Religiousity as an Antecedent of Employees' Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

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Abstract
Organisational practitioners and academics have recognized that employees' discretionary behaviours that go beyond their formally prescribed roles hold great promise for organizations and their members. This calls for identification of individual and organizational factors that promote these behaviours. The study investigated the extent to which employees' level of religiosity predicts their organizational citizenship behaviour. A cross-sectional survey was conducted involving 272 which comprised of 125 males (46%) and 147 females (54%) and were conveniently sampled from various organizations in the Central region of Ghana. Sixty-four percent of the respondents were Christians, while 34.3% and 1.7% were Muslims and Traditionalists respectively. Religiousity was measured using Huber and Huber's five dimension Centrality of Religion Scale (CRS), and OCB was measured using Organizational Citizenship Behavior Checklist (OCB-C) developed by Fox and Spector's which has a total of 20 items. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, independent samples t-test, Pearson's Product Moment correlation, ANOVA and multiple regressions. The results indicated that religiosity of the employees had significant contribution to their citizenship behaviour in their organizations. Regression analysis of the dimension of the religiosity scale showed that only religious ideological values and private practice significantly contributed to the OCB of the employees. ANOVA analysis also indicated that the religious denominations of the employees significantly influenced their OCB. The findings of this study suggest that efforts by organizations and society at large to inculcate religious values in employees would be invaluable for smooth and efficient organizational functioning. Further implications are discussed.

Key terms: Religiousity, Organisational citizenship behaviour, discretionary behaviour.

INTRODUCTION

There is a general consensus that the African is very religious, and that religion is a sub of the Africans personality, as well as the African socio-cultural system. These have been epitomized in the writings of Mbiti [24] and Leonard [21] in the following quotes:

"Africans are notoriously religious" (Mbiti, 1969, p. 1); and "Africans are in the natural sense of the word truly and deeply religious of whom it can be said that they eat religiously, drink religiously, bathe religiously, dress religiously and sin religiously" (Leonard,1966, p. 1).

Giving that cultural values and beliefs have been found to have profound effect on the behaviour of individuals in various contexts, this study investigated the extent to which the level of religiosity of employees affects their organizational citizenship behaviour.

Business organizations all over the world are experiencing turbulent times in the current dispensation. There is stiff competition which requires organizations and their employees to go the extra mile in order to survive in the rapidly changing business environment. This calls for innovative, proactive, dedicated and loyal employees who are keen on getting their orgainsation through the storming corporate milieu. Lawler [19] aptly observed that, "In a rapidly changing environment, employees need to rapidly change what they are doing and in some cases, to change the competences that they have in order to perform in new and different ways" (p. 5). Employers now need employees who are versatile and are willing to go beyond the formally prescribed job roles. The willingness to go beyond the formally prescribed roles is known as organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB). Athanasou and King [6] noted that OCBs are behaviours of a discretionary nature that are not part of employees' formal role requirements; however, these behaviours contribute to the effective functioning of an organization. Organ [35] defines OCBs as "individual behaviours that are discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promote the effective functioning of an organization" (p. 4).

Organisational practitioners and academics have recognized that these behaviours have great promise for organizations and their members. In view of this, enormous resources have been invested in investigating task, personal, leader and organizational antecedents of this type of behaviours Podsakoff et al, [36]. Alizadeh, Darvishi, Nazari and Emami [4] observed that the antecedents commonly studied are job satisfaction, perceptions of organizational justice, organizational commitment, personality characteristics, task characteristics, and leadership behaviour. More recent studies indicated that individuals' personal attributes, beliefs, attitude and dispositions have enormous influence on employees' organizational behaviour e.g. [31, 34]

This study investigated the extent to which employees' religiosity and religious denominations precipitate their engagement in discretionary behaviours that are not formally prescribed and rewarded by their employing organizations. The African, for that matter, the Ghanaian is said to be very religious. "Africans are in the natural sense of the word truly and deeply religious of whom it can be said that they eat religiously, drink religiously, bathe religiously, dress religiously and sin religiously" [21] (p. 1).

