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### VOTE TRADING, VOTERS BEHAVIOUR AND ELECTORAL GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

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**Abstract:** In recent time, the method of electoral democracy in Nigeria reflects the form of vote trading where exchange of cash and material goods become prevalent. This undue influence and subversion of electorate vote by political parties and candidates leaves significant gap in election and electoral process which are critical to promoting electoral governance. This study assessed the impact of vote trading on voter's behaviour, and examined the implication of vote trading on electoral governance in Osun State 2018 governorship election in Nigeria. A survey of questionnaire administration was employed to elicit information from voters and ad-hoc staff of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) that participated in the election. Results obtained from descriptive statistics (mean values) provide strong evidence on the significant impact of vote trading on voters behaviour, especially from low income earners. Also. Findings from the study showed that vote trading has implication on electoral governance as perceived in lack of transparency and accountability that distorts electoral governance. The study concluded that vote trading affect voters behaviour, influence election outcome and reduces the probability of viable electoral governance and also violate electoral rules which limit the right of the citizens to freely elect their electoral candidates.

**Keywords:** Vote Trading, Vote Buying, Vote Selling, Voters Behaviour, Electoral Governance.

#### Introduction

Vote trading is an economic contract among vote buyers and vote sellers. This economic contract is accomplished by vote brokers who, on behalf of their candidates and political parties propose money, goods or services to voters in return for their vote (Rigger, 2000; Wu, & Huang, 2004). Vote sellers exhibit propensity to reciprocate the kind gesture by voting for the political parties or candidates that patronize them. It is the feeling of obligation which propels their inclination to vote as paid. In this context, voter's behaviour towards party candidates is based on less distinctive policy position, rather than candidate credibility and

reliability (Kitschelt & Wilkinson, 2007; Bratton & Lewis, 2007). This kind of voting behaviour denies citizens the freedom to express their electoral preferences and antithetical to electoral governance.

Electoral governance is a crucial factor in securing the credibility of elections. It is a wider set of activities with broad institutional framework where voting and electoral competition take place (Mozaffar & Schedler, 2002; Elklit & Reynolds, 2005). As an economic transaction, vote trading compromise electoral governance in that it is inconsistent and incompatible with transparency, accountability, and free and credible electoral process. In

essence, vote trading may circumvent electoral preferences which consequently affect electoral governance such that, voters lack the will to question their political leaders. When electoral governance is perceived as unfair, unresponsive and corrupt, electoral candidates go outside the established norms to achieve their political objectives (Ndulu & Lulo, 2010).

In Nigeria, vote trading takes place at multiple stages of electoral cycle and has been observed during voter registration exercise, campaigns and rallies, party primaries, and Election Day. During voter registration exercise, political parties mobilize and pay registered voters in preparation for the election (Matenga, 2016). More often, campaign and rallies strategies includes material inducement where voters are offer money and commodities such as food, clothing, mobile phones with prepaid cards, oil, rice and other gifts (National Democratic Institute, 2012; Onapajo, Francis & Okeke-Uzodike, 2015). More so, most party primaries are conducted under opaque conditions where leaders bribe delegates to vote for their preferred candidate's party and on Election Day, voters are induced with money and commodities to influence election outcome (Ovwasa, 2013; Olatunji, 2018). Vote trading therefore is the act whereby voters receive gratification and pay-off from political parties and electoral candidates which consequently cause voters to give up their voting rights.

### **Problem Statement**

Literature on vote buying and vote selling in Nigeria largely focused on socioeconomic factors such as poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy (Danjibo & Abubakar, 2007; Bratton, 2008). Studies have also captured vote buying and vote selling as a product of political corruption

that brings about inefficient public service delivery, poor public services and inadequate infrastructure (Bratton & Lewis, 2007; Adojutelegan, 2018). Specifically, Onapajo et al. (2015) have linked vote buying and vote selling in Nigeria with political economy and oil corrupts elections. They argued that the incidence of vote buying in Nigeria elections is prevalent because of the oil wealth associated with politics and elections. Moreover, studies showed that buying and selling of votes portend dangers to democratic process of electing credible candidate, and impedes Nigeria's democratic sustainability (Ovwasa, 2013; Sakariyau, Aliu & Adamu, 2015; *Adetula, 2015*). However, there is a dearth of studies on systematic vote trading, its effect on voter's behaviour and implications on electoral governance. Hence, this study is an attempt to contribute to knowledge by providing insight on voter's perception, decisions and tendencies to sell their votes, and its outcome on electoral governance.

