

An Assessment of Hate Speech as a Factor against Democratic Development in Abia State, Nigeria

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<p>Corresponding Author Dr. Dennis, Ugochukwu Omeonu</p> <p>Department of Mass Communication, Abia State University</p> <p>Article History</p> <p>Received: 13 / 03/ 2025</p> <p>Accepted: 28 / 03/ 2025</p> <p>Published: 01 / 04/ 2025</p>	<p>Abstract: This study x-rayed an assessment of hate speech as a factor against democratic development in Abia State, Nigeria. The study's primary goal was to unravel An Assessment of Hate Speech as a Factor against Democratic Development in Abia State, Nigeria. Its specific goals were to determine the extent to which hate speech campaigns impact Nigeria's democratic development and to identify the issues related to the use of hate speeches in the country's democratic process. Stimulus Response Theory served as the foundation for the investigation. The survey research method was used in the study, and a questionnaire was used to collect data. In a population of 1,932,892, 501 people made up the sample size. The study used a multi-stage sampling technique. The main conclusions showed that issues with hate speech in Nigeria's political process include things like violence, murdering, seizing vote boxes, and mistreatment of individuals or groups based on their nationality, tribe, cultural heritage, or language ties. It was determined that the enormous volume of hate speech that occurs in Nigeria before to, during, and following elections encourages minority group marginalization and murders. Additionally, the electoral commission ought to remind politicians and political parties of Sections 95 and 102 of the 2010 Electoral Act, which forbid hate speech and prescribe penalties for any caught candidates or political parties. In Nigeria's democratic process, this will lessen the prevalence of hate speech.</p> <p>Keywords: Assessment, Hate Speech, Factor, Democratic, Development.</p>
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Introduction

Over the years, the making of negative statements especially before, during and after elections in democratic societies have given room for division, instead of unification. This is because, words are powerful as those who utter them. According to Adibe (2015), hate speeches are negative statements that can undermine democratic processes like issue-based campaigns, free and fair elections, honesty, good representation, and equality before the law. They can also result in violence, low voter turnout on election day, animosity between political groups, and ballot box snatching. According to him, hate speech uses derogatory terms to stigmatize and disparage people based on their sexual orientation, gender, race, ethnicity, or other group affiliations. It includes any words, gestures, actions, writing, or displays that have the potential to provoke violence or discriminatory behavior.

He emphasized that some people and organizations in Nigeria openly enjoy the opportunity to disparage and defame others by taking on the persona as religious and ethnic defenders. It is unlikely that there would be hate-motivated violent attacks on any group without hate speech and the hatred it expresses, he says, adding that hate speech is frequently the starting point for discrimination, harassment, and violence as well as a prelude to gravely damaging criminal acts.

However, Igwebuike (2016, p.4) points out that a number of international statutes with relevant provisions have been passed due to the detrimental impacts of hate speech on the advancement of democracy. He references the Nigerian government's July 1993 ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which declares that it is illegal to promote national, racial, or religious hate in a way that incites discrimination, hostility, or violence. He continues by saying that Article 4 of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) permits states to make it illegal to spread ideas that incite hatred or racial superiority against any race, group, or person of a different color or ethnic origin. These anti-hate speech legislation have been domesticated and may be found in the statute books of many nations, including those in Africa, in a variety of forms. For instance, the South African constitution expressly excludes hate speech, incitement to violence, and propaganda for war from the protection of free speech. No one is allowed to publish, disseminate, advocate, or communicate anything that could be interpreted as clearly demonstrating a clear intention to be hurtful, harmful, or to incite harm and promote or propagate hatred against any individual on the basis of one or more of the prohibited grounds, according to the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, 2000 (Madukwe, 2018).

Prior to the resurgence of hate speech in Nigeria's democratic process, attempts had been made by the nation's legislature to nip it in the bud. These attempts can be seen in the Electoral Act of 2010 which contains provisions specifically prohibiting politically motivated hate speeches. Section 95 of the Act provides that, "no political campaign or slogan tainted with abusive languages or insinuation or innuendos designed or likely to provoke violent reaction, emotions shall be employed in the political campaigns".

