

# Electoral Processes and Democratic Elections in Uganda, a Case Study of Electoral Commission of Uganda

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**Abstract:** *The study looked at the impact of democratic elections and electoral processes in the Republic of Uganda. The National Elections Act of 2008 includes provisions to guarantee free and fair elections, but what truly happens all through election stretches of time deviates from those guidelines; intimidation and violence in some areas of Uganda undermine inclusivity; the NEC is believed to lack adequate accountability and total independence from the national government, which detracts from trust; and the legal structure for elections having failed to provide effective oversight. The information was gathered from 211 participants utilizing questionnaires and a limited number of question guidelines as part of the study's research survey. Both selective sampling and simple random sampling were utilized. To examine the results, simple charts, regression analysis, and Pearson's correlation coefficient were used. The results showed a high positive correlation between the dependent variable—democratic election in the Republic of Uganda—and the three independent variables, which were mass indoctrination, electoral legal structure, and elections supervision. The strong high association seen between analysis of relevant that there was a positive and statistically significant (.000) connection between democratic elections and electoral processes. The study came to the overall conclusion that, despite widespread voter misunderstanding of the legal system, the Republic of Uganda's election process result in what are needed free and fair elections.*

**Keywords:** electoral processes and democratic elections

## Background to the Study

At the global level, each region and nation has seen distinct political adventures, particularly through contests that have formed those nations. As an illustration, the French waged bloody battles in Continent to protect citizens' rights to take part in national affairs. The same thing occurred in other European nations and the America (Nohlen, 2009). Many African nations (French and British colonies) underwent political changes following the Second World War that paved the way for their internal autonomy and independence. Even while certain African countries had elections previously, it wasn't until the emergence of the post-World War II era that voting rights and electoral processes were broadly dispersed. The colonial powers gave way to the participatory demands of the local elites in Africa, who then in turn used the elections to mobilize support against colonial rule (Zwier, 2008).

Elections in Africa evolved into a legislative tool used to guide colonies toward liberation and pre-structure the comment growth of the new African states in the interests of the old colonialists toward the conclusion of the colonial era.

Of the most effective instruments accessible to anti-colonial forces both within and without Africa was the desire for elections and an expansion of the right to vote, which was intimately linked to demands for participation, personality, and the sovereignty of the African governments.

Despite the fact that military dictatorships and autocratic, personality-driven one-party systems dominated post-colonial growth for extended periods of time, a thorough phase of democratic change began in 2009. The majority of African republics legally adopted multi-party governments, and multi-party contests occurred rather frequently (Woodward, 2000).

Pre-colonial Africa was not entirely devoid of the concept of democracy. Some historical civilizations chose their leadership through a process known as "election," in which multiple people were considered before a decision was made (see Hayward, 2007). The range of options and level of participation in this candidate selection, however, were generally somewhat constrained. Rare were the commercially orientated organizations in which the entire adult population participated directly.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

Election participants were unable to effectively seek remedy through the judicial system.

Election protections and openness were insufficient. For example, the procedure of confirming voters' identities when registrations certificates were granted by popular organizations, the indelible ink that can be easily removed, and box seals (Carter Center report, 2010).

The researcher believed that unless something was done to put an end to these fraudulent activities, the Uganda Information Commissioner would lose its credence to hold free, fair, and straightforward elections. It would also undermine key components of the election process, which would have the unfortunate effect of wasting a chance to increase confidence in the electoral process among Ugandans and other stakeholders

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To find out the effect of electoral mass sensitization on democratic elections in Uganda
2. To examine the influence of electoral legal framework on democratic elections in Uganda
3. To assess the influence of electoral supervision on democratic elections in Uganda.

### **Hypothesis of the study**

Ho: There is no relationship between the effects of electoral mass sensitization on democratic elections in Uganda

Ha: There is a relationship between the effects of electoral mass sensitization on democratic elections in Uganda

Ho: There is no relationship between the influences of electoral legal framework on democratic elections in Uganda

Ha: There is a relationship between the influences of electoral legal framework on democratic elections in Uganda

Ho: There is no relationship between the influences of electoral supervision on democratic elections in Uganda

Ha: There is a relationship between the influences of electoral supervision on democratic elections in Uganda

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the effect of electoral mass sensitization on democratic elections in Uganda?
2. What is the influence of electoral legal framework on democratic elections in Uganda?
3. What is the influence of electoral supervision on democratic elections in Uganda?

