



The Roles of Mass Media in Promoting Anti-Corruption Campaign on Elections and Vote Buying in Nigeria.

Ukaegbu, Michael Ibe (PhD); Prince, Obinna Amadi;
Micah, Pokubo

Department of English and Communication Arts, Faculty of Humanities, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Email/Phone: ¹michaelibe22@ gmail. com, 08135804251; ²obinna4sure@ yahoo. com, 08032738770; ³micahpokubo44@ gmail. com, 08135038180

ARTICLE INFO

Article No.: 090122077

Type: Research

Full Text: [PDF](#), [HTML](#), [PHP](#), [EPUB](#)

Accepted: 19/09/2022

Published: 28/09/2022

*Corresponding Author

Ukaegbu Michael Ibe

E-mail: michaelibe22@
gmail.com

Phone: 08135804251

Keywords: Mass media,
promoting, anti-corruption,
campaign, elections, vote-buying.

ABSTRACT

This paper focused on the role of mass media in promoting anti-corruption campaign on elections and vote-buying syndrome in the Political process in Nigeria. The background recognized the important of elections in the political leadership of democratic nations. The statement of problem is anchored on the widespread of irregularities in elections and vote buying in Nigeria. The objectives of this paper are to find out the extent to which the mass media promote anti-corruption campaign on elections and vote-buying in Port Harcourt, examine how the electorate perceives media anti-corruption campaign messages on election and vote buying in Port Harcourt, find out the implications of vote-buying in Nigerian democracy. The theoretical framework for the study is anchored on the Clientelism theory while the study adopted the survey method in showing how the electorates respond to media anti-corruption campaign messages on elections and vote-buying. The study used population of 3,171,000 which covered the entire Port Harcourt, with a sample size of 400, using purposive random technique. The study used questionnaire as instrument of data collection. The findings of the study reveal that electorates are been induced against their choice to vote for candidates they do not know or want. The study concluded that vote-buying on elections is a menace that triggers corruption and undue influence on the electorates and recommended for aggressive media anti-corruption campaign for good governance and accountability. Also, the media should adopt Agenda-Setting Theory in promoting and educating the electorate on the anti-corruption campaign on election and vote-buying in Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Elections are one of the major features of democracy. In fact, it is the pillar of democracy. It forms the process by which democratic leaders are elected to represent the people. Through elections the electorates chose who govern them. Elections however allow citizens to take part in governance of their State. It is an important process through which power is allocated and representative democracy is actualized.

Elections and voting are crucial mechanisms for selecting leaders for political office in every democracy. Although candidates on election appeal and explain their intended policies to the electorates before they are voted into power. Elections play two main functions in the world and especially in Africa. It is used to change a regime and its leadership or to seek approval from the electorate to enhance democratic governance and continuity. Many countries in the world select their leaders through problems of irregularities such as ballot fraud, intimidation, multiple voting, snatching of ballot boxes, violence, giving out of electoral incentives or buying of votes and others.

Meanwhile vote buying in Nigeria democratic elections have become a norm. Cases of vote-buying have been widely spread in many state elections in Nigeria. Vote buying which is literally referred to as "Clientelism" has a long history. Candidates used electoral incentives to attract voters during political campaigns and elections in many developing countries like Nigeria, and other African countries. Vote buying appears in different forms in every society. It may take the form of direct payments to voters or in form of gift items.

Schatter & Schedle (2005) stated that vote buying in its literal sense is a simple economic exchange. Candidates "buy" and citizens "sell" votes, as apples, shoes or television sets. Elections therefore allow citizens to take part in governance. Thus, elections give the citizens the opportunity to select their leaders. Electorates use elections to evaluate how leadership or governments have excelled in all facets of national life and development such as education, economy, agriculture, standard of living and others. It is therefore a cardinal process through which power is allocated and representative democracy is actualized (Baidoo, Danwa & Eshun, 2018). Indeed, vote-buying has taken the centre stage in African politics and electoral process especially in Nigeria.

