



Influence of Religious Affiliation on the Observance of Civil Service Work Ethics in Osun State

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Abstract

Ethical behaviour for civil servants worldwide is proxied by codes of discipline, loyalty, honesty, courage, cooperation, tact or skilfulness, and kindness, among others. These are behavioural codes any religion should ensure. What is observable in many states of Nigeria raises curiosity on the expected complementary roles of religion and work ethics among civil servants, despite the noble level of religiosity in the country. This study, therefore, set out to, examine the level of awareness of work ethics in the civil service of Osun State; and determine the influence of the religious affiliation on the observance of civil service work ethics. A sample of 337 males and 217 females was drawn proportionally from six core ministries namely: Education, Finance, Agriculture, Works and Transportation, Health and Environment of the Osun State Civil Service. A semi-structured questionnaire was employed as instrument to collect data. The analysis of data was done using percentages, chi-square and multinomial logit model. The univariate analysis was employed to measure interaction effects of demographic variables. The results showed that there was high level of awareness of work ethics among the three categories of staff in the civil service of Osun State; 96.7% of the Officers, 96.1% of General duty staff and all the Technical officers were aware of and knowledgeable about the work ethics required in the discharge of their duties. The results also revealed that civil servants who were Muslims tend to prefer high observance of work ethics relative to their Christian colleagues when other factors were held constant. The study concluded that religious affiliation of civil servants has no significant influence on their observance of work ethics.

Keywords: Civil service, Religious affiliation, Work ethics

Introduction

Civil servants, in some cases, interpret their level of observance of work ethics in relation to their religious beliefs; thereby ending the contradiction between faith and work. This tends to suggest that religion influences the many different areas of a person's life, such as family, politics and gender roles (Cherlin, 2009; Edgell, 2006; Davidman, 2001 & Legee, 1993). Individuals, no doubt, choose their religion leading them to its practice by placing significant efforts on certain work values that are salient to them. The civil service as a bureaucratic organisation defines work

responsibilities very clearly with the advantage of letting everyone understand what is expected of them. This becomes imperative as individuals might swerve off the expected terrain of conduct, probably because of personal or exogenous reasons. Even though ethics are gaining prominence in the discourse about governance in recent times, there seem to be pieces of evidence of declining standards in public life. Ethical lapses most times have constituted a substantial impediment to economic development in Nigeria. This raises concerns about the costs of misconduct of those who are charged with the responsibility of

guarding public interest and resources. These costs, most times, result in losses in precious resources which are meant to support the economic and social developments of nations and peoples (Eze, 2017; Adegrooye, 2005).

It is significant to note that religion, as well as religious institutions, play a prominent role in the society; and particularly, in the workplace. Mention must be made that civil servants do not leave their religion at the entrance to their place of work, it is integral to their lives. Religion in the workplace, for example, the civil service, therefore, seems to have become a major concern to scholars of corporate ethics. The influence of religion on work ethics has not been fully explored and in particular the relationship between religious affiliation and the level of observance of work ethics among civil servants as a specific type of study. Therefore, efforts will be made towards examining the impact of religion on the observance of work ethics in the civil service, using Osun State of Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarifications:

The Civil Service

The civil service can be defined as the administrative bureaucracy occupying an important place in the political system of many nations (Anazodo, Okoye & Chukwuemeka, 2012). The new Encyclopedia Britannica (2004) defined civil service as the body of government officials who are usually employed in civil occupations, but they are neither political nor judicial. In a similar vein, the Encarta World Dictionary (1999) defined the civil service as an employment system that is structured on hiring, retaining and promoting employees on their qualifications and ability to work. It can also be viewed as a branch of government service wherein individuals are employed based on professional merit as proven by competitive examinations (Nyameh & James, 2013). This implies that due process receives prominent attention while recruiting into the civil service.

Agbodike, Asawe, Igbokwe-Ibeto (2015) also indicated that the term civil service is used to refer to the body of men and women employed in a civil capacity, to faithfully implement government decisions and enjoy the security of tenure of office till retirement. This suggests that the critical contributions of the civil service

towards ensuring rapid development cannot be overemphasised. Therefore, efficient and effective management of the civil service becomes highly essential especially towards sustaining the socio-economic development of a nation, particularly, the developing nations.