Evidence suggests that religious and spiritual symbols and practices are becoming widespread and acceptable in the workplace as seen by the increase in religious enrichment and empowerment programmes, prayer meetings, Bible study, religious/spiritual language, and requests for time off for religious obligations or holidays [9, 10]. The 2010 population and housing census of Ghana indicated that Christians in Ghana constitute 71.2% of the total population, Muslims, 17.6%, traditional religion, 5.2%, others 0.8%, and 5.2% did not indicate affiliation with any religion (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). Thus, 94.8% of the Ghanaian population belongs to one religion or the other. Lawton and Morgan [20] observed that individuals characterized as religious are not only those who hold particular religious beliefs but also practice them in day-to-day life. How does this play out at the workplace regarding employees' work ethics and behaviour?

Religion is said to regulate human behaviour through institutionalized norms and principles and employees incorporate these values, norms, principles and beliefs into their work life [40]. The tenets of the various religions admonish their followers to be good organizational members. The Christian Bible, for instance stipulates: "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the realm of the dead, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom" (Ecclesiastes 9:10, NIV). The Bible again states, "Servants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters not with eye service, as men pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing the Lord. Whatever your task, work heartily as serving the Lord and not men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward; you are serving the Lord Christ. For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality" (Colossians 3: 22–25).

Similarly, Salam and Agil [41] claimed that "Islam provides principles which constitute both the law and ethics connected with work, and that Muslims are required to work and conduct business in accordance with these principles". Al-Goaib [3] posits that, in Islam, religiosity means the commitment to the fundamentals of Islamic religion empirically and theoretically through the fulfillment of Allah's rights, the protection of others rights, following Allah's orders, avoiding bad acts, and performing worship. The traditional religion also has unwritten ethical beliefs and principles that encourage employees to be good at everything they do. Mbiti [25] noted that the traditional ethical codes and rules of conducts "are written not on paper, but in people's hearts, minds, oral history, rituals and religious personages like the priests, rainmakers, officiating elders and even kings".

Giving that the various religions encourage their members to be diligent in whatever they do, it makes sense to empirically ascertain how this plays out at the workplace. Research findings suggest that people who hold and follow certain religious dogmas exhibit particular sets of behaviours that are reflected in their personal and social lives. Employees' work behaviour is expected to be affected by the level of religiosity and the extent to which they identify themselves with and are active followers of a certain religion [32].

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Religiosity is therefore viewed in the light of Kelly's personality theory which forms the basis of this study. This theory is used to explain how employees' personal religiosity or religious values and norms are activated in their work life experiences. This theory posits that a personal construct is a pattern for the anticipation of events. Empirical studies indicate that religious belief is a powerful force in every society [1] and individuals often activate and bring their religious beliefs to the workplace [18]. For instance, individuals who are more giving with their money are likely to activate this personal attribute and be as well more devoted with their time and effort at work. Huber and Huber [15] assert that "the personal system of religious constructs can be defined as a superstructure in personality which consists of all personal constructs which are related to the individually defined realm of religion and religiosity" (p. 714). A personal religious construct is activated when the individual anticipates something with a religious meaning. Personal religious beliefs are activated in organizational behaviour in many contexts as employees engage and interact with coworkers and their employers. Fok, Hartmandy, Patti, and Razek [7], for example, found that there were individual differences in the occurrence of organizational citizenship behaviour, and that individuals who were more benevolent were also more likely to engage in OCB.

The centrality of religiosity concept which consists of five core-dimensions, through which personal religious constructs are activated, was employed in this study. This involves the

interplay between sociologically defined core-dimensions and psychologically defined personal religious construct-system [15]. The five dimensions are described below.

The first component is the intellectual dimension, which is conceived from a sociological perspective. This component refers to the social expectation that religious people have some knowledge of their religion, and that they can explain their views on transcendence, religion and religiosity. In the personal religious construct system this dimension is represented as themes of interest, hermeneutical skills, styles of thought and interpretation, and as bodies of knowledge.