Based on this backdrop, the objectives of this study are to assess the impact of vote trading on voter's behaviour and examine the implication of vote trading on electoral governance. Within these parameters, the study present survey evidence from the fieldwork conducted in Osun state 2018 governorship election in Southwest Nigeria. In addition to the introduction, the study conceptualised the phenomenon of vote trading, voters behaviour and also provides study link on electoral governance and voting trading in Nigeria. This is followed by a theoretical model called reciprocal altruism. Subsequent sections include study location and methodology, results and interpretation, findings and discussion before conclusions.

### **Conceptual Phenomenon of Vote**

**Trading and Voters Behaviour**

Vote trading has evolved overtime in all democratic system. The only difference is that it differs in magnitude and manifestation and connotes different meaning from one polity to the other. Although new democracies seem to be prone to vote trading, evidence from the literature shows that buying and selling of votes was present also in the earlier histories of now established democracies such as those of Germany, United Kingdom and the United States. For instance, English voters in the 1830s perceived vote selling in election as a birthright, a time when equality and justice are temporarily achieved as politicians fulfill their financial obligations to support the citizens which may also enable redistribution of resources (Ibana, 1996; Hoppen, 1996; Wong, 2017). In the nineteenth century in Germany and United States, it was a common practice for politicians to distribute food, drinks and money in pursuit of electoral support (Gardner, 1990; Hasen, 2000; Aidt, Asatryan, Badalyan & Heinemann, 2015). In England during parliamentary elections, it was not uncommon to post the price for a vote openly outside the polling station and updated several times during the day just like a stock price (Seymour, 1970). However, vote trading decrease significantly in Western Europe and United States as a result of economic development and social welfare improvement.

Unlike Nigeria, Philippines and Benin Republic where voters are usually offer money and commodities such as food and clothing, cash for vote transactions are quite limited and exchange of votes for goods and services are common in Malawi, Zimbabwe and Uganda (Vicente & Wantchekon, 2009; Ovwasa, 2013; Canare, Mendoza & Lopez, 2018). Another

strategy of vote trading is to buy turnout. Also known as negative vote buying, politician's use this strategy to induce voters whom they expect to vote against them to defect from voting (Cox & Kousser, 1981; Nichter, 2008). This strategy proliferated in the late 19th century in Maryland and New York in United States where agents campaigning for the ruling party in the election bought voter identification cards of the opposition supporters and hired buses to take them out on excursion on Election Day (Schaffer, 2000). In Guyana, Mexico and Venezuela, politicians paid registered voters to disqualify themselves from voting by dipping their index fingers in indelible ink just as voters are required to do after casting their ballots (Argersinger, 1987; Cornelius, 2002; Kornblith, 2002).

Also, incumbents can buy votes of the electorate by relying on voter's dependency on small rewards such as the implementation of social programmes during the election campaign. These anti-poverty programmes such as medical care, empowerment scheme, credit loans and fertilizers scheme reach the voters only on election period, even though money has been previously set aside for these programmes (Stokes, Thad, Marcelo & Valeria, 2013; Ovwasa, 2013). The government carries out this social programme with the overarching objective of sustaining elections victory and keeping the voters reliant on government until the next election. This practice rests upon payoff that is explicitly tied to reciprocity in the polling booth (Diaz-Cayeros, Estévez & Magaloni, 2012; Karakushi, 2015). Moreover, vote trading is organized hierarchically where resources to buy votes are allocated to middlemen or vote brokers, individuals with significant social status who has built up trust relationship and knowledge of voters, including how

they vote (Rigger, 2000; Wu, & Huang, 2004; Stokes, 2005; Finan & Schechter, 2012). Political parties can exploit this by buying blocks of votes through the vote brokers. Since the total number of votes in all the wards and polling booths are expose to public information, political parties and candidates can ascertain if the expected votes are delivered (Hasen, 2000; Stokes, et al., 2013).

