

Influence of Religiosity on Turnover Intention: Empirical Evidence from Selected Employees in Lagos and Ogun States

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of employees' religiosity on their turnover intentions. The ex-post facto research design and the convenient sampling technique were employed in this study. A hundred and forty-nine (149) employees in Lagos and Ogun States of Nigeria were sampled as the study participants. The participants were between the ages of 18 and 56 years; with forty-three percent (43%) as males and fifty-seven percent (57%) as females. Three hypotheses were raised and tested. The result revealed a significant negative relationship between intrinsic religiosity and turnover intention ($r = -.233, p < 0.01$) and a significant positive relationship between extrinsic religiosity and turnover intention ($r = .256, p < 0.01$). Although the result revealed that intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity jointly influenced turnover intentions ($R^2 = .118, F(2,123) = 8.250, p < .01$), intrinsic religiosity dimension was found to contribute negatively to employees' turnover intentions ($\beta = -.233, p < .01$) while extrinsic religiosity was found to contribute positively to turnover intentions ($\beta = .253, p < 0.01$). This study concluded that religiosity influences employees' turnover intentions; it further asserts that intrinsically religious employees would experience reduced turnover intention, while extrinsically religious employees would experience increased turnover intentions. To this end, it was recommended that intrinsic religiosity should be encouraged in the work milieu within the limits of acceptable work ethics.

Keywords: *Intrinsic Religiosity, Extrinsic Religiosity, Turnover Intention, Lagos, Ogun*

Introduction

Human behaviour is determined by his beliefs, expectations, values and other mental perceptions (Allameh, Amiri, & Asadi, 2011). Similarly, many employee behaviours may be linked to their values and belief system (Sanoubar & Moghadam, 2013). Osman-Gani, Hashim and Ismail (2010) opined that religious beliefs have the potential to exert significant influence on individuals' decision making and behaviour. Much of Africans' belief system is rooted in religion.

Religion is a central aspect of African culture and may be viewed as having tremendous effect on behaviours in different contexts. The

term religiosity is used to describe individual's adherence or loyalty to the tenets of his/her religion. Religiosity has been found to exert significant influence on positive workplace behaviours (Khalid, Rahman & Madar, 2013). According to Roundy (2009), the hallmark of most religions is the selfless demonstration of good deeds. For instance, Obaid (2005) as cited in Salam and Agil (2012) asserted that the principles of Islam serve as a code of conduct for its adherents particularly in the workplace. While religiosity may help to promote desirable work behaviours, one may infer that it would help to prevent negative work behaviours like turnover intention.

Religiosity has been found to be positively related to positive work behaviours and attitude (Affeldt & MacDonald, 2010). It has also been suggested that a link exists between religiosity and negative work behaviours like turnover intentions (Hassan, Mohammad, Mohd, Rozilah & Ali, 2015). However, there is a need for more empirical evidence to support these assertions. Therefore this study concentrates on investigating the relationship between the dimensions of religiosity and turnover intentions.

Statement of Objectives

- i. To determine the relationship between turnover intentions and the dimensions of religiosity
- ii. To establish the influence of religiosity on turnover intention

Research Hypotheses

- H1** There will be a significant positive relationship between extrinsic religiosity and turnover intention
- H2** There will be a significant negative relationship between intrinsic religiosity and turnover intention
- H3** The dimensions of religiosity will significantly influence turnover intention

Literature review

Religiosity

Roundy (2009) affirmed that most religions implore their adherents to engage in various forms of good works or services. Park and Smith (2000) described religiosity as the demonstration of the value attached to one's faith. Allport and Ross (1967) proposed religiosity as extrinsic religiosity and intrinsic religiosity as the two dimensions of religiosity. According to Allport and Ross (1967), extrinsic religiosity and intrinsic religiosity are mutually exclusive. Each dimension of religiosity impacts human behaviour

differently. Extrinsically religious individuals demonstrate adherence to the tenets of their religion just for the attached benefits. In this case, religion is a means to an end. For extrinsically religious individual, membership of a religious group serves such purposes as: social approval, well-being and enhanced social status among others. Conversely, intrinsically religious individuals are involved in religious activities based on personal conviction, internalised values and belief system. In this case, intrinsically religious individuals are devoted to their religion and the common good. Religion for this category of persons is a lifestyle. It what they live for and profess. While the "self" is central to the extrinsically religious person, "others" are central to the intrinsically religious persons.

