

Voter education package and KAP framework in electoral violence prevention among youth of voting-ages in Ondo City, Ondo State Nigeria

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aimed to assess the effectiveness of a voter education instructional package in improving the Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP) framework for preventing electoral violence among youths in Ondo City, Nigeria.

Methodology/approach: A quasi-experimental design with a pretest-posttest control group approach was adopted. The sample consisted of 183 youths of voting age, selected from four communities. The experimental group received a structured voter education package over eight weeks, while the control group was exposed to traditional instructional techniques. Data were collected using five validated questionnaires. ANCOVA was used for analysis.

Results/findings: The study found that the treatment significantly improved participants' knowledge ($F = 28.275, p < 0.05$) and practice ($F = 21.810, p < 0.05$) regarding electoral violence prevention. However, there was no significant effect on attitude ($F = 0.195, p > 0.05$). Gender did not have a significant impact on any of the KAP components ($p > 0.05$).

Conclusions: The voter education package significantly enhanced knowledge and practice among youths in Ondo City, making it a promising strategy for preventing electoral violence. However, it did not significantly change attitudes, suggesting that attitude transformation requires more extensive engagement.

Limitations: The study focused on a specific region, and the sample size was limited to one state. Future studies should explore other regions and implement longitudinal assessments.

Contribution: The study contributes to the field by offering an evidence-based voter education package that can be adopted in Nigeria and other developing democracies to mitigate electoral violence among youth.

Keywords: Election, KAP Framework, Ondo City, Prevention, Violence, Voter Education Package, Youth of Voting-Ages

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1. Introduction

Elections are central to any democratic process, serving as a mechanism through which citizens choose their leaders, express their political will, and hold governments accountable. However, the integrity and credibility of elections are significantly undermined when violence is part of the electoral process. Electoral violence has emerged as one of the most pressing threats to democratic consolidation, particularly in developing countries such as Nigeria. Electoral violence, encompassing intimidation, physical harm, destruction of property, and disruption of electoral activities, poses a serious threat to democratic consolidation, political stability, and social cohesion (Ameh-Ogigo, 2025). It refers to any form of physical harm, intimidation, or coercion employed before, during, or after elections to influence

the electoral outcomes or suppress political participation. This violence may be orchestrated by political parties, candidates, state actors or non-state agents. It is particularly rampant in countries where democratic institutions are weak, political competition is intense, and the rule of law is compromised (Ikpe, 2015).

Nigeria, among other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, has consistently witnessed various forms of electoral violence, often involving youths, and its persistence threatens national peace, democratic progress and socio-political stability. The causes of electoral violence are diverse. This is because the perception of political power is the gateway to economic resources and patronage. In several African democracies, political office is less about public service and more about access to state resources. By implication, this zero-sum perception of politics makes elections a fierce battleground in which losing is equated with exclusion. Consequently, several political actors are willing to use any means, including violence, to secure a victory. This is compounded by weak institutions, such as the judiciary, electoral commissions, and security agencies, which fail to serve as neutral arbiters of electoral disputes. Thus, when political actors believe they cannot get justice through lawful means, several of them are likely to resort to violence as a strategy (Pasela, Jatmiko, & Susanti, 2024).

Another school of thought, such as Ezeibe (2021), believes that youth unemployment and poverty are also significant drivers of electoral violence, especially in developing democracies like Nigeria. For instance, in Nigeria and many parts of Africa, a large percentage of the population is youthful, with many being unemployed or underemployed (Ugwonna, Akudike, Morah, & Ugwonna, 2023). These youths are often frustrated and disconnected from political processes. Hence, politicians exploit this vulnerability by recruiting them as thugs, ballot snatchers, or agents of intimidation during elections (Onapajo, 2014). According to Eneji and Ikeorji (2018), the meagre incentives offered by political actors, such as money, traveling documents, monthly dole outs, drugs, or the promise of protection, are often enough to lure desperate youths into violent acts. This dynamic explains the intersection of socioeconomic deprivation and political violence among this category (Kesuma, 2023).

In a study conducted by Omotayo (2022), the author discovered that ethnic and religious divisions fuel electoral violence among young people. This is because, in highly plural societies where identity politics dominates, elections are seen as contests between groups rather than individuals or policies. Political actors often appeal to ethnic or religious sentiments to mobilize support, and when outcomes do not favor particular groups, violence may ensue. The manipulation of identity for political gain has led to post-election violence in several African countries, including Kenya, Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire. These conflicts often extend beyond electoral disputes to broader communal tensions, resulting in long-term instability and displacement of the population. It is also believed that the nature and conduct of electoral management bodies can provoke violence. Where elections are perceived as rigged or poorly administered, public trust erodes and frustration mounts. Similarly, delays in voting, shortage of materials, malfunctioning technologies, and biased conduct of electoral officials can lead to violent reactions from voters or political parties (Nokshuwan, Abubakar, Gaadi, & Bamgbade, 2020). In Nigeria, for instance, technical glitches and logistical failures have led to the cancellation of votes and disruption of elections, creating fertile ground for violence.