The second dimension is of the centrality of religiosity, ideology, refers to the social expectation that religious individuals have beliefs regarding the existence and the essence of a transcendent reality and the relation between the transcendence and human. In the personal religious construct system this dimension is represented as beliefs, unquestioned convictions and patterns of plausibility.

Public practice is the third dimension, and this refers to the social expectation that religious individuals belong to religious communities. Public practice is manifested in the public participation in religious rituals and in communal activities. In the personal religious construct system this dimension is represented as patterns of action and as a sense of belonging with respect to a certain social body as well as to a certain ritualized imagination of the transcendence.

Private practice refers to the social expectation that religious individuals devote themselves to the transcendence in individualized activities and rituals in private space. In the personal religious construct system this dimension is represented as patterns of action and a personal style of devotion to the transcendence. Empirical evidence suggests that intrinsic religious orientation has a significant positive correlation with emotional intelligence, but extrinsic religious orientation has a negative correlation with emotional intelligence [22]. This construct being intrinsic value is expected to have great influence on the work behaviour of employees. Weaver and Agle [44] indicated that religious role expectations, internalized as a religious self-identity, can influence ethical behaviour or values of individual.

The last component is religious experience, which refers to the social expectation that religious individuals have some kind of direct contact to an ultimate reality which affects them emotionally. In the personal religious construct system this dimension is represented as patterns of religious perceptions and as a body of religious experiences and feelings.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Organisational practitioners emphasized the need for employees to exhibit citizenship behaviours in the workplace in order to solve work-related problems on their own [11]. Occurrence of citizenship behaviour at the workplace enhances the pleasantness of work settings, and contributes to performance and efficiency [5]. This suggests that personal, contextual and organizational antecedents need to be explored widely across and within cultures to promote the productivity or organizations and working lives of employees. Identification of the essential antecedents would be invaluable to practitioners in designing interventions to enhance OCBs among employees.

Asamani, and Opoku Mensah, however noted that there is dearth of research works on the determinants of OCB in African work settings. Moorman [30] cited in Asamani and Opoku Mensah, [5] observed that cultural values can contribute to variations in work attitudes and behaviour of employees, both within and between. This calls for rigorous investigations into various potential antecedents of OCBs under varied socio-economic and cultural contexts. Ghanaians have generally been said to be very religious, and religiosity was found to be associated employees attitude and work behaviour [34]. In view of this, this study sought to find out the religiosity level of Ghanaian employees and how this impacts on their OCB. This area has not been explored in Ghana, cognizance of the fact that the cultural values of Ghana are different.

THE CONCEPT OF RELIGIOSITY

Religiosity, according to Hackney and Sanders [13] is considered to be a multi-layered concept which consists of cognitive, emotional, motivational and behavioural aspects. These authors indicate that the term is difficult to define when it is a subject of empirical research. Various authors defined religiosity differently, with some using the term interchangeably with spirituality, while others distinguish religiosity from spirituality. Hill et al. [14] indicated that, historically, there was a very strong connection between religiosity and spirituality, but current conceptions suggest that the two terms are distinct. For instance, Shafranske and Maloney [42] distinguished the two concepts. They considered religiosity as representing the adherence to the practices and beliefs of an organized church or religious institution, while spirituality involves a personal, experiential connotation and may or may not include religion.

In consonance with Richards and Bergin [39] also indicated that religion is a subset of the spiritual. According to these authors, spirituality involves having a transcendental relation with a superior and supernatural being, while religiosity involves adopting a certain religious creed or church. Frequently, the word spiritual is used to describe religious spiritual experiences, while the word religious is used for institutionalized religiosity, and an individual could be spiritual without being religious and vice versa [17].

ORGANIZATION CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR

Organ [35] defined organization citizenship behaviour (OCB) as the individual's behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization. Organ then proceeded to define what he meant by discretionary, as the behavior that is not an enforceable requirement of the role or the job description, that is, the clearly specifiable terms of the person's employment contract with the organization.