The Concept of Work Ethics

According to Aniele, (2004), work ethics refer to the systematic study of the fundamental principle of the moral law; or as normative science of human conduct. Work ethics have also been defined as a set of values which consists of right attitude, correct behaviour, respect for others, as well as proper communication in the workplace (Omisore & Oyende, 2015). Discipline as well as indiscipline, just and unjust, in addition to right and wrong, are closely related to ethics (Adeyeye, Adeniyi, Osinbanjo and Oludayo, 2015). It, therefore, implies that moral principles which are the subject matter of ethics are about the way people ought to behave especially in terms of commitment to their work as well as their team, integrity and being self-disciplined.

The concept of work ethics evolved from the writings in the earlier 20th century writings of Max Weber (1904-1905) who has been many times credited with contributing to the success of capitalism in western society with what became known as the Protestant work ethic (Hirschfeld & Field, 2000; Kalberg, 1996; Hill & Petty, 1995; Chursair & Koberg, 1988). Weber emphasised the value of work commitment and raised questions as to why some people place greater importance on work and appear more conscious than others. Work ethic, according to Weber (1904-1905, 1958 as cited by Ness, Melinsky, Buff, Ceryl, & Seifert, 2010) consists of seven associated dimensions: Leisure, Wasted time, Self-Reliance, Work Centrality, Delay of Gratification, Belief in hard work and Morality/Ethics (Salahudin, Alwi, Baharudin & Siti, 2016; Miller, Woehr & Hudspeth, 2002). According to Salahudin, Alwi, Baharudin and Siti (2016), work ethics control what an employee will do in different situations in an organisation. Essentially, the habit of good work ethics is intrinsic.

The term, morality, is derived from the Latin word *moralis* while ethics are closely related to a Greek word *ethos* meaning “the spirit or

attitudes of a community, people or system” (Long & Sedly (1987:266). Relating the meaning of ethics to work as a determinant of the individual’s quality of life suggests that, work ethic is an attitude of a group towards what constitutes moral principles governing work. In other words, ethics could be seen as issues surrounding the character, customs, as well as matters of behaviours. Sometimes, morality is concerned with how people act, while ethic is used to define the study of behaviour standards, specifically the rule of rights and wrong (Gbadamosi, 2004). Most times, the terms ethics and morality, are virtually interchangeable, especially when referring to how individuals ought or are expected to act (Miller, Woehr & Hudspeth, 2002). Similarly, a code of ethics is a set of guidelines that defines acceptance of behaviour for members of a private or public organisation. The codes of ethics include discipline, loyalty, honesty, courage, cooperation, tact or skillfulness, kindness, among others. Nilsson and Westerberg (1997), therefore, concluded that ethics and business should go together; for to do business without concern for ethics can lead to failure. It then presupposes that work ethics are highly valued at the workplace, and identifying employees with good work ethic has become crucial in the business of government. From the foregone concept of work ethics, it is expected that civil servants will have their orientation to work and expectations from work.

It is apt to note that the culture of many ethnic groups in Nigeria manifests lackadaisical attitude to a government job - the civil service, the police, customs, and the immigration service; among others (Aluko, 2003; Ahiauzu, 1985). The individual orientation to work, even without external inhibitions, can promote laziness. For instance, the saying in Yoruba that “*A kii sise oba laagun*,” meaning “*One does not do government job strenuously*”, or in Hausa that government job is “*Bature*” (meaning a “*white man’s job is nobody’s job*”) and in Ibo that government work is “*Orlu-oyinbo*” (meaning “*white man’s work with the unspoken message preaching laziness since they cannot identify with the ownership*”) is a reflection of Nigerians’ attitude to government work (Asifat, 2017, Amoo, 2013; Aluko, 2003; Ahiauzu, 1986). That orientation promotes laziness and the attitude might derive from the

alienation of the indigenous people within many Nigerian cultural groups- Yoruba, Hausa/Fulani and Ibo from active participation in the civil service by the British colonial administration (Rafindadi, 2014).

Meaning of Religion

The word, religion, is derived from the Latin word ‘religio’; *meaning that which binds men and women to one another and to their gods* (Ramsey & Ledbetter, 2001). Many scholars have defined religion from different perspectives. Taves (2009: 176) defined religion as “a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is; things set aside and forbidden - beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a church and all those who adhere to them.” Raines (2011) referring to Karl Marx (1844) noted that religion is the sigh of the oppressed humans; the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is also defined as the opium of society. From the definition of Karl Marx, it implies that religion makes people dogmatic. In other words, when people are influenced by religion, they do not see the accurate view of social problems around them. Anderson (2013) defined religion as an embodiment of beliefs, practices, as well as one’s attachment to something considered worthwhile in one’s life. Such beliefs and practices may include belief in supernatural forces (Supreme Being, divinities, lesser gods) as well as making libation, prayers, burning incense, bowing, among others. The definition of religion by Anderson (2013), rightly captures the issue of adherence to ethical principles/values as a result of one’s religion. This definition tends to suggest that religious engagement and practices encourage and support people towards living ethically.