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

This study used a cross-sectional survey approach because it offers a comprehensive explanation that is as truthful and accurate as feasible (Ezeani, 2009:98). Data was gathered from a cross - sections of participants at one time point using a cross - sectional design survey. A cross-sectional survey takes less time and is simple to implement. Both qualitative as well as quantitative methodologies were used by the. Statistical approach is more objective, according to Creswell (2009: 65), and they looked into the correlations between the characteristics that had been established.

### Study Population

The whole things or units to whom the study's findings are to be applied collectively are referred to as the population.

Population, according to Parahoo (2007), is the maximum number of entities from whom data can be gathered, such as people, things, events, or organizations. Target population, on the other hand, is the entire area of interest to the study from which the findings were generalized.

17,576,242 people were registered to vote in Uganda (National Election Report, 2010).

Yet, the analysis also took into account the 150 or so permanent staff of the election commission.

A sample of 307 respondents were chosen from the 424 participants who were accessible for this survey.

### Sample Size

The sample size in this research was carefully selected based on respondent's experience, age and knowledge of the subject or expertise. In explaining expertise-, Brockoff (2005), argues that expert knowledge `can be proven by demonstration, or by resources to confirmation through third parties. From the elements of the study population included electoral commissioners, Commission staff, some selected ordinary voters, and stakeholders in Uganda elections, appropriate samples were selected using Krejcie & Morgan tables (Krejcie & Morgan, 2000) as detailed in the table below.

**Table 1: Showing Sample Size by Population Categories**

Population category	Population (N)	Sample (n)	Sampling technique
Commissioners	9	9	Purposive
Directors & Heads of Departments	15	14	Purposive
Other Commission Staff	150	108	Simple Random
Stakeholders	50	44	Purposive
Ordinary voters	200	132	Purposive sampling
Total	<b>424</b>	<b>307</b>	

**Source:** This data was generated based on files at Uganda electoral commission head offices, and guided by Krejcie and Morgan Table (2000).

### Sampling Techniques

Simple random and purposive sampling techniques was used in this study, as indicated in Table 1 above.

### **Simple Random Sampling**

In this study, professionals and regular voters were the subjects. Straightforward random selection was performed. This approach was chosen because it allows everyone in the community an equal chance of being chosen to participate in a study (Sarantakos, 2005).

The use of simple random sampling was made possible by the reduction of investigator bias in the selection of participants (Maxwell, 2005).

In accordance with the aforementioned author, Babbie (2007) underlines the requirement for unbiased random selection that yet satisfies the researcher's needs.

The recipient and staff groups of responses were the ones targeted by this technique.

### **Purposive Sampling**

The study used purposive sampling to target commissioners, directors and heads of department, and stakeholders. According Neuman (2006), purposive sampling is when the researcher specifically targets certain people due to their knowledge about the research subject. Purposive sampling aims to ensure that the researcher finds and engages resourceful respondents to enrich the study (Berg, 2008). In agreement, Strauss, Anselm, and Corbin (2007) assert that purposive sampling is especially necessary in technical and investigative studies, the reason why it was used.

### **Data Collection Methods**

Data collection methods are ways through which the researcher gets data needed from the respondents (Patten & Mildred, 2001). This study used questionnaire survey and interviews according to Russell (2011) questionnaire surveys are less time-consuming and give the respondents the freedom to answer the way they feel most comfortable. The study used interviews to collect data since they give opportunity to probe further for in-depth information (De Vaus, 2001).

### **Questionnaire Survey**

Data was collected through questioning of respondents using self-administered questionnaires. According to Guppy & Gray (2008) successful surveys depend on carefully executed data collection method. The authors added that in case of questionnaire survey, the researcher must ensure that self-administered and guided questionnaires are easy to understand by the respondent and are not too long. In agreement, Nardi (2006) argues that questionnaires should be concise yet comprehensive.

