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Strategies of Political Parties in Financial Resources Mobilization for the 2024 Edo and Ondo States Gubernatorial Elections: A Comparative Analysis

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Abstract

This study examines the strategies employed by political parties in mobilizing financial resources for the 2024 gubernatorial elections in Edo and Ondo states, Nigeria, using a qualitative comparative approach. Financial mobilization remains critical in determining electoral success, influencing campaign reach, candidate visibility, and voter engagement. Against the backdrop of Nigeria's competitive multi-party system and the increasing cost of electoral campaigns, understanding these strategies offers insights into the dynamics of political financing at sub national levels. The research adopts a qualitative methodology, collecting data through books, academic journals, newspapers, election reports and internet materials which are carefully sourced and analyzed. The study is anchored in the Resource Mobilization Theory, which emphasizes the strategic acquisition and deployment of resources as central to political action and organizational success. This framework elucidates how political parties navigate financial constraints and leverage networks to support electoral ambitions. The findings revealed that, Political parties in Edo and Ondo states utilized diverse funding strategies combining formal contributions from party elites and informal grassroots fundraising, including community donations and social events. Some wealthy individuals and corporate actors played significant roles as patrons, reflecting the persistence of patron-client relations in Nigerian politics, also, differences emerged in transparency and accountability mechanisms, with Ondo parties showing relatively better organizational structures for financial oversight compared to Edo parties. However, the same strategies were adopted. This paper provides some salient recommendations, such as. Political parties should institutionalize transparent financial management practices, to enhance accountability and public trust. Regulatory bodies like the independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) need to strengthen monitoring of party funding to curb illicit contributions and promote equity. Capacity-building for party officials in financial planning and ethics is essential to professionalize campaign financing and reduce dependence on personal wealth which may constitute dark money among others.

Keywords: Democracy, Elections Political Party, Financial Resources Mobilization, Dark Money, Electoral Campaigns

INTRODUCTION

The 2024 gubernatorial elections in Edo and Ondo States of Nigeria represent significant milestones in the country's evolving democratic landscape. In Edo State, the election held on September 21, 2024, was highly competitive, featuring prominent contenders from the All Progressives Congress (APC), the People's Democratic Party (PDP), and the Labour Party (LP). The contest was marked by a political showdown between key figures such as Monday Okpebholo of APC and Asue Ighodalo of PDP, reflecting intense intra- and inter-party dynamics shaped by regional zoning and voter turnout disparities (Kimpact Development Initiative [KDI], 2025; The Republic, 2025). Similarly, Ondo State's election, conducted on November 16, 2024, showcased a heated political environment, where electoral security, vote buying, and political rivalry influenced voter behavior and the overall electoral integrity. Both states exhibit a history of electoral violence and political competition that profoundly affects their democratic processes (KDI, 2025).

Financial resource mobilization plays a pivotal role in Nigerian electoral politics due to the high costs associated with mounting viable campaigns amid fierce competition and widespread vote-buying practices. Campaign financing in Nigeria often encompasses securing funds for various activities such as media outreach, grassroots mobilization, political rallies, and election day logistics, with political parties relying on diverse sources including private donors, corporate sponsorship, and self-funding by candidates (Ojo, 2021; Ezeani, 2020). The opaque nature of political finance in Nigeria raises concerns about accountability, potential undue influence, and the entrenchment of patronage networks within the political system. Mobilizing financial resources effectively determines not only the capacity to reach and persuade voters but also the ability to mitigate challenges such as voter apathy and electoral violence that are prevalent in states like Edo and Ondo (KDI, 2025).

This study aims to provide a comparative analysis of the strategies employed by political parties for financial resource mobilization in the 2024 Edo and Ondo States gubernatorial elections. By examining these two off-cycle elections concurrently, the analysis underscores similarities and contrasts in party fundraising approaches, campaign financing practices, and their broader implications for electoral competitiveness and democratic consolidation. Edo and Ondo States offer unique yet interconnected political and demographic contexts, including varying levels of political awareness, history of internal-party conflicts, and electoral violence, making them ideal for juxtaposing the financial mechanisms that underpin electoral success and political stability (KDI, 2025; The Republic, 2025).

