

**SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL PREDICTORS OF FRANCHISE
DEVIANCE, E-VOTING AS A PANACEA TO GOOD GOVERNANCE
IN NIGERIA.**

OMOWUNMI JOSHUA OLUSEGUN

Department of public administration
Federal polytechnic, ilaro, ogun state nigeria

ABSTRACT

From one head of state to another, republic to republic, a larger percentage of Nigerian Citizens are of the opinion that the decapitating state of Nigerian economy is a consequence of poor leadership. The lackadaisical attitude of citizens and other socio-psychological factors like religion, and voting stress have contributed to Franchise deviance. The main purpose of this study was to investigate the socio-psychological factors responsible for franchise deviance and how electronic voting system would increase citizen's turnout during elections and provide a lasting solution to the issue of poor leadership and challenge of governance in Nigeria. A descriptive and survey method was adopted for investigation. Through random sampling technique, 520 respondents, 338 males, 182 females, 312 Christians and 203 Muslims were sampled. Result reveals that E-voting will not bring a lasting solution to poor leadership. Also voting stress is one of the major causes of franchise deviance while religion has no effect whatsoever on franchise deviance. In all respondents felt that an amalgam of E-voting and manual voting should be employed for franchise deviance to be totally minimized.

Key words: E-voting, Franchise deviance, Religion and Voting stress

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Franchise deviance is used specifically in this study to describe citizens who are constitutionally eligible to vote but due to specific reasons, they have decided to exclude themselves from the exercise on regular basis. Muheeb, (2015) pointed out that election is a civic duty that is crucial to democracy. In a free and fair election, each valid ballot cast registers a political position.

Despite the fact that election is crucial in leaderships election, over the decades, the population of voters has been a major yardstick for measuring polling turnout in Nigeria instead of the percentage of the eligible population that actually cast their votes during election. Sources collated from (U.S census Bureau, 2015; INEC 2015) have shown that two third majority is theoretically applicable on black and white and have not been practically achieved in Nigeria. In fact, the 1983 election result that recorded 53:16% polling turnout

against the actual value of 66.6% (2/5 majority) is the highest polling turnout recorded in Nigeria (NEC, 1988) even the just concluded 2015 election records indicated that only 27.7% of the qualified citizens participated in the election (INEC, 2015; US Census Bureau, 2015)

Socio-Psychological factors like religion, religious affiliation election violence/stress and group think have a serious role to play on the issue of franchise deviance in Nigeria. The importance of religion cannot be over emphasized, because a very good number of political aspirants in Nigeria have always identified themselves with various religious groups just to get their votes. Up till this present moment some religious denomination like Jehovah witness, through their doctrine has restricted their members from political participation of all forms. Just as Marx opine religion is the opium of the masses, many Nigerian citizens believe since the government has failed them, they are left with no choice that to rely on religion to provide them with pleasant illusion that also reduces their energy to go against the oppressive, heartless and soulless reality that bad leadership placed on them.

There is no gainsaying the fact that election stress and violence have hindered a lot of Nigerians from exercising their franchise in Nigeria. Of course, election crises have also become regular trademarks in the our electoral process in Nigeria. Just as postulated by Skinner (1948) human beings shy away from behaviours that elicit negative response. The resultant effect is that Nigerians began to protect their lives by running away from voting.

Electronic voting system which has been in use in some advance countries like the US, Canada and much more have proved to be the best voting method, that could reduce election stress/violence, religious influence, group influence and could also increase polling turnout. This system can work very well in Nigeria, according to UN 2016, Nigerian literacy level is 70.5% and U.N 2014, found that Nigerians have high technology adaptability level.

2.0 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Over the years, the Federal Republic of Nigerian has been walking on thin ice as a result of poor leadership which is an antecedent of poor leadership selection. Collated evidence from U.S Population Bureau and INEC shows that Nigeria's brand of democracy is plutocracy in disguise. Election results of 1979-2015 proved this since election turnout in Nigeria is between 23.15% - 53.16% of the population.

Religion, voting stress/violence and groups have contributed immensely to franchise deviance in Nigeria. E-Voting has been highlighted as the major solution to this issue but how effective and how acceptable this method would be remains the focus of this paper.

