



Newspaper Coverage of Vote Buying in Nigeria's 2023 General Elections: Perceptions of Academic Staff of Select Tertiary Institutions in South-South, Nigeria

¹Abdulazeez Hassan Kadiri, ²Wilfred Oritsesan Olley, ³Andrew Asan Ate & ⁴Isah Abdulazeez

¹Department of Journalism and Media Studies, Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi, Edo State, Nigeria

^{2&3}Department of Mass Communication, Edo University Iyamho, Edo State, Nigeria

⁴Department of Strategic Communication & Media Studies, Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi, Edo State, Nigeria

¹<https://orcid.org/0009-0005-4826-4608>

²<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5405-765X>

³<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5159-6989>

⁴<https://orcid.org/0009-0002-1994-5525>

*Corresponding author: isahabdulazeez234@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Background: Vote buying emerged as one of the most significant threats to the credibility and integrity of Nigeria's 2023 general elections, undermining democratic accountability and public confidence in the electoral process. Although several studies have examined vote buying and media coverage of elections in Nigeria, there is limited empirical evidence on how newspaper reportage shaped public perceptions of electoral credibility and the extent to which newspapers covered the phenomenon through different journalistic approaches. This study therefore investigated newspaper coverage of vote buying during Nigeria's 2023 general elections and readers' perceptions of its implications for electoral credibility.

Objective: The study examined the level of public awareness of vote buying, readers' perceptions of its impact on electoral credibility, the extent and patterns of newspaper coverage, and the dominant journalistic approaches employed in reporting the phenomenon.

Method: The study was anchored on the Social Influence Theory, Social Responsibility Theory, and Agenda-Setting Theory. It adopted a mixed-methods design comprising a survey and quantitative content analysis. The survey involved 383 academic staff selected through stratified random sampling from three tertiary institutions in South-South Nigeria. The content analysis examined 144 purposively selected editions of *The Punch*, *The Guardian*, *Daily Trust*, and *Daily Sun* published between January and December 2023. The unit of analysis was individual newspaper stories on vote buying. Stories were coded based on frequency of coverage, story type, placement, prominence, news sources, tone, and thematic focus using a structured coding sheet. Two trained coders independently analysed the content, and inter-coder reliability was established using Holsti's reliability coefficient, which exceeded the acceptable benchmark of 0.80.

Results: The findings revealed that public awareness of vote buying was relatively high, largely driven by media reports and civic education campaigns. Respondents perceived vote buying as having significantly undermined the credibility of the 2023 general elections despite increased public awareness of its consequences. The content analysis showed that newspapers devoted only modest attention to vote buying relative to other electoral issues, with *Daily Trust* and *The Punch* recording the highest frequency of coverage. Most reports were presented as straight news stories, while investigative, interpretative, and



editorial reports were comparatively few. Coverage focused predominantly on political events and actors, with limited attention to the structural, legal, and socio-economic factors that sustain vote buying.

Conclusion: The study concludes that Nigerian newspapers contributed to raising public awareness of vote buying and partially fulfilled their agenda-setting and social responsibility roles. However, the predominance of event-driven reporting and the limited use of investigative journalism constrained the media's capacity to expose the systemic nature of vote buying and promote meaningful electoral accountability.

Unique Contribution: The study contributes to scholarship by integrating audience perception with quantitative newspaper content analysis to demonstrate how patterns of media coverage shape public understanding of vote buying and perceptions of electoral credibility during Nigeria's 2023 general elections.

Key Recommendation: The study recommends that Nigerian newspapers strengthen investigative and interpretative reporting on vote buying, devote greater editorial attention to its systemic causes and democratic consequences, diversify their news sources, and collaborate more closely with electoral management bodies and civil society organisations to enhance voter education and reinforce electoral integrity.

Keywords: Vote buying, Newspaper reportage, Readers' perception, Nigerian elections, Media credibility

INTRODUCTION

Elections are fundamental to democracy because they provide citizens with the opportunity to choose their representatives and shape the direction of governance. In Nigeria, however, the credibility of elections has consistently been undermined by the prevalence of vote buying. This practice, which involves the exchange of money or material inducements for electoral support, has become one of the most pervasive threats to the country's democratic process (Nwankwo & Musa, 2023). Despite successive electoral reforms, vote buying persists, weakening democratic consolidation and eroding public confidence in electoral institutions.

Historically, the roots of money politics in Nigeria can be traced to the First Republic, where ethnic, religious, and regional loyalties created fertile ground for electoral manipulation. Since the country's return to democratic governance in 1999, vote buying has become increasingly institutionalised, influencing party primaries, general elections, and even post-election political patronage (Bunte & Ufen, 2009; Adegbite, 2011). The 2023 general elections once again exposed the magnitude of the problem, as major political parties, including the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), were accused of orchestrating systematic vote-buying schemes in several states. These allegations renewed concerns about the vulnerability of Nigeria's electoral process and the growing influence of financial inducements on voter behaviour.

The Electoral Act 2022 provides a comprehensive legal framework for combating vote buying by criminalising both the offering and acceptance of money or material benefits intended to influence voting behaviour. Sections 121, 124, and 127 explicitly prohibit such practices, while Section 130 prescribes penalties, including fines and imprisonment, for offenders. Nevertheless,



a significant gap remains between legal provisions and their implementation. Weak enforcement mechanisms, institutional fragility, and entrenched political interests have limited the effectiveness of the law, allowing vote buying to remain widespread (Adebanjo, 2019; Nwankwo & Musa, 2023).

Beyond Nigeria, scholars increasingly situate vote buying within the broader discourse on electoral integrity in developing democracies. Comparative studies across Africa, Latin America, and Asia demonstrate that poverty, weak institutions, and low levels of civic trust often sustain vote buying despite legal prohibitions (Stokes, 2021; Mares & Young, 2019). Nigeria reflects this broader pattern, where widespread unemployment, illiteracy, and economic inequality encourage some voters to exchange their votes for immediate material benefits (Ogogo, 2012).

Recent Nigerian studies further reveal that vote buying is not merely a transactional exchange but a systemic distortion of democratic culture. It limits political competition by favouring wealthy candidates, discourages issue-based campaigns, weakens democratic accountability, and undermines the social contract between citizens and elected leaders (Nwafor, 2016; Ibrahim, 2022). The problem is further compounded by inadequate regulation of campaign financing and limited transparency in political spending, making it difficult to monitor and curb illicit financial flows during election periods.

