

Sharia Law In Nigeria: Can A Selective Imposition Of Islamic Law Work In The Nation?

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Abstract

Originally, the radical Islamic movement in the Northern Nigeria was thought to be as a result of their poor socioeconomic infrastructures, poor governance, and the hatred for Nigeria's interest in the Western lifestyles and education; their movement has interest in the Islamization of Nigeria as evidenced in the subtle and gradually submerged documents of the Islamic laws known as Sharia law in the 1999 Nigeria Constitution. This action is sensitively viewed as a 'hidden coup de-tat agenda' in light of the rapid movement of the Sharia law in virtually all northern Muslim states in the nation. Why should the ideological Islamic legal principles of Sharia law (faith-based religion) occupy major sections of the Nigeria constitution? This is an indication of hidden agenda of the Muslim religion to turn the nation into an Islamic state. With great concern among Christians and the southern states, we surveyed 259 Nigerians from various demographic backgrounds, to determine the degree of general perceptiveness of Islamization of Nigeria, the perceptiveness of Islamic legal ideological principle and its workability in Nigeria, the driving phenomena behind the imposition of Sharia law, the perceptiveness of Nigeria standing as one nation (in the midst of Islamic law), the perceptiveness of Nigeria as a nation at boiling-edge, political – economic instability as a result of Sharia law, and the perceptiveness of the Christian's opposition of the imposition of Sharia law. The implications of the general legal operations of Sharia law were examined.

Keywords: Sharia law, Muslim, Christian, Imposition, Perceptiveness, Northern States and Nigeria.

Introduction

Nigeria is made up of Christians and Muslims. The Pew Research Center reported on December 18, 2012 that 2010 data on religion showed that 49.3% of Nigeria's population were Christians, 48.8% were Muslims, and 1.9% were followers of indigenous and other religions or unaffiliated. The Association of Religion Data Archives reported that the 2010 census data revealed that 46.5% of the total populations of Nigerians were Christians while Muslims were 45.5% and 7.7% were members of the other religious groups. With this diversity of faith based population, and the dichotomy of the geographical regions, the cultural, and the normative differences surrounding the Christians and Muslims, the adoption of one faith-based ideological principles in the political and constitutional [public] documents may be viewed as a 'cast in nature' and a 'vehicle' with adulterating substances capable of corrupting the general constitution of Nigeria in the near future. The idea of adopting Sharia law in all the Muslim majority states in the northern Nigeria spins the red lights, that the movement to Islamize the entire nation as Islamic state is just at the preliminary stage without major affront. This adoption makes Islam the principal law giver to the states in the northern Nigeria.

The majority of the southern states are populated with various Christian denominational faith and more than half of the Midwestern population are also Christians. Some Christians from the southern states live in the northern parts of the country as well, while some Muslims are found scattered in various major cities of the southern states and Middle belt.

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The beauty of a nation is the freedom to live wherever one chooses without the imposition of religious ideological principles. Nigeria is a nation with constitution not uniquely designed exclusively with Islamic ideologies, but with preamble that states:

"We the people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, having firmly and solemnly resolve, to live in unity and harmony as one indivisible and indissoluble sovereign Nation under God, dedicated to the promotion of inter-African solidarity, world peace, international co-operation and understanding, and to provide for a Constitution for the purpose of promoting the good government and welfare of all persons in our country, on the principles of freedom, equality and justice, and for the purpose of consolidating the unity of our people; do hereby make, enact and give to ourselves the constitution" (1999 Nigerian Constitution).

This research surveys Nigerians in the South, Southeast, Southwest, Middle-belt, and some Northerners living in the south, whether the imposition of Sharia law in the whole country would work. This concern spins around the constitutional preamble that holds the nation's resolution to live in "unity and harmony as one indivisible and indissoluble sovereign nation under God, dedicated to the promotion of inter-African solidarity, world peace,...." This research also seeks to find out whether Nigerians would want to maintain the "the principles of freedom, equality and justice" as the constitutional endowment of the nation permits the people to live in any part of the country without imposition of the Islamic laws. The fast imposition of Sharia law in most Muslim majority states is quite disturbing as Islam becomes the principal law giver in those states where Sharia law has been imposed.

Purpose

Many previous discussions have focused on the impacts of the impositions of Sharia law on non-Muslims living among the Muslim majority in the northern part of the country (Igwe, 2013; Ajayi, 1999; Edobor, 2000; Oraegbunam, 2000). With the radical Muslims occupying key positions in the federal governments of Nigeria, and the movements of the Muslim majority states imposing Islamic laws upon everybody living in their vicinities, one would perceive similar movement to introduce Sharia law into the entire country. The Muslims and their Islamic religion carry heavy political weights at the federal legislative environs. With their success in furtively introducing Sharia law into the nation's 1999 Constitution (Federal Law document), the motives for that stealth movement is yet to be hatched. This was a devised strategy contrived for Sharia law to wax its strength into the whole nation stealthily. This secret plot is yet brooding and springing its swings into the national sphere gradually.

The non-Muslims are pre-occupied with the perceptiveness of the Muslims introducing Sharia law to govern the entire nation. Therefore, it is the purpose of this study to question the general perceptiveness of Nigerians to ascertain the degree of general opinions of the entire Nigerian public, if Islam should be the principal law giver of the land and Sharia as the principal legal enforcer of the Islamic laws in a nation so diverse in ethnicity, religions, linguistics, and cultures as Nigeria. If the general perceptions of Nigerians are ascertained through this research project, we would advise the Islamic propagandists to scale back their motives for the sake of inter-African solidarity, world peace, and promotion of good government, welfare of the country and the unity of the country as the constitutional preambles of the nation demands.

Assumptions

Attention was focused on some basic research questions or assumptions that guided us to achieve research objectives. Inquiry seeks direction for "solving knotty problems induced by human ignorance" (Leedy, 1980, p.4). Leedy points out that "research seeks direction through appropriate hypotheses and is based upon obvious assumptions" (p.5). While the prognostic factors of the disease of ignorance is inherent in nature due to human's inability to understand its prognosis until its effects become obvious, it is necessary to establish some basic research questions or assumptions that would assist us to understand the possible repercussions of imposing Islamic laws on the whole nation as the principal law giver for the country ignorantly without minding the consequential effects on the entire country. Therefore, these assumptions include:

1. Why is Sharia law essential for the Islamic movement in Nigeria?
2. What are the compelling factors for the movement to Islamize Nigeria?
3. Who are the motivational agents behind the Islamization of Nigeria?

