

Educational Qualifications, Partisanship and Vote-Buying in the 2014 and 2015 Governorship Elections in Ekiti and Oyo States

Journal of Management and
Social Sciences
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Abstract

Though vote buying as an electoral practice obtains in both developed and developing democracies, comparative empirical research has shown that this phenomenon is most visible in transitioning democracies and political parties operating in these contexts devote huge resources to fund the unethical practice. While many scholarly works have been produced on this subject, few studies have engaged the question of causality/association among voters' educational qualifications, partisan status and acceptance of inducement at elections. Thus, this study fills the scholarly gap by investigating the relationship among educational qualification, partisan status and acceptance of vote inducement among voters in Ekiti and Oyo states, Southwest, Nigeria. A total of 983 registered voters were sampled through a multi-stage sampling technique. The participants were selected randomly from the official voter registration list. The result reveals a widespread of voter inducement in the 2014 Ekiti and 2015 Oyo states governorship elections. We find a strong association between voters' partisan status and acceptance of inducement. We also find a significant association between educational attainment and acceptance of inducement among the selected sample. Voting at the two elections was not considered a civic duty as voters were only motivated by pecuniary advantage they could draw from the election season.

Keywords

Educational attainment, electoral culture, Nigeria, partisanship, voter inducement

Introduction

This article investigates the electoral value of vote buying as a vote receiving strategy by political parties and candidates in the current democratic dispensation in Nigeria. It attempts to establish the extent to which level of

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education and engagement in partisan politics influence voters' preference during elections. The question of why people vote or why they vote in a particular way or for a specific candidate has remained salient in voter behaviour literature. Traditional political science literature emphasises three key factors that shape the way voters cast their ballot: voter orientation towards public policy issues (Harder and Krosnick, 2008; Downs, 1957); voter perception/evaluation of the performance of the ruling government (Boyne, G.A., James, O., John, P. and Petrovsky, 2009; Gronlund, and Setala, 2004); and electoral credentials of candidates on offer (Blais and Young, 1999). Recent evidence across democracies, emergent and consolidated, however, caution that campaign rallies and media adverts may not be sufficient to understand the voting decision or voter preference (Gingrich, 2019; Harris and Hern, 2018). The decision to vote at all or vote for a particular candidate is increasingly being influenced by other socio-psychological factors. One of these is the expected (material) gain of the voter from the act of voting. This throws up a scenario where the party/candidate seeking elective office is willing to negotiate with the voter to dispense favours or benefits in exchange for his or her vote. Through this relationship, voting becomes a purely economic exchange or a contract (Schaffer, 2002; Schaffer and Schedler, 2007) in which vote owners (the electorate) sell a commodity (vote) to vote seekers (party/candidate). This 'commoditization' of the vote which gives incentive to the voter to sell to the highest bidder (Schaffer, 2002) fits into the perspective of the rational choice theorists.

Vote buying as an electoral practice obtains in both developed and developing democracies though varies in degree and manifestation even as the phenomenon assumes diverse meanings in different historical and cultural settings. For instance, Hoppen (1996) has revealed that British voters in the 1830s sold their votes as a 'birthright'. Rigger (1994) has also documented a popular practice in Taiwanese politics in which politicians present gifts to the people during campaign visits. In Ghana, while Lindberg (2003) has alluded to the significance of vote buying as an important and enduring element of electoral competition in the gold-rich former British colony, Nugent (2007) notes that Ghanaian politicians engage in an unethical exchange involving material inducement of voters in exchange for electoral support. In specific reference to the presidential race, he finds that presidential contenders have needed to engage in vote buying to secure party tickets while post-nomination campaigns involve cross-region visits during which candidates make 'voluntary contributions' to one good cause or another or they 'greet' local chiefs with schnapps and other gift items. One credible argument that has been canvassed in the literature for differing degree and the manifestation of vote buying across democratic systems is that the phenomenon as a 'contract' is easier to enforce in certain countries than others (Hanusch and Keefer, 2012).

