

**AN ASSESSMENT OF VOTERS' TURNOUT IN THE 2023  
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION:  
(A Case Study of the Bwari Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory)**

**By**

**Chidi Eugene OGBONNA**

**PG/NLS2110009**

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR  
LEGISLATIVE AND DEMOCRATIC STUDIES /UNIVERSITY OF BENIN  
(NILDS/UNIBEN) POST/GRADUATE PROGRAMMES IN PARTIAL  
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTERS  
DEGREE IN ELECTIONS AND PARTY POLITICS (MEPP)**

**May, 2024**

## CERTIFICATION

This dissertation entitled “*An Assessment of Voters’ Turnout in the 2023 Presidential Election: A Case Study of the Bwari Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory*”, presented by Chidi Eugene Ogbonna (**PG/NLS2110009**) has met the partial requirements for the award of the degree of Masters in Elections and Party Politics (MEPP) of the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies/University of Benin, Edo State.

---

Dr. Otive Igbuzor  
Supervisor

---

Date

## APPROVAL PAGE

This is to certify that this dissertation, *An Assessment of Voters' Turnout in the 2023 Presidential Election: A Case Study of the Bwari Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory*, has been read and approved as having met the partial requirements for the award of the degree of Masters in Elections and Party Politics of the University of Benin/National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies approved for contribution to knowledge.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Otive Igbuzor.

Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Prof. Chris Ngara

Internal Examiner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Prof. Hassan Saliu

External Examiner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Asimiyu Abiola

Director Department of Studies

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this dissertation is a product of my research efforts, undertaken under the supervision of Dr. Otive Igbuzor. It is an original work and none of the parts of it have been presented for the award of any degree elsewhere. All sources of information have been duly acknowledged through the references.

---

Chidi Eugene OGBONNA

**PG/NLS2110009**

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to God Almighty, for the unquenchable passion, zeal, hunger, and quest for wisdom, knowledge, and understanding he placed within me. Also, for seeing me throughout the program.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My profound gratitude goes to my supervisor, Dr. Otive Igbuzor, for his expertise, painstaking contributions, corrections, and patience, which broadened my research knowledge. He inspired and guided me towards the completion of this work. This work could not have been a success without his support and encouragement. Special recognition goes to the Director General of the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS), Prof. Abubakar Olarewaju Suleiman, and the entire management and staff of the Institute, for creating a conducive environment to study. To my lecturers: Dr. Asimiyu Abiola; Dr. Otive Igbuzor; Dr. Hakeem Baba-Ahmed; Dr. Adeyemi Fajingbesi; Dr. Omorogbe J. Asemota; Dr. Augustine Osigwe; Prof. Samuel Egwu; Prof. Solomon Benjamin; Prof. Jacob Nda; Prof. Jake Dan-Azumi; Prof. Yusuf Zoaka; Dr. Adewale Aderemi; Dr. Chris Ngara; Dr. Arthur Ikeme, Dr. Mohammed Wakil; Dr. Leo Igbanoi; Dr. Bonkat Lohna and Dr. Ganiyu Ejalonibu. I wish to thank especially Dr. Asimiyu Abiola, the Director of the Department of Studies, whose discipline, counsel, and mentorship contributed to my success at (NILDS), as well as his dedication, commitment, and unfettered contributions to the Programmes.

To my editor friend, Mr. Lekan Olagunju, who did not relent in providing editorial counsel throughout the study. Thank you, sir. I am also indebted to my senior in the Election and Party Politics Programme; Hajjah Fatima Saleh whose previous work served as a guide to this work and my course-mates whose contributions and the privilege to serve as coordinating Class Rep. made my study at NILDS memorable. To the family of Chief Paul and Lolo Christiana Ayaeze (JP), whose name and influence helped gather statistical data from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), I am most grateful. Finally, I appreciate my amiable wife and lovely children, Mrs. Cordelia Ogonna, Isaac, Esther, and Praise Ogonna whose presence, love, and care remain a source of hope, encouragement, and strength.

## **ABSTRACT**

Low voter turnout has continued to be a reoccurrence in Bwari Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory, especially during presidential elections. Though, political participation is a fundamental aspect of the democratic system, empowering citizens to influence governance through elections. It is the number of voluntary activities undertaken by the public to influence public policy either directly or by affecting the selection of persons who make those policies. Examples; voting in elections, working on political campaigns, donating money to candidates or causes, contacting public officials, petitioning, protesting, and working with other people on issues that affect the generality of society. Political scientists are of the view that no other activity allows the opinions of more people to be represented in decision-making than voting in an election, thus, as one of the basic principles of participatory democracy, each citizen gets one vote and each vote counts. However, in Bwari Area Council which is the case study of this research, voter turnout, a subset of political participation, has witnessed a consistent decline during presidential elections. Thus, this study assessed the voters' turnout in Bwari Area Council during the 2023 presidential election. The primary objective of this study was to examine factors that influenced voter turnout in Bwari Area Council during the 2023 Presidential Election. In line with the foregoing, the specific objectives of the study include. (i) Investigate the factors that influenced the number of registered voters and voter turnout in the Bwari Area Council during the 2023 Presidential Election. (ii) Identify the actual causes of low voter turnout in the 2023 presidential election in the Bwari Area Council. (iii) Assess the effectiveness of institutions responsible for voter education in promoting voter registration and voter turnout. (iv) Evaluate the impact of logistical, structural, personal, and natural factors on voter turnout in previous presidential elections in the Bwari Area Council. The study's justification lies in its quest to encourage more voter turnout in Bwari Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory during Presidential elections.

In so doing, the study adopted the Psychological theory as its theoretical framework. For this study, the Mixed Research Design was adopted. The choice of this Research Design was deliberate because the study relied on Qualitative and Quantitative methods of data collection to achieve the specific objectives.

Qualitative data helped in gaining insight and exploring the depth, richness, and complexity inherent in the variables studied, while quantitative data was used to address the issues of “what” and “how” aspects of the research problem. The complementary usage of both data types formed the basis for the adoption of the mixed research method. The data for the study include secondary and primary data. The secondary data comprise journals, newspapers, library materials, INEC election reports, and the internet. The primary sources were the direct participant observation by the researcher who was an active participant in the 2015, 2019, and 2023 presidential elections processes as a Supervisory Presiding Officer (SPO) in Bwari Area Council. By and large, since the researcher wanted to get the voters’ opinions (primary data), the quantitative method through questionnaires was appropriate. Therefore, the representation of data was both in numerical and textual forms. The method of data analysis employed in this study depends on the objectives of the study. The objective-by-objective approach emphasizes the streamlining of research methods according to the specific objectives of the study. Details of the type of data, interpretation of data, as well as expectations based on existing theory were tailored to suit the objectives outlined in the study.

The study observed that although the number of registered voters in Bwari Area Council going into the 2023 Presidential election was 279,792 however, only 96,444 representing (35%) did turn out to cast a ballot on the election day, meaning that voter turnout on the 2023 Presidential election in Bwari Area Council was low when compared with the number of registered voters. In line with the specific objectives of the study, findings from the study revealed that several factors were responsible for low voter turnout in the Bwari Area Council during the 2023 Presidential election. These factors include (i) voters’ perception that votes won’t count resulting from a lack of confidence in the electoral process, (ii) lack of confidence in the electoral umpire, (iii) lack of confidence in political leaders resulting from unfulfilled campaign promises, (iv) fear of election violence and insecurity, (v) scarcity of cash caused by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) naira redesign few months before the presidential election (vi) migration of registered voters at the time of election, (vii) prioritization of election by voters.



Thus, the following recommendations and conclusion were made; (i) Declaration of a state of emergency on voter/civic education by the government to address the issue of voters' perception, (ii) Amendment of the 2022 Electoral Act by the National Assembly, (iii) Accountability of public/elected officials to the electorates, (iv) Sustenance of INEC's autonomy, independence, and neutrality in the pursuit of its vision of serving as an independent and effective Election Management Body committed to the conduct of free, fair, and credible elections for sustainable democracy in Nigeria (v) Adequate training of electoral officials especially on useful application of technology to avoid shortcomings during elections, (vi) Improvement of the Security of lives and property in Bwari Area Council before, during and after elections, etc. This study analyzed factors influencing voter turnout in Bwari Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory focusing on the 2023 Presidential election. It acknowledged that political participation is a fundamental aspect of democratic systems, empowering citizens to influence governance through elections. Also, the health of a democratic nation's government is often measured by how actively its citizens participate in decision making especially politics. However, low voter turnout poses a challenge to the democratic process, affecting government legitimacy and hindering the delivery of democratic dividends. This study revealed the existence of low voter turnout in the Bwari Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory during Presidential elections. It further shows that slow turnout are due to voters' perception that their vote won't count following a loss of confidence in the electoral process, weak electoral system, lack of confidence in political leaders, inadequate voter/political education, failure of elected leaders fulfilling their campaign promises, insecurity/electoral violence, weak electoral justice system, loss of confidence in the electoral umpire, migration of registered voters at the time of election, and prioritization of election by voters.

**Key words: Voters, Election, Voter-apathy, Participatory Democracy, and Political party**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### Cover Pages

Title page.....	
Certification.....	ii
Approval page .....	iii
Declaration.....	iv
Dedication.....	v
Acknowledgment.....	vi
Abstract.....	vii
Table of contents.....	x
List of Tables.....	xiii
List of Figures.....	xiv
List of Abbreviations.....	xv
List of Appendices.....	xviii

### CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study.....	1
Statement of Study Problem.....	1
Key Research Questions.....	2
Research Objectives.....	3
Significance of Study.....	3

Scope of the Study.....	4
Definition of Key Terms.....	5
Organization of the Study.....	9

**CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The Conceptual Review.....	10
Theoretical Review .....	17
Empirical Review.....	25
The Gap in Knowledge.....	33
Theoretical Framework.....	34
Relevance of the Theory.....	35
Application of Theories.....	36

**CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Research Design.....	40
Study Area.....	40
The Population of the Study.....	41
Sampling Procedure and Size.....	42
Sources of Data.....	42
Research Instruments.....	43
Method of Data Analysis.....	44
Objective I: Investigate factors that influenced number of registered voters and voter turnout in Bwari Area Council during the 2023 Presidential Election.....	44
Objective II: Identify the actual cause of low voter turnout during the 2023 Presidential	

Election in Bwari Area Council.....	47
Objective III: Assess the effectiveness of institutions responsible for voter education in promoting voter registration and turnout in the Bwari Area Council.....	49
Objective IV: Evaluate the impact of Logistical, Structural, Personal, and Natural factors on voter turnout in previous presidential elections in Bwari Area Council.....	50
Limitation of Study.....	52

**CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION**

The Bio-Data and Social Demographics of Respondents.....	53
Data Analysis, Interpretation, and Evaluation of Interview Responses.....	59
Legal framework of Electoral Process and the right to vote in Presidential election.....	59
Voter Registration in Nigeria viz-a-viz Bwari Area Council.....	61
Voters Qualification (Eligibility).....	62
Analysis of Bwari Area Council Register of Voters.....	63
2023 Presidential Elections in Bwari Area Council.....	70
Discussion of major findings.....	80

**CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION**

Summary of Findings.....	83
Conclusion.....	84
Recommendations.....	84
Reference.....	87
Appendix I.....	a
Appendix II.....	b
Appendix III.....	d

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1: Recent Trends in Voter Turnout around the Globe.....	30
Table 4.1: Gender Distribution of Respondents.....	53
Table 4.2: Age Distribution of Respondents.....	54
Table 4.3: Educational Qualification of the Respondents.....	55
Table 4.4: Occupational Affiliation of Respondents.....	56
Table 4.5: Marital Status of Respondents.....	57
Table 4.6: Summary of Sampled Questionnaires.....	58
Table 4.7: Summary of Respondents Interviewed.....	58
Table 4.8: Summary of Register of Voters by Wards in Bwari Area Council.....	64
Table 4.9: Gender Distribution of Registered Voters in Bwari Area Council.....	65
Table 4.10: Age Distribution of Registered Voters in Bwari Area Council.....	66
Table 4.11: Occupational Distribution of Registered Voters.....	67
Table 4.12: Summary of Results from Polling Units Collation at Registration Area Level.....	70
Table 4.13: What factors made you vote in the 2023 Presidential Elections?.....	71
Table 4.14: What factors made it difficult for you to vote in the 2023 Presidential Election.....	73
Table 4.15: What are the factors that contributed to low voter turnout in Bwari Area Council during the 2023 Presidential Election.....	74
Table 4.16: What can be done to encourage voter turnout?.....	77

## LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 4.1: Gender Distribution of Respondents.....	53
Fig. 4.2: Age Distribution of Respondents.....	54
Fig. 4.3: Educational Qualification of Respondents.....	55
Fig. 4.4: Occupational Qualification of Respondents.....	56
Fig. 4.5: Marital Status of Respondents.....	57
Fig. 4.6: Total Registered Voters by Wards.....	65
Fig. 4.7: Gender Distribution of Registered Voters.....	66
Fig. 4.8: Age Distribution of Registered Voters.....	67
Fig. 4.9: Occupational Affiliation of Registered Voters.....	69
Fig. 4.10: Factors that made Voters to Vote in the 2023 Presidential Election.....	72
Fig. 4.11: Factors that contributed to Low Voter Turnout in Bwari Area Council.....	75

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A	Accord Party
AA	Action Alliance
AAC	African Action Congress
ABIS	Automatic Biometric Identification System
ADC	African Democratic Congress
ADP	African Democratic Party
AEO	Assistant Electoral Officer
AMAC	Abuja Municipal Area Council
ANES	American National Election Studies
APC	All Progressive Congress
APGA	All Progressive Grand Alliance
APM	Allied Peoples Movement
APP	Action Peoples Party
APO	Assistant Presiding Officer
BP	Boot Party
B.Sc.	Bachelor of Science
BVAS	Bimodal Voter Accreditation System
CBN	Central Bank of Nigeria
CFRN	Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
CVRS	Continuous Voter Registration System
EO	Electoral Officer
FCT	Federal Capital Territory

HND	Higher National Diploma
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDEA	Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission
IPI	International Peace Institute
IPOB	Indigenous People of Biafra
IT	Information Technology
IREV	INEC Result Viewing Portal
KII	Key Informant Interview
LP	Labour Party
M.Sc.	Master of Science
NCE	Nigeria Certificate in Education
NILDS	National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies
NNPP	New Nigeria Peoples Party
NOA	National Orientation Agency
OND	Ordinary National Diploma
PDP	Peoples Democratic Party
PO	Presiding Officer
PRP	Peoples Redemption Party
PU	Polling Unit
PVC	Permanent Voter Card
PWD	Persons With Disability



REC	Resident Electoral Commissioner
SDP	Social Democratic Party
SMS	Short Message Service
SPO	Supervisory Presiding Officer
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
VAP	Voting Age Population
YPP	Young Progressive Party
ZLP	Zenith Labour Party

**LIST OF APPENDIX**

Appendix 1: Researcher’s Introductory Letter to Respondents .....a  
Appendix II: Questionnaires.....b  
Appendix III: Draft Interview Schedule..... d

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. Background to the Study.**

Political participation is a fundamental aspect of the democratic system, empowering citizens to influence governance through elections. Participation in politics refers to the various ways in which individuals or groups of people engage in the political or electoral process and influence government decisions. It is the number of voluntary activities undertaken by the public to influence public policy either directly or by affecting the selection of persons who make those policies (Longley, 2021). Political participation includes voting in elections, working on political campaigns, donating money to candidates or causes, contacting public officials, petitioning, protesting, and working with other people on issues. Political scientists are of the view that no other activity allows the opinions of more people to be represented in decision-making than voting, thus, as one of the basic principles of participatory democracy, each citizen gets one vote and each vote counts (Longley, 2021). However, the phenomenon of voter turnout, a subset of political participation, has witnessed a consistent decline in the Bwari Area Council during presidential elections. This study explored the factors influencing this decline, particularly in the 2023 presidential election.

### **1.2. Statement of the Study Problem**

Voter turnout is fundamental to representative democracy; it is a key indicator of the vitality of a democratic system. It helps in measuring both the legitimacy of government and the trust that citizens place in their political institutions and politicians, and shows how citizens are involved in the governance of their country. The act of voting in regular competitive elections delineates the boundaries of democracy and is the key feature in determining the health of a democracy. Voter

turnout is used to describe the percentage rate of eligible voters who vote in an election (often defined as those who cast a ballot). It is assumed that strong voter turnout and civic participation are fundamental to a healthy democracy whereas low voter turnout poses a challenge to the democratic process, affecting government legitimacy and hindering the delivery of democratic dividends. It is equally assumed that low voter turnout changes electoral outcomes, results in the election of an illegitimate or unpopular government, as well as causes a loss of legitimacy for the government. A cursory analysis of statistical data on Presidential elections in Bwari Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory in the past four election cycles (2011-2023) from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) indicates a low voter turnout in Bwari Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory. In 2011, the total number of registered voters was 142,865 while the voter turnout was 20,262 representing (14.2%) which was very low. Furthermore, in 2015 the number of registered voters rose to 162,786 and voter turnout was 33,162 representing (20.4%) which was also low. However, 2019 witnessed an increase with the number of registered voters rising to 224,737, which led to the turnout of voters rising to 61,702 representing (27.5%); consequently, 2023 recorded a tremendous increase in the number of registered voters as it rose from 224,737 to 279,792 while voter turnout increased as well to 96,444 representing (35%) which was also considered low when compared with the number of registered voters. Despite an increase in registered voters in the Bwari Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory, the percentage of actual voter turnout remains poor, resulting in a negative impact on electoral outcomes. This study aims to identify the root causes of low voter turnout during the 2023 Presidential election in the Bwari Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory.

### **1.3. Key Research Questions.**

To address the problem at hand, the study investigated the following questions:

- (i) How was the 2023 Presidential election in Bwari Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory generally conducted considering the following; total number of registered voters, accredited voters, and total votes cast?
- (ii) What are the factors that made eligible registered voters to vote during the 2023 Presidential election in Bwari Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory?
- (iii) Why did eligible registered voters not come out to vote on the election day?
- (iv) What can be done to encourage voter turnout in presidential elections in the Bwari Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory?

#### **1.4. Research Objectives.**

The primary objective of this study was to examine factors that influenced voter turnout in Bwari Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory during the 2023 Presidential Election. In line with the foregoing, the specific objectives of the study include.

- (i) Investigate the factors that influenced the number of registered voters and voter turnout in the Bwari Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory during the 2023 Presidential Election.
- (ii) Identify the actual causes of low voter turnout in the 2023 presidential election in the Bwari Area Council of the Capital Territory.
- (iii) Assess the effectiveness of institutions responsible for voter education in promoting voter registration and voter turnout.
- (iv) Evaluate the impact of logistical, structural, personal, and natural factors on voter turnout in previous presidential elections in the Bwari Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory.

#### **1.5. Significance of the Study**

The few earlier studies dedicated to voter turnout in the Bwari Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory did not pay adequate attention to ‘voters’ perception’ and the ‘widening gap’ between

the elected officials and the electorates of why there is low turnout. Therefore, there had been a knowledge gap hence, the findings of this study could fill the gap in the literature in this area as well as be beneficiary to the following;

1. Researchers: Democratic researchers and students could find useful reference materials in this area of knowledge.
2. Democratic Institutions: The findings from this study could be beneficial to democratic institutions in Nigeria, such as Political Parties, Politicians, the judiciary, Civil Society Organizations, the media, Electoral reform regulators (National Assembly), policymakers, the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS), etc. in facilitating policies for delivering democracy dividends and democratic consolidation. In the same way, this study could be beneficial to Citizens/Electorates, etc.
3. INEC: the significance of this study could potentially lie in its quest to restore citizens' trust and confidence in the capacity of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to conduct free, fair, transparent, inclusive, and credible elections in Nigeria leading to the promotion of electoral integrity and larger turnout of voters during presidential elections.
4. The government: The aftermath of this study thus, set out to provide useful recommendations on how to encourage more voter turnout which would have a long-lasting positive effect on democratic development in Bwari Area Council and Nigeria at large.

### **1.6. Scope of the Study**

The study focused on the 2023 presidential election in the Bwari Area Council of the Federal

Capital Territory: The study's scope was limited to the 2023 presidential election basically to assess the level of voter turnout in the 2023 presidential election in Bwari Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory.

### **1.7. Clarification of Key Terms**

**Voters:** There is no universal definition of the terminology of Voters, however, for this study; we chose to adopt the definition of the Collins Dictionary, which used the term Voters to describe people who have the legal right to vote in elections or people who are voting in a particular election (Collinsdictionary.com).

**Election:** According to JC Johari (2013), the term election means recruitment of the representatives by the choice of the voters. Drawing from Johari's definition, Adewumi and Olayinka (2022), described election as the process of choosing representatives by the citizens in a particular country. Election remains the pillar of democracy and no other means of choosing political leaders except through election. In a similar dimension, Moveh (2015) believes election plays two important roles. Firstly, it affords the people to freely choose leaders of their choice expected to manage the affairs of the populace. Secondly, an election allows prospective candidates to canvass for votes in a free and fair election. Lewis (2005), in Eytayo, and Olayinka (2022) opine that elections provide essential validation for democracy by increasing the confidence of individual citizens in their ability to meaningfully participate in public life. Given this, an election is a systematic way of choosing a few that will represent the larger people through voting (Ugbudian, 2015). This concurs with Albert (2007) who sees election to be a process of elite selection by most of the population in any given political system. Explaining, Greenberg and Page (2004) espoused that for elections to be democratic, whether in the prospective, electoral completion, or retrospective voting model; participation in elections and campaign activities must not only be at high levels but also must vary

substantially across social groups in the population, that is; by race, gender, income, occupation, religion, ethnicity, region, and so on. Thus, political participation is an activity by individual citizens. It includes unconventional participation, such as demonstrating, boycotting, and the like discussed above. Also, conventional participation, such as writing letters to the editor on political issues, contacting officials, going to public meetings, working on campaigns, and giving money. The most basic form of conventional political participation, the one that plays the most central part in theories of democratic control through elections, is the act of voting (Greenberg & Page, 2004).

**Voter apathy:** Voter apathy is a lack of interest among eligible registered voters in the elections of representative democracies Cloud (2010). Also, Yakubu (2012) defined voter apathy as a political concept that describes the indifference of electorates regarding their attitude toward the electoral process, such as voting. According to a publication by the Good-luck Jonathan Foundation on Barriers to Civic Participation in Nigeria (2019), voter apathy is described as the major indicator of the crisis of credibility of the electoral process and democratic system. Voter apathy is a situation defined by a lack of participation in the voting process, especially the actual action of voting, by a significant layer of the voting population. Voter apathy defines the situation in which citizens who have the capacity and responsibility to vote refuse or cannot either register to vote or vote after registering. The level of voter apathy is an indicator of the level of participation of citizens in the electoral process.