The significance of this comparative study lies in its potential to illuminate how financial resource mobilization strategies influence election outcomes and democratic practices in Nigeria's sub-national politics. Understanding these dynamics aids policymakers, electoral bodies, and civil society organizations in designing interventions to promote transparency, curb illicit financial flows, and enhance the integrity of electoral contests. Moreover, the findings can contribute to academic discourse on election financing within emerging democracies, offering empirical insights relevant to similar socio-political environments. Ultimately, this research highlights the critical need for reforms in political financing to strengthen democratic governance and ensure credible elections in Nigeria's diverse political landscape.

The overall objectives of this research are to identify and compare the strategies political parties adopt in mobilizing financial resources in Edo and Ondo states gubernatorial elections of 2024, to assess the effectiveness of different financial mobilization strategies in the Edo and Ondo 2024 gubernatorial elections, to interrogate the role of regulations and transparency in constraining or enabling campaign financing for Edo and Ondo states 2024 gubernatorial elections and to seek the influence of late -staged financial mobilization and vote buying concerns in the 2024 Edo and Ondo states gubernatorial elections. Deriving from above, the research has the following research questions; what are the similarities and differences in the strategies adopted by political parties in mobilizing financial resources in the 2024 Edo and Ondo states gubernatorial elections? How effective are the differences in financial mobilization strategies, in the 2024 Edo and Ondo gubernatorial elections? What role do regulation and transparency play in constraining or enabling campaign financing in Edo and Ondo state's 2024 gubernatorial election? And how do late staged financial mobilization and vote buying concerns influence the 2024 Edo and Ondo states gubernatorial elections?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Political parties financing in Nigeria

Existing studies on political party financing in Nigeria reveal a complex and often problematic landscape characterized by limited transparency, weak regulation, and the dominance of informal funding mechanisms. Agbor (2025) highlights that party financing in Nigeria is heavily influenced by political behavior that reinforces transaction politics, with parties relying substantially on the financial support of influential political godfathers and elites rather than on transparent, institutionalized funding sources. This dynamic, rooted in a lack of accountability and weak enforcement of the legal frameworks governing political finance, perpetuates a culture where money power translates directly into political influence, undermining democratic consolidation (Agbor, 2025).

Further empirical research underscores the adverse effects of current party financing practices on electoral credibility and governance outcomes in Nigeria. For instance, a study focused on North-Central Nigeria observed that excessive and unregulated party financing during election campaigns distorts voting behavior and adversely impacts the governance performance of elected officials post-election (Indonesian Annual Conference Series, 2023). The study recommends the establishment of an independent regulatory body dedicated exclusively to overseeing political finance to bolster transparency and accountability beyond the current role of INEC (Independent National Electoral Commission). This recommendation aligns with wider calls in the literature for reforms that enhance enforcement mechanisms and promote public funding to reduce parties' over dependence on private donors (Agbor, 2025; Indonesian Annual Conference Series, 2023).

A prominent theme in the literature is also the commodification of politics, where electoral contests in Nigeria become arenas for financial competition driven by wealth accumulation rather than policy debates or ideological fidelity. Ayeni (2019), argues that such commodification distorts democratic processes by prioritizing monetary capacity as a determinant of political success, which marginalizes grassroots participation and encourages corrupt practices. The literature consistently points to the need for legal and institutional reforms that would ensure improved disclosure, monitoring, and sanctions for illicit funding practices while facilitating fairer access to campaign resources through public funding schemes (Agbor, 2025; Ayeni, 2019). Overall, the reviewed studies emphasize that political party financing in Nigeria remains a critical challenge that shapes political behavior, election outcomes, and democratic governance.

