

**MONEY POLITICS AND THE CHALLENGES OF ELECTORAL INTEGRITY IN NIGERIA:
A CASE STUDY OF THE 2019 GENERAL ELECTION IN GOMBE STATE.**

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ABSTRACT

Electoral integrity is indispensable for democratic survival. It deepens the acceptability of the outcomes of elections and improves the people's acceptability of electoral outcomes. However, the primitive accumulations of votes that have voters available in the market space to be sold and bought tend to invalidate the clamour for electoral credibility. This paper examines the effect of money politics on electoral integrity in Nigeria, with special focus on the 2019 General Election in Gombe State. The specific objectives are to identify the causes of money politics in the State, examine the effect of money politics on electoral integrity in Gombe State 2019 General Election and to determine how to minimize or eradicate money politics and vote buying in the State. The study used mix methods of collecting data. It employs both the qualitative and quantitative methods. The questionnaire and Key Informant Interview were used to elicit primary data. The study reveals that money politics and vote buying have continued to hinder transparency and accountability by political leaders and in turn negatively affect the citizens. It also frustrates efforts at achieving good governance as leaders that engage through such monetized process are hardly accountable. Thus, money politics is an obstacle to achieving societal progress. It is recommended that the masses should be enlightened on the dangers of money politics and vote buying. Security personnel should also be allowed to do the needful during elections; rule of law regarding the issue of vote buying and money politics should be imposed; thuggery (kalare) activities should be stopped in the State.

Keywords: Money, Politics, Election, Integrity, Vote-buying.

Introduction

Money politics have gained concern in the international community as it threatens democratic sustainability across the globe. Money politics has occupied a central stage in academic and political discourse globally because it has posed a serious challenge to free, fair and peaceful democratic elections all over the world. Globally, money politics have deep roots and long-time historical background in electoral process. In United Kingdom, legislation to prevent excessive spending or misuse of money by electoral candidates has been in place since 1883 Feikert (2009). Money has been at the root of United States of America (USA) political crisis (Gillon, 2000).

In Africa and particularly in Nigeria, the ravaging effect of money politics in the manipulation of the electoral process by the political elite group is worrisome. This has been more obvious since the wake of the fourth republic in 1999. The period which ushered in high hopes that democracy would improve the lives of people and introduce a just and equitable development contrary to military regime. Unfortunately, it seems that many Nigerians have been disappointed in the performance of successive democratic governments and have lost confidence in the political institutions due to the corrupt practices associated with the nation's electioneering process. For example, Kura (2011), Ibrahim, Sani, Danladi, and Adamu (2015), and Ukase (2016) argued that political opportunists and special interests' individuals hijacked the electoral process thereby subverting the institutional mechanisms established to regulate the process. Money

politics is basically how politics is financed. Politics has been in existence from the beginning of time. The issue of how political parties fund their activities from registration, administration, campaigning during elections and how parties propel their ideologies has become very topical. In a like manner, candidates campaign finance viz. sourcing of funds for campaigns and election expenses (covering expenses pre-party primaries and general elections and thereafter) has attracted the attention of academic researchers and political analysts.

Political party financing covers the entire electoral cycle including processes and procedures of political party operations and associated costs with electioneering. Michael Pinto-Duschinsky (2002) gave a broad definition of political finance as inclusive of thirteen different things: Election campaign funds; political party funds; grants to elected officials; political organization funds; pressure and interest group funds; political lobbying funds; litigation funds in politically relevant cases; partisan mass media funds; corrupt political funds; unofficial payments to elected officials; unofficial payments to civil servants; unofficial payments to the mass media; payments intended to improve the electoral process.

The concept of political finance is used in many instances to capture legal and illegal electioneering and non-electioneering sourcing and spending of money in politics. Marcin (2006) said in its narrowest form, political finance could be money for electioneering or campaign finance. This money may be collected and spent by candidates for public office and also by their political parties or by other individuals or organized group of supporters. There are two major actors in political financing - political parties and the candidates; the financiers and the financed. There are equally two primary sources of political finance: public funds and private funds.

