

## Corporate ethical values and Organizational Justice as Determinants of Workplace Stress, Employee's Psychological and Social Well-Being

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### Abstract:

*The study was carried out to examine corporate ethical values and organizational justice as predictors of workplace stress and psychological and social well-being in a sample of 120 employees of eight commercial banks in Ogun East senatorial district, Nigeria. Five research instruments were used for this work which include Job Stress Inventory, Psychological Well-being scale, Social Wellbeing scale, Corporate Ethical Value scale and perceived Organizational Justice scale with Cronbach alpha values of .76, .73, .78, .73 and .77 respectively. Multivariate Analysis of Variance and Multiple Regression Analysis were employed. There was significant influence of corporate ethical values and organizational justice on the combination of workplace stress, and employees' psychological and social well-being (Wilk's Lambda = 23.991,  $p < .05$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .561$ ) and a significant prediction of workplace stress ( $F = 125.406$ ,  $p < .05$ ) were established. Corporate ethical values and organizational justice were significant independent predictors of psychological wellbeing and social well-being ( $F = 81.503$ ,  $p < .000$ ;  $F = 56.902$ ,  $p < .000$ ).*

*The outcome this study showed that corporate ethical values and organizational justice significantly contribute to workplace stress and psychological and social well-being of bank employees in Ogun East Senatorial District of Ogun State, Nigeria; Organizations should endeavour to advocate and enforce corporate ethical values both at management level and among other employees. Organizational justice should also be upheld in workplaces in such a way that all workers will have a sense of equal treatment, transparency, fairness and sincerity in their day-to-day dealings at work.*

**Keywords:** Corporate ethical values; Justice; Positive Behaviours; Wellbeing.

### Introduction

The implementation of an organization's policies rests squarely on the shoulders of its employees. For an organization to survive, therefore, it needs focused, committed, and motivated workers to perform the tasks required for the achievement of organizational goals. Studies have consistently shown that workplace stress and employees' psychological and social well-being considerably affect their performance and by extension, organizational success (Ismael, Noorshafine, Ismael, Jauhariah, Abu-Bakr, & Norish, 2015; Onunkun, 2017).

Workplace stress is a serious problem and has been of great concern to employees and other

stakeholders of organizations. Stress has been described to be the product of an altered equilibrium state of a particular system of an organism due to an exerted force which could further lead to pain or strain (Esia-Donkoh, Yelkperi & Esia-Donkoh, 2011). Generally, stress is a swift response to any unpleasant external or internal stimulus. It is the mind and body's reaction to change. Workplace stress can therefore be viewed as the harmful physical and behavioural responses in an environment where there is conflict job demand and control. Stress is inevitable in the presence of increased job demands and low level of control of the situation. Stress is capable of having great impact on both the employees and employers alike, we are

particularly concerned with its impact on employees. Although some workplace stress is normal and can prompt concerted effort by employees to overcome challenges and derive satisfaction, excessive stress can decrease productivity and performance. Workplace stress can arise from a number of situations including but not limited to long hours of work, lack of training and/or preparation, non-conducive physical environment, job insecurity, workplace harassment, etc. Anger, irritability, withdrawal from others, anxiety, depression, apathy, insomnia, headaches, loss of concentration, loss of sex drive, and using drugs to cope are signs and symptoms of excessive workplace stress. Thus, workplace stress arises from the perception of an imbalance between environmental demands or stressors and individual capacities to meet these demands.

Well-being is a positive psychology construct that describes the overall state of a person or a group of persons mentally, physically, medically, psychologically or socially (Bojanowska & Piotrowski, 2019; Crous, 2017; Maurya & Ojha, 2017). It does not necessarily explain a painful or disabled circumstance. Well-being encompasses meeting the physiological needs of an individual to the extent that a sense of fulfilment and personal objectives are attained with full participation in societal activities (Adebowale, Atte, & Ayeni, 2012). Well-being essentially is made up of comprehensive overview of life satisfaction and feelings including issues of depression and joy. In the workplace, wellbeing can be described as the relationship between an employee's personal characteristics and the work environment. Thus, a person-organization fit is critical in determining this type of well-being. Several authors have attempted to isolate the dimensions of well-being, and all these authors have all explicitly or implicitly mentioned psychological and social well-being as two of the dimensions (Rath & Harter, 2010; Stroebel, 2013; University of California, 2014).