Religious Affiliation and the Observance of Work Ethics

The ethical failures that seem to have brought Nigeria to her knees in terms of the economic crisis in recent times have brought to the fore the need for civil servants to observe certain basic ethical standards. If ethical failures could destroy high profile firms like Enron, Worldcom and Arthur Anderson (Emerson & McKinney, 2010), the adverse effect of unethical behaviour in Nigeria’s civil service will, no doubt, bring untold hardship to the citizenry. However, there appears to be a

renewed interest in spirituality as well as religion in the workplace in response to ethical failures (Emerson & McKinney, 2010). Religion, according to Emerson and McKinney (2010), has an ethical component most times derived from purported supernatural revelation. It is also one of the determinants of the moral values oftentimes mentioned which ensures ethical standards. The major world religions emphasise moral teachings, and in many ways, indicate disapproval of unethical actions. These moral teachings emphasise that an omniscient God observes human actions in addition to holding people responsible for their actions. It, therefore, implies that adherents of religion will be less tolerant of unethical behaviour (Schwartz, 2006; Calkins, 2000).

Empirical research has, however, failed to find a positively strong relationship between religious beliefs and ethical attitudes. For example, Clark and Dawson (1996) found that the religious, defined as those who have high scores on the Intrinsic/Extrinsic Revised scale of religiousness developed by Gorsuch & McPherson (1989) had lower levels of ethical sensitivity. Many studies also found a positive relationship between religion and ethical standards. Terpstra, Rozell and Robinson (1993) studied the ethical attitudes of undergraduate business students and found that religious belief is an important determinant of ethical attitudes. Smith and Oakley (1996) found that business students for whom religion was “very important” had stronger ethical standards, especially when reacting to hypothetical business issues. Similarly, Conroy and Emerson (2004) found that students who attended church regularly were less tolerant of unethical behaviour relating to business situations. Anderson (2013) further argued that the morality of Ghanaians was religiously determined. According to him, religion permeated every aspect of the Ghanaians. Religion, therefore, put a control on the way Ghanaians thought, behaved, talked, and reacted to day-to-day life issues as they related to their fellow humans. It was further stressed that as a result of their religion (God or Allah), Ghanaian Christians and Moslems would want to ensure good deeds and as well eschew from bad deeds. In a similar vein, Allport and Ross (1967) observed that individuals for whom their religious identity was highly important would tend to suffer emotional discomfort if they

deviate from the ethical teachings of that religion; and would, therefore, likely ensure strict adherence to ethical standards. This presupposes that even though there are wide varieties of religious experience, adherence to a religion is an important determinant of ethical attitudes. Therefore, civil servants who place a high value on religion will more likely work around core values that transcend self-interest. From the foregoing, this paper set out to, one, examine the level of awareness of work ethics in the civil service of Osun State; two; and determine the influence of religious affiliation on the observance of civil service work ethics.

Theoretical Orientation

The theoretical framework considered most suitable in this context is structural-functionalism. This is because of its emphasis on order towards the maintenance of a society. Moore (1991) stressed the importance of theory in research and counted any study without theory as a wasteful venture. The focus in this section will be the perspective of Emile Durkheim on religion. The theory of functionalism as introduced by Durkheim is explored.

Functionalism is closely tied up with the issue of order; that is, how order is maintained in a given society. Order, stability, cohesion as well as integration are maintained in society by its parts (Oaikhenana and Osemeke, 2016; Audu & Osuala, 2014). Wallace and Wolf (2006) and Turner (1999) argued that functionalism has three fundamental assumptions. First, society is believed to have a tendency towards equilibrium, a normal state of balance. Second, all parts of the system are connected and increasingly interdependent that examining any part without considering the effects of others becomes a problem (Turner, 1999). Third, it strives to organise and express the elements systematically to provide a more comprehensive explanation of social life. It also assumes that human behaviour is influenced by the social system. Therefore, human actions are eventually predictable (Wallace, 2006).