These research questions have been discussed below from religion, control, domination, foreign government, Islamic politicians, Nigerian Government, to Muslim Societas the formidable driving agents behind the movement to Islamize the entire nation.

Statement of the Problem

The existence of Sharia law, Sharia Criminal courts and Sharia customary courts in 1999 Nigeria Constitution invoke questions; why Nigeria is governed by two different legal systems of justice? Why is there no separation between religion and state? Why are some people in the same country being governed by their religious-faith while others are governed by the Federal Laws of the country? Why would a nation endanger herself with such confusing pattern of legal system? Why should there be a legal system where non-Muslim worshipers would have to suffer in the midst of Muslim neighbors living in the same environment and in the same nation? With the existence of Islamic radicals, their strongholds (in the north), their pathetic African allies across the sea, their radical politicians (in the Senate and House of Representatives as law makers), Nigerians are captivated with perceptiveness of Islamization of the whole nation as an Islamic state. Thus, there is need to engage in critical study to find out the general perceptiveness of the existence of Sharia law and the radical movement to Islamize the entire country. Nigerians are concerned about the existence of two different legal systems in the same nation.

Background

The "proponents of Sharia argue that the constitution guarantees freedom of religion while opponents argue that freedom of religion does not mean that Islam will be the State religion and take precedence over the constitution. When a northern Nigeria state adopts Islam as the state religion, it in fact puts the state above the nation and its constitution. In other words, "freedom of religion" does not entitle some northern states to create an Islamic state within the secular state of Nigeria. More specifically, the Nigeria constitution does not permit the adoption of Christianity or Islam as the state religion" (Edobor, 2000:13).

Sharia law is a product of the Islamic faith-based religion. We cannot predict for sure whether Nigeria is planning to be prolific (produce only Muslims) that would dominate the entire nation without any other faith-based religion. One would wonder whether the nation is still open for pluralistic society; a doctrine of a society with diverse groups as in religion, race, or ethnic origin with cultural matrix, and various distinctive characteristics that enhance solidarity and geo-polity. Nigeria, advocating for one nation under God would not open door for only one religious based doctrine to enter the 1999 Constitution. In a comparative observation across the globe, there has been a popular slogan: "Separation of Church and State" in places like United States of America, United Kingdom, France, and so on; one would expect that a populous and educated nation as Nigeria, who has embraced the Western styles of education and lifestyles, would reject constitutional legal system that would create huge outcry of the subtle agenda [with Islamic law inclusion] in this 21st century constitutional document. The huge outcry is emitting from non-Muslims who believe that the applications of the Sharia Law criminal codes are in oppositions to the "democratic principles" (Nwabueze, 2001:91-121).

While Nigeria practiced Western education and lifestyles, many pious Muslims believed that democracy is "purely of Western, foreign and secular, and has nothing to do with Islamic practice" (Makosa, 2007:n.p.). The Islamists see democracy as a system that was imposed on them by the Western society, and also a system that is contrary to Muslim standard of life. This is a common critic among the Islamic radicals, which drive majority of them into "an almost inescapable vicious circle of violence and political instability" (Ajayi 1999:21). It is quite obvious that, if the radical Muslims see issues that they do not like or agree with, they freely condemn and abhor those issues either violently or expressly; but, if non-Muslims "dare point out the abuses and crimes being committed in the name of Mohammedan religion, one risks being accused of blasphemy or islamophobia – a term recently coined by those who want to make criticizing Islam a crime around the globe" (Igwe, 2013:1). Would criticizing Sharia Law and bringing the nation to focus about the people's general perceptions [about the two distinctive legal systems in Nigeria] a crime?

The inclusion of Sharia Law in the 1999 Nigerian Constitution is the bone of contention that its subtle motive to Islamize the entire country has been overlooked; hence we engaged the nation in this quest to understand the general perceptiveness of Islamization by examining various factors, causes, and consequences on the nation.

Limitation

The scope of this study is limited to the South, Southeast, Southwest, Middle-belt, and most northerners that live within the scope of this survey. We eliminated the northern region of the country due to the fact that they are the proponents of this study and are not the focus of our general perceptiveness on Sharia Law. The northerners are already practicing Sharia and we are searching for those who are not generally under the Islamic legal dominion. Therefore, the obvious challenges encountered in this study were the maintenance of diversity in data collection and lack of in-depth original material on the issue of islamization of the whole country.

Significance of the Study

“The current insecurity challenge in Nigeria is at an alarming rate that calls for a greater concern. This emanate from low level civil disorder, large scale violence, even armed insurgency...” (Alna, et al., 2014:37).

With the level of insecurity challenges in Nigeria, there is need to avoid policies that would depict the country into national catastrophe. The mixture of ethnic religion with state politics by favoring Islam as a religion worthy of inclusion in the 1999 Nigerian Constitution has opened door for unavoidable critics, because of its implications in the future national polity. With “Islamic law still seeking to extend the prongs of its justice system beyond the jurisdictional scope granted it by the 1999 constitution;...” (Oraegbunam, 2000:1), the Nigerian public perceives the sharia law movement as a vehicle for mobilization of radical Muslims to covert the rest of the states to Islamic faith under Sharia law, thereby, impose Sharia upon the country when the principles of the Sharia is solidified. The practice of Sharia in Nigeria is still at its rudimentary stage from 1999 till 2015 which is nearly seven years. This study seeks the general opinions through survey about people’s perceptions of the Sharia in Nigeria. This research anticipates the reactions of the general public if Sharia has to extend beyond its jurisdictional boundaries granted by the Nigerian Constitution.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is centered on the perception of Sharia Law and its inclusion in 1999 Nigerian Constitution. This perceptiveness emphasized that Sharia Law institutionalization in the Nigerian Constitution is a motivational intent to Islamize the entire Nigeria as an Islamic State in near future. Nigeria has adopted Western Democratic ideologies that are in conflict with the principles of Islam. Adopting Sharia law alongside with the constitutional democracy invokes critics as the inconsistencies are obvious and manifold. The Islamic laws are religious doctrines, emanating from the Nigerian northern “Sunnis” of the “Maliki School of Jurisprudence” (Library of Congress studies, 2015:1). They have laws that define blasphemy, adultery, fornications, dress codes, and others, different from the Nigerian criminal codes. The consumption of alcohol is immoral, and socialization between a man and woman, and others, are also classified as immoral when compared with the Nigeria’s criminal codes. The ultimate forecast is that the proponents of Sharia Law have not reached their final destination, which would be hatched by Islamizing the whole nation as an Islamic State in order to conform to their religious doctrines.