Comparative empirical research has shown that vote buying is most visible in transiting democracies (Vicente, 2007) and political parties operating in these contexts devote huge resources to fund the unethical practice (Davies, 2012). Indeed, Africa has been cited in the literature as a thriving market for vote buying given the reliance of its rulers on the distribution of material benefits to the citizenry in exchange for regime support (Bayart, 1989; Berman, 1998; Bratton and Van de Walle, 1994) through a clientelistic system in which the patron controls material resources (private goods and benefits) and the clients control and provide non-material resources (vote/electoral support) which the former needs for political/electoral sustenance (Omobowale, 2008). This clientelist characterisation of African politics is driven by the assumption that voters in Africa put private transfers ahead of public goods in their voting decisions (Wantchekon, 2002). For some scholars on African governance, vote buying is regarded not only as a 'structural phenomenon' but equally as an integral part of local political culture and a phase in the process of political development (Vicente and Watchekon, 2009).

Vote Buying and Democratic Trajectory in Nigeria

Vote buying essentially involves the pre-electoral transfer of particularistic material benefits from the candidate/party to the voter with the aim of influencing his/her voting choice. Schaffer (2007) has identified the most common of these material inducements to include bags of rice, chickens, clothing, soccer balls, Viagra and whisky. Brunasco et al. (2004) define vote buying as 'the proffering to voters of cash or (more commonly) minor consumption goods by political parties, in office or opposition, in exchange for the recipient's vote'. Kramon (2009) describes the phenomenon as 'the distribution of particularistic or private material benefits with the expectation of political support'. Banerjee et al. (2011) describe vote buying as any instance by which 'cash, liquor, food, clothes or milk/refreshment (are distributed) as enticement (to vote or mobilize)'.

Vote buying is not a novel electoral practice in Nigerian politics. Rebranded 'stomach infrastructure' in the current dispensation, vote buying has been a defining element of the country's election history since the second republic, although inchoate (Ojo, 2006). This unethical electoral practice has however become entrenched in the current republic with two prominent politicians, Alhaji Lamidi Adedibu and Senator Olusola Saraki, both deceased, associated with the deepening of the phenomenon. These two politicians were known to have heavily invested in the provision of foods, drinks and other material needs for the people, particularly the poor and the needy, with the primary motive of luring them to give their votes during elections.

In the pre-independence era, the act of vote buying was particularly minimal. Given that the number of political parties was small and the parties were regionally based. There was no serious incentive for politicians to entice voters with material benefits. Rather, political parties heavily exploited

primordial loyalty to secure electoral support (Ojo, 2006). Vote buying, however, became prominent as an electoral behaviour in the second republic inaugurated on 1st October, 1979. The earlier oil boom era and the resultant petrol naira ensured there was so much money in the electoral space. Politicians introduced the practice of spraying new currency notes at campaign rallies to secure electoral loyalty with the ruling National Party of Nigeria (NPN) as the major culprit (Ojo, 2006).

In the politics of the aborted third republic, the act of vote buying became phenomenal. Politicians from the two political parties of the republic, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC) were guilty of material inducement of voters. These two parties were created by the Babangida administration as part of its demilitarization programme which has gone down in the political history of Nigeria as the costliest and longest. Politicians or their agents would clandestinely visit voters at home and offer them foods, money and other material needs. In some cases, politicians on election day offered bread inserted with money to voters. General Ibrahim Babangida was to cite the undue influence of money in the electoral process as a major ground for annulling the June 12, 1993, presidential election. In the first election of Nigeria's fourth republic, the use of money to procure votes was significantly low. This could be attributed to the fact that politicians were not too sure of the sincerity of the departing soldiers to disengage from political governance. This could however not be said of subsequent elections in the current republic as politicians have since become reckless with the use of money in their desperate bid to capture state power. Former President Olusegun Obasanjo whose party, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) was guilty of, and immensely benefited from vote buying during the 2003 and 2007 general elections offered an insight into the extent of vote buying in the current democratic dispensation when he noted that: "With so much resources being deployed to capture elective office, it is not difficult to see the correlation between politics and the potential for high level corruption" (Obasanjo, 2005). The former leader goes further: "... I have said that we prepare for elections as if we are going to war, and I can state without hesitation, drawing from my previous life, that the parties and candidates together spent during the last elections, more than would have been needed to fight a successful war... Elective offices become mere commodities to be purchased by the highest bidder..." (Obasanjo, 2005).