3.0 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What will be the reaction of Nigerians to E-voting?
2. Can E-voting provide a lasting solution to franchise deviance in Nigeria?
3. Would reduction in voting stress reduce franchise deviance?
4. To what extent has religion affected franchise deviance?

4.0 OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

1. To examine the reaction of Nigerians to E-voting
2. To identify the effect of socio-psychological factors like religion and voting stress/violence on polling turnout.
3. To intimate the public on how e-voting could be the lasting solution to election franchise in Nigeria.

4.0 HYPOTHESES

1. There is a significant relationship between religion and franchise deviance in Nigeria
2. There is a significant relationship between election violence and franchise deviance in Nigeria

5.0 WORKING THEORIES

Reason action theory & planned behaviour (Ajzen, I 1969)

Maslow Hierarchy of need theory (Maslow, A 1943)

Operant conditioning Theory (Skinner, B.F 1948)

6.0 REASON ACTION THEORY & PLANNED BEHAVIOUR THEORY

The Theory of Reason Action (TRA) and Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) have been well comprehended as models that provide a framework to explain the determinants of behaviour in a social and psychological prospective. The TRA suggests that behaviour is a direct function of intention which is formed by attitude towards that behaviour and subjective norms. When one has high intention, it is likely that he or she will perform the behaviour. The TPB is an extension, of TRA. In addition to the attitude and subjective norm, TPB adds the concept of perceived behaviour control. These theories have been extensively applied to predict franchise deviance on many occasions.

Since TRA has to do with how behavioural intention comes as a result of a belief that performing the behaviour will lead to a specific outcome, this could explain why the 1983 election recorded high polling turnout. Since citizens were desperate for a democratic system of government and having experienced democracy in 1979-1983, they believe that voting in that election will make them enjoy freedom after the long suffering under military rule.

7.0 MASLOW HIERARCHY OF NEED THEORY

This theory states that people are motivated to achieve certain needs and that some needs take precedence over others. Our most basic need is for physical survival, and this will be the first thing that motivates our behaviour. Once that level is fulfilled the next level up is what motivates us and so on. This motivational theory comprises of five models of human needs. They are:

Psychological needs – Safety need – love and belongingness needs – Esteem need – self-actualization need.

This theory has to some extent explained franchise deviance in Nigeria. Trading economic (2017) reported that 86:40% of Nigerian working population is employed. Also, United Nations Global survey (2005) found that 82% of Nigerians have shelter.

Thus we could infer that majority of Nigerian citizens have met their basic physiological needs voting in an election is an expression of one's love and belongingness to or particular political party or political aspirant. This need is the third level of need up the hierarchy. This indicates that if citizens did not participate in elections, it is because the 2nd level of need has not been met. The incessant threat to citizens' lives and property during election have made citizens to restrain from voting exercise. Once citizens feel that expressing their love for a political party or candidate will jeopardize their security, they will definitely become franchise deviant (Ibeh, 2015).

8.0 OPERANT CONDITIONING THEORY

This theory is of the opinion, that an individual changes behaviour because of the consequence (result) of the behaviour. The person learns behaviour has consequence which may be.

1. Reinforcement: A posture of rewarding event. This causes the behaviour to occur more often.
2. Punishment: A negative or punishing event, this cause the behaviour to occur less often.

This theory also explains franchise deviance in Nigeria. Exercising one's franchise in Nigeria is mutually reinforcing to stress and violence. With respect to this theory, stress and violence are forms of punishment which humans try to avoid in their everyday life. On the other hand, E-voting which can be done in the comfort of one's home and with almost privacy has not been associated with any form of election crises. In fact the system has recorded high level of congruency. Thus if this system is employed, according to this theory, citizens will find it easy to exercise their franchise without any cause for alarm.

9.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

European commission, (2014) found out that 23% of the European Union population barely had any digital skill with figure ranging from 6% in Sweden to 50% in Romania. Considering that, to function effectively in the digital society, one needs at least medium level or basic skills. In 2012 the percentage of individuals in the E.U who used the internet was 73%. As of November, 30, 2015, the percentage increase to 79.3% (Internet world stats, 2015).

