

Vote Buying and the Dialectics of Free and Fair Election in the 2017 Gubernatorial Election in Nigeria's Anambra State

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Abstract

The essence of election is to avail the citizens the opportunity to elect leaders of their choice. However, when such opportunity is manipulated by political parties through vote buying, the credibility of such election becomes a mirage. This study x-rayed the impact of vote buying on the conduct of free and fair election in the 2017 gubernatorial election in Anambra state. The study adopted descriptive survey research design and utilized questionnaire as the instrument of data collection. 400 respondents were interviewed using the well-structured 5-point scale questionnaire. Collected data were presented using frequency tables and percentages while chi-square test was used for data analysis. The study revealed that money and other material gifts were used to influence voters' choice of candidate by various political parties in the 2017 Anambra gubernatorial election. It was also revealed that vote buying significantly retarded the achievement of free and fair election in the 2017 gubernatorial election in Anambra state. Against this backdrop, this study recommends a stronger and abjectly independent electoral umpire with the requisite powers to prosecute electoral offenders especially those that engage in monetary inducement of voters.

Keywords: Democracy, Free and Fair Election, Money Politics, Political Parties, Vote-buying.

Introduction

In every democracy, free and fair election is indeed a sine qua non. No polity can be adjudged democratic if elections are not free from corruptible influence. The snag however, is that in Nigeria and several African countries elections are far from being fair (Ozekhome, 2020). One of the major palpable factors aside electoral violence is the menace of vote buying. This political malady is indeed pervasive in Nigeria as evident in Ekiti and Osun States and in the last concluded 2017 Gubernatorial Election in Anambra State (Nwankwo, 2018). Paradoxically; money itself has become a dominant factor. It is unfortunate that money seems to have taken the center stage in the political process in most countries, Nigeria in particular and because of this, the electorate's intentions are being subverted by money and other material inducements, thereby negatively affecting democratic ethos and values, especially the conduct of free and fair election in the State. However, it is disheartening that money plays a dangerous role in Nigeria elections. It even appears to be so dominant in the electoral process to an extent that the word 'vote

buying', seems to be an accepted nomenclature in the contemporary Nigerian politics. The 2017 Anambra State Gubernatorial Election was conducted and the winner declared but, the fact that it was dominated by high incidence of commercialization of votes or vote buying cannot be deemphasized. The Transition Monitoring Group [TMG], (2017), in its assessment of the election condemned the widespread of vote buying by party agents of the candidates. Mr Clement Nwankwo, the convener of Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room [NCSSR] (2017), in his interim report, flayed the commercialization of the process, He stated thus; "This emerging impunity of vote buying appears to be a dangerous trend in our elections and needs to be addressed urgently", (Vanguard Editorial, November 30, 2017).

Though many scholars engage in arguments with theories and concepts to explain the problem facing the Nigerian democracy, the problems keep growing without a noticeable improvement. In principle when a faulty process brings in a leader into power, the outcome cannot be more than the initial defective input (Onapojo, 2015). The result of the bad system of voting seen in Nigerian democracy manifests itself as many problems facing the Nigerian State such as corruption, unemployment, insecurity, violence, economic downturn, terrorism, and political instability, among others. Despite, the plausibility and strength of the arguments and issues raised by previous scholars on the subject matter, it is necessary to note that previous studies focused mainly on how various government institutions, politicians and the electorate engage in vote buying without looking at how vote buying affect the conduct of free and fair elections in the polity.

Existing scholarship in this area of study such as Ezeke (2011), Durotoye (2014), Adamu, Ocheni and Ibrahim (2016), Nwankwo (2018), Dickson, Danjuma and Ugwoke, (2019), Oladapo, Oyewele and Abayomi, (2020), did not ascertain the effect of vote buying on the conduct of free and fair elections in Nigeria especially the 2017 Gubernatorial Election in Anambra State. It is against this backdrop that this research work will employ the use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches to gather both primary and secondary data so as to bridge the existing gap that this study intends to fill.

Literature Review

Vote Buying and Money Politics in Nigeria: Vote buying has been a contentious challenge facing elections in Nigeria's Fourth republic. The ugly situation is at the verge of rendering elections in Nigeria's democracy worthless. This is because vote buying normally ends up producing bad leadership against the will of the electorates.

Several attempts have been made by writers and researchers to define the concept of vote buying. This is because vote buying carries different notions in different countries depending on the country's historical, cultural, political aspects and its election models (Schaffer, 2007). One of the most cited definitions on vote buying is from Etzioni-Halevy (as cited in Baidoo, Dankwa and Eshun, 2018) who defined vote buying as "the exchange of private material benefits for political support." The above statement by Etzioni stresses on gaining private material benefits by voters in return for their political support. In other words, it is about 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. In effect, voters are

given items for their private use and they are expected to return this gesture from candidates or political parties by voting for them. She saw this act as an exchange in the sense that the materials are given to the electorate in anticipation that the electorate would consider the gift received and vote for them. The implication of this is that instead of the electorate voting the best candidate for a political position, they are induced by material gains in the form of money, clothing or food items to vote in the candidates with more material benefits not minding if such political aspirant is the best for such position. In some rare cases, they might not vote at all so as not to be victimized by political party brokers whom they collected gift items from and are not inclined in their personal assessment to vote for their candidates. The malady of vote buying has to a great extent flawed free and fair election and electoral decisions, electorates because of this now sees election as a bazaar arena where the highest bidder gets the highest number of votes and this is inimical to popular choice and popular representation. In line with the above argument, vote buying minimizes the chances of politicians contesting for power on fair ground; it turns election to a situation whereby the candidate with the highest monetary capacity wins. In the same notion, Uwamahoro (2018) saw vote buying as an isolated action which perpetuates corruption throughout the entire political system. Simply put, it is the exchange of cash for votes. (Okoli and Lortyer, 2017).