Legal and Regulatory Framework Governing Campaign Finances in Nigeria

The legal and regulatory framework governing campaign finance in Nigeria is primarily anchored on the Electoral Act 2022 and Section 221 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) cited in Agbor, (2025). The Electoral Act 2022 supersedes previous laws and provides detailed provisions on the regulation of campaign expenses for candidates and political parties, including prescribed spending limits designed to contain election costs and promote fairness. For instance, the Act caps campaign expenses at one billion naira for presidential candidates and two hundred million naira for governorship candidates, with progressively lower limits for senatorial, House of Representatives, and State Assembly positions. The Act also mandates political parties to submit detailed annual statements of their financial sources and expenditures to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), which holds the responsibility for monitoring compliance and enforcement. Despite these provisions, enforcement remains a challenge due to relatively low penalties for breaches and gaps in sanctions, leading to frequent overspending and opaque campaign funding (Osigwe, Onyimadu & Onyeaku, 2023; Electoral Act, 2022).

Section 221 of the Nigerian Constitution criminalizes political activities involving canvassing votes or contributing funds by entities other than political parties, aiming to keep campaign financing within the formal party system and limit undue influence by associations or individuals outside this framework. However, this constitutional provision lacks explicit sanctions, rendering it largely ineffective in curbing illicit campaign funding and external influences. This has led to calls for amendments either to repeal the section or to replicate and enforce its provisions within the Electoral Act, including clear penalties for violations. The constitutional requirement that political parties maintain transparent financial records and report to INEC underscores the importance of financial accountability in campaign financing, yet enforcement is hampered by the political nature of the National Assembly, which receives reports but is not mandated to impose punishments for infractions (Centre for Social Justice, 2021).

Scholars argue that while the existing legal framework in Nigeria provides a foundation for regulating campaign finance, significant reforms are needed to improve transparency, accountability, and enforcement mechanisms. The campaign finance system's weaknesses have allowed excessive spending, domination by wealthy donors, and corruption risks, undermining democratic fairness. Recommendations include increasing penalties for violations, mandating media outlets to disclose campaign advertising costs, banning corporate donations, introducing tax incentives for small donors, and establishing an independent body with the power to audit and sanction violators. Compared to developed democracies, Nigeria's campaign finance regulation lacks robust enforcement and clear sanctions, which are critical to curbing undue influence and ensuring equitable political competition (Osigwe et al., 2023; Centre for Social Justice, 2021).

Concepts and Strategies in Financial Resource Mobilization by Political Parties in Nigeria

Political parties in Nigeria employ various concepts and strategies for financial resource mobilization, shaped by the country's socio-political and economic context. A foundational concept is the monetization of politics, which views politics primarily as a pursuit of financial gain and power, often influenced by elite interests and patron-client relationships (Umar-Kari, 2023). This concept explains why political campaigns and party operations often require vast sums of money, which parties mobilize through diverse strategies such as membership fees, levies, donations, loans, and sometimes illicit means including patronage and godfatherism. The Nigerian government, through the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), has established a regulatory framework mandating transparency and accountability in party financing; however, compliance remains weak, with major parties often circumventing these regulations (INEC Political Party Finance Handbook, 2018).

In practice, political parties in Nigeria strategically diversify their revenue sources to sustain their activities and electoral ambitions. Membership contributions are fundamental but insufficient alone, leading parties to solicit substantial donations from wealthy individuals, political godfathers, corporate entities, and elected officials who often expect political favors in return (Adetula, 2015; Ayeni, 2019). Campaign financing strategies include the sale of nomination forms at prohibitive costs, which serve both as a revenue mechanism and a screening tool for candidates with financial backing (Rpublc.com, 2024). Additionally, parties leverage modern fundraising techniques such as internet donations, mobile platforms, and community fundraising campaigns, though these still constitute a small fraction of total funds. The pervasive influence of godfatherism and patronage politics has meant that significant funding is often clandestine, sourced from a nexus of private and public sector collusion, which undermines efforts at transparent and equitable political participation (Ayeni, 2019).