Durkheim stressed that religion is real; it is an expression of society itself. Indeed, no society does not have religion. Individuals, according to him, perceive a force greater than them. To Durkheim, religion provides social cohesion as well as social control to maintain society in

social solidarity. He proposed that religion ensures three major functions in society: it provides social cohesion intending to maintain social solidarity through shared rituals and beliefs, provides social control to enforce religion-based morals and norms to ensure conformity and maintain control in society. It also offers meaning and purpose to answer questions relating to human existence and experience. In other words, religion supports the norms of societies, in addition to uniting its adherents into a moral community whose members feel a deep common bond. Some norms even derive from it (Audu & Osuala, 2014).

Structural- Functionalism in this context, therefore, looks at society and the civil service as built on order, guidelines, interrelation, balance, among the various parts as a means of maintaining the smooth functioning of the whole to ensure strict adherence to ethical principles. Generally, there are accepted standards of desirability in the society which virtually everyone shares. It is pertinent to state that governments at all levels (Federal, State and Local) develop rules, values and ethics for effective implementation of government policies and programmes, for the greatest good of the greatest number of people. The civil service, no doubt, is rule-directed. That is, the smooth running of the civil service is largely determined by strict adherence to rules and regulations. In this case, adherence to the ethics of the civil service becomes important in maintaining order and harmony in the civil service. It then presupposes that non-adherence to ethics of the civil service can prevent good implementation of policies and programmes of the government, with its attendant adverse consequences on the citizenry. Religion essentially is a fusion of expressed consciousness of all which creates a reality of its own. It can, therefore, be summed up that religion serves as a form of social control through the legitimisation of values especially in the discharge of duties of civil servants.

Methods

The study covered the entire Osun State Civil Service. Apart from the Office of the Governor and the Civil Service Commission, Osun State Civil Service had eighteen (18) ministries with a total population of 34,753. Osun State is in the Southwestern region of Nigeria. The State lies

within the Rain Forest Belt of Western Nigeria, south of the Niger. The population for the study consisted of Officers (299), General Duty (179) and Technical Staff (76) spread across the six core ministries- Agriculture and Food Security (88), Education (172), Environment (58), Works and Transportation (135), Finance (26) and Health (75) of the civil service of Osun State. The choice of officers in the above-mentioned categories was made to have representations of various grade levels since the population did not constitute a homogeneous group. They were also directly involved in decision-making in terms of policy formulation and implementation. Specifically, they formulated and implemented policies that had direct influences on the civil service and its employees, in addition to the public in general.

The study involved 544 respondents (civil servants) as the sample and they were selected using proportionate sampling technique across the six major ministries in the Osun State civil service. The study employed both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through questionnaire while secondary data were obtained from published materials specifically the nominal roll from the departments and ministries in the Civil Service of Osun State (Osun State Budget, 2019). Furthermore, the year 2019 budget (particularly the personnel section of the budget) of the affected ministries was used to validate the nominal roll.

The main instrument used for the study is a semi-structured questionnaire tagged "Religious Affiliation and Observance of Civil Service Work Ethics Questionnaire (RAOCSWEQ)" with three sub-sections. Section A of the questionnaire elicited demographic information such as age, sex, state of origin, religion, marriage type, among others, from the respondents. Section B dealt with respondents' awareness of work ethics while section C elicited responses on the impact of religion on work ethics. Participants were asked to respond to a four-point rating scale ranging from Strongly Agreed (4), Agreed (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1).

The validity of the questionnaire was done with the assistance of experts in Sociology, Demography and Social Statistics and measurement evaluators. Appropriate

corrections were made to guarantee content and construct validity. The pilot tested Scale with twenty respondents from the Office of the Governor yielded 0.7 Cronbach alpha value for section B and 0.68 for Cronbach alpha value for section C. Frequency counts and simple percentages were used to analyse demographic data, the awareness and knowledge of work

ethics by respondents were analysed using Chi-square, while multinomial logit model was employed to analyse the main explanatory variables and the level of observance of work ethics.

Results

Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Socio-demographic			
Characteristics	Options	Frequency	Percentage
Age group	≤ 30yrs	59	10.6
	31-40yrs	244	44
	41-50yrs	162	29.2
	51-59yrs	89	16.1
	Total	554	100
Sex	Male	337	60.8
	Female	217	39.2
	Total	554	100
State of origin	Osun	543	98
	Other States	11	2
	Total	554	100
Marital status	Single	50	9
	Married	497	89.7
	Separated	1	0.2
	Divorced	1	0.2
	Widowed	5	0.9
	Total	554	100
Marriage type	Monogamy	495	89.4
	Polygyny	59	10.6
	Total	554	100
Religion	Christianity	401	72.4
	Islam	153	27.6
	Total	554	100
Educational qualification(s)	Secondary education	32	5.8
	OND	52	9.4
	B. Sc. /HND	390	70.4
	Masters	78	14.1
	PhD	2	0.4
	Total	554	100
Year (s) of experience in the Civil Service	≤ 10yrs	295	53.2
	11-20yrs	138	24.9
	21-30yrs	96	17.3
	31yrs+	25	4.5
	Total	554	100

