Determinants of Change in Work Values in Rural Nigeria: Evidence from Ondo State

Fasina, Oluwatosin Oluwasegun[1]   Ibitoye, Adedoyin Lydia[1]   And Ibitoye, Olalekan[2*]

1.Department of Agricultural Extension and Communication Technology, Federal University of Technology, P.M.B 704, Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria

2.Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, Federal University of Technology, P.M.B 704, Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria

Abstract

The study analysed the determinants of change in work values among rural dwellers in Ondo State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were to ascertain the socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents in the study area; identify the prominent work values among the respondents in the study area; and determine the key factors influencing the change in work values among the respondents in the study area. A multi-stage sampling technique was employed for data collection in this study. Primary data which were collected with the aid of structured questionnaire and personal interview were used and a total of 120 respondents were sampled and interviewed for the study. Descriptive Statistics and Multiple Regression Analysis were used to analyse data collected in the study. The study revealed that the average age was about 57 years. The majority of the respondents were males and were married, with an average household size of 7 persons. Educational level was low in the study area. Farming was the dominant occupation practiced in the study area, with a low monthly average household income of ₦16, 888. The study concluded that commitment and dedication to work were the most prominent work values as identified by respondents in the study area, while educational level (β = 0.19**), population (β = 0.54**), closeness/proximity to other communities (β = 0.27**), good road network (β = 0.15**), good educational facilities (β = 0.16**) and exposure to media (β = -0.18**) were the key factors influencing change in work values in the study area. The study however recommended that adult education should be facilitated and encouraged among the dwellers of the study area; government should provide and maintain the already existing infrastructural facilities; and that the negative aspect of the media should be discouraged to enable the rural communities get the best from being exposed to the media.

Keywords: Change, Work Values, Rural Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Work values are important element of culture and other social systems in a community. Values are things held in high esteem by a society which its inhabitants adheres to tenaciously. In any society, behaviour is guided by values. Every organization or society has its own cultural practices and values. Societal values provide the underlying force for individual and group action. Work values, beliefs and guidelines dictate how work is expected to be done in a society (Bernard and Oyende, 2015). Work values are cultural norm that places a positive moral value on doing a good job and is based on the belief that work has intrinsic value for its own sake (Carrington, 1980). Work values provide standards used to judge behaviour and to choose between various goals and lines of action. The premium placed on these values demonstrates its level of reliance or importance in that society (Bernard and Oyende, 2015). Generally, work values serve as codes of conduct that govern peoples' actions, thus, are essential for cultural and societal maintenance (Basorun and Ayeni, 2013).

Like other cultural norms, a person's adherence to or belief in the work values is principally influenced by socialization experiences during childhood and adolescence (Akonti, 2013). Therefore, one significant factor shaping the work attitudes of people is the socialization which occurs through interaction with family, peers, and adults. Work values, which include the right attitude, correct behaviour, respect for others and effective communication in the workplace is sometimes described as work ethics. Work ethics can simply be referred to as a set of principles relating to morals, especially as they apply to human conduct. In specific terms, work ethics is about what is morally correct, honourable and acceptable to the larger majority of the people of a community or society. It is also the rules of conduct that have become a set of norms of the community or society. Essentially, work ethics regulate what an employee would do in different situations in the society. The habit of following good work ethics is intrinsic, i.e. it comes from within. Therefore, the work ethics an individual displays come from his/her values. Our values are dependent on our environment, experiences and life-long influences (Bernard and Oyende, 2015).

All over the world, changes are daily taking place. This change affects all countries and Nigeria is no exception. No wonder a philosopher once said that the only permanent thing in life is change, since all is always becoming, therefore, nothing is static in life (Anikpo and Ateme, 2006). Thus, the work environment has become susceptible to change, considering the dynamic and complex issues that are faced daily. The emerging trend in

work that is beginning to serve as a mark of distinction or critical edge is the level of work ethics and values that is domiciled within a community/society. In the face of the emerging world, every community must practice work ethics and incorporate good values as part of its culture if it must achieve higher performance. Work values affect the performance of every culture. This is because the human resource is the most important resource in every community. The dearth of hired labour for agricultural activities based on the labour intensiveness of agriculture, as well as the high cost of the available ones calls for concern. It is thus evident that attitude to work and especially farm work is changing in rural areas.

