

## **Party politics and Electioneering Campaign in Nigeria: An Evaluation of the 2023 Presidential Election in Edo State.**

**By**

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### **Abstract**

This paper examined the issue of party politics and electioneering campaign in Nigeria. However, it is aimed at examining the influence of party politics on electioneering campaign in the 2023 Edo state presidential election and their attendant consequences. To en-focus this study, the paper employed both primary and secondary sources of data and adopted the Rational Choice theory as its theoretical framework. This theory however was used in complementary ground to make up for the inadequacies that might arise there within. It was found out among other things that party politics and electioneering campaign had significant impact on the 2023 presidential election in Edo state. It is therefore recommended that Political party aspirants and political party members should strive to practice politics with patriotism by making frantic efforts to inform or persuade electorates rather than mislead them with enticing words. Political candidates and party members should adopt simple expressions to communicate their political agendas without the use of force, violence, destructive tendencies and unhealthy rivalries. They should also be concerned with creating healthy political environment that will encourage for a smooth electioneering campaign. They should as well be concerned with policies/programmes based campaigns that have the capacity to attract more supporters and enhancing their chances in elections. Instead of campaigns that are hate based and parochial in nature. Finally the government should further strengthen the legal pathways of the Electoral Acts, which regulates the affairs of political

party campaign activities. The implication of this is that it will create for a healthy campaign and political arena for good governance.

**Keyword: Party Politics, Electioneering, Political party, Campaign and Governance.**

### 1.1 Introduction

In every democratic system of government the existence of a political party is to struggle and compete for power. For this to be achieved a political party must be able to publicize their ideologies, principles, idea, missions and visions, as well as creating the policy framework to achieve their goals and objectives. The ability to realize this is dependent upon its capabilities to sale out and be able to convince the electorates on how best in achieving its goals. This is made possible during the electioneering campaign (Albert, 2011). Electioneering campaign and electoral issues has become the major and main instrument of communication between the electorates and the political aspirants both in the developing and advance democracies of the world.

In developed societies campaign activities are essentially determine by the party manifestos which is further manifested into policies formulation and implementation. Unlike in the developing democracies where ethnicity and unequal distribution of scarce resources and disarticulation of campaign speeches remain issues that have beclouded their elections. In most cases, ignoring what can promote sustainable economic, political and social development. Often times, politicians find it easy to manipulate religion, sectionalism, ethnic and other primordial sentiments as a take for sale point to the electorates (Albert, 2011).

All over the world, Electioneering campaign activities play important role in creating the much needed atmosphere through which the electorates partake in the political processes. They also link electorates with the government procedures and processes, as well as aggregate diverse political interest. They provide viable choices for voters to alternate government.

Electioneering activities are vital to political parties and democratic governance. These vital roles are further strengthening by the Nigeria Electoral Acts of 2010

and 2022, mandated to regulate the affairs of political party campaign activities devoid of electoral violence and electoral malpractices. Section Sections 95, 96, 99, 100 - 102 of the 2010 Electoral Law provides for decent electoral campaign devoid of bad language Oni (2017) no usage of language by politicians is neutral. It is of interest to note that language choices by politicians, no matter how innocuous the context may appear, tend to be politically clouded. The interesting thing is that even those making use of such language may consider what they are doing as being within reason.

The United Human Rights Council (2019) had severally discussed the power of political language during campaign and debates/interview, the way it results in particular social cognition. Daniel (2018) opined that the social cognition can be so insidious that it could make people act in particular ways as designed by the power holders in the society .The way and manner political influencers use language to dominate the thinking of the people and make them do what they want them (the populace) to do.

The use of political debates/interview during campaigns has become increasingly popular and is very important to the electoral process and voting behavior because it bridges the communication gap between political parties, political candidates and electorates. Hence, the study tends to fill the gap in literature by examine the impact of party politics on political campaigns in Nigeria, with specific emphasis on the 2023 presidential election in Edo state.

