

**VOTERS APATHY IN DEMOCRATIC PROCESS OF ONDO STATE NIGERIA:
INTERROGATING THE 2020 GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION**

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ABSTRACT

Voters' participation in election is essential for deciding leadership legitimacy in a democracy in any part of the globe. However, voters' participation in Nigeria has continued to dwindle, may be due to failure of government and political elites to address social, political, economic and security challenges confronting the nation which Ondo state is not an exception. Existing literature showed that scholars has provide insights into voters' apathy towards elections but did not comprehensively measured the extent of opinion about factors that influenced voters' apathy in 2023 governorship election in ondo state Nigeria, underlining the need to reassess the issue. This study therefore assessed the factors that influenced voter apathy in 2020 governorship election in ondo state Nigeria and show extent of opinions. This study is rooted in rational choice theory. Both primary and secondary methods were adopted to gather data. This study found only 27% of registered voters participated in 2020 Ondo state's Gubernatorial election indicating high apathy and questioning the election's legitimacy. It reveals extent which some factors such as age, education, tribe, political violence, lack of accountability, bad governance, and insufficient election information has influenced apathy was high, while health status, security and monetary inducements were less influential. To address voter apathy, it recommends engaging all age groups, increasing voter education, promoting inclusive policies, improving healthcare, security, strengthening political accountability, enhancing information dissemination and tackling financial barriers to foster higher voters' participation and stronger democracy in Ondo State, Nigeria.

Keywords: Democracy, Election, Legitimacy, Participation, Voter Apathy.

1. INTRODUCTION

Voters' participation in election is essential for deciding leadership legitimacy in a democracy in any part of the globe. Democracy connotes people empower to govern themselves in a form of government in which all citizens have votes (Edubridle, 2022:5). The political arrangement could situate the people to assembled where their affairs are determined and held in their own hand (Jega, 2005:5). To Agagu (2007), democracy means a representative form of government with participating decision making, accountability and guarantee of human and civil rights with those who exercise the political system of democracy could function as it is a consensual system where its legitimacy comes from an acceptance of the fairness, transparency of its procedures for elections to state offices and policy-making. According to Aver & orban (2014) democracy is

characterized by representation as official are held accountable to the public through periodic elections that confirm them in power or replace them with new official.

According to Adigun Agbaje (1999) democracy is a term that is used to describe an idea, process or system of government. As an idea, process or system, democracy entrenches and explain, or seeks to entrench and expand, the rights, ability and capacity of people, in any community, large and small from the most complex to the least complicated, to take control of their lives through participating as fully as possible, in discussions and decisions on issues and events that affect them and their community.

Electoral engagement by citizens of countries that have embraced democracy do that as a result of their political rights to practice the doctrine of eligibility to all duties and obligations embedded in their citizenship of such countries. Their participation and representation in all that are democratic make them legitimate as well as major key factors in who decides what and how Democracy means to people that partake in taking and carrying-out decisions on the general concerns of the state through their elected or selected representatives for the common good (Agbaje, 1999:193)

Since the return to democracy in Nigeria in 1999, elections have been held in the state, like other states either as normal or off- cycle subnational elections. The Ondo state 2020 election was an off-cycle subnational election that was held on October 10, 2020 among major political parties as registered by INEC, as such, the election discovered that there was voter apathy among voters during the election. How? It was discovered through INEC database, that the total number of registered voters in the 2020 Ondo State gubernatorial election is One million eight hundred and twenty-two thousand three hundred and forty-six (1,822,346), the total number of actual voters across the registered political parties is four hundred and ninety-two thousand eight hundred and twenty-five (492,825) and the differences is One million three hundred and twenty-nine thousand five hundred and twenty-one (1,329,521). This means, higher percentage of the registered voters during the 2020 Gubernatorial election in Ondo State did not vote.

Apart from the above dwindled in voters' participation, existing literature showed that scholars have provided insight into the causes and the effects of voters' apathy at different times, but they did not consider the issues in context of 2020 Ondo state governorship election, underlining the need to systematically interrogate the issue to proffer solution. This study therefore interrogates the reason for voters' apathy in 2020 Ondo state governorship election in Nigeria.

