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Demographic Factors and Candidate Selection: A Study of Political Choice Determinants in Edo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of demographic variables (educational level, gender, location, and socioeconomic status—defined by occupation and income) on the choice of political candidates, focusing on key determinant factors: relationship with the candidate, political party affiliation, ethnicity, religion, and candidate manifestos in Edo State, Nigeria. Five research questions and corresponding hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. A survey research design with a correlational approach was employed. The population consisted of all citizens aged 18 and above in the Edo South Senatorial District. A sample of 400 respondents was drawn from churches, mosques, markets, and business areas in four Local Government Areas (LGAs)—two from rural areas (Orhionmwon and Ovia South-West) and two from urban areas (Ikpoba-Okha and Egor)—using a multi-stage sampling procedure. Data collection was carried out using a self-designed questionnaire titled “Voters’ Demographic Variables on Choice of Political Candidates” (VDVCPC), which was validated by three experts in the Faculty of Education, University of Benin. The instrument had a reliability coefficient of 0.84, established through Cronbach’s Alpha. The researchers, assisted by two trained research assistants, administered the instrument. Data analysis involved simple linear regression with one binary categorical independent variable. The findings revealed that educational level, location, and occupation significantly influence voters’ decisions across various factors. Based on the results, recommendations were made for investment in educational programs, the implementation of region-specific campaign strategies, occupation-focused messaging, and the development of detailed manifestos to address diverse voter concerns.

Keywords: *Political Candidates, Voters, Elections, Determinant Factors, Demographic Variables*

Introduction

In any organized organization, be it a state or nation, the selection of leaders is a critical process that hinges on how voters evaluate potential candidates. In a democratic society, this process is not straightforward; it is influenced by a complex web of social, political, and personal factors. Kulachai, Lerdtomornsakul, and Homyamyen (2023), highlight that voting decisions are influenced by a complex interplay of individual-level factors, such as demographics (age, gender, education, income, and race/ethnicity), and contextual factors, including political, social, and economic environments. Educational attainment fosters political participation, and psychological factors like attitudes and beliefs shape voter preferences. According to Yusuf (2024) the factors influencing voting decisions, includes personality traits, political ideology, tribal affiliations, media, political parties, and candidate characteristics. The study found that a large majority of respondents recognized that a candidate’s personality traits and political ideology significantly influenced their voting choices. Additionally, many acknowledged the importance of tribal affiliations in their decisions. However, a notable portion had witnessed or heard about vote buying during elections, indicating awareness of its prevalence.

In Nigeria, voting behavior is shaped by a variety of demographic elements like education, gender, geographical location, and socioeconomic status (SES). These factors greatly influence how voters interact with political candidates and influence their final choices. According to Rational Choice Theory (Downs, 1957), voters tend to make decisions based on how well they believe a candidate aligns with their own interests. On the other

hand, the Sociological Model of Voting Behavior (Lazarsfeld et al., 1944) argues that a voter's background—whether it's their social status, ethnicity, or religious beliefs—often plays a major role in shaping their political preferences. Using these frameworks, this study explores how such demographic factors impact the decision-making process of voters when choosing political candidates in Edo State.

A "political candidate," as defined by Law Insider (2023), is anyone who publicly declares their intention to run for office or is encouraged to do so. Once candidates make their intentions known, voters evaluate them against certain criteria. However, as Hazan and Rahat (2010) pointed out, political parties in general elections often rely on informal and unstandardized methods to select their candidates, with personal relationships or familiarity playing a significant role. Political parties exist to unite individuals with shared ideologies, with the aim of securing as many positions of power as possible. Their ideas are often encapsulated in their manifesto—a strategic document that lays out the party's objectives and promises. Voters, especially those more politically savvy, often use this document to gauge whether a candidate's platform aligns with their expectations. In fact, a party's campaign policies strongly shape its public image and, by extension, its electoral success.