As obtains in other vote buying markets, key political operatives in vote buying enterprise in Nigeria include electoral candidates, political parties and incumbent governments. While candidates and parties engage in the direct offering of private goods to voters most common food items, incumbent governments may target specific constituencies with public goods such as provision or rehabilitation of public infrastructure on the eve of the election.

Stomach Infrastructure: Targets, Patterns and Strategies

The literature on vote buying has focused on four core themes namely, conditions that induce vote buying as an electoral strategy; targeted groups for vote buying; adopted strategies; and efficacy of the phenomenon as a vote generator.

Scholars have cited lack of credibility on the part of distributing politicians or their inability to make credible promises as to the major rationale why political operatives prefer pre-electoral transfers (private particularistic benefits) to pre-electoral promises of post-electoral transfers (public goods) (Robinson and Torvik, 2005; Keefer and Vlaicu, 2008; Hanusch and Keefer, 2012). While this argument may be valid, in the Nigerian case, the argument may not be true for all sections of the Nigerian polity. For instance, despite the widely acclaimed achievements of Rauf Aregbesola, the former governor of Osun state located in the South-West geo-political zone of the country, in the delivery of tangible dividends of democratic rule in virtually all sectors of the state including infrastructure, education, health and social security, achievements which should have almost effortlessly secured electoral victory for him in the 2014 governorship election in the state, his political party, All Progressives Congress (APC), still engaged in vote buying practice with the distribution of customised rice christened 'Iresi Aregbe' (Aregbesola Rice) to members of the public (Animashaun, 2014). Thus, in this case, the resolve by Aregbesola's APC to engage in vote-buying was not as a result of credibility deficit of its candidate but rather the fear that the entrenched poverty in the country may make its members and supporters vulnerable to the 'generosity' of the opposition.

There appears to be no consensus in the extant literature on targeted groups for vote buying enterprise. While Cox and McCubbins (1986) reason that political operatives will target core supporters in their distributional activities, Lindberk and Weibull (1987) contend parties and candidates will focus on swing voters or undecided voters or what Mair, Muller and Plasser (2004) call 'available voters'. In his study of the disputed 2007 Kenyan national elections, Gutierrez-Romero (2012) finds that the two leading parties that contested the presidential vote, the ruling Party of National Unity (PNU) and the main opposition, the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) engaged in vote buying targeting 'swing or moderate voters'. Studying Argentina, Stokes (2005) reports that political operatives target both low-income earners and those 'mildly' opposed to the distributing parties. Kramon (2009) reports a similar finding in Kenya where 'available' voters are targeted for mobilisation. In terms of the specific social category of voters targeted, Cornelius (2004) in his study on Mexico finds that urban lower-income earners are the preferred target groups. Nichter (2008) provides further empirical evidence for this in his study of the 2004 United States elections where he finds that politicians in East St. Louis offered rewards such as cigarettes, beer, medicine and money to the urban poor to mobilise them to the polls. Furthermore, Dixit and Londregan

(1996) corroborate this when they observe that vote buying proceeds from the low end of income distribution.