Literature Reviews

The literature on the general perceptiveness of Sharia Law implementation is scanty; but, there are volumes of critical thoughts on Sharia Law and its perilous nature in a country with greater number of non-Muslims. The implications are vital in a nation where religious wars have claimed so many lives in the past (Edobor, 2000; Igwe, 2013; Ajayi, 1999). However, we shall adopt a different angle of discussing the problems of this Islamic impositions of Sharia lawby anchoring on the inconsistencies of implementing Sharia law while adopting democratic principles in the national constitution. We shall look at Democracy and Sharia law, Constitution and Religion, and Volatile Plantation.

Democracy and Sharia Law

The principle of democracy is a form of government in which the political control is shared by all the people, either directly or by representation. Sharia law is the product of Islamic faith that has the principle of converting the world to conform to Islamic laws. Sharia law conforms to Marxist law – a doctrine formulated by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, which formed the foundations forcommunism.

Communism is the system based on the theory of force. Muslims society is more of communist society comparable to the theories of Karl Marx, and not compatible to the Western free Democratic Economy. Islamic law dictates the system of life across the spectrum, including financial transactions, dress codes, marriages, individual movements, and it functions in a closed system. In financial transactions for example,

"Muslims in Britain and throughout the world aspire to carry out their financial matters in accordance with the principles of Islamic law. Muslims are forbidden from obtaining the various conventional banking and insurance products and services in the forms currently offered due to their incompatibility with the principle of Islamic law" (Nwaolisa & Kasie, 2013:42).

In a closed financial system such as the case dictated by the Islamic laws, freedom is apparently lacking. Nigeria is a democratic system; with the advent of Sharia law, subtly crawled into the Nigeria's legal system, the nation may be corrupted by broadening the legal spheres of the Sharia law and its domain. This perception is due to the fact that the proponents of Sharia law have "made a considerable inroad into the nation's grundnorm" and the Islamic law is still seeking "to extend the prongs of its justice system beyond the jurisdictional scope granted it by the 1999 constitution" (Oraegbunam, 2010:1). According to Oraegbunam, "the effect is that criminal and other aspects of the legal regime have been adopted by most states in northern Nigeria but not without an affront to the secularity principle that should undergird national affairs."

A democratic system seeks free market enterprise, less government interferences in personal affairs, freedom of press, protection of human rights, and so on. In a democratic society, family independency is important, and as Whitaker (1985) points out that, "every family is a miniature society, a social order with its own rules, structure, leadership, language, style of living, and zeitgeist" (p.78). The Islamic system dictates the dress codes, the fellowship between the females and their counter parts, the type of food, the prayer schedules, financial transactions, and so on. Islam believes in the system of restrictiveness and Sharia is the legal vehicle to control and dominate various individuals in an attempt to bring people into compliance with the Islamic laws. Democracy is the world of freedom to choose right or wrong. The classical school of criminology says man is a "freewill agent" having "intrinsic choices of right or wrong" and are capable of making his or her own decision (Vold, 1979). Islam and Sharia cannot position itself as the leader of law giver to the nation that is working herself into African style of democracy and world affairs.

Constitution and Religion

Constitution "is the fundamental laws and practices that normally govern the operation of a state or association. A document containing these laws, - the constitution..." (Webster's Concise Dictionary, 2000 edition, p.152). Religion on the other hand is "A belief in a divine or superhuman power or principle, usually, thought of as the creator of all things. The manifestation of such a belief is in worship, ritual, conduct, etc." (p.617). The constitution of a state normally maintains neutrality in order to allow the people to make conscientious decisions on the matter of religious selection. Sharia Law is a secular ideology propagated to control the mind-set of the Muslim believers and non-Muslims living in the same vicinity. A communist enjoys controlling human behavior with dictates and oppression. Hess et al (1992) states that "Karl Marx, along with those of the Soviet leader Lenin (1870-1924), form the basis of a secular ideology called Marxism..." (p.407). Marxist monopolizes and dominates all sectors of their socialist operation by oppressing others for conformity. The propagandists of Sharia law and its introductory movement into the nation's constitutional document is to clear its gradual path-way to pre-dominate the nation as a State religion. Nigeria is volatile for this crisis, though, hidden now, but would be exposed in near future.

Volatile Plantation

Who plants thorns and thistle on the roads where human beings and animals walk barefooted and expect peace, happiness, harmony, and love to excel? Hyperbolically, Nigeria is the plantation field, where Sharia law has been imposed [planted] to rule both Muslims and Christians in the northern part of the country. The obvious effect would be tension, un-easement, hatred, ethnic division, and suspicion. Sharia law creates problem in allocation of resources within the states. It results to selective allocation of resources or profiling. Profiling leads to racial profiling which invokes the need for due process protections (Grant & Terry, 2008). There is negative citizen encounters with law enforcement on the basis of race or ethnic religious differences.

There is a slogan that says 'Palm Oil' and 'Water' cannot be mixed as one. Sharia law [for Muslims] and Sharia law [for Christians] invokes "racial profiling" (p.293), religious-ethnic profiling, and "criminal profiling" (p.201). Religion and ethnicity are twin demons instigating divisions and hatred in the nation, so diverse in multifarious dialects. In the event of fighting crimes, non-Muslims are likely to be arrested for failing to obey the Islamic law imposed on them. The imposition of Sharia Law on non-Muslims is volatile because it could instigate universal unrest and broaden insecurity in the nation.

Methodology

"A methodology is merely an operational framework within which the facts are placed so that their meaning may be seen more clearly" (Leedy, 1980, p.75).

