Religiosity, Institutions and Corruption in Africa

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Abstract
The simultaneous increase in religiosity and corruption in Africa is a paradox that is being investigated. Therefore, using the Sub-Saharan Africa Religion Survey and transparency international report datasets, this study employed multiple regressions analysis to investigate the impact of religiosity and other institutions on corruption in Africa. The study shows that all institutions have significant impact on the level of corruption in Africa. But, Religiosity increases the level of corruption when there are no strong political and economic institutions in place. Also, in democratic environment where political and economic institutions are weak religion serves as impetus to corruption. Thus, to reduce corruption, the laws of the religions need to be incorporated in the constitutions of the countries and strictly enforced. Equally, in good institutional environment, religiosity reduces the level of corruption. Meaning, the level of corruption is concurrently high with the level religiosity in Africa due to weak institutions. We therefore, recommend that the laws of the religions should be incorporated in the mainstream of the conventional legal system in Africa. Otherwise, the wide spread of religion in the continent will continue to increase the level of corruption which in turn hinders socio-economic development in the continent.
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1. INTRODUCTION
Christianity and Islam   are growing faster in Sub-Saharan Africa than in any other place on earth. Both religions are gaining more followers every day. While there is noticeable decline in religious zeal in many parts of the world, the religious enterprise appears to be booming in Africa. For instance, the percentage of Muslims and Christian in the African region rise from 57.56% in 1945 to 88.36% in 2010 (ARDA, 2014). More and more company warehouses, private buildings and homes are being converted to prayer houses, and sports stadia all over the country are being used more for religious crusades than for sporting events. Streets within African towns and villages, as well as inter-state highways are often blocked on Fridays and Sundays by enthusiastic worshippers who flock to churches and mosques for various religious activities. In both urban and rural areas, there are as many churches and mosques as there are streets.

Given the fact that all religions detest immorality, dishonesty and all sorts of social vices (corruption inclusive). For instance, the Quran (Holy book of Islam) 2:188 says "And eat up not one another's property unjustly, nor give bribery to the rulers that you may knowingly eat up a part of the property of others sinfully." (Holy Qur'an Chapter No. 2 verse 188,). Similarly, in the Holy Bible, Exodus 22:8 says, "You will accept no bribes, for a bribe blinds the clear-sighted and is the cause of the ruin of the upright."

These verses of the Holy Quran and Bible emphatically abhor corrupt practices. Thus the wide spread of these dominant religions is expected to have significant influence on human behavior in general and corruption in particular. But the report of the transparency international on corruption over the years shows that most of the African countries are highly corrupt. For example, Africa was reported the most corrupt region in 2010 (TI, 2010). Therefore, the simultaneous increase in religiosity and corruption is a paradox that worth investigation. The extant literatures in this regard submit that not only economic factors such as economic development, economic freedom, inflation and distribution of income etc. but also political, social and cultural factors such as democracy, political stability, gender and ethno-linguistic diversity have important effects on corruption.

However, none of the literatures reviewed investigated empirically if there is a link between religion and corruption in Africa. This therefore served as a gap that this paper is out to fill.

Therefore, the questions that remains unanswered include; what is the impact of religion on corruption?, how relevant is religious institutions to the   fight against corruption? Is religion more important than other institutions in the control of corruption?

To provide empirical answers to the aforementioned questions, the this paper is set to achieve the following objectives;
i.   to investigate the impact of religion on corruption,
ii.   to find out the impact of other institutions on corruption and
iii.   to evaluate the relative importance of the religious institution in the control of corruption in Africa.

The remaining part of the study is organized as follows: section 2 contains the literature review, section 3 outlines the methodology, section 4 contains the preliminary data analysis, presentation and discussion of empirical results, while section 5 covers the summary of the findings and conclusions of the study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual frame work

1. Corruption

The term corruption can be conceptualized in various ways depending on the political culture and civilization of the people. In many Nigerian communities, a man or community of men can give or sent a gift to an officer, in appreciation of his good performance. But in western culture, that is corruption. Likewise if you bend a rule or a procedure to favor someone, although in western civilization may be defended as a discretionary power of the officer, which may be covered by the constitution, but in another legal procedure, that will be termed a corrupt practice. In many cultures, including Nigeria, corruption is reduced to taking money to give something of public nature. However, it is generally accepted that it involves inducement intended to pressure an official from carrying out his functions in accordance with the set rules and procedures. It includes act of arrogation of benefits for oneself or ones friends and relatives to the detriment of the right or entitlement of others regarding the same or similar benefit. Thus, to be corrupt is to be opened to bribery and dishonesty, and to be immoral. The common conception of corruption covers all instances of bribery, kickbacks, favoritism, nepotism and the use of value influence in running of public affairs. In short, corruption is the act of using public office for private gain.

