


Journal of Exceptional Multidisciplinary Research (JEMR)

ISSN: 3007-8407 (Online)

Volume 1 Issue 1, (2024)

 <https://doi.org/10.69739/jemr.v1i1.32>

 <https://journals.stecab.com/index.php/jemr>

 Published by
Stecab Publishing

Research Article

The Impact of Religion and Culture on Political Corruption in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State: A Case Study of 2015 General Elections

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About Article

Article History

Submission: March 18, 2024

Acceptance : April 29, 2024

Publication : July 3, 2024

Keywords

Culture, Religion, Political Corruption, Local Government

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of religion and culture on political corruption in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State in reference to 2015 general elections. Many local governments in Nigeria lack many developments, social amenities, health facilities, rural development and power supply due to the syndrome of corruption and autonomy independence to control their resources without the state interference due to that scenario, lack of accountability, lack of credible leadership, instability of political and socioeconomic development as take place. Culture and religion as influenced voting patterns of the electorate during the 2015 Presidential general elections. The impacts of corruption on the politics of the country include the crisis of legitimacy, lack of party ideology, weak political institutions; economic underdevelopment and political violence and the role of "Godfatherism" as initiated electoral corruption. Some power brokers with sufficient financial muscles sponsored their anointed godsons for political offices in return for lucrative contracts and spoils of the public treasury looting. They sponsored thugs, bribed the electoral stakeholders, and influenced voters through vote buying and all sorts of electoral manipulation to ensure that their candidates scale through and control power at all levels. The questionnaire and the structured questions formulated by the researchers were given to project supervisor, who criticized and that the instruments are validated, for they were seen measuring what were expected to measure. Findings revealed that a total number of 30 respondents represented (22.3%) candidate's choice, 27 respondents represented (20.1%) election campaign, 23 respondents represented (17.1%) family background, while 54 respondents represented (40.2%) religious belief. This implies that majority of the respondents in this study agreed that religious belief is the means by which religion and culture influenced the voting pattern of Akinyele Local Government Area in the 2015 general elections. The study recommends that all candidates contesting for any political office must declare their assets publicly to avoid cases of corruption.

Citation Style:

Adeleke, J. K., & Bukola, V. J. (2024). The Impact of Religion and Culture on Political Corruption in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State: A Case Study of 2015 General Elections. *Journal of Exceptional Multidisciplinary Research*, 1(1), 21-32.



1. INTRODUCTION

Isaac Babalola Akinyele, the late Olubadan, is the name of the local government known as Akinyele. During General Muritla-Obasanjo's regime in 1976, Akinyele, a Local Government Area in Oyo State, Nigeria, was established by splitting off the Ibadan Municipal Government. Local governments in Nigeria face a variety of challenges, but some are universal and will persist forever. These include the effects of political corruption, religion, and culture on the management and governance of local government activities. One of Oyo state's largest local governments, Akinyele Local Government is located in Ibadan, the state's capital. The absence of social amenities, health care, rural development, and power supply in the Akinyele local government is a result of the corruption epidemic and self-sufficiency in managing their wealth without intervention from the government.

According to Ackerman (2000), Nield (2002), Hoffman (2002), and Bailey (2006), corruption is a cancer that prevents any society from allocating resources fairly and equally. It also impedes the development of political and socioeconomic spheres, accountability, and credible leadership. In the political sphere, corruption is even more harmful since it has led to flawed electoral processes and unfavorable leadership that prioritizes self-interest and personal gain over the interests of the country (Ogundiya, 2009). Corruption can take many different forms, ranging from bribery and extortion to unlawful activities, bureaucratic misuse, and electoral corruption, which is the main focus of this study. In Nigeria, corruption is a major barrier to free and fair elections (Ogundiya, 2010 and Olarinmoye, 2008). Nigeria's electoral process is plagued by corruption and corrupt practices, including as buying votes, bribing security personnel and electoral officials, purchasing party agents for anti-party activities, and manipulating elections (Adetula, 2008 and Human Rights Watch, 2007).

Therefore, elections and the electoral process in Nigeria are negatively impacted by corruption. Since the incumbent party lost the elections, the 2015 General Elections are regarded as one of the most credible elections in Nigeria with a twist (Adeniyi, 2017). This election also laid the groundwork for previously unheard-of political developments. Even though the 2015 General Elections were highly praised for their legitimacy, money politics has never had a bigger impact on an election in the nation's history, even though trillions of Naira (billions of dollars) were purportedly spent in the electoral process (EFCC, 2017; INEC, 2017). The foreign world, as well as all Nigerians, is very concerned about the country's need for political stability and a robust democratic culture. There have been multiple elections in the nation since the Fourth Republic was established in 1999, but the 2015 election is particularly important to our investigation. The Nigerian presidential election of 2015 has come and gone, but its lasting impact on the country's memory will endure for some time to come.