Shedding more light on the above statement, Okoye, cited in Okoli and Lortyer (2017), explained that vote buying is a type of money politics that solely has to do with influencing voters' decision either in cash(money) or with material items (clothes, food items, among others). An election that is influenced by vote buying cannot be said to be free and fair but an avenue for those with more economic advantage to gain the control of political power at the detriment of other contestants and the non-exposed and hungry electorates therefore sees the election period as an avenue to get their own share of the national cake not knowing that they are selling out the future dividends of a true democratic state on a platter.

Vote buying is manifested in different forms and in different political arrangements which can be during Party Primaries, campaigns and so on. It is not necessarily only at the polling unit. As captured by Okoli and Lortyer(2017: 32). Vote buying /selling is more pervasive during primary elections. In this context, political aspirants and their god fathers pay party delegates huge sum of money in order to win their votes. Sometimes, the payment is not necessarily in cash, cars, estates have also been used in lieu of cash. In general elections, vote buying and selling takes the form of exchange of money, foodstuff, clothing or other articles for votes.

From the above assertion it is obvious that vote buying takes place even during political party primary elections and the general election. This is to say that the votes of party delegates can also be bought during party primaries in order to influence their choice of the party flag bearer during the election proper. In a similar view, Dickson, Danjuma and Ugwoke (2019, p.77) contends that vote buying can also take place after the election proper even when the elected candidate has been sworn in as the elected representative and has already assumed official duty. This is seen when the elected representative compensates the so called "party bigwigs", some top party financiers and stakeholders

who in one way or the other influenced his Political success through cash subventions, political appointments, nominations among others. However, in a bid to show gratitude for cash or political support offered by this political elites and party structures, the elected representative instead of performing his acclaimed political duty of giving back to the society and electorate that elected him to represent their interest uses Government fund to sustain his party structure and “political god fathers” and at the end corruption and underdevelopment is the resultant effect. In line with this, Okeke (2014) averred that vote buying is also evident in the legislative arm of government where the legislators support a bill in exchange of monetary gain. This happens in the passing of a legislative bill whereby a legislator may decide to consent to a particular bill against another because of monetary inducement by the executive that initiated the bill or proposal. In some cases, this is also known as executive lobbying (Okoli et al, 2017).

Muhtadi (2019) condemns the act of vote buying, maintaining that it is a last-minute effort to influence the voter’s decision in an election. This usually takes place days before the election or even few hours or before the electorate goes in to vote by providing the voters with cash, goods, food items or other material benefits. In order to accumulate cash or material gift to give out to voters during elections, political office holders instead of utilizing public fund for development of infrastructure in the state siphon those finance for personal aggrandizement and use such for personal gains of which vote buying is one of such. Thus, money meant for the development of the state is used instead to buy votes from the electorates. Candidates that are not currently holding any political office before the inception of the electoral contest mostly seek the help of business tycoons or influential party members and might enter into an agreement with them so as to be financed by such rich politicians (God fathers) which after the election instead of the interest of the state being protected interest of these God fathers are protected to the detriment of the state. Vote buying in Nigeria is considered as a criminal offence, this is evident as stipulated in Article 130 of the Electoral Act 2010, as amended which states that: “A person who corruptly by himself or any other person at any time after the date of an election has been announced, directly or indirectly gives or provides or pays money to any person for the purpose of corruptly influencing that person or any other person to vote or refrain from voting at such election; or being a voter, corruptly accepts or takes money or any other inducement during any of the period stated in paragraph of this section, commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of N 100, 000 or 12 months imprisonment or both” (Oladapo, Oyewale and Abayomi, 2020, p.73). Though this law is stipulated, it needs to be promptly adhered to so as to avert this malady that has eaten deep into the nation’s political lexicon because the act of vote buying is a corrupt practice and is contrary to the stipulated laws of the country. It affects due process of electing leaders as voters are always induced to vote for candidates with more cash to give to the detriment of the have not’s, money decides who wins and not the citizens original choice of candidate. Shedding more light on the above statement, Baidoo, Dankwa and Eshun (2018), states that the occurrence of vote buying, seen as an incentive or gifts given to voters before elections in exchange for their votes is a corrupt electoral practice and it obstructs the democratic

process, it is also a threat to the conduct of elections. In other words, the act of vote buying is a corrupt practice and is in contrast to the laws of the land.

Conversely, Stokes, Dunning, Nazareno and Brusco (2013, p.70) in their opinion on the drastic effects of vote buying asserted thus: Efforts at vote buying incur high cost, caused by both the need to establish a structure of vote brokers to deliver benefits to the voter and of course the requirements to raise cash, for distribution. With limited resources in hand, and in an environment in which ballot secrecy is protected, candidates are concerned with the effectiveness of vote buying in determining outcomes. As a result, they focus on the distribution of electoral incentives to some voters but exclude others.