In Nigeria, the issue of electoral integrity has been a major concern since independence. Between 1959 and 2007, most elections conducted by the various election management bodies were marred by irregularities and allegations of violence (Omotola, 2010) except the 1993 Presidential election, which was won by M.K.O Abiola. The election was adjudged the best in the history of conduct of election before that time. Unfortunately, the result was annulled by the then President Ibrahim Babangida (Jinadu, Olagunju, Oyovbaire, 1993). The election years of 1999, 2003, and 2007 could be described as bad, worse and worst respectively in the annals of election administration in Nigeria. 2007 general election witnessed the highest level of election petition against the Electoral Management Body (EMB) in the country (1,475). This was buttressed by the main beneficiary of the election. Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'adua promised to carry out electoral reform in the country (National Mirror April 27th, 2007). However, the coming of Prof. Attahiru Jega in 2011 led to a lot of reforms, restructuring and innovations in the administration of electoral process in the country.

Election in Nigeria has been a business of politics with myriads of challenges, success stories and obstacles. General Election in Nigeria usually is heralded with fears, anxieties, uncertainties, intimidations, excessive use of money, bribery, corruption, rigging, misconducts, irregularities, logistic problems and other issues related to that (Sule, 2018). General Election has been taking place in Nigeria since 1959 during the preparations for the emergence of political independence. Nigeria witnessed three failed Republics from 1960 to 1999. The Fourth Republic was ushered in on May 29th 1999 when the military regime of General Abdulsalami Abubakar transferred power to the civilian regime of Olusegun Obasanjo. Since 1999, Nigeria has been sailing through the waves of the ocean of democratic experiment amidst varieties of challenges (Falola and Heaton, 2008). From 1999 to 2019, Nigeria has had six uninterrupted General Elections and twenty (20) years of unprecedented democratic rule for the first time in the history of the country (Sule, 2019).

Gombe State is one of the 36 States in Nigeria that was created in 1996 during the military regime of General Sani Abacha and is located in the centre of northeast geo-political zone. The resurgence of democracy in 1999 paved the way for political activities in the State including elections and political appointments at the local, state and national level. Gombe State is one of the States that recorded impressive electoral results and a voting pattern that is interesting in the recently concluded 2019 General Election. A Presidential, Gubernatorial, Senatorial, House of Representatives and State House of Assembly Elections were conducted on 16th February and 2nd March respectively.

Going by the existing dearth of studies relating to the 2019 general election in Gombe State and the need for such study, this paper therefore is aimed at the examination of the effects of vote buying on electoral credibility in Nigeria with special focus on the 2019 general election in Gombe State. This paper is organized into five main sections. It includes the introduction section, literature review and theoretical framework, methodology, data presentation and analysis and finally the conclusion section.

Literature Review

Money politics is essentially how politics is financed. Politics has been in existence from the beginning of time. The issue of how political parties fund their activities from registration, administration, campaigning during elections and how parties propel their ideologies has become very topical. In a like manner, candidates campaign finance viz. sourcing of funds for campaigns and election expenses (covering expenses pre-party primaries and general elections and thereafter) has attracted the attention of researchers and political analysts.

Money politics is the phenomenon in the Nigeria electoral process whereby contenders for elective positions used money or money is used on their behalf as an inducement to sway their support which is not based on persuading the electorates to vote according to their wish and conviction but on the force of money that has changed hands. Related to this, is outright vote-buying. Vote-buying in its literal sense, is a simple economic exchange. Money politics has taken a central stage in academic and political conversation globally because it has created a serious challenge to free, fair and peaceful democratic elections all over the world. Globally, money politics have deep roots and long-time historical background in electoral process (Lucky, 2014; Babatunde, Shaibu, & Ariyo 2019). In United Kingdom, legislation to prevent excessive spending or misuse of money by electoral candidates has been in place since 1883 (Feikert, 2009). Money politics have gained concern in the international community as it threatens democratic sustainability across the globe (Babatunde, Shaibu & Ariyo, 2019).

Many politicians or regional head candidates make middle-class people as the target of vote-buying operations by offering money or other forms of prizes as a medium of exchange in elections. It is a common understanding if there are large numbers of politicians who are conducting electoral campaigns with mobilizing voters through a political transactional approach. Some of socio-economic factors such as education level and the community income could influence the rampant of vote-buying practices. Besides, some studies related to vote-buying practices are also closely to the tolerant attitude of the community towards vote-buying practices and the patron-client network that became connector among the political elite and the masses (Muhtadi, 2018).

