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Democracy and challenges of Transition in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

(Ekiti State, Nigeria as a case study)

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Abstract

Nigeria has struggled to ensure credible and smooth power transitions since 1999, when it returned to democracy. Elections, especially during the Fourth Republic, have been tainted by elite interference, fraud, and violence, which has undermined public trust and prevented the development of strong democratic institutions. This study focusses on Ekiti State, which is representative of Nigeria's larger political landscape, where elections have frequently been contentious, with political elites manipulating electoral processes to maintain power and economic hardships contributing to a culture of vote-buying, or "stomach infrastructure."

Understanding these issues is essential to improving Nigeria's democratic framework and making sure that electoral transitions represent the will of the people rather than the interests of a privileged few. The study evaluates the role of political elites, institutional influence in electoral fraud as well as the major challenges on democratic transition in Ekiti State using the explanatory frameworks of Democratic Elite Theory and Differential Association Theory.

Results show that incumbents, political elites and institutional influences have considerable impact on elections and frequently put winning ahead of democratic ideals. The finding outcomes further revealed that due to widespread poverty, many voters now place more importance on immediate cash rewards than long-term governance results or dividend of democracy, undermining democratic institutions and creating controversy around power transfers, which are all being aided by most of the political parties. To strengthen Nigerian democracy, the study suggests addressing economic vulnerabilities that support election misconduct, encouraging voter education, and enforcing electoral laws more strictly.

Keywords: Political Elites, Democratic Transitions, Nigerian Fourth Republic, Political Parties, Ekiti State.

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Chapter One

1.1 Research Background and Problem

Democracy is globally seen and observed as the most inclusive and highly engaging type of government due to its concentration on the equal and accountable representation, principles of political equality, free and fair elections, respect for the rule of law, protection of majority and minority groups, and upholding of fundamental human rights (Ette and Akpan-Obong, 2022). Fundamentally, democracy empowers people for active participation and involvement, particularly by allowing them to elect their leaders through a transparent electoral process and to make every leader accountable for policy decisions and government (Ilori, 2020). However, democracy is still at an infant stage even as its consolidation remains difficult in many developing countries, such as Nigeria, where political transitions are frequently hampered by weak structures, poor governance, political violence, and electoral malpractices.

According to Chiamogu and Chiamogu (2019), the transition to democratic structure comes with high hopes, particularly as the country had just suffered what could be regarded as political darkness which bedevilled the state as a result of its military political structure. The Fourth Republic of Nigeria, which began in 1999, was supposed to bring about a new period of political stability, economic development, and good administration, especially it announced the transition from the military system to a democratic setting (Ilori, 2020) However, weak party structures, judicial interventions in political conflicts, irregular elections, and a lack of a strong democratic culture are just a few of the ongoing difficulties that have plagued the transition (Yusuf and Monday, 2024). The viability of democratic governance and the degree to which Nigeria has genuinely adopted democratic principles have come under scrutiny as a result of these difficulties.

Nigeria's democratic evolution can be seen by the 1996 creation of Ekiti State. As the "Fountain of Knowledge," the state is renowned for its political consciousness and engaged electoral involvement (Ayeni and Aweh, 2024). On the other hand, it has a political past characterized by recurrent power struggles, election disputes, and unstable rule like many other states in Nigeria. Numerous administration changes have occurred in the state as a result of judicial decisions,

claims of electoral fraud, and incidents of political violence (Ayeni and Aweh, 2024). Frequently occurring after contentious elections, the leadership changes highlight the wider difficulties of Nigeria's democratic transition.

Numerous political upheavals have occurred in Ekiti State since 1999, notably the gubernatorial elections in 2007 and 2014, which were tainted by accusations of electoral fraud, vote-buying, and judicial interventions. Additionally, the state has experienced the detrimental effects of political godfatherism, inadequate party structures, and inconsistent governance practices, all of which have hindered the consolidation of democracy (Ayeni and Aweh, 2024). A notable one is the 2007 gubernatorial election, which resulted in a number of legal fights before the legitimate winner was sworn in after the courts declared it invalid owing to irregularities (Gberevbie, 2014). In a similar vein, accusations of vote-buying, intimidation, and electoral process manipulation marked the elections in 2014, 2018, and 2022 (Gberevbie, 2014).

Essentially, this study underscores the role of political parties and their prominent figures – politicians in the electoral fraud, highlighting their contribution, influence, and actions on political actors on democratic outcomes in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. It is important to comprehend these problems in order to suggest solutions that will fortify democratic institutions and guarantee future political transitions go smoothly.

1.2 Research Aim and Objectives

This study seeks to underscore the role of political gladiators and institutional influence in electoral fraud in Ekiti state, Nigeria. To achieve this aim, the following objectives are observed;

- To critically analyze the role of political elites and institutional influences in electoral fraud in the democratic transitions in Ekiti state, Nigeria.
- To identify major challenges affecting democratic transitions in Ekiti state, Nigeria.

1.3 Research Questions

This research aims to answer the following key questions:

- How do political elites and institutional influence contribute to electoral fraud during democratic transitions in Ekiti State?
- What are the significant challenges affecting democratic transitions in Ekiti State?

1.4 Significance of the Study

Numerous factors make this study valuable, all of which advance our knowledge of Nigerian democracy, governance, and political transitions. Firstly, it contributes to the scholarly literature on democratic processes, particularly at the state level. Even while national politics receive a lot of attention, state-level political changes and the complexities of governance play an equally important role in determining Nigeria's overall democratic environment (Mayowa, 2020). A more nuanced understanding of political transitions and governance in Nigeria is made possible by this research's focus on Ekiti State, which highlights local issues and dynamics that may be missed in more general studies (Okorie, 2024).

Apart from its scholarly significance, the study has significant policy implications. Government agencies, electoral bodies, and policymakers may find the results to be a useful resource. With the knowledge gained from this study, these interested parties can create more effective plans to enhance the democratic process Ayeni and Aweh (2024).

The report makes practical suggestions that could have a positive impact on policy decisions, from election changes to the fortification of democratic institutions, ultimately promoting a more open and responsible political system.

The practical implications of the study are equally significant. The research findings can be used by voters, civil society organizations, and political players to promote significant election reforms and the general extension of democratic norms in Nigeria. Voters may be equipped with the information they need to make educated decisions, and civil society in particular can use the study's findings to advocate for laws that guarantee greater inclusivity and justice in the voting process. Lastly, the difficulties that Ekiti State has encountered during its democratic transition are not particular; rather, they are a reflection of larger national patterns. Thus, this study

provides insightful lessons that could guide political plans and changes in other Nigerian states dealing with comparable democratic issues.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This significant study provides a thorough analysis of the political and electoral history of Ekiti State, exploring the democratic transitions that have occurred there from 1999 to the present. The study provides insightful information about Nigeria's democracy by examining how elections, political competitions, and leadership changes have changed over time. Understanding Ekiti State's distinct political trajectory is essential to comprehending Nigeria's broader democratic transition, as it is shared by many other states in the nation.

This study's emphasis on the main issues that have beset Ekiti State's democratic governance is one of its main features. These problems, which range from electoral violence to problems with transparency and voter turnout, are not unique to Ekiti; they also exist in other regions of the nation. By carefully analyzing these challenges, the study identifies crucial areas in which advancements are required to guarantee that democracy is a live, breathing system that serves the interests of the populace rather than merely a theoretical idea.

The study also examines how institutions, political parties, and civil society are crucial in forming Ekiti State's democratic landscape; they are important in fostering political participation, encouraging good governance, and guaranteeing accountability; comprehending their impact is crucial to understanding the intricacies of democratic consolidation and the elements that either support or threaten democracy in the state.

Although this study is based in the Ekiti context, its ramifications go much beyond the boundaries of the state. The conclusions offer insightful insights that other Nigerian states can use, giving a more comprehensive view of the potential and difficulties associated with the country's democratic consolidation. As a result, this study adds to the continuing discussion on Nigeria's political development and the country's democracy.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Ekiti State has seen numerous election disputes, judicial interventions, and changes in government since Nigeria returned to democracy in 1999. The political history of the state, which was established in 1996, is representative of Nigeria's larger democratic battles. Intense political rivalry began when Otunba Niyi Adebayo (Alliance for Democracy) lost to Ayodele Fayose (PDP) in 2003 after winning the first democratic election in 1999.