Politicians in a bid to gain political positions incur a lot of expenses during the election period and thus they find it difficult to deliver necessary political dividends to the masses when they finally win. In a bid to minimize such expenses incurred during the election period by politicians they give out cash to some voters whom they think are more paramount to their electoral success and leave some most especially their party loyalists. This group of electorates might decide not to vote at all during election resulting to political apathy. Some candidates are likely to win an election without getting involved in vote buying because of its inefficiency as some party brokers might decide to siphon cash allotted to them in this regard. But, due to the corrupt nature of politics in the country not buying of votes is seen as the beginning of electoral failure by politicians (Hicken, Aspinall, Weiss and Muhtadi, 2018). From the forgoing, politicians see themselves involving in vote buying as a necessity to political victory not minding the fact that such act is inimical to democracy and popular choice.

In a similar view, Fox (1994) saw vote buying as exchanging political rights for material gains. His focus is on the right of a person to exercise his/her franchise. His definition, also stresses on an exchange which is also seen as a transaction. Thus, selling one's right by accepting a gift, incentive or benefit to vote for a candidate or a political party. To Fox, the aspect of exchange between the material benefit and the political support is more significant than the objective of the exchange. Schaffer (2002), in his own view explained further that Vote buying represents the exchange of money, gifts, goods or services for a vote. A "vote is literally 'bought' or 'sold' depending on whether one adopts the perspective of the candidate or the voter. The process of vote buying is accomplished via vote brokers, called the "Rigger". The vote brokers propose money, goods, or services to the voters in return for their vote (Wu and Huang, 2004). This vote brokers acts as the middle men between voters and politicians contesting for political power.

Bryan, cited in Baidoo, Dankwan and Eshun (2018) also defined the concept as the use of money and direct benefits to influence voters. While the first two definitions did not actually focus on the use of money, Bryan specifically included money in his definition. His definition, unlike some existing literature does not restrict vote buying to only money but includes other materialistic items like food. In this instance, electorates are given money and other direct benefits to manipulate their decisions. Thus, they are given these items to influence their decisions or choices at the polls. Again, voters are also given these direct benefits and may be expected to abstain from voting or to vote in a particular way.

Brusco, Nazareno and Stokes (2004) in their own analysis of the concept, views vote buying as an entirely party affair. They explained vote-buying as a form of transaction whereby candidates distribute private goods such as cash and gifts in exchange for electoral support or higher voter's turnout. The focus here is for voters, especially party supporters and swing voters to turn out in their numbers and vote for the party. In this case, they see vote buying as giving out of cash and other material items such as building materials, food and liquor to electorates especially party supporters to go out in their numbers and vote for the party. Effectively, electorates are paid solely to turn out and vote for the distributing party. The number of electorates who turn out to vote for a candidate is important in understanding people's political participation. This definition sees vote buying as a transaction (where there is a bargain and an agreement) or a trade.

On the other hand, Schaffer and Schedler (2005) contended that the logic of trade demands that the actors involved (buyers and sellers) engage in effective exchange of money for goods or services. In the absence of mutual exchange, if buyers do not pay or sellers do not deliver, the act is not considered as trade but instances of fraud or robbery. To them, the logic of commercial transactions further demands that buyers and sellers understand what they are doing: that they enter a reciprocal relationship of exchange. In other words, if voters accept the money, but vote as they had planned to do anyway, they do not take part in an act of exchange. They are not selling their votes, but earning unilateral gains. In their view, voter turnout gives the election management body an idea about the image of the authority in the eyes of the electorate. It can give it cause to assess its election processes to eliminate steps that hinder turnout and improve its organization of elections with the introduction of other workable measures to lure eligible voters to the polling centres during elections.

More so, Schaffer and Schedler (2005) posited that if we embrace a literal understanding of the term anchored in the world of economic exchange, we may define the purchase of votes in the electoral arena as a market transaction in which parties, candidates, or intermediaries pay (in cash or kind) for "electoral services" delivered by individual citizens. They identified the electoral services to be either a favourable vote or a favourable abstention. They see vote buying as a market exchange and in their view; the commodity that changes hands in the acts of vote trading carries a well-defined institutional meaning. To them, in the vote buying transaction, electorates can be engaged to offer electoral services. These services may require supporters and swing voters to go out in their numbers and vote for the party while they are rewarded for the services. The services may also target opposition supporters by paying them to refrain from voting and this does not ensure free and fair election. To them, votes are formalised expressions of preference by individual members of decision-making bodies.

They went further to identify two types of barriers that may impede the buying of votes as objective and inter-subjective barriers. With objective barriers, seller compliance is uncertain, since vote buying is an illicit business and as such does not take place within a "normal" market protected by social and legal norms. On the inter-subjective side, the electoral practices that are described as "vote buying" may carry different meanings in different cultural contexts, both the politicians and the electorates sees their relationship

as a relation of exchange (Schaffer and Schedler, 2005). The two barriers faced by politicians are quite challenging, on the objective side the voters most times fail to vote during the election time while inter- subjectively they might fail to understand commercial offers made to them by the politicians.

Vote Buying, Free and Fair Elections in Nigeria

Free and fair election is the cornerstone of every democracy and the primary mechanism for exercising the principle of sovereignty of the people (Udeoba and Aloukwu 2021). Through periodic free and fair election citizens confers legitimacy to a polity and developmental quests are sustained. Conducting free and fair election in a growing democracy like Nigeria has been a big task since the inception of democracy in the country.

