

Perceptions of Nigeria's Electoral Brand Image: Evidence from Registered Voters in Benin City

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the perceptions of factors influencing Nigeria's electoral brand image by assessing public perceptions of electoral processes, legal compliance, INEC professionalism, voter registration, electoral materials, and dispute management. Using a quantitative, descriptive cross sectional survey of 400 registered voters across four Local Government Areas in Benin City metropolis, respondents were selected using convenience sampling technique and data were analysed using descriptive statistics. Findings revealed that voter registration, professional conduct and compliance with electoral law influence Nigeria's electoral brand image. However, fairness and peacefulness of electoral campaign, electoral equipment and materials and dispute management demands further improvement to enhance democratic credibility and citizen trust. The study concludes that strengthening institutional integrity, improving the enforcement of electoral laws, and modernizing voter registration systems are essential to enhancing Nigeria's electoral brand image and democratic credibility.

Keywords: Nigeria election, Brand image, Voter Registration, INEC professionalism, fairness and peacefulness of campaign, Electoral Law.

INTRODUCTION

Elections give citizens the opportunity and freedom to choose their leaders and as well influence governance works. In a similar same manner, they also boost civic engagement, political power, and the people's ability to express collaborative preferences in a democracy (Zhizhi & Ibrahim, 2020; Klang & Murray, 2021). Additionally, Mansbridge (2015) observed that elections confer authority to representatives via voting, thereby augmenting accountability and civic engagement in governance. Still on the critical role of election, Katz (2016) posited that credible elections are generally seen as a key indicator of democracy, legitimacy and institutional maturity. Cheibub and Hay (2015) asserted that after cold war multiparty elections expanded globally. Harrison and Boyd (2018) posited that fraud, electoral instability and post-

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election disputes continue to weaken democracy. Over the past few years, the concept of electoral brand image has emerged as a valuable framework for understanding public opinion of electoral credibility and legitimacy (Khamis, Ang & Wellings, 2016). In Nigeria, electoral process have redefine the country's domestic and international image significantly (Ojo, 2014; Hug & Ginsburg, 2017). However the 2023 elections faced technical problems and irregularities despite reforms such as the Electoral Act 2022 and technologies like bimodal voter accreditation system (BVAS) and INEC result viewing portals (IREV) (Ojukwu et al., 2023). Previous studies focused on electoral misconduct and voter behaviour in Nigeria (Uvere & Adiele, 2017; Ezeabasili, 2020; Madukpe et al., 2025). These studies provided some insights into electoral integrity and participation however limited attention has been given to Nigeria's electoral brand image as a holistic construct. Therefore this study seeks to address this gap by examining how key components of electoral conduct influence public perception of Nigeria's electoral credibility. Accordingly, this study seeks to:

- i. ascertain the level of effectiveness of voter registration in Nigeria election brand image.
- ii. examine the fairness and peacefulness of campaign in Nigeria election brand image.
- iii. investigate the quality of electoral equipment and materials in Nigeria election brand image.
- iv. determine the degree of accuracy in publication of election results and management of electoral disputes in Nigeria election brand.
- v. ascertain the level of INEC professionalism in the conduct of Nigerian election.
- vi. examine the level of respect for the electoral law in Nigerian election brand.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Nigeria Election Brand Image

Elections are important processes that promote democracy and help shape how countries are perceived (Dahl, 2015; Titus & Aliyu, 2018). In Nigeria, however, the electoral system has posed challenges that promote the opposite of democracy, unity, and peace (Afolabi & Usman, 2016). Instead of bringing the country together, elections have further divided the country along ethnic, geographic, and religious lines. The violence associated with the Boko Haram and IPOB movements is a post-election violence and dissatisfaction movement, especially following the 2011 and 2015 elections (Afolabi & Usman, 2016).

