



VOTE BUYING AND ITS MANIFESTATIONS IN 2018 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION IN EKITI STATE

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Abstract: *It is evident that the brazen act of vote-buying in recent elections in Nigeria has taken the center stage in our political process. The recent elections held in the country are flawed with several irregularities including electoral frauds and money politics. The 2018 Ekiti Gubernatorial election was not spared from this electoral fraud. This is because political parties and candidates have shown by their conduct, that good party manifestoes and integrity of candidates jostling for public offices are no longer sufficient to guarantee electoral success thus, they resort to Vote-buying. In the same vein, the electorates have obviously demonstrated cynical electoral behavior by their readiness to sell their votes to the highest bidder. The study relies on content analysis of relevant data sourced from both primary and secondary sources to explore the 2018 gubernatorial election in Ekiti State. The findings of the study revealed that there was a prevalence of vote-buying in the 2018 gubernatorial election in Ekiti State. The major political parties, All Peoples Congress (APC) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) that participated in the race, were apparently indulged in electoral clientelism and vote-buying during the election. The findings also reveal that poverty, ignorance, political cynicism, lack of comprehensive manifestoes, and the desperation of the two parties to win at all costs encouraged the prevalence of the political malady. This uncharitable practice constitutes a blemish on the credibility of the election. The legitimacy of the newly-formed government remains contestable while the growing trend of vote-buying questions Nigeria's democracy. Although, it may be difficult to eliminate the phenomenon of Vote-buying in Nigerian Polity, nevertheless, its consequences on our democratic process can be minimized. The study however recommends electoral reform, massive political education, poverty reduction, and strict enforcement of legislation against vote-buying practices during elections to deter others.*

Keywords: Vote buying, Election, Clientelism, Democracy

1 Introduction

In modern democracies, elections provide the platform for the electorates to choose their leaders. It is an efficient mechanism for the peaceful transfer of power in the democratic system (Adigun, 2019). As a veritable instrument in sustaining democratic governance, the election plays a crucial role in building the state, power distribution, and ensuring peace and political stability of the state (Kiani & Sartipi, 2016). However, having expected such roles in a democracy, elections must be held

according to the fair and competitive democratic principles that accept people's rule, the right to self-determination and the construction of democratic institutions (Kiani & Sartipi, 2016).

The essence of free and fair elections in a democracy lies in the freedom of choice of voters, freedom of competition for the candidates and the impartiality of the machinery established for effecting the choice (Olisa, 1983 cited in Obianyo, 2015). In any democracy where all these are lacking, the entire process becomes encased in a ruinous

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controversy on the freeness and fairness of the election, authenticity of the results released, credibility and legitimacy crisis for those elected in the controversial process (Obianyo, 2015). According to Ojo (2008), the major distinction between electoral democracy and electoral authoritarianism builds upon the common confirmation that democracy requires elections, not just any kind of elections. Ideal democratic self-government is incompatible with electoral farces, as free, fair, and credible elections are indeed a sine qua non of electoral democracy.

Regrettably, the quality of elections across the globe, most especially in developing countries, has been plagued with irregularities such as intimidation, ballot fraud, multiple voting, low voter education, snatching of ballot boxes, violence, political clientelism and money politics, among others. (Stokes, 2005; Schaffer, 2007; Vincente, 2008; Kramon, 2009). However, one of the new dimensions of electoral irregularity in recent electoral experience, especially in Africa, is vote-buying. According to the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (2017), vote-buying uses state and public powers and resources by politicians or political parties to further their prospects in an election. To Schaffer & Schedler (2005), vote-buying in its literal sense is a simple economic exchange in which candidates “buy” and voters “sell” votes. They further argued that the act of vote-buying is a contract, or perhaps an auction, in which voters sell their votes to the highest bidder. Parties and candidates who offer material benefits to voters may generally aspire to purchase political support at the ballot box following the idea of market exchange.