Also survey result on the level of trust in the internet in 18 countries in 2014 (27, 901 respondent) shows that 36% of respondent aged 15 and older trust the internet. Highest level of trust was measured in Czech Republic (56%) and least in Germany (27%).

Delis (2014), conducted internet voting trials in two polling stations in Greece when respondents had cast a vote for the 2014 European parliamentary elections. The survey's result showed that 90% of respondents were somewhat or very satisfied with the electronic

voting experience. 47% trusted e-voting device such as the one used, whereas only 2% had negative opinion toward possible implementation. 75% were very positive towards the prospect of being able to vote in national election from home with use of similar device, while 12% appeared dismissive.

Faraon conducted on outline survey after 2010 National election with a non-representative sample of the Swedish populations (N = 5685) drawn from social media platform. The result revealed overall positive attitudes towards internet voting although respondents remain cautions concerning security issues. In Austria 68% of the respondents reported a strong trust in the internet voting system, with respect to its integrity and secrecy of vote while 12% were strongly concerned.

Population fact gather from United States census bureau 2015 collated with INEC elections result from 1989 – 2015 reported as follows.

Year	Population	Population of eligible voters	Total vote	%
1979	71,619,230	42,971,633	16,846,633	39.20%
1983	79,729,310	47,837,586	25,430,097	53.10%
1993	103,145,100	61,887,060	14,293,396	23.10%
1999	119,826,700	71,896,020	30,280,052	42.17%
2003	132,581,500	79,548,900	42,018,735	52.82%
2007	147,152,500	88,291,500	35,287,973	39.96%
2011	163,770,700	98,262,420	41,728,980	42.5%
2015	182,202,000	109,321,200	30,776,601	27.7%

Note that the National Bureau statistics 2010 reported that 40% of children less than 18 make up Nigerian population. Thus percentage of eligible voters in Nigeria was relocated by working the 60% of the population.

Research had also reported that no religion in Nigeria can give any political party two-third majority of votes to win a presidential election, and it was suggested that political parties must have the support of all religions to be sure of victory.

10.0 METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The researcher developed a 15-item questionnaire. The questionnaire is divided into 5 segments such that question 1-3 measures respondents' voting attitudes, question 4-7 measures the effect of psycho-social variable like Religion and Election Stress/Violence on respondents' voting attitudes, question 8-9 measures respondents' E-voting and internet awareness. Questions 10-14 measures respondents' attitudes towards E-voting and question 15 measures respondents' position on how e-voting would provide a lasting solution to bad leadership.

Using random sampling, 520 respondents were sampled from 6 states in the south-west geopolitical zone of Nigeria, their age, ranging from 21 and above. In all, 338 males and 182 females, 312 Christians and 208 Muslims were sampled

11.0 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1

State	Number of respondent	Percentage
Ondo	62	11.92%
Ekiti	54	10.38%
Lagos	150	28.85%
Oyo	98	18.85%
Osun	56	10.77%
Ogun	100	19.23%
Total	520	100%

