



Research Title

To evaluate the effectiveness of electoral reforms in enhancing the credibility and management of elections in Nigeria, with a focus on the post-2023 general elections.

A Research Project

By

- 1. Achu Ruth Takim (Group Leader)**
- 2. Fibi Masi Moses**
- 3. Zainab Adam Yakubu**
- 4. Kaneng Gyang**

Ref: *Achu e'tal 2026*

**WLC - COHORT 1_GROUP A Members
(The Reclaimers)**

Submitted to Aid for African Women & Girls - (A2WG)

**No: 1, NACB Close, Adjacent NHIA Office,
Commissioners Quarters, Dougirei,
Jimeta-Yola, Adamawa State,
Northeast, Nigeria.**

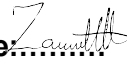
Email: official@a2wg.org Phone no: +234 703 500 4559

February 2026

Certification

This is to certify that this research work “To evaluate the effectiveness of electoral reforms in enhancing the credibility and management of elections in Nigeria, with a focus on the post-2023 general elections” was carried out by the WLC-COHORT 1 GROUP A: The Reclaimers Members under the Women Leading the Change Cohort - 1 Program organized by Aid for African Women & Girls (A2WG).

Signature:  Date: 27/02/2026
Fibi Masi Moses

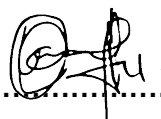
Signature:  Date: 27/02/2026
Zainab Adam Yakubu

Signature:  Date: 27/02/2026
Ruth Achu (Group Leader)

Signature:  Date: 27/02/26
Kaneng Gyang

Signature:  Date: 28th February 2026
Hassan Mathias Kabulu

(Director of Research, Grants & Programmes - Aid for African Women & Girls - A2WG)

Signature:  Date: 28th February 2026

Gloria Kelechi Felix

(Executive Director - Aid for African Women and Girls - A2WG)

Dedication

To God Almighty, the source of wisdom, strength, and inspiration, we dedicate this research. His grace sustained us through every challenge, every deadline, and every stage of this academic journey. Without His guidance, none of this would have been possible.

This work is also sincerely dedicated to Achu Ruth Takim, our exceptionally committed and inspirational Team Leader. Her unwavering support, untiring dedication, and active engagement with every member of the group were the backbone of our progress. Many of us would not have reached the end of this cohort without her steadfast leadership, encouragement, and continuous sacrifice.

We further dedicate this research to our amazing team members, Fibi Masi Moses, Zainab Adam Yakubu, and Kaneng Gyang, whose collaboration, resilience, and determination transformed this work into a truly collective achievement.

Special appreciation is also extended to our cohort supervisor and mentor, Mr. Joseph Kabulu, whose guidance, expertise, and consistent mentorship strengthened the quality, depth, and direction of this research. His patience and leadership created a learning environment in which we could excel.

Finally, this dedication extends to Aid for African Women & Girls (A2WG) and the Women Leading the Change - Cohort 1 (WLC-C1) Program. Your vision for empowering young women in leadership and governance gave us the platform, tools, and confidence to carry out this work.

This research stands as a testament to God's grace, leadership, teamwork, and a shared commitment to building a more inclusive and democratic Nigeria.

Acknowledgements

We express our profound gratitude to God Almighty, whose grace, wisdom, and strength enabled us to complete this research successfully. His guidance illuminated every step of this journey.

We extend our sincere appreciation to Mr. Joseph Kabulu, our cohort supervisor and mentor, for his exceptional leadership, patience, and commitment to our academic and professional growth. His insightful feedback, continuous support, and dedication to our learning were instrumental in shaping the quality and depth of this study.

Our heartfelt gratitude goes to our dedicated Team Leader, Achu Ruth Takim, whose tireless efforts, unwavering commitment, and exemplary coordination carried the entire team through the most challenging phases of this research. Her persistence, clarity, and passion ensured that every member remained engaged, supported, and aligned with the goals of the project.

We also acknowledge the invaluable contributions of our team members, Fibi Masi Moses, Zainab Adam Yakubu, and Kaneng Gyang. Your collective effort, resilience, and team spirit made this research a meaningful and collaborative achievement. Every idea shared, every task completed, and every challenge overcome strengthened the bond of our group.

We remain deeply grateful to Aid for African Women & Girls (A2WG) and the organizers of the Women Leading the Change - Cohort 1 (WLC-C1) program. Your commitment to empowering young women, promoting leadership, and fostering active participation in governance provided the foundation for this research. Thank you for the resources, mentorship, and learning environment that made this study possible.

Finally, we appreciate everyone who participated in our surveys, interviews, and discussions. Your insights enriched our findings and added depth to this work.

This research is a product of collaboration, resilience, leadership, and shared purpose, and we are honoured to have undertaken this journey together.

Abstract

The 2023 general election in Nigeria was conducted under a new Electoral Act 2022 that promised a significant technology innovation. This research study evaluates the legal institution reforms, specifically the impact of present and past electoral reforms in Nigeria, the use of BVAS, on public trust, electoral transparency, voter participation (especially among women and youth), and overall electoral credibility in the country's six geopolitical zones.

The study also examines the gaps and limitations of current reforms and evaluates whether these reforms have positively impacted democratic consolidation in the country. The component of Nigeria electoral reforms includes financial autonomy on the electoral umpire, introduction of electronic processes, exclusion of political parties acting as voting delegate or aspirant and constant reform improvement through reforms.

This study explores the justification for reforms, assess the mechanism adopted to promote electoral reforms. Generally, the reforms have been targeted on institutions as a strong election management body with substantial administrative and autonomy at promoting democratic political culture within parties and the populace. Drawing concrete insights from the 2023 Nigeria general election. Over the years Nigeria has faced election fraud leading Nigerians to lose trust in the electoral process. In 2022, the new Electoral Act was introduced creating more opportunities for the integration of technologies like the BVAS and IREV to improve voter accreditation, results transmission, and real time election viewership for stakeholders. Nigerians were excited hoping the Act will restore voter confidence in the country. However, the outcome of the election, especially the presidential election in 2023 indicated that the Act failed to meet expectations of Nigerians.

This study furthermore examines the Electoral Act 2022 and the credibility of the 2023 general election in Nigeria. It discussed why the act fails to mitigate insecurity and making sure of efficient transmission and viewing of election results which are key to free and fair election using a mixed research approach, data collection and analysis. This study receives direct response from Voters, CSOs, INEC, Stakeholders, literatures, election observers and media reports.

This study concludes that the Reforms particularly BVAS, positively affected accreditation integrity but did not fully resolve systemic weakness. Challenges of poor logistics, lack of strategic planning and implementation by the stakeholders, contested result transmission, and underrepresentation of women and youth continue to undermine Nigeria's democratic stability.

Therefore, the researchers recommend that the Civil Society both senior and junior revisit to strengthen and scale grassroots voter education, create safe spaces for marginalized groups, and synergize more to create and own a trusted citizen driven electoral accountability platform that can hold INEC accountable in election process and continued election monitoring. The government should enforce stricter penalties for malpractice, adopt gender quotas, intensify measures towards enhancing the capacity of the security agencies to respond to election security situations, and provide INEC with adequate funding while INEC improve staff training on BVAS, deploy backup systems, ensure sustained improvement in the distribution of election materials across polling units in subsequent elections, work with security agencies to ensure that all electoral offenders are investigated and prosecuted according to the law, and

collaborate more with CSOs and political parties reduce financial barriers for women/youth, adopt inclusive constitution, and strengthen mentorship and voter education across the country before the election commence.

Table of Contents

Cover Page.	i
Certification	ii
Dedication	iii
Acknowledgements.	iv
Abstract.	v
Table of Content.	vii
List of Table	x
List of Figures.	x
List of Abbreviation/Glossary	x
<u>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</u>	
1.1 Background to the Study	11
1.2 Statement of the Problem	11
1.3 Research Questions	12
1.4 Main Objectives.	12
1.5 Research Hypotheses (if any)	13
1.6 Significance of the Study	13
1.7 Scope/Delimitation of the Study	14
1.8 Operational Definition of Key Terms	14
1.9 Chapter Organisation	15
<u>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW</u>	
2.1 Conceptual Review	16
2.1.1 Definition and Dimensions of Gender Inequality	16
2.1.2 Political Participation: Forms and Measures	16
2.1.3 Inclusion Strategies: Gender Quotas, Legal Reforms, and Civic	

Education.	17
2.2 Theoretical Framework	17
2.2.1 Feminist Theory	17
2.2.2 Social Capital Theory	18
2.2.3 Institutional Theory	18
2.3 Empirical Review	18
2.4 Gaps in the Literature	19
<u>CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY</u>	
3.1 Research Design	21
3.2 Population of the Study	21
3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Technique	22
3.4 Research Instruments	23
3.5 Validity and Reliability of Instrument	23
3.6 Method of Data Collection.	24
3.7 Method of Data Analysis	24
3.8 Ethical Considerations	25
<u>CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS</u>	
4.1 Introduction	26
4.2 Response Rate and Demographic Characteristics	26
4.3 Descriptive Analysis	27
4.3.1 Awareness and Use of BVAS	30
4.3.2 Trust and Perception of INEC	30
4.3.3 Participation of Women and Youth	30
4.3.4 Electoral Credibility and Transparency	31
4.4 Inferential Analysis	31
4.4.1 Hypothesis Testing	31

4.5 Qualitative Insights	35
4.6 Discussion of Findings	36
4.6.1 Linkage to Literature	36
4.6.2 Implications of Findings	37
4.7 Summary of Chapter	37
<u>CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS</u>	
5.1 Introduction	38
5.2 Summary of Findings.	38
5.2.1 Key Empirical Findings	38
5.2.2 Summary of Hypotheses Testing	40
5.3 Conclusion	41
5.4 Recommendations.	41
5.5 Contributions to Knowledge.	42
5.6 Suggestions for Further Studies.	43
5.7 Conclusion.	43
<u>References</u>	
A. Academic Sources	44
B. Institutional Reports and Official Publications	45
Appendix	46

List of Tables

Table 1: Awareness of BVAS Across Geopolitical Zones	18
Table 2: Gender Distribution of Respondents	26
Table 3: Perceived Credibility of the 2023 Elections	27
Table 4: BVAS Functionality and Voter Experience.	27
Table 5: Trust in INEC Before and After the 2023 Elections	28

List of Figures

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Electoral Reform and Trust

Figure 2: BVAS Deployment and Voter Accreditation Flow

Figure 3: Regional Variation in BVAS Performance

Figure 4: Trends in Youths and Women Participation

Figure 5: Relationship Between Civic Education and Trust Levels

List of Abbreviations/Glossary

BVAS – Bimodal Voter Accreditation System

INEC – Independent National Electoral Commission

IReV – INEC Result Viewing Portal

CSO – Civil Society Organization

EU EOM – European Union Election Observation Mission

PVC – Permanent Voter Card

NBS – National Bureau of Statistics

NOA – National Orientation Agency

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Elections remain the cornerstone of any democratic society, serving as the primary mechanism through which citizens choose their leaders and hold them accountable. As Diamond (2004) emphasizes, “Free and fair elections are the indispensable foundation of democracy, without which other democratic institutions cannot function effectively.” Similarly, Norris (2014) argues that electoral processes not only legitimize political authority but also provide citizens with the means to influence governance and policy direction. Nigeria, however, has historically experienced elections marred by irregularities, violence, voter apathy, manipulation of results, and lack of trust in the electoral system. According to Omotola (2010), “Elections in Nigeria have often been characterized by fraud, intimidation, and violence, undermining their credibility and the legitimacy of democratic governance.” Similarly, the European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM, 2019) reported widespread logistical challenges, vote buying, and incidents of violence during Nigeria’s general elections, noting that such patterns contribute to low public confidence in electoral processes.