Nigeria has come a long way in terms of the number and spread of political parties. The number of political parties and their spread seems to give the impression that representation has become an important requirement for the existence of political parties (Omodia, 2018). For example, one of the requirements stipulated for the registration of political parties in the political transition dispensation that characterized the Nigerian Fourth Republic was that aspiring political associations or political groupings are needed to garner at least ten percent of the votes in twenty four out of the thirty six states to qualify for permanent registration (Aina, 2015). Political parties engage in political campaigns as collective efforts by political figures to present themselves favorably to the public for acceptance and support.

According to Feyipitan (2015), “the ultimate goal of almost every political party campaign is to win election and to offer promises to the people in order to secure votes in return”. Some of the major forms of political campaigns are political rallies, political debates, political interviews and political advertisements etc. (Opeibi, 2019).

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The advancement in technology as a result of the growth of Internet accessibility like the Social media networks, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter have enabled candidates aspiring for particular posts to use their Facebook pages and Twitter accounts for campaigns. Moreover, political rallies, political debates, political interviews and political advertisements are also commonly used by political parties during electioneering campaigns in canvassing for votes to win elections and in educating the voters to vote wisely.

What seems to be very important in any political campaign is the ‘message’ that is sent to the electorates. A campaign message is an important and potent tool that politicians use to express views and feelings to the public with the intention of reshaping and redirecting the electorates’ opinions to align with theirs. The message should be a simple statement that can be repeated severally throughout the campaign period to persuade the target audience or influence voters’ act in the candidates’ favour. The campaign message ought to contain the salient ingredients that the candidate wishes to share with the voters and these must be repeated often in order to create and establish a lasting impression on the mind of the voters. Oftentimes, good campaigners prefer to keep the message broad to attract the voters. Appropriate use of language calls for the proper identification of the kinds of electorates targeted for mobilization during or after a political campaign according to a report by the EU on the campaigns preceding the Fourth Republic (2007).

It is imperative to note that there are specific purposes for expressing political speeches, party slogans and campaign expressions. This action may be to inform the electorates about the intention of a political aspirant and/or express the manifesto of a political party. It may also be intended to persuade or convince the consciences of the electorates to vote in favour of a candidate or a political party.

Every electorate has expectations which may be clearly expressed or otherwise but such expectations are usually measured against certain symbols particularly, language expressions, which may present different meanings in the context of political campaigns and electioneering campaign. Oyeleye (2014) notes in his article, "The Power of words and the Techniques of Public Communication" that the situation, audience and purpose of communication integrate to determine the function and choice of language to use in exchange. He further identifies two functions of language: informative function, which expresses the encoder/speaker's experience and the regulatory function which can establish and maintain social mobilization and empowerment.

This background lends credence to the need for clear expression of political messages without any form of ambiguity. The extent to which these could be actualized is dependent upon the usage of political slogan in their activities as well as hate speeches in campaigns become vital to this study. Therefore the following research question becomes useful to this work;

1. To what extent party politics influenced electioneering campaign in Edo state?

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives are;

1. To examine to what extent party politics impacted electioneering campaign in the 2023 presidential election in Edo state.
2. To proffer solutions that will address the issue of party politics with its attendant effects on our electioneering campaign in Nigeria.

### **1.4 Research Hypothesis**

HR1: There is a relationship between the party politics and electioneering campaign in Edo state.

## 2.2 CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.

### **Party Politics and Electioneering Campaign in Nigeria: Patterns and Dynamics**

Party politics are the various activities of political parties employed in a democratic environment to seek for the control of political offices through stated norms of elections (Olaniyi 2017). To this extent, party politics exist when elective principles are present in a state and by implication under a democratic regime which recognizes the legitimate choice of the citizens to select or elect those to represent them in governmental offices. For example, in the pre-independent era in Nigeria, party politics was not in existence until 1922, when the Clifford constitution was introduced with its principles.

According to Okoye (2020), party politics therefore are “activities of formal structure, institution or organization which compete through electoral process to control the personnel and policies of government, and with the aim of allocating the scarce resources in a state through an institutionalized means or procedure”. Hence, the primary objective of party politics is directed toward a single goal of wrestling for government or political power.