To address these challenges, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), civil society organisations, and international election observers have introduced various reforms and advocacy initiatives aimed at promoting electoral transparency and integrity. Despite these efforts, progress has remained limited. Institutional weaknesses, political apathy, and resistance from entrenched political elites continue to undermine reform initiatives. Consequently, the persistence of vote buying raises important questions about Nigeria's democratic trajectory, the effectiveness of electoral institutions, and the capacity of existing legal frameworks to transform political behaviour in contexts characterised by socio-economic deprivation and weak accountability.

Given the crucial role of the media in promoting democratic governance, newspapers are expected to inform citizens, expose electoral malpractices, and stimulate public debate on issues affecting electoral integrity. Through agenda-setting and public enlightenment, newspapers can shape public understanding of vote buying, influence perceptions of electoral credibility, and promote accountability among political actors. However, concerns remain regarding the extent, prominence, and nature of newspaper coverage of vote buying during elections. Event-driven reporting, inadequate investigative journalism, and limited contextual analysis may reduce the media's effectiveness in addressing the structural dimensions of the problem.

Although previous studies have examined vote buying and media coverage of elections in Nigeria, relatively few have combined newspaper content analysis with audience perception to assess how newspaper coverage influences public understanding of vote buying and perceptions of electoral credibility. Furthermore, limited attention has been paid to newspaper coverage of



vote buying during the 2023 general elections conducted under the Electoral Act 2022. This study addresses these gaps by examining the extent and patterns of newspaper coverage of vote buying alongside readers' perceptions of its implications for electoral credibility. In doing so, it contributes to scholarship on electoral communication and provides evidence that may inform media practice, electoral reforms, and democratic governance in Nigeria.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study sought to:

1. Analyse the extent of newspaper coverage of vote buying during Nigeria's 2023 general elections.
2. Investigate the level of public awareness of vote buying during the 2023 general elections.
3. Examine readers' perceptions of the credibility and influence of newspaper reports on vote buying during the elections.
4. Assess the patterns and nature of vote-buying reportage in selected Nigerian newspapers during the 2023 general elections.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of the literature highlights multiple drivers. Poverty and high unemployment rates make citizens vulnerable to small inducements, while weak civic education undermines voters' appreciation of the long-term impact of selling their votes (Adeyemi, 2018; Ayoola, 2019). Political patronage networks further entrench the practice, especially in rural areas where traditional rulers and local elites act as intermediaries between politicians and voters. Ethno-religious sentiments are also instrumentalised, with politicians offering inducements along identity lines to secure bloc votes (Kuye&Kolawole, 2021). Above all, weak institutions such as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and law enforcement agencies remain susceptible to manipulation, thus fostering a permissive environment for vote buying (Nnadozie& Obi, 2021).

The media is critical to how citizens interpret electoral malpractices. According to agenda-setting theory, media not only informs the public but also shapes the salience of issues (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). In the Nigerian context, newspapers play an important watchdog role in exposing electoral misconduct. However, reportage of vote buying has often been inconsistent—sometimes superficial, episodic, or driven by political bias. Studies show that while newspapers cover instances of vote buying, they may frame them more as isolated events rather than as systemic threats to democracy (Ibrahim, 2009; Adewuyi, 2020). More recent scholarship suggests that the rise of digital journalism and social media platforms has complicated the role of newspapers, as online spaces increasingly amplify reports of electoral malpractice and provide alternative discourses (Ngwu& Obi, 2022). Yet, newspapers remain influential among educated elites, policymakers, and urban populations, giving their framing of vote buying significant implications for audience perception.



Audience Perception and Media Influence on Vote Buying Behaviour

Audience perception of vote buying is shaped not merely by the frequency of newspaper coverage but also by the framing, tone, and sources that are highlighted in such reportage. The manner in which the press selects and presents stories plays a pivotal role in constructing public attitudes towards electoral corruption. Newspapers that adopt a critical and investigative framing often underscore the illegality, moral depravity, and democratic consequences of vote buying, thereby positioning it as an existential threat to governance and democratic legitimacy (Trebilcock&Sossin, 2021). This type of coverage cultivates a heightened sense of urgency among readers, encouraging them to view vote buying not as a peripheral electoral issue but as a systemic problem requiring urgent institutional reform.

Conversely, neutral reporting or the trivialisation of vote buying by treating it as a mere “election ritual” risks desensitising the electorate to its corrosive effects. Where newspapers fail to foreground the implications of vote buying, audiences may come to normalise it as a routine political practice embedded within Nigeria’s electoral culture (Omotola, 2010). The result is a reinforcement of cynicism and political apathy, as citizens perceive little possibility of reform in a political system that tolerates or downplays corruption. This demonstrates that framing does not simply mirror reality but actively shapes social meaning and civic responses.

Generational divides further complicate audience perception. Research has shown that younger readers, who are digital natives and rely on diverse sources such as online newspapers, blogs, and social media, tend to be more critical of electoral malpractices compared to older readers who primarily depend on traditional print media (Nnadozie & Obi, 2021). This difference stems from the greater exposure of younger audiences to alternative narratives, fact-checking platforms, and participatory discussions on democracy and governance available through digital channels (Okoro & Nwafor, 2020). Consequently, their skepticism towards political ‘clientelism’ is informed not only by content but by the multiplicity of perspectives to which they are exposed.

Additionally, the tone of coverage plays a decisive role in shaping how readers evaluate the legitimacy of electoral practices. Strongly worded condemnations, supported by credible sources such as civil society organisations, electoral commissions, or international observers, tend to strengthen negative perceptions of vote buying and foster resistance among audiences (Adeniran, 2019). On the other hand, coverage dominated by partisan voices or politicians seeking to justify or rationalise the practice has the potential to distort public perception, framing vote buying as a pragmatic rather than unethical political strategy.

Audience perceptions are also shaped by the perceived credibility of the reporting source. Where newspapers are viewed as independent and professional, their stance on vote buying is likely to influence readers more strongly than coverage in media outlets perceived to be politically captured (Schiffrin, 2017). In contexts like Nigeria, where media ownership often aligns with political interests, the credibility gap becomes a determining factor in whether coverage is dismissed as propaganda or accepted as genuine civic guidance.



Thus, the framing of vote buying in newspapers does more than inform; it actively constructs narratives that shape audience perceptions, attitudes, and potential resistance. By influencing how individuals interpret the morality, legality, and political impact of the practice, newspapers either contribute to normalisation or to civic mobilisation against electoral corruption. Ultimately, public perception is not a passive reflection of reality but a product of mediated interpretations shaped by framing choices, generational outlooks, and the credibility of news sources.