Data Collection

We generated questionnaires to determine the general perceptiveness of Nigerians on the existence of Sharia law in 1999 Nigeria Constitution. We traveled to the South, Southeast, Southwest and Middle-belt to reach people of various age groups, males and females, with various educational background to collect this data on Sharia law. The questionnaire queried for individual's perception and general opinion on Sharia law and its implication in a culturally diverse nation as Nigeria. This study used both quantitative and qualitative research designs. Qualitative research uses inquiries to seek facts and synthesizes such facts into accurate and logical conclusion [or opinions] while quantitative analysis calculates, measures and deals with testing of variables (Creswell & Clark 2007; Leedy, 1980).

Subjects

The target research population was 259 participants. The participants were randomly selected from a large pool of the Nigerian population. A seventeen item structured questionnaire on Sharia law was designed and distributed to the participants across the four regions in Nigeria. The demographic background of the participants were Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa, and others. The age disparity ranged from 18-29, 30-39, 40-49, to 50-59 age levels.

Sampling

Therefore, this study was conducted in Nigeria in the areas of the south, southeastern, southwestern, and the Middle-belt. Those vicinities were selected due to the fact that the majority of the residents in those areas were Christian-faith with the limited number of the Islamic faith as the minority group. We utilized random sampling method because it provides us a chance avoid discriminatory practices in selecting participants for this study. Randomization has the elements of equality and independence in the selection process (Hopkins et al., 1987; Nowaczyk, 1988; Runyon & Haber, 1971). Randomization can work to "cancel out the effects of systematic errors caused by extrinsic variables that may be associated with either the dependent or independent variables" (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1987, p.117).

Field Procedures

The investigator adopted the following field procedures for data collection.

1. All the subjects were verbally interviewed the same day that the questionnaires were administered for completion for this study.
2. An in-depth interviews was conducted to gather demographic data such as: sex, ethnicity, age, and educational level.

Instruments

The instruments designed to elicit the information sought was the 17-item questionnaire on Sharia law in Nigeria. Each of the seventeen items has the Likert Scale response alternatives: (1). Agree; (2). Strongly Agree; (3). Disagree; (4). Strongly Disagree; (5). Unknown. The questionnaire contains items which essentially deal with the participants' perceptiveness of Islamization of Nigeria by the Islamic religion.

Measures

The independent variables for measurement in this study are (a) Islamization and (b) Sharia law; while the dependent variables are (a) nation and (b) Perceptiveness.

Hypotheses

Two hypotheses were tested in this study. These hypotheses were null-hypotheses. Leedy (1980) states that null-hypotheses assists the researcher "in establishing a statistical base against which a situation may be tested" (p.27). Bailey (1982) states that a null-hypothesis is a "hypothesis of no difference" (p.404). The null-hypotheses for this study include:

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the perceptiveness of Sharia law and the existence of Federal Law of Nigeria

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the imposition of Sharia law on Nigerians and the driving forces behind the imposition.

Objectives of the Study

This is an investigational study, whether the existence of Sharia law (i.e. religion) in 1999 Nigeria Constitution is a driving phenomenon for the Islamic radicals to Islamize the entire country. The objectives are:

- (a). To explore the existence of Sharia law in 1999 Nigeria Constitution for this study.
- (b). To find out the general perceptiveness of Nigerians concerning the existence of Sharia law in the nation's 1999 Constitutional documents.
- (c). To find out the driving phenomena behind the move for Islamization of Nigeria.
- (d). To find out the workability of Sharia law in the whole Nigeria as one nation.

Data Analysis

The data analysis for this study was based on the above two hypotheses. Chi-Square was used to test the differences between the perceptiveness of Islamization of Nigeria and existence of Sharia Law in Nigeria Constitution. "Chi-square (χ^2) is a frequently used test of significance in social sciences" (Babbie, 1986, p.422). According to Babbie, chi-square is based on the assumption that there is no relationship between two or more variables in the total population. Chi-square is suitable for this study because it tests non-related variables from both the dependent and independent samples. Utilizing the guidelines for the analytical process for qualitative research, it is imperative to move into a deeper understanding of data and generate interpretations (Creswell et al., 2007). The activities associated with qualitative data collection are analyzed through a continuous process of constant reflection on the data through the process of asking analytical questions that are driven by the research methods, as well as the collection of an open-ended questions to create environment for the analysis of the data obtained from the participants (Creswell et al., 2007). Through the data analysis process, data is coded and overarching themes are constructed.

Findings

The chi-square was used to test hypotheses one and two.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the perceptiveness of Sharia law and the existence of Federal Law of Nigeria.

Test of Hypothesis 1

Table 1: Sharia Law vs. Nigeria Federal Law

Choice of Legal System: Sharia or Federal Law			
Options	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Sharia Law	7	129.5	-122.5
Nigeria Federal Law	252	129.5	122.5
Total	259		

Chi-Square = 231.757, Df = 1 (degree of freedom)

Decision: Since the calculated value of χ^2 at 231.8 is greater than the tabulated value of χ^2 at 2.71, we reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between the perceptiveness of Sharia law and the existence of Federal Law of Nigeria, hence, Nigeria Federal Law is generally the choice of Nigerians.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the imposition of Sharia law on Nigerians and the driving forces behind the imposition.

Test of Hypotheses 2

Table 2: Powers behind Imposition of Sharia Law

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Unknown	5	51.8	-46.8
Strongly Disagree	4	51.8	-47.8
Disagree	3	51.8	-48.8
Agree	127	51.8	75.2
Strongly Agree	120	51.8	68.2
Total	259		

Chi-Square = 331.328

Decision: Since the calculated value of X^2 at 331.328 is greater than the tabulated value of X^2 at 7.78, we reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between the imposition of Sharia law on Nigerians and the driving forces behind the imposition. Therefore the phenomena variables behind the imposition of Sharia law are listed on table 6.

Discussion

Demographical Information

The demographical data from the respondents revealed age variations across the board. Examining the table below shows that 23 people were between ages 18 to 29 representing 8.9%. The respondents between ages 30 to 39 were 57 people which represents 22.0% of the population sample. The greater number of the respondents was between ages 40 to 49, and this group was 77 people resulting to 29.7% of the participants. The highest number of respondents was between ages 50 to 59 consisting of 89 people which was 34.4%. The data showed that ages 60 and above was only 13 people, which accounted for 5.0% participants. These figures totaled 259 survey group resulting to 100% of the total population sample as shown in table 3 of the demographical data information below.

