

Chapter 13

Work Orientations: A Comparison of Bank Workers and Secondary School Teachers in Sokoto Metropolis

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Introduction

Work is central to the survival and development of every society. By work we mean the activities involved in the production and distribution of the goods and services which members of the society require for their sustenance and reproduction. Because of its centrality, social scientists have paid considerable attention to various aspects of work including its ideology, forces of production, the social relations, the level of production, peoples' attitude towards work as well as the consequences of work for the individual and for the society. More recently, the challenge of globalisation and the increased recognition of employees as not just another, but a critical input into the production process have turned the attention of researchers on workers' orientations towards their work. This paper seeks to contribute to our understanding of workers orientation towards work. Specifically, the paper compares the work orientations of secondary school teachers with those of bank workers in Sokoto.

Work Orientations

Understanding orientations to work has been the focus of many researches since the publication of the *Affluent Worker Studies* by Goldthorpe and Lockwood, et. al. (1969; 1970). In their study, Goldthorpe *et. al.* sought to determine what wants and expectations people brought to their work from outside and how these wants and expectations determined their subjective experience of work (Goldthorpe et al, 1969:184). This was meant to be a corrective to the sole emphasis on objective and material determinants of work behaviour prevalent at the time. Following their lead, several studies have sought to understand variations in work orientations among different occupations, socio-economic groups and nationalities (e.g. Anderson, 1985; de Vaqus and McAllister, 1991; Loscocco, 1989; Mannheim, 1993; Bradley, 2006). The importance of an understanding of work orientations lies not only on their effects on the subjective experience of work but also on such other outcomes as productivity, political beliefs, support for specific social policies and overall national development.

Work Orientation Defined

While there is no generally accepted definition of work orientations, most contemporary authors conceptualise work orientation as the attitudes and motivation or expectations that people have about their work (Bradley, 2006; Heacock, 2009; Petroni and Colacino, 2008). It is these expectations that determine the overall subjective experience of work i.e. how people perceive and react to the actual work situation.

Types of Orientations

In the classic study by Goldthorpe *et al.*, (1968) three types of orientations were identified. These are:

1. Instrumental orientation – here the worker sees work only as a means for obtaining the income needed to live the desired kind of life outside work, and has no expectation of any emotional or social satisfaction from work.
2. Bureaucratic orientation – here, the worker sees devotion to organizational roles, regulations and procedures as the means to his own expectation of job security and stable employee-employer relationship.
3. Solidaristic orientation in which personal satisfaction is derived from association with working colleagues.

In more recent times, other authors have identified (in addition to instrumental orientation) assistance and complacency orientations (Bradley, 2006) and entrepreneurial orientation (in addition to bureaucratic) (Halaby, 2003). According to Bradley, assistance-oriented workers are concerned with helping others and being useful to society whereas complacency oriented workers are concerned neither with the instrumental or social aspects of work or the societal benefits of work. For Halaby, entrepreneurial-oriented workers focus on autonomy, self-sufficiency, competition and the acceptance of risk. The research reported in this paper examines work orientations, whether or not work is considered a central activity and whether or not the subjects considered their work as satisfying or not.

Methodology

The study employed a descriptive survey method. The sample included a hundred secondary school teachers and an equal number of bank workers. The choice of bank workers and teachers was dictated by the critical importance of these two sectors of the economy. Banks are critical to the stability of the economy while teachers have the responsibility of producing tomorrow's workers. The teachers were selected

from a secondary school and a teachers college, both belonging to the Sokoto State Government while the bank workers were selected from four banks operating within the Sokoto Metropolis.

The two schools were selected because of their proximity to each other, accessibility and sizes. The combined population of the teachers of the two schools is one hundred and twenty six. The bank workers were selected from the four banks whose managements gave permission for their workers to be served with the questionnaires. Other banks either refused to grant permission or claimed that they had to obtain permission from their headquarters. The combined population of the workers in the four banks used for this research is two hundred and thirty six excluding office attendants, security personnel and other non core workers.

In both the schools and the banks the lists of workers were obtained and samples were selected using systematic random sampling technique. Two research assistants – a teacher in one of the schools and a M.Sc. student – distributed and retrieved the questionnaires over a four day period. Face and content validity were established using three experienced academics. The questionnaire was pilot tested using four teachers from one of the schools but it was not considered necessary to effect any change in the questionnaire as a result of the pilot test.

In addition to questions on demographic characteristics, statements were made on the centrality of work; orientation towards time; whether success was determined by hardwork, luck or destiny; the importance of income, autonomy, and flexible work to the individual; and, the subject's assessment of the degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction derivable from his/her job. Respondents were given five options ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree and three options ranging from very important to not important on issues relating to work

orientations. On the more concrete issue of what their current job offered, they were required to answer Yes or No.