Prolonged court fights resulted from the 2007 gubernatorial race, which was characterized by electoral malpractices. The judiciary's role in influencing political transitions was highlighted in 2010 when the Court of Appeal declared Kayode Fayemi (ACN) the victor, nullifying Segun Oni's (PDP) victory. Elections in 2014 and 2018 further demonstrated Ekiti's unstable political environment; in 2014, Fayose returned to power amidst accusations of vote-buying, but in 2018, Fayemi returned under the APC (Mayowa, 2020).

2.2 Challenges Facing Democratic Transitions in Ekiti State

Even with the advancements since Nigeria's restoration to democracy in 1999, Ekiti State still faces major obstacles to stable and seamless democratic transitions. Election anomalies, shoddy political institutions, corruption, and the power of party and ethnic politics are the main causes of these issues (Oni, 2014). The state's democracy is weakened by the frequent changes in government, which are frequently followed by accusations of fraud and court cases. Understanding these issues is essential to developing workable solutions that would improve Ekiti State's democratic government.

1: Challenges Facing Democratic Transitions in Ekiti State

Table 1: Challenges Facing Democratic Transitions in Ekiti State

Challenges	Description	Impact on Democratic Transition
Electoral Violence	Incidents of violence during elections, including intimidation and attacks.	Creates fear, reduces voter participation, and delegitimizes election outcomes.
Electoral Fraud	Manipulation of results, vote buying, and ballot box snatching.	Undermines public trust in the democratic process and institutions.
Weak Political Institutions	Lack of independence in electoral bodies and judiciary inefficiency.	Leads to compromised election management and dispute resolution.
Corruption in Governance	Misuse of state resources for political gain.	Distorts fair competition and weakens democratic accountability.
Political Godfatherism	Influence of powerful individuals in selecting candidates.	Limits democratic choice and promotes elite control of governance.
Low Voter Turnout	Apathy due to past experiences of rigging and poor governance.	Reduces public influence in decision-making and weakens democratic legitimacy.

Judiciary's Role in Disputes	Delays in resolving election-related court cases.	Causes political instability and uncertainty in leadership transitions.
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- **Electoral Irregularities and Violence**

The frequency of political violence and electoral fraud in Ekiti State is one of the biggest obstacles to democratic transitions. Allegations of ballot box snatching, vote-buying, and voter intimidation by security personnel and political thugs have frequently plagued the state's elections (Mayowa, 2020). Concerns regarding fairness and transparency were voiced by opposition parties and independent observers throughout the very contentious governorship elections in 2007; 2014; and 2018 (Mbah, Nwangwu, and Ugwu, 2019; Okorie, 2024).

- **Weak Political Institutions**

Strong, independent institutions are essential to democratic governance's efficacy, but Ekiti State has experienced institutional flaws that impede peaceful political transitions (Gberevbie, 2014). Political interests have been accused of influencing the court, which is crucial in settling electoral disputes, producing inconsistent decisions that occasionally exacerbate political instability (ACCORD, 2023).

- **Corruption and Political Interference**

In Ekiti State, corruption continues to be a significant barrier to democratic transitions, impacting both governance and election procedures. In order to influence public officials, finance election campaigns, and practice patronage politics, politicians commonly utilize state resources (Solomon, 2024). According to Ette and Akpan-Obong (2022), this conduct results in governance that puts party and individual interests ahead of the general good and undercuts the democratic ideal of equitable political participation.

- **Ethnic and Party Politics**

Ekiti State, like many parts of Nigeria, has witnessed the harmful impacts of ethnic and party-based political divisions. Political alignments in the state are generally determined by adherence to party institutions rather than issue-based governance (Chiamogu and Chiamogu, 2019). Instability in government has resulted from this winner-take-all political culture, which marginalizes opposition parties following elections. Democratic transitions have also been made more difficult by factionalism and defections brought on by internal party disputes (Simphiwe, 2024).

2.4 Role of Political Elites and Institutions in Shaping Democratic Transitions

- Political Parties and Their Influence – Party Competition and Internal Democracy**

Political parties play a crucial role in Ekiti State's democratic transitions by influencing political stability, governance practices, and election results. Power in Nigeria has alternated between the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Progressives Congress (APC), which have been engaged in fierce conflict since the country's restoration to democracy in 1999. Although there is a thriving multiparty democracy evident in this rivalry, party internal democracy is still lacking. Political elites frequently choose candidates instead of holding open primaries, which causes internal party strife, defections, and factional crises. The lack of strong internal democratic structures has resulted in instability, where party conflicts spill over into governance, affecting policy continuity and democratic consolidation.

- Role of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) – Effectiveness of Electoral Management Bodies**

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is responsible for conducting credible elections and ensuring the smooth transition of power in Ekiti State. Over the years, INEC has introduced several reforms, such as the use of the Permanent Voter's Card (PVC), Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS), and electronic transmission of results, to improve electoral integrity. However, logistical challenges, delayed election materials, and allegations of political interference have raised concerns about INEC's effectiveness. Additionally, INEC's ability to curb vote-buying, a recurring issue in Ekiti elections, has been questioned. While the

commission has made progress in improving electoral transparency, further reforms are needed to strengthen its independence, enhance voter education, and improve election security to ensure credible and peaceful democratic transitions.

- **Judiciary and Election Tribunals – Legal Frameworks for Resolving Electoral Disputes**

In democratic transitions, the court is essential to maintaining the rule of law and settling electoral disputes. Numerous election results in Ekiti State have been challenged in court, resulting in significant rulings. For example, the Court of Appeal reversed the 2007 governorship election, which was first won by Segun Oni of the PDP, in favor of Kayode Fayemi of the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) in 2010. In a similar vein, post-election petitions have continued to be prevalent in Ekiti politics, underscoring the role that the judiciary plays in guaranteeing electoral justice (Izzi, 2019). However, concerns about judicial independence, delays in resolving election disputes, and alleged political influence over court decisions pose challenges to the credibility of the judicial process. Strengthening judicial capacity, ensuring impartiality, and streamlining electoral dispute resolution mechanisms are essential for fostering trust in democratic transitions (Omenma, 2019).

- **Civil Society and Media – Contributions of Non-State Actors to Democratic Transitions**

By supporting free and fair elections, educating voters, and holding political actors responsible, civil society organizations (CSOs) and the media have been instrumental in advancing democratic transitions in Ekiti State. By offering unbiased reporting on electoral behavior, election monitoring organizations like the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) and the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG) have improved election openness. According to Chukwudi and Ojo (2023), the media has also played a significant role in raising political awareness, uncovering electoral fraud, and offering a forum for political discussions.

However, issues like political intimidation of journalists, media bias, and the dissemination of false information on social media make these actors less effective. Improving the role of media and civil society in guaranteeing peaceful democratic transitions in Ekiti State requires bolstering

press freedom, encouraging responsible journalism, and supporting independent election monitoring (Mphaphuli, 2023).

2.6 Theoretical Framework

To analyze democratic transitions in Ekiti State, this study adopts Democratic Elite Theory and Differential Association Theory to explain the factors influencing democratic transitions in Ekiti State. These theories provide a foundation for understanding how electoral processes are shaped by elite influence and learned political behaviors, contributing to instability in governance.

Democratic Elite Theory: According to the Democratic Elite Theory, a small number of elites hold a disproportionate amount of political power and use their influence over democratic institutions to stay in power (Mosca, 1939; Pareto, 1963). Through institutional control, patronage networks, and financial inducements, political elites—especially incumbents—have a major impact on elections in Ekiti State. This domination perpetuates cycles of political instability by suppressing political competition and undermining free and fair elections. The fact that election results are frequently challenged in court emphasizes how elites have an impact on both the political process and court rulings.

Differential Association Theory: The Differential Association Theory (Sutherland, 1947) describes how social encounters teach behaviors, such as election malpractices. Because of their frequent exposure and acceptance by political actors, fraudulent electoral practices like vote-buying, ballot tampering, and electoral violence have solidified in Ekiti State. One example of how economic hardship feeds a culture of electoral manipulation is the pervasive acceptance of "stomach infrastructure," or the trade of money for votes.

This study evaluates how elite domination and the spread of fraudulent electoral practices impede the consolidation of democracy in Ekiti State by utilizing these theories. To ensure genuine democratic transitions, addressing these issues calls for voter education, institutional reforms, and tightened electoral laws.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

The study employed a case study design and collected data from political elites (Omotola, 2010). Adesiyan (2023) measures electoral integrity and government transferred using a mixed-method approach that includes surveys and interviews. Ethical guidelines, including voluntarism and confidentiality, were prioritized (Hoffmann and Wallace, 2022). The next sections described the research philosophy, design, approach, data collection, and analysis.

