

# The Relationship Between Tax Morale and Tax Compliance: Evidence from SMEs in Mogadishu, Somalia

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## ABSTRACT

In both developed and developing countries, tax compliance has become an important topic for personal and corporate taxation and stresses the taxpayer's duty to record income and assess tax liability. Moreover, tax compliance remains a crucial vehicle for increasing revenue generation and mobilization. Therefore, this study attempted to investigate the relationship between tax morale and tax compliance by using determinants of tax morale and its effect on tax compliance of taxpayers among small and medium-sized enterprises in Mogadishu. Also, the study linked the results to literature and presented some suggestions. The study used an adapted questionnaire and distributed 399 questionnaires to the respondents of taxpayers of business owners, managers and accountants to achieve the study's objectives. The data were analyzed using SPSS software version 21 for descriptive statistics and multiple regression. The study found that government trust and national pride have significant but negatively effects on tax compliance. Also, the study found that socioeconomic and individual factors have a significant and positive impact on tax compliance among SMEs.

**Keywords:** Tax morale, tax compliance, Small and Medium Enterprises, Mogadishu, Somalia

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Taxation is pivotal in the continuity of the economy all over the world. Every government should levy charges on their people and corporations to cover public expenditure to meet their budgetary demands (Shaari, Ali & Ismail, 2015). History has shown that people do not like paying taxes and take many steps, such as interpreting tax laws to their benefit to minimize their tax liabilities (Gituru, 2017). According to Fakile, Adegbe & Faboyede (2014), the tax provides the government with a key opportunity to fund the services given to its people. In developing countries like Somalia, this funding is an opportunity to eliminate poverty and provide public goods and services to reduce reliance on assistance in developed countries.

In many Sub-Saharan African countries, tax morale has grown in importance in the light of recent tax system reforms as they aim to develop their fiscal capability. The higher government's revenue, the more likely the government will provide more services to enhance the people's standard of living. Taxpayer education is an instrument intended to allow taxpayers to comprehend tax laws and procedures. It includes educating selected units within the revenue departments; providing taxpayers with education, advice, and encouragement through various media, including newspapers, television, radio shows, blogs, conferences, and front desk assistance; creating more space for the dissemination of critical knowledge to the taxpayers (Fjeldstad and Ranker, 2003).

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have an important role in economic growth within countries. SMEs represent a key force in today's economy and account for a substantial proportion of the business population in developing and developed countries. This sector accounts for more than 90% of the total number of companies in large countries, such as the UK, Japan (Grassi, Mitchell, Otani, Caruso, Nanni, Hachizuka, & Riba (2015). Similarly, in African countries, SMEs represent 90% (Masarira, & Msweli (2013).). Furthermore, In Somalia, SMEs make up about 90% of the private sector (Adan & Kising'u, 2018)

Moreover, the non-compliance attitude decreases the capacity to raise tax revenue to the amount expected to be collected (Deyganto, 2018). For this reason, tax noncompliance is a significant problem facing income tax administration and hindering the performance of tax revenue (Friedman, 2011). As a result, several governments face difficulties raising the tax they need due to tax noncompliance. For example, Giulia, Mick, Rhiannon (2014) argued that the sub-Saharan African countries collect far lower tax revenue as proportions of their GDPs, which is less than 16% on average, even though they have a high capacity to increase tax revenue to support their economic development. However, Somalia is facing the same issue as Sharan Africa countries, for example, Somalia's percentage of GDP remains very low, at just 2.7 per cent of GDP in 2016, and this is making it difficult for the Somali government to provide essential services such as health, education and administration to the public.

However, with increased awareness of social accountabilities and immeasurable state needs to support vulnerable societies in Somalia those rained by civil war conflicts and political instability, it is worth studying the impact of tax morality on tax compliance. The immoral of taxpayers may be deemed due to their beliefs regarding the inappropriate government expenditure; these beliefs may encourage many different taxpayers to evade tax; it may consequence a lack of tax compliance. Therefore, this study examined the relation of tax morale on tax compliance for SMEs in Mogadishu.