Perspectives of vote trading in relation to voter's behaviour could exist in three forms. First, voters can refuse or decline to enter into vote trading contract with vote buyers. This view posits that voters should simply avoid collecting money or material gifts from electoral candidates or party agents as this would increase the probability of electoral success (Bratton & Lewis, 2007; Dekel, Jackson & Wolinsky, 2007; Jang & Chang, 2016). Secondly, voters can enter into vote trading contract with vote buyers but with no intention to vote as paid or defects by refusing to vote. This approach encourages voters to collect money from electoral candidates but nonetheless vote for their preferred candidate. It is conceived by Schaffer (2005:13) as "take the bait and not the hook". While this view hold that vote trading is generally welfare improving, it is not always held with a culture of respect for law, it is considered illegal and destabilizes progress toward consolidation and deepening of democracy (Onapajo et al., 2015; Ovwasa, 2013; Olatunji, 2018).

Lastly, voters can enter into vote trading contract and comply by voting in accordance with the instruction of the vote buyers. This is particularly the scenario in most nascent democracies where the citizens easily switch their voting behaviour from the originally preferred candidate to alternative one who offers more money, and they continue to do so throughout the vote trading process

(Hicken, Leider, Ravanilla & Yang, 2015; Ojo, 2006). It has been argued that this view contributes to the decrease in overall social wealth; it increases corruption and subsequently leads to the persistence of poverty in the state because those who buy votes will do so in order to control public resources (Vicente & Wantchekon, 2009; Canare et al., 2018).

### **Electoral Governance and Vote Trading: A Study on Nigeria**

As a set of electoral process, electoral governance operates on three levels: rule making, rule application, and rule adjudication. Rule making involves designing the basic rules of electoral process; rule application involves implementing these rules to organize the electoral process; rule adjudication involves resolving disputes arising within the electoral process (Elklit & Reynolds, 2005). Electoral governance at the level of rule making, involves the design of institutions that define the basic framework of democratic elections such as rules that govern voter, party, and candidate eligibility and registration; laws and regulations that affect the resource endowments of parties and candidates; rules of electoral organization and suffrage rights.

At the level of rule application, electoral governance involves the task of diverse personnel that organize the execution of interdependent activities to establish stable institutional basis for voting and electoral competition. Electoral governance at this level involve complex bureaucratic activities and execution of coherent sets of rules of electoral administration and electoral management to bring about administrative efficiency, political neutrality, transparency, representation and public accountability (Gould, 1999). Electoral governance as rule application therefore consists of the

electoral body and other several technical institutions whose efficient organization and execution determine the credibility of elections, as inadequate attention to operational details and guidelines can compromise the credibility of elections (Schedler, 2001). Electoral governance at the level of rule adjudication involves settlement of disputes arising out of the electoral process and the results of voting and electoral competition (Elklit & Reynolds, 2005). At this level, electoral governance provides institutional mechanisms that curb electoral error and ensure peaceful management of political conflicts. In essence, impartial and appropriate adjudication of electoral disputes represents a fundamental procedural legitimacy of democratic elections (Choe & Darnolf, 1999).