Asekere's (2022) research on voter behavior in Ghana reveals that candidate personality and appeal play a significant role in influencing voters, particularly in politically competitive regions. This finding aligns closely with what is obtainable in Nigeria as voters also prioritize the candidate's personal connection and campaign manifestos when making electoral decisions. In competitive areas, where loyalty to any single party is not as strong, the appeal and relatability of the candidate become decisive factors, suggesting that in both Ghanaian and Nigerian contexts, voter behavior is shaped by a combination of candidate-specific traits and issue-driven campaign messaging. This highlights a broader trend across African democracies, where voter engagement can shift based on the alignment of candidates' messages with voters' immediate concerns and personal resonance. Interestingly, many voters also base their decisions on more personal connections or potential benefits they hope to receive, whether from the party or the candidate. These connections could come from family ties, party membership, or even promises of personal gain. For instance, a study by Uzongu (2019) highlights the unfortunate trend of vote-buying in several African nations, including Nigeria, where voters are swayed by gifts or financial incentives.

Furthermore, as Hogan and Kaiser (2005) noted, personality traits of leaders often predict their leadership style and effectiveness. A political candidate's mental and emotional resilience plays a significant role in their ability to lead. Leaders who lack stability or exhibit dysfunctional behaviors risk hindering the well-being and potential of those they govern. This has been reinforced by research from Agbude et al. (2014), which emphasizes the importance of sound mental health and moral character in governance.

Religion, too, plays a prominent role in shaping the political landscape in Nigeria. According to Obiefuna (2018), religion is a phenomenon within human society that shapes traditions in areas such as marriage, politics, formal and informal education, economy, law, and health as social institutions. Studies by Nwankwo (2019) and Shehu (2019) revealed that religion and ethnicity heavily influence voters' behavior. Nwachukwu (2022) also notes that religion heavily impacts on Nigeria's election each election year and it plays a major role in determining the winning presidential candidate and party. In fact, as religion becomes intertwined with politics, it shapes governance, policy development, and the electoral process itself, with voters often leaning towards candidates who share their religious views. Ethnic loyalty is another significant determinant in elections, as shown in Isiaq, Adebisi, and Bakare (2018), who argue that ethnicity has been central to Nigerian politics since the first general election in 1959.

This study, therefore, aims to fill the research gap by exploring how demographic factors like education, gender, and SES interact with political determinants such as ethnicity, religion, and party affiliation in shaping voter behavior in Edo State, Nigeria. A deeper understanding of these interactions is essential for crafting more effective political campaigns and promoting a more inclusive democratic process in the State and the nation.

Statement of Problem

The electoral process in Nigeria is faced with several challenges that hinder the achievement of a fair and unbiased democratic system and it is well established in literature that multiple factors, such as a candidate's party affiliation, manifesto, religion, and ethnic group, significantly influence voters in their selection of political candidates, particularly in presidential elections. Ideally, voters are expected to base their choices on unique qualities, such as the candidate's competence, established reputation, high integrity, and commitment to fulfilling promises. However, the use of political party affiliation, religion, ethnic group, and other sentimental factors should not be considered by individuals with sound minds, foresight, and genuine concern for the well-being of their nation and future generations.

While it is generally believed that individuals with a higher level of education would make decisions based on unbiased assessments, on the issue of gender, men are often considered less susceptible to deception or external influences once they have determined their course of action. Contrarily, women, who are commonly seen as being more sentimental, typically consider their children's best interests while making decisions. Thus, even when emotive considerations are present, female voters' decisions may be influenced by the possibility of choosing a politician who would put their children's welfare first. Moreover, geographical location and socioeconomic level (SES) (occupation of the voters and their income) impact decision-making in many facets of life, and this may not be different in their decisions concerning elections and the electoral process. During elections, these elements may influence voters' preferences and decisions. Given the aforementioned factors, it is essential to look into how demographic factors/variables like level of education, gender, geographic location, and SES (occupation of the voters and their income) affect how voters choose political candidates in the particular context of Edo State, Nigeria. This study intends to provide light on the ways in which these factors affect voters' decisions, offering insightful knowledge about the dynamics of the political process in Edo State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide this study:

1. To what extent does educational level influence voters' choice of political candidates in relation to the various determinant factors?
2. How does gender influence voters' choice of political candidates in relation to the determinant factors?
3. What is the influence of location on voters' choice of political candidates in relation to the determinant factors?
4. To what extent does the occupation of the voters influence their choice of political candidates in relation to the various determinant factors?
5. To what extent does the income of the voters influence their choice of political candidates in relation to the various determinant factors?