Since work values are the foundation upon which individual work ethics and attitudes are built (Bernard and Oyende, 2015). It is therefore pertinent to identify the determinants of change in work values among rural dwellers in the study area. Hence, this paper seeks answers to the following research questions: What are the socioeconomic characteristics of the rural community dwellers in the study area? What are the prominent work values among the rural community dwellers in the study area? What are the key factors that determining the change in work values among the rural community dwellers in the study area?

Providing answers to these questions will help in addressing the key issues arising from change in work values in the study area and consequently improve the quality of work done by hired labour and generally boosting agricultural production across the rural areas. This paper therefore analysed the determinants of change in work values among rural dwellers in Ondo State, Nigeria. However, the specific objectives of the study were to: ascertain the socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents in the study area; identify the prominent work values among the respondents in the study area; and to determine the key factors influencing the change in work values among the respondents in the study area.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Traditional African societies were controlled by norms whose enforcement (sanctions) worked to maintain order in society. Aseka (2010) attests that "African communities are linked by shared values that are fundamental features of African identity and culture." African communities share fundamental values that guide day-to-day life. These values and norms of communal living were subordinated by colonialism. Blake (2010) examines traditional African values as "a composite set of principles and to extent knowledge and beliefs that are held in high esteem embedded in African societies, and that are deemed worthy of being regarded as the guidelines for human behaviour in interpersonal, group and inter-group communications and relationships." Values are an integral part of African societies. Social relationships were determined by specific values guiding behaviour. According to Gyekye (1996), values and practices of traditional Africa (that) can be considered positive features of the culture and can be accommodated in the scheme of African modernity, even if they must undergo some refinement and pruning to become fully harmonious with the spirit of modern culture and to function satisfactorily within that culture.

Modernization has greatly impacted on the value system. As a result, deviance from these standards is no longer sanctioned. Nwauzor (2014) makes a case against poor developmental progress and mediocrity in the African continent. He blames it on the relegation of African values. Also, there is the inability of elites to harness the potentials of western education and African values for optimal performance.

Values are not peculiar to culture alone. They also exist in subcultures. Schaefer (2005) states that a subculture "is a segment of society that shares as distinctive pattern of mores, folkways, and values that differ from the pattern of the larger society." It is a culture within the larger culture. For instance, a youth subculture can develop among youths who share styles in common which distinguish them from the larger society. Haralambos and Holborn (2004) remarked that "youth cultures create their own distinctive style. Similarly, Henslin (2008) added that subcultures are "the values and related behaviours of a group that distinguish its members from the larger culture; a world within a world." Subcultures provide a common identity to its members. Values, different world view, interests are some of the distinctive features of subcultures. Other African values include the sacredness of life, good human relations, hospitality, honesty, friendliness, morality, time, the sacred and religion, respect for elders and authority and common language and proverbs (Nwauzor, 2014).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Study Area

The study was carried out in Ondo State, Nigeria. The state is situated in the South-Western part of Nigeria. Ondo State is one of the six states that makeup South-Western Nigeria. This state lies between longitude 4^030^1 and 6^0 east of the Greenwich and 5^045^1 North of the equator. The state has a population of 3,441,024 (National Population Commission, 2006). The State is peopled predominantly by Yorubas who speak various dialects of the Yoruba language such as the Akoko, Akure, Apoi, Idanre, Ikale, Ilaje, Ondo and the Owo and a minority speaking the Ijaw Language. The people are mostly subsistence farmers, fishermen and traders. In terms of culture and heritage, the life patterns of the people represent an embodiment of culture, ranging from the local

foodstuff to the mode of dressing, dancing, wood crafts, such as, carved house posts and decorated doors. An Oba or King heads the traditional institution. By religion, present day Ondo State people are mostly Christians, while a sizable number of Muslims can also be found in some parts of the state (ODSG, 2016).

