

Original Article

Electoral Inducements and Voter Decision-Making: Patterns and Influences in a Philippine City

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Abstract. Vote buying remains a persistent challenge in Philippine elections, raising concerns about democratic integrity despite existing legal safeguards. This study examined how and why vote buying continues and its influence on voter decision-making in a local context. Using an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, the research combined quantitative and qualitative data from 395 registered voters across ten urban and rural barangays in Urdaneta City, Pangasinan, Philippines. Data were gathered through survey questionnaires and follow-up interviews, and analyzed using descriptive statistics and appropriate tests of differences and associations. Results show that transactional inducements, such as cash and goods, are widely observed and normalized in local elections, but have limited influence on actual voting decisions. In contrast, programmatic inducements—such as promises of employment, education, and social services—are perceived as more influential, indicating a preference for long-term benefits. Most socio-demographic variables showed no significant relationship with participation in vote buying, except for religious affiliation. Qualitative findings suggest that economic conditions shape voters' openness to electoral incentives, though these do not necessarily determine voting behavior. The study concludes that vote buying persists as a normalized, yet complex practice shaped by socio-economic and political factors. It highlights the coexistence of transactional and programmatic motivations in electoral behavior and underscores the need for stronger governance, voter education, and structural reforms to enhance electoral integrity.

Keywords: *Clientelism; Electoral inducements; Philippine elections; Vote buying; Voting behavior.*

V*ox populi, vox Dei.* Translated as “the voice of the people is the voice of God,” this prominent Latin maxim has long shaped the political arena of democratic states by emphasizing participatory elections. In democratic systems such as the Philippines, elections are intended to ensure representation, accountability, and the peaceful transfer of power (De Leon, 1999; Zaide, 1997; Abocejo, 2014). However, the integrity of these processes remains contested due to persistent electoral malpractices, particularly vote buying.

Vote buying, commonly defined as the exchange of money, goods, or favors for electoral support, remains a deeply embedded feature of Philippine politics despite its prohibition under the Omnibus Election Code (Abocejo, 2014). Existing scholarship situates this practice within broader frameworks of clientelism and patron-client relations, where material inducements are used to secure political loyalty (Stokes, 2007; Kitschelt & Wilkinson,

2007). More recent studies affirm that such practices persist across democratic contexts, adapting to local socio-political environments and institutional constraints (Cruz, 2019; Aspinall & Berenschot, 2019; Ravanilla, Haim & Hicken, 2022; Ravanilla, Davidson & Hicken, 2022). In this context, vote buying is not merely a transactional exchange but part of a broader system of reciprocal expectations that can reinforce existing inequalities.

Comparative research further demonstrates that vote buying is a widespread electoral strategy observed in Latin America, Africa, and Asia, often targeting economically vulnerable sectors of the population. While earlier studies emphasize the role of poverty and limited access to information in shaping voter responsiveness to inducements (Brusco et al., 2004; Kramon, 2010), more recent analyses suggest a more complex relationship, where economically disadvantaged voters are more likely to be targeted but not necessarily more easily controlled (Cruz, 2019; Hennighausen & Keefer, 2022). Empirical evidence further shows that vote buying is frequently mediated through social networks and local relationships, which shape both the distribution of inducements and voter responses (Cruz, 2019; Ravanilla, Haim & Hicken, 2022; Ravanilla, Davidson & Hicken, 2022). These findings challenge the assumption that material incentives directly determine electoral choices and instead highlight voter agency.

In the Philippine context, vote buying is further complicated by its normalization within local political culture. Although widely recognized as illegal, it is often perceived by voters as a pragmatic response to economic need or as part of an established system of reciprocity between candidates and constituents (Schaffer, 2005; Abocejo, 2014). Recent studies highlight that intermediaries, or political brokers, continue to play a crucial role in facilitating these exchanges, embedding vote buying within localized social networks and everyday political practices (Hicken et al., 2014; Aspinall & Berenschot, 2019). As a result, the boundary between democratic participation and electoral manipulation becomes increasingly blurred.

Scholarly discussions on vote buying have evolved along several key strands. Some studies focus on the strategic targeting of voter groups through incentive distribution (Stokes, 2005; Nichter, 2008), while others employ experimental approaches to examine the causal effects of inducements on voting behavior (Vicente, 2012; Guardado & Wantchekon, 2014). More recent perspectives, however, interpret vote buying as a signaling mechanism in which the distribution of goods conveys credibility, viability, or future access to state resources rather than directly purchasing votes (Keefer & Vlaicu, 2008; Lindberg et al., 2022; Cruz et al., 2024). These perspectives collectively suggest that vote buying operates through multiple and overlapping mechanisms.

Despite this growing body of literature, a critical gap remains. Much of the existing research assumes a direct relationship between exposure to electoral inducements and voting behavior. However, emerging evidence indicates that voters may accept incentives without necessarily altering their electoral preferences, reflecting a more complex interplay between material benefit and political choice (Cruz, 2019; Ravanilla, Haim & Hicken, 2022; Ravanilla, Davidson & Hicken, 2022). This disconnect suggests that vote buying may function not only as a transactional exchange but also as a symbolic, relational, or culturally embedded practice. Furthermore, prior studies have predominantly relied on single-method approaches, often limiting deeper insight into the motivations, contradictions, and contextual meanings underlying voter behavior. As a result, the mechanisms through which vote buying persists despite its contested influence remain insufficiently understood.

To address this gap, this study adopts an integrated analytical framework combining Public Choice Theory, the Michigan socio-psychological model, and the Sociology of Politics. At the individual level, Public Choice Theory explains voter behavior as a function of rational self-interest, where accepting electoral incentives may be viewed as a pragmatic decision (Shaw, 2002; Abocejo, 2014). At the attitudinal level, the Michigan model emphasizes how perceptions and evaluations shape political choices (Campbell et al., 1960; Evans, 2004). At the structural level, the Sociology of Politics highlights how social characteristics—such as income, education, and religion—influence patterns of political behavior (Evans, 2004). Taken together, these perspectives conceptualize voter decision-making as the interaction of rational calculation, attitudinal evaluation, and social context.

Building on this framework, the study distinguishes between two forms of electoral inducements: transactional inducements, such as cash and goods, and programmatic inducements, including promises of employment, education, and social services. Recent research suggests that voters may respond differently to these forms, with programmatic appeals sometimes perceived as more credible or beneficial in the long term (Lindberg et al., 2022; Cruz et al., 2024). This distinction enables a more nuanced analysis of how different types of incentives are perceived and how they shape voter decision-making.

Against this backdrop, the present study seeks to examine how and why vote buying persists and how different forms of electoral inducements influence voter decision-making within a local Philippine context. By employing an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, the study integrates quantitative patterns with qualitative insights to better capture both observable trends and underlying motivations. In doing so, it contributes to a more nuanced understanding of vote buying as a multidimensional political behavior. It provides empirical insights that may inform efforts to strengthen electoral integrity and democratic governance.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design (Creswell, 2003) consisting of two distinct but interconnected phases. In the first phase, quantitative data were collected and analyzed to identify patterns, relationships, and statistically significant findings related to vote buying behavior. This was followed by a second phase of qualitative data collection, designed to explain and provide deeper insight into the quantitative results. The qualitative phase was developed based on key findings from the quantitative analysis, particularly regarding participant selection and interview question formulation. Integration of the two phases occurred during the interpretation stage, where qualitative insights were used to contextualize and explain the statistical trends observed in the quantitative data.

Participants and Sampling Technique

The quantitative phase of the study involved 395 registered voters from ten selected barangays in Urdaneta City, Pangasinan. A proportionate stratified sampling technique was employed to ensure representation across barangays based on voter population size, allowing for a balanced inclusion of respondents from both urban and rural areas. Respondents were required to meet specific inclusion criteria, namely being registered as voters, at least 18 years of age, and having participated in at least one election. Individuals who were not registered voters or who submitted incomplete survey responses were excluded from the analysis. To minimize potential bias, random selection procedures within barangays were implemented, survey items were neutrally worded, and anonymity was assured to reduce social desirability bias. For the qualitative phase, a subset of 15 participants was selected from the quantitative respondents using purposive, criterion-based sampling. Selection was guided by key quantitative findings, including levels of participation in vote buying, perceived influence of inducements, religious affiliation, and varying perceptions of electoral integrity. This approach ensured the inclusion of participants who could provide meaningful explanations for observed statistical patterns, thereby strengthening the explanatory function of the second phase.