The peaceful transfer of power and global commendations given to Nigeria during the 2015 general elections was a first operating democracy commendable (Uzuegbunam, 2020). In 2019, Nigeria was operating democracy took a step backward with the general elections. The public trust along with democratic participation was further compromised with the emergence of vote buying, election violence and political disaffection (Igiebor 2023, Jatau, Gabriel, Hassan, & Lere, 2022, Ejikeme, Onyinye, Kingsley, & Rebecca, 2022). INEC's 2019 election delay due to logistical issues has been Nigeria first post-independence election decision to delay the

election and has been criticized from within and outside Nigeria damaging Nigeria diplomacy and raising questions about Nigeria leadership role in Africa (Caleb, Daniel, & Osita, 2020, Odeh & Godwin, 2020). The Nigerian operating democracy image is tarnished and democracy maturity is in question due to the recurrent misconduct and instability in elections. There is need to improve Nigeria international image and the public confidence in Nigeria democracy by improving the integrity of the electoral process.

Voter Registration Process

Voter registration play a pivotal role in Nigeria's democracy however, it faces consistent challenges including public distrust, mismanagement of data and outdated technology. Oguchi and Jooji (2023) noted that many citizens especially in the southeast, believed elections are doctored, thereby resulting to low registration turnout. Ibeanu (2023) posited that the integrity of voter registration is jeopardized as a result of underage registration, duplicate entries and outdated technology. Okide, Amulu and Alozie (2021) opined that update for relocation of voters was further compound by centralized databases, inefficiency from corruption and weak infrastructure (Maduekwe, Okonkwo & Nwankwo, 2017; Akpan & Adagba, 2018).

Ezeani (2020) proposed reforms in terms of more online registration, and biometric smart cards to aid verification of qualified voters. Elgujja (2021) observed that while interest is growing in the advocacy for the inclusion of the diaspora, legal constraints still prevent voting for Nigerians abroad. Ibeanu (2023) stated that experts recommend the integration of biometric systems with the National ID database. To improve trust, Oguchi and Jooji (2023) suggested the enhancement of civic education. The importance of registration in the confidence of the electorate as well as the democracy is apparent, (Onyenweuwa & Ajie, 2019; Matasick, Alfonsi & Bellantoni, 2020). The system's integrity for future elections is the culmination of digital advancements, legal reforms, and the mobilization of the citizenry (Inglehart & Norris, 2016; Obiefuna- Oguejiofor, 2018)

Fairness and Peaceful Campaigning in Elections

The essence of fairness and peaceful campaign in democracy cannot be over emphasized (Kumlin, 2016). A fair campaign make certain that all contestants have equal access to media and public spaces, transparent financing and no misappropriation of state resources.it also demands stringent adherence to electoral laws and codes of conduct (Pearce Leanela, Alihodzic, Spinelli & Wolf, 2021)

Concha Cantu, Lara Otaola, and Orozco Henriquez (2021) posited that peaceful campaigning reiterate free violence, regards for opponents and the avoidance of hate speech or intimidation Recent elections have highlighted the importance of these principles (Douglas,Uscinski, Sutton, Cichocka, Nefes, Ang, & Deravi, 2019). Brickhill (2018) asserted that Abuja Peace Accord was introduced to reduce violence and encourage constructive dialogue.the goal of the agreements is to foster non- violence behavior among contestants and promote inter party dialogue. However, Oyigebe, Modu and Hamza (2024) noted that the success of such accords is often affected by the identities, ideologys and motivations of political gladiators, which are

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influenced by the complexity of Nigeria's socio political environment. Banbury (2023) asserted that Nigeria's 2023 general election was characterised by widespread vote buying, as well as monetization of primaries which raised concerns about fairness and transparency. Similarly Koralage (2024) asserted that during Sri Lanka's 2024 Presidential race, more than 96 violations were documented in just one day ranging from arson to misuse of state resources, sparking renewed demands for more effective implementation measure

Electoral Equipment and Materials

Electoral equipment such as ballot papers, biometric tools, and voter registers plays a key role in enhancing credible elections in Nigeria (Egwu, 2022). Yakubu (2023) posited that electoral Act 2022 has improved INEC acquisition and distribution of electoral materials as a result of domestic production of it for 2023 elections. Agboke (2025) argued that technological tools, such as BVAS and IVED have strengthened voter authentication and reduced electoral fraud.