Hypotheses

All research questions were hypothesized as follows:

1. Educational level of the voters does not significantly influence voters' choice of political candidates with respect to determinant factors.
2. Sex of the voters does not significantly influence voters' choice of political candidates with respect to determinant factors.
3. Location of the voters does not significantly influence voters' choice of political candidates with respect to determinant factors.
4. Occupation of the voters does not significantly influence voters' choice of political candidates with respect to determinant factors.
5. Income level of the voters does not significantly influence voters' choice of political candidates with respect to determinant factors.

Purpose of the Study

This study aimed to investigate the influence of demographic variables on the choice of political candidates with respect to some determinant factors. Specifically, the researchers will determine whether or not educational level, sex, location and Social Economic Status (SES) (occupation and income) of voters influence their consideration of political candidates for political positions based on the candidates' relationship with them, party affiliation, ethnic group of the candidate, religion of the candidate as well as manifesto of the candidate.

Method

This study employed the survey research design with correlation approach. All Edo South Senatorial district citizens from 18 years of age made up the population of the study. A sample size of 400 citizens of the senatorial district who had attained the age of 18 and above was sampled using a multi-stage sampling procedure. First of all, stratified random sampling was used to sample four Local Government Areas (LGAs): Orhriomwon, Ovia South West, IkpobaOkha and Egor from the district. Two LGAs were sampled from the rural areas and the other from the urban areas. Stratification into rural and urban areas was done to enable us have respondents from both locations. Secondly, convenient sampling technique was used to select Churches, mosques, market places and business places. The choice of this technique was to enable us sample respondents who are educated and non-

educated voters, male and female voters and those in high and low SES in terms of their occupation and income earned. Thirdly, simple random technique was used to select 100 respondents from each LGA for the study.

The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire designed by the researchers titled “Voters’ Demographic Variables on Choice of Political Candidates” (VDVCPC). The instrument was validated by three experts in the faculty of education, University of Benin. The reliability coefficient of .84 was obtained using Cronbach’s Alpha statistics. The instrument was administered by the researchers with the assistance of two trained research assistants. Where necessary, the researcher read the items and ticked the options based on the responses of the respondents. The questionnaires were collected immediately. Data obtained were analyzed using simple linear regression (one binary categorical independent variable) to determine the influence of voters’ demographic variables on their choice of political candidates.

Findings

Table 1: Data Presentation of the Demographic Variable

Demographic Variables	Number of Respondents (%)
Educated	347 (86.75)
Uneducated	53 (13.25)
Total	400 (100)
Male	139 (35.73)
Female	250 (64.27)
Total	389 (100)
Urban	298 (77.60)
Rural	86 (22.40)
Total	384 (100)
High Income	76 (19.44)
Low Income	315 (80.56)
Total	391 (100)
High Value Job	189 (48.46)
Low value Job	201 (51.54)
Total	390 (100)

From Table 1, all the 400 respondents indicated their educational level. Out of the 400 respondents, number of educated respondents was 347 representing 86.75% while number of uneducated respondents was 53 representing 13.25%. Only 389 out of the 400 respondents used for the study indicated their sexes. Out of the 389 respondents, number of male respondents was 139 representing 35.73% while number of female respondents was 250 representing 64.27%. Also, only 384 respondents out of the 400 respondents used for the study indicated their location. Out of the 384 respondents, number of urban respondents was 298 representing 77.60% while number of rural respondents was 86 representing 22.40%. For level of income earned by respondents, out of the 400 respondents used for the study only 391 respondents indicated their income level. Number of high-income respondents (those earning above 150,000 naira) respondents was 76 representing 19.44% while number of low income respondents was 315 representing 80.54%. Also, out of the 400 respondents used for the study, only 390 indicated their types of job. Number of respondents with high valued job (civil servants and renowned business) was 189 representing 48.46% while number of respondents with low value jobs was 201 representing 51.54%.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Educational level does not significantly influence voters' choice of political candidates with respect to determinant factors.