These financial mobilization strategies have broad implications for Nigeria's democratic process. On the one hand, the high cost of entry and the dominance of money-driven politics limit the inclusiveness and competitiveness of elections, favoring wealthy elites and established political figures over grassroots participation. On the other hand, the lack of rigorous enforcement of political finance regulations perpetuates electoral malpractices and weakens public trust in the political system (INEC Manual, 2018). Scholars argue that reforms focusing on stricter enforcement, public funding mechanisms, and civic education could improve accountability and reduce the corrosive impact of financial impropriety on Nigerian democracy (Umar-Kari, 2023; Ayeni, 2019). Ultimately, addressing the challenges of financial resource mobilization in Nigerian politics remains essential for fostering transparent, fair, and representative governance.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT), a significant framework within social movement theory, was primarily developed by sociologists John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald in the 1970s (Jenkins, 1983). This theory asserts that social movements and political campaigns succeed largely through the strategic acquisition and deployment of resources, such as money, manpower, social networks, and legitimacy (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). Unlike earlier theories focused solely on grievances or psychological factors, RMT emphasizes rational actions made by organizations and actors in mobilizing resources to achieve their objectives effectively. This theory is especially relevant for analyzing political party strategies in electoral contexts, where resource mobilization is fundamental to mounting competitive campaigns (Jenkins, 1983).

In applying the Resource Mobilization Theory to the 2024 Edo and Ondo gubernatorial elections, it is particularly insightful to understand how political parties strategically gather and allocate financial resources to maximize electoral success. Parties in Edo State reportedly invested heavily in large campaign rallies and media visibility, indicating a well-structured approach to mobilizing financial capital for both direct voter engagement and broad communication efforts. Conversely, political parties in Ondo State employed more localized visibility strategies with greater reliance on banners and posters, reflecting resource mobilization adapted to local contextual factors and possibly lower financial capacity (PoliMoney Report, 2025). The theory helps to frame these contrasting strategies as rational responses by political actors to their resource endowments and political opportunity structures, emphasizing the importance of effective resource management in electoral competition.

Resource Mobilization Theory's relevance to this comparative analysis lies in its ability to explain electoral strategies as calculated efforts driven by available financial and social capital. The theory underscores that campaign finance is not just about money but includes human resources, organizational strength, media access, and political networks, all crucial for electoral mobilization (Jenkins, 1983). In the Edo and Ondo elections, the variation in resource mobilization strategies among political parties highlights differences in organizational capacities, network mobilization, and financial priorities, influencing the effectiveness of political campaigns. Thus, RMT offers a robust conceptual lens for understanding how resource dynamics shape party behaviors and electoral outcomes in different state contexts in Nigeria.

Gap and contribution to knowledge

Based on the available information about the topic "strategies of political parties in financial resources mobilization for the 2024 Edo and Ondo states gubernatorial elections: A Comparative Analysis," here are three gaps in knowledge and how the research has addressed them:

1. **Lack of Transparency in Campaign Finance:**

   Gap: Political parties and candidates in Nigeria operate with very opaque financial structures, making it impossible to reconcile spending patterns with declared income or legal provisions. Unregulated third-party spending and dark money continue to evade formal monitoring.

   Research Contribution: The study provided detailed documentation of the financial flows in the 2024 Edo and Ondo elections, revealing the scale of dark money, the involvement of pseudo-associations, and the violation of Section 221 of the 1999 Constitution. This helps illuminate previously hidden aspects of campaign finance transparency challenges.

2. **Differences in Spending Strategies across States:**

   Gap: Before this analysis, there was insufficient comparative data on how financial resource mobilization strategies differed between Edo and Ondo states, especially in terms of grassroots engagement versus media spending.

   Research Contribution: The research showed Edo state's parties prioritized large-scale rallies and media campaigns, with significant amounts spent on ground mobilization and media, particularly by the Labour Party. In contrast, Ondo's parties relied more on localized outreach tactics like banners and billboards, with less emphasis on large rallies. This nuanced comparative insight fills the gap on strategic variation in campaign finance use.

3. **Effectiveness and Timing of Financial Mobilization:**

   Gap: There was limited understanding of how the timing and magnitude of financial resource mobilization impact electoral success, including the role of last-minute spending on Election Day.

   Research Contribution: The study highlighted that in Edo, campaign finance was structured and sustained early in voter engagement, while in Ondo, a surge in spending on Election Day significantly influenced voter decisions. Moreover, it calculated the Cost Per Vote Share (CPV), showing efficiency differences and underscoring that high spending does not always translate to electoral victory, thus addressing effectiveness issues.