However, despite the fact that party politics serve some other numerous purposes, outside the primary objectives, such as integrative mechanism, feedback mechanism, aggregative machinery or tool, regulatory and promotional roles, its roles are punctured and truncated by various negative activities such as polarizing and widening gap between and/or among ethnic groups, unhealthy rivalry, marginalizing tool, exploitative mechanism and expropriatory role, apart from undemocratic rule (Azeeze, 2012).

Party politics is the politics engaged in by, expressed through the channel of and or considered from the ideal of political parties as opposed to national interest (Nwankwo, 2021). To this end, party politics exist when elective ideals are present in a democratic system and the views, opinions or political philosophies are debated with the consciousness of promoting and protecting the interest of the party in power. More so, party politics are activities of formal structure, institution and organization which competes through electoral mechanism to influence people policies and programmes as well as allocation of public wealth through a

stipulated and articulated procedure (Okoye, 2021). Though, party politics is ordinarily directed towards ensuring Checks and balances in governance, strengthening the democratic institution and serve as feedback mechanism, however, its activities have been extremely abused through political rivalry, ethno-religious sentiment and making it undemocratic (Philip, Samson and Ogwu, 2014).

Thus, in a liberal democratic system, the party provides the medium through which the accountability of the executive and the legislators to the electorate is exercised through periodic elections under a multiparty electoral politics. This is of course the theory. The reality is and can be much different, because of the constricting effect on the choice of the electorate of (i) contradictions such as oligarchic and undemocratic tendencies in political party organization; and (ii) market imperfections and structural distortions in the economic organization of the liberal democratic state (Adeyi, 2011).

Campaign is the principal institution that links politicians and the electorate and at the same time provides a critical link between citizens and government. This assertion is justified in the words of William Riller (Geer, 1998): Campaigns are a distinguishing feature worldwide, of modern representative democracies. For most citizens in most polities, campaigns provide a compelling incentive to think about government. So, campaigns thus are perhaps the main point of contact between officials and the populace over matters of public policy. Yet, there are some other factors that need to be addressed and tackled because they remain a clog in the progress of Nigerian politics and constitute a threat to electioneering.

Ujo (2010) observes five methods of electioneering campaigns as used by political parties. They include: national tours, state tours, local rallies, house to house canvassing and advertisements in the media. Firstly, national tours are usually led by the party's chairman or presidential candidate. Apart from explaining the programme of the party, national tours are opportunities for showing the electorate the national officers of the party. State tours serve a similar purpose. Thirdly, rallies are organized in the various districts by local party organs after official permit has been obtained from the Divisional Police Officer. Fourthly, house to house canvassing is done by female party cadres who go into homes to

explain party manifestoes to female voters in Moslem dominated electoral districts and, fifthly, the mass media are the popular form of campaigns. Advertisements are placed in the major newspapers.

Similarly, advertisements are placed in many weekly magazines. Television and radio advertisements are also extensively used. The advancement in technology as a result of the growth of Internet accessibility like the Social media networks— Facebook, Instagram and Twitter—enable candidates aspiring for particular posts to use their Facebook pages and Twitter accounts for campaigns. Moreover, political parties during electioneering campaigns play important roles in canvassing for votes to win elections and in educating the voters to vote wisely. The nexus of political parties and electioneering campaigns is very crucial due to the fact that their indispensability appears obvious in contemporary democracies described as representative democracy. Indeed, a political system which does not select its leaders under the banner of political parties and carries out healthy campaigns for their success at polls can hardly be considered as a democratic government.