The fundamental questions asked were: Are there evidence to show there was voters' apathy in the 2020 Ondo state Gubernatorial election? What factors that influenced voter apathy in the 2020 Ondo state Gubernatorial election and to what extent? In terms of significance, the study created further awareness as regards voter apathy in the 2020 Ondo state Gubernatorial election as it represents a distinct issue in election management and voters, public conduct towards Government actions and inactions as well as the interplay of public policy and decisions making analysis.

Conceptual Clarification

The concept of voter apathy and election have been clarified by scholars at different times and in differently ways. However, the definitions relevant to this paper are adopted here.

Election

According to Chatarved (2006), election is the process and manner of competitiveness into various positions where in fe/w or many candidates vie for election offices as chosen or elected by voters, or set of people who are representative of a constituency, council, ward region, state and a country at large for a fixed tenure or period where such candidate(s) can seek for re-election as the case may be. To be elected, it requires a specific quota, which translates that the numbers of votes needed by people seeking for votes must acquire.

In other words, Maduabuchi Okeke (1999) defined elections as the means through which citizens of a given society reject those they do not want to governed them or have not governed them well. They are the basis of democracy. Through elections people choose their representatives and express their political and socio-economic aspirations by voting for a candidate or a political party whose vision and manifesto best reflect those aspirations.

In the light of the above, Johari (2009) defined election as the recruitment of the representatives by the choice of the voters. However, there is the possibility that some registered voters that are eligible to vote will display apathy due to several perceived factors thereby leading to under representation in an election. On this notes, it is important that we clarify the concept of apathy in context of voters. What is voter apathy?

Voter Apathy

According to Nweke & Etido-iyans (2018) voter apathy is an abandonment of the cause of being committed to the political system which may stems from lack of understanding and activities to the country in terms of civil duties and obligation. It is the lack of involvement in public way of doing things especially political participation which have brought serious decline. It means the percentage of those who are qualify to vote in an election as voter turnout is a significant measure to know the level of performance or rejection of region.

According to Agigbe (2015), voter apathy can be fined as the lack of interest or passivity of voters towards voting. The insensitivity of voters to electoral processes particularly voting caused by disenchantment arising from dissatisfaction with the political system and sometimes ignorance and lack of proper education. Stressing voter apathy results in low voter turnouts in a country supposedly run by elected officials, disenchantment and inactive citizens can present a problem because when very few people vote at election, the elected persons do not necessarily represent the belief and values of the general populations as fewer voters at the polls lessen the impacts of the popular vote and strengthen the impacts of special interest group.

In conceptualizing apathy, Abdullah & Arabo (2013) understood as a situation of not showing interest by voters in voting activities. It means a situation of low turnout by voters and showing indifferent attitude towards voting during election. As Okafor, Odigbo) Okeke (2022) noted, voter apathy is a decrease in the involvement of voters under the electoral system. It is when eligible voters reluctantly and knowingly avoid not to vote. In describing the concept, Ariyo and Fasunwon (2022) saw it as a mode for uncommitted, unserious and unreliable government that will eventually deprive the people dividends of governance. From the perspective of Abi, Asogwa & Ibenekwu

(2024) voter apathy is a protest show of attitude and anger against the political system of the government towards the people in a negative way (Obi, et al, 2024:249). In defining voter apathy, Aliyu, Mohammed & Bello (2020) wrote, voter apathy happened why the electorates did not vote in the actual sense, which is a reflection of the political reality on ground that shows disaffection to the government. For Folu (2022) voter apathy is exhibited when voters do not show interest, keen love and passion to cast his/her vote in an election. Hence, Akinyemi (2019) saw voter apathy as a threat and dangerous to democracy in Nigeria where few of her citizens failed to vote as guaranteed in the Nigeria's constitution of 1999 as amended.

Additionally, Mustapha & Enikanoselu, (2021) defined voter apathy arises when there is the lack of accountability, deceit, presence of violence and unfulfilled promises by the government over the people as well as other more variables issues that are associated that voters considered not worthy to vote in the first place which precipitate them not to participate in voting thereafter. Essentially, Ladi, & Stephenson (2022) noted that voter apathy threatens electoral consolidation since democracy cannot service without people's participation losing interest or not participating in elections.

