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INFLUENCE OF POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL ADMINISTRATION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF NIGERIA AND GHANA, 2015-2024

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Abstract

This study examined the influence between political parties and electoral administration in Nigeria and Ghana spanning the period 2015-2024, employing a comparative research design. To interrogate the issues raised, the theory of institutionalism was utilized. A mixed-methods approach was adopted. The sample size consisted of 384 respondents from each country, selected using stratified random sampling, with key informant interviewees. Data analysis involved both quantitative and qualitative techniques. The qualitative data from interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. Findings revealed significant variations in the influence of political parties on electoral administration in both countries. In Nigeria, political parties exert considerable influence, often undermining electoral neutrality through practices such as vote-buying and manipulation of electoral processes. This influence is exacerbated by corruption, electoral violence, and political fragmentation. In contrast, Ghana's political parties show more respect for the independence of the Electoral Commission, contributing to a more transparent and stable electoral environment. However, Ghana still faces challenges such as voter apathy and elite influence, though these issues are less severe compared to Nigeria. The study recommends among others; improving transparency and collaboration between political parties and electoral commissions, implementing stricter regulations on party financing and electoral malpractices, advancing electoral reforms to address corruption and inefficiency, and enhancing internal party democracy to reduce factionalism and promote inclusivity.

Keywords: Political parties, Electoral administration, Influence, Nigeria, Ghana

1. Introduction

Political parties are central to democratic governance, serving as vital instruments for mobilizing citizens, articulating collective interests, and shaping electoral administration. They function as intermediaries between the electorate and the state, offering platforms for political competition and fostering public participation in governance. Effective political parties contribute to credible elections by fielding candidates, monitoring electoral processes, and ensuring accountability. In West Africa, their role has been pivotal in both advancing and challenging the development of electoral systems over the years, reflecting the complex interplay between political dynamics and institutional frameworks (Adesina, 2021; Gyekye-Jandoh, 2022). Between 2015 and 2024, the region experienced notable

transformations in electoral administration, influenced by the actions of political parties and the broader socio-political context. West Africa's elections during this period were marked by a dual narrative: a deepening of democratic practices in some nations and a decline in others due to political instability. For example, voter registration reforms across several countries aimed at improving inclusivity and accuracy were often facilitated by active engagement from political parties (Owolabi, 2023). However, the politicization of electoral commissions in some nations undermined public trust, with surveys showing that only about 37% of citizens in the region expressed confidence in electoral bodies by 2024 (Kandeh, 2024).

The period also witnessed a demographic shift, with young voters under the age of 35 accounting for over half

of the electorate in several West African countries. This shift, driven by the efforts of political parties to engage youth, played a significant role in shaping electoral outcomes. Meanwhile, regional voter turnout averaged 57% during major elections in 2024, indicating sustained public interest in democratic processes despite challenges (Mensah & Adebayo, 2023). Political parties were instrumental in mobilizing this participation, leveraging innovative campaign strategies and increasing their presence in both rural and urban areas (Chambas, 2024). Notably, Ghana's 2024 election demonstrated the continued vibrancy of democratic competition in the region, as the major political parties fiercely contested the polls. The election highlighted the increasing role of technology in voter verification and tallying, but also raised concerns over rising political polarization and allegations of vote-buying (Appiah & Kwarteng, 2024).

Thus, the interplay between political parties and electoral administration in West Africa from 2015 to 2024 has been marked by progress and setbacks. While political parties have facilitated voter engagement and contributed to reforms, their actions have sometimes exacerbated mistrust in electoral systems. As the region continues to navigate these complexities, strengthening institutional frameworks, fostering political accountability, and promoting inclusive governance remain critical for the consolidation of democracy (Owusu & Dumbuya, 2024). The influence between political parties and electoral administration in Nigeria has evolved significantly from 2015 to 2024, marked by strides in electoral reforms and challenges rooted in political volatility and inefficiencies. Political parties in Nigeria have been central players in shaping the electoral landscape, exerting influence over voter mobilization, candidate selection, and post-election activities. The country's political system, dominated by parties like the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP), has seen fierce electoral competition, particularly in the presidential and gubernatorial elections. The 2015 elections, widely hailed as a turning point for democratic consolidation, were followed by the controversial 2015 elections, which saw the first peaceful transition of power from an

incumbent president to an opposition candidate. However, political parties and electoral administration faced significant hurdles, including challenges of voter registration, logistics, and political interference (Oluwaseun & Adebayo, 2021). Political parties and electoral administration in Ghana have undergone significant developments between 2015 and 2024, shaping the country's democratic trajectory. Ghana, known for its stability in West Africa, has seen a steady evolution in its electoral processes, with political parties at the forefront of this transformation. The 2016 general elections marked a crucial moment in Ghana's democratic history, characterized by a peaceful contest between the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC). These elections set the stage for the 2020 election, which despite controversies surrounding the results, reaffirmed Ghana's position as a beacon of democratic practice in Africa. However, the political landscape remained contentious, with issues such as voter registration, ballot security, and the role of political parties in ensuring electoral transparency taking center stage (Adu-Gyamfi & Owusu, 2021).

The 2024 elections in Ghana continued to build on previous experiences, with the Electoral Commission (EC) implementing measures to improve the credibility of the voting process. Political parties played an instrumental role in shaping these reforms, advocating for transparency and the proper functioning of the electoral system. Yet, the role of political parties in Ghana's elections remains controversial, with concerns over the growing influence of money in politics and voter manipulation. In the 2024 election, voter turnout dropped to 75%, suggesting a gradual decrease in citizen participation and confidence in the system (Osei & Ampofo, 2024). Despite these challenges, Ghana's political parties have maintained a crucial role in advocating for electoral reform, ensuring electoral credibility, and strengthening democratic governance in the country, underscoring the ongoing complexities of electoral administration in Ghana's evolving political landscape.

