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GALLUP POLLS FOR ELECTIONS FORECAST IN NIGERIA – AN ADVOCACY

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Abstract

As far back as 1824, a country like America saw the need for polls forecasting and began to use it. This paper reveals that, from unscientific method of straw votes, countries have advanced to scientific method of Opinion Polls popularly known today as Gallup Poll. With Gallup Poll, virtually every political, social, and economic issue of the day can be measured and the attitudes of the public concerning an issue can also be tracked. In conclusion the study establishes that, the post elections crises that engulfed Nigeria in 2011would probably not have taken place had the people been aware of the true opinions and attitudes of the majority of Nigerians before going to the polls; hence advocates that, it is high time the Nigeria Government takes queue from the Gallup organization to scientifically begin to track sensitive social and political matters of the country.

Gallup Poll is an opinion poll conducted by The Gallup Organization and frequently used by the mass media for representing public opinion. An opinion poll is a survey of public opinion from a particular sample. Opinion polls are usually designed to represent the opinions of a population by conducting a series of questions and then extrapolating generalities in ratio or within confidence intervals.

The Gallup Poll is named after its inventor, the American statistician, George Gallup. Until the mid-1980s the Gallup Poll conducted its polls using door-to-door sampling methods. Now, however, nearly all samples are chosen using the process of random digit dialing. (www.gallup daily, www.answers.com,www.media.gallup.com).

The Gallup Poll has existed since the 1930s. Historically, the Gallup Organization has measured and tracked the public's attitudes concerning virtually every political, social, and economic issue of the day, including highly sensitive or controversial subjects. For example, on 21st January 2010, Gallup began tracking daily the percentage of Americans who approved or disapproved of the job Barack Ubama is doing as president (www.gallup daily). Although Gallup has typically conducted its polling activities in collaboration with various media organizations and, on occasion, with worldwide associations and academic institutions, these polls are reputed to have been carried out independently and objectively.

According to www.wikipedia, Gallup polls were usually accurate in predicting the correct outcome of the United States presidential election which ushered in President Barack Ubama in 2009. A notable exception is the 1948 Thomas Dewey-Harry S. Truman election, where nearly all pollsters predicted a Dewey victory. The Gallup poll also inaccurately projected a slim victory by Gerald Ford in 1976, where he lost to Jimmy Carter by a small margin. (www.gallup daily, www.answers.com, www.media.gallup.com)

History of Opinion Polls

The first known example of an opinion poll was a local straw vote conducted by The Harrisburg Pennsylvanian in 1824, showing Andrew Jackson leading John Quincy Adams by 335 votes to 169 in the contest for the United States Presidency. Such straw votes—unweighted and unscientific—gradually became more popular, but they remained local, usually city-wide phenomena.

In 1916, the Literary Digest embarked on a national survey (partly as a circulation-raising exercise) and correctly predicted Woodrow Wilson's election as president. Mailing out millions of postcards and simply counting the returns, the Digest correctly called the presidential elections.

In 1936 however the Digest came unstuck. Its 2.3 million "voters" constituted a huge sample; however they were generally more affluent Americans who tended to have had Republican sympathies. The Literary Digest was stagnant to offset the bias. The week before Election Day, it reported that Alf Landon was far more popular than Franklin D. Roosevelt. At the same time, George Gallup conducted a far smaller, but more scientifically-based survey, in which he polled a demographically representative sample. Gallup correctly predicted Roosevelt's landslide victory. The Literary Digest soon went out of business, while polling started to take off.

Elmo Roper was another American pioneer in political forecasting using scientific polls. He predicted the re-election of President Franklin D. Roosevelt three times, in 1936, 1940, and 1944. Louis Harris had been in the field of public opinion since 1947 when he joined the Elmo Roper firm then later became partner.

Gallup launched a subsidiary in the United Kingdom, where it correctly predicted Labor's victory in the 1945 general election, in contrast with virtually all other commentators, who expected the Conservative Party, led by Winston Churchill.

By the 1950s, various types of polling had spread to most democracies. During these post-economic periods, surveys, analysis, and other formats were conducted in many regions. The Dean of American Public Opinion polling, Mr. Harris virtually engineered and pioneered new mechanisms for surveys and sector analysis also for various applications influencing all forms of information terminals such as the Bloomberg Terminal. Societies differentiate in reactions and tend to avoid sensitive political issues though these incentives provide a push towards the forefronts of economies and humanity. In Iraq, surveys conducted soon after the 2003 war helped to measure the true feelings of Iraqi citizens to Saddam Hussein, post-war conditions, and the presence of US forces before its withdrawal in December 2011. The 9/11 Commission and over many years, other various types of public Opinion polling surveys and analysis have also aided in post-war conditions and the presence of U.S. forces. (www.gallup.com, www.gallup daily).

