

## Ethno-Religious Sentiments and Voting Behaviour in Nigeria: A Survey of Adamawa North-Senatorial District in the 2019 General Elections

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**ABSTRACT:** Since the inception of the First Republic in Nigeria, several elections have been conducted, but the 2019 general election is very significant in this research because it exposed the influential role of ethnicity and religion in the voting behaviour of different ethnic and religious groups in Adamawa-North senatorial district. The research adopted Social cleavage theory as conceptual framework. Quantitative research methodology was adopted for the research, where both primary and secondary data were collected for the research, Statistical Package for Social Science was used to analyze the data using simple percentage tables and Chi-Square. This research work interrogates the influence of ethnicity and religion in the voting behaviour of the Nigerian electorates in Adamawa North Senatorial District. The study discovered that there was manipulation of ethnic and religious groups by the candidates and the manipulation influenced the result of the election. Candidates of political parties manipulated their ethnic or religious groups or even both in order to have more votes from them and by so doing affects the credibility of results of the 2019 general elections in Adamawa North Senatorial District. It is also found in the district that some people who belong to certain ethnic or religious groups were forced by their ethnic or religious groups to vote for candidates of their primordial ties against their conscience. The work recommends that there should be a penalty clearly stated out in the law for any candidate that is manipulating or using his/her ethnic or religious bias for campaign which ultimately, instigates ethnic or religious conflicts.

**KEYWORDS:** Ethno-religious, Sentiment, Voting-behavior, Elections, Democracy.

### INTRODUCTION

In the last few decades, many developing countries, and African countries in particular have embarked on democratizing their political system. Despite the importance of elections as instruments of democracy, experimental and independent surveys of voters' behaviour in multiparty elections and new transitional democracies remain scarce. Elections in Nigeria are marred with a political behaviour of rigging, the manipulation of religion, ethnicity, regionalism and nepotism as observed by many scholars. Voters are voting during elections based on their affinity with leaders that belong to the same religious groups, ethnic cleavages, region and other sentiments. (Nnoli, 2003)

Furthermore, ethnicity and religion are two phenomenon that can hardly be divorced from human being, while Ethnicity gives humans the sense of belonging to a group which fosters solidarity and unity, Religion plays a vital role in human lives by connecting them to the spiritual and giving them hope of a better life on earth and after death. The two phenomena are important in a human being as there is hardly an individual that doesn't belong to an ethnic group or practices one form of religion.

The two phenomena though important can be very dangerous when taken to the extreme and brought to public life especially politics. Politics is an activity that brings people together to relate with one another and provide solutions to problems affecting their society, when Ethnicity and Religion is brought into politics it leads to division based on sentimental feelings and cleavages.

The dominant role of ethnicity in Nigeria's democratic and partisan politics and the struggle for political power has been reflected through the results of previous elections from the First Republic to the recently concluded 2019 general elections. The first ever elections held in Nigeria (1959 General elections) was characterized by political parties which were mainly offshoots of ethnic and religious identities.

Democratic elections, especially secret ballot elections are held based on the conscience of the electorates without any form of bias or sentiments instigated by religion or ethnicity of the electorates, to electorates voting base on conscience is their power to choose those that will represent them base on merit and credibility of such candidates who can serve them better and represent their interest in the government but when the electorates are been forced to vote against their conscience democracy does not apply but pervasions ruled by religion and ethnicity.

Thus, ethnic and religious cleavages have continued to remain a major determinant of electoral outcome and related political issues with attendant implications for democratization and nation building in Nigeria. The study of ethno-religious sentiments and voting