The reviewed literature underscores the persistence of vote buying in Nigeria as a multifaceted problem rooted in socio-economic deprivation, weak institutions, and political culture. It also highlights the normative role of the media in combating this menace. However, several gaps remain. First, much of the scholarship has focused on definitions, causes, and manifestations of vote buying, with limited emphasis on how Nigerian newspapers specifically report and frame the practice. Second, there is inadequate engagement with recent studies (2020–2023) examining the interplay between traditional print media and emerging digital platforms in shaping electoral discourse. Third, audience perception has received limited scholarly attention, especially in terms of how coverage of vote buying influences voter attitudes, trust in democracy, and willingness to resist electoral inducements. This study seeks to address these gaps by systematically analysing Nigerian newspapers' reportage of vote buying during the 2023 general elections and evaluating how audiences perceived such coverage.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on three interrelated theoretical perspectives: the Social Responsibility Theory, the Social Influence Theory, and the Agenda-Setting Theory. These frameworks are particularly relevant because they collectively capture the dual focus of this research on newspaper reportage of vote buying and readers' perceptions of such coverage. While Social Responsibility Theory provides a normative lens for evaluating how newspapers ought to report on issues of electoral malpractice, Social Influence Theory explains how such reportage can shape audience attitudes and behaviours. The Agenda-Setting Theory complements these by demonstrating how the frequency and prominence of coverage influence the salience of vote buying as a public concern. Together, these theories offer a robust foundation for interrogating both the media's role and the public's response.

Social Responsibility Theory

The Social Responsibility Theory emerged from the Hutchins Commission Report of 1947 on press freedom and was subsequently systematised by Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm in 1956 as one of the normative press theories. The theory asserts that media freedom is not absolute but must be exercised with responsibility to society by ensuring truth, accuracy, fairness, balance, and objectivity (Ndimele & Innocent, 2006). Applied to this study, the theory provides the benchmark for assessing whether Nigerian newspapers discharged their ethical duty in reporting vote buying during the 2023 general elections. Since one of the research objectives was to examine the extent and framing of newspaper coverage, Social Responsibility Theory helps to determine whether the reportage amplified democratic accountability or merely reproduced the



culture of impunity surrounding electoral malpractice. In this way, it connects directly to the study's content analysis dimension.

Social Influence Theory

The Social Influence Theory, propounded by Herbert Kelman in 1958, explains how people's beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours are shaped by the expectations of others (Kelman, 1958). Kelman distinguished three forms of influence: compliance, identification, and internalisation, which describe different levels of persuasion and conformity. Within the Nigerian electoral context, this theory sheds light on how media framing of vote buying can influence the public's perception. If newspapers report vote buying as an unethical practice that undermines democracy, audiences may internalise this position and develop a negative attitude toward the act. Conversely, if coverage trivialises or normalises vote buying, readers may comply with existing political norms that tolerate such malpractice. The theory is thus useful for addressing the study's research questions on how audiences perceived the credibility of reportage and how the framing of stories shaped attitudes toward electoral integrity.

Moreover, Social Influence Theory is particularly relevant in Nigeria where electoral behaviour is strongly mediated by social pressures, networks, and identity groups. Voters often conform to the expectations of their communities, ethnic blocs, or peer groups, especially when inducements such as money, food, or clothing are offered (Isaiah, 2018). By explaining how social conformity and group influence operate, the theory provides insight into why voters might accept vote buying despite recognising it as a corrupt practice. Newspapers play a role in either reinforcing or challenging these norms through the ways they report such acts. Thus, the theory helps to illuminate the relationship between media content and the social psychology of voting behaviour in Nigeria.

Agenda Setting Theory

The Agenda-Setting Theory, developed by McCombs and Shaw (1972), complements the above perspectives by demonstrating how media attention influences public priorities. The theory posits that while the press does not dictate what people should think, it significantly shapes what people think about by assigning salience to certain issues through frequent and prominent coverage (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). In the context of this study, agenda-setting is critical for evaluating the extent to which newspapers gave visibility to vote buying during the 2023 general elections. By devoting substantial coverage to the issue, newspapers could have elevated public awareness and stimulated debate about its implications for democracy. Conversely, limited or marginal coverage might have reinforced public apathy or ignorance. The theory therefore directly supports research questions on the level of public awareness and the extent of reportage.

Although other communication theories such as Framing Theory or Cultivation Theory could have been employed, the chosen frameworks were deemed more suitable for this study because they address both the normative and practical dimensions of the research problem. Social Responsibility Theory evaluates how ethically newspapers carried out their duties, Social Influence Theory explains how readers interpreted and responded to the reportage, and Agenda-Setting Theory reveals how media coverage influenced the public salience of vote buying.



Together, these theories not only align with the study's research objectives but also provide a comprehensive lens through which the interplay between media reportage and audience perception can be understood in the Nigerian electoral context.

The three theories complement one another in explaining the relationship between newspaper reportage and public perception. Social Responsibility Theory provides the normative framework for assessing the quality and ethical standards of newspaper coverage of vote buying. Agenda-Setting Theory explains how the frequency and prominence of such coverage influence public awareness and the importance attached to the issue. Social Influence Theory accounts for how exposure to newspaper reports shapes readers' perceptions of vote buying and the credibility of the electoral process. Together, these theories are directly aligned with the study's objectives and research questions, providing an integrated framework for examining both the content of newspaper reportage and its influence on public perception of electoral credibility during Nigeria's 2023 general elections.

METHOD

The study adopted a mixed-method approach, combining survey and content analysis methods. This design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to take advantage of the strengths of each method while minimising their weaknesses. The survey method was employed to measure readers' perceptions, attitudes, and orientations regarding newspaper coverage of vote buying during the 2023 general elections. Content analysis, on the other hand, provided a systematic and objective examination of newspaper reportage on vote buying, focusing on frequency, how it was reported, tone, and thematic categories. The mixed-method approach thus offered both breadth (through quantitative surveys) and depth (through qualitative insights from content analysis), ensuring a more robust interpretation of the findings.

The survey method was employed because it is particularly suitable for behavioural and communication research. It enabled the collection of data from a large population through careful sampling and the use of a standardised questionnaire. This method was considered appropriate given the study's focus on readers' perceptions of newspaper reportage, which required a representative sample of individuals. As Asemah, et. al. (2012) note, the survey method is most relevant when primary data are derived from the views of the public or specific groups.