### **2.1.7 Patterns and Dynamics of political parties' activities and Practices in Nigeria between 1999 and 2023.**

Many political parties are central to the prospects of future electoral and political violence. At present there appear to be greater risks of intra party conflict than inter party tensions that characterized the 2015 elections. Political party primary and nomination processes are subjected to internal crises and violence. Violence has become common feature during and after election (for example, in Ekiti State, during the gubernatorial primaries held in June 2018). Many respondents were concerned about party's sustainability in terms of structure and crises control, particularly the ruling APC, as evidently shown in the public domain especially in their ability to effectively resolve internal rivalries and crises which, potentially could subject the parties open to fragmentation. "There are no major conflict resolution mechanisms amongst political parties in Nigeria. Despite the different Reconciliatory committees that are in existence, but they are hardly able to reconcile aggrieved members." Other views have pointed to a limited culture of internal party democracy as being a destabilizing factor, exacerbated by the rematch of old allies and adversaries across the country (Adele, 2011). For



example, in the case of Kano State, where Abdullahi Umar Ganduje, and his predecessor senator Rabi'u Kwankwaso both of the same party members have gone to greater lengths to influence party structures in their favor.

Although the Independent Electoral Commission INEC has the political umpire has the responsibility to monitor party primaries and could impose sanctions on parties that violate regulations, in practice INEC is sensitive to involvement in internal party processes, which often lack transparency. This means that many disputes may end up as protracted legal battles. Since the primary responsibility of INEC is to organize the election, its role as a political party regulator may be an undue burden. The Inter-Party Advisory Council (IPAC), supported by INEC, is the standing mechanism to resolve interparty disputes and to implement the political parties' code of conduct.

The controversial and sudden death of General Sanni Abacha (the then head of state) signaled the commencement of the fourth republic. Upon his sudden death, General Abdulsalami Abubakar, as it was alleged, who was to have been retired by General Abacha, along with other senior military officers on June 8, 1998 (Bello, 2008), emerged as the new Head of State on June 9, 1998? He was essentially preoccupied with organizing another transition to civil rule while attempting to re-enact a collaborative foreign policy with countries that had regarded Nigeria as a pariah state (Fawole, 1999 and Adebajo, 2006).

In stating the premises upon which he arrived at a conclusion for dissolving all the five political parties, former Head of state, General Abdulsalami Abubakar stated that, 'in particular, democratization was marred by maneuvering and manipulation of political institutions, structures and actors. In the end, we have only succeeded in creating a defective foundation on which a solid democratic structure can neither be constructed nor sustained (Gen. Abubakar, 1998)'. Thus, he doubted that the parties could be the strong pillars and instruments through which democracy can be cultivated and entrenched, maintaining that these qualities were certainly lacking in the Nigerian political space (Simbine, 2013). Abdulsalami's transition programme essentially threw up three major political parties: Alliance for Democracy (AD), All Peoples Party (APP) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) (Momoh2013:11).

In the march towards the Fourth republic, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) initially granted provisional registration to nine (9) political parties in 1998 (Simbine, 2013). The 1999 elections ushered in the Fourth Republic. Three political parties contested the elections. These were the People's Democratic Party (PDP), the All Peoples Party (APP) and the Alliance for Democracy (AD). The political parties that had sought to engage the emerging democratic order were 24 (Abutudu 2014). However, only three were registered by the Independent National Electoral Commission to assume the status of political parties. This was with the condition that after the local government elections of that year, those that had 10% votes and above in at least 24 states of the Federation would qualify to contest the subsequent State and Federal elections (Simbine, 2013).

This was after supposedly surmounting the constitutional huddles of showing that they were not sectional, ethnic, or religious party and that their membership and support bases were sufficiently reflective of the diversity of the country. The empirical test of this national spread requirement was the nationwide local council elections conducted in 1998. Actually, the AD did not exactly pass the test "but was nevertheless registered. The government felt this was the only way that the South West which had sustained the pro-democracy agitation since 1993, would participate in the transition programme, thereby lending it credibility" (Agbaje, et al 2007).

A major feature of the Fourth Republic is the proliferation of political parties, that primarily do not seek to contest elections, but which are in more ways limited and self-serving in roles and interests. Though the number of political parties was 30 in 2002, 33 in early 2006 and 50 in 2007, only 16 fielded candidates in the 2003 General Elections while only 26 contested the 2007 General Elections. Even the parties that contested the elections were merely "temporal machines for electoral contests" (TMG, 2003).