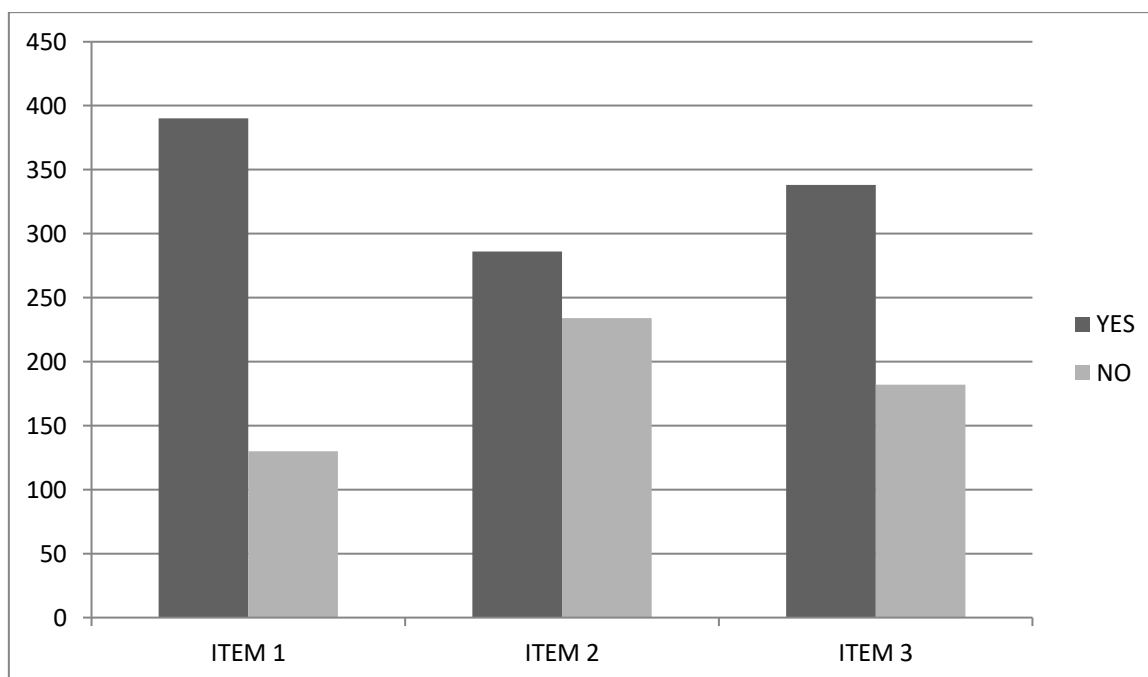
Table 2

Histogram showing respondents attitudes towards voting

Item 1: Do you have voters card?

Item 2: Did you make use of your voter’s card in the last election?

Item 3: Do you like voting?



Results in table 2 indicated that only 25% (130) of respondents don't have voters' cards, while 75% (390) have voters' cards. Results from the table also reveals that 286 (33%) respondents participated in the previous election while 234 (77%) did not. Also the table reveals that 388 (65%) like voting while 182 (35%) don't like voting.

Table 3: Histogram showing how election stress, crises and

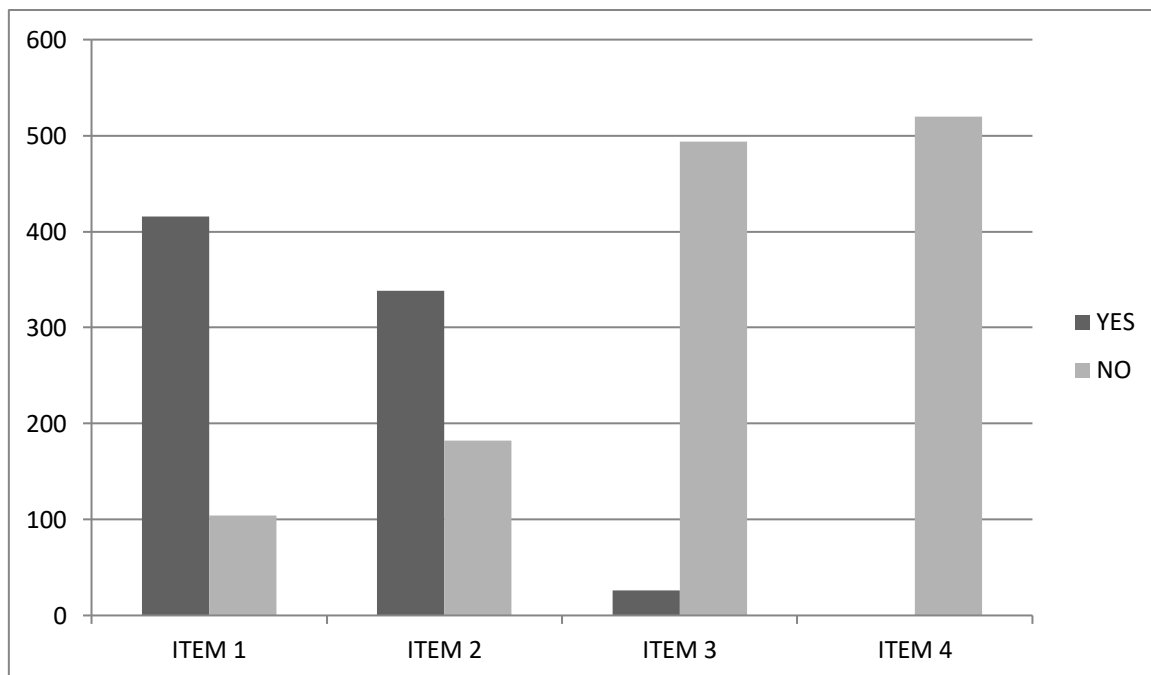
Religion affects respondents' voting attitudes

Item 1: Have election crises/voting stress affected the way you vote?

