



Exploring Job Satisfaction: Insights from Christian Organizations in Nigeria

Abstract: This monograph explores the complexity of job satisfaction, drawing from various fields of study, and asserts that factors such as job usefulness, individual indicators, organizational climate, trust level, and core business beliefs strongly influence its nature. Our understanding of job satisfaction is shaped by the shift to a globalized knowledge-driven economy, where organizations with a knowledge advantage are more successful. There is a growing interest in how religious beliefs and organizations can enhance well-being and job satisfaction in the 21st-century work environment. Despite criticisms of religious beliefs and organizations, their positive enabling and supportive capabilities in the workplace cannot be overlooked.

1. Introduction:

The job satisfaction of workers has been a major concern for employers within the work environment since the emergence of the formal organization, and a subject of study and exploration by scholars in various fields of study. Drawing from the cross-disciplinary explorations, we assert in this monograph that job satisfaction is a complex psychological phenomenon whose nature is strongly influenced by factors such as the usefulness of the job, job-centric individual indicators, organizational climate, culture, trust level, and core business beliefs among others. Suffice to note that our attempts to understand the complexities in job satisfaction are largely shaped by the shift from the post-war production-oriented economy to the present globalized knowledge-driven economy in which organizations that are successful in

acquiring and developing the subtle knowledge advantage that their employees possess are more competitive for market resources, particularly in strategic social institutions such as religion. Today, there exists in many parts of the globe a growing interest in the ways in which individuals can utilize religious beliefs, practices, and organizations to enhance their well-being and job satisfaction within the complex 21st-century work environment. We also observed in many studies worldwide that this interest in religion and religious organizations is mysterious, given the widespread belief that religious beliefs and organizations have for too long supported a backward-looking understanding of the world, focusing especially on managing sexual and gender relations, and funneled vast human and material resources toward this. Despite these widespread criticisms about the dysfunctional role of religious beliefs and organizations, the importance of their positive enabling and supportive capabilities in the world of work context cannot be emphatically stated. (Mesfin et al., 2020)(Soelton et al.2020)(Zacharias et al.2021)(Nabella et al.2022)



2. Literature Review

Besides being one of the most academically researched topics, job satisfaction has always perplexed scholars, researchers, and managers. Some core ideals have been purposefully established to gain perspectives on the unfolding of theoretical frameworks and postulations in many theories with their own conceptualizations from which this study surfaces in this context. Job satisfaction is an attitudinal variable concerned with employees' feelings or orientations towards the job. Additionally, job satisfaction is conceptualized as a collection of feelings that an individual holds toward their work, which is therefore equitable for this concept. Scholars have also defined this term differently, with some including it in psychology, while others view it in

sociology and organizational productivity. An exhaustive study of job satisfaction covers a wide range of factors. (Wahjoedi, 2021)(Alsughayir, 2021)(Utami et al.2021)

Job satisfaction is a unique complex of important sources of psychological and social variables. Subsequently, job satisfaction has elicited various interests and voluminous research and publications in the fields of human resource management, psychology, occupational behavior, sociology, mental health, and employee relationship management. Regrettably, despite the widespread study of job satisfaction, scholars still argue that there is a need to address some specific limitations of the literature in questioning what significantly accounts for job satisfaction in certain circumstances or special characteristics. Hence, several scholars and researchers engaged in this field of study range from those that relate their studies to the psychological perspective, social and work situations, and that of organizational productivity. (Maas et al.2021)(Mohammed et al.2022)

2.1. Conceptual Framework of Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a complex, unique, and inherently personal experience that considers the context in which a person works. Previous literature exclusively suggests theories and models that understand the workforce through a secular lens and hence, needs to develop an understanding of the religion-based workforce that works in spiritual work environments. This may propose a broader agenda and a wider awareness of several types of organizational rules. This opportunity necessitates the investigation of spiritual phenomena in the workplace and necessitates a diverse, broad knowledge of the spiritual nature of every individual in the arena of life. The workplace is also considered to ensure that people can function and improve the moral structure in various religious communities around the world. Although job satisfaction models attempt to operationalize or comprehend the nature of a specific construct to uncover the theoretical complexities that underpin the research inquiry, we acknowledge that Herzberg's

Two-Factor Theory and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs are grand theories of human motivation. (Wang et al., 2021)(Ortan et al.2021)

