

A Survey of Fulfilment of Campaign Promises: Implications for Political Apathy in Anambra State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined extent of fulfilment of campaign promises by those elected in the last ten years (2010-2020) in Anambra State, Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population was eight thousand, five hundred and forty-one (8,541) respondents. The sample was 1,709 respondents, selected through a multi-stage sampling procedure which involved simple random, proportionate and accidental sampling techniques. Instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire tagged “Campaign Promises and Fulfilment Rating Scale” (CPFRS) developed by the researchers with four sections and 28 items meant to elicit responses on the three research questions of the study. Reliability estimate of the instrument was established as .73 using Cronbach alpha. Descriptive statistics involving mean, standard deviation, percentages and charts were adopted for data analysis. Results revealed that though candidates were able to identify areas of needs and promised to address them if elected, the extent to which such promises were kept is very poor. It was recommended, among others, that a law should be put in place to compel political office holders to fulfil all campaign promises when elected.

Keywords: campaigns, promises, electorates, elections, political, apathy

Introduction

There has been an increasing dissatisfaction with the electoral process in Nigeria. This is marked with unabated spate of election apathy in the polity. Between 2010 and 2020, there have been countless covert and overt protests manifested in industrial actions and anti-government activities to send home the heated grievances with unmet political campaigns in Nigeria. Political campaigns are supposed to address the development

needs of the people. Accordingly, voters are inspired to work for the candidate or political party whose campaign promises agree with their social, economic and political needs. Political apathy sets in when the winner of the election fails to deliver on the mandate. Obianyo and Emesibe (2015) proposed that elections serve double essence in a system like Nigeria that is democratic in nature: it gives voters the opportunity to choose their preferred candidates who will deal with their issues; it also avails the candidates the opportunity to solicit for the votes of the qualified voters in a free and reasonable challenge with other contestants. These are the primary purpose of elections and are guided by laws prescribing how candidates will go about their campaigns and how electorates will go about in supporting and voting for the candidates of their choice. The case of Anambra State is worrisome in that parties and candidates have made campaign promises that they never fulfilled which have led to the disappointment of electorates in the study area. This has made the passion for elections and voting by electorates wax cold as electorates feel disappointed and do not even know the right basis to use in selecting candidates since their trust on candidates based on the content of their campaign promises has failed them.

It is worthy of note that the lack of plainly articulated laws against non-fulfilment of campaign promises has additionally undermined Nigeria's progress politically. Another shortcoming is the inability of the electorates to compel those elected into political offices to fulfil promises made to them during campaigns which was the basis of their being elected, probably because of lack of enabling laws. The problem of those elected to be recalled when deviated from their promises during campaign is also a constraint. Immunity which the political elites enjoy in Nigeria encourages a culture of impunity where the electorates become less important after elections and are treated with reckless abandon (Orji & Uzodi, 2012).

Some members of the political class and their political loyalists rely on the use of violence, with collusion of security agencies, to suppress the electorates when they tend to become more vocal in demanding the fulfilment of campaign promises (Timothy & Omolegbe, 2019). In recent times, the whole process has not been encouraging. The campaigns in 2015 and 2019 general elections in Nigeria were full of excitements on the parts of the electorates, which now end in discourse and bitterness. The races were portrayed by dread, loathe battles, and pre-political decision viciousness that made development most hazardous and quarrelsome in Nigeria since independence in 1960 (Mbah, Nwangwu & Ugwu, 2019). In spite of the clear forbiddance of specific behaviour at electioneering by Sections 95(1) and 102 of the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended), Paragraph 10(c) of the INEC-given Guidelines for Political Rallies and other related arrangements, egotist legislators breached these laws during general races. Section 95(1) of the Electoral Act expresses that "no political rally, campaign or political motto will be involved with damaging language

legitimately or by implication liable to harm any ethnic, innate or sectional emotions". Sub-section 2 further restricts the utilization of oppressive, unreasonable, offensive or base language and suggestions structured or liable to incite rough response or feelings during political crusades (FRN, 2010; Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room, 2015).

