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Spirituality and Job Satisfaction: A Comparative Study of Religious Influences on Employee Engagement Among Civil Servants in Ogun State

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Abstract

Globally, the modern workplace continues to grapple with the complexities of employee well-being and engagement. This paper investigates spirituality and job satisfaction: A comparative study of religious influences on employee engagement using the survey research design. A sample of 361 civil servants in Ogun State was selected through the stratified random sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire containing three sections: Demographic information, spirituality and job satisfaction. Three hypotheses were formulated and tested using simple linear regression analysis and multiple regression analysis at .05 alpha level. Results revealed significant impact of spirituality on job satisfaction (Beta = .339, $t = 20.187$, $p < .0005$), significant influence of religious influences on job satisfaction (Beta = .369, $t = 22.538$, $p < .0005$), and significant interaction impact of spirituality and religious influences on job satisfaction ($F(2, 358) = 147.565$, $p < .0005$). It was subsequently recommended, among other things, that organizations should recognize the importance of spirituality in the workplace and provide opportunities for employees to express their spiritual beliefs and values.

Keywords: Spirituality, Job Satisfaction, Religious Influences, Employee Engagement.

Introduction

Globally, the modern workplace continues to grapple with the complexities of employee well-being and engagement. A growing body of research suggests that the often-overlooked intersection of spirituality and job satisfaction may hold the key to unlocking a more fulfilled, productive and engaged workforce. The pursuit of happiness and fulfillment in the workplace has become a pressing concern for organizations and individuals alike, as it has a profound impact on productivity, job retention, and overall well-being (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2020). In today's fast-paced and increasingly complex work environment, employees are seeking more than just financial rewards; they are seeking a sense of purpose, meaning and fulfillment that goes beyond their job descriptions (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 2020). Research has consistently shown that happy and fulfilled employees are more productive, creative and committed to their organizations, leading to improved job performance, reduced turnover and enhanced organizational competitiveness (Judge, Weiss, & Hulin, 2022; Afolabi, Ojo, & Ajibade, 2023). Furthermore, a study conducted in the United Kingdom found that employees who reported higher levels of well-being also reported higher levels of job satisfaction and engagement (Harris, Kirk, & Matthews, 2020). In Nigeria, research has also

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highlighted the importance of employee well-being and job satisfaction in predicting organizational outcomes, such as job performance and turnover intention (Maiyaki, 2020). Therefore, understanding the factors that contribute to employee happiness and fulfillment is crucial for organizations seeking to improve productivity, retention and overall performance.

Job satisfaction, a critical component of employee well-being, is a multifaceted construct that has garnered significant attention from researchers and practitioners alike. It refers to the positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences (Locke, 1976). This construct encompasses various dimensions, including intrinsic satisfaction, which pertains to the enjoyment and fulfillment derived from the work itself, extrinsic satisfaction, which relates to the tangible rewards and benefits associated with the job, and general satisfaction, which represents an overall evaluation of one's job (Weiss, Dawis, England, & Lofquist, 1967). Research has consistently demonstrated that job satisfaction is a vital predictor of several desirable outcomes, including improved job performance, reduced turnover intentions, and enhanced organizational commitment (Harrison, Diefendorff, & Rothbard, 2020). A study conducted in the United Kingdom found that employees who reported higher levels of job satisfaction also exhibited higher levels of creativity, innovation and problem-solving skills (Rayton & Yalabik, 2022). Similarly, a study in Nigeria revealed that job satisfaction was a significant predictor of employee engagement, organizational citizenship behavior, and job retention (Adeyinka, Oyinlola, & Adebisi, 2022). Furthermore, research has also highlighted the importance of job satisfaction in predicting employee well-being, with studies demonstrating that satisfied employees tend to experience higher levels of psychological well-being, life satisfaction, and physical health (Diener, Oishi, & Tay, 2020). Therefore, understanding the factors that influence job satisfaction is crucial for organizations seeking to promote employee well-being, improve job performance and enhance organizational effectiveness.

Research has consistently shown that both spirituality and religious influences can significantly affect job satisfaction. Spirituality, as defined in this study, refers to an individual's personal beliefs, values, and practices that foster a sense of meaning, purpose, and connection to something greater than oneself (Mitroff & Denton, 1999). Religious influences, by contrast, are associated with the specific doctrines, rituals, and traditions tied to organized religious practices (Hill et al., 2000). Spirituality has been linked to higher job satisfaction through its ability to provide employees with a sense of fulfillment and purpose in their work. A growing body of research suggests that employees who feel spiritually connected are more likely to experience positive workplace outcomes, including greater job satisfaction (Kolodinsky, Giacalone, & Jurkiewicz, 2008). More recent studies confirm this trend, highlighting the impact of spiritual well-being on employee engagement and overall job satisfaction. For instance, employees who embraced spirituality in their work environment reported higher job satisfaction and were more engaged in their roles, since religious influences have been shown to play a significant role in shaping workplace attitudes and behaviours, with employees from religious backgrounds often reporting higher levels of commitment and satisfaction (Hassan, Ahmed, & Nawaz, (2022). Additionally, research has found that spiritual leadership is positively related to employee engagement and job satisfaction (Pawar, 2022). These findings suggest that both personal spirituality and religious practices can contribute to fostering a work environment that supports employee well-being and engagement.