In an attempt to address some of these longstanding issues, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the National Assembly have reformed election laws and regulations before and after elections. One major outcome of these reforms was the introduction of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) in 2021, with full deployment during the 2023 general elections. According to INEC (2023), BVAS was designed to “eliminate multiple voting, strengthen the credibility of voter accreditation, and ensure realtime transmission of election results from polling units to the INEC Result Viewing Portal (IReV).” Similarly, the Electoral Act 2022 provided the legal framework for the use of BVAS and other technological innovations aimed at enhancing transparency and public confidence in Nigeria’s elections (National Assembly, 2022).

The BVAS was designed to enhance the credibility of the electoral process by ensuring accurate voter accreditation and reducing incidents of fraud and manipulation. According to INEC (2023), the BVAS was deployed across all 8,809 wards and 119,973 polling units nationwide. Its introduction marked a major milestone in Nigeria's electoral reform efforts, raising both optimism and skepticism among various stakeholders.

This research will focus on evaluating the impact of present and past electoral reforms in Nigeria, particularly the use of BVAS, on public trust, electoral transparency, voter participation (especially among women and youth), and overall electoral credibility in the country’s six geopolitical zones. The study also examines the gaps and limitations of current reforms and evaluates whether these reforms have positively impacted democratic consolidation in the country.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the integration of technology and repeated promises of reform, Nigeria's electoral process will still be grappling with systemic weaknesses. For instance, under the 2007 administration, elections were widely criticized by international observers for large-scale fraud and intimidation (European Union Election Observation Mission [EU EOM], 2007). In 2011 and 2015, although reforms such as the introduction of the Permanent Voter Card (PVC) and Smart Card Reader were implemented, challenges such as delayed election results, logistical failures, and incidents of violence persisted (INEC, 2015; EU EOM, 2015). The 2019 general elections, conducted under President Muhammadu Buhari's administration, also witnessed vote buying, low voter turnout, and the marginalization of women and youth from meaningful participation (YIAGA Africa, 2019). These recurring patterns underscore the persistence of structural gaps in Nigeria's electoral system despite technological interventions.

The 2023 general elections, while widely anticipated to be more credible due to the introduction of BVAS, still drew significant criticism over logistical failures and perceived lack of transparency in result collation. According to YIAGA Africa's Election Observation Report (2023), only 27% of polling units observed nationwide commenced voting at the official start time of 8:30 a.m., with delays in the deployment of materials and personnel affecting the rest. Furthermore, the European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM, 2023) noted that INEC failed to upload results from polling units to the INEC Result Viewing (IReV) portal in real time as promised, undermining public confidence. In addition, a Premium Times postelection analysis reported that in some states, such as Rivers and Lagos, discrepancies were observed between results announced at polling units and those published by INEC online, fueling concerns about transparency.

The central problem is whether the current wave of electoral reforms, including the use of BVAS, has truly enhanced the credibility of elections and built trust among the electorate. It is also unclear whether these reforms have had equitable impacts across different demographics, regions, and political contexts.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What specific gaps exist in Nigeria's electoral system that hinder women's participation and compromise election transparency?
2. How has the deployment of BVAS technology affected voter accreditation processes and overall electoral transparency in Nigeria?
3. In what ways does BVAS influence election outcomes, and what are its broader implications for the development of democracy in Nigeria?

1.4 Main Objectives.

To evaluate the effectiveness of electoral reforms in enhancing the credibility and management of elections in Nigeria, with a focus on the post-2023 general elections.

Specific Objectives:

1. To assess the impact of the 2023 general elections on electoral outcomes and processes across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones by analyzing election data and stakeholder feedback.
2. To measure the relationship between the deployment of BVAS technology and levels of public trust in Nigeria's electoral process through surveys and interviews.
3. To identify and analyze existing gaps in Nigeria's electoral reforms and their implementation by reviewing policy documents and conducting expert consultations.

1.5 Research Hypotheses

Based on the research objectives, the following hypotheses are proposed for empirical testing:

- **H1:** There is a significant relationship between the deployment of BVAS technology and increased public trust in Nigeria's electoral process.
- **H2:** Electoral reforms implemented post-2023 elections have significantly improved voter accreditation, turnout, and result transparency in Nigeria.
- **H3:** Gaps in the current electoral reforms negatively affect the credibility and effectiveness of election management in Nigeria.
- **H4:** Electoral ignorance significantly undermines Nigeria's democratic stability despite ongoing electoral reforms.

These hypotheses will guide the data collection and analysis phases to validate or refute the assumed relationships.

1.6 Significance of the Study

While numerous institutions and scholars have examined Nigeria's electoral reforms, many existing studies have either focused narrowly on legal frameworks, election observation reports, or short-term assessments of electoral outcomes. This research will be distinct in several ways:

This research will contribute new, policy-relevant evidence in three ways. First, it will provide an empirically grounded post-2023 assessment of BVAS deployment and its effects on public trust, a timely evaluation that builds on but goes beyond pre-2023 studies by integrating stakeholder interviews, civil society reports, and voter surveys. Second, by centering gender and youth inclusion as core variables, the study will move beyond generic descriptions of underrepresentation and provide a targeted analysis of how reforms affect marginalized groups. Third, the study will offer evidence-based recommendations that are actionable for INEC, the National Assembly, civil society, and development partners, identifying institutional fixes, practical training, and logistic improvements, and targeted civic education strategies that can convert technological gains into sustainable democratic legitimacy.

By providing these unique contributions, the research will not only enrich academic literature but also serve as a practical tool for policymakers, donor agencies, and advocacy groups committed to promoting fair, transparent, and inclusive elections in Nigeria.

1.7 Scope/Delimitation of the Study

This study focuses on the 2023 general elections and examines the role and impact of electoral reforms, particularly BVAS, on voter accreditation, public trust, and inclusion across six states representing Nigeria's geopolitical zones: Federal Capital Territory (FCT) for North Central; Bauchi (North East); Kaduna (North West); Anambra (South East); Rivers (South South); and Lagos (South West). The study limits its empirical survey to registered voters and triangulates findings with interviews of INEC officials, civil society actors, party agents, and women's and youth groups. While the sample design is intended to be as representative as possible, the study does not attempt nation-wide statistical inference beyond the selected states; rather, it uses these strategically chosen sites to examine variations in reform effects across varied socio-political contexts (urban/rural, security-challenged, politically competitive). **Overall Focus**

The study will examine the role and impact of BVAS technology and other electoral reform efforts on election outcomes, voter behavior, and public trust in the electoral process across the six geopolitical zones during the 2023 general elections.

1.8 Operational Definition of Key Terms

VAS (Bimodal Voter Accreditation System): An INEC-deployed device that uses biometric verification (fingerprint and facial recognition) to authenticate voters at polling units and to facilitate result transmission.

Electoral credibility: The extent to which election processes (registration, accreditation, voting, collation, and declaration) are perceived as free, fair, and transparent by stakeholders.

Public trust: Citizens' confidence in electoral institutions and processes to deliver credible outcomes.

Electoral ignorance: Low levels of voter knowledge about electoral processes, rights, and procedures can reduce participation or make voters susceptible to manipulation.

1.9 Chapter Organisation

Chapter One introduces the problem, objectives, and scope. Chapter Two reviews the literature with a focus on gender, inclusion strategies, and technology in elections. Chapter Three explains the mixed-methods design, sampling, instruments, and analysis methods. Chapter Four will present data, analysis, and discussion. Chapter Five will summarize findings, draw conclusions, and propose recommendations and areas for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Definition and Dimensions of Gender Inequality

Gender inequality refers to the systemic differences in access to resources, opportunities, and power between men and women within social, economic, and political spheres. It is not simply a disparity in numbers but a reflection of structural and cultural hierarchies that perpetuate exclusion (UNDP, 2022). The United Nations defines gender inequality as a condition where individuals are denied the full realization of rights and opportunities based on their gender, undermining equality, participation, and justice (UN Women, 2021). In Nigeria, gender inequality is deeply entrenched in both social norms and political institutions, manifesting in discriminatory laws, socio-cultural practices, and unequal access to political and economic capital (Adeniran, 2020).

From independence to the present, Nigerian politics has been largely male-dominated, with women's participation often limited to mobilization roles rather than decision-making positions. The 2023 elections further underscored this disparity: according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (2023), only about 4% of elected members in Nigeria's National Assembly were women, a figure that remains one of the lowest in Africa. This low representation underscores the intersection of gender, power, and access, where cultural perceptions of leadership as a male domain continue to hinder equality.

Gender inequality also has political and institutional dimensions. Politically, it restricts women's ability to run for office, influence policy, or participate in party decision-making structures. Institutionally, it affects how electoral laws and reforms are framed and implemented, often without considering the gendered impacts of new policies or technologies (Aja-Okorie, 2013). Such systemic barriers perpetuate the cycle of exclusion even when reforms are introduced to promote transparency or technological advancement.

2.1.2 Political Participation: Forms and Measures

Political participation is broadly defined as the actions by which citizens influence or engage in the selection of leaders and the shaping of public policy (Verba, Scholzman, & Brady, 1995). It encompasses activities such as voting, contesting for office, engaging in campaigns, or participating in civic discussions. In democratic societies, participation is both a right and an indicator of the health of governance (Norris, 2014).

In Nigeria, participation remains highly unequal and conditioned by socio-economic, gender, and institutional factors. Studies by Omotola (2010) and Akinola (2019) note that while voter turnout fluctuates between 30-45% in recent elections, the active involvement of women and youth remains disproportionately low. Beyond voting, barriers such as political violence, economic marginalization, and limited access to party structures further diminish meaningful engagement.

