

Factors Responsible to an Effective Electoral Process in the North East Nigeria Conference of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. A Basis for Transformation

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Abstract

Failure to follow the ethics of a good spiritual electoral process is usually the result of poor leadership, followers, disunity, and division. The purpose of this research was to look into the factors that contribute to an effective electoral process in the North-East Nigeria Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. A self-created questionnaire and interview were used to collect data. Percentages, means, standard deviations, and stepwise regression analyses are among the data analysis tools available. To collect quantitative and qualitative data, the study used a cross-sectional design, specifically a causal design. The study sample consisted of 76 delegates from the North East Nigeria Conference, according to the findings. It was discovered that deficiencies in organizational culture, organizational politics, ethnicity, geopolitical affiliation, leadership influence, transparency, spirituality, and competence were factors. Transparency, spirituality, and competence were also revealed to be prerequisites during the constituency process (elections). It was suggested that the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church reconsider changing the chairmanship of the nominating committee in order to address the factors responsible for non-compliance with the ethics of an effective electoral process. The selection of church administrative officers in the twenty-first century should be based on competence, spirituality, experience, and educational qualifications. Finally, conference and union officeholders should be limited to no more than two consecutive terms.

Keywords

Effective Electoral Process, Leadership, Transformation

1. Introduction

Due to various factors, including selfish motives and the scheming of desperate politicians seeking or clinching power by any means possible, free and fair elections have become a mirage worldwide. Adherence to due process in the electioneering procedures is hardly acknowledged owing to corruption, intimidation, or limited choice (Oku, 2017). Even in the church, being a faith-based institution, free and fair elections are hardly obtainable, and this raises serious questions as to the acceptability of the outcomes of such elections. Despite efforts to ensure credible electoral processes in today's society, both the church and the secular society have yet to get their processes right (Saferworld, 2017). To a large extent, the credibility of leadership selection processes influences the acceptability of a leader and the quality of leadership produced. Many academics believe that an effective electoral process is one of the most important constitutional tools for resolving conflict in crisis countries and the church (Leonard, 2009). The effectiveness of a leader determines the level of progress in the country or organization that person leads, which is a result of the electoral process that brought the leader to power.

There have been cases of widespread violence and crises in the church in many African countries as a result of unsatisfactory electoral procedures that produce unacceptable results, particularly in our orthodox churches, just as there have been cases in many African countries' secular elections (Kovacs, 2018; Busari & Meko, 2017). According to preliminary reports of the European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM), alleging serious irregularities in the African election process as observed by Lynch, Cheeseman, and Willis (2019), motivation for electoral violence is usually based on a desire to influence electoral outcomes, which could be achieved through various forms of political exclusion, such as exclusion from candidacy, exclusion from campaigning, exclusion from electoral information, and exclusion from voting.

Elections are an important part of democracy. The threat of ineffective electoral processes, religious organizations are not immune to the threat of ineffective electoral processes in a democratic setting. Power struggle, accusations, favoritism by electorate officers, theft, extortion, and police harassment of churchgoers. The electoral process appears to have recently become distorted and dictated by unforeseen circumstances, causing division and disappointing results in some quarters. Numerous studies have found that ineffective electoral processes have resulted in disillusionment and violence in societies and organizations. This could be attributed to factors such as ethnicity, geopolitical affiliation, electoral supervision, godfatherism influence, insufficient sensitization, and an ineffective organizational regulatory framework or policy (Brosché et al., 2020; Birch, Daxecker, & Høglund, 2020; Li et al., 2020). In some Christian denominations, such as the Catholic Church, only Cardinals and ordained Bishops choose Popes (Boorstein, 2019). Only ordained ministers in the Evangelical Church (ECWA) choose their leaders for the positions of president, vice presi-

dent, general secretary, and assistant general secretary.

As a Christian leader, all that is required is a man of integrity, honesty, and dignity. He must be an ordained ECWA minister with at least 15 years of experience, just like in the ECWA (*ECWA Constitution and Bye-Laws, 2018*). Another Christian organization that uses polity government is the Reformed Church of Christ (“ecclesiastical polity”). According to one of their published creeds, the Second Helvetic Confession, the election of leaders is required (Chapter XVIII). “God has made it the responsibility of the community to” recognize, call, and elect leaders for various offices, the duties of which it has prepared”. In their practices, they ordained laymen to elect 100 members for the synod cycle, a six-year legislative period (*György, 2020*). The Seventh-day Adventist Church, on the other hand, selects leaders through nominating committees and delegation (*GCSDA Church Manual, 2022a*). Any electoral process, however, should be a major tool in ensuring a credible election. Transparent processes should be incorporated into the rules or procedures. Elections in the Seventh-day Adventist Church were emphasized as democratic, transparent, free, and fair. Although elections are more likely to be free, fair, and credible, the results are not always clearly articulated. Could it be that there are many issues that determine the impartiality of delegates in constituencies, affecting their ability to express their feelings and stand for an effective electoral process, in addition to that (*Leonard, 2009*)?