**Participatory Democracy:** Participatory democracy emphasizes the broad participation of constituents in the direction and operation of political systems. It is an ingredient of every political system, whether traditional or modern, democratic or totalitarian, large or small. Explaining, Johari (2013) asserts that the Political system may be of any kind; someone must make political decisions



and do other related things like appointment, reshuffling, and removal of office-holders from time to time. An important may, however, be drawn in that whereas, in the traditional and monarchical systems, participation is severely restricted to the nobility and its agents, the democratic systems have, in principle; transformed these prerogatives into rights available to every 'Tom, Dick, and Harry. The reason is that a democratic system is regarded as the only system based on the will of the people desiring the participation of as many people as possible in the power struggle. The desire to give meaning and force to the principle of consent, accountability, and political opposition partly stimulated such an expansion of participation. Participation is the principal means by which consent is granted or withdrawn in a democracy and rulers are made accountable to the ruled (J. C. Johari, 2013).

R. C. Johari (2018) established that participatory democracy has been a feature of human society since classical times. Participatory democracy is believed to have been a common practice of the undeveloped people and hunter-gatherer tribes. In seventh and eighth century ancient Greece, the informal distributed power structure of the villages and minor towns began to be displaced with collectives of oligarchs seizing power as the villages and towns coalesced into city-states. A brief period where a region was governed almost totally by participatory democracy occurred during the Spanish Civil War, from 1936 to 1938, in the parts of Spain controlled by anarchist Republicans.

**Political Party:** According to Likoti, (2005), in Adewunmi (2022), a political party is an organized group of people with similar political aims and opinions that seek to influence public policy by getting its candidate elected to public office. As cited in Ojo (2008), Edmund Burke defined a political party as a body of men united to promote by their joint endeavors national interests based on some particular principles on which they all agreed. The existence of political

parties according to this definition is based on the principles of promoting national interest with membership spread across the country. This lends credence to the position of the Nigerian constitution, which requires that political parties should reflect federal character before being registered (Tordoff, 1999). Consequently, Osumah (2009) in Adesanmi (2022), conceived a political party as a voluntary association organized by persons, banded by common interests or aims, which seeks to capture power through the election of its candidates into public office. This connotes a political party as a voluntary organization aimed at acquiring political power to implement government policies. Political parties are an integral part of the process of the entrenchment of democracy. Thus, political parties produce the candidates and set the parameters of issues and agenda upon which elections are held, and are expected to perform these duties periodically (Adesanmi, 2022). Political parties are among the most important institutions affecting political participation. In most countries, political parties determine candidates' nomination, election, and which issues achieve national prominence (Adesanmi, 2022).

Wakil (2022), averred that political parties are very critical to the sustainability of democratic norms and values. However, he observed that the political party institutions in African Countries are still very rudimentary. He further defined a political party as an organized group of people with at least broadly similar political goals and ideas who strive to influence public policy by electing their candidates to public office. Explaining, Wakil (2022) posited that political parties share the same purpose, aims, and objectives among members. Different political parties contend with one another to influence public policy and opinion through their respective ideas, values, and ambitions. The winning party administers the government with the opposition, keeping a close eye on how it functions. The operation of the whole governmental apparatus in a country lies in the presence of political parties and is one of the good markers of a successful democratic

transition. The practice of democracy and political participation remains impossible in the absence of political parties. They are the driving force behind everything the government does (Wakil 2022).

### **1.9. Organization of the Study.**

Chapter one contains the general introduction, comprising the background of the study; statement of the study problem; research questions and objectives; the significance of the study; the scope and limitation of the study; and the outline of the chapters. Chapter two provides a thorough review of the literature and theoretical framework. Chapter three focuses on a comprehensive statement of the research methodology. The data and discussion of the results form the content of chapter four. Chapter five is a summary of the study, recommendations, contributions of the research to the body of literature, and conclusions based on the findings of the study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter adopted a thematic approach in reviewing and discussing extant and relevant literature. The study was later situated within the framework of Psychological Theory as espoused by William James (1890) and Campbell et al. (1960) respectively.

#### 2.1. Conceptual Review

According to a publication by the Office of Connecticut's Legislature on Understanding Voter Turnout (Frame, 2022), Voter turnout is defined as a helpful statistic that indicates how engaged voters were in a particular election. It is understood as the percentage of voters who vote in a given election and is calculated by dividing the number of votes by the number of voters. Consequently, the International IDEA (2016) opined that voter turnout is the extent to which eligible voters use their vote on Election Day. It is measured as the percentage of votes cast in an election, including invalid votes. Voter turnout is one of the crucial indicators of how citizens participate in the governance of their country. High voter turnout is, in most cases a sign of the vitality of democracy, while low turnout is usually associated with voter apathy and mistrust of the political process. Because of its importance, media and civil society actors, as well as the democratic support community and many other stakeholders, are concerned when citizens do not turn out to vote. They are also keen to understand the reasons behind low turnouts (International IDEA, 2016).

Similarly, Mahmud (2016) points out that Voter turnout simply means the percentage of the voting population (or the percentage of registered voters) who came out to vote in an election. In democratizing societies, voter turnout is the most common form of political participation. Unlike in advanced democracies where citizens engage in various types of participation, people in the former do not have the economic means or the time to engage in other forms of participation. Also,

most of the political systems frown on other types of participation, which may be regarded as opposition to the authorities. It is therefore important to examine voter turnout as the major form of political participation and its effects on regime legitimacy.

Also, according to Chukwuma N. A. and Okpala B. A. (2018), Voter turnout is the voting-eligible population or the percentage of eligible voters who cast a ballot in an election. Voter turnout is the percentage of eligible voters who cast a vote in an election. In every democratic society, voter turnout is the most common form of political participation. Most of the existing theories of voter turnout deal with either the determinant or how to enhance turnout either at the national level or local level. Therefore, the presence of low voter turnout always gives room for electoral manipulation and other forms of electoral vices that mar free and fair elections in Nigeria. Stella (2004), cited in Dass and Sa'idu (2022) posited that voter turnouts are veritable measures of political legitimacy and are contrasted with the measures of trust in politicians and satisfaction with the performance of the current government. The hypothesis posed by Stella (2004) emphasized that the degree of political legitimacy affects voter turnout, whereas citizens' trust in political actors and satisfaction with the government may influence voters' choice but it may not have a straightforward connection with turnout during elections. Deducing from Stella's view, one can understand that the crisis of legitimacy of most political leaders, as well as the electorate's confidence in the politicians, may have serious consequences on voter turnouts.

According to Blais & Dobrzynska (1998) cited in Omotola & Aiyedogbon (2012), voter turnout is one of the core ways of measuring the level of participation in any election; it is usually measured as the percentage of registered voters who vote. The assumption is that the higher the level of voter turnout, the higher the level of participation and, by extension, the greater the democratic quality of the election. Adigun (2020), while considering Factors Determining Voter Turnouts in

Presidential Elections in Nigeria: A Multivariate Correlation Analysis of the 2019 Presidential Election; opined that people's active participation in elections is one of the key measures of electoral democracy. The people's lack of interest or apathy in elections undervalues the democratic process, engender mistrust in political institutions, and enthrone unaccountable leadership. Explaining, he identified voter turnout as a crucial aspect of electoral studies. Even though Nigeria has successfully undergone two decades of uninterrupted democracy, she may not be too fast in imbibing the tenets of electoral democracy which presupposes active people's participation in the electoral process. This is because there has been a conspicuous decline in voter turnouts in presidential elections since 2003, resulting from several factors (Adigun, 2020).

However, Aldrich et al. (2016) in *Turnout as a Habit* opined that voting is one of the fundamental acts of democratic politics. As such, there has been a huge literature seeking to understand it and a great deal has been learned. Even though a wide panoply of factors is, as hypothesized, related to turnout, those that are also related to candidate choice are almost invariably more strongly related to vote choice than to the decision to turn out. Explaining, Campbell et al. (1960) cited in Aldrich et al. (2016) averred that the intensity of partisan preference was strongly related to turnout (1960, p. 97), but they also showed a substantially stronger relationship between the intensity of partisan choice and candidate preferences (Campbell et al., p. 69). Equally, voting as an act of political participation is less strongly explained by relevant variables than, for example, participation in campaigns or other modes of political participation. Quoting Verb and Nie (1972), found that the turnout-to-vote factor was noticeably less strongly related to overall political participation than were campaign and communal activity factors (Verb and Nie 1972, p. 358). Meanwhile, Longley (2021) while identifying voter participation as one of the most impactful expressions of patriotism; considered voting as one of the primary means of participating in

politics. He asserted that ‘no other political activity allows the opinions of more people to be represented other than voting. As one of the basic principles of participatory democracy, each citizen gets one vote, and each vote counts equally (Longley, 2021).

Drawing from the above deductions, voter turnout is an indication of the citizen's or eligible registered voters’ contribution to the emergence of a particular government. It is the measurement of the legitimacy of a particular government. Voter turnout helps in determining the legitimacy of the government of the day. It is proof of how the citizens supported or backed the emerging government following an election. It is a term used in ascertaining whether the present government is the reflection of the general will or the volition of certain individuals in a country. Whereas low voter turnout hampers the legitimacy of the government, high voter turnout is the reflection of the citizens’ support of their government or political system.

**Eligible Voters:** The International IDEA (2016) adopted two measures for the eligible voter’s definition: first, the number of registered voters as officially reported by the national bodies responsible for compiling voters’ lists such as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC); and second, the voting age population (VAP), which is an estimate of the proportion of a country’s population that is of voting age. International IDEA (2016) identified two main reasons for using both voter registration and voting age population (VAP) statistics to measure the number of eligible voters. First, in some countries, registration data is either inaccurate or unavailable, and sometimes a voter register is not used. In such cases, voting age population (VAP) statistics can be used as an alternative to estimate voter turnout. Second, and most importantly, the voting age population (VAP) statistics can provide a clearer picture of participation in some countries as they signal a problem with the voters’ list or registration system (International IDEA, 2016).

In Nigeria, just as in most developed and developing democracies, registered voters must meet

certain eligibility requirements, allowing them to vote in a particular locality. Voters must be Nigerian citizens at least 18 years of age on the date of the election and must possess a Permanent Voters' Card. In addition, a voter must have registered in the polling unit where he/she intends to vote on Election Day. Similarly, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) can impose certain rules or requirements mandating how a person can be eligible to vote. Most recently, the 2022 Electoral Act (as amended) established certain rules and laws requiring voters to show identification before being allowed to vote on Election Day. However, the majority of registered voters appear to vote more in a presidential election. Since the introduction of technology in Nigeria's electoral process and following the enactment of the 2022 Electoral Act, the pool of eligible voters has increased from men, women, and youth to include people with disability (PWDs), though voter turnout has consistently remained on the decline.

**Voting Age Population:** The terminology of the voting age population (VAP) is used to refer to the proportion of a country's population that is of voting age (International IDEA, 2016). Meanwhile, a voting age is the minimum age established by law that a person must attain before they become eligible to vote in a public election although, the voting age differs for different countries. However, according to Albemay (2011), at 18 you become an adult citizen, no longer a dependent on your parents, and your views are your own and you can enter a legal contract without the supervision of a guardian, as the voting ballot is an official document and can be as a legal contract between you and your government, in that by accepting your vote your government is required by law to count it as an individual opinion among all the others and to do justice to the ultimate result. The voting age in different countries is different; it varies from 16 to 25. However, the ideal age is 18 years and above can make free choices. He or she attains considerable education



at 18, which helps them to think and decide who can be a good representative choice for either the parliament or the executive.

**Registered Voters:** According to the law dictionary, the concept of registered voter is used to describe a person who has recorded his or her name in the voting register and is entitled legally to cast a vote

**Voter registration:** According to a publication by Open Election Data 2023, Voter registration is the key process that establishes which individuals are eligible to vote in an election. The voter registration process varies widely across countries. In some countries, eligible voters get registered upon turning of voting age or when they move to a new place of residence. This type of registration is called passive voter registration. In other countries, the voter has to take specific steps to register. That type of registration is called active voter registration. For instance, before the 2023 general elections, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) created room for mass registration of eligible voters through the Continuous Voter Registration System (CVRS) exercise. In all voter registration processes, the government must provide eligible voters with fair access to the process. The government should also make sure the citizen has a reasonable opportunity to complete or update their registration. Also, the responsible authority must inform voters in advance about where, when, and how to register or update their details in the voter register.

**Voter register:** A voter register or list is a detailed record of every person registered and eligible to vote. The voter list also includes relevant information used to identify voters and assign them to a specific electoral district and polling station. Often, the voter register is divided into sub-lists for use at each polling station. Polling station voter lists typically only have the names of people designated to vote at that specific polling station. This makes it quicker and easier for election officials to determine who is qualified to vote. In many democracies, such as Nigeria, voters can

check their registration details, including their assigned voting location, often using Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs). In some states, like in the Federal Capital Territory, the voter register or list look-up system is available by public publication and through Short Message Service (SMS) message notification. When voters present themselves at a polling station, poll officials cross-check that their names appear on the voter list before they cast a ballot. The total number of accredited voters on the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) often forms the basis for the final turnout calculation for each polling unit on Election Day. In Nigeria viz-a-viz Bwari Area Council, at specified times, polling unit turnout is recorded on the election day. The number of voters assigned to polling units varies across the 10 Constituent electoral wards in the Bwari Area Council, typically with 1-750 in the lower range and 1,000-3000 in the upper range.

**Importance of voter register**—To make sure that eligible voters can vote and ineligible people are not, the voter register must be:

- i. **Complete:** eligible people and their relevant details are on the list, while ineligible people are not on the list.
- ii. **Accurate:** the information included in the list is correct. Polling unit lists can also be inaccurate if incorrectly drawn from the main voter list.
- iii. **Current:** updated to acknowledge recent deaths, recognize newly eligible voters, and reflect changes in residency, personal identification, or other voter details.

With access to the voter register, citizens can check their registration status and details for accuracy. In several places, voters can also verify the location of their polling station, so they know where to go on Election Day. Public access to voter registers can increase the accuracy and completeness of the voter list if individuals have sufficient opportunity to correct any errors or

update their information. The ability to view and correct the entire list can boost public confidence in the voter registration process, electoral authorities, and the election process more broadly. Access to the voter list allows political parties to ensure their interest is included—for instance, allowing them to check voter registration rates in their geographic bases of support. Civic organizations can check the quality of the voter list through an independent audit or other impartial review procedure. Such an assessment may highlight positive aspects of the voter list and any issues that need to be addressed, such as cases of individuals with multiple registrations. Access to population information, like census data, allows for better assessment of voter lists. For instance, stakeholders can compare voter registration rates to census data to look for trends and identify populations that may be under-registered or other areas for improvement.

**Details on voter register data**—The information included in voter register varies from country to country however in Nigeria, besides the names, birth dates, and place of residence of voters, other information in the voter list may include: the date of registration, gender, occupation, passport photograph, elector number or voting card number, registration address, temporary registration address, relevant sub-national levels of electoral geography, polling unit number, polling unit name, and any “special” status.

## **2.2. Theoretical Review**

According to a publication by International IDEA (2017) on voter turnout trends around the world, Voter turnout is one of the crucial indicators of how citizens participate in the governance of their country. Higher voter turnout is in most cases a sign of the vitality of democracy, while lower turnout is usually associated with voter apathy and mistrust of the political process. Because of its importance, media and civil society actors, as well as the democratic support community and many

other stakeholders are concerned when citizens do not turn out to vote. They are also keen to understand the reasons behind low and high turnouts. Collecting comprehensive data on voter turnout from across the globe and trying to understand what affects people's decisions to vote or not to vote is therefore important (International IDEA, 2017).

Furthermore, Dass and Sa'idu (2022) observed that theories act as the foundation of analysis, especially if the analysis is humanities and social science-oriented. The theoretical framework provides a facial glide within which to test our pre-positions and verify our variables relevant to the study area thus, Dass and Sa'idu (2022) in Theoretical Review of the 2019 General Election in Nigeria: A focus of Voter-Turnout employed the Behavioral Theory in guiding the analysis and in analyzing the voting pattern and behavior of groups in the society with particular reference to elections. The behavioral theory was employed primarily as a product of the American attitude toward society, which had gained recognition in late 1950 at the Chicago University. The proponents of the behavioral theory include Robert Dahl (1950), Ponton and Gil (1993), David Easton (1956), and David Truman (1961) among others. The behavioral approach also represents a shift from the traditional approaches to scientific or behavioral science. The major focus of the behavioral theory is that (i) the prediction of a political situation and explanation should be done through empirical laws that postulate political and social regularities; (ii) that a focus should be geared toward social and psychological determinants of political behavior (iii) that all statements in political science must be in principle verifiable that is, to behaviorists, every phenomenon must be verified for judgment; (iv) that the use of an empirical method of data collation and evaluation, more especially the attitude scale or complex statistical techniques; (v) that the behavior of individuals at various groups and levels and the actor must be analyzed (Varma, 1975). The central strength of the behavioral theory in analyzing political phenomena focuses on two issues:

techniques of research and theory building. The theory of research, theory makes us understand the causes of events between individual states and actors in the quest for a power struggle in the political system. It also helps in the development of areas of content analysis, case analysis, interviewing, and the process of observation and statistics. These help in gaining tremendous knowledge and information concerning certain political behaviors (Dass & Sa'idu, 2022).

Meanwhile, Suleiman (2022), considered the Impact of voter turnout in conducting free and fair elections focusing particularly on (the 2019 Abuja Municipal Area Council [AMAC] Election), and in doing so he adopted the rational choice theory as propounded by George Homans (1961) as the framework for his study. The premise of the rational choice theory is that the aggregate behavior in society reflects the sum of the choices made by individuals also, the rational choice theory was used to affirm and describe the situation in which citizens are voting in their best interest, supporting candidates whose platform guarantee the most favorable outcomes. The rational choice suggests that there is always a linkage between an individual preference and voting behavior. He further quoted Omotola and Aiyedogbon (2012) who asserted that each individual makes their choices based on their preferences and the constraints or choices they face. At the individual level, the rational choice theory stipulates that the individual chooses the action or outcome they must prefer, where actions or outcomes can be evaluated in terms of costs and benefits. A rational individual chooses the action or outcome that provides benefit minus cost. Rational decision-making entails choosing among all available alternatives; the alternative that the individual must prefer (Suleiman, 2022).

Isiaka et al. (2021) in Election and Voters' Turnout in Nigeria: An Investigation of Reasons for Voter Apathy in 2019 General Elections in Oyo State. This study examined the voter turnout in the 2019 general elections in Oyo state and investigated the reason(s) responsible for voter apathy in

the elections. Rational choice theory was adopted as the mental map for the study to illustrate the fact that individuals always make prudent and logical decisions that offer them the greatest satisfaction, given the choices available, and are in their highest self-interest (Downs, 1957). This rational choice theory, according to Haywood (2002) is based on the assumption that individuals are rationally self-interested actors and make their choices by the facts of reality. Downs (1957) opined that although rational choice theory emanated from economics, however, it has a significant impact on the study of voter behavior and motivation. According to the rational choice theory, if potential voters think their vote is highly likely to make a difference, electoral turnout would be high, and if they feel otherwise, there would be voter apathy. Advocates of this theory believe that before an electorate chooses any of the aforementioned options, he would have his reason or reasons.

Igiebor (2022), Explored the Effects of Security Challenges on Electoral Participation in Nigeria with a focus on the Fourth Republic, and in doing so he adopted both the Structural-Functionalism and Frustration-Aggression theories respectively as the framework for his study to justify his assertion that electoral violence has two perspectives, namely; the Structural-Functionalist and the Frustration-Aggression. According to him, the structural- functionalism sees society from the viewpoint of a multifaceted system that has the complete parts working together collectively to enhance consistency and permanence. The structural-functionalism perspective considers societal construction and functions. The structural-functionalism approach explains the social construction and configurations from the perspective of the fundamental functioning of its constituent elements, which include customs, traditions, accepted standards, and institutions.

Quoting a common analogy popularized by Herbert Spencer cited in Urry (2000) that the constituent's elements of the society as organs that ensure the proper functioning of the whole body. The social structure of society is seen as coherently woven and relational concepts that work like organisms, having different social institutions functioning cooperatively to ensure an all-

inclusive social balance. On the other hand, Igiebo (2022) quoted Dollard et al. (1939) who postulated that the theory of Frustration-Aggression is based on the notion that frustration leads to aggression. The theory posits that frustration leads to aggression and that aggressive behavior results from inhibition or hindrance of someone's effort, aim, or ambition to achieve a certain goal. When the source of the aggression cannot be confronted, the aggression gets displaced onto an innocent target.

Explaining, Sisk (2008) cited in Igiebo (2022), averred that an alternative to the Frustration-Aggression theory is the idea of relative deprivation, wherein an inconsistency exists between what is and what is attainable. The further the discrepancy, the more likely the anger and resort to violent means. When parties are quite certain of loss or exclusion in an election context, especially when they expect to be permanent minorities (to lose not just once, but again and again), the certainty of outcomes is also a strong causal driver of violence. When a strongly insecure party or faction expects to be systematically excluded from political power, they may well turn to violence to either prevent their exclusion or to prevent the election process (Igiebo 2022).

Additionally, Igbinsosa (2022), on the Effect of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) on the 2015 and 2019 Presidential Election in FCT: (A case study of Bwari Area Council), adopted the contextual approach as the theoretical framework to examine the effect of ICT on the 2015 and 2019 Presidential election in Bwari Area Council, FCT. According to him, the Contextualist approach was propounded by (Pettigrew 1990, 1987, 1985), and has gathered much attention among Information and Technology [IT] scholars such as Augustsson et al. 2010; Ngwuyama, 1998). Igbinsosa (2022) further alluded that the adoption of contextualist theory was motivated by two motives; one was the assertion of Pandey (2015, that the contextual approach as a theoretical approach has the backing of major scholars in the technology and information environment.

Secondly, it can boast a firm foundation whereby all major pillars in organizational framework and direction can stand especially one like the electoral management body and other democratic institutions (Pandey, 2015).