Table 1 shows that (44%) were between 31 and 40 years. Those that could be described as young (≤ 30 years) in the service had the lowest percentage (10.6%). This might result from the irregularity of recruitment in contemporary times. It can also be said that the mass exodus of many old and experienced civil servants from the Osun State civil service in the year 2012, as a result of the introduction of Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS) as stipulated in the Osun State Contributory Pension Law (2008), accounted for the 54.6% of civil servants in Osun State being energetic and active at the study period. Also, 60.8 % of the respondents from the six core ministries were males while 39.2 % were females. In terms of sex, both groups were adequately represented. This is a reflection of the larger composition of sex ratio in the civil service and improvement in the wider gap that existed before. In the same vein, 98 % of the respondents were indigenes of Osun while 2 % were from other States in Nigeria. Information gathered also showed that a few of those respondents from other states were youth corps members who performed excellently well during their service years at one point or the other and were, thereafter, offered employment. It can be said that the Osun State government was liberal in its recruitment policy.

In addition, 9 % of the respondents were single, 89.7% were married; 0.2 % separated; 0.2 % divorced; and 0.9 % widowed. Also, 89.4 % of the respondents had one wife while 10.6 % were polygynists. Marriage type was to shed light on family size. It is noted that large family size is assumed to be capable of predisposing people to unethical behaviour at work. This is even established in the literature. In other words, the family can put a strain on one's work through demand for economic resources. As financial demands from the family increase, work is likely to take on more of an economic meaning (Aju, Orugun & Ilamosi, 2013; Brief

and Nord, 1990). The study documented that Christian faithful were more in population than the Islamic faithful. Christian respondents were 72.4 %; while 27.3 % were Moslems. The obvious gap between Christianity and Islam as religions of the civil servants might just be accidental or have a bearing with early interests of many Christians in education and the resultant effects of that in their outnumbering others in many workplaces (Ushe, 2015; Galadima & Yusuf, 2001). It was in no way intentional to involve adherents of a particular religion in any outstanding majority. Furthermore, 5.8 % of the respondents in the six selected core ministries had secondary education, 9.4 % had Ordinary National Diploma (OND) certificates. A remarkable number of respondents (70.4%) had Higher National Diploma (HND) or Bachelor's degree and 14.5% had post-graduate qualifications. In terms of ability to understand and complete the instrument, the respondents were competent. The data on years of experience of respondents supported the pyramidal structure of most workforce. As years of experience were advancing, there were reductions in the representations of the groupings. While those with years of experience of ten years and below constituted 53.2 % (more than half), there was a sharp decline to 24.9 per cent when years of experience increased from 11 to 20 years. Similarly, while 17.3 % indicated that they had worked for between 21 and 30 years, only 4.5 % of the respondents had worked for 31 years and above. It can be said that those with less than 10 years' experience and below dominated the civil service of Osun State. The mass retirement of civil servants from the Osun State civil service in the year 2012, as a result of the introduction of Contributory Pension Scheme (Osun State Contributory Pension Law, 2008), might have been responsible for the lowest percentage (4.5%) of respondents with 31 years of experience and above.

Table 2: Respondents' Awareness and Knowledge of Work Ethics

	Officers	General Duty Staff	Technical Officers	Total
	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)
Extent of familiarity with the code of ethics and professionalism in the civil service				
not familiar at all	10 (3.3)	7 (3.9)	0 (0)	17 (3.1)
Familiar	231 (77.3)	135 (75.4)	64 (84.2)	430 (77.6)
highly familiar	58 (19.4)	37 (20.7)	12 (15.8)	107 (19.3)
Total	299 (100)	179 (100)	76 (100)	554 (100)
Pearson Chi square (4) =4.0224; p-value=0.403				
Civil servants' knowledge of the work ethics required				
completely ignorant	4 (1.3)	4 (2.2)	1 (1.3)	9 (1.6)
fairly knowledgeable	144 (48.2)	54 (30.2)	28 (36.8)	226 (40.8)
Knowledgeable	112 (37.5)	88 (49.2)	35 (46.1)	235 (42.4)
highly knowledgeable	39 (13.0)	33 (18.4)	12 (15.8)	84 (15.2)
Total	299 (100)	179 (100)	76 (100)	554 (100)
Pearson Chi square (6) =15.8892; p-value=0.014				