Table 2a: Model Summary of Regression Analysis of the Prediction of Educational Level on Voters' Choice of Political Candidates with respect to the Determinant Factors

	Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Relationship	Regression	176.605	1	176.605	7.239	.007
	Residual	9440.829	387	24.395		
	Total	9617.434	388			
Party	Regression	24.715	1	24.715	2.208	.138
	Residual	4331.085	387	11.191		
	Total	4355.799	388			
Ethnicity	Regression	347.558	1	347.558	14.925	.000
	Residual	9011.892	387	23.287		
	Total	9359.450	388			
Religion	Regression	196.320	1	196.320	9.406	.002
	Residual	8077.006	387	20.871		
	Total	8273.326	388			
Manifesto	Regression	124.313	1	124.313	7.483	.007
	Residual	6428.751	387	16.612		
	Total	6553.064	388			

a. Dependent variable; Voter's Choice

b. Predictors; (constant), Educational Level

In Table 2a, p-values of .007, .138, .000, .002 and .007 were obtained for relationship, party affiliation, ethnicity, religion and manifesto respectively. Only p-value of party affiliation is greater than .05 α level which means that party affiliation does not significantly influence the choice of political candidate by voters while the p-values of relationship, ethnicity, religion and manifesto are less than .05 α level which means that they do significantly influence the choice of political candidate by voters. Since all the determinant factors did not significantly influence the choice of political candidate by voters, hence, the null hypothesis is not retained.

Table 2b: Parameter Estimates of Regression Analysis of the Prediction of Educational Level on Voters' Choice of Political Candidates with respect to the various Determinant Factors

	Model B	Unstandardized Coeffs Std Error	Standardized Coeffs Beta	r	R-Square	Adj R ²
Constant	20.283	.410				
1 Rlship	1.393	.518	.136	.136	.018	.016
Constant	14.917	.278				
2 Party	.521	.351	.075	.075	.006	.003
Constant	17.152	.401				
3 Ethnicity	1.955	.506	.193	.193	.037	.035
Constant	15.793	.379				
4 Religion	1.469	.479	.154	.154	.024	.021
Constant	12.745	.338				
5 Manifesto	1.169	.427	.138	.138	.019	.016

a. Dependent Variable; Voter's Choice

Table 2b revealed that the R Square values are .018, .006, .037, .024 and .019 for relationship, party affiliation, ethnicity, religion and manifesto respectively. This means that 1.8%, 0.6%, 3.7%, 2.4% and 1.9% of the dependent variable (voter's choice: relationship, party affiliation, ethnicity, religion and manifesto) was explained by the predictor (educational level). The constant term was approximately 20.28, 14.92, 17.15, 15.79 and 12.75 for the voter's determinant factors and the predictor variable (educational level) for the respective factors were approximately 1.39, 0.52, 1.96, 1.47 and 1.17. The values of r, which are approximately .136, 0.075, 0.193, 0.154

and 0.138, represents the correlation between the educational level and voter’s choice with respect to relationship, party affiliation, ethnicity, religion and manifesto. It therefore means that voters' choice of political candidates with respect to the determinant factors: relationship with the candidate, ethnicity of the candidate, religion of the candidate and manifesto of the candidate were significantly influenced by educational levels of the voters but party affiliation of the political candidates was not significantly influenced by educational levels of the voters.

Hypothesis 2: Voters’ sex does not significantly influence their choice of political candidates with respect to determinant factors.

Table 3a: Model Summary of Regression Analysis of the Prediction of Voters’ Sex on Choice of Political Candidates with respect to the various Determinant Factors

	Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Relationship	Regression	4.128	1	4.128	.166	.684
	Residual	9613.306	387	24.841		
	Total	9617.434	388			
Party	Regression	1.132	1	1.132	.101	.751
	Residual	4354.668	387	11.252		
	Total	4355.799	388			
Ethnicity	Regression	5.653	1	5.653	.234	.629
	Residual	9353.796	387	24.170		
	Total	9359.450	388			
Religion	Regression	60.743	1	60.743	2.862	.091
	Residual	8212.583	387	21.221		
	Total	8273.326	388			
Manifesto	Regression	38.358	1	38.358	2.279	.132
	Residual	6514.706	387	16.834		
	Total	6553.064	388			

a. Dependent variable; Voter’s Choice

b. Predictors; (constant), Sex of voters

In Table 3a, p-values of .684, .751, .629, .091 and .132 were obtained for relationship, party affiliation, ethnicity, religion and manifesto respectively. All the p-values of all the determinant factors are greater than .05 α level which means that they do not significantly influence the choice of political candidate by voters. The null hypothesis is retained.