## 2.0 Literature Review

Taxation is the best way to promote economic growth and poverty alleviation. It provides a consistent and reliable financial foundation for designing nations to help develop its economy and finance for physical and social strategic priorities such as infrastructures. Integrated with industrial prosperity, it reduces lengthy dependency on assistance and guarantees effective governance by encouraging accountability and transparency to its citizens (Romer & Romer, 2010). Moreover, taxation is a crucial element of the relationship between people and governments, perhaps the most basic. The tax authority significantly influences disposable income and goods and services available to citizens. To ensure institutional survival and preserve public order, tax rises are essential for politicians and governments to finance government operations (Sjoberg, Mellon, Peixoto, Hemker& Tsai,2019).

However, many issues face African countries, including Somalia, concerning accountability and transparency within their tax structures, tax policies and tax administrations. Taxation started during the colonial period in Somalia and inherited with tax and financial laws of Somalia were a century ago from the Italian and British colonial administrations. These tax laws have thus become obsolete. Besides, under Barre's military regime, the economy was under the direction and control of the army (Mohamud ,2019). Besides, the tax code or tax system seems to be of great concern according to the various taxpayers attracted to the tax scheme; remedial taxation could be an appealing means of raising revenue. Moreover, there are two other important factors: tax morale and tax compliance. This study will go through these factors and will be as explanatory factors.

### 2.1 Tax Compliance

Tax compliance is vital for economic growth, even though authorities often use tax revenue to build infrastructure, education, and health (including public goods) to optimize taxpaying citizens' socioeconomic wellbeing. Low tax compliance is a significant problem in several developing nations, restricting government agencies' ability to increase development projects (Alabede&Zainal Affrin, 2011; Sebele-Mpofu&Msipa, 2020). It is universally recognized that several factors led to this vulnerability: corrupt practices, an informal urban sector, weak judicial systems, uncertainty in tax legislation, high marginal rates, absence of sufficient knowledge and accounting practice, a culture of non-compliance, and inefficient administration of tax system. Tax moral is a key indicator of compliance, and it has a trivial impact? The first perception of the significance of tax morality needs to come from survey data that directly question groups of people regarding perceptions toward money laundering and tax evasion (Luttmer and Singhal,2014).

Tax compliance is a growing global issue for tax authorities and lawmakers. Money laundering, including tax evasion, severely endangers the government's ability to boost government revenues to meet public expenditures While tax morality is molded by several aspects (like guilt, preferences for honesty, moral sentiments, and cultural issues), cultural standards and mutuality are often considered significant determinants. Furthermore, other studies identified those conducted in developing countries that tax compliance affected social, cultural, psychological and economic factors (Doerrenberg & Peichl, 2018).

### 2.2 Tax Morality

The morale of taxpayers is a crucial factor in determining compliance and other types of conduct. Therefore, taxpayer morale and compliance behavior are becoming increasingly important issues for tax authorities and policymakers worldwide. To generate enough revenue, any government will most likely implement developmental plans to raise the civilization's living standard (Redae & Sekhon, 2017). The findings of this study showed a significant connection between taxpayer morale and compliance behavior. Moreover, many factors affect morality itself; for example, Cyan, Koumpias, and Vazquez (2016) researched what influences taxpayers' perceptions towards taxes in Pakistan.; the findings showed that overall, communities with lower labor-force participation rates have much more favorable perceptions towards tax compliance in Pakistan. In addition, educated participants have more excellent tax morals, unlike illiterate, and only those with really high levels of achievement possess higher tax morals than bachelor's degree holders.

Bides, the effect of education was not significant. These different factors mentioned in the preceding section can be categorized into three main variables as grouped by (Doerrenberg & Peichl,2013) using either empirical or experimental survey data and grouped into; Socio-demographic Variables, Socioeconomic Variables, and Trust in Government and National Pride. Considering Andresen and Palil (2010) identified factors that shaped tax morality, the researcher will employ these factors to measure the morality of taxpayers among SMEs in Mogadishu. The following sub-section will present how these variables affect compliance and their relationship.

