

A Comparative Study of the Interconnectedness of Religion and Politics in Northern and Southern Nigeria: The Role of Literacy Level

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ABSTRACT

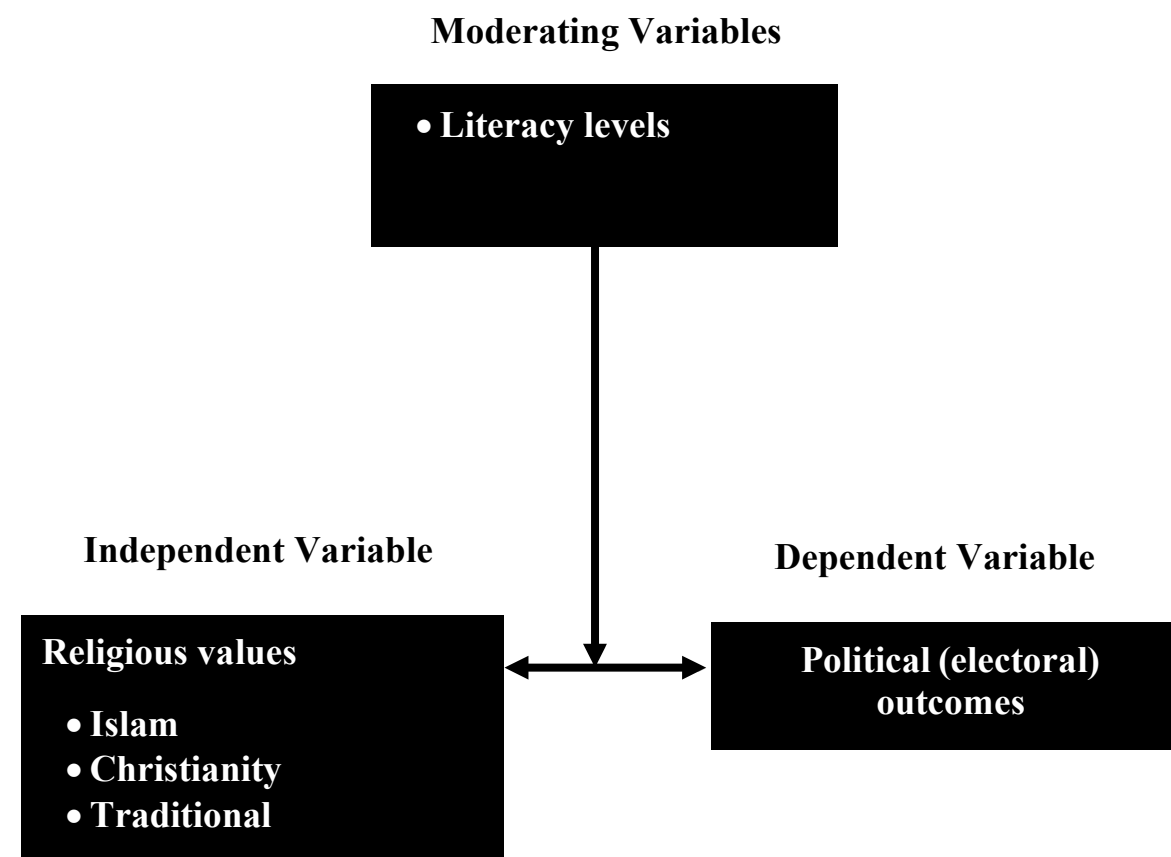
Although research on the determinants of political outcomes has been a subject of debate for many decades and perhaps centuries, findings are often awash with nuances and not on par with realities at the regional level. There are more questions arising from dynamics in the societies, related to political campaigning and social movements at the regional level. Consequently, this project aims to examine the independent and mediating effects of religion and literacy levels on voters' decision and electoral outcomes at regional levels amongst female voters in Nigeria. A mixed-method approach is adopted to ameliorate any contradictions between qualitative and quantitative findings. Early findings of this research suggest a battery of issues ranging from divergence in perceptions of religious issues; poor attitude to political outcomes; a weak awareness of political issues; and an underdeveloped attention is paid to gender imbalances in politics.

Keywords: Political Outcomes; Religion; Politics; Northern and Southern Nigeria; Gender; Literacy Level

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The research sets out to contribute to the literature on the determinants of *political outcomes* regarding *Christianity and Islam* and it seeks to achieve the following purpose:

- “To investigate how political outcomes are influenced by religion in Nigeria and to ascertain whether the differences inherent within the South and the North is informed by a depth of religion and literacy levels”.
- To investigate the general and disparate influences of religion on the electoral process at the regional levels amongst female voters in Nigeria.
- To examine the independent and mediating effects of religion and literacy levels on voters' decision and their roles in the current Nigerian political setup.
- To evaluate religious diversity and the advancement of political goals.
- To discuss relevant literature on religion and its significance as a mechanism for political outcomes.
- To highlight the policy implications of the research findings; and
- To make recommendations that boost the understanding of how religion and literacy level can lead to political outcomes that translate to sustainable development for developing countries.