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behaviour in the 2019 general elections is significant, not just for analyzing political participation, but also for its potential consequences for democratization and nation building. It is based on the above that this research examines the effects of Ethno-religious sentiments on voting patterns in Nigeria, a survey of Adamawa North Senatorial District 2019 General elections.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Since the introduction of elections in the Nigerian political history, the factors influencing voting behaviours have been left speculated. This is majorly due to political development in the country which many describe as unpredictable. Going by the issue of voting, it is very crucial to understand that the most important part of election is casting votes on the day of election by eligible voters. However, the factors influencing voting behavior among others include ethnicity, religion and regionalism which can be seen in the 2019 general election in Adamawa north senatorial district. Ethnicity and religion played a major role in determining the eligibility and credibility of the candidate rather than merit. Voters in Adamawa north senatorial district align themselves with their own ethnic or religious affiliations and vote for candidates from the same ethnic or religious group, these candidates are seen as the representatives of that particular ethnic or religious group hence the candidate receives more support From the people with whom he/she has affiliations with, this makes the electorate to be biased base on sentiment and not on issues in choosing the qualified candidates that can represent their interests at the national helm of affairs. They tend to go blind voting by voting for their candidates based on their ethnic affiliation rather than merit and conscience.

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The general objective of this study is to determine the effect of ethno-religious sentiment and voting behavior on the 2019 general elections in Adamawa north senatorial district.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The Following are questions the research seek to answer

- i. What is the main cause of Ethno-religious sentiments in Adamawa North Senatorial District?
- ii. How did Ethno-Religious Sentiment determine voting patterns in the 2019 general elections?
- iii. Why was the credibility of the 2019 general election undermined by the sentimental voting patterns?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Ethnicity**

Young Crawford (1976) defined ethnicity as the active sense of identification with some ethnic unit. Whether or not this group has any institutional structure of its own, or whether it has any real existence in pre-colonial epoch. Ethnicity or ethnic personality additionally includes, subjective self-consciousness, a claim to status and recognition either as superior group or as group at least equal to others groups. Ethnicity is to ethnic category what class consciousness is to class. Joan, (1974) viewed ethnicity as an alternative form of social organization and identification to class but it is a contingent and alterable status like class, which may or may not be articulated in particular contexts or specific occasions. Ethnicity that is the conversion of cultural differences into basis for political differentiation between people arises under certain circumstances. One of the circumstances that spur ethnicity is explained by elite competition. Competition between or among the elite precipitates ethnic conflict under specific conditions which arise from the broader political environment rather than from differences in the cultural values of the ethnic groups in question. This opinion is predictable with the presumption that ethnic identification is subject to fluctuations rather than a fixed or given disposition (Brass, 1991). Another hypothetical reasoning for the rise of inter-ethnic conflict is the critical role of the relationship established between the elite and the state particularly the roles of collaborators with the opponents of the state authority (Joan, 1974)

### **Ethnicity and Voting Behaviour**

Zuckerman, Valentino & Zuckerman (1994) explained that no matter how private the act of voting is, an individual's social and political networks directly and strongly determine the choice made. Powell (1976) has earlier argued that where a voter's social class, ethnic group, and religion are associated with consistent political interests, it is likely for that person to be a strong supporter of one of the political parties. People whose webs of group affiliations contain numerous reinforcing ties persistently support the same political party (Simmel, 1955). Zuckerman, Valentino and Zuckerman (1994) also argue that weak partisanship results from a person's location in cleavages that have conflicting political interests, viewing voting decisions as reflections of the citizen's location in particular social networks. They further state that: As individuals interact with their friends, family, coworkers, and neighbours, they learn about politics. The more their social circles align with the political cleavages present, the more likely is the voter to support one of the political parties. No one can vote like their social intimates, when these people hold conflicting political views. No matter how frequently they interact and no matter how much they share, these individuals will vote together only when their social bonds are associated with political cleavages (Zuckerman, Valentino and Zuckerman, 1994).

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Ethnic voting can take different dimension. Wolfinger (1965) remarked that ethnic voting has two manifestations, (1) Members of an ethnic group show an affinity for one party or the other which cannot be explained solely as a result of demographic characteristics (2) Members of an ethnic group will cross party lines to vote for or against a candidate belonging to a particular ethnic group. He argues that several political circumstances are also associated with the strength of ethnic voting-that ethnicity will be more important in the absence of plain cues to guide voters' decision, ethnicity is likely to play a greater role in non-partisan election, where voters cannot rely on the party label. He however states that while party identification may impede the free play of ethnic salience, it also stabilizes and prolongs ethnic relevance; ethnic voting also seems to be less important when some great issue dominates political perspectives, as the depression did in the 1930's. While playing down the ethnic factor in voting behaviour, Lindbergh and Morrison (2007) state thus: Voting behaviour is not so much ethnic in essence as it is a rational response to the classic information problem for the voter using the parties' historical affiliation as a key source of evaluation. Clientelistic and ethnic predisposed voting are minor feature of the Ghanaian electorate, and when present, they seem to be nurtured by intense partisan competition.