Discretionary behaviour being rather a matter of choice, its omission is not necessarily recognized and rewarded by the organization. Organization citizenship behaviour links performance and job satisfaction in a meaningful way [35]. According to Organ [35], Organization citizenship behaviour has a variety of forms, including altruism, courtesy, sportsmanship, civic virtue and conscientiousness. Altruism means that employees help others with organizationally relevant tasks. Courtesy means that they treat others with respect. Sportsmanship implies that employees have a positive attitude and are willing to tolerate less than ideal circumstances without complaining. Civic virtue means that employees responsibly participate in, and are concerned about, the welfare of the company. Conscientiousness is discretionary behavior that goes well beyond minimum role requirement of the organization, such as making phone calls to take care of business from home.

The positive contribution of Organization citizenship behaviour to organizational performance is widely accepted by literature [36]. These important contributions to organizational success, it is critical for organizations to understand how and why employees engage in organization citizenship behaviours

RELIGIOSITY AND ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOURS

A review of literature by McGhee and Grant [27] indicated that spiritual individuals in the workplace are more likely to demonstrate enhanced teamwork, greater kindness and fairness, increased awareness of other employees' needs, increased honesty and trust within their organizations, higher incidences of organizational citizenship behaviour, express more servant-leader behaviour, perceive the ethical nature of business issues more clearly and are more sensitive to corporate social performance. In 2004, Oler investigated the extent to which employees' religiosity and spirituality affected their daily work practices and leader/follower trust levels in food service and nutrition directors and their subordinates. The findings indicated that the more employees were engaged in religious practices, the more likely they were to demonstrate specific spiritual actions that are activated in their work attitudes and behaviour.

Likewise, Rastgar, Zarei, Davoudi and Fartash [37] suggested that the most important agents that described workplace spirituality include: benevolence, generativity, humanism, integrity, justice, mutuality, receptivity, respect, responsibility and trust. These agents form the values and basic principles to which religious individuals adhere. They are consistent with the dimensions of organizational citizenship behaviour, and can therefore be theorized to influence its occurrence.

Religious persons are more likely to exhibit these citizenship-like behaviours in any context they find themselves. Rastgar et al. [37] noted that work place spirituality impacts employees positively to work hard and engage in extra role behaviours. Khalid, Rahman, Madar and Ismail [16] examined the role of religiosity on organizational citizenship behaviours among 237 undergraduates from an institution of higher learning located in the north of Peninsular, Malaysia and found that intrinsic religiosity was a significant predictor of organizational citizenship behaviour, while extrinsic religiosity was a significant predictor of organizational citizenship behaviour.

Affeldt and MacDonald [2] studied the relationship between spirituality to work, organizational attitudes and behaviours in a sample of 446 employees from multi-site religiously affiliated health care system. They opined that the influence of spirituality on employee and organizational performance can best be assessed in healthcare settings. Further, they found significant relationship among spirituality, job satisfaction, work ethic, and organizational citizenship behaviours.

Further, Mitroff and Denton [28] cited in Marschke [23] indicated that "organizations which identify themselves as spiritual have employees who are less fearful of their organizations; are less likely to compromise their basic beliefs and values in the workplace; perceive their organizations as being significantly more profitable and, report that they can bring significantly more of their complete selves to work, especially their creativity and intelligence".

RESEARCH QUESTION AND HYPOTHESIS

The following research question and hypothesis were formulated based on the review of related literature:

Which of the sub-components of religiosity has the greatest influence on employees' citizenship behaviour

H1: Employees' level of religiosity will positively influence their oganisational citizenship behaviour.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study aimed to identify the relationship between religiosity of employees and organizational citizenship behaviour. As a result the descriptive survey was deemed appropriate.