Non-adherence to electoral laws can be found in hate speech utilized during campaigns and this is not the desire of the electorates. The part that hate speech, ethnicity and religion played in the 2015 general elections in Nigeria was crucial. Basically, most decisions made on mobilization worked around religion and ethnicity. These variables moulded the pre- and post-elections periods and led to divisions between ethnic gatherings related with the officeholder (in-gathering) and other ethnic gatherings (out-gathering). These brought about problems across board (Mbah, Nwangwu & Ugwu, 2019). The Electoral Act captures the ceaseless call for Electoral Offences Commission whose principal obligation is to arraign offenders.

The pervasiveness of bitterness during the developments in the 2015 general elections is a manifestation of the lack of issue-based politics in Nigeria. These problems should have been guided by the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended). In Nigeria today, such vexatious issues may incorporate political rebuilding, the Niger Delta issues, Biafra dissident development, monetary downturn, interior populace uprooting, among others (Ikeanyibe, Ezeibe, Mbah & Nwangwu, 2018). In this manner, Nwangwu and Ononogbu (2014) averred that the predominant ideological vacuum of many groups is currently loaded up with early stage personalities like ethnicity, regionalism, religion, among others.

According to Ehinmore and Ehiabhi (2013), election campaign in Nigeria is often characterized by violence, insults of political opponents, confrontations of all kinds, and unrealistic promises and intimidation of perceived enemy which often leads to violence during and after the elections. This is really anti-electoral laws and process and these are not the expectations of the electorates. This case in point was witnessed across the nation and in Anambra State during the 2019 general elections. Inflammatory electoral campaigns which polarized the constituency or the nation remain a vital reason for post-election violence (Angerbrandt, 2018).

Studies have shown that political campaigns are not in line with electoral laws and not meeting the expectations of electorates in Nigeria. The report of Ojukwu, Mazi-Mbah and Maduekwe (2019) on elections and democratic consolidation in Nigeria indicated that electoral campaigns were not in line with electoral laws and expectations of electorates. A similar study by Sule, Sani and Mat (2017), on political behaviour and voting pattern in Nigeria, also indicated that campaigns of party candidates are not in line with electorates' expectations and are also against electoral laws and conduct. The

analysis of Sule (2019) on the voting pattern, issues and impact of 2019 presidential election in Nigeria indicated that political campaigns and processes were not 100% in line with electoral laws and campaigns as to the expectations of the electorates, which have become the fuel for political apathy in the largest democracy in Africa. In view of the foregoing, it is necessary to interrogate the extent of fulfilment of electoral campaigns between 2010 and 2020 in Anambra, the biggest state in Southeast Nigeria.

Research questions

1. To what extent do campaign promises agree with the development needs of Anambra State between 2010 and 2020?
2. To what extent are campaign promises fulfilled by elected officials in Anambra State between 2010 and 2020?
3. Are there differences in the office occupied and extent of fulfilment of campaign promises in Anambra State between 2010 and 2020?

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The study area was Anambra State, South-East Nigeria. The study population was eight thousand, five hundred and forty-one (8,541) respondents consisting of executive committees of men, women and youth forums in each community in the local government areas selected for the study. The study sample was 1,709 (20% of targeted population) respondents selected through a multi-stage sampling procedure involving simple random, proportionate and accidental sampling techniques. Instruments used for data collection was a questionnaire tagged "Campaign Promises and Fulfilment Rating Scale" (CPFRS) developed by the researchers to elicit responses on the research questions of the study. Reliability estimate of the instrument using Cronbach Alpha reliability estimate was .73. Descriptive statistics involving mean, standard deviation, percentages and charts were adopted for data analysis.

Presentation of results

The results of the investigation are presented according to the research questions of the study.

Research question one: To what extent do campaign promises agree with the development needs of Anambra State between 2010 and 2020?

Descriptive statistics involving mean and standard deviation were adopted to analyse data and answer the research question. Results are presented in table 1 and figure 1.