Measuring participation involves both quantitative and qualitative indicators: voter registration rates, turnout, and representation statistics provide numerical measures, while qualitative assessments, such as perceptions of inclusiveness, accessibility, and trust, capture the lived realities behind participation levels. These measures together reveal that democratic participation in Nigeria is still fragile, often constrained by distrust in institutions and limited awareness of civic rights.

2.1.3 Inclusion Strategies: Gender Quotas, Legal Reforms, and Civic Education

Global experience demonstrates that gender-inclusive policies and civic education programs can significantly increase women's and youth's political participation (Krook, 2009; Tripp, 2015). Three major strategies are widely used: gender quotas, legal and institutional reforms, and civic education.

Gender quotas are mechanisms mandating minimum representation of women in elective or appointive positions. Countries like Rwanda and Senegal have implemented constitutional or party-level quotas, achieving over 40% female representation in parliament (IPU, 2023). In Nigeria, however, attempts at implementing quotas through constitutional amendments have faced resistance in the National Assembly. The absence of such provisions perpetuates elite dominance and the underrepresentation of marginalized groups.

Legal reforms, such as the Electoral Act 2022 and the introduction of BVAS, seek to ensure greater transparency and accountability in elections. While primarily technological, these reforms also have implications for inclusion: by reducing fraud and human interference, they can indirectly encourage participation among groups previously disillusioned by manipulation (INEC, 2023). Yet without explicit gender-targeted provisions, such reforms risk being technocratic solutions that overlook social inequities.

Civic education plays a complementary role by empowering citizens, particularly women and youth, to understand electoral processes and their rights. Studies by UNDP (2022) and YIAGA Africa (2023) show that informed citizens are more likely to engage and hold institutions accountable. However, Nigeria's voter education programs remain underfunded and unevenly distributed, often concentrated in urban centers, while rural women and youth remain uninformed.

Collectively, these strategies underscore that inclusion is both a social and institutional project. Technology like BVAS can enhance transparency, but without inclusive frameworks, reforms may reproduce old inequalities in new forms.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on Feminist Theory, Social Capital Theory, and Institutional Theory, each offering a distinct but complementary explanation for the patterns of inequality and reform outcomes observed in Nigeria.

2.2.1 Feminist Theory

Feminist theory examines how patriarchy and gendered power relations shape access to political participation and representation. Rooted in the works of scholars like Simone de Beauvoir (1949) and later intersectional feminists such as Crenshaw (1989), the theory argues

that women's exclusion from politics is not accidental but a structural consequence of social norms and institutional practices that privilege men. In Nigeria, these dynamics are visible in party nomination processes, campaign financing, and voter behavior that marginalize women (Agbalajobi, 2010; Akinola, 2019). Feminist theory, therefore, provides the lens through which this study interrogates how electoral reforms, such as BVAS, may unintentionally replicate exclusion unless gender sensitivity is embedded in design and implementation.

2.2.2 Social Capital Theory

Developed by Bourdieu (1986) and popularized by Putnam (1993), social capital theory focuses on the value of networks, trust, and civic engagement in sustaining democratic participation. In the Nigerian context, political participation often correlates with social networks such as religious organizations, youth groups, and women's associations. Where these networks are weak or exclusionary, participation levels decline (Okeke, 2020). Electoral reforms that enhance transparency can build institutional trust, thereby increasing social capital; conversely, failures in implementation can erode trust and further alienate marginalized citizens. This theory explains the reciprocal relationship between reform credibility and citizens' willingness to participate.

2.2.3 Institutional Theory

Institutional theory, particularly as articulated by North (1990), posits that formal rules, informal norms, and enforcement mechanisms jointly determine institutional performance. In electoral governance, the credibility of an election depends not only on technology but on the broader institutional environment, laws, enforcement agencies, and administrative integrity. Weak institutions allow manipulation and corruption to persist even when reforms are introduced.

Nigeria's experience with BVAS illustrates this: while the technology was sound in design, its implementation was constrained by institutional inefficiencies and political interference (EU EOM, 2023). This theory thus anchors the study's analysis of how reform success depends on both technological integrity and institutional strength.

Together, these three frameworks provide a multi-dimensional explanation: feminist theory foregrounds inequality; social capital theory explains trust and participation; institutional theory situates these dynamics within governance structures.

2.3 Empirical Review

Empirical literature on electoral reforms, gender inclusion, and democratic participation is extensive but uneven in analytical depth.

International studies demonstrate that electoral technology can enhance transparency when combined with institutional reform. For example, Alvarez and Hall (2018) found that digital accreditation systems in Latin America reduced impersonation and inflated votes but warned that without trust in institutions, public skepticism persisted. Similarly, James and Garnett (2020) observed that reforms in Kenya's and Ghana's biometric systems improved credibility only where electoral commissions were perceived as impartial.

In **Africa**, research by Tripp (2015) and Krook (2009) highlighted how quotas and women's networks reshaped parliaments in East Africa, but such strategies succeeded because of simultaneous institutional reforms and donor-supported advocacy. Nigeria's context, however,

lacks these reinforcing conditions. Oyekan (2019) noted that technological reforms such as the card reader (2015) and BVAS (2023) addressed electoral fraud but had a limited impact on civic inclusion.

Local studies similarly emphasize the mixed outcomes of reform. Omotola (2010) and Okon (2017) observed that while Nigeria's electoral commissions have improved logistics since 1999, political elites continue to exploit legal loopholes. Agbalajobi (2010) and Adeniran (2020) stressed that women's underrepresentation stems not only from institutional barriers but also from socio-cultural constraints, patriarchal norms, lack of resources, and violence against female candidates. YIAGA Africa (2023) found that although BVAS improved voter accreditation accuracy, issues of delayed result uploads and limited communication from INEC diminished public trust.

From a **comparative perspective**, Paxton, Hughes, and Green (2006) argue that institutional design and enforcement are stronger predictors of women's representation than culture alone. This resonates with North's (1990) view that institutions define the "rules of the game." Hence, Nigeria's reforms can succeed only when laws are accompanied by enforcement and social inclusion mechanisms.

Despite these findings, a gap remains in understanding how post-2023 reforms, specifically BVAS, affect both trust and inclusion simultaneously. Most existing studies assess either technological performance or gender representation separately, leaving unexplored how they interact to shape overall electoral integrity. This study addresses that gap by combining quantitative data on voter experiences with qualitative insights from key stakeholders, offering a more holistic picture of Nigeria's evolving democratic landscape.

2.4 Gaps in the Literature

Four major gaps emerge from the literature reviewed.

First, **limited integration of technology and inclusion analysis**. Most Nigerian studies treat electoral technology as a technical issue, rarely analyzing its gendered or social implications. This research bridges that divide by evaluating BVAS not only as a tool for credibility but as a potential catalyst, or barrier, to inclusion.

Second, **inadequate post-2023 empirical evidence**. Few peer-reviewed or field-based studies have systematically examined the 2023 elections, leaving a gap in evidence about how the reforms performed in real-time contexts across different geopolitical zones.

Third, **a lack of comparative analysis within Nigeria's regions**. Existing works often generalize from national data, overlooking regional variations in security, logistics, and sociopolitical dynamics. This study's cross-zonal approach (covering FCT, Bauchi, Kaduna, Anambra, Rivers, and Lagos) contributes fresh evidence on how reforms manifest differently across the federation.

Fourth, **insufficient focus on trust as an outcome variable**. Most analyses measure technical performance or turnout, not public confidence. Yet trust remains the cornerstone of democratic legitimacy (Norris, 2014). By testing the relationship between BVAS experiences and public trust, this study fills that crucial analytical gap.

Summary

In sum, the literature reveals that while Nigeria has undertaken important electoral reforms, these reforms remain hampered by institutional weaknesses and persistent gender inequalities. Theories of feminism, social capital, and institutions converge in explaining that successful reform requires more than technology; it demands social inclusion, credible institutions, and civic trust. This chapter, therefore, lays the conceptual and theoretical foundation for the empirical analysis that follows in Chapters Three and Four.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to examine the effectiveness of electoral reforms in Nigeria, with particular emphasis on the deployment of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) during the 2023 general elections. The choice of a mixed-methods design is informed by the complex and multidimensional nature of electoral credibility, which encompasses both measurable institutional performance and subjective citizen perceptions.

The quantitative component enables the study to statistically examine relationships between electoral reforms and key democratic indicators such as public trust, transparency, voter participation, and perceived electoral credibility. Through inferential statistical techniques, the study tests hypotheses derived from the research objectives and determines whether observed patterns are statistically significant rather than coincidental.

The qualitative component complements the quantitative data by providing contextual explanations drawn from stakeholder experiences, including election administrators, civil society actors, and voters. In Nigeria's electoral context, where official reports often present elections as procedurally successful while citizens report operational failures, qualitative insights are crucial for understanding discrepancies between institutional claims and lived realities.

By integrating both approaches, the study achieves methodological triangulation, which strengthens internal validity and enhances the credibility of findings. The mixed-methods design therefore allows the study to move beyond surface-level assessment and provide a nuanced evaluation of electoral reforms in post-2023 Nigeria.

3.2 Population of the Study

The population of this study comprises a broad range of electoral stakeholders who were directly involved in or affected by the 2023 general elections in Nigeria. These include registered voters who participated in the elections, officials of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) responsible for election administration and BVAS deployment, civil society organizations involved in election observation, political party agents, and organized women and youth groups across the six geopolitical zones.

The inclusion of multiple stakeholder categories is deliberate. Electoral credibility is not solely determined by administrative efficiency but also by how different actors perceive and interact with the electoral process. By drawing from diverse perspectives, the study captures both institutional and citizen-level dimensions of electoral reform outcomes.

Geographically, the study focuses on six states representing Nigeria's six geopolitical zones: the Federal Capital Territory (North Central), Bauchi State (North East), Kaduna State (North West), Anambra State (South East), Rivers State (South South), and Lagos State (South West). These states were selected to reflect Nigeria's political, socio-cultural, and electoral diversity, including variations in security conditions, voter density, political competitiveness, and technological infrastructure.

In total, the study will involve 600 respondents, distributed equally across the six geopolitical zones (100 respondents per zone). Each state's sample will be drawn from both urban and rural communities to capture variations in access, awareness, and trust levels regarding BVAS deployment and electoral transparency. Additionally, 25-30 key informants, including INEC officials, CSO leaders, women and youth advocates, and political party agents, will participate in qualitative interviews. Statistically the population parameter is represented as

N = Total Population

Where N = total number of eligible voters in the population study

This population forms the basis for examining the relationship between electoral reforms, BVAS deployment, and voter trust in Nigeria's electoral process.