Consequently, believed that elections are much more than mere ethnic censuses or straight forward economic referenda, that the complexity of voting motivations is evidenced by unforeseen Facts: contra the stereotype of ethnic voting, many African heads of government hail from secondary or minority ethnic groups; and converse to the economic voting thesis, incumbent presidents often gain re-election despite the poor performance of African economies. They however agree that ethnic sentiments play a role in shaping vote choice, hut noted that rational calculations about material welfare are apparently at the forefront of voters' minds, through creating a long-haul mental feeling of gathering steadfastness securing natives to parties, where casting a vote becomes an expression of group identity. By suggestions, other social divisions move toward becoming subsumed as optional to ethnicity. Horowitz defined ethnic parties as those that derive their support from an identifiable ethnic group and serve the interests of that group. To be an ethnic party, a party does not have to command an exclusive hold on the allegiance of group members, it is how that party's support is distributed, not how the ethnic group's support is distributed, that is decisive (Horowitz, 1985).

### **The Effect of Ethnicity on the Voting Behaviour of the Nigerian Electorates**

The Nigeria polity is one that has been plagued by many impediments to its political development. Ethnic coloration has been identified as one of the major factors militating against the evolution of the truly modern democratic nation where the interest, well-being and the rights of the natives are protected, irrespective of the ethnic, racial, religious, geographical, social and economic background of the individual (Lewis, 2007).

Ethnocentrism is a widespread marvel when distinctive ethnic gathering comes in contact, but taken to an extreme dimension it becomes ethnicity or ethnic nationalism. The circumstance can be said to, have been encouraged by the colonial masters. The idea of separating strangers from natives as was practice in the north continued and intensified ethnic mistrust. The strategy of Sabongari is in itself much the same as politically-sanctioned racial segregation (Lewis, 2007).

Ethnicity has in the past threatened the co-operate existence of the nation as various ethnic groups have at one time or the other express the desire to secede from the federation. The Yoruba threatened to Secede in 1953 and 1954, the Hausa and Fulani in 1966, the Igbo in 1964. Succession has been declared twice in the history of Nigeria, the Republic of Biafra in 1967 and the Delta Peoples Republic in 1966. These attempts were forcibly repressed by the Federal threes, That of Biafra was very costly in terms of lives and other resources that was committed to the prosecution of the civil war that followed the declaration of sovereignty by the Biafra leader. (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance: 2000).

Ethnicity has remained a serious problem in the development of the Nation. We see it comes to play often in issues such as employment into the federal civil service and in admission into institutions of higher learning. It is common phenomenon in the Nigerian society to see a section or sector or its higher echelons dominated by people of a particular ethnic group, a good example is the domination of the army and sectors like the Judiciary also dominated by the Yoruba ethnic group. (Ojukwu, Mbah & Maduekwe, 2019).

Another development in the issue of ethnicity in Nigeria is the recent rise of ethnic militia in various parts of the country. The idea of cultural union dates from the colonial era, when we had the Igbo State Union, the Egbe Omo Oduduwa, the Jam'iyyar Mutanen Arewa (Northern People's Congress), and a host of others sponsored by various minority groups. I laying ethnic militias however is really something novel in the political development of Nigeria. Some of these ethnic militias include the Odua People's Congress of the Yoruba ethnic group, the Bakassi Boys and the Movement for the Survival of the Sovereign state of Biafra (MOSSOB), a Biafra revivalist movement of the Igbo ethnic group, as the Egbesu boys and several others of the Niger Delta Area. The existence of some of them came to the open after they had a clash with the government, with such development; the country can be described as under siege or resting on a time bomb (Ojukwu, Mbah & Maduekwe, 2019).