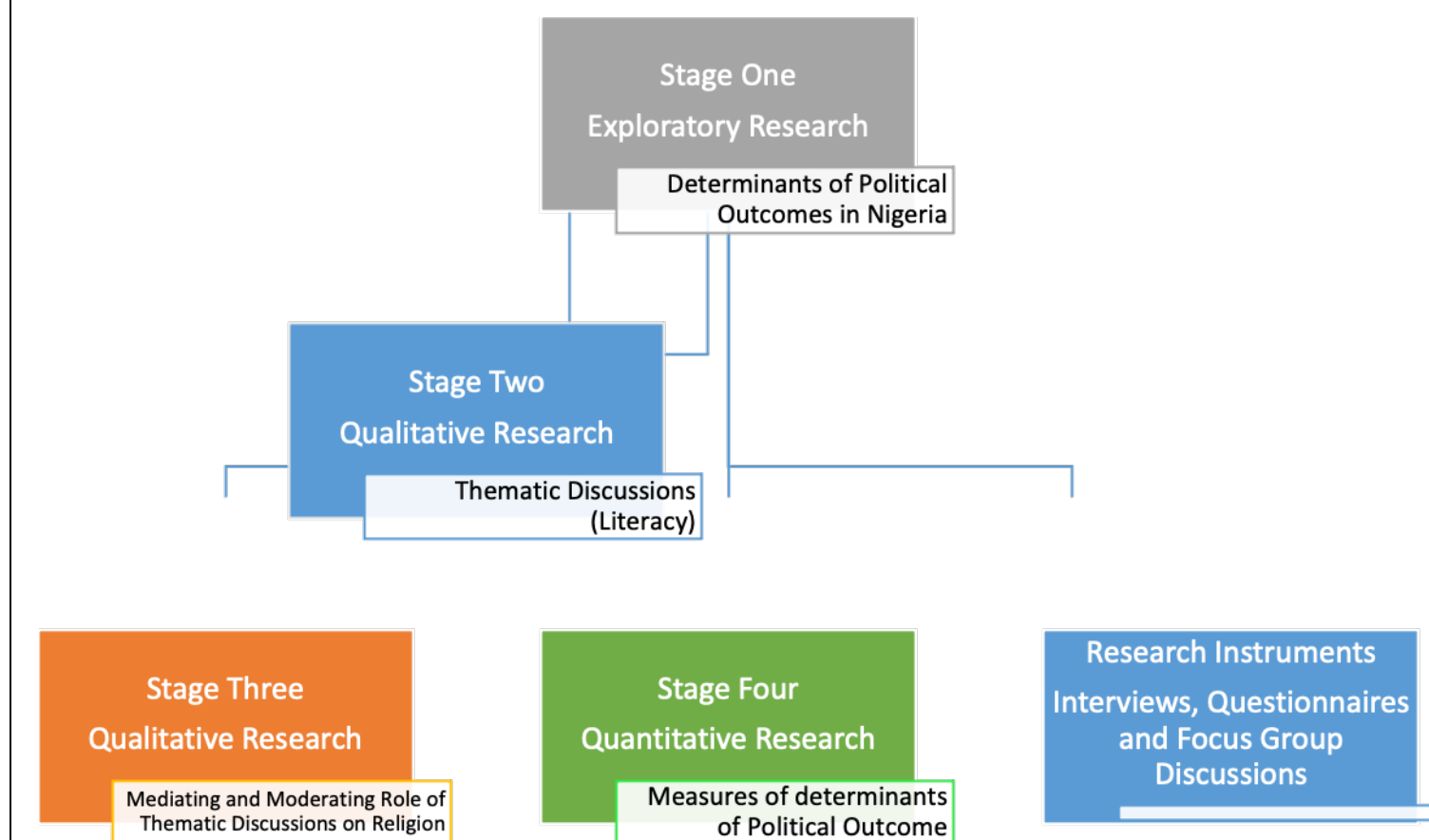


SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Geopolitical zone	Location	Selected State	State Governors' Political Party
North-East	North of the Niger	-	-
North-West		Kano	APC
		Kaduna	APC
North-Central		Kwara	APC
South-East	South of the Niger	Abia	PDP
South-South		Enugu	PDP
South-West		Edo	PDP
		-	-

Due to considerations of time and financial resources, three states in the first cohort (Abuja, Kano, and Kaduna), and three states in the second group (Abia, Anambra, and Edo) will be the main data collection groups. All respondents to the study are politically active.

RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODS



CURRENT KNOWLEDGE AND GAPS (1)

- Although research on the determinants of political outcomes has been a subject of debate for many decades and perhaps centuries, findings are often awash with nuances and not on par with realities at the regional level.
- More questions are arising from dynamics in the societies, related to political campaigning and social movements at the regional level; how political outcomes get driven by interactions with religious groups and interests; as well as the position of traditional religions in a developing country like Nigeria.
- The perception of religion by the government in Nigeria is mostly a tool for political mobilization. This has been a recurring key indicator in Nigeria's successive elections.
- However, there appear to be fragments of disparities in degrees of influence of religion on political activities at the regional levels.

CURRENT KNOWLEDGE AND GAPS (2)

- Most research conducted on this subject consider the general outlook of the influence of religion over political participation and electoral outcomes, but the outcomes of this research may not paint a true picture of the deeper contexts.
- This project aims to examine the independent and mediating effects of
 - religion and literacy levels on voters' decisions and
 - electoral outcomes at regional levels amongst female voters in Nigeria.
- A mixed-method approach will be adopted to ameliorate any contradictions between qualitative and quantitative findings, whilst also embedding the findings of this research in the experience of participants and stakeholders considered in the research.
- The findings of this research will contribute to academic debate and help understand the political dimensions of Nigeria's democracy and policymaking.

REFERENCE TO IMAGES USED

1. Bournemouth University (2016). Islamic Awareness Week. Accessed on 20.11.2021 at <https://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/news/2016-03-04/islamic-awareness-week>
2. Croitoru, M. (2021). Faith in veganism: Is eating meat unchristian? Accessed on 20.11.2021 at <https://buzz.bournemouth.ac.uk/2021/03/faith-in-veganism-is-eating-meat-unchristian/>