The Nigerian electoral system for Ozekhome (2020:31), has been fraudulent and this needs to be nipped in the bud because it is necessary for elections to reflect the wishes and choices of the electorates. Going further, Agbu (2016) stated that elections in Nigeria is characterized by massive fraud, intimidation, assassination of political opponents, rigging, vote buying and others and this does not support the conduct of free and fair election. Free and fair election in Nigeria is a far cry when compared to what is obtainable in other democracies as opined by Esan and Ayeni (2017). Election in Nigeria is impinged by political violence, intimidation of voters, brazen falsification of election results, intimidation of officials and observers, under age voting, vote buying among others which induces voters to vote in candidates not based on party manifestoes or productivity but based on inducement, thus negating free and fair election. It is difficult to remove electoral fraud or manipulation from the history of elections in Nigeria. According to Awopeju (2011), Election rigging dates back to pre- independence.

The phenomenon vote-buying became prominent in post independent Nigeria. Even then, their influence was very minimal in the first republic from 1960 – 1966. During the first republic, appeals to ethnic and religious sentiments were the most important weapons the political leaders and tribal heroes deployed to ensure electoral victories. This was possible because the strength and popularity of the major political parties and their allies were essentially enhanced by the primordial ties they had with the people in their regions. The parliamentary system that was being practiced then, also made it possible for the political parties to exercise considerable control over the candidates to be fielded for elections. As Dudley cited in Ovwasa (2014) correctly observed that candidates in the elections were less important as the parties took the centre stage, appealed to ethnicity played alliance politics and used highly emotive terms which in most cases invited people to violence. Most of the election expenses were borne by the parties from the funds they were able to raise. It should be noted, however, that although politicians were known to distribute T-Shirts, Caps and badges with party emblems, some food stuff and sundry items to voters at political rallies, there was no huge spending by individual candidates to win elections as obtain currently in the political activities of candidates.

However, vote-buying escalated to greater dimensions during the second republic which started in 1979 (Ovwasa, 2014). It was perhaps, encouraged by some wealthy Nigerians who made their money during the Nigerian civil war between 1967 – 1970, by

probably supplying arms and ammunitions to both parties to the war and those who were government contractors, reconstructing projects, after the destructive civil war. As soon as the military signalled the commencement of competitive politics, these people ventured into politics or sponsored candidates for elective office. Davies (2006, p.12) in a recent work summarizes the situation as follows:

There was so much display of affluence and use of money by the wealthy contractors and the mercantile class that those who emerged victorious in the conventions and the primaries of some of the political parties, notably the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), the Nigerian People's Party (NPP) and the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) belonged to the business managerial.

The situation was even worse in 1993 as the act of vote-buying took very firm roots in the political activities of contestants (Nwosu, cited in Ovwasa, 2013). This was because the political campaigns for the conduct of the 1993 election demonstrated excessive use of money during the party primaries and the presidential elections, despite the fact that the elections were conducted under the watchful eyes of the military. The rich had actually hijacked the two political parties decreed into existence by the military, namely the National Republican Convention (NRC) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP). At the primaries for example, the use of money to win party nomination was pervasive while complaints of bribery trailed the results. As one of the contestants who lost out claimed, "Money was paid to party functionaries, who were demanding and negotiating the amount of money to be given to them for payment to win offices and others, and for how votes will be allocated to aspirants" (Nwosu, 1996, p.78).

Interestingly enough, the noticeable excessive use of money during the 1993 presidential election was ostensibly adduced by President Babangida to annul the election. In annulling the 1993 election, he declared: There were authenticated reports of election malpractice against agents, officials of the NEC and voters... there were proof of manipulation, offers and acceptance of money and other forms of bribery. The amount of money spent by the presidential candidates was over 2.1 million naira (Ojo, 2007).

Similarly, vote-buying reached its pinnacles in the elections that ushered in the current democratically elected government in 1999 and the civilian-civilian transition elections of 2003, 2007 and 2011, as one political scientist once observed, "if the use of money in the 1999 elections was open and shameless that of 2003 was outrageously indecent (Suberu, 2001). This seemed to have ironically pricked the conscience of former President Obasanjo, who was a beneficiary of the sordid act in the two elections to admit though, belatedly that with so much resources being deployed to capture elective offices, it is not difficult to see the correlation between politics and the potential for high level corruption.

The greatest losers are the ordinary people; those voters whose faith and investment in the system were hijacked and subverted because money, not their will, is made the determining factor in elections and subsequently, election are neither being fair nor free. Can we not move from politics of money materialism to politics of ideas, issues and development (Obasanjo, 2005). Vote buying assumed a frightening and consummative dimension in the 2007 elections, (Asobie, 2007). This is because the use of money to buy

conscience appeared to have been extended to the judiciary whereby contending candidates influence tribunal judgement with money.

It will be recalled that the Governorship Candidate of the Action Congress (AC) later Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) and now All Progressive Congress (APC) Engineer Rauf Aregbesola had dragged the Osun State Governor Olagunsoye Oyinlola, of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) to the Osun State First Elections Petitions Tribunal to challenge his election as the Governor of Osun State for the second term. The News Magazine of 6th July 2008, made damaging allegations against the Tribunal members and the counsel to Governor Oyinlola. The news magazine reported how two judges of the Osun State First Elections Tribunal, namely, Thomas Naron (Chairman) and J.F. Ekanem were alleged to have "Slipped into Cesspool of scandal" by their very regular telephone calls and text messages to Kunle Kalejaiye (SAN), the lead Counsel to Governor Oyinlola (*The News Magazine* July, 2008).

