helped both the emerging and consolidating democracies in carrying out free and fair elections. Over the intervening decades, these international organisations have given some types of technical support so as to guarantee credible elections and ensure improved governance and societal wellness in the nation concerned.

Events and happenings from developed democracies all over the world have revealed that the significance of election security to the credibility of elections cannot be overemphasized as the conduct and administration of free, fair and credible elections to an excellent degree rely on the security system available in any democratic setting. Thus, the advancement and employment of different security measures by various governments and electoral commissions in both consolidated and emerging democracies to guarantee election credibility and as a result avoid legitimacy crisis. Sean Dunne, talking about the importance of elections security, avers that, reliable security throughout an electoral process is critical to enhancing participants' confidence and dedication to an election. He, later suggested more that security continues to be an inseparable part of the electoral process.

The significance of a secured environment for the conduct of free, fair and credible elections cannot be downplayed. To this effect, the unalloyed contributions of governments at all levels and the readiness of security agencies to manage security challenges before, during, and after elections cannot be overemphasized. Particularly, nonetheless, as a result of the spate, enormity and magnitude of electoral violence that have been experienced from previous general elections between 1999 and 2019 in Nigeria, there were major misgivings from within and outside Nigeria regarding whether the government would certainly have the ability to provide adequate and well-coordinated security that will ensure the conduct of free, fair and credible elections in 2023. Against this backdrop, this study relying mainly on secondary sources of data collection

critically examined the role of security agencies in a free, fair and credible election by using 2023 presidential election as a case study.

Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria, security of voters, election materials and officials and the preservation of legal and orderly electoral processes are essential for free, fair and credible elections. In accordance with the provisions of the Police Act, the Criminal Code (1990), the Police Service Commission (PSC) guidelines (2003) and the Electoral Act (2010), security agencies, especially the police are saddled with the constitutional duty of providing proper security throughout elections to allow people elect their leaders under a calm atmosphere without fraud, worry, coercion, intimidation and violence. While the Police Service Commission guidelines emphasize the scope for police involvement in the electoral process, the Electoral Act plainly specifies what makes up electoral offences before, during and after elections and designates the role of maintaining internal security throughout elections to the police.

Although, the provisions of the above-stated legal structures and allied documents are inarguably elaborate and detailed enough to make sure that the police efficiently and professionally perform their electoral functions, reports of actual performance of security agencies throughout elections suggest rather sadly that the police have not only failed to properly carry out their election responsibilities but have themselves ended up being a central element of the security challenges connected with the conduct of elections in Nigeria. Consequently, election insecurity has ended up being an enduring attribute of election administration in Nigeria. This issue made the Nigerian citizen to question the role of the Nigerian security agencies before, during and after elections in Nigeria. Hence, this study aims to examine the role of security agencies in a free, fair and credible election by using 2023 Presidential election as a case study.

Objectives of the Study

This study has both main and specific objectives. The main objective of this study is to examine the role of security agencies in a free, fair and credible election by using 2023 Presidential election as a case study. However, the specific objectives are:

To study how the security agencies curb electoral violence before, during and after elections

To understand the impact of electoral violence and insecurity on the electoral participation in Nigeria

To highlight the challenges faced by the security agencies in curbing electoral violence in Nigeria.

Research Questions

The followings are the research questions for this study:
How does the security agencies curb electoral violence before, during and after elections?

What is the impact of electoral violence and insecurity on the electoral participation in Nigeria?
What are the challenges faced by the security agencies in curbing electoral violence in Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The followings are the research hypotheses for this study:

There is a significant influence of the security agencies on electoral violence before, during and after elections

There is a significant relationship between electoral violence and insecurity on the electoral participation in Nigeria

Significance of the Study

The findings of the study would be significant in several ways.

It would serve as a reference material both for students and other researchers, who may have need for information and documentations on this area of academic study.

The findings would also be helpful to all the security agencies that their role in ensuring free, fair and credible election before, during and after elections are properly carried out without any form of bias.

The findings would also offer the electorate the opportunity to evaluate the role of security agencies in free, fair and credible election without any form of fear or intimidation from the security agencies.