Table 3b: Parameter Estimates of Regression Analysis of the Prediction of Sex on Voters' Choice of Political Candidates with respect to the various Determinant Factors

Model	Unstandardized Coeffs		Stadized Coeffs	r	R-Square	Adj R ²
	B	Std Error				
Constant	21.080	.315				
1 Sex	.215	.527	.021	.021	.000	-.002
Constant	15.204	.212				
2 Sex	.113	.355	.016	.016	.000	-.002
Constant	18.288	.311				
3 Sex	.252	.520	.025	.025	.001	-.002
Constant	16.420	.291				
4 Sex	.825	.487	.086	.086	.007	.005
Constant	13.244	.259				
5 Sex	.655	.434	.077	.077	.006	.003

a. Dependent Variable; Voter’s Choice

b. 1=Relationship with Candidate, 2= Party

Affiliation, 3= Ethnicity, 4=Religion & 5= Manifesto

Table 3b revealed that the R Square values are .000, .000, .001, .086 and .077 for relationship with the candidate, party affiliation, ethnicity of the candidate, religion of the candidate and manifesto of the candidate

respectively. This means that 0%, 0%, 1%, 8.6% and 7.7% of the dependent variable (voter’s choice: relationship, party affiliation, ethnicity, religion and manifesto) was explained by the predictors (sex).The values of r, which are approximately .021, 0.16, 0.25, 0.086 and 0.077, represent the correlation between the sex of voters and their choice with respect to relationship, party affiliation, ethnicity, religion and manifesto. It therefore means that sex of voters does not significantly influence voters' choice of political candidates with respect to relationship with the candidate, party affiliation, ethnicity of the candidate, religion of the candidate and manifesto of the candidate. That is to say, that both men and women behave in the same way in choosing political candidates with respect to the determinant factors.

Hypothesis 3: Voters’ location does not significantly influence their choice of political candidates with respect to determinant factors.

Table 4a: Model Summary of Regression Analysis of the Prediction of Voters’ Location on Choice of Political Candidates with respect to the Determinant Factors

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Relationship	Regression	86.626	1	38.626	3.509	.082
	Residual	9529.467	387	24.688		
	Total	9616.093	388			
Party	Regression	43.565	1	43.565	3.920	.048
	Residual	4289.558	387	11.113		
	Total	4333.124	388			
Ethnicity	Regression	418.928	1	418.928	18.114	.000
	Residual	8927.368	387	23.128		
	Total	9346.296	388			
Religion	Regression	178.312	1	178.312	8.504	.004
	Residual	8093.358	387	20.967		
	Total	8271.670	388			
Manifesto	Regression	57.391	1	57.391	3.421	.065
	Residual	6475.174	387	16.775		
	Total	6532.564	388			

- a. Dependent variable; Voter’s Choice
- b. Predictors; (constant), Voters’ Location

In Table 4a, p-values of .082, .048, .000, .004 and .065 were obtained for relationship, party affiliation, ethnicity, religion and manifesto respectively. Only p-values of relationship with the candidate and manifesto are greater than .05 α level while the p-values of party affiliation, ethnicity and religion are less than .05 α level. Since all the determinant factors did not significantly influence the choice of political candidate by voters, hence, the null hypothesis is not retained.