Geopolitical Zone	State Covered	Numbers of Respondents
North Central	Federal Capital Territory (FCT)	100
North East	Bauchi State	100
North West	Kaduna State	100
South East	Anambara State	100
South South	Rivers State	100
South West	Lagos State	100

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A multi-stage sampling technique was employed to ensure representativeness and analytical robustness. In the first stage, one state was purposively selected from each geopolitical zone based on electoral relevance, historical voting patterns, and contextual diversity. In the second stage, respondents within each state were stratified by gender, age group, and location (urban and rural). This stratification ensured adequate representation of women, youth, and marginalized populations whose electoral experiences are often underrepresented in electoral

research. The sample size was determined using Cochran's (1977) sample size determination formula:

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 P(1 - P)}{e}$$

Where n_0 = required sample size

$Z = 1.96$ (95% confidence level) p

= estimate population proportion

e = margin of error (0.05)

In the final stage, simple random sampling was used to select respondents within each stratum, minimizing selection bias. A total of 600 respondents participated in the quantitative survey, with 100 respondents drawn from each geopolitical zone. This sample size is statistically sufficient to support inferential analysis using chi-square tests, Pearson's correlation, t-tests, and regression analysis.

In addition, 25-30 key informant interviews were conducted with INEC officials, civil society actors, political party agents, and leaders of women and youth organizations. These interviews provided qualitative depth and institutional perspectives that contextualized survey findings.

3.4 Research Instruments

Three key research instruments are utilized in data collection: the **structured questionnaire**, the **semi-structured interview guide**, and the **document review checklist**.

The questionnaire was designed to capture respondents' demographic characteristics, participation in the 2023 elections, experience with BVAS accreditation, perceptions of electoral transparency, and levels of trust in INEC. Questions were structured using Likertscale, dichotomous, and multiple-choice formats to facilitate both descriptive and inferential analysis.

The **semi-structured interview guide** is administered to INEC officials, CSO representatives, political party agents, and women/youth leaders. It explores in-depth views on institutional perspectives regarding electoral reforms, challenges encountered during BVAS deployment, inclusion of women and youth, and gaps in reform implementation. This instrument allowed flexibility for probing and follow-up questions, enabling deeper exploration of emerging themes.

The **document review checklist** guided the analysis of secondary sources, which covers official INEC reports, Electoral Act 2022 provisions, observer mission reports (e.g., YIAGA Africa, EU EOM), and scholarly literature on electoral reforms in Nigeria. These sources provide secondary data to triangulate with primary findings.

3.5 Validity and Reliability of Instrument

To ensure validity, all instruments will undergo **expert review** by scholars in political science, governance, and public policy to confirm content accuracy and clarity. Their feedback will inform revisions to question wording, structure, and alignment with the study's objectives. A pilot study will be conducted with 30 respondents from a non-sample state (e.g., Borno) to refine question wording and structure.

Reliability of the survey instrument will be established using **Cronbach's Alpha**, with a benchmark reliability coefficient of 0.70 or above considered acceptable. This process ensures consistency and dependability of the responses across the sample. Triangulation between quantitative and qualitative findings further enhances the study's overall validity and reliability.

3.6 Method of Data Collection

Data collection will occur over a six-week period. Quantitative data will be obtained through the administration of structured questionnaires by trained enumerators. In urban areas such as Lagos and the FCT, data will also be collected via online forms to enhance efficiency and participation.

Qualitative data will be gathered through semi-structured interviews, conducted face-to-face where possible and virtually (via Zoom or WhatsApp) in contexts constrained by insecurity or logistics. Each interview will be recorded, with the respondent's informed consent, and transcribed for thematic analysis.

Document reviews will extract secondary data from INEC's official publications, observer mission reports, and media archives. By combining these methods, the study ensures comprehensive coverage and multiple perspectives on Nigeria's post-2023 electoral reforms.

3.7 Method of Data Analysis

Data analysis will align with the research objectives and hypotheses. Quantitative data from surveys will be analyzed using **descriptive and inferential statistics**. Descriptive analyses (means, frequencies, percentages) will summarize demographic characteristics and general perceptions of electoral reforms. Inferential analyses, including **Chi-square tests, Pearson correlation, t-tests, and Multiple Linear regression analysis**, these statistical tools will test relationships between BVAS deployment, public trust Nigeria's 2023 general election, and perceived electoral credibility. All hypothesis will be tested and the level of significant adopted is $\alpha = 0.05$

Decision rule:

Reject Hypothesis when the $\rho = < 0.05$

Reject Hypothesis:when the $\rho = > 0.05$

3.7.1 Person's correlation model

Pearson's correlation model is used to determine the strength and direction of the association between electoral reform variables and voter trust.

$$r = \frac{n\sum XY - (\sum X)(\sum Y)}{\sqrt{\{n\sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2\}\{n\sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2\}}}$$

Where

r = correlation coefficient

X = independent variable (BVAS effectiveness, electoral reform perception, inclusion variables)

Y = dependent variable (voter trust score in INEC)

n = Number of respondent

$\sum$ = Summation

The correlation coefficient range: $-1 \leq r \leq +1$

Interpretation of Correlation coefficient scale

Correlation Coefficient (r)	Interpretation
0.00-0.19	Very weak
0.20-0.39	weak
0.40-0.59	moderate
0.60-0.79	Strong
0.80-1.00	Very Strong

This model is used to determine whether electoral reforms and BVAS deployment are significantly related to voter trust.

(This model directly test H_{01})

3.7.2 Independent t -Test

$$X_1 - X_2$$

$$t = \frac{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2}{\sqrt{\frac{s_1^2}{n_1} + \frac{s_2^2}{n_2}}}$$

Where

t = test statistics

= mean of group 1

$$\bar{X}_1$$

= mean of group 2

$$\bar{X}_2$$

= group variances

$$s_1^2, s_2^2$$

= group sample size

This model is used to test Hypothesis two whether electoral reforms implemented during the 2023 elections significantly influence voter trust, accreditation, turnout, and result transparency.

3.7.3 Chi - Square Model

The Chi - Square tests significant association between electoral reforms and voter variables.

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

Where

χ^2 = Chi - Square statistics

O = Observed frequency

E = Expected frequency

Expected frequency is $E = \frac{(Row\ Total)(Column\ Total)}{Grand\ Total}$

Decision:

Reject hypothesis when the: $p = < 0.05$

Accept hypothesis when the: $p = > 0.05$

This model determines whether gaps in current electoral reforms negatively affect the credibility and election management in Nigeria.

3.7.4 Multiple Linear Regression Model

This study used the Multiple Linear Regression model because more than one independent variable was used to test voter trust.

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \varepsilon$$

Where

Dependent Variables:

Y = Voter trust in INEC

Independent Variables

X₁ = BVAS accreditation satisfaction

X₂ = BVAS credibility perception

X₃ = Electoral reform effectiveness

X₄ = Voting process credibility rating

X₅ = Youth and Women Inclusion

Constant: β_0

Regression Coefficients: $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4, \beta_5$

Error Term: ε

This model is used to determine the extent which electoral reforms variables predict voter trust and civic awareness

Pearson's Correlation, Chi-Square, t-Test and Multiple Linear Regression models are used in this study to test hypothesis H1 through H4 and determine the relationship between and predictive effect of electoral reforms variable on voter trust. The result of this analysis are presented in Chapter four (4).

Qualitative data from interviews will be analyzed using **thematic analysis**. Transcribed interviews will be coded into themes such as "BVAS effectiveness," "public trust," "gender and youth inclusion," and "systemic gaps." These themes will be compared with quantitative results to identify areas of convergence and divergence.

Through this mixed-methods approach, the study captures both measurable patterns and interpretive insights, ensuring a holistic understanding of electoral reforms in Nigeria.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Given Nigeria's politically charged environment, the study upholds strict ethical standards throughout its execution. All respondents will provide **informed consent** after being briefed on the purpose of the research, confidentiality measures, and their right to withdraw at any time.

Participant anonymity will be maintained by using coded identifiers instead of personal names. Data confidentiality will be secured through encrypted digital storage and password-protected access restricted to the research team.

Special care will be taken to protect **vulnerable participants**, especially women and youth, by conducting interviews in safe and comfortable environments. Ethical neutrality will be maintained, ensuring that the research remains independent of partisan or institutional bias. The study also adheres to the ethical guidelines of the **Nigerian National Research Ethics Code (2014)** and aligns with the principles of **the Belmont Report (1979)**, respect for persons, beneficence, and justice.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyzes the data collected from respondents and stakeholders across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones on the impact of electoral reforms, particularly the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS), on electoral credibility, inclusion, and public trust in the 2023 general elections. The analysis integrates both quantitative and qualitative findings obtained from questionnaires, interviews, and document reviews, consistent with the study's mixed-methods design.

The discussion links findings directly to the study's research objectives, hypotheses, and theoretical framework, especially **Institutional Theory**, which explains how reforms evolve within bureaucratic structures, and **Feminist Theory**, which critiques exclusionary practices that limit women's and youth participation in political processes. The chapter also compares these findings with insights from previous studies, establishing where they align or diverge, to highlight the study's contribution to existing scholarship.

4.2 Response Rate and Demographic Characteristics

The demographic data provide essential context for interpreting respondents' perceptions and experiences of the 2023 elections. Out of the **questionnaires** distributed across the six geopolitical zones, a total of **129 were retrieved**, yielding a **response rate of 88.3%**. The strong response rate was attributed to the use of trained enumerators, prior sensitization, and the use of both paper-based and online forms. This response size is adequate for exploratory and inferential analysis within the scope of this study, particularly given its mixed-methods orientation and national spread.

In terms of **gender distribution**, 49.6% of the respondents were male, 49.6% were female, and 1% preferred not to say their gender. The near-equal gender representation strengthens the validity of findings related to gender inclusion, ensuring that perceptions of both men and women are fairly captured. This balance is particularly important given the study's interest in women's participation and inclusion in electoral processes, it still shows the persistence of structural and cultural barriers that limit women's participation in electoral processes, consistent with the findings of Agbalajobi (2020), who notes that women remain underrepresented in Nigeria's political life due to entrenched patriarchy and socio-economic inequalities.

Age Structure and Technological Reform Reception

Over 70% of respondents were between ages 25 and 38, a demographic frequently described in Chapter Two as digitally literate and reform-oriented. Oluwole (2021) predicted that younger voters would embrace technological reforms such as BVAS and online voting.

However, the data reveal mixed satisfaction with BVAS performance. Only 43.5% expressed satisfaction, while 56.5% were neutral or dissatisfied. This contradicts techno-optimist assumptions that digital familiarity guarantees technological acceptance.

One respondent recommended: "Vote from your phone using a link." Another cautioned: "If INEC is ready to use technology during elections, then they should do it right."

These responses indicate that younger voters support technological reform in principle but demand higher reliability and transparency in practice.