3.1 Research Philosophy

The study employs a pragmatic research philosophy, which is a synthesis of the positivist and interpretivist approaches to understanding the challenges of democratic transition in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. As electoral processes entail quantitative (e.g., election outcomes, voter turnout) and qualitative experiences (e.g., perceptions of electoral fairness, political violence), a pragmatic approach leaves one with space for adaptability in the incorporation of quantitative and qualitative methods (Adesiyan, 2023; Madueke & Enyiazu, 2025; Omotola & Oyewole, 2023).

3.2 Research Design

The research design provides a structured framework for examining the issues of democratic transition in the Fourth Republic of Nigeria, with a case study of Ekiti State. The research design applies a case study method, which is most suitable for a detailed examination of complex political and electoral issues in a specific geographical and political setting (Yin, 2017). The choice of Ekiti State is justified by its electoral past of disputes, irregularities, and political turnovers, thus qualifying it as a key case study for the understanding of Nigeria's overall electoral issues. To provide an all-around analysis of Nigeria's democratic turnovers, the study utilizes a mixed-methods strategy that combines quantitative and qualitative methods.

3.3 Research Approach

To ensure a holistic perspective of Nigeria's democratic evolution and election issues, this study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods. The mixed-methods approach allows for a close scrutiny of patterns in data and opinions of stakeholders, which is essential in the face of election processes' complexity (Adesiyan, 2023). Using survey questionnaires to collect structured data, the quantitative approach offers quantifiable information on voters' behavior, electoral integrity, and institutional performance. The method enables the identification of trends in vote buying, intimidation of voters, and manipulation of elections, especially in Ekiti State (Madueke & Enyiazu, 2025; Hoffmann & Wallace, 2022). However, semi-structured interviews of prominent political elites are used to execute the qualitative approach (Adisa, 2019).

3.4 Population and Sample

Political elites, the National Youth Service Corps, and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) were the study's participants. Their opinions provided a holistic overview of Nigeria's electoral system's institutional constraints, security concerns, political party operations, and election processes (Madueke & Enyiazu, 2025). Party leaders, especially from the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP), discussed mobilization strategies for voters, campaign financing, and how the political elite impacted elections (Adisa, 2019; Adesiyan, 2023; Omotola & Oyewole, 2023). Purposive sampling was utilized in the study to achieve good coverage and representation. This sampling ensured gathering credible and informed information by offering the facility to select participants with firsthand, relevant experience in Nigeria's electoral process (Hoffmann & Wallace, 2022).

The questionnaire had 50 respondents to ensure variety, representativeness, and sufficient coverage of the principal electoral players. Ten political party chairmen (APC, PDP, and other pertinent parties), 15 NYSC members who were INEC ad hoc staff, 10 Nigeria Police Force personnel assigned to election security work, and 15 INEC staff (senior and field officers) were addressed in the breakdown (Ekiti State Government, n.d.).

3.5 Data Collection

Electoral transition challenges in Nigeria were examined in this study using primary and secondary data collection techniques. Primary data was collected from structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews among political elites in Ekiti State (Adesiyan, 2023). Government reports, academic journals, and election commission documents provided the secondary data sources (Madueke & Enyiazu, 2025). The electoral history of Ekiti State had in the past consisted of mixed-methods research that guaranteed quantitative studies of election patterns and qualitative assessment of political manipulation, security infractions, and governance issues (Adenuga & Olakunle, 2024).

3.6 Questionnaire Design

A five-section standardized questionnaire (A–E), each focusing on a particular area of the challenges facing the democratic transition in Ekiti State, was created for the study using Google Forms. All the Nigeria Police Force officers, party chairmen, National Youth Service Corps members who served as ad hoc staff of INEC, and officials of the Independent National Electoral Commission were administered the questionnaire. Demographic information such as age, gender, voting status, and experience was collected in Section A.

Section B tested the legitimacy of the election and captured irregularities such as voter intimidation and vote buying (Adesiyan, 2023). Influence by internal party democracy and political actors was examined under this section, including parties, the judiciary, and the INEC (Madueke & Enyiazu, 2025). Whereas Section E investigated how democratic institutions could be strengthened, Section D studied political violence and security concerns (Adenuga & Olakunle, 2024). This design collected both quantitative (Likert-scale, rankings) and qualitative (open-ended) data to ensure that there was a wide understanding of electoral governance as well as challenges.

3.7 Data Validity and Reliability

Before being fully implemented, the questionnaire is pilot-tested with a group of respondents to verify validity and reliability. This assists in improving the neutrality, uniformity, and distinctness of questions (Hoffmann & Wallace, 2022). Triangulation is employed for proving trustworthiness, comparing original data with secondary data. To establish fairness and

impartiality in representation of the election realities of Ekiti State, answers would also be cross-checked by other stakeholders of the elections (Adisa, 2019).

3.8 Data Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques were utilized in the study. Descriptive statistics were utilized to examine quantitative survey data to reveal patterns of election participation, manipulation, and security issues (Adesiyen, 2023). Thematic coding was utilized to examine qualitative interview data to reveal underlying themes in stakeholder experience, political interference, and election management issues (Omotola & Oyewole, 2023). A thorough examination of Nigeria's election transitions was guaranteed by the amalgamation (Adenuga & Olakunle, 2024).

3.9 Ethical Consideration

Undeviating respect for ethics guaranteed voluntary involvement, informed consent, and secrecy. For effective decision-making prior to participation, participants like political elites were given sufficient information about the purpose of the study (Hoffmann & Wallace, 2022). The responses were utilized for academic purposes only, and data were anonymized to ensure participant anonymity (Madueke & Enyiazu, 2025). For the sake of ensuring compliance with research integrity, ethical clearance was obtained from concerned institutions (Adisa, 2019).

Chapter Four

Data Analysis, Results and Interpretation

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis, results, and interpretation of the data collected for the study. It begins with an overview of the demographic characteristics of the respondents, including gender, age group, and educational background. The chapter further explores respondents' participation in the electoral process, their perceptions of election credibility, and the prevalence of electoral irregularities. Additionally, it examines key challenges to democratic governance, the influence of political actors, and the impact of political violence on elections in Ekiti State. The findings are presented using descriptive statistics, tables, and figures to provide a comprehensive understanding of the study's objectives.

4.2 Demographic Information

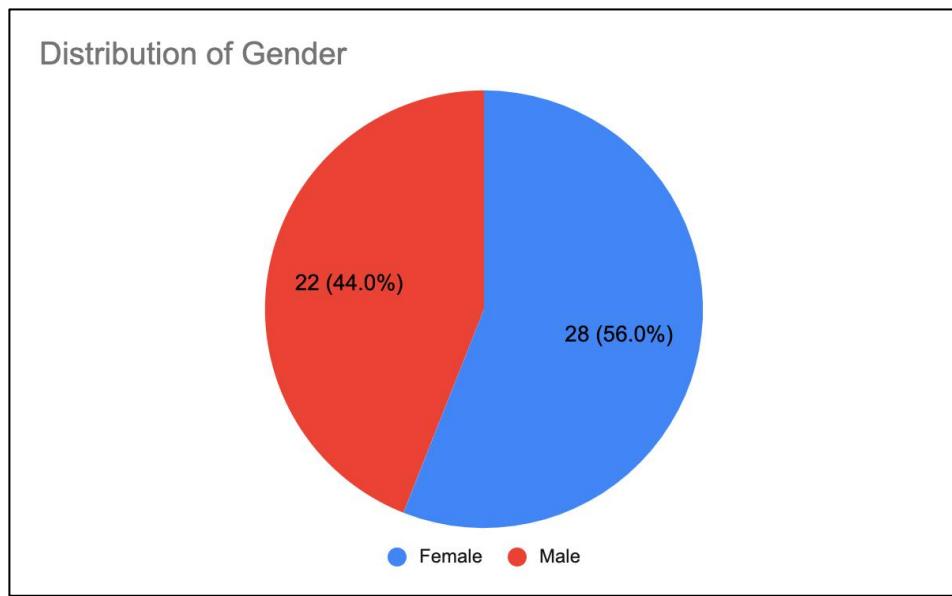


Figure 4.1: Distribution of Gender

The chart above presents the gender distribution of the 50 respondents of this study. Females constitute the majority, accounting for 56% (28 individuals), while males make up 44% (22 individuals). This indicates a relatively balanced gender representation, though there is a higher proportion of female respondents