### **Interviews**

Data was collected through face to face interviews. Wengraf (2001) reveals that interviewing is an essential and simple way of data collection. In agreement, Amin (2005) argues that the advantage of using interview is that, it allows on spot explanations, adjustments and variation could be introduced during the data collection process and through respondent's incidental comments, use of facial and body expressions, tone of voice, gestures, feelings and attitudes (Amin, 2005).

### **Data Analysis**

Inspection, cleaning, transformation, and modeling of data are all steps in the analytical process, which has the objectives of identifying necessary details, advancing hypotheses, and assisting in decision-making (Gorard, 2003). Analysis, as according Grbich (2007), is the process of dissecting a whole into its component parts for independent analysis. Data analysis is a technique for taking raw data and turning it into knowledge that consumers may use to make decisions. Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS Version 21) was used to gather data and analyze it in order to find answers, test hypotheses, and refute theories (Grbich, 2007).

In this study, SPSS was utilized since it has been successfully used to analyze social data on a regular basis.

**RESULTS****Response Rate**

The response rate is the percentage of people who responded to the study, and was calculated using the formula:

$$\frac{\text{Actual no. of responses}}{\text{Targeted Response}} \times 100\%$$

If the response rate is 50% or less, it shows that the data is inadequate for analysis, but if the response rate is 60%, it indicates that the data is good for analysis. If the rate is 70% and above, then the data is very good for analysis. The researcher should use all means to increase the response rate in order to have a representative sample for meaningful generalization (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003, p.83).

The results for the targeted and actual sample from which data was taken are shown in Table 4.1 below.

**Table 2: Target sample and Response Rate**

Category of Respondents	Population Size	Sample Size	No. of respondents	Response Rate (%)	Non Response
Commissioners	9	9	8	88.9	11.1
Directors & Heads	15	14	11	78.6	21.4
of Departments Other Commission	150	108	85	78.7	21.3
Staff Stakeholders	50	44	27	61.4	39.6
Ordinary voters	200	132	80	60.6	39.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>68.7</b>	<b>31.3</b>

*Source: Primary data from the field*

Out of a targeted sample of 307 respondents, only 211 provided information, giving a response rate of 68.7% which is good for analysis as per Mugenda & Mugenda (2003). This implies therefore that data was collected from a reasonable percentage of the study population and can be generalized for the community.

**Demographic characteristics of respondents**

The demographic characteristics that were discussed include gender, age, marital status, educational background and the job title of the respondent. Table 4.2 below shows the distribution of these demographic characteristics.

**Table 3: Distribution of the bio data characteristics of the respondents**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	137	65
Female	74	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Age of respondents</b>		
18-28	44	21
29-39	78	37
40-50	43	20
51 – 61	29	14
Above 61	17	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Relationship with Uganda Electoral Commission</b>		
Commissioner/staff	9	4
Manager/Director	14	7
Voter	88	42
Partner	40	19
Others	60	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>100</b>

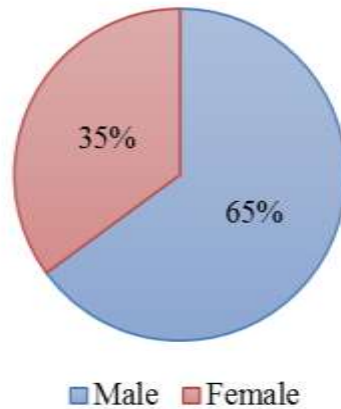
*Source: Primary data, 2022*

### Gender of the respondents

The study examined the distribution of respondents by gender to establish whether respondents captured views from all categories of gender and the findings further shown in the pie-chart (4.1) below.