The Gallup Organization

The Gallup Organization provides a variety of management consulting, human resources and statistical research services. The Gallup Organization has over 40 offices in 27 countries. World headquarters are in Washington, D.C.; operational headquarters are in Omaha, Nebraska. The Gallup Organization was founded in 1958, when George Gallup grouped all of his polling operations into one organization. After Gallup's death in 1984, The Gallup Organization was sold to Selection Research, Incorporated (SRI) of Lincoln, Nebraska in 1988. SRI, founded in 1969 by the psychologist Don Clifton, pioneered the use of talent-based structured psychological interviews. The current Chairman and CEO of The Gallup Organization is Jim Clifton.

Gallup Europe is part of the Gallup Organization. Established in 2003 in Brussels as a joint venture of various European offices. Gallup Europe acts as the coordination center for polling activities in Europe and provides evidence-based policy research and measurement-based strategic advice for all policy areas to policy- and decision-makers. It is notably the current provider of the European Commission's "Flash Euro barometers"— ad hoc thematically telephone interviews to measure public opinion. (www.gallup.com).

Sample and Pooling Methods

Opinion polls for many years were maintained through telecommunications or in person to

person contact. Methods and techniques vary though; they are widely accepted in most areas. Verbal, ballot, and processed types can be conducted efficiently contrasting other types of survey, systematic, and complicated matrices beyond previous orthodox procedures. Opinion polling developed into popular applications through popular thought although response rates for some surveys declined. Also the following has also led to differentiating results: Some polling organizations, such as Angus Reid Strategies, YouGov and Zogby, use Internet surveys, where a sample is drawn from a large panel of volunteers and the results are weighed to reflect the demographics of the population of interest. This is in contrast to popular web polls that draw on whoever wishes to participate rather than a scientific sample of the population and are therefore not generally considered as accurate.

The wording of a poll can include bias, as the bias can be in the opinion. For instance, the public is more likely to indicate support for a person who is described by the operator as one of the "leading candidates". This support itself overrides subtle bias for one candidate, as is lumping some candidates in an "other" category or vice versa. 21st century Polling arms vary in complexity due to these circumstances.

Americans Confidence in Polls

According to Frank, Lydia and David (1997), Public opinion polls would have less value in a democracy if the public - the very people whose views are represented by the polls – did not have confidence in the results. This confidence does not come easily. The process of polling is often mysterious, particularly to those who don't see how the views of 1,000 people can represent those of hundreds of millions. Many Americans contact The Gallup Organization each year

1. to ask how Gallup's results can differ so much from their own personal impressions of what people think,
2. to learn how Gallup Organization go about selecting people for inclusion in the polls, and
3. to find out why they have never been interviewed.

In addition to these questions about sampling validity, the public often asks questions about the questions themselves - that is, who decides what questions to ask the public, and how those looking at polls results can be sure that the answers reflect the public's true opinion about the issues at hand.

The public's questions indicate a healthy dose of skepticism about polling. Their questions, however, are usually accompanied by a strong and sincere desire to find out what's going on under Gallup's hood. It turns out that the callers who reach Gallup's switchboard may be just the tip of the iceberg. In fact, when asked about the scientific sampling foundation on which all polls are based, Americans were skeptical. Most said that a survey of 1,500 - 2,000 respondents - a larger than average sample size for national polls cannot represent the views of all Americans.

However, Survey researchers have actually conducted public opinion polls to find out how much confidence Americans have in polls - and have discovered an interesting problem. People generally believe the results of polls, but they do not believe in the scientific principles on which polls are based. In a recent Gallup "polls on polls", respondents said that polls generally do a good job of forecasting elections and are accurate when measuring public opinion on other issues. (www.gallup.com).

How Are Polls Conducted in America?