From Table 2, 3.3 per cent in the Officers' cadre indicated that they were not familiar at all with the code of ethics and professionalism; 3.9 per cent of the respondents in the General Duty staff category reported that they were not familiar at all with the code of ethics as well as professionalism in the civil service; while none of the Technical Officer respondents indicated non-familiarity. Also, 96.7 per cent in the Officers' cadre were either familiar or highly familiar with the code of ethics and professionalism in the civil service; 96.1 per cent of the General Duty staff respondents were either familiar or highly familiar with the code of ethics and professionalism in the civil service; while 100% respondents in the Technical Officers' cadre indicated that they were familiar with the code of ethics and professionalism in the civil service. The highest percentage in the Technical Officers' category could be attributed to the fact that they were, in most cases, involved in the implementation of the nitty-gritty of government programmes.

Table 2 also shows that 1.3 per cent of the Officers claimed complete ignorance of the work ethics required in the civil service of Osun State; 2.2 per cent of the General Duty staff respondents indicated that they were completely ignorant of the required work ethics in the civil service of the State; while 1.3 per cent of the Technical Officer respondents also indicated complete ignorance. Thus, the claim of 1.3 per cent of Officers who claimed to be university graduates, of complete ignorance of the work ethics required in the service, could have been as a result of wrong recruitment policy. This is because they were supposed to know better than the two other categories of staff. Aggregating fairly knowledgeable, knowledgeable and highly knowledgeable, 98.7 per cent of the Officers were knowledgeable about the required work ethics in the civil service of Osun State. Similarly, 97.8 per cent of the General Duty staff respondents reported that they were knowledgeable about the required work ethics in the civil service; while 98.7 per cent of Technical Officer respondents

indicated being knowledgeable. The Technical Officers and Officers had the largest proportion (98.7 per cent). It could be assumed that their high level of education and great involvement

in the implementation of government policies and programmes were responsible for being knowledgeable about the required work ethics in the civil service.

Table 3: Respondents' Religious affiliation and their level of observance of Work Ethics

	Low	High	Total
Variables	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)
Religion in relation to the level of observance of work ethics			
Christianity	223 (55.6)	178 (44.4)	401 (100)
Islam	83 (54.2)	70 (46.4)	153 (100)
Total	306 (55.2)	248 (44.8)	554 (100)

Pearson Chi square = 1.7987; p-value = 0.407

The information presented in Table 3 reveals that 55.6 per cent of the respondents who were Christians had low level of observance of work ethics, while 44.4 per cent displayed high level of observance of work ethics. Also, 54.2 per cent of the respondents who were Moslems had low level of observance of work ethics; while

46.4 per cent displayed high level of observance of work ethics. The adherents of the two religions exhibited low level of observance of work ethics. This tends to suggest that the religious engagements of the respondents did not encourage and support ethical behaviour.

Distribution of Observance of Civil Service Work Ethics

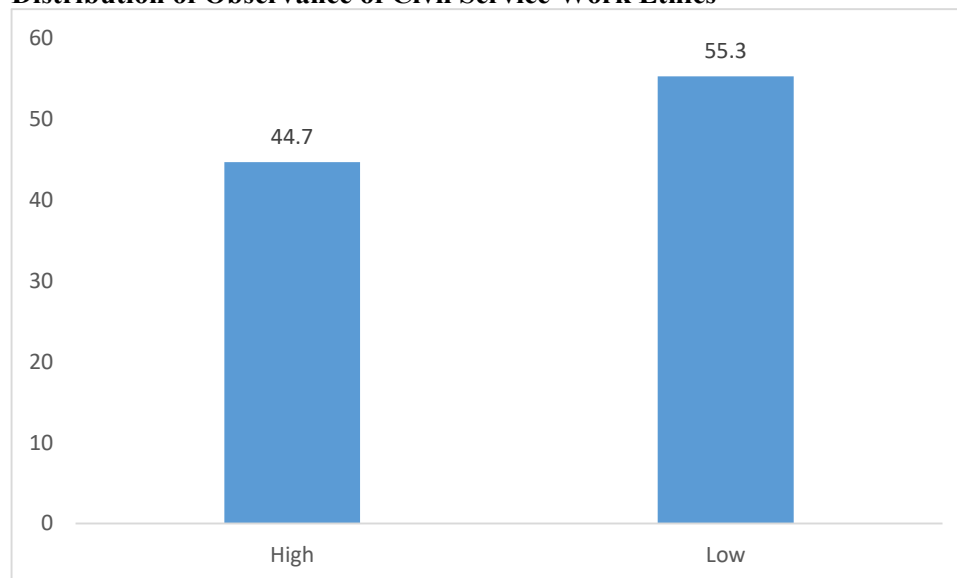


Figure1: Observance of Civil Service Work Ethics

Figure 1 displays the distribution of observance of civil service work ethics in Osun State. The results showed that 44.7% of the respondents