In addition, political rhetoric and media manipulation play a role in inciting violence (Egobueze & Nweke, 2016). This is because hate speech, fake news, and inflammatory campaigns, especially through social media, are likely to inflame passions and mislead voters. In summary, when politicians demonize opponents or frame elections in apocalyptic terms, they create a sense of existential threat among supporters, which may lead to preemptive or retaliatory violence. Specifically, social media has become both a tool for civic engagement and a platform for mobilizing violence, with unregulated digital spaces allowing the rapid dissemination of inciting messages. The consequences of electoral violence are far-reaching. At the political level, it undermines the legitimacy of electoral outcomes and weakens public confidence in democracy. Elections should be moments of accountability and renewal; however, when marred by violence, they become sources of fear and disillusionment. Voters may choose to disengage from the political process, fearing for their safety, thereby weakening the democratic participation. This alienation can pave the way for authoritarianism and unchallenged incumbency.

Electoral violence disrupts markets, deters investment, and leads to the destruction of property and infrastructure. Businesses may shut down during election seasons, and economic activities may be paralyzed in areas affected by conflict. The cost of rebuilding communities affected by violence is enormous, both in terms of financial resources and human lives. Socially, electoral violence tears communities apart, deepens ethnic divisions, and leads to loss of life and displacement. Families are separated, trust among neighbors is eroded, and the social fabric of society is weakened due to the violence. The psychological impact is equally severe. Victims of electoral violence often suffer from trauma, fear, and long-term mental health challenges. Children who witness violence may internalize aggression as a legitimate means of political expression, perpetuating the cycle of violence into future generations. This normalization of violence as part of the electoral culture is one of the most dangerous legacies of repeated electoral conflicts.

Over the years, government institutions, civil society organizations, international bodies, and scholars have made several efforts to address and correct the problem of electoral violence, particularly among the youth population. At the institutional level, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has implemented various reforms aimed at curbing electoral malpractice and violence. Some of these include the introduction of biometric voter registration, the Permanent Voter Card (PVC), the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS), and real-time election result transmission. These technological interventions have helped reduce incidents of multiple voting, impersonation, and ballot stuffing, which are factors that often trigger violence. However, while these measures address structural irregularities, they have not adequately dealt with the behavioral and attitudinal dimensions of electoral violence in Nigeria.

Similarly, civil society organizations (CSOs) and international development partners have contributed significantly to violence prevention through peace campaigns, advocacy, media sensitization, and conflict monitoring. For instance, programmes such as the "Stop Violence Against Democracy" (S-VAD) by the National Democratic Institute (NDI), and "Vote Not Fight" campaigns initiated by the Youngstars Foundation and supported by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), have targeted youth across Nigeria with messages of peace, tolerance, and responsible political participation. Although impactful in reach and visibility, many of these interventions have been criticized for their episodic and media-heavy nature, with limited long-term engagement or grassroots education. Academically, several studies have examined the causes, patterns, and prevention of such violence. For example, Oguniye (2013) and Adesote and Abimbola (2014) identified youth unemployment, political godfatherism, and weak institutions as key drivers of electoral violence. Magaji, Ibrahim, David, and Abubakar (2024) examined the role of political socialization and civic awareness in influencing youth behavior during elections. Their findings suggest that poorly informed youth are more susceptible to political manipulation, making voter education a critical variable in violence mitigation (B, Suripatty, & Lewerissa, 2025).

In addition, evidence from comparative studies in Kenya, Ghana, and Sierra Leone points to the effectiveness of voter and civic education in reshaping political attitudes and reducing the appeal of violence among the youth. For instance, Cheeseman et al. (2018) highlighted how peer-to-peer civic training, mock election exercises, and community dialogue forums in Kenya's slums reduced tensions and improved youth-led conflict mediation during elections. Despite these efforts, the gap in instructional, school-based, and non-school-based voter education persists in Nigeria, particularly among out-of-school youth and those in semi-urban areas. Several interventions lack a structured curriculum, measurable learning outcomes, and longitudinal follow-up. This reveals the need for an education-based solution rooted in experiential learning, moral development, and context-specific content, precisely what the current study aims to offer through its eight-week instructional package. A more pedagogical, scalable, and evidence-based approach is urgently needed. This study builds upon these foundations to offer a practical voter education package designed not only to inform but also to transform the youth's knowledge, attitude, and practice of electoral violence prevention within the ambit of their civic engagement.

Preventing electoral violence is therefore critical for sustaining democratic governance and safeguarding citizens' rights and freedoms, particularly in societies marked by deep political, ethnic, or socio-economic divisions. It is a community-based approach that can help influence, mediate tensions, discourage violence, and promote dialogue. Organized and united communities are believed to be more resilient to political manipulation and more likely to resist violence. The voter education package is a cornerstone of electoral violence prevention (Omoniyi, 2025). It exposes citizens, particularly young people, to their rights and responsibilities in the electoral process, the importance of peaceful participation, and the consequences of violence. A voter education package refers to a comprehensive set of tools, materials, strategies, and activities designed to inform and empower citizens, especially first-time voters or marginalized groups, about the electoral process, voting rights, responsibilities, and non-violent political participation (Omoniyi, 2025).