According to Matenga (2016), nearly 80% of voters from 36 African countries believe voters are bribed – either sometimes or often. To corroborate the above submission, the fieldwork of Vicente & Wantchekon (*n.d.*) on vote-buying in Africa also revealed that vote-buying enjoys widespread electoral support. In Nigeria, one of the fundamental problems of the democratization process is

the inability to conduct free, fair and credible elections. Electoral malpractices have characterized virtually all the elections conducted in the history of Nigerian politics. Consequently, since the return to democracy in 1999, vote-buying has steadily grown in scale and brazenness. According to Olaito (2018), the election period is seen as a season of “give and take” with lots of commercial activities on the red-light street. He further notes that vote-buying does not only happen on the day of the election but starts from the fee charged by political parties for application forms for party offices from the national to the local level, to the party/caucus meetings, congresses, conventions, campaigns grounds, party primaries, and then general elections. Several videos and images have emerged, showing the unabashed sharing of cash, food and valuable items among the electorate by politicians and parties during recent elections in Edo, Osun, Bayelsa, Anambra, Ondo and Ekiti states (Onuoha & Ojo, 2018). Consequently, some contemporary elections' credibility, transparency, and outcome have continued to be in doubt (Nwekede *et al.*, 2018).

The issue of vote-buying has generated a lot of academic discourse. (Alemika, 2007; Danjibo & Oladeji, 2007; Bratton, 2008; Ojo, 2008; Sha, 2008; Amadi, 2012; Inokoba & Kumokor, 2011; Lucky, 2013; Animashaun, 2015; Onapajo, 2015). Many scholars and election observers have attributed the menace of vote-buying in Nigeria to the introduction of Smart Card Readers (SCRs) technology and the permanent voter cards (PVCs), the rising rate of poverty, illiteracy, desperation among politicians and the introduction of stricter measures against ballot snatching, among others (Agbu, 2015, Adigun, 2019; Nwekede *et al.*, 2018). However, many of these studies engage theories and concepts to analyse the existence of vote-buying in elections in the country without due reference to some of the peculiarities of the polls in the country. This study, therefore, investigates the practice of vote-buying in the 2018 gubernatorial election in Ekiti State. The study tries to understand the nature and



manifestation of vote-buying in the 2018 gubernatorial election in Ekiti state and the factors responsible for vote-buying during the said election. Specifically, the study investigates the consequences of vote-buying on the outcome of the election result and good governance, most especially in Ekiti State.

2. Conceptual framework

Important concepts for this study are vote-buying and elections, which will be taken in turns for explication.

Vote-buying:

Vote-buying, which is also known as "voters-inducement," "electoral treating", "vote-trading", "vote-selling," or "money exchange hand politics," has become a phenomenon and a recurring feature in most countries' electoral process (Nkwede *et al.*, 2018). Schaffer (2002) noted that vote-buying connotes different meanings in different historical and cultural contexts. According to Ojo (2006), the reason for this is that the concept, both from a historical and comparative perspective, is neither system-specific nor space-bound. Vote-buying occurs in all developed or developing democracies. According to Owasa (2014), the only difference is that it differs in magnitude and manifestation from one country to the other.

Vote-buying can be referred to as an act of exchanging one's vote for material goods, including notions of clientelism. To Schaffer (2002), vote-buying is the act of economic exchange, a contract, or perhaps an auction in which the voters sell their votes to the highest bidder. According to Schaffer & Schedler (2005), it is a situation where candidates, political parties, or any other political sympathizers buy and electorates sell votes. The candidates and the political members buy votes by offering particularistic material benefits to voters. Contrary to the above submission, Rigger (1994), in his view, asserts that vote-buying is more than a mere economic transaction. Instead, it is a combination of economic exchange and social practices.

Etzioni-Halevy (1989: 287 cited in Baidoo, 2018)) equally describes vote-buying as "the exchange of private material benefits for political support." The above definition emphasizes on gaining private material benefits by voters in return for their political support; that is, giving voters some benefits in the form of gifts or incentives for them to reciprocate with their votes by voting for the giver or the candidate. Similarly, Bryan (2005) also defines the concept as using money and direct benefits to induce voters to gain their political support. Unlike other scholars, Bryan specifically includes money in his definition. Unlike other literature, his view on the concept does not restrict vote-buying to only money but includes other materialistic items like food or material items. In this regard, voters are influenced by money and other direct benefits to manipulate their decisions at the polls (Baidoo, et al., 2018).