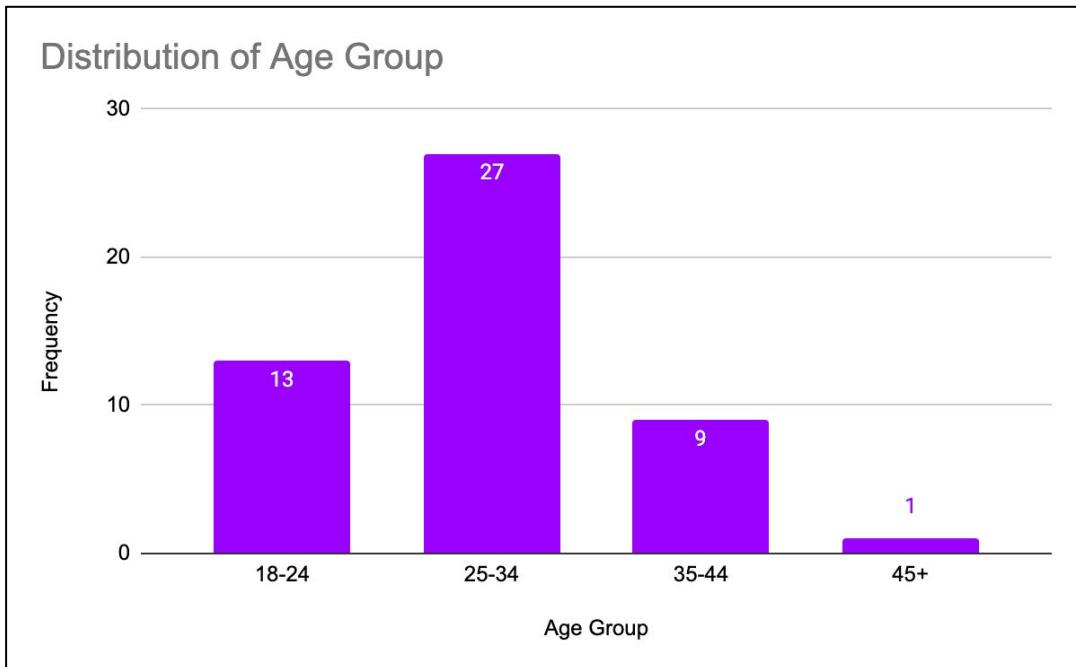


Figure 4.2: Distribution of Age Group

The majority fall within the 25-34 age group, comprising 54% (27 individuals). This is followed by the 18-24 age group at 26% (13 individuals) and the 35-44 age group at 18% (9 individuals). Only 2% (1 individual) is aged 45 or older. This indicates that the sample is predominantly young adults, with the largest representation in the 25-34 age bracket.

Frequency vs. What is your highest level of education?

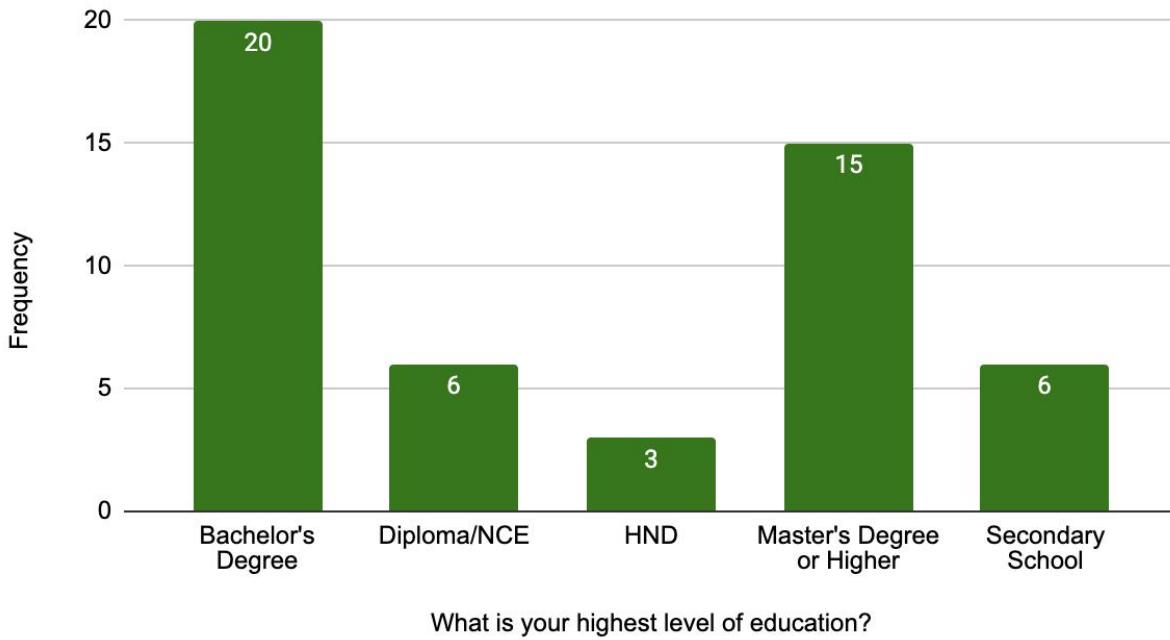


Figure 4.3: Distribution of Education Background

The largest group holds a Bachelor's degree, accounting for 40% (20 individuals), followed by those with a Master's degree or higher at 30% (15 individuals). Respondents with a Diploma or NCE and those with only a secondary school education each make up 12% (6 individuals). Meanwhile, 6% (3 individuals) possess a Higher National Diploma (HND). This indicates that the majority of respondents have attained higher education, with a significant proportion holding at least a Bachelor's or Master's degree, while a smaller percentage have lower academic qualifications.

4.2 Participation and Roles in the Electoral Process

The table presents the distribution of respondents based on their roles in the electoral process. The largest group consists of voters, making up 22% (11 individuals), followed by INEC staff and NYSC election officials, each comprising 20% (10 individuals). Electorates account for 12% (6 individuals), while citizens, observers, and those with no role each represent 6% (3 individuals). Political party leaders make up 4% (2 individuals), and business personnel,

members, and police officers each contribute 2% (1 individual). This indicates diverse participation in the electoral process, with a significant presence of official election personnel and voters.

Table 4.1: Distribution of Respondents by Role in the Electoral Process

Role in Electoral Process	Frequency	Percent
Business	1	2%
Citizen	3	6%
Electorate	6	12%
INEC Staff	10	20%
Member	1	2%
None/Nil	3	6%
NYSC Election Official	10	20%
Observer	3	6%
Police	1	2%
Political Party Leader	2	4%
Voter	11	22%
Total	50	100%

Distribution of elections cycles Respondents have participated in

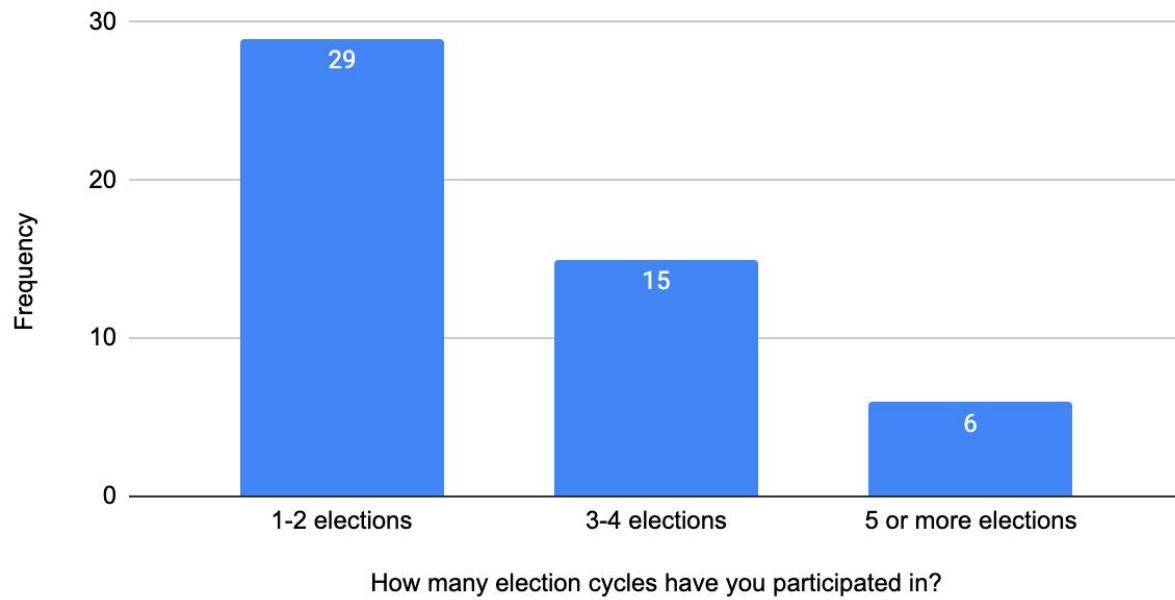


Figure 4.4: Distribution of Election Cycles Respondents have Participated

The majority, 58% (29 individuals), have participated in 1-2 elections, indicating limited electoral experience. Another 30% (15 individuals) have taken part in 3-4 elections, while only 12% (6 individuals) have participated in five or more elections. This suggests that most respondents have relatively low electoral engagement, with a smaller proportion having extensive experience in multiple election cycles