A voter education package is more than just information; it is a strategic intervention to build civic competence, promote peaceful participation, and reduce electoral violence, especially among vulnerable or influential groups like the youth. It goes beyond periodic voter sensitisation campaigns, and it is an approach that can be integrated into formal and informal education systems. It emphasizes democratic values, political tolerance, conflict resolution skills, and the rule of law. An informed and politically conscious electorate is less likely to be manipulated by politicians and more likely to demand accountability and peaceful conduct (Gadau & Malami, 2022). It helps drive a coordinated and sustained effort that addresses both the symptoms and root causes of violence. It rests on the fact that it is not enough to react to violence once it occurs; proactive strategies must be implemented well in advance of elections and sustained beyond election day. The voter education package is a strategic, timely, and experimental approach to empowering youth with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to actively prevent electoral violence. It has been deployed in developed societies such as the United Kingdom, United States, Canada, and Australia to improve the number of eligible participants in the electoral process. For this study, it typically includes printed manuals, visual aids (e.g., posters and infographics), digital content (videos and social media messages), and training guides tailored to different demographics, including youth, women, rural dwellers, and persons with disabilities.

1.1 Statement of problem

Elections are the bedrock of democratic governance, offering citizens the opportunity to choose their leaders, express their political preferences, and participate in public decision-making. However, in many developing democracies, such as Nigeria, the electoral process is frequently marred by violence, intimidation, and political unrest. Electoral violence, particularly among youth, has become a recurrent and troubling feature of Nigeria's democratic experience, threatening political stability, undermining public trust in electoral institutions, and stalling democratic consolidation. The persistent occurrence of electoral violence raises critical concerns about the effectiveness of existing preventive measures and the role of civic education in shaping voter behavior. Nigeria's electoral history since the return to democracy in 1999 has been riddled with numerous instances of violence, ranging from ballot box snatching and intimidation of voters to physical assaults and killings. According to the Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room and reports from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), hundreds of election-related deaths and injuries have been recorded in virtually every election cycle.

The 2011 post-election violence, the violent episodes of the 2019 general elections, and the volatility witnessed during off-cycle gubernatorial elections in states like Ondo, Rivers, and Kogi provide ample evidence of this trend. Of particular concern is the increasing involvement of Nigerian youth in electoral violence. Youths, who constitute over 60% of Nigeria's voting population, are often mobilized by political actors as tools of violence and for disruption. This paradox—wherein the demographic with the greatest stake in the future of democracy becomes the greatest threat to its survival—points to a deep-rooted problem of civic ignorance, political disillusionment, and socioeconomic vulnerability. Many youths are lured into violent political acts through promises of financial gain, protection from prosecution, and social validation within political networks. These developments suggest an urgent need for educational interventions targeted at this demographic group. Previous efforts by government institutions, civil society organizations, and international partners have contributed to mitigating electoral violence to varying degrees.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has implemented reforms such as biometric voter registration, the deployment of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS), and electoral legal reviews. Civil society campaigns, such as “Vote Not Fight” and media sensitization programmes, have also attempted to engage youth in peace advocacy. While these efforts are commendable, they often suffer from limitations, such as inadequate reach, short-term focus, lack of standardization, and insufficient evaluation of impact. Furthermore, most existing interventions fail to address the educational and behavioral roots of electoral violence. There is a clear gap in the literature and practice regarding structured, curriculum-based voter education packages designed specifically to prevent electoral violence among youth. What is missing is a pedagogically sound, context-sensitive, and interactive instructional approach that not only informs young voters but also transforms their attitudes and practices regarding electoral participation. This problem is further compounded by the declining quality of civic education in schools and the general disconnect between formal education and real-life political engagement.

Many Nigerian youths, particularly those in secondary schools, tertiary institutions, or vocational training, receive limited instruction on civic responsibility, democratic values, and peaceful political conduct. Even where civic education exists, it is often theoretical, outdated, and lacks practical application. This disconnect between education and electoral behavior leaves a vacuum that can be easily filled by misinformation, propaganda and political manipulation. In Ondo City, which has experienced episodes of politically motivated violence during elections, this problem is particularly acute. Like many urban centers in Nigeria, the city is characterized by a politically aware but socioeconomically disadvantaged youth population. Political actors frequently exploit the frustrations of unemployed or underemployed youth, offering them stipends or patronage in exchange for acts of electoral aggression (Pradana, Sudrajat, Nauli, & Yuliansyah, 2021). Without meaningful engagement, these youths remain vulnerable to the cycle of violence that plagues electoral processes. Considering these challenges, there is an urgent need for an innovative approach that addresses the problem of electoral violence among youth through a long-term educational lens.

Specifically, a well-designed instructional package is needed to provide relevant knowledge, cultivate peaceful attitudes, and promote nonviolent electoral practices. Such a package must go beyond information dissemination to include interactive and experiential learning strategies that resonate with the lived experiences of young people. This study seeks to fill this gap by developing and testing an experimental voter education package tailored to the youth demographic in Ondo City, Nigeria. The intervention, implemented over an eight-week period, was designed to improve knowledge, reshape attitudes, and reinforce peaceful electoral behaviors. It draws on the Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice (KAP) model as a theoretical framework, emphasizing the interconnectedness of awareness, disposition, and action. The package is also grounded in experiential learning theory, which posits that meaningful change occurs when learners are actively involved in the learning process. Therefore, this study addresses the lack of a comprehensive, effective, and empirically tested instructional voter education strategy capable of equipping youth with the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral competencies necessary to resist involvement in electoral violence.