The role of political parties and their influence on electoral administration has been a critical aspect of the democratic evolution in both Nigeria and Ghana from

2015 to 2024. Political parties in these two countries, while both contributing to democratic governance, exhibit distinct characteristics in their organizational structures, financing, internal cohesion, and approach to electoral administration (Adeola, 2023; Mendy, 2024). In both nations, political party elites have had a significant impact on shaping electoral outcomes, engaging with electoral commissions, and influencing political reforms. However, the dynamics of political party cohesion, factionalism, and reforms in Nigeria and Ghana reveal the contrasting paths these two countries have taken in their democratic development. Thus, the comparative study of political parties and electoral administration in Nigeria and Ghana reveals a dynamic interplay between political party elites, financing, internal cohesion, factionalism, and reforms. While Ghana has made strides in improving transparency and public trust in its electoral system, Nigeria continues to face challenges related to corruption, internal party conflict, and electoral integrity. Both countries, however, remain pivotal in the study of political party behavior and electoral administration in West Africa, offering valuable insights into the complexities of democracy in the region.

The political landscape in Nigeria and Ghana presents a fascinating yet challenging terrain for electoral administration. In an ideal democratic system, elections should be free, fair, and credible, ensuring public trust in governance and fostering political stability. Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) are expected to operate independently, competently, and transparently, while political parties should embody democratic ideals through internal cohesion, ideological clarity, and transparent financing. These benchmarks are essential for nurturing democratic governance, yet the realities in Nigeria and Ghana often fall short.

Despite periodic elections since 2015, both nations have struggled with significant electoral challenges. Nigeria's elections have been plagued by widespread violence, voter suppression, logistical inefficiencies, and allegations of electoral fraud. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has faced recurring criticism for its lack of autonomy and capacity to manage credible elections. On the other hand, Ghana's Electoral

Commission (EC) has achieved relatively higher levels of public trust and operational efficiency, but challenges remain. Issues such as voter apathy, vote-buying, and the undue influence of political elites have raised concerns about the long-term sustainability of its democratic gains. These contrasting trajectories make Nigeria and Ghana compelling case studies for examining the efficacy of electoral administration and political party dynamics in West Africa.

Both countries have implemented reforms to address these challenges. Nigeria has introduced measures like the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) and electronic transmission of results to enhance transparency, while Ghana has leveraged biometric voter registration and improved its National Identification System. However, systemic problems persist. Electoral violence, particularly in Nigeria, continues to claim lives and undermine public confidence in democratic processes. Ghana, despite its relative success, faces growing concerns about the monetisation of politics and the lack of ideological substance in its party system. These persistent challenges not only hinder democratic consolidation but also reflect broader weaknesses in the political systems of both nations.

The inadequacies of political parties further compound these issues. In both countries, internal democracy within parties is weak, with party elites dominating decision-making processes. Political party financing lacks transparency, fostering an environment where powerful individuals and organisations wield undue influence. Factionalism, character assassinations during campaigns, and the absence of clear ideological platforms diminish the ability of parties to serve as effective vehicles for representation and governance. This weakens democratic institutions and exacerbates political disillusionment among citizens. Hence, the objective of the study is to analyse the extent to which political parties influence electoral administration in Nigeria and Ghana.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Definitions

Political Parties

Smith (2021) defines political parties as vehicles for aggregating diverse societal interests into coherent policy platforms, thus playing a pivotal role in governance and representation. Similarly, Jones (2022) affirms that political parties act as mediators between the state and citizens, providing channels for political participation and accountability. Adams and Lee (2023) suggest a more structural view, describing political parties as organisations designed to capture and maintain political power through electoral competition.

Political Party Elites

Political party elites refer to a group of influential individuals within a political organisation who hold significant power and control over decision-making processes, strategic direction, and the allocation of resources. In many political systems, political elites are disproportionately drawn from affluent and highly educated backgrounds who can perpetuate disparities in political representation and policy outcomes, further entrenching existing inequalities (Clark, 2024).

Political Party Financing

Political party financing refers to the process by which political organisations obtain, manage, and utilize financial resources to support their activities. These activities often include election campaigns, administrative operations, policy development, voter engagement, and public communication (Adebayo, 2021; Owusu, 2022). Political party financing can be defined as the means through which political parties seek for financial assistance for the execution of party programmes.

Political Party Reforms

Political party reforms refer to the systematic efforts to change, improve, or restructure political parties to enhance their functioning, accountability, and responsiveness to the needs of the electorate (Smith, 2020). Political party reforms typically seek to decentralise power, allowing for more democratic decision-making processes within parties themselves. In many instances, this has involved revising the procedures for selecting party leaders and candidates for

public office to make them more transparent and participatory (Johnson, 2021).

Electoral Administration

Electoral Administration refers to the organizational, procedural, and legal framework established to ensure the smooth conduct of elections, including the registration of voters, oversight of election processes, and declaration of results (Adeyemi, 2020; Johnson & Patel, 2023). Electoral Administration is the structured process of planning, managing, and implementing electoral activities, including voter registration, candidate nominations, election day operations, and results verification (Eze, 2020; Musa & Clark, 2023).

2.2 Empirical Review

Political Parties Influence on Electoral Administration in Nigeria

The influence of political parties on electoral administration in Nigeria has attracted significant scholarly attention, with recent studies exploring the multifaceted role they play in shaping electoral outcomes and processes. Researchers have focused on the interplay between political parties and electoral bodies, particularly regarding how party actions and strategies impact administrative processes. One study by Adebayo and Omotosho (2021) argues that political parties influence electoral administration by employing resource mobilisation strategies that shape the credibility of elections. Similarly, Olayemi (2022) suggests that party interference in the operations of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has created challenges for free and fair elections. These studies contrast with findings by Akindele (2022), who denies that parties wield disproportionate control over electoral bodies, highlighting instead institutional reforms as mitigating factors. Research by Igbineweka (2022) acknowledges that political parties often interfere in the nomination processes, thereby creating challenges for electoral neutrality. This view shares similarities with those of Eze and Abubakar (2023), who emphasise the role of party influence on the timing of elections and resource allocation by administrative bodies.

However, in contrast, Omoruyi (2023) asserts that political party influence is constrained by technological advancements and judicial oversight. This view introduces an alternative argument that technological reforms have decreased undue party influence over administrative practices. Equally, studies by Adepoju (2024) and Salami (2024) suggest that political parties contribute to the structure of electoral administration by shaping key operational strategies. They highlight that party competition pressures electoral bodies to maintain neutrality, although these bodies often face conflicts due to partisanship. These findings differ from earlier works, such as those by Adebayo (2022), who denies that political parties possess sufficient leverage to destabilise electoral processes. The influence of political parties is further contested by Uchenna (2022), who proposes that external funding and international observation dilute the control of parties over electoral processes. These views are supported by international studies like those of Adisa (2021), who suggests that electoral processes rely on transnational interventions rather than party dominance alone. Political interference in electoral management is similarly explored by Yusuf et al. (2022), who contrast the role of parties in resource mobilisation with societal demand for transparency and neutrality. These scholars argue that as political parties contest administrative neutrality, reforms aimed at electoral transparency emerge as counterbalances. In contrast, other scholars such as Idowu (2023) contest this by showing that reforms have failed to reduce party influence due to inadequate implementation.