Section 102 of the same electoral Act further states that:

"any candidate, person or association who engages in campaign or broadcasting based on religious, tribal or sectional reason for the purpose of promoting or opposing a particular political party or the election of a particular candidate, is guilty of an offence under this Act and on conviction shall be liable to maximum fine of one million naira or imprisonment for twelve months or both"

Despite these laws against hate speeches, the electoral process in Nigeria has witnessed a high level use of hate speech. Okafor (2015), observes that politicians exploited these sentiments to shore up their political chances without minding the danger they pose to peaceful co-existence as a nation, thereby creating room for electoral violence. He further points out that hate speech is one of the causes of electoral violence and that electoral violence could be regarded as election motivated crisis employed to alter, change or influence by force or by coercion, the electoral behaviour of voters and possibly reverse electoral position in favour of a particular individual, group or political party. This, he states, may also include intimidation of voters, ballot box stuffing and snatching, multiple thumb printing, killing and kidnapping as well as other riotous protests in the society.

The effects of hate speech on the nation, its citizenry and the electoral process can be deduced from the postulations of Kukah's (2015) position and Adibe's (2015) view that hate speech leads to violence, hatred, character assassination, rebellion, betrayal amongst the people, killing, kidnapping and ballot box snatching, thereby affecting democratic development in the society. These negative effects of hate speeches are antithetical to democratic practice and sustainability which Almond italics, (2008), notes offers the citizens a number of basic civil and political rights and in which their most important political leaders are selected in free and fair elections and are accountable under a rule of law. The essential idea of democracy, he adds, is that people have the right to determine who governs them in a fair and free manner.

The questions are: are democratic development and sustainability possible under a free rein of hate speeches? What are the short term, medium term and long term implications of the prejudices created by hate speeches in Nigeria's electoral process? Is it possible to stop or minimise hate speeches in the nation's democratic process? This study, therefore, examines the sociological implications of hate speeches campaigns and their influences on the electoral process in Nigeria. Within the scope of this study, the researcher will limit his work to Abia State.

Statement of the Problem

There is a dearth of literature on the effects of hate speech on democracies in developing nations like Nigeria. However, the body polity has been defined by hate speech. Hatred has grown to

the point where Nigeria has seen a period of quit notices and counter-quit notices. While scholars (Iredia, 2007, Dare, 2012, and Igwebuike 2016) have studied several facets of Nigerian democracy, the impact of hate speech campaigns on the country's political process has received less attention. Researchers have also focused less on the challenges related to the use of hate speech in Nigeria's democratic process and the impact of hate speech on these processes. Furthermore, little emphasis has been placed on how to combat hate speech and how much hate speech campaigns impact Nigeria's democratic growth.

Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to do an assessment of hate speech, as a limiting factor for democratic development in Abia State, Nigeria. Therefore, the particular goals were to determine the issues related to the use of hate speech in Nigeria's democratic process;

Determine the degree to which hate speech campaigns impact Nigeria's democratic growth.

Research Questions

- What issues arise from hate speech being used in Nigeria's democratic process?
- To what extent do hate speech campaigns affect democratic development in Nigeria?

Literature Review

Problems of Hate Speech on Democratic Development

Fischer (2002) revealed that pre- and post-election violence caused by hate speech may have an impact on the following manifestations of election violence: Ezeibe (2015) revealed that electoral violence is the greatest consequence or problem of hate speech that militates against democratic development. Other predictors of democratic development include the supremacy of the constitution, periodic and free and fair elections, equality before the law, separation of powers, and the rule of law.