In addition to the election's outcome, which saw the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and incumbent president Goodluck Ebele Jonathan defeated, it also revealed the unwavering influence of race and religion on voting patterns among various societal groups (Mudasiru, 2015). While it is true that religion and ethnicity have always played a role in Nigerian

politics, there were several notable differences in the country's presidential election in 2015. Since 1999, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has dominated Nigerian politics, winning more states than losing ones and consistently gaining ground on the opposition. However, the PDP lost some of its strongholds in the 2015 presidential election, including the states of Adamawa, Kwara, Niger, Plateau, and Benue but a small number to the All Progressives Congress (APC), the principal opposition party. The election resulted in the first opposition party merger in Nigeria history as well as the country's first election loss for an incumbent president. Thus, it is important to comprehend what led to the infiltration of the Nigerian ruling party's grassroots.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Nigerian voters' voting practices are heavily impacted by their cultural and religious beliefs. Despite the federal government's constant suggestion that individuals put the interests of the country above those of their ethnic and religious groupings; no politician in Nigeria can win an election without the support of members of their ethnic nationalities. Because of this, most politicians emphasize addressing the needs of their ethnic nationalities even when it comes to the interests of the nation. Unfortunately, Nigeria's current political system prevents individuals of minority ethnic groups from holding the office of president without the support of the main ethnic groupings. This may be one of the reasons behind the ongoing secessionist demonstrations and the requests of several Nigerian ethnic groups for modifications to the nation's current political structure.

1.2. Aims and Objective of the Study

The study examined the impact of religion and culture on political corruption in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State of Nigeria, using the 2015 general elections as a case study.

(i) To evaluate how religion and culture influenced the voting pattern of Akinyele local government electorate during the 2015 general election

(ii) To look at the ways the media emerged power blocs on the negative influence of cultural politics in Akinyele local government during the 2015 general election

(iii) To reveal how corruption affected voting pattern in Akinyele local government during the 2015 general election?

1.3. Research Questions

(i) How does religion and culture influenced the voting pattern of Akinyele local government electorate in the 2015 general election?

(ii) What are the ways the media emerged power blocs reduce the negative influence of cultural politics in Akinyele local government during the 2015 general election?

(iii) How does corruption affected voting pattern in Akinyele local government during the 2015 general election?

1.4. Significance of the Study

In light of its ramifications, this study will offer methods by which Nigerian religious leaders can rationally persuade Western nations to recognize religion as an official governmental practice. Any nation that rejects the teachings



and practices of recognized religious institutions may find it difficult to provide the moral foundation for its citizens' social conduct, as religious institutions continue to be among the most trustworthy stewards of moral norms in society. Thus, ethnicity and religion can be used to contribute to the harmony and advancement of society.

1.5. Conceptual Framework

1.5.1. Concept of Culture

Culture is commonly defined as the entire way of life of a given group of people living in a particular society. Knowledge, beliefs, morals, art, law, customs, and any other skills and behaviors that man has developed as a member of society are all considered to be part of culture. Psychologists who compare people from various ethnic or national backgrounds frequently find variations in the dependent variables under research. In such instances, they might demonstrate how different psychological factors, along with age, gender, educational attainment, and other factors, result in a statistical effect that appears to explain the variations. However, what if part of the variation is still not explained? In that instance, it was customary to refer to an esoteric leftover as "culture" until recently. At first, the idea of culture appeared even more enigmatic to researchers comparing foreign groups.

According to Child (1981), national variations in the traits of groups or their constituents have effectively been attributed to national differences. A cultural anthropologist does not view culture as esoteric or residual. It is a social phenomenon that shows up pretty obviously, albeit sometimes it is difficult to explain how it shows up. According to anthropologists, culture is a significant phenomena deserving of its own academic discipline. They do not see it as a single variable; rather, they see it as an incredibly complicated system that needs to be dissected to understand its individual parts and how they work together. While organizational behavior specialists and cross-cultural psychologists came to understand this reasoning somewhat later, they have also realized that it is necessary to deconstruct culture rather than try to understand as a monolithic block.

It is evident where the Latin word "cultura" came from. It derives from the verb *colo* (infinitive *colere*), which has several meanings, including "to tend," "to cultivate," and "to till" (Tucker, 1931). It may accept things like *ager*, which is why the word "agricultura," which literally means "field tilling," Character, or *animus*, is another possible object of the statement would then allude to the development of human character. Thus, culture—a Latin word—can be linked to learning and sophistication. The etymological interpretation of the word "culture" is mostly accepted. But things are far more complicated in the realm of anthropology. Definitions of culture are plentiful and vary greatly in complexity. The term "transmitted and created content and patterns of values, ideas, and other symbolic-meaningful systems as factors in the shaping of human behavior" is one example of the intricate definition put forward by Kroeber and Parsons (1958).

White (1959/2007) offered an even more difficult to understand definition: "By culture we mean an extra somatic, temporal continuum of things and events dependent upon symbolizing." Kluckhohn's (1951) definition is also frequently cited: The

distinctive achievements of human groups are represented by their patterned ways of thinking, feeling, and acting, which are primarily acquired and transmitted through symbols. These ways of thinking, feeling, and acting are embodied in artifacts. The fundamental components of culture are traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially the values that are attached to them. The collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another (Hofstede, 2001) is culture, which is shared mental software. Although Hofstede thinks his concept also applies to other collectives, such as regions, races, occupations, organizations, or even age groupings and genders, the group or category might be a national society. Jahoda (1984) asserts that the term "culture" is the most elusive in the social sciences' lexicon and that there are enough books on the subject to fill several library shelves. Segall (1984) offered a workable answer, arguing that it was not worthwhile to try to clarify the idea or come up with a definition that would be accepted by everyone.