Therefore, the mass media have a role to play in promoting anti-corruption campaign on elections and vote buying by educating, enlighten and sensitizing the electorates to avoid selling their votes and to vote for the candidates of their choice who would promote good governance and ensure dividends of democracy in the society. Thus, the mass media play an important role in promoting anti-corruption campaign on election and vote-buying in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Elections and vote-buying in Nigeria electoral process has become a syndrome which has eaten deep in the lives of political office seekers and electorates. All elections conducted in Nigeria have historically been characterized by electoral irregularities, especially vote-buying. Election time is a period the major political parties in Nigeria; All Progressive Congress (APC) and People's Democratic Party (PDP) dished-out cash and several tangible materials to influence voters. The wholesome practice has affected the dividends of democracy. However, this research looks at how mass media anti-corruption campaign on elections and vote-buying can inform, educate and enlighten electorates to vote the right candidate on elections without any form of inducement or gratification in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the study

The main purpose of this study is to;

1. Find out the extent to which the mass media promote anti-corruption campaign on elections and vote-buying in Port Harcourt.
2. Examine how the electorate perceives media ant-corruption campaign messages on election and vote buying in Port Harcourt.
3. Find out the implications of vote-buying in Nigerian democracy.

Research Questions

1. Are there mass media anti-corruption campaign messages on elections and vote-buying in Port Harcourt?
2. How do electorates perceive or feel about mass media anti-corruption messages on elections and vote-buying in Port Harcourt?
3. What are the implications of vote buying in Nigeria democracy?

Conceptual Review

Elections: Election is the process of choosing a leader in a democratic government. It is one of the major features or cardinals of a democracy.

Simply put, elections are mechanism by which people choose their representatives. The concept of election has been conceived by various scholars. According to Udu, Nkwede & Ezekwe (2015), election is described as a widely and universally accepted means through which, individuals are openly and methodically chosen to represent a body or community in a democratic government.

Ejue & Ekanen (2011) posit that election is free, fair and credible when the candidate with the highest vote wins, voters rights are protected while credible and popular candidates emerge as winners. They further affirmed that election remains the only way to establish majority rule and legitimacy of government.

However, elections in Nigeria are forms of choosing representatives to the federal state and local government level. Elections in Nigeria started since 1959 with different pre-independent political parties. For instance, presently, we have three major political parties in Nigeria, which are: People's Democratic Party (PDP), All Progressive Congress (APC) and Labour Party (LP).

There are various stages of elections in Nigeria. Elections are conducted periodically into various political offices across the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is the commission constituted to conduct and supervise elections in Nigeria. INEC is required to conduct free, fair and credible elections in Nigeria. But, since the return of democracy in 1999, election has been characterized by widespread of massive riggings, killings, ballot snatching, vote-buying and other forms of irregularities.

Political elections in Nigeria are used to elect political leaders at the Federal level (The President, Senators and House of Representative Members) at the State level (Governor and House of Assemblies Members) at Local Government Level (The chairman and councilors).

Vote-Buying:

The 2019 general elections in Nigeria witnessed an explosion into the use of the term "vote buying" in academic and media circle. An often cited definition of vote buying describes it as the "exchange of private material benefits for political support. Oladapo, Oyewale, & Abayomi, (2020) defined vote buying as any form of financial, material or promissory inducement or reward by a candidate, political party, agent or supporter to influence a voter to cast his/her vote or even abstain from doing so in order to enhance the chances of the contestant to win an election.

Vote-buy, otherwise known as "voters inducement", "Electoral trading", "vote-trading", "vote-selling", "money exchange-hand policies". Nwekede, et al (2018) explained that this exchange of trade in politics has become a recurring feature in the Nigerian electoral system. The context of vote buying refers to the act of exchanging one's own vote for material goods. It is a notion of Clientelism, whereby voters support candidates who have provided them with material things or cash.

Rigger (1991), asserts that Vote-buying is more than a mere economic transaction, instead, it is a combination of economic exchange and social practices. In vote-buying transactions, voters are usually offered money, commodities, such as food, or

clothing, or jobs. Some of the factors that encourages this act may include but not limited to poverty, political corruption, compromised electoral management body (EMB) militarized politics, nature and character of Nigerian politics, lack of trust and confidence in the electoral process, perceived election rigging, and ignorance or illiteracy.

One of the most cited definitions on vote buying is from Etzioni-Halevy (1989) who defined vote-buying as "the exchange of private material benefits for political support". The definition stresses on gaining Private Materials benefits by voters in return for their political support. However, it is about giving voters some benefits in form of gift or incentives for them to reciprocate their votes by voting for the giver or the candidate.

Similarly, Fox (1994) sees vote buying as exchanging political right for material gains. This right is the exercise of a person's franchise. His definition also speaks of an exchange of material things. That is selling one's right for material benefits. He explained that vote buying is a transaction whereby candidates distribute private goods such as cash and gifts in exchange for electoral support or higher turnout. The focus here is that voters or party supporters receive money and gifts for turning out for elections and voting for such candidate.