Following Nichter's (2008) typology, three core strategies of vote buying are adopted by political parties and electoral candidates in their vote buying efforts. These are turnout buying, negative turnout buying and rewarding party loyalists. Each of these models of vote buying has consequences for the electoral prospects of the distributing parties and the opposing parties. Politicians may, however, choose to combine these strategies as Dunning and Stokes (2008) have shown in the case of Argentina's Peronist party. Turnout buying involves giving material benefits to potential voters in order to mobilise them to the polls (Cox, 2006). Turnout buying increases potential votes for parties offering rewards. Negative turnout buying targets indifferent voters opposed to the distributing party with the aim of luring them away from the polls. Negative turnout buying not only disenfranchises eligible voters, but it also tends to diminish the prospect of an opposition victory. This strategy of vote buying which Schaffer (2009) refers to as 'partisan demobilization' is usually resorted to by political operatives when election reforms have substantially strengthened secret balloting as to make ballot monitoring somewhat difficult. Empirical evidence of this genre of vote buying has been reported by Schedler (2002) in the Phillipines where voters loyal to the opposing parties were materially rewarded for disqualifying themselves from voting by dipping their fingers in ink or taking bus trips out of town during polling. Kornblith (2002) also reports that in Guyana and Venezuela, political operatives dispensed favours to opposition voters to part with their voter identification cards. Rewarding loyalists as a strategy of garnering votes is relatively under-theorised (Gaus-Morse, Mazzuca and Nichter, 2009). As an electoral practice, it involves offering rewards to core supporters who would ordinarily vote the party without being materially induced. Parties offer rewards to loyal supporters either to sustain their loyalty or for the purpose of instilling a sense of 'personal obligation' on supporters. Reporting findings from Argentina, Brazil and Mexico, Lawson (2009) has shown that political parties give rewards to individuals who are more likely to vote for the candidates of the rewarding parties.

The question of efficacy or whether pre-electoral handouts sway votes in favour of the distributing parties remains unsettled in the literature on electoral behaviour. Two interrelated factors determine the efficacy of vote buying as a vote receiving strategy. These are, firstly, the ability of the vote buyers to enforce the contract of vote buying by monitoring how recipient individuals vote; and secondly the extent of secrecy of balloting. Enforcement is necessary at least to ensure 'value for money' such that voters do not just receive benefits and then refuse to vote distributing candidates or even refuse to attend polling.

Within the context of ballot secrecy that characterises modern democratic elections, vote buyers have developed creative means of achieving seller

compliance. In the Philippines for example, political parties give carbon paper to recipient voters so as to copy their ballots while Italian parties give cell phones with cameras to voters for the purpose of photographing their ballot (Schaffer, 2007: 30-31). Nigeria provides a bizarre dimension to seller compliance. During the 2014 governorship election in Osun state, there were unconfirmed media reports that the People's Democratic Party required those who received rice, salt and kerosene from the party to swear to an oath that they would vote the candidate of the party at the election. In reference to Africa, owing to the stark reality that monitoring of voting preference by political parties is particularly low (Guardado and Wantchekon, 2017) coupled with increasing electoral reform efforts in many African democracies aimed at enhancing vote secrecy, chances are that pre-electoral transfers neither result in higher party vote shares nor higher voter turnout. Using matched data to study Benin and Kenyan cases, Guardado and Wantchekon (2017) find no statistically significant relationship between cash handouts and vote shares or voter turnout. They note that since virtually all competing political parties engage in cash distribution to the same constituency, the resultant 'cash glut' tends to cancel out the effect of vote buying on voting decisions. Efficacy of vote buying as a vote generating tool will naturally depend on the perception or meaning the voter attaches to the offer. Thus, if a voter perceives the offer as an act of benevolence or compassion, h/she is likely to give his/her vote to the candidate offering the gift. On the other hand, where the voter perceives the offer as an opportunity to share from the wealth of the politicians which he perceives to be ill-gotten, vote buying will not have any significant impact on the electoral behaviour of the electorate.

Research Hypotheses

1. Voters that are not-partisan are less likely to accept inducement to vote at the Oyo and Ekiti governorship elections
2. Voters' level of education has significant influence on whether they will accept inducement at the Ekiti and Oyo governorship elections

Methods and Data

This study is a post-poll survey conducted to examine the phenomenon of vote buying and voter behaviour in two governorship elections in Nigeria. The target population comprised electorate resident in Ibadan and Ado-Ekiti in Oyo and Ekiti states respectively. The unit of analysis was registered voters that cast ballot in the 2014 (Ekiti state) and 2015 (Oyo state) gubernatorial elections. Samples were randomly selected from a list of registered voters in the two state capital cities mentioned above. The authors sought and obtained official lists of registered voters from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) offices of the two states, and these were used as the sampling frame. INEC voter registers were considered the most appropriate because there are no

alternative lists available with names and addresses of registered voters where samples could be drawn.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