Thus the major parties, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Alliance for Democracy (AD), Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), and All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) have been plagued by deep internal crises, disorder, recurring tensions and turmoil manifested in factional fighting, expulsions and counter-expulsions, multiple executives and dual offices. There is a high level of money politics,

political vagrancy, indiscipline and in-cohesion (Omotola 2009). Some months into the Fourth republic, with Obasanjo as President, politicians began to clamour for the registration of more parties. The federal government initially refused to register more political parties, a development that forced the unregistered associations to seek redress in court (Simbine, 2013:4).

With Court judgment in their favour, it appeared that a floodgate was opened for parties to seek and get registered. Thus, while about 30 political parties contested during the 2003 elections, the number grew to 63 as the 2011 elections drew near. As of April 2013, only 25 political parties are recognized by the election management body (Simbine, 2013). With the registration of the new political parties; All Progressives' Congress (APC) which is a product of a Merger from the three main opposition parties: Action Congress of Nigeria, All Nigerian people's party, Congress for progressive Change and factions of two other parties) People's Democratic Movement (PDM), Independent Democrat (ID) the number of the political parties still stand at 25 (Aduku and Umoru, 2014).

What became the three dominant parties in 1998 viz Alliance for Democracy (AD), Peoples Democratic party (PDP) and All Peoples Party (APP) later (ANPP) had huge military presence both in their formation and membership, particularly the latter two parties. As such, from the outset the behaviour of the political parties was heavily influenced by a culture of militarism while some of the parties were preponderantly constituted by militicians. In addition, they lacked ideological rooting. However, the Fourth Republic has been characterized by numerous internal crises, godfather politics and fractionalization within political parties (Momoh, 2013).

At the 1999 Presidential election, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo of PDP had contested against a coalition of two other parties (APP and AD) which had brought forward Chief Olu Falae as presidential candidate (Momoh, 2013). The election was however not free and fair while traces of ethnic politics still manifested in the creation of political parties as AD had its main followership in the south west. But while the 1999 elections were not free nor fair, the 2003 General Elections were characterized by fraud, miscounting, rigging, and malfeasance. In addition, the election was not issue-oriented, the political parties lacked well-thought out

programmes and manifestos, the executive lord over the other two arms through actual disrespect of ruling or threat of impeachment and blackmail, (Momoh, 2006).

The 2007 General elections could best be described as electoral Tsunami or what have been euphemistically referred to as Direct Capture (DC), within the overall strategic framework of Primitive Accumulation of Votes (PAV). In early stages of PAV political parties rigged elections and although the state was generally not neutral, its institutions were used (instrumentalised) for the purpose of achieving PAV "In other words, state institutions were first captured by private interests, particularly political parties, and then deployed for PAV" (Ibeanu, 2009).

Political parties in Nigeria are not keen about deepening democracy; rather they are more preoccupied with the crude capture of power. They have abandoned their traditional role of membership recruitment and mobilization, and political education (Momoh, 2013). With the emergence of godfathers, owners and joiners, political nomads and the use of uncivil means to win elections, Nigerian political parties have continued to contribute to de-democratization. The central challenge of party system dwells on party processes, inter-party relationship, violence, and other ecological factors (Momoh, 2013).

In contra- distinction, Jinadu (2013) rising to the defense of political parties in Nigeria especially in the fourth republic contend that:

This is not to say that all has been bad or that all has not been well since May 1999. It is only to point to creeping and indeed deepening contradictions, which require urgent policy action. The action is urgent, if the considerable and obvious progress the country has made towards deepening democratic transition since 1999 in the following areas is not to turn into a fleeting mirage: (i) continuing commitment to federalism; (ii) the political succession, in line with constitutional fixed term limits and/or through democratic elections, at the federal and state level, even if still problematic and controversial in several respects; (iii) the ebb and flow in the watchdog role of the legislature and judiciary especially at the federal level, under the separation of powers; (iv) the apparent subordination of the military to civilian control; (v) the vibrancy of the Civil Society as democratic sentinel; and (vi) the

limited, though not inconsequential, success of democracy-promoting institutions, such as the Independent National Electoral Commission, the National Human Rights Commission and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (Aduku and Umoru, 2014).