Theoretical Relevance

The Rational Choice (RC) theory is relevance to this study as provide insights into understanding why individual will display political apathy in a democracy. The theory was developed by Anthony Downs in his 1957 work “An Economic Theory of Democracy” According to Adebayo (2021), Eze & Olusola (2021) and Adeyemi (2021), the RC theory assumes that:

- i. Individuals act in their own self-interest, making decisions that maximize their personal benefits while minimizing costs.
- ii. Voters make a rational calculation of the costs and benefits associated with voting.
- iii. Individuals participate in political processes if the expected benefits outweigh the costs.
- iv. Voters seek out and process information to make informed decisions, but only to the extent that the benefits of obtaining this information justify the costs.

Although, Chukwu (2021) explained that RC theory has been criticized for: (a) oversimplification based on the assumption that all voters act purely out of self-interest and rational decisions, which may not account for emotional, social, and cultural influences on voting behavior. (b) overlooking the possibility that some individuals vote out of a sense of civic duty or altruism, rather than for personal gain. (c) assuming that voters have the ability to gather and process all necessary information, which may not be realistic in complex political environments.

Despite the limitations or weaknesses, Ogunleye (2021), Yusuf (2021), Igbokwe (2021), Omotayo (2021), Balogun (2021) and Falade (2021) revealed that the RC theory demonstrates relevance for explaining voter apathy in 2020 Ondo State gubernatorial election by analyzing how voters weigh the costs and benefits of participating in the election in the following context.

- i. The costs associated with voting include time, effort, and potential risks (such as fear of violence). In Ondo State, high levels of electoral violence, logistical issues, and economic hardship increased these costs significantly, therefore many voters perceive voting as not worth the effort.*
- ii. If voters believe their vote will not make a significant difference in the election outcome or that the election process lacks transparency and fairness, the perceived benefits of voting decrease. In the 2020 governorship election, distrust in the electoral process and dissatisfaction with political parties may have reduced the perceived benefits of voting.
- iii. Gathering information about candidates and the electoral process requires time and effort. Inadequate voter education and biased media coverage can increase these costs, leading to voter apathy. In Ondo State, many voters may have felt they lacked sufficient information to make an informed decision, further discouraging participation.
- iv. Despite its limitations, RC theory provides a useful framework for understanding voter apathy in the 2020 Ondo State's governorship election. It highlights how high costs and low perceived benefits of voting can discourage electoral participation. By addressing these factors – such as improving electoral transparency, reducing violence, and enhancing voter education – policymakers can develop strategies to mitigate voter apathy.

Empirical Review

Voters apathy towards election has been documented by scholars. Adebayo (2021) examined the causes of voter apathy in Ondo State's election and found that mistrust in the electoral process, fear of violence, and poor voter education were significant contributors to voter apathy. This scholar recommended the implementation of stringent security measures, improved voter education programs, and reforms to enhance the transparency of the electoral process. Also, Adeyemi (2021) examined the role of political parties in influencing voter turnout in Ondo State's election and concluded that ineffective party campaigns and lack of grassroots mobilization contributed to low voter turnout. This scholar recommended that political parties should invest in grassroots mobilization and engage more effectively with the electorate. However, Eze & Olusola (2021) investigated the impact of socio-economic factors on voter turnout in Ondo State's election and revealed that economic hardship and unemployment were found to negatively influence voter participation, as many potential voters were engrossed with survival rather than political engagement. These scholars suggested economic empowerment programs and social safety nets to ease economic burdens on prospective voters.

Moreover, Chukwu (2021) assessed the effect of electoral violence on voter turnout in Ondo State's election. The panic about violence was a major constraint to voter participation, with many voters choosing to stay home due to safety concerns and recommended enhanced security measures and strict enforcement of laws against electoral violence. Nevertheless, Falade (2021) investigated the effect of electoral transparency on voter turnout in Ondo State's election and revealed that the perceived lack of transparency in the electoral process discouraged many voters from participating. This scholar suggested reforms to ensure transparency and build trust in the electoral system.

Furthermore, Ogunleye (2021) explored the relationship between voter education and voter apathy in Ondo State's election and revealed that the lack of comprehensive voter education was identified as a key factor in voter apathy. This scholar called for the implementation of robust voter education programs by both government and non-governmental organizations. A study by Omotayo (2021) examined the role of civic education in addressing voter apathy in the 2020 Ondo State's election showed a significant lack of civic education contributed to voter apathy, as many citizens were unaware of the importance of their vote. This scholar advocated for enhanced civic education programs in schools and communities. Additionally, Yusuf (2021) examined the influence of media coverage on voter participation in Ondo State's election and reported that biased media coverage and the dissemination of fake news were found to contribute to voter apathy. This author recommended regulatory oversight to ensure balanced media reporting and campaigns to combat fake news.