Sample for the study was selected using both simple random sampling and systematic random sampling procedures. Nevertheless, the sample was drawn in two phases. In the first phase, 66 registration areas were randomly selected from Ibadan to add to the 13 registration areas in Ado-Ekiti. INEC voter registers are compiled according to registration areas (R.A.). For Ibadan (capital city of Oyo state) there are 11 local government areas, namely, Ibadan North, Ibadan North-East, Ibadan North-West, Ibadan South-East, Ibadan South-West, Akinyele, Egbeda, Ido, Lagelu, Ona Ara and Oluyole. Each of these local government areas has 12 registration area centres except Egbeda, Ibadan North-West and Ona Ara (11 each), Ido and Oluyole (10 each), Lagelu (14). For each of the LGAs, six Registration Area centres were randomly selected. Hence, out of the 127 Registration Areas in Ibadan, 66 were randomly selected. In contrast, Ado-Ekiti (Ekiti state capital) is one local government area with just 13 (INEC) Registration Areas. Because of the smallness in number, all the voter registration lists from the 13 Registration Areas centres were included in the list of the sampling frame. This was done to realise a relatively large enough sample to be included in the study from Ado-Ekiti. In the second and final phase, 25 respondents from each selected registration area (voters registration lists) were selected using a systematic sampling procedure. Thus, 1185 respondents were selected for the study. However, only 983 respondents fully filled the questionnaire and returned them, giving a satisfactory response rate of about 83% which is a sufficient threshold for this type of survey.

Instrument of Data Collection

The original questionnaire was pre-tested with a convenience sample of 25 in each city using Cooper and Schindler's (2006) collaborative participant method. With the help of four field assistants, data for the main study was collected in the months of January and February in 2016 through a face-to-face survey conducted at participants' residence. The field assistants were final year undergraduate students of a private University where the authors work. Before entering the field, the field assistants were trained in the process and procedure of questionnaire administration and ethics of research. On the field, respondents willing to fill the questionnaire immediately were allowed and the field assistants waited to collect the filled questionnaire after the respondents were done. Other respondents who could not fill the questionnaire immediately

were granted two days to do so and return the questionnaire. No inducement was offered to respondents to complete the questionnaire.

Participants

There were 983 participants in the final sample for this study. Percentage distribution for voters in the two governorship elections (Table 1) shows that age, marital status, educational qualifications and partisan status of respondents in the sample do not differ substantially between the two states. In both states, the majority of the participants have only primary or senior secondary school education (71.4%, 56.0%) and most are married (52.2%, 48.5%). In terms of the age range of the participants, about 54 percent of the sample from Ekiti are within the age range of 41-50 years. Although they are still in the majority, only 33.4% of the sample from Oyo state are in the age range of 41-50 years.

Table 1: Percentage of Voters in the 2014 and 2015 elections in Ekiti and Oyo State

	Ekiti		Oyo	
	N	%	N	%
Age				
18-30	71	21.8	150	22.8
31-40	53	16.3	204	31.0
41-50	176	54.2	220	33.4
51 and Above	25	7.7	84	12.8
Total	325	100	658	100
Marital Status				
Single	132	40.6	295	43.4
Married	170	52.3	319	48.5
Divorced	11	3.4	41	6.2
widowed	1	0.3	1	0.2
Separated	6	1.8	0	0.0
Missing	5	1.5	2	0.7
Total	325	33.1	658	100.0
Education Qualification				
Primary School	124	38.2	297	45.1
SSCE	108	33.2	72	10.9
ND/NCE	30	9.2	177	26.9
HND/B.Sc.	38	11.7	97	14.7
M.Sc./PhD	25	7.7	15	2.3
Total	325	100.0	658	100.0
Partisan Status				
Partisan	91	28.0	198	30.1
Non-Partisan	234	72.0	460	69.9
Total	325	100.0	658	100.0
If Respondents Voted in the Election				
Yes	302	92.9	651	98.9
No	23	7.1	7	1.1
Total	325	100.0	658	100.0

Most respondents (72.0% in Ekiti and 69.9% in Oyo) identified themselves as non-partisan; suggesting that majority of the sample may not be involved in active party politics or belong/loyal to any political party.