### **Theoretical Framework**

This work adopts the Rational Choice theory as its theoretical framework. The theory is used to direct the framework of this study in order to bridge the gap between party politics and electioneering campaign within the ambit of the stated objective. The theory is also known as the Choice Theory, the Rational Action Theory or the Theory of Reasoned Action. It is “a popular theory that is used to explain the actions of voters as well as politicians Edwards III (2002).

Its basic assumption is that the individuals act in their own best interest, such an individual carefully weighs the costs and benefits of possible alternatives.” Hence, the theory is used to understand human behavior.

It therefore, has long been the dominant paradigm but most recently, since the behavioral revolution it has become more widely used in other related disciplines to explain social phenomena (Green, 2002).

The utilization of the theory posits that all action is fundamentally ‘rational’ in character and that all people calculate the likely costs and benefits of any action before deciding what to do, and its application to social interaction takes the form of the exchange theory.

This is to say that parties compete, at least in theory, as in a market place. A party is in the market for votes. Its products are its candidates and policies. In the context of our analysis, the Rational Choice Theory seeks to explain political processes and outcomes as consequences of purposive behavior. Political actors are assumed to have goals they can pursue sensibly and efficiently. Downs (cited in Edwards, 2002) argues that voters want to maximize the chance that the policies they favour will be adopted by government, and parties they want to vote into office. Thus, in order to win, the wise party selects policies that are widely favoured. Parties and

candidates may do all things to win, but they will primarily use their accomplishments and policy position to attract votes (Ogu, 2013).

If party “A” figures out what the voters want more accurately than party “B” does, then party “A” should be more successful. To win the election, parties must pay attention to the problems that concern the voters in their campaigns. If voters are worried about serious insecurity, like in Nigeria at present, parties must put in their campaign agenda the insecurity issue and how to address it to get the support of the voters and win the election. Hence, this theory explains the reality of the electioneering campaigns pursued by the political parties and their aspirants.

### **Research Methodology**

#### **Research Design and Population of the Study**

The research employs the survey design with a population study of the total number of eligible voters in the eighteen (18) local government areas of Edo state which stood at 4,235,800.

#### **Sampling Size and Sampling Technique**

The cluster sampling technique was applied in this study. Cluster sampling was used because of the homogenous yet internally heterogeneous statistical population. The entire population was first broken into Senatorial Districts from Senatorial Districts to Local Government Councils from where a sampling size of 1,500 respondents was selected.

**Table 1.1: Population of the three senatorial districts, local Government councils and Questionnaire Quota.**

1.	EDO CENTRAL	POPULATION	QUESTIONNAIRE QUOTA
a	Esan Central	137,900	40
b	Esan North East	159,800	46
c	Esan South East	217,900	62
d	Esan West	167,300	47
e	Igueben	92,100	26
		775,000	221
2.	EDO NORTH		
a	Akoko Edo	342,600	97
b	Etsako East	193,000	55
c	Etsako Central	123,400	35
d	Etsako West	260,700	74
e	Owan East	202,600	57
f	Owan West	129,800	37
		1,252,100	355
3.	EDO SOUTH		
a	Oredo	490,600	139
b	Orhionmwon	241,000	68
c	Ovia North East	203,500	57
d	Ovia South West	180,900	51
e	Egor	445,800	126
f	Uhunmwode	159,500	45
g	IkpobaOkha	487,400	138
		2,208,700	1,200

Source: The National Population Commission of Nigeria (2018) and the National Bureau of Statistics (2017).

Table1.2: Senatorial District, Population, and Sample Allocation (questionnaires) to each of the Three Senatorial District of Edo State.