Although these were mere allegations but they were substantial to cast the judiciary in bad light since it is unethical for the judges of the tribunal to have private discussion regarding the case without the presence of the representative of the petitioner. As widely expected, and perhaps, because of this "Unholy Marriage" between the tribunal judges and the lead Counsel to Oyinlola, the verdict was given in favour of Oyinlola. In rejecting the judgment, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), said the discredited election petition tribunal delivered its obnoxious judgment without any atom of moral scruple or an eye for Justice (Fayeniwo, 2008).

Nonetheless, it took another two years of legal battle before this ugly situation was reversed. This is because the Appeal Court sitting at Ibadan set aside the First Elections Petitions Tribunal Judgment and decided the case in favour of ACN candidate Rauf Aregbesola on the 26th of November, 2010, and directed that he be sworn in as Osun State Governor on the 27th of November, 2010. This was why there was no governorship election in Osun State on April 26th 2011. The fact is that the use of money or any other inducement for that matter, to preserve justice creates problems for good governance. Commenting on the high use of money in Nigerian Politics, the *Guardian* of May 31st, 2008 has this to say: *In a country where money politics is very high, the opposition candidates are in disadvantaged position before the polls.* The fact that a politician is out of power, having lost patronage easily loses followership makes matter worse. For the fact that most politicians of nowadays cannot look beyond their nose, they soon become orphaned (*The Guardian*, 2008). Politicians without capacity to buy votes are left without anything and citizens because of non-exposure, greed and poverty level are induced to vote in politicians who bought their votes contrary to the principles of free and fair election

Research Method

Research Design: The study employed a descriptive survey research design. This design was adopted in order to enable the researcher gather wide range of data on how vote buying affects the conduct of free and fair election in Nigeria: A study of the 2017 gubernatorial election in Anambra State.

Method and Instrument of Data Collection: The study employed the Quantitative (ex-post-facto) Research Methodological approach of data collection. Instrument of data collection was questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed using homogenized questions to ensure uniformity of responses for easy data collection and analysis. The questions were structured in a closed-ended format for easy understanding and responses. Copies of the questionnaire were administered with the help of three research assistants who were trained for one week on how to carry out the exercise. While in the field, questions were explained to the respondents before they filled the questionnaire. Those who couldn't read nor write were assisted by the research assistants to interpret and complete the questionnaire.

Population of the Study According to the National Population Census that was held in (2006), Anambra State has a population of 4, 177,828. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the population projection of 13 years using an annual growth rate of 3.2 percent (UNDP) as suggested by Owuamalam (2012) was utilized. Projected population for Anambra State

$$PP = GP \times PI \times PT$$

Where PP = Projected population

GP = Given population

PI = Population increase index

PT = Period between given population and the year of study (PT = 2006 to 2019 = 13)

Therefore, PP =?

$$GP = 4, 177, 828 \times 3.2 \times 13$$

Therefore, PP =?

$$GP =$$

$$PI = 3.2/100 = 0.032$$

$$PT = 2006 \text{ to } 2019 = 13$$

$$PP = 4, 177, 828 \times 0.032 \times 13$$

$$= 1,737,976.448$$

Therefore, PP + GP

$$= 4,177,828 + 1,737, 976.448$$

$$= 5, 915, 804.448 \text{ (Actual population).}$$

SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The sample of the population of this study was arrived at using Taro Yamane formula thus:

$$n = N / (1 + N (e)^2)$$

Where: n = desired sample size

N = population size under study

e = error margin which is 0.05

1 = unity and is always constant

$$\text{Therefore: } n = 5, 915,804.448 / 1 + 5, 915,804.448 (0.05)^2$$

$$n = 5, 915, 804.448 / 1 + 5, 915, 804.448 \times 0.0025$$

$$n = 5,915, 804.448 / 1 + 14, 789.51112$$

$$n = 5,915, 804.448/14,790.51112$$

$$n = 399.9$$

Therefore, $n = 400$ (sample size)

For this study, multi-stage sampling method was used. This was to allow the respondents from Anambra State to have equal chances of being selected. Anambra State has 3 senatorial districts which are: Anambra Central, Anambra North and Anambra South, the State has 21 local Government Area. The selection was divided into three stages. The first stage of sampling involved the use of cluster sampling. Anambra State was clustered into three senatorial zones and each of these zones has 7 local government areas, which include: (a) **Anambra Central:** Anaocha, Njikoka, Awka North, Awka South, Dunukofia, Idemili North and Idemili South. (b) **Anambra North:** Ayamelum, Anambra East, Anambra West, Onitsha North, Onitsha South, Ogbaru and Oyi. (c) **Anambra South:** Aguata, Ekwusigo, Ihiala, Nnewi North, Nnewi South, Orumba North and Orumba South).

The second stage involved random picking of one local government from each senatorial district. For Anambra Central, Awka South local government was picked, for Anambra North, Oyi local government area was selected, while for Anambra South, Aguata local government area was picked. At the third stage one community was randomly picked from each local government area. In Oyi local government, Ogbunike town was picked, in Anaocha local government, Aguluzigbo community was picked and in Aguata local government area, Ekwulobia town was picked. At the fourth stage, purposive sampling was used to pick adult members who were aged 18 years and above from each of the communities and at this point, 400 copies of questionnaire were divided into 3 halves with figure (133.333).