4.3 Electoral Processes and Democratic Consolidation

4.3.1 Credibility of Elections in Ekiti State

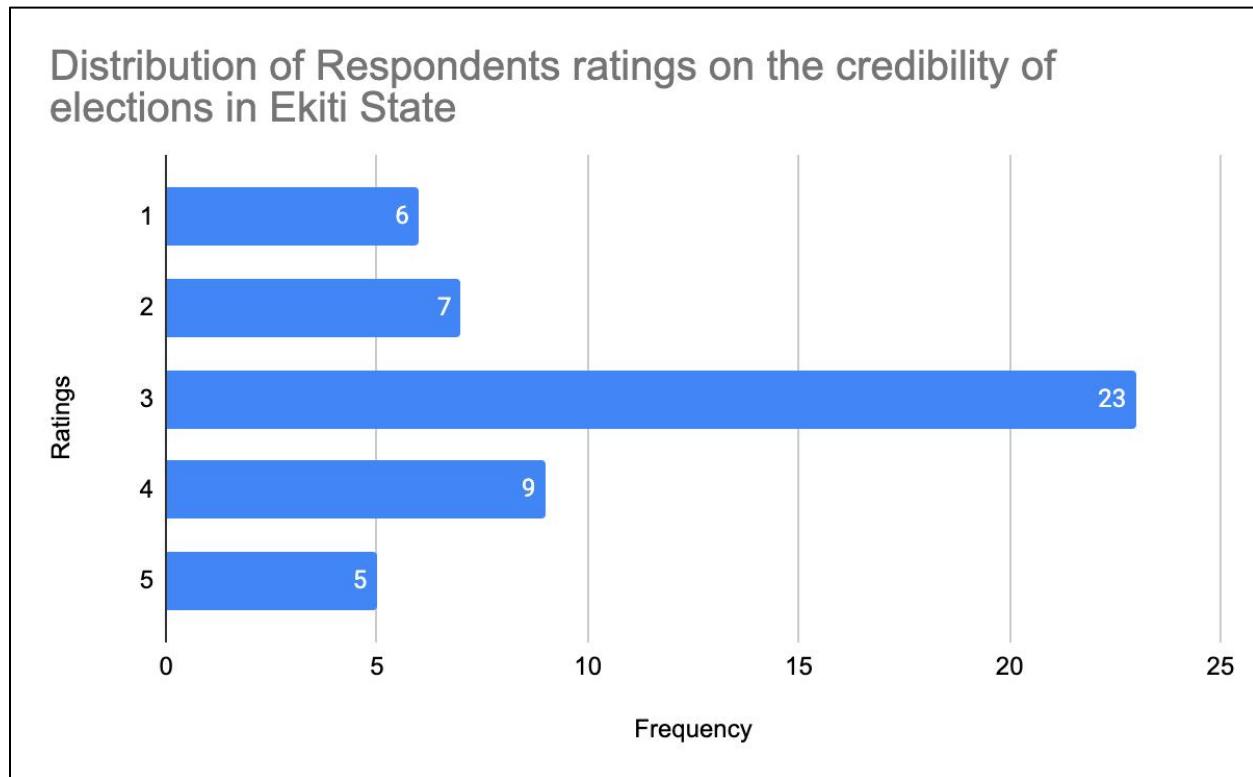


Figure 4.5: Distribution of Respondents Ratings on the Credibility of Elections in Ekiti State

The chart presents respondents' ratings of election credibility in Ekiti State on a scale of 1 to 5. The majority, 46% (23 individuals), rated credibility as average (3), while 18% (9 individuals) gave a rating of 4. Lower ratings were also common, with 14% (7 individuals) rating it 2 and 12% (6 individuals) giving the lowest score of 1. Only 10% (5 individuals) rated election credibility as excellent (5). The summary statistics in Table 2 below indicate that respondents rated the credibility of elections in Ekiti State on a scale of 1 to 5, with a minimum rating of 1 and a maximum of 5. The mean score is 3, suggesting an average perception of credibility. The standard deviation of 1.107 shows moderate variation in responses. The skewness of -0.094 indicates a nearly symmetric distribution, while the kurtosis of -0.239 suggests a relatively flat distribution with no extreme outliers. This suggests that while some respondents perceive elections as fair, a significant proportion remains skeptical about their credibility.

Table 2: Summary Statistics of Respondents Ratings on Election Credibility in Ekiti State

Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
1	5	3	1.107	-0.094	-0.239

4.3.2 Electoral Irregularities in Ekiti State

The table presents respondents' observations of electoral irregularities. Vote-buying was the most commonly observed, with 48% (24 individuals) confirming its occurrence, while 34% (17 individuals) did not witness it, and 18% (9 individuals) were unsure. Ballot box snatching was reported by 38% (19 individuals), while 44% (22 individuals) saw no such incidents. Voter intimidation was noted by 46% (23 individuals), and 44% (22 individuals) believed electoral result manipulation occurred. Underage voting had the lowest confirmation, with only 18% (9 individuals) observing it, while 42% (21 individuals) did not and 40% (20 individuals) were unsure. These findings indicate that electoral malpractice remains a significant concern, with vote-buying and result manipulation among the most frequently observed issues.

Table 3: Observations of Electoral Irregularities in Ekiti State

		Frequency	Percent
Vote-buying	No	17	34
	Not sure	9	18
	Yes	24	48
	Total	50	100
Ballot box snatching	No	22	44
	Not sure	9	18

Voter intimidation	Yes	19	38
	Total	50	100
	No	15	30
	Not sure	12	24
Underage voting	Yes	23	46
	Total	50	100
	No	21	42
	Not sure	20	40
Electoral result manipulation	Yes	9	18
	Total	50	100
	No	16	32
	Not sure	12	24
	Yes	22	44
	Total	50	100

4.3.3 Perceived Significance of Challenges to Democratic Governance in Ekiti State

The table presents respondents' ratings of key challenges to democratic governance in Ekiti State on a scale of 1 to 5. The highest-rated challenge is political interference in state institutions, with a mean score of 4.04, followed by corruption in political processes (4.02) and voter apathy (3.98). Weak democratic institutions and lack of transparency both received a mean score of 3.94. Policy inconsistency due to leadership transitions scored 3.8, while frequent judicial

interventions in elections had the lowest rating at 3.62. The standard deviations indicate moderate variation in responses, with the highest variability observed in perceptions of transparency and judicial interventions. These findings highlight significant concerns regarding corruption, political interference, institutional weaknesses, and particularly money influencing voters' action during elections, suggesting areas for governance reforms.

4.3.4 Influence of Money of Voter Choice (IMVC)

The Nigerian Bureau of Statistics' most recent numbers show that 40.1% of Nigerians make less than \$1.1, each day (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020). The inclination of an average voter to sell their votes during elections has been connected to the economic circumstances of the majority, who make less than \$1 per day (Olawale and Oluwaseun, 2014). The general public's economic circumstances have been blamed for voter behaviour and, more recently, the desire to adopt "stomach infrastructure."

Figure 4: *Influence of Money on Voter's Choice (IMVC)*

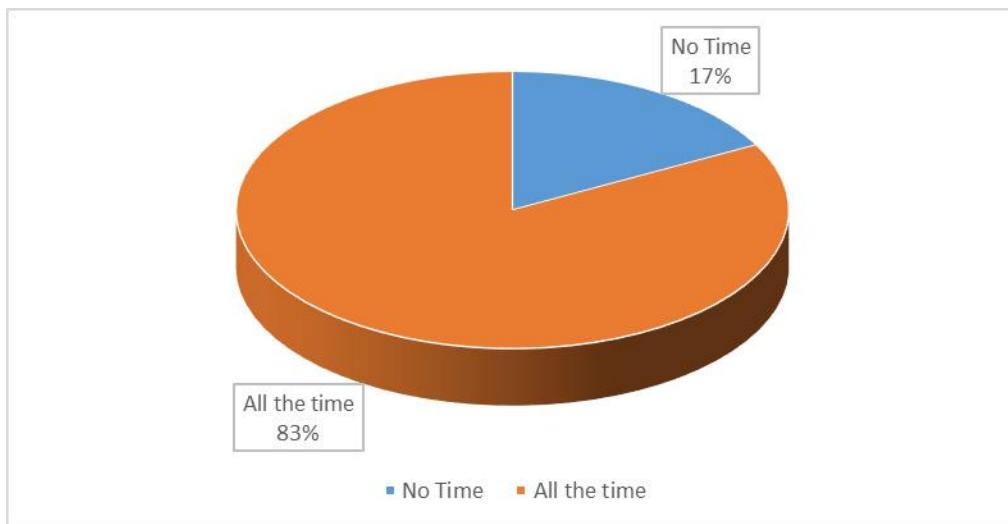


Table 4: *Influence of Money on Voter's Choice (IMVC)*

Responses	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
All the time	83	83%	83%

No Time	5	17.2	17.2
All The Time	24	82.8	100
Total	29	100.0	

Source: Adisa, 2017.