In doing so, this study contributes to the body of knowledge on civic education and violence prevention while offering a practical model that can be adopted and scaled up in other parts of Nigeria. In summary, the prevalence of youth involvement in electoral violence, the ineffectiveness of short-term sensitization campaigns, the weaknesses in civic education delivery, and the absence of research-backed instructional interventions constitute critical problems. If Nigeria is to achieve electoral peace and democratic maturity, there must be a shift towards educational models that engage, empower, and transform young voters. Therefore, this study responds to this urgent national need by offering a voter education package that is not only instructional but also transformative, contextually relevant, and grounded in empirical analysis.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Contextualising Electoral Violence in Nigeria

Electoral violence in Nigeria is neither new nor sporadic; it has been deeply woven into the political fabric of the state, spanning the pre-election, election day, and post-election phases (Angerbrandt, 2018). Ikpe (2015) and Ameh-Ogigo (2025) trace electoral violence to systemic factors: political exclusion, elite manipulation, ethnic rivalries, and economic deprivation, among others. Onapajo (2014) underscores how incumbents weaponise violence as a strategy to entrench power, leveraging both state and nonstate actors. Moreover, the role of youth in electoral violence is pivotal in this study. Egobueze and Nweke (2016) documented how young people in Rivers State served as both perpetrators and casualties of election-related clashes. Similarly, Omotayo (2022) argues that disenfranchised youth facing unemployment and alienation become easy recruits for political violence, incentivized by tokenistic payments or ethno-political loyalties. This context explains the need for preventive intervention. However, as Tonwe, Aihie, and Igiebor (2017) highlight, security clampdowns alone cannot resolve the deep roots of electoral violence. Hence, scholars increasingly advocate “soft approaches, such as voter education, to transform youth knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors toward peaceful democratic participation.

2.2 Voter Education: A Conceptual Exploration

Voter education, in its classical sense, entails efforts to increase citizens’ understanding of electoral processes and their rights and obligations (Ogbu, 2020). Nokshuwan et al. (2020) expanded this definition to include the combating of hate speech and fostering of tolerance. Orji (2012) and Obakhedo (2011) highlight the potential of voter education to empower citizens against political manipulation and violence. However, while conceptually clear, the operationalization of voter education varies widely. Ezeibe (2021) criticizes many programs for being superficial, driven more by donor optics than by empirical evidence of impact. The literature calls for innovative, context-specific interventions that go beyond generic civic messages to engage with local realities. This critique underpins the relevance of integrating voter education with the KAP framework, transforming abstract knowledge into measurable shifts in attitudes and practices relevant to preventing electoral violence.

2.3 Knowledge: Awareness Versus Depth

A crucial question in the literature is whether voter education genuinely increases youth knowledge or merely promotes superficial awareness of the issues. Ogbu (2020) finds that civic education workshops in Enugu State raised youth knowledge of voting procedures and the legal consequences of electoral violence. However, Magaji et al. (2024) cautioned that knowledge gains do not always translate into behavioral change. Adigwe and Ajoku (2022) revealed a similar pattern: although youth report understanding the dangers of electoral violence, they often lack deeper insights into how violence is orchestrated by political elites. This is consistent with Angerbrandt (2018), who argues that Nigeria’s electoral violence is driven not by ignorance alone but by calculated strategic interests. Hence, a critical gap exists between knowing that violence is “bad” and understanding how to resist the manipulative structures that perpetuate it. The experimental voter education package in Ondo City appears well-situated to address this gap, but its ultimate effectiveness depends on whether it conveys actionable knowledge or merely information.

2.4 Attitude: From Perception to Disposition

The second pillar of the KAP framework—attitude—has received nuanced attention in studies on electoral violence. Ameh-Ogigo (2025) finds that youth attitudes towards violence are shaped by perceived political efficacy: when youths believe their votes do not count, they become apathetic or susceptible to violent mobilization. Nnaji et al. (2024) similarly note that even knowledgeable youths may rationalise violence as a legitimate political strategy if they perceive the political system as unjust. Ikpe (2015) emphasizes that attitudes towards violence are not purely moral but are deeply intertwined with grievances about marginalization and socioeconomic exclusion. Critically, Oyinloye (2018) in his action research study shows that sustained engagement, rather than one-off interventions, is required to shift youth attitudes toward violence. While traditional voter education campaigns often assume that knowledge automatically produces positive attitudes, the evidence suggests otherwise. Therefore, in the context of the Ondo City experiment, the key evaluative question is whether the voter education package addressed the root drivers of pro-violence attitudes—

such as cynicism, perceived injustice, and low political efficacy—or merely delivered normative messages condemning violence.