Sampling Technique and Sample Size
A multi-stage sampling technique was employed for data collection in this study. In the first stage, two (2) Local Government Areas (LGAs) were randomly selected from the eighteen (18) Local Government Areas in the State. The LGAs are Akure South and Ifedore. In the second stage, three (3) rural communities/villages were randomly selected from the strata of rural communities in each Local Government Area earlier selected. The rural communities in the LGAs were identified from a list of communities based on infrastructural index and population line (NBS, 2009). The selected communities include Eyinloro, Oda and Ipinsa in Akure South LGA; Isarun, Ipogun and Ibule in Ifedore LGA. This make a total of six (6) communities that were selected from the two local government areas. Lastly, twenty (20) respondents were randomly selected and interviewed from each of the six (6) communities across the two (2) local government areas; hence, a total of one hundred and twenty (120) respondents were selected for the study.

Source of Data
The study used primary data for its analysis. The primary data were collected with the aid of structured questionnaire and personal interview. The questionnaire consisted of close and open ended questions to obtain relevant information on the socioeconomics characteristics of the respondents, types and the determinants of the change in work values in the study area.

Analytical Techniques
Descriptive Statistics such as means, frequency counts and percentages, standard deviation, minimum and maximum were used to ascertain the socio-economic characteristics of the rural community dwellers and to identify the prominent cultural values among the rural community dwellers in the study area (Objectives 1 and 2), while a Multiple regression analysis using the Ordinary Least Square Estimate (OLS) was employed to determine the key factors influencing the change in cultural values among the rural community dwellers in the study area (Objective 5).

Model Specification: (Multiple Regression Analysis)
Multiple regression analysis using the OLS estimate was used to determine the factors influencing the change in cultural values in the study area. Regression has been defined as the amount of change in (the value of) one variable associated with a unit change in (the value of) another variable. In this study, the Multiple Regression Analysis, therefore, helps to determine the key factors influencing the changing cultural values among the rural community dwellers in the study area. The model was specified as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_i X_i + \varepsilon \dots \dots \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

Where,

Y = the dependent variable.

β_0 = Constant

X_i = the matrix of independent/explanatory variables,

β_i = the regression coefficients,

ε = the error term.

Y is the Change in work values which is dependent on the explanatory variables $X_1, X_2, X_3, \dots X_n, \varepsilon$ i.e. how much change in cultural values is accounted for by each of the explanatory variables and how much is unexplained as measured by the error term ε. The regression model will be implicitly specified as:

$$Y = f(X_1, X_2, X_3, X_4, X_n, \varepsilon) \dots \dots \dots (2)$$

More specifically, the variables specification will be specified as follows:

Y = Change in work values.

X_1 = Educational level of respondents (Number of years spent in school).

X_2 = Population.

X_3 = Technological advancement.

X_4 = Closeness/proximity to city centre/metropolis.

X_5 = Electricity supply

X_6 = Road network

X_7 = Health facilities

X_8 = Good source of water supply

X_9 = Educational facilities

X_{10} = Financial houses

X_{11} = Exposure to the media

X_{12} = Exposure/cosmopoliteness

ε =   the error term.

Measurement of Variables

Dependent Variables: The dependent variable of the study is '**change in work values'**. Literature review and Key Informant Interview with community leaders and elderly people was used to identify the prominent values related to work activities and relationships. This was then pretested before the final draft used for the study. This was measured by asking the respondents to indicate their perception about the change in work values. This was done by assigning weights to each perception level. The scores were specified as follows: Great change = 3, Moderate change = 2, Little change = 1. The following are the work values that are expected to determine work and interpersonal relationships in the study area: Commitment, cooperation, dedication, diligence and dignity of labour. Others are faithfulness, hard work, honesty, loyalty, punctuality and trust. The mean score for each 'work value' was computed and these mean scores were further categorised into little (< 1.5), moderate (1.5 – 2.49) and great (2.5 – 3.0) change in work values.

Independent Variables: The independent variables were measured as follows:

(a). Age of the respondents: Respondents were asked to state their actual age measured as the number of years of respondents from birth to the time of study. A class interval of three groups was used. These groups included less than 30 years, 31 – 50 years and 51 years and above. Frequency counts and percentages were used to present the information obtained.