Deviating from other scholars, Brusco, Nazareno & Stokes (2004) see vote-buying as a transaction whereby the candidate and other political cohorts share material items such as money and gifts in exchange for electoral support or higher turnout. The main agenda is to encourage their party members and other electorates to turn out in their numbers and vote for the party. In this instance, vote-buying is used to promote political participation. While some scholars and literature restrict vote-buying to handing out cash for votes, others also extend vote-buying to the distribution of materials for votes. The concept has been viewed negatively and positively. According to Cox & McCubbins, (1986), the use of incentives are usually targeted on the poor or less educated class of opposition supporters to not turn out and vote, which is referred to as 'negative vote-buying; it is potent to encourage apathy, swing voters and a party's main supporters to turn out and vote which are also referred as 'turnout buying' (Cox & McCubbins, 1986).

ELECTION

The concept of an election, like other concepts in social science, has been conceived differently by various



scholars. According to Amid (2002: 159), the concept has several meanings, including selection, extraction, and designating something from, among other things, appointing someone from a pool. To Udu, *et al.* (2015), an election is a widely and universally accepted means through which individuals are openly and methodically chosen to represent a body or community in a larger entity or government. An election can also be seen as a form of the collective decision-making process in which the citizens, especially the electorates, decide which party or candidate takes over the responsibility for the administration of public affairs (Rose, 2000). The above definitions see the election as a democratic medium or platform through which the citizens choose those that will represent their interests in public affairs. In accordance with the above, (Clark, 2015) sees it as a procedure in which parties and candidates are selected through elected public voting and selection systems.

To Kiani & Sartipi, (2016), an election is a collection of operations to select the rulers and determine the observers to check the power. From this view, they mean that election is a selection technique and different ways to determine the choice of means of representatives. According to Judge (2006), elections are a democratic means by which citizens participate in forming political institutions and determining the operators of political authority. However, an election is defined as a “force reviving the democratic system because it creates negotiations and public debate, forms the political slogans and program and determining the parliament composition and affects the distribution of power in the government (Le Duce *et al.* 2002:1). To corroborate the above, Kerr (2013) asserts that the consolidation and the progress of democracies hinge on popular confidence in the process and in the conduct of elections. Accordingly, establishing a democratic system depends on democratic elections (Kiani & Sartipi, 2016). Without elections being conducted in a transparent, free and fair manner, democracy remains a charade in itself. To Ejue & Ekanem (2011), election is free, fair and credible

when the voters’ rights are protected. The candidate with the highest votes wins.

3. THE NATURE AND MANIFESTATIONS OF VOTE-BUYING IN NIGERIA

An election observer and monitoring group, Yiaga Africa, has described vote-buying as the new way of election rigging by politicians. The group further posits that the days when rampant and widespread ballot-box snatching, political thuggery, and falsification of figures at collation centres characterized election rigging in Nigeria are gone and vote-buying is the name of the new electoral fraud (Punch news, 2019). Corroborating this argument, Onuoha & Ojo (2019) affirm that even though vote buying has become ubiquitous in recent elections, history predates the return to democracy in May 1999. The phenomenon has been an integral element of money politics in Nigeria. The recent experiences in the 2018 gubernatorial election in Ekiti state and other states like Osun and Edo State have shown that one in five Nigerians has experienced an offer for their vote (Bratton, 2008).

According to Olaito (2018), vote-buying does not only take place in the wee hours of the election; it takes place at multiple stages of the electoral cycle and has been observed eminently during voter registration, the nomination period, campaigning and more predominant during election day, shortly before or during vote casting (Onuoha & Ojo 2019). Like a normal marketplace, vote-buying involves the buyers and the sellers (Onuoha & Ojo, *ibid*). The contestants, politicians, political parties, and party agents are the “buyers” while prospective voters are the “sellers”. They further stress that the commodity on sale are the electorates’ votes while the medium of exchange could be monetary and non-monetary items. According to Nkwede & Abah, (2019), the rewards offered by the buyers include money, commodities such as food like rice, bread, salt, onion and groundnut oil and trinkets in the form of umbrellas, T-shirt, caps, bags and other valuables. However, the market force that determines the value or price of a vote is the level of desperation of the



party and contestants to win at all costs. As noted by Onuoha & Ojo (2019), aside from the money and other valuables used by the buyers to induce the sellers, the following are the other ways vote-buying manifests in election

The Cash for Vote approach: According to them, this involves giving or promising prospective voters some agreed amount of money well before the individual casts their vote at the polling booth. Affirming this, Atoyebi et al. (2018) assert that the settlement (Money or material) is made secretly while the buyers demand evidence of ownership of a voter's card and assurance that the voter will vote for their party before offering the money.