Results and Discussion

Out of the one hundred questionnaires distributed to each group, ninety eight and sixty-five were returned, respectively. This is a satisfactory percentage of return for this kind of research. According to Babbie (2008:289), as a rough guide a return rate of “50 percent is considered adequate for analysis and reporting. A response rate of 60 percent is good; a response rate of 70 percent is very good”. We present first the result of the analysis for each group and later compare the two groups. It is to be noted that some questions were not answered i.e. there were missing cases as indicated in the tables.

Table13.1: Demographic Characteristics (Teachers)

| | | |
|----------|-----------------------|-----------|
| A | Sex | |
| | Male | 62 |
| | Female | 36 |
| | | 98 |
| B | Age | |
| | 15-30 years | 54 |
| | 31-45 years | 23 |
| | 46 + | 14 |
| | Missing cases | 7 |
| | | 98 |
| C | Marital status | |
| | Single | 19 |
| | Married | 75 |
| | Widowed | 1 |
| | Separated | 1 |
| | Missing cases | 2 |
| | | 98 |

| | | |
|----------|------------------------------|-----------|
| D | Religion | |
| | Islam | 72 |
| | Christianity | 23 |
| | Others | 3 |
| | | 98 |
| E | Highest Qualification | |
| | FSLC | 1 |
| | Post Primary | 3 |
| | ND/NCE | 37 |
| | HND/BSc | 42 |
| | MSc/PhD | 13 |
| | Missing cases | 2 |
| | | 98 |
| F | Salary Grade Level | |
| | 05-07 | 20 |
| | 08-10 | 54 |
| | 12-14 | 18 |
| | Missing | 6 |
| | | 98 |
| G | Length of Service | |
| | 1-10 years | 67 |
| | 11-20 years | 17 |
| | 21-30 years | 5 |
| | 31-40 years | 4 |
| | Missing cases | 5 |
| | | 98 |

Table 13.2: Work and Time Orientations

| S/N | | SA | A | U | D | SD | MC | Sample size |
|-----|--|------|------|-----|------|-----|-----|-------------|
| 1 | Work is most important activity in life | 32.7 | 46.9 | 4.1 | 10.2 | 4.1 | 2.0 | 98 |
| 2 | Hard work is a duty of every citizen | 57.1 | 38.8 | 1.0 | 1.0 | - | 2.0 | 98 |
| 3 | Work is only a means to income | 31.6 | 29.9 | 6.2 | 26.8 | 5.2 | 1.0 | 98 |
| 4 | Any kind of work contributes to society | 36.7 | 40.8 | 4.1 | 16.8 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 98 |
| 5 | Hard work is only way to success | 52.0 | 32.7 | 0 | 11.2 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 98 |
| 6 | Success can come with luck | 34.7 | 40.8 | 6.1 | 11.2 | 2.0 | 5.1 | 98 |
| 7 | Achievement in life is preordained | 70.4 | 23.5 | 1.0 | 2.0 | - | 3.1 | 98 |
| 8 | I feel frustrated having to report for work at specified times | 69.4 | 22.5 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2.1 | 98 |
| 9 | I can always do later whatever I am unable to do immediately | 59.1 | 36.8 | 1.0 | 1.0 | - | 2.0 | 98 |
| 10 | Man should not be a slave to time | 66.2 | 24.7 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2.0 | 98 |

Note: SA - Strongly Agree
A - Agree
U - Undecided
D - Disagree
SD - Strongly Disagree
MC - Missing cases

As can be seen in table 13.2, this group of workers has a strong work ethic. A large percent strongly agreed/agreed that work is the most important activity in life (81.3), that work is a duty of every citizen (97.9) and that any kind of

work makes some contribution to society (78.4). These results show a strong belief in the importance of work and the dignity of labour. These results do not vary with age, sex, income or length of service. In other words, relatively equal percentages of men and women, the old and the young, etc, strongly agreed/agreed with the statements.

However, on the issue of whether or not hardwork brings success, the results show contradictory beliefs. While 84.7 percent strongly agreed/agreed that hardwork leads to success, 75.5 percent strongly agreed/agreed that success can come through luck and 93.9 percent opined that success or failure is something preordained. Finally, on the issue of time orientation, the responses show a negative time orientation. 91.9 percent feel frustrated with the demand for punctuality, 95.9 percent believe they can do at a later time whatever they are unable to do immediately while 90.9 percent were of the opinion that man should not be a slave to time.