While electoral irregularities and violence characterised elections conducted in Nigeria, the phenomenon of vote trading continued to influence the electoral process. The Afro barometer pre-election survey conducted in the 2003 and 2007 general elections showed that campaign irregularities are targeted at the rural poor and fewer than one out of five Nigerians are exposed to vote buying while fewer than one in ten experience threats of electoral violence (Bratton & Lewis, 2007). Findings from the study indicates that voters considered vote trading as wrong but understandable because they feel that political candidates are obliged to recompense when they are voted in election. Also, studies showed that poverty, ignorance and the inability of political parties to put in place comprehensive manifesto for scrutiny as well as corruption influence vote buying and money politics in Nigeria's democratic governance (Ovwasa, 2013; Kwaghga and Tarfa, 2015). Further examination on the political economy of vote buying and vote

selling in 2014 Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) governorship primary election in Nasarawa state reveal that delegates were promised financial offer by party aspirants in a bid to influence their voting choices, and the delegates equally voted based on monetary inducement (Okoli & Iortyer, 2017).

The study of Adojutelegan (2018) uncover voters behaviour during the 2012 governorship election; 2015 house of assembly, house of representatives, senate and presidential elections; and 2016 governorship election in Akoko north west local government in Ondo state. The study also investigates voters common experience with respect to the provision of infrastructures and delivery of public services. Findings from the study showed a reciprocal relationship between vote-selling, infrastructure and public services such that, vote sellers feel justified because vote-selling is perceived as a product of poverty, disappointment, lack of trust and voter's apathy as well as willingness to accept their own share of national resources.

In Edo state 2016 governorship election, agents of political parties offered money to voters to secure vote. Olatuji (2018) showed that voters at Orhiowon local government area, in Iduenbo ward would first visit the distributor of the cash encircled by members of the party before going to queue for voting. The governorship elections conducted in Ondo and Anambra states in 2016 and 2017 respectively brought to the fore the challenges of vote trading in Nigeria electoral process. These elections were marred by vote buying not necessarily because of the value of the votes bought but owing to the display of indiscretions by vote buyers. In Ondo state it was reported that vote buyers were seen at strategic locations of some polling units in



Odigbo, Okitipupa and Ilaje exchanging PVCs with money say #3,000 to #5,000. It was a demand and supply which Ondo people tagged “see and buy” or “vote and make soup” (Ojo, 2016:1; Arowolo, 2019:1).

The level of commercialisation of vote appears to have increase in the 2017 Anambra governorship election. Political party agents distributed money to voters at polling units in Awka North, Idemili North, Njikoka and Nnewi South local governments, even more with the fact that the buying and selling of votes takes place in the presence of the security officials (Okogba, 2017). Moreover, there is no standard with regards to settings and placement of the voting cubicle and ballot box. Voting cubicles were positioned openly in a way that compromise the secrecy of voting, thereby depriving voters the right to exercise their franchise freely (Vanguard Newspaper, 2017). The conduct of the 2018 national assembly by-election in Kastina state was characterised by vote buying and poor management of election statistics. The by-election was recorded and made public on social media where videos revealed the participation of electoral officials and party leaders distributing as much as #5,000 to voters on the queue (Dass, 2018).

Similar to Ondo case, #3,000 or #5,000 was offered to voters in 2018 Ekiti state governorship election, or payment into the bank account of voters (Premium Times, 2018). According to the reports, voters move in numbers to cash collection points in lieu for their votes. For assurance of voting for the party that offered them money, voters publicly display the ballot papers before placing it inside the ballot box or use the smart phones to snap the photographs of the ballot paper which show the party they voted for and later presented it to the party agents before

they could be paid. In some cases, political parties involved in vote buying paid those who had no PVC #2,000 to vote in connivance with INEC officials (The Punch Newspaper, 2018). This form of economic transaction between those who buy and sell votes is subtle and intrinsically link to electoral governance, in that it is inconsistent and incompatible with the principle of transparency, accountability, free and credible electoral process.

### **Theoretical Foundations: Reciprocal Altruism**

Reciprocal altruism is a theoretical model used in this study for unfolding the impact of vote trading on voter’s behaviour. This model was adapted to the centre of social science discourse in the process of understanding human behaviour. From the behavioural science perspective, reciprocal altruism is the exchange of goods or services between individuals such that one individual benefits from an act of the other, and then the other individual benefits in return. When individuals can gain immediate benefits from cooperating, this kind of cooperation is a selfish motivation, a by-product of mutualism and a cooperation that provides a payoff (Yamamoto & Tanaka, 2009). In human beings, the benefit of charity is more evident. Individual infringement of reciprocal altruism pact will reduce the chances of favour and benefit from other individuals (Buss, 2008).