Content analysis was used to examine the extent, nature, and framing of newspaper reportage on vote buying during the 2023 general elections. Following the definition of Berelson (1952), content analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of communication content. This approach was considered suitable because it ensured consistency, reduced bias, and allowed replicability in future studies. By analysing news articles, features, opinion pieces, editorials, and cartoons, the study was able to provide insights into how newspapers presented the issue of vote buying to the public.

The population for the survey comprised academic staff of three tertiary institutions in South-South Nigeria: University of Benin (UNIBEN), Benin City; University of Port Harcourt



(UNIPORT); and Delta State University (DELSU), Abraka. The combined staff population of the three universities stood at 8,964.

Table 1: Components of the Survey Population

Institution	Population
UNIBEN	3,021
UNIPORT	2,985
DELSU	2,958
Total	8,964

While this population provided accessibility and uniformity in terms of educational exposure, a key limitation lies in its restricted representativeness of the general Nigerian newspaper-reading public. Hence, findings may not be generalisable to the wider society beyond the sampled academic staff.

According to the Nigerian Press Council (2010, cited in Ate, 2014), there are 315 registered newspapers in Nigeria. This formed the population for content analysis. However, due to feasibility considerations and the study's focus on nationally circulated dailies, four newspapers: *The Punch*, *The Guardian*, *Daily Trust*, and *Daily Sun* were purposively selected. These newspapers were chosen because of their wide readership, national coverage, and influence in setting media agendas on political discourse.

A proportional stratified sampling technique was employed to select respondents from the three universities. Using the Yamane (1967) formula at 95% confidence level, the sample size was determined to be 383. Stratification ensured proportional representation from each institution.

Table 2 Sample Size Distribution

Institution	Population	Sample Size
UNIBEN	3,021	129
UNIPORT	2,985	128
DELSU	2,958	126
Total	8,964	383

Out of 383 copies questionnaire administered, 375 were retrieved in usable condition, representing a 97.9% return rate.

Stempel's (1952) content sampling technique was adopted, which demonstrated that smaller samples of newspaper issues could still yield valid results. Following this, 12 editions of each newspaper were sampled per month across the study period. The study covered a period of 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023, coinciding with the peak of electoral activities and media reportage on vote buying.



To ensure balanced quarterly representation, one newspaper was selected for each quarter:

- *The Guardian* (January–March),
- *The Punch* (April–June),
- *Daily Sun* (July–September),
- *Daily Trust* (October–December).

This procedure produced a total of 144 editions (12 issues × 3 months × 4 newspapers). However, a limitation of this design is that it may not fully capture irregular spikes in reportage linked to special events, such as election day or post-election disputes.

The main instrument for the survey was a structured questionnaire - Readers' Perception of Newspaper Coverage of Vote Buying Questionnaire (REPENCOVBQ) - developed by the researcher. The questionnaire contained 28 items divided into three sections: demographic data, newspaper readership patterns, and perceptions of reportage. A 5-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree) was used to measure respondents' perceptions.

For content analysis, a coding sheet and coding guide were developed. Content categories included frame of vote buying (moral, political, economic, legal), extent of coverage, format of reportage (straight news, editorials, opinion, cartoons, letters), and tone of reportage (favourable, unfavourable, neutral). These categories were designed in line with the study objectives and validated by communication research experts.

To establish validity, the survey questionnaire was reviewed by the researcher's supervisor, two experts in mass communication, and one expert in measurement and evaluation. The content analysis instrument was subjected to face validation by two researchers at Edo University, Iyamho. Necessary modifications were made before deployment.

Reliability was tested through a pilot study involving 20 academic staff of Rivers State College of Arts and Science (excluded from the main study). Using Cronbach's Alpha, the survey instrument produced a coefficient of 0.81, indicating strong internal consistency. For content analysis, inter-coder reliability was tested using Scott's Pi Index. Two coders independently analysed selected content, and results achieved acceptable reliability thresholds in line with Wimmer and Dominick (2010).

The study adhered to ethical principles of research. Respondents were informed of the purpose of the study and their right to voluntary participation. Anonymity and confidentiality of data were guaranteed, and no identifying information was collected. For the content analysis, only publicly available newspaper editions were used, ensuring no ethical violations.

Data from the survey were analysed using frequency distribution tables and simple percentages to address the research questions. Hypotheses were tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) at a 0.05 level of significance. For content analysis, data were presented in tables showing frequencies and percentages of reportage across the identified categories. Findings from both methods were triangulated to provide a comprehensive



understanding of newspaper reportage and readers' perceptions of vote buying during the 2023 general elections.

PRESENTATION OF THEMATIC DATA

Table 3: Responses on Awareness of Vote-Buying Practices During the 2023 Elections

Awareness of Vote-Buying Practices	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	Decision
I am aware of vote-buying practices that occurred during the 2023 elections.	195 (52.00%)	115 (30.67%)	45 (12.00%)	20 (5.33%)	3.29	Accepted
I frequently encountered discussions about vote buying in the media during the 2023 elections.	160 (42.67%)	125 (33.33%)	60 (16.00%)	30 (8.00%)	3.10	Accepted
Community-based campaigns raised my awareness about vote buying in the 2023 elections.	120 (32.00%)	140 (37.33%)	80 (21.33%)	35 (9.33%)	2.92	Accepted
I understand the legal and ethical implications of vote buying during elections.	210 (56.00%)	110 (29.33%)	40 (10.67%)	15 (4.00%)	3.37	Accepted
Public campaigns effectively highlighted the prevalence of vote-buying practices during the 2023 elections.	135 (36.00%)	140 (37.33%)	60 (16.00%)	40 (10.67%)	2.99	Accepted

Source: Field survey 2024

Table 3 presents an analysis of responses on awareness of vote-buying practices during the 2023 elections. The findings indicate a high level of awareness among respondents, as evidenced by the mean scores ($\bar{X}$) for all statements exceeding the threshold of 2.50, leading to their acceptance. A significant proportion of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statements, suggesting widespread acknowledgment of vote-buying practices during the elections. The first statement, focusing on general awareness, recorded the highest mean score (3.29), reflecting that most participants were familiar with the occurrence of vote-buying. Media discussions also played a prominent role, as indicated by the acceptance of the second statement ($\bar{X}$ =3.10), highlighting the influence of media platforms in disseminating information about this issue.

Community-based campaigns were moderately effective in raising awareness, with a mean score of 2.92, suggesting that while such campaigns reached a substantial audience, their impact was not as pronounced as media influence. Furthermore, respondents demonstrated a strong understanding of the legal and ethical implications of vote buying, with the highest percentage of agreement (56.00% strongly agree) and a mean score of 3.37, underscoring the effectiveness of educational initiatives on this aspect.



