

# Work Values and Job Adjustment of Civil Servants in Lagos Secretariat, Nigeria: Implications for Counselling and Evaluation

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## Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between work values and job adjustment of civil servants in Lagos State Secretariat, Alausa. In this regard, one hundred and sixty workers were used for study selected from four randomly selected ministries in Lagos State Secretariat. The instrument used for data collection was a researcher made questionnaire. The data collected were analyzed with independent t-test and Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that there was no significant difference in the ideal work values of new and experienced workers in Lagos state secretariat, there was a significant difference in the actual work values of new and experienced workers; a significant difference in the level of job adjustment of new and experienced workers and a significant relationship between work values and job adjustment of workers. Based on the findings of this study, suggestions, recommendations, counselling and evaluation implications were made to stakeholders and relevant agencies.

**Keywords:** Job adjustment, work values and civil servants

## Introduction

In Nigeria today, it has been observed that people or employees' disposal to their jobs no longer produce optimum result as it used to be in the past. Work in the past during the 60's and 70's was seen as a tool for survival and fulfillment, but in recent times, it has turned in the opposite direction as a result of increased affluence and as such; this has brought about a poor adjustment of workers to their works.

Warr (1982) lend credence to this through a survey that was carried out. He asked some workers if they would carry on working if it were not financially necessary and found out that 31percent of men and 34 percent of women would stay in their present job; while 35 percent of men and 29 percent of women would work, but they would try to change their jobs. The implication of this is that 65 percent of workers are fulfilled in their work places without much financial implication, while 64 percent of workers would still work without financial implications; but they are already on the work turnover list, hence, such workers will have a poor disposition towards their job, they are already at the verge of exit in their work place for a better job offer elsewhere.

Job adjustment in a given environment is largely determined by the value attached to the job. It is an indication that the productivity of the employee is traceable to the work environment and basically attached to the benefits and values derived from the works or job assigned. For instance, some jobs are risky, yet the work environment and benefits are not commensurate with the risks attached to the job. In such an environment, the employees tend to work cautiously to safeguard themselves at the detriment of the organizational aims, goals and objectives.

Based on these developments, many employees have considered it as a norm to changing jobs from time to time in order to meet up with their desired work value. Work is viewed as an interaction between an employee, his or her assignments or responsibilities in the work environment. Work is seen as a means of realizing individual's personal goals and values. In another development, work is seen as a means of livelihood. According to Lu& Lin (2002) work is seen as a means of self-expression and self-actualization. This implies that your work can speak volumes about you. Work can also be a means of identity sometimes.

From surveys carried out in the western world to investigate workers and their jobs, two points were clearly made; Baron(1986) observed that working is more than for mere survival as believed by some. He noted that money is important, but there are other things people want from their jobs. He also observed that a number of surveys carried out in developed countries have found that having interesting or challenging work and working in a good work environment are more important than pay.

In another development, significant proportions of employees are not happy with their jobs. Some employees leave home for work as a matter of necessity and not wanting to be seen as a liability. While the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover is often studied, less research work has been done on the relationships between personal values, job satisfaction, dissatisfaction and turnover. Most employers do not consider employees' point of view when it comes to job satisfaction, it does not matter to them if the job is fulfilling to the worker, and neither do they consider the future that lies ahead in the job as it affects the employees. Employers have shown a whole lot of indifference to these important topics. However, it will be

necessary for us to understand what values are.

This inner driving force may help to explain job adjustment or mal-adjustment especially when there are discrepancies between personal work values and work environments. Individuals choose jobs and people do work. Hence, work values, the fulfillments of personal aspirations and subjective evaluations may exert stronger effects than objective work characteristics such as pay (Tans and Feij, 2001).

In recent times people often gravitate towards jobs that fit their wants and needs, since there is no satisfaction derived in their work place which in turn hampers the competencies and commitment of such individual to his or her career. Personal values which are expected from the job, but when not realizable or achievable, results into psychological distress that in turn may have costly consequences for human resources management. Thus, work value and adjustment are key concerns to any organization. An individual or employee is willing to put in his or her best at work, such as time, efforts, interest and commitment but where discrepancies between expected occupational values and actual values experienced exists, this will be the determining factor for job adjustment in the work place, because the greater the discrepancies, the lower the job satisfaction.