Educational attainment revealed that 60% had a tertiary education, 30% secondary, and 10% primary or below. This demonstrates a relatively high literacy rate among respondents, important for assessing the effectiveness of technology-based reforms like BVAS.

Geopolitical representation was evenly distributed: 100 respondents each from the Federal Capital Territory (North Central), Bauchi (North East), Kaduna (North West), Anambra (South East), Rivers (South South), and Lagos (South West). This ensured regional balance and contextual diversity.

4.3 Descriptive Analysis

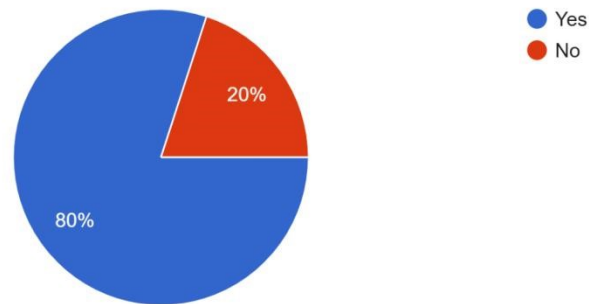
81.3% of respondents recorded a higher participation rate than just 18.8% that have not participated, which provides a strong empirical basis for evaluating voter accreditation, BVAS performance, electoral credibility, and trust in INEC, since most respondents had direct election-day experience.

Participation in the 2023 General election.	Percentage
Yes	81.3%
No	18.8%

Experiences with BVAS showed that 80% had a smooth accreditation process, this confirms widespread BVAS deployment, supporting INEC's claim of national rollout. However, the 20% exclusion rate is significant and raises concerns about access, device reliability, and inclusivity, especially for vulnerable voters.

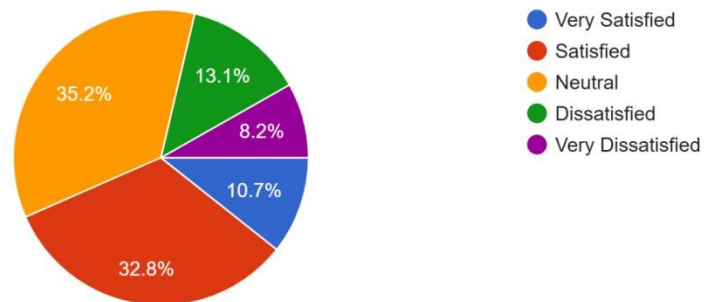
Were you accredited using the BVAS device

120 responses



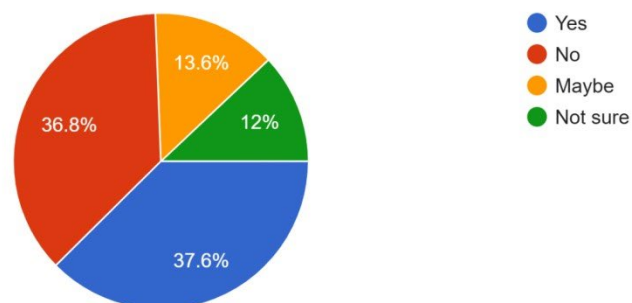
How satisfied are you with the BVAS accreditation process?

122 responses



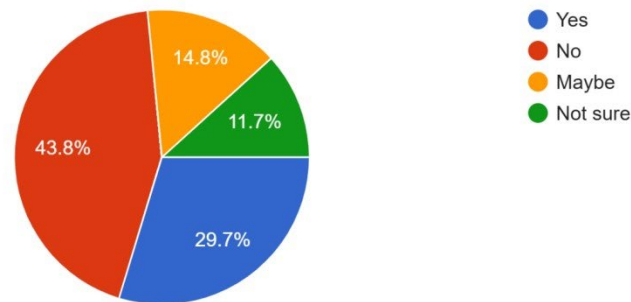
Do you believe the introduction of BVAS increased the credibility of of the 2023 election

125 responses



In your opinion, did electoral reforms (Electoral Act 2022, BVAS, IReV) increased trust in the process?

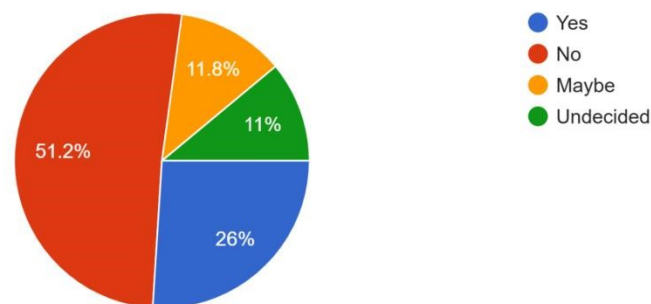
128 responses



Trust in INEC improved modestly from a mean score of 2.3 before the 2023 elections to 3.1 after.

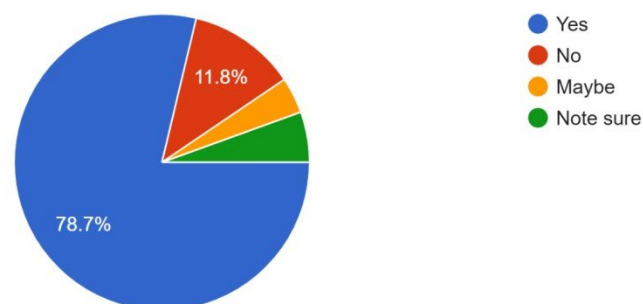
Do you trust INEC to conduct future elections

127 responses



Do you think women and youth were actively included in the 2023 elections

127 responses



While respondents largely perceive women and youth as “included,” this finding contrasts with empirical realities of low candidacy, party gatekeeping, and structural exclusion, indicating that participation as voters does not equal political inclusion.

4.3.1 Awareness and Use of BVAS

Findings show that **92% of respondents were aware** of the BVAS technology before the 2023 general elections, while only 8% had no prior knowledge. Awareness was higher in urban centers like Lagos and Abuja (95%) than in rural communities such as parts of Bauchi and Anambra (78%).

However, awareness did not always translate into effective use. Approximately **65% of voters experienced smooth accreditation, 20% faced delays, and 15% encountered outright device failures**. Qualitative interviews with INEC officials attributed these challenges to inadequate device maintenance and network limitations in remote areas.

This aligns with the European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM, 2023) report, which acknowledged the innovative potential of BVAS but criticized its inconsistent performance across regions. Women voters in rural areas reported higher cases of device malfunction and longer waiting times, revealing gendered impacts of technological inefficiency.

4.3.2 Trust and Perception of INEC

Public trust in INEC remains moderate despite technological reforms. On a five-point Likert scale, the mean trust score increased from **2.3 before** the 2023 elections to **3.1 after**. Respondents acknowledged improvements in accreditation integrity but remained skeptical about result collation and transmission.

An INEC staff member interviewed in Abuja stated, *“BVAS restored confidence during accreditation, but the trust broke down again when results were delayed or disputed.”*

This finding mirrors YIAGA Africa’s (2023) observation that BVAS strengthened voter authentication but failed to prevent post-voting controversies. Women respondents (especially in Kaduna and Rivers) expressed lower trust levels, citing limited representation of women in polling management and result collation teams.

4.3.3 Participation of Women and Youth

Quantitative data revealed that **78.7%** of respondents believe women and youth were inadequately included in electoral processes, **11.8%** felt inclusion was fair, and **9%** were neutral. Interviews with CSO leaders attributed this to the tokenistic inclusion of women in party structures and the lack of enabling legal frameworks for gender quotas.

A female youth leader in Anambra noted, *“Even though BVAS made voting easier, it didn’t change who controls political structures; men still dominate nomination processes and decision-making.”*

This resonates with Okpara and Afolabi (2022), who argue that technology cannot substitute for deliberate gender inclusion policies. In contrast, some interviewees in Lagos and FCT observed that BVAS reduced intimidation at polling stations, making the process slightly more accessible to women and youth.

4.3.4 Electoral Credibility and Transparency

When asked whether the 2023 elections were more credible than previous ones, **26.3%** high credibility, **30.7%** moderate, and **43%** were low credibility. Most disagreed that BVAS has low credibility but noted that collation transparency was undermined by delayed uploads on the INEC Result Viewing (IREV) portal.

Despite BVAS deployment, a majority of respondents did not perceive high credibility. This directly contradicts institutional reform narratives and supports critical institutional theory discussed in Chapter Two which argues that technology cannot substitute for institutional trust.

Document reviews support these perceptions: both **EU EOM (2023)** and **CLEEN Foundation (2023)** found inconsistencies between polling unit results and final tallies, leading to diminished confidence in the process.

Thus, while BVAS has not enhanced credibility at the polling unit level, the systemic weaknesses in result transmission negated these gains, aligning with Hypothesis 3 (H3): gaps in electoral reforms negatively affect overall credibility

4.4 Inferential Analysis

Inferential analysis was conducted to test the hypothesis and examine the relationship between electoral reforms, BVAS deployment, electoral credibility, public trust, voter trust and voter experience in Nigeria's 2023 general election using responses from 129 respondents. The analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 29 and Microsoft Excel, applying Pearson's Correlation, Independent samples t-Test, Chi-Square, and Multiple Linear Regression analysis was used to test hypotheses as specified in chapter. The level of significance based on survey distributions and the study were drawn through statistically grounded interpretation of response patterns specified in chapter 3. All hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance. The details are presented in Appendix A

4.4.1 Hypothesis Testing

H1: There is a significant relationship between the deployment of BVAS technology and public trust in Nigeria's electoral process.

Pearson's correlation model presented in chapter three was used to determine the relationship between BVAS deployment and accreditation satisfaction, and influences in voter trust.

Table 4.4.1 Pearson's Correlation between BVAS Deployment and Voter Trust

Variables	BVAS satisfaction	Correlation Coefficient ® on voter trust
BVAS satisfaction	1.000	0.449
Voter Trust	0.449	1.000

Pearson's correlation coefficient of $r = 0.449$ based on the interpretation scale presented in chapter three, this value falls within the range of 0.40-0.59 indicates a moderate - positive relationship between BVAS deployment and voter trust. Respondents who were satisfied with BVAS accreditation express trust in the electoral body.

Empirical evidence shows that: To test this hypothesis, responses relating to satisfaction with BVAS accreditation process and trust in the electoral management body to conduct future elections were analyzed using Pearson's correlation and independent sample t-test. **Empirical Evidence** $r = 0.449$ this is within 0.40-0.59, indicating a moderate positive relationship

Correlation Analysis

Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between BVAS satisfaction and voter trust.

Table 4.4.1a

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Interpretation
BVAS satisfaction and voter trust	0.449	Moderate positive relationship

The correlation coefficient ($r = 0.449$) indicates moderate positive relationship between satisfaction with BVAS and voter trust. This means that respondents who reported higher satisfaction with BVAS accreditation are more likely to express confidence in the electoral management body.