To ensure clarity and prevent remarks that are unclear, it may also be important to define the borders and substance of culture. Jahoda (1984) argues that it would be circular reasoning to claim that culture determines behavior if culture is understood to include behaviors. Fischer and Schwartz (2011) also address the issue of whether values are shaped by culture. This is only logical if values are not considered components of culture; otherwise, the argument would resemble the discussion around the production of photons by light. The software of the human mind comprises internalized interaction patterns, values, and beliefs, as described by Hofstede (2001). The second category is the environment that has been created by humans and can include anything that they have made, such as buildings and artwork. Two further differences in the definition of culture are covered by Rohner (1984). First, there is a difference between cultures as meaning systems and cultures as behavioral systems. Second, some academics—referred to as realists—ascribe an autonomous existence to culture, while others—referred to as nominalists—see it as a product of human subjectivity.

1.6. Concept of Religion

The relationship between religion and politics, or more specifically, between religion and voting behavior, is a key area of concern in Nigerian politics. Nigerian society is religiously pluralistic, which has a big impact on the country's political decisions and behavior (Oguntala-Lagunda, 2008). It has proven to be an enormous challenge to define religion. But we really must try to define this here for practical purposes.

Religion is described as "a unified system of beliefs and practices which unite into moral community called a church all those who adhere to them" by noted sociologist Emile Durkheim, as cited in Aderibigbe and Aiyegboyin (1997). The aforementioned concept, which defines religion in terms of Christianity, is quite constrictive. What about Islam, the indigenous religion of Africa, and other religions? Any reasonable definition of religion ought to include everyone.

Similar to ethnicity, religion is the cornerstone of African society. It gives its adherents a sense of self, defines their worldview, and gives them the ability to perceive and interpret



both the material and spiritual worlds. It gives its members a feeling of safety and community and empowers them to protect their physical and spiritual lives from outside threats. Three major religions are practiced in Nigeria: Christianity, Islam, and African Traditional Religion (ATR). These religious ideologies all permit the intersection of politics and religion. Thus, voters' actions are also influenced by their religious convictions. All three of these major religions are practiced throughout the nation; however, the northern region of the nation is dominated by Islam, the southern region by Christianity, and a small percentage of the nation adheres to the African Traditional Religion.

1.7. Concept of Political Corruption

Political corruption is a branch of corruption that involves rulers, whether selected or elected, and other categories of public officials in charge of the affairs of a state or political community. Political corruption constitutes any illegal, unethical, or unauthorised exploitation of one's official position for personal or sectional gain or advantage (Brownsberger 1983; Gyekye 1997; Oladele 2013; Olopoenia 1998; Olukotun 2015; Rose-Ackerman & Palifka 2016; Scott 1972). Adding the word 'political' to corruption is to distinguish it from the other branches of corruption. Here, 'political' refers to public office holders, official goods and services as well as the agencies and institutions of state or any organised political community that are saddled with the responsibility of managing public affairs or public goods. Thus, political corruption 'is an act of corruption perpetrated against the state or its agencies by a person holding an official position in pursuit of his own private or personal profit' (Dimant, 2016; Gyekye, 1997:193; Rose-Ackerman & Palifka 2016).

It is imperative to state that the direct victims of political corruption are the state, body politic and its fortunes. This is because a corrupt act committed against a private or non-governmental organisation (NGO), going by the definition here, does not constitute political corruption, even though it is indeed an act of corruption that should attract a form of punishment. In this connection, the widely reported misappropriation of financial and material support for Nigeria's internally displaced persons (IDPs) and even the diversion of date fruits from Saudi Arabia, for Nigerian Muslims during 2017 Ramadan fast, are relevant examples.

Political corruption covers several other forms of corruption such as graft, bribery, nepotism, kickbacks, clientelism, favouritism, misappropriation and stealing of funds, among others, once any of these is against the state or government. In other words, it covers activities and general abuse of privileges such as the illegal transfer of public funds to private domestic or foreign accounts, unapproved reduction of customs duties on imported items by customs officials, deliberate award of contracts for public works in return for kickbacks, lowering employment requirements in favour of relatives while rejecting candidates with better credentials, perversion of justice by police and judicial officials in favour of individuals who offer bribes or other forms of inducement and several others (Johnston, 1997; Nye, 1967).

In Nigeria, the official working definition of corruption, as

provided by the Independent Corrupt Practices and Allied Offences Commission (ICPC) anti-corruption law, includes bribery, fraudulent acquisition of property, fraudulent receipt of property, the use of pecuniary advantage, gratification, influence peddling, insincerity in advice with a view to gaining advantage, less than a full day's work for a full day's pay, tardiness and laziness. It also includes failure to report any case of inducement to the appropriate authorities (Akanbi 2005).

Although this is a broad operational definition for corruption, both in the private and public spheres in Nigeria, the idea of making failure to report cases of inducement an offence is quite instructive. It underlines the severity of the problem or 'the existence of a corruption complex and the need to deal with the widespread tolerance of corruption among the populace' (Aiyede, 2011). Meanwhile, it should be noted that societal widespread tolerance of corruption, which worsened at the height of military rule in the country, is a fundamental manifestation. It partly typifies the erosion of age-long communitarian ethos that emphasised public interests among almost all the traditional societies and cultural groups in Nigeria.

For the reasons listed above, some researchers prefer using practice cases in quantitative research rather than worldwide databases. CREW provided individual corruption statistics on members of the US Congress, which Ruske (2015) utilized to examine the relationship between political and economic corruption.