However, Balogun (2021) investigate the impact of electoral logistics on voter turnout in Ondo State's election and found that poor logistics, including late arrival of voting materials and malfunctioning voting machines, led to voter frustration and apathy. This scholar recommended improvements in electoral logistics and contingency planning.

In addition, Igbokwe (2021) interrogated the influence of demographic factors on voter turnout in Ondo State's election. Age, gender, and education level were significant predictors of voter turnout, with younger and less educated individuals showing higher levels of apathy. This scholar recommended targeted voter mobilization efforts for younger and less educated demographics.

The literature highlights various factors contributing to voter apathy in Ondo State's election, including electoral violence, lack of voter education, poor electoral logistics, economic hardship, and mistrust in the electoral process. However, the literature did not measure the extent these factors influenced voters' apathy in the 2020 Ondo State's gubernatorial election, underlining the gap and the need to reassess the issue to proffer solution. This study therefore assessed factors that have influenced voters' apathy in 2020 Ondo state's governorship election in Nigeria and the extent the factors translate low voters' outcome. In this way, associating with existing literature to contribute comprehensive knowledge about voters' apathy towards this election.

2. METHODS AND FINDINGS

Descriptive research design which combination qualitative and quantitative method of data analysis was employed. In using the qualitative method (secondary) relevant contents were

extracted from textbooks journals, internet materials on 2020 Ondo state’s gubernatorial elections. In using the quantitative method (primary), 900 structured questionnaires were employed to elicit data from the respondents. The participants for the study cuts across several demography of communities’ youths, farmers, market women, academic, professional, elderly men and physically challenged persons. The study was conducted in randomly selected urban and rural towns and communities in Ondo state using nine (9) local Govt out of the eighteen (18) local Govts in the state. To achieve this, three local governments were randomly selected from each senatorial district (central, north and south). This was to ensure participant representativeness across the three senatorial district in the state. The data gathered were analysis using simple percentage statistics and the results were presented in table and discussed.

Evidence of Voters’ Apathy in the 2020 Ondo State’s Gubernatorial election

Information from Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC, 2020) revealed there was voters’ apathy in the 2020 Ondo State’s gubernatorial election. While tables I shows number of voters by local government, tables II shows number of registered voters versus actual voters.

Table I: No of voters in 2020 election across local government in Ondo state

S/N	Local Govt Area	No of Registered Eligible Voters
1	Akoko North East	80,040
2	Akoko North West	72,139
3	Akoko South East	35,747
4	Akoko South West	101,842
5	Akure North	74,821
6	Akure South	290,267
7	Ese-odo	70,014
8	Idanre	82,449
9	Ifedore	75,257
10	Ilaye	132,189
11	Ile-oluji/okeigbo	73,051
12	Irele	66,959
13	Oyigbo	136,146
14	Okitipupa	110,572
15	Ondo East	50,496
16	Ondo West	172,815
17	Ose	69,087
Total		1,822,346

Source: INEC (2020)

Table II: No. of registered voters versus actual voters in 2020 election in Ondo state

S/N	Category	Total
1	No. of registered voters	1822346
2	No. of actual voters	492825
3	Differences	-1,329521

Source: INEC (2020)

The table II shows that the number of registered voters is 1,822,346. This represents the total number of individuals who were eligible and have registered to vote in the 2020 gubernatorial election in Ondo State as at then. However, the number of actual voters is 492,825 indicating individuals who actually participated during the voting process. The difference between the registered voters and actual voters is -1,329,521 suggesting that 1,329,521 registered voters did not turn out to vote in these election. This implies that only about 27% of registered voters participated in the election (492,825 out of 1,822,346). The low voter turnout might suggest a lack of political engagement or low interest among the electorates. The low turnout can raise questions about the legitimacy and representativeness of the election results. If only a small fraction of the electorate participates, the elected officials may not truly represent the preferences of the broader population. However, a lot of factors may have contributed to this voters’ apathy. This factors are analyzed subsequently.