- Pre- election day violence (it occur during registration period and can lead to massive disenfranchisement of voters due to psychological fear);
- Campaign violence (it is during this period that major political meeting and rallies are held. This period is a prominent stage with high tendency for electoral violence);
- Election day violence (it manifests in the forms of burning of election offices and material including ballot boxes and papers, intimidation of voters, snatching of ballot boxes, rigging and diversion of election materials;
- Post-election day violence (violence can also occur hours and days after elections. This can emanate from dispute over election results and the inability of judiciary system to handle election dispute fairly. The manner in which election result are announced might also lead to electoral violence

Straus & Taylor (2012), examined African national elections from 1990 to 2008 and observed that 10 percent of the elections involved the highest level of violence and a further 10 percent involved substantial, though lower violence. Another 38 percent had limited violence and 42 percent had no substantial violence.

Nigeria's political history is notable for being extremely unstable. From the pre-colonial period through the First, Second,

and Third Republics until the Fourth Republic in 1999, electoral violence has existed in Nigeria. Since violence is a common way to acquire and hold onto power, it has actually become a feature of elections, impeding the development of democratic institutions, norms, and processes. Similar to the spread of tiny guns, hate speech sales in Nigeria contribute to the country's intolerance and election violence. We saw that Nigerian electoral violence includes killings, looting, property damage, and destruction; assaults and threats of death; bombings; violent street protests and hooliganism; arbitrary arrests and detentions without a warrant; combat between political parties; and arbitrary detentions and arrests without a warrant. Nigerian democracy is at danger due to these manifestations.

In Nigeria, ethnicity and electoral fraud are positively correlated with electoral violence. Because successive political generations in Nigeria believe that politics is a profitable business, electoral fraud persists. As a result, the majority of people and organizations aim for political power in order to further their own interests, and they frequently do so at all costs (Ejiofor, 2007).

There is ample evidence of election fraud in 1999. On election day, there were incidents of vote buying and selling, ballot box theft, and the abduction of election workers along with other sensitive materials (such as ballot papers, results, and validation stamps). As anticipated, these activities resulted in minor acts of violence (Aremu & Omotola, 2007). Nigerians wanted to put an end to the lengthy years of oppressive military rule, therefore they accepted the results of the 1999 elections despite the extensive evidence of fraud surrounding them (Wantchekon, 1999).

Nigerian elections in 2003 resulted in at least 100 fatalities and numerous injuries (Human Right Watch, 2004). Supporters of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), which was in power at the time, were mostly responsible for the violence. The South West and South East, where PDP governors and supporters frantically battled opposition, saw the most violence. According to Environmental Right Action (2003), violent conflict between Niger Delta militant leaders Asari Dokubo and Ateke Tom marked the elections in portions of Rivers and Bayelsa states.

HRW (2007) claimed that there were approximately 967 instances of electoral violence in which at least 300 people were killed, even though the two main contenders for the 2007 presidential election were both Northern Muslims from the same state (Kastina). The degree of electoral fraud was not unrelated to the high level of violence. According to reports, former President Olusegun Obasanjo said the 2007 election would be "a do-or-die affair for PDP" before it was held. According to Tenuche (2009), the election would therefore be a "life and death" situation for the PDP and Nigeria. This explains the blatant, bold, and audacious electoral rigging that took place in 2007. Thus, the direct seizing of mandates and votes was unprecedented, according to Ibeanu (2009).

The 2011 presidential election was significant because it marked the 'third wave' of democratization in Nigeria and the first real political struggle between the Muslim north and the largely Christian south. The nation was split along religious and ethnic lines during the presidential election. At least 165 people were killed by violence during the party primaries, campaigns, and election day. The April 2011 elections were among the bloodiest in Nigerian history, despite being hailed as among of the fairest. Widespread demonstrations by followers of Muhammadu Buhari, the Congress for Progressive Change's presidential candidate and

the main opposition candidate from the north, marked the start of the post-election violence. They objected to President Goodluck Jonathan, a Christian from the South, being re-elected. In the northern states, the protests turned into violent riots or sectarian killings, primarily targeting Christians and southerners, while in southern Nigeria, they turned into retaliatory attacks (Human Rights Watch, 2011). The expressions of hate speech allow for democratic stagnation rather than progress due to their detrimental effects. Madukwe (2018)