2.5 Practice: Behavioral Change or Symbolic Compliance?

The “practice” component of KAP reflects the ultimate test of voter education: does it prevent violent behavior during elections? Many studies lamented the disjunction between knowledge, attitudes, and practice. For instance, Egobueze and Nweke (2016) found that despite pre-election sensitization in Rivers State, violent incidents surged due to economic inducements and local political dynamics. Similarly, Ezeibe (2021) argues that financial incentives and ethnic loyalties often override youths’ learned knowledge about the dangers of electoral violence. Henry (2023), in his study on Malawi, suggests that preventive mechanisms only succeed where institutional frameworks ensure credible elections. Without systemic reforms, educational interventions risk being mere palliative measures. Magaji et al. (2024) provide a note of cautious optimism, demonstrating that well-structured civic education programs can influence youth practices, but only when coupled with practical support mechanisms, such as hotlines for reporting violence or community peace monitoring. Thus, the Ondo City intervention must be examined not merely for its capacity to change attitudes, but for its tangible impact on youth behavioral choices during electoral events. It remains an open question whether practice changes endure under the pressures of election day dynamics, such as monetary inducements or fear of retaliation.

2.6 The Role of Experimental Approaches

Experimental designs provide a methodological advantage in disentangling the causal relationship between voter education and electoral violence prevention. Ogbu (2020) employs quasi-experimental methods to measure changes in civic knowledge among youth exposed to voter education. However, many studies remain limited by pre/post-test designs without robust control. In contrast, the experimental voter education package in Ondo City represents an important methodological advancement if it is designed with proper randomization, control groups, and longitudinal tracking. Henry (2023) underscores that experimental interventions must also consider context: what works in one state may fail in another due to socio-political idiosyncrasies. Moreover, as Ezeibe (2021) observes, measuring impact requires tools sensitive enough to capture shifts not only in overt behavior but also in hidden dispositions toward violence. This demands sophisticated instruments beyond simple questionnaires, such as simulated electoral scenarios or behavioral observations. Therefore, while the experimental approach in Ondo City is commendable, its validity and generalizability will depend on methodological rigor and context-sensitive adaptation.

2.7 Youth as Both Perpetrators and Change Agents

A recurrent theme in the literature is the paradoxical role of youth as both the perpetrators of electoral violence and the demographic most invested in democratic change (Omotayo, 2022). Eneji and Ikeorji (2018) highlight how NGOs leverage this duality by designing youth-targeted interventions to transform potentially violent actors into peace ambassadors. Gadau and Malami (2022) explain that many youths engage in violence not purely out of malice but due to socio-economic vulnerabilities, political patronage networks, and a search for belonging. Oyinloye (2018) adds that even militant youths often articulate sophisticated political grievances, revealing a latent capacity for constructive civic engagement if appropriately channelled. Therefore, a voter education package must move beyond didactic instruction to engage youth as partners in violence prevention. Ogbu (2020) notes the effectiveness of participatory methods, such as role plays and peer-led sessions, in fostering ownership and authentic dialogue. Critically, the literature suggests that treating youth merely as recipients of education ignores their agency. Interventions must validate youth perspectives and provide safe platforms for dialogue, particularly during politically tense periods.

2.8 Institutional and Structural Constraints

While voter education focuses on individual cognitive and behavioral changes, structural constraints often undermine its impact. Onapajo (2014) argues that electoral violence persists in Nigeria because it serves the entrenched political interests of the ruling elite. Elite actors often sabotage educational initiatives if they perceive them as threats to their capacity to manipulate the elections. Nokshuwan et

al. (2020) warned that hate speech and misinformation can quickly erode the gains made by voter education. Without institutional reforms, educational interventions risk being swept aside by systemic dysfunctions, such as electoral fraud, security failures, and biased electoral commissions. Ibeogu and Nwusulor (2020) illustrate that electoral violence in Ebonyi State was exacerbated by the weak enforcement of legal consequences for offenders. Similarly, Orji (2012) emphasized the importance of prompt justice mechanisms to deter violence. Hence, the Ondo City intervention must be situated within a larger ecosystem. Although crucial, voter education cannot stand alone. It must be integrated with institutional reforms, legal accountability, and community-level monitoring.

2.9 The Promise and Limitations of Digital Voter Education

The digital revolution has opened new avenues for educating voters. Nokshuwan et al. (2020) and Ugwonna et al. (2023) argue that digital resources, including e-libraries and online campaigns, can disseminate electoral information quickly and cost effectively. However, Eneji and Ikeorji (2018) cautioned that digital interventions risk exacerbating inequalities due to Nigeria's pronounced digital divide. Moreover, digital spaces are fertile ground for misinformation, a fact highlighted by Nokshuwan et al. (2020) in their study of hate speech proliferation. Hence, while digital platforms can complement traditional voter education, they cannot replace the interpersonal, trust-building engagements crucial for genuine behavioural change. The Ondo City intervention might draw valuable lessons: integrating digital content as supplementary, not substitutive, tools. Hybrid models that blend face-to-face interactions with digital resources appear to be the most promising.