Results I

Table 2 presents results of descriptive statistics for the study. A large number of participants voted at the governorship elections in both states (92.9%, 98.9%). When examining participants' partisan status together, the majority of registered voters neither sighted parties' manifestoes before casting their votes

Table 2: Distribution of responses along partisan status in both Ekiti and Oyo states

Participants	Ekiti				Oyo				Sig
	Partisan voters		Non-partisan voters		Partisan voters		Non-partisan voter		
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Voted at the elections	76.1	23.9	99.6	0.4	98.0	2.0	99.8	0.2	P<0.001
Sighted parties' manifestos before voting	38.0	62.0	8.8	91.2	74.5	25.4	42.3	57.7	
Voted based on quality of campaign promises	35.9	63.0	0.4	99.6	74.1	25.9	32.8	67.0	
Believed campaign promises were enough to vote for a particular candidate	20.7	79.3	3.5	96.5	1.5	98.5	7.5	88.8	
Were induced or bribed before casting vote	95.7	4.3	93.0	7.0	98.0	2.0	82.4	17.6	

Source: Authors' Field Work, January/February 2016

nor voted based on the quality of campaign promises by contesting candidates at the elections. In both Oyo and Ekiti states, a large number of registered voters indicated that campaign promises were not enough to vote. A similar pattern was also noted in participants' views with regards to whether contestants at the elections attempted to or indeed offered them some kind of inducement prior to or during the governorship elections. What is indeed striking is the seeming similarity of views between partisan-voters and non-partisan voters in both states. In both Ekiti and Oyo states, an overwhelming majority of partisan-voters (95.7%, 98.0%) and non-partisan-voters (93.0%, 82.4%) respectively indicated that they were induced/bribed by contestants or their proxies before voting at the elections. Similarly, fig. 1 below shows the percentage distribution of voters who actually voted because they were convinced that it was a civic duty. The chart shows that majority of the voters in Ekiti (partisan, 67.4%; non-partisan, 59.1%) and in Oyo state (partisan, 59.4%; non-partisan, 51.3%) did not vote in the governorship elections because it was their civic right to do so. It may be that other motivating factors inspired the electorate to participate in the election process. Nevertheless, a closer look at the data suggests that more non-partisan voters in the distribution voted because they knew it was their civic duty to participate in the elections.

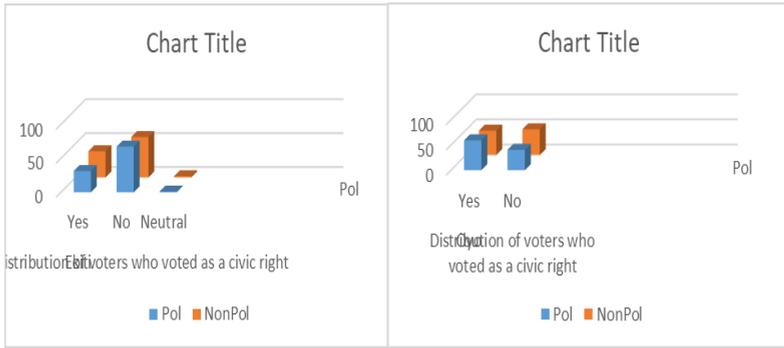


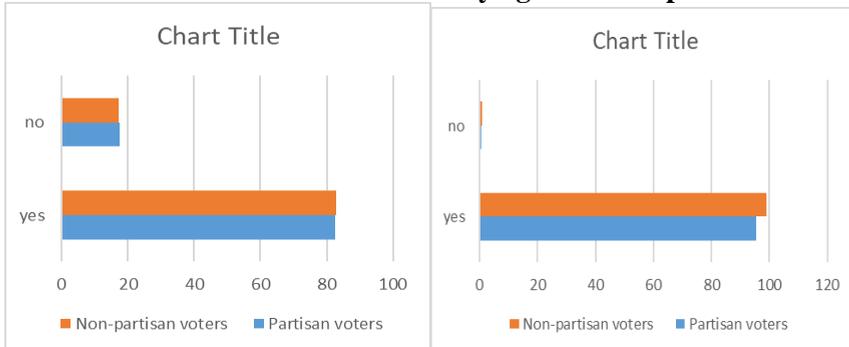
Fig1: Distribution of voters’ perception on voting at the elections as civic duty