Beliaieva (2019) observed that the used of Artificial Intelligence (AI) by INEC to audit registers and monitor data is expected to enhance transparency and minimise errors. However, issue like poor logistics, inadequate staff training and security risk persist. It is believed that adoption of electronic voting technologies (EVTs) will curb fraud and boost participation, but concern about security and legal preparation subsist (Obiefuna-oguejiofor, 2017, Maphunye, 2019; Uzedhe & Okhaifoh, 2016). Agunyai, ojokorotu and Folusho (2023) opined that digital systems could enhance trust and engagement, Omolaye (2023) maintained that Nigeria's legal framework must be reformed to back their effective use.

Publication of Election Results and Management of Electoral Disputes

It is important that election results are posted for the purpose of public trust, fairness and accountability in democracy. The INEC in Nigeria used an IReV portal and an ERAD dashboard to post results and enable access to the public in real-time which helps to reduce misinformation (Pawelec, 2022; Yakubu, 2022). Disputes and issues, according to the public, are still systemic weaknesses that contribute to a decline in public confidence, despite the allegations against opposition claims of tampering and disregard for the rules of process (Ifejika, 2023).

Lack of effectiveness, delayed and controversial judgements by the judiciary have caused distrust in the process Izuogu, 2025; Yiaga Africa, 2025). During the pre-election nomination process, there were candidate disqualifications and altercations, especially in the states of Rivers and Zamfara (NILD, 2020). While the 2015 presidential election was a reflection of the people's power, the 2023 election disputes and elite manipulation, due to the technical breakdown of the BVAS, were reported (Eze & Onuegbu, 2023; Madueke & Enyiazu, 2024). The Nigeria democracy consolidation process benefits from a focus on institutional stability, unbiased judicial process, and efficient management of election results (Ebenezer, 2014).

INEC Professionalism in Conduct of Election

The conduct of elections in Nigeria by Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) has been a subject of scrutiny as a result of challenges experienced in various electoral cycles. According to Tsuwa and Agaigbe (2022), the 2019 elections revealed some substantial operational

challenges, which include insufficient personnel and logistic difficulties which eventually obstruct INEC capacity in delivering free and fair elections. However Banjo (2023) opined that there is notable improvement in 2023 general elections that makes numerous observers to commend INEC for its efforts, which serve as a sign of a potential paradigm shift in handling electoral matters however this does not left out issues of corruption and not adherence to electoral rules and regulation. Madueke and Eyiazu (2024) asserted that INEC must address these challenges to enhance its credibility. Furthermore, Bawul, Kente and Akase (2025) opined that the perception of public on INEC media interaction can enhance trust in the electoral process. While progress has been made, continuous efforts are necessary to institutionalize professionalism in Nigeria's electoral management.

Electoral Law

The electoral legislation of Nigeria is governed by 1999 Constitution while the election is anchored on electoral Act 2022. The Act enforced leads to improvements like biometric accreditation and transmission of result electronically to enhance transparency (Yusuf, 2022). However Adebayo and Ojo (2021) asserted that the execution has not been equal as a result of logistical and political challenges. Ohion (2014) opined that legal safeguards are welcome development, but the issue of vote buying, violence and judicial partiality undermine trust. Despite this advancement, INEC's trustworthiness is still questioned (Jega 2019). Experts advocate for civic education and institutional reform to support legal changes (Olorunmola, 2020; Sulaiman, 2023). Oyinye, Olatinwo and Damola (2023) posited that the intention of introducing the Act is to curb malpractices but inadequate implementation subsists. Previous elections revealed irregularities, emphasizing the necessity for accountability (Iosr et al., 2015; Ihugba & Alfred, 2019). Without holistic reform, the legality of democracy remains fragile (Owen & Smith, 2015)

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual model highlights the determinants of electoral brand image (See Figure. 1 for the contents). The determinants identified from the literature and evaluated in this study are: voter registration process, fairness and peaceful campaigns, electoral equipment and materials, result publication and management of electoral disputes, INEC staff professionalism, and adherence to electoral laws.