Factors that Influenced Voters’ Apathy in 2020 Ondo State’s Gubernatorial Election

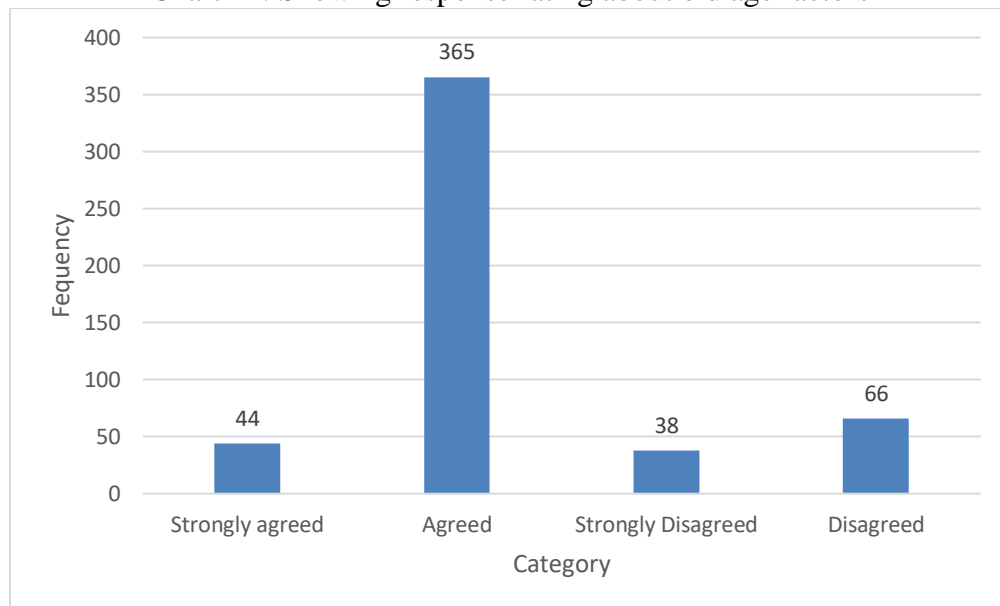
The results of the data gathered in respect to the factors that influenced voters’ apathy in 2020 Ondo state’s gubernatorial election are presented in tables and charts (II-VIII).

Table III: Old age factor

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agreed	44	8.6
Agreed	365	71.2
Strongly disagreed	38	7.4
Disagreed	66	12.9

Source: Field Work (2024)

Chart III: Showing response rating about old age factors



The results from table III and the corresponding chart III showed that 44(8.6%) of the respondents strongly agreed that old age contributed to voter apathy in the 2020 Ondo State’s Gubernatorial

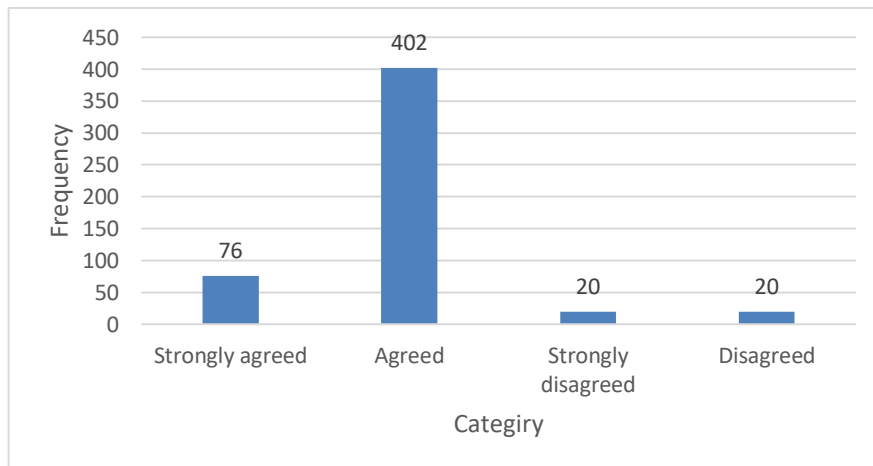
election, 365(71.2%) also agreed to the notion, 38(7.4%) strongly disagreed, while 66(12.9) of the respondents disagreed that aging contributed to voter apathy in the 2020 Ondo state’s Gubernatorial election. This results indicated that majority of the respondents were of the opinion that old age contributed to influence voter apathy in the 2020 Ondo State’s Gubernatorial election.

