

# Stakeholder Engagement And Corporate Reputation Of Electoral Bodies In Nigeria

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**Abstract:** This study investigated the relationship between stakeholder engagement and corporate reputation, focusing on social attractiveness and transparent decision-making as proxies, within Nigeria's electoral bodies. Adopting a cross-sectional research design grounded in a positivist paradigm, data were collected from 247 state chairmen of 18 registered political parties across Nigeria's 36 states, selected using Taro Yamane's formula from a population of 648. A structured 39-item questionnaire, validated through face and content validity assessments, captured stakeholder engagement and corporate reputation dimensions, with data analyzed using Kendall's tau-b correlation coefficient. The findings revealed a significant positive correlation between stakeholder engagement and social attractiveness ( $\tau = 0.364, p < 0.01$ ), indicating that inclusive engagement practices enhance perceptions of trustworthiness and inclusivity. A weaker but significant correlation was found with transparent decision-making ( $\tau = 0.153, p < 0.01$ ), suggesting limited impact due to systemic challenges. Grounded in Social Learning Theory, the study concluded that stakeholder engagement fosters trust and cooperation, though transparency perceptions require further improvement to bolster electoral legitimacy. Recommendations include establishing quarterly consultative forums and digital platforms to enhance social attractiveness, and implementing digital reporting systems and oversight committees to improve transparent decision-making. These measures aim to strengthen stakeholder trust and public confidence in Nigeria's electoral processes by addressing engagement and transparency gaps.

**Keywords:** Stakeholder Engagement, Corporate Reputation, Social Attractiveness, Transparent Decision-Making

## 1.0 Introduction

Electoral bodies in Nigeria are pivotal to the nation's democratic process, ensuring free, fair, and credible elections that underpin political stability and public trust (Shafiu et al., 2023). However, these institutions face significant challenges, including perceptions of bias, delays in result transmission, and institutional inefficiencies, which erode their corporate reputation and undermine electoral legitimacy (Oti & Otalor, 2024). These issues have fueled public skepticism and reduced stakeholder confidence, threatening the acceptance of electoral outcomes and the broader democratic framework.

Corporate reputation, defined as the collective perception of an organization's credibility, fairness, and effectiveness, is a strategic asset for electoral bodies, influencing stakeholder cooperation and public trust (Ekechukwu et al., 2023). Its sub-dimension - attractiveness and transparent decision-making, are critical in this context. Attractiveness reflects the institution's appeal, inclusivity, and alignment with societal values, fostering stakeholder participation and trust through ethical governance and transparent communication (Tkalac Verčič et al., 2023; Shabir et al., 2024). Transparent decision-making, characterized by open and accessible communication of electoral processes, enhances accountability and reduces perceptions of bias, thereby strengthening the credibility of election outcomes (Knox et al., 2025; Oti & Otalor, 2024). Despite their importance, lapses in these areas, such as limited access to fiscal information or opaque dispute resolution, continue to challenge Nigeria's electoral bodies, necessitating strategies to bolster their reputation (Shafiu et al., 2023).

Stakeholder engagement, a dynamic process involving active interaction with groups like political parties, civil society, and the electorate, emerges as a potential driver of corporate reputation by fostering transparency, accountability, and inclusivity (Knox et al., 2025; Lai et al., 2021). Grounded in Social Learning Theory, which posits that stakeholders model trust and cooperation based on observed organizational behaviors (Bandura, 1977; Edinyang, 2016), stakeholder engagement can enhance perceptions of attractiveness and transparency through mechanisms like public forums and consultations (Buhmann et al., 2024). When electoral bodies demonstrate ethical conduct and participatory decision-making, stakeholders learn to trust the institution, reinforcing its reputation (Wood & Bandura, 1989). However, challenges such as power imbalances and superficial engagement can undermine these efforts, necessitating meaningful participation to align with societal expectations (Giannopoulos et al., 2021).

While previous studies have explored predictors of corporate reputation, such as workforce agility or product quality in sectors like telecommunications and retail (Ajalie et al., 2023; Adebayo, 2024; Ozigi & Akhigbe, 2024), limited research has specifically examined stakeholder engagement's role in shaping the corporate reputation of electoral bodies in Nigeria, particularly through the lenses of attractiveness and transparent decision-making. For instance, Ajalie et al. (2023) found a positive link between stakeholder involvement and reputation in the telecom sector but did not focus on electoral contexts or use Social Learning Theory. Similarly, Andini and Arief (2024) explored CSR transparency but overlooked broader stakeholder engagement dynamics, while Gandhiwati et al. (2024) adopted a qualitative approach without a theoretical framework, limiting generalizability to Nigeria's electoral landscape.