Table 3: Demography

		Frequency	Percent
	18-29	23	8.9
	30-39	57	22.0
	40-49	77	29.7
	50-59	89	34.4
	60 and Above	13	5.0
	Total	259	100.0
	unidentified sex	23	8.9
	Female	99	38.2
	Male	137	52.9
	Total	259	100.0
	Others	22	8.5
	Hausa's Living in the South	29	11.2
	Yoruba Origin	99	38.2
	Igbo Origin	109	42.1
	Total	259	100.0
	Elementary Education	39	15.1
	Secondary Education	69	26.6
	Higher Education	151	58.3
	Total	259	100.0

The above demographical data revealed distinctive variations in sexes. The respondents who identified themselves as male were 137 people, accounting for 52.9%, whereas 99 people identified themselves as female, which was 38.2%. In fact, 23 people (8.9%) did not identify their sexes. The data on ethnic origin showed interesting figures in all the three major ethnic tribes, notably the Hausa living in the southern part of the country, the Yoruba and the Igbos. The data showed 29 people were Hausa origin accounting for 11.2% participants; 99 people were of Yoruba origin, making up 38.2% participants, while 109 people were Igbo origin, and this was 42.1% participants. In fact, 22 people were unidentified ethnic groups which made up to 8.5% participants in this survey.

The respondents' data on education revealed that the majority of the people surveyed had formal educational background. The data showed that 39 people, which was 15.1% had elementary education. While 69 people, which was 26.6% had secondary education, 151 people, 58.3% reported higher educational achievements. The high level of education among the survey group could probably explain why the respondents were able to understand the contents of the instruments and were co-operative during personal interviews. This facilitated the collection of information in this study.

Perception of Sharia Imposition and Nigeria Federalism

Table 4: Sharia Imposition VS. Federalism

		Frequency	Percent
Imposition of Sha	Unknown	3	1.2
	Strongly Disagree	149	57.5
	Disagree	107	41.3
	Total	259	100.0
Nigeria Maintain F	Unknown	3	1.2
	Strongly Disagree	7	2.7
	Disagree	13	5.0
	Agree	107	41.3
	Strongly Agree	129	49.8
	Total	259	100.0

Sharia law is an Islamic legal system that operates under Islamic political structure of government. Nigeria is a sovereign democratic nation with a constitution and an elected President as Commander in-Chief of the Armed Forces. The nation's constitution creates the offices of the Governor, State Assemblies, and Local Governments. The powers of these entities are delegated by the 1999 Nigerian Constitution. In fact, the nation's constitution is the only Supreme Legal Binding Document uniting Nigerians under Federal Republic of Nigeria. Religion and politics could be likened to palm oil and water-mixture, which does not stick [together]. The establishment of the Federal Sharia Court of Appeal in the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria was a pathway to national crisis in the near future. Religion in this country has been politically mixed with ethnic-religion, and both have become inseparable in Nigerian politics. In this process, Sharia has sprang its wings boldly into the domain of the Nigerian political systems.

The perceptive imposition of Sharia law is evidence in the movement to convert the rest of Nigerians to Islam. "Two governors of Sharia implementing states-Sokoto and Bauchi-were among those who gave cash rewards to mainly Igbos who converted to Islam in Abuja National Mosque" (Igwe, 2013:2). We surveyed 259 Nigerians living in the south, southeast, southwest, middle-belt, and northerners living in the southern regions, whether the imposition of Sharia law would work in Nigeria. The results were overwhelmingly clear that the imposition of Sharia law on the entire nation would be catastrophic and desirous miscalculation as reflected or evidenced in the responses of the survey participants. We found out that 107 people, which was 41.3% disagree that the imposition of Sharia law will work in Nigeria. In fact, 149 people, which was 57.5% strongly disagree that the imposition of Sharia law will work in Nigeria, while 3 people, which was approximately 1.2% responded unknown. We also surveyed Nigerians whether the nation should remain a federation without undue influences of Sharia law. In our data, 107 people, 41.3% agree that Nigeria should remain a Federation, 129 people, 49.8% strongly agree for Federal Republic of Nigeria, while 13 people, 5.0% disagree, 7 people which was 2.7% strongly disagree and 3 people, 1.2% responded unknown.

The results of this survey showed that Nigerians are interested in maintaining their Federal Status as one nation without any imposition of Islamic laws. "Islam dominated the north and had a number of supporters in the South Western, Yoruba part of the country. Nigeria has the largest Muslim population in sub-Saharan Africa" (Library of Congress Country Studies, 2015:1). Sharia law is a religious product of Islam, which has eaten inside the "vein of Nigerian politics" (Ajayi, 1999:17). The propagandists and advocates of Sharia Law still yawn "to extend the prongs of its justice beyond the jurisdictional scope granted by the 1999 constitution" (Oraegbunam, 2010:1). Sharia law is not designed for a multiethnic society as Nigeria, and should not impose its control on both the non-Muslims and the entire nation.

If we are actually emulating the democracy of the Western world, we should learn to separate religion and State as witnessed in United States, United Kingdom, France, and so on. The Sharia law has its domain in the Islamic legal principles which inculcate non-Muslims who do not practice the Islamic religion, but live in the midst of the Muslims in the northern part of the country. How can a nation such as Nigeria work blindly, knowing fully well that the danger ahead about Sharia law would deepen ethnic-religious tension, hatred, intolerance, and dissipate the nation into ungovernable state, if Sharia law is imposed on the entire country. Are we planning to change the "Federal Republic of Nigeria" to "Islamic Republic of Nigeria"? We need to employ common sense to right nonsense; otherwise, the future generation of this country would be erroneously directed into controversial unresolvable state that would destabilize the national structure of our system of government.

Democratic Choice

Democracy is the government in which political control is shared by all the people either directly or by representation through election. Democratic society and Sharia law? Sharia law is an Islamic religious laws, which has no place in the State politics. Edobor states,

"The core of the issue is, there is no evidence that religion interwoven with State politics has ever brought any people more freedom, justice or prosperity, other than total suppression. History has shown that religion interwoven with State politics is perhaps the easiest and most effective tool humankind has devised yet to suppress one another" (2000:2).