The Sampling Issue

Probability sampling is the fundamental basis for all survey research of Gallup Organization. The basic principle is that, a randomly selected, small percentage of a population of people can

represent the attitudes, opinions, or projected behavior of all of the people, if the sample is selected correctly. The fundamental goal of a survey is to come up with the same results that would have been obtained had every single member of a population been interviewed. In other words, the objective is to present the opinions of a sample of people that are exactly the same opinions that would have been obtained had it been possible to interview all adult Americans in the country. The key to reaching this goal is a fundamental principle called equal probability of selection, which states that if every member of a population has an equal probability of being selected in a sample, then that sample will be representative of the population. It's that straightforward. Thus, it is Gallup's goal in selecting samples to allow every adult American an equal chance of falling into the sample. How that is done, of course, is the key to the success or failure of the process. (www.answers.com/gallup organization)

Selecting a Random Sample

The first one thousand people streaming out of a Yankees game in the Bronx clearly are not representative of all Americans. Now consider a group compiled by selecting 1,000 people coming out of a Major League Baseball game in every state in the continental United States - 48,000 people! We now have a much larger group - but we are still no closer to representing the views of all Americans than we were in the Bronx. We have a lot of baseball fans, but, depending on the circumstances, these 48,000 people may not even be a good representative sample of all baseball fans in the country - much less all Americans, baseball fans or not.

When setting out to conduct a national opinion poll, the first thing Gallup does is to select a place where all or most Americans are equally likely to be found. That would not be a shopping mall, or a grocery store, an office building, a hotel, or a baseball game. The place nearly all adult Americans are most likely to be found is in their home. So, reaching people at home is the starting place for almost all national surveys. By necessity, the earliest polls were conducted in-person, with Gallup interviewers fanning out across the country, knocking on Americans' doors. This was the standard method of interviewing for nearly fifty years, from about 1935 to the mid-1980s, and it was a demonstrably reliable method. Gallup polls across the twelve presidential elections held between 1936 and 1984 were highly accurate, with the average error in Gallup's final estimate of the election being less than 3 percentage points. By 1986, a sufficient proportion of American households had at least one telephone to make telephone interviewing a viable and substantially less expensive alternative to the in-person method. And by the end of the 1980s, the vast majority of Gallup's national surveys were being conducted by telephone. Today, approximately 95% of all households have a telephone and every survey reported is based on interviews conducted by telephone. Gallup proceeds with several steps in putting together its poll with the objective of letting every American household, and every American adult have an equal chance of falling into the sample.

First, Gallup clearly identifies and describes the population that a given polls is attempting to represent. In the case of Gallup polls that track the election and the major political, social and economic questions of the day, the target audience is generally referred to as "national adults". Strictly speaking the target audience is all adults, aged 18 and over, living in telephone households within the continental United States. In effect it is the civilian, non-institutionalized population. College students living on campus, armed forces personnel living on military bases, prisoners, hospital patients and others living in group institutions are not represented in Gallup's "sampling frame". Clearly these exclusions represent some diminishment in the coverage of the population, but because of the practical difficulties involved in attempting to reach the institutionalized population, it is a compromise Gallup usually needs to make.

Next, Gallup chooses or designs a method that will enable it to sample the target population randomly by starting with a list of all household telephone numbers in the continental United States. This complicated process really starts with a computerized list of all telephone exchanges in America.

along with estimates of the number of residential households those exchanges have attached to them. The computer, using a procedure called random digit dialing (RDD), actually creates phone numbers from those exchanges, and then generates telephone samples from those. In essence, this procedure creates a list of all possible household phone numbers in America and then selects a subset of numbers from that list for Gallup to call.

It's important to go through this complicated procedure because estimates are that about 30% of American residential phones are unlisted. Although it would be a lot simpler if we used phone books to obtain all listed phone numbers in America and sampled from them (much as you would if you simply took every 38th number from your local phone book), we would miss out on unlisted phone numbers, and introduce a possible bias into the sample. (www.answers.com/gallup organization)

The Number of Interviews or Sample Size Required

One key question faced by Gallup statisticians is, how many interviews does it take to provide an adequate cross-section of Americans? The answer is, not many. That is, if the respondents to be interviewed are selected entirely at random, giving every adult American an equal probability of falling into the sample. The current U.S. adult population in the continental United States is 187 million. The typical sample size for a Gallup poll, which is designed to represent this general population, is 1,000 national adults. The actual number of people that need to be interviewed for a given sample is to some degree less important than the soundness of the fundamental equal probability of selection principle. In other words; although this is something many people find hard to believe. If respondents are not selected randomly, we could have a poll with a million people and still be significantly less likely to represent the views of all Americans than a much smaller sample of just 1,000 people - if that sample is selected randomly.