The persistent decline in the corporate reputation of Nigeria's electoral bodies, despite scholarly efforts to identify reputation predictors, remains a critical issue. Public distrust, fueled by perceived biases and lack of transparency, continues to hinder electoral legitimacy, as evidenced by recurring disputes and low stakeholder confidence (Shafiu et al., 2023; Oti & Otalor, 2024). It is on this premise that the role of stakeholder engagement in influencing corporate reputation, is explored in this study.

## 1.2 Hypotheses

To achieve the aim and objectives of the study, the following hypotheses were formulated:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between stakeholder engagement and attractiveness.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between stakeholder engagement and transparent decision-making.

## 2.0 Literature Review

### 2.1 Conceptual Review

#### 2.1.1 Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement is a dynamic and continuous process that involves the active interaction of organizations with individuals, groups, or entities who have a vested interest in their operations, aiming to foster transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in decision-making. For electoral bodies, effective stakeholder engagement is pivotal for enhancing organizational legitimacy and aligning policies with societal expectations. It encompasses structured mechanisms like public forums, advisory panels, and consultations that ensure diverse perspectives are integrated into governance processes (Knox et al., 2025). By promoting open communication and participatory decision-making, stakeholder engagement builds trust, reduces conflicts arising from divergent interests, and fosters a shared sense of ownership among stakeholders, including civil society, political parties, and the electorate (Lai et al., 2021). However, challenges such as power imbalances, resource constraints, and the risk of superficial engagement can undermine its effectiveness, necessitating equitable and meaningful participation to achieve sustainable outcomes (Buhmann et al., 2024; Giannopoulos et al., 2021). This process is particularly critical in electoral contexts, where stakeholder trust directly influences the perceived credibility and acceptance of election outcomes.

#### 2.1.2 Corporate Reputation

Corporate reputation represents the collective perception of an organization's credibility, fairness, and effectiveness, shaped by its past actions and ability to deliver value to stakeholders. For electoral bodies, corporate reputation is a strategic intangible asset that influences public trust, stakeholder cooperation, and the legitimacy of electoral processes. It is built through consistent ethical conduct, transparent election administration, and responsiveness to stakeholder concerns, which collectively enhance institutional resilience and public confidence (Ekechukwu et al., 2023; Nguyen et al., 2021). A strong corporate reputation reduces electoral disputes and fosters compliance with electoral outcomes, while lapses such as delays in result transmission or perceived bias can quickly erode it (Shafiu et al., 2023). Recent studies emphasize that corporate reputation is dynamic, evolving through stakeholder interactions and shaped by organizational behaviors that align with societal expectations of fairness and transparency (Galdón Salvador & Marín Díaz, 2024; Zabłocka-Kluczka & Sałamacha, 2020). Maintaining a positive reputation requires ongoing stakeholder engagement, credible service delivery, and proactive management of public perceptions to uphold democratic principles.

#### 2.1.3 Measures of Corporate Reputation

##### 2.1.3.1 Attractiveness

Attractiveness, as a dimension of corporate reputation, refers to the degree to which an organization is perceived as appealing, approachable, and aligned with societal values, influencing stakeholder willingness to engage with or support it. In the context of electoral bodies, attractiveness is reflected in the institution's ability to project warmth, inclusivity, and credibility, thereby encouraging stakeholder participation and trust in electoral processes (Tkalac Verčič et al., 2023). This perception is shaped by factors such as transparent communication, ethical governance, and the provision of accessible platforms for stakeholder interaction, which enhance the institution's appeal to voters, political parties, and civil society (Shabir et al., 2024). Research highlights that

organizations demonstrating social attractiveness through fairness and empathy are more likely to foster positive stakeholder relationships, reducing skepticism and increasing cooperation (Han et al., 2023). Cultivating attractiveness involves consistent engagement, adherence to democratic norms, and proactive efforts to address stakeholder concerns, thereby reinforcing its image as a trustworthy and inclusive institution.