In all the different views of acknowledging the contextual theory, Dimiz and Pozzebon (2012) cited in Igbinosa (2022) asserted that all the IT studies reviewed are titled in one direction. In a similar vein, Stockdale et al, 2006, and Symons 1991) quoted in Igbinosa (2022), opined that the contextual approach provides researchers with a wide range of features. Explaining, Symons (1991) in Aavik (2015) argued that breaking it into a member of elements (why), subject (what), timeframe (when), methodologies (how), and people (who)-allows the researcher to recognize a wide scope of interrelated factors. The contextual approach in its capacity and influence gives the researcher a broader scope in terms of analysis as it regards man and its interactions with its environmental strata (Aavik, 2015; Stockdale et al 2006). Also, Adigun (2020), Considered Factors Determining Voter Turnouts in Presidential Elections in Nigeria: A Multivariate Correlation Analysis of the 2019 Presidential Election. The paper employed the rational choice theory as its theoretical framework in analyzing three key variables such as; electoral violence, socio-economic factors, and candidate's popularity - with the use of Multivariate Correlation Analysis; a statistical procedure that calculates correlation coefficients of two or more variables to determine the strengths of their relationships. The premise of the rational choice theory as stated earlier is that the aggregate behavior in the society reflects the sum of the choices made by individuals.

Thus, Chukwuma and Okapala (2018) examined Voter Turnout and the Quest for Free and Fair Elections in Nigeria with a focus on the 2017 Anambra State Gubernatorial Election. The study interrogated what accounts for voter turnout and the specific factor responsible for low voter turnout during the Anambra State 2017 gubernatorial election. The theoretical framework of



analysis for this study was anchored from the proposition emanating from Elite theory. Citing Chuma in Onu, Umeriruike, Biereenu-Nnabugwu, and Nwankwo (2009), who believed that the Elite theory arose as a critique of egalitarian ideas such as those related to the principles of democracy and socialism; Elite theory is rooted in the philosophical ideas that every society is divided into two major groups: the elites and non-elites, the ruled and the rulers, the political class and the non-political class then the governing and the non-governing etc. Explaining, Chukwuma & Okpala (2018) expressed the view that the concept of elite is considered as ascribed by many to Weber (1922) as the founding father of Elite theory because of his work on power and domination (1992). However, the theory was developed by classical elitist Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923), Gaetano Mosca (1858-1941), and Robert Michels (1876-1936).

Adeyemi Eyitayo and Olayinka Adebogun (2022) examined Voters' Participation and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria: An Analysis of the 2011-2019 Presidential Elections. The study was anchored on the rational choice theory of election, also known as the rational action theory. It is a theory for understanding and often modeling social economic and individual behavior. It is the main paradigm in the currently dominant microeconomics school of thought. It is also central to modern political science, as well as other disciplines such as sociology and philosophy. The proponents of this theory are Downs, (1957) and Arrow, (1986). According to this duo, the Rational Choice Theory of Election identifies that political behavior and voting pattern of the electorates a rational choice based on some indicators such as economic benefit, resources allocation, distribution of goods and services, allocation of juicy political offices, and favor (Downs, 1957; Arrow, 1986). Rational Choice Theory of Election is either evaluative or non-evaluative according to Downs (1957) and Arrow (1986). Evaluative is measuring and evaluating the performances of regimes to determine whether they deserve voters' choice or not and rationality is based on

performance measurement. The non-evaluative is based on clientelistic considerations such as favoritism, patronage, ethnicity, religion, regionalism, and family. The proponents of this theory observed that elections in African countries are mostly considered on clientelistic rationalism where the ethnic, religious, and regional cleavages are given much consideration. They also identified what they called “Swing votes” in developing democracies like Nigeria where they analyzed that ethnic, religious, patronage, and clientelistic satisfaction of the voters when measured with evaluation of performances of the leaders in office can influence the outcome of an election.

However, Aldrich et al. (2016) in *Turnout as a Habit*, investigated whether there may be a reason for predicting vote choice as opposed to turnout. In particular, the study explored empirically whether turnout reflects two styles of decision making that is; some people deciding to turnout as it is usually understood, as the result of deliberation or conscious weighing of relevant factors. Other citizens determine whether to vote as the result of what is understood theoretically in social psychology as habituated responses, responding automatically to quite different sorts of cues. The study was anchored on the psychological theory of habit built on the premise that people have strong habits only with the combination of frequently performed behavior in similar performance contexts.

Drawing from the above assertion is the fact that the habit theory of voting is built on the idea that people learn context response associations and these are then available in memory to guide subsequent responses. Aldrich et al (2016) asserted that the application of habit to turnout begins with the voter initially going through a series of careful calculations and eventually voting. If those calculations are embedded in a consistent context and if the result of those calculations consistently points the individual to choose to vote, then she will apply less and less careful consideration and

deliberation to the task. Thus, by the time she has a strong habit, she performs significantly fewer conscious calculations in deciding to turn out in the current election. Citing McCulloch et al. (2008), Aldrich et al. (2016) averred that when habitual voters perceive the contexts in which they have voted in the past, the response of voting is likely to be activated in memory. Also, alternative responses may be deactivated in memory when one choice is made repeatedly. Also, Cravens (2020) while measuring the strength of voter turnout habits described turnout habit as a durable disposition to vote determined by an ability to automatically initiate voting and self-identify as a frequent voter. The paper was however anchored on the framework of Psychological theory as espoused by Psychologist William James (1890) and Campbell et al. (1960) respectively. The premise of the psychological theory was built on the social psychological approach to the study of voter turnout to depict the closeness of the election, the intensity of partisan preferences, interest in the election, concern about the outcome, political efficacy, and citizen duty in their pioneering development. During the earliest years of the American National Election Studies [ANES], two social psychological concepts played especially important roles: (a) social identification with reference groups and (b) the drive to maintain cognitive consistency. The single most important book on the psychology of voting is *The American Voter* (Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960). One of its authors, Phillip Converse, was trained as a social psychologist, and he brought the richness of social psychology in the 1950s to the table as academic theories of voters were first being developed (Cravens, 2020).

### **2.3. Empirical Review**

Dass and Sa'idu (2022) analyzed the voting pattern and behavior of groups in the society with particular reference to election in Theoretical Review of the 2019 General Election in Nigeria focusing particularly on voter turnout. Findings from the study revealed that issues or variables

such as violence, poverty, and unemployment have been adjudged as socio-economic factors that precipitated voter turnouts in Nigeria, using the geo-political analysis. However, disaggregation in views among scholars posits that the popularity of candidates or rather the candidate's tribe, running mate's tribe, and support for the candidate's political party and voters' trust among other things provide stronger declining turnouts in 2019 general elections in Nigeria. The paper concludes that the only leeway or a way forward to low voter turnouts is that, voters should concentrate on the candidate's credibility capacity and patriotism to the country, as a variable for choosing a presidential candidate in the future (Dass & Sa'idu, 2022).

Meanwhile, Suleiman (2022), considered the Impact of voter turnout in conducting free and fair elections focusing particularly on (the 2019 Abuja Municipal Area Council [AMAC] Election), Findings from the study revealed that voter turnout is shaped by several factors which include; lack of interest and understanding of election, lack of interest in candidates or political party, politics or government to a certain degree which makes it difficult for an individual to see the value of universal suffrage, as well as to see the benefits or cost of new government policies and end up casting his or her vote in an election (Suleiman, 2022). Additionally, Igbinsosa (2022) investigated the Effect of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) on the 2015 and 2019 Presidential elections in FCT focusing particularly on the Bwari Area Council. The results from the study indicated that the introduction of technological innovation through the use of Biometric Card Readers in the 2015 and 2019 elections in Bwari Area Council minimized electoral fraud and manipulation which had been a constant challenge in previous elections; implying that there was a significant positive effect of Information and Communication Technology [ICT] on the outcome of the general elections of 2015 and 2019 respectively. Also despite the successes recorded with the application of ICT in elections, there were observed flaws following some cases where the

biometric Card Reader failed to read and authenticate the fingerprint of some eligible voters which led to a systematic disenfranchisement of eligible registered voters in Bwari Area Council (Igbinosa, 2022).

Consequently, Isiaka, et al (2021) in *Elections and Voters' Turnout in Nigeria: An Investigation of Reasons for Voter Apathy in the 2019 General Election in Oyo State*; examined reasons for voter apathy in Oyo State during the 2019 general elections. The finding of the study revealed that there was voter apathy which led to low voter turnout in Oyo state during the 2019 general elections. This according to Isiaka et al (2021) was in line with the assertion made by Yakubu (2012) who averred that, political apathy has been a major factor for low voter turnout in elections in Nigeria. Also, the statistical data from INEC presented in the study indicated that the percentage of voter turnout for presidential and national assembly elections in 2019 in Oyo State was only 31%, indicating a decline of about 13.5% from the 2015 elections which had a turnout of 44.5%. In addition, the study showed that voters' lack of confidence in their political leaders is the major reason for voter apathy and consequently, low voter turnout. Supporting this assertion, he went on to quote Mattes et al in Falade (2014) that, popular trust in political institutions remains at relatively low levels. Additionally, electoral violence and political campaigns of parties and candidates are other factors that affect political participation (Isiaka, et al, 2021).

Moreover, Igiebor (2022), equally explored the Effects of Security Challenges on Electoral Participation in Nigeria focusing particularly on the Fourth Republic. The study posited that voter participation in the electoral process is affected by widespread violence and feelings of insecurity resulting in low-level participation. Also, Adigun (2020) considered the Factors Determining Voter Turnout in Presidential Elections in Nigeria: Multivariate Correlation Analysis of the 2019 Presidential Election. The study analyzed three key variables; violence, socio-economic factors,

and the candidate's popularity with the use of Multivariate Correlation Analysis (a statistical procedure that calculates correlation coefficients of two or more variables to determine the strengths of their relationships). The study, therefore, finds that of the three variables, the candidate's popularity as indicated by voters' preferences for the candidate's/running mate's tribe, political party, and trust in the candidate's abilities provide stronger evidence of the declining turnouts in Nigerian presidential elections (Adigun, 2020).

Chukwuma and Okapala (2018) examined Voter Turnout and the Quest for Free and Fair Elections in Nigeria with a focus on the 2017 Anambra State Gubernatorial Election. The study interrogated what accounts for voter turnout and the specific factor responsible for low voter turnout during the Anambra State 2017 gubernatorial election. Findings from the study revealed that while efforts are in place to address the recurring low voter turnout in an election in Nigeria, the challenges persist because of the culture of political apathy that is implicated in elite disposition in Nigeria politics vis-à-vis other multiple factors which the proscribed Indigenous People of Biafra [IPOB] exacerbated in the 2017 Anambra gubernatorial election. Meanwhile, Adewumi Eyitayo and Olayinka Adebogun (2022) explored Voters' Participation and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria: An Analysis of the 2011-2019 Presidential Elections. Findings from the study depict that several factors influence voters' choice and that vote buying is a common phenomenon that majorly affects voters' choice alongside ethnicity, political party affiliation, and religion, and there have been variations and fluctuations in voters' turnout across different states and geo-political zones of Nigeria. The study concluded that voters' participation has a significant relationship with democratic consolidation in Nigeria (Adewumi & Adebogun, 2022).

However, Aldrich et al (2016) in *Turnout as a Habit*, investigated whether there may be a reason for predicting vote choice as opposed to turnout. In particular, the study explored empirically

whether turnout reflects two styles of decision making that is; some people deciding to turnout as it is usually understood, as the result of deliberation or conscious weighing of relevant factors. Findings from the study revealed that habit requires an interaction between repetition of behavior and stability of performance context; and that people have strong habits only with the combination of frequently performed behavior in similar performance contexts thus, both repetition of behavior and stability of context may themselves be associated with turnout in voting.

Also, not only was this interactive habit strength measure both statistically significant and substantively very large, but it also helped to define two distinct groups of individuals whose approaches turn out very differently. Unlike casual voters, the behavior of those with a strong habit was not as well predicted by the standard decision-making variables, such as the strength of preference, care about the election, etc. The effect of these decision-making variables, individually and collectively, was far weaker among those with a strong voting habit than those without one. For these individuals, voting is likely to be triggered by stable cues in the performance context, regardless of their decisions concerning turnout. Consequently, Cravens (2020) while measuring the strength of voter turnout habits considered turnout habit as a durable disposition to vote determined by the ability to automatically initiate voting and self-identify as a frequent voter. Findings from the study revealed that voting in one election makes a person more likely to vote in future elections. Also, the study results further suggest that psychological habit partly explained the past-future turnout connection. This goes in line with William James' (1890) assertion that habits result from repeat behavior, altering structure in the brain and making the subsequent tendency to act more automatic.

**Table 3.1: Recent Trends in Voter Turnout around the Globe**

Rank	Country	Election	Year	(%)	Election	Year	(%)	System of Government
1	Equatorial Guinea	Presidential	2022	98.41%	Parliamentary	2022	84.01%	Presidential
2	Rwanda	Presidential	2017	98.15%	Parliamentary	2017	98.15%	Presidential
3	Laos	Presidential	-	-	Parliamentary	2021	98.02%	Presidential
4	Turkmenistan	Presidential	2022	97.17%	parliamentary	2018	86.22%	Presidential
5	Nauru	Presidential	2019	95.13%	parliamentary	2019	95.13%	Presidential
6	Singapore	Presidential	2011	94.8%	Parliamentary	2020	95.81%	Parliamentary republic
7	Vietnam	Presidential	-	-	Parliamentary	2021	95.60%	-
8	Ethiopia	Presidential	-	-	Parliamentary	2021	93.64%	Presidential
9	Togo	Presidential	2020	92.28%	Parliamentary	2018	59.26%	Presidential
10	Antigua & Barbuda	Presidential	-	-	Parliamentary	2014	90.27%	Presidential
11	Uruguay	Presidential	2019	90.13%	Parliamentary	2019	90.13%	Presidential
12	Gambia	Presidential	2021	89.34%	Parliamentary	2022	51.21%	Presidential
13	Maldives	Presidential	2018	89.22%	Parliamentary	2019	75.52%	Presidential
14	Seychelles	Presidential	2020	88.45%	Parliamentary	2020	88.4%	Presidential
15	Bolivia	Presidential	2020	88.42%	Parliamentary	2020	88.42%	Presidential
16	Burundi	Presidential	2020	87.71%	Parliamentary	2020	87.31%	Presidential
17	Zimbabwe	Presidential	2018	86.84%	Parliamentary	2018	83.1%	Presidential
18	Turkey	Presidential	2023	86.24%	Parliamentary	2023	86.24%	Parliamentary republic
19	Tajikistan	Presidential	2020	85.34%	Parliamentary	2020	86.44%	Presidential
20	Belarus	Presidential	2020	84.24%	Parliamentary	2019	77.31%	Presidential
21	Sierra Leone	Presidential	2023	72.84%	Parliamentary	2023	72.84%	Presidential
22	Sri Lanka	Presidential	2019	83.72%	Parliamentary	2019	75.89%	Semi-Presidential
23	Philippines	Presidential	2022	83.07%	Parliamentary	2022	83.83%	Presidential
24	Indonesia	Presidential	2019	81.93%	Parliamentary	2019	72.57%	Presidential
25	Argentina	Presidential	2023	81.31%	Parliamentary	2023	71.51%	Presidential
26	Ecuador	Presidential	2021	80.99%	Parliamentary	2021	81%	Presidential
27	Uzbekistan	Presidential	2021	80.42%	Parliamentary	2021	67.8%	Presidential
28	Brazil	Presidential	2022	79.05%	Parliamentary	2022	79.2%	Presidential
29	Ghana	Presidential	2020	78.89%	Parliamentary	2020	77.83%	Presidential
30	Guinea	Presidential	2020	78.88%	Parliamentary	2020	50.04%	Presidential
31	South Korea	Presidential	2022	77.08%	Parliamentary	2022	66.21%	Presidential
32	Djibouti	Presidential	2021	76.44%	Parliamentary	2021	61.78%	Presidential
33	Liberia	Presidential	2023	75.19%	Parliamentary	2023	72.49%	Presidential
34	Taiwan	Presidential	2020	74.9%	Parliamentary	2020	74.86%	Semi-Presidential
35	Peru	Presidential	2021	74.57%	Parliamentary	2021	70.08%	Presidential
36	Guinea-Bissau	Presidential	2019	74.37%	Parliamentary	2019	84.69%	Presidential
37	Azerbaijan	Presidential	2019	74.24%	Parliamentary	2019	46.84%	Presidential
38	Cyprus	Presidential	2018	73.97%	Parliamentary	2018	65.72%	Presidential
39	France	Presidential	2022	73.69%	Parliamentary	2022	48.7%	Semi-Presidential
40	Panama	Presidential	2019	73.01%	Parliamentary	2019	70.71%	Presidential
41	USA	Presidential	2020	70.75%	Parliamentary	2020	70.75%	Presidential
42	Zambia	Presidential	2021	70.61%	Parliamentary	2021	70.3%	Presidential
43	Kazakhstan	Presidential	2019	69.44%	Parliamentary	2019	63.25%	Presidential
44	Honduras	Presidential	2021	69.09%	Parliamentary	2019	59.49%	Presidential
45	Czech Republic	Presidential	2023	68.24%	Parliamentary	2023	65.39%	Parliamentary republic
46	Poland	Presidential	2020	68.18%	Parliamentary	2020	61.74%	Parliamentary republic
47	Palau	Presidential	2020	47.73%	Parliamentary	2020	62.7%	Presidential



48	Georgia	Presidential	2018	46.83%	Parliamentary	2018	56.11%	Presidential
49	Republic of Macedonia	Presidential	2019	46.7%	Parliamentary	2019	52.02%	Parliamentary republic
50	Sudan	Presidential	2015	46.4%	Parliamentary	2015	46.4%	Presidential
51	Venezuela	Presidential	2018	45.74%	Parliamentary	2018	30.09%	Presidential
52	Palestine	Presidential	2005	45.6%	Parliamentary	2005	77.7%	Presidential
53	Ireland	–	2018	43.8%	Parliamentary	2018	62.8%	Parliamentary republic
54	Mali	Presidential	2018	42.7%	Parliamentary	2018	35.6%	Presidential
55	Egypt	Presidential	2018	41.05%	Parliamentary	2018	29.07%	Semi-Presidential
56	Algeria	Presidential	2019	39.9%	Parliamentary	2019	23.03%	Semi-Presidential
57	Portugal	Presidential	2021	39.24%	Parliamentary	2021	57.10%	Parliamentary republic
58	Kyrgyzstan	Presidential	2021	39.16%	Parliamentary	2021	34.94%	Presidential
59	Bulgaria	Presidential	2021	38.7%	Parliamentary	2021	37.10%	Parliamentary republic
60	Central Africa	Presidential	2020	35.3%	Parliamentary	2020	44.3%	Presidential
61	Nigeria	Presidential	2023	29%	Parliamentary	2023	29%	Presidential
62	Afghanistan	Presidential	2019	19%	parliamentary	2019	42.23%	N/A
63	Haiti	Presidential	2016	18.11%	Parliamentary	2016	17.82%	Presidential

Source: International IDEA, et al (2023)

Based on data from recent trends in voter turnout around the world by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) et al. (2023), presented in Table 3.1 above. Voter turnout rates across the globe vary significantly, reflecting diverse political landscapes, and societal factors in both the developed, developing, and under-developed democracies. Findings from the data indicate that whereas 60% voter turnout rates and above is considered high, 50% and below is seen as low. Also, it records a high average of 63.8% of voter turnout in presidential elections, 60.9% of voter turnout in parliamentary elections as well a 60% average in voter turnout across different systems of government. Flowing from the data, Equatorial Guinea (98.41%) and Rwanda (98.15%) displayed the highest voter turnout in recent national elections with several other African and Asian countries occupying the top (10) position of countries with the highest voter turnout based on both presidential and parliamentary elections; including Laos (98.02%), Turkmenistan (97.17%), Singapore (95.81%), Vietnam (95.60%), Nauru (95.13%), Ethiopia (93.64%), Togo (92.28%), Antigua and Barbuda (90.27%). The data equally captured countries

with the lowest voter turnout rates including; Mali (42.7%), Egypt (41.05%), Portugal (39.24%), Kyrgyzstan (39.16%), Algeria (39.9%), Bulgaria (38.7%), Central Africa Republic (35.25%), Nigeria (29%), Haiti (18.11%), and Afghanistan (19%), International IDEA, et al. (2023).

Furthermore, the findings revealed that while high turnout rates often indicate a strong sense of civic engagement and active participation in democratic processes, it is crucial to recognize that this is not always the case, especially in developing and underdeveloped democracies. In some instances, unusually high turnout figures (60% and above) can be attributed to factors such as coercion, corruption, or lack of transparency, rather than genuine citizen involvement while 50% below are the result of voter apathy, voter suppression especially with countries classified by Democracy Index as flawed democracies or authoritarian regimes and disenchantment with systems seen as corrupt and dysfunctional. Consequently, it is essential to consider multiple factors, including the overall political climate, accessibility of elections, voter education, and the presence of robust democratic institutions, to accurately assess the level of civic engagement reflected in voter turnout rates globally. Also, the data revealed that voter turnout has decreased over time in recent decades, with most countries posting lower voter turnout in recent elections than those that took place 20-30 years ago (International IDEA, et al. 2023).

Meanwhile, election experts have identified multiple causes for this trend including voter apathy, voter suppression, etc., especially in countries classified by the democracy index as flawed democracies or authoritarian regimes however, on a more positive note, election experts also point out that high voter turnout can equally be a sign that the right to vote is now being extended to more and more people recalling that there was a time in history when voting was confined to the rich, usually the white males who could easily take time off work to vote. However, voting is now likely to be available to women, blue-collar workers, and minorities who were often previously

denied voting rights and who may not rearrange their lives to vote on a specific day or time (Voter Turnout by Country, 2023).

As earlier stated in section 2.1.1, the right to vote is not only constitutionally guaranteed but is also protected under International Human Rights Law such as (Article 21.3) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948) and (Article 25) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1966) which most countries are signatories to. However, the World Population Review (2023) revealed that not every eligible voter does so. The review discovered that the reasons for this phenomenon vary; including lack of political interest by some potential voters, the feeling that their votes don't matter, dislike for the available candidates, and lack of other voting requirements (World Population Review, 2023, p.2). Thus, striving for meaningful and inclusive participation remains a fundamental goal for fostering vibrant democracies worldwide.