To be sure, there is some gain in sampling accuracy that comes from increasing sample sizes. Common sense and sampling theory tell us that a sample of 1,000 people probably is going to be more accurate than a sample of 20. Surprisingly, however, once the survey sample gets to a size of 500, 600, and 700 or more, there are fewer and fewer accuracy gains that come from increasing the sample size. Gallup and other major organizations use sample sizes of between 1,000 and 1,500 because they provide a solid balance of accuracy against the increased economic cost of larger and larger samples. If Gallup were to quite expensively use a sample of 4,000 randomly selected adults each time it did its poll, the increase in accuracy over and beyond a well-done sample of 1,000 would be minimal, and generally speaking, would not justify the increase in cost. Statisticians over the years have developed quite specific ways of measuring the accuracy of samples, so long as the fundamental principle of equal probability of selection is adhered to when the sample is drawn. For example, with a sample size of 1,000 national adults, (derived using careful random selection procedures), the results are highly likely to be accurate within a margin of error of plus or minus three percentage points. Thus, if we find in a given poll that President Obama's approval rating is 50%, the margin of error indicates that the true rating is very likely to be between 53% and 47%. It is very unlikely to be higher or lower than that. To be more specific, the laws of probability say that if we were to conduct the same survey 100 times, asking people in each survey to rate the job Barrack Obama is doing as president, in 95 out of those 100 polls, we would find his rating to be between 47% and 53%. In only five of those surveys would we expect his rating to be higher or lower than that due to chance error. As discussed above, if we increase the sample size to 2,000 rather than 1,000 for a Gallup poll, we would find that the results would be accurate within plus or minus 2% of the underlying population value, a gain of 1% in terms of accuracy, but with a 100% increase in the cost of conducting the survey. These are the cost value decisions that Gallup and other survey organizations make when they decide on sample sizes for their surveys. (www.gallup.com, www.answers.com/gallup organization).

Potential for Inaccuracy

Polls based on samples or populations are subject to sampling error which reflects the effects of chance and uncertainty in the sampling process. The uncertainty is often expressed as a margin of error. The margin of error is usually defined as the radius of a confidence interval for a particular statistic from a survey. One example is the percent of people who prefer product A versus product B. When a single, global margin of error is reported for a survey, it refers to the maximum margin of error for all reported percentages using the full sample from the survey. If the statistic is a percentage, this maximum margin of error can be calculated as the radius of the confidence interval for a reported percentage of 50%. Others suggest that a poll with a random sample of 1,000 people has margin of sampling error of 3% for the estimated percentage of the whole population. A 3% margin of error means that 95% of the time the procedure used would give an estimate within 3% of the percentage to be estimated. The margin of error can be reduced by using a larger sample, however if a pollster wishes to reduce the margin of error to 1% they would need a sample of around 10,000 people. In practice pollsters need to balance the cost of a large sample against the reduction in sampling error and a sample size of around 500-1,000 is a typical compromise for political polls. (Note that to get complete responses it may be necessary to include thousands of additional participators.).

Non-Response Bias

Since some people do not answer calls from strangers, or refuse to answer the poll, poll samples may not be representative samples from a population. Because of this selection bias, the characteristics of those who agree to be interviewed may be markedly different from those who decline. That is, the actual sample is a biased version of the universe the pollster wants to analyze. In these cases, bias introduces new errors, one way or the other that are in addition to errors caused by sample size. For example, Conservative voters were less likely to participate in the survey than in the past and were thus underrepresented. Error due to bias does not become smaller with larger sample sizes. If the people who refuse to answer, or are never reached, have the same characteristics as the people who do answer, then the final results should be unbiased. If the people who do not answer have different opinions then there is bias in the results. In terms of election polls, studies suggest that bias effects are small, but each polling firm has its own formulas on how to adjust weights to minimize selection bias.

Response Bias

Survey results may be affected by response bias, where the answers given by respondents do not reflect their true beliefs. This may be deliberately engineered by unscrupulous pollsters in order to generate a certain result or please their clients, but more often is a result of the detailed wording or ordering of questions (see wording of questions below). Respondents may deliberately try to manipulate the outcome of a poll by e.g. advocating a more extreme position than they actually hold in order to boost their side of the argument or give rapid and ill-considered answers in order to hasten the end of their questioning. Respondents may also feel under social pressure not to give an unpopular answer. For example, respondents might be unwilling to admit to unpopular attitudes like racism or sexism, and thus polls might not reflect the true incidence of these attitudes in the population. In American political parlance, this phenomenon is often referred to as the Bradley Effect. If the results of surveys are widely publicized this effect may be magnified - the so-called spiral of silence.