The Herzberg two-factor theory serves as one of the most influential frameworks in organizational psychology and illustrates the basic foundation on how we can understand the inner workings of employee motivation and satisfaction. Herzberg's two-factor theory is founded on the two primary factors for employee motivation; these are those related to the intrinsic value and nature of the work itself, and extrinsic motivation factors that occur in the work environment. The extrinsic factors are known as the hygiene factors and are directly associated with an employee's well-being. When hygiene factors are lagging, employee satisfaction overall will decrease. Maslow formulated a hierarchy of needs, and the theory contends that individuals have a specific and hierarchical need structure, varying from low-order to high-order levels. These needs can act in an individual's thoughts to motivate behavior, and Maslow's hierarchy of needs provides a broad classification for motivational variables. Individual needs can be satisfied and move up to satisfy more needs once the lower-level needs are met. Maslow's hierarchy of needs considers the general establishment of particular conclusions; that is, the higher-level needs are not stimulating until met, but the lower-level needs are necessary for the survival of the emotional well-being of the individual. Overall, these definitions refer to a psychological state that is reflected in the individual's overall attitude towards the job. The elements mentioned in the definition of job satisfaction relate to the characteristics of motives, needs, and perceptions. This is the reason why the intrinsic concept in Human Resource. (Twum & Ayitey, 2024)(Kato et al.2024)

2.2. Factors Influencing Job Satisfaction

Two main perspectives can be articulated to account for the factors contributing to job satisfaction. Internal viewpoints highlight the influence of the organization and its environment,

as well as personal attitudes, including beliefs and values, on job satisfaction. The workplace culture is a leading factor in determining satisfaction towards the organization, as employees seek to work in a congenial work environment. Therefore, it is believed that certain organizations will have a high level of employee satisfaction. The work ethos emphasizes the principles of love, extending compassion, concern, showing dignity, value, and respect to fellow human beings by exhibiting good and altruistic behaviors. Likewise, the effectiveness of leadership is linked with the satisfaction of employees. Leadership effectiveness is also described as a key determinant of job satisfaction, judging by the general opinion that people leave their boss and stay with the organization. Employees want to work effectively with managers who understand them, develop their skills, communicate effectively, reward them with incentives, and motivate them regularly. (Fidyah and Setiawati2020)(Tran, 2021)(Alrazehi et al.2021)

Organizations are constantly encouraged to recognize employee efforts to address employee satisfaction within the organization. The transformational power and impact of employee recognition are acknowledged by organizations that want to enjoy their employees' renewed energy, commitment, support, and satisfaction with their jobs and the organizations for which they work. Values that are widely believed shape behavior, guide decision-making, and help define the working relationships of an individual in an organization. Personal values and attitudes are critical factors affecting the level of loyalty individuals may feel towards their organization. Studies also show that an individual's values and beliefs are significantly positively related to their loyalty towards the organization. External factors such as economic conditions and changes, inflation, wages, government policy, and general satisfaction with the quality of working life can all impact employee morale and satisfaction. People's satisfaction with different areas of their working life varies; their satisfaction or dissatisfaction can vary over a short timescale. The factors listed above reflect several small facets of an individual's role and work

environment. The sum of these facets, plus personal characteristics such as values, will determine overall job satisfaction. Some individuals may grumble about the smallest aspects within each category, but overall appear content. Others find that many aspects are excellent, but a few very negative elements destroy their level of satisfaction. This will be the same when assessed from an internal and external viewpoint. (Ali and Anwar2021)(Murray & Holmes, 2021)(Baqir et al.2020)(Younies and Al-Tawil2021)

The determination of job satisfaction resides in the fact that multiple factors can be acting simultaneously to influence satisfaction with a job. The key question about this issue is which factors are more important than others and in what circumstances. Answering these questions is important to organizations because satisfied employees work harder, give better representation of the organization, stay with the organization longer, and cooperate more effectively. For organizations to make efficient use of these results, considerable effort must be directed towards determining the influence of each factor, including when promoting, hiring, motivating, or allocating training. Becoming better informed about which facets of work are most important in promoting job satisfaction has been a focus of considerable research effort. (Agustina et al.2024)

3. Methodology

This study addressed the question, "What is job satisfaction like in Christian religious organizations in Nigeria?" A qualitative design was used to draw on the workplace experiences and insights of multiple participants in a single long-form interview, meaning qualitative and reflexive. Our preference for a qualitative research approach was based on our effort to systematically explore and capture various subjective aspects of what it is like to work in Christian organizations. We intentionally opted for the mode of inquiry that not only asks employee respondents directly for their own perspectives but also attempts to generate a more

profound understanding of those experiences. Collecting data from survey studies or another method could not meet this particular interest that we had.