Five respondents (17.2%) claimed that money had no impact on voters' decisions at any point in time. Twenty-four (82.8%) of the Ekiti election stakeholders stated that money always had an impact on voters' decisions. The answer demonstrates that voters were significantly swayed by money during elections. This implies that widespread poverty, which is fuelled by a high unemployment rate and corruption, among other motivating factors, affects election results. Nigerian elections are now viewed as contests between the highest bidders, with the winner being the one with the biggest expenditure.

Regarding additional challenges, 54% (27 individuals) stated "No," while others mentioned low literacy levels, youth unemployment, greed, and an aging population as additional governance challenge. 38% (19 individuals) provided no response. Overall, these findings suggest that political and institutional weaknesses, alongside public disengagement, pose major threats to democratic governance in Ekiti State.

Table 5: Perceived Significance of Challenges to Democratic Governance in Ekiti State

	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Mean	Std. D
Frequent judicial interventions in elections	1	5	17	16	11	50	3.62	1.008
Policy inconsistency due to leadership transitions	1	1	15	23	10	50	3.8	0.857
Weak democratic institutions (e.g.,	1	2	13	17	17	50	3.94	0.978

INEC, judiciary)								
Lack of transparency and accountability in governance	1	3	12	16	18	50	3.94	1.018
Voter apathy and low civic engagement	1	1	13	18	17	50	3.98	0.937
Corruption in political processes	1	2	12	15	20	50	4.02	1
Political interference in state institutions	0	2	14	14	20	50	4.04	0.925

4.4 Political Elites and Institutional Influence

4.4.1 Influence of Political Actors and Parties on Electoral Processes in Ekiti State

In an effort to outperform the other candidates and parties, political parties have also been known to commit a variety of electoral malpractices. A negative approach to an election battle was shown in former President Obasanjo's stance that his party will win at all costs. It's intriguing, though, that his successor, who was a member of the same party and a beneficiary of the scam, recognised the shortcomings and planned to reverse the trend. As a result, it calls into question the roles that political parties and individual candidates play in the electoral process.

Figure: Role of political parties in electoral fraud (RPPEF)

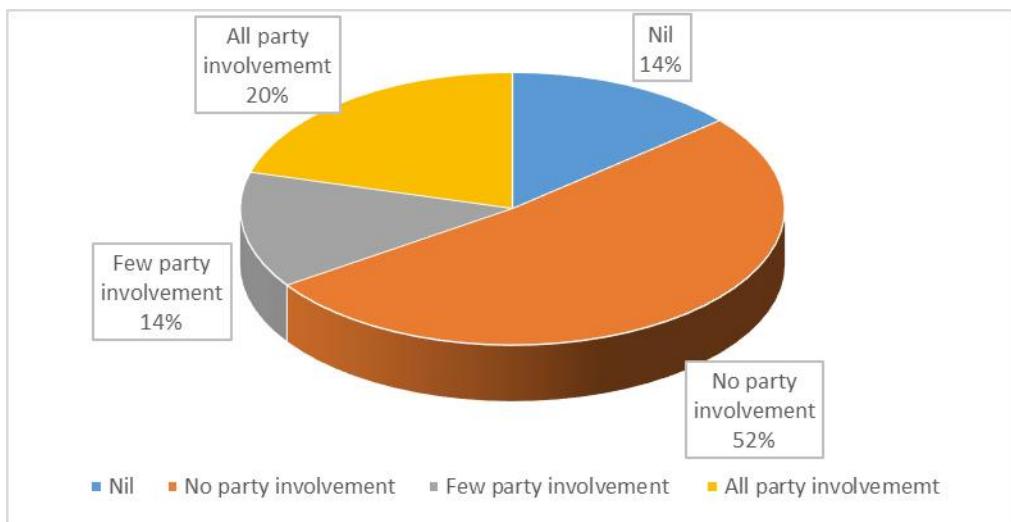


Table 6: Role of Political Parties in Electoral Fraud (RPPEF)

Responses	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Nil	4	13.8	13.8
No party Involvement	15	51.7	65.5
Few Parties Involvement	4	13.8	79.3
All Party Involvement	6	20.7	100
Total	29	100.0	

Source: Adisa, 2017.

To this question, four respondents (13.8%) did not provide a clear answer. Fifteen (51.7%) of the respondents claimed that no party was involved in electoral fraud. Only a few parties were involved in election fraud, according to four respondents (13.8%). According to six respondents (20.7%), electoral fraud was committed by all parties. In other words, the results of these interviews showed that parties were not thought to be heavily involved in electoral fraud.

The results show a clear difference between the broad presumptions regarding political parties' role in electoral fraud. 51.7% of respondents said that political parties did not participate in

electoral fraud, despite the fact that they directly profit from the criminal activity of the perpetrators. This is consistent with research by Adisa (2019), which showed that although political parties do not directly participate in election fraud, they profit from its results and may unintentionally encourage fraudulent activity by failing to denounce such crimes or by providing a lack of control.

4.6 Thematic Analysis of Electoral Challenges, Judicial Interventions, and Democratic Strengthening in Ekiti State

4.6.1 Challenges Faced by INEC in Conducting Free and Fair Elections

The responses to the question “What challenges do INEC face in conducting free and fair elections?” highlight several challenges faced by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in ensuring credible elections. A key issue is corruption, including bribery and electoral fraud, which undermines the fairness of the electoral process. Vote buying and voter suppression tactics, such as intimidation by political thugs and security agencies, further compromise electoral integrity.

Another significant challenge mentioned by the respondents is poor logistics and mismanagement of resources, which lead to delays and inefficiencies in election processes. The lack of adequate security allows for electoral violence and disruptions, making it difficult to maintain order during elections. Additionally, the influence of political parties and high-ranking politicians creates a biased electoral environment, reducing public trust in the process.

Respondents also pointed out technological inefficiencies in voter registration and result collation, leading to irregularities. The lack of voter awareness and civic education contributes to electoral malpractice, as many citizens do not fully understand their rights or responsibilities in the process.

Overall, these challenges highlight the need for transparent electoral processes, strengthened security measures, technological advancements, and stronger legal frameworks to ensure free and fair elections in Nigeria. A more independent INEC, free from political interference, is crucial to restoring public confidence in the system.



Figure 4.6 Word Cloud of Key Challenges Hindering Free and Fair Elections in Nigeria

4.6.2 Impact of Judicial Interventions on Democratic Stability in Ekiti State

Ekiti State depends on judicial interventions because they preserve democratic stability through their work in protecting the integrity of elections and handling political disputes. Several stakeholders have varying opinions about the effectiveness of judicial interventions on democratic stability in Ekiti State based on question responses. Technical victory over meritorious judgment instead of proper evaluation is a popular belief among those who see the judiciary as controlled by the governing party while some support judicial oversight for its rule of law preservation and increased accountability.

Judicial corruption causes widespread disappointment among the public because judges accept bribes while remaining susceptible to political pressures in court decisions. The judicial

intervention into elections serves two functions in the eyes of survey respondents since it addresses voting irregularities yet sometimes harms democracy through improper applications. The people express concerns about leadership representation in politics because courts frequently overturn election outcomes. The jury respondents express the notion that courts sustain democratic calmness because they stop electoral deception and settle differences honorably. Public trust in the electoral system is believed to decrease because courts play an increasingly prominent role in deciding election winners.

Judicial influence upon democracy receives positive assessments when institutions display independence and ensure transparency as well as account to the public. Nigeria's democratic institutions will gain greater trust through legal system reform which stops political interference and speeds up dispute resolution processes.