Research Instruments

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire for the quantitative phase and a semi-structured interview guide for the qualitative phase. The questionnaire included sections on demographic characteristics, observation and participation in vote buying, perceived influence of electoral inducements, and perceptions of electoral practices. Content validity was established through expert evaluation by three scholars in political science, yielding an average rating of 4.48, which was interpreted as highly valid. In addition, pilot testing was conducted among a small group of respondents to assess clarity and reliability. Internal consistency was measured using Cronbach's alpha, yielding coefficients of 0.87 for observation, 0.89 for participation, and 0.91 for perceived influence, indicating high reliability. The interview guide for the qualitative phase was developed from the quantitative findings and designed to explore deeper motivations, contradictions, and contextual explanations of vote-buying behavior.

Data Gathering Procedures

Data collection followed a sequential process consistent with the explanatory sequential design. In the first phase, survey questionnaires were administered to selected respondents after securing the necessary permissions from relevant authorities. The researcher personally facilitated the data collection to ensure accuracy and completeness of responses. Upon completion and analysis of the quantitative data, the second phase was conducted, wherein selected respondents were invited to participate in follow-up semi-structured interviews. These interviews focused on explaining key quantitative findings, particularly patterns that required further contextual understanding. Each interview lasted approximately 20 to 40 minutes and was conducted in a manner that ensured participant comfort and confidentiality. For both phases, barangay officials certified the conduct of data collection to ensure transparency and procedural integrity.

Data Analysis Procedure

Quantitative data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, percentages, and weighted means, were used to summarize the data and describe patterns of vote buying behavior. To examine differences across demographic groups, independent samples t-tests and one-way analysis of variance were employed, while relationships between variables were analyzed using Spearman's rank-order correlation. These statistical techniques were selected to align with the theoretical framework, allowing for the examination of group-based variations and relational dynamics in voter behavior. Prior to conducting inferential analyses, statistical assumptions were tested to ensure the methods were appropriate. Normality was assessed using the Shapiro-Wilk test, and skewness and kurtosis were examined to assess distributional characteristics. Outliers were identified using boxplots and treated accordingly to avoid distorting the results. In cases where the assumptions for parametric tests were not met, appropriate nonparametric alternatives were used. Qualitative data from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. Transcripts were coded iteratively to identify recurring themes related to motivations, perceptions, and contextual influences on vote buying. These themes were then compared and integrated with the quantitative findings to provide a comprehensive explanation of observed patterns. The integration of quantitative and qualitative data strengthened the validity of the findings by linking statistical trends with participant experiences and interpretations.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to fundamental ethical principles in social science research. Prior to participation, respondents were informed of the purpose of the study and were assured that their participation was voluntary. Informed consent was obtained, and participants were given the option to withdraw at any stage without penalty. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, no personally identifiable information was disclosed in the data analysis or reporting. Responses were treated with strict confidentiality and were used solely for academic purposes. Given the sensitive nature of vote buying as an electoral malpractice, the researcher exercised caution in framing questions and conducting interviews to avoid coercion, discomfort, or risk to participants. Data were securely stored and handled in accordance with ethical research standards.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Profile of Respondents

The demographic characteristics of respondents provide essential context for interpreting patterns of electoral behavior and engagement in vote buying. As shown in Table 1, most respondents are within the 41–65 age group (46.08%), followed closely by those aged 20–40 (44.56%). This indicates that the sample is composed largely of politically experienced individuals who have participated in multiple electoral cycles. Prior research suggests that repeated exposure to elections may increase familiarity with electoral practices, including vote buying, potentially contributing to its normalization rather than its rejection (Aspinall & Berenschot, 2019; Ravanilla et al., 2022). Thus, the age distribution of respondents supports the interpretation that perceptions captured in this study are shaped by sustained engagement with local political processes.

Table 1. *Demographic Profile of Respondents in Terms of Age*

Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18-19 years old (Adolescent)	29	7.34
20-40 years old (Middle Adult)	176	44.56
41-65 years old (Late Adult)	182	46.08
Older than 65 years old (Old Age)	8	2.03
Total	395	100.00

In terms of sex (Table 2), female respondents constitute the majority (58.99%). While this may reflect sampling variation, it also provides valuable insight into gendered perspectives on electoral behavior. Existing studies indicate that women's political participation is often shaped by both household-level decision-making and community-based networks, which can influence exposure to and perceptions of electoral inducements (Cruz, 2019). The strong female representation in the sample, therefore, enriches the analysis by capturing these dynamics.

Table 2. *Demographic Profile of Respondents in Terms of Sex*

Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	162	41.01
Female	233	58.99
Total	395	100.00

Religious affiliation (Table 3) shows that most respondents identify as Roman Catholic (54.68%), reflecting broader national patterns. Religion has been identified as a significant social factor influencing political attitudes and behavior, particularly in contexts where religious institutions maintain a strong presence in the community. Recent studies highlight that social networks, including religious communities, can structure political behavior and facilitate the dissemination of electoral incentives (Ravanilla et al., 2022). This is particularly relevant given the study's later finding that religious affiliation is associated with participation in vote buying.

Table 3. *Demographic Profile of Respondents in Terms of Religious Affiliation*

Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Roman Catholic	216	54.68
Iglesia Ni Cristo	81	20.51
El Shaddai	3	0.76
Ministerial Assembly of Urdaneta, Inc.	4	1.01
Pentecostal Christian Fellowship	9	2.28
Philippine Independent Church	16	4.05
Universal Assembly of Yahweh	8	2.03
United Methodist Church	13	3.29
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints	12	3.04
Urdaneta Muslim Association	6	1.52
Builder of Life Church	10	2.53
Jesus Rouch Fellowship	8	2.03
Jesus Lord of Glory	9	2.28
Total	395	100.00

Educational attainment (Table 4) reveals that a plurality of respondents are secondary school graduates (32.91%), followed by college graduates (21.77%). While education is often associated with increased political awareness, empirical findings remain mixed regarding its role in reducing susceptibility to vote buying. Some studies suggest that education enhances critical evaluation of candidates, while others indicate that structural constraints, such as economic need, may override cognitive factors (Hennighausen & Keefer, 2022). The distribution observed in this study suggests that basic educational attainment does not necessarily preclude engagement in vote buying practices.

Table 4. *Demographic Profile of Respondents in Terms of Highest Educational Attainment*

Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No Formal Education	10	2.53
Elementary Undergraduate	19	4.81
Elementary Graduate	11	2.78
Secondary Undergraduate	29	7.34
Secondary Graduate	130	32.91
Vocational	39	9.87
College Undergraduate	56	14.18
College Graduate	86	21.77
Post-baccalaureate	2	0.51
Master's Degree Undergraduate	5	1.27
Master's Degree Graduate	3	0.76
Doctorate Degree Undergraduate	4	1.01
Doctorate Degree Graduate	1	0.25
Total	395	100.00

Occupational data (Table 5) indicate that most respondents are either employed (51.40%) or self-employed (44.55%), reflecting a mixed economic structure characterized by both formal and informal labor. The substantial proportion of self-employed individuals suggests varying levels of income stability, which may influence responsiveness to electoral incentives. Recent literature emphasizes that economic vulnerability, particularly in informal sectors, can increase exposure to clientelist practices, even if it does not directly determine voting behavior (Cruz, 2019; Hennighausen & Keefer, 2022).

Table 5. *Demographic Profile of Respondents in Terms of Occupation*

Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Employed	203	51.40
Self-employed	176	44.55
Unemployed	16	4.05
Total	395	100.00

Income distribution (Table 6) further highlights the economic context of respondents, with a significant proportion earning between PHP 5,000 and PHP 9,999 monthly (33.92%). This concentration in lower-income brackets aligns with findings that economically constrained voters are more frequently targeted in vote buying operations due to their perceived need for immediate material support (Cruz, 2019). However, consistent with recent studies, such targeting does not necessarily translate into predictable voting outcomes, underscoring the complexity of voter decision-making (Ravanilla et al., 2022).