Our rationale for choosing individual interviews over focus groups was that we wanted to maximally capture the different kinds of communication going on within the organization through conversations more in-depth than might occur in more interactive and potentially less power-dynamic focus group encounters. We also wanted to ensure that the specific career stages of persons within the organization did not affect their willingness to share experiences and insights or affect the degree of candor, or, alternatively, the amount of narrative detail and personal reflection shared. Our study participants were selected from among Anglican seminarians, clergy, teachers, and lay employees from five different kinds of Christian organizations in Nigeria: a university, a theological seminary, four secondary schools, and an NGO. We sought these participant types to draw on the perspectives of church leaders, as well as those further down the organizational hierarchy, including those whose actual work was most likely to be pastorally or missionally oriented, and those who might have less of an interest in those dimensions of the workplace and might be more likely to focus on experiencing the job as a job. All participants in this research project provided consent, which was obtained verbally due to issues of confidentiality. Data was collected using a short but free-flowing qualitative interview guide to elicit responses to a range of questions related to what their job is like, as well as how they evaluate that job on a range of facets. "Follow-up" questions and anecdotes were used to invite elaboration and further reflection from participants. Data analysis was done utilizing emergent themes, meaning that no a priori codes or concepts were used, as befitting a research question interested in insider and subjective perspectives on phenomena. It involved reading and rereading participant responses and organizing text into categories from that reading. (Jones, 2021)

3.1. Research Design

The research design outlines the nature of the research strategy selected to investigate job satisfaction within Christian organizations in Nigeria. We discuss why a qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods design was used and justify this choice by referring back to our study aims and objectives. We argue that a qualitative research approach was most suitable, given the complex and subjective nature of job satisfaction and the need to explore this construct within a religious setting. Both the theoretical frameworks and background to this study highlight why a qualitative research approach is most suited. From a practical perspective, undertaking this research with an applied focus dictated that the case studies needed to be treated individually in order to appreciate the different settings of the organizations involved. We therefore use four qualitative case studies. (Katebi et al.2022)

We used a convenience sample of Christian organizations, as our aim was to engage with willing participants who had an interesting story to tell. Each of the case study organizations varied in size, sector, and focus, dependent upon their Christian mission. As a result, we interviewed employees from a multi-denominational Christian charity, a Catholic monastery, an Oblate congregation, and an Anglican diocese. These organizations are referred to as Grace, Mount St. Bernard, St. Mary's, and St. Helen's respectively. The employee participants had varying lengths of service ranging from new starters to employees with over twenty years of experience in their organization. Interviewees are demographically profiled in the accompanying table, along with details of the organization's context.

3.2. Data Collection and Analysis

The collection of data from the participants was done through a mixture of qualitative and quantitative techniques. Staff surveys in the form of questionnaires were completed by a total of

401 staff in nine of the eleven organizations visited, while an additional 33 interviews were conducted with staff from these organizations. Given the non-prescriptive nature of this study and the objectives of gathering a wide range of views that could provide the broadest understanding and possible insights, a mixture of methods was used, depending on the nature of the discussion and the personnel involved. It was agreed before beginning that the impact of the research would not be fully understood until analysis was complete. The organizations visited were asked to both represent the type of activities linked to any basic service provision or development. Also, they were an adequate mix geographically across Nigeria, with the traditional North-South dichotomy also being explored.

The surveys that were conducted were mainly provided to ensure that the various organizational boards or central management teams were fully apprised of the views of their staff and volunteers. This would, it was hoped, provide evidence of both the commitment and concerns of those who were driving the organization from 'the shop floor,' where day-to-day services are provided, and also from the volunteers who were a vital part of the service delivery in such organizations. Training sessions were conducted at each of the organizations to ensure the confidentiality and integrity of the empirical data collection process. It had been agreed in advance that individual staff comments from formal questionnaires could not be quoted as it was important that truly honest opinions could be recorded to ensure the outcome of the research was at least as reasonable or equitable as possible. Therefore, the research was undertaken ethically in respect of safeguarding individual contributions. Anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed and upheld throughout. Data that was obtained is wholly and totally non-attributable.