### **2.1.3.2 Transparent Decision-Making**

Transparent decision-making is a critical facet of stakeholder collaboration, characterized by the openness and clarity with which an organization communicates its decision-making processes, ensuring stakeholders can access relevant information and rationales. For electoral bodies, transparent decision-making is essential for fostering trust, accountability, and legitimacy in electoral processes, particularly in Nigeria's context of public skepticism toward governance institutions (Oti & Otalor, 2024). It involves timely disclosure of information, such as electoral procedures and financial allocations, which enables stakeholders to scrutinize actions and hold officials accountable (Shabir et al., 2024). Transparent governance enhances public participation and reduces perceptions of bias, thereby strengthening the credibility of electoral outcomes (Knox et al., 2025). However, challenges such as limited access to fiscal information and institutional inefficiencies can hinder transparency, necessitating structured platforms like public consultations and digital reporting to bridge these gaps (Oti & Otalor, 2024). By prioritizing transparency, electoral bodies can enhance its corporate reputation and foster stakeholder confidence in the democratic process.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

### **2.2.1 Social Learning Theory**

Social Learning Theory, developed by Albert Bandura in the 1960s and later expanded in his seminal work, posits that individuals learn behaviors, attitudes, and values through observing others within their social environment, rather than solely through direct experience or conditioning. The core tenets of the theory include observational learning, where individuals model behaviors by watching others; the role of cognitive processes, such as attention, retention, and motivation, in facilitating learning; and the concept of reciprocal determinism, which suggests that behavior, personal factors, and the environment mutually influence each other (Bandura, 1977). Bandura emphasized the importance of role models, reinforcement, and self-efficacy in shaping behavior, as demonstrated in his famous Bobo doll experiment, which showed that children imitate aggressive behaviors they observe (Bandura et al., 1961). Critics of the theory argue that it overemphasizes observational learning while underplaying biological or innate factors, such as genetic predispositions, and may not fully account for individual differences in learning processes (Eysenck, 1990). Additionally, some scholars contend that the theory's reliance on external reinforcement oversimplifies complex human motivations (Rotter, 1982).

Social Learning Theory provides a framework for understanding how stakeholders, including voters, political parties, and civil society, learn and adopt perceptions of the institution's credibility and transparency through observation and interaction. Stakeholders observe the actions of electoral bodies, such as transparent decision-making or ethical conduct, and model their trust and engagement based on these observations, influenced by the institution's reputation as a role model for democratic integrity (Edinyang, 2016). Reciprocal determinism explains how electoral bodies' engagement practices, stakeholder reactions, and the broader political environment interact to shape corporate reputation. For instance, when electoral bodies demonstrates fairness in electoral processes, stakeholders may learn to trust the institution, reinforcing positive behaviors like voter participation or cooperation from political parties. Conversely, observed lapses, such as delays or perceived bias, can erode trust, as stakeholders model skepticism based on negative cues, highlighting the theory's relevance to building legitimacy through consistent, observable actions (Wood & Bandura, 1989).