Lastly, public campaigns highlighting the prevalence of vote-buying practices were also deemed effective, with a mean score of 2.99. However, the distribution of responses shows that a notable minority either disagreed or strongly disagreed, implying some gaps in the reach or resonance of these campaigns. Overall, the findings reflect a well-informed populace with varying degrees of exposure to different awareness-raising initiatives, highlighting the need for continuous and multifaceted efforts to address vote-buying practices comprehensively.

Table 4: Responses on Perception of Credibility in Vote-Buying Reports

Perception of Credibility in Vote-Buying Reports	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	Decision
I trust the accuracy of reports on vote buying published in Nigerian newspapers.	200 (53.33%)	110 (29.33%)	45 (12.00%)	20 (5.33%)	3.31	Accepted
Reports on vote buying in Nigerian newspapers are balanced and unbiased.	175 (46.67%)	120 (32.00%)	55 (14.67%)	25 (6.67%)	3.19	Accepted
Nigerian newspapers provided sufficient evidence to support their claims about vote-buying practices.	160 (42.67%)	130 (34.67%)	55 (14.67%)	30 (8.00%)	3.12	Accepted
I believe Nigerian newspapers actively investigated vote-buying practices during the 2023 elections.	180 (48.00%)	115 (30.67%)	50 (13.33%)	30 (8.00%)	3.19	Accepted
The language used in newspaper reports about vote buying influenced my perception of their credibility.	140 (37.33%)	125 (33.33%)	70 (18.67%)	40 (10.67%)	2.97	Accepted

Source: Field survey 2024

The table provides an analysis of respondents' perceptions of the credibility of vote-buying reports in Nigerian newspapers during the 2023 elections. The mean scores ($\bar{X}$) for all statements exceed the threshold of 2.50, leading to the acceptance of each statement, signifying a generally positive perception of the credibility of these reports. A majority of respondents (53.33% strongly agreed and 29.33% agreed) trusted the accuracy of vote-buying reports published in Nigerian newspapers, reflected in the highest mean score (3.31). This indicates that many participants found these reports reliable. Similarly, the perception of reports as balanced and unbiased was supported by a majority (46.67% strongly agreed and 32.00% agreed), with a mean score of 3.19. This underscores a belief in the fairness and objectivity of newspaper reporting on vote-buying.

The sufficiency of evidence provided in the reports was also positively rated ($\bar{X}$ =3.12), although a minority expressed disagreement, suggesting that while many respondents found the evidence adequate, others perceived gaps. The investigative role of newspapers in uncovering vote-buying practices during the elections was similarly acknowledged ($\bar{X}$ =3.19), with nearly half of the



respondents (48.00%) strongly agreeing that newspapers actively pursued such issues. The influence of language used in newspaper reports on respondents' perceptions of credibility was also accepted ($\bar{X}$ 2.97). While a significant portion of respondents agreed with this statement, the relatively lower mean score and higher percentage of disagreement (29.34% combined for D and SD) suggest that language choices were a more contentious factor. The data indicate a strong overall trust in the credibility of vote-buying reports in Nigerian newspapers, with respondents appreciating their accuracy, balance, and investigative efforts. However, there remain areas for improvement, such as the sufficiency of evidence and the impact of language, to strengthen the perceived credibility further.

PRESENTATION OF CONTENT ANALYSIS DATA

Table 5: Extent of coverage of issues of Vote Buying in Select newspapers

Newspapers	No. of stories (%)
The Guardian	20 (22.22)
Punch	25(27.78)
Daily Sun	15 (16.67)
Daily Trust	30 (33.33)
Total	90 (100)

Source: Field study 2024

The data in Table One shows the extent of coverage of vote-buying issues in four selected newspapers—*The Guardian*, *Punch*, *Daily Sun*, and *Daily Trust*—over 12 months, with each newspaper contributing 36 editions. Of the 90 stories analysed, *Daily Trust* provided the most coverage with 30 stories (33.33%), followed by *Punch* with 25 stories (27.78%), *The Guardian* with 20 stories (22.22%), and *Daily Sun* with 15 stories (16.67%). The study involved a systematic allocation of 12 editions per month per newspaper, ensuring equal representation across the different quarters of the year, which helped capture seasonal variations and allowed for a comprehensive analysis of how vote-buying issues were covered over the entire study period. This approach highlights that *Daily Trust* and *Punch* focused more on the issue, while *Daily Sun* gave it the least attention.

Table 6: Frame of Vote Buying

Unit of Analysis	The Guardian	Punch	Daily Sun	Daily Trust	Total
Moral	2 (2.22%)	5 (5.56%)	1 (1.11%)	5 (5.56%)	13 (14.44%)
Political	12 (13.33%)	10 (11.11%)	7 (7.78%)	15 (16.67%)	44 (48.89%)
Economical	2 (2.22%)	8 (8.89%)	5 (5.56%)	8 (8.89%)	23 (25.56%)
Legal	4 (4.44%)	2 (2.22%)	2 (2.22%)	2 (2.22%)	10 (11.11%)
Total	20	25	15	30	90 (100%)
	(22.22%)	(27.78%)	(16.67%)	(33.33%)	

Source: Field study 2024



The findings indicate that the political frame dominated the coverage of vote buying across the four newspapers, accounting for 48.89% of the total reportage. *Daily Trust* had the highest contribution (16.67%) within this frame, followed by *The Guardian* (13.33%), *Punch* (11.11%), and *Daily Sun* (7.78%). The economical frame followed with 25.56%, with *Punch* and *Daily Trust* leading at 8.89% each. The moral frame had 14.44% of the total, and the legal frame accounted for the least coverage at 11.11%. This suggests that newspapers focused predominantly on political implications and economic aspects of vote buying while underreporting its moral and legal dimensions. The implications reveal a prioritisation of systemic and strategic discussions over ethical or legal consequences.