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Omoyele (2018) states that hardly will someone witness election in Nigerian society without money or gift been shared. Money politics seems to be the major problems in African countries. Especially, Nigeria seems to experience money politics from time to time. In the view of Edward (2014), money entails the provision of individual cash payment or goods to voters before or during elections. In other words, anyone who has a

good ambition towards the development of the people and the society at large but refuses to distribute money to the electorates may find it difficult to gain the supports of the electorates. In most societies where the people involve themselves in this type of act are likely faced with oppressed-oppressors contradiction. It must be noted that one of the major powers of the electorates is his franchise. That is, a way of electing good people into power through voting.

According to Babayo and Mohammed (2018), money seems to be influential in determining the outcome of elections in almost democratic regimes in the world, especially in Nigeria. It appears that developing democracies like Nigeria witness the incidence of money being used openly during elections in order to secure victory by the political aspirants. Not only that, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) seems to be one of the tools used in manipulating election results in order to favour the highest bidder after INEC officials seem to have collected bribe from the political aspirants. Example of this is that of governorship election in Osun State in the year 2018. The election that was conducted was declared inconclusive when the results of the election supposed to be announced by INEC.

Abdulrahman, Danladi and Sani (2016), opine that money politics and vote buying seem to have become strategies by many politicians in the society today, especially Nigerian in securing political victory. Abdulrahman, Danladi and Sani (2016), express further that money politics is the process whereby contenders for elective positions use money or money is used on their behalf by their agents as an inducement to influence their supports which is not based on persuading the electorates to vote according to their wish and conviction as against the wish of the electorates. This is a process whereby voter's decision, choice, view and conscience of the voters are manipulated to the advantage of the contestants or political parties. To make a good quality study on effect of money, politics vote buying has to be considered because it is a branch of money politics.

On the phenomena of Vote Buying, Lucky (2014) explained that the act of vote-buying is a contract or perhaps an auction in which voters sell their votes to the highest bidder. Parties and candidates buy vote by offering particularistic material benefits to voters. Candidates may generally aspire to purchase political support at the ballot box in accordance with the idea of market exchange. Vote buying has emerged as a major blight of elections in Nigeria.

According to Onuoha and Ojo (2018), the practice of vote buying comes in two formats: 'cash for vote' and 'vote for cash', also known as 'prepaid' and 'post-paid'. Under the prepaid or cash for vote strategy, prospective voters are given some money before the election with trust that the receivers will deliver on their promise. At times, the voting pattern is monitored by agents of the giver. This pattern of contract is based on hope and trust. The problem with this strategy is that there is a limitation to the amount of punishment the money giver can muster in the event of a breach of contract by the receiver. There are several instances where people collected money and failed to deliver on their promise, or even failed to turn up for voting.

As opposed to the prepaid approach, the post-paid method involves giving money only after voting is done. Under this approach, money is not given until it is proven that the voter actually voted for the party of the patron. It is always preceded by a gentlemen's agreement between the patron or his representative and the client. To show evidence, the voter either stylishly displays a thumb-printed ballot paper for party agents to see or uses a smart phone to take a photo of the ballot paper after thumb-printing, which will be presented to collect an agreed amount at designated places located within the vicinity of the polling station or inside the house of the party leader (Onuoha & Ojo, 2018).

Another expression for the prepaid option is 'see and buy', meaning paying for what you have verified. Here, evidence of the thumb-printed ballot paper must be seen before payment is made to the voter.

In the 2019 general elections, both prepaid and post-paid methods of vote buying were employed, and it occurred before, during and after voting. Nwankwo (2018) explains that vote buying in the 2019 elections was the post-paid method. But the method was not a sudden happenstance. According to the scholar, this type of vote buying had been tested in 2017 governorship elections in Ondo and Ekiti states. It was code-named 'dibo ko s'ebe' (vote and cook soup) and was said to have swayed the victory in favour of the APC candidate. Each vote attracted a sum of ₦ 5000.