2.10 Towards a Holistic Model: Integrating KAP with Community Structures

One of the strongest insights from the literature is that successful interventions require a holistic approach to the problem. Obakhedo (2011) and Oyinloye (2018) advocate embedding voter education within community structures—such as religious organizations, youth groups, and schools—to enhance sustainability and cultural resonance. Ogunode and Onakoya (2024) note that tertiary institutions play a vital role in post-election violence prevention by nurturing civic values and critical thinking. According to Magaji et al. (2024), community engagement helps dismantle the local power dynamics that fuel violence. Therefore, the Ondo City voter education package will likely have a greater impact if it is woven into local institutions that can sustain its messages beyond the election cycle. The literature collectively affirms the potential of voter education to mitigate electoral violence, especially among the youth. However, its effectiveness is neither automatic nor uniform in nature. Key limitations emerge: knowledge gains often remain superficial unless tailored to local realities; attitudes toward violence are deeply rooted in systemic grievances; behavioral change is vulnerable to contextual pressures such as monetary inducements; structural dysfunctions often undermine educational gains; and youth agency must be recognized rather than merely instrumentalized. Thus, the experimental voter education package in Ondo City sits at the intersection of promise and challenges. Its success depends on whether it translates knowledge into practical skills, reshapes attitudes grounded in sociopolitical realities, and empowers youth to resist systemic pressures toward violence. Future research must interrogate not merely whether voter education “works” but how it interacts with wider sociopolitical structures. Only such a holistic inquiry can illuminate sustainable pathways toward violence-free elections in Nigeria.

2.11 Objectives of the study

The following objectives are raised and answered in this study

1. To ascertain whether there will be a main effect of treatment on the knowledge, attitude, and practice of electoral violence prevention among youth of voting age in Ondo City.
2. To determine whether there is a main effect of gender on knowledge, attitude, and practice of electoral violence prevention among youth of voting age in Ondo City.
3. To investigate whether there will be a significant interaction effect treatment on the knowledge, attitude, and practice of electoral violence prevention among youth of voting age in Ondo City.

3. Research Methodology

This study adopted a quasi-experimental research design involving a pretest-posttest control group approach to examine the effect of an intervention on participants' knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding electoral violence prevention. A 2×2 factorial matrix. The sample comprised 183 youth of

voting age, purposively selected from four communities in Ondo City, Ondo State, Nigeria. Participants were randomly assigned to the experimental or control group. The experimental group received a structured voter education intervention package over seven weeks, consisting of weekly sessions on electoral processes, civic duties, consequences of electoral violence, and conflict resolution. The control group did not receive any treatment during the study period. Data were collected using five validated, self-developed questionnaires. These were comprised of four responses and five stimulus instruments. The instruments are:

The following constitute the Response Instruments:

- (1) Knowledge of Electoral Violence Prevention Test ($r= 0.91$)
- (2) Attitude to Electoral Violence Prevention Scale ($r= 0.74$)
- (3) Practice of Electoral Violence Prevention Scale ($r= 0.86$)

The following constitute the Stimulus Instruments:

- (3) Instructional Guide on Voter Education Package
- (4) Instructional Guide on Conventional Lecture Method Strategy
- (5) Research Assistant Evaluation Sheet

Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were used for initial data analysis, while inferential statistics, including ANCOVA, were employed to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level. Ethical approval was obtained, and informed consent was secured from all participants and their guardians prior to data collection.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Result

H₀₁: There is no significant main effect of treatment on youth-of-voting-ages' knowledge of electoral violence prevention in Ondo City

Table 1. Summary of MANCOVA Result Showing the Pre-post Effects of Treatment, and Gender on Knowledge, Attitude and Practices of Electoral Violence Prevention Among Youth of Voting-Ages in Ondo City

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	PosttestKnowledge	866.426a	10	86.643	12.105	.000	.413
	PosttestAttitude	1039.396b	10	103.940	1.187	.303	.065
	PosttestPractice	3124.409c	10	312.441	5.456	.000	.241
Intercept	PosttestKnowledge	107.441	1	107.441	15.010	.000	.080
	PosttestAttitude	5074.643	1	5074.643	57.950	.000	.252
	PosttestPractice	3511.840	1	3511.840	61.331	.000	.263
PretestKnowledge	PosttestKnowledge	.374	1	.374	.052	.819	.000
	PosttestAttitude	2.015	1	2.015	.023	.880	.000
	PosttestPractice	2.289	1	2.289	.040	.842	.000
PretestAttitude	PosttestKnowledge	787.332	1	787.332	109.996	.000	.390
	PosttestAttitude	88.307	1	88.307	1.008	.317	.006
	PosttestPractice	51.639	1	51.639	.902	.344	.005
PretestPractice	PosttestKnowledge	1.795	1	1.795	.251	.617	.001
	PosttestAttitude	1.558	1	1.558	.018	.894	.000
	PosttestPractice	396.928	1	396.928	6.932	.009	.039

Treatment	PosttestKnowledge	202.390	1	202.390	28.275	.000	.141
	PosttestAttitude	17.113	1	17.113	.195	.659	.001
	PosttestPractice	1248.835	1	1248.835	21.810	.000	.113
Gender	PosttestKnowledge	.220	1	.220	.031	.861	.000
	PosttestAttitude	3.368	1	3.368	.038	.845	.000
	PosttestPractice	140.294	1	140.294	2.450	.119	.014
Treatment * Gender	PosttestKnowledge	.749	1	.749	.105	.747	.001
	PosttestAttitude	79.378	1	79.378	.906	.342	.005
	PosttestPractice	26.530	1	26.530	.463	.497	.003
Error	PosttestKnowledge	1231.150	172	7.158			
	PosttestAttitude	15061.828	172	87.569			
	PosttestPractice	9848.816	172	57.261			
Total	PosttestKnowledge	45661.250	183				
	PosttestAttitude	604755.000	183				
	PosttestPractice	572283.000	183				
Corrected Total	PosttestKnowledge	2097.577	182				
	PosttestAttitude	16101.224	182				
	PosttestPractice	12973.224	182				

a. R Squared = .413 (Adjusted R Squared = .379)

b. R Squared = .065 (Adjusted R Squared = .010)

c. R Squared = .241 (Adjusted R Squared = .197)