Item 2: If there were no election crises and if voting stress can be reduced would you have voted in all election?

Item 3: Does your religion go against voting?

Item 4: Does your religion play a role in deciding whether you vote or not?

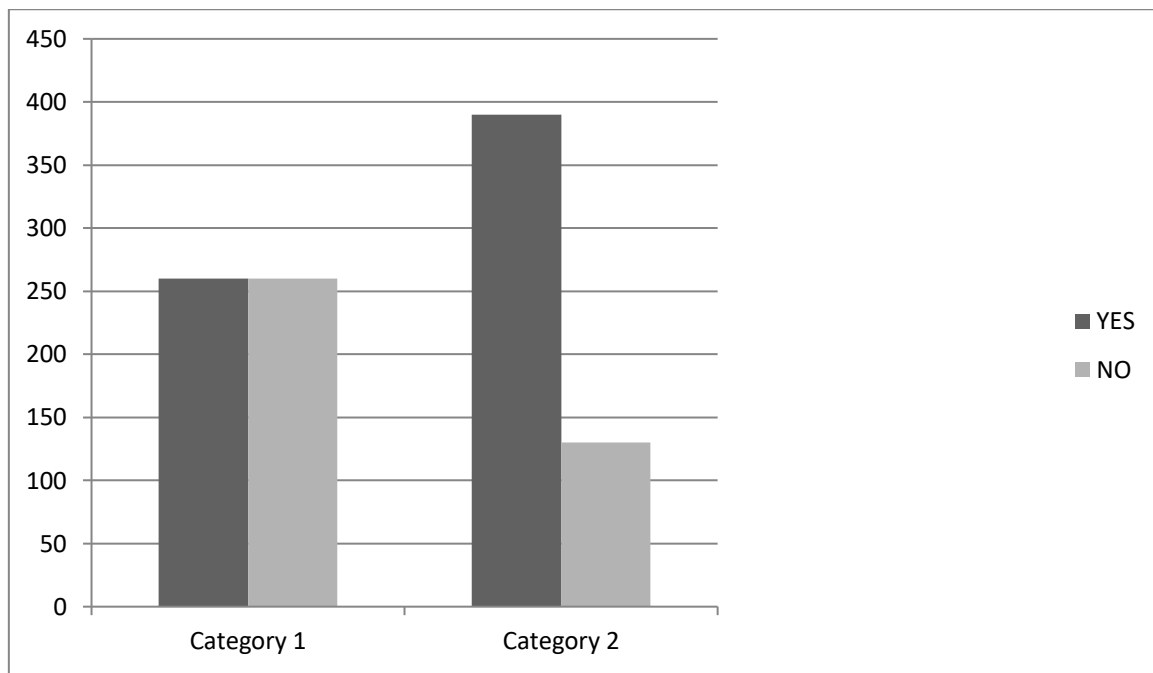


Results in Table 3 reveals that 416 (80%) believe election crises/voting stress has affected the way they vote. The table also reveals that 338 (65%) respondent's believed that if election crises and voting stress could be reduced they would have voted in all election. The table further indicated that only (5%) of respondent feels their religion goes against voting while (100%) of respondent feels religion doesn't play a role in deciding who they vote for.

Table 4: histogram showing respondents' e-voting and internet awareness

Item 1: Have you been doing any activity on the Internet?

Item 2: Have you heard of electronic voting before?



Results in Table 4 reveal that only 50% of respondents don't make use of internet facilities while 75% of respondent have heard about E-voting before.

