



MORAL VALUES AND TECHNICAL SKILLS AS DETERMINANTS OF JOB SECURITY AMONG PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN RIVERS STATE



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Abstract

The study investigated moral values and skills as determinants of job security among private secondary school teachers in Rivers State. Three research questions were raised and three corresponding hypotheses formulated to guide the study. Correlation survey design was employed in the study and the population of the study was 14, 256 private secondary school teachers out of which 389 teachers were sampled for the study through simple random sampling technique. Two questionnaires named “Moral Values and Technical Skills Questionnaire” (MVTSQ) and “Job Security Questionnaire” (JSQ), having 10 questionnaire items respectively were used to collect data on the dependent and independent variables of the study. The two questionnaires were face and content validated by a Measurement and Evaluation expert at the University of Port Harcourt. Cronbach alpha was used to estimate the reliability of the instruments and while MVTSQ had a coefficient of 0.88, JSQ has a value of 0.82. There were 389 copies of questionnaire administered but only 366 which represented 94.1% retrieval rate was used for analysis. The research questions were answered using simple and multiple regression while the hypotheses were tested using t-test associated with simple regression and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the study showed that moral values contributed moderately to job security while technical skills had a high relationship on job security. However, a combination of moral values and technical skills had a higher relationship on job security among the teachers and the relationship were all significant. The study recommended that the government should carry out its regulatory roles through the Ministry of Education on regular basis by ensuring that while teachers endeavour to acquire the right skills and morals, the school proprietors also ensure that their job is secured as both parties are partners in progress in the education industry

Keywords: Moral Values, Technical Skills, Job Security, Private Secondary Schools, Teachers

Introduction

One of the main factors that employees often consider when securing employment in any organization is job security. This is because, job security is significant to other life aspirations such as career progression, financial stability and wellbeing among others. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2019) pointed out that there has been a steady decline in



permanent job opportunities and this can be attributed to employee, employer or employment system related factors.

Since employees are usually the uncertain personality in the employment contract, they are usually expected to be of their best performance in order to retain and remain on their job. In the process of securing employment, two major factors are often essential which are morals and proficiency (skills) which are the domains for which University degrees are awarded.

Securing job security has been a challenge in recent times as Osajie(2024) pointed out that morals across all spheres of the society including employment have continued to wane and Adekiya *et al.*, (2020) equally pointed out that organizations are constantly seeking for skilled individuals in order to meet the goals and objectives of their organization.

It was pointed out by Aishwarya (2021) that job security is the state of having a secured job or the probability of an individual having his or her current jobs secured. This means that the individual is able to remain on the job for a long period of time without the fear of being laid-off. However, as previously established, Aishwarya (2021) further pointed out that several factors determine employees job security and this includes; *skills* and knowledge, mental and emotional stability towards their work among other factors.

In private schools, customer satisfaction is usually key as a result of high competition among different service providers who are in the same trade. Most private school proprietors especially at the secondary level of education are keen in employing workers who are both skilled and possess the best moral standard that will contribute to the goals of the school. The job security of the employee, in this case the teacher is therefore dependent on the extent to which they can contribute to organizational goals and objectives. Dirisand van Vliet (2022) pointed out that *job* security is highly valued by workers, and that they are willing to sacrifice a substantial share of their wage for more *security and this includes acquiring more skills and attending professional development programmes where their skills and morals can be sharpened.*

The issue of morals cannot be undermined for anyone that wants to work successfully in a private school. This is because the ability to recognize and respond to ethical issues takes precedence in this professional context (Delante&Lagura, 2024). Employees working in private secondary schools like those in other organizations must recognize the moral difficulties in ethically ambiguous situations and assigning value to them (Ineichen *et al.*, 2017) within professionally accepted boundaries. Alluding to this, Makdoom&Aamir (2023) pointed out that moral integrity is required in the workplace for an employee to do the right thing and not to be involved in dishonest practices for personal or further gains, even when not being monitored. This is one of the core belief of private organizations which includes private schools.