#### Figure 1: Gender of the Respondents

Fig. 4.1: Gender of the respondents



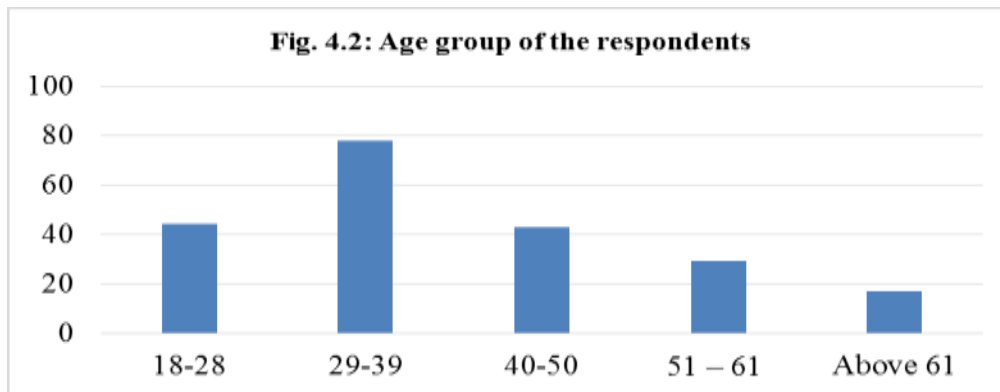
Source: primary data, 2022

The results indicate that 65% of respondents were male, while the rest were female (35 per cent). This implies that there are more males than females who engaged in election-related and democratic processes in Uganda. However, it also shows that the results represented the views of both the males and females, hence eliminating total gender bias from the study.

#### Age of the respondents

The study also investigated the age distribution of the respondents to determine whether the respondents were old enough to understand the study variables and findings are broken down according to the ages of the respondents as further illustrated in the bar graph (Fig 2) below.

Figure 2: Age group of the respondents



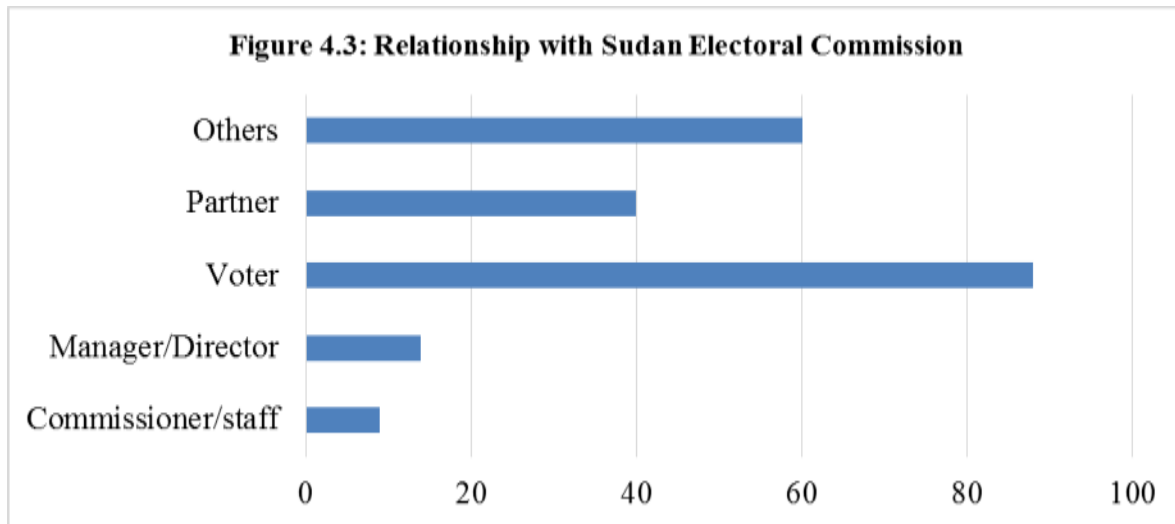
Source: Primary data, 2022

The results in Table 3 and Figure 2 also show that most of the respondents (78), representing 37% are in the 29-39 years age group. These were followed by 44 (21%) of the respondents who are in the 18-28 years age group. This implied that the young people and the middle-aged are the ones who mostly comprise those who engage in the electoral processes and mass sensitization in Uganda.

#### Relationship with Uganda Electoral Commission

The study also sought to ascertain the relationship between the respondents and the National Electoral Commission (NEC) of the Republic of Uganda. Results are shown in Table 2 above and the bar-graph Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Relationship with Uganda Electoral Commission



Source: Primary data

Further results as in Fig. 3 above indicate that most of the respondents (88) representing 42% are voters followed by 60 (28%) in the others group, then partners who comprise 40 (19%).