Scope of the Study

The study focused on Presidential election in 2023. Although the study is limited to the Presidential election of 2023, it is assumed that in Nigeria generally, the general elections have similar attributes. Based on this assumption, the result of the findings could be generalized and the Nigeria Police shall also be used as the only security agencies examined in this study.

Limitations of the Study

The study was faced with time and fund constraints being academic based research. The time allocated for this study was not enough as in combining the work on this study with daily academic routine. Also, the study was limited to some areas due to the problems of funds, shortage of texts, journals and information relevant to the study.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter is concerned with the methodology used in achieving the objectives of the study. It covers research design, study area, population of the study, sample size, sampling techniques, instrument for data collection, sources of data collection, validity of research instrument, reliability of the instrument, administration of the instrument, method of data analysis and decision rule.

Research Design

This study employed the use of survey research design. The choice of this research design was considered appropriate because of its advantages of identifying attributes of a large population from a group of individuals. The design was suitable for the study as the study sought to examine subject matters using the 2023 presidential election as a case study.

The Study Area

This study was conducted in Nigeria. The choice of this study area was informed by its involvement in the subject matter in the state.

Population of the Study

The population of this study consisted of thirty-three (33) security agents deployed during the 2023 presidential election.

Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

As a result of the inability of the researcher to effectively study the whole staff strength (population) of the organisation, a representative number was chosen as the sample size population. Thirty (30) staff was used as the sample size. The sample size was calculated using the Taro Yamane scientific formula which is given as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

N is the Population

1 is the constant

e is the degree of error expected

n is the sample size

$$n = 33$$

$$1 + 33 (0.05)^2$$

33

$$1 + 33 (0.0025)$$

33

$$1 + 0.0825$$

33

1.0825

$$n = 30.4$$

Sources of Data Collection

Data were collected from primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained through questionnaire and personal interviews with security agents deployed during the 2023 presidential election. This method was adopted to enable detailed and independent information not covered

by the questionnaire to be expressed by the respondents. Secondary data were obtained from published reports, books, internet, journals, newspapers and magazines. For analytical comparison of facts and proper compilation of facts and figures, survey of existing documents was deemed necessary.

Instrument for Data Collection

Data were collected through questionnaire carefully designed and administered to the respondents, as well as through personal interviews. On the whole, the questionnaire constituted the major instrument for data collection. The questionnaire contains sections A and B. Section A contains personal information about the respondents. Section B is the main body of the questionnaire. This section contains seventeen (15) close ended questions using a four (4) point scale instrument through which the opinions of the respondents were expressed. Their responses were measured by means of a four category rating system:

SA	-	Strongly agree	4
A	-	Agree	3
D	-	Disagree	2
SD	-	Strongly disagree	1

Validity of Research Instrument

The validity of the research instrument was assessed by the supervisor and other experts in the [Faculty and School]. These experts assessed the relevance of each item in relation to the objectives of the study, the hypotheses to be tested as well as the comprehensibility of each item in relation to the cognitive level of the respondents. They validated the instrument by effecting necessary corrections, examining the contents and ascertaining clarification of ideas as well as appropriateness of the items.

Reliability of the Instrument

Reliability in this context refers to the measure of consistency of the instrument used in eliciting relevant and desirable responses from respondents so that the objectives can be reliably and meaningfully achieved. In order to determine the reliability of the instrument used in the study, the corrected questionnaire was administered randomly on selected security agents deployed during the 2023 presidential election. This approach was repeated with the same group after a

two – month’s period and the results obtained from the first and second pre-test were consistent, therefore, the instrument is reliable.

Administration of the Instrument

The questionnaire were personally administered by the researcher to the respondents during official hours at the office. The exercise was done with the help of head of operations of the organization. This enhanced return rate of 100%.

Method of Data Analysis

Tables and simple percentage was used as technique of analyzing the research questions while linear regression was used to test the research hypotheses. All the tests were conducted at 0.05 level of significance.