Expectation of cooperation in reciprocal altruism promotes repeated economic transaction between the recipient (voter) and the actor (political party) which stabilise altruistic behavior. Human beings behave altruistically because they have human altruistic emotions and the pleasure of contemplating others happiness (Trivers, 1971; Finan &

Schechter, 2012). This fact explains altruistic behavior among voters as they reciprocate by voting political party that shows kindness with gifts, jobs, money or any other material benefits. It is a direct exchange at the individual level of rewards and material goods by political parties and candidates in return for electoral support of voters (Kitschelt & Wilkinson, 2007; Stokes et al., 2013; Hicken et al., 2015). In essence, this model argues that vote trading is sustained in part because of individual feelings of reciprocity. Voters who are offer money or material goods in exchange for their votes reciprocate because they experience pleasure in increasing the payoff of political party or candidate who has helped them.

However, altruistic cooperation which is beneficial more only to the altruist but not the recipient may negatively impact growth and development. In this case, profits are expected to be unequal. In human beings which are social mammals, this pattern is easily observed. Cheating or acceptance of altruism without the same level of reciprocation does occur in human population because of specialised cognitive mechanisms which drive individuals to be selfishly motivated during mutually beneficial cooperation task (Georgantzis & Gines, 2009). Logical illustration is further presented.

Altruism requires at least a group of two: an altruist (political party) that pay a certain cost; and a recipient (voter) that receive the benefit. Political party value Permanent Voter's Card (PVC) more than money or commodity given to a voter, while a voter value the money at least as much as he values PVC. Assuming the value of PVC is #20,000, a voter can exchange PVC for money say #5,000. The cost/benefit ratio to the political party is  $5,000:20,000 = 1:4$ . That is, for every kindness or favour rendered by a political

party to a voter, it is expected that political party receive four times of the value from the voter. This implies that the cost of voting for a political party is greater than the benefits derived from the money or commodities given to a voter. Note that the benefit of the altruistic act of political party is greater than the cost of the act to a voter. This form of reciprocal altruism refers to as subtle cheating which involve reciprocating but always attempting to give less than what is given, or give less than the partner would give if the situation is reversed (Trivers, 1971). In this sense, the voter also benefits from the relationship but not as much as he would if the relationship is completely equitable while the subtle cheater (political party) benefits more than it would if the relationship with the recipient (voter) is equitable.

This form of reciprocal altruism is based on the assumption that purely selfish political parties engaged in strategic interaction with voters, whereby the value and cost of aiding voters in form of money or commodities outweighed the value and benefit derived from the voters. In this case, poor voters are motivated to sell their vote as they see no difference between electoral candidates and political parties who in turn are interested keeping this kind of connection as it cost less for them (Karakushi, 2015). Hence, this strategy creates economic inefficiencies; it reduces the supply of public goods and encourages bias public policy in favour of the elites (Vicente & Wantchekon, 2009; Aidt et al., 2015; Adojutelegan, 2018). Thus, when political parties and electoral candidates buy votes, they reinforce social subjugation and do long-term damage to poor voters.

#### **Study Location and Methodology**

This study was carried out in Osun state. The state is one of the six southwest states

in Nigeria with its capital in Osogbo. Osun state is bounded in the north by Kwara State, in the east by Ekiti and Ondo states, in the south by Ogun state and in the west by Oyo state. Indigenes of Osun state belong to the Yoruba race and comprises of Oyo, Ife, Ijesa, Igbomina and Osun. The State is delineated into 3 senatorial districts and 30 Local Government Areas. Demographically, the National Bureau of Statistics (2017) figure puts Osun state at an estimated population of 4,705,589 million people.