However, prepaid vote buying attained a disturbing climax during the 2018 governorship elections in Ekiti state when the two dominant parties made it an integral part of balloting under the slogan 'See and Buy'. In 2019 general election of the two states came with another strategy which was known as post-paid vote buying, a day to the elections the people received alerted from the state government.

The contribution of post-paid vote buying to electoral victories in Ondo and Ekiti states seems to have given an impetus to politicians to make more use of the strategy in the 2019 general elections. As a result of the post-paid vote buying, electoral outcomes in the 2019 elections became a matter of the highest bidders (Maclean & Egbejule, 2019).

This refers to the situation whereby any politician who has money whether he will deliver and defend the interests of his people or not majority of the masses are not thinking that way as per as the candidate has money, he is assuming that he can influence the people of his constituency. The candidate who is rich has more advantages than this opponent who has the capacity and capability to be a good leader of a political constituency. These are exactly what are happening in many states of Nigeria. Therefore, vote buying is a money politics because of the money politics has numerous strategies.

3.0 Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the Rational Choice Theory of Election. Downs (1957) and Arrows (1986) are credited as the philosophers behind the emergence of the Rational Choice Theory of Election. The Rational Choice Theory of Election is a Political Economy approach towards explaining the changes of voters' choice in an election based on the benefits that are increased to the pattern and choice in their voting. It is an attempt to perceive election as an economic bargain which is utilized through a rational choice based on scale of preference and opportunity cost of the party or politician that is selected or elected in the process. The behaviour of both the candidates and the electorates are measured in economic terms and material benefits that are obtained through the process of election. The Theory is a result of the Theory of Consumer Behaviour in Economics which explains the rationality in the attitudes of consumers of goods and services and the behaviour of the manufacturers in their efforts to maximize profit in a competitive environment.

The electorates are regarded as consumers of goods and services who seek maximum utility in their votes for or against a particular party or candidate while the politicians are considered as manufacturers who seek to maximize profit in a competitive environment through seeking the support of the voters for electoral promises that are beneficial either in cash, kind, policy choice preferences, appointments, nepotism, kickbacks and other clientele and patronage system of reward.

It is assumed that if rational choice and the concept of utility can explain the behaviour of consumers in an open market, Rational Choice Theory of Election can explain the attitudes of politicians and voters in the political battle during election exactly in the economic model situation. The Theory established a correlation between consumers of goods and services and their wise choices with that of electorates and their rational choices during an election on one hand and the competition between the manufacturers in a perfect market and politicians in a multi-party environment (Downs, 1957; Arrows, 1986).

The Rational Choice Theory of Election is a good explanation of the voting example in Gombe State during the 2019 General Election and can be applied successfully in supporting the literature context and the discussions section because despite the fact that the choice was narrowed down naturally between the two major contenders in the APC and PDP, many supporters and voting bloc voted not because of the perception of the common public goods but rather in return for anticipation of personal benefits from their preferred candidates such as ethnic favour, religious considerations and personal benefits. In another way, **some** voters elected their leaders in the General Election in 2019 in Gombe State based on perceived performance, policy choice preferences and anticipation of the common public goods for all.

Method of Data Collection

The researchers met people of the three Senatorial District of the State for data collections. In effect the consent of the people and the area under study was sought before the data collection. The interview was conducted in each of the three (3) Senatorial District of the State.

Nature of the interview was Key Informant Interview (KII) which was conducted with those who are knowledgeable about the 2019 General Election in Gombe State. Therefore, six (6) Electorates (voters), four (4) Candidates that contested the General Election and two (2) Civil Society members will be interviewed.

The interview was structured with all the relevant questions clearly written down before the commencement of the interview sessions. An open-ended questionnaire was also used to randomly survey the opinion of the people on the subject matter. Six Research Assistants were employed, two from each Senatorial District, they helped the researcher in administration of the questionnaires. Number of voters from each Senatorial District determined the number of questionnaires shared to each of the three Senatorial District of the State.

Method of Data Analysis

Data of the questionnaire and the interview were presented and a quantitative method of data analysis was used to analyse the data collected from the questionnaire. The data from the interview was also analyzed qualitatively and the results were presented in form of a summary collected through questionnaire and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The data from questionnaire was presented in tables using frequency, percentage. The findings were discussed in relation to the research questions, literature review and the theoretical framework.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The Total 698 of Responses were analyzed from Questionnaire

Analysis of respondents’ gender as presented in table 1 below revealed that over 60% of them (61.0%) were male, while the remaining were female (39.0%). The dominance of Male respondents over female is due to the conservative nature of female gender in the North when it comes social interaction.