People’s and Christian institutions’ dissatisfaction with election results is an indicator of a lack of confidence and trust in the electoral process. According to Li, these factors may contribute to employees’ negative attitudes and behaviors because employees’ negative assessments of work demands may result in burnout and decreased engagement (*Li et al., 2020*). “Transformational change operating in a fast-changing complex world, innovation skills, and the ability to master change are often mentioned as vital for organizational transformation,” write *Eva et al. (2019)*.

However, cultural changes are part of an organization’s transformation. The emotional influence that the leader has on employees and other leaders is covered by the emotional aspects of leadership. One factor that appears to be important is the leader’s acceptance of the change process. And the leader’s ability to recognize people’s fears and doubts, as well as his or her willingness to work toward transformation. The need for transformational change appears to be growing (*Huffaker, 2017*). Organizational performance improves as a result of transformation. Employee perceptions, readiness for change, and changes to “traditional ways of working, values, structures, and strategies” are the foundation for this (*Rafferty & Jimmieson, 2017*). Finally, the influence of organizational change on employee behavior may shift over time (*Yan et al., 2022*).

Organizational change is an emergent phenomenon that occurs as a result of the interaction of internal and external factors. The process of transforming an organization from its current state to a future state is known as organizational

change (Harb & Sidani, 2019). As a result, organizational change refers to the transformation of an organization to a better state (Göçen, 2021), which may be the result of changes in values and operational standards. But Zakiri suggested that it is critical that everyone in an organization, especially delegates or voters during leadership elections, have good communication skills as part of organizational change. This will allow the organization to achieve its goals and objectives while also reducing the likelihood of a crisis occurring during the election of leaders (Zakiri, 2020). Thus, the ingredients for effective church electoral processes in the North East Nigeria Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church were investigated in this study. Objective of Study, the elements that contributed to a smooth electoral process in the North-East Nigeria Conference of Seventh-day Adventists are examined in this study. This study is especially useful as a feedback mechanism for the local church leadership (Local Conferences), who are the church policymakers, on the perceived sense of contradiction between the electorate and the local church. The study assists administrators in developing future methods for electing leaders who are emotionally free. This can help members and leaders develop a sense of purpose and maximize cooperation in the church's mission. It will benefit future members of the nomination committee, which was used to elect constituency leaders. Because the church is transformed, the election process becomes visible and acceptable to the delegates.

2. Theoretical Basis

The theoretical framework can be defined as various theories that have been applied by some researchers and are in line with current research. The research is founded on two theories: behavior theory and social choice or voting theory (Hutchings & Jefferson, 2018; Sani et al., 2017). Behavior in general is a constant and omnipresent phenomenon. People always behave in some way, and it could be argued that it is impossible for (living) humans not to behave. The primary goal of behavioral social and political scientists is to explain (and predict) behavior: why do people behave the way they do? There are numerous theories for studying voter behavior in a multicultural organization like the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Social class, religious background, family loyalties, on-the-job relationships, local pressure groups, mass communication media, and other factors all influence voting.

This requires analyzing delegate behavior during the organization's leadership election. The individual and the social environment in which the individual exists are central to voting behavior theory. The presence of delegates from various ethnic groups at the conference, who came together to elect leaders, established homogeneity among members of a specific group based on discussion with one another (Hutchings & Jefferson, 2018; Elff & Roßteutscher, 2017: p. 202). Interaction with one another can also devolve into a political debate, which can sometimes sway the opinions of others. The existence of such significance in or-

ganizations explains uniformity among members of a specific group (Elff & Roßteutscher, 2017: p. 202). People's perceptions are frequently influenced by influential people and ethnic groups. Evan and Ball, on the other hand, believed that the delegates' perceptions were significantly influenced by both the environment and the individual (Evans & Northmore-Ball, 2018). It is extremely useful to the researcher when interpreting research data analysis. It means that a theoretical framework is a useful structure for holding or supporting a theory or theory. The theoretical framework serves as a guide, not a summary of the research findings. As a result, it presents the ideas of research giants in the relevant field as they relate to the proposed research field. It progresses to an understanding of relevant theories and how they aid in the comprehension of research data.