Many academics have had significant success in China studying the issue of regional corruption by using objective data. Zhou and Tao (2009) use the number of corruption cases in their study on the relationship between government size and corruption in local and market regions of state organ personnel as a gauge for corruption within the state organs. Li and Zhang (2014) utilized the ratio of local authorities (people/million) to calculate the number of incidences of corruption. Wu (2012) and Qiao (2013) employ the direct collecting of corruption instances as a methodology for their empirical investigations. The efforts of these researchers serve as a valuable resource for a more thorough and impartial analysis of corruption in China. To quantify corruption levels more accurately in recent literature, researchers typically use a number of corrupt databases supplied by authorities. Simultaneously, an increasing number of academics are beginning with the objective index or the actual case.

1.8. Causes of Political Corruption in Nigeria

Scholars have put forth a number of explanations for the main reasons behind corruption in Nigeria. These include: low income and unfavorable working conditions (Asobie, 2012); rent and rent-seeking practices (Mauro, 1998); economic deals and actions of multinational corporations; weak political institutions and low human development indicators (Mbaku, 2010 & Obazee, 2014); social and political factors (Dike, 2002 & Ikubaje, 2014); and prolonged military rule (Shehu, 2006).

Furthermore, this study determined that the election process is the primary source of corruption in the nation. This is because people elect political leaders to positions of authority in order



to provide unselfish services, accountability, and transparency as well as to create and carry out sound policies, punish offenders, and provide for their basic needs. The goal has been achieved in Nigeria, where the election process produced rulers who completely devalue social services and decent government in favor of personal wealth acquisition. Elections therefore produce corrupt governmental servants as well as general corruption.

1.9. Manifestations of Political Corruption in Nigeria

There are two methods to quantify corruption's manifestations. The first approach makes use of Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index ranking, while the second uses real-world data from a particular nation over a predetermined amount of time. The first approach ranks the world's nations according to a number of carefully chosen indices, including levels of bribery, governance indicators, and illicit financial inflows or outflows from a specific nation. This method is done once a year. Nigeria was listed as one of the most corrupt nations in the world by Transparency International, which also named it the most corrupt nation in the world in 1996 and 1997. Nigeria has continued to rank among the most corrupt nations worldwide.

Nigeria has maintained a higher international profile of corruption since 1996, despite a recent decline. The nation has consistently been ranked among the most corrupt for an extended period of time. Using the second way of analysis, it was revealed in a report that between 2006 and 2013, fifty (50) prominent government officials and private businessmen were accused of embezzling around \$7.5 billion (N1.35 trillion). This was said in a March 2017 State House briefing by Itse Sagay, the President's legal advisor. This time frame did not include 2014 and 2015, when there was unprecedented high-level theft, especially during the 2015 General Elections.

Similarly, a 2017 report co-authored by Transparency International and the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Center (CISLAC) revealed that the former Nigerian Army Chiefs, encompassing the Navy, Land, and Air Force, embezzled \$15 billion (N5, 444, 183, 780, 011.50 trillion) via deceitful arms procurement agreements. This is only one area of governance; if further research is done, what about the other areas of governance? Naturally, it will increase in value by trillions and even billions of dollars. Furthermore, and in support of the aforementioned reports, a different report published by Chatham House in Britain stated that the ruling class had stolen at least \$480 billion (N173, 915, 225, 875, and 776.00 trillion) from the Nigerian State since the country's formal independence in 1960.

An African Union audit from earlier in 2015 revealed that Nigeria has stolen around N6.87 trillion since gaining political independence. According to a recent study carried out by the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics in collaboration with the European Union and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), which was published in August 2017, 95% of Nigerians are corrupt and have participated in corrupt activities at some point between 2016 and 2017. The investigation also disclosed that from 2015 to 2016, public officials received bribes of N400 billion (\$1, 105, 792, 754.64 billion). The aforementioned

expressions are but a small selection of the actual expressions of corruption in Nigeria as well as corrupt activities.

Vote buying and bribery are evident during the voting process in Nigeria. The then-ruling PDP diverted \$2.1 billion (N777, 133,624,337, 580.00 billion) intended for the purchase of weapons to combat the Boko Haram insurgency for its campaign finances during the 2015 General Elections. The most recent revelation revealed how PDP officials, opposition politicians, security personnel, and voters were bought off and bribed to ensure the party won at all costs.

1.10. Overview of the 2015 General Election

For numerous reasons, the 2015 General Elections mark a significant turning point and watershed in the history of Nigerian democracy. Four republics have existed in Nigeria's history: the First Republic (1960–1966), the Second Republic (1979–1984), the Third Republic (1990–1999), which was aborted, and the Fourth Republic (1999–present). It was the first time in 2015 in any of the aforementioned Republics that an opposition political party overthrew the ruling party.

Fourteen (14) political parties ran for the presidency in the 2015 election; there were 25% fewer votes cast in 2015 than in 2011, the incumbent was defeated by the opposition by 45% to 54%, and the opposition won more states—21 out of 36—than the incumbent (CPPA, 2015). Only thirty-one million and seven hundred and forty-six and four hundred and ninety (31, 740, 490 million) were accredited to vote in the 2015 presidential elections out of the sixty-seven million and forty-two thousand and five (67, 422, 005 million) registered voters. Among the total number of votes cast, 29.9 million and 432.82 million (or 29.5 million and 83 million) were deemed valid (CPPA, 2015).