Table IV: Level of education and tribalism factors

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agreed	76	14.7
Agreed	402	77.6
Strongly disagreed	20	3.9
Disagreed	20	3.9

Source: Field Work (2024)

Chart IV: Showing rating about level of education and tribalism factors



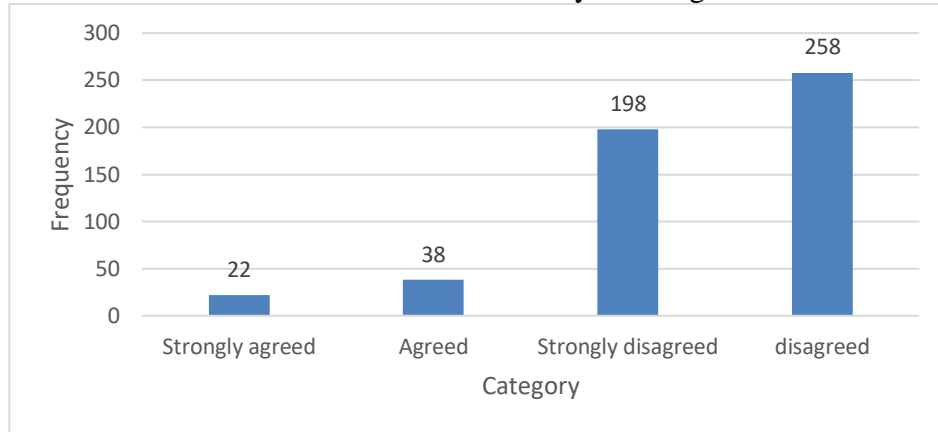
The result from table IV and the corresponding chart IV revealed 76(14.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed that the level of education and tribalism are key factors of voter apathy in the 2020 Ondo state’s Gubernatorial election, 402(78%) agreed, 20(4%) strongly disagreed and 20(4%) disagreed to the assertion. The result therefore indicates that larger proportion of the respondents agreed that the levels of education and tribalism are key factors of voter apathy in the 2020 Ondo state’s Gubernatorial election.

Table V: Health status and security factors

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agreed	22	4.3
Agreed	38	7.4
Strongly disagreed	198	38.4
Disagreed	258	50.0

Source: Field Work (2024)

Chart V: Health status and security challenge factors



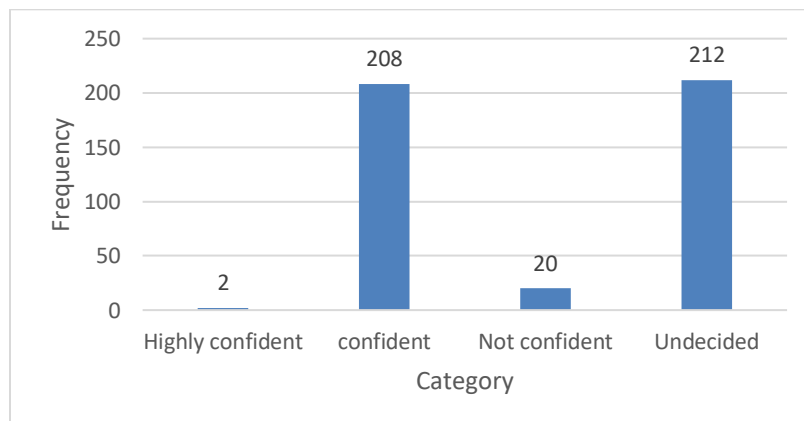
The result from table V and the corresponding chart V noted that 22(4.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed that health status and security factors influenced or contributed to voters’ apathy in the 2020 Ondo state’s Gubernatorial election, 38(7.4%) of the respondents agreed and 198(38.4%) strongly disagreed and 258(50.0%) of the respondent disagreed on the assertion. The data indicates that majority 258(50%) of the respondents disagreed that health status and security challenges affect voters’ apathy during the 2020 Ondo state’s Gubernatorial election. Which suggests that health status and security was not a reason for low voters’ turnout in this election.