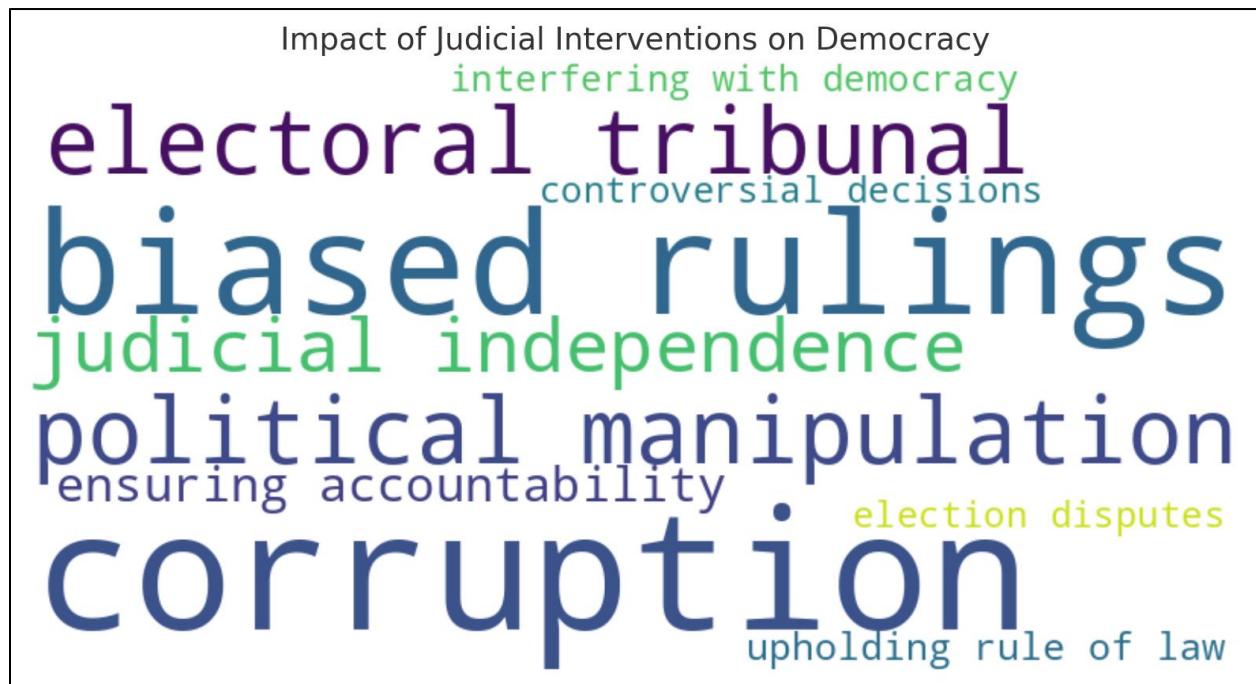


Figure 4.7: Word cloud Depicting Judicial Influence on Democratic Stability

4.6.3 Solutions to Strengthen Democratic Institutions and Ensure Smooth Transitions of Power

The responses obtained from the question “What possible solutions can be taken to strengthen democratic institutions and ensure smooth transitions of power?” suggest a range of solutions to strengthen democratic institutions and promote stable governance. A key recommendation is ensuring free and fair elections through improved electoral processes, reduced corruption, and enhanced transparency. Strengthening INEC’s independence by shielding it from political influence is seen as crucial for credible elections.

Another major theme is judicial independence and electoral reforms. Respondents stress the need for an impartial judiciary to fairly resolve electoral disputes and uphold democratic principles. Corruption within the judiciary must be addressed to restore public trust. Eradicating vote buying and political interference would enhance electoral credibility and reduce post-election disputes.

Security is also a major concern, with suggestions to increase security presence during elections to prevent violence, intimidation, and disruptions. Technological advancements, such as electronic voting systems and cybersecurity measures, are recommended to enhance transparency and efficiency in the voting process.

Civic engagement is another priority, with calls for voter education and political awareness campaigns to ensure citizens understand their rights and responsibilities. Ensuring good governance, accountability, and inclusive decision-making would further strengthen democratic institutions.

Overall, a combination of legal reforms, political transparency, security improvements, and voter empowerment is needed to sustain democratic stability and smooth transitions of power in Nigeria.

Solutions to Strengthen Democratic Institutions



A word cloud centered around the theme of strengthening democratic institutions. The most prominent word is 'transparency' in a large, yellow-green font. Surrounding it are other key terms: 'good governance' (yellow), 'electoral reforms' (green), 'voter education' (purple), 'security improvements' (teal), 'free and fair elections' (blue), 'stop corruption' (yellow), 'judicial independence' (yellow), and 'eliminating vote buying' (small, blue text above 'security improvements'). The words are arranged in a roughly circular pattern, with 'transparency' at the top and 'judicial independence' at the bottom.

Figure 4.8: Word Cloud Highlighting Solutions for Strengthening Electoral Integrity

Chapter Five

Discussion of Findings and Conclusion

5.1 Discussion of Findings

This study investigates the major challenges affecting democratic governance in Ekiti State, the impact of electoral processes on democracy, the role of political actors and institutions in shaping democratic transitions, and possible measures for strengthening democratic institutions. The findings highlight several critical issues undermining democratic consolidation in Ekiti State, including electoral violence, vote-buying, weak democratic institutions, judicial interference, and a lack of political accountability. Additionally, the study explores the role of electoral processes in shaping governance, examining voter participation, election credibility, and party dynamics. The discussion also considers strategies for strengthening democracy, ensuring smooth political transitions, and enhancing governance in Ekiti State.

5.1.1 Major Challenges Affecting Democratic Governance in Ekiti State

The research findings expose major obstacles impacting democratic management in Ekiti State while corresponding to universal problems across Nigeria and additional developing democracy states. Political intimidation alongside violent activities in elections preserves a continuous problem because such practices inhibit voter participation while weakening election mandates. The research data matches previous findings presented by Jombo and Bamigbose (2023) who established that election-related violence makes way as a primary barrier against democratic stability in Nigeria. Gichuhi (2020) establishes that insufficient elections law enforcement together with political shifts within security forces generates continuous violence which erodes public confidence in electoral processes. The findings of Omojowo et al. (2024) show political elites in African democracies use state institutions to silence opponents and sustain their grip on power just like Ekiti State experiences.

The survey results showed that political parties make frequent financial payments to voters as part of their vote-buying strategy. The concept of vote-buying corresponds with Nwagwu et al. (2022) who detailed this practice as a common problem in Nigeria because of its focus on

monetary exchanges instead of policy platforms. Nwagwu and others (2022) explain that political monetization damages electoral integrity by causing politicians to concentrate on personal profit instead of public service delivery. Research finds that campaign financing rules in developed democracies control financial dealings between politicians and voters and eliminate straightforward financial transactions for voting. Nigeria together with various emerging democratic systems experiences financial struggles which makes citizens accept money offers from politicians thus maintaining subpar governance because politicians focus on recovery of campaign expenses instead of good governance (Nwogu, 2023).

The study also highlights weaknesses in democratic institutions, particularly the electoral commission, judiciary, and legislature. Similar findings have been noted in research examining the role of Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), where accusations of political interference and logistical inefficiencies have led to public skepticism (Kucici & Dalah, 2025). Comparative studies like that of Gabie (2019) indicate that in more developed democracies, electoral commissions operate with greater independence, reducing the likelihood of political manipulation. However, in Ekiti State, as in many Nigerian states, delayed election results, irregular voter registration, and judicial controversies undermine confidence in democracy, according to the respondents. Additionally, political interference in the judiciary has been widely documented in Nigeria, with studies showing that court decisions on electoral disputes often reflect political pressures rather than judicial independence (Peabody, 2011).

The lack of political accountability and citizen engagement further exacerbates democratic challenges in Ekiti State. The findings from this research suggest that elected officials frequently fail to fulfill campaign promises, leading to widespread disillusionment. This aligns with studies that emphasize the role of accountability mechanisms in democratic stability. While established democracies have robust oversight institutions, weak accountability structures in Nigeria allow corruption and poor governance to persist. Research indicates that strengthening civil society organizations, independent media, and anti-corruption agencies can improve political accountability (Annan, 2022), a recommendation that applies to Ekiti State.