However, while moral values are important in the work place, the importance of professional skills cannot also be undermined. Noori and Zakeri (2021) stated that skills refer to the ability to use one's knowledge and apply this know-how in doing tasks and solving problems. Employees require skills to carry out their jobs and this is why job-related skills are of importance in any organization (Felstead *et al.*, 2019). In today's work environment, both soft and hard skills are of importance in the workplace for improved performance. Office of Disability Employment Policy (n.d.) identified skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, leadership, teamwork and adaptability as some of the skills that employees should have. Acquiring these proficiencies is essential in the global business environment and these abilities must be put to use (Ololade *et al.*, 2015) as this strongly determines the job security of any employee.

There are studies that have been conducted to interrogate how morals and skills affect employees in their places of work and Delante and Lagura (2024) conducted one of such studies on moral sensitivity and work values as determinants of work engagement among Barangay health workers. There were 300 barangay health workers who were chosen by proportionate stratified sampling from the Local Government Units of Monkayo, Maragusan, Montevista, Compostela, and New Bataan in Davao de Oro Province. Weighted mean, Pearson r, and regression analysis were used to examine the questionnaire responses. The respondents' high degrees of moral awareness, work values, and job engagement were demonstrated by the results. It was shown that there was a statistically



significant correlation between moral sensitivity and work engagement as well as between work values and engagement.

On the other hand, Diris and van Vliet (2022) conducted a study on the relation between skills and job security by identifying the contractual return to skills. The study estimated the relationship between abilities and the likelihood of an employee landing a permanent contract vs alternative contractual arrangements using PIAAC data from 29 nations. It was demonstrated that numeracy abilities made a greater contribution than literacy abilities, which are mostly determined by industry and vocation. The study also revealed significant differences between nations, showing that at the national level, permanent employment is significantly predicted by either no skills, only literacy skills, or only numeracy abilities, but never both.

Furthermore, Makdoom and Aamir (2023) carried out another study on the mediating effect of job experience on the relation between level of education and moral integrity at the workplace. A convenience sampling technique was used to select 353 CEOs from various businesses. The results demonstrated that moral integrity is influenced by employees' educational attainment, with employment experience acting as a significant mediating factor. Furthermore, no gender difference was discovered, indicating that moral integrity was equally important for workers of both sexes. According to the study, education appears to be the most significant factor that can influence an individual's moral integrity.

In a similar manner, Noori and Zakeri (2021) investigated job security, digital skills and competencies in banking sector. The survey was based on data from Maskan Bank in Iran. The data gathered from the respondents was analyzed using a structural equation model. The results demonstrated a strong correlation between job security and digital skills and abilities. The impact of digital skills was greater than that of digital competences. Likewise, the biggest correlations with job security were found in computer abilities and communication competencies. The results indicated that employment security and data security and content production skills did not significantly correlate, which calls for more research.

Adekiya *et al.*, (2020) also carried out another study on perceived job insecurity and task performance among bank employees in Nigeria Banking Industry. Three Money Deposit Banks in the Nigerian banking sector yielded a total of 341 bank employees who were chosen at random. The study shown that when employees confronted the potential of job instability, their performance was impacted by emotional and psychological characteristics. The moral values and skills of employees in any organization therefore play important roles in their job experience.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate moral values and technical skills as determinants of job security among private secondary school teachers in Rivers State. In specific terms, the study sought to:

- determine the relationship between moral values and job security among private secondary school teachers in Rivers State.
- ascertain the relationship between technical skills and job security among private secondary school teachers in Rivers State.
- examine the joint relationship between moral values and technical skills on job security among private secondary school teachers in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in the study:

What is the relationship between moral values and job security among private secondary school teachers in Rivers State?

What is the relationship between technical skills and job security among private secondary school teachers in Rivers State?

What is the joint relationship between moral values and technical skills on job security among private secondary school teachers in Rivers State?



Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

There is no significant relationship between moral values and job security among private secondary school teachers in Rivers State.

There is no significant relationship between technical skills and job security among private secondary school teachers in Rivers State.

There is no significant joint relationship between moral values and technical skills on job security among private secondary school teachers in Rivers State.