The debates on political party influence are further nuanced by contrasting views presented by Ajibade (2023), who supports the idea that resource distribution linked to political party strategies undermines electoral fairness. Meanwhile, studies like those by Adebisi and Uchenna (2024) challenge this perspective by asserting that increased judicial oversight limits party influence by creating checks and balances on administrative interference. These conflicting views suggest that the extent of political influence varies based on administrative capacity, judicial strength, and regional political contexts.

Political Parties Influence on Electoral Administration in Ghana

Political parties play a pivotal role in shaping electoral administration in Ghana, exerting influence through both direct and indirect mechanisms. Various studies explore the multifaceted relationship between political parties and electoral processes, highlighting how their actions impact democratic governance. Owusu (2022) argues that political interference often undermines the independence of Ghana's Electoral Commission, creating tensions between democratic principles and party influence. These findings propose that political parties' manipulations challenge electoral credibility, an assertion that is echoed by other studies focusing on voter mobilisation and party strategies.

In contrast with this, Aidoo (2023) contends that political parties' engagement with electoral administration can foster transparency, arguing that well-organised parties support voter education and the smooth conduct of elections. Conversely, Adjei and Kwarteng (2023) challenge this notion by highlighting instances where political competition has led to corruption, thereby varying from Aidoo's perspective. Similarly, research by Tetteh (2022) notes that the interplay between political parties and public institutions is dynamic, as political priorities shift and electoral reforms alter party strategies. This suggests that electoral administration is often a site of negotiation rather than outright dominance, pursuing a balance between competing party interests. On the other hand, Afriyie (2024) denies this perspective, emphasising that party interference diminishes voter confidence, thereby contributing to electoral manipulation. These differing perspectives highlight debates over whether political party influence is wholly detrimental or occasionally beneficial.

The research by Antwi and Tandoh (2023) shares that political parties' role is not just adversarial; they can strengthen the transparency of electoral administration by facilitating voter outreach and information campaigns. However, this is contested by Prah (2022), who suggests that the manipulative use of resources by political parties erodes trust in Ghana's democratic systems. Similarly, Korang (2024) finds that political

parties' informal strategies can undermine the credibility of elections, particularly when institutional oversight is weak. In contrast, research by Quaye (2023) emphasises that party competition fosters healthy democratic debate, a view supported by Ofori (2022), who states that party rivalry often ensures the legitimacy of electoral processes through increased citizen participation. However, other studies differ, such as those by Afriyie and Sowah (2023), who claim that high levels of political competition create challenges such as resource disparities and unequal access to electoral tools. These views suggest that the competition between parties often varies depending on socioeconomic status and regional factors.

The studies by Asare (2023) and Dzanku (2022) highlight a dynamic relationship, proposing that political parties' strategies depend on both institutional reforms and shifts in electoral governance. Equally, these mechanisms show patterns of strategic adaptation by parties seeking to navigate electoral environments. This is supported by research from Adjei and Akoto (2024), who argue that political strategies and administrative reforms intersect, demonstrating both continuity and change in party influence patterns. In comparison, Tandoh (2023) suggests that reforms can reduce the adversarial nature of political strategies, though this does not entirely neutralise political influence. Danso (2021) argues that political parties often use their financial resources and networks to exert undue influence over electoral institutions, a view echoed by Owusu and Mensah (2022), who claim that such interference undermines institutional independence. In contrast, Asiedu (2023) proposes that political parties' active involvement in electoral processes can enhance accountability and responsiveness by fostering competition. This argument aligns with the findings of Amankwah (2024), who suggests that party engagement brings transparency by involving stakeholders in electoral decision-making, though others contest this claim by highlighting its limitations in the face of vested interests.

Research by Adjei and Kwarteng (2023) highlights that political parties often vary in their approach to influencing electoral administration, with dominant

parties leveraging their resources more effectively than smaller ones. This echoes findings by Antwi (2022), who claims that the disproportionate power of major parties exacerbates inequalities in the electoral system. In contrast, Nyarko (2023) proposes that reforms aimed at levelling the playing field can mitigate such disparities, though he acknowledges that entrenched interests may resist these changes. Similarly, studies by Afriyie (2023) argue that legal reforms are necessary but insufficient on their own, as the effectiveness of these measures depends on their enforcement and political will.

Mensah and Korang (2024) discuss the role of political parties in shaping electoral policies, suggesting that their involvement often results in policy frameworks that favour incumbents. This aligns with the findings of Prah (2023), who asserts that electoral administration in Ghana frequently reflects the priorities of ruling parties, thus challenging the principles of fairness and neutrality.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

The study adopted Institutionalism theory as its framework to examine how political institutions both formal and informal shape the actions and behaviour of political actors. This theory is particularly relevant when comparing Nigeria and Ghana, as it highlights the role of institutions like political parties, electoral commissions, and the judiciary in influencing electoral administration. According to scholars like Anderson (2021), institutional arrangements in both countries strongly determine the nature of electoral processes and political competition. In Ghana, the relatively strong institutional framework of the EC ensures that political parties must adhere to strict electoral guidelines. The EC's ability to act independently and manage electoral disputes is seen as a key factor in Ghana's electoral success. Institutionalism argues that this is due to the EC's established reputation for neutrality and fairness, which ensures that political parties operate within defined legal boundaries (Gyae, 2022). Furthermore, the institutional framework in Ghana allows for the active participation of civil society groups, which adds an additional layer of legitimacy to the electoral process.

However, in Nigeria, institutional weakness, as highlighted by Olumide (2024), is more apparent in the

electoral system. The politicisation of INEC and the pervasive influence of ruling political parties often lead to electoral malpractice. Institutionalism suggests that these weaknesses undermine the credibility of elections and encourage political parties to exploit loopholes within the system to secure electoral victories. Thus, Nigeria's political party system is largely defined by patronage networks and an informal system of power that circumvents formal institutional structures. This comparison highlights how the strength and functioning of electoral institutions significantly affect the conduct of elections and the relative success of political parties. Institutionalism also argues that for electoral processes to be fair and transparent, political institutions must be insulated from political interference, which has been a critical issue in Nigeria.