### Empirical Findings

#### The effect of electoral mass sensitization on democratic elections in Uganda

#### Descriptive statistics

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of the electoral mass sensitization in Uganda

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Uganda government has a national framework for citizen sensitization	211	1.00	5.00	3.2085	1.23986
Uganda electoral commission has a functional strategy for electoral sensitization	211	1.00	5.00	3.0142	1.26295
I am familiar with electoral processes in Uganda	211	1.00	5.00	3.2038	1.47719
I am aware of my right to vote	211	1.00	5.00	2.6398	1.48103
As a voter, I am familiar with the voting calendar	211	1.00	5.00	3.1801	1.20150
As a voter, I am familiar with the requirements for running for office	211	1.00	5.00	2.7488	1.09041



I know what to do in case my electoral rights are violated	211	1.00	5.00	3.0095	1.25732
Valid N (list wise)	211				

Source: primary data, 2022

The findings in Table 4 indicate that, on average, most respondents were unsure of the replies to the inquiries about electoral politics and mass voter education in Uganda. The deviations from the mean also demonstrate constancy in answers. Also, the data demonstrate that for every question, at least one responder (min=1) and at most five (max=5), respectively, expressed a strong disagreement.

Participants were undecided on whether the administration of Uganda has a guiding policy for citizen enlightenment (mean=3.01, SD=1.23), suggesting that the nation might not have one. Results also indicate that respondents were unsure that Uganda electoral commission has a functional strategy for electoral sensitization (mean=3.01, SD=1.26), which shows little confidence in the Electoral Commission as a body charged with electoral sensitization as a core function and purpose for its existence.

The results of the survey indicate that the respondents are not sure whether they are familiar with Uganda's election procedures (mean=3.20, S. D=1.47), suggesting that it is possible that they are not.

The data further demonstrate that respondents are dubious of their knowledge of their right to vote (mean=2.63, SD=1.48), which supports the conclusion in the previous question.

This gives weight to the suggestion that citizens may not be sufficiently aware of their rights and responsibilities as citizens. The interviewees are unsure if they are acquainted with the voting schedule, according to the results (mean=3.18, SD=1.20). Furthermore, they don't know if they are familiar with the prerequisites for running for office (mean=2.74, SD=1.09). Unsurprisingly, the findings indicate that individuals are unsure about what to do in the event that their right to vote is infringed (mean=3.00, SD=1.25). If people are unaware of their rights, they will be unable to determine whether they have been violated and what to do about it.

### Hypothesis Testing

Table 5 below shows the Pearson correlation between the electoral mass sensitization and democratic elections in Uganda.

**Table 5: Pearson’s Correlations between mass sensitization and democratic elections**

		Mass Sensitization	Democratic Elections
Mass Sensitization	Pearson Correlation	1	.949**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	211	211
Democratic Elections	Pearson Correlation	.949**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	211	211

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation between both variables is 0.949, which suggests that they are highly and positively associated. This suggests a positive link between the factors, with mass sensitization resulting in democratic elections.

This result supports the first hypothesis, according to which electoral mass sensitization significantly affects democracy in Uganda.

**The influence of electoral legal framework on democratic elections in Uganda**  
**Descriptive Statistics**

**Table 6: Descriptive Statistics the electoral legal framework in Uganda**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Election laws are functional in Uganda	211	1.00	5.00	3.3365	1.16109
Uganda electoral commission follows stipulated electoral laws	211	1.00	5.00	3.1659	1.16536
Uganda electoral laws are free and fair	211	1.00	5.00	3.2417	1.16838
Uganda government does not interfere with electoral laws	211	1.00	5.00	3.3791	.90939
Uganda electoral commission has competent staff who understand the law	211	1.00	5.00	3.3081	1.16082
As a voter, I have trust in the electoral laws	211	1.00	5.00	3.2891	1.08532
As a voter, I have trust in the overall laws of the country	211	1.00	5.00	2.2701	1.14560
Uganda follows international legal frameworks on election	211	1.00	5.00	2.5498	1.33493
Uganda Electoral Commission is familiar with international legal frameworks	211	1.00	5.00	1.9905	1.07345
Valid N (list wise)	211				

*Source primary data 2022*

The findings in Table 6 above demonstrate that, on aggregate, most responders were unsure about the replies to inquiries about just the election rules foundation for free and fair elections in Uganda. The values for the standard deviation also demonstrate constancy in responses.

Also, the results demonstrate that for every issue, there were at least one and up to five respondents who strongly disagreed (min=1) and agreed (max=5).