#### **2.4. Gaps in Knowledge**

Several kinds of literature mirroring the intendments of this study were reviewed thematically. Different literature on voter turnout especially those by Adewumi Eyitayo and Olayinka (2022), Suleiman (2022), Adesanmi (2022), Obiagu et al. (2022), Chukwuma & Okpala (2018), Adigun (2020), among others for instance, were used to examine as well as buttress the notion of voter turnout with the definition by International IDEA (2016), Dass & Sa'idu (2022), and Isiaka, et al (2021) providing the needed insight for voter turnout. In a similar vein, the legal Framework for voters' registration, voter eligibility, voting age population, voters' register, and the right to vote in a Presidential election in Nigeria viz-a-viz Bwari Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory by the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as altered), and the Electoral Act, 2022 (as amended), were discussed.

Some factors that influence voter turnout were laid out in the reviews, but there was no adequate mention of the ‘voters’ perception’ of the election outcome and the widening gap between the elected officials and the voters. No mention was made of ‘how and what’ the voter thinks or feels about election and politics as well as the political institution”, even though the constitution provides the grand norm for citizens’ participation in the electoral process in Nigeria’s constitutional democracy. These, therefore, constitute a gap in voter turnout literature and form the basis for this research with the sole aim of juxtaposing the ideal voter turnout mechanism within the Nigerian electoral process. The study looked at how these gap can be closed. This is necessary because regardless of the legal framework backing the electoral process, the voters’ perception of the election outcome and the relationship between the elected officials and the voters as well as the voters’ thoughts about the political institution and politics generally will influence their level of participation. Thus, this study was carried out to address these identified gaps.

## **2.5. Theoretical Framework**

This study adopted the Psychological Theory of Voting as espoused by William James (1890) and Campbell (1960) respectively as the framework for its conceptualization. Various psychological theories such as political efficacy and political interest focus on individual-level factors that influence political participation viz-a-viz voter turnout. Political efficacy refers to an individual’s belief in their ability to influence political outcomes, and higher levels of efficacy are associated with greater political engagement and political interest reflects an individual’s level of interest in political issues and can be a motivating factor for voter turnout. In every instance, the selected theory sufficed for any of the variables being studied.

### **2.5.1 Relevance of the Theory**

The Psychological theory of voting examines the closeness of the voters' perception of elections, the intensity of partisan preferences, interest in the election, concern about the outcome, political efficacy, and the citizens' duty in pioneering societal development (Campbell, et al. 1960). For instance, during the earliest years of the American National Election Studies [ANES], two social psychological concepts played especially important roles: (a) social identification with reference groups and (b) the drive to maintain cognitive consistency. The single most important book on the psychology of voting is *The American Voter* (Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960). One of its authors, Phillip Converse, a trained social psychologist, brought out the richness of social psychology in the 1950s to the table as academic theories of voters were first being developed. The centerpiece of this work was the claim that identification with a political party formed early in life, was usually maintained throughout adulthood, and colored perceptions of political events and political actors to perpetuate it. Other important work done at about the same time asserted that political campaigns rarely converted voters from one party loyalty to another. Instead, this work showed that campaigns mostly activated predispositions that were in the 'voters' minds' before the campaigns started and that these predispositions shaped the interpretation of incoming information to yield choices that could have been predicted before the campaign (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, & McPhee, 1954; Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1944). The weakness of the Psychological theory lies in its recent development of scope and complexity to account for the influence of various internal and external factors on electoral choice. However, for this study, the Psychological theory of voting was adopted based on its examination of the closeness of the voters' perception of elections, the intensity of partisan preferences, interest in the election, concern about the outcome, political efficacy, and the citizens' duty in pioneering societal development. Also,

the understanding of voters and elections was expanded and deepened following the psychology theory of voting. In every instance, the selected theory sufficed for any of the variables being studied.

## **2.6. Application of Theories**

Based on the Psychological Theory, the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as altered) recognizes and outlines the right to political participation and the importance of voter and civic education and national orientation in different forms. Reading through the chapters explicates specific Constitutional powers ascribed to the respective agencies and institutions of government towards ensuring adequate citizens' engagement in governance and participation in elections through voter and civic education and national orientation programs. The right to take part in governance through voting and the right to contest for public office is enshrined in Section 7 (4). Similarly, Section 14 (2) and paragraph (c) stipulate the right to take part in government as well as choosing people for election. Accordingly, Section 40 guarantees the right to belong to a political party. Also, the right to be registered as a voter, and to vote for a President, member of the Senate and House of Representatives, Governors, House of Assembly members, etc. is captured in Sections 77 (2), 117, 132 (5), and 178 (5) respectively.

Additionally, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is constitutionally empowered by section 15 Part I, Third Schedule of the 1999 Constitution (as altered) and the 2022 Electoral Act, (as amended) to see to the registration of eligible voters, and political parties, as well as the conduct and monitoring of elections into the office of the President, members of the Senate, House of Representatives, Governors, and House of Assembly. Specifically, section 2 (a-c) of the Electoral Act 2022 (as amended) stipulates that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) shall besides the functions conferred on it by the Constitution, have the power to;(a)

conduct voter and civic education;(b) promote knowledge of sound democratic election processes; and(c) conduct referendum required to be conducted under the Constitution or an Act of the National Assembly. Consequently, section 19 of the Electoral Act 2022, states as follows;(1) Subject to section 9 (5) of this Act, the Commission shall, not later than 90 days before a general election, appoint a period of seven days during which a copy of the voters' register for each Local Government, Area Council or Ward shall be displayed or published for public scrutiny at every registration area and on its official website or any website established by the Commission for that purpose. (2) Upon displaying or publishing the voter register by this section, the Commission shall accept and consider objections and complaints about the names omitted or included in the voters' register or relation to any necessary correction, within 14 days after displaying the voter register by this section. (3) During the period of the display of the voters' list under this Act, any person may— (a) object to the form prescribed by the Commission against the inclusion in the supplementary voters' register of the name of a person on grounds that the person is not qualified to be registered as a voter in the State, Local Government or Area Council, Ward or registration area or that the name of a deceased person is included in the register; or(b) Claim the form prescribed by the Commission that the name of a person registered to vote has been omitted. (4) Any objection or claim under subsection (2) shall be addressed to the Resident Electoral Commissioner through the electoral officer in charge of the Local Government or Area Council (5) An official or staff of the Commission, who fails to display or publish the voters' register as provided under subsection (1) commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of N100,000 or imprisonment for a term of six months or both.

Also, the National Orientation Agency (NOA) established in 1993 by Decree 100, now the Act of Parliament No. 24 of 2004 has among other things the role of re-orientating and encouraging

Nigerians to freely and actively take part in discussions and decisions affecting their general and collective welfare and for matters connected therewith. Section 3, Part I of the National Orientation Agency Act, 2004 further elaborates on the functions of the agency to include; (a) Enlightening the general public on Federal Government policies, programs, and activities;(b) Mobilize favorable public opinion and support for Federal Government policies, programs and activities; (c) Collect, collate, analyze and provide a source of feedback from the public to the Federal Government on its policies, programs and activities;(d) Establish social institutions and framework for deliberate exposure of Nigerians to democratic norms and values for virtue, peaceful, united, progressive and disciplined society; (e) Energize the conscience of all categories of Nigerians to their rights and privileges, responsibilities and obligations as citizens of Nigeria (CFRN, 1999 as altered, NOA, Act, 2004).

Indeed, the examination of the closeness of voters' mindset and voting habits in elections, the intensity of partisan preferences, interest in the election, concern about the outcome, political efficacy, and citizen duty as espoused by the proponents of psychological theory is at the core of Nigeria's electoral process and most particularly, in pioneering the social psychological approach to study of voter turnout and development of modern democratic arrangements of (Campbell et al. 1960). Also, the Psychological theory in setting the basis for studying voter turnout in its purest form emphasizes the individual-level factors that influence political participation. Explicitly, in applying the Psychological Theory, it is noted that higher voter turnout truly is needed for the optimal legitimacy of government and, a viable democratic political system and to foster unity, peace, and society development.

Furthermore, to appreciate the essence of the Psychological theory within the context of this study, a rehearsing of the key points intended in the study becomes necessary. Emphasizing this, the study



examined factors that influenced voter registration and voter turnout in the Bwari Area Council during the 2023 presidential election. With this in mind, the Psychological Theory was chosen because of its emphasis on an individual's belief in their ability to influence political or electoral outcomes and the individual's level of interest in political issues as a motivating factor for voting in an election. Psychological Theory is suited for a study of this nature since it seeks to evaluate the effect of individual-level factors that influence voter turnout in a presidential election. Therefore, this study in applying the Psychological Theory examined the factors that influenced voter turnout during the 2023 presidential election in the Bwari Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This chapter presents the methodology adopted for the study. The methodology is grouped under the following subheads: Research Design; Study Area; Population of the Study; Sampling Procedure and Size; Sources of Data; Research Instruments; and the specific research methods adopted for actualizing the research objectives termed the Objective-by-Objective Approach. The researcher has been a participant/observer over the years.

#### **3.1. Research Design**

For this study, the Mixed Research Design was adopted. The choice of this Research Design was deliberate because the study relied on Qualitative and Quantitative methods of data collection. The qualitative data helped to gain insight; and explore the depth, richness, and complexity inherent in the variables studied, while the quantitative data assisted in addressing the “what” and “how” aspects of the research problem. Also, the quantitative method helped the researcher to obtain and measure responses from a large sample of the population of the study. Thus, the complementary usage of both data types formed the basis for the adoption of the mixed research method. The data for the study include secondary and primary data comprising of journals, newspapers, library materials, INEC election reports, and the internet as well as the voters’ opinions, through questionnaires and interviews. Therefore, the representation of data was both in numerical and textual forms.

#### **3.2. Study Area**

The study location was the Bwari Area Council, Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja. The Bwari Area Council is the second largest area council in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja, as well as a third tier of government established under Section 7 of the Constitution of the Federal

Republic of Nigeria, CFRN (1999, as altered). It is made up of Ten (10) Electoral Constituency Wards with (485) registered polling units. Also, the Bwari Area Council is administered by an elected Executive Chairman with a team of Supervisory Councilors and local government employees, while ten (10) elected Councilors led by a House leader comprise its legislative arm. The choice of this location is premised on the fact that it is the second largest Area Council with the largest polling units in the Federal Capital Territory Abuja, as well as the study's main objective which was to examine factors that influenced voters' turnout in the Bwari Area Council during the 2023 Presidential Election.

### **3.3. Population of the Study**

For this study, the population of the study consisted of the entire group of eligible registered voters (279,792), accredited voters (96,444), total votes received by political parties (93,189), total valid votes cast (93,189), rejected votes (3,255) and total votes cast (96,444) across the ten constituent wards in Bwari Area Council, (INEC, 2023) as well as some selected election stakeholders considered key players in the election of the President. They include; political party leaders and administrators, especially party leaders of the three leading political parties in the recent 2023 Presidential Election; that is the All Progressive Party [APC], Peoples Democratic Party [PDP], and the Labour Party [LP], Election officials (permanent and ad-hoc staff of the Independent National Electoral Commission [INEC]), who were directly involved in the conduct, supervision, and monitoring of the electoral process in the Bwari Area Council. The choice and relevance of these populations are because as primary election stakeholders; they are directly and indirectly involved in elections management as well as electing the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The eligible registered voters were selected randomly from the polling units with the highest number of registered voters across the ten constituent wards in Bwari Area Council to

assess the voter turnout during the 2023 presidential election. Political party Chairmen were interviewed and given their prime place in the electoral process arising from the constitutional provision that candidates for election must be sponsored by political parties (Section 131 (c) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, [as altered]). Also, Poll officials comprising of the Presiding Officers [POs] and Assistant Presiding Officers [APOs] who oversaw the election of the President were considered relevant to the study research.

### **3.4. Sampling Procedure and Size**

The study adopted the Probability Sampling Technique as espoused by (McCombes, 2023). This is a type of research sampling method that allows the researcher to make strong statistical inferences about the whole group especially when engaged in quantitative research. Thus, the sample size of four fifty (450) respondents was selected from the total population of two hundred and seventy-nine thousand, seven hundred and ninety-two (279,792) using the stratified sampling method which involves dividing the population into subpopulations that differ in certain important ways and allowing the researcher to draw precise conclusions by ensuring that every subgroup is properly represented in the sample. Drawing from the foregoing, the sample size for the study was determined using the stratified sampling method given that some electoral wards in Bwari Area Council such as Dutse, Kubwa, and Usuma, have a higher number of polling units and registered voters. Based on this, four hundred and fifty (450) respondents were selected from the population as stated in section (3.3) and the other of; Kubwa 75 respondents, Usuma 75 respondents, Dutse 75 respondents, Byhazin 35 respondents, Bwari Central 45 respondents, Kuduru 35 respondents, Kawu 40 respondents, Shere 35 respondents, Ushafa 35 respondents.

### **3.5. Sources of Data**

Data were sourced from both primary and secondary sources. The Primary sources of data were

the responses obtained from the Key Informant Interview (KII) and closed questionnaires. Also, the direct participant observation by the researcher who was an active participant in the 2015, 2019, and 2023 presidential elections processes as a Supervisory Presiding Officer (SPO) in Bwari Area Council. The secondary data comprises journals, newspapers, library materials, the internet, as well as the official reports of the Independent National Electoral Commission [INEC] on presidential election results, among others. The above sources of data provided a literary as well as empirical basis for the analysis and discussion of findings in chapter four.

### **3.6. Research Instruments**

Closed questionnaires that contained four sections (Sections 1 and 2 focused on the Demographic Information and Voting Behavior of the respondents respectively, while section 3 covered questions on respondents' Political Engagement and Awareness, and section 4 deals with questions on Logistical, Institutional/Structural, Natural, and Personal Factors that influenced Voter turnout in the 2023 Presidential elections in Bwari Area Council). The closed questionnaires were administered to 450 respondents in the ten (10) constituent wards of Bwari Area Council using the stratified sampling method given that some electoral wards have a higher number of polling units and registered voters. Tables and Charts were used in presenting respondents' views on the work under study and a simple percentage was used in analyzing them. Also, the Key Informant Interview [KII], Summary of INEC's Presidential Election Results Statement (like Form EC 8A: Statement of Results of Poll from Polling Units) as well as INEC Voter register, among others were some instruments used in conducting the research. The Key Informant Interview [KII] was adopted because of its ability to elicit in-depth responses, while the published official election results, Summary of INEC's Presidential Election Results Statement (like Form EC 8B: Summary of Results from Polling Units Collation at Registration Area Level), communications from the

eligible registered voters, and political party leaders. The Key Informant Interview [KII] was administered to some selected key election players as stated earlier in Section 3.3 above to elicit responses on the cause of low voter turnout in Bwari Area Council as well as to evaluate the role of Institutional, Structural, and Personal factors in determining voter turnout the 2023 Presidential election.

### **3.7. Method of Data Analysis**

The method of data analysis employed in this study depends on the objectives of the study. The objective-by-objective approach emphasizes the streamlining of research methods according to the specific objectives of the study. Details of the type of data, interpretation of data, as well as expectations based on existing theory were tailored to suit the objectives outlined in the study.

#### **3.7.1 Objective I: Investigate factors that influenced the conduct of the 2023 Presidential Election in Bwari Area Council focusing on voter turnout.**

The study emphasized voter turnout in the 2023 presidential election with greater attention paid to the eligible registered voters in the Bwari Area Council. Indeed, this objective ought to assess how eligible registered voters in Bwari Area Council participated in the 2023 presidential election. The essence of this was to compare the ideal voter turnout percentage in a developed and developing democracy with Nigeria's 2023 Presidential election viz-a-viz Bwari Area Council.

*Data required:* Qualitative and Quantitative data were required. The data were from Closed questionnaires that contained four sections (Sections 1 and 2 focused on the Demographic Information and Voting Behavior of the respondents respectively, while section 3 covered questions on respondents' Political Engagement and Awareness, and section 4 deals with questions on Logistical, Institutional/Structural, Natural, and Personal Factors that influenced Voter turnout in the 2023 Presidential elections in Bwari Area Council). The closed questionnaires were randomly administered to 450 respondents in the ten constituent wards out of which 400 were

completed and retrieved. Also, the Key Informant Interview [KII] was administered to some selected key election stakeholders/players in the Bwari Area Council to elicit responses on factors that influenced the number of registered voters and voter turnout in the Bwari Area Council during the 2023 Presidential election. Also, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) officially published the voter register as well as a report on the summary of the statement of 2023 presidential election results (Form EC 8A) in Bwari Area Council, newspaper publications, the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as altered), the 2022 Electoral Act (as amended), 2023 INEC Electoral Rules Regulations, etc. were considered relevant to achieving objective one.

*Collection of data:* To gather the required data for achieving objective one, closed questionnaires that contained four sections (Sections 1 and 2 focused on the Demographic Information and Voting Behavior of the respondents respectively, while section 3 covered questions on respondents' Political Engagement and Awareness, and section 4 deals with questions on Logistical, Institutional/Structural, Natural, and Personal Factors that influenced Voter turnout in the 2023 Presidential elections in Bwari Area Council) were randomly administered to 450 respondents in the ten constituent wards of Bwari Area Council as well as drafted Key Informant Interviews [KII] were conducted among key election stakeholders in Bwari Area Council. Also, a copy of the total number of registered voters, and an official statement of the 2023 presidential election results (Form EC 8A) in Bwari Area Council were required to achieve objective one thus, an official letter was addressed to the Chairman, Independent National Electoral Commission [INEC], the Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) of the Federal Capital Territory and the Electoral Officer (EO) of Bwari Area Council. Thereafter, the official summary of the 2023 presidential election results as was collected in the 485 polling units in Bwari Area Council as uploaded on the INEC

result viewing portal [irev), was analyzed.

*Analysis of data:* To achieve this objective, content analysis was adopted. Content analysis deals with the study of recorded information. Hence, content analysis was used to gather information on the percentage of eligible registered voters and voters' turnout during the 2023 presidential election in Bwari Area Council.

*Interpretation of data:* The Thematic Approach was used in the presentation of data. The discussions were also rendered in prose but for the measurement of the percentage of the number of eligible registered voters who cast a ballot on Election Day and those who were absent during the 2023 presidential election.

*Expected results based on existing theory:* Based on the Psychological theory adopted for this study, as well as other existing theories such as mobilization and structural theories; the study anticipated that given these theories' main postulation psychological, mobilization, and structural factors influence voter turnout. Under psychological theory, it is believed that an individual's belief in their ability to influence an election or political outcome and an individual's level of interest in political issues will serve as a motivating factor for participation in an election. Also, the mobilization theory suggests that people are more likely to participate in an election when they are reached out to and mobilized by political actors (Cameron, 1974). On the other hand, structural theory observed that the electoral system, political institutions, as well as the overall political environment can either hinder or facilitate voter turnout (Prowitt, 1969).

An analysis of the percentage of voter turnout in Presidential elections in Nigeria over time and in comparison with the percentage of eligible registered voters indicated a steady declining record in how eligible voters participate in presidential elections when juxtaposed with the ideal voter turnout percentage in both developed and developing democracies.



### **3.7.2. Objective II: Identify the actual cause of low voter turnout during the 2023 Presidential Election in Bwari Area Council.**

There is no doubt that voter turnout is shaped by several factors. These factors are responsible for the specific percentage of voter turnout witnessed during an election. Given this, there is a need to evaluate the roles played by the Institutional, Structural, Natural, and Personal factors in the determination of the actual cause of low voter turnout in the 2023 Presidential election in Bwari Area Council. In particular, this objective laid bare the contributions of the listed factors to voter turnout during the 2023 presidential election in the Bwari Area Council.

*Data required:* Qualitative and quantitative data were required. Data, for instance, were taken from the Closed Questionnaires, Key Informant Interview [KII], literature, etc.

*Collection of data:* Letters requesting for interview appointments were sent out to the identified respondents introducing the essence of the study and the researcher. Questions on the Closed questionnaires and Key Informant Interviews [KII] were drafted to examine the roles of institutional, structural, natural, and personal factors during the 2023 presidential election whereby some eligible registered voters in Bwari Area Council were in their respective homes on the election day which had been fixed on the 25<sup>th</sup> February 2023 by the Independent National Electoral Commission ([inecnigeria.org](http://inecnigeria.org), Timetable and Schedule of Activities for 2023 General Election, 2022, 26<sup>th</sup> February 2023), and for one reason or the other chose not to cast a ballot on the election day. It must also, be stated that four hundred and fifty (450) closed questionnaires, and eight ([8], Key Informant Interviews [KII] were administered to eligible registered voters, and some selected election officials and political party leaders from the scalene triangle frame of registered voters, electoral officials and political party leaders in Bwari Area Council as identified in section 3.3.

*Analysis of data:* The content of the Key Informants Interview [KII], questionnaire, and relevant literature concerning roles played by institutional, structural, natural, and personal factors in

voters' turnout were analyzed. Indeed, the roles put forward were categorized into themes and discussed.

*Interpretation of data:* First, the content of the Key Informant Interview [KII], questionnaire, and other secondary materials such as books, official government publications, etc. were analyzed. Second, they were presented and discussed thematically.

*Expected results based on existing theory:* At the core of the Structural theory is the fact that societal and institutional factors have a greater impact on voters' turnout. It further illustrates that the electoral systems, political institutions as well and the overall political environment can hinder or facilitate voter turnout. For example, compulsory voting laws can increase turnout, while restrictive voter Identification laws may discourage turnout on Election Day. Also, Mobilization theory which looks at the role of political organizations, parties, and activists in mobilizing and encouraging individuals to vote in an election; suggests that people are more likely to cast a ballot on election day when they are reached out to and mobilized through campaigns, voter registration, voter education and sensitization, etc. Additionally, the Psychological theory asserts that individual-level factors can also influence turnout on Election Day. An example is political efficacy which posits that an individual's belief in their ability to influence electoral or political outcome can determine their level of participation; thus higher level of efficacy will result in a greater level of turnout on Election Day. Also, an individual's level of interest in political issues can serve as a motivating factor for participation in the electoral process. Drawing from this analysis, it is expected the following variables which include institutional, structural, natural, and personal factors will influence voter turnout.

### **3.7.3 Objective III: Assess the effectiveness of institutions responsible for voter education in promoting voter registration and turnout in the Bwari Area Council.**

As noted in the preceding section, Institutional, Structural, Natural, and Personal factors could play specific roles in the determination of voter turnout in a Presidential election. However, little is known of the influence of these factors in influencing the eligible registered voters on Election Day. This section examined the effectiveness of the institutions responsible for educating eligible voters about voter registration and voter turnout in Bwari Area Council during the presidential election.