The use of State fund in Kano to establish Sharia Police called Hisbah would be questionable under a democratic society, where 'freedom of speech' and 'press' is fully protected and practiced. The implementation of Sharia law in a State where Muslims cohabit with non-Muslims creates problems with the use of the Sharia police [Hisbah] for law enforcement operations. Igwe (2013) states that during Ramadan month, "Hisbah arbitrarily arrested and detained those whom they perceived to be prostitutes or homosexuals. They clapped down on the sale and drinking of alcohol" (:2). The enforcement of Sharia law among non-Muslims violates their fundamental human rights. The Hisbah law enforcement activities unduly create structural harassment on those citizens who knew nothing about various Islamic laws. Their operational tactics target their fellow Nigerians whom they classified as second class citizens, simply because they are Christians, non-Muslims, and perhaps, speak different dialects. In this premises, we still support Sharia law in a multi-dialectal nation as Nigeria. Where is human rights protection in Nigeria as the most populous Black nation in the world? "The Sharia police destroyed over 240,000 bottles of beer as part of its latest crackdown on immoral practices in the State. Some of these goods belonged to non-Muslims or are for consumption by non-Muslims" (:2).

Sharia law and State politics create a cast on the Western style of democracy. In a democratic society, "Katsina State voted to spend 359 million in building mosques in 34 local councils in the State" (Igwe, 2013:2). This is a State where public revenue is devoted for building such a magnificent edifice for the Muslims' faith. One wonders whether similar amount of money would be allocated for building Churches and other religious facilities as well. What happens to the poor, needy and unemployed youths in this State? Confusion finds its abode when religion is masked with political activities in any nation. Sharia law should not be imposed on all the inhabitants of Nigeria, otherwise, democracy would recess, and anarchy and chaos would rule the Nigerian society.

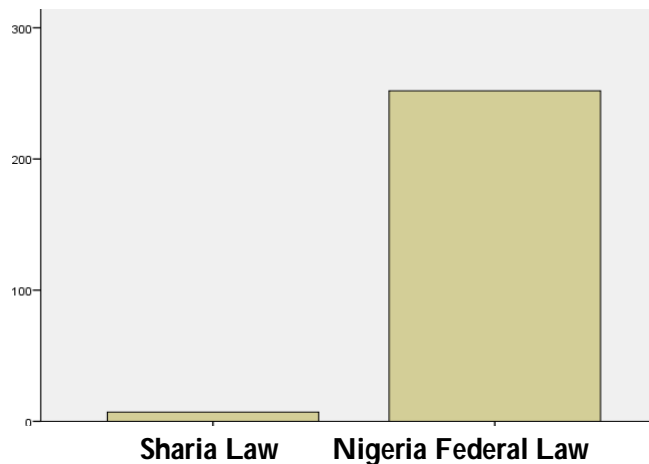
Precedence: Sharia Law or Nigeria Federal Law

Table 5: Sharia Law or Nigerian Federal Law

Choice	Frequency	Percent
Sharia Law	7	2.7
Nigeria Federal Law	252	97.3
Total	259	100.0

First and foremost, The Chapter I of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution titled "General Provisions" in Part I "Federal Republic of Nigeria" No.1.(1) states: "The Constitution is Supreme and its provisions shall have binding force on the authorities and persons throughout the Federal Republic of Nigeria. (2) The Federal Republic of Nigeria shall not be governed, nor shall any persons or group of persons take control of the Government of Nigeria or any part thereof, except in accordance with the provision of this Constitution. (3) If any other law is inconsistent with the Provisions of this Constitution, this Constitution shall prevail, and that other law shall, to the extent of the inconsistency, be void" (1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, p.18).

It is not disputable that the Nigerian Constitution [Federal Law] takes precedence over the activities, legislative powers, and oversees the operations of Islamic laws and its regulatory authorities. The functional jeopardy is that a nation cannot have two distinctive legal authorities to govern the indigenes of the same nation. The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria created Sharia Courts of Appeal for any State that desire it. In reference to No.275: (1), There shall be for any State that requires it a Sharia Court of Appeal for that State. (2) The Sharia Court of Appeal of the State shall consist of – (a) A GrandiKadi of the Sharia Court of Appeal; and (b) Such Member of Kadi of the Sharia Court of Appeal as may be prescribed by the House of Assembly of the State.

Figure 1: Choice of Legal System

We have established the fact that the Nigeria Federal Law takes precedence over Sharia law. The 1999 Nigeria Constitution allowed Islamic Ethnic-Religious Doctrines a partial encroachment into the nation's Constitution, without considering multitudes of other ethnic religions in the nation. We surveyed 259 Nigerians with questions on which legal system should take precedence? Sharia law or Nigeria Federal Law.' The results were very interesting in the sense that 252 people, which was 97.3% overwhelmingly said that Nigerians preferred to be ruled by Nigeria Federal Law, while only 7 people, 2.7% chose to be ruled by Sharia law. Almost the entire nation has chosen to remain under the 'Federal Republic of Nigeria' and not "Islamic Republic of Nigeria."

Sharia Law Movement

Sharia Law is an Islamic legal system; only the Islamic government, progenitors, progeny, and all those who practice and believe in Islamic propositions could spur sharia law movement in any nation. The Sharia law and ethnic-religion are the two 'headless demons' drugging Nigeria into confusion, bidding for disunity and ultimate chaos in the future. Comparatively, most conflicts in Africa are mostly connected to ethnic and religious conflicts rooted in serious religious and political differences as seen in Iraq, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, and so on.

Nigeria is blindly allowing this headless dragon to drag the country into a stage of meaningless drama which would linger within the nation.