Table 1 reveals a significant main effect of treatment on knowledge ($F_{(1,182)} = 28.275$; $P < (.000)$ 0.05, partial $\eta^2 = 0.141$) and practice ($F_{(1,182)} = 21.810$; $P < (.000)$ 0.05, partial $\eta^2 = 0.113$). Hence, the hypotheses are rejected. This implies that the treatment contributed significantly to the variation in the participants' scores on knowledge and practices of electoral violence prevention. The partial eta squares of 0.141 and 0.113 showed that the treatments contributed 14.1% and 11.3% to the participants' knowledge and practice of electoral violence prevention, respectively. The table also shows that there was no significant main treatment with attitude ($F_{(1,182)} = .195$; $P > (.659)$ 0.05, partial $\eta^2 = 0.001$) to electoral violence prevention among youth of voting age in Ondo City. Hence, the hypothesis was not rejected in this study. To determine the magnitude of the significant main effect across the treatment groups, the estimated marginal means of the treatment groups were calculated, and the results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Estimated Marginal Means of Youth of Voting-Ages' Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of Election Violence Prevention by Treatment

Dependent Variables	Treatment Groups	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Knowledge	Experimental (Voter Education Package)	16.474 ^a	.275	15.931	17.017
	Control Group (Instructional Technique)	14.022 ^a	.339	13.354	14.690
Practice	Experimental (Voter Education Package)	57.659 ^a	.778	56.123	59.195

Control Group (Instructional Technique)	51.569 ^a	.958	49.679	53.459
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Table 2 reveals that participants in the treatment group had the highest post-knowledge mean score in electoral violence prevention (16.474^a) compared to their counterparts in the Control Group (Instructional Technique) (14.022^a). This means that participants who were exposed to the voter education package performed better than those in the control group. This implies that the electoral voter education package was an effective program that could increase knowledge of fire electoral violence prevention. Table 2 reveals that participants in the treatment group had the highest post-practice mean score in electoral violence prevention (57.659^a) than their counterparts in the Control Group (Instructional Technique) (51.569^a). This means that participants who were exposed to the voter education package performed better than those in the control group. This implies that the electoral voter education package was an effective program that could increase the practice of fire electoral violence prevention.

Table 1 reveals that there were no significant main effects of gender on youth-of-voting-ages' knowledge ($F_{(1,182)} = .031$; $P(.861) > 0.05$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.000$), attitude ($F_{(1,182)} = .038$; $P(.845) > 0.05$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.000$) and practice ($F_{(1,182)} = 2.450$; $P(.119) > 0.05$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.014$) of electoral violence prevention. Hence, the hypotheses are not rejected. This implied that the gender had not significant effect on participants' scores on knowledge, attitude and practice of electoral violence prevention. The partial eta squares of 0.000, 0.000, and 0.014 showed that the treatment had a contribution of less than 0.1% to participants' knowledge, attitude, and practice of electoral violence prevention.

H₀2: There is no significant main effect of gender on youth-of-voting-ages' knowledge of electoral violence prevention in Ondo State.

Table 1 reveals that there was no significant main interact effect of treatment and gender on youth-of-voting-ages' knowledge ($F_{(1,182)} = .105$; $P(.747) > 0.51$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.001$), attitude ($F_{(1,182)} = .906$; $P(.342) > 0.05$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.005$) and practice ($F_{(1,182)} = .463$; $P(.497) > 0.05$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.003$) of electoral violence prevention. Hence, the hypotheses are not rejected. This implied that treatment and gender had no significant effect on participants' scores on knowledge, attitude, and practice of electoral violence prevention. The partial eta squares of 0.001, 0.005, and 0.003 showed that the treatment contributed less than 0.005% to participants' knowledge, attitude, and practice of electoral violence prevention.

H₀3: There is no significant interaction effect of treatment and gender on youth-of-voting-ages' knowledge of electoral violence prevention in Ondo.

4.2 Discussion of Findings

4.2.1 Main effect of treatment on knowledge, attitude and practice of electoral violence prevention among youth of voting-ages in Ondo City

The treatment had a significant effect on knowledge and practice, but not on attitude towards electoral violence prevention among youth of voting age in Ondo City. By implication, the findings from this study revealed compelling evidence that a structured voter education package significantly improves knowledge, reshapes attitudes, and enhances the adoption of preventive practices regarding electoral violence among the youth of voting age. This is in line with the work of (Ibeogu & Nwusulor, 2020) and (Adigwe & Ajoku, 2022). First, the results revealed a notable increase in participants' knowledge of electoral processes, rights, and dangers of electoral violence after the intervention. Prior to the treatment, many youths demonstrated a limited understanding of the intricacies of the electoral system, the legal consequences of electoral violence, and their role as stakeholders in sustaining peaceful elections. However, post-test scores showed a statistically significant improvement in their knowledge, reflecting the value of consistent, well-structured civic education delivered through participatory and instructional strategies. This aligns with the findings of Ameh-Ogigo (2025) and Angerbrandt (2018), who affirmed the role of voter and civic education in improving democratic literacy and reducing susceptibility to manipulation and violence.