Area	Population	Sample Allocation
Edo Central	775,000	221
Edo North	1,252,100	355
Edo South	2,208,700	624
Total	4,235,800	1,200

From the table above, Edo Central has 221 questionnaires administered in the senatorial district, Edo North 355 questionnaires were administered in the senatorial district while a total of 624 questionnaires were also administered in the Edo South senatorial district.

### Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Findings

In carrying out this research study, a total of 1500 questionnaires were distributed to respondents. But it was discovered that only 1200 questionnaires were retrieved from the field. Thus, the study total sample of respondents for analytical purpose was 1,200 questionnaires.

**Table1: Frequency distribution of responses to questionnaire item 1 that the choice of language during electioneering campaign impacted the 2023 presidential election in Edo state.**

#### Question 1

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	90	5.9	5.9	5.9
Disagree	50	15.1	15.1	21.0
Disagree	146	10.6	10.6	31.7
Undecided	424	40.4	40.4	72.0
Valid Agree	490	28.0	28.0	100.0
Strongly Agree	120	100.0	100.0	
Agree				
Total				



Table 1.above tells us that 5.9% of respondents strongly disagree while 15.1% disagree that the choice of language during electioneering campaign impacted the 2023 presidential election in Edo state. While 10.6% were undecided. 40.4% agree while 28.0% strongly agree that the choice of language during electioneering campaign impacted the 2023 presidential election in Edo state.

**Table 2: Frequency distribution of responses to questionnaire item 2 that political debate and interview impacted the choice of elected candidate during the 2023 presidential election in Edo**

**Question 2**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	Strongly	80	10.4	10.4	10.4
		40	17.6	17.6	28.0
Undecided	Disagree	158	17.6	17.6	45.6
		428	332	29.2	74.8
Valid	Agree	590	25.2	25.2	100.0
Agree	Strongly	1200	100.0	100.0	
	Total				

**Table. 3: Frequency distribution of responses to questionnaire item 3 that the different strategies adopted i.e. slogan / propaganda during the electioneering campaign impacted the 2023 presidential election in Edo state.**

**Question 3**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	Strongly	154	10.6	10.6	10.6
		120	19.4	19.4	30.0
Undecided	Disagree	86	18.6	18.6	48.6
		34.2	34.2	82.8	82.8
Valid	Agree	488	488	17.2	100.0
		1200	100.0	100.0	

Strongly Agree				
Total				

Table 3.shows the frequency distribution of the different strategies adopted e.g. political slogan during the electioneering campaign impacted the 2023 presidential election in Edo state. 10.6% representing 154 of respondents strongly disagree while 19.4% representing 120 of respondents disagree that the different strategies adopted e.g. political slogans and propaganda during the electioneering campaign impacted the 2023 presidential election with 18.6% representing 86 of respondents' undecided. 34.2 % which is 352 of total 1200 respondents sampled agree while 17.2% which is 488 strongly agree that the different strategies adopted during the electioneering campaign impacted the election.

### Testing of Hypothesis

In testing the relationship between party politics (independent variable) and electioneering campaign (predictive variable) question one shall be utilized.

### Question One

That choice of language impacted the 2023 presidential election in Edo state.

Statement of Hypothesis

H01: There is no relationship between party politics and electioneering campaign.

H-R1: There is a relationship between party politics and electioneering campaign.

Table 4: Regression analysis between party politics and electioneering campaign.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Sig.
1	.848a	.719	.718	.000b

Regression is significant at the 0.01 level

Table 4.shows that there is a positive relationship (Pearson R = 0.848) between the party politics and electioneering campaign. With the p-value (Sig. = 0.000) less than

0.01, this means that the research hypothesis is being accepted which states that there exist a relationship between the between party politics and electioneering campaign and the null hypothesis is being rejected which states that there is no relationship between party politics and electioneering campaign there is a strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant and positive relationship between party politics and electioneering campaign

### **Discussion of Findings**

The Pearson's  $r$  of = 0.848 at  $\alpha$  0.01 shows a high positive relationship between party politics and electioneering, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis which states that there is no relationship between the party politics and electioneering campaign and the acceptance of the research hypothesis which states the contrary. The findings concerning party politics and electioneering campaign vis a vis impacting the election a causative factor in impacting the 2023 presidential election has a direct replica in Feyipitan (2015), "the ultimate goal of almost every electioneering campaign is to win election and to offer promises to the people in order to secure votes in return".