Decision Rule

The decision to either reject or accept the null hypothesis (H_0) was reached using the following rules:

If the calculated value (t_{cal}) is greater than the table value (t_{tab}), the null hypothesis (H_0) will be rejected in favor of the alternative hypothesis (H_1) and if the table value (t_{tab}) is greater than the calculated value (t_{cal}) the alternative hypothesis (H_1) will be rejected in favor of the null hypothesis.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers data analysis, interpretation and the mode of presentation to illustrate the role of security agencies in a free, fair and credible election. The various sections below therefore show the analysis and discussion of data collected from various respondents of security agencies. Respondents comprising of security personnel of various security agencies in Nigeria, especially the Nigerian Police Force, amounted to Thirty (30). All 30 respondents responded to the various questions asked in the questionnaire, as there were no unreturned questionnaires.

Responses gotten from the respondents were analysed to either Explain with the empirical evidence the initial claims of the researcher on the subject matter.

Below are the objectives and the analysis of some of the questions used to address these objectives.

PRESENTATION OF DATA

Table 1 **Statistics of Field Survey**

Questionnaires Issued	Questionnaires Returned	Questionnaires not Returned
30	30	0

Source: Field Survey July, 2023.

Table 1 clearly shows the sample size of 30 questionnaires issued and 30 returned distribution without any not returned.

Table 2
What is your gender?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	15	50.0	50.0	50.0
Valid Female	15	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey July, 2023.

Table 2 clearly shows the gender distribution of respondents. 15 respondents representing 50.0% were male while, 15 respondents representing 50% were females.

This implies that the respondents were equal number of Gender.

Table 3**What is your age bracket?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 18-30 years old	4	13.3	13.3	13.3
31-50 years old	21	70.0	70.0	83.3
51-70 years old	4	13.3	13.3	96.7
71 years old and above	1	3.3	3.3	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey July, 2023.

Table 3 highlights the age distribution of the respondents. 4 respondents representing 13.3% are between 18-30 years old, 21 respondents representing 70.0% are between 31-50 years old, 4 respondents representing 13.3% are between 51-70 years old, and, 1 respondent representing 3.3% is 70 years old and above.

This implies that majority of the respondents are between the ages of 31 to 50 years old.

Table 4**What's your educational qualification?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid HND/Degree	8	26.7	26.7	26.7
Masters/PhD	12	40.0	40.0	66.7
Professionals	10	33.3	33.3	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey July, 2023.

Table 4 indicates the educational qualification of the respondents.

8 respondents representing 26.7% have HND/Degree, 12 respondents representing 40.0% have Masters/PhD, and 10 respondents representing 33.3% are Professionals.

This implies that majority of the respondents have Masters/PhD.

Table 5

What's your marital status?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Single	10	33.3	33.3	33.3
Married	10	33.3	33.3	66.7
Divorced	5	16.7	16.7	83.3
Widow(er)	5	16.7	16.7	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey July, 2023.

Table 5 shows the marital status of the respondents. 10 respondents representing 33.3% are not married, 10 respondents representing 33.3% are married, 5 respondents representing 16.7% are divorced, while 5 respondents representing 16.7% are widows/widowers.

This implies that majority of the respondents were Married and Single.

Table 6

Which Security Agency below do you belong to?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid The Mobile Police force	7	23.3	23.3	23.3

The Nigerian Army	8	26.7	26.7	50.0
The Nigerian Police Force	10	33.3	33.3	83.3
Others	5	16.7	16.7	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey January, 2023.

Table 6 indicates the department of the respondents.

7 respondents representing 23.3% are Security agents of the Mobile Police force, 8 respondents representing 50.0% are Soldiers of the Nigerian Army, 10 respondents representing 33.3% are Security agents of the Nigerian Police Force, while 5 respondents representing 16.7% are of Other Security agencies.

This implies that majority of the respondents are Security agents of the Nigerian Police Force.

Table 7

Do you have knowledge about how the security agencies curb electoral violence before, during and after elections?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	30	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field Survey July, 2023.

Table 7 shows the level of knowledge the respondents about how the security agencies curb electoral violence before, during and after elections.