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## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### Sociological Model

The first social model that can explain voter behaviour finds its origin from Lipset and Rokkan (1967) social cleavage model. The model provides an analytical framework for the structuring of voter alignment and the formation of political parties in Western Europe. While many authors have accepted the prominence of ethnicity within African politics, only few have tried to explain the relevance of ethnicity in the context of the model, thus modifying it to include ethnicity (Erdmann, 2007).

The theory is to a great degree worried about the recognizable proof of social cleavages and the chronicled grouping in which they developed in Western Europe, i.e. the sequence of conflicts” (Erdmann, 2007) The social cleavages in Western Europe were thus the centre vs periphery (subject/dominant culture) social class (owner vs worker), religion (State vs Church), and economy (rural vs urban). Secondly the model addresses the conditions under which stable cleavage systems are articulated and how political parties are formed. According to the model, cleavages determined the emergence and content of European political parties. In its third complex, the model is concerned about individual voting behavior within the established political system. Party systems are seen to encourage citizens to distinguish between their loyalty to the total political systems and their attitudes towards the competing politicians. Political parties therefore had an expressive function, in that they developed rhetoric for the translation of social and cultural structure into demands and pressures for action or inaction (Erdmann, 2007).

Although not directly addressed in the Lipset-Rokkan model, Erdmann (2007) notes that; ethnicity, can be subsumed under the centre-periphery cleavage. In Western Europe this cleavage described the conflict about the dominant culture of the emerging state-which of the various regional cultures would become the nation’s state culture. Put differently, it was the conflict between various ethnic groups about cultural dominance in the state. (Erdmann, 2007)

### Application of the Theory

In Africa the conflicts are not so much about the dominant culture, but about who controls channels of distribution (Erdmann, 2007). Incorporating ethnicity into the model would mean that ethnicity is utilised as a social cleavage that provides a basis for political party formation and voter alignment. However, Erdmann (2007) notes that “Ethnic cleavages are variable and ethnicity can, but need not, lead to voter alignment” as this depends on the way ethnic identities are politically developed. (Erdmann 2007)

Today, this political-sociological approach shows that” electoral choices are based on a limited number of social cleavages”. These cleavages are thus social class (owner vs worker) religion (state vs church) and ethnicity. The argument here is that if you belong to a particular dimension and there is a political party that represents that particular segment, one would vote for that party. Party identification however does not always happen along these social cleavages (Archer, 2009).

Erdmann (2007) goes on to note that, the effective mobilisation of parties is also dependent factors such as the political strategies of the elite, and not just the social cleavages that exist. This is to mean that the development of party systems and voter alignment as emphasised by the model is not just limited to the social cleavages that may constitute party systems, but rather the extent to which these conflicts are treated and institutionalized into “more or less stable political party systems”. This is because insights on voting behaviour in institutionalized party systems cannot “be explained exclusively by socio-structural variables”. The output and input performance of the political regime, political parties and the government are also important determinants of voting behaviour (Erdmann, 2007) The model thus promotes an “agency-oriented approach” towards the explanations of voting behaviour. But Due to “fluid political conditions”, the cleavage model can be useful in explaining the voting behaviour and party alignment of “only a fraction of the electorate” (Erdmann, 2007).

The model emphasizes the historical dimension of party systems and voter alignment, and as a result of its long-term historical dimension, it may not apply for African countries that formed their political parties after the 1980’s. It is thus doubtful that the model can provide empirically grounded findings about voter orientation and party alignments in Africa. In addition to this Lipset and Rokkan” never claimed that this would be applicable to other parts of the world” the cleavage model also suggests that people’s electoral behaviour is determined by group membership irrespective of their value orientations (Erdmann, 2007).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research work centers on examining the effects of ethno-religious sentiment and voting behaviours in Adamawa North Senatorial District in the 2019 general elections.