(b). Gender: This was measured by indicating whether each of the respondents interviewed is a male or female. Dummy variable labelled "1" for female and "2" for male was used. Frequency counts and percentages were used to present the information obtained.

(c). Marital status: Respondents were asked to indicate their marital status from the options provided. The options were labelled as follows: single = 1, married = 2, divorced = 3, separated = 4, widowed = 5. Frequency counts and percentages were used to present the information obtained.

(d). Educational level: This was measured by asking the respondents to indicate the total number of years of formal education they have. Frequency counts and percentages were used to present the information obtained.

(e). Household size: Household size was measured by asking the respondents to indicate among the actual number of persons living together under the same roof. This was categorised into groups and scores were assigned as follows: 1 – 5 persons = 1, 6 – 10 persons = 2, 11 persons and above = 3.

(f). Income level: Respondents were asked to indicate their actual monthly income. This was categorised into groups and labelled as follows: less than 10,000 = 1, 10,000 – 19,999 = 2, 20,000 and above = 3.

(g). Population of the community: This was obtained from the relevant government agencies such as the National Population Commission.

(h). Technological advancement: This was measured by asking the respondents to indicate their perception about the technological advancement. This was done by assigning weights to each perception level. The scores were specified as follows: Strongly agree = 5, agree = 4, undecided = 3, disagree = 2, strongly disagree – 1. Frequency counts, percentages and ground mean were used to present the information obtained.

(i). Proximity to other communities: This was measured by taking the average distance between the community and other neighbouring communities. It was measured in kilo-meters.

(j). Infrastructural and social amenities: This was measured by assigning dummy scores to the infrastructural facilities present in the community. It was measured by assigning scores to the facilities as follows: Health = 1 if present, and 0 if otherwise; School = 1 if present, and 0 if otherwise; Market = 1 if present, and 0 if otherwise; Extension = 1 if present, and 0 if otherwise; Potable water = 1 if present, and 0 if otherwise; = 1 if present, and 0 if otherwise; Credit = 1 if present, and 0 if otherwise; Road = 1 if present, and 0 if otherwise.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Rural Dwellers in the Study Area

The socio-economic characteristics presented include age, gender, marital status, level of education, household size, occupation, monthly income and religion. It was revealed that the average age was about 56 years; this is an indication that well experienced rural dwellers that could give an annotated account of how the work values had changed over time in their respective communities were selected for the study. Most of the respondents in the study area are males. This agreed with the findings of Sakiru (2013), who reported that there were more male-headed households than female-headed households in rural areas of South- West, Nigeria. Therefore, the fact that household heads were mainly interviewed for the study gave room for more males than the females to be interviewed for the study. I was also revealed that most of the respondents were married. The fact that majority of the rural dwellers in the study area were married might be a reflection of the strong moral values attached to marriage institution in the study area. This agrees with the findings of Oluwatayo (2011), who reported that there

are more married household heads in his research on gender considerations in decision making in rural Nigeria.

The average household size of seven persons suggested that household size in the study area is fairly large and that it will be a vital source of labour for agricultural production activities since rural areas is predominantly agrarian. Most of the respondents had no formal education, with farming being the dominant occupation practiced in the study area. This might be attributed to the fact that the majority of the respondents in the study area are fairly old and may not have had the opportunity of attempting/completing the basic primary education. With monthly average household income of ₦16, 888, the average household income was below the minimum wage of ₦18, 000 in Nigeria. This is an indication that average household income was very low in the study area in agreement with the findings of Ibitoye and Oguntade (2015), who reported that average income from agrarian rural communities is generally low. However, it was revealed that most of the respondents in the study area belong to the Christian faith.