All respondents representing 100% indicated to have known about the subject matter and can give responses issued to them for the purpose of this research.

Table 8

If yes, how do the security agencies curb electoral violence before, during and after elections?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Security planning and deployment	6	20.0	20.0	20.0
Pre-election intelligence and risk assessment	9	30.0	30.0	50.0
Valid Monitoring and responding during elections	6	20.0	20.0	70.0
Post-election investigations and legal action	5	16.7	16.7	86.7
Voter education and awareness	4	13.3	13.3	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey July, 2023.

Table 8 highlights how the security agencies curb electoral violence before, during and after elections.

6 respondents representing 20.0% identified Security planning and deployment, during and after elections, 9 respondents representing 30.0% identified Pre-election intelligence and risk assessment as how the security agencies curb electoral violence before, during and after elections, 6 respondents representing 20.0% identified Monitoring and responding during elections as how the security agencies curb electoral violence before, during and after elections, 5 respondents representing 16.7% identified Post-election investigations and legal action as how the security agencies curb electoral violence before, during and after elections, while 4 respondents representing 13.3% identified Voter education and awareness as how the security agencies curb electoral violence before, during and after elections.

This implies that majority of the respondents identified Pre-election intelligence and risk assessment as how the security agencies curb electoral violence before, during and after elections.

Table 9

Are these how the security agencies curb electoral violence before, during and after elections in your ward?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly agree	9	30.0	30.0	83.3
Agree	16	53.3	53.3	53.3
Disagree	3	10.0	10.0	93.3
Strongly Disagree	2	6.7	6.7	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey July, 2023.

Table 9 clearly shows the responses of the respondents as regards to if these are how the security agencies curb electoral violence before, during and after elections in their ward.

9 respondents representing 30.0% Strongly agree that these are how the security agencies curb electoral violence before, during and after elections in their ward, 16 respondents representing 53.3% agree that these are how the security agencies curb electoral violence before, during and after elections in their ward, 3 respondents representing 10.0% disagree that these are how the security agencies curb electoral violence before, during and after elections in their ward, while 2 respondent representing 6.7% Strongly disagree that these are how the security agencies curb electoral violence before, during and after elections in their ward.

This implies that majority of the respondents agree that these are how the security agencies curb electoral violence before, during and after elections in their ward.

Table 10

Do you know the impact of electoral violence and insecurity on the electoral participation?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	30	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field Survey July, 2023.

Table 10 shows the level of knowledge of the respondents on the impact of electoral violence and insecurity on the electoral participation.

All respondents representing 100% indicated to have known about the subject matter and can give responses to other questions that follows.

Table 11

If yes, what is the impact of electoral violence and insecurity on the electoral participation?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Suppression of voter turnout	7	23.3	23.3	23.3
Disenfranchisement of marginalized groups	6	20.0	20.0	43.3
Erosion of trust in the electoral process	6	20.0	20.0	63.3
Polarization and deepening of societal divisions	5	16.7	16.7	80.0
undermining democratic institutions and stability	6	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey July, 2023

Table 11 shows the impact of electoral violence and insecurity on the electoral participation.

7 respondents representing 23.3% identified Suppression of voter turnout as the impact of electoral violence and insecurity on the electoral participation, 6 respondents representing 20.0% identified Disenfranchisement of marginalized groups as the impact of electoral violence and insecurity on the electoral participation, 6 respondents representing 20.0% identified Erosion of trust in the electoral process as the impact of electoral violence and insecurity on the electoral participation, 5 respondents representing 16.7% identified Polarization and deepening of societal divisions as the impact of electoral violence and insecurity on the electoral participation, while 6

respondents representing 20.0% identified undermining democratic institutions and stability as the impact of electoral violence and insecurity on the electoral participation.

This shows that majority of the respondents identified Suppression of voter turnout as the impact of electoral violence and insecurity on the electoral participation.