Table 7: Journalistic Genres

Unit of Analysis	The Guardian	Punch	Daily Sun	Daily Trust	Total
Straight News	15 (16.67%)	6 (6.67%)	5 (5.56%)	2 (2.22%)	28 (31.11%)
Feature	2 (2.22%)	12 (13.33%)	2 (2.22%)	16 (17.78%)	32 (35.56%)
Opinion	1 (1.11%)	4 (4.44%)	3 (3.33%)	6 (6.67%)	14 (15.56%)
Cartoon	2 (2.22%)	3 (3.33%)	5 (5.56%)	6 (6.67%)	16 (17.78%)
Total	20 (22.22%)	25 (27.78%)	15 (16.67%)	30 (33.33%)	90 (100%)

Source: Field study 2024

The data shows a diverse use of journalistic genres, with features being the most frequently employed (35.56%). *Daily Trust* utilised features the most (17.78%), followed by *Punch* (13.33%). Straight news was the second most common genre, comprising 31.11% of the total, with *The Guardian* contributing the most (16.67%). Opinion pieces and cartoons were less frequently used, accounting for 15.56% and 17.78% respectively, with *Daily Sun* leading in cartoon use (5.56%). This distribution implies a strong reliance on feature articles to provide in-depth analyses of vote buying, reflecting an effort to offer detailed narratives and perspectives.

Table 8: Thematic Content

Unit of Analysis	The Guardian	Punch	Daily Sun	Daily Trust	Total
Corruption	5 (5.56%)	15 (16.67%)	5 (5.56%)	4 (4.44%)	29 (32.22%)
Democracy	2 (2.22%)	5 (5.56%)	2 (2.22%)	6 (6.67%)	15 (16.67%)
Voter Manipulation	13 (14.44%)	5 (5.56%)	8 (8.89%)	20 (22.22%)	46 (51.11%)
Total	20 (22.22%)	25 (27.78%)	15 (16.67%)	30 (33.33%)	90 (100%)

Source: Field study 2024 Thematic content analysis reveals that voter manipulation dominated coverage at 51.11%. *Daily Trust* contributed the most to this theme (22.22%), followed by *The Guardian* (14.44%). Corruption was the second most addressed theme at 32.22%, with *Punch* making the highest contribution (16.67%). Democracy, while important, was the least reported theme, accounting for only 16.67%, with *Daily Trust* again leading at 6.67%. These findings suggest that newspapers emphasised the manipulative tactics associated with vote buying over



broader systemic issues like corruption or democratic values, highlighting the immediacy of voter influence concerns.

Table 9: Tone of Reportage

Unit of Analysis	The Guardian	Punch	Daily Sun	Daily Trust	Total
Favourable	10 (11.11%)	20 (22.22%)	10 (11.11%)	25 (27.78%)	65 (72.22%)
Unfavourable	2 (2.22%)	3 (3.33%)	2 (2.22%)	3 (3.33%)	10 (11.11%)
Neutral	8 (8.89%)	2 (2.22%)	3 (3.33%)	2 (2.22%)	15 (16.67%)
Total	20 (22.22%)	25 (27.78%)	15 (16.67%)	30 (33.33%)	90(100%)

Source: Field study 2024

The tone of reportage was predominantly favourable, comprising 72.22% of total coverage. *Daily Trust* reported the most favourable content (27.78%), followed by *Punch* (22.22%). Unfavourable tones were minimal at 11.11%, while neutral tones accounted for 16.67%. *The Guardian* and *Punch* contributed marginally to unfavourable and neutral tones. The overwhelming favourability suggests that newspapers may have taken a less critical stance on vote buying, potentially normalising the practice or reflecting a lack of in-depth critique of its implications for democracy and governance.

DISCUSSION

Research Question One: What is the level of public awareness regarding vote buying practices during the 2023 elections?

The findings in Table 3 indicate a relatively high level of awareness of vote buying among respondents. A majority (52%) strongly agreed and 30.67% agreed that they were aware of vote-buying practices during the 2023 elections. Similarly, more than 70% acknowledged frequent exposure to media discussions about vote buying, while over 65% reported understanding its legal and ethical implications. This outcome suggests that both mass media reportage and community-based campaigns succeeded in drawing public attention to the prevalence of the practice. These findings resonate with Adeyemi (2018) and Ayoola (2019), who emphasised the role of media and civic education initiatives in sensitising the electorate to the dangers of electoral corruption.

However, awareness does not necessarily translate into rejection of the practice. Studies such as Kramon (2017) and Akinbobola (2021) highlight how socio-economic constraints—poverty and unemployment—often compel voters to rationalise vote buying as a survival strategy. While the present study confirms that awareness levels are high, it also underscores the gap between knowledge and behavioural change, which remains a key challenge for electoral integrity in Nigeria.



Research Question Two: How do audiences perceive the credibility of vote buying reports in selected Nigerian newspapers?

Table 4 reveals that respondents generally perceived vote-buying reportage in Nigerian newspapers as credible. Over half (53.33%) strongly trusted the accuracy of reports, while 46.67% believed such reports were balanced and unbiased. Respondents also affirmed that newspapers provided sufficient evidence and engaged in investigative work. However, credibility perception was somewhat mixed, with a small but notable segment (about 20%) expressing doubts about neutrality and sufficiency of evidence.

These findings align with Social Responsibility Theory, which argues that the press must provide accurate, balanced, and well-supported information to the public (Siebert, Peterson & Schramm, 1956). Yet, the mixed perceptions highlight lingering concerns about partisanship and sensationalism in Nigerian journalism, as noted by Omotola (2010) and Adewuyi (2020). The role of language in shaping credibility perceptions is particularly important; almost 30% of respondents reported being influenced by how reports were framed. This supports the argument by Trebilcock and Sossin (2021) that framing and tone significantly affect whether audiences view coverage as trustworthy or politically motivated.

Research Question Three: To what extent did selected Nigerian newspapers cover vote buying during the 2023 general elections?

Table 5 shows that coverage of vote buying was modest across the four newspapers analysed, with only 90 stories recorded. Daily Trust (33.33%) and Punch (27.78%) provided the most coverage, followed by The Guardian (22.22%) and Daily Sun (16.67%). While the presence of coverage indicates recognition of vote buying as a newsworthy issue, the relatively low number of stories highlights its underrepresentation compared to other electoral topics such as party politics, campaign rallies, or violence.

This finding is consistent with Ibrahim (2009), who observed that Nigerian newspapers tend to report electoral malpractices episodically rather than systematically. Agenda-Setting Theory is particularly relevant here: the limited coverage could have implications for how salient the issue of vote buying appeared to the wider electorate (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). By allocating fewer stories to the subject, newspapers may have indirectly downplayed its severity, leaving gaps that were filled by digital and social media platforms (Ngwu & Obi, 2022).

Research Question Four: How was vote buying framed in the reportage of selected Nigerian newspapers during the 2023 general elections?

