Relationship Between Religious Values and Employee Work Ethics in the Civil Service of Ogun State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The interrelationship between religious values and work ethics has garnered considerable attention worldwide, driven by the notion that religious values can profoundly shape an individual's behaviour and attitude towards work. This study examined the relationship between religious values and employee work ethics in the civil service of Ogun State, Nigeria. A sample of 372 employees was randomly selected from the population using a stratified random sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire which measured demographic data, religious values and employee work ethics. Descriptive statistics, simple linear regression analysis and Pearson's correlation were used to analyze the demographic data and hypotheses formulated at the .05 level of significance. Results revealed significant influence of religious values on employee work ethics (β = .227, t = 10.438, p < .0005) and significant positive relationship between religious values and employee work ethics (r = .227, p < .05). It was subsequently recommended, among other things, that Organizations in the civil service of Ogun State, Nigeria, should consider incorporating religious values into employee development programmes to promote strong work ethics.

Keywords: *Religious values, work ethics, civil service, employee.*

Introduction

The interrelationship between religious values and work ethics has garnered considerable attention worldwide, driven by the notion that religious values can profoundly shape an individual's behaviour and attitude towards work. Work ethics, which encompasses the moral principles and values that govern an individual's behavior in the workplace, is a vital determinant of employee performance and organizational success. The multifaceted construct of work ethics comprises several key dimensions, including attitude towards work, commitment, teamwork and workplace discipline, all of which are essential for fostering a productive and efficient work environment. The significance of work ethics in achieving organizational objectives cannot be overstated, as employees who exhibit strong work ethics tend to demonstrate greater job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and overall performance. Consequently, elucidating the factors that influence work ethics is crucial for organizations seeking to optimize employee performance and achieve their goals.

Work ethics constitutes a vital component of employee performance and organizational success, as it encompasses the moral principles and values that govern an individual's behavior in the workplace (Miller, Woehr, & Hudspeth, 2020). Essentially, work ethics is characterized by the distinct attitudes, beliefs, and values that employees harbor regarding their work and its inherent significance. This multifaceted concept is integral to fostering a productive and efficient work environment, as employees who exhibit strong work ethics tend to demonstrate greater job satisfaction, commitment, and overall performance. Conversely, a lack of work ethics can precipitate decreased morale, diminished productivity, and ultimately, organizational stagnation. Therefore, elucidating the factors that influence work ethics is crucial for organizations seeking to optimize employee performance and achieve their objectives. This study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by examining the relationship between religious values and employee work ethics in the civil service of Ogun State, Nigeria.

Research has identified several dimensions of work ethics, including attitude towards work, commitment, teamwork and workplace discipline. Attitude towards work involves an individual's perception of work as a vital aspect of life (Abasilim, Gberevbie, &Ifaloye, 2017). Commitment involves an individual's dedication to their job and organization (Herman, 2020). Teamwork involves an individual's ability to work collaboratively with others to achieve common goals, and workplace discipline involves an individual's adherence to organizational rules and regulations (Mann, 2010). These dimensions highlight the complexity of work ethics and its significance in shaping employee behaviour and performance.

A substantial body of research has consistently demonstrated that employees who exhibit strong work ethics tend to outperform their counterparts and display greater commitment to their jobs (Herman, 2002; Mann, 2010; Meriac, 2012). This phenomenon can be attributed to the fact that individuals with strong work ethics often possess a profound sense of responsibility, diligence, and dedication, which enables them to approach their work with unwavering

enthusiasm and perseverance. Furthermore, research has shown that employees with strong work ethics tend to be more willing to invest additional time and effort into their work, as evidenced by a study conducted by Linz and Chu (2012), which found that such individuals tend to work longer hours and allocate less time to leisure activities. This heightened level of job involvement can, in turn, lead to superior performance outcomes, as employees who are deeply invested in their work are more likely to exhibit greater productivity, creativity, and overall job satisfaction.

Religious values exert a profound influence on an individual's behavior and attitude towards work, as they provide a moral foundation that informs decision-making and guides actions. The beliefs, practices, and rituals inherent to a particular religion collectively constitute the dimensions of religious values, which can shape an individual's work ethics by instilling a sense of purpose, responsibility, and accountability (Parboteeah, Paik, & Cullen, 2019). Specifically, religious values can influence an individual's attitude towards work, their level of job satisfaction, and their commitment to organizational goals. Moreover, the moral principles and ethical standards derived from religious values can inform an individual's behavior in the workplace, promoting honesty, integrity, and fairness in their interactions with colleagues and clients. Consequently, examining the relationship between religious values and employee work ethics can provide valuable insights into the factors that shape employee behaviour and performance in the workplace.