Table 6. *Demographic Profile of Respondents in Terms of Monthly Family Income*

Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
P4,999.00 and below	67	16.96
P5,000.00-P9,999.00	134	33.92
P10,000.00-P14,999.00	58	14.68
P15,000.00-P19,999.00	33	8.35
P20,000.00-P24,999.00	37	9.37
P25,000.00-P29,999.00	27	6.84
P30,000.00-P34,999.00	17	4.30
P35,000.00-P39,999.00	9	2.27
P40,000.00-P44,999.00	5	1.27
P45,000.00-P49,999.00	5	1.27
P50,000.00 and above	3	0.76
Total	395	100.00

As shown in Table 7, most respondents reside in urban barangays (69.11%). This challenges traditional assumptions that vote buying is predominantly a rural phenomenon rooted in patron–client relations. Contemporary research indicates that clientelist practices are equally prevalent in urban settings, where dense social networks and political competition can facilitate the distribution of inducements (Aspinall et al., 2022). The predominance of urban respondents in this study supports the view that vote buying is a cross-cutting phenomenon not confined to specific geographic contexts.

Table 7. *Demographic Profile of Respondents in Terms of the Classification of Barangay*

Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Urban	273	69.11
Rural	122	30.89
Total	395	100.00

Finally, Table 8 shows that a large proportion of respondents have participated in multiple elections, with 28.61% reporting participation in 7–9 electoral cycles and 24.05% in ten or more. This high level of electoral experience suggests that respondents are well-acquainted with recurring electoral practices. Rather than diminishing the prevalence of vote buying, repeated participation may contribute to its normalization, as voters come to view such practices as routine elements of the electoral process (Aspinall & Berenschot, 2019).

Table 8. *Demographic Profile of Respondents in Terms of Number of Elections Participated*

Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
None	27	6.84
1-3	61	15.44
4-6	99	25.06
7-9	113	28.61
10 and above	95	24.05
Total	395	100.00

Overall, the demographic profile indicates that vote buying is not confined to a single socio-demographic group but is embedded across diverse segments of the population. The findings reinforce the argument that electoral inducements operate within broader social, economic, and institutional contexts, shaping voter behavior in complex and often non-deterministic ways.

Voters' Extent of Observation and Participation in Vote Buying

The findings on voters' extent of observation and participation in vote buying indicate that the practice is both highly visible and structurally embedded in the local electoral environment. As shown in Table 9, respondents consistently observed vote buying, particularly when inducements were distributed more than three times during the campaign period (WM = 3.38, "Strongly Observed"). The overall weighted mean (AWM = 2.57, "Observed") suggests sustained exposure to the practice across electoral cycles. This aligns with recent findings that vote buying is not episodic but systematically embedded within campaign strategies that rely on repeated voter contact and material distribution (Cruz, 2019; Ravanilla et al., 2022). The results imply that visibility itself may contribute to the normalization of clientelist exchanges in local politics.

Table 9. Voters' Extent of Observation on Vote Buying in Terms of Frequency

Indicator	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
Candidates give cash/goods/programmatic mobilization...		
Once during the election campaign	1.65	Strongly Not Observed
Twice during the election campaign	2.18	Slightly Observed
Thrice during the election campaign	3.06	Observed
More than thrice during the election campaign	3.38	Strongly Observed
Average Weighted Mean	2.57	Observed

Note. 1.00-1.75 Strongly Not Observed, 1.76-2.51 Slightly Observed, 2.52-3.27 Observed, 3.28-4.00 Strongly Observed

Table 10 further shows that vote buying is most visible during the final phase of the campaign period (WM = 3.74, "Strongly Observed"), whereas occurrences during the early stages and on election day are comparatively minimal. The overall AWM of 2.36 ("Slightly Observed") indicates temporal concentration of inducements. This pattern reflects strategic electoral timing, where candidates intensify resource distribution closer to election day to maximize behavioral influence. Similar studies argue that clientelist strategies are often "last-minute" interventions designed to exploit decision uncertainty among voters (Hicken et al., 2018; Aspinall et al., 2022).

Table 10. Voters' Extent of Observation on Vote Buying in Terms of Period

Indicator	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
Candidates give cash/goods/programmatic mobilization...		
During the first period of the election campaign	1.27	Strongly Not Observed
During the middle period of the election campaign	2.81	Observed
During the last period of the election campaign	3.74	Strongly Observed
During the polling day	1.61	Strongly Not Observed
Average Weighted Mean	2.36	Slightly Observed

Note. 1.00-1.75 Strongly Not Observed, 1.76-2.51 Slightly Observed, 2.52-3.27 Observed, 3.28-4.00 Strongly Observed

Beyond observation, the results reveal active voter participation in vote buying practices. Table 11 shows that participation increases with frequency of inducement, particularly when exposure exceeds three instances (WM = 3.50, "Strongly Participated"). The overall AWM of 2.85 ("Participated") suggests that respondents are not merely passive recipients of information but active participants in electoral exchanges. This finding supports Cruz (2019), who argues that vote buying operates through reciprocal social mechanisms where voters exercise agency within constrained political environments.

Table 11. Voters' Extent of Participation in Vote Buying in Terms of Frequency

Indicator	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
Candidates give cash/goods/programmatic mobilization...		
Once during the election campaign	1.96	Slightly Participated
Twice during the election campaign	2.57	Participated
Thrice during the election campaign	3.37	Strongly Participated
More than thrice during the election campaign	3.50	Strongly Participated
Average Weighted Mean	2.85	Participated

Note. 1.00-1.75 Strongly Not Participated, 1.76-2.51 Slightly Participated, 2.52-3.27 Participated, 3.28-4.00 Strongly Participated

Table 12 shows that participation peaks during the middle and final stages of the campaign (WM = 3.29 and 3.69), while participation on election day remains minimal. The overall AWM of 2.87 confirms that participation is

temporally structured, with concentrations during periods of intensified campaign activity. This reinforces the argument that vote buying is not random but follows predictable electoral cycles shaped by campaign logistics and broker-mediated distribution systems (Aspinall et al., 2022).

Table 12. *Voters' Extent of Participation in Vote Buying in Terms of Period*

Indicator	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
Candidates give cash/goods/programmatic mobilization...		
During the first period of the election campaign	3.23	Participated
During the middle period of the election campaign	3.29	Strongly Participated
During the last period of the election campaign	3.69	Strongly Participated
During the polling day	1.26	Strongly Not Participated
Average Weighted Mean	2.87	Participated

Note. 1.00-1.75 Strongly Not Participated, 1.76-2.51 Slightly Participated, 2.52-3.27 Participated, 3.28-4.00 Strongly Participated

Qualitative findings reinforce these quantitative results. A dominant perception among respondents is that vote buying has become a normalized campaign strategy. As shown in Table 13, 96.20% of respondents reported that candidates “always” provide inducements during elections. This normalization reflects what recent studies describe as the routinization of clientelist exchange, where illegal practices become socially expected components of electoral competition (Ravanilla et al., 2022). As one participant noted, vote buying is perceived as a determinant of electoral success, illustrating how material inducements are embedded in voter expectations and political reality.

Table 13. *Distribution of Respondents on How Often Candidates Give Electoral Inducements to Voters During Elections*

Indicator	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Always	380	96.20
Sometimes	11	2.78
Rare	4	1.01
Never	0	0.00
Total	395	100.00

The mechanism of vote buying further reveals the central role of intermediaries. Tables 14 and 15 show that barangay officials are the primary actors in both observation (69.11%) and participation (71.14%) of vote buying, followed by campaign managers and candidates. This finding supports the concept of “vote brokers,” who facilitate the distribution of inducements through localized networks of authority and social trust (Abocejo, 2014; Hicken et al., 2018). Recent studies similarly emphasize that brokers are essential in sustaining clientelist systems by reducing transaction costs and ensuring compliance through social proximity (Aspinall et al., 2022).

Table 14. *Distribution of Respondents' Observation on Who Delivers the Electoral Inducements to Voters*

Indicator	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Campaign Managers	94	23.80
Barangay Officials	273	69.11
Candidates	28	7.09
Total	395	100.00

Table 15. *Distribution of Respondents' Participation on Who Delivers the Electoral Inducements to Voters*

Indicator	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Campaign Managers	73	18.48
Barangay Officials	281	71.14
Candidates	41	10.38
Total	395	100.00

Overall, the findings demonstrate that vote buying is not an isolated or opportunistic behavior but a normalized and institutionalized feature of local electoral politics. Repeated exposure, temporal campaign strategies, and broker-mediated distribution systems reinforce its persistence. Consistent with recent literature, the results suggest that vote buying operates as a multidimensional practice shaped by both structural conditions and voter agency rather than a simple transactional exchange (Cruz, 2019; Ravanilla et al., 2022; Aspinall et al., 2022). This convergence of quantitative and qualitative evidence highlights the embeddedness of clientelist practices within contemporary electoral systems.