2. Religion

Religion is a fundamental set of beliefs and practices generally agreed upon by a group of people. These set of beliefs concern the cause, nature, and purpose of the universe, and involve devotional and ritual observances. They often contain a moral code governing the conduct of human affairs.

3. Institutions

North (1990) defined institutions as the rules of the game or humanly devised constraints that shape human interactions. Greif (2006) argued that institutions might be defined as a set of social factors, rules, beliefs, values and organizations that jointly motivate regularity in individual and social behavior. Thus, in the context of this paper institutions can be seen as the fundamental rules and regulations, norms of behavior in the society, culture, religion and all other social constructions that govern the interactions of individuals and groups in the society.

Theoretical Frame work

The theoretical framework upon which this paper is based are; the materialistic theory. The Theory of Religious Economy and Entrepreneurial model of religion.

Materialistic Theory: Hobbes in (Samuel,1996) asserts that there could be a right to material wealth only if it was acquired according to the stipulations of the law. Locke in (Agha, 2012) maintains that the right to private property precedes the civil law, for it is grounded in natural moral law. Consequently there is extremely nothing wrong in a person having material wealth. But the attitude of pursuit of material wealth at all cost is not only materialistic but often results in corruption.

Corruption is characteristically materialistic in nature both in developing and developed nations. Materialism constitutes one of the keys of all vices such as bribery and corruption, kidnapping, armed robbery, terrorism, vandalism, misappropriation, to mention but a few that are perpetrated in our society today. The term "materialism" as used in this paper is a deviation from the philosophical concept which explains matter as everything in the world, including man, which is opposed to spirit (Marx,1848). On the contrary, the term is used to refer to excessive quest for or pursuit of material wealth. Africans have become very materialistic to the extent that religious communities are not exception. Today, family survival depends largely on the amount of material wealth at the disposal of parents. The needed pleasure and sensuality in the family can hardly be found in a poor family. Consequently, most Africans, Christians and Muslims alike, in the present century are working hard to grab the National cake at all cost. In the Nigerian society, materialism and politics have become identical so much that only those who are rich run for political position because they can afford to bribe their way through. The major political objective now is no longer to develop the Nation or Society but to accumulate wealth for oneself and their unborn generations. This has informed the mad rush into politics by all means including human lives. In the political life of a nation, corruption arises out of the notion that those who have and those who have not experienced material wealth are equal in some respects, but are unequal absolutely in financial and property possession (Chuta, 2004).The miserable aspect of materialism in Africa is that it is highly admired and then revered by the majority of the people. That is what makes it thrive in the society. In Africa , materialism and its offspring, specifically corruption, are experienced in a bracing social atmosphere and had led to new definitions of bribery and corruption referred to these days in terms of "behaviour", "greeze", "torch", etc. Many Africans claim that material wealth is an expression of good life no matter how it is acquired. No wonder some people have used their parents, children or loved ones, for money rituals.

The Theory of Religious Economy: This theory sees different religious organizations competing for followers in a religious economy, much like the way businesses compete for consumers in a commercial economy. This theory, asserts that a true religious economy is the result of religious pluralism, giving the population a wider variety of choices in religion. According to the theory, the more religions there are, the more likely the population is to be religious and hereby contradicting the secularization thesis.

Entrepreneurial theory of religion: This theory sees the founders of religions act like entrepreneurs, developing new products (religions) to sell to consumers (to convert people to). According to this theory, most founders of new religions already have experience in several religious groups before they begin their own. They take ideas from the pre-existing religions, and try to improve on them to make them more popular.

Empirical Literature

The extant literatures suggest that corruption is multifaceted and its effect on any economy is pervasive. For instance studies like (Adenugba, and Omolawal, 2014), (Mu'azu, 2000), (Agha,2003), (Benjamin and Onah, 2014), (Olukayode , 2013), (Samanta. 2009), (Chuta,2004), (Yılmaz ata, and Akif arvas, 2011), (Ghulam, and Anwar, 2007), (Nadia and Galli,2010), (Danila, 2004), (Mudit, and Ravi,2009), (Moris and Stephen,1991), (Park and Hoon, 2003), have demonstrated that corruption is a multi-dimensional and a complicated concept. Also, the estimated results of these studies have shown that not only economic factors such as economic development, economic freedom, inflation and distribution of income etc. but also political, social and cultural factors such as democracy, political stability, gender and ethno-linguistic diversity have important effects on corruption. However, none of the literatures reviewed investigated empirically if there is a link between religion and corruption in Nigeria. This therefore served as a gap that this paper is out to fill.