In the Nigerian electoral context; vote-buy is an open form of buy-and-selling votes. It is a form of bribery that substantially corrupts the Nigeria electoral system. The phenomenon of money politics and vote-buying became prominent in post independent Nigeria.

Vote-buying in most democracies is considered an electoral offence. In accordance to the Electoral Act, 2022 Vote-buying is under "Undue Influence" in section 127 and reads thus: A person who –

- (a) Corruptly by his or herself 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 or for any person for the purpose of corruptly influencing that person or any other person to vote or refrain from voting at such election, or on account of such person or any other person having voted or refrained voting at such election, or
- (b) Being a voter, corruptly accepts or takes money or any other inducement during any of the period stated in paragraph (a), commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of N100,000 or imprisonment for a term of 12 months or both. (Nigeria Electoral Act, 2022).

According to Mohammed (2016) vote buying obstruct democratic process by interfering with the rights of citizens to freely decide on who will represent them and their interests. This can result in the candidates with the deepest pocket winning the

election, rather than the candidates who would best serve their constituent.

Mass media promoting anti-corruption campaign on elections and vote-buying

Mass media refers to a diverse array of media technologies that reach a large audience via mass communication. It refers to device through which communication takes place. The mass media technology is intended to reach a mass audience. It is the primary means of communication used to reach the vast majority of the general public. The most common platforms for mass media are newspapers, magazines, radio, television, billboard, and the internet (new media). The general public relies on the mass media for news and information on political issues in Nigeria. Mass media has been a strong voice in reporting elections and political process in Nigeria since inception of elections in Nigeria.

It has therefore, become very important to access the role of the mass media in electoral history of Nigeria. To what extent has the Nigerian media discharged its statutory functions towards achieving a positive political national agenda? (Aghamelu, 2021).

The above assertion underscores the need of the media to embark on anti-corruption campaign against irregularities in Nigeria elections and vote-buying. Dukor (1998) posit the role of the media in politics on the "fundamental rights to receive and impart information". Thus, the information media pass to the electorates should properly guide them to elect a credible candidate that will represent them in elected position.

Kalu (1985) stated that the media should enable the electorate to analyze campaign messages of politicians. Media focus should be to set the correct political agenda for the audience and not allowing the politicians to determine for electorates.

Ciroma (2005) asserts that Journalistic writing...commentaries, exhibitions, articles, reviews, columns, broadcast discussion.... Should raise and answer pertinent questions that help to elucidate confusing issues, particularly relating to politics and leadership. The media in its campaign should stand against electoral irregularities and vote-buying and suggest workable techniques that can help Nigerians deal decisively with problems of corruption, lack of accountability and weak check and balances in government.

However, the menace of vote-buying in Nigeria electoral process is a worry on elections. For instance, the last concluded governorship election in Anambra State on Nov. 6th 2021 witnessed massive vote-buy and selling as reported. Sahara Reporters stated that political parties on the election raise vote-buying to ₦10,000 per voter. The report showed that incentives and vote-buying in the election increased the number of voters on queue.

Also, on the concluded Osun State July 16, 2022 governorship election, Premium Times reported that vote trading was recorded in most of the areas as observed, particularly outside Osogbo. "There was open negotiation of buying and selling of votes well-coordinated by the polling agents in many of the polling units. There were no complaints from any of them against each other".

In a press release by Premium Times on March 13, 2022 titled "2023 Elections: Foundation Launches 'Put on your think cap'. Mr. Fedeyi Akin called on citizens to vote wisely, this time and shun the vice of election violence and vote-buying. The media used the press release to campaign against vote-buying and called on Nigeria citizens to use their franchise right wisely, and elect leaders that can be held accountable for governance.

Mass media in its role has used the television, radio, newspaper, magazine, billboard, social media and other media channels to promote anti-corruption campaign on good governance and to enlighten the citizens against vote-buying in electoral system of Nigeria.

The mass media has the obligation in providing voter's education messages that would enable the electorates vote wisely during elections. The electorates must have all information that is needed to elect the right candidate who can ensure good governance. Where such public awareness is lacking; the media must accept a share of the blame of failed elections in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

The framework adopted in this study is the theory of Clientelism. It explains the linkage between elections and vote-buying in Nigeria. Clientelism theory is trace back to French Political theorist Etienne de la Boetie in the 1500s. Although he did not use the term Clientelism directly he described the practice of emperors who used gifts publicly to gain loyalty from those who were eager to accept what amounted to be bribery. This suggests that gaining of public loyalty and support with any form of inducement is central to Clientelism practice. Nkwede et al (2018).