had high observance while slightly more than half (55.3%) had low observance of work ethics.

Table 5: Main explanatory variables and level of observance of work ethics

Respondents' Characteristics	Model 1 High		Model 2 High	
Religious Affiliation	Coefficient	p-value	Coefficient	p-value
Christianity	RC	-	RC	-
Islam	0.0794	0.410	0.1836	0.373
Constant	-0.2254	0.025		
Age group				
Less than 30 years			RC	-
31 – 40 years			0.0554	0.874
41 – 50 years			0.2483	0.539
51 – 59 years			0.4395	0.390
Gender				
Male			RC	-
Female			0.1156	0.554
Marital Status				
Single				
Married			0.6954	0.061
Ministry				
Agriculture			RC	-
Education			-1.1687	0.000
Environmental			-1.2247	0.001
Finance			-0.7147	0.123
Health			-1.5841	0.000
Transport			-0.4359	0.145
Designation				
General duty staff			RC	-
Technical officers			-0.9485	0.004
Officers			-0.4582	0.057
Education				
Secondary			RC	-
OND			0.3668	0.461
HND			0.0803	0.846
Postgraduate			0.0584	0.901
Years of experience				
Less than 11 years			RC	-
11 – 20 years			-0.1651	0.516
21 – 30 years			-0.4072	0.251
31 – 40 years			-0.4884	0.386
Constant			0.1582	0.769

Note: RC = Reference category

The choice of multinomial logit analysis was made because the dependent variable consisted of several unordered categories. The interpretation of the unordered categories becomes easy using multinomial logit model (Kwak & Clayton- Mathews, 2002). The results presented in Table 5 consisted of two models. This section presents the findings of the second objective (Model 1). The first model is the multinomial logit estimate for comparing religious affiliation of the civil servants (Moslems and Christians) and level of observance of work ethics. The multinomial

logit for civil servants that were Moslems relative to Christians was 0.0794 unit higher for preferring high to low observance of work ethics. In other words, civil servants who were Moslems appeared to have high observance of work ethics compared to their Christian colleagues but the result was not statistically significant. Similarly, the second model gave room for the influence of other factors to religious affiliation and level of observance of work ethics. The logit model for civil servants who were Moslems compared to their Christian colleagues was 0.1836 higher for preferring

high to low observance of work ethics, given other variables in the model were held constant. Also, as age increased, high level of observance of work ethics was noted compared to low level among the civil servants. In the same vein, the logit model for female civil servants compared to their male colleagues was 0.1156 higher for preferring high to low observance of work ethics, given that other variables were held constant. Also, the logit model for married civil servants compared to their single colleagues was 0.6954 higher for preferring high to low observance of work ethics, given that other variables were held constant. In other words, married civil servants appeared to have high observance of work ethics compared to their single colleagues.

In the six core ministries where data were collected, the logit model indicated that there was no significant difference in the work ethics of civil servants. However, in the ministries of Works and Transport, Finance, and Health; higher level of observance of work ethics was noted among civil servants compared to the other three ministries. The logit model for civil servants that were Technical Officers compared to their General Duty staff colleagues was - 0.9485 lower for preferring high to low observance of work ethics, given that other variables were held constant. Similarly, the logit model for civil servants that were Officers was - 0.4582 lower for preferring high to low observance of work ethics, given that other variables were held constant. In other words, higher level of observance of work ethics was observed among General Duty staff compared to their Technical Officers and Officer colleagues. Also, as the level of education increased, low level of observance of work ethics was noted compared to high level of observance among civil servants. Besides, as the years of experience increased, high level of observance of work ethics was noted compared to low level among civil servants.