Table 4b: Parameter Estimates of Regression Analysis of the Prediction of Voters' Location on Choice of Political Candidates with respect to the Determinant Factors

Model	Unstandardized Coeffs	Standardized Coeffs	r	R-Square	Adj R ²
	B	Std Error	Beta		
Constant	20.300	.524			
1 Location	1.119	.598	.095	.095	.009
Constant	14.622	.351			
2 Location	.794	.401	.100	.100	.010
Constant	16.478	.507			
3 Location	2.462	.578	.212	.212	.045
Constant	15.478	.483			
4 Location	1.606	.551	.147	.147	.022
Constant	12.767	.432			

5 Location	.911	.493	.094	.094	.009	.006
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a. **Dependent Variable; Voter’s Choice**

b. **1=Relationship with Candidate, 2= Party**

Affiliation, 3= Ethnicity, 4=Religion & 5= Manifesto

Table 4b revealed that the R Square values are .009, .010, .045, .022 and .009 for relationship with the candidate, party affiliation, ethnicity of the candidate, religion of the candidate and manifesto of the candidate respectively. This means that 0.9%, 1%, 4.5%, 2.2% and 0.9% of the dependent variable (voter’s choice: relationship, party affiliation, ethnicity, religion and manifesto) was explained by the predictors (sex).The values of r, which are approximately .095, .10, .212, .147 and .094, represent the correlation between the location of the voters and their choice for political candidate. It therefore means that location of the voter does not significantly influence voters' choice of political candidates with respect to relationship with the candidate and manifesto but significantly influence voters' choice of political candidates with respect to of party affiliation, ethnicity and religion.

Hypothesis 4: Voters’ occupation does not significantly influence their choice of political candidates with respect to determinant factors.

Table 5a: Model Summary of Regression Analysis of the Prediction of Voters’ Occupation on Choice of Political Candidates with respect to the Determinant Factors

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Relationship	Regression	103.198	1	103.198	4.208	.041
	Residual	9467.287	387	24.527		
	Total	9570.485	388			
Party	Regression	23.203	1	23.203	2.070	.151
	Residual	4327.547	387	11.211		
	Total	4350.750	388			
Ethnicity	Regression	362.024	1	362.024	15.554	.000
	Residual	8984.273	387	23.275		
	Total	9346.296	388			
Religion	Regression	254.696	1	254.696	12.269	.001
	Residual	8013.394	387	20.760		
	Total	8268.090	388			
Manifesto	Regression	10.245	1	10.245	.605	.437
	Residual	6536.443	387	16.934		
	Total	6546.688	388			

a. **Dependent variable; Voter’s Choice**

b. **Predictors; (constant), Voters’ Occupation**

In Table 5a, p-values of .041, .151, .000, .001 and .437 were obtained for relationship, party affiliation, ethnicity, religion and manifesto respectively. Only p-values of party affiliation and manifesto of the candidate are greater than .05 α level while the p-values of relationship with the candidate, ethnicity and religion are less than .05 α level. Since all the determinant factors did not significantly influence the choice of political candidate by voters, hence, the null hypothesis is not retained.

Table 5b: Parameter Estimates of Regression Analysis of the Prediction of Voters' Occupation on Choice of Political Candidates with respect to the Determinant Factors

Model	Unstandardized Coeffs	Stadized Coeffs	r	R-Square	Adj R ²
B	Std Error	Beta			
Constant	20.705	.329			
1 Occupation	1.047	.510	.104	.104	.011
Constant	15,044	.222			

2 Occupation	.496	.345	.073	.073	.005	.003
Constant	17.555	.320				
3 Occupation	1.960	.497	.197	.197	.039	.036
Constant	16.026	.302				
4 Occupation	1.644	.469	.176	.176	.031	.028
Constant	13.335	.273				
5 Occupation	.330	.424	.040	.040	.002	-.001

a. Dependent Variable; Voter’s Choice

b. 1=Relationship with Candidate, 2= Party

Affiliation, 3= Ethnicity, 4=Religion & 5= Manifesto

Table 5b revealed that the R Square values are .011, .005, .039, .031 and .002 for relationship with the candidate, party affiliation, ethnicity of the candidate, religion of the candidate and manifesto of the candidate respectively. This means that 1.1%, .5%, 3.9%, 3.1% and 0.2% of the dependent variable (voter’s choice: relationship, party affiliation, ethnicity, religion and manifesto) was explained by the predictors (occupation). The values of r, which are approximately .104, .073, .197, .147 and .040, represent the correlation between the occupation of the voters and their choice for political candidate. It therefore means that occupation of the voter does not significantly influence voters' choice of political candidates with respect to party affiliation and manifesto of the candidate but it does significantly influence voters' choice with respect to relationship with the candidate, ethnicity and religion.