Lin (1990) showed that college graduates' experienced discrepancies between expected and actual job values and the discrepancies affected their career exploration. Miltra, Jenkins and Gupta (1992) suggest that when an individual cannot use their work value in a particular job, this failed expectation would cause feelings of dissatisfaction that may cause them to withdraw from work through absenteeism, lateness, tiredness and intentions to leave (Locke, 1976) and they may experience negative emotions such as jealousy and envy that may in turn affect the performance of co-workers. Also, large discrepancies between work value and work environment are major restrictions on career development.

In line with these, it will be necessary to note the work adjustment expected of an employee. Work adjustment is the process of achieving a positive result towards the degree of responsiveness of an employer to meeting the requirement of the employer and employee. The degree to which the requirements of both are met may be called "correspondence". But how many employee and employer relationship had been able to meet up at the point of "correspondence"?

Workers' condition and the environment of work have been described as poor, the discrepancies between personal work values and work environments are so obvious, and therefore it is of utmost importance to focus on this study of work value and job adjustment of workers in Lagos State Secretariat, Alausa and its implication for counselling and evaluation.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Work adjustment has been discovered as a major hitch to productivity in most our offices in Nigeria and Lagos State in particular. It has been observed that the work value of every prospective employee has always been higher expectancy, but as soon as the job is begun, the expected value becomes farfetched which in turn makes employees to have negative disposition towards their works. This does not have to do with the employees alone, but the negligence and the inability of the employer to meet up to his responsibilities and obligations towards his employees.

Several people are engaged in different works, but they are not really happy doing the work they are being paid for as a result of poor communication, bad management skills from the managers, a poor sense of humour in the work place and lack of motivation for a job well done, poor remuneration and poor work environment.

All these have contributed to a poor work adjustment of workers.

In view of these prevalent problems, it is important to find out from workers in Lagos State how they perceive their jobs, what is their level of work value? How does work value relate to their job adjustment and how the level of productivity can be effectively achieved from the part of the employees?

### **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between work value and adjustment. For job adjustment to be achieved or attained, it is essential for internalized value to be married with the expected work value in line with individual desires and expectations from a particular job, thereby bringing about a high level of commitment to work. The purpose therefore includes the following under listed objectives

- To determine the ideal work values possessed by new and experienced workers in Lagos state.
- To ascertain the actual work values of new and experienced workers in Lagos state.
- To determine the level of job adjustment of new and experienced workers in Lagos state.
- To find out the extent of the work value of workers in Lagos state in relation to their job adjustment.

### **Research Questions**

Four research questions were formulated to guide the study.

- To what extent does an ideal work value of new and experienced workers differs?

- What are the differences in the actual work values of new and experienced workers in Lagos state secretariat?
- What is the level of job adjustment of new and experienced workers in Lagos state secretariat?
- To what extent is the work value of workers related to job adjustments?

### Research Hypotheses

Four corresponding null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study.

- There will be no significant difference in the ideal work values between new and experienced workers in Lagos State Secretariat.
- There will be no significant difference in the actual work values of new and experienced workers in Lagos State Secretariat.
- There will be no significant difference in level of job adjustment between new and experienced workers in Lagos State Secretariat.
- There will be no significant relationship between work value and job adjustment of workers in Lagos State Secretariat.

### Review of Related Literature

One of the most prominent and influential writers on values and value systems is Rocheach (1973) who defines a value as 'an enduring belief'. Central to these definitions is the fact that values and value systems are thought of in relative terms; values in terms of preferences for behavior or end states relative to their converses and value systems in terms of the relative importance of any given value relative to others in the system. Work values have subtle, but powerful influence on work life (Hofstede & Bond, 1984)

Since values are created in most types of the social interaction, the work place is one of the major social environments in which values are created, shared and developed, Roe & Ester (1999) have provided an extensive review of the literature concerning values and work making a distinction between general values or general life values and values concerning specific life domains, while this distinction seems to be commonly agreed on, there are some debate over the relationship between the two; while some argue that work values represent a subset of the general values, others argue that "taking a more holistic view integrating work and non-work values, may be more productive" (Elizur & Sagie,1999), by stressing the structural similarity between work values and general values. The most important factor, however, is that work values cannot be examined independent of either organizational or national culture (Roe & Ester, 1999)

Therefore it can also be assured that these work values could be relatively constant in crisis periods and thus it becomes crucial for organizations that people with the necessary or sought after work values are not lost for the organization in general downsizing, since they may be crucial for the subsequent rebuilding of the company.

Furthermore, the changes in the psychological contract are likely to affect employees differently depending on the differences in their work values; particularly times of stress will affect performance of employees with particular work values (Sin, 2003).