The opposition PDP won 12 seats, or 38.71% of the total, while the newly ruling APC won 19 out of 31, or 61.29 percent of the states, in the results of the April 12, 2015, gubernatorial elections. Anambra was already under APGA control, while Osun was under the control of the APC, Ondo Labour Party, Edo APC, and Bayelsa PDP. If these states were combined, there would be 36 states altogether. According to INEC data from 2017, the APC held 21 states (58.33%), the PDP 13 seats (36.11%), and the APGA and Labour Party each controlled 1 state (2.78%).

The APC won the majority of seats in the upper chamber (55.05%) and the lower chamber (62.5%) in the National Assembly Elections, which were held on March 28, 2017, the same day as the Presidential Elections. This allowed the APC to form the leadership of both houses, ousting the PDP from its stronghold majority leadership of 16 years (INEC, 2017).

The 2015 General Elections in Nigeria were exceptional and distinctive in the country's democratization process due to a number of elements and challenges. First of all, the threat of insecurity posed by Boko Haram made these elections the most difficult in the nation's history (Africa Centre for Strategic Studies, 2015). In addition to issue-based campaigns addressing issues including corruption, poverty, insecurity, a weak economy, and unemployment, there were more nuanced and less combative campaign processes than in the previous elections (Ayanda & Odunayo, 2015). In the 2015 General Elections, candidates and their followers had an unrestricted



platform to promote their parties and campaign pledges because of the increased guarantee and advancement of free speech (Chukwudi, 2015).

According to reports, the 2015 general elections were more credible, fair, and free than the ones that preceded them. They also featured improved civil liberties, such as the ability to speak freely and run an opposition campaign, among other things (IRI, 2015). A powerful opposition APC unmatched in the history of the nation was formed as a result of the merging of significant opposition groups, including ACN, ANPP, faction of APGA, CPC, and new PDP, with the ability to challenge the ruling PDP at all levels (Omilusi, 2015). It was the first time that the country had seen the success of such a potent alliance of parties in opposition. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) was recognized with improving the credibility of the 2015 General Elections by implementing numerous improvements, most notably the adoption of smart card readers for voter authentication and voting procedures. Essentially, electronic voting was implemented, which significantly reduced election manipulation (Orji, 2015). The aforementioned problems and elements were the main contributors to the 2015 General Elections being improved, credible, and totally different from any earlier elections in the nation's history.

1.11. Influence of Culture and Religion in Nigerian Elections

Despite the nation's failure to ensure that only the registered and accredited electorate cast ballots during the elections, the Nigerian government successfully conducted the 2015 presidential election. The card reader was first acquired by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). However, everyone may easily point the finger at the federal government for conducting less than credible elections—that is, unless they are unaware of the impact of religion and ethnicity on Nigerian politics. It should be remembered that the British colonialist constitutions served as the model for the current political structure in Nigeria. Therefore, the authorities of Nigeria quickly realized that the model was primarily abstract in character as the European guided political philosophy was eventually developed as a paradigm for development in Nigeria. It ignored the historical particularities of the populace and viewed growth as having nothing to do with the people and culture of Nigeria.

It ignored theThe Nigerian people were able to elect their own representatives to the legislative council in Lagos thanks to the Clifford Constitution of 1922. Regional government was established by the Bourdillion Constitution of 1939, and Nigerians had better opportunity to participate in and discuss their own affairs thanks to the Richard Constitution of 1945. The Macpherson Constitution of 1951 established a central Legislative and Executive council for the entire nation, the Lyttleton Constitution of 1954 made Nigeria a federal state, and Nigerian political independence was granted by the 1960 Constitution.² While ethnicity has historically been a significant barrier to Nigeria's peace and prosperity, its impact was not as great as it is now. The historical distinctiveness of the people, although growth was viewed as having no bearing whatsoever on the people and culture of Nigeria.

The Willink Commission, named for Harry Willink, a former vice-chancellor of Cambridge University, was established by the British government in 1957 to look into the fear that some of the nation's minority ethnic groups were expressing in response to the domineering attitudes of Nigeria's major ethnic nationalities. After conducting a thorough investigation, the commission made several recommendations, including the establishment of Trust Territory, a special area for the Ijaws, the designation of Edo and Calabar as minority areas, a national prison system, a unified police force, and the advancement of members of minority groups to positions of power in order to counteract any imbalance in the distribution of power in Nigerian politics. Unfortunately, the suggestions that were made by the commission were not entirely carried out.

It is worth noting that Ken Saro Wiwa, renowned environmentalist and civil right activist, was killed under the leadership of General Sanni Abacha following the determination by Saro-Wiwa to liberate the Ogoni Community from state-imposed poverty being the aftermath of the protracted oil exploration and exploitation of the region by the transnational oil companies. Corroborating this view, Ewhrudjakpor (2013) noted that: "as a result of these multi-national oil companies' activities, things are no longer the same in the various oil bearing communities in Nigeria. The people also are no longer at ease." Prior to the death of Ken Saro Wiwa and the nine other Ogoni leaders, the proposal converting Ogoni community into a trust territory had already attained the status of an agenda at the International Court of Justice in Hague, following the petition filed by the Ogoni community on the allegation of the marginalization of the Ijaw community by the federal government.