Table 5: histogram showing respondents' attitudes towards e- Voting

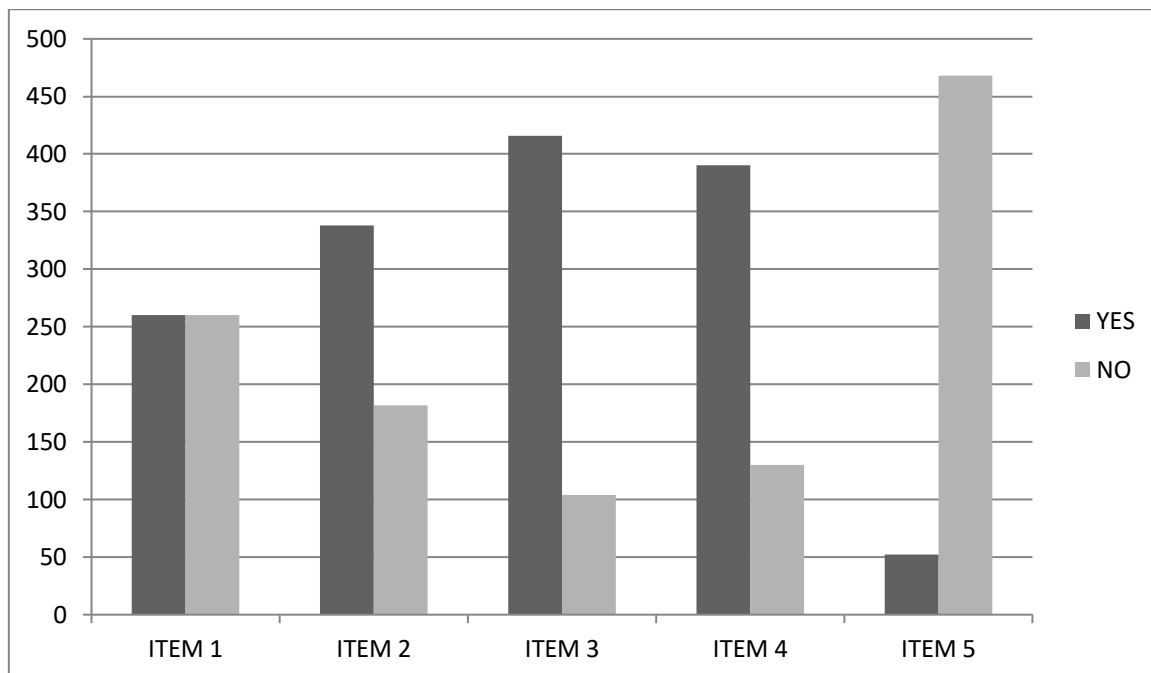
Item 1: Should e-voting be the only medium of voting in Nigeria?

Item 2: Do you think it is better for Nigeria to employ both E-voting and manual voting during elections?

Item 3: Do you think the adoption of E-voting will reduce election stress and election crises?

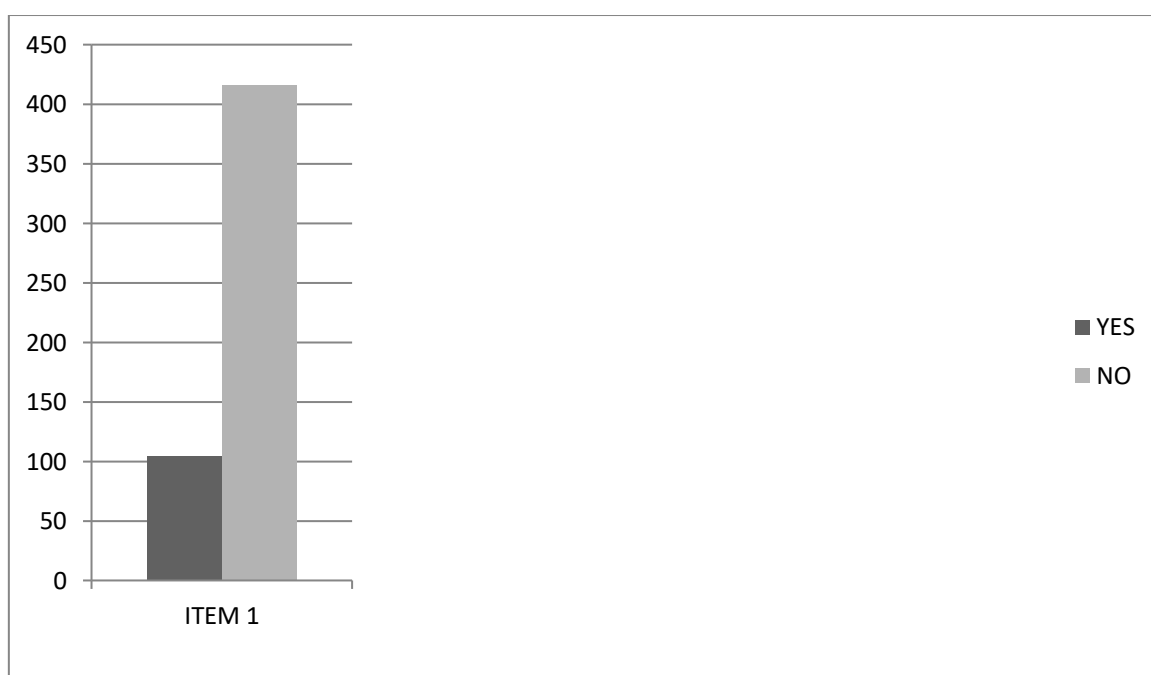
Item 4: If E-voting is adopted in Nigeria will you vote regularly?