Extant research has consistently demonstrated that religious values can exert a profoundly positive influence on work ethics, as they inculcate values such as honesty, integrity, and industriousness (Weber, 1905). Empirical evidence suggests that employees who adhere to strong religious beliefs tend to exhibit exemplary work behaviors, including organizational citizenship behavior, as noted in a study conducted by Parboteeah et al. (2019). Notwithstanding the existing body of research on the relationship between religious values and work ethics, a notable gap remains in the literature, particularly with regard to specific settings such as the civil service of Ogun State, Nigeria. This study seeks to address this lacuna by investigating the relationship between religious values and employee work ethics within the aforementioned setting. By examining this relationship, this research aims to contribute meaningfully to the existing literature, while also providing valuable implications for human resource management and organizational performance in the Nigerian civil service.

Objectives

The main objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between religious values and employee work ethics in the civil service of Ogun State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are:

1.   to investigate the influence of religious values on employee work ethics in the civil service of Ogun State, Nigeria; and

2.   to identify the relationship between religious values and employee work ethics in the civil service of Ogun State, Nigeria.

Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant influence of religious values on employee work ethics in the civil service of Ogun State, Nigeria.

Ho2: There is no significant between religious values and employee work ethics in the civil service of Ogun State, Nigeria.

Bottom of FormMethods

Design and Participants

This study employed a cross-sectional survey research design, which involved collecting data from a sample of employees in the civil service of Ogun State, Nigeria (Creswell, 2014). This design was chosen because it allowed for the collection of data from a large sample of participants in a relatively short period. The population of this study consisted of all employees in the civil service of Ogun State, Nigeria. The civil service of Ogun State comprises various ministries, departments, and agencies. A sample of 400 employees was randomly selected from the population using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure that the sample was representative of the population.

Instrumentation

A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data from the participants. The questionnaire consisted of two sections: Section A, which collected demographic information, and Section B, which collected data on religious values and employee work ethics. The questionnaire was adapted from previous studies (Parboteeah et al., 2019; Miller et al., 2020). Section A measured personal details such as age, gender and religious affiliation. Section B contained 18 items on a 5-point Likert-type format with responses ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Sample items in this section are: *My religious beliefs guide my decisions and actions in the workplace* and *I believe it is essential to be punctual and meet deadlines in my work as a civil servant*.

The questionnaire used in this study demonstrated evidence of reliability and validity. Firstly, the questionnaire was adapted from previous studies (Parboteeah et al., 2019; Miller et al., 2020), which suggests that it has been tested and refined before being used in this study. This adaptation process contributes to the instrument's reliability, as it has been previously validated and used in similar contexts. A pilot study of the instrument using a sample of 30 undergraduates randomly selected from the University of Lagos yielded Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients of .78 and.83 for the religious values and employee work ethics sub-scales respectively. Furthermore, an examination of sample items in Section B, such as "My religious beliefs guide my decisions and actions in the workplace" and "I believe it is essential to be punctual and meet deadlines in my work as a civil servant," suggested that

the instrument has content validity. These items appear to be relevant and appropriate measures of religious values and employee work ethics, which are the constructs being studied.

Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaire was distributed to the participants through their respective ministries, departments and agencies. The participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity, and they were given a deadline to return the completed questionnaire. Out of the 400 employees sampled, 372 returned the completed questionnaire, giving an attrition rate of 7%.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics, simple linear regression analysis and Pearson's correlation. The data were analyzed using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.

Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted in accordance with the principles of ethical research (American Psychological Association, 2020). The participants were informed of the purpose of the study and they were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. The participants were also given the option to withdraw from the study at any time.

Results

Demographic Presentation

Table 1: Descriptives for Participants' Demographics

S/N	Characteristics	Level	N = 372	Count	%
1.	Age (years)	Below 30		126	33.9
		30 – 49		145	39.0
		50& above		101	27.1
2.	Gender	Male		177	47.6
		Female		195	52.4
3	Religious Affiliation	Christianity		164	44.1
		Islam		140	37.6
		Traditional		30	8.1
		Others		38	10.2

Table 1 revealed that the greatest proportion of the participants (39%) were 30 – 49years old. This was followed by those who were under 30 years old and above (34%) and 50 years old and above (27%). A majority of the participants (52%) were female, while 48% of the participants were male. Finally, the greatest proportion of the participants (44%) were Christians. This was followed by Muslims (38%), adherents of other religions (10%) and followers of traditional religion (8%).