The Osun state governorship election took place on 22nd September, 2018. While Fourth-eight (48) political parties contested for the governorship position, notable and leading parties includes Advanced Democratic Congress (ADC), Action Democratic Party (ADP), All

Progressives Congress (APC), People’s Democratic Party (PDP) and Social Democratic Party (SDP). The election is one of the keenly contested in Nigeria because of the inability of INEC to make a return in accordance with the legal framework and guidelines. Based on the results collated by the returning officer, the margin between the two leading candidates was 353 which were lower than the number of registered voter in the affected areas. Extent law of INEC guidelines and regulations posit that where such situation occurs, declaration may not be made and the election stands to be inconclusive. In the light of the foregoing, INEC slated 27th of September 2018 for the rerun in the affected polling units.

**Table 1: Affected Local Government, Number of Polling Units (PU) and Reasons for Rerun Election**

Local Government	Reasons	No. of Polling Units	No. of Voters Affected
Orolu	Disruption	2	947
Ife South	Malfunction of Smart Card Reader	3	1314
Ife North	Over voting	1	353
Osogbo	No voting took place	1	884
Total		7	3,498

Source: INEC, 2018

The first round election was characterised by infractions such as disruption of voting at some polling units, malfunction of Smart Card Reader (SCR) and over voting. While all the 48 political parties are

constitutionally allowed to participate in the rerun, the election was clearly a contest between the two leading political parties of APC and PDP.

**Table 2: Results of the Rerun Governorship Election**

Local Government	Ward PU	ADP	APC	ADC	PDP	SDP
Ife North	W10, PU2	0	126	0	2	0
Ife South	W7, 8	0	455	0	36	2
Orolu	W8, 9	1	280	0	122	1



Osogbo	W5, PU17	0	299	0	165	1
Total		1	1,160	0	325	4
First Round Election Results		49744	254345	7681	254698	128049
Overall Total		49745	255505	7681	255023	128053

**Source:** INEC, 2018

The study relies on primary data through the use of questionnaire administration. 5 local governments from Ede South, Obokun, Ife Central, Osogbo and Olorunda were selected from the study area through a simple random sampling technique. In each of the selected local government, 30 copies of questionnaire were administered, such that 20 copies were administered on voters and 10 copies administered on ad-hoc staff of the INEC, totaling 150 respondents. Respondents were selected through snowball sampling technique to suit the exigency of the study. The inclusion criteria for respondents were

based on the participation of the respondents in the 2018 Osun state governorship election. The questionnaire survey was designed to assess the impact of vote trading on voters behaviour, and examine the implications of vote trading on electoral governance. The variables are measure on likert scale with score ranging from 1-5. Descriptive statistics (mean values) was used to present the aggregate agreement scores. Mean values that are higher than half (2.5) are regarded as “low agreement” while mean values that are lower than half (1. 0 to 2.5) are regarded as “high agreement”.

**7. Results and Interpretation**

**Table 3: Mean Values on the Impact of Vote trading on Voters Behavior**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>N</b>
Vote buyers exchange money with voters at the polling unit	1.87	1.299	150
Declined to vote because money did not exchange hands	2.87	.957	150
Collected money but voted according to conscience	2.66	.926	150
Collected money and voted for the party that bought the vote	1.69	1.135	150
Collected money from more than one parties and void the vote	2.54	1.162	150
Offered money to sell vote but declined	2.80	.990	150

**Source:** Fieldwork, 2018

Results in Table 3 showed that vote buyers exchange money with voter at the polling stations (1.87), handful number of voters did not vote because they were not offered money by vote buyers (2.87) and majority

of the voters collected money from vote buyers but only few voted based on their conscience (2.66). The table further showed that majority of the voters collected money and voted for the party

that bought their vote (1.69), lesser voters collected money from more than one parties and voided their vote (2.54) and

majority of voters was offered money to sell their vote but only few did not collect the money (2.80).