Vote for Cash: The second way the vote-buying manifests is the giving or rewarding the voter with the agreed amount of money after the individual has shown evidence that he or she voted for the party. The method to ascertain the voter has voted for the party of the vote buyers includes; shrewdly displaying the ballot paper to inform the party agents of his compliance to the contract; taking of a photograph of the thumb printed ballot paper to show as evidence. There were widespread allegations of the above scenario in the 2018 gubernatorial election in Ekiti state. In the election, the political fraud was given the name 'see and buy', with political party agents invading polling units with bags of money (Akinde & Micah, 2020). According to Atoyebi et al. (2018), many of the party agents approached voters with PVCs and convinced them to vote for their parties. The two major parties in the state, APC and PDP, were alleged to have taken the lead in this undemocratic fraud (Atoyebi *et al.*, 2018). While the APC was offered N5,000 for a vote, the state government was alleged to have offered N3,000 per vote 'electronically. There was evidence of the amount electronically paid to the accounts of civil servants and pensioners in the state for 'logistics', which can be induced (Atoyebi *et al.*, *ibid*).

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study uses the Clientelism theory to explain the practice of vote-buying in elections in Nigeria, using Ekiti

state gubernatorial election as a case study. The Clientelism theory can be traced to the work of Etienne de La Boetie (1552-1553) in the 1500s, where he describes the practice of emperors who used gifts publicly to gain loyalty from those who were eager to accept what amounted to bribery. This suggests that gaining public loyalty and support with gifts, money, or inducements is central to clientelist practice. The early scholars of clientelism, the social relationship between patron and client, was paramount. The emphasis was on direct, face-to-face interactions and transactions between the patron {politicians} and client (voters). For instance, Scott (1972) views clientelism as an "instrumental friendship," while Lande (1977) refers to it as a dyadic alliance.

Given the above, clientelism can be regarded as the exchange of goods and services for political support, often involving an implicit or explicit quid-pro-quo (Stokes, Dunning, Nazareno & Busco 2013 cited in Nkdede et al., 2018). According to Graham (1997), the clientelism theory emphasizes a set of actions based on the principle of "take there, give here", allowing both clients and patrons to gain advantage from others' support. However, clientelism has become a pervasive problem that characterises distributive politics in many developing countries around the world (Gallego & Wantchekon, 2017). Vote-buying or political clientelism is understood generally as a situation in which a patron (contestants, political parties or politicians) offers material gifts to a client (electorates) in exchange for a vote or support (Gallego, 2014). Even though clientelism theory has limitations and shortcomings, the theory is relevant to the study since it makes a strong link between elections and vote-buying in recent elections in a democratic state such as Nigeria (Nkwede, 2018).

4. METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Ekiti state, which has sixteen (16) local governments, with 2,398,957 people according to the 2016 population census. The study areas were Ado, Ikere, and Oye Local governments. The choice of these areas is premised on the prevalence and reported cases of



vote-buying. Consequently, the study adopted a multi-stage and non-probability sampling design (random sampling) which involves the first stage, the selection of the three local governments, Ado, Ikere and Oye were randomly selected. In the second stage, one (1) electoral ward in each location was randomly selected, while in the third and final stage, fifty (50) respondents from Ado and twenty-five (25) respondents from Ikere and Oye in one (1) polling unit were randomly selected from each of the electoral wards making the total number of one hundred and fifty (150) respondents sampled for the study. Both primary and secondary data were used in the fieldwork. Questionnaires were used to gather primary data from the randomly selected respondents in the study area. Secondary data was generated from publications, literature, reports, relevant scholarly journals, and articles. In an attempt to provide a tested and tentative guide for this study, the following assumptions are made;

- i. that there are different misconceptions on the concept of vote buying;
- ii. that there are different ways vote-buying manifest in an election;
- iii. that there are factor(s) responsible for the vote-buying in the election;

- iv. that vote-buying have consequences on the credibility of the election outcome and good governance.}]'

3.1 OVERVIEW OF 2018 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION IN EKITI STATE

Ekiti state is one of the six states created in 1996 by the then military regime. The state was carved out of the Ondo State in southwestern Nigeria. The state is predominantly a Yoruba area that boasts of a homogeneous population, cultural affinity and common language (Olowoluju & Ogundele, 2019). The gubernatorial election held on Saturday, July 14, 2018, was the sixth governorship election in the history of Ekiti state. The state's previous elections took place in 1999, followed by 2003, 2007, 2009 (rerun election), 2014 and then 2018 (Nkwede, 2018).