## 2.3 Empirical Reviews

S/N	Author(s) / Year	Country	Topic/ Objectives	Methodology	Findings	Conclusion	Gaps	Comparison with Current Study
1	Ajalie et al. (2023)	Nigeria	To investigate the impact of stakeholder involvement on the corporate reputation of telecom service providers in Lagos, Nigeria.	Cross-sectional survey design; data from 1,200 telecom service users across four major providers using structured questionnaires; analyzed with SEM and SPSS.	Significant positive relationship between stakeholder involvement and corporate reputation ( $R^2 = 0.199$ , $p < 0.000$ ), accounting for 19.9% of reputation variation.	Telecom companies should cultivate positive relationships and trust with stakeholders to enhance corporate reputation.	Limited to telecom industry; no specific focus on attractiveness or transparent decision-making as reputation proxies; lacks theoretical underpinning like Social Learning Theory.	Similar cross-sectional design and Nigerian context, but current study focuses on electoral bodies, uses Social Learning Theory, and employs Kendall rank correlation with attractiveness and transparent decision-making as proxies.
2	Andini & Arief (2024)	Indonesia	To explore the role of CSR transparency in building corporate reputation through sustainability communication.	Quantitative survey with 385 respondents; preliminary interviews with Pronas's management; data analyzed using SEM-PLS.	CSR impacts trust, mediating the relationship with reputation; social media is crucial for engagement and brand recognition; barriers include lack of CSR team and KPIs.	Sustainability communication enhances CSR transparency, building trust and improving corporate reputation.	Focus on CSR transparency, not stakeholder engagement broadly; no explicit use of Social Learning Theory; limited to one organization (Pronas).	Current study directly examines stakeholder engagement, uses Social Learning Theory, and focuses on electoral bodies in Nigeria with a different analytical method (Kendall rank correlation).
3	Gandhiwati et al. (2024)	Indonesia	To examine stakeholder collaboration in building Jakarta's reputation as a smart tourism city destination.	Qualitative descriptive method with case study approach; data from interviews with diverse stakeholders; analyzed using Nvivo and SNA model.	Tourism department showed high connectivity among stakeholders, emphasizing collaboration's role in reputation building.	Effective stakeholder collaboration is essential for enhancing Jakarta's reputation as a smart tourism city.	Qualitative approach limits generalizability; no focus on attractiveness or transparent decision-making; lacks	Current study uses a quantitative cross-sectional design, applies Social Learning Theory, and targets electoral bodies in

							explicit theoretical framework .	Nigeria, unlike the qualitative tourism focus.
4	Ozigi & Akhigbe (2024)	Nigeria	To investigate workforce agility and organizational reputation in electricity distribution companies in South-South, Nigeria.	Cross-sectional survey design; simple random sampling of 205 managers/supervisors; data from questionnaires analyzed with SEM.	Strong positive correlation between workforce agility (resilient behavior, dynamic capabilities) and organizational reputation.	Workforce agility significantly enhances organizational reputation in electricity distribution companies.	Focus on workforce agility, not stakeholder engagement; no mention of Social Learning Theory; limited to electricity sector.	Shares Nigerian context and cross-sectional design but differs in focusing on stakeholder engagement, using Social Learning Theory, and targeting electoral bodies with different reputation proxies.
5	Adebayo (2024)	Nigeria	To examine the influence of product quality on corporate reputation of retail firms in Nigeria.	Quantitative research design; multistage sampling of 246 respondents; data from questionnaires analyzed with SPSS v26.	Product quality significantly influences corporate reputation in Lagos State's retail firms.	High-quality products meeting consumer needs foster trust and enhance reputation.	Focus on product quality, not stakeholder engagement; no theoretical framework like Social Learning Theory; limited to retail sector.	Similar Nigerian context and quantitative approach, but current study examines stakeholder engagement in electoral bodies, uses Social Learning Theory, and employs Kendall rank correlation.

### 3.0 Methodology

The study employed a cross-sectional research design, guided by a positivist philosophical paradigm, to quantitatively assess the relationship between stakeholder engagement and corporate reputation at a specific point in time (Saunders et al., 2019). A sample of 247 state chairmen of the 18 registered political parties across Nigeria's 36 states was selected using Taro Yamane's formula, ensuring adequate representation of the population of 648 chairmen (Yamane, 1967). Data were collected through a structured questionnaire comprising 39 items, divided into sections capturing demographic characteristics, stakeholder engagement and corporate reputation (assessed via attractiveness and transparent decision-making) (Dedrick & Greenbaum, 2010; Telci & Kantur, 2014). The consensus online survey technique facilitated data collection from this geographically dispersed population, allowing for efficient gathering of diverse perspectives while minimizing logistical challenges (Hasson et al., 2000). Responses were analyzed using the Kendall rank correlation coefficient to test the hypotheses.

The validity and reliability of the research instrument were meticulously ensured to enhance the credibility of the findings. Face validity was established by consulting a panel of experts, including management scholars and practitioners familiar with electoral processes, who refined ambiguous items to ensure clarity and relevance (Taherdoost, 2016). Content validity was assessed using Lawshe's (1975) content validity ratio, with experts evaluating the questionnaire's coverage of stakeholder engagement and corporate reputation dimensions, leading to the revision of low-coring items (Haynes et al., 1995). Despite the potential for social

desirability bias in questionnaire responses, the structured design with closed-ended Likert-scale items minimized this limitation, enabling efficient and statistically robust data analysis (Saunders et al., 2019).