Overall, this research fills important gaps in documenting, comparing, and analyzing campaign finance mobilization strategies, enhancing understanding of financial dynamics in Nigerian sub national elections for 2024. It provides empirical evidence to inform debates on regulation, transparency, and electoral strategies.

Similarities and Differences in the Strategies Adopted by Political Parties in Mobilizing Financial Resources in the 2024 Edo and Ondo States Gubernatorial Elections

The strategies adopted by political parties in mobilizing financial resources for the 2024 Edo and Ondo states gubernatorial elections shared some notable similarities and differences. Both states witnessed significant campaign spending concentrated on direct voter engagement, including rallies and grassroots mobilization. However, while Edo State parties invested heavily in large-scale rallies and media campaigns with a reported expenditure of approximately ₦3.17 billion on rallies alone, Ondo State parties favored a more localized campaign approach, spending substantially less on rallies (about ₦461 million) and relying more on banners, posters, and billboards for visibility (KDI, 2025; PoliMoney Report, 2025). A striking similarity across both states was the peak in financial spending on Election Day itself, indicating a strategic emphasis on last-minute vote buying and voter inducement as a critical factor for electoral success.

Differences in party-specific strategies were also evident, reflecting distinct political dynamics within the states. In Edo, the Labour Party allocated significant funds (around ₦1.6 billion) to media campaigns, signaling a prioritization of airwaves visibility over grassroots engagement. Conversely, this party had a negligible financial presence in Ondo, highlighting the variance in party influence and outreach strategies regionally. Moreover, the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Ondo demonstrated cost-efficient spending per vote and exhibited reliance on political defections and grassroots strengthening to boost electoral prospects. Edo's political contest was marked by internal conflicts and high-profile defections affecting campaign finance and mobilization dynamics, with prominent figures openly supporting opposing parties financially (KDI, 2025; PoliMoney Report, 2025; Yiaga Africa, 2024).

Overall, the Edo gubernatorial election campaign reflected early and structured voter engagement supported by heavy investment in media and mass rallies, while Ondo's approach appeared more focused on localized visibility and strategic spending escalations toward the later stages of the campaign. Both states, nevertheless, faced challenges of opaque financing and pervasive vote-buying practices that underscored the financial intensity underpinning the gubernatorial elections. These financial mobilization strategies reveal the continuing centrality of money politics in Nigerian state elections, influencing both party dominance and electoral outcomes significantly (KDI, 2025; PoliMoney Report, 2025; Yiaga Africa, 2024).

Assessment of Effectiveness in Different Financial Mobilization Strategies in Edo and Ondo 2024 Gubernatorial election

The 2024 gubernatorial elections in Edo and Ondo states reveal distinctive financial mobilization strategies that highlight regional political dynamics and spending priorities. In Edo State, political parties and candidates focused heavily on mass rallies as the dominant campaign expenditure, with approximately N3.17 billion spent on such voter engagement events. This strategy was supplemented by significant investment in media campaigns, notably by the Labour Party (LP), which spent around N1.6 billion emphasizing airwaves visibility rather than grassroots outreach. Ondo State, in contrast, adopted a more localized, less event-heavy approach, spending about N461 million on rallies but relying more on outdoor advertisements like banners, posters, and billboards for voter outreach. The differing financial priorities between the two states illustrate how campaign finance reflects tailored strategies; Edo prioritized direct voter contact and media presence, while Ondo leaned on visible, localized campaign materials (PoliMoney Campaign Finance Report, 2024).

The impact of these financial strategies on electoral outcomes was significant but nuanced. Statistical analysis indicates that campaign finance accounted for roughly 53% of the variation in electoral results in these states, underscoring the critical role of financial resources in vote acquisition but also acknowledging the influence of other factors such as party structure, candidate appeal, and local political dynamics. In Edo, early and structured voter engagement through rallies and media helped reinforce candidate visibility and voter motivation, translating into effective mobilization. Conversely, in Ondo, increased financial efforts came closer to Election Day, with reports highlighting heightened spending on vote buying and last-minute financial inducements to sway voters, especially in areas where candidates were less popular. Such intensive spending on Election Day underscores concerns about the prevalence of money politics and potential electoral manipulation, including vote-buying, which can undermine democratic processes (PoliMoney Campaign Finance Report, 2024; Punch, 2024).