The electoral body in the country, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) lifted the ban on election campaign on April 15, 2018 and the timetable for election slated July 14, 2018 was released. Eventually, the gubernatorial election was conducted in 2,195 polling units and 256 polling points in the 177 wards located in all the 16 Local Government Areas (LGAs) of the state with 35 political parties contesting the election (Daily Trust Editorial, 2018). As shown in Table 1, thirty- five political parties registered and contested for the election.

S/N	Name of the Candidates	Political Party	Party Acronym
1	Dr. Kayode Fayemi	All Progressive Congress	APC
2	Prof. Kolapo Olusola Elcka	Peoples Democratic Party	PDP
3	Mr. Ayokinka Dada	People For Democratic Change	PDC
4	Malam Sahced Jimoh	African People's Alliance	APA
5	Bode Olowoporoku	Advance Compress of Democrats	ACD
6	Otunba Scgun Adewale	Action Democratic Party	ADP
7	Mr. Gokan Aniniasaun	Progressive People's Alliance	PPA
8	Mr. Tope Adedunayo	Advanced People's Democratic Party	APDP
9	Mr. Akinloye Aiyegbusi	Social Democratic Party	SDP
10	Mr. Oladosu Olaniyan	Nigeria Peoples Congress	NPC
11	Dr. Sikiru Tsc Lawal	Labour Party	LP
12	Mr. Jacob Abiodun Aluko	Accord	A



13	Mr. Adcbisi Omoyeni	Mega Party of Nigeria	MPN
14	Mr. Olaniyi Apboola	Alliance for Democracy	AD
15	Mr. Tosin Ajibarc	Independent Democrats	ID
16	Mr. Dare Bejide	People's Party of Nigeria	PPN
17	Mr. Gbenga Akcrele	Democratic People's Party	DPP
18	Mr. Olalckan Olanrcwaju	Democratic People's Congress	DPC
19	Rev. Tundc Afc	Abundant Nipcria Renewal Party	ANRP
20	Mr. Lucas Arubutoyc	All Grassroots Alliance	AGA
21	Mr. Babatundc Alcgbeleyc	National Democratic Liberty Party	NDLP
22	---	People's Alliance for National Development & Liberty	PANDEL
23	Mr. Ayodeji Ayodelc	All Progressive Grant Alliance	APGA
24	Mr. Tcmitopc Omotayo	Young Progressive Party	YPP
25	Mr. Sule Olakan Ganiyu	Freedom and Justice Party	FJP
26	Comrade Shola Omolola	Action Alliance	AA
27	Mr. Olabode Jegcdc	Masses Movement of Nigeria	MMN
28	Mr. Femi Badc-Gboyccga	Unity Party of Nigeria	UPN
29	Mr. Stephen Oribamise	All Grand Alliance Party	AGAP
30	Mr. Ayodeji Faokorcde	Young Democratic party	YDP
31	31. Dr. Oluscpcun Adelcyc	United Democratic Party	UDP
32	Tcmitopc Amuda	KOWA Party	KP
33	Mr. Adcwalc Akinyclc	Green Party of Nigeria	GPN
34	Prince Adcgboye Ajayi	Better Nigeria People's Party	BNPP
35	David Adesua	Democratic Alternative	DA

(INEC, 2018)

However, in spite the 35 political parties that registered and contested for the election, apparently the election was a two-way hot race between Kolapo Olusola- Eleka of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and Kayode Fayemi of the All-Progressives Congress (APC) (Nkwede, 2018). While the PDP candidate, Kolapo-Eleke was then Depute Governor of the state and the anointed candidate of his boss, Governor Ayodele Fayose. The candidate of APC Kayode Fayemi was the erstwhile Governor of the state and was also a Minister of Solid Minerals Development under the current Buhari-led administration, the position he resigned to pursue his governorship ambition (Nwekede, ibid). According to Olowoloju & Ogundele

(2019), the election was considered by many political analysts as a “clash of titans” because Governor Ayodele Fayose has proven to be one of the most important outspoken critics of the Buhari presidency. Equally, Ekiti state stood out as the only state controlled by an opposition party in Nigeria’s Southwestern geo-political zone. In order to forestall electoral irregularities and the breakdown of law and order, 30,000 policemen and 10,000 soldiers were as well as two helicopters, 250 patrol vehicles and five Armoured Personnel Carriers were deployed for the election (Thisday, July 15, 2018). Although the decision of the federal government over the deployment of the security personnel was condemned by



the state Governor, Ayodele Fayose and his party (PDP) with the claim that the federal government masterminded the heavy security presence to intimidate PDP members and help in facilitating the rigging of the election for Dr. Kayode Fayemi of the APC (Olowoluju & Ogundele 2019).