Since Arthur Brayfield and Harold Rothe came up with definition of Job satisfaction in 1951, researchers around the world have been fascinated by the concept. Brayfield and Rothe (1951) stated job satisfaction as an individual's attitude towards their work. Smith, Kendal and Hulin (1969) defined job satisfaction as feelings or affective responses to facets of situations. Another psychological concept that has been found to be as popular as job satisfaction is individual differences which can be divided into three areas.

They are genetic predispositions (i.e. Personality traits and core self-evaluation),variation in the demographical background(i.e. educational level, marital status, age and organizational tenure) and cultural differences.

Eysenck (1952) defined personality as a perceptual attitude of how an individual looks at the world. Costa & Mccrae (1992) further defined the concept through the creation of the five factor model which includes extraversion, agreeableness, consciousness, neuroticism and openness to experience. Since then, these traits have been used as the basis in creating personality measurements (Saucier & Goldberg, 1994).

Judges & Durham (1997) even created a new concept of personality traits called the core-self-evaluation (CSE), which includes factors such as self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, locus of control and neuroticism. Past research has been proven that personality traits including core self-evaluation are related to job satisfaction (Furnham,2003).

Demographic backgrounds such as educational level (Okpara,2007), marital status (Gazioglu & Tansel,2006), age (Erond,2005) and organizational tenure (Chinmetee Pituck,2003), have been found to be related to job satisfaction. Different demographical backgrounds usually resulted into different types of employees and how to manage them (McCormick,1992).Furthermore, cultural background has also been found

to be related to job satisfaction (Struss & Soresen,1975).

According to Money & Graham (1999), it seems that the amount of pay is the most important factor in determining overall job satisfaction among American employees. However, Japanese employees believe that satisfaction with work and peers, not pay amount are the most important factors in determining their job satisfaction.

There are several methods used to evaluate job satisfaction. One of these methods is referred to as the global approach, which measures overall job satisfaction. Smith & John (1969) suggested that global satisfaction is not equivalent to the sum of the facet measured.

However, some research have agreed that global job satisfaction is the sum total of the satisfactions associated with each component of an employee's job.

Rice & McFarlin (1991) found that job facet (e.g. Pay amount and co-workers) are the individual components that make up their experience at work and facet satisfaction is an individual's evaluation of that particular facet. Individuals may feel highly satisfied, neutral or highly dissatisfied about a job facet based on how important that job facet is to them. Individuals cannot feel satisfied or dissatisfied with a job facet that is not important to them.

Drummond & Stoddard (1991) found, in line with our thinking, that the importance of economic returns, security and management (which might all represent extrinsic work values) were negatively correlated to job satisfaction. However, creativity and variety (both intrinsic work values) were also negatively correlated to job satisfaction in their quite specific group of 69 undergraduate and graduate female education majors working for helping professions.

Research on person-organization fit has shown important implications for individual well-being and organizational outcomes. For instance, fit between a person's values and organizational values (Work value congruence) are associated with behavioural and affective outcomes, such as longer tenure, greater organizational commitment and better job performance (Caldwell, 1991). Unless management makes concerted efforts to change organizational culture, employees who lack value congruence early in their tenure are likely to maintain some level of work value in congruence throughout their tenure in that organization. This is because individual's values are relatively stable over time (Erdogan, Krainer & Liden, 2004)

## **Methodology**

The study employed a descriptive survey design using simple random sampling technique to select Lagos State Secretariat, Nigeria as the study locale. The sample consisted of 160 civil servants (79 males and 81 females) selected through cluster sampling. Each ministry within the secretariat area served as a cluster. Ten clusters were identified and from each, sixteen civil servants were selected utilizing systematic sampling procedure. However, in selecting the participants, two criteria were considered: The sex and years of experience of the participants. A 20-item researcher designed questionnaire titled Work Value and Job Adjustment Questionnaire (WJAQ) was used to elicit responses from the participants. The instrument had two sections, A and B. Section A sought the demographic data ( age, sex, gender, years of experience and educational qualification) of the respondents while section B contained items used to gather data on civil servant's perception of work value and job adjustment. The item response format was a four-point Likert scale of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree which were scored 4,3,2 and 1 respectively for positive items while the negative items were scored in reverse order. The researchers personally administered the questionnaire to the participants in their various ministries. The content and face validity of the data collection instrument were determined by expert opinion while its reliability was empirically ascertained by test-retest procedure using four week time lag which yielded a coefficient value of 0.65. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to analyse the hypotheses generated.