3. METHODOLOGY

Nature and source of variables

The data use in this study is cross-sectional data for five African countries (Cameroon, Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya and Tanzania. The 25,091 respondents were selected across the five countries. The choice of the country and the time is informed by the availability of data. The detail description of the data on variables basis in discuss as follows;

Dependent variable

The dependent variable for all the models in this study is level of corruption. Globally, there are three major measures of corruption which include the corruption perception index (CPI) that is the inverse of transparency, the control of corruption index (CCI) and the corruption index (CI). Although Judge et al. (2011), observed that there is strong correlation among the three measures of corruption (CPI, CCI and CI), the CPI is the most popularly used in empirical literature. Thus, CPI is used as an index for corruption in this study. The corruption perception index was obtained from Transparency International (2010). We used Transparency International (2010) data because the Sub-Sahara Africa religion survey data used as the measure of religiosity was conducted in 2010. To harmonize the data, all the data used is for 2010. It ranges from 0 to 10 where low values indicate high transparency and low corruption.

Independent variables

Economic variables

The Heritage Foundation's Index of Economic Freedom is designed to capture the attributes of national economic institutions is used in this study. The Index defines economic freedom as the fundamental right of every human to control his or her own labour and property. The index is measured in 10 components. Each component is assigned a score from 0 to 100 with 100 being most free and 0 least free. The total economic freedom score is calculated by averaging the 10 component scores. Another Economic variable used is GDP per capita taken from the World Bank's World Development Indicators (World Bank 2014).

Institutional variables

Measures of political institutions were used as institutional variables in this study. The Level of Democracy (DEMO) measured by Polity IV developed by Marshall et al (2013) was used. World Bank governance indicators including Rule of Law (ROL), Regulatory Quality (RQ) and Government effectiveness (GOEF) were also used in this paper.

Religious variables

Religion affiliation (RELIGION), Influence of Islam on life (IIL) Influence of Christianity on life (ICL) and percentage of Christian and Muslims are used as religious variables. The data on this is obtained from sub-Sahara Africa religion survey 2010 of Association of Religion Data Archive.

Model specification

To achieve the objectives of this study, multiple regression model was specified on the basis of the theoretical and empirical determinants of corruption. The model is specified as follows;

$$CORR_i = \alpha_0 + \beta ECO_i + \lambda REL_i + \delta INS_i + \varepsilon_i \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots (1)$$

Where α_0 is the constant parameter, β, λ and δ are vectors of the slope parameters to be estimated, ε_i is the stochastic error term and **ECO**, **REL** and **INS** represent the vector of economic, religious and institutional variables defined in table 1.

To check for robustness, the religion variables in sub-Saharan Africa Religion Survey (2010) was substituted with the percentage of religious adherents (PREL) measured by the percentage of Christian and Muslim adherent

contained in the world religion dataset of Association of Religion Data Archive (ARDA)

Method of data analysis

Simple percentages and cross tabulations used for the preliminary data analysis. Multiple regression analysis estimated by Ordinary Least Square (OLS) technique with robust standard error was employed for the analysis of the impact of religion and other institutional variables on corruption in Africa. The Ordinary Least Square technique was considered most appropriate in this study because the dependent variable is continuous variable.

Table 1: Description of variables

VARIABLE NAME	DEFINITION	SOURCE
Dependent variable		
CORR	Level of corruption	Transparency international
Independent variable		
RELIGION	Religion affiliation	Association of Religion Data Archive
PREL	Percentage of religion adherents	Association of Religion Data Archive
LogGDPPC	Log of GDP per capita	World Bank development indicators
ROL	Rule of law	World Bank governance indicators
DEMO	Level democracy	Polity IV
GOEF	Government effectiveness	World Bank governance indicators
RQ	Regulatory quality	World Bank governance indicators
ECOFREE	Economic freedom index	Heritage foundation

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Preliminary analysis

The preliminary analysis was done to examine the background information contained in the data as obtainable in the sample area.

Table 2; Religious affiliation of respondents

Religious Affiliation	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
ATR	579	2.31	2.31
Christianity	19,054	75.94	78.25
Islam	4,937	19.68	97.92
None	521	2.08	100.00
Total	25,091	100.00	

Table 2 is the frequency distribution of religious affiliation of the people in the five African countries (Cameroon, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa and Tanzania) surveyed. The result shows that out of the 25,091 respondents, 75.94%, 19.054% and 2.31% of the respondents are affiliated to Christianity, Islam and African traditional religion respectively. Only 521(2.31%) of them are not affiliated to any religion. This portrays the high level of religiosity in the continent.