## 4.0 Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Results and Analyses

**Table 4.1: Demographic Analyses**

<b>Gender Distribution</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Male	210	85.0	85.0	85.0
Female	37	15.0	15.0	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
<b>Age Group Distribution</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
18 - 30 years	25	10.1	10.1	10.1
31 - 40 years	47	19.0	19.0	29.1
41 - 50 years	87	35.2	35.2	64.4
51 years and above	88	35.6	35.6	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
<b>Highest Level of Education Distribution</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Secondary school certificate	79	32.0	32.0	32.0
National Diploma (ND) / Higher National Diploma (HND)	60	24.3	24.3	56.3
Bachelor's degree	89	36.0	36.0	92.3
Postgraduate degree (Master's/PhD)	19	7.7	7.7	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
<b>Years of Experience in Electoral Activities Distribution</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Less than 10 years	26	10.5	10.5	10.5
10 - 15 years	77	31.2	31.2	41.7
16 - 21 years	103	41.7	41.7	83.4
More than 21 years	41	16.6	16.6	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

The demographic profile of the 247 respondents, who were state chairmen of registered political parties in Nigeria, provides insights into the composition of key stakeholders in the electoral process. The gender distribution indicates a predominantly male population, with 210 males (85.0%) compared to 37 females (15.0%), reflecting a gender imbalance typical in Nigerian political leadership roles (Adeyinka-Ojo, 2021). The age distribution shows a mature sample, with 35.6% aged 51 years and above and 35.2% aged 41–50 years, suggesting experienced individuals likely familiar with electoral dynamics. Only 10.1% were aged 18–30 years, indicating limited youth representation in these roles. Educationally, 36.0% held bachelor's degrees, 32.0% had secondary school certificates, 24.3% possessed ND/HND qualifications, and 7.7% had postgraduate degrees, reflecting a moderately educated sample capable of engaging with complex electoral processes (Telci & Kantur, 2014). Regarding experience, 41.7% had 16–21 years in electoral activities, and 31.2% had 10–15 years, indicating a highly experienced group likely to provide informed perspectives on stakeholder engagement and corporate reputation (Ajali et al., 2023).

This demographic composition suggests a sample well-positioned to assess the relationship between stakeholder engagement and the corporate reputation of electoral bodies. The predominance of experienced, older males aligns with the hierarchical and patriarchal structure of Nigerian political systems, which may influence perceptions of attractiveness and transparent decision-making (Shafiu et al., 2023). The moderate educational attainment indicates sufficient literacy to engage with policy and procedural aspects of electoral management, supporting the validity of their responses. The balanced experience levels suggest a mix of seasoned and relatively newer stakeholders, providing diverse insights into how stakeholder engagement practices shape the reputation of electoral bodies.

#### 4.1.1 Univariate Analyses

**Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics on Stakeholder Engagement**

<b>Item</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>Skewness</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Kurtosis</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>
Electoral bodies actively seek input from political parties, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders in electoral decision-making.	247	1	5	3.31	1.064	-0.416	0.155	-0.257	0.309

Regular consultative forums are organized to engage electoral stakeholders on emerging challenges and reforms.	247	1	5	3.44	1.106	-0.559	0.155	-0.392	0.309
Stakeholder concerns and feedback are taken into account when formulating electoral policies.	247	1	5	3.84	0.966	-1.198	0.155	1.581	0.309
There is an established mechanism for stakeholders to voice their concerns and receive timely responses.	247	1	5	3.77	1.007	-1.002	0.155	0.930	0.309
Collaboration with international election observers has positively influenced electoral bodies' operational effectiveness.	247	1	5	3.21	0.986	-0.202	0.155	-0.294	0.309

The descriptive statistics for stakeholder engagement indicate moderate to high agreement among respondents regarding the engagement practices of electoral bodies in Nigeria. The statement “Stakeholder concerns and feedback are taken into account when formulating electoral policies” received the highest mean score (M = 3.84, SD = 0.966), suggesting strong agreement that electoral bodies consider stakeholder input in policy formulation, with negative skewness (-1.198) indicating a tendency toward higher agreement. Similarly, “There is an established mechanism for stakeholders to voice their concerns and receive timely responses” had a high mean (M = 3.77, SD = 1.007) and negative skewness (-1.002), reflecting positive perceptions of feedback mechanisms. The item on regular consultative forums (M = 3.44, SD = 1.106) and active seeking of stakeholder input (M = 3.31, SD = 1.064) showed moderate agreement, with slight negative skewness indicating a lean toward agreement. Collaboration with international observers had the lowest mean (M = 3.21, SD = 0.986), suggesting less consensus on its impact. The moderate standard deviations (0.966–1.106) and varying kurtosis values (-0.392 to 1.581) indicate some variability in perceptions, suggesting that while stakeholder engagement is generally perceived positively, certain aspects, like international collaboration, are less consistently endorsed