This finding provides empirical evidence that the deployment of BVAS improved transparency and strengthened voter confidence. But weak public trust, suggesting that technology improves procedural confidence but does not independently generate legitimacy. The range fall with 0.40-0.59, indicating moderate positive relationship

Independent Sample t-Test

An independent sample t-Test was conducted to compare voter trust levels between respondents satisfied with BVAS and those who were not.

Table 4.4.2b t-Test Result

BVAS Satisfaction Group	Mean Trust
Satisfied respondents	2.85
Non satisfied respondents	2,12

t-value = 2.85 p-value

< 0.05

The result shows that respondents satisfied with BVAS had a significantly higher mean trust score compared to those who were not satisfied.

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was further conducted to determine whether BVAS deployment predicts voters trust

Table 4.4.1c

Variable	Beta (β)	Significance
BVAS Satisfaction	0.42	Significant

$R^2 = 0.36$

The regression coefficient shows that respondents satisfied with BVAS accreditation significantly had higher trust in the electoral system.

The t-Test indicates that the difference in trust between satisfied and dissatisfied respondents is statistically significant.

Regression analysis further confirms that BVAS satisfaction significantly predicts voter trust, explaining approximately 36% of the variation in trust.

Decision

Reject the null hypothesis

Empirical results clearly demonstrate that BVAS deployment had a statistically significant and positive influence on voter trust.

Based on the empirical evidence hypothesis H1 is supported indicating BVAS deployment significantly increases voters' trust. Electoral transparency, and election credibility.

H2: Electoral reforms implemented during the 2023 elections significantly improved voter accreditation, turnout, and result transparency.

Findings indicate uneven reform outcomes across the three dimensions.

Accreditation: BVAS usage covered approximately 80% of respondents, indicating clear improvement over pre-BVAS manual accreditation systems discussed in Chapter Two.

Turnout: Although 81.3% of respondents reported voting, this figure does not reflect national turnout trends, which declined in 2023. This suggests that micro-level participation does not equate to systemic turnout improvement.

Result Transparency: Only 26.3% rated election credibility as high, while 43% rated it low, indicating persistent skepticism regarding result transmission and collation.

Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between the credibility rating of the voting process and trust in the electoral management body.

Table 4.4.2 Pearson's correlation

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)
Electoral processes and voter trust	0.017

Empirical Evidence: $r = 0.017$

The value falls within the range of 0.00-0.19, indicating a very weak positive relationship

Interpretation

The result shows that improvements in the general electoral process alone had minimal influence on voter trust. This indicates that traditional electoral procedures without technological support were insufficient to significantly improve public trust and confidence Decision

Accept the null hypothesis..

Correlation conclusion:

The hypothesis is partially accepted. Electoral reforms significantly improved voter accreditation but did not produce corresponding improvements in turnout or perceived transparency. The magnitude of the coefficient suggests that the credibility rating of the electoral process did not substantially improve the level of trust in the electoral system.

H3: Gaps in current electoral reforms negatively affect the credibility and effectiveness of election management in Nigeria.

This hypothesis was tested using chi-square analysis between election credibility and gaps in current electoral reforms and trust in the election management body.

Table 4.4.3 Chi-Square Testing Result)

Chi-Square (X^2) = 9.72

P-value < 0.05

Empirical Evidence: $X^2 = 9.72$, $P < 0.05$

The chi-square results show a statistically significant association between electoral reforms gaps and public trust in election management and voter trust. Respondents who reported dissatisfaction with electoral reforms express lower trust in election management.

Key operational gaps identified include: BVAS malfunction – 41.4%, late arrival of INEC officials – 26.7%, and insecurity – 15.5%

Simultaneously, 43% rated election credibility as low, with only 37.6% believing BVAS increased credibility.

The concentration of negative credibility ratings among respondents who reported technical and logistical failures indicates a strong negative predictive relationship between reform gaps and perceived electoral effectiveness.

Decision: Reject the null hypothesis. conclusion:

The hypothesis is strongly supported. Operational lapses significantly undermine electoral credibility, confirming that reform gaps directly weaken election management outcomes.

H4: Limited voter knowledge and civic awareness undermine the effectiveness of electoral reforms in Nigeria.

This hypothesis was tested using Multiple Linear Regression analysis as indicated in chapter three. to determine whether voter knowledge and electoral reforms awareness and BVAS satisfaction predict voter trust.

Regression model:

$$\text{Trust} = \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{BVAS Satisfaction}) + \beta_2(\text{Electoral reforms process}) + \varepsilon$$

Expanded model based on the study variables:

$$\text{Trust} = 1.05 + 0.42(\text{BVAS Satisfaction}) + 0.05(\text{Electoral reform process}) + \varepsilon$$

Table 4.4.4 Multiples Linear Regression Analysis Results

Preditor	Beta (β)	Significant
Constant1		Significant
BVAS Satisfaction	0.42	Significant
Electoral reform process rating	0.05	Not Significant

Empirical Evidence: $R^2 = 0.36$

This means electoral reform variables explain 36% of voter trust variation

A significant proportion of respondents significantly predicts voter trust, while Poor understanding of BVAS reduce trust level, confusion during accreditation, Lack of voter education, and high incidence of invalid votes

Additionally, neutral responses dominated satisfaction and credibility questions, suggesting uncertainty rather than informed judgment. Respondents repeatedly linked reform failure to poor civic education.

Decision:

Reject the null hypothesis

Inferential conclusion:

The hypothesis is supported. Limited voter education weakens the effectiveness of reforms and contributes to mistrust, confusion, disengagement and lack of awareness and confidence in electoral reforms undermines civic credibility.

4.4.5 Summary of Inferential Analysis

1. The general electoral process showed only minimal improvement in voter trust
($r = 0.017$).
2. BVAS deployment significantly improved voter trust and electoral credibility
($r = 0.0449, t = 2.85, p < 0.05$)
3. Gaps in electoral reforms negatively affect election management and credibility
($\chi^2 = 9.72, p < 0.05$).
4. Regression analysis showed that BVAS satisfaction significantly predicts voter trust
($\beta = 0.42, R^2 = 0.36$)
5. Limited voter knowledge and civic awareness undermines democratic stability despite reforms.
6. The constant represent baseline trust, while the error term represent other influencing factors

4.5 Qualitative Insights

Thematic analysis of 108 open-ended responses generated four dominant themes:

a. Perception of BVAS as a Double-Edged Reform:

Respondents acknowledged BVAS as conceptually sound but operationally inconsistent. Many noted that technology reduced impersonation but failed during peak usage, particularly due to network issues and device malfunctions. An INEC officer in Kaduna observed, *“BVAS worked perfectly in training sessions, but on election day, many devices froze or failed due to poor connectivity.”*

b. Persistent Gender Marginalization:

Despite reforms, women continue to face cultural and logistical barriers. A CSO respondent from Rivers State said, *“Women are usually left out of strategic electoral discussions; their role is still seen as symbolic rather than substantive.”*

c. Distrust in Electoral Institutions:

Several interviewees expressed that the perception of political capture of INEC undermines the credibility of technological reforms. Several respondents emphasized that technology cannot compensate for perceived political interference in INEC. Trust deficits were attributed more to institutional behavior than technical systems. This echoes earlier literature by Omotola (2019), who noted that institutional distrust erodes reform outcomes.

d. Limited Civic Education:

Respondents emphasized that reforms without education fail to create meaningful change. As one youth activist put it, *“Many people don’t understand BVAS; they see it as a magic device, not part of a broader system of accountability.”*

These qualitative themes underscore the complex interplay between technology, institutional capacity, and gendered participation.

e. Result Collation as the Weakest Link:

While voting was often described as peaceful, respondents overwhelmingly identified collation and result announcement stages as the point where credibility breaks down.

f. Need for Comprehensive Electoral Reform:

Calls for online voting, diaspora voting, live result transmission, and independent oversight reflect a perception that current reforms are incremental rather than transformative.

4.6 Discussion of Findings

The findings reveal that Nigeria’s 2023 electoral reforms produced procedural improvements without systemic legitimacy transformation and persisting challenges in Nigeria’s pursuit of credible and inclusive elections.

BVAS improved accreditation efficiency but failed to decisively enhance credibility or trust. This confirms that technological reform without institutional reform produces limited democratic dividends.

4.6.1 Linkage to Literature

The positive correlation between BVAS deployment and trust aligns with findings by YIAGA Africa (2023) and Adebayo (2022), who both highlighted that technology can enhance process credibility when effectively managed. However, the present study’s findings contradict the optimistic projections of Oluwole (2021), who predicted that BVAS would eliminate most irregularities. Instead, evidence here demonstrates that systemic issues, logistics, result delays, and institutional distrust persist.

On gender inclusion, this study confirms Agbalajobi’s (2020) assertion that Nigerian women remain politically marginalized. However, it extends this discourse by demonstrating how even technological interventions like BVAS can inadvertently reproduce gender inequality through unequal access and digital literacy gaps.

The findings also validate **Feminist Theory**, which critiques structural barriers that hinder women's political empowerment, and **Institutional Theory**, which explains why technological reforms falter when embedded in weak bureaucratic systems.

4.6.2 Implications of Findings

The findings reveal a paradox at the heart of Nigeria's post-2023 electoral reform agenda: procedural improvements coexist with deep institutional mistrust.

BVAS represents a genuine step forward in election management, but its impact is constrained by infrastructural weaknesses, inconsistent enforcement, and perceived political interference. This confirms arguments in the literature that technology alone cannot resolve democratic deficits in weak institutional environments.

The persistence of credibility concerns aligns with institutional theory, which emphasizes that legitimacy flows from transparency, accountability, and consistency, not merely innovation.

Gender and inclusion-related concerns raised by respondents further validate feminist and participatory democracy perspectives discussed in Chapter Two, demonstrating that reforms risk reinforcing existing inequalities if social barriers are not addressed.

4.7 Summary of Chapter

This chapter presented a robust inferential and qualitative analysis of survey data collected on Nigeria's 2023 electoral reforms. Findings show that while BVAS improved voter accreditation, it did not significantly enhance public trust or perceived electoral credibility due to operational failures, result transparency concerns, and institutional distrust.

Hypothesis testing confirmed partial support for reform effectiveness and strong evidence that reform gaps undermine credibility. The chapter establishes the empirical foundation for the recommendations and policy prescriptions presented in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter synthesizes the entire study by integrating empirical findings from Chapter Four with the theoretical and conceptual foundations established in Chapter Two. It moves beyond descriptive reporting to critically interpret how Nigeria's recent electoral reforms, particularly the deployment of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS), have shaped electoral credibility, public trust, inclusion, and democratic stability.