Extent of Perceived Influence of the Amount of Electoral Inducements on Voters' Decision

The findings on the perceived influence of electoral inducements reveal a nuanced and non-linear relationship between material incentives and voter decision-making. Rather than functioning as a direct determinant of electoral choice, inducements appear to operate conditionally, depending on both their type and magnitude.

As shown in Table 16, cash-based inducements demonstrate a clear intensity gradient: lower amounts (PHP 500 and below; WM = 1.48) are perceived as “Very Not Influential,” while higher amounts (PHP 2,001 and above; WM = 3.66) are rated as “Very Influential.” Despite this escalation, the overall weighted mean (AWM = 2.44) indicates that cash is only “Slightly Influential” on voter decisions. This suggests that while large sums may have potential persuasive power, typical vote-buying amounts may not be sufficient to reliably shape electoral choices. This finding aligns with recent literature emphasizing that economic vulnerability increases exposure to vote buying but does not necessarily translate into predictable voting behavior (Cruz, 2019; Hennighausen & Keefer, 2022). It also reinforces the argument that material inducements function within broader social and behavioral constraints rather than as deterministic instruments of control.

Table 16. *Extent of Perceived Influence of the Amount of Electoral Inducements on Voters' Decision in Terms of Cash*

Indicator	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
I may vote for a candidate who gives...		
P500 and below	1.48	Very Not Influential
P501-P1,000	1.56	Very Not Influential
P1,001-P1,500	2.41	Slightly Influential
P1,501-P2,000	3.08	Influential
P2,001 and above	3.66	Very Influential
Average Weighted Mean	2.44	Slightly Influential

Note. 1.00-1.75 Strongly Not Influential, 1.76-2.51 Slightly Influential, 2.52-3.27 Influential, 3.28-4.00 Strongly Influential

A similar pattern is observed for goods-based inducements (Table 17), where perceived influence increases with value. High-value goods (WM = 3.77) are considered “Very Influential,” while low-value goods remain largely ineffective. However, the overall AWM (2.47, “Slightly Influential”) again indicates limited aggregate impact on voter choice. This reinforces the interpretation that vote buying operates less as a direct exchange mechanism and more as part of a broader clientelist repertoire characterized by reciprocity and conditional expectations. Consistent with Stokes (2007) and Cayeros et al. (2012), such exchanges are not unconditional transactions but embedded in ongoing relational and political negotiations where compliance is not guaranteed.

Table 17. *Extent of Perceived Influence of the Amount of Electoral Inducements on Voters' Decision in Terms of Goods*

Indicator	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
I may vote for a candidate who gives...		
P500 and below worth of goods	1.37	Very Not Influential
P501-P1,000 worth of goods	1.48	Very Not Influential
P1,001-P1,500 worth of goods	2.47	Slightly Influential
P1,501-P2,000 worth of goods	3.25	Influential
P2,001 and above worth of goods	3.77	Very Influential
Average Weighted Mean	2.47	Slightly Influential

Note. 1.00-1.75 Strongly Not Influential, 1.76-2.51 Slightly Influential, 2.52-3.27 Influential, 3.28-4.00 Strongly Influential

In contrast, programmatic mobilization emerges as the most influential category of electoral inducement (Table 18). All indicators—job opportunities, scholarships, livelihood programs, healthcare services, and financial assistance—register high influence ratings, with an overall AWM of 3.55 (“Very Influential”). This indicates that voters place greater value on long-term, policy-oriented commitments than on immediate material rewards. Recent studies similarly suggest that programmatic appeals may serve as signals of credibility and governance capacity, shaping voter expectations about future benefits rather than immediate transactions (Keefer & Vlaicu, 2008; Kramon, 2010; Cruz et al., 2020). In this sense, programmatic inducements function as reputational mechanisms that extend beyond electoral cycles.

Table 18. *Extent of Perceived Influence of the Amount of Electoral Inducements on Voters' Decision in Terms of Programmatic Mobilization*

Indicator	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
I may vote for a candidate who promises to give...		
Job once elected	3.72	Very Influential
Scholarship once elected	3.65	Very Influential
Livelihood programs once elected	3.64	Very Influential
Health care services once elected	3.61	Very Influential
Financial support once elected	3.14	Influential
Average Weighted Mean	3.55	Very Influential

Note. 1.00-1.75 Strongly Not Influential, 1.76-2.51 Slightly Influential, 2.52-3.27 Influential, 3.28-4.00 Strongly Influential

Taken together, these findings suggest that electoral inducements operate within a differentiated hierarchy of influence. While cash and goods exhibit limited overall impact, they may still function strategically in specific contexts, particularly when values are relatively high or when economic vulnerability is pronounced. However, their influence remains secondary compared to programmatic appeals, which consistently demonstrate stronger perceived electoral impact. This pattern supports recent scholarship arguing that vote buying should not be understood as a purely transactional mechanism of voter control but as part of a broader hybrid system combining material exchange, signaling, and programmatic competition (Cruz, 2019; Ravanilla et al., 2022; Aspinall et al., 2022). Rather than replacing policy-based appeals, material inducements coexist with them, operating as complementary—though not decisive—strategies within electoral competition. Ultimately, the results indicate that, while vote buying persists as a visible feature of elections, its perceived influence on voter decision-making is limited and context dependent. Programmatic inducements, by contrast, demonstrate stronger and more sustained influence, suggesting that voters are not solely driven by immediate material gain but also by expectations of long-term governance benefits. This reinforces the broader conclusion that electoral behavior in the study context is shaped by an interaction between transactional incentives and programmatic considerations, rather than by vote buying alone.

Differences Between Voters' Profile Variables and Extent of Observation and Participation in Vote Buying

The analysis of differences between demographic characteristics and voters' extent of observation and participation in vote buying indicates a largely stable pattern across most socio-demographic variables, with only selected factors showing statistically significant variation. Overall, the findings suggest that vote buying is broadly experienced across demographic groups, although certain contextual and social variables shape specific dimensions of exposure and participation. Results show that age does not produce statistically significant differences in the extent of observation across frequency (Sig. = 0.939), period (Sig. = 0.945), and overall measures (Sig. = 0.744), all of which exceed the 0.05 threshold. This indicates that exposure to vote buying is not differentiated by generational cohort within the sample. In other words, vote buying appears to be a cross-age phenomenon, consistent with the interpretation that clientelist exposure is structurally embedded in local electoral environments rather than age-dependent. A similar pattern is observed in participation, where age again does not yield significant differences (Sig. = 0.744 > 0.05). This reinforces the notion that engagement in vote buying is not confined to or shaped by a particular age group but rather reflects broader systemic exposure.

In contrast, sex emerges as a significant variable in specific dimensions of observation. As shown in Table 19, significant differences are observed in frequency (Sig. = 0.020) and period (Sig. = 0.026), although not in the overall measure (Sig. = 0.231). This suggests that, while male and female respondents differ in how often and when they encounter vote buying, their overall exposure remains statistically comparable.

Table 19. *Difference in the Voters' Extent of Observation on Vote Buying in Terms of Sex*

Indicator	Mean Difference	df	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision on H ₀
Frequency	0.063	393	2.338	0.020*	Reject
Period	0.058	393	2.232	0.026*	Reject
Overall	0.015	393	1.200	0.231	Accept

Note. a = 0.05; df = degree of freedom; *p < 0.05; t = computed t-value; Sig. (2-tailed) = computed significance value; H₀ = null hypothesis

In participation, a similar pattern is observed (Table 20), where sex significantly affects frequency (Sig. = 0.018) and period (Sig. = 0.022), but not the aggregate measure (Sig. = 0.231). This implies that gender differences may be situational rather than structural, influencing specific moments of electoral engagement rather than sustained behavioral differences.

Table 20. *Difference in the Voters' Extent of Participation on Vote Buying in Terms of Sex*

Indicator	Mean Difference	df	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision on H ₀
Frequency	0.070	393	2.367	0.018*	Reject
Period	0.070	393	2.298	0.022*	Reject
Overall	0.017	393	1.200	0.231	Accept

Note. $\alpha = 0.05$; df = degree of freedom; * $p < 0.05$; t = computed t-value; Sig. (2-tailed) = computed significance value; H₀ = null hypothesis

Religious affiliation also shows consistent significance in both observation and participation, particularly in frequency and period dimensions (Tables 21 and 22). For observation, significant differences are found in frequency (Sig. = 0.001) and period (Sig. = 0.003), while participation shows similar results (frequency: Sig. = 0.002; period: Sig. = 0.020). However, no significant differences are observed in overall measures in both cases.