Clientelism theory emphasis a set of actions based on the principle of "take there, give here", with the practice allowing both clients and patrons to gain advantage from others support (Graham 1997). However, Clientelism practice in political election is the process in which the patron (politician) offers material things to the client (voter) for the benefit of gaining support or vote. The theory has gained momentum in the doctrine of electoral system in Nigeria. Therefore, giving and receiving money has become the order of the day in Nigerian electoral system.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive survey design method. The justification for adopting survey research is that it enhances easy means of obtaining useful data from representative sample of target population. The population consists of the entire Nigeria, but the researchers limited it Port Harcourt residents for easy population management. Out of the population of 3,171,000, a sample size of 400 was derived through the Taro Yamane sample size template. The purposive random sampling technique was adopted while the

questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The data collected were tabulated and presented on a four point Likert. The analysis and interpretation of the results produced in the questionnaire formed the findings of this research. The responses in the questionnaire were data derived from the four hundred sample representation of Port Harcourt residents.

Table 1: Are there mass media anti-corruption campaign messages on elections and vote-buying in Port Harcourt.

S/N	Questions	SA	A	D	SA	Total
1	Have you heard, see or read anti-corruption campaign messages on elections and vote-buying	204 (51%)	181 (30.25%)	45 (11.25%)	30 (7.5%)	400 (100%)
2	Are you aware that vote-buying on election is an electoral offence	216 (54%)	109 (27.25%)	51 (12.75%)	24 (6%)	400 (100%)
3	Have you voted for the candidate of your choice without inducement	30 (7.5%)	28 (7%)	90 (22.5%)	252 (63%)	400 (100%)

Source: Fieldwork.

There is a strong indication that voters have either heard, see or read media messages on elections and vote-buying. The messages may be on radio, television, newspapers, billboard, tradition media, etc on campaign to vote the right candidate; during

elections. These media messages have created awareness and enlightenment to voters yet it was discovered that the electorates still cast their vote by influence of inducement.

Table 2: How do the electorates perceive or feel about mass media anti-corruption campaign on elections and vote-buying in Port Harcourt.

S/N	Questions	SA	A	D	SA	Total
4	I feel very bad	15 (3.75%)	261 (65.25%)	112 (28%)	12 (3%)	400 (100%)
5	I feel very good	208 (52%)	128 (32%)	34 (8.5%)	30 (7.5%)	400 (100%)
6	I accept incentives during elections	228 (57%)	115 (28.75%)	25 (6.25%)	32 (8%)	400 (100%)

Source: Field work

Table 2 shows the electorate perceives or receives media anti-corruption campaign messages on election and vote buying with different feelings. They are very

aware of the impart of the message, yet they do otherwise and vote against their conscience as result of electoral inducement.

Table 3: What are the implications of vote-buying in Nigerian democracy?

S/N	Questions	SA	A	D	SA	Total
7	Do you think you will receive democratic dividends after selling your vote	35 (8.75%)	42 (10.5%)	218 (54.5%)	105 (26.25%)	400 (100%)
8	Do you expect the politicians to employ or empower you after you have sold your vote	41 (10.25%)	34 (8.5%)	228 (57%)	97 (24.25%)	400 (100%)
9	Do you hold the politicians accountable after you have sold your vote	38 (9.5%)	22 (5.5%)	101 (25.25%)	239 (59.75%)	400 (100%)

Source: Field work

Table 3 shows the implications of vote-buying to the electorates in Nigeria remains that politicians would want to recover the huge amount spent during elections and vote-buying. They found it difficult to provide or fulfill their electoral promises to provide good road network, electricity, medical care, schools, jobs and others to the poor masses that collected money and gifts to vote them into office.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

From the analysis above, there are indications that mass media promotes anti-corruption campaign messages on elections and vote-buying in electoral process. These messages are transmitted through different media channels, via radio, television, newspaper, billboards, social media etc. The media used these platforms to create awareness and educate the electorate on the right candidate to be elected.

Table 2, revealed that respondents feel differently on media anti-corruption campaign messages on vote-buying. Majority still accept incentive while few tried to justify their conscience. The politicians are more interested in their gains rather than sanctity of ballot. These electorates are been induced against their choice to vote for candidates they do not know or want.