Second, the findings did not indicate a positive shift in participants' attitudes towards violence prevention and political tolerance. Before the intervention, there was evidence of political apathy, endorsement of retaliatory violence, and lack of confidence in peaceful dispute resolution. Following the instructional treatment, however, participants exhibited more democratic dispositions, expressed strong aversion to electoral thuggery, and endorsed peaceful channels for addressing political grievances, but their attitudes were still not significant. This could be because attitude transformation is often more difficult to achieve than knowledge gain. This is in line with the works of Ogunode and Onakoya (2024), Henry (2023) and (Olowojolu, Rasak, Ake, Ogundele, & Afolayan, 2019).

Third, and perhaps most significantly, the study recorded marked improvements in the practical steps that the youth were willing to take or had already taken to prevent electoral violence. These included commitments to report threats, educate peers, avoid inflammatory social media content, and volunteer for community peace campaigns. The practice component of the KAP model is essential as it reflects the translation of knowledge and attitude into concrete actions. The experiential learning techniques embedded in the instructional package, such as mock election scenarios, conflict resolution drills, and community peace project designs, enabled participants to rehearse non-violent behavior and understand the real-world implications of their choices during elections. These findings reinforce the view that practical engagement is vital for consolidating learning outcomes in peace education. This is in line with the studies conducted by Obakhedo (2011) and (Egobueze & Nweke, 2016).

4.2.2 Main effect of gender on knowledge, attitude, and practice of electoral violence prevention among youth of voting age in Ondo City

Gender had no significant effect on the knowledge, attitude, and practice of electoral violence prevention among youth of voting age in Ondo City. This is because preventing violence in elections is not a question of gender. This is in accordance with the study conducted by (Ugwonna et al., 2023). The absence of gender differences in electoral violence prevention metrics suggests that both male and female participants possessed comparable baseline awareness and behavioral inclinations. This finding aligns with several recent studies, indicating that civic education programs may have effectively equalized knowledge and attitudes across genders (Onapajo, 2014). This implies that sociocultural norms around political violence do not differentially shape preventive practices by gender in this context.

4.2.3 Interaction effect treatment on knowledge, attitude, and practice of electoral violence prevention among youth of voting age in Ondo City

Significant interaction treatment and gender had no significant effect on the knowledge, attitude, and practice of electoral violence prevention among youth of voting age in Ondo City. This is supported by the work of Orji (2012), who affirmed that the interaction of treatment and gender may not necessarily impact the knowledge, attitude, and practice of electoral violence prevention. The lack of a significant interaction between treatment condition and gender indicates that the intervention's efficacy was consistent for both male and female participants. In other words, the training or informational materials produced similar gains in knowledge, attitudes, and practices, regardless of gender.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Conclusion

This study examined the effectiveness of an experimental voter education package designed to prevent electoral violence among youth of voting age in Ondo City. The research findings demonstrate that the eight-week instructional intervention significantly enhanced participants' knowledge, attitudes, and practice (KAP) concerning electoral violence and its prevention. The study's results provide empirical evidence that structured civic education can serve as a powerful tool for reducing electoral violence. The youths who participated in the program exhibited substantial improvements in their understanding of electoral systems, civic responsibilities, the legal consequences of violent behavior, and the importance of political tolerance. The interactive nature of teaching strategies, such as role plays, media literacy activities, peer dialogues, and community-based simulations, contributed significantly to the observed transformation.

In terms of practice, the participants moved from a passive stance to active engagement in peace-oriented actions. Many reported a willingness to discourage hate speech, promote peaceful dialogue among peers, volunteer as observers, and sensitize others against political violence. The intervention did not merely inform but empowered youth to become agents of peaceful elections in their communities. The use of the KAP model and experiential learning theories provided a strong pedagogical basis for the program's success. Given the recurrent nature of electoral violence in Nigeria and the central role that youths often play in either perpetuating or preventing it, this study offers a timely contribution to policy and practice. The experimental voter education package demonstrated that with the right content, delivery method, and youth engagement strategy, young people can become key stakeholders in sustaining electoral peace. The study affirms that voter education, when innovatively designed and consistently implemented, is a viable and impactful strategy for preventing electoral violence.

5.2 Suggestions

The following recommendations are made

1. Adopt the voter education package as part of school- and community-based civic education programmes to systematically build knowledge and skills for peaceful participation in elections.
2. Integrate digital tools and mobile platforms (e.g., apps, WhatsApp, and SMS messaging) into the voter education strategy to reach a technologically inclined youth audience.
3. Establish partnerships with electoral bodies (e.g., INEC), civil society organizations, and youth networks to ensure the sustainability and wider adoption of the instructional package.
4. Train civic educators and community leaders to deliver the package using participatory and experiential learning methods that resonate with youth's experiences.
5. Institutionalize pre-election peace pacts and peer-led community engagement projects to translate knowledge and attitude shifts into actions.
6. Conduct longitudinal impact evaluations to monitor the long-term effects of voter education on youth electoral behavior and violence prevention.

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