*Data required:* Qualitative data suggestions on the effectiveness of various institutions responsible for educating eligible voters towards voter registration and voter turnout in Bwari Area Council during the presidential election and ways such influences could be enhanced in the future.

*Collection of data:* To accomplish getting the Key Informant Interview [KII], letters were written and shared with the targeted respondents, and an interview date was scheduled afterward. The Key Informant Interview [KII] was the major source of data complemented by newspaper reports, as well as literature. As already established, the Key Informant Interview [KII] was conducted on eligible registered voters, electoral officials, and serving political party leaders who were key players in the electoral process during the 2023 presidential election in Bwari Area Council. Some top electoral officials (Electoral Officer [EO] and Assistant Electoral Operation [AEO]); and senior Party Officials (Chairman), were selected randomly.

*Analysis of data:* Various kinds of literature concerning the effectiveness of institutions responsible for educating eligible voters towards voter registration and voter turnout during the 2023 presidential election and the Key Informant Interviews [KII] conducted, were examined using the content and descriptive analysis method to identify the effectiveness of the institutions responsible for educating eligible voters towards voter registration and voter turnout, etc. during the 2023

presidential election and ways to strengthen such institutions in future presidential elections were analyzed.

*Interpretation of data:* Both content and descriptive analysis, as well as themes in the Key Informant Interview [KII] supported by relevant literature specifically on the effectiveness of the institutions responsible for educating eligible voters towards voter registration and voter turnout in the 2023 presidential elections and ways to strengthen such institutions in the future presidential election were analyzed.

*Expected results based on existing theory:* The Mobilization theory emphasizes the role of political organizations, parties, and activists in mobilizing and encouraging individuals to vote in an election. It suggests that people are more likely to participate when they are reached out to and mobilized by political actors through campaigns, voter registration drives, and grassroots organizing. Dwelling on the precepts of the effectiveness of institutions responsible for educating eligible voters towards voter registration and voter turnout which the Mobilization Theory connotes, it must be stated that voter turnout during the 2023 presidential election in Bwari Area Council was premised on institutional dictates.

#### **3.7.4 Objective IV: Evaluate the impact of Logistical, Structural, Personal, and Natural factors on voter turnout in previous presidential elections in Bwari Area Council.**

As stated earlier, Institutional, Structural, Natural, and Personal factors influence voter turnout during presidential elections. As a result, this section assessed the impact of logistical, Structural, Natural, and Personal factors on voters' turnout in previous presidential elections; and proffered strategies for strengthening or mitigating these factors for future presidential elections based on the level of positivity or negativity.

*Data required:* Qualitative data on respondents' views on the impact of the Logistical, Structural,

Natural, and Personal factors on presidential elections and strategies for strengthening or mitigating them for future Presidential Elections.

*Getting the data:* To get the required data; letters requesting an interview schedule were written to the targeted respondents. Nevertheless, the Key Informant Interview [KII] was complemented with literature. Pointedly, the Key Informant Interview [KII] was conducted on eligible registered voters, top permanent and ad-hoc electoral officials who were key players in the 2023 presidential election, political party leaders, and members of the public. The selection of informants was done using the random sampling technique.

*Analysis of data:* The data collected kinds of literature concerning the impact of logistical, structural, natural, and personal factors on voter turnout in presidential elections, as well as the Key Informant Interviews [KII] conducted, were methods to identify the strategies that would strengthen or mitigate the impact of logistical, structural, personal, institutional factors, in future Presidential elections.

*Interpretation of data:* The thematic approach was used for the interpretation of data. Consequently, suggested strategies from Key Informant Interview [KII] and kinds of literature were coded and framed into themes.

*Expected results based on existing theory:* In a nutshell, the Structural theory outlined the impact of societal and institutional factors such as the electoral system, political institutions, and overall political environment, etc. on voter turnout. Likewise, the Mobilization theory emphasizes the role of political organizations, parties, and activists in mobilizing and encouraging individuals to vote on Election Day. Mobilization theory suggests that people are more likely to vote in an election when they are reached out to and mobilized by political parties.

Also, various Psychological theories such as political efficacy and political interest focus on

individual-level factors that influence voter turnout. For instance, political efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to influence electoral or political outcomes thus, higher levels of efficacy are associated with greater voter turnout; on the other hand, political interest reflects an individual's level of interest in political issues hence, can be a motivating factor for voter turnout. Therefore, it is pertinent to state that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), National Orientation Agency [NOA], political parties, and activists have the constitutional mandate to ensure eligible registered voters are registered, mobilized, and encouraged to vote in presidential elections, the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Chapters II, & IV, 1999, CFRN, [as altered]).

### **3.8. Limitations of the Study**

Certain limitations arose from the choice of research methods. The data requirement was predominantly qualitative, however, the need to provide an answer to the "how many" question posed by the study resulted in the adoption of the mixed method which encompassed the usage of quantitative data. Nevertheless, because the subjects being investigated were peculiar ones with a dearth of hindsight knowledge or literature, the study adopted the random sampling technique using questionnaire surveys as the research instrument to mitigate the effect of sampling bias. Given the choice of research design, the researcher chose both qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis as well, but both content and descriptive analysis that could mostly be relied on emphasized the examination of documents related to the subject being studied and therefore suffices as the major data analysis method for the study.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION

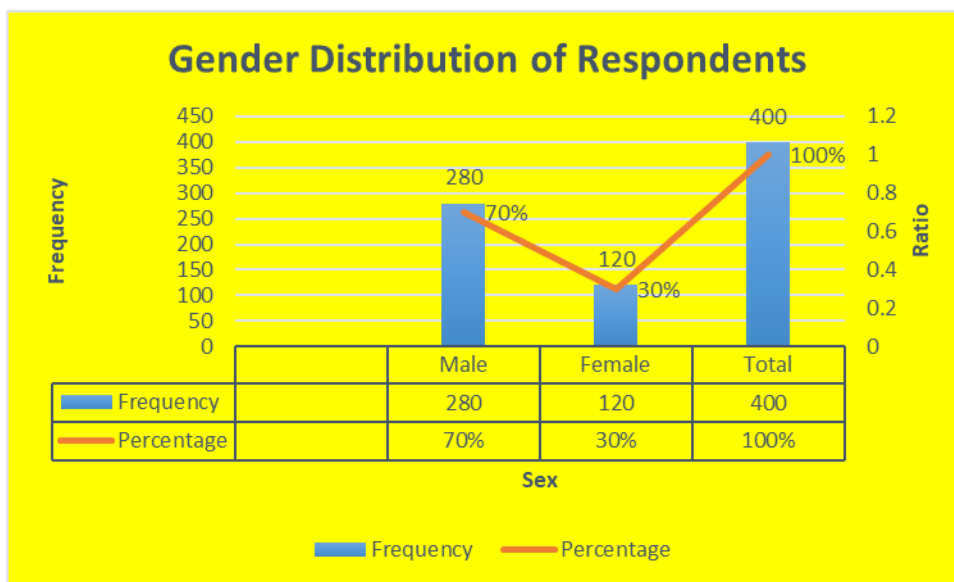
This chapter contains the presentation of bio-data and analysis of data collected through questionnaire administration and structured interviews. Deductions or findings were drawn in line with the objectives stated in Chapter One. The field data were analyzed using a thematic approach, where the data was collected through questionnaires; and interviews were collectively presented, analyzed, and interpreted. Importantly, it is noteworthy to state that the same survey instrument was adopted and analyzed for the 2023 presidential election in Bwari Area Council.

#### 4.1. Bio Data and Social Demographics of Respondents

**Table 4.1:** Gender Distribution of Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	280	70%
Female	120	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Fieldwork, January, 2024*



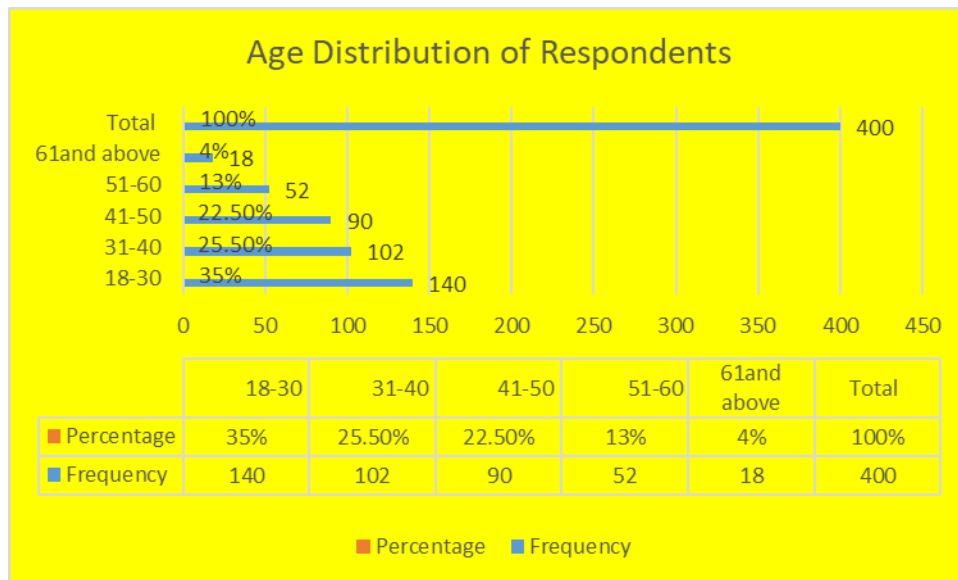
**Figure 4.1:** Gender Distribution of Respondents

Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1 above shows the gender distribution of the respondents; which indicates that out of the 400 respondents, 70% (280) were males while 30% (120) respondents were females. This indicates that although male respondents were more than female respondents, however, all genders were represented in the sample.

**Table 4.2:** Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Brackets	Frequency	Percentage
18-30	140	35%
31-40	102	25.5%
41-50	90	22.5%
51-60	52	13%
61and above	18	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Fieldwork, January 2024*



**Figure 4.2:** Age Distribution of Respondents

Table 4.2 and Figure 4.2 above shows the age distribution of the respondents; where 35% (140) of the

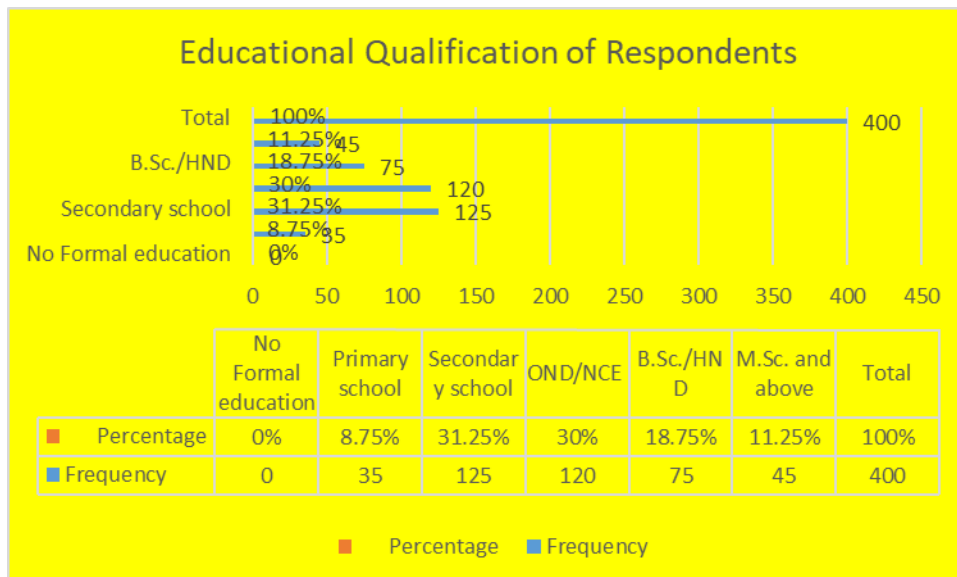


respondents were between the ages brackets of 18-30 while 25.5% (102) respondents were between 31-40 years old. Also, 22.5% (90) of the respondents were between ages 41-50 years, 13% (52) of the respondents were between ages 51-60 years, and 4% (18) respondents were 61 and above. This implies that the respondents aged 18-30 years constituted the highest respondents to the survey, while 61 and above were the least respondents sampled.

**Table 4.3:** Educational Qualification of the Respondents

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
No Formal education	Nil	0%
Primary school	35	8.75%
Secondary school	125	31.25%
OND/NCE	120	30%
B.Sc./HND	75	18.75%
M.Sc. and above	45	11.25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Fieldwork, January 2024



**Figure 4.3:** Educational Qualification of Respondents

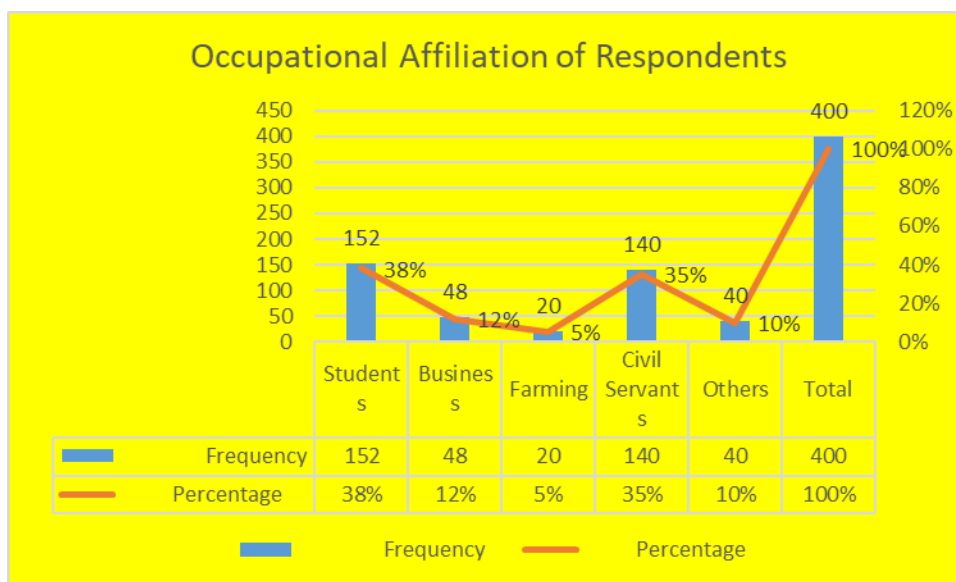
The above Table 4.3 and Figure 4.3 above reveals the educational attainment of the respondents, wherefore,

31% (125) of the respondents had attained secondary education, 30% (120) respondents had OND/HND certificates, and 18.75% (75) respondents had B.Sc./HND certificates. Also, 11.25% (45) of the respondents had a master’s degree and above while 8.75% (35) had primary education and none of the respondents was illiterate. However, the dominant of respondents with OND/NCE, B.Sc./HND, M.Sc. and above, and respondents with Primary and Secondary education qualifications indicates that most of the respondents could understand the phenomenon surrounding voter turnout in a presidential election hence, provided reliable findings as it concerns voter turnout during the 2023 presidential election in Bwari Area Council.

**Table 4.4:** Occupational Affiliation of Respondents

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Students	152	38%
Business	48	12%
Farming	20	5%
Civil Servants	140	35%
Others	40	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Fieldwork, January, 2024



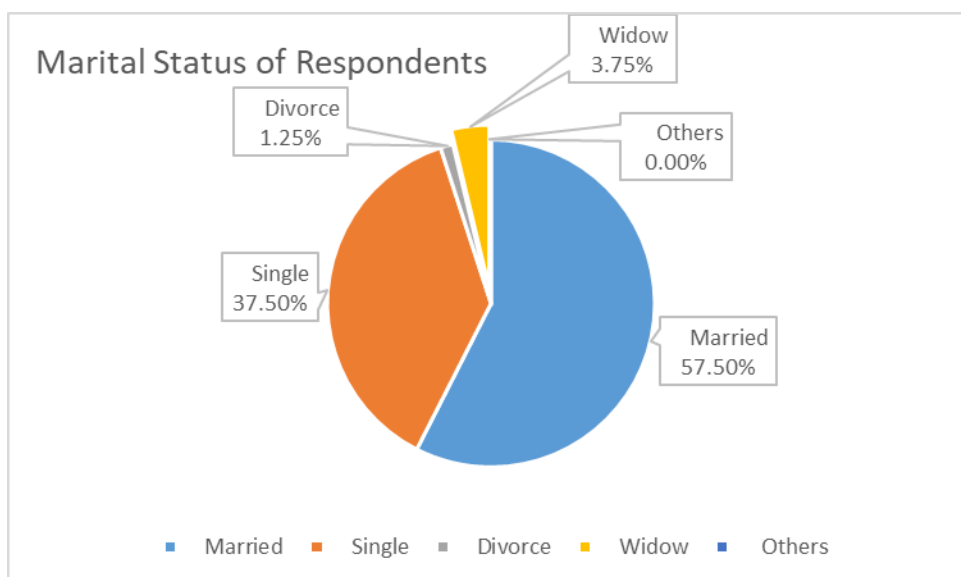
**Figure 4.4:** Occupational Affiliation of Respondents

The occupational distribution of respondents as presented in Table 4.4 and Figure 4.4 above indicates that 38% (152) of the respondents were students, 35% (140) were civil servants, also, 12% (48) of the respondents were businessmen, and women, 5% (20) of the respondents were farmers and 10% (40) respondents were of other occupations like an artisan, etc.

**Table 4.5: Marital Status of Respondents**

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Married	230	57.5%
Single	150	37.5%
Divorce	5	1.25%
Widow	15	3.75%
Others	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Fieldwork, January 2024*



**Figure 4.5: Marital Status of Respondents**

Table 4.5 and Figure 4.5 above show the distribution of respondents by marital status thus, indicating that 57% (230) respondents were married, 37.5% (150) respondents were singles, 3.75% (15) respondents were widows, 1.25% (5) respondents were divorcees and no respondents of other marital status were recorded.

#### **4.2. Data Analysis, Interpretation, and Evaluation of Interview Responses**

This section contains the analysis of results and discussion of findings however, the presentation, analysis, and discussion of findings were carried out by the study objectives as outlined in section 1.4. It is important to note that the same survey instruments were adopted in analyzing the 2023 Presidential election in Bwari Area Council.

**Table 4.6:** Summary of Sampled Questionnaires

Responses	Frequency	Percentage	Remark
Total number of questionnaires issued	450	100%	Valid
Total number of completed and retrieved questionnaires	400	89%	Valid
Total number of un-completed and un-retrieved questionnaires	50	11%	Invalid
<b>Total</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>100%</b>	

*Source: Fieldwork, January 2024*

Table 4.6 shows the summary of sampled questionnaires thus, as highlighted in the table, 450 questionnaires were issued of which 11% (50) were un-completed and un-retrieved and hence declared in-valid; as the study examined only 89% (400) completed and retrieved questionnaires considered valid and analyzed.

**Table 4.7: Summary of Respondents Interviewed**

S/N	Population	Number of Respondents	Name of Respondent	Designation	Date/Time	Venue	Mode of interview
1	Political Party Leaders	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Philip Okafor</li> <li>Ali Sheri</li> <li>Victor Oforegbu</li> </ul>	Chairman, PDP, Bwari Area Council  Chairman, APC, Bwari Arera Council  Chairman, Labour Party, Bwari Area Council	24/01/2024 11.00 am  10.00 am 15/01/2024  30/01/2024 10.00 am	Office  Private Residence / Home  Office	Written Response  Physical/ Face to Face  Physical/ Face to Face
2	INEC/Poll Officials	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Idowu Oladimeji</li> <li>Anthony Agi</li> <li>Jibrin Isa</li> <li>Onyeka Solomon</li> <li>Lukas Dalyop</li> </ul>	Former Electoral Officer Bwari Area Council  Director Voter Registration  Assistant Electoral Officer Operations, Bwari Area Council  Presiding Officer  Asst. Presiding Officer	22/12/2023 10.00 am  26/12/2023 4.00 pm  22/12/2023 11.00 am  20/12/2023 10.00 am  20/12/2023 1.00 pm	Nil  Private Residence  Private Residence  WhatsApp Video Call  WhatsApp Video Call	WhatsApp Call  Physical/Face-to-face  Physical/Face to Face  WhatsApp Video Call  WhatsApp Video Call

*Source: Fieldwork, January 2024, (Researcher's Compilation)*

### **4.3. The Legal Framework of the Electoral Process and the Right to Vote in Presidential Elections in Nigeria viz-a-viz Bwari Area Council**

The right to vote is constitutional as well as guaranteed under International Human Rights Law, to which Nigeria is a signatory of, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, (UDHR, 1948). Indeed, international human rights law provides that the right to vote, including other rights recognized under the Covenant; shall not be subject to unreasonable restrictions and distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national origin, property, birth or another status, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1966). Specifically, Article 21.3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) illustrated the importance of citizens' participation in the electoral process thus;

i) "The will of the people" shall be the basis of the authority of government;

ii) This 'will' shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections, which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

iii) Everyone has the right to participate in the government of their country. The significance of these concepts has been further outlined in other agreements, for example, (Article 25) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1966) stated thus: "Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, with of the distinctions mentioned in article 2 and without unreasonable restrictions:

a) To take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives;

- b) To vote and to be elected in genuine periodic elections, which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors;
- c) To have access to equality, to public service in his country”. Where the right is violated, effective remedies are to be provided.