Table 1, Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	269	39.0	39.0
Male	420	61.0	100.0
Total	689	100.0	

Source: field survey data collected by the author, 2022; there were 9 missing responses

Table 2 below shows the distribution of respondents’ age in groups. While majority of the respondents were between 28-37 year of age (41.0%), few of them were between age 58 and above (1.9%). Over 87% of the respondents were youths, indicating that most of the respondents were actively involved in political activities. For this study person within the age group 18-47 are considered as youths.

Table 2, Distribution of Respondents Age group

Age Group	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
18-27	126	18.2	18.2
28-37	284	41.0	59.2
38-47	192	27.7	86.9
48-57	78	11.3	98.2
58 and above	13	1.9	100.0

Total	693	100.0
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Source: *field survey data collected by the author, 2022; there were 5 missing responses* Table 3 below indicates that 99% of the respondents were of Gombe state extraction, while only 1% of them were from other state. This indicates that nearly all of the respondents contacted were considerably aware of the political happenings in Gombe State.

Table 3, Distribution of Respondents by State of Origin

State of Origin	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gombe	683	99.0	99.0
Other	7	1.0	100.0
Total	690	100.0	

Source: *field survey data collected by the author, 2022; there were 8 missing responses*

Table 4 below indicates the senatorial distributions of the respondents. 35.1% of them were from Gombe Central Senatorial District, 36.1% of them were from the Northern Senatorial District, while the remaining 28.8% of them were from the Southern Senatorial District. The table further reveals that at least 200 respondents were contacted per

Table 4, Distribution of Respondents by Senatorial District

Senatorial District	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gombe Centra	244	35.1	35.1
Gombe North	251	36.1	71.2
Gombe South	200	28.8	100.0
Total	695	100.0	

Source: *field survey data collected by the author, 2022; there were 3 missing responses*

Analysis of respondents' level of education as presented in table 5 below shows that most of them had attained tertiary education (68.8%), while only few of them were educated only to the level of primary schools (3.7%). This indicates that most of the respondents contacted were literate and have some considerable knowledge regarding the issues that this study intendeds to address.

Table 5, Distribution of Respondents by Level of Education

Level of Education	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not Educated	64	9.2	9.2
Primary	26	3.7	12.9
Secondary	127	18.3	31.2
Tertiary	478	68.8	100.0
Total	695	100.0	

Source: *field survey data collected by the author, 2022; there were 3 missing responses*

Table 6 also shows the distribution of respondents' occupation, with most of them ranging from civil servants (35.7%), farmers (29.0%), Traders to (25.4%). Only few of them were Politicians (7.4%) and Clergy men (2.5%).

Table 6, Distribution of Respondents by Occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Civil Servant	247	35.7	35.7
Clergy	17	2.5	38.2
Farmer	201	29.0	67.2
Politician	51	7.4	74.6
Trader	176	25.4	100.0
Total	692	100.0	

Source: field survey data collected by the author, 2022; there were 6 missing responses

Presentation of Responses to Research Questions

Table 7 below shows summary of responses to whether respondents participated in the 2019 general election in Gombe State. While most of them responded in the affirmative (93.7%), only few of them however, did not so participate (6.3%).

Table 7, Did you Take Part in the 2019 General Election in Gombe state?

Responses	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	44	6.3	6.3
Yes	650	93.7	100.0
Total	694	100.0	

Source: field survey data collected by the author, 2022; there were 4 missing responses

Analysis of factors that motivated respondents to participate in elections, as contained in table 8 below revealed that over half of them view such participation as their duty (51.5%), some were motivated by money (22.0%), food items that was shared (11.1%), religion (8.8%), and ethnic inclinations (6.5%).

Table 8, What Motivate you to Participate in Election?