In spite of the tension and apprehension, the election was conducted by the INEC on July 14, 2018, with 403, 451

voted out of the 913, 334 registered voters, representing 44.2% of the total voting population in the state (Nwekede, 2018).

As shown in Table 2, the results of the 2018 gubernatorial election in Ekiti State as announced by INEC ON 15 July, 2018

S/N	Name of the Candidates	Political Party	Party Acronym	Votes
1	Dr. Kayode Fayemi	All Progressive Congress	APC	197,459
2	Prof. Kolapo Olusola Elcka	Peoples Democratic Party	PDP	178,121
3	Mr. Ayokinka Dada	People For Democratic Change	PDC	1,242
4	Malam Sahced Jimoh	African People's Alliance	APA	1,199
5	Bode Olowoporoku	Advance Compress of Democrats	ACD	1,149
6	Otunba Segun Adewale	Action Democratic Party	ADP	1,052
7	Mr. Goke Aniniasaun	Progressive People's Alliance	PPA	632
8	Mr. Tope Adedun	Advanced People's Democratic Party	APDP	464
9	Mr. Akinloye Aiyegbusi	Social Democratic Party	SDP	367
10	Mr. Oladosu Olaniran	Nigeria Peoples Congress	NPC	350
11	Dr. Sikiru Tse Lawal	Labour Party	LP	280
12	Mr. Jacob Abiodun Aluko	Accord	A	250
13	Mr. Adedunsi Omoyeni	Mega Party of Nigeria	MPN	231
14	Mr. Olaniran Apoolu	Alliance for Democracy	AD	216
15	Mr. Tosin Ajibare	Independent Democrats	ID	212
16	Mr. Dare Bejide	People's Party of Nigeria	PPN	187
17	Mr. Gbenga Akerele	Democratic People's Party	DPP	181
18	Mr. Oladokun Olanrewaju	Democratic People's Congress	DPC	147
19	Rev. Tunde Afe	Abundant Nigeria Renewal Party	ANRP	125
20	Mr. Lucas Arubutoye	All Grassroots Alliance	AGA	107
21	Mr. Babatunde Alagbeleye	National Democratic Liberty Party	NDLP	84
22	---	People's Alliance for National Development & Liberty	PANDEL	74
23	Mr. Ayodeji Ayodele	All Progressive Grand Alliance	APGA	70
24	Mr. Temitope Omotayo	Young Progressive Party	YPP	49
25	Mr. Sule Olakan Ganiyu	Freedom and Justice Party	FJP	42
26	Comrade Shola Omolola	Action Alliance	AA	41
27	Mr. Olabode Jegede	Masses Movement of Nigeria	MMN	35
28	Mr. Femi Bade-Gboyega	Unity Party of Nigeria	UPN	33



29	Mr. Stephen Oribamise	All Grand Alliance Party	AGAP	31
30	Mr. Ayodeji Faokorcdc	Young Democratic party	YDP	31
31	31. Dr. Oluscun Adelcyc	United Democratic Party	UDP	29
32	Tcmitopc Amuda	KOWA Party	KP	23
33	Mr. Adcwalc Akinyclc	Green Party of Nigeria	GPN	20
34	Prince Adcgboye Ajayi	Better Nigeria People's Party	BNPP	14
35	David Adesua	Democratic Alternative	DA	14
1	Registered voters: - 909, 585			
2	Accredited Voters: - 405,861			
3	Votes Cast: - 403, 451			
4	Valid Votes: - 384,594			
5	Rejected Votes: - 18,857			

Source: INEC, 2018

The INEC's Chief Returning Officer for the election, Professor Idowu Olayinka, declared the candidate of the All-Progressives Congress (APC), Dr Kayode Fayemi, as the winner of the election (Channel TV, 2018). According to the announcement, Kayode Fayemi of APC, was victorious in 11 out of the 16 local government areas of the state, polling 197,459 votes to beat his closest rival Olusola who got 178,121 votes. (INEC, 2018).