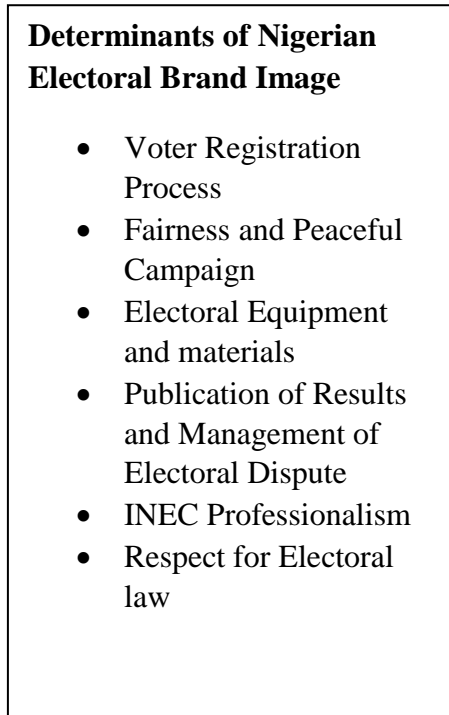


Figure 1: Determinants of Nigerian Electoral Brand Image

Source: Authors' Conceptualization (2025)

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is anchored on institutional theory propounded by John W. Meyer and Brian Rowan in 1977. The theory described how organisations and institutions obtain legitimacy and public acceptance through conformity to existing rules, socially accepted structure, regulatory frameworks, norms and practices to gain credibility and stability.

Considering election brand image, all stakeholders' institution like government, INEC, judiciary and political parties are expected to conform to these standards to earn public trust and electoral credibility. When electoral procedures such as voter registration, campaign rules, availability of electoral equipment and materials, publication of election results, and effective management of election disputes are conducted according to the established institutional norms, citizens are more likely to consider the process as transparent and credible. However, anything contrary to this will be regarded as fraud and injustice which will eventually tarnish election brand image.

Empirical Review

Ojukwu, Okeke and Nwankwo (2023) examined electoral technology and the credibility of the 2023 general elections in Nigeria. The paper aimed to investigate how use of electoral technologies such BVAS and IREV influenced the credibility and public perception of the 2023 general elections in Nigeria. The population of the study was the registered voters and electoral stakeholders involved in the 2023 elections while the sample size is 400 respondents choosing from different voting locations. The study utilized survey research design using questionnaires and descriptive statistical analysis. The findings revealed that electoral technologies improved voter verification and transparency however technical challenges and delays in result transmission reduced citizens trust in the electoral process. The study recommended INEC to improve on electoral technologies and adequate training for officials.

Tsokwa and Nwanegbo (2024) investigated the impact of the 2022 electoral reform on the credibility of the 2023 general elections in Nigeria. The study examined the influence of electoral Act 2022 and technologies on credibility and transparency of the 2023 general elections in Nigeria. The population of the study was political stakeholders. Secondary data were retrieved from electoral report, journal publications, policy documents and election observation reports. The study used descriptive research method and found that electoral Act 2022 introduced reforms such as biometric voter accreditation and electronic transmission of results, although challenges subsist which include non-compliance with electoral procedures, logistic problems and delay in result transmission. The study recommended independence of the electoral institutions, training for officials and compliance with electoral law.

METHODOLOGY

This study used cross sectional descriptive research approach to evaluate the image of Nigerian electoral brand. The total population of registered voters in the four Local Government Areas in the Benin City metropolis: Egor, Ikpobal Okha, Oredo and Ovia North East according to Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC, 2023) includes: 1,168,396. The Yamane Formula was used to calculate a sample size of 400 respondents with a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error, See the formula below:

Yamane's (1964) formula:
$$n = \frac{N}{1+Ne^2}$$

A standardized questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale was used to collect primary data, which measured critical variables such as voter registration, campaign fairness, electoral materials, result publication and dispute resolution, INEC professionalism, and adherence to electoral regulations. The questionnaire was equally distributed proportionally across the selected Local Government Areas. To ensure high response rate of response the instrument was personally administered by the researchers.