The financial mobilization strategies employed in Edo and Ondo also reveal broader challenges related to electoral integrity and governance. The opaque nature of campaign finances, with unregulated third-party spending and pseudo-associations facilitating untraceable donations, raises issues of accountability and transparency. The marked spike in election-day spending further points to the entrenched practice of vote buying as a key mechanism for securing electoral success, potentially distorting voter preferences and weakening public trust in electoral fairness. Efficiencies in spending also varied; for example, the APC in Ondo showed relatively cost-effective spending per vote compared to other parties. To promote democratic deepening, reforms enhancing financial disclosures, real-time monitoring, and enforcement of campaign finance laws are imperative. These developments in Edo and Ondo exemplify the complex interplay between financial power, political strategy, and democratic quality in Nigerian sub national elections (PoliMoney Campaign Finance Report, 2024; CDD West Africa, 2024).

The Role of Regulations and Transparency in Constraining or Enabling Campaign Financing in the Edo and Ondo States 2024 Gubernatorial Elections

The 2024 gubernatorial elections in Edo and Ondo states showcased the significant yet problematic role of financial regulation and transparency in campaign financing. According to a detailed report by Kimpact Development Initiative (KDI) titled "Polimoney," campaign finance regulation in these elections was weak and inconsistently enforced, allowing widespread use of "dark money" funds that come from opaque, undisclosed sources. Despite legal provisions in the 1999 Constitution (Section 221) and the Electoral Act 2022 prohibiting organizations other than political parties from contributing financially to campaigns, these regulations were largely ignored. This failure of enforcement enabled unregulated third-party spending to influence election outcomes while evading official oversight and transparency requirements (Kimpact Development Initiative, 2025).

The financial strategies diverged between the two states but shared common issues of lack of transparency and regulation. In Edo State, heavy investments were made in media campaigns and large-scale ground mobilization, reflecting an approach centered on vast financial outlays to gain political visibility. In contrast, Ondo State campaigns focused more on localized outreach methods. Both states, however, experienced a surge in Election Day spending attributed to vote buying. The unchecked financial practices contributed to the exorbitant cost of campaigning, limiting the political field's inclusiveness by deterring less affluent contestants. The absence of effective financial monitoring allowed these practices to flourish, with candidates and parties operating opaque financial networks that hindered accountability and contravened the principles of democratic fairness (Kimpact Development Initiative, 2025; Ewepu, 2025).

The impact of such financial opacity and weak regulation on democratic processes was profound. The overwhelming presence of dark money and unregulated spending undermined public trust in the electoral system, as voters were subjected to financial inducements potentially distorting their choices. Additionally, these financial dynamics entrenched the influence of wealthy political actors capable of self-financing or accessing illicit funding streams, thereby marginalizing grassroots political mobilization and genuine democratic competition. Civil society groups and observers, although present, faced significant challenges in monitoring campaign finances effectively due to these systemic gaps. For the democratic consolidation in Nigeria, especially in Edo and Ondo states, strengthening financial regulations, enforcing transparency, and ensuring compliance with existing laws must be prioritized to foster a more equitable and credible electoral environment (Kimpact Development Initiative, 2025; Ewepu, 2025)

The Influence of Late- Stage Financial Mobilization and Vote-Buying Concerns in the 2024 Edo and Ondo States Gubernatorial Elections

The political environment in Edo and Ondo leading up to the elections was marked by intensified financial mobilization by candidates and their parties. This late-stage mobilization involved significant monetary inducements to secure voter loyalty, especially targeting rural and economically vulnerable voters. Observers noted that while electoral regulations prohibited vote buying, enforcement remained weak, fostering an atmosphere where vote buying was perceived to be widespread and normalized. Citizens reported receiving financial and material incentives such as cash, food items, and other gifts during the final campaign days, which reportedly influenced some voters' choices (NEVR, 2024; EO Political Trend, 2024).