Method of Data Analysis: Frequency tables and percentages were used in the presentation of the raw data. That is, all information gathered in the course of the study were carefully analysed with descriptive statistical tools, and the precise tools are statistical tables, frequency distribution tables and bar charts with the view to provide solution or answer to key questions of the study, as well as validate or reject the hypotheses. Hypotheses and results were evaluated by decision rules anchored on chi-square test.

Results and Discussion of Findings

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents: Out of the three hundred and eighty (380) respondents, two hundred and sixty (representing 68.4%) were males; one hundred and ten (representing 28.9%) were females, while ten respondents (representing 2.6%) didn't indicate their sex. Thirty of the respondents (representing 7.9%) possess only First School Leaving Certificate, one hundred and thirty-five (representing 35.5%) possess Senior School Certificate, one hundred and eleven (representing 29.2%) possess First Degree Certificate, fifty-four (representing 14.2%) possess degree higher than the First Degree, forty (representing 10.5%) do not possess any degree, while ten (representing 2.6%) opted not to give out that information about them. Also two hundred and fifty respondents (representing 65%) are single, one hundred and ten (representing 28.9%) are

married, seven (representing 1.8%) are divorced, three (representing 0.8%) are widowed, while ten (representing 2.6%) chose not to give out that information about them.

Research Question: Did the use of Vote buying to influence voters' choice of candidate in the 2017 gubernatorial election ensure the conduct of free and fair election in the State?

Item 1

Table 1: MONEY WAS USED TO INFLUENCE VOTERS' CHOICE OF CANDIDATE BY POLITICAL AGENTS OF VARIOUS POLITICAL PARTIES IN 2017 ANAMBRA STATE GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION.

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	180	47.4
	Agree	150	39.5
	Undecided	40	10.5
	Disagree	4	1.1
	Strongly Disagree	3	0.8
	Total	377	99.2
Missing	999.00	3	0.8
Total		380	100.0

Item 1

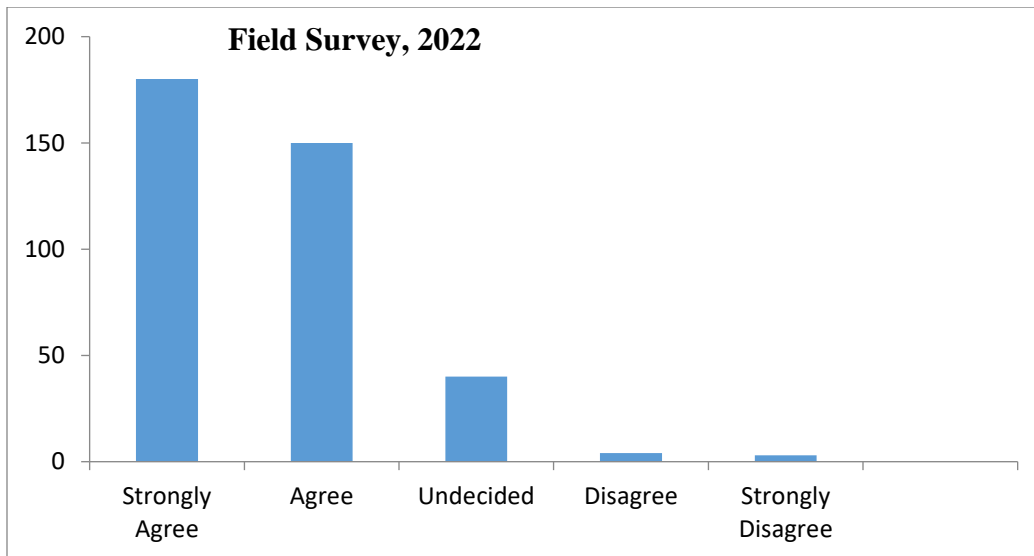


Table 1 shows that one hundred and eighty respondents strongly agreed that Money was used to influence voters' choice of candidate by political agents of various political parties in 2017 Anambra State gubernatorial election, one hundred and fifty agreed, four disagreed while 3 strongly disagreed. Forty respondents neither agreed nor disagreed while three left theirs un ticked. It is therefore obvious from the data generated that, Money was used to influence voters' choice of candidate by agents of various political parties in 2017 Anambra State gubernatorial election.

Table 2: VOTERS ENGAGED IN VOTE SELLING IN VARIOUS COMMUNITIES DURING THE 2017 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION IN ANAMBRA STATE.

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	210	55.3
	Agree	130	34.2
	Undecided	20	5.3
	Disagree	11	2.9
	Strongly Disagree	5	1.3
	Total	376	98.9
Missing	999.00	4	1.1
Total		380	100.0