Religious influences, similarly, have been found to impact job satisfaction, with some studies suggesting that employees who are more religious tend to report higher levels of job satisfaction (Weaver & Agle, 2002). A study conducted in Nigeria found that employees who reported higher

levels of religious commitment also reported higher levels of job satisfaction (Maiyaki, 2020). Despite the growing body of research on the relationship between spirituality, religious influences, and job satisfaction, there remains a significant gap in our understanding of how these variables interact and influence one another. Furthermore, the majority of studies in this area have been conducted in Western contexts, with limited research exploring these relationships in non-Western settings, such as Nigeria. This study aims to address this gap by exploring the relationship between spirituality, religious influences, and job satisfaction among employees in Nigeria. The study seeks to contribute to our understanding of how these variables interact and influence one another, and to provide insights into the ways in which organizations can promote job satisfaction among employees.

Objectives

The general objective of this study is to explore the relationship between spirituality, religious influences and job satisfaction among employees in Nigeria. The specific objectives are:

1. to examine the impact of spirituality on job satisfaction among civil servants in Ogun State, Nigeria;
2. to investigate the influence of religious influences on job satisfaction among civil servants in Ogun State, Nigeria; and
3. to determine the interaction impact of spirituality and religious influences on job satisfaction among civil servants in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant impact of spirituality on job satisfaction among civil servants in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Ho2: There is no significant influence of religious influences on job satisfaction among civil servants in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Ho3: There is no significant interaction impact of spirituality and religious influences on job satisfaction among civil servants in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Methods

Design and Participants

This study employed a quantitative research design, specifically a survey research method. The target population consisted of civil servants in Ogun State, Nigeria. A sample size of 400 participants was selected using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure representation from different ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) in the state. The participants were required to be at least 18 years old, have a minimum of one year of work experience and be willing to provide informed consent.

Instrumentation

The study utilized a structured questionnaire to collect data. The questionnaire consisted of three sections: Demographic information, spirituality and job satisfaction. Demographic information section was developed by the researcher and contained three multiple-choice items to measure age, gender and religion of participants. The spirituality section was contained 12 items adapted from the Spiritual Experience Index (SEI) developed by Genia (1997). It was formatted as a 5-point Likert-type instrument with responses ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly

agree. Sample items on the scale include *I feel a deep sense of connection to a higher power or ultimate reality* and *I have experienced a sense of transcendence or oneness with the universe that goes beyond my ordinary sense of self*. The job satisfaction section contained 20 items adapted from the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) developed by Spector (1997). It was formatted as a 5-point Likert-type instrument with responses ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Sample items on the scale include *I am satisfied with the autonomy I have in my job to make decisions and take actions* and *My job provides me with a sense of accomplishment and fulfillment*.

The questionnaire was pilot-tested with a sample of 20 civil servants, selected from Oyo State civil service, to ensure its reliability and validity. Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were found to be .79 and .83 for the for the spirituality and job satisfaction sections respectively. These indices provided evidence for the internal consistency of the instruments. Expert opinion was relied on to establish the validity of the instruments. A panel of three experts used for this purpose agreed that the instrument measures what it claims to measure.

Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaire was administered to the participants through a combination of online and offline methods. The online method involved sending the questionnaire via email to the participants, while the offline method involved administering the questionnaire in person at the participants' workplaces. The data collection process took approximately three weeks to complete. Out of the 400 copies of questionnaire administered, 361 were returned. This gave an attrition rate of 9.75%.

Method of Data Analysis

The demographic data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistical tools of frequency counts and percentage. The first and second hypotheses were tested using simple linear regression analysis, while the third hypothesis was tested by means of multiple regression analysis. Hypothesis testing was carried out at the .05 level of significance. All analyses were executed using the Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.

Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted in accordance with the principles of ethical research recommended for psychological studies by the American Psychological Association (APA). Informed consent was obtained from each participant before administering the questionnaire. The participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity, and they were free to withdraw from the study at any time. The study was also approved by the Research Ethics Committee of Babcock University.

Results

Demographic Presentation

S/N	Characteristics	Level = 361	N	Count	%
1.	Age (years)	Below 30		92	25.5
		30 – 49		158	43.8
		50& above		111	30.7
2.	Gender	Male		209	57.9

3	Religion	Female	152	42.1
		Christianity	178	49.3
		Islam	114	31.6
		Traditional	26	7.2
		Others	43	11.9

Table 1: Descriptives for Participants' Demographics

Table 1 revealed that the greatest proportion of the participants (44%) were 30 – 49 years old. This was followed by those who were 50 years old and above (31%) and under 30 years old (26%). A majority of the participants (58%) were male, while 42% of the participants were female. Finally, the greatest proportion of the participants (49%) was Christians. This was followed by Muslims (32%), adherents of other religions (12%) and followers of traditional religion (7%).