Table 3. Level of Corruption

Country	Level of corruption
Cameroon	7.8
Kenya	7.9
Nigeria	7.6
South Africa	5.5
Tanzania	7.3

Table 3 displays the level of corruption in the five African countries. The level of corruption in Cameroon, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa and Tanzania is 7.8, 7.9, 7.6, 5.5 and 7.3 respectively. The level of corruption in all the countries is relatively high because the figure is more than 5 for all of them. . But the level of corruption in South Africa is shown to be the least.

Table 4: Religious Affiliation and Level of Corruption

Religious Affiliation	Level of corruption					Total
	5.5	7.3	7.6	7.8	7.9	
ATR	60	486	14	19	0	579
Christianity	1,309	14,704	678	1,209	1,154	19,054
Islam	28	3,506	818	245	340	4,937
None	107	372	6	30	6	521
Total	1,504	19,068	1,516	1,503	1,500	25,091

Table 4 displays the level of corruption by religious affiliations. At highest level of corruption, only 6 people out of 1, 500 are not affiliated to any religion. So, the level of religiosity is high and the level of

corruption is also high. Also, the table shows that Christianity and Islam are the predominant religious in the continent.

Table 5: Impact of religiosity and institutions on Level of Corruption

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	DEPENDENT VARIABLE: Level of Corruption (CORR)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Log of GDP per capita (logGDPPC)	-0.80***	-0.61***	-0.89***	-0.39***	-0.50***	-0.56***
	(0.0064)	(0.00060)	(0.0100)	(0.0024)	(0.0058)	(0.0031)
Religion affiliation (RELIGION)	0.011***	-0.0047***	0.011***	-0.016***	-0.0052**	0.013***
	(0.0034)	(0.00031)	(0.0035)	(0.0015)	(0.0022)	(0.0017)
Influence of Islam on life (IIL)	-0.017***	-0.000015	-0.017***	-0.0043***	-0.010***	-0.0050***
	(0.00076)	(0.000068)	(0.00075)	(0.00039)	(0.00059)	(0.00040)
Influence of Christianity on life (ICL)	0.0036***	-0.00044***	0.0040***	-0.0018***	-0.00046	0.00068
	(0.0012)	(0.00012)	(0.0012)	(0.00054)	(0.00081)	(0.00065)
Current personal Economic situation (CPES)	-0.026***	0.0028***	-0.028***	0.0089***	-0.0022	-0.0081***
	(0.0028)	(0.00026)	(0.0028)	(0.0015)	(0.0022)	(0.0015)
Current feeling (CFEEL)	0.028***	0.00049*	0.026***	0.011***	0.021***	0.010***
	(0.0032)	(0.00027)	(0.0032)	(0.0014)	(0.0022)	(0.0016)
Rule of Law (ROL)		-1.18***				
		(0.0015)				
Extent of democracy (DEMO)			0.018***			
			(0.0014)			
Government effectiveness (GOEF)				-1.15***		
				(0.0043)		
Regulatory quality (RQ)					-1.02***	
					(0.015)	
Economic freedom (ECOFREE)						-0.16***
						(0.00094)
Constant	13.2***	11.1***	13.8***	9.46***	10.5***	20.4***
	(0.046)	(0.0051)	(0.072)	(0.021)	(0.049)	(0.041)
Observations	25,026	25,026	25,026	25,026	25,026	25,026
R-squared	0.574	0.996	0.583	0.873	0.730	0.875

Source: Authors' computation. Robust standard errors in parentheses *** denotes 1% level of significance.

Table 6 contains the regression estimates for the investigation of the impact of religion on corruption. Result of six regressions are presented in the column 1 to 6 of the table. The separate regressions for estimated where each regression contains an institutional variable. These variables are not simultaneously include because of the problem of endogeneity (interdependence) which is a common feature of institutional variables. The dependent variable for all the models is level of corruption. The independent variables are Log of GDP per capita (logGDPPC), Religion affiliation (RELIGION), Influence of Islam on life (IIL) Influence of Christianity on life (ICL), Current personal Economic situation (CPES), Current feeling (CFEEL), Rule of Law (ROL), Extent of democracy (DEMO), Government effectiveness (GOEF), Regulatory quality (RQ) and Economic freedom index (ECOFREE).

The results reveals that logGDPPC is inversely related to the level of corruption. This implies that the higher the level of income of a country the lower the level of corruption. In other words, the richer a country becomes the less the level of corruption in that country. That is corruption is more prevalent in poor countries most of which are in sub-Saharan Africa.