The methodology adopted for the analysis of the questionnaire responses was to take a 'data-centric' approach by constructing an analytical framework that was based on the answers

provided by the respondents. This was developed as part of the data collection process as the construction of the questionnaire was based on addressing the need to meet the research question posed. In essence, the structured questions were designed to be linked to the relevant dimensions of governance and management practice as identified in the most recent governance code. The data was coded and the consequent results of those codes were subjected to both manual and computer-based thematic analysis. There were no major problems encountered with the inclusion of a mixture of numerical data, nor the interpretation of comments given. For many organizations, some basic questions were addressed, such as simple staff turnover calculation. However, this process was also capable of the more advanced calculation of average tenure of service, highest and lowest senior to lowest staff ratio, the incidence of workload that was considered additional to the interviewees' job title, and the general feelings towards the organizations. The process produced robust findings in relation to the subject area. The limitation of the method is that it was not replicated in size by a control sample of organizations. However, the impression was given that anything less would not have met the organizational requirements for a data-intensive method aimed at providing on-the-ground insights.

4. Findings

In this section, the results would be presented as follows:

1. Job Satisfaction This thematic category explores the extent to which employees in Christian organizations are satisfied with their work. It also reflects the quality or tone of employee experiences about organizational output as it intentionally reflects individual input. It essentially revolves around the major dimensions of job satisfaction. This theme could be subdivided into satisfaction with the organization, job, persons, motivation, and organizational output.

2. Leadership, Organizational Culture, and Job Satisfaction This aspect opens up the traits of organizational cultures and positively axiological leadership that employees are exposed to in Christian organizations. Some of the variables in this dimension were subsumed under the aspect of Christian spirituality, which explored the extent to which it impacted employees' job satisfaction. The facet under Christian spirituality was identified as God-fearing. This sub-theme reflected the fear of God in the workplace, which manifested in the adoption of management practices that reflected virtues such as moral leadership, humility, equity, and selflessness, among others.

The dimension could be divided into two themes: dissatisfaction and satisfaction. The purpose was to dichotomize job satisfaction in Christian organizations because different occurrences, including scenarios, were revealed in the data. Statistical findings shall be presented in the form of descriptive statistics, frequencies, or simple percentages, while qualitative narratives or case studies shall also be presented. These would be supported with relevant literature and compared as findings are presented for each of the explored facets, including overall job satisfaction.

4.1. Overview of Job Satisfaction in Christian Organizations in Nigeria

In an earlier section of this report, we provided the definition and dimensions of job satisfaction. This section provides an overview of job satisfaction in Christian organizations in Nigeria today. There is a large body of research and reports that explore this theme from diverse perspectives. Two key themes dominate this body of literature: key indicators of job satisfaction in Christian organizations in Nigeria today, and the potential factors that have led to this situation. Since the bulk of our data has come from secondary sources, we will first provide a vivid snapshot of the present situation. (Ihemeje et al.2023)(Onwuzu and Nnamani2023)(Olofinkua, 2020)

Most Christian organizations in Nigeria are blessed with employees who are highly committed, dedicated, and who exhibit a high level of spiritual maturity. Most employees desire to be at work when they are expected to be at work, and they maintain a reasonable working relationship with their supervisors. For most employees, it is normal for them to reach out beyond their officially assigned duties to attend to their jobs. On the positive side, there is typically a high level of spiritual satisfaction. Also on the high side is the level of social satisfaction employees derive from working in Christian organizations. Whether it is in a church, voluntary Christian agency, or faith-based organization in Nigeria, employees are highly satisfied with the relationships they have in their various departments and ministries. Despite the above, there are many factors that make employees exhibit a low level of job satisfaction. Many employees pass through the doors of their organizations in the morning with a heavy spirit and a morose attitude, entering another day of ennui and sustenance mode. There are employees who also exhibit the same or similar attitude even during breaks and lunchtime. There are, *ceteris paribus*, a number of causal analyses to this. Some of them are cultural; others are doctrinal or theological; and yet some others are economic. Industry-specific and work content factors also account for job satisfaction or dissatisfaction issues in Christian organizations in Nigeria. The data, however, show no evidence of any asymmetry requiring the use of counter or reactants or to arouse dissenting or diverse perspectives. Rather, the data and the information we have received are indicative of a scenario typified by an analytic and theoretical synergy that reflects several intersections or cross-links between the various issues, operating within the Christian organizations, which, in our opinion, have various background causes, including but not limited to those already mentioned above. (Olofinkua, 2020)(Nwachukwu et al.2022)(Ezeh et al., 2022)(Obi et al., 2021)

It is important to draw a comparison between the challenges faced by organizations in which their managerial ethics are ethereal and ethical and secular organizations. Christian organizations are more likely to be populated by people who have Christian ethics. People with Christian ethics are expected to possess Christian qualities. Thus, a Christian employee in a Christian organization is more disposed to being a good and hard-working employee of that organization, which has employed him or her with Christian values. This work is not focused, of course, on ministries and religious doctrines, but on faith-based organizations, particularly organizations that are motivated by their Christian tenets and values. The prevalence of 'Christian ethics' among employees, the people hired, and the nature of the products and services prevailing in these organizations, as well as the organizations' philosophy and mission, present a special mode of management. (Health Organization, 2020) (Jacobsen, 2021)