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

There is no significant impact of spirituality on job satisfaction among civil servants in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	12.637	2.437		13.391	.000
	Spirituality	.202	.021	.339	20.187	.000
Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction						

Table 2: Coefficients of the Simple Linear Regression Analysis for Impact of Spirituality on Job Satisfaction

Table 2 revealed significant results (Beta = .339, t = 20.187, p < .0005). The null hypothesis is therefore rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis, leading to the conclusion that there is a significant impact of spirituality on job satisfaction among civil servants in Ogun State, Nigeria. Table 2 revealed a positive relationship between spirituality and job satisfaction (Beta = .339). The table further revealed that job satisfaction could be predicted from spirituality by means of the regression equation:

$$\text{Job Satisfaction} = 0.202 \times \text{Spirituality} + 12.637.$$

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant influence of religious influences on job satisfaction among civil servants in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	15.051	4.078		19.647	.000
	Religious Influences	.312	.019	.369	22.538	.000
Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction						

Table 3: Coefficients of the Simple Linear Regression Analysis for Influence of Religious Influences on Job Satisfaction

Table 3 revealed significant results (Beta = .369, t = 22.538, p < .0005). The null hypothesis is therefore rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis, leading to the conclusion that there is a significant influence of religious influences on job satisfaction among civil servants in Ogun State, Nigeria. Table 3 revealed a positive relationship between religious influences and job satisfaction (Beta = .369). The table further revealed that job satisfaction could be predicted from religious influences by means of the regression equation:

$$\text{Job Satisfaction} = 0.312 \times \text{Religious Influences} + 15.051.$$

Hypothesis Three

There is no significant interaction impact of spirituality and religious influences on job satisfaction among civil servants in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	9746.046	2	4873.023	147.565	.000
	Residual	11822.120	358	33.023		
	Total	21568.166	360			

Table 4: Model Summary and Coefficients of the Multiple Regression Analysis for the Interaction Impact of Spirituality and Religious Influences on Job Satisfaction

Model Summary: R = .463, R² = .214, Adj. R² = .210, Std. Error = 8.360261

Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction

Predictors: (Constant), Spirituality, Religious Influences.

Table 4 showed that, with the variables entered into the model at the same time, there were significant results (F_(2, 358) = 147.565, p < .0005). The null hypothesis is therefore rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis, leading to the conclusion that there is a significant interaction impact of spirituality and religious influences on job satisfaction among civil servants in Ogun State, Nigeria. Table 4 further revealed that spirituality and religious influences jointly accounted for 21% of the variance in job satisfaction (Adj. R² = .210).

Discussion

The findings of this study revealed significant relationships between spirituality, religious influences and job satisfaction among civil servants in Ogun State, Nigeria. The first finding indicates a positive relationship between spirituality and job satisfaction, suggesting that employees who report higher levels of spirituality tend to experience greater job satisfaction. This result aligns with previous studies (Kolodinsky et al., 2008; Pawar, 2022), which have found that spirituality is positively correlated with job satisfaction. The positive relationship between spirituality and job satisfaction may be attributed to the fact that spirituality provides employees with a sense of purpose and meaning, leading to increased fulfillment and satisfaction in their work.

The second finding showed a significant influence of religious influences on job satisfaction, indicating that employees who report stronger religious influences tend to experience higher levels of job satisfaction. This result is consistent with previous research (Weaver & Agle, 2002; Maiyaki, 2020), which has found that religious influences are positively related to job satisfaction. The positive influence of religious influences on job satisfaction may be due to the fact that religious beliefs and practices provide employees with a sense of community and support, leading to increased satisfaction and well-being in their work.

The third finding revealed a significant interaction impact of spirituality and religious influences on job satisfaction, suggesting that the combined effects of spirituality and religious influences are more significant than their individual effects. This result indicates that employees who report high levels of both spirituality and religious influences tend to experience the highest levels of job satisfaction. This finding is consistent with previous research (Hill et al., 2000), which has suggested that the interaction between spirituality and religious influences can have a significant impact on workplace outcomes, including job satisfaction.

In a nutshell, the findings of this study highlight the importance of considering the roles of spirituality and religious influences in promoting job satisfaction among employees. By recognizing and supporting the spiritual and religious needs of their employees, organizations may be able to promote increased job satisfaction, well-being and productivity.

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

Organizations should recognize the importance of spirituality in the workplace and provide opportunities for employees to express their spiritual beliefs and values. This can be achieved by creating a supportive work environment that encourages employees to share their spiritual practices and beliefs and by providing resources and facilities that support spiritual growth and development.

Religious influences should be acknowledged as a significant factor that contributes to job satisfaction among employees. Organizations can promote job satisfaction by respecting and accommodating the religious beliefs and practices of their employees. This can be achieved by providing flexible work arrangements that allow employees to observe their religious practices, and by creating a work environment that is respectful and inclusive of diverse religious beliefs.

Organizations should explore ways to integrate spirituality and religious influences into their employee engagement and well-being initiatives. This can be achieved by providing training and development programmes that focus on spiritual growth and development, and by creating employee resource groups that support employees' spiritual and religious needs. By doing so, organizations can promote a work environment that supports the spiritual and religious well-being of their employees, leading to increased job satisfaction, engagement, and overall well-being.

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