Table VI: Perceived money and other material inducement factor

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Highly confident	2	0.4
Confident	208	41.2
Not confident	20	3.9
Undecided	212	54.5

Source: Field Work (2024)

Chart VI: Showing rating on perceived money and other material inducement factors

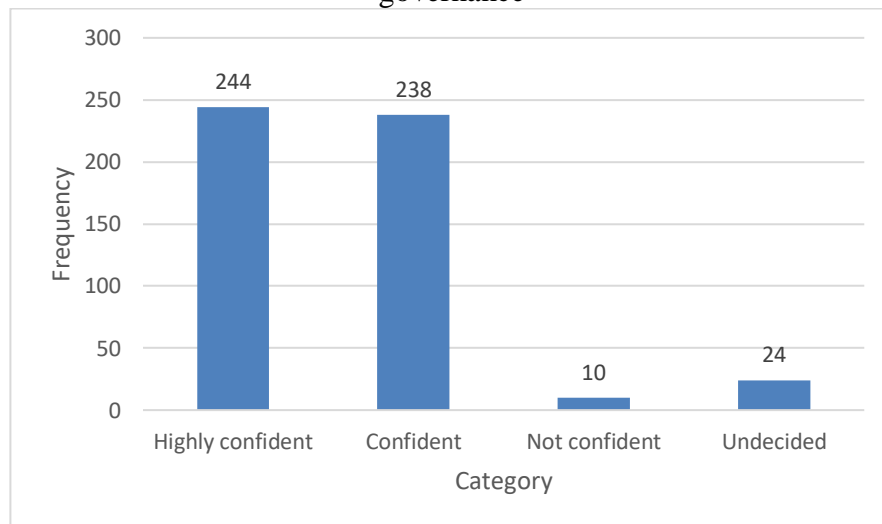


Results from table VI and the corresponding chart VI indicates 208 that represented 41.2% of the respondents were confident that perceived money and other material inducement factors influence voter apathy in the 2020 Ondo state’s Gubernatorial election, 20(4%) confident and 212(55%) of the respondents signified undecided. The data indicated that the majority of the respondents were undecided as whether perceived money and other material inducement factors and benefits from candidates or political parties influenced or triggered voter apathy in the 2020 Ondo state’s Gubernatorial election.

Table VII: Lack of interest due to perceived political violence, lack of accountability and bad government factors

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Highly confident	244	47.3
Confident	238	46.1
Non confident	10	1.9
Undecided	24	4.7

Chart VII: Lack of interest due to perceived political violence, accountability and bad governance



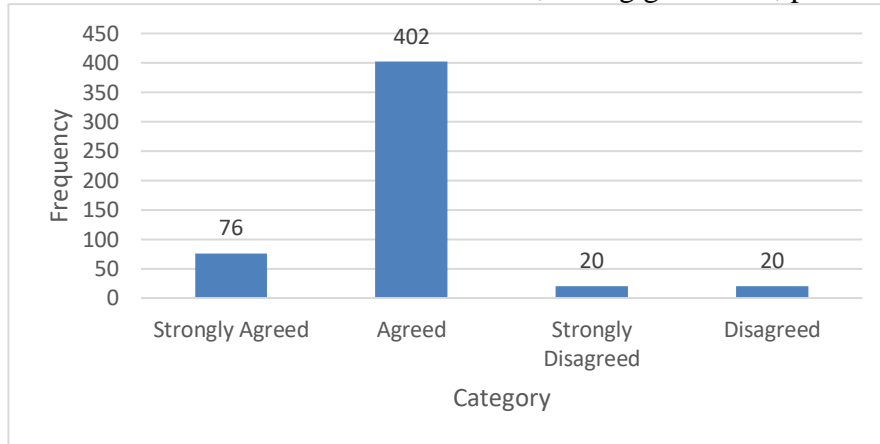
The results from table VII and the corresponding chart VII showed that 244(47.3%) of the respondents were highly confident that lack of interest on account of perceived political violence, lack of accountability and bad governance influenced or triggered voter apathy in the 2020 Ondo state’s Gubernatorial election, 238(46.1%) highly confident, 10(2%) not confident, while 24(5%) of the respondents were undecided. This data indicates that the majority of the respondent 244(47.3%) have the notion that lack of interest due to perceived political violence, political accountability and bad Governance influenced voter apathy during this election in Ondo State.