Table: Socio-Economic Characteristics of Rural Dwellers in the Study Area

Socioeconomic Variable	Mean	Mode	Std. Deviation
Age	55.7	60 years	14.5
Sex	-	Male	-
Marital Status	-	Marital Status	-
Household Size	7	6 persons	2
Educational Status	-	No formal education	-
Occupation	-	Farming	-
Household Income	16, 888	15, 000	6, 991
Religion	-	Christianity	-

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

Prominent Work Values in Ideal Situation in the Study Area

Figure 1 presented the prominent work values in ideal situation in the study area. The table shows the ranking of how respondents opined that work values should be prioritized in an ideal situation in the study area. It was revealed that commitment and dedication to work should be the most prominent work values as identified by respondents in the study area. This suggests that better reward might often attributed to these two values and that worker(s) that portrays these qualities/values are said to be 'excellent and responsible workers' since they are both dedicated and committed to their work. It is also believed that workers that possess these values will equally have other qualities. Hard work, diligence and faithfulness ranked next to commitment and dedication in the order of their prominence. Also, workers that are hard working and diligent are often believed to be more preferred especially with agricultural related tasks. Loyalty and honesty ranked 7th and 8th respectively in the order of prominence of work values as opined by the respondents. This might be attributed to people's prejudice towards workers being honest or loyal. However, trust should be the least prominent work value in the study area as opined by the respondents. This might equally be as a result of the predisposition of people towards workers/labourers; since people can hardly trust a worker you are not certain of his level of honesty or loyalty.
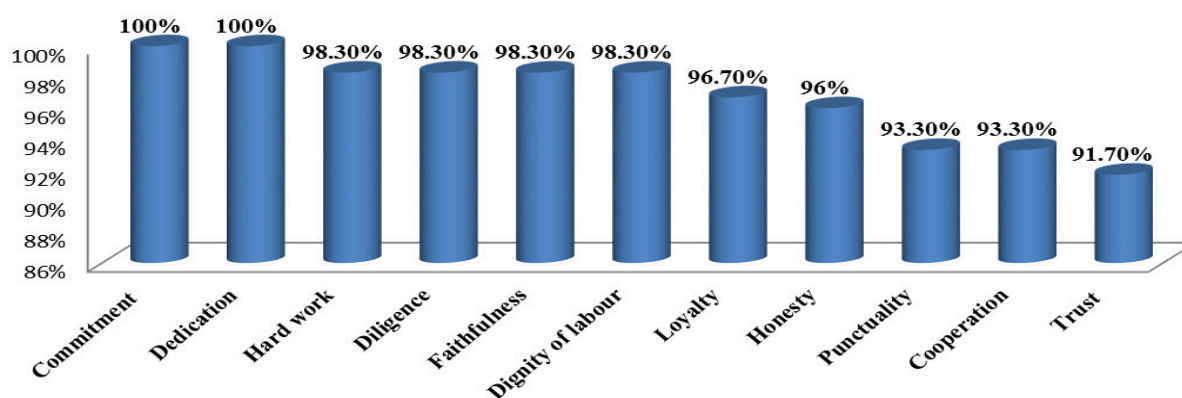

Figure 1: Prominent Work Values in Ideal Situation in the Study Area
Source: Field Survey, 2016.

Factors Influencing the Change in Work Values

Table 2 presented the factors influencing the change in work values among the respondents in the study area. It was revealed that that at p ≤ 0.05, educational level (β = 0.19**), population (β = 0.54**), closeness/proximity to other communities (β = 0.27**), good road network (β = 0.15**) and good educational facilities (β = 0.16**)

all had a positive significant influence on work values, while exposure to media (β = -0.18**) had a negative significance influence on work values in the study area. The positive significant relationship between education and work values suggests that increase in the level of educational status will positively influence work values in the study area. This suggests that increase in educational level will lead to having more individuals who are more ready than others to accept new ways of life, they are often referred to as the 'innovators'. These people have a certain influence; however, if the new ways are seen to benefit those who have adopted them, the rest of the community may eventually come to accept them. General attitude toward how work is done can then shift; new ideas may be welcomed as promising a better life instead of being regarded as a threat to established ways of doing things. Therefore, education is a key factor influencing people's ideas, values and ways of doing things (FAO, 2015).

In the same way, as population, closeness/proximity to other communities, good road network and good educational facilities increases in the study area, work values is positively influenced. More importantly, the closer the communities are, the higher the chances of contact with other cultures and ways of doing things. Therefore, cultural and work values diffusing from one community to the other in the study area will be enhanced. Most often, closeness/proximity to urban areas often influence the values (both cultural and work values) of neighbouring rural communities and settlements since contact with other societies is an important force for cultural change (FAO, Undated).