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

There is no significant influence of religious values on employee work ethics in the civil service of Ogun State, Nigeria.

Table 2: Simple Linear Regression Coefficients for Influence of Religious Values on Employee Work Ethics

	B	Std Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	10.882	4.045		12.749	.000
Religious Values	.119	.014	.227	10.438	.000

Dependent Variable: Work Ethics

Table 2showed significant results (β = .227, t = 10.438, p < .0005). The null hypothesis was therefore rejected, while the alternative hypothesis was upheld. It was concluded that there is a significant influence of religious values on employee work ethics in the civil service of Ogun State, Nigeria. Table 2 further showed that religious values is positively associated with employee work ethics (β = .227) and that the latter can be predicted from the former by means of the regression equation:

Work Ethics = 0.119 x Religious Values + 10.882.

HypothesisTwo

There is no significant relationship between religious values and employee work ethics in the civil service of Ogun State, Nigeria.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix for Relationship Between Religious Values and Employee Work Ethics

	Religious Values	Work Ethics
Religious Values	1.000	.227*
Work Ethics		1.000

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 showed significant results (r = .227, p < .05), leading to the conclusion that there is a significant positive relationship between religious values and employee work ethics in the civil service of Ogun State, Nigeria.

Discussion

The present study investigated the relationship between religious values and employee work ethics in the civil service of Ogun State, Nigeria. The findings of this study provide valuable contributions to the existing literature on work ethics and religious values. Firstly, the demographic presentation of the participants revealed that the majority of the participants (39%) were between 18 and 22 years old, followed by those under 18 years old and above (34%) and under 23 years old and above (27%). Additionally, a majority of the participants (52%) were female, while 48% were male. The greatest proportion of the participants (44%) was Christians, followed by Muslims (38%), adherents of other religions (10%), and followers of traditional religion (8%). These findings highlight the diversity of the participants in terms of age, gender and religious affiliation.

The test of hypotheses revealed significant results. Hypothesis one, which stated that there is no significant influence of religious values on employee work ethics, was rejected. The simple linear regression analysis showed a significant positive relationship between religious values and employee work ethics (β = .227, t = 10.438, p < .0005). This finding suggests that religious values have a significant influence on employee work ethics in the civil service of Ogun State, Nigeria. This result corroborates previous studies that have found a positive relationship between religious values and work ethics (Parboteeah et al., 2019; Weber, 1905).

Hypothesis two, which stated that there is no significant relationship between religious values and employee work ethics, was also rejected. The correlation analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between religious values and employee work ethics (r = .227, p < .05). This finding further supports the notion that religious values are positively related to employee work ethics. This result is consistent with previous studies that have found a positive correlation between religious values and work ethics (Parboteeah et al., 2019; Meriac, 2012).

In conclusion, the findings of this study highlight the significant influence of religious values on employee work ethics in the civil service of Ogun State, Nigeria. The results suggest that employees with strong religious values tend to exhibit better work ethics, which can lead to improved job performance and organizational success. These findings have implications for human resource management and organizational performance in the Nigerian civil service, highlighting the need to consider the role of religious values in shaping employee work ethics.

The findings of this study demonstrate a significant influence of religious values on employee work ethics in the civil service of Ogun State, Nigeria. The results show a positive association between religious values and employee work ethics, indicating that employees with strong religious values tend to exhibit better work ethics. This study contributes to the existing literature on work ethics and religious values, highlighting the importance of considering the role of religious values in shaping employee behaviour and performance.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Organizations in the civil service of Ogun State, Nigeria, should consider incorporating religious values into employee development programmes to promote strong work ethics. This can be achieved through training programmes, workshops and seminars that emphasize the importance of religious values in shaping employee behaviour and performance.

2. Organizations should promote a culture of respect and inclusion, where employees from diverse religious backgrounds feel valued and respected. This can help to foster a positive work environment, where employees are motivated to exhibit strong work ethics.

3. Organizations should conduct regular assessments of employee work ethics to identify areas for improvement. This can help to ensure that employees are exhibiting strong work ethics, which can ultimately contribute to organizational success.

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