Strengths: Institutionalism's primary strength is its ability to explain the role of both formal and informal institutions in shaping political behaviour. It is particularly valuable for understanding how the design and functioning of electoral bodies like the EC in Ghana or INEC in Nigeria affect the nature of electoral competition and the fairness of elections (Anderson, 2021). Institutionalism highlights the fact that electoral outcomes are not solely determined by political parties or voters, but by the broader political environment that institutions create.

Relevance to the Study: This theory is highly relevant to the study of Nigeria and Ghana's political parties and electoral systems. In Ghana, the relatively autonomous EC has contributed to smoother electoral transitions, whereas the more politicised INEC in Nigeria has struggled with credibility issues. By comparing the institutional structures in both countries, institutionalism allows for a deeper understanding of the governance challenges they face in managing free and fair elections. Furthermore, the theory helps illuminate how the behaviour of political parties is often conditioned by institutional arrangements, such as the legal framework governing elections and the level of independence granted to electoral bodies.

Limitations: One of the limitations of institutionalism is that it tends to focus on the formal structures of political

institutions, often neglecting the informal practices that significantly influence electoral outcomes. In both Nigeria and Ghana, informal institutions such as patronage networks, ethnic loyalties, and clientelism play a crucial role in determining political outcomes, yet institutionalism does not always account for these dynamics. Additionally, institutionalism can sometimes neglect the historical and socio-cultural contexts that shape how political institutions function in specific countries, leading to an incomplete analysis.

3. Methodology

The study adopted a mixed methods of data collection of both primary and secondary sourced from Ghana and Nigeria. To investigate the issues, this study utilised a comparative design strengthened by quantitative and qualitative methods anchored with a survey research to examine the relationship between political parties and electoral administration in Nigeria and Ghana. Quantitative method, specifically online surveys questionnaire using Google form was employed. On the other hand, qualitative method, primarily through in-depth of 64 Key Informant Interviewees. While the target population of this study consists of 192, 000,000 of estimated party membership across active political parties in Nigeria and Ghana. The study made use of Krejcie and Morgan (1970) to determine the sample size of 384 each from both countries.

This is shown below;

$$S = \frac{X^2 NP (1-P)}{d^2 (N-1) + X^2 P(1-P)}$$

Where

S = Sample size

X = Table of Chi-square 1 degree of freedom at 5% degree of confidence Interval

N = Population size (192,000,000)

P = Population proportion (assumed to be 0.5 for the maximum sample size)

Dx² = Degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (0.5) = 0.0025

$$S = 384$$

The proportional sample size was obtained using Bowley (1926). The formula is;

$$n = \frac{N_h}{n}$$

n

Where

n = The total sample size

Nh = The population size of each ward

Total sample size (n) = 384

Total population (N) = 192,000,000

The quantitative data collected through questionnaire underwent analysis using both descriptive and inferential statistics. In parallel, the analysis of qualitative data derived from Key Informant Interviewees. The data analysis was conducted using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software, a robust statistical tool widely used in social science research.

4. Results and Discussion

Table 1: Questionnaire Distribution and Response Rate

Total Questionnaire Distributed	Total Questionnaire Returned	Response Rate (%)
384	384	100%

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents on Political Parties and Electoral Administration in Nigeria and Ghana

Demographic Characteristics	Nigeria (N = 384)	Ghana (N = 384)
1. Age		
18-24	50 (13%)	40 (10%)
25-34	100 (26%)	90 (23%)
35-44	80 (21%)	75 (20%)
45-54	70 (18%)	60 (16%)
55 and above	50 (13%)	50 (13%)
2. Gender		
Male	210 (55%)	180 (47%)
Female	174 (45%)	174 (45%)
3. Educational Qualification		
No formal education	20 (5%)	15 (4%)
Primary education	40 (10%)	30 (8%)
Secondary education	100 (26%)	95 (25%)
Tertiary education	180 (47%)	170 (44%)
Postgraduate education	44 (11%)	(14%)
4. Geopolitical Zones/ Regions		
North Central (Nigeria)	60 (16%)	-
North East (Nigeria)	50 (13%)	-
North West (Nigeria)	50 (13%)	-
South East (Nigeria)	60 (16%)	-
South South (Nigeria)	50 (13%)	-
South West (Nigeria)	50 (13%)	-
Greater Accra (Ghana)	-	70 (18%)
Ashanti (Ghana)	-	50 (13%)
Western (Ghana)	-	60 (16%)
Northern (Ghana)	-	55 (14%)
Eastern (Ghana)	-	60 (16%)
Volta (Ghana)	-	49 (13%)

5. Occupation		
INEC staff	60 (16%)	-
EC staff	-	70 (18%)
Political party member	50 (13%)	45 (12%)
Political analyst	70 (18%)	60 (16%)
CSO representative	60 (16%)	50 (13%)
General electorate	144 (38%)	159 (41%)
6. Years of Experience in Political Activities		
Less than 1 year	60 (16%)	50 (13%)
1-3 years	80 (21%)	70 (18%)
4-6 years	90 (23%)	100 (26%)
7-10 years	70 (18%)	60 (16%)
More than 10 years	84 (22%)	84 (22%)
7. Frequency of Participation in Elections		
Never participated	50 (13%)	60 (16%)
1 election	30 (8%)	40 (10%)
2-3 elections	100 (26%)	90 (23%)
4-5 elections	90 (23%)	80 (21%)
More than 5 elections	114 (30%)	114 (30%)

Source: Analysis of Field Survey using SPSS, 2025

Table 2 showed the demographic characteristics of respondents regarding political parties and electoral administration in Nigeria and Ghana reveal insightful trends in the political landscape of both nations. The age distribution among respondents highlights that the majority of participants fall within the age groups of 25-34 and 35-44 years, with Nigeria having 26% and 21%, respectively, while Ghana records 23% and 20% within these same age ranges. This pattern suggests that political engagement is relatively high among young adults, indicating that both nations have an active middle-aged electorate. The lower percentage of respondents within the 18-24 age range, with Nigeria at 13% and Ghana at 10%, suggests that while youth involvement in political matters is present, it remains moderate. This could be attributed to a lack of interest, disillusionment, or systemic barriers that discourage young voters from actively participating in electoral processes.