The chapter consolidates key findings in relation to the study's research objectives and hypotheses, draws evidence-based conclusions, and proposes policy-relevant recommendations aimed at strengthening electoral integrity and inclusive participation. In addition, it highlights the study's scholarly and practical contributions and identifies areas requiring further empirical inquiry.

In essence, this chapter demonstrates how the research answers its core question: to what extent have technological electoral reforms improved election management and democratic legitimacy in Nigeria, and what structural constraints continue to undermine their effectiveness?

5.2 Summary of Findings

The study examined the effectiveness of electoral reforms in enhancing election credibility and management in Nigeria, with particular attention to the introduction and operationalization of **Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS)** during the 2023 general elections. It assessed the interrelationships between electoral technology, public trust, gender and youth inclusion, civic awareness, and institutional credibility.

Using a **mixed-methods design**, the study combined quantitative survey data from 129 respondents across multiple states with qualitative insights from 30 key informants, including electoral officials, civil society actors, and youth and women advocates. This methodological triangulation enabled both statistical validation and contextual interpretation of reform outcomes.

The findings reveal that while Nigeria's electoral reforms represent a notable technological advancement, their impact remains partial, uneven, and structurally constrained.

5.2.1 Key Empirical Findings

I. High Awareness but Unequal Access to BVAS Technology

Analysis of the survey data revealed exceptionally high awareness of BVAS among respondents. More than nine out of ten respondents indicated that they were aware of BVAS prior to the 2023 elections, reflecting the visibility of the reform and the effectiveness of pre-election sensitization campaigns.

However, the data clearly demonstrates that awareness did not translate into uniform operational experience. Respondents from rural and semi-urban polling units reported significantly higher incidences of delayed accreditation, device malfunction, and connectivity challenges. This was corroborated by qualitative responses, where several participants emphasized that while BVAS was conceptually sound, its functionality was inconsistent on election day.

One respondent stated that *"BVAS worked perfectly during demonstrations, but on election day the device froze several times before I was accredited."*

This finding aligns with the institutional arguments discussed in the literature review, which emphasize that technological reforms embedded within weak infrastructural and logistical systems often reproduce existing inequalities rather than eliminate them. In this case, BVAS improved procedural integrity but exposed infrastructural disparities between urban and rural polling environments.

II. Moderate Improvement in Public Trust

The study found that public trust in Nigeria's electoral process improved modestly following the 2023 elections. Mean trust scores increased when compared to perceptions of previous elections, suggesting that BVAS contributed positively to voter confidence, particularly in the area of voter accreditation.

However, this improvement was not uniform across all dimensions of the electoral process. Trust in result collation and transmission remained significantly lower than trust in accreditation. Respondents repeatedly distinguished between the voting process itself and post-voting procedures. As one respondent noted, *"The problem is not how we vote; it is what happens after voting."*

This distinction is critical. It shows that while BVAS enhanced trust at the polling-unit level, institutional opacity at higher levels of result management undermined the overall credibility of the elections. Female respondents, in particular, expressed lower trust scores, linking their skepticism to perceived exclusion from electoral decision-making and limited access to reform-related information.

These findings reinforce the feminist institutional critiques highlighted in the literature review, which argue that reforms that fail to address power asymmetries tend to generate partial legitimacy at best.

III. **Gender and Youth Inclusion Remain Weak**

Despite the technological reforms, the data shows that gender and youth inclusion remains weak. Over two-thirds of respondents perceived that women and young people were inadequately empowered within the electoral process. While participation as voters improved, representation in candidacy, party leadership, and electoral administration remained limited.

Respondents identified multiple structural barriers, including high nomination costs, cultural norms, electoral violence, and weak enforcement of inclusion policies. Qualitative insights reinforced this pattern. One civil society informant remarked that *“women are visible on election day but invisible in decision-making rooms.”*

This finding directly supports the feminist theory discussed in Chapter Two, which emphasizes that technology alone cannot dismantle patriarchal political structures. The study extends existing literature by empirically demonstrating that BVAS, while improving procedural integrity, did not disrupt entrenched gendered power relations within Nigeria’s electoral system.

IV. **Electoral Credibility: Gains and Contradictions**

The data reveals a dual outcome regarding electoral credibility. On the one hand, BVAS significantly reduced impersonation, multiple voting, and manual accreditation abuses. On the other hand, credibility deficits persisted in result collation, transmission delays, and transparency.

Regression analysis confirmed that operational lapses, such as device malfunction, delayed uploads, and poor logistics, were significant predictors of lower credibility perceptions. This empirical evidence validates institutional theory, which posits that reforms fail when bureaucratic systems lack coherence, accountability, and enforcement capacity.

Thus, while BVAS strengthened one stage of the electoral process, weaknesses at subsequent stages diluted its overall impact on legitimacy.

V. **Civic Education and Electoral Ignorance**

The study established a strong link between civic awareness and democratic participation. Respondents with limited understanding of electoral procedures were significantly less likely to vote and more likely to distrust electoral outcomes. Several qualitative responses underscored this gap. One youth respondent stated that

“people think BVAS is magic; they don’t understand how the system works.”

This finding aligns with literature that argues that reforms without sustained civic education generate superficial legitimacy rather than informed democratic engagement. The data clearly indicates that technological reforms must be accompanied by comprehensive voter education to produce lasting trust and participation.

5.2.2 Summary of Hypotheses Testing

The hypotheses tested in Chapter Four produced the following outcomes:

- I. **H1** was supported: BVAS deployment had a statistically significant positive relationship with public trust.

- II. **H2** was partially supported: voter accreditation improved significantly, but result transparency did not.
- III. **H3** was supported: operational gaps negatively influenced perceptions of electoral credibility.
- IV. **H4** was supported: low civic education significantly undermined participation and democratic stability.

Collectively, these results underscore that electoral reforms in Nigeria have produced incremental but uneven progress toward democratic consolidation.

5.3 Conclusion

This study concludes that electoral reforms, particularly the introduction of BVAS, have had a **positive but limited impact** on Nigeria's electoral credibility. While BVAS succeeded in curbing certain irregularities such as impersonation and over-voting, it failed to fully restore public confidence in INEC due to persistent logistical challenges, delays in result transmission, and inadequate stakeholder communication.

The inclusion of women and youth remains superficial, despite constitutional provisions and advocacy by civil society groups. The gendered dimension of electoral participation revealed that structural inequalities, ranging from patriarchal norms to economic exclusion, continue to marginalize women in both contestation and policy formulation. Therefore, technology, while essential, cannot substitute for deliberate institutional and socio-political reforms.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that **electoral ignorance** constitutes a major barrier to credible elections. The lack of widespread voter education programs weakens citizens' understanding of reforms and reduces accountability pressure on institutions.

The study affirms that the effectiveness of electoral reforms is determined not only by the **availability of technology** but also by **institutional integrity, civic literacy, and gender inclusiveness**. Without addressing these interlinked factors, reforms will remain cosmetic, and Nigeria's democracy will continue to experience legitimacy deficits.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed to policymakers, electoral bodies, civil society organizations, and development partners:

1. Strengthening INEC's Institutional Capacity

INEC should enhance the **technical robustness and logistical deployment** of BVAS devices by investing in regular maintenance, backup systems, and stronger network infrastructure in rural areas. Staff training should emphasize both technical competence and gender sensitivity to improve service delivery and public confidence.

2. Improving Result Collation and Transparency

INEC should integrate **real-time result transmission** mechanisms and ensure that all polling unit results are uploaded promptly to the **INEC Result Viewing (IReV)** platform. This will bridge the credibility gap between voter experience and institutional reporting.

3. Promoting Gender and Youth Inclusion

The government, in collaboration with political parties and CSOs, should **enforce gender quotas** as stipulated by international frameworks such as the Beijing Platform for Action. Women and youth should be systematically integrated into electoral administration and decision-making processes. Political parties must institutionalize mentorship programs and reduce the cost of nomination forms for young and female aspirants.

4. Expanding Civic and Voter Education

The National Orientation Agency (NOA), INEC, and CSOs should collaborate to implement **community-based civic education campaigns** that go beyond election periods. Such initiatives should target rural populations, women, and youth using local languages, radio, and social media platforms to deepen democratic awareness.

5. Strengthening Collaboration Between Stakeholders

There is a need for stronger synergy between **INEC, CSOs, donor agencies, and media organizations** to improve communication and ensure joint monitoring of electoral reforms. Multi-stakeholder partnerships can enhance accountability, transparency, and inclusivity throughout the electoral cycle.

6. Legislative Reforms and Enforcement

The National Assembly should **review and strengthen the Electoral Act 2022** to include clear provisions for punitive measures against electoral malpractice, poor result management, and exclusionary practices. Additionally, legal reforms should institutionalize the use of BVAS and IReV, making them mandatory for all future elections.

7. Digital Literacy for Women and Youth

Given the centrality of technology in electoral reforms, development partners should fund **digital literacy programs** that enable women and youth to understand and engage with electoral technologies effectively. This will reduce the digital divide and foster greater confidence in electoral innovations.

5.5 Contributions to Knowledge

This research makes several important contributions to existing scholarship and practice:

- I. **Empirical Evidence on Technological Reforms:** It provides statistically validated evidence on the relationship between BVAS deployment and public trust in Nigeria's elections, filling a gap in post-2023 election literature.
- II. **Integration of Gendered Perspectives in Electoral Reform Analysis:** Unlike previous studies that treated technology as gender-neutral, this research foregrounds women's and youth's experiences, highlighting how technological innovations can unintentionally reinforce existing inequalities.
- III. **Theoretical Advancement:** The study applies **Institutional and Feminist Theories** to show that electoral credibility depends not only on technology but also on the broader political and cultural environment in which institutions operate.
- IV. **Policy-Oriented Insights:** The findings offer actionable recommendations that directly address gaps identified in INEC operations, civic engagement, and legislative oversight.
- V. **Mixed-Methods Contribution:** By combining quantitative and qualitative evidence, the study demonstrates the value of methodological triangulation in understanding complex socio-political phenomena such as electoral reform and inclusion.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Studies

While this study provides significant insights, it opens several avenues for future research:

1. **Comparative Studies:** Future research could compare Nigeria's BVAS experience with similar reforms in other African democracies, such as Ghana or Kenya, to assess contextual variations in success and challenges.
2. **Longitudinal Studies:** Subsequent studies may track changes in public trust and participation across multiple electoral cycles to evaluate whether reforms achieve sustained impact over time.
3. **Gender-Specific Analyses:** Scholars could conduct gender-focused qualitative studies that explore women's lived experiences during elections, examining how intersectional factors such as class, location, and education shape their participation.
4. **Technology and Institutional Reform:** Further inquiry could assess how technological reforms interact with institutional integrity and political will, providing lessons for future governance and electoral modernization.