Elections have become common and taken for granted as a result of the widespread proliferation of democracy and the democratization of all governance processes in both governmental and non-governmental organizations worldwide, including Seventh-day Adventists. However, in order for a democracy to be recognized in the committee of nations, it must thrive on elections, making it an acceptable means of giving credence to governance institutions in Africa and around the world. This implies that the electoral process is an important, all-inclusive form of a democratic system in which people are chosen or elected to positions of leadership. The election process encompasses all of the constitutional procedures, activities, and programs associated with election administration. This includes the activities and events that led up to the election of candidates for various positions and offices (Amegnan, 2017). The act or power of electing someone to fill an office or position is referred to as an election. Elections are the only acceptable institutionalized process that allows members of society to select office holders; thus, the electoral process is what provides the electorate with the institutionalized framework for selecting representatives through a competitive, free, and fair election. Elections are also viewed as a decision-making process in which a population chooses the individual(s) who will represent them in running the affairs of the state. Elections are a major tool for the recruitment of political leadership in democratic societies; they are the key to democratic participation and the method of providing consent to the government.

According to Omezue-Nnali (2020), elections allow the governed to choose who will govern them. This means that elections serve a self-actualizing function by confirming individual citizens' worth and dignity as human beings. It is important to note that elections can take place only in a democratic government. Further, the electoral process includes the selection of delegates from various churches to serve as constituency members, the formation of a nominating committee, and the announcement of the results to the delegates at the constituency venue (GCSDA constitution, article V. General Conference Sessions Section 1-11, 2022). As a result, the Seventh-day Adventist Church's leadership patterns are a representative system. The leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist organization must act and affirm the organizational culture because their actions

will directly influence the behaviors of its members. Leaders must act in accordance with organizational culture; they must understand how the organization treats each cultural characteristic; and they must demonstrate how their members are expected to act in accordance with organizational culture and achieve church objectives (GCSDA Church Manual, 2022b).

3. Methodological Procedures

This section goes over the study's methodology. This includes the research design, study population, sample size, sampling technique, and data collection instrument. Procedures for collecting data on instrument validity and reliability, data analysis methods, and ethical considerations. The instrument's dependability, as determined by a qualitative interview.

3.1. Research Design

"A research design, also known as a research strategy," writes Imed, "is a plan to answer a set of questions." In other words, "it is a framework that includes data collection, analysis, and interpretation methods and procedures." In another development, "the research design describes how the researcher will investigate the research's central problem" (Imed, 2022). To collect quantitative data, the study employed a cross-sectional design, specifically a causal design. The study used a cross-sectional research design for population-based surveys and a mixed-methods approach. A mixed-method design, on the other hand, is defined as a type of research in which the researcher combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g., data collection tools) to gain a thorough understanding (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). This helped in investigating the causal relationships between the dependent (election outcomes) and the independent and mediating variables. The interviews section was used to supplement quantitative data. One-on-one interview discussion methodologies were intended to supplement quantitative methods (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018).

3.2. Population and Sampling Procedures

In research, a population is typically a large group of individuals or objects who are the primary focus of a scientific question and the beneficiaries of a study. "All of the units to which the research findings can be applied are referred to as the population." In other words, the population is a collection of all the units that share the variable characteristics under investigation and for which the research findings can be generalized (Shukla, 2020). This study includes all delegates who attended the constituency sessions of the North East Nigeria Conference on January 28-31, 2021.

The conference delegates are considered accessible populations in this study due to their active participation and role in the election of leaders in the conference constituencies. In determining the sample size from the study's population, the researcher used Taro Yamane's (1967) formula, which is commonly

used in determining sample size in any research with finite population size constituencies. In determining the sample size from the study's population, the researcher used Taro Yamane's (1967) formula, which is commonly used in determining sample size in any research with finite population size. This formula assumes a normal distribution, implying that delegates will be distributed normally in relation to the parameters under consideration. Therefore, this study "determined the sample size" from the population of the delegates at the NENC Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist church. "Taro Yamane's formula is given as follows:

$$n = N / \left[1 + N(\alpha^2) \right]$$

where:

n = Sample size;

N = Total population size (known or estimated);

α = Precision level (0.05).

Therefore, sample size:

$$n = 158 / \left[1 + N(\alpha^2) \right]$$

$n = 158 / [1 + 158 (0.05^2)]$;

$n = 76.21$;

$n = 76$ (Approximately).

In addition, the researcher used a proportionate random stratified sampling technique to select delegates in proportion to the size of the conference. The proportionate stratified random sampling technique is appropriate for this study for two major reasons: First, it provides "a highly representative sample of the target population," and second, the sample frame is easily available and accessible. **Table 1** shows the population of stratum (conference), proportional allocations, and the sample size for the conference.

3.3. Instruments for Data Collection

An interview and a self-designed questionnaire were used in this study. The research questions questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first section contains the participants' personal biodata for the purposes of this study only. The second section is divided into six (6) sections based on the fifty-two (52) study variables. The questionnaire design consists primarily of closed-ended type questions, with the following description: a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating

Table 1. Sampling.

Conferences	Population (Delegates)	Sample Size (population for the/ Total study population*sample size)
NENC	158	76
Total	158	76

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Table 2. Likert scale rating and interpretation of the mean score.