Table 12

is this the impact of electoral violence and insecurity on the electoral participation in your ward?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly agree	14	46.7	46.7	46.7
Agree	12	40.0	40.0	86.7
Disagree	3	10.0	10.0	96.7
Strongly Disagree	1	3.3	3.3	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey July, 2023

Table 12 shows the responses of the respondents as regards to if this is the impact of electoral violence and insecurity on the electoral participation in their ward.

14 respondents representing 46.7% Strongly agree that this is the impact of electoral violence and insecurity on the electoral participation in their ward, 12 respondents representing 40.0% agree that this is the impact of electoral violence and insecurity on the electoral participation in their ward, 3 respondents representing 10.0% disagree that this is the impact of electoral violence and insecurity on the electoral participation in their ward, while 1 respondent representing 3.3% Strongly disagree that this is the impact of electoral violence and insecurity on the electoral participation in their ward.

This indicates that majority of the respondents strongly agree that this is the impact of electoral violence and insecurity on the electoral participation in their ward.

Table 13

Do you have knowledge about the challenges faced by the security agencies in curbing electoral violence?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	30	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field Survey July, 2023.

Table 13 shows the knowledge of the respondents about the challenges faced by the security agencies in curbing electoral violence.

All respondents representing 100% indicated to have known about the subject matter and can give responses issued to them for the purpose of this research.

Table 14

If yes, what are the challenges faced by the security agencies in curbing electoral violence?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Political interference and bias	8	26.7	26.7	26.7
Difficulties in intelligence gathering	6	20.0	20.0	46.7
Complex and dynamic security environment	5	16.7	16.7	63.3
Balancing security and civil liberties	7	23.3	23.3	86.7
Limited resources and capacity	4	13.3	13.3	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey July, 2023

Table 14 highlights the challenges faced by the security agencies in curbing electoral violence.

8 respondents representing 26.7% identified Political interference and bias as the challenges faced by the security agencies in curbing electoral violence, 6 respondents representing 20.0% identified Difficulties in intelligence gathering as the challenges faced by the security agencies in curbing electoral violence, 5 respondents representing 16.7% identified Complex and dynamic security environment as the challenges faced by the security agencies in curbing electoral violence, 7 respondents representing 23.3% identified Balancing security and civil liberties as the challenges faced by the security agencies in curbing electoral violence, while 4 respondents representing 13.3% identified Limited resources and capacity as the challenges faced by the security agencies in curbing electoral violence.

This implies that majority of the respondents identified Political interference and bias as the challenges faced by the security agencies in curbing electoral violence.

Table 15

Are these the challenges faced by the security agencies in curbing electoral violence in your area?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly agree	13	43.3	43.3	43.3
Agree	12	40.0	40.0	83.3
Disagree	3	10.0	10.0	93.3
Strongly Disagree	2	6.7	6.7	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey July, 2023

Table 15 clearly shows the response of the respondents as regards if these are the challenges faced by the security agencies in curbing electoral violence in their area.

13 respondents representing 43.3% Strongly agree that these are the challenges faced by the security agencies in curbing electoral violence in their area, 12 respondents representing 40.0% Agree these are the challenges faced by the security agencies in curbing electoral violence in their area, 3 respondents representing 10.0% Disagree that these are the challenges faced by the security agencies in curbing electoral violence in their area, while 2 respondent representing 6.7% Strongly Disagree that these are the challenges faced by the security agencies in curbing electoral violence in their area.

This indicates majority of the respondents strongly agree that these are the challenges faced by the security agencies in curbing electoral violence in their area.

TEST OF HYPOTHESIS

Having given a careful analysis of the responses, the hypothesis earlier formulated in chapter one of this study are approached by the use of linear regression at 0.05 (5%) level of significance.

HYPOTHESIS ONE

H₀: There is no statistical relationship between security agencies and free, fair and credible elections

H₁: There is a statistical relationship between security agencies and free, fair and credible elections

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.992 ^a	.985	.977	.94868

a. Predictors: (Constant), security agencies

The model summary shows percentile relationship between Security agencies and Free, fair and credible elections. The table clearly shows an “R” of 0.992. This implies that the predictor or independent variable (Security agencies) has 99.2% influence on Free, fair and credible elections. In other words, the independent variable accounts or is responsible for 99.2% change in Free, fair and credible elections.