**Table 4: Mean Values on the Implications of Vote Trading on Electoral Governance**

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Vote trading is not contradictory to electoral governance	1.65	1.269	150
Vote trading weakens transparency and accountability in the electoral process	1.63	1.083	150
Vote trading increase the rate of popular participation in government	1.79	1.359	150
Vote trading produce political leaders that promote good governance	2.97	.655	150
Vote trading is not a major obstacle to free and credible election	1.79	1.271	150
Vote trading increase the rate of electoral corruption	1.59	1.205	150

**Source:** Fieldwork, 2018

Results in table 4 showed that vote trading is contradictory to electoral governance (1.65), vote trading weakens transparency and accountability in the electoral process (1.63) and decrease the rate of popular participation in government (1.79). Results from the table further showed that vote trading does not produce political leaders that promote good governance (2.97), vote trading is a major obstacle to free and credible election (1.79) and increase the rate of electoral corruption (1.59).

### Findings and Discussion

Findings from the result showed that vote trading does not produce viable leaders and obstruct good governance as resources meant for social development are diverted to vote buying in election. This implies that wrong choices of electoral candidates who are political merchants are often made by voters which consequently has negative impact on electoral governance. This finding is

consistent with the studies of Adojutelegan (2018) and Kwaghga and Tarfa (2015) that leadership performance is no longer considered as the critical factor in electoral outcome in Nigeria because of the phenomenon of vote buying in elections. Hence, poor governance continues to predominate.

Findings showed that electoral manipulation and systematic fraud through vote trading transaction weakens transparency and accountability process in elections. This finding is not unconnected with the studies of Mozaffar and Schedler (2002); Elklit and Reynolds (2005) and Issacharoff, Karlan and Pildes (2001) that fair and free elections are impossible without effective electoral governance. However, political leaders in Nigeria deliberately manipulate the process of election administration to secure favorable election outcome through inducement of voters with money and fungible goods. Therefore, vote trading as

electoral strategy is contradictory to the value and validity of electoral governance.

Findings showed that low income earners are likely to sell their vote as a result of their economy status. This finding align with the studies of Ekezie (2018); Olatunji (2018); Kwaghga and Tarfa (2015) and Stokes et al. (2013) that electorates demonstrate the readiness to sell their votes to the highest bidder among the electoral candidates because their limited means make them susceptible to material inducements or modest amount of money. This implies that poor voters place more value on immediate benefits as oppose to long-term public services because they are disillusioned and disenchanted about the electoral governance process.

Lastly, findings showed that vote trading drives electoral corruption. Where a candidate invested much before being elected into public office, simple economic rationality will propel him to make the money invested in election as many folds as possible. This findings reinforce previous studies that struggle for state power and control of national resources are accompanied with the running of elections with illicit money by politicians which encourage corruption in the polity and hampered democratic governance of (Danjibo & Abubakar, 2007; Kwaghga & Tarfa, 2015; Adamu, Ocheni & Ibrahim, 2016). Also, the study found that political corruption, electoral corruption and vote buying distort democratic process and antithetical to democratic development. These findings suggest meaningful explanation on the prevalence of vote trading in a system where the state institutions are weak, elites compete for the control of state resources and higher level of corruption.

### Conclusions

This study provided a theoretical model

and empirical evidence that the poor and are likely to be offered money and goods in exchange for votes. Similarly, voters are likely to reciprocate by voting for the political parties that offer them money or material benefits. This study also considered vote trading as political corruption that produce negative implications on electoral governance because it promote the primacy of money in electoral process to the detriment of merit, good governance and free and fair election. In essence, the study found that though vote trading increases voter turnout, it hampers electoral governance as a result of manipulation of electoral process through inducement of voters, electoral officials and security agents. This study also argued that vote trading weakens popular participation, transparency and accountability in electoral process because of the electorate cynical behaviour towards the electoral candidates. This study concluded that the correlation between vote trading and voters behaviour reflect in weak electoral process which violate Nigeria's electoral governance.

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