Scale	Responses	Mean Interval	Interpretation of Scale
1.	Strongly Disagree	0.01 to 1.00	Very low
2.	Disagree	1.01 to 2.00	Low
3.	Neutral	2.01 to 3.00	Average
4.	Agree	3.01 to 4:00	High
5.	Strongly Agree	4.01 to 5.00	Very high

Note. Adapted from “School Choice of Computing Students: A Comparative Perspective from Two Universities,” by R. Bringula, et al (2012), *Creative Education*, 3, p. 1073. Copyright 2012 by Scientific Research Publishing.

strong disagreement, 2 indicating disagreement, 3 indicating ambiguity, 4 indicating agreement, and 5 indicating strong disagreement. **Table 2** presents the Likert scale rating and interpretation of the mean score

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

In this study, the researcher was guided by the following procedures:

- 1) The researcher obtained permission from NENC to collect data from the field.
- 2) The questionnaires were administered by the conference presidents who served as research assistants using the drop-off/pick-up method;
- 3) The researcher traveled to the district of the conferences for the interviews;
- 4) Data collection took about three (3) months after approval.
- 5) Data was prepared for analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Krysik, 2018).

3.5. Method of Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of converting raw data into information useful for decision-making. Prior to the analysis, the questionnaire from the participants was checked for errors and coded for data entry. The researcher utilized multiple data analysis tools through the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS®, version 28) and Smart PLS 3 software. The significance level was set at a p-value of 0.05.

Descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution and percentages, mean, and standard deviation were utilized to describe the research variables in a general way. Stepwise regression analyses were conducted to address the first three research questions. This enabled the researcher to find the independent variables that significantly influence the dependent variable. Also, path analysis was used to answer research question four. Path analysis has two components: path coefficients and a path diagram. Path coefficients represent the mathematical part of the analysis, and the path diagram represents the visual part of the analysis.

4. Results & Discussion

This section presents the analysis, results, and discussions of the data collected to

address the research questions stipulated in chapter 1. It also describes the study setting, response rate, respondents' general demographics, and the basis for the hypotheses' acceptance or rejection.

Research Question One

This section investigates the relationships between the study variables and the null hypotheses. The first research question looked at organizational factors (organizational culture, organizational politics, and rule adherence) to see if they had a significant impact on the outcome of the North East Nigeria Conference of Seventh-day Adventists' electoral process.

According to **Table 3**, the stepwise regression model produced an adjusted R² of 0.387 for all three predictors. Thus, adherence to rules, organizational politics, and culture accounted for roughly 39% of the electoral process outcomes in the North East Nigeria Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. $F(3, 192) = 42.060$,

Table 3. Effect of organizational culture, organizational politics, and adherence to rules on electoral process outcome.

MODEL SUMMARY									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
	0.573 ^a	0.328	0.325	0.69134	0.328	94.769	1	194	<0.001
	0.620 ^b	0.384	0.378	0.66355	0.056	17.590	1	193	<0.001
	0.630 ^c	0.397	0.387	0.65862	0.012	3.904	1	192	0.050

^aPredictors: (Constant), Adherence to rules; ^bPredictors: (Constant), Adherence to rules, Organizational politics; ^cPredictors: (Constant), Adherence to rules, Organizational politics, Organizational culture.

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	54.734	3	18.245	42.060	<0.001 ^b
	Residual	83.285	192	0.434		
	Total	138.019	195			

^aDependent Variable: Electoral process outcome; ^bPredictors: (Constant), Adherence to rules, Organizational culture, Organizational politics.

COEFFICIENTS ^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	2.001	0.385		5.195	<0.001
Organizational culture	0.111	0.056	0.118	1.976	0.050
Organizational politics	-0.310	0.071	-0.271	-4.370	<0.001
Adherence to rules	0.407	0.064	0.419	6.391	<0.001

^aDependent Variable: Electoral process outcome (Zakiri, 2023).

p.001; all three variables statistically significantly predict the outcome of the electoral process. However, a closer look at the coefficients shows that organizational politics has a negative unstandardized coefficient in the model ($=-0.310$, p.001), implying that as politics grows, so does the perceived outcome of the election process. Based on the findings, the null hypothesis, which claims that organizational factors such as organizational culture, politics, and adherence to rules have no significant effect on the outcome of the electoral process in the North East Nigeria Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, is rejected. The researcher accepts the alternative hypothesis and concludes that organizational factors such as organizational culture, organizational politics, and rule adherence have a significant impact on the outcome of the electoral process in the North East Nigeria Conference elections of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