Therefore, the methodology adopted for this research is quantitative which emphasizes on the use of numeric data and statistics to draw out its findings. The work also used the following hypotheses:

- i.  $H_0$  - Ethno-Religious politics is not the major cause of Ethno-Religious sentiment in Adamawa North Senatorial District
- ii.  $H_0$  - Religious sentiments were not responsible for the voting patterns in the 2019 general elections
- iii.  $H_0$  - Sentimental voting patterns did not undermine the credibility of the 2019 general elections

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## Study Area

There are five local government areas in Adamawa North Senatorial District, these five local governments form the study area for this work, they are Mubi North, Mubi South, Michika, Maiha and Madagali. These local governments are among the 21 local governments in Adamawa State. Mubi North and South were earlier one local government and later splits into two in 1996. Mubi town lies on the west bank of Yedseram river, a stream that flows north into lake Chad and on the western flanks at the foot of the Mandara mountains which separate Nigeria from the Republic of Cameroon. The two local governments are located in the sub-sudan savanna vegetation belt. (Adebayo, 2004)

According to history, in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century Mubi remained under the jurisdiction of the Sultanate of Mandara unit conquered in the Fulani Jihad by Modibbo Adama, later on taken over by German Forces in 1903 and serve as a frontier post and administrative centre of German colonialist. However, Mubi north is blessed with three institutions of higher learning; the state university, the Federal Polytechnic and the College of Health technology while Mubi South is blessed with the second largest cattle market in the country and open border commercial activities with Cameroon. Mubi North and South local governments have an agrarian type of economy where crops like maize, groundnuts, rice, guinea corn and beans are produced in marketable quantities to other states around the country and to Cameroon and Chad respectively. (Adebayo, 2004)

More so, Maiha local government was created in 1989 by Ibrahim Babangida administration, the local government was also part of the German territory between 1918-1959 and later voted to join the Federal Republic of Nigeria in 1959. Maiha local government also enjoys agrarian economy. (Bude, 1991)

Maiha local government was created by the defunct Gongola state local government edit No.3 of 1976 under Maj. Gen. Mohammed Jega administration. Michika runs along mountainous range that forms eastern boundaries of Nigeria with Cameroon. Michika has fast growing metropolitan town and the headquarter in Michika. The local government has an agrarian economy and the bulk of Michika's produce is groundnut others are subsidiary such as maize, rice, guinea corn and beans. (Bude, 1991)

Madagali local government was created in 1984 with its headquarters in Gulak out of Michika by Ibrahim Babangida administration. The entire land falls within Chad Basin area. Madagali local government area also have an agrarian economy, crops produced in the area are maize, millet, guinea corn, beans and groundnuts. (Bude, 1991).

## Method of Data Analysis.

The method of analyzing and interpreting data was done through the use of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) to run simple percentages and chi-square. Through this interpretation, the effect of ethno-religious sentiment and voting behavior of the electorate in Adamawa North Senatorial District in the 2019 general elections was ascertained.

## DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

**Research Question 1:** What is the main cause of Ethno-religious sentiments in Adamawa North Senatorial District?

**Table 1.1 Issues on power struggle and ethno-religious sentiments**

Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agree	121	50.0
Strongly Agree	58	24.0
Undecided	19	7.9
Disagree	36	14.9
Strongly Disagree	8	3.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source:* Field Survey, 2020

From the table 1.1 above, 50% of the respondents agreed that ethno-religious sentiment is caused by power struggle among various ethno-religion groups, 24% of the respondents strongly agree with the fact, 7.9% of the respondents are on the fence, they neither agree nor disagreed, 14.9% of the respondents disagree that ethno-religious sentiments is caused by power struggle among various ethno-religious groups while 3.3% of the respondents strongly disagreed as well. The view held by the majority of the respondents goes to justify the fact that ethno-religious sentiment is caused by power struggle.