Responses	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Because it is my duty to elect my leader	335	51.5	51.5
I served as an adhoc staff	1	0.2	51.7
I was given food items	72	11.1	62.8
Money was shared to us	143	22.0	84.8
Some one of my religion was a candidate	57	8.8	91.3

Someone of my ethnic group was a candid	42	6.5	100.0
Total	650	100.0	

Source: field survey data collected by the author, 2022; there were 12 missing responses

Analysis of factors that give rise to money politics revealed that most respondents identified hunger and poverty (60.4%), followed by ignorance (22.6%) and illiteracy (16.8%). Only very few (0.0%) identified unemployment as a reason for the existence of money politics.

Table 9, What are the Foundations/causes of Money Politics in Gombe State?

Responses	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Hunger and poverty	416	60.4	60.4
Ignorance	156	22.6	83.0
Illiteracy	116	16.8	99.8
Unemployment	1	0.1	100.0
Total	698	100.0	

Source: field survey data collected by the author, 2022; there were 9 missing responses

In a response to the question on the effect of money politics and vote-buying on the electoral integrity of Gombe State in the 2019 general election as presented on Table 10, the respondents were almost unanimous (93.5%) about the negative effect of money politics and vote buying on electoral integrity in Gombe state. However, only few of them held a contrary opinion (6.5%).

Table 10, The Effect of Money Politics and Vote-buying on Electoral Integrity in Gombe State

Responses	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	45	6.5	6.5
Ye	646	93.5	100.0
Total	691	100.0	

Source: field survey data collected by the author, 2022; there were 7 missing responses

Analysing the consequence of vote buying and money politics in Gombe state revealed that the greatest consequences were on the loss of sense of responsibility on the part of Electoral Management Agency, Security agents and political party candidates (38.1%), Lack of transparency in each stage of the election (34.0), and Lack of inclusiveness or equal opportunities (12.9%)

Table 11, How do Money Politics and Vote Buying have Consequences on the Electoral Integrity of the Gombe State 2019 General Election?

Responses	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
All stakeholders in the election such as Electoral Management Board, Security agents and political party candidates are not responsible	263	38.1	38.1

Candidates do not have equal opportunities to be elected	62	9.0	47.1
Lack of inclusiveness or equal opportunities	89	12.9	60.0
Lack of transparency in each step of the election	235	34.0	94.0
Some political parties and candidates were unable to campaign	20	2.9	96.9
Voters did not cast their votes freely	22	3.2	100.0
Total	691	100.0	

Source: field survey data collected by the author, 2022; there were 7 missing responses

Analysis of factors responsible for money politics in the state revealed that candidates and political parties were in the foremost causal factor (53.8%), followed by electorates (35.2%) and Electoral Management Board (10.0%).

Table 12, Who are Responsible for Money Politics in the Gombe state 2019 General Election?

Responses	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Candidates and Political Parties	376	53.8	53.8
Electoral Management Board (EMB)	70	10.0	63.9
Electorates	246	35.2	100.0
Total	692	100.0	

Source: field survey data collected by the author, 2022; there were 6 missing responses

Respondents were asked concerning ways through which money politics can be minimized in the state or even eradicated. Most of them suggested the need for every citizen to cultivate the right attitudes in political activities for the purpose of achieving good governance (45.3%), followed by the need for non-governmental agencies to assist in educating the masses to be aware of the dangers that are (39.9%). Another measure suggested was the need for the electorates to be enlightened towards the rules and regulations of elections (13.6%).

Table 13, Based on your Assessment, how can Money Politics be Minimized or Eradicated in Gombe State?

Responses	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Any other	8	1.2	1.2
Every citizen must cultivate the right attitudes in political activities to achieve good governance	313	45.3	46.5
Non-governmental agencies should assist in educating the masses to be aware of the dangers that are	276	39.9	86.4

The electorates should be enlightened towards the rules and regulations of elections	94	13.6	100.0
Total	691	100.0	

Source: *field survey data collected by the author, 2022; there were 7 missing responses* **Findings**

Senatorial Zones in Gombe State are (North, Central, and South) as well as the Local Government Areas under them. Both male and female were interviewed from the groups of electorates, civil societies and electoral candidates that partook in the 2019 general election in Gombe State. The occupations of the electorates range from Secondary School Teachers, Farmers, Civil Servants and Bankers. In all six (6) electorates were interviewed; two (2) Civil Society organizations were interviewed; while four (4) Candidates were equally interviewed.