Table 21. *Difference in the Voters' Extent of Observation on Vote Buying in Terms of Religious Affiliation*

Indicator	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision on H ₀
Frequency	2.208	12	0.184	2.733	.001*	Reject
Period	1.947	12	0.162	2.586	.003*	Reject
Overall	.060	12	0.005	0.316	.986	Accept

Note. $\alpha = 0.05$; df = degree of freedom; * $p < 0.05$; F = tabular significance value; Sig. = computed significance value; H₀ = null hypothesis

Table 22. *Difference in the Voters' Extent of Participation on Vote Buying in Terms of Religious Affiliation*

Indicator	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision on H ₀
Frequency	2.611	12	0.218	2.667	.002*	Reject
Period	2.177	12	0.181	2.040	.020*	Reject
Overall	0.080	12	0.007	.316	.986	Accept

Note. $\alpha = 0.05$; df = degree of freedom; * $p < 0.05$; F = tabular significance value; Sig. = computed significance value; H₀ = null hypothesis

These findings suggest that religious affiliation may shape exposure points and social contexts where vote buying occurs, rather than determining overall levels of engagement. This aligns with recent studies emphasizing the role of social institutions, including religious networks, in structuring political exposure and facilitating localized political interactions (Ravanilla et al., 2022).

In contrast, educational attainment, occupation, and monthly family income do not produce statistically significant differences across all indicators (all Sig. values > 0.05). While these results suggest no detectable variation in this dataset, they do not necessarily imply homogeneity in behavior. Rather, they indicate that within this sample, economic and educational stratification does not translate into statistically distinct patterns of observation or participation in vote buying. This finding is particularly notable given established literature linking socio-economic vulnerability to clientelist exposure. Recent studies suggest that while economic conditions may influence susceptibility to electoral inducements, their effects are often mediated by local networks and political context rather than operating directly through income or occupation alone (Cruz, 2019; Hennighausen & Keefer, 2022).

Spatial context introduces a more differentiated pattern in the data. For observation, classification of barangay shows a significant difference in period (Sig. = 0.037), indicating that the timing of exposure to vote buying varies between urban and rural settings. However, no significant differences are observed in frequency and overall measures (Table 23).

Table 23. *Difference in the Voters' Extent of Observation on Vote Buying in Terms of Classification of Barangay*

Indicator	Mean Difference	df	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision on H ₀
Frequency	-0.044	393	-1.522	0.129	Accept
Period	-0.058	393	-2.094	.037	Reject
Overall	-0.020	393	-1.498	.135	Accept

Note. $\alpha = 0.05$; df = degree of freedom; * $p < 0.05$; t = computed t-value; Sig. (2-tailed) = computed significance value; H₀ = null hypothesis

A similar pattern appears in participation (Table 24), where barangay classification significantly affects period (Sig. = 0.016) but not frequency or overall participation. These findings suggest that spatial context influences when vote buying occurs rather than how much it is observed or experienced. This is consistent with recent literature emphasizing that clientelist strategies are often adapted to local political environments, with timing adjusted to maximize electoral impact (Aspinall et al., 2022).

Table 24. *Difference in the Voters' Extent of Participation on Vote Buying in Terms of Classification of Barangay*

Indicator	Mean Difference	Df	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision on H ₀
Frequency	-0.052	393	-1.637	0.102	Accept
Period	-.0790	393	-2.412	0.016*	Reject
Overall	-.0199	393	-1.498	0.135	Accept

Note. a = 0.05; df = degree of freedom; *p < 0.05; t = computed t-value; Sig. (2-tailed) = computed significance value; H₀ = null hypothesis

The number of elections participated in does not significantly influence either observation or participation (Sig. = 0.242 > 0.05 in both cases). This indicates that electoral experience does not necessarily reduce or intensify exposure to vote buying. Instead, it suggests that repeated participation in elections may coexist with continued exposure to clientelist practices, reinforcing the idea that normalization rather than novelty drives persistence.

Taken together, the results indicate that most demographic variables do not significantly differentiate voters' observations and participation in vote buying. Significant differences are limited to sex, religious affiliation, and spatial classification, and even these effects are largely confined to specific dimensions (frequency or timing) rather than overall measures. This pattern suggests that vote buying is a structurally embedded phenomenon that cuts across demographic boundaries. Where differences exist, they are context-specific rather than systemic, reflecting variations in exposure conditions rather than fundamentally different behavioral tendencies. Consistent with recent literature, this reinforces the interpretation that vote buying operates through localized social and political networks rather than being strongly determined by individual socio-demographic attributes (Cruz, 2019; Ravanilla et al., 2022; Aspinall et al., 2022). Overall, the findings highlight the resilience of vote buying as a normalized electoral practice, with variations shaped more by context and social structure than by individual demographic characteristics.

Differences Between Voters' Profile Variables and the Extent of Perceived Influence of the Amount of Electoral Inducements on Voters' Decision

The analysis of differences between respondents' socio-demographic characteristics and the perceived influence of electoral inducements reveals a generally stable pattern across most variables, with significance emerging only in selected dimensions. Overall, the findings indicate that perceived susceptibility to vote buying is not strongly differentiated by most demographic attributes, suggesting a broadly distributed experience of electoral inducements within the sample.

Table 25. *Difference in the Extent of Perceived Influence of the Amount of Electoral Inducements on Voters' Decision in Terms of Religious Affiliation*

Indicator	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision on H ₀
Cash	2.859	12	0.238	3.028	0.000*	Reject
Goods	3.043	12	0.254	3.078	0.000*	Reject
Programmatic Mobilization	4.412	12	0.368	2.417	0.005*	Reject
Overall	0.061	12	0.005	0.316	0.986	Accept

Note. a = 0.05; df = degree of freedom; *p < 0.05; F = tabular significance value; Sig. = computed significance value; H₀ = null hypothesis

Age does not significantly influence the perceived impact of cash (Sig. = 0.789), goods (Sig. = 0.781), or programmatic mobilization (Sig. = 0.885), all of which exceed the 0.05 threshold. This indicates that responsiveness to electoral inducements is not systematically differentiated by age group in this study. Rather than implying uniform behavior, the result suggests that exposure to and interpretation of vote buying may be structurally embedded across life stages.

Similarly, sex does not produce statistically significant differences across cash (Sig. = 0.212), goods (Sig. = 0.227), and programmatic mobilization (Sig. = 0.060). Although the latter approaches significance, it remains above the threshold, indicating that gender-based differences in perceived influence are not statistically established in this dataset. This suggests that both male and female voters are similarly situated within the broader context of exposure to electoral inducement.

In contrast, religious affiliation emerges as a significant differentiating factor across all forms of inducements (Table 25). Statistically significant differences are observed in cash (Sig. = 0.000), goods (Sig. = 0.000), and programmatic mobilization (Sig. = 0.005), although no significant difference is found in the overall measure (Sig. = 0.986).

This pattern suggests that religious identity may shape how voters evaluate and respond to specific types of electoral inducements, potentially through moral norms, institutional influence, or community-based political socialization. However, the absence of significance in the aggregate measure indicates that these differences are situational rather than systemic in shaping overall perceived influence. This aligns with recent studies emphasizing the role of social institutions in structuring political perceptions and localized electoral interactions (Ravanilla et al., 2022).

Educational attainment shows selective variation in perceived influence (Table 26). Significant differences are observed for cash (Sig. = 0.018) and goods (Sig. = 0.014), while programmatic mobilization (Sig. = 0.295) and the overall measure (Sig. = 0.916) do not show statistical significance. This suggests that education may shape sensitivity to short-term material inducements such as cash and goods, but does not significantly alter perceptions toward long-term, programmatic appeals. This finding supports the interpretation that cognitive factors associated with education may influence the evaluation of immediate rewards, while structural and aspirational considerations remain relatively consistent across educational groups.