It could be recalled that the British colonialists had wanted to delay the process leading to the Nigerian political independence to enable them have enough time to address the problem of ethnicity and religion in the country based on the recommendations by the Willink Commission. But the Nigerian nationalities were rather too in a hurry, so they were not ready to accept any condition that would delay Nigeria political freedom beyond October 1960. So, religion and culture today have become the two major sources of conflict in the Nigerian politics. This may account for why the more established democratic nations tend to relate to the issues regarding religion and culture with a sense of caution. Nigeria is among the leading countries today exporting Christianity to the more established democratic nations of the world. Nonetheless, some people are wondering the basis upon which religious leaders can logically convince the western world to accept religion as a part of state practice considering its implications.

Any nation that rejects the teachings and practices of recognized religious institutions may find it difficult to provide the moral foundation for its citizens' social conduct, as religious institutions continue to be among the most trustworthy stewards of moral norms in society. Thus, culture and religion can be used to contribute to the well-being and advancement of society. As a result, the study's main goal is to demonstrate how religion and culture affected Nigerian voters' choices in the 2015 presidential election. It may also offer suggestions for how the media, as rising power blocs, can lessen the detrimental



effects of cultural politics and open the door for an inclusive government in the nation.

1.12. Rational Choice Theory

Rational Choice Theory also known as Choice theory or Rational Action Theory was adopted for this study. This theory is the most potent paradigm for the direction of this research. The sociologist, George Homas in 1961 laid the basic framework for exchange theory, which he beached in assumptions drawn from behavioral psychology. This could be attributed to the foundation of the Rational Choice Theory.

However, between 1960 and 1970, other theorists like Blau, Coleman, and Cook extended and enlarged his thoughts and helped to develop a more formal model of rational choice. Over the years, rational choice theorists have become increasingly mathematical, reviewing their thought to Marxian ideas. Becker (1976) opines that “the Rational Choice Theory was early popularized by a 1992 Nobel Memorial Prize Laureate in Economics Science, Gary Becker, who was one of the first to apply rational actor models more widely”. Rational Choice Theory is a theory for understanding social and economic as well as individual behaviour. It is the main paradigm professed by the microeconomics school of thought and is significantly adopted by analyst in the field of political science and other disciplines like sociology, anthropology and philosophy.

The concept of rationality used in rational choice theory is different from the colloquial and most philosophical use of the word. Colloquially, “rational” behaviour typically means “sensible”, “predictable”, or “in a thoughtful, clear-headed manner.” Rational choice theory uses a narrower definition of rationality. At its most basic level, behavior is rational if it is goal-oriented, reflective (evaluative), and consistent (across time and different choice situations).

It is further maintained that “almost all economics textbook treatments of human decision-making use rationality as an assumption of individual behavior in microeconomic models and analyses.” It is also employed in sociology, political science, and philosophy. According to the idea of rational choice, comprehending the voting behavior of individuals entails knowing the driving forces behind their decisions, which may include religious and ethnic sentimentalism. The RTC supports the theory that people behave the way they do because they have preferences among variable choice alternatives that let them select the one that best suits their needs. In other words, people behave in a certain way because they make logical decisions based on their objectives.

One of the main factors influencing how people behave is their economic situation. This highlights the reasons why people are frequently driven by materialism, which is typified by an uncontrolled desire for money and profit-making, and it clarifies the reasons why people weigh the possible advantages and disadvantages of every course of action before taking it.

This thinking model is called rational choice theory. The logical voter is one who bases his decision on the candidates' inclinations toward certain religions and/or ethnic backgrounds. According to this view, every person has a blank slate when they are born and chooses how they want to live. An individual who is unable to resist their urges and may even

be urged by their surroundings to vote based on their ethnic and religious preferences are known as the predetermined actor. These individuals may become fixated on either external or internal factors—or both—that cause them to act contrary to their initial moral principles. The most appropriate explanation for Nigeria's long-standing voting habits is the rational choice theory. Similar to the time of independence, ethno-religious ties still exist to be reflected in Nigerian voters' voting patterns, as the majority of voters view gaining state authority as both a goal in and of itself.

As a means of obtaining money, achieving the control of authority within their ethnic nationality and even religion cycle is considered necessary. The outcomes of the 2015 presidential election show how strongly this played out. While the then-President Buhari, a Muslim from the North, won nearly all of the Northern States, his nearest opponent, the then-President, won primarily in the South-East and South-South States, which are home to Christians and are his ethnic homeland. Voting patterns in the South West, North Central, and other regions of the nation were heavily influenced by religious divisions and cultural feelings. Therefore, it is important to notice that the methods used in Nigeria's political system to choose political participants through political recruitment, materialism-driven interest determines the character of political socialization and the open channels of communication that exist between political office holders and other state players in the political system. Economic interest ultimately determines politics, which is why it is anticipated that politics will be service-driven. This was evident in the 2015 Nigerian presidential elections.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

One significant factor brought about by social and cultural circumstances is corruption. The results of multiple studies on the origins of corruption classified the causes as non-economic and economic (Shadabi, 2013). Religion has been identified in the literature as one of the non-economic variables contributing to corruption. All faiths condemn corruption, which is a social behavior exhibited by humans and has a significant impact on investment, growth, inflation, and innovation (Shadabi, 2013). According to Shadabi (2013), religion has an impact on people's attitudes and behaviors. He points out that while numerous academics have already looked at the relationship between religion and corruption, the findings of their investigations have not all been consistent.