The gender distribution among respondents presents a male dominance in both Nigeria and Ghana, although the disparity is more pronounced in Nigeria, where 55% of respondents are male compared to Ghana's 47%. This gender imbalance in political engagement aligns with broader socio-political contexts, where patriarchal

structures often limit female participation in governance and electoral activities. However, the equal representation of female respondents in Ghana (45%) compared to Nigeria (45%) suggests a relatively progressive trend in gender inclusivity within the electoral process. This implies that although male dominance persists, efforts towards gender parity in electoral participation are more pronounced in Ghana than in Nigeria.

Educational qualification is another critical factor influencing political engagement. The findings indicate that the majority of respondents possess at least a secondary school education, with Nigeria recording 26% and Ghana 25%. Tertiary education levels are notably high, with 47% in Nigeria and 44% in Ghana, signifying that a significant proportion of the electorate is well-educated and potentially more informed about political affairs. The presence of postgraduate respondents, slightly higher in Ghana (14%) than in Nigeria (11%), suggests that a more educated populace may influence electoral administration and political party participation in Ghana. The low figures for those without formal education 5% in Nigeria and 4% in Ghana indicate that literacy rates among electorally engaged citizens are relatively high. This trend suggests that political discourse

in both countries is largely shaped by educated individuals who may have the capacity to critically assess political candidates and policies.

The regional distribution of respondents further reflects political participation across various parts of Nigeria and Ghana. In Nigeria, there is relatively equal representation across geopolitical zones, with North Central and South East recording the highest participation at 16%. This distribution underscores the decentralised nature of political engagement, where different regions contribute to the electoral discourse. In Ghana, Greater Accra has the highest representation at 18%, indicating that political activities may be more concentrated in urban centres. The representation from other regions such as Western (16%), Northern (14%), and Volta (13%) demonstrates a relatively even spread of political awareness across the country, reinforcing the notion that electoral administration and political party participation are widely distributed.

Occupational distribution among respondents highlights the roles of key stakeholders in electoral administration and political processes. In Nigeria, 16% of respondents are affiliated with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), while in Ghana, 18% are staff of the Electoral Commission (EC). This suggests that a significant proportion of respondents are directly involved in electoral administration, implying that the study captures expert insights from election officials. Political party members constitute 13% in Nigeria and 12% in Ghana, indicating moderate direct involvement in partisan politics. Political analysts and civil society organisation (CSO) representatives also feature prominently, with 18% and 16% respectively in Nigeria and 16% and 13% in Ghana, underscoring the role of independent observers in shaping electoral discourse. The general electorate comprises the largest segment, with 38% in Nigeria and 41% in Ghana, reinforcing the critical role of ordinary voters in determining electoral outcomes.

The respondents' years of experience in political activities reflect varying levels of engagement. Those with less than one year of experience account for 16% in Nigeria and

13% in Ghana, suggesting the inclusion of new entrants into political affairs. The majority of respondents have between 4-6 years of experience, with Ghana (26%) slightly higher than Nigeria (23%), indicating sustained engagement over multiple election cycles. The significant proportion of respondents with more than 10 years of political experience (22% in both countries) highlights the presence of seasoned participants who have witnessed multiple electoral processes, which may contribute to informed perspectives on electoral administration.

Participation in elections is a key indicator of political engagement. The data show that 30% of respondents in both Nigeria and Ghana have participated in more than five elections, demonstrating a strong commitment to democratic processes. However, 13% in Nigeria and 16% in Ghana report never having participated, suggesting potential voter apathy or systemic barriers to electoral participation. The percentages of those who have taken part in 2-3 elections 26% in Nigeria and 23% in Ghana highlight a moderate level of recurring voter engagement.

Overall, the demographic characteristics of respondents offer critical insights into the electoral landscape of Nigeria and Ghana. The findings suggest that young adults and middle-aged individuals constitute the core electorate, with educational attainment playing a crucial role in shaping political awareness. The gender disparity in Nigeria underscores the need for more inclusive policies to enhance female political participation. Regional variations suggest that political engagement is relatively decentralised, although urban centres may have higher concentrations of active participants. Occupational data reinforce the role of electoral officials, political analysts, and civil society representatives in shaping the electoral discourse. The data on political experience and election participation indicate a balance between new entrants and seasoned voters, with long-term participants contributing to the stability and continuity of electoral engagement. These insights collectively provide a detailed understanding of political parties and electoral administration in Nigeria and Ghana, shedding light on the factors influencing democratic participation in both countries.

Table 3: Political Parties Influence on Electoral Administration in Nigeria and Ghana

Questions	Nigeria (N = 384)	Ghana (N = 384)
2a. Influence of political parties on electoral administration		
Very significant	25% (96)	30% (115)
Significant	50% (192)	45% (173)
Neutral	15% (58)	15% (58)
Insignificant	5% (19)	5% (19)
Very insignificant	5% (19)	5% (19)
2b. Political parties directly influencing outcomes		
Yes	60% (231)	50% (192)
No	30% (115)	35% (134)
Unsure	10% (38)	15% (58)
2c. Impact on voter turnout		
Very high	35% (134)	40% (154)
High	40% (154)	35% (134)
Moderate	15% (58)	10% (38)
Low	5% (19)	8% (31)
Very low	5% (19)	7% (27)
2d. Transparency in electoral strategies		
Very transparent	25% (96)	30% (115)
Transparent	40% (154)	35% (134)
Neutral	15% (58)	20% (77)
Opaque	10% (38)	10% (38)
Very opaque	10% (38)	5% (19)
2e. Party elites shaping decision-making		
To a very large extent	20% (77)	25% (96)
To a large extent	45% (173)	40% (154)
To a moderate extent	25% (96)	20% (77)
To a small extent	5% (19)	10% (38)
Not at all	5% (19)	5% (19)
2f. Transparency in party financing		
Very transparent	10% (38)	8% (31)
Somewhat transparent	30% (115)	40% (154)
Neutral	25% (96)	25% (96)
Somewhat non-transparent	20% (77)	20% (77)
Very non-transparent	15% (58)	7% (27)
2g. Cohesion within major political parties		
Very cohesive	15% (58)	12% (46)
Somewhat cohesive	40% (154)	45% (173)
Neutral	25% (96)	25% (96)
Somewhat divided	15% (58)	12% (46)
Very divided	5% (19)	5% (19)

Source: Analysis of Field Survey using SPSS, 2025

Table 3 showed the influence of political parties on electoral administration in Nigeria and Ghana reveals both similarities and divergences in the political dynamics of the two nations. A significant proportion of respondents in Nigeria, accounting for 50%, and in Ghana, 45%, perceive political parties as having a significant impact on electoral administration. Meanwhile, a quarter of Nigerian respondents and 30% of Ghanaians view this influence as very significant. The implication of these findings suggests that political parties in both nations maintain a strong presence in the administration of elections, possibly through mechanisms such as candidate selection, logistical support, and interactions with electoral commissions. The higher percentage of respondents in Ghana identifying political parties' influence as very significant could indicate a more overt role played by political parties in shaping election processes, compared to Nigeria.