**Table 4.3: Descriptive Statistics on Social Attractiveness**

Item	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.	Skewness	Std. Error	Kurtosis	Std. Error
The public perceives electoral bodies as a trustworthy and credible election management body.	247	1	5	3.18	1.036	-0.230	0.155	-0.515	0.309
Electoral bodies maintain a positive relationship with the media and civil society organizations.	247	1	5	3.44	0.965	-0.654	0.155	0.028	0.309
The transparency of electoral bodies' operations has improved public confidence in the electoral system.	247	1	5	2.93	1.117	0.003	0.155	-0.757	0.309
Our electoral bodies are recognized for promoting fairness and inclusivity in electoral processes.	247	1	5	2.86	1.104	0.083	0.155	-0.729	0.309
Electoral bodies consistently communicate their achievements and challenges to foster public engagement and support.	247	1	5	3.57	0.929	-0.895	0.155	0.768	0.309

The descriptive statistics for social attractiveness, a proxy for corporate reputation, reveal varied perceptions among respondents. The statement “Electoral bodies consistently communicate their achievements and challenges to foster public engagement and support” had the highest mean (M = 3.57, SD = 0.929), with negative skewness (-0.895) indicating a tendency toward agreement, suggesting that respondents view communication efforts positively. The item on maintaining positive relationships with media and civil society (M = 3.44, SD = 0.965) also showed moderate agreement, with negative skewness (-0.654). However, perceptions of public trust and credibility (M = 3.18, SD = 1.036), transparency improving public confidence (M = 2.93, SD = 1.117), and fairness and inclusivity (M = 2.86, SD = 1.104) received lower mean scores, with near-neutral or slight positive skewness (0.003 to 0.083), indicating less agreement and more varied responses. The standard deviations (0.929–1.117) and kurtosis values (-0.757 to 0.768) suggest moderate variability, reflecting mixed perceptions of the electoral bodies' attractiveness, particularly in fostering public trust and inclusivity

**Table 4.4: Descriptive Statistics on Transparent Decision-Making**

Item	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.	Skewness	Std. Error	Kurtosis	Std. Error
Decisions regarding electoral processes are communicated clearly to all relevant stakeholders.	247	1	5	3.12	1.062	-0.237	0.155	-0.438	0.309
Policies and procedures related to election management are made publicly available and easily accessible.	247	1	5	2.86	1.108	0.048	0.155	-0.640	0.309
The selection and implementation of electoral technologies follow a transparent decision-making process.	247	1	5	2.82	1.128	0.090	0.155	-0.828	0.309
Electoral bodies ensure that all stakeholders are aware of key election timelines and procedural changes.	247	1	5	2.95	1.139	-0.153	0.155	-0.891	0.309
Electoral dispute resolutions are handled in a fair and transparent manner.	247	1	5	2.84	1.091	0.091	0.155	-0.682	0.309

The descriptive statistics for transparent decision-making, the second proxy for corporate reputation, indicate generally low to moderate agreement. The statement “Decisions regarding electoral processes are communicated clearly to all relevant stakeholders” had the highest mean ( $M = 3.12$ ,  $SD = 1.062$ ), with slight negative skewness ( $-0.237$ ), suggesting moderate agreement on clear communication. Other items, including public availability of policies ( $M = 2.86$ ,  $SD = 1.108$ ), transparency in electoral technology selection ( $M = 2.82$ ,  $SD = 1.128$ ), awareness of election timelines ( $M = 2.95$ ,  $SD = 1.139$ ), and fair dispute resolution ( $M = 2.84$ ,  $SD = 1.091$ ), had lower means, with near-neutral or slight positive skewness (0.048 to 0.091). The standard deviations (1.062–1.139) and negative kurtosis values ( $-0.891$  to  $-0.438$ ) indicate moderate to high variability, suggesting inconsistent perceptions of transparency in electoral processes. These findings highlight challenges in achieving transparent decision-making, which may undermine the corporate reputation of electoral bodies.