Several researches concurred that religion had a major impact on the amount of corruption in society, either increasing or decreasing. Research by Sandholtz and Gray, Alesina et al., Paldam (as quoted in Shadabi 2013), La Porta et al., and Emwanta (2014) has demonstrated the impact of religion on the degree of corrupt behavior in society. “Several of these researches came to the conclusion that the degree of corruption is significantly influenced by both the same religion and the diversity of religions (Shadabi, 2013). However, other research (mentioned in Shadabi 2013) by Treisman, Gerring and Thacker, Samanta, Shabbir and Anwar, and others demonstrated that religion had no bearing on the degree of corruption in society. The input of this study will aid in determining the course of the results and findings focus more on the relationship between religion and



corrupt actions and misguided values than they do on religion and corruption alone.

There are two types of public employees in Nigeria: civil servants and public servants. In Nigeria, civil servants are members of the public service who work in federal and state ministries. While those who work for state and federal parastatals and agencies are called public servants. Additionally, university employees in Nigeria are classified as public servants. They are primarily split into two categories: junior and senior personnel. Therefore, while discussing staff positions, the focus is on seniority or juniority.

In Nigeria, it has been discovered that corruption affects junior and senior employees; however, it appears to affect junior employees more frequently than senior employees (Idong, 2012 in Ekhoobiye, 2014). He offered two possible explanations: first, their meager pay package; second, many had prominent families to support. According to O'Connor and Fisher (2011), having a low salary makes it difficult to make ends meet and is likely to encourage people to use dishonest methods to get more money. O'Connor and Fisher's position on staff income implies that most junior staff members have meager incomes that hardly allow them to survive, given the fact that many of them have a large number of dependents that they must support, and the country's raging inflation has caused the cost of living to soar.

According to Oviawe (1997), the main reasons why public employees in Nigerian universities engage in harsh practices include inadequate compensation and incentives. This viewpoint contends that low compensation, a lack of benefits, and inadequate incentives contribute to the low motivation of Nigerian university employees. However, the research by Ekhoobiye (2014) asserted that although corruption is most prevalent or widespread among junior employees, the overall number of those implicated is negligible in comparison to corruption involving senior public servants and high-ranking authorities.

This suggests that senior staff members' dishonest actions will have a significantly larger overall impact than they will on junior staff members. Whatever the case, both have a terrible impact on Nigerian society's moral standards. They both have the same effect on fostering false ideals in society.

Academic and non-academic workers make up the workforce of Nigerian universities. The teaching staff, which comprises individuals with positions ranging from Graduate Assistant, Assistant Lecturer, Lecturer 11, Lecturer 1, Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor, to Professor, comprises the academic staff. Their main responsibilities include research, course advising, teaching, and supervision. All non-teaching staff members in universities, such as those working in Registry, are referred to as non-academic personnel. Exams and Records, Student Affairs, Academic Planning, Physical Planning, Library, Health Centers, Maintenance Units, and Security Department are all located in close proximity to the Vice Chancellor's Office. Their primary responsibilities are administrative in nature, along with the provision of additional services that are necessary for colleges to run efficiently. Reports and observations seem to indicate that a large number of academic and non-academic staff members in Nigerian universities are deeply embroiled in

corrupt activities.

According to research by Idong (quoted in Ekhoobiye 2014) and Ekhoobiye (2014), academic staff members are less likely than non-academic staff members to engage in corrupt activities. The prior study by Udin (1989), which found that non-teaching staff at higher institutions is more likely than academic staff to engage in corrupt activities, was supported by the results of both studies. Conversely, Obaro (2013) conjectured that the prevalence of corruption is greater among academic personnel compared to non-academic staff due to their advantageous position to impose corruption on its victims, who have little chance of escaping punishment. His position/argument appears logically sound, and common sense will support it.

According to Sandholtz and Taagepera's (2005) research, developed economies with well-established liberal democracies had lower levels of perceived corruption than developing ones. This is not surprising as the climate offers a favorable setting for controlling corruption that both the rulers and the ruled in these nations pay close attention to laws and regulations. While corruption is a major issue in certain nations, it is not and has not been for some time in others. Similarly, levels of corruption vary across different parts of the same nation.

The place of residence should be another determinant of corruption because it implies a different culture and traditions, judicial system types, geographic regions, and institutional development," according to a 2009 study by Mielger et al. The location between Nigeria's southern and northern areas will be clarified with the aid of the current study. It is possible to infer from the above that moral failings have seeped into Nigeria's cultural customs and belief system. These moral failings happen to Nigerian university employees regardless of their religion, status, category, or location. That is, whether the staff members are from the south, east, west, or north of the nation; if they are senior or junior cadre; whether they are Christians or Muslims; and whether they fall into the academic or non-academic category. The impact of these moral errors (erroneous beliefs) appears to be widespread and have not spared any group, just as they seem to among the general public.

3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter states the various methods used in research, as well as the population of the study, and sampling techniques used in determining the sample size for the research. The main objectives of this research were achieved through quantitative methods, as inferential statistics were used to measure the level of accuracy and validate responses from the respondents in accordance to the objectives of the research.

3.1. Research Design

This research adopted the descriptive survey research design. Since two or variables in the formulation of the research topic depend and affect each other, the researcher deemed it necessary to adopt this research design to get accurate results from the study. Data characteristics were described using frequencies and percentages, and no manipulations of data or variables were necessary, the researcher chose this research design.