When questioned whether Uganda's election rules were effective, responders were unsure (mean=3.33, S. D=1.16), indicating that although the rules may exist, the responders are still dubious of their efficacy.

Results show that respondents are uncertain about whether the Ugandan election committee upholds the laws that are listed (mean=3.16, SD=1.16), which is another indication that the laws can exist but not be maintained or enforced. Respondents had mixed feelings about whether the country's electoral laws were free and fair (mean=3.24, SD=1.16) as well as if the Ugandan government meddled in the campaigns (mean=3.37, SD=0.90).

The findings demonstrate that participants were uncertain if the Uganda election board had knowledgeable staff who comprehended the law (mean=3.30, SD=1.16), a further evidence that willful ignorance of the laws on political races may exist

not just among the populace but also in the locations where it was least expected, specifically in the locations where it was least suspect, specifically in the locations where it was least predicted that it might exist.

**Hypothesis Testing**

Table 7 below shows the Pearson correlation between the electoral legal framework and democratic elections in Uganda.

**Table 7: Correlations between electoral legal framework and democratic elections in Uganda**

		Legal Framework	Democratic Elections
Legal Framework	Pearson Correlation	1	.928**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	211	211
Democratic Elections	Pearson Correlation	.928**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	211	211

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation between the two variables in question is 0.928, which suggests that they are significantly and positively associated.

This suggests that there is a strong positive association between the variables, suggesting that the electoral law framework has an impact on democratic elections.

This result supports the second hypothesis, which holds that the electoral legal system significantly enhances the quality of elections.

**The influence of electoral supervision on democratic elections in Uganda**

The third objective of the study was to ascertain the influence of electoral supervision on democratic elections in Uganda. The data for this theme was also gathered using the survey questionnaire with various questions as listed below.

**Descriptive statistics**

**Table 8: Descriptive statistics on electoral supervision in Uganda**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Uganda electoral commission has capacity to supervise election process	211	1.00	5.00	2.5735	1.29764
Uganda electoral commission					

independently supervises electoral process	211	1.00	5.00	2.7393	1.31776
Uganda electoral commission effectively manages any electoral malpractice	211	1.00	5.00	2.8768	1.16455
Uganda electoral commission counts cast votes in the stipulated manner and places	211	1.00	5.00	2.7536	1.28949
Uganda electoral commission announces winners within agreed time	211	1.00	5.00	2.4218	1.24108
Uganda electoral commission is neutral while coordinating elections	211	1.00	5.00	3.6635	1.30038
Valid N (list wise)	211				

Source: primary data, 2022

According to Table 8's findings, the majority of those surveyed were generally unsure of how elections supervision affected fair and free elections in Uganda.

Also, the results demonstrate that for each assertion, at least one participant strongly opposed (min=1) and at least one strongly agreed (max=5).

Respondents were unsure (mean=2.57, SD=1.29) when asked whether the Uganda electoral commission has the capacity to oversee the election process, raising the potential that the commission may not be able to do so.

### Hypothesis Testing

Table 4.8 below shows the Pearson correlation between electoral legal supervision and democratic elections in Uganda.

**Table 9: Correlations between electoral supervision and democratic elections**

		Electoral Supervision	Democratic Elections
Electoral Supervision	Pearson Correlation	1	.934**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000

	N	211	211
	Pearson Correlation	.934**	1
Democratic Elections	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	211	211

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results show a correlation of 0.934 which indicates that the two variables are strongly and positively correlated. This implies that electoral supervision strongly and positively influences democratic elections in the Republic of Uganda. Therefore, this finding agrees with the third hypothesis as stated that electoral supervision influences democratic elections.

### Conclusions

Uganda has done little to ensure mass sensitization of the people, hence compromising the democratic processes of the country. This is despite the finding in agreement of the hypothesis that electoral mass sensitization has a significant effect on democratic elections. The electoral commission only appears to pay lip service to various aspects of mass sensitization but nothing is done beyond that.

### Recommendations

There is need for the Uganda Electoral Commission to enable mass sensitization of the people of Uganda on the electoral laws through voter information, voter education and civic education. This education should be emphasized and also incorporated in the national education curriculum. It will go a long way to promote democratic elections in the country.

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