On the importance attached to various attributes of a job, the expectations of this group of workers is not different from the expectations of most workers as can be seen in table 13.3. These expectations include a high income, freedom to work independently, opportunity for promotion, etc. The only noticeable difference is that about one third of these workers did not consider freedom to choose when to work i.e. flextime, as important (see table III). On the more concrete issue of what the teachers are getting from their job, table 13.4 shows that a large percent opined that the job offers promotion, is helpful to others and to society, offers challenge, and, surprisingly, gives them pride. The two desirables which the job does not offer are security and sufficient income. Not surprisingly, therefore, majority of the respondents considered their job as highly satisfying or satisfying as can be seen in table 13.4. This is contrary to the general impression many people have of teachers as being a dissatisfied if not frustrated lot.

Table 13.3: Importance of Certain Variables in a Job (Percentages)

| S/No | Variable | Very important | Important | Not important | Missing cases | Actual (sample) |
|------|--------------------------------|----------------|-----------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 1 | High income | 62.2 | 34.7 | 2.0 | 1.0 | 98 |
| 2 | Opportunity for promotion | 68.4 | 30.6 | - | 1.0 | 98 |
| 3 | Freedom to work independently | 52 | 36 | 10 | - | 98 |
| 4 | Freedom to choose when to work | 26 | 38 | 33 | 1 | 98 |
| 5 | Usefulness to society | 87 | 9 | 2 | - | 98 |
| 6 | Opportunity to help others | 74 | 20 | 3 | 1 | 98 |

Table 13.4: What the current job offers, in percentages

| S/N | | Yes | No | Missing cases |
|-----|-----------------------------|------|------|---------------|
| 1 | Pays sufficiently | 20.4 | 79.6 | - |
| 2 | Offers promotion | 86.7 | 10.2 | 3.1 |
| 3 | Helpful to others | 91.8 | 7.1 | 1.0 |
| 4 | Helpful to society | 98.0 | 2.0 | - |
| 5 | Offers independence | 59.2 | 35.7 | 5.1 |
| 6 | Gives me pride | 59.2 | 39.8 | 1.0 |
| 7 | Offers security | 48.0 | 52.0 | - |
| 8 | Offers challenge | 68.4 | 29.6 | 2.0 |
| 9 | Cooperation with co-workers | 92.9 | 6.1 | 1.0 |

Table 13.5: Level of Satisfaction with Job (%)

| | | |
|---------------------|---|--------|
| Highly satisfied | - | 19.4 |
| Satisfied | - | 42.9 |
| Undecided | - | 10.2 |
| Dissatisfied | - | 25.5 |
| Highly dissatisfied | - | 2.0 |
| Total | - | 100.00 |

The Bank Workers

Table 13.6 presents the demographic characteristics of the bank workers. There are more Christians, single, younger and highly educated people in this group compared with the teachers. Table 13.7 presents these workers opinions on the centrality of work, source of success, time orientation, etc. Among these workers, 69.2 percent strongly agreed/agreed that work is the most important activity in life, that work is a duty (88.3%) and that any kind of work makes some contribution to society (63.1%). Thus, there is not much difference between the two groups on these values.

However, this group differs significantly from the teachers on their perception of the source of success. This is more so with respect to the attribution of success to luck and relatively less so with the attribution of success or achievement to destiny, although 73 percent believe that achievement in life is preordained (compared with 93 percent of the teachers). Furthermore, time orientation is relatively better in that only 41 percent feel frustrated by the demand for punctuality, 44 percent procrastinate and 51 percent strongly agreed/agreed that man should not be a slave to time. (The corresponding figures for teachers are 91.9, 95.9 and 90.9 percent, respectively). On the importance of job attributes there is no difference between the bank workers and the teachers (as can be seen in table VIII) except with regard to the desire to be able to choose when to work.

52 percent of bank workers consider this as very important compared with 26 percent of the teachers.

Table 13.6: Demographic Characteristics (Bankers)

| | | |
|----------|------------------------------|-----------|
| A | Sex | |
| | Male | 39 |
| | Female | 26 |
| | | 65 |
| B | Age | |
| | 15-30 years | 47 |
| | 31-45 years | 11 |
| | 46 + | 1 |
| | Missing cases | 7 |
| | | 65 |
| C | Marital status | |
| | Single | 36 |
| | Married | 24 |
| | Missing cases | 5 |
| | | 65 |
| D | Religion | |
| | Islam | 26 |
| | Christianity | 36 |
| | Others | 1 |
| | | 65 |
| E | Highest Qualification | |
| | ND/NCE | 5 |
| | HND/BSc | 55 |
| | MSc/PhD | 4 |
| | Missing cases | 1 |
| | | 65 |
| F | Length of Service | |
| | 1-10 years | 59 |
| | 11-20 years | 1 |
| | Missing cases | 5 |
| | | 65 |