Table 1: Summary of descriptive statistics on campaign promises agreement with development needs of Anambra State between 2010 and 2020

Areas of needs	Very high	High	Low	Very low	N	Mean	Std. dev.	Decision
Education	276	544	573	316	1709	2.46	1.06	Rejected
Health	304	722	524	159	1709	2.69	1.02	Accepted
Road infrastructure	287	654	546	222	1709	2.59	1.1	Accepted
Social amenities	563	671	444	31	1709	3.03	1.2	Accepted
Social welfare	544	711	301	153	1709	2.96	1.11	Accepted
Poverty reduction	456	600	591	92	1709	2.87	1.09	Accepted
Creating employment	599	724	219	167	1709	3.03	1.14	Accepted
Others	412	627	502	168	1709	2.75	1.12	Accepted
Composite mean						2.80	1.11	Accepted

Cut-off mean = 2.50

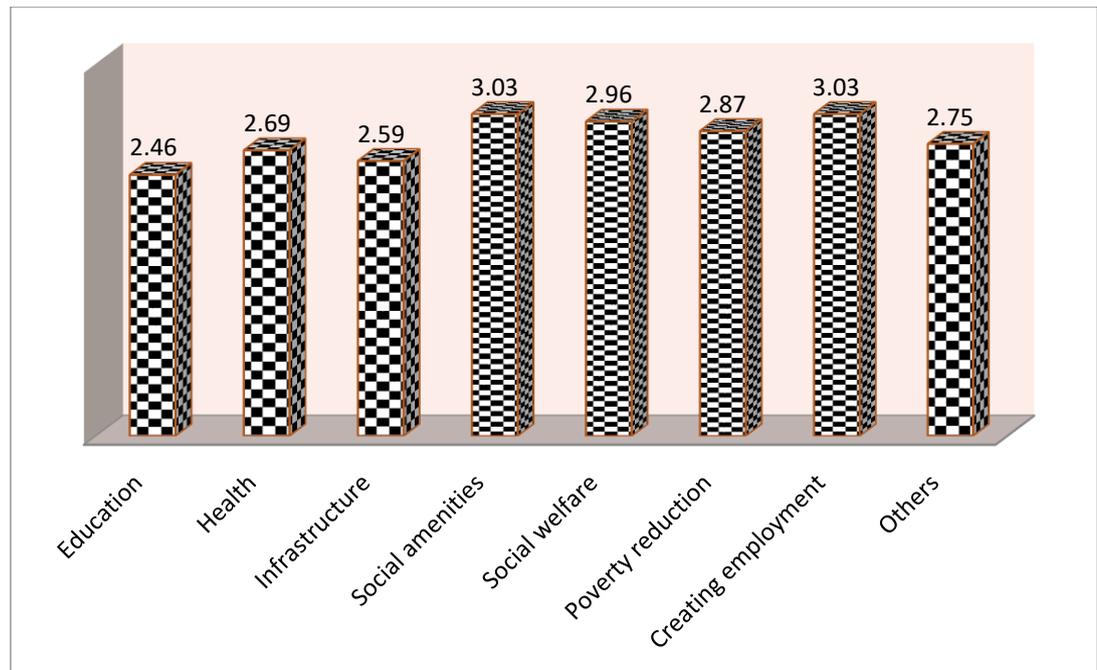


Figure 1: Bar chart showing mean responses on campaign promises agreement with developmental needs

Results as presented in table 1 with illustration in figure 1, show acceptance by respondents that campaign promises usually agree with the areas of needs in Anambra State.

Research question two: To what extent are campaign promises fulfilled by elected officials in Anambra State between 2010 and 2020?

Descriptive statistics involving mean and standard deviation were adopted to analyse data and answer the research question. Results are presented in table 2 and figure 2.

Table 2: Extent of campaign promises fulfilled by elected officials in Anambra State between 2010 and 2020

Area of needs	N	Always f (%)	Sometimes f (%)	Rarely f (%)	Never f (%)	Remark
Education		29 (2)	204 (12)	632 (37)	844 (49)	VPE
Health		16 (1)	188 (11)	554 (32)	951 (56)	VPE
Road infrastructure		54 (3)	471 (27)	458 (28)	726 (42)	PE
Social amenities	1709	87 (5)	314 (18)	517 (30)	791 (46)	PE
Social welfare		44 (3)	210 (12)	469 (27)	986 (58)	VPE
Poverty reduction		12 (1)	22 (1)	107 (6)	1568 (92)	VPE
Creating employment		18 (1)	156 (9)	633 (37)	902 (53)	VPE
Others		33 (2)	211 (12)	592 (35)	873 (51)	VPE