From Table 2, it can be deduced that the winner of the election had 51.3 percent of the total votes cast while

Olushola Kolapo Eleks of the PDP got 46.3 percent of the total votes cast and the remaining 33 other aspirants had just 2.4 percent of the votes.

5. DATA ANALYSIS

5.1 Vote Buying, an Inducement to Voters to Vote against Their Wishes

Respondents were asked if vote-buying in an election is an inducement to voters to vote against their wishes. The response to that is presented in table 12.6 below.

Table 11.6 Vote buying, an inducement to voters to vote against their wishes

S/N	Vote Buying	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	52	52.0
2.	No	28	28.0
3.	I am not sure	20	20.0
	Total	100	100

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2021.

From table 11.6 above, it shows that 52 percent of the respondents said that vote-buying in an election serves as an inducement to voters to vote against their wishes, while 28 percent opined that vote-buying in an election does not

serve as an inducement to voters to vote against their wishes, and 20 percent of the respondent did not express their views on this

11.7 Giving of Gifts is regarded as Vote Buying



Respondents were also asked if giving gifts, cash and other items to electorates either by the political parties or the

candidate for the election can be regarded as vote-buying. Table 12.7 below presents this.

Table 11.7 Giving of Gifts is Regarded as Vote Buying

S/N	Giving of gifts	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	68	68.0
2.	No	24	24.0
3.	I am not sure	8	8.0
	Total	100	100

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2021.

From table 11.7, 68 percent of the respondents regarded giving of gifts, cash and other items to electorates either by the political parties or the candidate for the election as vote buying, 24 percent of the respondent did not regard giving of gifts, cash and other items to electorates either by the political parties or the candidate for the election as vote buying. And only 8 percent of the respondents said they are not sure of this.

11.8 There is nothing bad in sharing of money during an election.

Respondents were asked if they agree that there is nothing bad in sharing money and other material items by political parties and the candidate for an election to induce voters to vote for them during the election. Table 11.8 presents the responses.

Table 12.8 There is nothing is bad with sharing of money during an election

S/N	Sharing of money	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Strongly Agree	32	32.0
2.	Agree	30	30.0
3.	Undecided	10	10.0
4.	Disagree	15	15.0
5.	Strongly Disagree	13	13.0
	Total	100	100

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2021.

From table 11.8 above, it is obvious that 62 percent of the respondent agreed that sharing of money and other material items by political parties and the candidate during

an election in order to induce voters to vote for them is a political fraud. 28 percent of the respondents did not agree



with this and 10 percent of the respondents did not make their decisions known.

11.9 Awareness of Vote Buying

Table 11.9 Awareness of Vote Buying

S/N	Vote Buying	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	75	75.0
2.	No	15	15.0
3.	I am not sure	20	20.0
	Total	100	100

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2021.

Table 11.9 above shows that 75 percent of the respondents were aware of vote buying during 2018 gubernatorial election in Ekiti State, 15 percent were not aware and about 20 percent said they are not sure.

11.10 Political parties induced the voters during the 2018 gubernatorial election

Table 11.10 Political parties induced the voters during 2018 gubernatorial election

S/N	Voters were Induced	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Strongly Agree	37	37.0
2.	Agree	25	25.0
3.	Undecided	13	13.0
4.	Disagree	15	15.0
5.	Strongly Disagree	10	10.0
	Total	100	100

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2021.

From table 11.10 above, it can be concluded that about 62 percent of the respondents agreed that the political parties before, during and after the 2018 gubernatorial election in Ekiti state induced voters with money in order to vote for

Respondents were asked if they were aware of vote-buying during the 2018 gubernatorial election in Ekiti State; their response is presented in table 12.9 below.

All the political parties that contested during the 2018 gubernatorial election in Ekiti State induced voters with money before, during, and after the election. Table 12.10 below presents the respondent's views on this.

them. 25 percent of the respondents did not agree with this, and 13 percent neither agreed or disagreed.