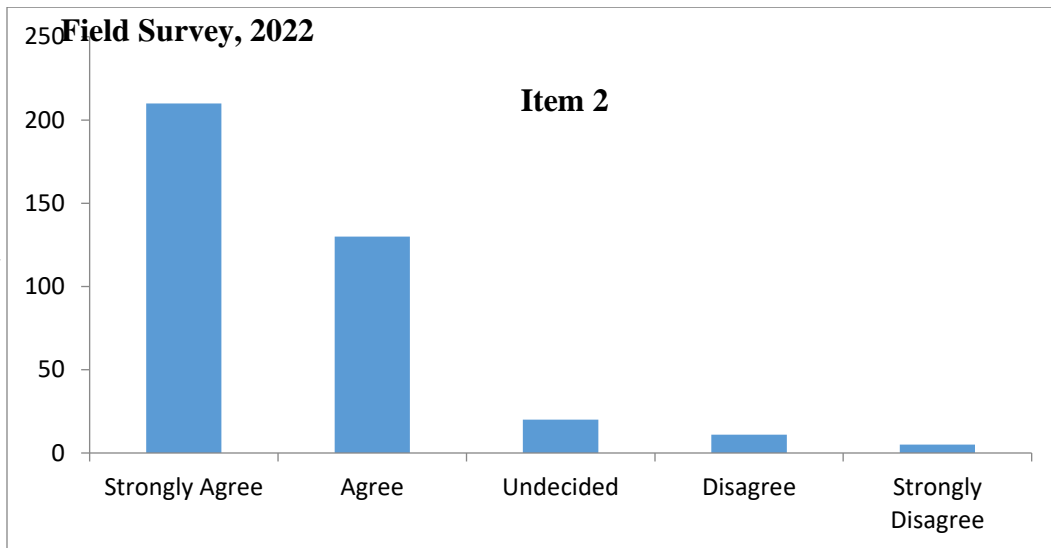


Table 2 glaringly shows that two hundred and ten respondents strongly agreed that Voters engaged in vote selling in various communities during the 2017 gubernatorial election in Anambra State. While one hundred and thirty respondents agreed, eleven disagreed, five strongly disagreed, twenty were undecided and four respondents withheld their answers to the question. From the data generated from the field, it is evident that Voters engaged in vote selling in various communities during the 2017 gubernatorial election in Anambra State.

Table 3: POLITICAL PARTIES ENGAGE IN VOTE BUYING AS A MEANS TO PERSUADE THE MASSES TO VOTE FOR THEIR CANDIDATES.

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	180	47.4
	Agree	100	26.3
	Undecided	10	2.6
	Disagree	80	21.1
	Strongly Disagree	3	0.8
	Total	373	98.2
Missing	999.00	7	1.8
Total		380	100.0

Field Survey, 2022 **Item 3**

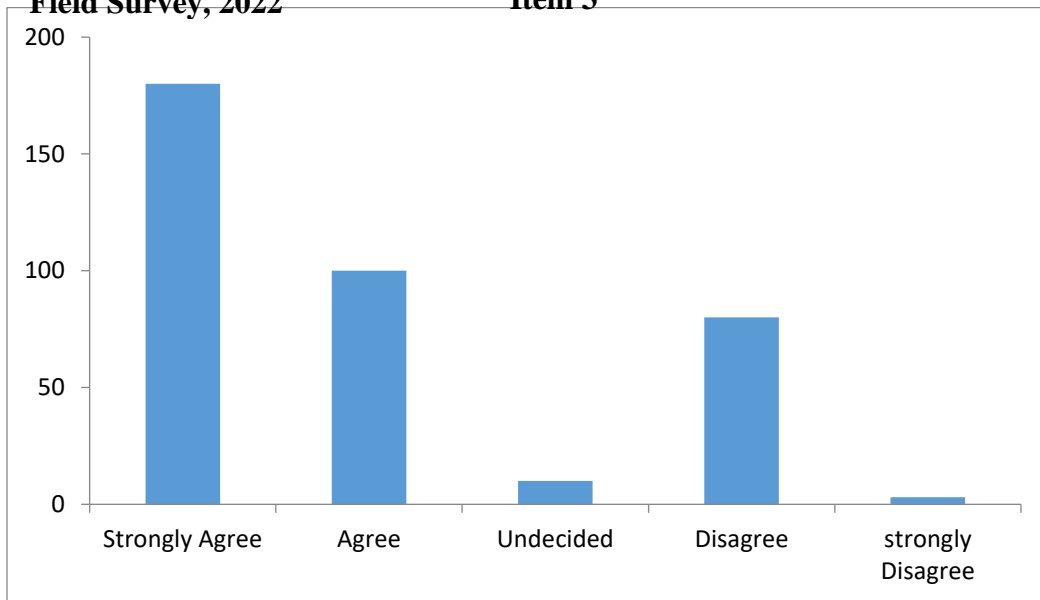


Table 3 shows that one hundred and eighty respondents strongly agreed that Political parties engage in vote buying as a means to persuade the masses to vote for their candidates. One hundred respondents agreed and eighty disagreed. Only three respondents strongly disagreed while ten were uncertain. Seven of the respondents also withheld their answers to the question. From the field survey, it's clear that Political parties engage in vote buying as a means to persuade the masses to vote for their candidates.

Table 4: THE USE OF VOTE BUYING TO INFLUENCE VOTERS' CHOICE OF CANDIDATE IN THE 2017 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION IN ANAMBRA STATE WAS A BANE TO THE CONDUCT OF FREE AND FAIR ELECTION IN THE STATE.