The electorates, or voting delegates, are skeptical of this strategy. When the electoral system becomes overly politicized, it is clear that the organizational culture and rules of engagement will be altered to favor certain people seeking elective positions. This demonstrates that secular politics have become institutionalized within the church. Based on this, other anomalies begin to emerge, resulting in a loss of credibility and confidence in the church's so-called elected leaders. The finding backs up Yusuf & Zaheruddin's (2015) claim that most electoral processes are marked by politics of bitterness and rancor, in which some contestants will go to great lengths to blackmail their opponents in the hope of gaining an advantage and acceptance among the electorate, in this case, voters. It demonstrates that when organizational politics are abused, there is almost always a disruption in organizational culture and rule adherence. In most cases, the rules of engagement will be relaxed to allow less favored candidates with "higher-level leadership" anointing to be elected. This also creates a gray area in the organizational culture of the Seventh-day Adventist Church electoral system. The responses from the oral interview back up this claim. It causes strife among Christian churchgoers. The split between the Assemblies of God Church in Nigeria and the Western Nigeria Union Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is a case study (Osazuwa, 2022; Agbo & Adonu, 2017).

Ethnicity and Political skills in Electoral Process

Ethnicity, according to Bilge et al. (2021), can be viewed as a social construct that represents an individual's and/or group's identity. Ethnicity is a broad term that includes the outcomes of culture, nationality, and race. It is a self-defined cultural identifier; how it is conceptualized is influenced by the larger social and cultural context. When ethnicity becomes a deciding factor, little or no consideration is given to competence and the organization's or society's basic objective, goal, or mission. Where the minority has no say, a sense of marginalization and victimization may prevail, which is not a good omen for the church. A recent study by Li et al. (2020) backed up this finding, indicating that there is a lack of confidence and trust in the political process, which leads to decreased engagement of people who value their integrity. When delegates are chosen based on tribal or ethnic affiliation rather than fairness and equity, local churches demon-

strate this. This also applies to how the constituency process works, where leaders are chosen because they are qualified.

According to [Chen and Lin \(2014\)](#), leadership influence is the ability to persuade, manipulate, negotiate, and use other strategies to influence people to take a positive or negative stance, which supports the study’s findings. Some strategies can be decoded based on the tone of voice and responses to events and situations in the constituency. When leaders are seen making statements that undermine others in order to gain cheap popularity by campaigning for or selling them to voters. According to some, the president of the church’s higher level of organization becomes the final authority. The electorate should be aware that this position is consistent with the official working policy of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which advocates delegating power to different levels of the church rather than centralized power. The Seventh-day Adventist Church follows the New Testament model as well as Ellen G. White’s writings.

We believe that the authority given to the church by Jesus allows church leaders to make decisions that bind all members; we also believe that the apostles affirmed the principle of collective decision-making by leaders representing the entire body of believers. To that end, we collectively submit to decisions made at General Conference Sessions, which have always been representative bodies, and by Annual Councils, whose membership became representative of the World