Methodology

The study adopted a correlation survey design as it intends to investigate the relationship between a dependent and an independent variable. The population of the study was all the 14, 256 private secondary school teachers in Rivers State out of which 389 teachers were sampled for the study through simple random sampling technique. The sample size was determined using the Taro Yamane formula for sample size calculation. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire and while the first questionnaire had 10 questionnaire items and was titled “Moral Values and Technical Skills Questionnaire” (MVTSQ) and used to collect data on the independent variables of the study, the second questionnaire named “Job Security Questionnaire” (JSQ) was used to collect data on the dependent variable of the study and contained 10 questionnaire items. The questionnaires were both structured along the line of the four point modified Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA=4), Agree (A=3), Disagree (D=2) and Strongly Disagree (SD=1) respectively. The two questionnaires were face and content validated by a Measurement and Evaluation expert at the University of Port Harcourt. Cronbach alpha was used to estimate the reliability of the instruments and while MVTSQ had a coefficient of 0.88, JSQ has a value of 0.82. There were 389 copies of questionnaire administered but only 366 which represented 94.1% retrieval rate was used for analysis. The research questions were answered using simple and multiple regression while the hypotheses were tested using t-test associated with simple regression and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Answer to Research Questions

Research Question One: What is the relationship between moral values and job security among private secondary school teachers in Rivers State?

Table 1: Simple regression analysis of the relationship between moral values and job security among private secondary school teachers in Rivers State

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate	Remark
1	.686 ^a	.470	.469		12.78205	Moderate and Positive Relationship

a. Predictors: (Constant), Moral_Values

Table 1 showed that the value of r was 0.686 which implied that there was a moderate and positive relationship between moral values and job security among private secondary school teachers in Rivers State. Similarly, the value of r² of 0.470 implied that moral values predicted 47.0% (0.470*100) of job security among private secondary school teachers in Rivers State.

Research Question Two: What is the relationship between technical skills and job security among private secondary school teachers in Rivers State?

Table 2: Simple regression analysis of the relationship between technical skills and job security among private secondary school teachers in Rivers State

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate	Remark
1	.964 ^a	.930	.930		4.65083	High and Positive Relationship
a. Predictors: (Constant), Technical_Skills						

Table 2 indicated that the value of r was 0.964 which implied that there was a high and positive relationship between technical skills and job security among private secondary school teachers in Rivers State. Similarly, the value of r² of 0.930 implied that technical skills accounted for 93.0% (0.930*100) of job security among private secondary school teachers in Rivers State.

Research Question Three: What is the joint relationship between moral values and technical skills on job security among private secondary school teachers in Rivers State?

Table 3: Multiple regression analysis of the joint relationship between moral values and technical skills on job security among private secondary school teachers in Rivers State

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate	Remark
1	.978 ^a	.956	.955		3.70178	High and Positive Relationship
a. Predictors: (Constant), Technical_Skills, Moral_Values						

Table 3 indicated that the value of r was 0.978 which implied that there was a high and positive relationship between a combination of moral values and technical skills on job security among private secondary school teachers in Rivers State. Similarly, the value of r² of 0.956 implied that the combination of moral values and technical skills predicted 95.6% (0.956*100) of job security among private secondary school teachers in Rivers State.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between moral values and job security among private secondary school teachers in Rivers State.

Table 4: t-test associated with simple regression of significant relationship between moral values and job security among private secondary school teachers in Rivers State

Coefficients ^a							
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Decision
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	-2.557	1.824		-1.402	.162	
	Moral_Values	11.748	.654	.686	17.968	.000	Significant
a. Dependent Variable: Job_Security							

Table 4 revealed that the value of t for moral values of 17.968 was more than the default value of t-critical of 1.96 at 364 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance and the significance value of 0.000 was also less than the p-value of 0.05 and as such, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate accepted, implying that there was a significant relationship between moral values and job security among private secondary school teachers in Rivers State.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between technical skills and job security among private secondary school teachers in Rivers State.

Table 5: t-test associated with simple regression of no significant relationship between technical skills and job security among private secondary school teachers in Rivers State

Coefficients ^a							
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Decision
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	-14.953	.664		-22.531	.000	
	Technical_Skills	16.524	.238	.964	69.455	.000	Significant

a. Dependent Variable: Job_Security

Table 5 showed that the value of t for technical skills of 69.455 was more than the default value of t-critical of 1.96 at 364 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance and the significance value of 0.000 was also less than the p-value of 0.05 and as such, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate accepted, implying that there was a significant relationship between technical skills and job security among private secondary school teachers in Rivers State.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant joint relationship between moral values and technical skills on job security among private secondary school teachers in Rivers State.