The court is within this context; by necessary implication, to protect citizens’ right to vote, Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (CFRN, 1999). In recognizing that it is not a right in the category of Chapter 2 rights, which section 6(6) (c) of the Constitution excludes from being justiciable. Indeed, the right to vote, being an element of civil and political rights, is a constitutionally recognized fundamental political right that is justiciable. Section 1 sub-section (2) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, (as altered), establishes the right to vote as the foundation of a political regime based on democratic elections. It prescribes that:

*“1. (2) The Federal Republic of Nigeria shall not be governed, nor shall any persons or group of persons take control of the Government of Nigeria or any part thereof, except by this Constitution”, Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (CFRN, 1999).*

#### **4.4. Voter Registration in Nigeria viz-a-viz Bwari Area Council**

Section 153 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as altered), established the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) as one of the Fourteen Federal Executive Bodies. Also, Section 118 of the 1999 Constitution (as altered) states that:

*“The registration of voters and the conduct of elections shall be subject to the direction and supervision of the Independent National Electoral Commission, Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (CFRN, 1999)”.*

Also, sections, 9. Sub-Section 1. (a), (b), 2. (a), (b), 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, of the Electoral Act, 2022 (as amended), elaborated the functions of the Independent National Electoral Commission to include;

*9. (1) The Commission shall compile, maintain, and update, continuously, a National Register of Voters (in this Act referred to as “the Register of Voters”) which shall include the names of all persons*

*(a) entitled to vote in any federal, state, Local Government, or Federal Capital Territory Area Council election; and*

*(b) with disability status disaggregated by type of disability.*

*(2) The Commission shall keep the Register of Voters in its National Headquarters and other locations, as the Commission may determine:*

*Provided that the Commission shall keep the Register of Voters in*

*(a) the electronic format in its central database; and*

*(b) Manual, printed, paper-based record or hard copy format.*

*(3) The Commission shall maintain as part of the Register of Voters, a register of voters for each State of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory.*

*(4) The Commission shall maintain as part of the Register of Voters for each State and the Federal Capital Territory, a Register of Voters for each Local Government or Area Council within the State and the Federal Capital Territory.*

*(5) The Register of Voters shall contain, regarding each person, the*



*particulars required in the Form prescribed by the Commission.*

*(6) The registration of voters, updating, and revision of the Register of Voters under this section shall stop not later than 90 days before any election covered by this Act.*

*7) The registration of voters shall be at the registration centers designated for that purpose by the Commission and notified to the public (Electoral Act, 2022).*

#### **4.5. Voters Qualification (Eligibility)**

The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as altered), in sections 7(4), 117(2), 118, 135(5) and 178(5) recognized the right to vote and the necessity of registering eligible voters as the basis of elections into various executive arms of government, Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (CFRN, 1999). However, in Nigeria, just as in most developed and developing democracies, registered voters must meet certain eligibility requirements, allowing them to vote in an election and a particular locality. Thus, Section 12 of the Electoral Act 2022 (as amended), established that (1) a person shall be qualified to be registered as a voter if such a person:

*(a) Is a citizen of Nigeria;*

*(b) Has attained the age of 18 years;*

*(c) Is ordinarily resident, works in, originates from the Local Government, Area Council, or ward covered by the registration center;*

*(d) Presents himself to the registration officers of the Commission for registration as a voter; and*

*(e) Is not subject to any legal incapacity to vote under any law, rule, or regulations*

*in force in Nigeria.*

*(2) A person shall not register in more than one registration center or register more than once in the same registration center.*

*(3) A person who contravenes subsection (2) commits an offense and is liable on conviction to a fine not more than ₦100,000 or imprisonment for a term not more than one year or both.*

#### **4.6. Analysis of Bwari Area Council Register of Voters**

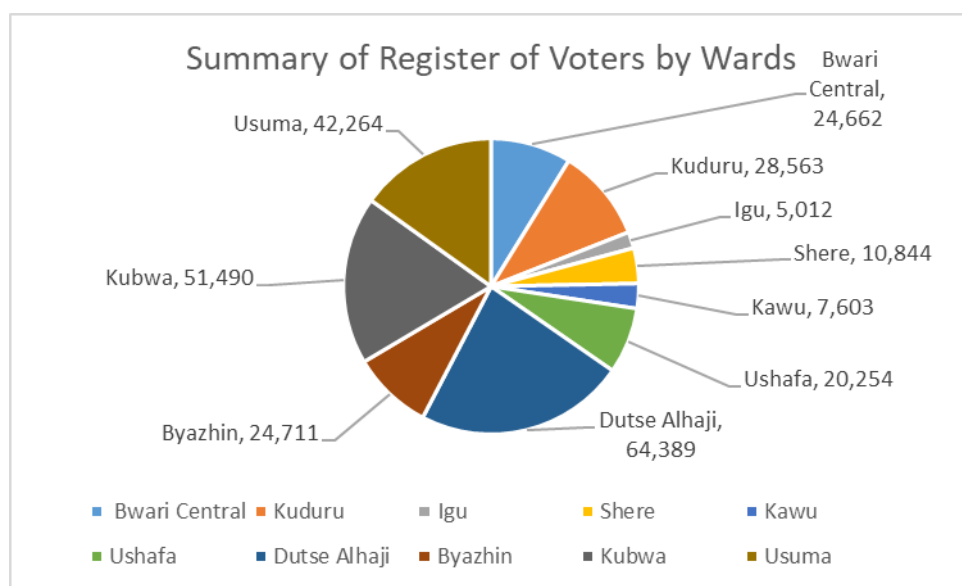
In preparation for the Presidential Election scheduled for 25<sup>th</sup> February 2023, a phased nationwide Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) exercise was conducted by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) at the Registration Area (RA) level from 26<sup>th</sup> June 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022, with online Pre-registration and physical in-person voter registration. This is to enable all eligible Nigerian citizens residing in Bwari Area Council to register. The data for those who completed the online registration and physical in-person registration at the INEC headquarters and the Bwari Area Council were consolidated, and processed to remove multiple registrants using Automatic Biometric Identification System (ABIS). After the exercise, Bwari Area Council had a total number of 279,792 registered voters which was used for the 2023 presidential election.

**Table 4.8:** Summary of Register of Voters by Wards in Bwari Area Council

S/N	Wards	Total Registered Voters
1	Bwari Central	24,662
2	Kuduru	28,563
3	Igu	5,012
4	Shere	10,844
5	Kawu	7,603
6	Ushafa	20,254

7	Dutse Alhaji	64,389
8	Byazhin	24,711
9	Kubwa	51,490
10	Usuma	42,264
<b>Total</b>		<b>279,792</b>

*Source: Fieldwork, January 2024, (Author's Compilation)*



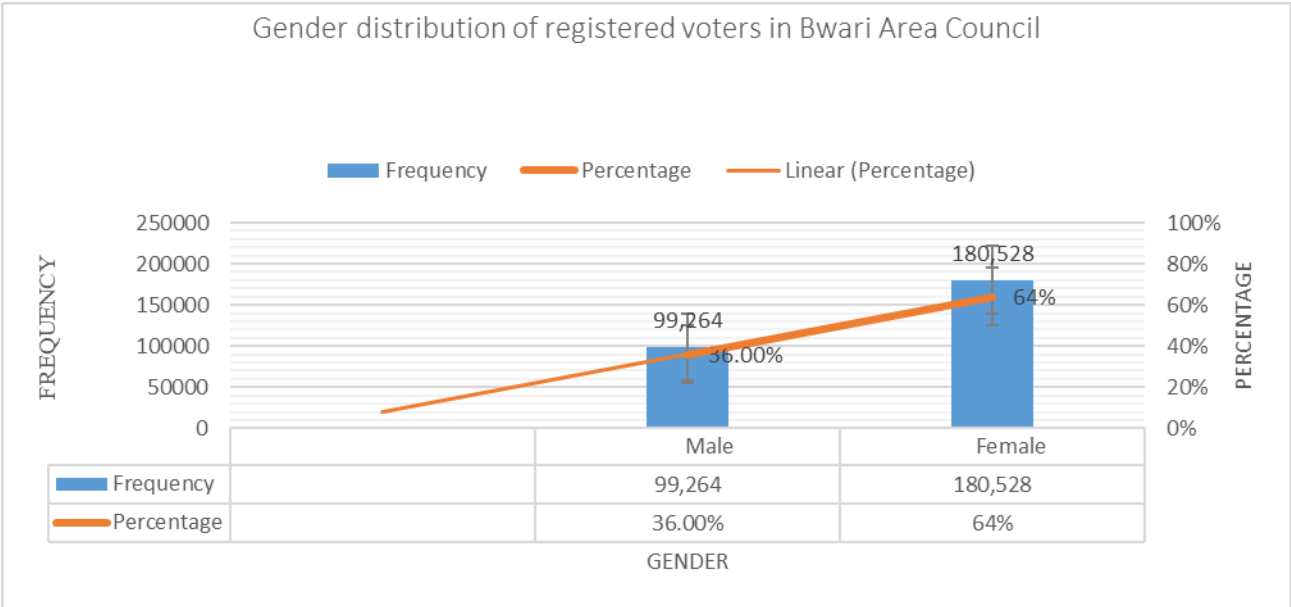
**Figure 4.6:** Summary of Register of Voters by Wards

As earlier stated in section 4.3, Bwari Area Council had a total number of 279,792 registered voters which was used for the 2023 Presidential election. Thus, Table 4.8 and Figure 4.6 above, are the presentation of the register of voters by wards in Bwari Area Council.

**Table 4.9:** Gender Distribution of Registered voters in Bwari Area Council

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	99,264	36%
Female	180,528	64%
<b>Total</b>	<b>279,792</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Fieldwork, January, 2024*



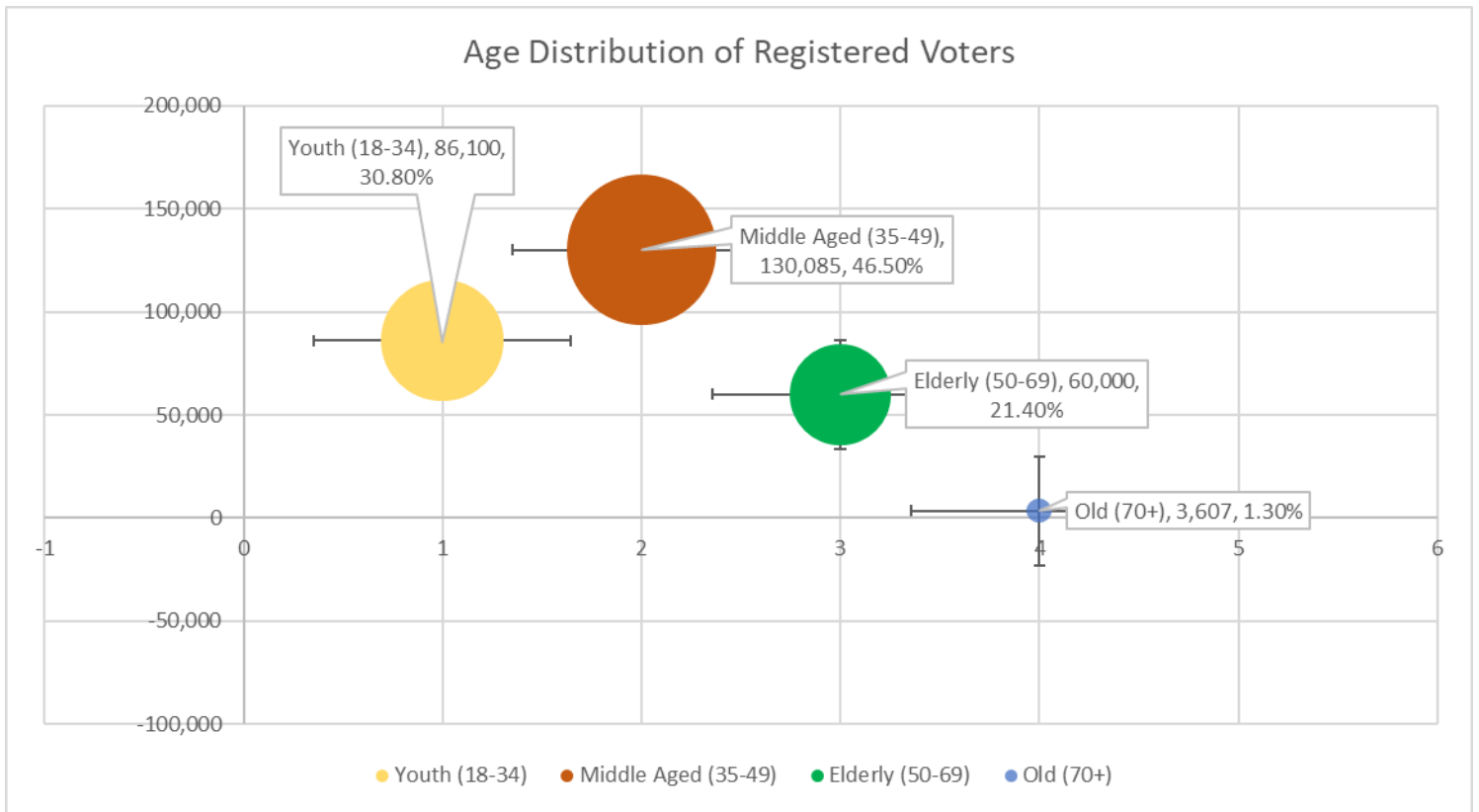
**Figure 4.7:** Gender Distribution of Registered Voters in Bwari Area Council

Table 4.9 and Figure 4.7 above depict the gender distribution of registered voters in Bwari Area Council during the 2023 Presidential election; which indicates that out of the 279,792 registered voters, 64% (180,528) were females while 36% (99,264) registered voters were males. This indicates that although female registered voters were more than male registered voters, however, both genders registered for the 2023 Presidential election in Bwari Area Council.

**Table 4.10:** Age Distribution of Registered Voters in Bwari Area Council

S/N	Age Group	Registered Voters	Percentage
1	Youth (18-34)	86,100	30.8%
2	Middle Aged (35-49)	130,085	46.5%
3	Elderly (50-69)	60,000	21.4%
4	Old (70+)	3,607	1.3%
<b>Total</b>		<b>279,792</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Fieldwork, January 2024



**Figure 4.8:** Age Distribution of Registered Voters

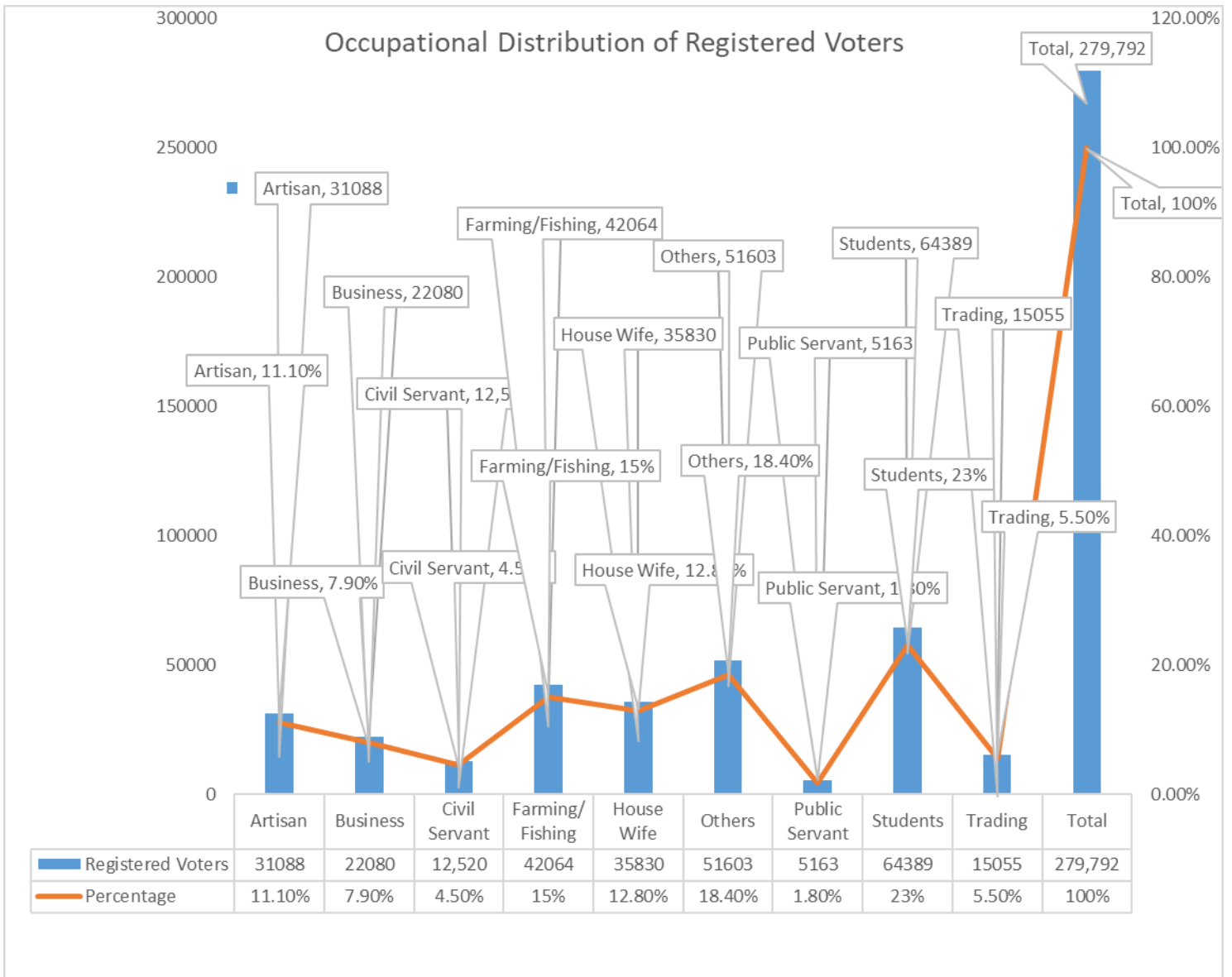
Table 4.10 and Figure 4.8 above show the age distribution of registered voters in the Bwari Area Council during the 2023 Presidential election. The age distribution of registered voters indicates that out of 279,792 registered voters in the Bwari Area Council, 30.8% (86,100) registered voters were youths, while 46.5% (130,085) registered voters were of middle age, also 21.4% (60,000) registered voters were elderly and 1.3% (3,607) registered voters were old. This means that registered voters of middle age (35-49) were higher than the youth (18-34), elderly (50-69), and the old (70+) during the 2023 Presidential election in Bwari Area Council.

**Table 4:11:** Occupational Distribution of Registered Voters

S/N	Occupation	Registered Voters	Percentage
1	Artisan	31, 088	11.1%
2	Business	22, 080	7.9%
3	Civil Servant	12,520	4.5%

4	Farming/Fishing	42,064	15%
5	House Wife	35,830	12.8%
6	Others	51,603	18.4%
7	Public Servant	5,163	1.8%
8	Students	64,389	23%
9	Trading	15,055	5.5%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>279,792</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Fieldwork, January 2024*



**Figure 4.9:** Occupational Distribution of Registered Voters

Table 4.11 and Figure 4.9 above show the occupational distribution of registered voters in the Bwari Area Council, the table indicates that out of the 279,792 registered voters, 23% (64,389) were students, 18.4. % (51, 603) were engaged in other professions, 15% (42,064) were farmers/fishers, 12.8% (35,830) were stay-at-home parents, 11.1% (31,088) were artisans, while 7.9% (22,080) were businessmen/women, 5.5% (15,055) and 4.5% (12,520) and 1.8% (5,163) were civil servants and public servants respectively. This means that eligible voters of diverse occupations registered for the

2023 presidential election in the Bwari Area Council.

#### 4.7. 2023 Presidential Elections in Bwari Area Council

The 2023 presidential election was held on Saturday, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023 in the entire 485 Polling Units across the Ten (10) Electoral Wards of Bwari Area Council between the hours of 8:30 am and 2:30 pm in which 18 political parties and candidates contested for the presidential election.

**Table 4.12: Summary of Results from Polling Units Collation at Registration Area Level**

State F.C.T Code 37 Registration Area BWARI Code 02

S/N	Ward Name	Code	No. of PUs	No. Of Registered Voters	No. Of Accredited Voters	Votes Received by Political Parties	Total Valid Votes	Rejected Votes	Total Votes Cast	Turnout percentage
1	Bwari Central	01	44	24, 662	9, 026	8, 727	8, 727	299	9,026	
2	Kuduru	02	52	28, 563	9, 917	9, 560	9, 560	357	9,917	
3	Igu	03	10	5, 012	1, 462	1, 414	1, 414	48	1,462	
4	Shere	04	23	10, 844	3, 595	3, 384	3, 384	211	3,595	
5	Kawu	05	16	7, 603	2, 552	2, 426	2, 426	126	2,552	
6	Ushafa	06	37	20, 254	7, 397	7, 215	7, 215	182	7,397	
7	Dutse	07	105	64, 389	22, 559	22, 008	22, 008	551	22,559	
8	Byazhin	08	39	24, 711	9, 401	8, 938	8, 938	463	9, 401	
9	Kubwa	09	80	51, 490	16, 200	15,800	15,800	400	16,200	
10	Usuma	10	79	42, 264	14, 335	13,717	13,717	618	14,335	
<b>Total</b>			<b>485</b>	<b>279,792</b>	<b>96, 444</b>	<b>93,189</b>	<b>93,189</b>	<b>3,255</b>	<b>96,444</b>	<b>35%</b>

Source: Fieldwork January 2024, (Researcher's Computation)

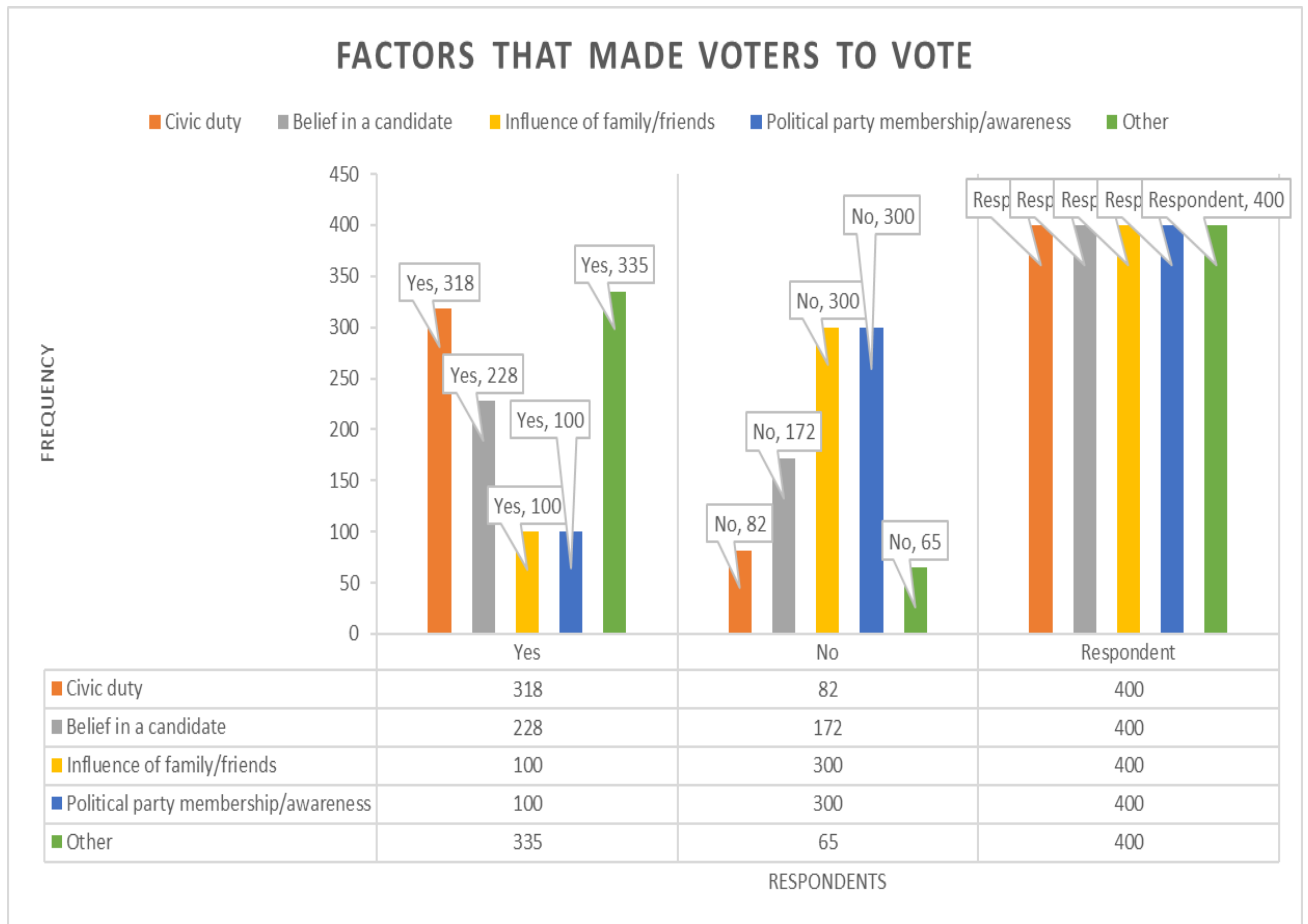


Table 4.12 depicts a Summary of Results from the Polling unit collation at the Registration Area Level in Bwari Area Council. It indicates that Bwari Area Council is divided into ten (10) electoral wards, and 485 polling units. It further shows that the Bwari Area Council has a total number of 279,792 registered voters, which was used to conduct the 2023 Presidential election. Also, out of the 279,792 registered voters in Bwari Area Council, only 35% (96,444) were accredited and voted in the 2023 Presidential election, although the total number of votes cast was 96,444 however, the total number of valid votes received by political parties was 93,189 while 3,255 votes were classified as rejected votes. Furthermore, the above statistical data on Summary of Results from Polling Units Collation at the Registration Area Level shows that voter turnout in Bwari Area Council during the 2023 Presidential election was low especially when compared with the number of eligible registered voters.