Wording of Questions

It is well established that the wording of the questions, the order in which they are asked and the number and form of alternative answers offered can influence results of polls. Thus comparisons between polls often boil down to the wording of the question. On some issues, question wording can result in quite pronounced differences between surveys. This can also, however, be a result of legitimately conflicted feelings or evolving attitudes, rather than a poorly constructed survey. One way in which pollsters attempt to minimize this effect is to ask the same set of questions over time, in

order to track changes in opinion. Another common technique is to rotate the order in which questions are asked. Many pollsters also split sample. This involves having two different versions of a question, with each version presented to half the respondents.

The most effective controls, used by attitude researchers, are:

1. Asking enough questions to allow all aspects of an issue to be covered and to control effects due to the form of the question (such as positive or negative wording), the adequacy of the number being established quantitatively with psychometric measures such as reliability coefficients, and
2. Analyzing the results with psychometric techniques which synthesize the answers into a few reliable scores and detect ineffective questions.

These controls are not widely used in the polling industry.

Coverage Bias

Another source of error is the use of samples that are not representative of the population as a consequence of the methodology used, as was the experience of the Literary Digest in 1936. For example, telephone sampling has a built-in error because in many times and places, those with telephones have generally been richer than those without. Alternately, in some places, many people have only mobile telephones. Because pollsters cannot call mobile phones (it is unlawful in the United States to make unsolicited calls to phones where the phone's owner may be charged simply for taking a call), these individuals will never be included in the polling sample. If the subset of the population without cell phones differs markedly from the rest of the population, these differences can skew the results of the poll. Polling organizations have developed many weighting techniques to help overcome these deficiencies, to varying degrees of success. Several studies of mobile phone users by the Pew Research Center in the U.S. concluded that the absence of mobile users was not unduly skewing results, at least not yet.

An oft-quoted example of opinion polls succumbing to errors was the UK General Election of 1992. Despite the polling organizations using different methodologies, virtually all the polls in the lead up to the vote (and exit polls taken on voting day) showed a lead for the opposition Labor party but the actual vote gave a clear victory to the ruling Conservative party. In their deliberations after this embarrassment, the pollsters advanced several ideas to account for their errors, including:

Late Swing

For example, the Conservatives gained from people who switched to them at the last minute, so the error was not as great as it first appeared.

The Spiral of Silence

For example, the Conservatives had suffered a sustained period of unpopularity as a result of economic stagnation and a series of minor unpopular actions. Some Conservative supporters felt under pressure to give a more popular answer.

The relative importance of these factors was, and remains, a matter of controversy, but since then, the polling organizations have adjusted their methodologies and have achieved more accurate surveys and analysis in subsequent elections.

Failures

The best-known failure of opinion polling to date in the United States was the prediction that Thomas Dewey would defeat Harry S. Truman in the 1948 U.S. presidential election. Major polling organizations, including Gallup and Roper, indicated a landslide victory for Dewey.
In the United Kingdom, most polls failed to predict the Conservative election victories of 1970 and 1992, and Labour's victory in 1974. However, their figures at other elections have been generally accurate.

Influence

By providing information about voting intentions, Opinion polls can sometimes influence the behavior of electors. The various theories about how this happens can be split up into two groups: bandwagon/underdog effects, and strategic ('tactical') voting.

A bandwagon effect occurs when the poll prompts voters to back the candidate shown to be winning in the poll. The idea that voters are susceptible to such effects is old, stemming at least from 1884. Safire (1993) reported that it was first used in a political cartoon in the magazine Puck in that year. It has also remained persistent in spite of a lack of empirical corroboration until the late 20th century. George Gallup spent much effort in vain trying to discredit this theory in his time by presenting empirical research. A recent meta-study of scientific research on this topic indicates that from the 1980s onward the Bandwagon effect is found more often by researchers (Irwin and Holsteyn, 2000).

The opposite of the bandwagon effect is the Underdog effect. It is often mentioned in the media. This occurs when people vote, out of sympathy, for the party perceived to be 'losing' the elections. There is less empirical evidence for the existence of this effect than there is for the existence of the Bandwagon effect (Irwin and Holsteyn, 2000).