The instrument's validity was verified through content and face validity, which involved putting the questionnaire to expert review and verifying item clarity and relevance, while constructs were altered from existing literature to improve measurement accuracy. A pilot study was

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conducted to confirm reliability of the instruments using Cronbach's Alpha, and all variables achieved values more than the acceptable threshold of 0.70, showing strong internal consistency (See Table 1 for details).

Table1: Reliability Results

S/N	Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach alpha value
1	Voter Registration, counting of vote and publication of result	6-8 (3)	0.702
2	Fairness and Peacefulness of Election Campaign	9-11 (3)	0.742
3	Election Equipment and Materials	12-14 (3)	0.859
4	Publication of Result and Management of Election Dispute	15-17 (3)	0.907
5	INEC Staffing and Staff Professionalism	18-20(3)	0.800
6	Respect for Electoral Law	21-23 (3)	0.830

Source: Authors' fieldwork (2025)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

All 400 copies of questionnaire distributed were returned and deemed usable, resulting in a 100% response rate. This high response rate was achieved because the researchers personally administered the questionnaire.

Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Demographic Characteristics	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	178	44.5
	Female	222	55.5
	Total	400	100
Age	18-27years	149	37.2
	28-37 years	88	22.0
	38-47 years	107	26.8
	48 years and Above	56	14.0
	Total	400	100
Marital Status	Single	200	50.0
	Married	185	46.2

	Others	13	3.2
	Missing Value	2	0.4
	Total	398	100
Religion	Christianity	375	93.8
	Islam	21	5.2
	Traditional	4	1.0
	Total	400	100
Educational Status	Primary	12	3.0
	Secondary	53	13.2
	Tertiary	333	83.2
	Missing Values	2	0.5
	Total	400	100

Source: Authors' field work (2025)

The survey sample was predominantly female (55.5%), with males making up 44.5%, potentially influencing the perspectives shared. Most respondents were young adults, with 37.2% aged 18–27, followed by 28–37 (22%), 38–47 (26.8%), and those over 48 (14%). Marital status was fairly balanced: 50% single, 46.2% married, and 3.2% in other categories, with 0.4% missing data. A vast majority (93.8%) identified as Christian, while 5.2% were Muslim and 1% practiced traditional beliefs, reflecting dominant cultural influences. Educationally, the group was well-informed, with 83.2% holding tertiary qualifications, and smaller proportions having secondary (13.2%) or primary education (3%).

Table 3: Description of the Determinants of Nigerian Electoral Brand Image

S/N	Statement	Mean	Std Dev
Voters Registration Process			
1	Voters registration were properly carried out	3.38	1.351
2	Counting of vote were done at the polling units	3.75	1.171
3	The vote counted at the polling units reflected the outcome of result announced	2.14	1.316
	Overall Mean and Standard Deviation for Voter Registration Process	3.09	1.279
Fairness and Peacefulness of Electoral Campaign			
4	There were fairness and same level playing ground for all parties to carry out their electoral campaign	3.02	1.426

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S/N	Statement	Mean	Std Dev
5	Parties campaign were free of violence	2.93	1.3635
6	Electoral Campaign were devoid of inciting statement	2.58	1.217
	Overall mean and standard deviation for Fairness and Peaceful Campaign	2.84	1.335
Election Equipment and Materials			
7	The equipment for conducting election were adequate & perfectly in working condition	2.92	1.328
8	The equipment and materials were adequately provided and made available at every polling units	3.24	1.287
9	There were no missing, hijacking or destruction of materials	2.38	1.319
	Overall mean and standard deviation for Election Equipment and Materials	2.847	1.311
Publication of Result and Management of Election Dispute			
10	Result was properly published using the right channel and announced at the right time	2.62	1.430
11	INEC as the umpire were not biased	2.04	1.244
12	Electoral disputes were properly and promptly managed	2.55	1.242
	Overall mean and standard deviation for publication of result and management of election dispute	2.40	1.305
INEC Staff Professionalism			
13	Electoral officials were professional in their conduct	2.97	1.330
14	INEC releases timetable at the right time	3.40	1.226
15	The election processes were carried out according to the timetable	3.38	1.217
	Overall mean and standard deviation for INEC staff professionalism	3.25	1.258
Respect for Electoral Law			
16	Parties primary were conducted in accordance with electoral law	3.34	1.221
17	Election was properly conducted according to the electoral law and there were no rigging and vote buying	1.96	1.236