Table 6: Sharia Law Movement: Forces Behind it

Phenomena behind Imposition of Sharia Law							
Option		Frequency	Percent		Option	Frequency	Percent
Religion	Strongly Agree	120	46.3	Islamic Politicians	Strongly Agree	119	45.9
	Agree	127	49.0		Agree	124	47.9
	Disagree	3	1.2		Disagree	6	2.3
	Strongly Disagree	4	1.5		Strongly Disagree	4	1.5
	Unknown	5	1.9		Unknown	6	2.3
	Total	259	100.0		Total	259	100.0
Control	Strongly Agree	109	42.1	Nigerian Government	Strongly Agree	19	7.3
	Agree	127	49.0		Agree	15	5.8
	Disagree	20	7.7		Disagree	119	45.9
	Strongly Disagree	3	1.2		Strongly Disagree	99	38.2
	Total	259	100.0		Unknown	7	2.7
Domination	Strongly Agree	139	53.7	Muslim Society	Strongly Agree	129	49.8
	Agree	101	39.0		Agree	109	42.1
	Disagree	9	3.5		Disagree	17	6.6
	Strongly Disagree	7	2.7		Strongly Disagree	4	1.5
	Total	259	100.0		Total	259	100.0
Foreign Government	Strongly Agree	59	22.8				
	Agree	79	30.5				
	Disagree	77	29.7				
	Strongly Disagree	39	15.1				
	Unknown	5	1.9				
	Total	259	100.0				

In our survey on Sharia movement, the results were very fascinating, indicating serious future problems because the respondents had serious accusatory points of views. The respondents in our survey accused religion as the motive for implanting the Islamic laws, so that, the rest of the population would be converted into the Islamic faith in the near future. Therefore, religion is the first accusatory factor behind this Sharia law movement. Other variables were the movement to control others, domination, influences of the foreign governments, the Islamic politicians, Nigerian Government, and the Muslim society. Religion showed greater accusatory values in the sense that 120 people which was 46.3% strongly agree, 127 people, 49.0% agree, whereas only 3 people, 1.2% disagree, 4 people which was 1.5% strongly disagree. Only 5 people, 1.9% indicated that they did not know.

Some of the respondents indicated that the desire to control the nation with Islamic religion was a strong factor. The results of our survey showed that 109 people, 42.1% strongly agree, and 127 people, 49.0% agree. While 20 people, 7.7% disagree, only 3 people, 1.2% strongly disagree. Domination was another accusatory factor. The survey results showed that 139 people, 53.7% strongly agree that Islamic religion was a strong factor that would be used for the domination of the other ethnic religions. While 101 people, 39.0% agree, 9 people, 3.5% disagree, 7 people, 2.7% strongly disagree, only 3 people, 1.2% expressed unknown. In fact, our survey showed that foreign government was among the accusatory factor contributing to Islamic movement with Sharia law in Nigeria. The Nigerians perceived that foreign Islamic nations were behind the Sharia law movement in this country, and this was expressed in the results of the survey. The results showed that 59 people, 22.8% strongly agree, 79 people, 30.5% agree, while 77 people, 29.7% disagree, only 39 people, 15.1% strongly disagree and 5 people, 1.9% said unknown. Another strong accusatory factor for the movement of Sharia law in Nigeria was the Islamic Politicians. It is believed that politics play strong roles in policy implementations. Our survey revealed strong ties with the Islamic politicians' strong roles in the Sharia law movement. The survey results showed that 119 people, 45.9% strongly agree, 124 people, 47.9% agree, 6 people, 2.3% disagree, 4 people, 1.5% strongly disagree, while 6 people, 2.3% said unknown.

The Nigerian Government has been accused of “favoring one religion over the other” (Ajayi, 1999:20), and has resulted into disturbances, where the Muslims are feeling superior over the rest of the Nigerians. This is evidenced when “some fanatic northern Nigerian elected officials are insisting that Muslims are Muslims first and Nigerians second and, therefore, are entitled to live by the Sharia law” (Edobor, 2000:13). The Nigerian Government seemed to have bought the idea by implementing the Sharia law for the people that claimed to belong to Muslims first. However, the results of our survey defended Nigeria’s involvement in the Sharia law movement. The results revealed that 119 people, 45.9% disagree that Nigerian Government was involved in the Sharia law movement, 99 people, 38.2% strongly disagree, while 19 people, 7.3% strongly agree, 15 people, 5.8% agree. Only 7 people, 2.7% said unknown. In fact, while Nigerian Government favored the implementation of Sharia Law, Nigerians do not believe that the government is involved in the movement for Islamization of the entire nation.

The majority of the Muslims in Nigeria are Sunni, which belong to Maliki School of jurisprudence. A large number of Sunni Muslims are members of Sufi brotherhoods. Most Sufis follow the Qadiriyya, Tijaniyyah and /or Mouride movement (Library of Congress Studies, 2015:1). These groups are the northerners and they have incorporated the controversial Sharia law. The majority of these Muslims are Quraniyyun movement or Mouride movement. In our survey, the Muslim society has been accused of leading the movement for the islamization of the entire nation by introducing Sharia law as their primary legal system. Our survey results showed that 129 people, 49.8% strongly agree that the Muslim society is a factor in the movement to Islamize the nation, 109 people, 42.1% agree, 17 people, 6.6% disagree, while 4 people, 1.5% strongly disagree.

In sum, almost all the accusatory factors presented in table 4 supported the fact that they contribute significantly to the movement for the islamization of the entire nation, except the Nigerian Government. The results of the data defended government involvement in the movement to change the entire nation to an Islamic State.

Can Nigeria stand as a nation under Sharia Law?

Table 7: Sharia Law Versus the Nation

Options		Frequency	Percent
Nigeria Unity Under Sharia Law	Strongly Agree	8	3.1
	Agree	27	10.4
	Disagree	107	41.3
	Strongly Disagree	117	45.2
	Total	259	100.0
Insecurity in Nigeria and Ethnic Sentiments	Strongly Agree	119	45.9
	Agree	91	35.1
	Disagree	29	11.2
	Strongly Disagree	13	5.0
	Unknown	7	2.7
Total	259	100.0	
A Nation at Edge of Breaking	Strongly Agree	69	26.6
	Agree	49	18.9
	Disagree	138	53.3
	Unknown	3	1.2
	Total	259	100.0

With multiethnic dialects and religious differences in Nigeria, the perceptive implementation of Islamization of the whole country would throw the nation into uproar. The participants of our survey responded sharply in the areas of unity, insecurity and break-up of the nation. Among the survey group, 117 people, 45.2% strongly disagree that Nigeria would still be united as a nation under Sharia law, 107 people, 41.3% disagree that the nation would be united as one under Sharia law, 27 people, 10.4% agree and 8 people, 3.1% strongly agree. The security of the nation is a significant factor. Our data also showed that 119 people, 45.9% strongly agree that the Islamization of Nigeria would be dangerous and desirous for the nation.