Table 26. *Difference in the Extent of Perceived Influence of the Amount of Electoral Inducements on Voters' Decision in Terms of Highest Educational Attainment*

Indicator	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision on H ₀
Cash	2.015	12	0.168	2.076	0.018*	Reject
Goods	2.175	12	0.181	2.141	0.014*	Reject
Programmatic Mobilization	2.236	12	0.186	1.181	0.295	Accept
Overall	0.095	12	0.008	0.497	0.916	Accept

Note. a = 0.05; df = degree of freedom; *p < 0.05; F = tabular significance value; Sig. = computed significance value; H₀ = null hypothesis

Occupation (Sig. = 1.000) and monthly family income (Sig. = 0.901) do not produce significant differences across all indicators. This indicates that socio-economic status, as measured in this study, does not statistically differentiate the perceived influence of electoral inducements. Similarly, classification of barangay does not yield significant differences (Sig. = 0.135), suggesting that urban-rural location does not significantly alter perceived susceptibility to vote buying in this sample. This is notable, as it challenges assumptions that spatial context alone strongly determines responsiveness to clientelist strategies. Recent literature similarly suggests that vote buying is increasingly adaptive across geographic settings rather than confined to rural environments (Aspinall et al., 2022). The number of elections participated in also does not significantly affect perceived influence (Sig. = 0.242). This indicates that repeated exposure to elections does not necessarily reduce or increase susceptibility to electoral inducements. Instead, it suggests that normalization of vote buying may occur across varying levels of electoral experience, consistent with findings that repeated exposure does not inherently generate resistance to clientelist practices.

Overall, the results indicate that most socio-demographic variables do not significantly differentiate the perceived influence of electoral inducements. Significant variation is limited primarily to religious affiliation (across specific inducement types) and educational attainment (for cash and goods only), and even these effects are dimension-specific rather than consistent across all indicators. This pattern suggests that perceived influence is broadly distributed across demographic groups, reinforcing the idea that vote buying operates as a structurally embedded electoral phenomenon rather than one strictly determined by individual characteristics. Where differences exist, they are partial and context-dependent, reflecting variations in interpretation rather than fundamentally different behavioral orientations. Consistent with recent scholarship, these findings support the view that electoral inducements function within complex social and institutional environments where individual demographics alone are insufficient predictors of voter responsiveness (Cruz, 2019; Ravanilla et al., 2022; Hennighausen & Keefer, 2022). Instead, vote buying appears to operate through intersecting social, cultural, and political mechanisms that cut across demographic boundaries.

Relationships Between Voters' Profile Variables and the Extent of Observation and Participation in Vote Buying

The correlational analysis provides a clearer understanding of how voters' socio-demographic characteristics are associated with their extent of observation and participation in vote buying. Overall, the findings indicate that statistically significant relationships are limited to select variables and specific dimensions, while most demographic factors do not exhibit meaningful associations. This suggests that both observation and participation in vote buying are broadly experienced across demographic groups, with variation emerging only in particular

social and contextual dimensions.

As shown in Table 27, age does not show any significant relationship with observation across frequency ($p = 0.739$), period ($p = 0.909$), and overall measures ($p = 0.516$). This indicates that exposure to vote buying is not systematically differentiated by age group.

Table 27. Relationships Between Voters' Extent of Observation on Vote Buying in Terms of Age, Sex, Religious Affiliation, and Highest Educational Attainment

Indicator	Age	Sex	Religious Affiliation	Highest Educational Attainment
Frequency				
Spearman rho	0.017	-0.117	0.140	-0.026
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.739	0.020*	0.005*	0.605
Decision on H_0	Accept	Reject	Reject	Accept
Period				
Spearman rho	0.006	-0.112	0.109	-0.004
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.909	0.026*	0.031*	0.932
Decision on H_0	Accept	Reject	Reject	Accept
Overall				
Spearman rho	-0.033	-0.060	-0.015	0.025
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.516	0.231	0.762	0.615
Decision on H_0	Accept	Accept	Accept	Accept

Note. *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level; Sig. (2-tailed) = computed significance value; H_0 = null hypothesis

In contrast, sex exhibits weak but statistically significant relationships with observation in terms of frequency ($\rho = -0.117$, $p = 0.020$) and period ($\rho = -0.112$, $p = 0.026$), although not in the overall measure ($p = 0.231$). This suggests that gender differences are present in specific exposure points but do not translate into broader differences in overall observation levels. Religious affiliation also shows significant correlations with frequency ($\rho = 0.140$, $p = 0.005$) and period ($\rho = 0.109$, $p = 0.031$), but not in the overall measure ($p = 0.762$). This implies that religious identity may influence when and how often vote buying is encountered, possibly reflecting variations in social networks and community-based political interactions rather than overall exposure levels. Educational attainment does not show significant relationships with observation across all indicators ($p = 0.605$, 0.932 , 0.615). This suggests that exposure to vote buying is not significantly differentiated by educational level in this study. Rather than indicating neutrality, this finding implies that vote buying operates across educational categories without clear stratification effects.

As shown in Table 28, occupation ($p = 0.942$, 0.577 , 0.252), monthly family income ($p = 0.617$, 0.952 , 0.293), and number of elections participated ($p = 0.526$, 0.408 , 0.221) do not show significant relationships with observation. These results indicate that socio-economic status and electoral experience do not significantly shape exposure patterns in this sample.

Table 28. Relationships Between Voters' Extent of Observation on Vote Buying in Terms of Occupation, Monthly Family Income, Classification of Barangay, and Number of Elections Participated

Indicator	Occupation	Monthly Family Income	Classification of Barangay	Number of Elections Participated
Frequency				
Spearman rho	0.004	-0.025	0.077	-0.032
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.942	0.617	0.129	0.526
Decision on H_0	Accept	Accept	Accept	Accept
Period				
Spearman rho	-0.028	0.003	0.105	-0.042
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.577	0.952	0.037*	0.408
Decision on H_0	Accept	Accept	Reject	Accept
Overall				
Spearman rho	-0.058	-0.053	0.075	-0.062
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.252	0.293	0.135	0.221
Decision on H_0	Accept	Accept	Accept	Accept

Note. *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level; Sig. (2-tailed) = computed significance value; H_0 = null hypothesis

However, classification of barangay shows a significant relationship with observation in terms of period ($\rho = 0.105$,

$p = 0.037$), suggesting that spatial context influences when vote buying is observed rather than its overall frequency or prevalence. This implies that timing strategies in electoral inducement may vary between urban and rural settings.

As shown in Table 29, age does not significantly correlate with participation across all dimensions ($p = 0.758, 0.928, 0.415$), indicating that engagement in vote buying is not age dependent.

Table 29. Relationships Between Voters' Extent of Participation on Vote Buying in Terms of Age, Sex, Religious Affiliation, and Highest Educational Attainment

Indicator	Age	Sex	Religious Affiliation	Highest Educational Attainment
Frequency				
Spearman rho	0.016	-0.119	0.136	-0.024
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.758	0.018*	0.007*	0.632
Decision on H_0	Accept	Reject	Reject	Accept
Period				
Spearman rho	-0.005	-0.115	0.083	0.005
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.928	0.022*	0.101	0.928
Decision on H_0	Accept	Reject	Accept	Accept
Overall				
Spearman rho	0.041	-0.063	0.129	-0.095
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.415	0.212	0.010*	0.058
Decision on H_0	Accept	Accept	Reject	Accept

Note. *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level; Sig. (2-tailed) = computed significance value;
 H_0 = null hypothesis

Sex, however, shows significant relationships with participation in frequency ($\rho = -0.119$, $p = 0.018$) and period ($\rho = -0.115$, $p = 0.022$), although not in the overall measure ($p = 0.212$). This suggests that gender differences are present in specific participation contexts but do not define overall involvement levels. Religious affiliation demonstrates a significant relationship with participation in frequency ($\rho = 0.136$, $p = 0.007$) and overall participation ($\rho = 0.129$, $p = 0.010$), although not consistently across all dimensions. This indicates that religious identity may influence both the intensity of engagement and general tendencies toward participation in vote buying, likely through community norms or localized political networks.

As shown in Table 30, educational attainment does not significantly correlate with participation across all indicators ($p = 0.632, 0.928, 0.058$). Although the last value approaches significance, it remains above the threshold, suggesting no statistically reliable relationship.

Table 30. Relationships Between Voters' Extent of Participation on Vote Buying in Terms of Occupation, Monthly Family Income, Classification of Barangay, and Number of Elections Participated

Indicator	Occupation	Monthly Family Income	Classification of Barangay	Number of Elections Participated
Frequency				
Spearman rho	-0.001	-0.024	0.082	-0.034
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.980	0.639	0.102	0.501
Decision on H_0	Accept	Accept	Accept	Accept
Period				
Spearman rho	-0.047	-0.009	0.121	-0.054
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.346	0.864	0.016*	0.281
Decision on H_0	Accept	Accept	Reject	Accept
Overall				
Spearman rho	0.013	-0.029	0.032	0.017
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.799	0.561	0.526	0.743
Decision on H_0	Accept	Accept	Accept	Accept

Note. *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level; Sig. (2-tailed) = computed significance value; H_0 = null hypothesis

Similarly, occupation ($p = 0.980, 0.346, 0.799$), income ($p = 0.639, 0.864, 0.561$), and number of elections participated ($p = 0.501, 0.281, 0.743$) do not show significant relationships with participation. These findings suggest that socio-economic status and electoral experience are not strong predictors of engagement in vote buying within this sample.