12. Discussion of Findings



Tables 6, 7 and 8 address the meaning of vote-buying. The study revealed that vote-buying in an election serves as an inducement to voters to vote against their wishes by giving gifts, money and other rewards. The study's findings equally established that there was prevalence of vote buying in the 2018 gubernatorial election in Ekiti State and all the political parties that participated in the election were indicted of their involvement in vote-buying. This result is also in consonance with the work of Atoyebi (2018) that there was the prevalence of vote-buying in the 2018 gubernatorial election in Ekiti to the extent that the political fraud was given the name 'see and buy', where voters at the polling booths after thumb-printed would show the party agents with bags of money to convince the cronies that he/she actually voted in their favours and then get paid

Tables 9 and 10 revealed that vote-buying manifested in the 2018 gubernatorial election in Ekiti State. The study showed that vote-buying manifested through sharing money at the polling unit where the party agents and sympathizers were with bag of money to pay those who voted in favour of their parties; through electronic transfer of money, and door to door sharing of money. This finding is in line with the work of Nkwede & Abah (2019), that the rewards usually offered by political parties (the buyers) to induce the voters (Sellers) include money, commodities such as food like rice, bread, salt, onion and groundnut oil and trinkets in the form of umbrellas, T-shirt, caps, bags and other valuables.

6. Conclusion

The work has attempted to examine the political fraud of vote-buying in the recent elections in Nigeria using the 2018 gubernatorial election in Ekiti State as a case study. The allegations against the political parties that participated in the election, most especially the two leading political parties (PDP and APC), of their involvement in unabashed financial inducement of voters before and during the election have since been outrightly denied by the political parties and other stakeholders directly

involved in the elections. However, the findings from the empirical study carried out by the researcher pointed to the fact that there was a prevalence of vote-buying in the election with dire consequences on the credibility of the election, legitimacy of the elected government, effective political participation, the integrity of the people of the state as well as the image of Nigeria among the comity of democratic nations. The ignoble trade in votes that followed the gubernatorial election and other recent elections in the country clearly indicates that democracy in Nigeria is on auction sale to the highest bidder. Therefore, the study submits that electoral fraud, intimidation, vote-buying and the overall practice of clientelism remain enduring characteristics of Nigeria's electoral politics and must be addressed to avert an impending political and electoral crisis in the near future.

7. Recommendation

Based on the nature and findings of this study, some major recommendations were made in this work to assist in eradicating the monster of vote-buying in future elections in Ekiti State and Nigeria in general. Some of these recommendations include;

1. Electoral Reform: there is a need for electoral reforms to check vote-buying for future elections in the country. The amendment Electoral Act is imperative to outlaw and criminalizes vote buying and selling, including any person or group aiding it. Equally, there is a need to improve the law's enforcement mechanisms to tame the tides of vote-buying and selling as an emerging dimension of election rigging in Nigeria.
2. Mass Political Education: There is a need for massive orientation and enlighten programmes that will help change attitudes and perceptions of the individuals toward an election in particular and politics in general. The people should not see the election as a period to take their shares of national cakes but as a platform to shape their lives by voting for the right people into power. As Ovie-Whiskey rightly notes in respect of the electoral Act, 1982, the problem is not the law as such, but the society, insisting



that: On the side of the people, they should shun those politicians displaying ill-gotten wealth, knowing fully well that the money belongs to them, but being frequently siphoned by the opportune politicians. They should show self-respect and hold their dignity high by ignoring and showing disrespect to incompetent but wealthy officeholders.

3. Mass Poverty Reduction Programme: There is no doubt that an average hungry man can go a long way in selling his birthright for a plate of food. The economic hardship in the country that keeps taking thousands of people into poverty daily must be addressed. The economy must be improved upon to empower the people economically because when poverty is reduced to the barest minimum; the electorates can make independent electoral decisions in voting for credible politicians rather than incompetent but money spending politicians

4. There is the need for some ethical codes to be enacted for all elected officials to prohibit them from exhibiting stupendous wealth, which gives a negative signal to the people that election to public office gives one the rare opportunity to amass wealth

5. The INEC officials and security agencies must be given adequate training and re-orientated. All INEC officials and security personnel are expected to be non-partisan. Any security personnel guilty of aiding and abetting electoral malpractices should face the penalty as stipulated by law.

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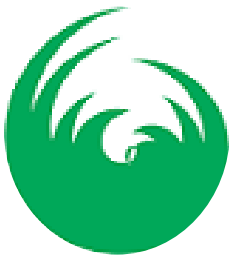
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