3.2. Study Area

The study area for this study was Akinyele Local Government Area, which is one of the eleven local governments that make up Ibadan metropolis. Its headquarters located at Moniya. Akinyele local government area was created in 1976 and it shares boundaries with Afijio Local Government to the north, Lagelu Local Government Area to the east, Ido Local Government Area to the west and Ibadan North Local Government Area to the south. It occupies a land area of 464.892 square kilometers with a population density of 516 persons per square kilometer. Using 3.2% growth rate from 2006 census figures, the 2010 estimated population for the Local Government is 239,745. The local government is governed by an elected chairman and 12 councilors, one elected from each ward.

3.3. Study Population

The population for this study comprised of resident members of Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State. Questionnaires were distributed to some religious leaders, students and others chosen for this study. Since the population for this study was large, the researcher adopted the convenience sample technique.

3.4. Sample and Sampling Techniques

Sample random method was adapted to select women of the selected local government for the research work. Sample technique according to Ifidom (2007) is the process of selecting from the population in such a way that any entity in the population has an equal chance of being selected and that each choice is independent of any other choice. A good sample should not be an identical representation of the population. The conditions make a sample qualified to be described as randomly selected. Popoola (2012) observed that sample random is not haphazardly selected rather are universally accepted methods of selection

Sample size is the total member of the sample selected, sufficient enough to represent the entire population (Johnson 2012). In a nutshell, it is the actual member or part of a study population that is objectively selected for such study. The sample size of 100 will be drawn from the population using simple random method. This sample population represents the researcher's respondents.

3.5. Data Collection

Data collection for this study was gathered from the respondents through the use of questionnaires. Questionnaires was shared to the respondents of the Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State, and field surveys through responses to questions in the questionnaire served as the main source of primary data for this study. Other information was collected from text books, journals and other secondary sources of data.

3.6. Research Instrument

In other to collect relevant information necessary for the study, questionnaire was developed by the researcher before it was administered and giving to the project supervisor for approval. The design questionnaire is aimed at gathering relevant information on the impact of religion and culture on political

corruption in Nigeria in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State. The questionnaire and the structured questions formulated by the researchers were given to project supervisor, who criticized and that the instruments are validated, for they were seen measuring what were expected to measure.

3.7. Data Analysis

This chapter presented the data gathered from the impact of religion and culture on political corruption in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State during 2015 General Elections. 150 copies of questionnaires were distributed to respondents and 134 copies were returned duly completed. Analysis of this study is presented in percentages and tables below. Section A contains all the demographic questions while section B covers findings from the research questions for this study. Simple percentage was used for quantitative data while qualitative data were content analysed in this study. Data collected were analyzed using frequencies and percentages. These frequencies and percentages enabled the researcher to clearly represent true data characteristics and findings with a great deal of accuracy. Interpretation and analysis of data was also used to describe items in the tables and used for this study.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results show that a total of 30 respondents (22.3%) indicated their choice of candidate, 27 respondents (20.1%) indicated their involvement in the election campaign, 23 respondents (17.1%) indicated their family background, and 54 respondents (40.2%) indicated their religious belief. This suggests that the majority of survey participants thought that religious beliefs are the mechanism via which culture and religion impacted the way that voters in Akinyele Local Government Area cast their ballots in the general elections of 2015. According to Bratton (2013), voting behavior is a collection of individual electoral actions, such as supporting a candidate, attending polls, and participating in campaigns. Voting behavior is probably impacted by a variety of factors; it's not just one cleavage that affects vote choices. For example, the degree of class, religious, or ethnic voting, or whichever is most prevalent among them; rather, it is the culmination of all enduring divides among the population that are likely to have an impact on voting trends.

5. CONCLUSION

The voting habits of Nigerian voters and residents of Akinyele Local Government are influenced by culture and religion. In Nigeria, no candidate can win an election without the backing of members of their respective nationality, culture, and religion, despite the federal government's frequent insistence that citizens prioritize their country's interests over those of their ethnicity, culture, or religion. This is the reason why, even at the expense of the interests of the country, most politicians prioritize addressing the requirements of their respective cultures and religions. Nigeria's electoral process is plagued by corruption and corrupt practices, including as buying votes, bribing security personnel and electoral officials, purchasing party agents to engage in anti-party actions, and manipulating elections. Therefore, elections and the electoral process in Nigeria are negatively impacted by corruption. Because the



incumbent party lost the elections, the 2015 General Elections are regarded as one of the most credible elections in Nigeria ever. This election also laid the groundwork for previously unheard-of political developments.

In spite of the widely acknowledged legitimacy of the 2015 General Elections, no election in the nation's history has been more heavily influenced by money politics, with billions of dollars (trillions of Naira) purportedly being spent during the voting process. This study looked at how corruption has been influencing the nation's electoral process in the run-up to the 2015 general elections. Nigeria is currently a democratic country, however its election process is flawed, and even the so-called advanced democracies have flawed systems.

6. RECOMMENDATION

The study recommended that:

(1) Voting behaviour should be based on party ideology, competence and reputation of the candidates and not by culture and religion.

(2) The electorates must reject culture and religion as the bases of political choice. This is because, it enthrones mediocrity and encourages ethnocentrism and corruption in all sphere of our national life.

(3) INEC should encourage the electorates to vote for national interest than for religion voting behavior.

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