Table VIII: Lack of information on elections, voting guidelines, procedures

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agreed	76	15
Agreed	402	78
Strongly Disagreed	20	4
Disagreed	20	4

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

Chart VIII: Lack of information on elections, voting guidelines, procedures



The results from table VIII and the corresponding chart VIII provides that 76(15%) of the respondents strongly agreed that lack of information on elections, voting guidelines, procedures triggered voter apathy in the 2020 Ondo state’s Gubernatorial election, 402(78%) agreed to the position, 20(4%) strongly disagreed, while 20(4%) disagreed with the position. The majority of the respondents therefore agreed that lack of information on elections, voting guidelines, procedures of the elections influenced or triggered voter apathy in the 2020 Ondo State’s Gubernatorial election.

3. DISCUSSION

From the foregoing findings, it becomes clearer that the number of registered voters in 2020 Ondo State’s gubernatorial election was 1,822,346 which represents the total number of individuals who are eligible and have registered to vote. While 492,825 individuals actually participated in the voting process. The difference between the registered voters and the actual voters is in deficit of -1,329,521 indicating that about 1,329,521 registered voters did not turn out to vote in these election. In this case, only about 27% of registered voters participated in the election (492,825 out of 1,822,346) revealing a high extent of voters’ apathy, lack of political engagement or interest among the electorate and raising the question about the legitimacy and representativeness of the election results of the 2020 Ondo State Gubernatorial election.

In terms of the factors that influenced voters’ apathy and the extent, it can be argued as revealed this study finding that 71.2% which represent the majority of the respondent agreed that age is a factor that have led to voter apathy in the 2020 Ondo State’s Gubernatorial election. Also, 78%

which represented larger proportion of the respondents agreeing that the education and tribe are key factors contributed to voter apathy in the 2020 Ondo state's Gubernatorial election. 47.3% have the motion that lack of interest on account of political violence, political accountability and bad Governance contributed to voter apathy or disengagement from voting in this election. 78% were in agreement that the lack of information about the election, voting guidelines, procedures on triggered voter apathy in the 2020 Ondo State's Gubernatorial election. These findings are in agreement with Falade (2021). Chukwu (2021), Ogunleye (2021), Balogun (2021) and Igbokwe (2021) the research outcomes which argued that highlighted these factors as causes of voters' apathy.

It can also be deduced from the finding that while 50% which represented the majority disagreed especially that health status and security contributed to influenced voters' apathy in the last 2020 Ondo state's Gubernatorial election. While some 55% which equally represented majority were undecided especially about money inducement to voter apathy in the 2020 Ondo state's Gubernatorial election.

4. CONCLUSION

This study assessed the factors that influenced voter apathy in the 2020 Ondo state's Gubernatorial election and to show the extent if the ratings. The findings from the 2020 Ondo State's Gubernatorial election reveal a significant voter turnout deficit, with only about 27% of registered voters (492,825 out of 1,822,346) participating. This indicates a high level of voter apathy and raises concerns about the legitimacy and representativeness of the election results. The study identifies several factors contributing to voter apathy including that: age, education, tribe, political violence, lack of accountability, bad governance, as contributing to voter disengagement, lack of information on elections and voting procedures triggered voter apathy. While it can be concluded that health status, security, monetary inducement did not contribute or influence voters' apathy in the 2020 gubernatorial election in Ondo State. However, we can conclude that the extent which majority of the factors measured contributed to voters' apathy is considerably high.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

To address voter apathy and improve voter turnout in future elections therefore, the following recommendations are proposed:

- i. Implement policies and programs that engage all age groups in the political process, ensuring that both young and older voters feel represented and motivated to vote.
- ii. Increase efforts to educate the electorate on the importance of voting and how their participation impacts governance. This can be achieved through public awareness campaigns and integrating civic education into the school curriculum.
- iii. Promote policies that ensure equitable representation of various tribes and communities, fostering a sense of inclusion and importance among all demographic groups.
- iv. Enhance healthcare access and security measures around election periods to alleviate concerns that might deter voters from participating.
- v. Strengthen political accountability and governance practices to rebuild trust in the electoral process and reduce political violence, making it safer and more appealing for citizens to vote.

- vi. Ensure widespread dissemination of clear and accessible information about elections, voting guidelines, and procedures well ahead of the election dates. Utilize various media platforms to reach a broader audience.
- vii. Investigate and address any financial or inducement-related barriers that might be discouraging voters from participating. Implement strict regulations and monitoring to prevent vote-buying and financial manipulation.

The implication of addressing these factors is that it would make the electoral process become more inclusive, engaging, and representative, ultimately enhancing the democratic process in Ondo State and ensuring that future elections reflect the true will of the people.

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