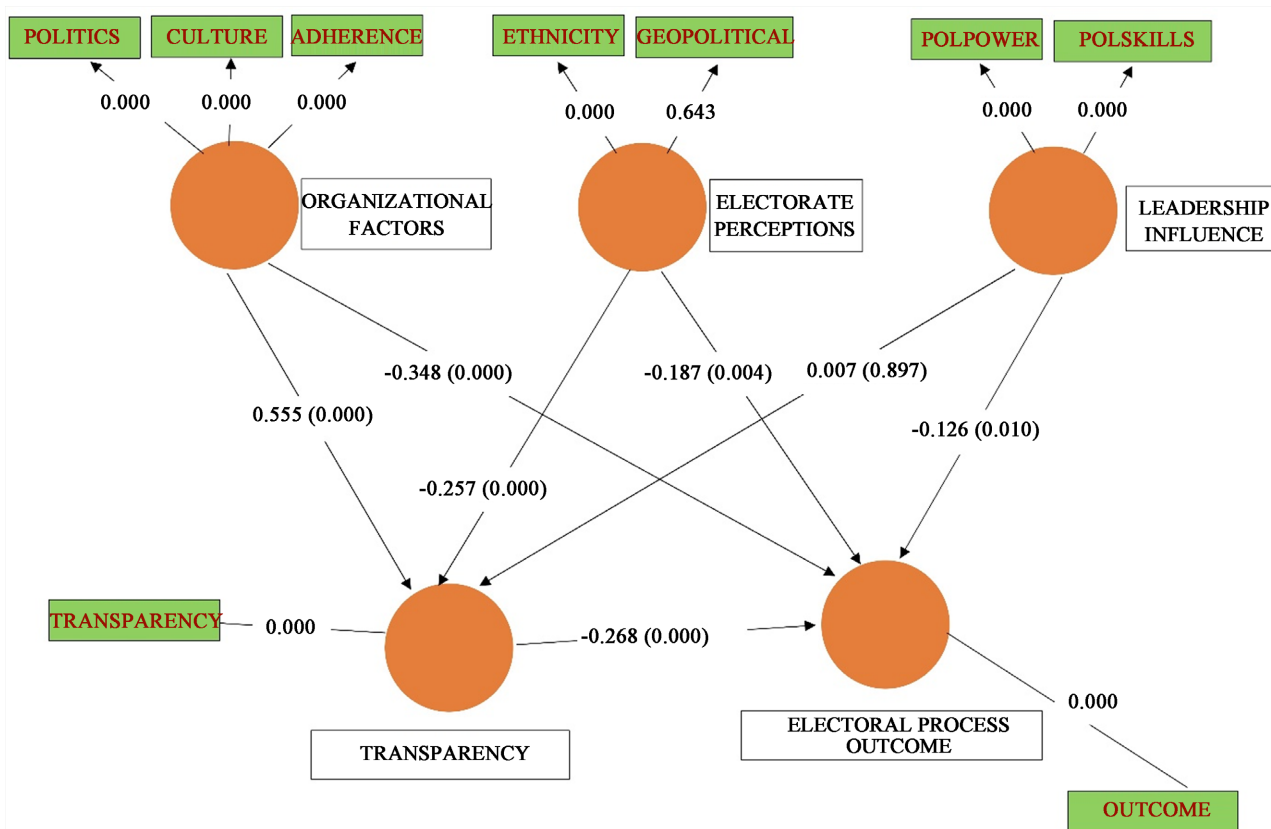


Figure 1. Transparency and Electoral Process. Mediating effect of election transparency on the independent and dependent variables (Zakiri, 2023).

Church in the second half of the twentieth century (GCSDA Church Manual 2022c).

This demonstrates that transparency has no discernible mediating effect on the relationship between leaders and the outcome of the second electoral process. The path diagram in Figure 2 depicts the mediating effects of transparency on the relationship between organizational factors, electorate perceptions, leadership, and electoral process outcome. Ling and Northouse conducted a similar study, concluding that organizational leaders must be self-aware, have internalized moral perspectives, balance processing, and be relationally transparent (Ling et al., 2017; Northouse, 2019). A leader who believes in transparency trusts God’s guidance and sovereignty in his life and the life of the church. G.T. Ng, Ph.D., Secretary General of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, provides transparent leadership. Failure of the electoral process can have grave consequences for stakeholders, culminating in extensive losses that can lead to the extinction of an organization or institution (Zakiri, 2023). Increased organizational productivity requires transparency and effective communication. Because failure causes a crisis, which causes uncertainty and significant harm to the organization and its employees. According to Zakiri, a crisis not only disrupts