**Table 1.2 Representation a factor for ethno-religious sentiments**

Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agree	97	40.1
Strongly Agree	86	35.5
Undecided	25	10.3

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Disagree	23	9.5
Strongly Disagree	11	4.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source:* Field Survey, 2020

The table 1.2 above shows that 40.1% of the respondents agreed that ethno-religious sentiment comes into play when people see the candidate as the representative of their ethnic or religious group, 35.5% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement, 10.3% of the respondents are undecided on the issue, while 9.5% of the respondents disagreed that ethno-religious sentiment comes into play when people see the candidate as their representative and 4.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. Going by the majority responses of the respondents it has justify the fact that ethno-religious sentiment comes into play when people see the candidate as the representative of their ethnic or religious group.

**Research Question 2:** How did Ethno-Religious Sentiment determine voting patterns in the 2019 general elections?

**Table 1.3 Voting base on affiliations**

Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agree	88	36.4
Strongly Agree	112	46.3
Undecided	16	6.6
Disagree	14	5.8
Strongly Disagree	12	5.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source:* Field Survey, 2020

The table I.3 above revealed that 36.4% of the respondents agreed that people voted for candidate with whom they have ethnic or religious affiliations with, 46.3% of the respondents strongly agreed. 6.6% of the responses are undecided on the issue while 5.8% of the responses disagreed and 5.0% of the respondents strongly disagreed. This reveals that people voted for candidate with whom they have ethnic or religious affiliations during the general elections.

**Table 1.4 Voting pattern was based on ethnic or religious considerations**

Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agree	91	37.6
Strongly Agree	77	31.8
Undecided	22	9.1
Disagree	38	15.7
Strongly Disagree	14	5.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source:* Field Survey, 2020

The above table 1.4 revealed that 37.6% of the respondents agreed and 31.8% of the respondents strongly agreed that voting in Adamawa North Senatorial district was based on ethnic and religious considerations. 9.1% of the respondents are uncertain while 15.7% and 5.8% respectively disagreed to that. We therefore draw conclusion base on the highest response that agreed that voting was based on ethno-religious considerations in Adamawa north senatorial district.

**Research Question 3:** Why was the credibility of the 2019 general election undermined by the sentimental voting patterns?

**Table 1.5 Ethnicity and religious influence on the result of the elections**

Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agree	103	42.6
Strongly Agree	98	40.5
Undecided	18	7.4
Disagree	15	6.2
Strongly Disagree	8	3.3

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<b>Total</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>100</b>
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*Source:* Field Survey, 2020

The table I .5 above revealed that 42.6% and 40.5% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that ethnicity and religion have influence the result of the 2019 general elections in Adamawa north senatorial district, 7.4% are indecisive while 6.2% and 3.3% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement. This table however revealed that there is strong influence of ethnicity and religion on the result of the 2019 general elections in Adamawa north senatorial district.

**Table 1.6 Issues on voting against the conscience of the electorates**

<b>Items</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Agree	81	33.5
Strongly Agree	67	27.7
Undecided	31	12.8
Disagree	43	17.8
Strongly Disagree	20	8.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source:* Field Survey, 2020

Table above 1.6 revealed that 33.5% and 27.7% of the respondents agreed that voters were forced by their ethnic or religious groups to vote for candidate of their primordial ties. 12.8% have not decide on the statement. While 17.8% and 8.3% of the respondents disagreed with the statement above. From the responses 33.5% and 27.7% of the respondents we have concluded that there are ethnic and religious groups that were forced to vote for candidates of their primordial ties.

### TEST OF HYPOTHESES:

For the purpose of this research the descriptive statistical tool that would be used to test the research hypotheses is the Chi-square (X<sup>2</sup>).

Generally, the decisional rule for accepting or rejecting a hypothesis is the same for all inferential statistics:

1. When the calculated statistic is greater than the table value, the research rejects the **null** hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) and accepts the alternate hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>).
2. When the table value is greater than the calculated statistic, the research accepts the **null** hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) and rejects the alternate hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>).

**Table 2 H<sub>0</sub> - Ethno-Religious politics is not the major cause of Ethno-Religious sentiment in Adamawa North Senatorial District**

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Chi-Square</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Table Value</b>
Ethno-religious sentiment is caused by power struggle among various ethno-religious groups	165.562	4	.000*
voting based on ethno-religious sentiments produce credible and eligible leaders	5.810	4	.214*

*Source:* Field Survey, 2020

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 48.4.