Hypothesis 5: Voters’ income does not significantly influence their choice of political candidates with respect to determinant factors.

Table 6a: Model Summary of Regression Analysis of the Prediction of Voters’ Income on Choice of Political Candidates with respect to the Determinant Factors

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Relationship	Regression	53.660	1	53.660	2.171	.141
	Residual	9563.774	387	24.713		
	Total	9617.434	388			
Party	Regression	2.428	1	2.428	.216	.643
	Residual	4353.372	387	11.249		
	Total	4355.799	388			
Ethnicity	Regression	72.722	1	72.722	3.031	.083
	Residual	9286.728	387	23.997		
	Total	9346.296	388			
Religion	Regression	80.976	1	80.976	3.825	.051
	Residual	8192.350	387	21.169		
	Total	8273.326	388			
Manifesto	Regression	68.743	1	68.743	4.103	.043
	Residual	6484.321	387	16.755		
	Total	6553.064	388			

a. Dependent variable; Voter’s Choice

b. Predictors; (constant), Voters’ Income of the Voters

In Table 6a, p-values of .141, .643, .083, .051 and .043 were obtained for relationship, party affiliation, ethnicity, religion and manifesto respectively. Only p-value of manifesto of the candidate is less than .05 α level while the p-values of relationship with the candidate, party affiliation, ethnicity and religion are greater than .05 α level. Since all the determinant factors did not significantly influence the choice of political candidate by voters, hence, the null hypothesis is not retained.

Table 6b: Parameter Estimates of Regression Analysis of the Prediction of Voters' Income on Choice of Political Candidates with respect to the Determinant Factors

Model	Unstandardized Coeffs	Standardized Coeffs	r	R-Square	Adj R ²
B	Std Error	Beta			
Constant	20.680	.329			
1 Income	.766	.520	.075	.006	.003
Constant	15,143	.277			
2 Income	.163	.351	.024	.001	-.002
Constant	17.823	.404			
3 Income	.892	.512	.088	.008	.005
Constant	16.129	.379			
4 Income	.941	.481	.099	.010	.007
Constant	12.939	.338			
5 Income	.867	.428	.102	.010	.008

a. **Dependent Variable; Voter's Choice**

b. **1=Relationship with Candidate, 2= Party**

Affiliation, 3= Ethnicity, 4=Religion & 5= Manifesto

Table 6b revealed that the R Square values are .006, .001, .008, .010 and .010 for relationship with the candidate, party affiliation, ethnicity of the candidate, religion of the candidate and manifesto of the candidate respectively. This means that .6%, .1%, .8%, 1% and 1% of the dependent variable (voter's choice: relationship, party affiliation, ethnicity, religion and manifesto) was explained by the predictors (occupation). The values of r, which are approximately .075, .024, .088, .099 and .102, represent the correlation between the income of the voters and their choice for political candidate. It therefore means that the income of the voter does not significantly influence voters' choice of political candidates with respect to of relationship with the candidate, party affiliation, ethnicity and religion but it does significantly influence voters' choice with respect to manifesto of the candidate.

Discussion

The results showed that educational level significantly influenced voters' choices regarding relationship, ethnicity, religion, and manifesto, but not party affiliation. This suggests that more educated voters tend to consider a candidate's personal characteristics and manifesto more critically than their political party. This finding aligns with the study by Kulachai, Lerdtomornsakul, and Homyamyen (2023) and Evans and Tilley (2017), which found that higher education levels correlate with greater political awareness and a tendency to focus on substantive issues rather than party lines. Similarly, Verba, Scholzman, and Brady (1995) demonstrated that education enhances civic skills, leading to more nuanced decision-making processes in voting behavior. In contrast, Achen and Bartels (2016) argue that even well-educated voters often rely on party cues due to the complexity of political information. This means that despite their education, they might still base their choices on which political party a candidate belongs to, as it simplifies the decision-making process in a complex political landscape.