Statistically, a 99.2%the relationship is a very strong positive relationship.

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	115.200	1	115.200	128.000	.008 ^b
	Residual	1.800	2	.900		
	Total	117.000	3			

a. Dependent Variable: security agencies

b. Predictors: (Constant), security agencies

The ANOVA table aids in fitness test. It shows how fit the data used for the model aligns with one another. Considering the “Sig” column of the ANOVA table, we can deduce that the p (Sig) = 0.008.

A significance of 0.008 is less than our acceptable region of $p \leq 0.05$. In other words, we accept the alternate hypothesis which states that there is a statistical significant relationship between Security agencies and Free, fair and credible elections.

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-4.500	1.162		-3.873	.061
	security agencies	4.800	.424	.992	11.314	.008

a. Dependent Variable: security agencies

The coefficient table aids in measuring volume or unit increase/decrease in relationship between security agencies and free, fair and credible elections. A Beta of 0.992 clearly indicates that for a unit increase in Security agencies, free, fair and credible elections is expected to increase by 0.992.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Every research study must have a theoretical and practical implication based on findings analysed from the study. This particular paper clearly revealed that there is a statistical positive relationship between [security agencies] and [free, fair and credible elections]. This is depicted in all table analysed in the paper. With a significant level of 0.05, the study clearly shows a

relationship between the variables. This clearly outlines a road map for management and other stake holders in the industry to treat this subject with utmost preference to boost productivity, performance and bring out desired outputs.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The first objective of the study was to study how the security agencies curb electoral violence before, during and after elections. Findings from the study revealed that Pre-election intelligence and risk assessment, Security planning and deployment, Voter education and awareness, Monitoring and response during elections, and Post-election investigations and legal action are how the security agencies curb electoral violence before, during and after elections in Nigeria.

The second objective of the study was to understand the impact of electoral violence and insecurity on the electoral participation in Nigeria. Findings from the study revealed that Suppression of voter turnout, Disenfranchisement of marginalized groups, Erosion of trust in the electoral process, Polarization and deepening of societal divisions, and undermining democratic institutions and stability are the impact of electoral violence and insecurity on the electoral participation in Nigeria.

The third objective of the study was to highlight the challenges faced by the security agencies in curbing electoral violence in Nigeria. Findings from the study revealed that Limited resources and capacity, Political interference and bias, Complex and dynamic security environment, Difficulties in intelligence gathering, and Balancing security and civil liberties are the challenges faced by the security agencies in curbing electoral violence in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

The paper examines the [topic]. From the responses analysed from the respondents of security agencies, and previous empirical studies on the subject matter, the researcher was able to clearly point out that there is a statistical significant relationship between Security agencies and Free, fair and credible elections.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the objectives and findings of the research paper, the following are recommendation from the study:

Security agencies should maintain a high level of professionalism and impartiality in their operations during elections. They should uphold the rule of law and demonstrate fairness and neutrality in their actions. This includes avoiding any form of political bias, refraining from

undue influence or interference, and treating all political parties, candidates, and citizens equally. Building and promoting a culture of professionalism within security agencies will enhance public trust and confidence in their role during elections.

Effective coordination among different security agencies is crucial for addressing electoral violence comprehensively. Security agencies should establish mechanisms for sharing intelligence, coordinating operations, and exchanging information in real-time. This collaboration should extend to engagement with election management bodies, civil society organizations, and relevant stakeholders. Regular joint training exercises and joint operation planning will enhance synergy, streamline efforts, and improve overall security preparedness.

Security agencies can play a vital role in promoting voter education and engagement initiatives, by partnering with election management bodies, civil society organizations, and community leaders, security agencies can help educate voters on their rights and responsibilities, the electoral process, and the importance of peaceful participation. These efforts should specifically target marginalized groups, emphasizing inclusivity and equal participation. Increasing voter education and engagement will contribute to reducing tensions, preventing misinformation, and fostering a peaceful electoral environment.

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