Population

Population is the target group, from which the researcher is interested in gaining information and drawing conclusions. In this study, the targeted population was workers in organizations or institutions in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

Sample and Sampling procedure

The study involved a convenience sample of 272, which consisted of 125 males (46%) and 147 females (54%) from various occupations including, health, transport, banking, teaching and other occupations within the metropolis. The sample involved Christians: 164(60.3%) Christians, 104(38.2%) Muslims, 4(1.5%) Traditionalists. Table 1 shows the designation distribution of the respondents.

Table 1: Designation of Respondents

Designation	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Top Level Staff	52	19.1
Middle Level Staff	86	31.6
Lower Level Staff	134	49.3
Total	**272**	**100**

Source: Fieldwork Survey (April, 2016)

Research Instrument

The research instrument used for the data collection was a set of questionnaire. Two main measures were used in this study; Centrality of religiosity scale (CRS) [15] and Fox and Spector's [8] 20-item OCB scale. These were adapted to suit the Ghanaian context.

Centrality of Religiosity scale

The 15-items version of the Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS) [15] was adapted for the study. The scale has 5 additional items for interreligious settings which were included, making the total items for religiosity 20. It measures the general intensities of five theoretically defined core dimensions of religiosity. The five dimensions are: public practice, private practice, religious experience, ideology and the intellectual dimensions. These can together be

considered as representative for the total of religious lives of an individual. The scale has been validated in over 20 countries, including a number of African countries (e.g. Nigeria) and found to be very reliable and valid. Response options was on a 7 point-Likert scale which ranged from 1 (Never), 2 (A few times a year), 3 (1 to 3 times a month), 4 (once a week), 5 (More than once a week), 6 (Once a day) and 7 (Several times a day). Individuals with higher scores on the CRS are deemed to have a more central religious construct system. The reliability coefficient obtained for this study was .827.

Organisational citizenship behaviour

Fox and Spector's (2011) 20-item OCB scale was adapted for the study. The items were scored on a 5-point likert scale, 1 (Never), 2 (Once or twice), 3 (Once or twice per month), 4 (Once or twice a week) and 5 (every day). The alpha reliability coefficient for this study was .841

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study sought to investigate the levels of religiosity and organizational citizenship behaviour of employees from various orgnisations. Data were collected, using a set of questionnaire and was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics (Pearson's r, and linear multiple regression analyses). The data were screened and questionnaires that were not fully completed, thus, having significant missing data were omitted. Outliers and other influential cases were identified and also omitted using the Cook's distance, studentized, Mahalanobis, and also checked for serial correlation with the Durbin-Watson statistic. Further, multicollinearity was checked to ensure that the sub-components were not highly correlated to each other to be included in multiple regression analysis. The results are presented in tables 2, 3 and 4.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of respondents' scores on OCB, Total religiosity, and the sub-scales of religiosity

	Possible range	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
				Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
OCB	20-100	61.3603	12.09048	-.613	.148	-.713	.294
Religiosity (Overall)	20-140	103.5368	14.13635	-.964	.148	.872	.294
Intellect	3-21	14.3309	2.85454	-.471	.148	.064	.294
Ideology	3-21	17.8750	3.31259	-.600	.148	-.797	.294
Public practice	3-21	16.6949	3.04679	-.790	.148	.917	.294
Private practice	6-42	30.3382	5.60932	-.588	.148	-.195	.294
Experience	5-35	24.2978	4.51928	-.779	.148	.485	.294

The descriptive statistics of the employees' religiosity and OCB are presented in table 2. The results indicated that the level of OCB exhibited by the respondents was quite good since the mean (60.93 out of a maximum of 100) was above the average score on the scale, and the religiosity was very high (a mean of 103.33 out of 140 maximum score). The scores on the various sub-comreponents of religiosity were also very high, especially the ideological values component (17.88 out of a maximum of 21). This confirms the general view held that African, and by extension, Ghanaians are religious.

H1: Employees' level of religiosity will positively predict their oganisational citizenship behaviour.