5.1.2 Impact of Electoral Processes on Democracy and Governance in Ekiti State

Research findings examine vital electoral process obstacles together with their democratic and governing implications within Ekiti State. The voting habits in Ekiti State demonstrate variable levels since particular elections maintain active involvement yet others face voting disinterest. The study identifies three critical elements which reduce voter engagement although they are security concerns together with distrust in the electoral process and candidate choice dissatisfaction. The findings match research trends about Nigerian voting habits because voters avoid elections due to violent behavior and perceived election tampering. According to research (Omojowo et al., 2024; Norris, 2018), political dissatisfaction reduces voter turnout in all democracies but strong institutions and minimal electoral malpractice limit such effects. Developed democracies have encountered voter apathy by implementing both compulsory voting systems and intensive civic participation measures according to Birch (2016). To establish reliable electoral processes in Nigeria additional long-term voter education methods and institutional reform strategies must continue indefinitely.

The study confirmed that political parties determined the development and evolution of democratic governance in Ekiti State as a primary discovery. The research shows that political organizations commonly deal with battles within their ranks while enforcing candidates against their will and ignoring democratic procedures. Parties today operate with propaganda while launching personal attacks alongside utilizing their networking power based on patronage systems instead of focusing on policy debate. Research about Nigerian political dynamics shows how elite groups control party organizations while the primary parties lack meaningful ideological differences. Mature democratic systems focus on policy-oriented campaigns while establishing competitive primary systems together with institutional parties that champion internal democracy according to Burnell & Gerrits (2013). However, the enhancement of party institutions together with policy-oriented campaign initiatives across Ekiti State would help boost electoral competition as well as improve governmental outcomes.

5.1.3 Strengthening Democratic Institutions and Ensuring Smooth Transitions of Power

The research demonstrates that electoral reforms play a key function in developing democratic institutions alongside creating orderly power transfers in Ekiti State. Independence of the

Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) needs strengthening together with better electoral logistics and improved voter education programs to achieve critical progress. The research results support Hollyer et al. (2011) by showing that electoral democracy needs self-governing institutions with open election procedures for democracy to thrive. Research works like that of Layiwola (2024) and Omotayo and Adekunle (2021) endorse electronic voting for credibility improvements but the continuing electoral malpractice in Nigeria demands expanded reforms involving both technological solutions and legal frameworks and law enforcement capacities (Omojowo et al., 2024).

The study also underscores the challenge of vote-buying, linking it to economic hardship. Respondents noted that financial inducements from politicians sway voter decisions, a phenomenon widely discussed in political science literature. Research from other emerging democracies supports the view that poverty increases voter susceptibility to clientelism, where immediate financial gains are prioritized over long-term governance quality (Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 2002). However, in contrast, mature democracies have successfully reduced vote-buying through strict campaign finance regulations and voter education initiatives (Canare et al., 2018). Addressing economic challenges through job creation and social welfare programs, as the study suggests, could be a viable strategy to curb this practice in Ekiti State.

Judicial independence is another major concern, particularly in electoral dispute resolution. The study finds that political interference in the judiciary weakens trust in legal adjudication. Study of Siboy (2021) on judicial systems in democratic nations highlight that independent judicial bodies are essential for resolving election disputes fairly. While some African countries have made progress in insulating the judiciary from political influence, Nigeria continues to struggle with perceptions of judicial bias, reinforcing the study's findings.

Also in the findings, the role of civil society and grassroots activism in promoting political accountability is also emphasized. Research of Waddington et al. (2019) on democratic governance highlights that active civic engagement fosters transparency and holds leaders accountable. However, while established democracies have institutionalized mechanisms for citizen participation, Nigeria still faces challenges in ensuring that public opinion influences

policy making (Ajulor, 2018). Expanding digital engagement platforms and town hall meetings, as suggested by the study, could bridge this gap.

5.2 Conclusion

This study examined the challenges facing democratic transitions in Ekiti State, focusing on electoral processes, political institutions, and governance dynamics. It sought to understand the key obstacles to democratic consolidation, the role of electoral processes in shaping democracy, the influence of political actors and institutions, and potential measures for strengthening democracy and ensuring smooth political transitions. Using a mixed-methods approach, data were collected through a structured questionnaire incorporating both closed and open-ended questions. This allowed for a comprehensive analysis of the quantitative trends while also capturing qualitative insights from respondents' perspectives. The findings reveal that democratic transitions in Ekiti State are hindered by electoral violence, vote-buying, weak democratic institutions, political interference, and limited political accountability.

In addressing the first research question—*What are the major challenges facing democratic transitions in Ekiti State?*—the study finds that electoral violence, political intimidation, and vote-buying significantly undermine the democratic process. Elections in the state suffer due to party rivalry that includes ballot box snatching as well as attacks on voters and opposing candidates. Political elite classes commonly use financial bribes to swing election results which devalues the democratic procedure. The critical democratic institutions such as judiciary together with electoral commission underperform in maintaining proper oversight which deepens the collapse of governance systems. The challenging political environment weakens public trust in democracy because it drives away residents from voting and reduces their faith in democratic systems.

Regarding the second research question—*How have electoral processes in Ekiti State impacted democratic consolidation?*—the study highlights both progress and setbacks. Electoral malpractice across Ekiti State remains an ongoing issue that damages public trust with instances of vote-buying together with logistical issues and long delays for result announcement. A

worrying number of citizens show apathy toward voting because they doubt that their ballots make any difference. Electoral disputes that get extended by political influences on judicial choices lead to unstable post-election situations which undermine democratic consolidation according to the study findings.

The third research question—*What role do political actors and institutions play in shaping democratic transitions in Ekiti State?*—reveals that political actors, particularly party elites, significantly influence the democratic process. The research demonstrates that power in Ekiti State political parties rests in two or three important figures who implement their chosen candidates which suppresses party democracy and lessens political competition. Political representatives tend to uphold party solidarity before focusing on community needs thus creating problems with governance. Political pressure from national parties weakens the effectiveness of critical institutions including the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the judiciary during electoral practices. Many respondents doubt the judicial system's independence when they handle electoral disputes thus weakening confidence in all democratic institutions.

To address the final research question—*What measures can be adopted to strengthen democracy and ensure smooth political transitions in the state?*—the study suggests several reforms. Restoring voter confidence relies heavily on increasing INEC independence and enhancing election management procedures along with strengthening punishment of electoral misconduct. Strong democracy and smooth political transitions depend on three key strategies which include teaching voters proper conduct and implementing economic enhancement initiatives and maintaining strict enforcement of campaign donation regulations. Electoral integrity depends on judges maintaining their independence by receiving appointments through transparent procedures while the executive plays no interference. Transparent primaries coupled with issue-based campaign strategies between political parties aid internal democratic growth which enhances political competitiveness as well. The accountability of political actors and the creation of civic engagement depends heavily on civil society organizations and media institutions.

The findings from this study present important implications which affect Ekiti State's democratic governance together with the whole nation of Nigeria. The present research shows the necessity of organizational improvements to enhance voting reliability while simultaneously building

official political responsibilities and encouraging voter involvement. Democratic consolidation remains unstable because reforms are needed to fortify the transition process between political regimes and decrease public uncertainties. Elected officials together with oversight bodies and civil society components must work to establish enduring democratic measures which focus on maintaining openness alongside diversity alongside accountability practices.

The democratic progress in Ekiti State faces ongoing obstacles that endanger political system stability and credibility. Smooth political transitions and deep democracy require the attention of these three fundamental issues: electoral violence and vote-buying together with institution strengthening. The implementation of democratic institutions together with increased political accountability and citizen engagement will advance Ekiti state governance while creating a model for larger changes in Nigerian democracy.

Chapter Six

Recommendations

6.1 Recommendations for Future Studies

Research on Ekiti State democratic transitions should use an extended timeframe to evaluate how electoral system changes coupled with political party evolution and institutional growth affects democratic stability into the future. The research should follow a longitudinal method to determine how well current interventions handle electoral violence as well as vote-buying and weak political accountability.

Studies regarding democratic transitions in Ekiti State should encompass comparisons between this state and other Nigerian states facing similar political and electoral challenges to gain overall insights into structural elements that affect democratic transitions. Research that explores various states in Nigeria would reveal state-specific political stability and electoral governance improvement strategies.

In order to grasp the various democratic process influences between stakeholders the research scope needs expansion to include civil society organizations and traditional leaders and representatives from the private sector. Further analysis should examine how digital technologies influence political involvement through social media and electronic voting platforms during elections and voting periods.

Qualitative investigations that examine voting perceptions together with political culture and grassroots participation would supply extraordinary insights about how democracy operates in Ekiti State. The collection of ethnographic data through interviews and focus group discussions might help researchers understand how voters and political candidates experience democratic life.

Future academic studies should research how effectively legal systems together with policy instruments work to fight election misbehavior and support good governance practices. The establishment of policy guidelines will enable researchers to produce practical recommendations for improving democratic institutions along with facilitating seamless transitions between political regimes in Ekiti state.

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