#### 2.2.1 Socioeconomic Variables are more likely to affect tax compliance

Prior studies highlighted three major socioeconomic factors that impact the moral tax period. First, employment status could be asserted that self-employed individuals have lower tax morals than permanent and part-time employees. This could be explained by the fact that self-employed people have more opportunities to avoid tax. Second, the degree of education and tax morals are not

concise. Literate taxpayers have far more knowledge and information about the reporting requirements and fiscal relations. Besides, they may be conscious that the state institutions of the nation have an elevated tax compliance behavior (Erul,2020).

Similarly, Torgler (2007) stated that the effect of education on tax morality ought to be vague: qualified professionals appear to understand better just what government offers and how much it needs to spend obtained state revenue. Therefore, tax morality among educated individuals should largely depend on the government's expenditure. The Thirty Income level is challenging and relies on certain circumstances. If individuals are not comfortable with their financial position, they may usually avoid them.

### 2.2.2 Trust in Government and National Pride is more likely to affect tax compliance

Tax morality is declining as people believe that taxes are spent superfluously as supported by survey research (Doerrenberg & Peichl,2013), while Frey and Torgler (2007) discovered that national trust has a positive and significant influence on tax morale variable. Moreover, the significance of politicians and the attitude of democratic government are critical aspects for clarifying tax morals. Individuals seem to be much more consistent in modern democracies, impacting government spending policies in these nations. According to Bilgin (2014), if individuals are happy with their cultural identity, they might be more faithful to their countries, and thus tax morality might be high. Furthermore, Ostrom (1998) highlighted two aspects of tax compliance and trust in tax authorities. The first is direct contact between government officials and taxpayers in eliciting voluntary tax compliance, and the second is how authorities handle taxpayers. The trust in tax authorities and tax compliance highlight two elements.

### 2.2.3 Individual Variables are more likely to affect tax compliance

Personal financial constraints are thought to have an impact on tax compliance because financial distress compels individuals to prioritize what must be paid first, such as basic survival needs such as food, clothing, and housing, or where immediate demand on a limited income is enforced (i.e., perceived threat of action from lenders), over tax liabilities. People with personal issues, such as many dependents, are more likely to break the law than those in better financial standing (Mohani and Sheehan, 2004). Personal financial suffering appears to be a key determinant in tax compliance, according to previous studies such as Warnery and Walend (1982). The introduction of a self-assessment system (SAS) in a country stated that compels taxpayers to pay their taxes and submit their tax returns could influence compliance decisions among taxpayers, particularly those in debt. According to Allingham and Sandmo (1972) and Etim and Nweze (2016), penalties impact tax compliance. The larger the penalty, the higher the likelihood of noncompliance.

## 2.3 Research Hypothesis

The study developed the following hypothesis to determine association among variables.

Hypothesis 1: Socioeconomic Variables are more likely to affect tax compliance

Hypothesis 2: Trust in Government and National Pride is more likely to affect tax compliance

Hypothesis 3: Individual Variables are more likely to affect tax compliance

## 3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study used quantitative method and data was collected through survey. Furthermore, the study used descriptive and explanatory methods. the study emphasizes SMEs in Mogadishu, particularly Howlwadag District, as this district hosts the biggest market in the capital, and all SMEs are operating in this market hereafter (Bakaro Market). SMEs sector as the population of this study, the target population of this study includes; business owners, managers and accounting staff as taxpayers of SMEs. The total population of the study was 150,000, the sample of size from this population was 399.

## 4.0 Research Findings and Discussions

### 4.1 Backgrounds of Respondents

According to Table 4.2, most respondents were male (71.6%), given a balance of 28.4% of the respondents were female. This indicates that most respondents' taxpayers of the SMEs are male, and the SMEs employed more males than females.