Turnover Intention

Turnover intention may be defined as employees' decision and willingness to quit the organization. It precedes actual turnover and therefore may be used to predict actual labour turnover. Turnover refers to employees' disengagement from their organisation either voluntarily or involuntarily. According to Price and Mueller, (1981), voluntary turnover occurs when employees decide to leave the services of an organisation for better offers or opportunities; while involuntary turnover occurs when an organisation dismisses employees because they no longer require their services.

Voluntary turnover is detrimental to organisational success and has been the focus of industrial and organization psychologists and other organisational behaviour experts. There is a desperate need to check the constant loss of organisations' priced workforce in order ensure the survival and effectiveness of such organisations. Past studies have suggested factors like age, gender, tenure,

designation, experience, compensation, education, nature of employment are predictors of turnover intentions of employees in the organization. Other factors that may be implicated in employee turnover include perceived organisational justice; perceived leadership style; job satisfaction among others.

Religiosity and Turnover Intention

Past studies have attempted to link religiosity with workplace behaviours (McGhee & Grant, 2008; Roundy 2009). However, there exists a dearth of empirical literature on the influence of religiosity on negative work behaviours like turnover intentions. Weaver and Agle (2002) posited that individuals internalize religious role expectations as a religious self-identity; and this may in turn influence their ethical behaviour or values. In other words, intrinsic religiosity exerts influence on individual’s values and good conduct. On the contrary, extrinsically religious employees see their duties within the organisation as transactional, and act to safeguard their personal interests

and goals. It may then be expected that intrinsically religious employees would be less likely to have turnover intentions when compared to extrinsically religious employees. Similarly, Allen and Meyer (1996) found that religiosity has the strongest influence on affective commitment which is evident in its effect on work experiences such as the perceived goals and values of the organization and employees’ feelings of membership in an organization. This would have negative effect on turnover intentions.

Zafar, Altaf, Bagram and Hussain (n.d) found that religiosity influence banking employees’ switching intention. Oler (2004) found that worship service attendance influenced work attitudes of directors and employees. On the contrary, Hassan, *et al* (2015) found that no significant relationship between religious calling and turnover intention. Based on the review literature, there is a need for empirical evidence on the relationship between religiosity and turnover intention. The proposed relationship is depicted in figure 1:

Conceptual model



Fig.1: A conceptual model of the influence of religiosity on turnover intention

Method

The ex-post facto research design and the convenient sampling technique were employed in this study. A total of two hundred and six questionnaires were administered to non-managerial employees from service and

manufacturing organisations in Lagos State and Ogun State of Nigeria. Only one hundred and forty-four (144) correctly completed questionnaires were analysed. The participants included sixty-six (66) males and seventy-eight (78) females between the ages of

eighteen (18) and fifty six (56) years.

Religiosity was measured using 20 item adapted Religious Orientation Scale (ROS) originally developed by Allport and Ross (1967). This scale is divided into two sub scales: extrinsic religious orientation with 11 items and the intrinsic religious orientation with 9 items measured on a 5-point Likert format (1 = strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree). The wording of the items for this scale was adapted to accommodate the context of the present study. Coefficient alpha was reported to be above .80 for intrinsic religious orientation and over .70 for extrinsic religious orientation (Donahue, 1985). Specifically, Khalid, et al (2013) reported a cronbach alpha of .78 for intrinsic religiosity dimension and .80 for the extrinsic religiosity dimension. For the Nigerian context, Olowookere (2015) reported a Cronbach alpha of .75 for Religious Orientation Scale (ROS), .76 for the intrinsic religiosity dimension and .82 for the extrinsic religiosity dimension.

Turnover Intention was measured using a six item turnover intention scale (TIS-6) which was adapted from the 15-item scale originally developed by Roodt (2004) as cited in Bothma and Roodt (2013). The scale is scored on a 5

point Likert format ranging from Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree to Strongly Disagree. The TIS-6 was reported to have a cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of .80.

Results

Table 1 revealed the result of Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis used to test hypothesis one and two. Hypothesis one and two were confirmed. The result shows that extrinsic religiosity was positively related to turnover intention ($r=.256, p<0.01$) while intrinsic religiosity was negatively related to turnover intention ($r= -.233, p<0.01$).