\*significant at 5%

The analysis in table 4.2. 1 above reveals that almost all the variables were significant at 5% level of significance except voting based on ethno-religious sentiment produce credible and eligible leader that was not significant with chi-square value of 165.562 and 5.810. This signifies that Ethno-Religious politics is the major cause of Ethno-Religious sentiment in Adamawa North Senatorial District because majority of the variable were significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted which state that ethno-religious sentiments is caused by ethno-religious politics in Adamawa North Senatorial District.

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**Table 3 H<sub>0</sub> - Religious sentiments were not responsible for the voting patterns in the 2019 general elections.**

Questions	Chi-Square	Df	Table Value
People voted For candidates with whom they have ethnic or religious affiliations	189.488	4	.000*
Every ethnic or religious group voted for their representative	128.124	4	.000*

**Source:** Field Survey, 2020

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell Frequency is 48.4.

\*significant at 5%

The analysis in table above indicate that all the variables were significant at 5% level of significant with chi-square value of 189.488 and 128.124. This signifies that Religious sentiments were responsible for the voting patterns in the 2019 general elections in Adarnawa North Senatorial District almost the variables were significant except one.

Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted which state that Religious sentiments were responsible for the voting patterns in the 2019 general elections in the study area.

**Tables 4 110 - Sentimental voting patterns did not undermine the credibility of the 2019 general elections**

Questions	Chi-Square	Df	Table Value
Ethnicity and religion have influence the result of the 2019 general elections in the senatorial district	188.289	4	.000*
Voters were Forced by their ethnic or religious groups to vote for candidate of their primordial ties	52.628	4	.000*

**Source:** Field Survey 2020

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected Frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 48.4.

\*=significant at 5%

The analysis in table above shows that all the variables were significant at 5% level of significance with chi-square value of I 88.289, and 52.628. This signifies that Sentimental voting patterns undermined the credibility of the 2019 general elections in Adamawa North Senatorial District.

Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted which state that sentimental voting patterns undermined the credibility of the 2019 general elections.

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The responses received from the questionnaires returned and the analysis of the data collected. From various respondents revealed some major findings from the research work. It has been found From the study that ethno-religious sentiments in Adamawa North Senatorial District is cause by power struggle among various ethnic or religious group where every ethnic or religious group is fighting to be in the corridors of power, to control the affairs of the society according to their taste leading such ethnic or religious group into influencing and convincing their members to vote for their own candidate during the 2019 general elections in Adamawa North Senatorial District.

The study revealed that people voted base on ethnic or religious affiliations that they have with the candidate who is contesting the elections, this surface in the 2019 general elections. This is because the people see the candidate as the representative of their ethnic or religious group and such candidate when voted to power will protect the interest of the ethnic or religious group lie/she belongs that gives the electorate the confidence to vote base on sentiments during the general elections.

More so, the study also shows that the elections in the senatorial district was done base on ethno-religious sentiments rather than merit. This in turn bring in leaders into power who do not have the technical know-how of handling the need of the masses and been good representatives of their society. And when the electorates voted for candidate base on sentiments rather than merit there will

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vacuums in his/her representation because the candidate voted into power is not eligible and credible for the position, as such there will be misrepresentation, what the society requires From him/her as the leader will not be achieved.

The study found that sentimental voting influenced the voting pattern and behavior of electorate, the voting behavior of the electorate tends to change when ethno-religious sentiment comes into play, instead of voting for credibility and eligibility of the candidate they vole For financial gains and protection of the interest of such ethnic group rather than merit, for the candidate to win, all means were taken including election rigging in places where the electorate share the same affiliation as the candidate in the 2019 general elections in the senatorial district.

It was also found that there was manipulation of ethnic and religious groups by the candidate and the manipulation influenced the result of the election. Candidates of political parties manipulated their ethnic or religious groups or even both in order to have more votes from them and by so doing affects the credibility of results of the 2019 general elections in Adamawa North Senatorial District. It is also found in the district that some people who belong to certain ethnic or religious groups were forced by their ethnic or religious groups to vote for candidates of their primordial ties against their conscience.