Hate Speech and Democratic Development

Regarding the impact of hate speech campaigns on democratic progress, Herz, a professor of law at Cardozo Law School in New York, and Peter (2016), a senior research fellow at Central European University in Budapest, note that a significant portion of the discussion regarding how to combat hate speech should be addressed. The writings demonstrate the widespread agreement that hate speech is one of the problems of our time and that it must be stopped. The question of when it should be illegal is what splits the academics that worked on the topic. The content of hate speech is the deciding element in the majority of the world. On the other hand, in the United States, the critical question is the *context* in which hate speech takes place.

The researchers revealed how the American method embodies constitutional rights, particularly freedom of expression, which is a key component in encapsulating the idea of liberty and is outlined in their democratic constitution. In addition to being a fundamental part of democracy and their identity as human beings, Americans value freedom of speech because it guarantees their ability to speak up when any other right is in danger. The United States has one of the strongest and most comprehensive protections of free expression of any nation. Despite the widespread belief among Americans that hate speech is abhorrent, it is legally permitted in public conversation, with the exception of situations in which it is likely to promote criminal activity. In other words, proscription is not necessary for inciting violence on its own. According to American jurisprudence, the state may only intervene to forbid or punish hate speech when incitement occurs in an environment where such violence is likely to occur.

In other contexts, other values are just as important—if not more so—than rights notions. "Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world," states the Preamble of the 1948 United Nations adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. "The Union is founded on the indivisible, universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality, and solidarity," according to the Preamble to the European Union's 2000 Charter of Fundamental Rights. In a similar vein, many nations' constitutions express the conviction that equality and dignity are just as significant—if not more so—than liberty as principles that ought to be respected. Since hate speech is viewed as a threat to equality and an attack on the dignity of its targets, legal systems around the world are more willing to impose restrictions and believe it is permissible for decisions to be made based on the content of hate speech. In fact, according to Article 20(2) of the United Nations' 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, "[a]ny advocacy of national, racial, or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility, or violence shall be prohibited by law." 168 nations have ratified the Covenant. When the United States signed the Covenant in 1992, it made it apparent that it was deviating from

the international consensus by expressing reservations about the hate speech clause on the grounds that it violated the First Amendment.

Additionally, Edwin (2016) notes that Americans' attention on hate speech's essential function in inciting violence or other legal infractions is a distinction between their approach to hate speech and that of other countries. Although it is not the main factor, this is an issue in other nations as well. In a very insightful and persuasive essay, Bhikhu Parekh, a member of the British House of Lords and a former professor of political philosophy at the Universities of Westminster and Hull, makes the following argument:

Hate speech is unacceptable... [because] it treats members of the target group as internal enemies, rejects them as equal and valid members of society, diminishes their social status, and undermines the foundation of a shared life in these and other ways. It engenders distrust and animosity amongst people and groups, instills dread, impedes their ability to interact normally, and generally has a negative impact on how society is conducted. By stigmatizing members of the target group, denying them the ability to live as contributing members of society, and disregarding their uniqueness and differences by reducing them to homogenous representations of the relevant racial, ethnic, or religious group, hate speech also violates the dignity of the target group (at 44).

Theoretical framework

This study was anchored on Stimulus-Response Theory;

Stimulus-Response Theory;

Ivan Pavlov, a Russian psychologist who lived from 1849 to 1936, developed this theory. According to the theory, the interaction between stimuli and responses results in the manifestation of behavior or attitude. The theory also shows that sensory reactions are specifically responsible for belief. Theorists believe that when a stimulus is offered to a subject, the subject reacts to it by exhibiting behavior. According to the researcher, behavior cannot occur without some kind of stimulus, and he proved this beyond a reasonable question by using his dogs in his experiments. Classical conditioning comes to mind when one thinks of stimulus theory. The idea of stimulus and response is, of course, presented quite succinctly by classic conditioning, which shows how a stimulus can elicit a consistent and predictable response in a subject with no effort. Additionally, Ivan Pavlov and his dogs come to mind when one thinks of classical conditioning because of the way they salivate whenever the bell for food rings. This indicates that humans and other living things react to their stimuli.