S/N	Statement	Mean	Std Dev
18	Both local and international observers were allowed to monitor election	3.20	1.350
	Overall mean and standard deviation for respect for electoral law	2.83	1.269

Source: Authors' field work (2025)

The voter registration process has a mean score of 3.09, indicating a neutral to somewhat favorable assessment of the process effectiveness, however the standard deviation (1.279) reveals significant range in respondents' views. The fairness and peacefulness of electoral campaigns had a mean of 2.84, showing impressions of neutrality or slight disagreement, while the standard deviation (1.335) suggests significant variance in perspectives. Likewise, the availability of voting equipment and materials resulted in a mean of 2.847, revealing neutrality or moderate dissatisfaction, while the standard deviation (1.311) showed different view among respondents. The release of election results and the resolution of electoral disputes had the least mean (2.40), indicating widespread dissatisfaction, while the standard deviation (1.305) indicates varying perspectives.

Conversely, INEC staff professionalism had a mean of 3.25, showing a satisfactory view, with a standard deviation (1.258) indicating generally consistent responses. Finally, respect for electoral laws had a mean of 2.83, shows modest compliance, while the standard deviation (1.269) indicates respondents' differing opinion.

Table 4: The Overall Image of the Nigerian Electoral Brand

S/N	Image of the Nigerian Electoral Brand	Mean
1	Voter Registration Process	3.09
2	Fairness and Peaceful Campaign	2.84
3	Election Equipment and Materials	2.847
4	Publication of result and management of election dispute	2.40
5	INEC staff professionalism	3.25
6	Respect for electoral law	2.83
	Overall image of the Nigerian electoral brand	2.88

Source: Authors' field work (2025)

The results on Table 4 succinctly showed that the overall reputation of the Nigerian electoral brand is slightly poor, below average at mean perception of 2.88.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study show that voters' perceptions of Nigeria's electoral brand image are shaped by several key aspects of the electoral process, including voter registration, campaign

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conduct, electoral materials, result management, INEC professionalism, and adherence to electoral laws. Generally, the results suggest that while some progress has been made, there are still noticeable gaps that affect public confidence in the system.

Voter registration recorded a moderate mean score 3.09 (SD = 1.279), indicating that respondents perceive the process as somewhat effective, though not without challenges. This finding is consistent with Oguchi and Jooji (2023) and Ibeanu (2023), who identified persistent issues such as outdated technology, duplicate registrations and public distrust in the voter registration system. This suggests that while reforms have been introduced, their impact has not been fully felt by the electorate.

In terms of campaign fairness and peacefulness, the findings reveal (mean = 2.84; SD = 1.335) moderate dissatisfaction among respondents. This aligns with Banbury (2023) and Oyigebe et al. (2024), who reported widespread concerns about vote buying, monetization of politics, and unequal campaign opportunities. These issues undermine the credibility of elections and weaken public trust, as elections are expected to provide a fair and level playing field for all political actors.

Similarly, electoral equipment and materials were rated as moderately adequate (mean = 2.847; SD = 1.311), reflecting mixed perceptions among respondents. This finding supports Agboke (2025), who noted improvements in electoral technologies such as BVAS, but also aligns with Bieliaieva (2019), who emphasized that logistical challenges, inadequate training, and operational inefficiencies continue to affect the effectiveness of such technologies. This indicates that technological advancement alone is insufficient without proper implementation and support systems.

The lowest ratings were recorded for result publication and dispute management, indicating a high level of public skepticism (means = 2.40; SD = 1.305) regarding transparency and fairness in this area. This finding is in line with Ifejika (2023), who highlighted concerns over result manipulation and lack of transparency, as well as Izuogu (2025), who pointed to delays and inconsistencies in judicial processes as key contributors to declining public confidence. These challenges suggest that the post-election phase remains a critical weakness in Nigeria's electoral system.