### **CONCLUSION**

Ethno-religious sentiment is a cancer-warm that is eating deep the root of democracy of Nigeria in general by washing way all the democratic processes and installing different view of political perspective in the country. Ethno-religious sentiments when allowed to grow to maturity can lead to ethnic or religious clashes in the society because of the degree of negative effect it has on the people, their voting behaviour and democratic culture in the Country.

Ethnicity and religion are two phenomenon that can hardly be divorced from a human being, while Ethnicity gives humans the sense of belonging to a group which fosters solidarity and unity, Religion plays a vital role in human lives by connecting them to the spiritual and giving them hope of a better life on earth and after death. The two phenomenon are important in a human being as there is hardly an individual that doesn't belong to an ethnic group or practices one form of religion.

The two phenomenon though important can be very dangerous when taken to the extreme and brought to public life especially politics. Politics is an activity that brings people together to relate with one another and provide solutions to problems affecting their society, when Ethnicity and Religion is brought into politics it leads to division based on sentimental feelings and cleavages. Ethno-religious tendency has hindered the development of national parties, national identities and democratic culture in Nigeria. This is because candidates from different ethnic and religious groups while competing for political positions could easily manipulate them for compromise and bargain which could easily invoke ethnic-focused conflict with dire consequences for democratic stability and national survival.

The dominant role of ethnicity in Nigerian democratic and partisan politics and the struggle for political power has been reflected through the results of previous elections from the First Republic to the recently concluded 2019 general elections and specifically in the Adamawa North Senatorial District. Thus, ethno-regional cleavages have continued to remain a major determinant of electoral outcome and related political issues with attendant implications for democratization and nation building in our societies and in Nigeria at large.

Therefore, for the good of the society ethno-religious sentiments must be put away and replaced with the right democratic culture of free and fair elections with no ethnic or religious influence, we will not have leaders that are after their selfish interest rather than the interest of the masses at heart. If this is achieved society will begin to produce credible leaders who are able and capable of handling their various positions because they have what it takes to lead and bring out the expected results.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this work, the following recommendations are made in order to eradicate ethno-religious sentiments and its influence on voting behavior in Adamawa North-Senatorial District and Nigeria at large.

It has been discovered from the study that ethno-religious sentiments in Adamawa North Senatorial District is cause by power struggle among various ethnic or religious group. Therefore, the study recommends that there is need to create awareness on national unity and democratic culture among various ethnic and religious groups so that power struggle can be eliminated among various ethno-religious groups.

The study revealed that people see the candidate as the representative of their ethnic or religious group and such candidate when voted to power will protect the interest of the ethnic or religious group he/she belongs, the research recommend that national party should be promoted and candidates should be endorse base on national party arrange.

It was Found in the study that the elections in the senatorial district was done base on ethnoreligious sentiments rather than merit. Therefore, the study suggests that there should be political education of the masses on the dangers of sentimental voting rather than merit. If the masses are fully educated on this, there will be a paradigm shift in the voting behavior of the masses.

The study also recommends that sentimental voting should not influence the voting pattern of the people hut a derive for democratic culture and national development, the government should therefore promote democratic culture in various segments of the country.

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The research recommends that there should be penalty clearly stated out in the law for any candidate that is manipulating or using his/her ethnic or religious bias for campaign which ultimately, instigates ethnic or religious conflicts.

The study proffers that adequate manpower and security should be put in place to check the excesses of elections malpractices in various polling units of the senatorial district especially those with strong ethnic or religious ties. And those caught in the act of election malpractice should be punished by the law accordingly.

The study also recommends that, vote buying at the polling units should be prohibited by the law, this in turn will change the mindset of the electorate on the need for financial accumulation during election to a mindset of free and fair elections.

Also, the research recommends that electronic voting should be put in place and adequate training and knowledge of the processes of e-voting should be taught by the Independent National Electoral Commission, this reduces the influence of sentimental voting.

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