#### 4.1.2 Bivariate Analysis

**Table 4.5: Test of Relationships between Stakeholder Engagement and Corporate Reputation (Social Attractiveness and Transparent Decision-Making)**

Kendall's tau_b	Stakeholder Engagement	Social Attractiveness	Transparent Decision-Making
Stakeholder Engagement	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.364**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	247	247
Social Attractiveness	Correlation Coefficient	.364**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	247	247
Transparent Decision-Making	Correlation Coefficient	.153**	.376**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000
	N	247	247

**Note:** \*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The bivariate analysis using Kendall’s tau-b correlation coefficient provides evidence to reject the null hypotheses, as significant positive relationships were found between stakeholder engagement and the two proxies of corporate reputation. Stakeholder engagement showed a moderate positive correlation with social attractiveness ( $\tau = 0.364$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), indicating that stronger engagement practices, such as incorporating stakeholder feedback and organizing consultative forums, are associated with improved perceptions of trustworthiness, media relations, and inclusivity in electoral bodies.

The correlation between stakeholder engagement and transparent decision-making was weaker but still significant ( $\tau = 0.153$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), suggesting that engagement practices have a limited but positive impact on perceptions of transparency in electoral processes. The stronger correlation between social attractiveness and transparent decision-making ( $\tau = 0.376$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) indicates that improvements in one aspect of reputation may reinforce the other, as transparent practices enhance public trust and vice versa. These results suggest that stakeholder engagement significantly influences the corporate reputation of electoral bodies, though its impact is more pronounced on social attractiveness than on transparent decision-making.

#### 4.2 Discussion of Findings

##### Stakeholder Engagement and Social Attractiveness

The significant and positive correlation between stakeholder engagement and social attractiveness ( $\tau = 0.364$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) underscores the critical role of active interaction in enhancing the perceived appeal, inclusivity, and trustworthiness of electoral bodies in Nigeria. This finding aligns with the literature, which emphasizes that stakeholder engagement, through mechanisms like public forums and consultations, fosters a sense of inclusivity and credibility, thereby enhancing an organization's attractiveness (Knox et al., 2025; Tkalac Verčič et al., 2023). Social Learning Theory provides a robust explanation for this relationship, as stakeholders observe electoral bodies' behaviors, such as open communication and responsiveness to concerns, and model positive perceptions of trust and cooperation (Bandura, 1977; Edinyang, 2016). For instance, when electoral bodies actively seek input from political parties and civil society, as highlighted by Lai et al. (2021), stakeholders learn to view the institution as approachable and aligned with democratic values, reinforcing its social attractiveness. Furthermore, Shabir et al. (2024) note that organizations demonstrating empathy and fairness in engagement practices cultivate positive stakeholder relationships, which is evident in this study's finding that effective engagement enhances perceptions of electoral bodies as trustworthy and inclusive. However, the moderate correlation suggests that while engagement significantly boosts attractiveness, historical challenges, such as public skepticism toward electoral integrity in Nigeria, may temper these perceptions, necessitating sustained efforts to align engagement with societal expectations (Shafiu et al., 2023).

The reciprocal determinism aspect of Social Learning Theory further elucidates this relationship, as stakeholder engagement, public perceptions, and the political environment mutually reinforce each other (Wood & Bandura, 1989). When electoral bodies model ethical conduct and participatory decision-making, stakeholders, including voters and political parties, are motivated to engage positively, enhancing the institution's appeal (Knox et al., 2025). This is supported by Han et al. (2023), who argue that organizations fostering inclusivity through stakeholder interactions reduce skepticism and increase cooperation, thereby strengthening corporate reputation. The study's findings suggest that practices like regular consultative forums and feedback integration, as advocated by Lai et al. (2021), are critical for projecting warmth and credibility, which are central to social attractiveness. Nonetheless, Ekechukwu et al. (2023) highlight that lapses in consistent engagement can undermine these efforts, indicating that electoral bodies must maintain proactive and equitable engagement to fully realize their potential to enhance attractiveness and build stakeholder trust in Nigeria's electoral context.