When examining the direct influence of political parties on electoral outcomes, 60% of Nigerian respondents affirm such influence, compared to 50% in Ghana. This suggests that political parties in Nigeria may exert greater control over the electoral process, possibly through vote mobilisation strategies, campaign financing, or influencing electoral bodies. The lesser percentage in Ghana might indicate a more structured electoral framework that mitigates direct political party intervention, reflecting stronger institutional safeguards. However, in both countries, a considerable percentage remains sceptical or uncertain, with 10% in Nigeria and 15% in Ghana responding as unsure. This uncertainty underscores the need for more transparency in electoral processes to dispel doubts regarding undue political interference.

Voter turnout is another critical factor influenced by political parties. In Nigeria, 35% of respondents perceive the impact of political parties on voter turnout as very high, while in Ghana, this figure rises to 40%. Additionally, 40% of Nigerian respondents and 35% of Ghanaians consider the influence to be high. These figures indicate that political parties play a crucial role in mobilising voters, possibly through voter education campaigns, party affiliations, and grassroots political

engagement. The slightly higher percentages in Ghana suggest a more active or effective political mobilisation strategy. Conversely, the percentage of respondents who perceive a low or very low impact on voter turnout remains relatively small in both countries, indicating that the majority acknowledge political parties as essential actors in electoral participation.

Transparency in electoral strategies presents another dimension of political party influence. In Nigeria, 25% of respondents rate the transparency of electoral strategies as very transparent, while in Ghana, the figure is slightly higher at 30%. Meanwhile, 40% of Nigerian respondents and 35% of Ghanaians consider electoral strategies to be transparent. These figures suggest a perception of relative openness in the electioneering process. However, a significant proportion of respondents also express neutrality or concerns about opacity. The 10% in both nations who rate electoral strategies as opaque and the additional 10% in Nigeria who consider them very opaque indicate underlying scepticism about the fairness of the electoral process. The lower percentage of Ghanaians perceiving electoral strategies as very opaque (5%) could imply stronger regulatory mechanisms ensuring electoral integrity in Ghana compared to Nigeria.

The role of party elites in shaping decision-making is another area of concern. In Nigeria, 20% of respondents believe that party elites influence decision-making to a very large extent, compared to 25% in Ghana. A larger proportion of respondents in both countries 45% in Nigeria and 40% in Ghana acknowledge a large extent of elite influence. These findings highlight that elite politicians and high-ranking party members wield considerable power in shaping party policies, candidate selection, and election strategies. The implications of such dominance suggest that internal democracy within political parties may be constrained, potentially sidelining grassroots voices and fostering political clientelism.

Transparency in party financing emerges as a key issue, with only 10% of Nigerian respondents and 8% of Ghanaians considering political party financing to be very transparent. A higher percentage of Ghanaians (40%) compared to Nigerians (30%) believe that party financing

is somewhat transparent. However, the presence of respondents identifying party financing as somewhat or very non-transparent 35% in Nigeria and 27% in Ghana points to widespread concerns regarding financial accountability in political campaigns. This underscores the need for stronger financial disclosure laws and enforcement mechanisms to enhance transparency and curb illicit financial flows into political campaigns.

Cohesion within major political parties also varies between the two nations. In Nigeria, 15% of respondents regard political parties as very cohesive, compared to 12% in Ghana. The proportion of respondents who consider parties to be somewhat cohesive is slightly higher in Ghana (45%) than in Nigeria (40%). The relatively lower perception of cohesion in Nigeria suggests a more fragmented party structure, potentially due to internal divisions, ideological inconsistencies, or factional disputes. Conversely, Ghana's political parties appear to exhibit greater unity, which could contribute to more stable political campaigns and governance. Nonetheless, in both countries, a notable percentage of respondents (25%) remain neutral, indicating mixed perceptions of internal party unity.

The comparative analysis of political party influence in Nigeria and Ghana underscores both shared and divergent electoral dynamics. Political parties in both nations exert substantial influence on electoral administration, voter turnout, and decision-making processes. However, Ghana appears to have a slight edge in perceived transparency, cohesion, and institutional integrity. These findings highlight the necessity for enhanced electoral reforms, stricter financial regulations, and robust party governance frameworks to ensure democratic credibility in both Nigeria and Ghana.

Expanding further, it is essential to delve into the historical context of political party influence in both nations. Nigeria, with its vast multi-ethnic and multi-party structure, has seen various political entities play dominant roles in shaping electoral outcomes. The influence of regional and ethnic considerations has historically impacted electoral processes, sometimes fostering political tensions and undermining democratic stability.

Ghana, on the other hand, has experienced a more stable two-party dominance, which has contributed to a relatively predictable and regulated electoral framework. The implications of these structural differences suggest that while political parties in Ghana exert influence, it may be more streamlined compared to the diverse and sometimes fragmented political party landscape in Nigeria. Moreover, the legal frameworks governing political parties in both nations play a role in determining the extent of their influence. Ghana's Electoral Commission maintains stricter oversight on campaign financing and party registration, which might explain the relatively higher perceptions of transparency. In contrast, Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has often faced criticisms regarding its ability to curb financial misconduct and political interference. Strengthening these institutions is critical to fostering fair and credible elections in both countries.

Thus, while political parties are indispensable to the democratic process in Nigeria and Ghana, their roles must be continuously scrutinised to ensure they contribute positively to democratic governance. By addressing concerns around transparency, financing, and cohesion, both nations can enhance electoral credibility and democratic stability. Future reforms should focus on strengthening electoral commissions, improving financial accountability, and fostering internal democracy within political parties. These efforts will not only promote fair elections but also reinforce public trust in the electoral process.