Similarly, the results indicate that religion affiliation (RELIGION) has a significant impact on the level of corruption in Africa. This is shown in all the models contained in table 6. However, the results demonstrate that religion has positive relationship with the level of corruption in the column 1 where none of the institutional variable is included. But the relationship tuned out inverse when we controlled for the institutional variables in column 2, 4 and 5 when Rule of Law (ROL) Government effectiveness (GOEF) and Regulatory quality (RQ)

Were included in the models respectively. This means, for religion affiliation to reduce the level of corruption, rule of law, effective government and quality civil service must be ensured. On the contrary, the relationship between religion and level of corruption remains positive in column 4 and 6 when we control for democracy (DEMO) and economic freedom (ECOFREE) respectively. Simply, this connotes that economic freedom and democracy is in a way impetus to increase in level of corruption.

The influence of Islam and Christianity are found to have significant impact on the level of corruption in all the models (column 1 to 6). While influence of Islam is negatively related to level of corruption in all the models,

influence of Christianity is positively related to level of corruption in column, 3 and 6 where we include democracy and economic freedom respectively as well as column 1 where the institutional variables are not accounted for in the model. By implication, the influence of Islam is inversely related to the level of corruption and the influence of Christianity will only reduce corruption significantly in the presence of strong institutions. In short, the result presented in table 6 shows that religion has significant impact on the level of corruption in Africa. Therefore, religion and other institutions are relevant in the control of corruption.

Table 6: Robustness Check

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	DEPENDENT VARIABLE: Level of Corruption (CORR)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Log of GDP per capita (logGDPPC)	-0.8016***	-0.6086***	-0.9192***	-0.3938**	-0.4672***	-0.4730***
	(0.004455)	(3.390e-04)	(0.01407)	(0.002508)	(0.004406)	(7.075e-04)
Percentage of religiosity (PREL)	0.007233***	-0.004800***	-0.003280*	1.204e-05	0.01909***	0.04403***
	(4.749e-04)	(5.107e-05)	(0.001719)	(5.022e-04)	(6.018e-04)	(1.492e-04)
Rule of Law (ROL)		-1.1949***				
		(8.521e-04)				
Extent of democracy (DEMO)			0.02277***			
			(0.002123)			
Government effectiveness (GOEF)				-1.1481***		
				(0.004812)		
Regulatory quality (RQ)					-1.1402***	
					(0.01158)	
Economic freedom (ECOFREE)						-0.2045***
						(2.523e-04)
Constant	12.517***	11.451***	14.252***	9.4916***	8.6479***	18.909***
	(0.05204)	(0.006401)	(0.2292)	(0.03241)	(0.02154)	(0.004681)
Observations	25,091	25,091	25,091	25,091	25,091	25,091
R-squared	0.566	0.998	0.571	0.872	0.753	0.993

Robust standard errors in parentheses ***, **, and * denote 1%, 5% and 10% significance respectively

To examine the robustness of the result presented in table 6. We substituted the variables of religion contained in Sub-Saharan Africa religion survey 2010 with the percentage of Christian and Muslim adherents contained in World Religion Dataset. The variable is renamed PREL to represent the level of religiosity. With the level of corruption as the dependent variable, the results presented in column 1 to 6 of table 7 shows that religion has significant impact on the level of corruption.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATION

While there is noticeable decline in religious zeal in many parts of the world, the religious enterprise particularly Christianity and Islam is alarmingly booming in Africa. All religions condemn all sorts of social vices (corruption inclusive). The widespread of religion significantly influences human behavior in general. So, it should influence corruption in particular. However, the reports of the transparency international on corruption over the years show that Africa is the most corrupt continent in the world. The simultaneous increase in religiosity and corruption is a paradox investigated in this paper. Using the sub-Saharan Africa religion Survey data 2010, the study employed multiple regression techniques to investigate the impact of religion on corruption in Africa. The paper also investigated the impact of other institutions on corruption.

All of the estimations in this paper with various control variables show that Religion is a significant determinant of the level of corruption in Africa. Also, Religiosity increases the level of corruption when there are no strong institutions in place. The findings of the study equally show that, in good institutional environment, religiosity reduces the level of corruption. Meaning, the level of corruption is concurrently high with the level religiosity in Africa due to weak institutions. In democratic environment where political and economic institutions are weak religion serves as impetus to corruption.

All institutions (including religion) have significant impact on the level of corruption in Africa.

Thus, to reduce corruption, the laws of the religions need to be incorporated in the constitutions of the countries and strictly enforced.

We therefore, recommend that the laws of the religions should be incorporated in the mainstream of the conventional legal system in Africa. Otherwise, the wide spread of religion in the continent will continue to increase the level of corruption which in turn hinders socio-economic development in the continent.

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