The question is how important was inducement (stomach infrastructure) to voters? And did it have any influence on voters at the elections? Data in table 3 shows that almost every participant irrespective of whether they are partisan or non-partisan believed that stomach infrastructure was important at the elections. Fig. 2 below illustrates this information better.

Table 3: Percentage of participants who considered voter inducement important at the elections

	Ekiti				Oyo			
	Partisan voters		Non-Partisan voters		Partisan voters		Non-partisan voters	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Stomach Infrastructure was important to me before voting at the elections	82.6	17.4	82.9	17.1	99.5	0.5	99.1	0.9

Fig. 2: Illustration of voters’ perception of the importance of voter inducement at the Ekiti and Oyo governorship elections



Result II

Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis tested the association between the partisan status of respondents and acceptance of inducement to vote. Partisan voters are defined as electorate who are registered/card-carrying members of one political party or another at the elections. In contrast, non-partisans mean voters/participants who are not card carrying members of a political party. Data in table 4 shows

Table 4: T-test of partisan status on acceptance of inducement before vote casting for a particular candidate

		t-test for Equality of means						
		t	Df	Sig (x-tailed)	Means diff	Std error diff	95% confidence interval of the difference	
							Lower	Upper
Acceptance of Inducement	Equal variance assumed	-5.297	981	0.000	-0.227	0.43	-0.311	-0.143
	Equal variance not assumed	-6.929	967.1	0.000	-0.227	0.33	-0.291	-0.163

the t-test value of -5.297 and -6.929 for equal variance assumed and equal variance not assumed respectively and the significance value of $p < 0.001$ for both cases. In each case, the significant value is less than 0.05 significant level. In other words, the result indicates that hypothesis 1 which states that voters that were non-partisan are less likely to accept inducement to vote at the 2014 Ekiti election and 2015 Oyo election seems to hold true as the results indicate that partisanship is significant to acceptance of voter inducement.

Hypothesis 2

Table 5: Association between levels of education and acceptance of inducement before voting

Acceptance of Inducement at the Elections	Level of education					X ²	p-value
	No education	Secondary school	NCE/ND	Degree	Phd/Masters		
Accepted inducement	93.4%	93.2%	98.3%	83.3%	78.4%	69.9	P<0.001
Did not accept inducement	6.6%	6.8%	1.7%	16.7%	21.6%		
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%		

Data in table 5 suggests that there is a statistical association between educational qualifications and acceptance of inducement at the elections. While 21.6% of voters with postgraduate degrees did not accept inducement at the

elections, only 1.7% of National Diploma (ND) or National Certificate of Education (NCE) did not accept. The p-value indicates these variables (educational qualification and acceptance of inducement) are not independent of each other and that there is a statistically significant association between them.

Discussion and Conclusions

There has been much debate about the electoral value of vote buying on voters' preferences, and lately, this connection has been examined by scholars on the rationality of materially-induced voting behaviour. Aside from the well-researched role of vote buying in emerging democracies, little is known about how widespread this phenomenon is in Nigerian elections. Furthermore, earlier empirical studies have little to say about whether partisanship and educational qualifications of voters have any effect on the acceptance of inducement in an election.