**Table 4.13: What factors made you vote in the 2023 Presidential Election?**

S/N	Factors that made you vote in the 2023 Presidential Election	Yes	%	No	%	Respondent	%
1	Civic duty	318	79.5%	82	20.5%	400	100%
2	Belief in a candidate	228	57%	172	43%	400	100%
3	Influence of family/friends	100	25%	300	75%	400	100%
4	Political party membership/awareness	100	25%	300	75%	400	100%
5	Other	335	83.7%	65	16.3%	400	100%

*January 2024eldwork, January2024*



**Figure 4.10:** Factors that made Voters to Vote in the 2023 Presidential Election

Table 4.13 and Figure 4.10 above show the distribution of respondents' views on factors that made them vote in the 2023 Presidential election. The table and figure indicate that 79.5% (318) respondents agreed to have voted because it is a civic duty, while 20.5% (82) respondents did not agree. Also, 57% (228) respondents confirmed that belief in a candidate made them vote, while 43% (172) respondents held a contrary view. Additionally, 25% (100) respondents agreed to have voted due to the influence of family/friends, and 75% (300) respondents did not agree. While 25% (100) respondents agreed to have voted due to Political party membership/awareness, 75% (300) respondents held a contrary opinion. However, 83.7% (335) respondents agreed to have voted as a result of other factors like the introduction of technology in the conduct of elections (BVAS & Irev), the emergence of perceived third force political parties, etc. while 16.3% (65) respondents

did not agree to this.

**Table 4.14: What factors made it difficult for you to vote in the 2023 Presidential Election?**

S/N	Factors that made it difficult to vote in the 2023 Presidential Election	Yes	%	No	%	Respondent	%
1	My vote won't count	335	83.7%	65	16.3%	400	100%
2	Use of Technology (BVAS)	212	53%	188	47%	400	100%
3	Relocation/Migration	248	62%	152	38%	400	100%
4	Lack of confidence in INEC	228	57%	172	43%	400	100%
5	Late arrival of Poll officials	100	25%	300	75%	400	100%
6	Involvement in an election duty	250	62.5%	150	37.5%	400	100%
7	Other	318	79.5%	82	20.5%	400	100%

*Source: Fieldwork, November, 2023*

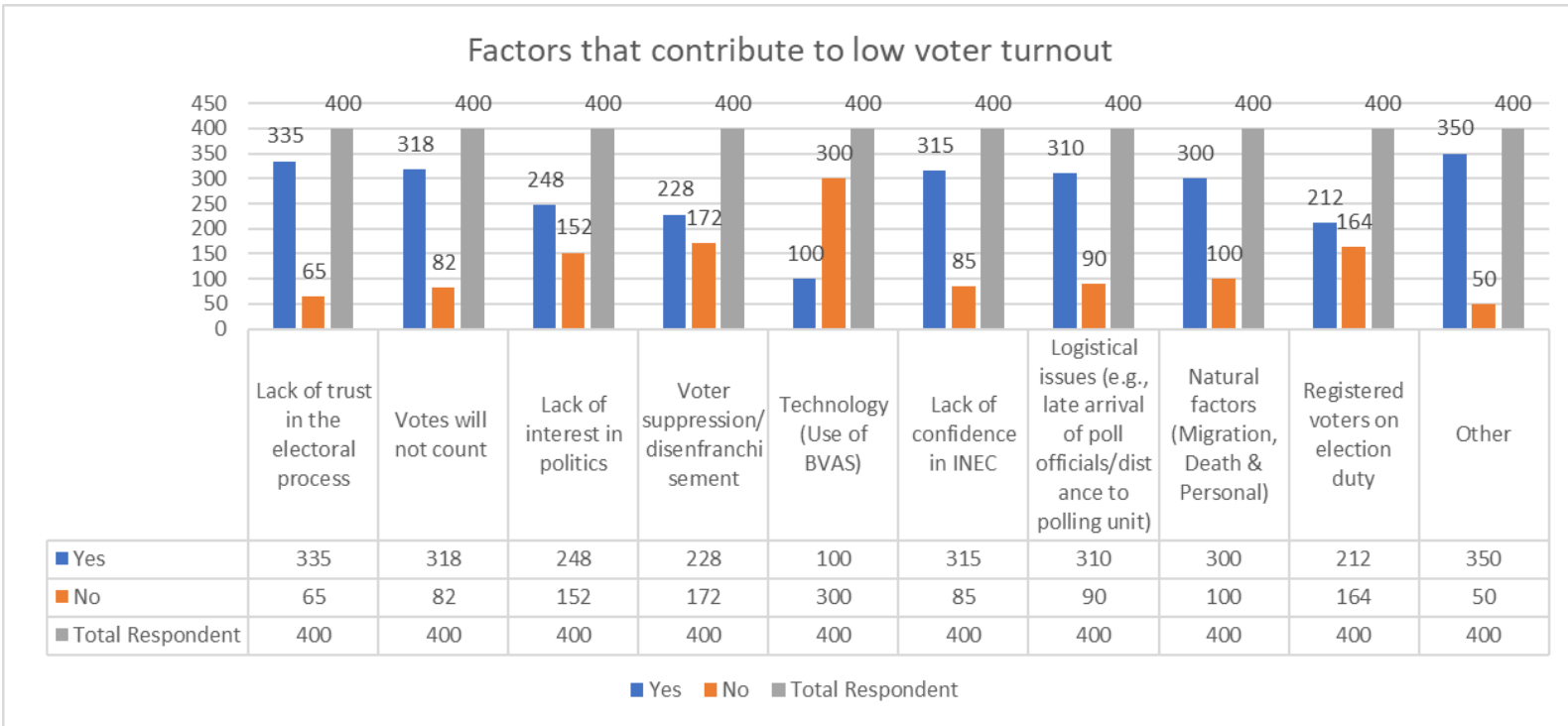
Table 4.14 shows the distribution of respondents' views on factors that made it difficult for them to vote in the 2023 Presidential election. The table indicates that 83.7% (335) respondents confirmed that the perception that votes won't count made it difficult for them to vote while 16.3% (65) respondents held a contrary opinion. Also, 53% (212) respondents agreed that the use of technology (BVAS) prevented them from voting, while 47% (188) respondents objected to this view. Moreover, 62% (248) respondents agreed not to have voted due to relocation/migration from their registered polling unit, and 38% (152) respondents did not see this as the reason for not voting. While 57% (228) respondents cited a lack of confidence in INEC as the reason not to vote, 43% (172) respondents did not agree with this view. Furthermore, 25% (100) respondents gave the late arrival of Poll officials to the polling unit as the reason for not voting, while 75% (300) respondents held a contrary opinion. Also, 65.2% (250) respondents affirmed that involvement in election duty and other essential services made it difficult to vote while 37.5% (150) respondents objected to this. However, 79.5%

(318) respondents affirmed that other factors such as insecurity, election violence, scarcity of cash, failure of political leaders to fulfill campaign promises, etc. made it difficult for them to vote during the 2023 presidential election, while 20.5% (82) respondents did not consider these factors as a reason not to vote.

**Table 4.15: What are the factors that contributed to low voter turnout in Bwari Area Council during the 2023 Presidential Election**

S/N	Factors that contributed to low voter turnout	Yes	%	No	%	Respondent	%
1	Lack of trust in the electoral process	335	83.75%	65	16.25%	400	100%
2	Votes will not count	318	79.5%	82	20.5%	400	100%
3	Lack of interest in politics	248	62%	152	38%	400	100%
4	Voter suppression/disenfranchisement	228	57%	172	43%	400	100%
5	Technology (Use of BVAS)	100	25%	300	65%	400	100%
6	Lack of confidence in INEC	315	78.7%	85	21.3%	400	100%
7	Logistical issues (e.g., late arrival of poll officials/distance to polling unit)	310	77.5%	90	22.5%	400	100%
8	Natural factors (Migration, Death & Personal)	300	75%	100	25%	400	100%
9	Registered voters on election duty	212	53%	164	47%	400	100%
10	Other	350	87.5%	50	12.5%	400	100%

*Source: Fieldwork, January 2024*



**Figure 4.11:** Factors that Contributed to Low Voter Turnout in Bwari Area Council during the 2023 Presidential Election

Table 4.15 and Figure 4.11 above depict factors that contributed to low voter turnout in the Bwari Area Council during the 2023 presidential election. While 83.75% (335) respondents agreed that lack of trust in the electoral process was a major influence on the voter turnout in Bwari Area Council during the 2023 presidential election, 16.25% (65) respondents did not see this as a factor that influenced voter turnout. Also, 79.5% (318) respondents affirmed the perception that votes won't count as a reason for low voter turnout, and 20.5% (82) respondents objected to this view. 62% (248) respondents thought that lack of interest in politics also contributed to low voter turnout while 38% (152) respondents held a contrary opinion. While 57% (228) respondents were of the notion that voter suppression/disenfranchisement equally contributes to low voter turnout, 43% (172) respondents did not see this as a reason for low voter turnout. Another factor that my respondents identified as a major reason for low voter turnout during the presidential election was the use of technological instruments, this was compounded by technical glitches encountered with the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System [BVAS] in some polling units. 25% (100) respondents affirmed this as a key factor for

low voter turnout while 75% (300) respondents objected to this view. Furthermore, 78.7% (315) respondents cited a lack of confidence in INEC as a major reason for low voter turnout while 21.3% (85) respondents did not agree with this view. Also, logistical issues such as the late arrival of poll officials and election materials as well as distance to polling unit were considered as factors that contributed to low voter turnout. 77.5% (310) respondents confirmed this while 22.5% (90) respondents objected. There was also the issue of natural factors like migration, death, and personal which 75% (300) of the respondents agreed to have contributed to low voter turnout while 25% (100) respondents did not see as the reason for low voter turnout. 53% (212) of the respondents argued that they didn't vote because of engagement on election duty and essential services on Election Day while 47% (164) objected. Lastly, 87.5% (350) of the respondents listed other factors like insecurity and fear of election violence, prioritization of election, lack of confidence in political leaders, outcome of previous elections, electoral justice system, weak electoral and democratic institutions, dwindling economy, etc. as reasons for low voter turnout while 12.5% (50) respondents disagreed with this. To corroborate this finding, one of the interviewees, Okafor (2024, p.2) narrated thus:

Though, the turnout for the 2023 Presidential election in Bwari Area Council was massive compared to previous Presidential elections but still significantly low following the number of registered voters. Several factors were responsible for low voter turnout during the last presidential election in Bwari Area Council especially, security concerns, lack of trust in the electoral process, and logistics. There were also issues of inadequate electoral materials and resources and a lack of trust in the electoral management body. The introduction of new naira notes by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) which led to the scarcity of cash across the country equally compounded the low voter turnout as many eligible registered voters were unable to feed talk more of having the strength to go and queue at the polling unit to cast a ballot.

However, one other interviewee, Sheri (2024, p.3) shared his experience at his polling unit during the Presidential election:

The issue of over-voting recorded at my polling unit during votes tabulation led to the cancellation of votes and declaration of no election at my polling unit by the Presiding officer, in line with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) rules that states that where the total number of votes cast exceeds the number of accredited voters in the (BVAS) the Presiding officer is to cancel the election of that particular polling unit by filling [FORM EC40G] (PU). So, the Presiding officer's compliance with this rule systematically disenfranchised all eligible registered voters of this polling unit who cast a ballot on Election Day. Meaning that the time and effort spent on the queer by these voters to get accredited as well as the votes cast amounted

to waste. The consequence of this decision is that eligible registered voters of this polling unit may decide not to come out to vote in the next election.

Also, Oforegbu (2024, p.5) who was among those interviewed expressed his views on challenges experienced in the 2023 presidential election in Bwari Area Council:

Some eligible registered voters were unable to vote on election day due to the failure of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) to read their Permanent Voter’s Card, it was more difficult in some rural areas. There were cases where the BVAS succeeded in reading the voter’s card but failed in authenticating the voter’s fingerprints and face resulting in them not being able to cast a ballot.

From the foregoing analysis, it is deduced that the majority of the respondents believed that both Institutional/Structural, Logistical, Natural, and Personal factors contributed to low voter turnout during the 2023 Presidential election in Bwari Area Council.

**Table 4.16: What can be done to encourage voter turnout?**

S /N	What can be done to encourage voter turnout?	Yes	%	No	%	Respondent	%
1	Mandatory voting law	318	79.5%	82	20.5%	400	100%
2	Provision for essential service providers to vote	335	83.7%	65	16.3%	400	100%
3	Amendment of 2022 Electoral Act, (as amended)	248	62%	152	38%	400	100%
4	Adequate voter/civic education campaigns	228	57%	172	43%	400	100%
5	Mobile Polling Stations	300	75%	100	25%	400	100%
6	Electronic voting	175	43.7%	225	56.3%	400	100%
8	Early Voting Opportunities	208	52%	192	48%	400	100%
9	Enhanced voting Accessibility	208	52%	192	48%	400	100%
10	Others	300	75%	100	25%	400	100%

*Source: Fieldwork, January 2024*

Table 4.16 above depicts the distribution of respondents' views on what can be done to encourage voter turnout. The table indicates that 79.5% (318) of the respondents suggested that enacting compulsory voting law for all adult Nigerian citizens (18 years and above) will help to encourage voter turnout while 20.5% (82) respondents objected to this suggestion. While 83.7% (335) of the respondents were of the view that providing a platform for essential service providers to vote during elections may equally encourage voter turnout however, 16.3% (65) respondents did not support this view. Another suggestion that my respondents made to encourage voter turnout was the amendment of the 2022 electoral act to accommodate certain omissions. 62% (248) respondents affirmed that this is a key step towards encouraging voter turnout while 38% (152) respondents held a contrary view. Also, 57% (228) of the respondents noted that embarking on adequate voter/civic education by relevant government and non-governmental agencies can equally help in encouraging voter turnout while 43% (172) respondents did not see this as a step to encourage voter turnout. 75% (300) of the respondents pointed out the need to create mobile polling stations on Election Day to accommodate eligible registered voters, who may be out of their area of registration during voting however, 25% (100) respondents disagreed with this notion. Furthermore, 43.7% (175) of the respondents suggested that the inclusion of electronic voting in the electoral process may as well encourage voter turnout while 56.3% (225) respondents did consider this as a measure to encourage voter turnout. Also, 52% (208) of the respondents suggested that an introduction of early voting opportunities may equally serve as a measure to encourage voter turnout while 48% (192) of respondents did not support this view. While 52% (208) argued that an enhancement of voting accessibility by the electoral umpire may serve as a means to encourage voter turnout, 48% (192) of respondents objected to this argument. Lastly, 75% (300) of the respondents believed that other measures such as government accountability/responsiveness to the yearnings of the electorates, Diaspora voting, improved Logistical/Technical issues and Transparency/Improved Electoral Process can as well encourage voter turnout while 25% (100) held a contrary view.



Findings from the respondents on what can be done to encourage voter turnout agree with the propositions made by some electoral officials on measures to encourage voters' turnout during elections. Anthony (2024, p.7) narrated thus:

INEC has succeeded in strengthening democracy in Nigeria due to; the people's resolve not to be ruled again by the military having experienced that before; the introduction and use of technology in the management of the electoral process; and the engagement of the stakeholders in the electoral process. However, the greatest challenge and gap yet to be filled is working on the people's mindset through voters' education. Though INEC has been doing that the truth is that INEC cannot do it alone. To get the mindset or perception of the electorates reoriented especially on politics and the electoral process will require the collective engagement of all stakeholders.

Corroborating the aforementioned findings is the response of Oladimeji (2023, p.1) who gave his opinion on what can be done to encourage voter turnout:

Voter turnout on election day is the reflection of the number of registered voters who came out to cast a ballot on election day. However, the failure of elected officials to fulfill campaign promises has negatively affected turnout as voter's displeasure with the political leaders and elected officials discourages voters from filling out to vote on election day. Thus, to encourage turnout during elections; elected officials need to be responsive and accountable to the electorates. Also, INEC needs to be encouraged especially on the use of technology in the electoral process.

In line with the foregoing, Isah (2023, p.2) narrated thus:

Low turnout of voters during elections is the result of a loss of confidence in the electoral process therefore to regain this confidence, the government needs to be responsive to the yearnings of the electorates without which we may continue to witness apathy and low turnout during elections. Also, the citizens need to wake up to the reality that voting in an election is a fundamental right that aids in holding the public or elected officials accountable. So, failure to vote in an election is an indirect way of asking a government that is not responsive to the populace to remain in power.

Similarly, Dalyop (2023, p.3) is of the note that:

To encourage voter turnout during elections, the National Assembly may consider amending the 2022 Electoral Act to accommodate poll officials as well as the essential service providers who although may be registered for the election and possess Permanent Voter's Cards yet are not allowed to vote on election day. A look at the number of poll/electoral officials and essential service providers who do not vote on election day as a result of being engaged on election duty shows that low voter turnout is also a cause of institutional factors.

Additionally, Solomon (2023, p.4) gave his suggestion on how to encourage voter turnout:

Apart from making provision for poll/electoral officials to vote during elections as is the case in some developed and developing democracies, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) may consider creating mobile polling units across the country on election day to enable eligible registered voters who may be out of their registered polling unit location on election day to cast a ballot.

Based on the above response of the poll/electoral officials interviewed, we can deduce that encouraging voter turnout in Bwari Area Council may require the amendment of the 2022 Electoral Act, engagement of all stakeholders in voter/civic education, creation of mobile polling units on election day, and ensuring that poll/electoral officials and essential service providers equally cast a ballot on election day. Also, ensuring that political leaders and elected officials remain accountable and responsive to the electorates before, during, and after election and tenure of office.

#### **4.8. Discussion of major findings**

From the relevant data presented and analyzed above on the Assessment of Voter Turnout during the 2023 Presidential election in Bwari Area Council, the following deductions or findings can be drawn. Firstly, the 2023 Presidential election was conducted by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2023 in all the 485 Polling units across the ten (10) constituent wards of Bwari Area Council in which 18 political parties and candidates; (A-Accord Party, AA-Action Alliance, AAC-African Action Congress, ADC-African Democratic Congress, ADP-African Democratic party, APC-All Progressive Congress, APGA- All Progressive Grand Alliance, APM-Allied Peoples Movement, Action Peoples Party, BP- BOOT Party, LP-Labour Party, NNPP-New Nigeria Peoples Party, NRM-National Rescue Movement, PDP-Peoples Democratic Party, PRP-Peoples Redemption Party, SDP-Social Democratic Party, YPP-Young Progressive Party, and ZLP Zenith Labour Party) contested for the seat of the president.

Secondly, out of 279,792 registered voters used for the conduct of the election, only 35% (96,444) did turn out to cast a ballot on the election day indicating a low voter turnout when compared with the number of registered voters. The majority of the respondents opined that several factors influenced voter turnout in the

Bwari Area Council during the 2023 Presidential election. The identified factors include; voters' perception that votes won't count resulting from a lack of confidence in the electoral process, loss of confidence in the political leaders and elected officials, fear of electoral violence and security, prioritization of election by voters, belief in a candidate, influences of family/friends, civic duty, emergence of third force political party, political party membership/awareness, pre-voting campaign, adequate voter/civic education.

The study also discovered that INEC's introduction of technology like the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS), the INEC Result Viewing Portal (Irev) in preparation for the election following the enactment of the 2022 Electoral Act (as amended), as well as voter-candidate engagement on social media, led to an increase in both voter registration and voter turnout in Bwari Area Council during the 2023 Presidential election. Another factor that the study discovered to have contributed to low voter turnout during the 2023 Presidential election was the cancellation of votes and declaration of no election in some polling units where the number of total votes cast exceeded the number of accredited voters. This complies with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) electoral rules which state that where the number of total votes cast exceeds the number of accredited voters in the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS), the Presiding officer is mandated to cancel all the votes and declare 'no election' in that polling unit using (Form EC40G [PU]). Findings from the study further revealed that though, the use of biometric voter registers, permanent voter's cards, and Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) in the 2023 presidential election helped in minimizing electoral fraud like over voting, ballot box snatching, and stuffing which marred previous electoral process in Bwari Area Council. However, the cases of technical hitches encountered in the application of the technology during the election as well as the recent cases of insecurity in Bwari Area Council if not properly addressed by the electoral umpire and security agencies, may result in more voter apathy/low voter turnout in the future elections in Bwari Area Council.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the summary, conclusion, and recommendations of the study.