Classification of barangay shows a significant relationship with participation in terms of period ($\rho = 0.121$, $p = 0.016$), indicating that spatial context influences when participation occurs. However, no significant relationships are observed in frequency or overall participation. This suggests that geographic and administrative contexts shape the timing of engagement rather than its intensity or overall likelihood.

Overall, the correlational analysis indicates that most socio-demographic variables are not significantly associated with either observation or participation in vote buying. Where significant relationships exist, they are limited to specific dimensions—primarily sex, religious affiliation, and barangay classification—and do not extend consistently across all measures. This pattern suggests that vote buying is not strongly structured by individual demographic characteristics but is instead embedded in broader social and contextual environments. The limited number of significant correlations further implies that exposure to and participation in vote buying are widespread and relatively uniform across demographic groups, with variations emerging only in specific social or temporal conditions. Consistent with recent literature on clientelist behavior, these findings reinforce the view that vote buying operates through localized political networks and contextual dynamics rather than through stable individual-level predictors alone (Cruz, 2019; Ravanilla et al., 2022; Hennighausen & Keefer, 2022).

Relationships Between Voters' Profile Variables and the Extent of Perceived Influence of the Amount of Electoral Inducements on Voters' Decision

The correlational analysis examining the relationship between voters' socio-demographic characteristics and the perceived influence of electoral inducements provides a nuanced understanding of how vote buying is interpreted across different population groups. Overall, the findings indicate that statistically significant relationships are limited to selected variables and specific dimensions, while most demographic factors do not exhibit meaningful associations. This suggests that the perceived influence of electoral inducements is broadly distributed across the sample, with variation emerging only under particular social conditions.

As shown in Table 31, age does not significantly correlate with the perceived influence of cash ($p = 0.415$), goods ($p = 0.406$), or programmatic mobilization ($p = 0.591$). This indicates that responsiveness to electoral inducements is not systematically differentiated across age groups, suggesting that perceptions of vote buying transcend generational categories.

Table 31. Relationships Between the Extent of Perceived Influence of the Amount of Electoral Inducements on Voters' Decision in Terms of Age, Sex, Religious Affiliation, and Highest Educational Attainment

Indicator	Age	Sex	Religious Affiliation	Highest Educational Attainment
Cash				
Spearman rho	0.041	-0.063	0.129	-0.095
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.415	0.212	0.010*	0.058
Decision on H_0	Accept	Accept	Reject	Accept
Goods				
Spearman rho	0.042	-0.061	0.131	-0.097
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.406	0.227	0.009	0.055
Decision on H_0	Accept	Accept	Reject	Accept
Programmatic Mobilization				
Spearman rho	0.027	-0.095	0.120	-0.063
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.591	0.060	0.017*	0.208
Decision on H_0	Accept	Accept	Reject	Accept
Overall				
Spearman rho	-0.033	-0.060	-0.015	0.025
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.516	0.231	0.762	0.615
Decision on H_0	Accept	Accept	Accept	Accept

Note. *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level; Sig. (2-tailed) = computed significance value; H_0 = null hypothesis

Similarly, sex does not show significant relationships across all indicators—cash ($p = 0.212$), goods ($p = 0.227$), and programmatic mobilization ($p = 0.060$). Although the latter approaches significance, it remains above the threshold. This suggests that male and female voters are similarly situated in their perceptions of the influence of electoral inducements on their voting decisions.

In contrast, religious affiliation consistently shows statistically significant relationships with perceived influence

across all inducement types: cash ($p = 0.010$), goods ($p = 0.009$), and programmatic mobilization ($p = 0.017$). These findings suggest that religious identity may play a meaningful role in shaping how voters interpret and respond to electoral incentives. Religious communities may influence political perceptions through shared moral frameworks, institutional guidance, or localized social norms that affect how inducements are evaluated. However, the absence of significance in the overall measure indicates that these differences are dimension-specific rather than reflecting broader divergence in overall perceived influence.

Educational attainment does not show statistically significant relationships with perceived influence across cash ($p = 0.058$), goods ($p = 0.055$), and programmatic mobilization ($p = 0.208$). Although cash and goods approach the significance threshold, they do not meet the required level of statistical confidence. This suggests that educational differences do not meaningfully structure how voters perceive the influence of electoral inducements in this sample. Rather than indicating uniformity, the results imply that exposure to vote buying and its perceived effects cut across educational categories without clear stratification.

Occupation ($p = 0.252$), monthly family income ($p = 0.293$), classification of barangay ($p = 0.135$), and number of elections participated ($p = 0.221$) do not show significant relationships with perceived influence. These findings indicate that socio-economic status, spatial location, and electoral experience are not statistically associated with how voters evaluate the influence of electoral inducements. However, the absence of statistical significance should not be interpreted as a complete absence of influence. Rather, it suggests that within this dataset, these variables do not produce measurable variation in perceived responsiveness to vote buying under the applied analytical conditions.

Overall, the correlational analysis demonstrates that most socio-demographic variables are not significantly associated with the perceived influence of electoral inducements. Significant relationships are limited primarily to religious affiliation, and even these effects are confined to specific inducement types rather than overall influence. This pattern suggests that perceptions of vote buying operate as broadly shared social interpretations rather than as outcomes strongly determined by individual demographic characteristics. Where variation exists, it is context-specific and dimension-dependent rather than systemic. Consistent with recent political behavior literature, these findings reinforce the idea that electoral inducements function within socially embedded environments shaped more by institutional and community-level factors than by individual demographic profiles alone (Cruz, 2019; Hennighausen & Keefer, 2022; Ravanilla et al., 2022). Thus, vote buying appears to persist not because certain groups are uniquely susceptible, but because its influence is distributed across overlapping social and political contexts.

Behavioral and Normative Dimensions of Vote Buying

The quantitative results revealed several patterns that required deeper explanation: (1) vote buying was widely observed and participated in but only slightly influenced voter decisions; (2) cash and goods were perceived as only slightly influential; (3) programmatic incentives were more influential than immediate inducements; and (4) most socio-demographic variables showed no significant relationships, except for religious affiliation. These findings raised critical questions about the persistence, perceived effectiveness, and normalization of vote buying.

To address these gaps, qualitative data were collected from 15 participants through semi-structured interviews. Consistent with an explanatory sequential design, the qualitative phase was explicitly conducted to explain, refine, and contextualize the statistical results. Through thematic analysis, key explanatory themes were generated and systematically linked to the quantitative findings using joint display and integrated narrative discussion. Table 32 presents the major themes that emerged from the interviews and their explanatory relevance.

The widespread observation and participation in vote buying, despite its limited influence on actual voting decisions, can be explained by the theme of normalization of vote buying. Participants consistently framed the practice as an expected and routine component of elections:

It has become part of campaigning. Everyone does it already. (Participant 5)

This explains why vote buying persists even when it does not strongly determine voter choice. Rather than functioning purely as coercion, it operates as an institutionalized electoral practice embedded in local political culture.

Table 32. Emerging Qualitative Themes Explaining Quantitative Findings

Theme	Description	Representative Response
Normalization of Vote Buying	Vote buying is viewed as a routine campaign practice	<i>"Normal na 'yan tuwing eleksyon."</i> (It is already normal during elections.)
Survival Rationality	Acceptance driven by economic necessity	<i>"Hindi ito para sa boto, kundi para sa pang-araw-araw na pangangailangan."</i> (This is not for the vote, but for daily needs.)
Non-binding Reciprocity	Incentives accepted without voting obligation	<i>"Tinatanggap namin, pero nasa amin pa rin ang desisyon."</i> (We accept it, but the decision is still ours.)
Programmatic Preference	Voters prioritize long-term benefits	<i>"Mas mahalaga ang proyekto kaysa sa pera."</i> (Projects are more important than money.)
Moral-Behavioral Disjuncture	Ethical rejection despite participation	<i>"Alam naming mali, pero ginagawa pa rin."</i> (We know it is wrong, but we still do it.)
Religious Mediation	Religion shapes moral interpretation	<i>"Sa amin, may epekto ang simbahan sa pagpili."</i> (In our case, the church influences decisions.)