Examining the influence of voters' sex on their choice of political candidates regarding the determinant factors the findings indicated that sex did not significantly influence voters' choices. This implies that whether a voter is male or female, it has no significant impact on how they choose political candidates. Men and women tend to make similar choices when it comes to selecting political candidates based on various factors. Contrasting this, some studies like those by Dolan (2010) have shown gender differences in political preferences and candidate evaluations. However, the current findings align with the work of Lawless and Fox (2010), who argue that gender differences in voting behavior have diminished over time, reflecting broader social changes. Reflecting global patterns, this study highlights how demographic factors, including gender and ethnic affiliation, continue to shape candidate selection processes. Research by Debus and Himmelrath (2024) in Germany shows that candidates who are women or from minority groups often face lower chances of being nominated by political parties with conservative views. This highlights how a party's beliefs can impact who they choose to represent them, especially when it comes to diversity. This finding aligns with other studies suggesting that ongoing research is needed across different political systems to better understand how factors like gender and background continue to shape political representation.

The study revealed that location influenced choices concerning party affiliation, ethnicity, and religion, but not relationship with candidate and manifesto. In other words, where a voter lives affects their decisions about political candidates based on the candidate's political party, ethnicity, and religion. However, the voter's location does not affect their decisions based on their personal relationship with the candidate or the candidate's manifesto. These results are in line with findings by Johnston et al. (2004), who noted regional variations in voting patterns, particularly in relation to party affiliation and ethnic considerations.

The findings revealed that occupation significantly influenced voters' choices concerning relationship, ethnicity, and religion, but not party affiliation and manifesto. This implies that a voter's job or type of work has a significant impact on how they choose political candidates based on their personal relationship with the candidate, the candidate's ethnicity, and the candidate's religion. However, a voter's job does not affect their decisions based on the political party the candidate belongs to or the candidate's policy proposals manifesto.

Examining the influence of voters' income on their choice of political candidates in relation to the determinant factors, the results showed that income significantly influenced voters' choices concerning manifesto, but not relationship, party affiliation, ethnicity, and religion. Verifying this, studies by Gelman et al. (2007) indicate that wealthier voters place more emphasis on policy details and proposed agendas. Conversely, Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee (1954) suggested that economic status might not always predict party loyalty or ethnic considerations, aligning with the findings of this study.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that voters' educational levels significantly influence their choice of political candidates with respect to relationship with the political candidate, ethnicity of the candidate, religion of the candidate and manifesto of the candidate but party affiliation of the political candidates was not significantly influenced by voters' educational levels. Also, the sex of voters did not significantly influence voters' choice of political candidates with respect to the determinant factors. Location of the voter did not significantly influence voters' choice of political candidates with respect to relationship with the candidate and manifesto but significantly influenced voters' choice of political candidates with respect to party affiliation, ethnicity and religion. Moreover, occupation of the voter did not significantly influence voters' choice of political candidates with respect to party affiliation and manifesto of the candidate but significantly influenced voters' choice with respect to relationship with the candidate, ethnicity and religion. It was also found that the income of the voter did not significantly influence voters' choice of political candidates concerning the relationship with the candidate, party affiliation, ethnicity and religion but significantly influenced voters' choice with respect to manifesto of the candidate.

Recommendations

From the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Since educational level significantly influences voters' choices regarding their relationship with candidates, ethnicity, religion, and manifesto, but not party affiliation, it is crucial to invest in educational programs that enhance political awareness and critical thinking. These programs should focus on encouraging voters to evaluate candidates based on their personal characteristics and policy proposals, rather than solely on party lines.
2. Policymakers and political campaigners should consider educational backgrounds when tailoring messages, as education influences several aspects of voter decision-making.
3. Since sex does not significantly influence voters' choices, political campaigns should adopt gender-neutral strategies that appeal equally to both male and female voters. This ensures that campaign messages resonate broadly across the electorate.
4. There is need to recognize and address regional differences in voter preferences concerning party affiliation, ethnicity, and religion. Campaign messages should be tailored to reflect the unique political, ethnic, and religious contexts of different regions.
5. Occupation significantly influences voters' choices concerning relationship, ethnicity, and religion, suggesting that political messaging should be tailored to different occupational groups. Candidates and parties should consider the values, concerns, and priorities of various occupational demographics when developing their campaign strategies.
6. Given that income significantly influences voters' choices concerning the manifesto, political campaigns should emphasize detailed and comprehensive economic policies and articulate how proposed policies will impact different income groups to attract support.

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