Responses from Electorates:

All the electorates interviewed consented to have participated in the 2019 general election, and observed that there were some elements of money politics and vote buying during the election.

They identify utilized by party representatives, while few of them identified sales of Permanent Voters Card (PVC) to the leading cause of money politics, followed by the desire by politicians to win at all cost, then lack of awareness on the part of electorates and finally illiteracy.

While most of the electorates strongly agreed that money politics affect electoral integrity, they indicated self-discipline, electoral education and meaningful employment as the more effective means through which money politics can be minimized. Others measures suggested include the use of religious preaching, electronic voting, rigorous screening of candidates and effective security during election.

Responses from Candidates

The candidates interviewed participated in the 2019 general election in Gombe State. They also observed that their oppositions or rivals used one form of vote buying or the other during the election. They identified the use of cash and thugs (Kalare boys) by oppositions to win election.

They indicated the 'do or die' attitude of opposition candidates as the major cause of money politics and vote buying in Gombe State, followed by the desire for personal enrichment and illiteracy on the part of electorates. Most of them equally agreed that money politics and vote-buying affect electoral integrity; and suggested that it can be minimized through neutrality of incumbent governments and their willingness to arrest and implement laws on money politics and vote buying against perpetrators.

Responses from Civil Society Members

Members of the Civil Societies that were interviewed actively took part in the 2019 general election in the State. Most of them observed some elements of vote buying particularly the presentation of gifts to electorates during the actual voting exercise.

Most of them identified poverty as the major cause of vote buying while few of them added lack of awareness and the desperate moves by electoral candidates and party representatives to win election by all means possible.

While subscribing to the fact that vote buying affects electoral integrity, most of them suggested the use of electronic voting system as a way of minimizing money politics and vote buying. Few of them however suggested the use of self-discipline as a way of curbing the problem.

Discussion of Findings

Regarding the causes of money politics and vote buying in Gombe State in the 2019 general elections, the study reveals that the foundations/causes of money politics and vote buying in the state were due to hunger, poverty and ignorance. Nigeria has been seen as the poverty capital of the world with about 133 million Nigerians multi-dimensionally poor. Nigeria's 133 million people

living in Multidimensional Poverty means 6 in 10 people have to constantly do an opportunity cost at varying scales that is far removed from the reality of the rest of the population, not in this bracket (Ojetunde, 2022). Information gathered through interviews concerning the causes of money politics and vote buying in the state revealed that most of the electorates, candidates and civil society members identified poverty as the major cause of money politics and vote buying.

Besides, few respondents add that lack of awareness and the desperate moves by electoral candidates and their representatives to win election by all means are the other courses of money politics and vote buying. This is validated by Asogwa and Peter (2009) Peter and Shaibu (2021) that the character of the state in Nigeria, which orchestrated the do – or – die posture of political contestation generally occasioned money politics and vote buying. It is because access to political offices provides the avenue for primitive capital accumulation. This has also occasioned the consistent party switching (Peter and Shaibu, 2021). The implication of this is that if welfare of the citizens is not enhanced, it will negatively affect electoral outcome. To address this issue, it is important to pursue the welfare of the people as it will help to ameliorate money politics.

The finding on the causes of money politics in Gombe State agrees with Sule (2019), whose study discovered that the 2019 General Election in Gombe State was peaceful and successful, he equally revealed that the voting pattern indicated the influence of some factors such as money, religion and media in shaping public opinion for choosing leaders at different levels and that there is a benefit politically from the voting pattern but specifically, there is an important lesson to learn from the outcome of the election. Sule's (2019) findings however did not explain the foundation of money politics and vote buying in the state. Similarly, the finding of this study agrees with the study by Babatunde, Sha'ibu & Ariyo (2019) who found influence of money in Nigerian politics and mentioned that it has seriously discredited electoral process in Nigeria since 1999. This discredit, according to him is attributed to mass poverty leading to over reliance on the political system that supported money politics; influences of political godfathers, institutional decadence; poor democratic consciousness; desperation of contestants, and corrupt leadership that subvert the process.