In fact, 91 people, 35.1% agree that it will increase the level of insecurity in the country, 29 people, 11.2% disagree, while 13 people, 5.0% strongly disagree, only 7 people, 2.7% unknown.

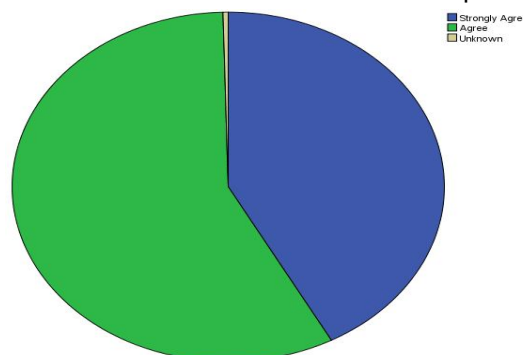
One would be tempted to ask: can implementation of Sharia law for the whole country cause the Nigeria to disintegrate as a nation? The participants' responses showed 69 people, 26.6% strongly agree, 49 people, 18.9% agree, 138 people, 53.3% disagree that the country would break-up, only 3 people, 1.2% unknown. The results on the question of disintegration of Nigeria if the entire nation is Islamized were inconsistent with results on the question of unity of Nigeria under Sharia law. Majority of the respondents disagree that the entire Nigeria would be united under Sharia law, while the same majority disagree that the country would break-up or disintegrated as a nation. The reason may be due to the fact that the Nigerian public does not want religious governance, but would want to maintain their democratic system as one nation without any Islamic interference.

Partial Effects: Islamization of the Entire Nation

Table 8: Impacts on Political-Economy and Governance

Options		Frequency	Percent
Political Instal	Strongly Agree	99	38.2
	Agree	111	42.9
	Disagree	39	15.1
	Strongly Disagree	9	3.5
	Unknown	1	.4
	Total	259	100.0
Good Govern	Strongly Agree	121	46.7
	Agree	131	50.6
	Disagree	2	.8
	Strongly Disagree	3	1.2
	Unknown	2	.8
	Total	259	100.0

The implementation of Sharia law for the whole nation would significantly create political unrest in the country. The previous table 7 reflected that Nigeria cannot stand as one nation if Sharia law is imposed on the whole nation (as the law of the land). The table 8 above showed that 99 people, 38.2% strongly agree that there would be strong political instability and unstable economy if the whole nation is Islamized. While the economy would be impacted, the administrative government of the nation would be strongly affected. In fact, 111 people, 42.9% agree, 39 people, 15.1% disagree, and 9 people, 3.5% strongly disagree. Only 1 person, .4% unknown. The imposition of Sharia law to Islamize the entire country would hamper good governance; 121 people, 46.7% strongly agree, 131 people, 50.6% agree, 2 people, .8% disagree, 3 people, 1.2% strongly disagree, and only 2 people, .8% unknown. The table 8 strongly predicts serious crisis in the entire nation if Sharia law is imposed on the nation.



Imposition of Sharia Law on Southern Christians

Figure 2: Southern Christians Vs. Sharia Law

Religion, mingling with politics is a dangerous game to display in a nation's political spectrum, especially, when the government discretionarily lean in favor of one religion in the midst of the multitudes of other religious group. We tend to find out through research what would be the reaction of others if events happen against them. Our intention in this particular case is to find out whether the southern states and Christians would oppose imposition of Sharia law in the entire country.

Table 9: Christians versus Sharia Law

Options	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	109	42.1
Agree	149	57.5
Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Unknown	1	.4
Total	259	100.0

The table 9 shows significant results. The Islamization of the entire country would create devastating havoc in the social, political, and economic situations of the whole nation. The results of our survey loudly and boldly indicated serious problems; 109 people, 42.1% strongly agree, 149 people, 57.5% agree, and only 1 person, .4% unknown. In this survey, we have zero disagree and zero strongly disagree. This is an indication that the entire southern Christians agree that Islamization of the entire nation would create serious problems. No participant disagrees or strongly disagree that Islamization would not cause problems in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The epitome of the general discussion of this study is that there is consistency in the exposition of the implications and impacts of Islamization of the entire country [through evangelical conversion of non-Muslims to Muslims]. Our study has shown that mixing ethnic religion with politics is a dangerous mix, and could lead the nation to disintegrate faster. If we are operating under the Western system of democracy, it should be noted that separation of religion and state is a wisdom approach, in order to minimize or discourage excruciation in the minds of the citizens of the nation. People suffer extreme mental and physical infliction of pains when their government tend to lean or favor only one religion and cast others as second class citizens. A situation of this nature could evolve into the dissolution of the spirit of 'one nation, embodied in the constitutional preamble which serves as the nation's tightrope. We should therefore remember that democracy is the government in which political control is shared by all the people either directly or by representation through election, whereas Sharia law is an Islamic religious laws, which has its origin in Islamic religion. Religion and politics could be likened to palm oil and water—mixture, which does not stick [together].

The establishment of the Federal Sharia Court of Appeal in the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria was a pathway to national crisis in the near future. Political activities of Nigeria have been mixed with ethnic-religion, and Sharia, being a product of Islamic religion has sprang its wings boldly into the domain of the Nigerian political systems. The perceptive imposition of Sharia law in the northern part of the country is evidence in the movement to convert the rest of Nigerians to Islam. "Two governors of Sharia implementing states—Sokoto and Bauchi—were among those who gave cash rewards to mainly Igbos who converted to Islam" (Igwe, 2013:2). What business has any public servant to use public fund for such religious reward? Is the nation heading to democracy or theocracy? Confusion lurks around the nation subtly, and looms in the nation's constitutional document without major challenges until its missions [eggs] are finally hatched.

Confusion finds its abode when religion is masked under political activities in any nation. Sharia law should not be imposed on all the inhabitants of the country, otherwise, democracy would recess, and anarchy and chaos would rule the Nigerian society.

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