#### 5.1. Summary of Findings

Political participation is a fundamental aspect of democratic systems, empowering citizens to influence governance through elections. However, the phenomenon of voter turnout, a subset of political participation has witnessed a consistent decline in Bwari Area Council during presidential elections. This study analyzed factors influencing voter turnout in Bwari Area Council focusing on the 2023 Presidential election. Findings from the study revealed that there was low voter turnout in Bwari Area Council during the 2023 Presidential election, which poses a challenge to the democratic process and development of the area, also that despite an increase in the number of registered voters, the percentage of actual turnout on Election Day has consistently remained poor impacting electoral outcomes.

However, from the views of the respondents and interviews, several factors were identified to have influenced voter turnout in the Bwari Area Council during the 2023 Presidential election. These factors include; voters' perception that votes will not count resulting from a lack of confidence in the electoral process, loss of confidence in the political leaders and elected officials, fear of electoral violence and security, prioritization of election by voters, belief in a candidate, influences of family/friends, civic duty, emergence of a perceived third force political party, political party membership/awareness, pre-voting campaign, voter/civic education. The study also discovered that INEC's introduction of technology like the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS), the INEC Result Viewing Portal (Irev) in preparation for the election following the enactment of the 2022 Electoral Act (as amended), as well as voter-candidate engagement on social media, led to an increase in both voter registration and voter turnout in Bwari Area Council during the 2023 Presidential election. Findings from the study further revealed that though, there were cases of technical

hitches encountered in the application of the technology during the election, the truth remains that the use of biometric voter register, permanent voter's cards, and Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) in the 2023 presidential election helped in minimizing electoral fraud like over voting, ballot box snatching and stuffing which marred previous electoral process in Bwari Area Council.

## **5.2. Conclusion**

This study analyzed factors influencing voter turnout in Bwari Area Council focusing on the 2023 Presidential election. It acknowledged that political participation is a fundamental aspect of democratic systems, empowering citizens to influence governance through elections. Also, the health of a democratic nation's government is often measured by how actively its citizens participate in decision making especially politics. However, low voter turnout resulting from political apathy poses a challenge to the democratic process, affecting government legitimacy and hindering the delivery of democratic dividends. This study revealed the existence of voter apathy in the Bwari Area Council which led to a consistent decline in voter turnout during Presidential elections. It further shows that voter apathy and low turnout are due to voters' perception that their vote won't count following a loss of confidence in the electoral process, weak electoral system, lack of confidence in political leaders, inadequate voter/political education, failure of elected leaders fulfilling their campaign promises, insecurity/electoral violence, weak electoral justice system, loss of confidence in the electoral umpire, migration of registered voters at the time of election, and prioritization of election by voters.

## **5.3. Recommendations**

In line with this study's objectives, we hereby make the following recommendations;

1. The government may declare a nationwide state of emergency on voter/civic education to complement the efforts of INEC and the National Orientation Agency. The major reason INEC succeeded in registering 12,298,944 eligible voters during the Continuous Voter Registration exercise held in preparation for

the 2023 general election from 28<sup>th</sup> June to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022 was because of the level of attention and importance attached to it by other relevant bodies. We, therefore, recommend the inclusion of religious bodies, private organizations, community and town union leaders, and educational institutions in creating awareness and sensitization of Nigerians on the importance of adequate citizens' participation in the electoral process. This will go a long way in changing the voters' perception (mentality) towards the electoral process.

2. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) should maintain its guiding principles of autonomy, transparency, integrity, credibility, impartiality, dedication, equity, excellence, and teamwork to fulfill its mission and vision of serving as an independent and effective Election Management Body committed to the conduct of free, fair, and credible elections for sustainable democracy in Nigeria.
3. The National Assembly may consider amending the 2022 Electoral Act (as amended) to correct some irregularities and omissions as well as empower INEC to introduce mobile polling stations, and early voting, especially for essential service providers who may be engaged in election duty and to make provision for Nigerians in Diaspora to vote.
4. INEC may consider undertaking critical training of its personnel especially on useful application of technology to avoid shortcomings during elections. Also, there is an urgent need for INEC to come up with more significant ways of resolving issues of over-voting at polling units rather than the usual cancellation of votes and declaration of no election where the number of total votes cast exceeds

the number of accredited voters which systematically disenfranchises eligible registered voters.

5. The public office holders especially elected officials must ensure good, accountable, and responsive governance to regain lost confidence in the voters' minds as well as to sustain government legitimacy.
6. Considering the recent cases of kidnapping, armed robbery, and banditry attacks recorded in Bwari Area Council, the government may consider as a matter of urgent public importance to improve the security of lives and property in Bwari Area Council if nothing is done may result in a lower turnout of voters in a future election.

## REFERENCES

- Abdallah N. M. & Krishi M. A. (2019, 21<sup>st</sup> February). How Voter Turnout Shapes Nigeria's elections. Retrieved from: <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/how-voter-turnout-shapes-nigeria's-election.html>.
- Adewumi, E. & Olayinka, A. B. (2022). Voters' Participation and Democratic Consolidation Nigeria: An Analysis of 2011-2019 Presidential Elections. *Journal/index.php/IJSSHR/article/view/806*.
- Adesanmi O. A. (2022). Political Party, Participation and Democratic Governance in Nigeria, [jopafll.com/uploads/issues24/political-party-participation and Democratic-Governance-in-Nigeria pdf](http://jopafll.com/uploads/issues24/political-party-participation-and-Democratic-Governance-in-Nigeria.pdf).
- Adigun O. W. (2020). Factors Determining Voter Turnouts in Presidential Elections in Nigeria: Multivariate Correlation Analysis of the 2019 Presidential Elections (March 1, 2020). *Open Political Science 2020*, Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3908213>
- Aldrich J. H., et al. (2016). Turnout as a Habit. *Political Behaviour* 33(4):535-563  
DOI:10.1007/s11109-010-9148-3
- American National Election Studies (2023). The Psychology of Voting. <https://electionstudies.org/papers-documents/conference-papers/the-psychology-of-voting-and-election-campaigns>
- Andeweg, R.B. (2000). Political recruitment and party government. In J. Blondel et al. (Eds.). *The nature of party government*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Anthony A. (2024, January 20<sup>th</sup>). Personal Communication [Personal Interview].
- Bekoe D. A. & Burchrad S.M. (2017). The Contradictions of Pre-election violence: the effects of violence on voter turnout in sub-Saharan Africa. *African Studies Review*, 1-20  
DoI:10.1017/asr.2017.50
- Burns, J.M. (1997). Leadership. In Saleh F. (2022). *Assessment of the Effects of Leadership Recruitment process on the independence of the legislature: a study of the 8<sup>th</sup> Nigerian Senate*. Submitted to the Department of Studies, National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS) Abuja.
- Campbell et al. (1960). *The American Voter*. Library of Congress Catalog Card Number:60-11615
- Chukwu N.A. & Okpala B.A. (2018). Voter Turnout and the Quest for Free and Fair Elections Nigeria: A study of 2017 Anambra Gubernatorial Election. *Socialscintices journal of the social sciences and humanities* Vol.3.No 3 September 2018.
- Collins Dictionary (2023).



- Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (CFRN1999, as altered).
- Dacombe R. & Parvin P. (2021). Participatory Democracy in an Age of Inequality, Representation, 57:2, 145, DOI: 10.1080/00344893.2021.1933151.
- Dass M. G. & Sa'idu A. (2022). Theoretical Review of the 2019 General Elections in Nigeria: A Focus of voter Turnouts: arabianbmr.com pdf/ Nigerian Journal of Social Development (NGJSD) Vol. 10, N0.2.
- Dalyop L. (2023, December 20<sup>th</sup>) Personal Communication [Personal Interview].
- Electoral Act 2022 (As Amended).
- Forms of Political Participation in Nigeria (16<sup>th</sup> February 2023). Retrieved from <https://www.stears.co/article/what-are-the-forms-of-political-participation-in-Nigeria>
- Fowler A.G. (2013). Five Studies on the Causes and Consequences of Voter Turnout. Harvard Dash repository <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:Hul.Inst/Repos:dash.current.terms-of-use#LAA>
- Greenberg & Page (2004). The Struggle for Democracy: Seventh Edition.
- Good luck Jonathan Foundation (2021). Barriers to Civic-Participation in Nigeria: The Ondo and Edo States Context.
- Habu I. S. (2018). Politics: Concepts, Principles, and Issues: First Edition. Faith International and Zaria Printers and Publishers.  
(<https://thelawdictionary.org/registered-voter/>)  
<https://openelectiondata.net/en/guide/key-categories/voter-registration/>.  
<https://IDEA-on-voter-turnout-around-the-world/>  
<https://wisevoter.com/country-rankings/voter-turnout-by-country/>  
<https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/voter-turnout-by-country>  
<https://dataphyte.com/latest-reports/how-nigeria-became-largest-african-democracy-with-lowest-voter-turnout>  
<https://punchng.com/2023-voter-turnout-hits-44-year-low-drops-to-27%>  
(<https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/voter-turnout-by-country>).
- Igbiosa I. O. (2022). The Effect of ICT on the 2015 and 2019 Presidential Elections in the (F.C.T): A Case Study of Bwari Area Council. Submitted to the Department of Studies, National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS) Abuja.
- Igiebor G. O. (2021). Political Alienation in Nigeria: A Survey of Electoral Behaviour in the 2019 General Election.
- Igiebor G.O. (2022). The Effects of Security Challenges on Electoral Participation in Nigeria: the Fourth Republic in focus.

- Independent National Electoral Commission (2023). Manual for Election Officials. Retrieved from [www.inecnigeria.org](http://www.inecnigeria.org).
- Independent National Electoral Commission (2024). Report of the 2023 General Elections. Retrieved from [www.inecnigeria.org/](http://www.inecnigeria.org/)
- Independent National Electoral Commission Result Viewing Portal. [www.irevelectionresult.ng](http://www.irevelectionresult.ng)
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966).
- International IDEA (2016). Voter Turnout Trends around the World.
- International Peace Institute [IPI] (2011). *Elections in Africa: Challenges and opportunities*. Retrieved from [https:// www.ipinst. org/wp-content](https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content)
- Isah J. (2023, December 20<sup>th</sup>). Personal Communication [Personal Interview].
- Isiaka H.O., et al (2021). Election and Voter Turnout in Nigeria: An Investigation of Reasons for Voter Apathy in the 2019 General Election in Oyo State.
- James W. (1890). *The Principles of Psychology*, Vol. 1. Henry Holt and Co. <https://doi.org/10.1037/10538-000>
- Johari J. C. (2013). *Principles of Modern Political Science*: Sterling Publishers Private Limited-A-59, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase II, New Delhi-110020.
- Johari R. C. (2018). *Understanding Political Theory*: Wisdom Press, MurariLal Street, Ansari Road, Daryanganj, New Delhi-110002.
- Longley R. (2021). Definition of the Concept of Political/Voter Participation. Retrieved from [Thoughtco.com/Political-Participation-definition-examples-5198236](http://Thoughtco.com/Political-Participation-definition-examples-5198236).
- Lewkowicz, et al. (2020) in Tshishonga N. S (2022). *The Rise and Fall of the Liberation Movement: Examining The Governing African National Congress of South Africa*: [igi-global.com/dictionary/the-rise-and-fall-of-liberation-movements/107492](http://igi-global.com/dictionary/the-rise-and-fall-of-liberation-movements/107492).
- Mahmud S.S. (2017). *The 2015 General Elections: Voter Turnout, Voting Behaviour and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria*.
- Matthew H. F. (2022). *Understanding Voter Turnout: Connecticut General Assembly*. [www.cga.ct.gov/o/r/](http://www.cga.ct.gov/o/r/)
- Molokwane & Lukamba (2018). *Citizen Involvement in the Formulation of Public Policy*.
- Nylen W. R. (2003). *Participatory Democracy: Participatory Democracy versus Elitist Democracy; Lesson from (2003, pp. 27-34)*. Retrieved from [link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/97814403980304\\_3](http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/97814403980304_3)
- Obada M.I. (2016). *Research Process, Policy-making, Report-Writing & Referencing*. Second Edition. Gold Mark Press Limited.

- Obiagu, et al. (2022). The Limiting Effects of Inconclusive Gubernatorial Elections towards the Democratic Consolidation of Nigerian State. Brill.com/view journals/fare/aop/article-10.1163-1821889x-bja10008/article-10.1163-1821889x-bja10008.xml.
- Obiefuna, O. (2018). Advancing electronic voting systems in Nigeria's electoral process: Legal challenges and future directions. *Journal of Sustainable Development Law and Policy*, 9(2), 187-219.
- Oforegbu V. (2024, January 30<sup>th</sup>) Personal Communication [Personal Interview].
- Okafor P. (2024, January 24<sup>th</sup>). Personal Communication [Personal Interview].
- Oladimeji I. (2023, December 22<sup>nd</sup>). Personal Communication [Personal Interview].
- Olalekan W. (2019). The Factors determining voter turnouts in presidential elections in Nigeria: Multivariate correlation analysis of the 2019 Presidential election. Nnamdi Azikiwe University Publishers.
- Omotola J. S. & Aiyedogbon (2012). Political Participation and Voter Turnout in Nigeria's 2011 Elections: 2012-Journal-of-African-Elections-VIIInJ-Political-Participation-Voter-turnout-Ngeria's-2011-elections-eisa.pdf.
- Orisadare M. A. (2019). An Assessment of the Role of Women Groups in Women's Political Participation, and Economic Development in Nigeria.
- Ojukwu U. G. & Mbah C. C. (2019). Elections and Democratic Consolidation: A Study of 2019 General Election in Nigeria.
- Peng Y. (2020). What is Public Participation: the definition and frameworks: we solve. App/What-Is-Public-Participation-the-definition-and-two-frameworks.
- Premium Times Nigeria (2023, 5<sup>th</sup> March). Analysis: The trend of low voter turnout continuous in Nigeria [Article]. Retrieved from <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/2023/03/5/Analysis-trend-of-low-voter-turnout-continuous-in-Nigeria/>
- Principles of Public Participation (2023). Retrieved from [https://co-ntelligence.org/cipol\\_publicparticipation.html/](https://co-ntelligence.org/cipol_publicparticipation.html/)
- Principles of Participation (2023) Retrieved from <https://Publicadministration.Un.org/en/Intergovernmental-Support/Committee-of-Experts-On-Public-Administration/Governance-Principles/Addressing-Common-go>.
- Quick S. K. & Bryson J. (2016). Theories of Public Participation in Governance. Public Participation: Principles and Best Practice (International Center for Not-For-Profit-Law LLC). Retrieved from <https://www.icnl.org/wp-content/uploads/Attachment-3-Public-Participation-Principles-and-Best-practice->

[Eng.pdf](#)

Sheri A. (2024, January 15<sup>th</sup>). Personal Communication [Personal Interview].

Solomon O. (2023, December 20<sup>th</sup>). Personal Communication [Personal Interview].

Stockmen D. et al. (2019). Bribes and Ballots: The Impact of Corruption on Voter Turnout in 75 Democracies. *International Political Science Review* 34(1):74-90

Stockmen D. (2017). What Affects Voter Turnout? A review article/meta-analysis of aggregate research *Government and Opposition* 52(4): 698-722.  
<https://cambridge.org/core/journals/government-and-opposition/article/what-affects-voter-turnout-review-articlemeta-analysis-of-aggregate-research/>

Suleiman A. S. (2022). The Impact of Voter Turnout in Conducting Free, and Fair Election: A Case Study of 2019 AMAC Election. Submitted to the Department of Studies, National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS) Abuja.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). <https://www.un.org/>

Visser M. (1998). Five Theories of Voting Action Strategy and Structure of Psychological explanation.

Wakil M. (2022). Political Party Governance: A Practical Guide to Studying Comparative Political Party Governance.

Yakubu (2012). Democracy and Political Apathy in Nigeria (1999-2011). *European Scientific journal* ESJ,8(20).

Zittel T. & Fuchs D. (2021). Participatory Democracy and Political Participation: Can Participatory. Engineering brings citizens back in. Retrieved from [https://3dfestival.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Thomas\\_Zittel-and\\_Dieter\\_Fuchs\\_participatory\\_De.pdf](https://3dfestival.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Thomas_Zittel-and_Dieter_Fuchs_participatory_De.pdf)

## APPENDIX 1

**DEPARTMENT OF STUDIES  
NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR LEGISLATIVE AND DEMOCRATIC  
STUDIES/UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, POST-GRADUATE PROGRAM  
F.C.T ABUJA**

**PROGRAMME: MASTERS IN ELECTIONS AND PARTY POLITICS (MEPP)**

**Dear Respondent,**

I am a post-graduate student of Elections and Party Politics (MEPP), at the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS), Abuja, currently researching the topic; **ASSESSMENT OF VOTERTURNOUT IN THE 2023 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: (A CASE STUDY OF THE BWARI AREA COUNCIL)**. Please, be assured that the information that is being requested here is strictly for academic purposes; hence any information volunteered by you will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

The primary objective of this study was to analyze the factors that influenced voter turnout in the Bwari Area Council during the 2023 presidential election. In line with the foregoing, the specific objectives of the study include;

- (i) Investigate the factors that influenced the number of registered voters and voter turnout in Bwari Area Council during the 2023 Presidential Election.
- (ii) Identify the actual causes of low voter turnout in the 2023 presidential election in the Bwari Area Council.
- (iii) Assess the effectiveness of institutions responsible for voter education in promoting voter registration and voter turnout.
- (iv) Evaluate the impact of logistical, structural, personal, and natural factors on voter turnout in previous presidential elections in the Bwari Area Council.

**Note:** You are not obliged to write your name on the questionnaire.

I sincerely appreciate your encouragement, understanding, and prompt response in completing this questionnaire.

Thank you.

Yours Sincerely,

**Chidi Eugene OGBONNA**

## **APPENDIX II**

### **QUESTIONNAIRE**

#### **ASSESSMENT OF VOTER TURNOUT IN THE 2023 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: (A Case Study of Bwari Area Council)**

##### **Guide to Answering the Questions:**

Please, tick [ ] in the appropriate boxes for open-ended questions as shown below, and list your answers in the space provided.

##### **Section 1: Demographic Information:**

1.1. GENDER: Male [ ] Female [ ]

1.2. AGE: i. 18-30 [ ] ii. 31-40 [ ] iii. 41-50 [ ] iv. 51-60 [ ] v. 61 and above [ ]

1.3. MARITAL STATUS: Single [ ] ii. Married [ ] iii. Divorcee [ ] IV. Widow [ ] v. Others [ ]

1.4. EDUCATIONAL LEVEL: i. Primary school [ ] ii. Secondary school [ ] iii. OND/NCE [ ] IV. B.Sc./HND [ ] v. M.Sc. and above [ ] VI. No formal education [ ]

1.5. OCCUPATION: i. Student [ ] ii. Business [ ] iii. Farming [ ] IV. Civil Servant [ ] v. Others [ ]

##### **Section 2: Voting Behavior:**

2.1. Are you a registered voter? Yes [ ] No [ ]

2.2. Do you have a Permanent Voters Card (PVC)? Yes [ ] No [ ]

2.3. Did you vote in the 2023 presidential election in Nigeria? Yes [ ] No [ ]

2.4. If you voted, please specify the reason(s) for your decision to vote;

- Civic duty [ ]
- Belief in a candidate [ ]

- Influence of family/friends [ ]
- Political party membership/awareness [ ]
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

2.5. If you did not vote, please specify the reason(s) for your decision not to vote.

- Lack of interest in politics [ ]
- Lack of trust in the electoral process [ ]
- Voter suppression/disenfranchisement [ ]
- Logistical issues (e.g., late arrival of poll officials/distance to polling unit) [ ]
- Others (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

2.6. How many times have you voted in a Presidential election since 1999?

- 1-2 times [ ]
- 3-4 times [ ]
- 5-7 times [ ]

### **Section 3: Political Engagement and Awareness**

3.1. How politically engaged do you consider yourself to be?

- Very engaged [ ]
- Somewhat engaged [ ]
- Not very engaged [ ]
- Not at all engaged [ ]

3.2. If very engaged how do you follow the electoral process in Nigeria?

- Television/Radio [ ]
- Newspaper/Social media [ ]
- Friends/Family [ ]
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

3.3. Are you a political party member? Yes [ ] No [ ]

### **Section 4: Logistical, Institutional/Structural, Natural, and Personal Factors**

4.1. Do you consider the following factors to have made it difficult for you to vote on Election Day?

- Late arrival of Poll official [ ]
- Relocation/Migration [ ]
- Involvement in an election duty [ ]
- My vote won't count [ ]
- Technology/Use of BVAS [ ]
- Lack of confidence in INEC [ ]
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

4.2. Do you think the Nigerian electoral laws and regulations as well as democratic institutions such as INEC, Political Parties, the Judiciary, etc. have contributed positively to voter turnout? Yes [ ] No [ ]

4.3. How would you rate the Nigerian electoral laws as well as the performance of INEC, political parties, the judiciary, the National Orientation Agency, and democratic institutions in terms of encouraging voter turnout since 1999? I.0-25% [ ] ii. 30-45% [ ] iii. 50-65% [ ] IV. 70-85% v. 90-100% [ ]

### **APPENDIX III**

#### **DRAFT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

1. What is your assessment of voter turnout in Bwari Area Council during the 2023 presidential election?
2. Considering the incessant declining percentage of voter turnout in the most recent Presidential elections in Bwari Area Council, what do you think is the actual cause of low voter turnout in Bwari Area Council?
3. There is no doubt that Logistical, Institutional/Structural, Natural, and Personal factors play significant roles in presidential elections, in your assessment as a key player in the electoral process, how have these factors influenced voter turnout in Presidential elections in Bwari Area Council in recent times?



4. What challenges have hindered the effectiveness of Institutional/Structural, and Personal factors in Presidential Elections in the Bwari Area Council?
5. How can these challenges be addressed?
6. What is the relationship between voter turnout and government legitimacy in the electoral process?
7. Do you think liberal democracy can flourish in Nigeria without viable voter turnout?
8. How can adequate voter turnout be encouraged in Bwari Area Council?
9. What alternative strategies can resolve some of the challenges hampering adequate citizens' participation in the electoral process, especially in the Bwari Area Council?