Because of its connection to the research, the theory served as the foundation for the study. The Stimulus' Response Theory also shows that behavior is impossible without some kind of stimulus. As a result of their Stimulus Response to such perceptions, people may be swayed by hate speech and act or react in ways consistent with the speeches in their pursuit of support for a specific political party or candidate, which could have an indirect or direct impact on the development of democracy.

Methodology

The study adopted the survey research method

Population of the Study

According to the 2018 INEC official website, there were 1,396,162 registered voters in Abia state, which made up the study's population. In essence, the decision to select solely Abia's registered voters was made because minors are not allowed to vote.

Sample Size

The Australian internet calculator was used to calculate the study's size, as indicated below:

Confidence level:	99%
Population size:	1,932, 892
Proportion on population:	0.85
Confidence interval:	0.04 = 4%
Upper:	0.89000
Lower:	0.81000
Standard error:	0.01553
Relative standard error:	1.83
Sample size:	= 529

Method of Data Analysis

In order to analyze the data collected for this study, inferential and descriptive statistical approaches were used. Tables, frequencies, and basic percentages were utilized in the descriptive statistical approach to analyze the study, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was employed in the inferential statistical method to analyze the hypothesis.

Demographic Presentation and Analysis

Of the 529 copies of the questionnaire that were given to the respondents, 501 were returned, 17 were not, and 11 were disqualified for incorrect ticking.

Demographic Distribution of Respondents

Table 4.1

Categories	Strata	Frequency	Percent
Age	18-22	80	16
	23-27	100	20
	28-31	121	24
	32 and above	200	40
Gender	Male	456	91
	Female	45	9
Residence	Aba	101	20
	Umuahia	100	20
	Isiala Ngwa	100	20

	Isuikwuato	100	20
	Obingwa	100	20
Marital Status	Married	230	46
	Single	241	48
	Widowed	20	4
	Divorced	10	2
Occupation	Farming	100	20
	Politics	241	48
	Business	60	12
	Student	100	20
		501	100

Research Question 1: To what extent do hate speeches affect democratic development in Nigeria?

The questionnaire items that answered the above question are 8, 9, 10 and 11

Table 4.2: Abuse of people's culture as a problem of hate speech

OPTIONS	SCORE (x)	FREQUENCY (f)	fx	PERCENTAGE
a. Strongly agree	4	230	920	45.9
b. Agreed	3	230	690	45.9
c. Strongly disagree	2	21	42	4.2
d. Disagreed	1	20	20	4
Total	10	501	1672	100

Similar to table 8 and 9, 45.9% of the respondents strongly agreed that abuse of people's cultures may be another way to manifest hatred amongst them. Another 45.9% agreed to the question and correspond to an average rating of 3.34 on a scale of

five, this indicates that abuse of people's culture is one of the major ways which hate speech is manifested in Nigeria.

Table 4.3: Violence as a problem associated with hate speech

OPTIONS	SCORE (x)	FREQUENCY (f)	fx	PERCENTAGE
a. Strongly agreed	4	240	960	48
b. Agreed	3	230	690	45.9
c. Strongly disagreed	2	11	22	2.1
d. Disagreed	1	20	20	4
Total	10	501	1692	100

$$\text{Average score} = \frac{\sum fx}{\sum f} = \frac{1692}{501} = 3.37$$

From the Table 3 above, 48% of the respondents strongly agreed that violence is one of problems associated with hate speech. 45.9% of respondents agreed that violence is one of the

problems associated with hate speech this emanated from the fact that on a scale of four, there was an average rating 3.37%, an indication that violence is a major problem associated with hate speech.