## Results

**Table 1: Demographic Data of the Respondents**

| Variable                         | Frequency | percentage |
|----------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| <b>Sex</b>                       |           |            |
| Male                             | 79        | 49.4       |
| Female                           | 81        | 50.6       |
| Total                            | 160       | 100.0      |
| <b>Educational Qualification</b> |           |            |
| NCE/ OND                         | 40        | 25         |
| B.Sc/HND/B.A                     | 92        | 57.5       |
| M.Sc/M.Ed/M.A                    | 28        | 17.5       |
| Total                            | 160       | 100.0      |
| <b>Years of Experience</b>       |           |            |
| 1-5                              | 30        | 18.8       |
| 6-10                             | 20        | 12.5       |
| 11-15                            | 18        | 11.3       |
| 16-20                            | 40        | 25.0       |
| 21-25                            | 52        | 32.5       |
| Total                            | 160       | 100.0      |

Table 1 show the distribution of samples by sex where seventy-nine (79) male workers took part in the study constituting 49.4% of samples involved in the study. Eighty-one female workers were also involved in the study with 50.6% of the samples. Forty samples had NCE/OND with 25% of the samples surveyed. Ninety-two had first degree constituting 57.5% of the samples under study while 28 samples had second degree with 17.5% but none of the samples under study had Doctoral degree. Thirty had spent below five years, twenty had spent between 6-10 years and eighteen samples had been on the job between 11-15 years. Forty samples had spent between 16-20 years and fifty-two had spent above 20 years with 18.8%, 12.5%, 11.3%, 25% and 32.5% of the samples under study respectively.

**Table 2: Distribution of participants by range of experience (New/Old)**

| Worker       | Range of years of experience | N   | %    |
|--------------|------------------------------|-----|------|
| New          | 1-10                         | 50  | 31.3 |
| Old          | 11-25                        | 110 | 68.7 |
| <b>Total</b> |                              | 160 |      |

**Table 2.1: Difference in ideal work values of new and experienced workers.**

| Ideal work values | N   | x     | Sd   | t-cal | t-crit | df  |
|-------------------|-----|-------|------|-------|--------|-----|
| New worker        | 50  | 8.76  | 2.36 | 0.76  | 1.96   | 158 |
| Old worker        | 110 | 14.21 | 4.78 |       |        |     |

Not significant at 0.05,df=158, critical t=1.96

Result from Table 2 shows no significant difference in the ideal work values of new and experienced workers in Lagos State secretariat, Alausa. This was based on the result of the analysis which shows a calculated t-value of 0.76 as against a theoretical value of 1.96 at 0.05 alpha level.

**Table 3: Difference in actual work values of new and experienced workers.**

| Actual work values  | N   | x    | Sd   | t-cal | t-crit | df  |
|---------------------|-----|------|------|-------|--------|-----|
| New workers         | 50  | 6.78 | 4.21 | 2.41  | 1.96   | 158 |
| Experienced workers | 110 | 6.98 | 3.98 |       |        |     |

Significant at 0.05,df=158. Critical=1.96

From the results presented in table 3, it was evident that the calculated t-value of 2.41 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 given 158 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. This shows that there is a significant difference in the actual work values of new and experienced workers in Lagos State Secretariat.

**Table 4: Difference in job adjustment of new and experienced workers**

| Level of job adjustment | N   | x    | Sd   | t-cal | t-crit | df  |
|-------------------------|-----|------|------|-------|--------|-----|
| New workers             | 50  | 7.67 | 3.41 | 2.95  | 1.96   | 158 |
| Experienced workers     | 110 | 6.32 | 4.20 |       |        |     |

Significant at 0.05, df=158. Critical=1.96

Table 4 shows a significant calculated t-value of 2.97 at 0.05 level of significance. This shows that there will be a significant difference in the level of job adjustment of new and experienced workers in Lagos State Secretariat.

**Table 5: Relationship between work values and job adjustment of workers.**

| Level of job adjustment | N   | x     | Sd   | r-cal | r-crit | df  |
|-------------------------|-----|-------|------|-------|--------|-----|
| New workers             | 160 | 18.72 | 5.76 | 0.78  | 0.20   | 158 |
| Experienced workers     | 160 | 16.31 | 4.98 |       |        |     |

Significant at 0.05, df=158, r-crit= 0.20

The result from table 5 shows a significant relationship between work values and job adjustment of workers. This was based on the result of the analysis which shows a calculated r-value of 0.78 against a theoretical value of 0.20 at 0.05 alpha level.