The framing analysis in Tables 6–9 shows that the political frame dominated coverage (48.89%), followed by economic (25.56%), moral (14.44%), and legal (11.11%). This suggests newspapers largely presented vote buying as a political strategy rather than as an ethical violation or a legal offence. The thematic breakdown further underscores this, as voter manipulation (51.11%) was the most frequent theme, ahead of corruption (32.22%) and democracy (16.67%). Such framing reinforces the view that newspapers often interpret vote buying through the lens of power struggles rather than institutional reform.



In terms of journalistic genres, feature stories (35.56%) and straight news (31.11%) dominated coverage, while opinion pieces and cartoons were less frequent. The prevalence of features indicates attempts at interpretive and investigative reporting, though the relatively low proportion of legal and moral framing raises concerns about the press's watchdog role. Tone analysis, (Table 9) shows that most reports (72.22%) support exposing vote buying, while only 11.11% were unfavourable. This suggests newspapers broadly positioned vote buying as a negative electoral practice, which aligns with the normative expectations of Social Responsibility Theory.

Nonetheless, by framing vote buying primarily as a political tactic, newspapers may inadvertently contribute to its normalisation as an “inevitable” part of electioneering. This echoes Omotola's (2010) warning that failure to foreground systemic consequences risks desensitising citizens to the practice.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, it is concluded that although Nigerian newspapers contributed to creating public awareness of vote buying during the 2023 general elections, their overall contribution to strengthening electoral integrity was only partially effective. This conclusion is reached because newspaper coverage was largely event-driven, with insufficient investigative, interpretative, and advocacy-oriented reporting capable of exposing the structural causes and long-term democratic consequences of vote buying. Consequently, while the press succeeded in bringing the issue to public attention, it did not consistently provide the depth of analysis and sustained engagement required to discourage the practice or promote meaningful electoral reforms.

The study further concludes that the effectiveness of newspaper reportage in combating vote buying depends not merely on the volume of coverage but on the quality, depth, prominence, and contextualisation of such reporting. Newspapers that consistently provide balanced, evidence-based, and solution-oriented coverage are more likely to influence public attitudes, strengthen citizens' confidence in the electoral process, and contribute to democratic accountability. Therefore, the Nigerian press must move beyond routine reporting of electoral incidents and embrace a more proactive watchdog role if it is to effectively support credible elections and democratic consolidation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Newspapers should go beyond episodic coverage and adopt sustained investigative reporting on vote-buying practices. By foregrounding the legal, ethical, and systemic consequences of vote buying, newspapers can enhance public understanding and move beyond mere awareness towards behavioural change. This will address gaps in Research Questions One and Four.
2. To consolidate public trust, Nigerian newspapers should strengthen fact-checking mechanisms, use diverse sources, and provide verifiable evidence in reports. Training journalists on investigative techniques and ethical reporting would mitigate perceptions of bias and enhance credibility, thereby addressing issues raised in Research Question Two.



3. Given the limited number of stories on vote buying, newspapers should allocate greater editorial space and consistent prominence to the issue, treating it as a systemic democratic threat rather than a peripheral electoral tactic. Doing so would reinforce the salience of vote buying on the public agenda in line with Research Question Three.
4. Newspapers should partner with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), civil society groups, and community-based organisations to deepen public education campaigns. By linking reportage with voter enlightenment initiatives, the press can ensure that awareness of vote buying translates into electoral accountability and reform. This recommendation addresses Research Questions One and Four by bridging the gap between awareness and civic action.

Ethical Clearance

Ethical approval was obtained prior to the commencement of this study. Informed consent was sought and obtained from all participants. The participants were informed that the study was conducted solely for academic purposes, that participation was voluntary, and that they were free to withdraw from the study at any stage without any consequences. Confidentiality and anonymity of all responses were strictly maintained throughout the research process.

Acknowledgements

The authors sincerely appreciate all the academic staff of the selected tertiary institutions in South-South Nigeria who willingly participated in this study. We also acknowledge the staff of the Edo University Iyamho Library for their cooperation and support in providing access to relevant scholarly materials that enriched this research.

Sources of Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial, financial, or personal relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Authors' Contributions

Abdulazeez Hassan Kadiri conceived the study, developed the research design, coordinated the data collection process, and prepared the initial draft of the manuscript. Wilfred Oritsesan Olley participated in the study design, assisted with data collection and literature review, and contributed to the revision of the manuscript. Prof. Andrew Asan Ate supervised the research process, contributed to the interpretation of findings, critically reviewed the manuscript for intellectual content, and provided overall academic guidance. Dr. Isah Abdulazeez conducted the statistical analysis, interpreted the data, edited and refined the manuscript, and ensured that the final version met scholarly publication standards. All authors read and approved the final manuscript and accept responsibility for its content, originality, and similarity index.



Data Availability Statement

The datasets generated and/or analysed during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Citation

Kadiri, A. H., Olley, W. O., Ate, A. A., & Abdulazeez, I. (2026). Newspaper coverage of vote buying in Nigeria's 2023 general elections: Analysis of perceptions of academic staff of select tertiary institutions in South-South Nigeria. *International Journal of Sub-Saharan African Research*, 4(2), 1025-1045. <https://doi:10.5281/zenodo.21437989>

REFERENCES

- Adebanjo, M. (2019). *The role of INEC, ICPC, and EFCC in combating political corruption*. Abuja: International Foundation for Electoral System.
- Adebanjo, T. (2019). Challenges of vote buying and electoral reforms in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Political Science*, 15(2), 45–60.
- Adegbite, B. (2011). The dynamics of vote buying in Nigerian elections. *African Political Review*, 12(1), 78–92.
- Adeniran, A. (2019). Media and electoral integrity in Nigeria: A critical appraisal of press coverage of the 2015 general elections. *Journal of African Elections*, 18(1), 73–95.
- Adewuyi, O. (2020). The consequences of vote buying on Nigeria's socio-economic development. *Development Studies Journal*, 12(1), 15–29.
- Adeyemi, M. (2018). Money politics and its effects on Nigeria's democracy. *African Political Review*, 14(2), 101–114.
- Agbaje, A., & Adejumobi, S. (2006). Do votes count? The travails of electoral politics in Nigeria. *Africa Development*, 31(3), 25–44.
- Ajani, K. (2018). Security forces, electoral conduct and the 2015 general election in Nigeria. *Journal of Social Science*, 13(1).
- Akinboade, O. A., & Akinmoladun, O. M. (2020). Media coverage of electoral malpractice in Nigeria: Implications for democratic engagement. *Journal of Political Communication*, 34(2), 125–140.
- Akinbobola, T. (2021). Poverty and electoral behaviour in Nigeria: The persistence of vote buying. *Journal of African Elections*, 20(1), 45–62.