5. Discussion

In this section of Chapter 4, we discuss the results presented in the previous chapter and their implications in light of the literature. Thus, we also link the presented theoretical framework of the study with our findings, as well as the quantitative and qualitative data. The extent to which the two methods coincide is also reflected in the various subsections below. Again, as we have mentioned already, we refine and develop further aspects of our discussion regarding the implications of job satisfaction in Nigeria and the interrelationship between religion and work, especially in an African context like Nigeria. In fact, in our findings, we pointed out that only one of the job satisfaction aspects of working in Christian organizations we have indicated from the existing literature was among the most significant job satisfaction factors in our sample.

We conclude this chapter by discussing the concrete management and administration-related implications of our research, re-exploring some unexpected findings, and bringing the entire

discussion to light with some more general considerations. The relevance of the present study, in fact, goes beyond mere organizational aspects because it focuses not only on exploring whether people working or interested in working for Christian organizations are satisfied with their job, but we have also sought to identify what the main job satisfaction triggers or drivers are, if any, in Christian-based organizations. The results allow us to cautiously suggest that recent claims from several scholars that there is a direct relationship between individuals' religiosity and their job satisfaction in a particular and in the private sector, in general, have to be further tested.

5.1. Implications for Management and Policy

This is another sub-section that seeks to make a seamless connection between our research findings in the past sub-sections and the contemporary issues of job satisfaction as they manifest in management practices and organizational policies in Christian organizations. The subsequent in-depth analysis expounds on the implications for management and policy. The impression that Christian workplaces or spiritual organizations are quiescent even as they push forward in the practice of organizational culture is deceptive. Thus, a majority of Christians are only likely to stay in organizations that share their Christian values, which will not make their professional and spiritual life irreconcilable. Thus, managers must consider their distinct employee needs in Christian organizations or risk losing some very valuable personnel. Given that it was possible for these workers to change their job situation, the demotivation and discontent under which they worked would have resolved altogether. (Edmans, 2023)(Hidayat et al., 2022)

For Christian workplaces or organizations, the findings suggest that if the objective is to foster a work environment that supports employees in their spiritual and professional growth, certain organizational management interventions are crucial. One would be evidence of the importance of spiritual leadership and the coaching mentoring style of leadership that encourages spiritual and organizational growth. Lastly, a systemic policy intervention at an organizational level that

supports leadership in their pursuit of a more satisfying work environment for their employees is the need for more regular evaluative meetings on different organizational processes and stipulated methods of well-being practices that can be tried and tested to see the level of impact on the satisfaction of staff. (Hughes et al., 2020)

6. Conclusion and Future Research Directions

This research has sought to explore job satisfaction using empirical data from Christian organizations in Nigeria. Evidence has confirmed that job satisfaction is influenced by a combination of personal and demographic factors, as well as personality factors. Other factors that are proposed to influence job satisfaction regarding these organizations are found not to be at play, or indeed even relevant. This suggests that there is potential for comparative investigation of the factors associated with job satisfaction and their relative significance within Christian organizations compared with mainly secular organizations internationally. Furthermore, like other organizations, it has ethical implications as well as implications for church effectiveness. Finally, however, the study has reflective limitations, which prompt future research. This is particularly essential given the limitations of using a small sample size, a cross-sectional dataset, a single country focus, and a specific type of Christian organization in developing theoretical advancement and generalizability to an extent. More reports will be communicated in the near future.

In a managerial context, the study has important practical implications. The informal feedback from several organizational participants during the course of conducting fieldwork provides some evidence that this study has confirmed recent changing societal trends, such as more religious employees joining such organizations for God-related calls to add spiritual value to their core motives, and the implications for responsiveness and value-added efficiency. Hence,

one of the directions for future research is to investigate job satisfaction longitudinally – to weigh the degree of influence of such disillusionment (or otherwise) at the recruitment stages, with different Christian offerings, on employee job satisfaction over a certain period of time. Another direction is to investigate whether the findings depicted here can be replicated using similar organizations in other African countries, as one group of respondents disclosed that Nigeria is unique due to its peculiar social human capital development, and that therefore the findings cannot be replicated anywhere else in Africa. Other avenues may include comparing Christian organizations with secular ones.

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