Table 6: One-way analysis of variance of no significant joint relationship between moral values and technical skills on job security among private secondary school teachers in Rivers State

ANOVA ^a							
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
1	Regression	107243.298	2	53621.649	3913.079	.000 ^b	Significant
	Residual	4974.257	363	13.703			
	Total	112217.555	365				

a. Dependent Variable: Job_Security
b. Predictors: (Constant), Technical_Skills, Moral_Values

Table 6 indicated that the value of f for moral values and technical skills of 3913.079 and the significance value of 0.000 both implied that the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate accepted that there was a significant joint relationship between moral values and technical skills on job security among private secondary school teachers in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

The findings from the study established that moderate and positive relationship existed between moral values and job security among private secondary school teachers in Rivers State. This relationship was also identified to be significant which points to the fact that moral values play an important role in job security of private secondary school teachers. This finding agrees with that of Delante and Lagura (2024) which also showed that there was a statistically significant correlation between moral sensitivity and work engagement as well as between work values and engagement. This means that aside being skillful, teachers in private secondary schools are expected to uphold a high moral standard and this is essential as private school business is highly competitive and the need to be of the best moral standard cannot be overemphasized especially among teachers who want to keep their jobs. Building the required morals may involve engaging in personal development as Makdoom and Aamir (2023) identified that workers with higher education showed more moral integrity and this calls for the need for further education. Their moral expression to colleagues, students and parents must meet



expectation as the response from these stakeholders' can determine whether a teacher will be retained or laid-off.

However, there was a high and positive relationship between technical skills and job security among private secondary school teachers in Rivers State which was also significant. The impact of skill on job security was higher than moral values and this means that beyond being morally upright and appealing, teachers must be able to deliver on the job. Study by Diris and van Vliet (2022) also established that even among expected skills, some skills are more important than others and this means that teachers in these schools must be as versatile as possible in order to be able to keep their job. Furthermore, Noori and Zakeri (2021) pointed out that in this digital age, digital skills take precedence and these are the types of skills that teachers need to build to stay relevant in their job and achieve job security. This means that school owners are most likely to keep a teacher who is technically competent than the other way round. This is understandable as the goal of the school in terms of service delivery and performance is more often tied to being skillful on the job and school administrators are likely to keep such staff.

In a related manner, there was a high and positive relationship between a combination of moral values and technical skills on job security among private secondary school teachers in Rivers State and there was a significant relationship between the combination of moral values and technical skills on the combination of moral values and technical skills showed a more robust contribution suggesting that teachers who have good morals and are technically sound stand a higher chance of remaining on the job. Job seekers in private secondary schools in the State and those who are already in employment must strive to improve on their morals while also enhancing their technical skills as this will go a long way to guarantee their job security in the long run. Adekiya *et al.*, (2020) alluded to this by stating that any employee that wants to keep their job must be sound in all domains. No teachers is therefore expected to develop capacity in one area at the expense of the other as a well-built teacher both internally and externally is essential to keeping one's job.

Conclusion

The study concluded that moral values and technical skills were significant to job security among private secondary school teachers in Rivers State. However, while moral values contributed moderately to job security, technical skills had a higher contribution while a combination of both moral values and technical skills made higher contribution to job security and significantly. This means that while moral values and technical skills cannot be ignored for job security among the teachers, technical skills will make more impact in the process of keeping a teacher on the job.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study: Private school owners should itemize and circulate moral principles that are the building block of their school to teachers and other stakeholders as well will help reduce cases of violation as well as promote the core values of the school to the outside community.

Private secondary school teachers should seek and take advantage of personal development programmes by sharpening their skills in the area of their responsibility as this is very important in the process of keeping them on the job.

The government should carry out its regulatory roles through the Ministry of Education on regular basis by ensuring that while teachers endeavour to acquire the right skills and morals, the school proprietors also ensure that their job is secured as both parties are partners in progress in the education industry.

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