4.1 Discussion of Major Findings

Extent of Political Parties Influence on Electoral Administration in Nigeria and Ghana

The extent to which political parties influence electoral administration can significantly shape the democratic process in any nation. In both Nigeria and Ghana, political parties wield substantial influence over electoral outcomes, whether through candidate selection, voter mobilization, or direct interaction with electoral bodies. This influence, however, varies in its intensity and impact, depending on the political context, institutional

safeguards, and the level of political competition within each country.

In Nigeria, political parties have historically had a significant influence on the electoral process. The sheer number of political parties and the dominance of regional and ethnic interests mean that political parties in Nigeria can exert considerable pressure on the electoral administration. One of the most visible forms of this influence is in the selection of candidates and the way in which party elites shape the outcome of elections. Party elites often have the power to determine who runs for office, making decisions that can affect the broader electoral process. Additionally, political parties in Nigeria have been known to play a significant role in the mobilization of voters, sometimes using resources like vote-buying, patronage, and other forms of political patronage to sway electoral outcomes. This level of control often raises concerns about the fairness and transparency of elections, particularly in a country where electoral violence and irregularities have been commonplace in the past.

In Ghana, the influence of political parties on electoral administration is also substantial, but the relatively lower number of political parties and the more stable two-party system means that this influence is more streamlined. Ghana's political system is characterized by more structured and regulated party activities, which allows for greater oversight and less room for partisan manipulation of the electoral process. While political parties in Ghana still exert significant influence, particularly in terms of voter mobilization and the selection of candidates, there is a greater sense of institutionalized fairness and transparency compared to Nigeria. Ghana's Electoral Commission plays a more neutral role in ensuring that political parties abide by electoral laws, and its ability to maintain independence from political parties has contributed to the country's relatively successful democratic transitions.

The difference in political party influence between Nigeria and Ghana can also be attributed to the political culture in each country. In Nigeria, political parties are often seen as vehicles for political elites to maintain

power, with less emphasis on the broader democratic ideals of transparency and public accountability. In contrast, Ghana has a more ingrained political culture of competition between two dominant parties, which fosters a more open and regulated electoral environment.

Despite these differences, both countries share common challenges regarding the transparency of political party activities. In both Nigeria and Ghana, the role of party financing and the influence of political elites are significant factors that impact the effectiveness and fairness of electoral administration. Political parties in both countries have been criticized for lack of transparency in their financial operations, and the extent to which elite interests shape party decision-making remains a concern. This has implications for democratic consolidation, as public trust in the electoral system is undermined when political parties are perceived as prioritizing their financial interests over the welfare of the electorate.

The role of political parties in influencing electoral administration is a double-edged sword in both Nigeria and Ghana. While their influence can help to mobilize voters and drive political participation, it also raises concerns about the fairness and transparency of the electoral process. Strengthening the independence of electoral commissions, enhancing transparency in party financing, and promoting greater accountability within political parties are key steps that both countries can take to mitigate the negative effects of political party influence on electoral administration.

The analysis of political parties' influence on electoral administration in both Nigeria and Ghana reveals a detailed interplay of factors, presenting both similarities and contrasts in the ways these parties impact the electoral process. The relationship between political parties and electoral administration in both nations is crucial in determining the transparency, fairness, and overall integrity of elections. Political parties shape the electoral process through various means such as candidate selection, resource mobilization, party strategies, and interactions with electoral bodies. However, the nature and extent of this influence differ between the two

countries, owing to variations in political context, institutional structures, and the level of political competition.

In Nigeria, political parties have long been a dominant force in shaping the electoral process, influencing candidate selection, party strategy, and voter mobilization. Adebayo and Omotosho (2021) assert that political parties engage in resource mobilization strategies to influence electoral outcomes, echoing the concern that such strategies may undermine the credibility of elections. The impact of political party influence is evident in the way party elites often determine who runs for office, which has a profound effect on the integrity of the electoral process. Similarly, Olayemi (2022) points to party interference in the operations of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) as a significant challenge, a sentiment echoed by other scholars like Bello et al. (2022), who suggest that political parties play an essential role in the mobilization of loyalists, thus shaping the course of electoral administration. However, Akindele (2022) offers a contrasting view, denying that parties have disproportionate control over electoral bodies, and instead highlighting the role of institutional reforms as mitigating factors. This distinction is important because it suggests that political parties' influence, while significant, may not be as overpowering in all cases, as institutional mechanisms can often serve as a check against undue interference.

A critical aspect of political party influence in Nigeria is the extent to which they are able to shape the electoral process through patronage and financial influence. Studies like those by Okonkwo (2023) assert that public administration reforms and societal pressures serve as counterbalances to the power of political parties, suggesting that broader factors, including the independence of electoral bodies and reforms aimed at reducing corruption, can help mitigate party influence. The interviews further illustrate these differences. Nigerian electoral officials emphasized how political parties influence the deployment of election materials, appointment of electoral officers, and even the scheduling of elections. Some participants noted that party influence extends to litigation and post-election dispute resolution,

confirming Okonkwo's (2023) observation that political interference is pervasive in Nigeria's electoral process. The ruling party, in particular, was cited as having undue influence over electoral decisions, which erodes public trust in INEC. This view aligns with the argument put forward by Uchenna (2022), who suggests that external funding and international observation dilute the power of political parties, thereby contributing to the integrity of the electoral process. However, the extent to which such external influences can counteract party dominance remains a contentious issue, particularly given the pervasive power of political elites.

In Ghana, the influence of political parties on electoral administration is similarly pronounced, yet the dynamics differ somewhat due to the country's more stable two-party system. Ghana's political system allows for greater institutional oversight and regulation, thus creating a more neutral and independent role for the Electoral Commission. Studies by Antwi et al. (2021) and Owusu (2022) indicate that political parties in Ghana, while still exerting significant influence, tend to do so in a more structured and regulated environment compared to Nigeria. Ghana's Electoral Commission is seen as relatively more autonomous, and its ability to maintain independence from political parties contributes to the country's more successful democratic transitions. The work of Aidoo (2023) supports this, suggesting that party engagement with electoral administration can foster transparency by supporting voter education and the smooth conduct of elections. This perspective contrasts with the Nigerian experience, where party interference in electoral processes, particularly by the ruling party, remains a persistent challenge. Interviewees highlighted how Ghana's EC operates with relative autonomy, a finding supported by Aidoo (2023), who credits institutional transparency as a key factor in Ghana's electoral stability.