Table 4.4: Intimidation of minority group is due to hate speech

OPTIONS	SCORE (x)	FREQUENCY (f)	fx	PERCENTAGE
a. Strongly agreed	4	126	504	25
b. Agreed	3	129	387	26
b. Strongly disagreed	2	114	228	23
d. Disagreed	1	132	132	26
Total	10	501	1251	100

From Table 4 above, 25% of the respondents strongly agreed that intimidation of minority groups in Nigeria during and after election will lead to a misunderstanding that the political seats are not for the minority groups, 26% of the respondents agreed that

such intimidation will discourage the minority groups from contesting for a political position this correspond to the fact that the average rating is 2.49% on a scale of 4 implying that intimidation of minority groups is as a result of hate speech.

Table 4.5: Retardation of development is caused by rigging, sentimental voting and appointment

OPTIONS	SCORE (x)	FREQUENCY (f)	fx	PERCENTAGE
a. Strongly agreed	4	200	800	39.9
b. Agreed	3	200	600	39.9

c. Strongly disagreed	2	60	120	12
d. Disagreed	1	41	41	8.2
Total	10	501	1561	100

$$\text{Average score} = \frac{\sum fx}{\sum f} = \frac{1561}{501} = 3.12$$

From Table 5 above, 39.9% of the respondents strongly agreed that democratic development is hampered because of rigging, sentimental voting and appointment. Also, 39.9% of other respondents agreed that rigging, sentimental voting and appointment will hamper democratic development. This was deduced from the average rating of 3.12% on a scale of 4%, which

	Score	X	Y	x^2	y^2	Xy
a. Strongly Agreed	4	320	279	102400	77841	89280
b. Agreed	3	141	201	19881	40401	28341
c. Strongly Disagreed	2	30	06	900	36	180
d. Disagreed	1	10	15	100	225	150
$\sum = \text{Total}$	n = 5	501	501	123281	118503	117951

$$r = \frac{(5 \times 117951) - (501 \times 501)}{\sqrt{((5 \times 123281) - (501)^2)((5 \times 118503) - (501)^2)}} = 0.95$$

The estimated correlation coefficient, r , is 0.95. This indicates a very strong positive relationship between hate speech as defined in the null hypothesis and democratic development. This relationship is almost linearly perfect (i.e. almost equal to 1) in other words hate speech is almost directly proportional to democratic development. This implies that ethnicity, religion and political affiliation which are all elements of hate speech highly influence free and fair election, equality before the law and supremacy of the constitution which are all elements of democratic development. It is ideal to further test if the true Pearson coefficient, ρ , is significantly different from zero using the obtained estimated Pearson coefficient r .

$H_0: \rho$ is not significantly different from zero (i.e. there is no true significant relationship between hate speech and democratic development).

$$t_{cal} = \frac{r\sqrt{n-2}}{\sqrt{1-r^2}} = \frac{0.95\sqrt{5-2}}{\sqrt{1-0.95^2}} = 16.88$$

$$t_{tab} = t_{(0.975, n-2)} = 3.18$$

Conclusion

Since t_{cal} is greater than t_{tab} (i.e. $16.88 > 3.18$) we reject H_0 and conclude that there is sufficient evidence to conclude that there is a significant linear relationship between ethnicity, religion and political affiliation which are all elements of hate speech. This entails that hate speech, elements have negative influences on free and fair election, equality before the law and supremacy of the constitution which are all elements of democratic development because the population correlation coefficient is significantly different from 0. This entails that a change in hate speech will also lead to a corresponding change in democratic development.

Discussion of Findings

suggests that rigging, sentimental voting and appointment will hamper democratic development.

H_{01} : Hate speech (ethnicity, religion and political affiliation) do not have any relationship with democratic development.

Using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation method, let x represent the hate speech variable and y the democratic development variable.