Discussion

The study has been able to establish that there was a general awareness of civil service ethics in Osun State. The awareness of ethics is high among different cadres (Officers, General Duty and Technical Officers) in the State civil service. The high level of awareness exhibited by the three categories of officers could be attributed to their high level of education and

involvement in the implementation of government policies. It was observed that the high level of awareness exhibited by the officers influenced the respondents' knowledge of work ethics with the Officers and Technical Officers having the highest percentage (98.7%). This tends to suggest that their formal education was a predictor of ethical behaviour that raised the bar of good administration in the civil service (Akume, 2012; Cole, 2004; Braunstein, 1992).

The respondents reacted differently to the issue of the influence of religion on the observance of work ethics. To be ethical implies finding out whatever society accepts and do it. Ethical rules operate to protect the people who work in organisations (Anderson, 2013) most especially the civil service and the larger society against various immoral activities. The study presents the relationship between religious affiliation and observance of work ethics. It was observed that when only religious affiliation was fitted into the model, there was no significant association between the level of observance and religious affiliation. Similarly, when other factors were combined with religious affiliation, the association still did not influence ethical attitudes. This, therefore, implies that religious affiliation is not a predictor of observance of work ethics. In other words, ethical attitudes are not a function of religious beliefs (Gorsuch & McPherson, 1989; Kidwell, Stevens & Bethke, 1987). Thinking about religious affiliation to the observance work ethics, for example, by way of not breaking the law, not violating trust and being less susceptible to various immoral activities, may not be enough in bringing about high observance of work ethics. Civil servants who observed work ethics did so out of their conviction. Even though a higher percentage of civil servants were adherents of the two religions, they did not allow such religions to positively influence the discharge of their duties. Since religion is personal, and it is often said to be an opium of society (Raines, 2011), it should not be seen as a major parameter which civil servants will employ to live an ethical life.

Conclusion

This study focused on the influence of religious affiliation on the observance of civil service work ethics in Osun State. It has presented the

state of knowledge and what is needed to be done to bridge the observed gaps in knowledge. Two specific objectives guided the focus of study. A review of studies and opinions of scholars have been carried out while several issues that are germane to the study have come to the fore. It has been established that the relationship between religious affiliation and the level of observance of work ethics overlap, almost inseparable and complementary. This is more so as scholars have come up with the idea that civil servants, in the discharge of their duties require high integrity, absolute impartiality and loyalty to the public interest.

The findings imply that civil servants who are satisfied with their work will most likely be satisfied with their lives. In essence, those who are satisfied with their work tend to keep away from trouble and ensure adherence to rules and regulations of their workplace. The 55.3 per cent of civil servants who recorded a low level of observance of work ethics implies that the tone of discipline was low in the civil service of Osun State. The recorded low level of observance of civil service work ethics among civil servants who were religious adherents could have generated dishonesty, corruption, absenteeism, lateness to work and other forms of unethical practices. Also, the low level of observance of work ethics despite the religious affiliation of civil servants could not have raised the bar of good administration.

Recommendations

Civil servants, most times, appear to be under pressure to meet special expectations concerning proper patterns of behaviour. The ultimate success of high observance of work ethics in the civil service is hinged upon the civil service as an institution to implement a wide range of policies without fear or favour. The following recommendations are, therefore, offered to raise the level of observance of work ethics in the civil service of Osun State.

- (i) Awareness and knowledge of work ethics should not be left to chance. The determination of whether a situation is ethical or not or even a dilemma begins with the awareness and knowledge of work ethics. Therefore, to enhance the level of ethical awareness and raise the knowledge of work ethics, ethical culture should be built through induction education at the point of entry for new civil service

employees to inculcate acceptable norms and values.

- (ii) Ethics-oriented refresher training courses should from time to time be organised for old employees to enable them to act mainly in terms of public interest. The refresher training courses could be on or off-the-job.
- (iii) Leadership in the civil service should be aware of their ethical responsibility and act as ethical leaders. The day-to-day conduct of leaders in the civil service should be an epitome of high ethical conduct as their values (honesty, integrity, respect for others, fairness, among others) determine what kind of ethical climate will develop in the civil service.
- (iv) The civil service should embark on value re-orientation programmes for the adherents of the two religions in the service, to ensure proper discharge of their duties per their religious teachings. This development, no doubt, will minimise the level of dishonesty, corruption, absenteeism, lateness to work, in addition to improving the tone of discipline in the civil service.
- (v) Since civil servants do not leave their religious beliefs at home while coming to the workplace, the Osun State Government should encourage morally responsible conduct, laced with religious beliefs thereby leading to high observance of work ethics and improvement in work-related values such as hard work, diligence, honesty, as well as high moral standards.

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