VPE = Very poor extent, PE = Poor extent

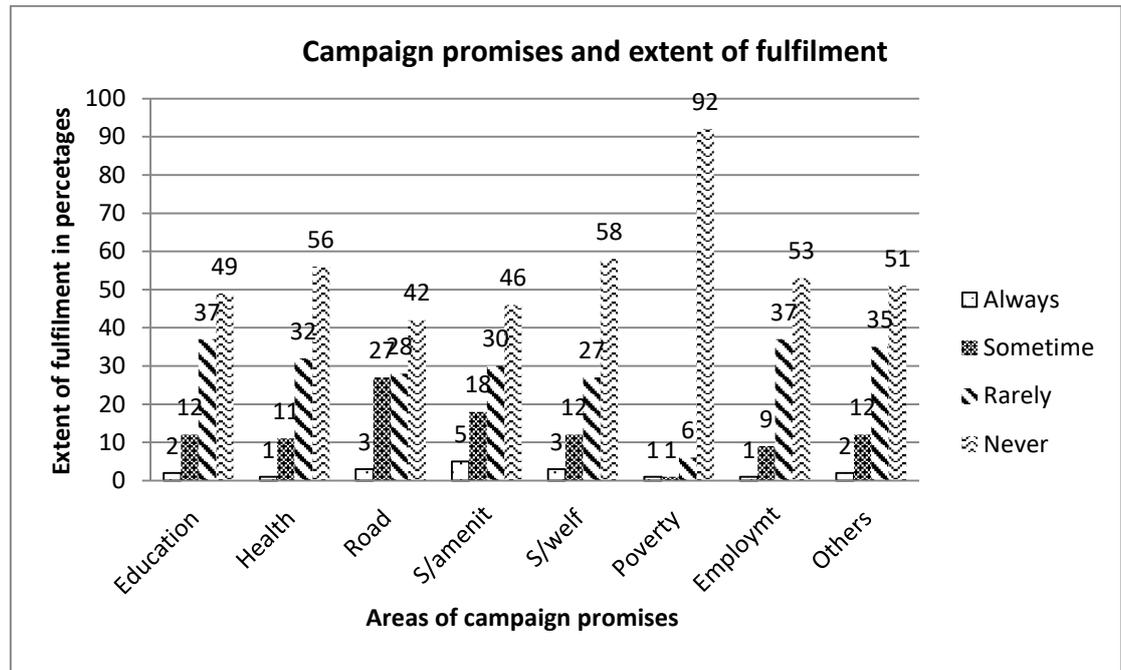


Figure 2: Extent of fulfilment of campaign promises

Results as presented in table 2 and figure 2 show that the extent of fulfilment of campaign promises is very poor by political office holders when elected into political offices in Anambra state between 2010 and 2020.

Research question three: Are there differences in the office occupied and extent of fulfilment of campaign promises in Anambra State between 2010 and 2020?

Table 3: Summary of descriptive analysis of political offices and fulfilment of campaign promises

Which of the political office holders had fulfilled their promises more in the last ten years?	SA f (%)	A f (%)	D f (%)	SD f (%)
Governors	1019 (59)	330 (19)	265 (16)	95 (6)
Senators	113 (7)	187 (11)	611 (35)	798 (47)
House of Reps.	84 (5)	102 (6)	564 (33)	959 (56)
State house of Ass.	19 (1)	55 (3)	719 (42)	916 (54)
Local Govt. Chair	276 (16)	433 (25)	488 (29)	512 (30)
Local Govt. Councillors	38 (2)	42 (3)	722 (42)	907 (53)