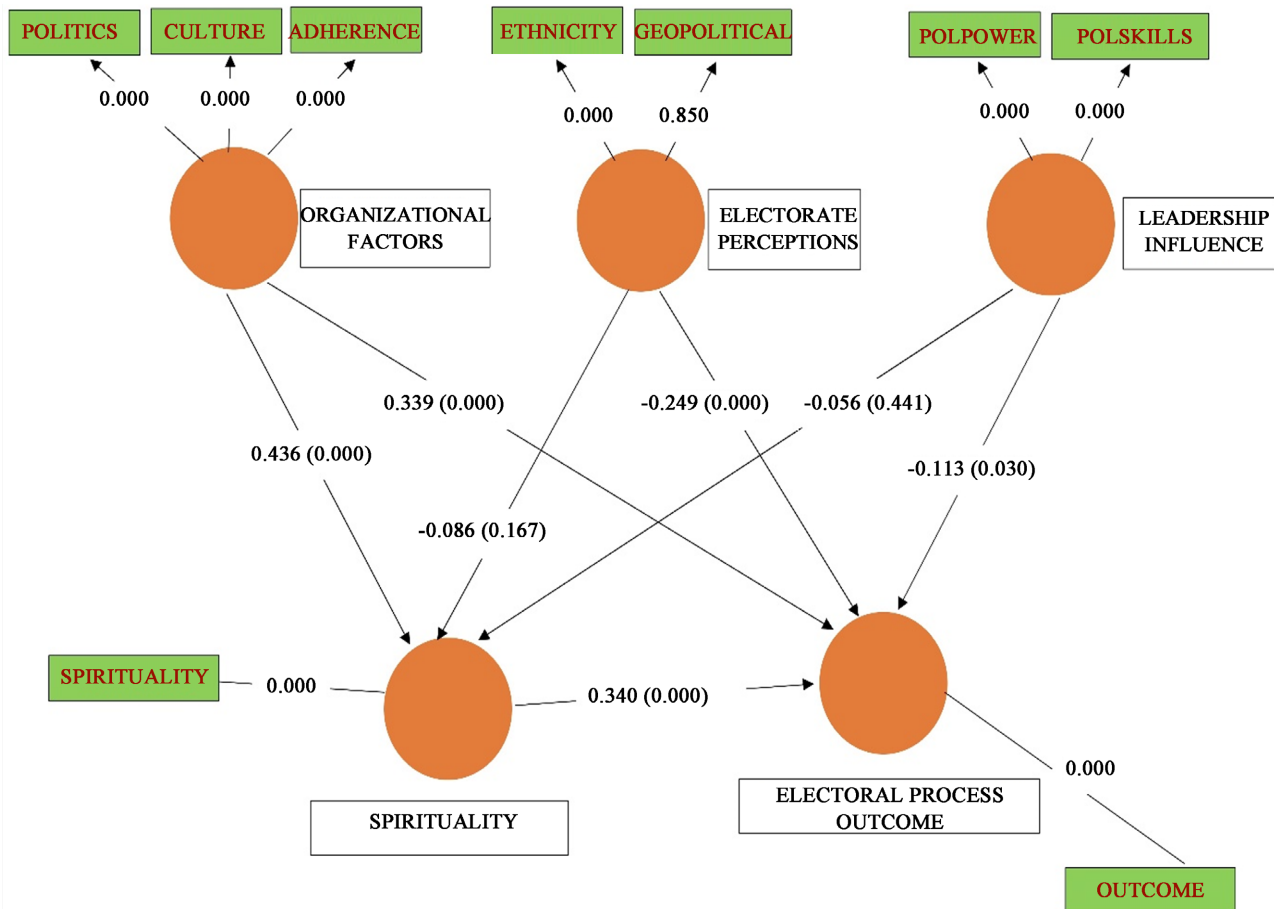


Figure 2. Spirituality and Electoral Process. The effect of election spirituality on the independent and dependent variables (Zakiri, 2023).

an organization's smooth operation but also jeopardizes its brand name (Zakiri, 2020).

Figure 2 demonstrates that spirituality plays a role in mediating the relationship between organizational factors and electoral process outcomes. When spirituality was compared to organizational factors, it was discovered that spirituality influences electoral outcomes. A close examination of **Figure 2** reveals, however, that spirituality does not mediate the relationships between electorate perceptions, leadership, and electoral process outcomes. As a result, the null hypothesis that spirituality has no effect on the relationship between organizational factors and electoral process outcomes is rejected. In contrast, the null hypothesis regarding spirituality's mediating effect on electorate perceptions, leadership influence, and the electoral outcome is accepted.

Leaders' spirituality fosters a positive relationship with their employees (Yadav et al., 2022). Spirituality became the oil of unity, energizing the democratic selection process by empowering participants to democratize and make structures more life-giving (Sanders, 2017; Yadav et al., 2022; Pawar, 2017). Because it is both extraordinary and extraordinarily simple, spirituality is deeply personal beliefs, convictions, and patterns of thought, emotion, and behavior regarding what ultimately belongs to God. When delegates are spiritually sound, they will be focused on the principles of fairness, honesty, integrity, and service, which are essential for human effectiveness both personally and professionally. The spiritual leader's vision stems from a sense of the bigger picture, that there is a greater purpose, which is to serve others or to empower others to be leaders themselves. Cultivating a deep inner spiritual life as a remedy for these disabilities in those charged with selecting leaders is critical because it has long been said that if you want to avoid problematic discussions, avoid talking about politics and religion.

Figure 3 demonstrates that competence has no significant mediating effect on the relationships between voter perceptions, leadership, and electoral process outcomes. As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected which states that competence has no significant mediating effect on the relationship between organizational factors and election outcomes. The alternative hypothesis regarding the mediating effect of competence on electorate perceptions, leadership influence, and electoral process outcome, on the other hand, is accepted. **Figure 3** depicts a schematic path analysis of the mediating effects of competence on the relationship between organizational factors, electorate perceptions, leadership, and the outcome of the electoral process. Competency is one of the tools that can be used to determine an effective electoral process because competencies are the skills, knowledge, practical behaviors, and attitudes that influence how a leader operates in the organization. A leader with competency in communication, service delivery, planning, and resource organization will be considered, which simply means that the election should be based on the ability to manage and account for resources. This can be to someone who understands the organization's policy, the competency of others, teamwork, motivation, team development,