Item 5: If E-voting is adopted in Nigeria will you stop voting?



Results in table 5 reveals 50% (260) of respondent agrees that e-voting should be the only medium of voting in Nigeria. Also 338 respondents feel E-voting and manual voting should be used during elections. Also results in the take reveals that 80% of respondent believe E-voting will reduce election stress and crises. Also results in the table reveals that 75% of respondents will vote often if E-voting is accepted in Nigeria while 10% claim they will stop voting.

Table 6: Histogram showing respondents' position on how E-voting would provide a lasting solution to bad leadership in Nigeria.



Results in table five reveals that E-voting cannot provide a lasting solution to bad leadership in Nigeria 20% (104) Yes while 416 (80%) No

12.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The present studies investigated the role of socio-psychological variables like election crises/voting stress and religion on franchise deviance in Nigeria. Results from the study showing 30% of the respondent participated in the last election correlates the results of 2015 election that reveals 27.7% of eligible voters participated in the last election. Although our study reveals that 75% of respondents have voter cards. The reason while this score does tally with the numbers of respondent who actually voted might be due to the fact most respondents only needed the voters card for other purposes apart from election. The study supported INEC 2015 collated result that not up to 2/3 majority of Nigerians participated in the election since 1999-2015.

However, from the present study, 65% of respondent's claimed they liked voting, even if majority of the respondents did not participated in the last election. Reason for this contradiction might be because only south-west political zone was considered for the study. Other reasons might be a consequence of socio-psychological variable (Election Crises/voting stress and religion) earlier mentioned. More results from this study revealed that larger percentage of the sampled population (80%) did not turn out to vote because of election crises and voting stress. This result tallies with Skinner (1948) that human beings shy away from situation with unpleasant consequence. Also 65% of the participants feel if voting stress is reduced, they will turn out to vote more. This result confirms voting stress and election crises are the major reasons why citizen in Nigeria don't turn out to vote.

Also the present study did not find any relationship between religion and franchise deviance. Results from the study found that 95% of respondents believe religion did not affect the way they vote. The study also revealed that 80% of respondents prefer the adoption of both e-voting and manual outing. Although 30% believe e-voting should be the only medium of voting. This result may be due to the fact that respondents don't have total trust for e-voting. The study found that respondents don't believe e-voting would bring a lasting solution to the problem of bad leadership in Nigeria. This result might be as a result of the ill-trust that respondent show towards the medium or because they have experienced a lot of hardship and believe there is no solution to the problem of bad leadership in Nigeria. In conclusion, the results of this study show that majority of respondents are willing to vote if only election crises and voting stress could be reduced. In other words, since respondents feel e-voting and manual voting should be employed as a means of voting in Nigeria due to the fact that not all respondents can make use of the internet. The government should use this medium to improve on future elections.

It should also be noted that if this two media are employed it will give room for more polling turnouts. Thus election result will be reliable, giving citizens the spirit of oneness that will make the nation Progress.

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