H₁ There will be a significant positive relationship between extrinsic religiosity and turnover intention

H₂ There will be a significant negative relationship between intrinsic religiosity and turnover intention

Table 1: Correlations among variables

Variables	1	2	3
1. Intrinsic Religiosity	1		
2. Extrinsic Religiosity	-.012	1	
3. Turnover Intention	-.233**	.256**	1

Correlation is significant at * $p<.05$ and ** $p<.01$

The implication of this result is that as employees become more intrinsically religious, they have the likelihood to experience decreased turnover intentions. Likewise, as they become more extrinsically religious, they have the likelihood to

experience increased turnover intentions. Multiple regression analysis was used to further examine the influence of these dimensions of religiosity on turnover intention. This was the basis for stating and testing hypothesis three.

H₃ The dimensions of religiosity will significantly influence turnover intention. The result of multiple regression analysis in Table 2 confirmed hypothesis three. The result showed that intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity jointly accounted for 11.8% variance in turnover intentions ($R^2 = .118$, $F (2,123) =$

8.250, $p < .01$). Further, intrinsic religiosity dimension was found to contribute negatively to employees' turnover intentions ($\beta = -.233$, $p < .01$) while extrinsic religiosity was found to contribute positively to turnover intentions ($\beta = .253$, $p < .01$). Hence, both intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity influenced turnover intentions.

Table 2: Multiple regression analysis showing the joint prediction of Intrinsic Religiosity and Extrinsic Religiosity on Turnover Intention

	R	R²	F	P	β	t	Sig.
Constant						5.197	.000
	.344	.118	8.250	<.01			
Intrinsic Religiosity					-.233	-2.713	.008
Extrinsic Religiosity					.253	2.989	.003

Beta weights (β) is an indication of the expected change (increase or decrease) in the dependent variable in standard deviation units, when there is one standard deviation increase in an independent variable with all other independent variables held constant. Accordingly, turnover intention is expected to decrease by .233 as intrinsic religiosity ($\beta = -.233$, $p < .01$) increases by one standard deviation. Conversely, turnover intention is expected to increase by .253 as extrinsic religiosity ($\beta = .253$, $p < .01$) increases by one standard deviation. By implication, intrinsic religiosity decreases turnover intentions while extrinsic religiosity increases turnover intentions.

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendation

This study found intrinsic religiosity to be negatively related to turnover intention and extrinsic religiosity to be positively related to turnover intention. Although both dimensions jointly influenced turnover intentions, intrinsic religiosity contributed negatively to changes in turnover intentions while extrinsic religiosity contributed positively to changes in turnover

intentions. This means that while intrinsic religious orientation reduces turnover intentions; extrinsic religious orientation increases turnover intentions. These findings are compatible with the assertions of Allport and Ross (1967) who described intrinsic religiosity as the internalization of the principles of one's religion and making it a lifestyle; and extrinsic religiosity as instrumental and transactional. When things go as envisaged, extrinsically religious individuals will remain in the organisation but they are very likely to leave when the goings are not in their favour. This finding contradicts the report of Hassan, *et al* (2015) who found religiosity to exert no significant effect on turnover intentions.

Adetunji (2013) described Nigerians as very religious people, which may to a large extent explain their resilience even in the face of adverse political, social and economic hardship. Intrinsic religiosity strengthens the resolve of religious adherents; it makes them develop resilience and long suffering in times of distress. Intrinsically religious employees believe they are working for God and not man;

and that God would bountifully reward their hard work, patience and perseverance (Olowookere, 2015). This study concluded that intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity influence employees' turnover intentions in opposite directions. It further asserts that intrinsically religious employees would experience reduced turnover intention, while extrinsically religious employees would experience increased turnover intentions. To this end, it was recommended that intrinsic religiosity should be encouraged in the workplace through flexible work culture and policies. Organisations should endeavour to promote intrinsic religiosity by adhering to the following suggestions:

1. Respect and promote personal and corporate values
2. Allow for flexibility in work schedules to allow employees' meet religious obligations within the limits of work ethics.
3. Incorporate standardized assessments of intrinsic religiosity in the recruitment process
4. Approve the qualities of intrinsic religiosity

Religiosity in the workplace is no longer viewed as a taboo because studies have shown that employees perform at their best when they bring their whole being (spirit, soul and body) to work. As noted by Morgan (2001), gone are the days when employees leave their religious beliefs outside the gate of the workplace; these days, employees come to work with their religious beliefs which underlies their work behaviours. It is therefore imperative that employers promote intrinsic religiosity among their employees in order to enjoy the attached benefits. Furthermore, this study recommended that turnover intentions in the Nigerian context be compared to other parts of the world to further situate the influence of religiosity. Finally this study should be

replicated across contexts to further validate the relationship between religiosity and turnover intentions among employees.

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