### Stakeholder Engagement and Transparent Decision-Making

The weaker but significant positive correlation between stakeholder engagement and transparent decision-making ( $\tau = 0.153$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) indicates that while engagement practices contribute to perceptions of transparency in electoral processes, their impact is limited, likely due to systemic challenges in Nigeria's governance landscape. This finding is consistent with Oti and Otalor (2024), who note that transparent decision-making, characterized by clear communication of electoral procedures and accountability, is essential for fostering trust but often hindered by institutional inefficiencies and limited access to information. Social Learning Theory explains this dynamic, as stakeholders observe the electoral body's actions, such as timely disclosure of election timelines or dispute resolution processes, and model their trust based on these cues (Bandura, 1977; Edinyang, 2016). However, the weaker correlation suggests that observed behaviors may not consistently translate into perceptions of transparency, possibly due to persistent public skepticism, as highlighted by Shafiu et al. (2023). Knox et al. (2025) emphasize that structured engagement platforms, such as public consultations, are vital for enhancing transparency, yet the study's results indicate that these mechanisms may not be fully effective in Nigeria, where stakeholders perceive gaps in openness and accountability (Oti & Otalor, 2024).

The limited impact of stakeholder engagement on transparent decision-making reflects challenges in aligning engagement practices with stakeholder expectations for accessible and clear information, as noted by Shabir et al. (2024). Social Learning Theory's concept of reciprocal determinism suggests that the political environment and stakeholder reactions influence the effectiveness of engagement in promoting transparency (Wood & Bandura, 1989). For instance, when electoral bodies fail to consistently publicize policies or handle disputes transparently, stakeholders may model skepticism, undermining trust in decision-making processes (Shafiu et al., 2023). Buhmann et al. (2024) argue that power imbalances and superficial engagement can further erode perceptions of transparency, which may explain the weaker correlation in this study. To strengthen this relationship, electoral bodies must prioritize structured mechanisms like digital reporting and stakeholder consultations, as recommended by Knox et al. (2025), to enhance the observability of transparent practices and foster stakeholder confidence in Nigeria's electoral processes.

## 5.0 Conclusion

The study on stakeholder engagement and corporate reputation of electoral bodies in Nigeria demonstrates that effective stakeholder engagement significantly enhances social attractiveness ( $\tau = 0.364$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and, to a lesser extent, transparent decision-making ( $\tau = 0.153$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), thereby bolstering the credibility and legitimacy of electoral processes. Grounded in Social Learning Theory, the findings highlight that stakeholders model trust and cooperation when electoral bodies demonstrate inclusive and transparent practices, though systemic challenges limit the impact on transparency perceptions. These insights underscore the importance of sustained, meaningful engagement to strengthen the corporate reputation of electoral bodies in Nigeria's complex political landscape.

### 5.1 Recommendations

- i. Electoral bodies in Nigeria should prioritize robust, inclusive engagement strategies to foster perceptions of trustworthiness and inclusivity. Practical actions can include establishing regular, structured consultative forums with political parties, civil society organizations, and the media to ensure diverse stakeholder voices are integrated into electoral decision-making. These forums should be held quarterly, with clear agendas and publicly accessible outcomes to model openness, as stakeholders learn from observed behaviors.

Additionally, electoral bodies can develop digital platforms, such as interactive websites or mobile apps, to provide real-time updates on electoral activities and solicit stakeholder feedback, enhancing approachability and public trust. Training programs for electoral officials should emphasize empathetic communication and stakeholder relationship management to project warmth and credibility, aligning with societal expectations and reinforcing the institution's appeal.

- ii. Electoral bodies should implement targeted measures to improve the openness and accessibility of their decision-making processes, addressing systemic barriers to transparency. Practical steps include adopting digital reporting systems to publicly share detailed electoral procedures, timelines, and financial allocations in user-friendly formats, ensuring stakeholders can scrutinize actions effectively.

Regular public briefings and live-streamed sessions on electoral technology selections and dispute resolution processes should be conducted to model transparency, encouraging stakeholders to trust the system through observed accountability. Furthermore, establishing independent oversight committees with stakeholder representatives can enhance the credibility of decision-making processes, reducing perceptions of bias and fostering confidence in electoral outcomes.

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