### Discussion of Findings

Findings from hypothesis one revealed that there will be no significant difference in the ideal work values of new and experienced workers in Lagos State Secretariat. This result confirms the assertion of Caldwell (1991) that unless management makes concerted efforts to change organizational culture, employees who lack value congruence early in their tenure are likely to maintain some level of work value in congruence throughout their tenure in that organization. This is because individual's values are relatively stable over time.

The result is also in support of the views of Martin & Gracia (1994) where their own findings have shown that individual ideal work value is a common response to the demands of new work environment. Therefore, workers could introduce changes in the content and strategies that characterizes their own work roles, in order to cope with difficult and stressful environments, thus improving their mental health.

Findings from hypothesis two revealed that there will be no significant difference in the actual work values of new and experienced workers in Lagos State Secretariat. The result above conforms to the findings of Sin (2003), he said that changes in psychological contract are likely to affect employees differently depending on the differences in their work values, particularly; time of stress will affect performance of employees with particular work values.

Folkman & Lazarus (2004), in their own findings it is in support of this result. They claim that as a coping strategy, individual actual work value would represent individual behavioural and cognitive efforts to mitigate, tolerate and master demands by playing a moderating role between such work values and their outcomes. High actual work values would increase the level of arousal among employees which, in turn, would lead them to adapt themselves to such demands by modifying their own job environment.

Findings from the third hypothesis revealed that there will be no significant difference in the level of job adjustment between new and experienced workers in Lagos State Secretariat. The result conforms with Rice & Mc Fartin (1999) findings where they found that job facet are the individual components that make up experience at work and facet satisfaction is an individual's evaluation of that particular facet. Individual may feel highly satisfied, neutral or highly dissatisfied about a job facet based on how important that job facet is to them.

This result contradicts Rodriguez and Salvador (2005) findings where they believe that individual level of job adjustment could be seen as a problem-focused coping strategy, which would make active work individual adjustment possible. They went further to establish that job adjustment demands such as role conflict, role overload and job ambiguity, apparently lead to individual innovation. However, the development of job adjustment behavior at the workplace is not only related to job demands. The presence of job resources, such as job control, job feedback and the opportunity to use one's own skill at work foster individual job adjustment.

Findings of the fourth hypothesis revealed that there will be significant relationship between work values and job adjustment of workers in Lagos State Secretariat. This result contradicts Drummond & Stoddard (1991) assertion. They found that the importance of economic returns, security and management (which might represent extrinsic work values) was negatively correlated with job adjustment. However, creativity and variety (both intrinsic work values) were also negatively correlated to job adjustment in their quiet specific group of 69 undergraduate and graduate female education majors.

This result supports the findings of Lin (1990). He said people tend to gravitate towards jobs that fit their wants and needs. The discrepancy between expected occupational values and the actual values experienced at workplace determines job adjustment, the greater the discrepancy, the lower the work values.

Jenkins and Gupta (1992) suggest that when an individual cannot use their work values in a particular job, this failed expectation will cause feelings of dissatisfaction that may cause them to withdraw from work through absenteeism, tardiness or intentions to leave and they may experience negative emotions such as jealousy and envy that may in turn affect the performance of co-workers.

### **Recommendations, Counselling and Evaluation Implications**

Counselling and evaluation services may be provided to help employees to better understand their own needs and wants, and hence find better ways to realize these ideals in jobs. On the other hand, more varied and personalized workers welfare packages may be discussed and introduced to accommodate diverse employees wishes, such as flexible work time, holiday arrangements, childcare allowances.

Workers overall ability to function in a healthy manner, there should be counselor-worker relationship. Counselling and evaluation therefore provide experiences which aid each person to understand himself, his work place and live in harmony with his environment.

Counseling is executed by a professional counselor utilizing appropriate strategies to achieve optimum results and evaluation should be executed by a professional measurement and evaluation expert. Workers should be helped to realize personal goals and values to avoid psychological distress that in turn may have costly consequences for human resource management.

Management should enhance the workers' job adjustment, by providing job enrichment, job enlargement, job redesign and performance management systems for challenge and self-actualization at work.

Workers should be made to know that money is no longer the only valued reward from work, although still an important one, especially in the current Nigeria economic depression, better and more effective performance management systems have the potentials to enhance both employee's actual monetary returns and a psychological sense of equality and consequently to provide actual benefits in organizational performance.

### **Conclusion**

The changes in the nature of work itself as well as related work values are part of a comprehensive cultural change linked to economic development and leading people towards post materialist values, individual life styles and civil participation.

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