This is further accentuated in the Assessment of the Role of Citizens Participation in the Electoral Process in Nigeria: A Study of the 2016 Governorship Election in Edo state which had posited that the political stability and development of any political system is a function of the awareness and positive involvement of the citizens in civic and political matters (Mustapha and Ebomoyi 2017).

Also added to the above facts (Olaniyi 2017) is of the view that Party politics are activities of political parties in a democratic environment to seek for the control of political offices through stated norms of elections. Such norms of good conduct by the political aspirants / electorate was completely ignored neither was Sections 95, 96, 99, 100 - 102 of the 2010 Electoral Law which provided for decent electoral campaign devoid of bad language Oni (2017) was evidently absent in the 2023 president election.

As they were more concerned with the desperation of winning the election, This fact is further given credence to by what the concept of what political party is, as an organisations whose members have values, ideals and aspirations in common

and at Least participates in the organised contest/struggles for political power. Coleman & Roseberg (cited in Smith 1996). This is further supported by the theory adopted in this work the Choice Theory, the Rational Action Theory or the Theory of Reasoned Action. It is "a popular theory that is used to explain the actions of voters as well as politicians Edwards III (2002).

### **Conclusion**

Electioneering campaigns are important attributes of democracy. In Nigeria, the context of politics and electoral competition for power have necessitated all kinds of undemocratic, extra-legal and unbecoming abuses of the legal framework governing political party activities. One of the difficult circumstances created by the pattern of party politics in Nigeria is the betrayal of the very basis of the campaign as a process of interest articulation and aggregation (Gambo and Ribadu 2017)

It can be justly be concluded from the research so far that party politics predominates as well as determine the electioneering campaign arena in Edo State politics. And the activity of the politicians cannot be over emphasized in this regard .This role is further worsened by the choice of language used by Politician's that are clouded in the political expediency of ethnicity, religion and sectional appeals. Baseless campaign promises made by them not only create fear and apprehension about the future of democracy in the country.

But also expressing the difficult circumstances in which the democratic process is conditioned as expressly manifested in political debates/interview that proved as a major causative factors that have impacted the 2023 presidentially election in Edo State. Political education is therefore highly required to empower and to educate the uninformed electorates on how to determine who to vote, campaign for and why. Not until this is done with other issues mentioned in the discussion of electioneering campaign are addressed and translated into policy action by relevant agencies or authorities ethnic politics, vote buying and personality attacks will continue to dominate electioneering environment in Nigeria.

It is however, good to be said that voters were able to vote their conscience {rather than engaging in vote selling that has pre-dominated elections in the past}

irrespective of the content and manner or pattern of campaigns. But the sustainability of this paradigm shift will be determined by the upcoming and subsequent elections in the state.

### **Recommendation**

In the light of the findings and conclusion of this paper the researcher recommends the following:

1. Political candidates and party members should make frantic efforts to inform or persuade electorates for their votes rather than mislead them with enticing words or making hate speeches capable of disrupting the electoral process and causing disenchantment among the electorates.
2. Political candidates and parties should communicate their political agenda without the use of force, destructive tendencies and unhealthy rivalry among one party and the other and between party members and electorates.
3. There is the need also for inter-party dialogue that can create for routines confidence among party members and party members and electorates.
4. The government on the other hand, should further strengthen the legal pathways of the Electoral Acts that regulates the affairs of political party campaign activities. The implication of this is that it will create for a healthy campaign and political arena for good governance.

5 They need to be re-engineered and re- focused from their mere role of being just institutions for acquiring political power through elections but to institutions that are capable of structuring, mediating and reconciling societal interests.

Finally, the electorates should endeavor to exercise their political rights without fear or favour. As this in the long will help to develop and build upon their confidence and Morales.

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