The article started by trying to establish whether respondents participated in the 2014 and 2015 Ekiti and Oyo states governorship elections. The state-specific examination showed a similarity in response as more than 90% of the sample in both states indicated that they participated in the elections. Socio-demographic variables such as age and marital status did not seem to have an effect on participation at the two governorship elections. In both Ekiti and Oyo states, older people and more married electorate than any other social categories participated in the elections. Nevertheless, the majority of the samples from both states are non-partisan. A noteworthy point, however, is that a large number of the sample did not sight party manifestoes before deciding and casting their votes for a candidate at the elections. Even, most considered party manifestoes and campaign promises of the candidates as irrelevant. On the contrary, the views of partisan-voters and non-partisan voters were much more similar in the Ekiti governorship election than in Oyo state. In Ekiti, partisan status was irrelevant to the opinion of the sample regarding the quality of campaign promises of electoral candidates as participants overwhelmingly indicated they did not vote based on the quality of campaign promises. In Oyo state, however, differences of opinion regarding the effect quality of campaign had on their decision to vote for a candidate manifested. For example, 74% of partisan voters in the Oyo state sample voted based on the quality of campaign promises; but only a few (32.8%) of non-partisans in the sample based their voting decision on the quality of campaign promises. More importantly, most voters accepted inducement prior to or during the election before voting for the candidate of their choice. Indeed, there is a striking similarity in the pattern of opinion among samples in both states that they did not participate at the election because they believed doing so was performing a civic obligation. Thus, voter inducement or what is now popularly regarded as 'stomach

infrastructure' in political parlance was widespread in both Ekiti and Oyo states' gubernatorial elections of 2014 and 2015. Indeed, this finding further reflected in participants' belief in the connection between the importance of voter inducement and their voting behaviour.

Having established that most voters accepted inducement to vote and how this influenced their voting decisions, the study then analysed the partisan dynamics of this phenomenon. Here we tried to establish whether voters' engagement in party politics will significantly influence acceptance of vote inducement. Here we got a surprise as the finding suggests a connection between partisanship and acceptance of inducement. In plain language, the findings reveal that partisan voters are more likely to accept inducement at the elections than non-partisan voters. The only explanation for this is that voters that are politicians are insiders and therefore more exposed to the nuances of materials and strategies of vote inducement. They know candidates bring money and material items to party offices for onward distribution to members of the society. Despite party affiliation, therefore, members may likely view stomach infrastructure as a welfare package for members or as pay back items for their loyalty to the party. This finding is similar to that of the study conducted by Bratton (2008) who finds a correlation between vote buying and loyalty to a political party. Yet, this finding poses a surprise. Ordinarily, voters that engage in party politics are expected to be motivated by party ideology coupled with the quality of campaign promises of candidates rather than the monetary or material reward (Enders and Smallpage, 2018; Gans-Morse, Mazzuca and Nichter, 2009). Nevertheless, party members are members of the society who are influenced by the prevailing socio-economic dynamics in the society.

The study analysed the association between the educational qualifications of voters and acceptance of inducement. It was observed that acceptance of inducement is associated with how much education a voter has. Both variables are not independent of each other. The more education a voter has the less likely he/she will accept inducement before voting. This result confirms earlier studies which suggest that education is one of the keys to reducing the influence of acceptance of inducement by voters (Marshall, 2015; Tolbert and Smith, 2005). It was observed that majority of voters at the two governorship elections were educated only up to secondary school level. Low number earned a degree or postgraduate degrees.

In conclusion, it was not the belief of the voters in civic responsibility that motivated them to participate in the governorship elections but rather their participation was due to the presence and acceptance of inducement from electoral candidates or their proxies. While partisan status of voters has nothing to do with decision to accept inducement from politicians, educational attainments seem to exact some level of influence on voters' decisions. Although, this article offers some insight into the currency of vote buying and the sociology of electoral culture in Nigeria, it is limited in a number of ways.

For instance, it would have been more interesting to analyse the organisational dimension of vote buying in the country in order to establish how this is implicated in the results declared at the elections. Findings from such empirical study will have far reaching policy impact on how best to curtail the menace of vote inducement in Nigeria's electoral culture. In addition, if poverty dynamics of vote buying is investigated, it has prospect of offering more insightful dimensions to the worth of the current findings among political sociologists and scholars of electoral/political studies.

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