The Effects of money politics and vote buying on electoral integrity was examined and the findings obtained from questionnaire and interview indicates that money politics and vote buying have effect on electoral integrity of Gombe State in the 2019 General Election. This finding is consistent with the finding of Tolo and Abolarin (2019), who found that politicians in Nigeria in general and Ese-Odo Local Government in particular force themselves into seat of power by manipulating the thought of the electorates through engaging in money politics and vote -buying. The Tolo and Abolarin study showed that any community involve in the act of money politics and vote buying will not earn respect among other communities of the world, therefore, it will affect their electoral integrity. This is also consistent with the finding of Pahlevi, Widodo, Kalpiando, Ablipraya and Amrurobbi (2020), who indicated that money politic practices are not only harmful to electoral integrity but also have a long-term impact on new behaviours to produce more corrupt people in the system. Therefore, it is very important to have free fair and credible election that can lead all the communities to earn electoral integrity. Although, the finding of Idakwaji, Paul and Alih (2018) showed that electorates believed that it is almost impossible to conduct credible elections in Nigeria.

The manner by which money politics and vote buying affect electoral integrity was examined. Findings from this study revealed that money politics and vote buying affect electoral integrity mostly in the form of sense of responsibility on the part of all stakeholders, particularly political parties. It also takes the form of lack of transparency through each step of the election.

Factors responsible for Money Politics in the Gombe State in the 2019 General Election were examined. The result of the data collected using questionnaire for this study indicate that candidates and political parties are responsible for money politics and vote buying in the State followed by the electorate.

The result of this study is similar to the finding of Wilhelma (2013) who found out that money politics is everywhere in politics, cutting across election campaigns, political parties, interest groups, nonprofit organizations and the media that depend heavily on money, or more broadly speaking on material resources.

Ways through which money politics can be minimized or eradicated in Gombe State was examined and the results indicated that money politics and vote buying will be reduced in Gombe State if every citizen cultivates the right attitudes in political activities to achieve good governance. Another way to reduce the danger of money politics is that non-governmental agencies should assist in educating the masses to be aware of the dangers that are in money politics and vote buying, this will also reduce the toxic of money politics and vote buying in the state. The responses to the interview conducted revealed that money politics can be reduced through neutrality of incumbent governments and the need for a political will to arrest offenders and implement laws on money politics and vote buying against perpetrators. Other measures suggested include the use of religious preaching, electronic voting, rigorous screening of candidates, effective security during election and while few of them however suggested the use of self-discipline as a way of curbing the problem. But the finding of Lucky (2014) indicates that it may be difficult to eliminate the phenomenon of money politics and Vote-buying's negative consequences on the Nigerian.

Conclusion

The study was aimed at assessing the effect of money politics on Electoral integrity in Nigeria: A study of 2019 General Election in Gombe State. The respondents shared their opinions and experiences on the foundation/causes of money politics in Gombe State during the elections. Their responses indicated that hunger and poverty followed by ignorance are among the causes of money politics in the State. Electorates who are suffering from hunger and poverty can be easily influenced by politicians who offer a business to them which will bring a day or two days' foodstuff to their family, especially if they do not understand the toxic nature of the money politics and vote buying.

Money politics and vote buying have affected the electoral integrity of the 2019 General Election of Gombe State; this is among the findings of the research work based on the responses of over 90% of the respondents. We are all aware that any election done out of its guiding principles, it is far away from what is called electoral integrity. In any ideal election, money politics and vote buying would never be accepted, and the people will be allowed to vote for the candidates of their choices.

Findings of this study indicate that all stakeholders in the elections are responsible for the issues of money politics and vote buying in the election. This implies that if the stakeholders did not engage in the bad act of money politics and vote buying, the state would have a good leader who will come and consider the welfare of the citizens. Because the leader will not be thinking that democracy is a business, he spent money before he got to the office and he must recover his money before any other project can be executed in his constituency.

The results of this study indicate that candidates, political parties and electorate are responsible for the issue of money politics and vote buying in the State. It is hoped that if candidates, political party and electorate can cooperate and stop these acts, Gombe State can get better leaders that can take the State to the next level.

To minimize or eradicate the money politics and vote buying based on the responses generated from majority of the respondents there is the need for every citizen to cultivate the right attitude towards political activities, and non-governmental agencies should assist in educating the masses on the dangers of money politics and vote buying.

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