Table 3, revealed the implications of vote-buying on the future of the country. Participants noted that they might not enjoy dividends of democracy, employment nor hold the leaders accountable in the democratic governance of the country, because of selling their votes.

CONCLUSION

The study has attempted to assess the level and magnitude of vote buying in electoral process in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria and the media awareness, enlightenment and voter education through anti-corruption campaign on elections and vote buying in Nigeria. Vote buying has gradually gained roots in the Nigeria electoral system. The poor has often been the target of political parties during vote buying. The implication of vote-buying is that it can trigger corruption by politicians after being voted in office and the electorate might longer hold them accountable.

Recommendations

The study recommend as follows;

1. The mass media should promote aggressive anti-corruption campaign on elections irregularities and vote-buying to create awareness and educate the

masses on the right to vote the credible candidates on election for better governance.

2. The mass media should use Agenda setting theory to promote how the electorate should think, feel and perceive anti-corruption campaign messages on elections and vote-buying on electing credible candidates during elections
3. The mass media through Agenda-Setting Theory should enlighten and educate the electorate on the need to avoid selling their votes and hold the politicians accountable for good democratic governance and provision social amenities as well as job creations.

REFERENCES

- Aghamelu, F.C. (2020). The Role of the mass media in the Nigeria Electoral process Article online @ <http://dx.dot.org>.
- Baidoo, F.L, Dankwa, S. & Eshun, I. (2018). Culture of vote buying and its implications; Range of incentives and conditions Politicians offer to electorates. Published by European Centre for Research Training and Development UK.
- Ciroma, A. (2005). "The 2004 Local government elections in Nigeria". Extract form point blank, NTA interview programme, June.
- Dukor, O. (1998). "The state and the media in Africa". In O. Dukor (Eds) Philosophy and Politics discourse on values and power in Africa. O.OP Ltd.
- Electoral Act, (2022) of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.
- Ejue, B.J.& Ekanem, S.A. (2011). Voter rights and credible election in Nigeria. The imperative of rethinking the content of Citizenship education. International Journal of Humanities and social science.
- Etzioni-Halevy, E. (1989). Exchange material benefits for political support: A comparative analysis. In A. Heidenheimer, M. Johnston, & N.T. Levine (Eds), Political Corruption; A handbook.
- Fox, J. (1994). The difficult transition from Clientelism to citizenship; Lesson from Mexico. World Politics.
- Graham, R. (1997). Clientelism and cultural politicabras, le ira "joma lada ca Braudel center papers No. 15.
- Kalu, O.U. (1985). Religion and political values in Nigeria. A phorastic Respective Nsukka, University Press.
- Mohammed, A.B. (2016). The menance of vote buying and selling in Nigeria and way forward. Nasarawa State University, Keffi.
- Nigeria Electoral Act, 2022.
- Nwekede, J.O., Nweke, K, Dauda, K.O., & Olawale, M.A. (2018), "Elections and vote buying in Nigeria". A study of 2018 gubernational election

- in Ekiti State. Calabar Journal of Politics and Administration. Vol 5. No. 1.
- Oladopo, S.O., Oyewale, A.O., & Abayomi, H.O. (2020). Influence of Vote Buying Among Electorates; Its Implications to Nigeria future Democracy. High Education of Social Science. From [URL:http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/hess/article/view/11659](http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/hess/article/view/11659). DOI:http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/11659.
- Premiumtimes ng.com, 2022. Retrieved August 10, 2022.
- Rigger, S.E. (1994) "Machine Politics in the new Taiwan. "Institutional reform and electoral strategy in the republic of China in Taiwan". A PhD dissertation, Harvard University.
- Schatter, F.C., & Schedler, A. (2005). What is Voting? The limits of the market model. A paper presented at the conference of poverty, Democracy and Clientelism; The Political Economy of the vote buying, Stanford University.
- Udu, L.E. Nwekede, J.O. & Ezekwu, A.E. (2015). The imperative of credible elections for sustainable national development in Nigeria. Lessons from the Ekiti State gubernatorial election, 2014. Journal of sustainable Development.

Cite this Article: Ukaegbu, MI; Prince, OA; Micah, P (2022). The Roles of Mass Media in Promoting Anti-Corruption Campaign on Elections and Vote Buying in Nigeria. *Greener Journal of Art and Humanities*, 9(1): 29-35.