Table 13.7: Work and Time Orientations

| S/N | | SA | A | U | D | SD | MC | Total |
|-----|--|------|------|------|------|------|-----|-------|
| 1 | Work is most important activity in life | 44.6 | 24.6 | 4.6 | 21.5 | 4.6 | - | |
| 2 | Hard work is a duty of every citizen | 58.5 | 30.8 | 1.5 | 6.2 | 1.5 | 1.5 | |
| 3 | Work is only a means to income | 43.1 | 29.2 | 3.1 | 16.9 | 6.2 | 1.5 | |
| 4 | Any kind of work contributes to society | 40.0 | 23.1 | 12.3 | 21.5 | 1.5 | 1.5 | |
| 5 | Hard work is only way to success | 56.9 | 26.2 | 4.6 | 10.8 | 1.5 | - | |
| 6 | Success can come with luck | 10.8 | 35.4 | 12.3 | 33.8 | 7.7 | - | |
| 7 | Achievement in life is preordained | 52.3 | 20.0 | 13.8 | 9.2 | 3.1 | 1.5 | |
| 8 | I feel frustrated having to report for work at specified times | 18.4 | 23.3 | 13.1 | 30.1 | 15.0 | - | |
| 9 | I can always do later whatever I am unable to do immediately | 18.2 | 26.6 | 4.5 | 27.6 | 23.1 | - | |
| 10 | Man should not be a slave to time | 31.9 | 19.2 | 3.1 | 9.5 | 36.3 | - | |

Note: SA - Strongly Agree
A - Agree
U - Undecided
D - Disagree
SD - Strongly Disagree
MC - Missing cases

Table 13.8: Importance of Certain variables in a job (in percentages)

| S/N | Variable | Very important | Important | Not important | Missing cases | Actual sample |
|-----|--------------------------------|----------------|-----------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1 | High income | 55.4 | 41.5 | 3.1 | - | |
| 2 | Opportunities for promotion | 75.4 | 23.1 | 1.5 | - | |
| 3 | Freedom to work independently | 61.5 | 32.3 | 6.2 | - | |
| 4 | Freedom to choose when to work | 52.3 | 26.2 | 21.5 | - | |
| 5 | Usefulness to society | 78.5 | 21.5 | - | - | |
| 6 | Opportunity to help others | 86.2 | 13.3 | - | - | |

Table 13.9: What Current Job offers (%)

| S/N | | Yes | No | Missing cases |
|-----|-----------------------------|------|------|---------------|
| 1 | Pays sufficiently | 58.5 | 41.5 | - |
| 2 | Offers promotion | 81.5 | 18.5 | - |
| 3 | Helpful to others | 89.2 | 10.8 | - |
| 4 | Helpful to society | 90.8 | 9.2 | - |
| 5 | Offers independence | 53.2 | 47.7 | - |
| 6 | Gives me pride | 80.0 | 18.5 | 1.5 |
| 7 | Offers security | 60.0 | 40.0 | - |
| 8 | Offers challenge | 92.3 | 7.7 | - |
| 9 | Cooperation with co-workers | 93.8 | 6.2 | - |

Table 13.10: Level of Satisfaction with Job (%)

| | | |
|---------------------|---|---------------|
| Highly satisfied | - | 21.5 |
| Satisfied | - | 70.8 |
| Undecided | - | 6.2 |
| Dissatisfied | - | 1.5 |
| Highly dissatisfied | - | 0.0 |
| Total | - | 100.00 |

On what the current job offers, the bank workers consider their pay as sufficient, have greater pride in their work, and consider their work as more secure and more challenging (Table 13.9). Finally, while 62.3 percent of the teachers consider the job as highly satisfying or satisfying, the corresponding figure for the bank workers is 92 percent (Table 13.10). In sum, the result of the analysis indicates that these two groups of workers are satisfied with their jobs, take pride in them, have a strong work ethic and believe in the dignity of labour. However, there is a weak sense of self efficacy and negative time orientation. Yet, a strong sense of self efficacy and a strong time consciousness are critical for both individual and organizational productivity. A weak sense of self efficacy is an obstacle to rigorous self discipline and self exertion which productivity demands. A poor orientation towards time implies slow or even no response to technical changes and inability to get work done efficiently. The absence of a sense of self-efficacy and positive time orientation among teachers is particularly bad for future socio-economic development because students imbibe the values they see their teachers exhibit in their behaviours.

In sum, for the various reform programmes of government to succeed, for the Vision 20:2020 to be attained, Nigerian workers need to develop a greater sense of self efficacy and an acute sense of time. At present, late coming has become a sort of status symbol, especially as one moves up the organizational hierarchy. To conclude, the foregoing observations have implications for future research. First, there is need to study larger samples of various work groups than this study has done. Secondly, there is need to research the determinants of work orientation which are essentially socio-cultural. Researchers, therefore, need to examine what factors in the socio-cultural environment, as well as in work organizations, impact on the orientations of workers. For instance, the contents of socialization in our various ethno-

religious and economic groups need to be studied so that socialization practices that impede the development of a sense of self efficacy and positive time orientation can be eliminated.

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