Also, there is a close relationship between population size, the agrarian nature of rural communities / farming systems and other aspects of cultural/work values. Where there are not many people in an area and there is plenty of farm land, farmers may abandon their fields after two or three seasons and move on to fresh, fertile land. The old fields then have a chance to recover during a fallow period. Whole villages may move as new land is cleared and prepared for farming but as population increases, land becomes scarce. Therefore, new methods of farming may have to be developed which allow fields to be cultivated year after year. This suggests the positive influence population can have on work value in the study area.

Good road network has a positive influence on work values in a number of ways. On a more local scale, good roads network have brought many changes to rural society. Travel has been made easier and more people can visit other places and learn different ways of doing things. Traders establish shops and the goods in them may act as incentives for farmers to produce more in order to buy them. Crops can be marketed more easily and farming inputs brought into rural areas more quickly and cheaply.

However, the negative influence exposure to media has on work values in the study area might be attributed to the fact that newspapers, radio, television and internet can also bring rural people in remote areas into contact with the outside world. This presents the glamour and bright side of life and can negatively impact on the work values in the study area. For example, the youths do not want to work on the farms again; rather, they are looking for faster ways of acquiring wealth through the internet.

The results also revealed that the R^2 value of the regression model was 0.535. This implies that the explanatory variables captured in the model jointly accounted for 53.5 percent of the variations in the factors influencing the change in work values among the respondents in the study area. When adjusted for degree of freedom based on the adjusted coefficient of determination (Adjusted R^2), the result shows that the model has 48.0 percent explanatory power with respect to variations in the factors influencing the change in work values among the respondents in the study area.

Table 2: Factors Influencing the Change in Work Values

Variables	Coefficients (β)	Std. Error	t-value	Sig.
(Constant)	0.18	0.63	0.28	0.78
Educational level of respondent	0.19**	0.08	2.58	0.01
Population	0.54**	0.09	6.10	0.00
Technological advancement	-0.05	0.19	-0.25	0.80
Proximity to neighbouring communities	0.27**	0.11	2.56	0.01
Electricity supply	-0.09	0.07	-1.23	0.22
Road network	0.15**	0.07	2.16	0.03
Health facilities	0.04	0.08	0.52	0.60
Good source of water supply	-0.05	0.04	-1.46	0.15
Educational facilities	0.16**	0.08	2.00	0.05
Financial houses	0.13	0.16	0.81	0.42
Exposure to the media.	-0.18**	0.07	-2.44	0.02
Exposure/cosmopolitness	-0.02	0.07	-0.28	0.78

R^2 = 0.535; Adjusted R^2 = 0.480

** = 5% Level of Significance

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

Conclusion

This study concluded that most of the respondents are fairly old, with more male household heads that are married. It was also concluded that the household size in the study area was fairly large; most of the respondents had no formal education, with farming being the major occupation practiced in the study area. It was further concluded that the average household income was very low and that most of the respondents in the study area belong to the Christian faith. The study also concluded that commitment and dedication to work were the most prominent work values as identified by respondents in the study area, while educational level, population, closeness/proximity to other communities, good road network, good educational facilities and exposure to media are the key determinants of work values in the study area.

Recommendations

From the findings of this study, the following recommendations were.

i.   Adult education should be facilitated and encouraged among the dwellers of the study area. This is vital as it was reported that education is one of the key determinants of work values in the study are. However, since the majority of the respondents who are well experienced to give an annotated account of how the work values has changed over time in their respective communities are fairly old (about 56 years old on the average); coupled with the fact that formal educational status is low in the study area with a larger percentage of the respondents not having any form of education. This however, presents the urgent need to facilitate and encourage adult education since the target population are fairly old.

ii.   Government should provide and maintain the already existing infrastructural facilities like good road network and good educational facilities. This is very important since it was reported in this study that they have a positive significant effect on work values in the study area.

iii. Since exposure to media has a negative significance influence on work values in the study area. It is therefore recommended that negative aspect of the media should be discouraged to enable the rural communities get the best from being exposed to the media. Boost for work values on the media to counteract the negative influence of the media can be achieved through jingles, promotions and drama to extol and promote appropriate work values.

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