The second category of theories on how polls directly affect voting is called strategic or tactical voting. This theory is based on the idea that voters view the act of voting as a means of selecting a government. Thus they will sometimes not choose the candidate they prefer on ground of ideology or sympathy, but another, less-preferred, candidate from strategic considerations. An example can be found in the United Kingdom general election, 1997. Then Cabinet Minister, Michael Portillo's constituency of Enfield was believed to be a safe seat but opinion polls showed the Labor candidate Stephen Twigg steadily gaining support, which may have prompted undecided voters or supporters of other parties to support Twigg in order to remove Portillo. Another example is the Boomerang effect where the likely supporters of the candidate shown to be winning feel that chances are slim and that their vote is not required, thus allowing another candidate to win.

These effects indicate how opinion polls can directly affect political choices of the electorate. But directly or indirectly, other effects can be surveyed and analyzed on all political parties. The form of media framing and party ideology shifts must also be taken under consideration. Opinion polling in some instances is a measure of cognitive bias, which is variably considered and handled appropriately in its various applications. (www.media.gallup.com).

Contemporary Issues about Elections Forecasts – America verses Nigeria

In January 2012, the following Election predictions were made in America and turned up to be true:

South Carolina Republican primary:

1. Newt Gingrich 25.6% 0
2. Mitt Romney 40.4% 89%
3. Ron Paul 15.0 0
4. Rick Santorum 18.3 2

Florida Republican primary:

1. Mitt Romney – 45%
2. Newt Gingrich – 33%
3. Rich Santorum – 13%
4. Ron Paul – 9%

February 2012, the following Election predictions were also made in America which turned up to be true again:

Republican Primary Projections in Nevada

	Vote Projection	Chance of win
Mitt Romney	51.3%	100%

Republic Primary Projections in Michigan

	Vote Projection	Chance of win
Mitt Romney	40.4%	89%

Newt Gingrich	25.6%	0
Ron Paul	15.0	0

Republican Primary Projections in Arizona

	Vote Projection	Chance of win
Mitt Romney	50.7%	91%
Newt Gingrich	26.2%	0
Ron Paul	14.1	0

Newt Gingrich	24.4	9
Rick Santorum	18.3	2

Republican Primary Projections in Ohio

	Vote Projection	Chance of win
Mitt Romney	29.4%	40%
Newt Gingrich	28.0	36
Rick Santorum	25.0	23

(Scott Elliott (2012), Election Projection, www.politicaldog101.com)

Contrarily in Nigeria, there is no organized and trusted organization whether by the government or private sector that scientifically tracts social and political issues. What is commonly found on the internet for Nigeria is either an individual's bias opinion or people's efforts to blackmail the public for their favored candidates. Take for example this internet piece in April 2011 titled 'Nigeria Presidential Elections Predictions from all sides' on http://ngelections2011.wordpress.com; which said "A poll from Pollster in Abuja puts all the candidates on equal footing. Next are reporting it as a win for Shekarau but with 21% of vote he is only just beating Jonathan on 20%, Buhari on 18% and Ribadu on 17%". Of course, this is very far from the INEC Nigerian Presidential Elections Results 2011 (file///F:/elections resultsnig.htm):

Goodluck Jonathan	16,309,936 votes
Muhamadu Buhari	8,477,992 votes
Nuhu Ribadu	1,884,963 votes and
Shakarau	609,382 votes

Shakarau who was predicted a win here was the least on the line of election results that really took place; rather, it was Goodluck Jonathan that won the election by a wide margin. And those who were opportuned to be in Nigeria at this time would confidently say that this kind of prediction did not in any way reflect the opinion and attitude of the majority of Nigerians across the country. It was unscientific and not objective, hence, misleading.

Conclusion

The post elections crises that engulfed Nigeria in 2011would probably not have taken place had the people been aware of the true opinions and attitudes of the majority of Nigerians before going to the polls. Even the removal of fuel subsidy that brought about large protest in January 2012 leading to destruction of lives and properties and halting economic activities for two weeks would have been better planed for if the Nigerian Government had known ahead of time by a scientific tool such as Gallup Poll that a larger percentage of people are either not well informed or not in support of the removal of fuel subsidy. It is high time the Nigeria Government takes queue from the Gallup organization to scientifically track sensitive social and political issues in the country so that the opinions and attitudes of the generality of people are well known to the world.

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