**TABLE 4.2 Gender**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	106	28.4	28.4	28.4
	Male	267	71.6	71.6	100.0
	Total	373	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.3 presented that most of the respondent is less than 40 years old, where 175 (46.9%) are 29 years old and below, and 165 (44.2%) of them are in the range of 30 to 39 years. The respondents aged 40 to 49 represent 6.7%, and the remaining respondents are 50 years and above (2.1%).

**TABLE 4.3 Age group**

	Age	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	29 and below	175	46.9	46.9	46.9
	30 - 39	165	44.2	44.2	91.2
	40 - 49	25	6.7	6.7	97.9
	50 and above	8	2.1	2.1	100.0
	Total	373	100.0	100.0	

Likewise, the respondents were asked about their educational qualifications, as shown in Table 4.4. Only 2.7% of respondents are not attending school, while 19 (5.1%) have a school certificate. Meanwhile, 15 (4%) respondents have Diploma qualifications. In comparison, almost half of the respondents 185(49.6%) are Bachelor's degree holders, and the remaining 144 (38.6%) the respondents are at master's level and above.

The result indicated that most SMEs accountants, owners, and Managers have a bachelor's degree and above, and thus, their qualification was essential to assess whether they had information related to the tax compliance of the taxation system in Mogadishu.

**TABLE 4.4 Academic Background**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not attend school	10	2.7	2.7	2.7
	School certificate	19	5.1	5.1	7.8
	Diploma	15	4.0	4.0	11.8
	Bachelor Degree	185	49.6	49.6	61.4
	Master level and above	144	38.6	38.6	100.0
	Total	373	100.0	100.0	

The table below (Table 4.5) specifies that 206 (55.2%) respondents are married, while 140 (37.5%) respondents are single. The remaining respondents Divorced/ Widow/ Separated are 27 (7.2%). This result states that most respondents who work in SMEs are married as they have a stable income to support families.

**TABLE 4.5 Marital status**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Single	140	37.5	37.5	37.5
	Married	206	55.2	55.2	92.8
	Divorced/ Widow/ Separated	27	7.2	7.2	100.0
	Total	373	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.6 demonstrates the business types, and the result shows 141 or 37.8% of the businesses involved in this study were sole proprietorships while the partnership was 1,480 or 39.7%. The other remaining are limited companies 84 (22.5%). The data indicates that most of the SMEs in Mogadishu were Sole proprietorships and partnerships.

**TABLE 4.6 Business type**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Sole proprietorship	141	37.8	37.8	37.8
	Partnership	148	39.7	39.7	77.5
	Limited Company	84	22.5	22.5	100.0
	Total	373	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.7 represents that most respondents (232 @ 62.2%) have formal taxation education. However, the remaining respondents do not have any formal education (141 @ 37.8%). Therefore, the majority of respondents are significant to answer the questionnaire, while those without formal tax education are still relevant due to their job experience.

**TABLE 4.7 Did you receive any formal education on taxation**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	232	62.2	62.2	62.2
	No	141	37.8	37.8	100.0
	Total	373	100.0	100.0	

By reviewing the table below (Table 4.8) of current positions of the respondents in organizations, it shows that most of the participants were managers and accountants, representing 36.5% and 35.1%, respectively. The remaining respondent was owners, representing 28.4% of the total respondent.

**TABLE 4.8 Current position in an organization**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Owner	106	28.4	28.4	28.4
	Manager	136	36.5	36.5	64.9
	Accountant	131	35.1	35.1	100.0
	Total	373	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.9 below shows that most businesses operate less than five years with 39.4% less than two years and 31.6% are between three to five years. Another 12.9% are in the business for a range of six to eight years. The remaining 9.9% and 6.2% of the businesses have existed in the market for nine to ten years and more than ten years, respectively.