On a more positive note, INEC staff professionalism received relatively higher ratings (mean = 3.25; SD = 1.258), suggesting some level of public confidence in the conduct of electoral officials. This finding supports Banjo (2023), who observed improvements in INEC's performance during recent elections, and Bawul et al. (2025), who emphasized the importance of institutional communication and professionalism in building public trust. However, the moderate nature of this rating indicates that further improvements are still required.

Respect for electoral laws was also perceived at a moderate level (mean = 2.83; SD = 1.269), reflecting mixed opinions among respondents. This is consistent with Yusuf (2022), who acknowledged improvements in electoral legal frameworks, and Oyinye et al. (2023), who argued that weak enforcement and selective compliance continue to undermine the effectiveness of these laws. This suggests that while legal provisions exist, their practical

implementation remains a challenge. This findings reinforce the view that Nigeria's electoral brand image is shaped by both progress and persistent shortcomings within the electoral system. The study highlights that improvements in one aspect of the process are not sufficient to guarantee public trust if other areas continue to fall short.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study provides more detailed understanding of how voters perceive various elements influencing Nigeria's electoral brand image. The findings revealed that there have been an improvements in some areas like voter registration and the conduct of electoral officials, although these are not strong enough to put total confidence in the electoral system. However campaign fairness, the handling of electoral results and dispute management indicates negative perceptions among voters. One essential insight taken from this study is that trust in elections is not determined through a single factor but influenced by how well various aspect of electoral process work as a synergy. This means that some areas perform relatively well but deficiency in other aspects can minimize overall confidence. This shows that improvement in Nigeria's electoral image demands more than isolated reforms it requires consistency, transparency and accountability across the entire process

In reality, strengthening Nigeria's electoral brand image will rely on how effectively institutions can implement electoral laws, ensuring fairness in political rivalry and management of election result in a way that is perceived credible by the citizens. When voters sees the electoral procedures as transparent and fair, it will not only enhance trust but also increase democratic participation and legitimacy. This research enhances understanding that Nigeria's electoral credibility is strongly linked to public perception. Therefore, addressing the identified gaps is essential to fostering a more reliable and trustworthy electoral system.

The recommendations of this study are drawn directly from the areas where respondents expressed concerns in the findings. First, given the moderate rating of voter registration (mean = 3.09), INEC should strengthen the reliability of the voter registration system by improving data verification processes, regularly updating the voter register, and expanding access to digital registration platforms. This will help address issues of duplication, outdated records, and public distrust observed in the study.

Second, in response to the low perception of campaign fairness and peacefulness (mean = 2.84), electoral regulatory bodies and security agencies should enforce stricter monitoring of campaign activities. This includes imposing sanctions on political parties involved in vote buying, hate speech, and electoral violence, as well as ensuring equal access to media platforms for all contestants.

Third, considering the moderate dissatisfaction with electoral equipment and materials (mean = 2.85), INEC should improve logistical planning by ensuring timely distribution, proper testing, and adequate backup of electoral technologies such as BVAS. Special attention should be given to training ad hoc staff on the use of these technologies to minimize operational failures on election day.

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Furthermore, the very low rating of result publication and dispute management (mean = 2.40) suggests an urgent need for greater transparency in the post-election process. INEC should ensure real-time electronic transmission of results from polling units and make result portals fully functional and accessible. In addition, electoral dispute resolution mechanisms should be strengthened through faster judicial processes and clearer communication of decisions to the public.

In relation to INEC professionalism (mean = 3.25), although relatively positive, continuous capacity building and performance monitoring should be institutionalized to sustain and improve current standards. Finally, given the moderate perception of compliance with electoral laws (mean = 2.83), there is a need for stricter enforcement of electoral regulations, particularly in areas relating to vote buying and campaign financing, alongside intensified voter education to improve public awareness and accountability. Jointly implementing these targeted measures will address the specific weaknesses identified in the study and contribute to improving public confidence and the overall credibility of Nigeria's electoral process.

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