SA= strongly agree, A= agree, D = Disagree, SD = strongly disagree

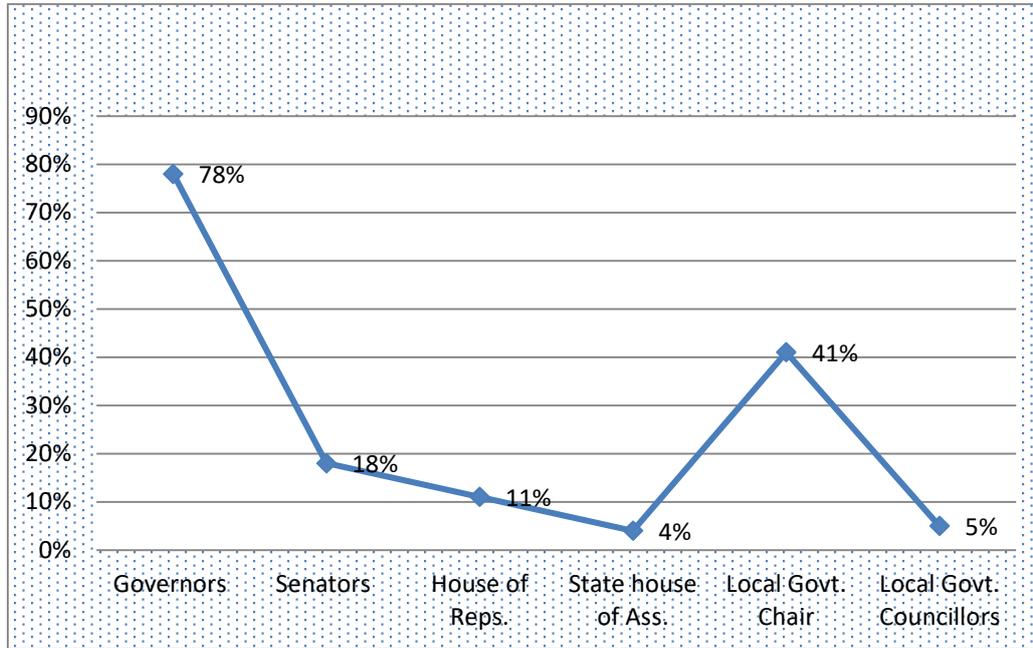


Figure 3: Political office holders and fulfilment of campaign promises

Results of analysis as presented in table 3 and figure 3 reveal that among elective political office holders between 2010 and 2020, Governors are seen to fulfil their campaign promises more, with a fulfilment percentage of 78%, followed by Local Government Chairmen - 41%, Senators - 18%, House of Representatives members - 11%, Local Government Councillors - 5%, while State House of Assembly members are the least with just 4%.

Discussion of findings

The first finding of the study indicated that the respondents agreed that campaign promises usually agree with the areas of needs in Anambra State. This is in line with the work of Sule, Sani and Mat (2017), who found out that campaign of party candidates were usually in line with electorates' expectations.

The second finding of the study also indicated that the extent of fulfilment of campaign promises by political office holders when elected has been very poor in Anambra state between 2010 and 2020. The finding of the study corroborates the work of Ojukwu, Mazi-Mbah and Madukwe (2019), who reported that most politicians in Nigeria do not fulfil their campaign promises.

The third finding revealed that among elective political office holders in the past 10 years, Governors are seen to fulfil their campaign promises more, with a fulfilment percentage of 78%, followed by Local Government Chairmen (41%), Senators (18%), House of Representatives members (11%), Local Government Councillors (5%), while State House of Assembly members are the least with just 4%. It is obvious that those with executive powers in the state are rated higher than those with legislative powers. Findings show that candidates seeking election into political positions in Anambra State have been able to identify the basic needs of the people and promising to address them during electioneering campaign while they seek the peoples' votes but such expectations are short-lived as politicians only use them as bait to gain votes. This is an ugly trend in Nigeria, and it has impeded national development over the years.

Conclusion

Results revealed that though candidates identified areas of needs and promised to address them if elected into office, the extent of fulfilment of such promises is very poor. Also, those elected into the office of Governor and Local Government Chairmen (that is the executive positions) were rated to perform better in terms of fulfilling campaign promises made while those of legislative positions perform below expectation.

Recommendations

1. Government should set up development plans so that successive administrations must work with for the actualization of the state developmental goals.
2. Any elected public office holder who fails to fulfil his campaign promises should not be given another chance or a second term in office by the electorates. This will encourage public office holders to fulfil their campaign promises.
3. The executive arm of government should be closely monitored so that they may continue to perform at their optimum capacity. On the other hand, the legislators should be held accountable by the electorates for the projects they attract to the state through lobby and negotiations on behalf of the people.
4. A law should be put in place to compel political office holders to fulfil all campaign promises when elected.

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