Closely linked to this is survival rationality, where economic vulnerability drives participation. While survey results indicate widespread acceptance of inducements, the interviews reveal that such acceptance is grounded in necessity rather than political allegiance:

When someone gives something, we accept it because life is difficult. (Participant 7)

This theme clarifies why high participation coexists with low influence. Vote buying becomes a coping mechanism under conditions of material deprivation, aligning with perspectives within political economy.

The theme of non-binding reciprocity further explains why cash and goods are only slightly influential. Participants emphasized that accepting incentives does not translate into electoral obligation:

Accepting does not mean you will vote for them. (Participant 9)

This supports the quantitative finding that material inducements do not guarantee electoral control, but instead function as flexible, non-binding exchanges.

In contrast, programmatic preference explains why programmatic incentives are perceived as more influential than immediate inducements. Respondents associated these with long-term governance outcomes and service delivery:

If there are projects and services, that is what we believe in. (Participant 11)

This finding reinforces the interpretation that voters prioritize perceived future benefits over short-term gains, indicating the coexistence of programmatic and clientelist logics.

The strong normative rejection of vote buying (Table 33), despite widespread participation, is explained by moral-behavioral disjuncture. Respondents expressed awareness of the unethical nature of vote buying while continuing to engage in it:

We know it is wrong, but sometimes we have no choice. (Participant 2)

This theme highlights a tension between democratic values and structural constraints, explaining the paradox observed in the quantitative data.

Finally, the significance of religious affiliation is clarified through religious mediation, where moral frameworks and collective norms influence electoral behavior:

The church guides us on what is right or wrong. (Participant 14)

This explains why religion emerged as a significant variable while other socio-demographic factors did not.

Drawing from these themes, the integration of findings was achieved through explicit explanatory linking, in

which qualitative insights were used to interpret and deepen the meaning of the statistical results. As shown in Table 33, the joint display demonstrates how numerical trends align with lived experiences and social interpretations. The qualitative findings do not merely corroborate the quantitative results; rather, they explain why these patterns occur, thereby strengthening the study's explanatory power.

Table 33. *Integration of Qualitative and Quantitative Findings*

Quantitative Finding	Qualitative Explanation	Integrated Interpretation
Vote buying is widely observed and participated in	Respondents described it as a “normal campaign strategy” and a form of economic assistance	Vote buying persists as a normalized socio-economic practice rather than purely political coercion
Cash and goods are slightly influential overall	Participants accept incentives but do not feel obligated to vote accordingly	Vote buying functions as non-binding reciprocity rather than guaranteed vote control
Programmatic incentives are highly influential	Respondents associate these with long-term benefits and governance capacity	Voters prioritize perceived future utility over immediate gains
Religion is significantly related to participation	Religious norms influence moral evaluation and collective voting behavior	Religious affiliation mediates ethical and social interpretations of vote buying

The qualitative and descriptive findings further reveal that vote buying is deeply embedded in structural conditions, social dynamics, and normative contradictions within the electoral system. Poverty emerged as a central explanatory factor shaping voter acceptance of cash, goods, and programmatic mobilization. Respondents consistently framed participation as a survival strategy rather than a purely political act, highlighting the role of economic vulnerability in electoral behavior.

A lot of voters who accept the offers of the candidates during the election are poor. We cannot blame them because it is one of their only chances to fill their hunger in a day.
(Participant 1)

Beyond economic necessity, social influences—particularly family and community networks—also shape voter behavior. The acceptance of inducements due to familial pressure or shared perceptions of entitlement (“coming from the people’s money”) reflects the embeddedness of vote buying within local social norms. These findings indicate that electoral behavior is not solely an individual decision but is mediated by collective expectations and relational obligations.

Despite widespread participation, Table 34 shows a strong normative rejection of vote buying, with 96.96% of respondents affirming that it is not a good practice. This reinforces the theme of moral-behavioral disjuncture, where voters uphold democratic norms while simultaneously engaging in practices that contradict them.

Table 34. *Distribution of Respondents on Whether Vote Buying is a Good Thing*

Indicator	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	12	3.04
No	383	96.96
Total	395	100.00

Further reinforcing the structural nature of vote buying, Table 35 indicates that 94.68% of respondents attribute the practice to competitive pressure among candidates. This suggests that vote buying is sustained not only by voter behavior but also by systemic incentives within electoral competition, consistent with arguments that candidates deploy inducements strategically to remain competitive (Guardado & Wantchekon, 2014).

Table 35. *Distribution of Respondents on Whether Vote Buying is a Result of Pressure Among the Candidates*

Indicator	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	374	94.68
No	21	5.32
Total	395	100.00

The perception of electoral integrity further underscores this normalization. As shown in Table 36, all respondents

(100%) believe that elections are not free from malpractice. This reflects a deeply entrenched expectation that vote buying is part of the electoral process, undermining trust in democratic institutions.

Table 36. *Distribution of Respondents on Whether Elections are Free from Malpractice*

Indicator	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	0	0.00
No	395	100.00
Total	395	100.00

It seems like, nowadays, vote buying is a normal campaign strategy for every political candidate. I can say that vote buying, unfortunately, determines who has a greater chance of winning the election.
(Participant 3)

Interestingly, Table 37 shows that voters continue to prioritize substantive policy issues, particularly poverty (48.86%), despite the prevalence of vote buying. This supports the theme of programmatic preference and indicates that voters simultaneously engage with both transactional and policy-based considerations.

Table 37. *Distribution of Respondents on the Most Important Policy Issue for the Candidates*

Indicator	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Education	29	7.34
Poverty	193	48.86
Employment	54	13.67
Corruption	57	14.43
Health	29	7.34
Justice	33	8.35
Total	395	100.00

Finally, Table 38 demonstrates a strong normative commitment to democratic principles, with all respondents affirming the importance of free and fair elections. This reinforces the paradox identified earlier and highlights the complexity of voter behavior within constrained democratic contexts.

Table 38. *Distribution of Respondents on Whether Free and Fair Election is an Important Part of Democracy*

Indicator	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	395	100.00
No	0	0.00
Total	395	100.00

During the election, we can choose whoever we want to vote for. That's why if it is done in the wrong way, the will of the people is not obeyed. (Participant 2)

This finding supports Zaide's (1997) assertion that voters function as the "fourth branch of government," emphasizing their central role in democratic governance. Overall, the explanatory sequential integration demonstrates that vote buying persists not merely due to individual opportunism, but because it is embedded in a broader system characterized by economic inequality, competitive political pressures, and normalized practices. While voters remain aware of democratic ideals and policy priorities, their behavior is shaped by structural constraints and social realities. Addressing vote buying, therefore, requires not only legal enforcement but also structural reforms that reduce economic vulnerability, strengthen institutions, and transform the incentives underlying electoral competition.

Conclusion

This study is subject to several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the use of self-reported data on a sensitive and legally prohibited practice may introduce social desirability bias, as respondents may underreport or modify their responses. Second, the study is limited to a specific local context, which constrains the generalizability of the findings to other settings. Third, although the sample size is sufficient for statistical analysis, it may still limit the detection of smaller effect sizes, thereby affecting statistical power. Finally, the study relies on perceived influence rather than actual voting behavior, which may not fully capture

the complexities of electoral decision-making. These limitations highlight the need for cautious interpretation and suggest directions for future research.

Despite these constraints, the study shows that transactional inducements (cash and goods) remain widely observed and participated in, reflecting the normalization of vote buying. However, their perceived influence appears limited, indicating that acceptance does not necessarily translate into electoral support. In contrast, programmatic inducements (e.g., jobs, services) are perceived as more influential, suggesting that voters value longer-term benefits over immediate material exchanges. Most socio-demographic variables showed no significant variation, although religious affiliation and economic conditions appear to shape engagement.

Against this backdrop, addressing vote buying requires a multifaceted approach. Strengthening the enforcement of electoral laws and ensuring accountability of local actors are essential to restoring public trust. Political candidates should shift from transactional strategies toward programmatic, performance-based campaigning. At the same time, sustained voter education is needed to emphasize the long-term consequences of vote buying and promote informed electoral choices, with religious and civil society institutions playing a key role. Ultimately, reducing vote buying necessitates addressing structural inequalities, especially poverty and limited access to education. Future research may expand on political affiliations, local dynamics, and broader clientelist practices to further deepen understanding of electoral behavior in the Philippine context.

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