Despite the differences in the electoral systems of both countries, the role of political parties in voter mobilization and the selection of candidates remains a significant point of contention. Both in Nigeria and Ghana, political parties engage in resource mobilization, often using funds and other political tools to sway electoral outcomes. However,

in Ghana, the influence of political parties on the Electoral Commission appears more limited due to stronger institutional safeguards and legal frameworks. As noted by Mensah (2023), reforms in Ghana have helped mediate the effects of party competition, reducing bias while acknowledging that party strategies still shape electoral administration outcomes. This view contrasts with findings in Nigeria, where the dominance of political elites and their ability to manipulate the electoral system through both formal and informal channels, such as party primaries and vote-buying, remains a significant challenge.

In both countries, there is considerable concern regarding the transparency of party financing and the influence of political elites. Studies from Nigeria, such as those by Okonkwo (2018) and Ibrahim and Garba (2019), highlight the role of financial resources in distorting electoral outcomes, with political parties often exploiting systemic weaknesses in electoral laws to secure favorable results. This is similar to concerns raised in Ghana, where the mobilization of financial resources by dominant parties is seen as contributing to electoral manipulation. Kwaku et al. (2023) note that while reforms in Ghana have succeeded in reducing some of the negative effects of political party influence, they have not completely eliminated the disparities between larger and smaller parties, particularly in terms of access to resources. This issue, as suggested by Afriyie (2024), underscores the challenge of balancing party influence with the need for greater accountability and fairness in electoral administration.

The findings from both countries underscore the need for continued reform to address the challenges posed by political party influence on electoral administration. In Nigeria, the interplay between political parties and the electoral commission remains a key point of concern. As noted by Omodia (2017) and Okafor (2019), political interference in electoral processes often undermines the autonomy of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), thereby jeopardizing the fairness of elections. In Ghana, while the influence of political parties on electoral processes is somewhat more regulated, the continued use of partisan tactics and the

dominance of financial resources in elections raise questions about the overall fairness of the system. Studies by Prah (2022) and Korang (2024) highlight the potential for party influence to erode trust in the electoral process, especially when parties use informal strategies to manipulate election results.

Furthermore, the role of political parties in electoral violence and malpractices cannot be overlooked. In both Nigeria and Ghana, political parties have been linked to electoral violence, with parties often inciting violence to intimidate voters and secure favorable outcomes. This is particularly evident in Nigeria, where studies by Adedoyin (2018) and Aluko (2018) identify a strong correlation between party activities and electoral violence. Similarly, in Ghana, political parties are seen as playing a role in creating regional and socioeconomic disparities, which, according to Tetteh (2022), undermine the credibility of elections. However, the effectiveness of legal frameworks and electoral reforms in mitigating these challenges remains a point of debate, with some scholars suggesting that while reforms have made significant strides in reducing the impact of political party influence, others like Tuffour (2023) argue that political will and institutional capacity are required to fully neutralize the effects of party interference.

The contrasting views presented in the studies from Nigeria and Ghana reflect the complexities of political party influence on electoral administration. While both countries face challenges regarding transparency, fairness, and the integrity of the electoral process, the degree to which political parties are able to exert control differs significantly. In Ghana, the relatively more regulated political environment and institutional safeguards help mitigate the negative effects of political party influence, whereas in Nigeria, political parties continue to exert considerable influence, particularly through the manipulation of electoral bodies, resources, and party strategies. Corroborating, YIAGA (2024) report on the 2024 Ghana general elections reported that transparency and responsiveness in election administration builds citizens' trust in Ghana's EC. The culture of respect for democratic institutions by different stakeholders strengthens and encourage active

participation. This complex interplay between political parties, electoral administration, and institutional reforms highlights the need for a comprehensive approach to improving the electoral process in both countries, with an emphasis on enhancing transparency, strengthening electoral institutions, and promoting greater public participation in the democratic process.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, both Nigeria and Ghana faced significant challenges in their political and electoral systems, but they also offered valuable lessons in how political parties and electoral commissions could work together to improve the integrity and effectiveness of elections. Strengthening the independence of electoral commissions, enhancing transparency in political party activities, improving political education, and promoting political accountability were essential steps for both countries to take in order to ensure democratic consolidation and the successful functioning of their electoral systems. While the path to electoral reform was challenging, the findings suggested that fostering a more transparent, inclusive, and accountable relationship between political parties and electoral bodies would have been crucial for achieving sustained democratic progress in both countries.

To address the negative influence of political parties on electoral administration both countries need to;

- I. Strengthen regulation and oversight of political parties through establishment of clearer legal frameworks that define the boundaries of political party activities and ensure that they operate within the bounds of democratic norms in both countries.
- II. Enforcing comprehensive transparency in party financing by disclosing their sources of funding, including donations, membership dues, and corporate contributions.
- III. The Nigerian government must also strengthen the enforcement of laws that prevent vote-buying,

electoral malpractice and electoral violence. Strict penalties should be imposed on political actors who engage in these practices.

- IV. In Ghana, political parties should be required to enhance internal democracy, allowing for more representation and participation in party decision-making processes. Ghana's electoral laws should also ensure that political parties are held to high standards of accountability regarding campaign financing.
- V. Furthermore, political parties in both countries should be encouraged to engage in regular consultations with civil society organizations, election observers, and the electorate in general to ensure that they maintain a connection with the voters' interests and concerns.

Limitations of the Study

These limitations can be broadly categorised into issues related to data collection, methodological concerns, sample size, regional biases, and broader contextual factors. The sample size for the online survey questionnaire, while reflective of the broader population in Nigeria and Ghana, may not fully capture the diversity of experiences and perspectives across various demographic groups. Moreover, the online survey method itself is subject to a selection bias. Not all individuals have equal access to the internet or are proficient in using online platforms, particularly in rural or underdeveloped areas.

The contextual limitations of the study in Nigeria and Ghana are shaped by distinct historical, cultural, and institutional factors that may not be fully captured within the confines of this study. The mixed-methods approach used in this study also introduces certain methodological limitations on self-reported data from both interview participants and survey respondents. Self-reported data is inherently subject to biases, including social desirability bias and recall bias, which can distort the accuracy of the findings.

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