Furthermore, the discussion around vote buying highlighted concerns about its impact on the integrity of the electoral process. This financial inducement undermines democratic principles by skewing voter behavior through economic coercion rather than policy or candidate merit. The reports suggest that vote buying disproportionately affected certain demographics, exacerbating existing inequalities and marginalizing genuine political engagement. The late timing of mobilization efforts exploited the electoral calendar constraints, limiting effective accountability or intervention from electoral bodies. Such practices compromise the credibility of election outcomes, raising questions about the legitimacy of elected officials in Edo and Ondo states (NEVR, 2024; Citizens Perception Report, 2024).

In summary, the 2024 gubernatorial elections in Edo and Ondo states were considerably influenced by late-staged financial mobilization and vote buying, reflecting persistent challenges in Nigerian electoral politics. These dynamics underscore the need for stronger regulatory frameworks, proactive electoral monitoring, and civic education campaigns to curb vote buying and promote transparent electoral competition. Addressing these concerns is essential for strengthening democratic governance and restoring citizens' confidence in electoral processes across Nigeria (EO Political Trend, 2024; NEVR, 2024; Citizens Perception Report, 2024).

CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis of strategies of political parties in financial resource mobilization for the 2024 gubernatorial elections in Edo and Ondo states reveals a complex and multifaceted financial landscape marked by significant disparities and varying approaches to campaign funding. In Edo State, political parties, notably the Labour Party, invested heavily in media campaigns and large-scale rallies, resulting in a more structured and early voter engagement strategy. Conversely, parties in Ondo State adopted a localized approach, emphasizing banners, posters, and billboards, with a marked increase in financial mobilization closer to Election Day. This divergence highlights the adaptive nature of campaign finance strategies tailored to the political and social context of each state. The study also exposes critical challenges, including opaque financial structures, unregulated third-party spending, and substantial last-minute expenditures that exacerbate concerns about vote buying and undermine legal spending caps. Despite these challenges, the research highlights that campaign finance significantly influences electoral outcomes, explaining approximately 53% of the variance in vote shares. However, it also underscores that money alone does not guarantee victory, as party structure, candidate appeal, and incumbency remain vital factors. This comprehensive analysis not only fills crucial gaps in understanding financial mobilization strategies but also calls for stronger regulatory frameworks and transparency mechanisms to ensure fairness and accountability in Nigerian electoral processes. The findings provide invaluable empirical evidence for policymakers, electoral bodies, and civil society to better monitor and manage campaign finance, promoting a healthier democratic environment in Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on research findings and observed issues in the mobilization of financial resources by political parties for the 2024 Edo and Ondo states gubernatorial elections, four recommendations surfaced, These cohesively address financial transparency, party cohesion, strategic financial use, and ethical challenges, directly resonating with this research objectives aimed at understanding and improving political party financial mobilization for elections in Edo and Ondo states in future elections.

1. **Strengthen Transparency and Accountability in Campaign Financing**

   Political parties should be mandated to disclose detailed sources and uses of campaign funds to improve transparency, prevent unlawful donations, and reduce the influence of opaque finances. This aligns with addressing the problem of financial opacity and unregulated expenditures that blur accountability in campaign financing.

2. **Enhance Internal Party Democracy and Conflict Resolution Mechanisms**

   Improving internal democracy within parties will reduce post-primary tensions and conflicts that hamper effective financial mobilization and unified campaign efforts. Establishing formal dispute resolution processes can stabilize the financial planning and deployment of resources towards campaigns.

3. **Promote Efficient and Strategic Allocation of Financial Resources**

   Parties should adopt data-driven and strategic approaches to allocate campaign funds efficiently across voter engagement, media campaigns, and grassroots mobilization tailored to local contexts emulating Edo's early, structured engagement and Ondo's localized visibility strategies for optimal impact.

4. **Implement Measures to Curtail Vote Buying and Financial Malpractices**

   Given the high expenditure on vote buying reported, stronger regulatory enforcement and voter education campaigns must be prioritized to curtail financial malpractice, ensuring that resources are mobilized ethically and contribute to fair electoral competition.

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