The third research question was what are the problems associated with the use of hate speeches in Nigeria's democratic process? Tables 2, and 3 were used to answer the research

question 3. Then, 23% of respondents said that abuse of people cultures may lead to agitation amongst the electorate, 25% of respondents support that abuse of people cultures may lead to conflict between electorate, 26% of respondents were of the opinion that it will lead to electorate being manipulated while 26% of respondents agreed with the last option that it will lead to hatred of electorate due to their cultural heritage, 26% of respondents were of the opinion that violence emanating from hate speech campaigns might lead to loss of electorate lives, 22% of respondents agreed that the violence from hate speech can cause damage to electorate's property, 26% of respondents tick that violence from hate speech campaigns can create tension in a particular area or region, 26% of respondents support the opinion that it can be used to disrupt other political parties activities, 26% of respondents were of the opinion that violence emanating from hate speech campaigns might lead to loss of lives of the electorate, 22% of respondents agreed that the violence from hate speech can cause damage to electorate's properties, 26% of respondents tick that violence from hate speech campaigns can create tension in a particular area or region, 26% of respondents support the opinion that it can be used to disrupt other political parties activities, 91.8% of respondents agreed that part of the hatred that exist between cultural and religious groups in Nigeria during and after election is as a result of hate speech campaigns, while 8.2% of respondents were of the view that they disagreed with the opinion that part of the hatred that exist between different cultural and religious groups in Nigeria during and after election is as a result of hate speech campaigns.

The result obtained from the findings supports the observation of Shariff (2015) which states that there is a relationship between hate speech campaigns and election violence which is killing, looting, blackmailing other political parties, damage of property, fighting amongst different political parties, violent Street protest and hooliganism.

The fourth research question was to what extent do hate speech campaign affect Democratic development in Nigeria? Research question 4 was answered using tables 4 and 5

respectively. Then, 95.8% of respondents believe that most violent killings during and after election are caused by hate speech campaigns. while the last option that is D, had no response, 25% of respondents said that intimidation of minority groups in Nigeria during and after election will lead to a misunderstanding that the political seat are not for the minority groups. Moreover, 26% of respondents believe that such intimidations will discourage the minority groups from contesting for a political position, 23% of respondents tick the third option that it will lead to separation of political parties members from minority to majority, 26% of respondents choose the last option, 30% of the respondents believe that sentimental voting and appointment can cause unwillingness to carryout projects that will help electorate, 36% of respondents said that they will be reluctant about the welfare of the electorate. 34%, of respondents believe that they will be more interested in the personal interest than national development. The last option had no responses, 98% of respondents agreed with the opinion that electorate are influenced by ethnicity and other primordial considerations while voting, which affects Democratic development in Nigeria, while 2% disagreed that electorate are influenced by ethnicity and other primordial considerations, while voting which affects Democratic development in Nigeria. No response was recorded from the last option.

The opinion of Abiodun (2017) is in agreement with the result obtained from the findings which revealed that hate speech can lead to violence, hatred, assassination of character, betrayal amongst the people, kidnapping and ballot box snatching.

Conclusion

After discussing the results and summarizing the findings, it is concluded that hate campaigns do, in fact, impede the democratic development of Nigeria and Abia State by fostering hatred, ballot box snatching, low voter turnout, and violence, particularly prior to, during, and during general elections.

Last but not least, research also showed that the increased intensity of hate speech campaigns before the general elections in Nigeria and Abia State had encouraged the marginalization of minority groups and allowed for the dehumanization and violation of their rights.

Recommendations

The following suggestions were offered in light of the study's findings.

1. The electoral body should take the initiative to educate candidates and voters on how to steer clear of hate speech, focus their campaigns on policymaking, and guarantee minority groups' safety.
2. The electoral authority should also remind politicians and political parties of Sections 95 and 102 of the 2010 Electoral Act, which forbid hate speech and prescribe penalties for any political party or candidate found in violation. In Nigeria's democratic process, this will lessen the prevalence of hate speech.

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campaigns, 8.2% of respondents disagreed that most violent killings during and after elections are caused by hate speech

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