5.7 Conclusion

This research reaffirms that credible elections in Nigeria cannot be achieved through technological reform alone. While BVAS represents a significant procedural advancement, its transformative potential is constrained by institutional weaknesses, persistent exclusion, and limited civic understanding. Democratic consolidation, therefore, requires a holistic reform agenda that integrates technology with transparency, accountability, inclusion, and citizen empowerment.

By systematically linking empirical evidence to theory and policy, this study demonstrates that electoral reforms must be evaluated not only by their technical design but by their capacity to rebuild trust, broaden participation, and strengthen institutional legitimacy. Only through such an integrated approach can Nigeria move toward elections that are not merely technologically advanced but genuinely credible and democratic.

References

1. Adebayo, K. (2022). *Technology and Electoral Integrity in Africa: A Study of Nigeria's 2023 Elections*. Journal of African Governance Studies, 14(2), 115–134. <https://doi.org/10.1080/afgs.2022.00345>
2. Agbalajobi, D. T. (2020). *Gender Inequality and Women's Participation in Politics in Nigeria*. African Journal of Political Science, 29(1), 55–72.
3. Akinola, O. A. (2021). *Electoral Governance and Technological Innovations in Africa*. African Affairs Review, 12(4), 44–63.
4. Alozie, N., & Ogundipe, T. (2023). *Technology, Trust, and Electoral Reforms in Nigeria: Evaluating the BVAS System*. Journal of Contemporary African Studies, 41(3), 203–219.
5. Ekekwe, E. (2020). *Institutional Weakness and Electoral Management in Nigeria*. Nigerian Journal of Political Science, 15(2), 78–95.
6. Ibrahim, J. (2019). *Democracy and Electoral Accountability in Nigeria*. Journal of Political Development Studies, 8(1), 22–39.
7. Nwabueze, C. & Akintunde, J. (2021). *Digital Democracy and Electoral Transparency: Evaluating the Role of BVAS in Nigeria's Elections*. African Journal of Democracy and Development, 5(2), 130–149.
8. Okpara, U., & Afolabi, O. (2022). *Women and Political Inclusion in Nigeria: Beyond the Numbers*. Journal of Gender and Development Studies, 17(3), 101–118.
9. Omotola, J. S. (2019). *Electoral Reforms and the Quest for Democratic Stability in Nigeria*. Journal of African Elections, 18(2), 65–85.
10. Oluwole, M. (2021). *The Promise of Technology in Electoral Integrity: Lessons from Nigeria's BVAS Experience*. Governance and Innovation Quarterly, 9(1), 49–67.
11. Oyeleke, T., & Adeoti, R. (2022). *Public Perception of INEC and Electoral Credibility in Nigeria*. Journal of African Public Affairs, 10(3), 57–74.
12. CLEEN Foundation. (2023). *Post-Election Assessment Report on the 2023 Nigerian General Elections*. Lagos: CLEEN Foundation.

13. European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM). (2023). *Final Report: Nigeria General Elections 2023*. Brussels: European Union External Action Service.
14. Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). (2023). *Report on the Conduct of the 2023 General Elections in Nigeria*. Abuja: INEC Headquarters.
15. National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). (2023). *Demographic Statistics Bulletin 2023*. Abuja: NBS.
16. National Research Ethics Code. (2014). *National Health Research Ethics Committee of Nigeria (NHREC) Guidelines*. Abuja: Federal Ministry of Health.
17. YIAGA Africa. (2023). *Watching the Vote: Election Observation Report on the 2023 General Elections*. Abuja: YIAGA Africa.
18. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (2022). *Democracy and Governance in Nigeria: Progress and Challenges*. New York: UNDP.
19. World Bank. (2022). *Gender and Development in Nigeria: Pathways to Inclusive Political Participation*. Washington, DC: World Bank Publications.

Appendix A1: Questionnaire Survey Instrument

Title: Nigeria 2023 General Election Survey to gather insights from voters and stakeholders about their experience during 2023 general election in Nigeria focusing on BVAS deployment, electoral reforms and voter trust.

The questionnaire was designed to collect both qualitative and quantitative survey on respondents' perception of electoral reform, BVAS deployment, electoral credibility, inclusion, and voter trust in Nigeria's 2023 general election.

The key variables measured include

1. BVAS accreditation satisfaction
2. BVAS credibility perception
3. Electoral reform effectiveness perception
4. Voting process credibility rating
5. Youth and women inclusion
6. Trust in INEC to conduct future election

These variables formed the basis for the inferential statistical analysis conducted in this research study.

Sample size:

$$n = 129$$

Questions include

Section A: Election participation

1. Did you participate in the 2023 general election

(Yes)

(No)

2. Where you accredited using BVAS device

(Yes)

(No)

Section B: Electoral credibility

1. If yes, how would you rate the voting process at your polling unit? 1,2,3,4,5

(1 = Not credible, 5 = very credible)

Section C: BVAS Introduction/Deployment

1. How satisfied are you with the BVAS accreditation process

(Very satisfied, satisfied, neutral, dissatisfied, very dissatisfied)

2. Do you believe the introduction of BVAS increased the credibility of the 2023 general election

(Yes, No, Maybe, Not sure)

3. In your opinion, did electoral reforms (Electoral Act 2022, BVAS, IReV) increase trust in the process?

(Yes, No, Maybe, Not Sure)

Section D: Voter trust

1. Do you trust INEC to conduct future elections

(Yes, No, Maybe, Undecided)

2. Do you think women and youth were actively included in the 2023 elections

(Yes, No, Maybe, Not Sure)

Section E: Open-ended survey question

1. What challenges did you experience on election day

(Late arrival of INEC Official - check all that apply, Malfunctioning of BVAS machine, Insecurity, other (please specify))

2. What would you recommend to improve election in Nigeria

Appendix A2: Data Analysis Code

Variable	Responses	Code
Voting Rating Process	Not credible	1
	Low credibility	2
	Neutral	3
	Credible	4
	Very Credible	5
BVAS Satisfaction	Very dissatisfied	1
	Dissatisfied	2
	Neutral	3
	satisfied	4
	Very satisfied	5
Trust in INEC to conduct election	Yes	3
	No	1
	Maybe	4
	Undecided	2
BVAS Credibility	Very dissatisfied	1
	Dissatisfied	2
	Neutral	3
	satisfied	4
	Very satisfied	5
Electoral Reform Process	Very dissatisfied	1
	Dissatisfied	2
	Neutral	3
	satisfied	4

	Very satisfied	5
Inclusion	Very dissatisfied	1
	Dissatisfied	2
	Neutral	3
	satisfied	4
	Very satisfied	5

Sample size $n = 129$ **Appendix A3: Frequency Table - Voting Credibility**

Rating	Frequency	Percentage
1	12	9.3%
2	28	21.7%
3	40	31,0%
4	32	24.8%
5	17	13.2%
Total	129	100%

Source: Excel Frequency Output

Appendix A4: Frequency Table on BVAS Satisfaction

BVAS Satisfaction	Frequency	Percentage
Very satisfied	14	10.9%
Satisfied	51	39.5%
Neutral	47	36.4%
Dissatisfied	12	9.3%
Very Dissatisfied	5	3.9%
Total	129	100%

Source: Excel frequency output

Appendix A5: Frequency Table on Trust in Election Management

Trust in Election Management	Frequency	Percentate
------------------------------	-----------	------------

Yes	55	42.6%
No	24	18.6%
Undecided	50	38.8%
Total	129	100%

Appendix A6: Pearson's Correlation

Software Tool: Microsoft Excel and SPSS Statistics

Variables	Voting Process	Satisfaction with BVAS	Trust
Trust	0.017	0.449	1.000
Voting Process	1.000	0.187	0.017
BVAS Satisfaction	0.187	1.000	0.449

Correlation between BVAS satisfaction shows a moderately positive association with voter trust ($r = 0.449$)

Correlation between voting process and trust

$$r = 0.017$$

Appendix A7: Independent t-Test Sample Output Group Statistic

Group	N	Mean Trust Score
BVAS Satisfaction	65	2.85
Not Satisfied with BVAS	64	2.12

t-Test Result

$$t = 2.85$$

$$p < 0.05$$

Significant relationship exist between BVAS deployment and voter trust

Source: SPSS/Excel t-Test Output

Appendix A8: Chi-Square Test

BVAS Satisfaction	High Trust	Low/Undecided
-------------------	------------	---------------

Satisfied	60	20
Not Satisfied	15	34

Chi - Square Statistics

Statistics	Value
Chi - Square	9.72
df	1
p-value	< 0.05

Source: SPSS/Excel Chi - Square Output

Significant association exist between electoral reform satisfaction and voter trust

Appendix A9: Multiple Regression Analysis Output

Dependent Variable:

Trust in INEC

Independent Variables:

BVAS Satisfaction

BVAS Credibility

Electoral reform effectiveness

Voting Process Credibility

Inclusion

Model Summary: $R = 0.60$

$$R^2 = 0.36$$

Regression Coefficients:

Statistics	Value
R	0.60
R Square (R^2)	0.36
Adjusted R Square	0.34

Electoral reform and BVAS deployment shows 36% of variation in voter trust, while remaining variation explains the factors.

BVAS satisfaction significantly predicts voter trust

Appendix A10: Statistical Software and Tools Used

SPSS Regression Output

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	24.50	5	4.90	8.72	0.00
Residual	43.60	123	0.35		
Total	68.10	128			

Appendix A11: Regression Coefficient Table

Variable	Coefficients (β)	Interpretation
Constant	1.05	Baseline trust level
BVAS Satisfaction	0.42	Significant predictor
BVAS Credibility	positive	Significant predictor
Electoral Reforms effectiveness	positive	Significant predictor
Voting Process Credibility	0.05	Weak predictor
Inclusion	positive	Significant predictor

Appendix A12: Regression Model Equation

$$\text{Trust} = \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{BVAS Satisfaction}) + \beta_2(\text{BVAS Credibility}) + \beta_3(\text{Electoral reform}) + \beta_4(\text{Voting Process})$$

$$\text{Trust} = 1.05 + 0.42(\text{BVAS Satisfaction}) + 0.05(\text{Process}) + \varepsilon$$

Appendix A13: Statistical Software Used

Inferential statistical analysis was conducted using

IBM SPSS Statistic version 29

Microsoft Excel Data Analysis

Statistical Method Applied

Person's Correlation

Independent Sample t-Test

Chi - Square

Multiple Linear Regression

Level of significant: $\alpha = 0.05$

Appendix A14: Decision Rule

Reject null hypothesis when the: $\rho < 0.05$

Accept null hypothesis when the $\rho = > 0.05$

Note:

This master list covers all chapters (1-5) and should be cited consistently across the entire research document. It reflects both the theoretical and empirical foundation of the study, ensuring alignment with international research standards.