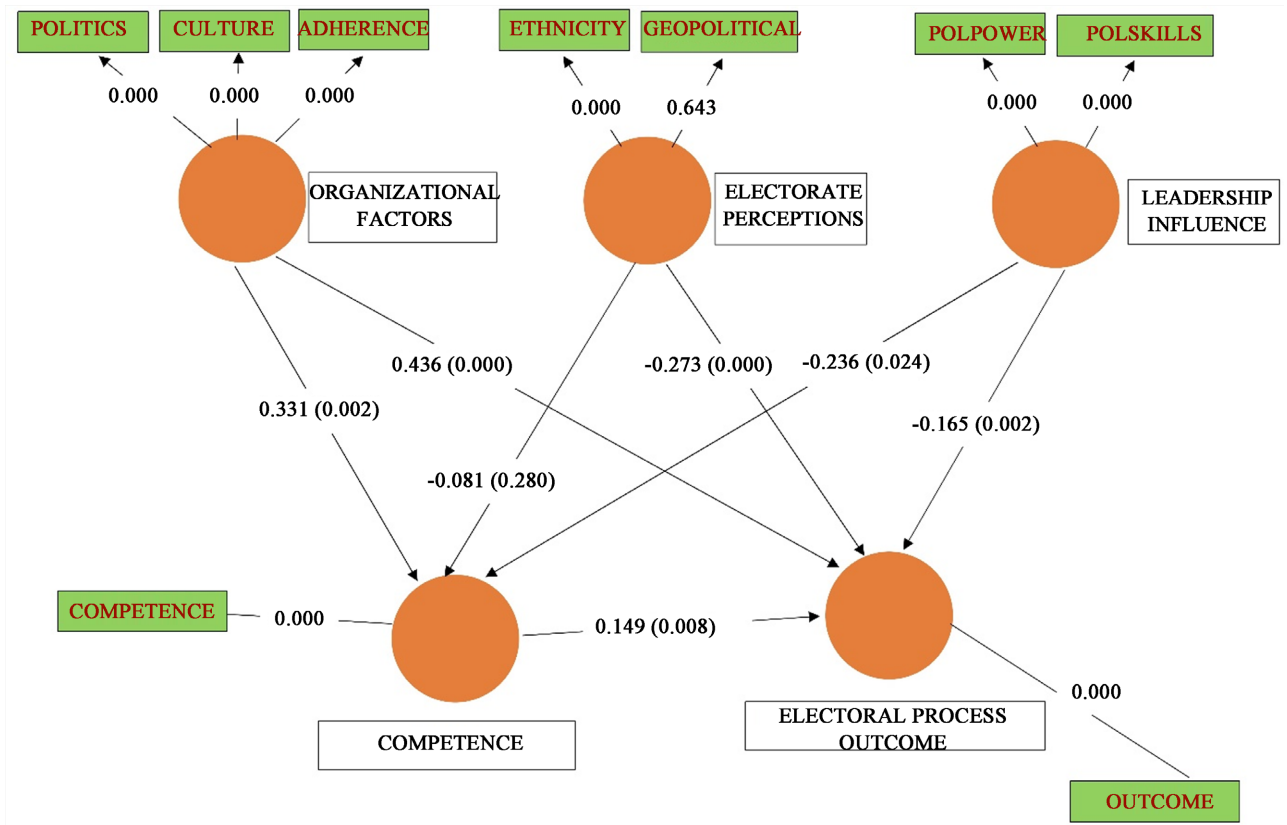


Figure 3. Competence and Electoral Process. Effect of election competence on the relationship between organizational factors, electorate perceptions, leadership, and electoral process outcome (Zakiri, 2023).

liaison, and networking.

Findings

In general, respondents rated variables such as organizational culture, politics, and competence as ‘high,’ with mean scores of more than 3 on a 5-point scale. With a mean value of less than 3 on a 5-point scale, the electoral process produced the lowest average results. According to the regression analysis, organizational culture, politics, and rule adherence are significant predictors of electoral process outcome, $F(3, 192) = 42.060, p.001$. In the North East Nigeria Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, ethnicity and geopolitical affiliation accounted for approximately 28% of electoral process outcomes. Thus, the two variables statistically significantly predict electoral process outcomes, $F(2, 193) = 28.062, p.001$. Political skills accounted for 36% of electoral process outcomes in the Northern Nigeria Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists ($F(1, 194) = 29.310, p.001$). The quality of electoral outcomes is influenced by transparency, spirituality, and competence. If church policy is not followed during the constituency, the church manual, which serves as a guide during the election of leaders, is abandoned (Zakiri, 2023).

5. Conclusion

Finally, the findings show that leadership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church

is given organizational culture, organizational politics, and power based on church structure and how leaders are selected. This structure allows for favoritism, fatherism, greed, selfishness, power struggles, and tribalism (Zakiri, 2023). Several factors influence the effectiveness of an electoral process. An election that is transparent, free, fair, and credible is critical. And, in order to avoid the electorate's tendency to politicize or tribalism's influence in the constituency, this fosters unity and a commitment to evangelism, which is the mission, objective, and goal of the Seventh-day Adventist Church worldwide. According to Zakiri (2020), organizations will need to determine the best "channel" for transmitting "messages" even during the constituency election of leaders because, in order to establish an effective electoral process, competency, spirituality, and transparency during leader selection are critical considerations. Positive feedback during or after the election will help to manage the crisis of accepting the results.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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