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	170	44.7
	Agree	110	28.9
	Undecided	3	0.8
	Disagree	10	2.6
	Strongly Disagree	80	21.1
	Total	373	98.2
Missing	999.00	7	1.8
Total		380	100.0

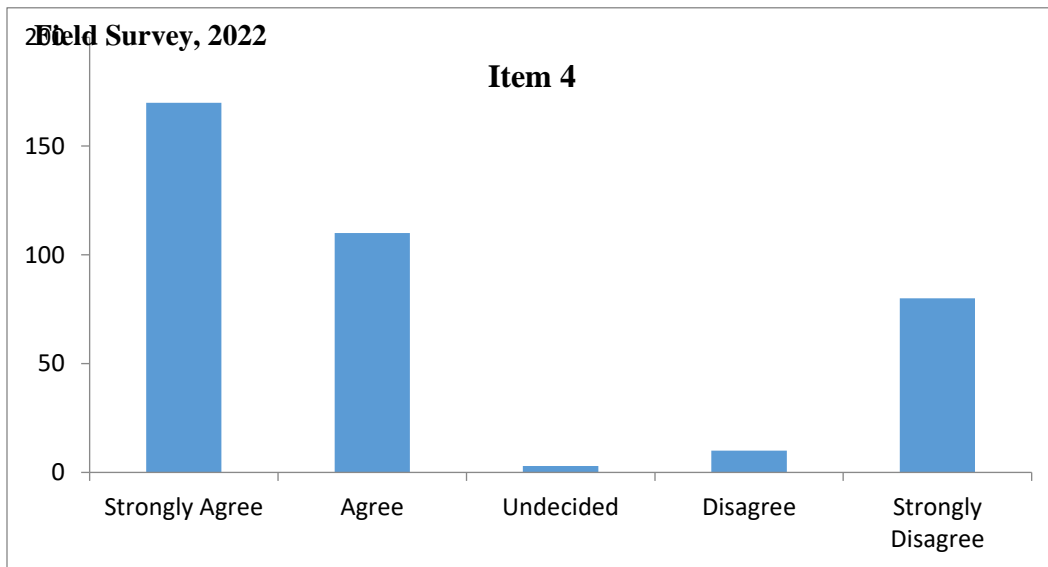


Table 4 shows that one hundred and seventy respondents strongly agreed that the use of vote buying to influence voters' choice of candidate in the 2017 gubernatorial election in Anambra State was indeed a strong bane to the conduct of free and fair election in the State. One hundred and ten respondents also agreed while ten disagreed. Eighty strongly disagreed; three were undecided while seven withheld their answers to the question.

Test of Hypothesis

Hypothesis: Vote Buying retarded the achievement of free and fair election in the 2017 gubernatorial election in Anambra State.

Chi-Square Test

Effects of vote buying on Free and fair election

Table 5: FREQUENCIES ON THE TEST OF HYPOTHESIS

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual (Obs-Exp)	(Obs-Exp) ²	Component (Obs-Exp) ² /Exp
3.00	4	22.35	-18.35	336.723	15.066
4.00	18	22.35	-4.35	18.923	0.847
5.00	46	22.35	23.65	559.323	25.026
6.00	76	22.35	53.65	2,878.323	128.784
7.00	37	22.35	14.65	214.623	9.603
8.00	56	22.35	33.65	1,132.323	50.663
9.00	53	22.35	30.65	939.423	42.032
10.00	25	22.35	2.65	7.023	0.314
11.00	19	22.35	-3.35	11.223	0.502
12.00	20	22.35	-2.35	5.523	0.247
13.00	10	22.35	-12.35	152.523	6.824
14.00	10	22.35	-12.35	152.523	6.824
15.00	2	22.35	-20.35	414.123	18.529
16.00	1	22.35	-12.35	455.823	20.395
17.00	1	22.35	-12.35	455.823	20.395
18.00	1	22.35	-12.35	455.823	20.395
19.00	1	22.35	-12.35	455.823	20.395
Total	380				386.841

Table 6: STATISTICAL TEST OF HYPOTHESIS

	Effects of vote buying on	Free and fair election
Chi-Square		386.841
Df		16
Table Value(0.05)		26.296

Table 6 provides the actual result of the chi-square goodness-of-fit test. We can see from the table that our chi-square value is statistically significant with $X^2= 386.8$, $p<.0005$. The alternate hypothesis is hereby accepted and the null rejected. We therefore, conclude that Vote buying significantly retarded the achievement of free and fair election in the 2017 gubernatorial election in Anambra State. Vivid analysis of all the data collated from the responses of the study population in tables 1,2,3 and 4 indicates that money was very instrumental to various political parties especially the ruling party, in influencing voters' choice of candidates in the 2017 gubernatorial election in Anambra State.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The essence of election is to avail the citizens the opportunity to vote/elect leaders of their choice, but when such opportunity is manipulated by political parties through the use of vote buying, free and fair election becomes a mirage. Conducting free and fair elections in Nigeria since our return to democracy by the Independent National Electoral Commission and democratic government is being negated by several factors such as multiple registration of voters, manipulation of electoral rules, thuggery, ballot snatching and stuffing, violence and vote buying and these factors limit the achievement of free and fair election.

The aim of this study was to interrogate the effect of vote buying on the conduct of free and fair election in the 2017 gubernatorial election in Anambra State, as well as investigate how INEC's cosmetic approach to vote buying has contributed to the failure of the electoral body to achieve free and fair election in the 2017 gubernatorial election in Anambra State. The outcome of the study indicated that vote buying has significantly retarded the achievement of free and fair election in the 2017 gubernatorial election in Anambra State. Against this backdrop, this study recommends a stronger and abjectly independent electoral umpire with the requisite powers to prosecute electoral offenders especially those that engage in monetary inducement of voters. This has become very imperative as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) had severally over the years, lamented about their lack of absolute powers to enforce electoral laws as well as swiftly prosecute electoral offenders in Nigeria (Okwuadimma and Biereenu-Nnabugwu, 2021: 71).

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