Table 3: Correlation coefficients of the relationships between the components of religiosity and OCB

Components	Intel	Ideology	Public Pr	Private Pr	Experience	Total Rel
Pearson's r	.545	.744	.193	.656	.594	.776
Sig.	.001	.001	.001	.001	.001	.001

The Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used in finding the relationship that exists between employees' religiosity and their citizenship behaviour. The results revealed that the overall level of religiosity of employees was positively related to their organizational citizenship behaviour (0.697, p < .001). All the components were found to be linearly related to the OCB, thus suitable for the multiple linear regression analyses. Adherence to religious ideological values was found to be the most (r = .744, p < .001) influential component of religiosity on employees' citizenship behaviour. Private practice had the least relationship with OCB (r = .193, p < .001).

The standard linear multiple regression analysis was performed to ascertain the extent to which each of the five sub-components of religiosity predicts employees' organizational citizenship behaviour. Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure that there were no violations of the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity. The results of this analyses indicated that no assumption was violated, and there was no problem with multicollinearity, as all tolerance values were above .10, and VIFs were between 1.172 to 2.054 [43]. All sub-components significantly correlated with organizational citizenship behaviour which indicates that the data was suitable for examination through multiple linear regressions.

Table 4: Regression analysis of the components of religiosity and OCB

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-6.664	3.427		-1.944	.053		
	Intellect	.337	.198	.079	1.698	.091	.563	1.775
	Ideology	1.755	.173	.481	10.152	.000	.550	1.819
	Public practice	.317	.155	.080	2.051	.041	.812	1.231
	Private practice	.468	.105	.217	4.467	.000	.522	1.915
	Experience	.508	.117	.190	4.352	.000	.649	1.541

a. Dependent Variable: OCB

The direct method was used for the multiple regressions analysis since no a priori hypothesis had been made to determine the order of entry of the component of religiosity. The five components (predictor variables) together strongly related to OCB (R = .820, p < .001) and explained 66.6% (adjusted R^2 = .666) of variance in organizational citizenship behaviour [F (5, 266) = 108.94, p < .001]. The results indicated that, with the exception of intellectual knowledge and understanding of one's religion (intellect, β = .079, p > .05), all the other component significantly predicted the respondents' OCB. Adherence to one's religious ideological values had the strongest influence on OCB (β = .481, p < .001) and private practice of religiosity also making a significant contribution (β = .217, p < .001).

The results demonstrated that employees who were more religious were more likely to engage in organizational citizenship behaviour. This findings support that of Rastgar et al. [37] that work place spirituality impacts employees positively to work hard and engage in extra role behaviours. Similarly, Affeldt and MacDonald [2] also found a significant positive relationship between spirituality and organizational citizenship behaviours of employees, suggesting the relevance of workplace spirituality in employees' organizational behaviour and performance [38].

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The findings of the study extend previous research by supporting the suggestion that religious beliefs, attitudes and practices improve job attitudes and workplace behaviours. This finding is very essential in the African context given the highly religious nature of the African, and for that matter, the Ghanaian. It is important to note that all the major religions admonish and impart positive values unto their members which hold great promise for contemporary organization. Religion can no longer be separated from organizational life, especially in the African context that religion is a sub cultural belief. Religious beliefs make individual employees more conscious of the needs and feelings of their peers and more willing to take action for the benefit of others and the organizations. It seems also that highly religious individuals tend to be more satisfied with their work and are more committed to their organizations' values and goals. It may be that being religious simply serves to remind the congregant to do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

The findings have implications for contemporary organizations. The results in this study clearly indicated that it not church attendance and public display or intellectual appreciations of one's religious values and beliefs that is important in organizational life. Rather it is the adherence and private practice of the religious values that hold great promise for organizations. There is the need for organizations to effectively and actively prime religious cues in their organizations to activate the religious beliefs in employees. When this is done, it would make employees incorporate their religious values in their work, which have been found to have positive impacts on organizational behaviour. When employees have their whole being (body, soul and spirit) recognized and appreciated at the workplace, it make them alive and very energized to discharge their duties at the workplace. Humans are spiritual beings; recognizing and priming religious beliefs and values holds great promise for today's organizational life.

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