**TABLE 4.9 how long has your business been in operation or current position**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than 2 years	147	39.4	39.4	39.4
	3 years - 5 years	118	31.6	31.6	71.0
	6 year – 8 years	48	12.9	12.9	83.9
	9 years - 10 years	37	9.9	9.9	93.8
	More than 10 years	23	6.2	6.2	100.0
	Total	373	100.0	100.0	

## 4.2 Correlation Analysis

This section presented the correlation of the study variables; according to Brooks (2008), a correlation between two variables measures the degree of linear association between them. To determine the association between independent variables and dependent variables measured by tax morale on tax compliance, the value of the correlations coefficient always ranges between positive and negative. If the correlation coefficient is positive indicates the two variables have a positive relationship, and a negative correlation coefficient shows negative relation with variables. In contrast, a zero-correlation coefficient indicates no linear relationship between the two variables (Fola, 2105).

**Table 4.15 Correlations**

		GTANP	SECOF	INDF	TCOMP
GTANP	Pearson Correlation	1	.530**	.589**	.439**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	373	373	373	373
SECOF	Pearson Correlation	.530**	1	.661**	.774**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	373	373	373	373
INDF	Pearson Correlation	.589**	.661**	1	.644**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	373	373	373	373
TCOMP	Pearson Correlation	.439**	.774**	.644**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	373	373	373	373

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As presented in Table 4.15, the three independent variables (TGANP, SECOF, INDF) was positively correlated with the dependent variable (TCOMP), with correlation coefficients of 0.439, 0.774 and 0.644, respectively. The SECOF correlate the biggest to the TCOMP. Also, as indicated in table 4.15, the three explanatory variables are modestly associated with one another, with none exceeding the rule of thumb that correlations greater than 0.8 may lead to erroneous results. Furthermore, the significant level of Pearson Correlation among TCOM and TGANP, SCO, and INDF were significant at the 0.01 level while  $p = 0.00$ . as specific representation trust of government and national pride has a low and significant relationship with tax compliance ( $r = 0.439$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.000$ ) at 0.01 level of significance. This means that there is a 0.439 chance that tax compliance will increase when trust in the government and national pride increases. The results also reveal that socioeconomic factors have a positive and significant connection with tax compliance ( $r = 0.774$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.000$ ), indicating a 0.774 likelihood that tax compliance will rise as socioeconomic factors rise. However, the findings show a positive and significant relationship between individual factors and tax compliance ( $r = 0.644$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.000$ ) at the 0.01 level of significance, indicating a probability of 0.644 that the level of tax compliance will increase as individual factors increase.

## 4.3 Multiple Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is generally used to evaluate and depict a cause-and-effect relationship that has been depicted to some degree through correlation analysis. The regression model reveals the magnitude and direction of the cause-and-effect relationship. This is done by estimating the coefficients of estimations for the explanatory variables. This means that a negative coefficient of estimation frequently implies a drop in the response variable by the magnitude of the estimated coefficient. The standardized coefficients of estimation are used to increase the accuracy of the estimated model.

**Table 4.16 Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. The error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.794 <sup>a</sup>	.631	.628	4.11222	.631	210.066	3	369	.000

The R-value indicates a relatively strong relationship between the predictor variables and the response variable (tax compliance). Because R is positive, this is the case (0.794). The R square, or the coefficient of determination, indicates how tax compliance differed depending on the independent variables, including socioeconomic factors, individual factors, government trust and national pride. The three independent variables investigated explain 62.8 per cent of the factors affecting tax compliance among SMEs in Mogadishu, while the other 37.2 per cent describe characteristics that were not investigated in this study. The model was fit the data if the R Square is more than 50 per cent.

**Table 4.17 ANOVA**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	10656.870	3	3552.290	210.066	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	6239.907	369	16.910		
	Total	16896.777	372			

a. Dependent Variable: TCOMP

Predictors: (Constant), INDF, GTANP, ECNOF

According to table 4.17 is presented the regression model is significant. The F significant value of p was determined to be less than 0.05. The model is useful in predicting how INDF, GTANP, and ECNOF affect tax compliance among SME taxpayers. As a result, the F value of 210.066 indicates that the model is compatible with the data. This demonstrates that the independent factors are effective predictors of tax compliance. furthermore, the overall regression model was significant, as illustrated in table 4.17, F (210.066) = 16.9, p<.001, R2 = 63%.