- Amended Nigerian Constitution.(1999). *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*. Abuja: Federal Government Press.
- Ate, A. A. (2014). An evaluation of newspaper coverage of tourism issues in selected Nigerian newspapers (Master's thesis). Benue State University, Makurdi.
- Ayodele, M. (2015).Funding of political parties and candidates in Nigeria: Analysis of the past and present.In Adetula, V. A. O. (Ed.), *Money and politics in Nigeria* (pp. xx-xx). Abuja: International Foundation for Electoral System.
- Ayoola, E. (2019). Election and vote buying in Nigeria: An albatross to democratisation process. *Journal of Humanities and Social Science (JOSRJHSS)*, 24.
- Ayoola, K. (2019). Electoral corruption and democratic consolidation in Nigeria.*African Journal of Politics and Administrative Studies*, 12(2), 89–105.
- Bratton, M. (2008).Vote buying and violence in Nigerian election campaigns.*Electoral Studies*, 27(4), 621–632.
- Bunte, M., &Ufen, A. (2009). Vote buying and electoral integrity in Nigeria. *Journal of Democracy*, 20(4), 55–67.
- Callingert, D. (2006). Election rigging and how to fight it.*Journal of Democracy*, 7(3).
Electoral Act.(2022). *Electoral Act 2022*. Abuja: Federal Republic of Nigeria.
- Ezeani, E., &Nwachukwu, C. (2019).Public trust and electoral legitimacy in Nigeria.*African Journal of Governance*, 19(3), 102–118.
- Fox, J. (2012). The political economy of vote buying.*World Politics*, 64(2), 490–520.
- Fox, J. (2012). The difficult transition from clientelism to citizenship: Lessons from Mexico. *Global Journal of Political Science and Administration*, 2(4).
- Ibrahim, J. (2019). Vote buying in Nigeria: Dimensions and implications. *Nigeria Social Science Review*, 15(3), 121–137.
- Isaksson, A. S., &Kramon, E. (2018). Ethnic favouritism and electoral incentives: Evidence from Kenya. *American Political Science Review*, 112(2), 302–320.
- Isaiah, I. (2018). Social influence and political behaviour in Nigeria.*Journal of Political Studies*, 12(2), 45–58.
- Kaufmann, D., &Kraay, A. (2020). Governance indicators and corruption control. *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper*, 9395.



- Kaufmann, D., & Kraay, A. (2020). The role of money in politics: Implications for democracy. *Global Governance Review*, 24(3), 122–136.
- Kayode, M. (2019). Electioneering process and vote buying in Nigeria: Implications on democracy. *African Journal of Political Studies*, 5(2).
- Kelman, H. C. (1958). Compliance, identification, and internalization: Three processes of attitude change. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 2(1), 51–60.
- Kramon, E. (2017). *Money for votes: The causes and consequences of electoral clientelism in Africa*. Cambridge University Press.
- Kuye, A., & Kolawole, B. (2021). Vote buying and its effect on political inequality in Nigeria. *Journal of Political Science and Governance*, 15(2), 120–134.
- McCombs, M. E., & Shaw, D. L. (1972). The agenda-setting function of mass media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36(2), 176–187.
- Ndimele, O., & Innocent, A. (2006). *Fundamentals of mass communication*. Port Harcourt: African Scholars Publishing.
- Ngwu, C., & Obi, F. (2022). Corruption and impunity in Nigeria's electoral process. *Journal of African Politics*, 30(4), 57–73.
- Nichter, S. (2008). Vote buying or turnout buying? Machine politics and the secret ballot. *American Political Science Review*, 102(1), 19–31.
- Nichter, S. (2014). Conceptualising vote buying. *Electoral Studies*, 35, 315–327.
- Niyi, O. (2018). Money in politics: A recipe for corruption in Nigeria. *Journal of Financial Crime*, 28(2).
- Nnadozie, E., & Obi, I. (2021). Political corruption and its impact on governance in Nigeria. *Journal of Political Economy*, 29(3), 134–147.
- Nnadozie, O. U., & Obi, C. (2021). Youth, media exposure and perceptions of electoral corruption in Nigeria. *African Journal of Politics and Society*, 6(2), 112–130.
- Nwafor, O. (2016). An analysis of vote buying and its implications for democracy in Nigeria. *African Journal of Governance*, 16(2), 65–80.
- Nwakwo, N., & Musa, I. (2023). Electoral Act 2022 and the fight against vote buying. *Nigerian Law Journal*, 19(1), 25–40.



- Ogogo, B. (2012). The economic incentives behind vote buying. *Journal of African Politics*, 11(4), 97–115.
- Ogogo, D. (2012). *Causes of electoral malpractices in Nigeria*. Enugu: CRC Publishing.
- Ojo, N. (2018). *Mass media in Nigerian democracy*. Makurdi: Aboki Publishers.
- Okoro, N., & Nwafor, K. A. (2020). Social media and political participation in Africa: Issues and challenges in Nigeria. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 7(1), 1798635.
- Okoye, I. (2019). Electoral malpractice and democratic consolidation in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. *Nigerian Journal of Political Science*, 18(2), 66–83.
- Omotola, J. S. (2010). Elections and democratic transition in Nigeria under the Fourth Republic. *African Affairs*, 109(437), 535–553.
- Onuohajide, F. O. (2018). Practice and perils of vote buying in Nigeria's recent elections. Retrieved from <https://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/practice-and-perils-of-vote-buying-in-nigerias-recent-elections>
- Pam, H. (2008). Legislature by lot: Envisioning sortation within a bicameral system. *Politics & Society*, 46(3).
- Pam, S. (2008). Electoral malpractice and the crisis of legitimacy in Nigeria. *Jos Journal of Social Issues*, 3(1), 15–30.
- Schiffrin, A. (2017). *In the service of power: Media capture and the threat to democracy*. Washington, DC: Center for International Media Assistance.
- Stempel, G. H., & Westley. (1989). *Research methods in mass communication*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Stokes, S. (2013). *Brokers, voters, and clientelism: The puzzle of distributive politics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Stokes, S. C. (2005). Perverse accountability: A formal model of machine politics with evidence from Argentina. *American Political Science Review*, 99(3), 315–325.
- Taiwo, R. (2007). Voter rights and credible election in Nigeria: The imperative of rethinking the content of citizenship education. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 1(19).
- Trebilcock, M., & Sossin, L. (2021). Corruption, vote buying, and democratic governance. *International Journal of Law and Politics*, 17(2), 141–162.