**Table 4.18 Coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.566	1.047		-.541	.589
	GTANP	-.041	.038	-.043	-1.068	.286
	ECNOF	.803	.055	.629	14.505	.000
	INDF	.341	.061	.254	5.580	.000

Dependent Variable: TCOMP

Table 4.18 showed the coefficients of the independent variables; the first independent variable (GTANP) negatively correlated with tax compliance and had an insignificant effect as showed its Unstandardized Coefficients and p values = -.041, 0.286 respectively. However, the last two variables, ECNOF, INDF were positively correlated with tax compliance and statistically significant as predicated Unstandardized Coefficient and p values .803, .341, 0.000, respectively.

#### 4.4 Discussions

This section summarized the study's significant findings based on the study's objectives; the general objective was to examine the factors affecting tax compliance among SME taxpayers in Mogadishu. Data was collected through a questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS software version 21. The study established the first hypothesis: "Socioeconomic Variables are more likely to affect tax compliance". The result showed that Socioeconomic Variables has a significant influence on tax compliance. This result aligns with Torgler (2007) and Erul(2020). The second hypothesis was "Trust in Government, and National Pride is more likely to affect tax compliance".

The result showed that Government and National Pride has an insignificant influence on tax compliance. Again, this result is divergent from Frey and Torgler (2007); Musimenta, Naigaga, Bananuka, & Najjuma (2019).

Furthermore, Bilgin (2014) discovered that national trust has a positive and significant influence on tax compliance. Ofori (2020) found the same result as investigated the Contribution of Tax Morale on tax Compliance of Micro and Small-Scale Enterprises in Ghana and revealed that trust in government and national pride negatively impacts tax compliance. Finally, the study examined the impact of an individual factor on tax compliance. The result showed that individual factor has a significant influence on tax compliance. Also, these results confirmed Etim, Umoffong, & Basse (2020) who investigated the relationship between the individual factor and tax compliance. Furthermore, Palil (2010) also supports this result for the investigation of tax knowledge and tax compliance determinants in the self-assessment system in Malaysia, that determinants included individual factors and found the same result for this study.

#### 5.1: Conclusion

The study concluded the relationship between tax morale and tax compliance by using determinants of tax morale affecting taxpayers' tax compliance among SMEs in Mogadishu using primary data through questionnaires. In addition, the study utilized descriptive, correlation and regression analysis to achieve research objectives. As a result, the overall determinants of tax morale significantly influence the tax compliance of SMEs in Mogadishu.

First, the study concluded that government trust and national pride have significantly and weak adverse effects on tax compliance. This result explained the low-level trust of government and national pride the higher of tax compliance. Also, the taxpayers believed the government's positive actions did not affect their tax compliance. Second, the study also found the socio-economic factors have a significant and positive impact on tax compliances. This means the increase of socio-economic factors leads to increased tax compliance.

Finally, the research found that individual factors have a significant and positive impact on tax compliance. This confirms that increasing the individual factor will increase tax compliance among SMEs. The taxpayer's judgment significantly depends on whether or not to pay taxes.

## 5.2 Recommendations

- Taxpayers should be encouraged to pay taxes regardless of their financial situation by giving tax incentives such as tax holidays to enhance their morale and encourage them to comply with the Self-Assessment System voluntarily.
- Tax authorities should continually warn taxpayers of the consequences of tax evasion and non-compliance, as well as the fines that will be imposed if they are found.
- In order to promote and improve compliance, tax authorities should assess tax rates regularly and make them as low as possible.
- The tax authority should actively engage with them to increase their knowledge capacity on taxation principles, not merely to equip them with the fundamental principles of tax returns but also to ensure that they can lower their costs while filing their returns. This increases their tax awareness and enhances their compliance level, reducing the instances of tax evasion.

## 5.3: Reference

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