Psychological well-being again is another way through which individuals carry out self-evaluation either cognitively or affectively (Diener, 1997). Cognitive evaluation is premised on general assessment of life satisfaction and deliberate self judgement. Whereas, an evaluation based on personal emotions and feelings towards pleasant and unpleasant experiences is considered to be affective evaluation. Ryff and Keyes (1995) opine that elements of psychological well-being encompass ability to accept oneself, having purpose for life, understanding the immediate environment where one belongs, autonomy and potential to develop good interpersonal relationship with others. Self-acceptance explains the extent to which an individual develops a good and positive disposition toward everything about oneself. A person with clarity of goal and objectives to pursue in life is considered to understand his or her purpose for living. Environmental mastery connotes the ability to handle situations and tasks for every day of life. Autonomy refers to being self-directed, independent, and having confidence in one's ability. A person who is easily disposed to other people in the environment with high sense of satisfaction and trust in others is described as having positive relations.

Social well-being is a reflection of the extent to which individuals consider their needs met and ability to live with other people in the same community. According to Keyes (1998) on social well-being, it is the wholistic analysis of an individual predicaments, relevance and effective functioning within the society. In this instance, social well-being is regarded to have six classified dimensions to include social integration, social acceptance, social contribution, social actualization, and social coherence. Social integration is described as the level at which an individual has a sense of belonging with other people in the society (Jo, Kwon & Jung, 2020). It deals with having things in common with others within the community where one belongs. Social acceptance

explains a situation of societal approval and acceptance of a person in the community setting. Social contribution deals with self-appraisal of personal or individual's social value in addition to the degree at which the community appreciates or values the efforts made by an individual to make things better for all. Social actualization is the overall assessment of the available potentials, growth and development of the society. The last dimension of social well-being is social coherence which is the general view of people about the operations, organization and quality of the world around us (Keyes, 1998).

Ethical values are the various guidelines and rules to be observed by organization while carrying out their day to day activities. They are also called corporate ethical values which are meant to be obeyed and followed by workers in dealings with customers from time to time. It is again regarded as the formal rules or principles capable of eliciting pro-social and virtuous behavior within and outside the workplace. Examples of ethical values identified in most of the literatures are mutual respect for people, openness, honesty, equity and fairness, and integrity among others. Every good and standard organization is expected to have a code of conduct and ethics for staff in carrying out their duties. In a very clear term, corporate ethical values and behaviours are principles that help and guide business environment. They are tools for ensuring equity and justice in dealing with employees and customers in work places. Ogunyemi, Fasanmi and Onunkun (2018) in their view explain that corporate ethical values represent the organization's standard of expected model of behaviours from workers beginning with the board members down to the new entrants in the establishment. However, these set of model behaviours expected from both the employees and customers can be enhanced by a lot other organizational variables which include organizational justice which could promote fairness and just treatment in any workplace.

Organizational justice was a product of Greenberg's (1987) works while exploring employees' perception about their organizational behavior and the consequent attitudinal disposition and behaviours. Justice explains the rationale behind every action whether it is morally right or wrong which could generate actions and reactions on the part of the employee. The issues of organizational justice cut across decision making in the area of interview and personnel selection, fairness in promotion exercises and other incentives for workers. There are four identified dimensions of organizational justice by Ajala and Bolarinwa (2015), which include distributive, procedural, and interpersonal, and informational justice. Distributive justice implies fairness in the way responsibilities, resources, benefits and incentives within an organization are shared. Procedural justice is concerned with the ways actions and decisions are taken. Interpersonal justice focuses on treating workers with fairness and having mutual respect for all workers irrespective of their status or achievement, lastly, informational justice explains fairness and even distribution of the needed information among the rank and file of the organization.

Bennett (1991) noticed that unethical behaviour and workplace stress are positively correlated. A strong tie and relationship were confirmed between procedural justice, interpersonal justice and stress (Judge & Colquitt, 2004). Studies by scholars over the years have revealed that organizational justice promotes harmony between family and work lives which tend to reduce or eliminate stress. Arzu, Meral, Tanyeri, and Irge (2014) for instance, confirmed a negative relationship between organizational justice work place stresses. It can therefore be easily deduced that the presence of corporate ethical values and organizational justice has a way of reducing work-related stress of workers. Thus, relationship between corporate ethical values and workplace stress is in the negative. Whereas, a positive relationship has been observed between corporate

ethical values and psycho-social well-being of employees. Gerard (2013) affirms that an organization's core values are shared by members of the organization and therefore enhance their social well-being. Attention to ethics in the workplace helps employee growth and meaning — which are two of the dimensions of psychological well-being.

From the foregoing, stress is capable of having several negative effects on both the employees and organizations in general. Identifying the correlates of employees' psychological and social well-being can help in enhancing psycho-social well-being and resulting motivation of workers. It is therefore imperative to investigate the relationship of psychological wellbeing and social well-being and corporate stress among employees in workplace psychology particularly in banking sector in Nigeria. Moreso that there is dearth of sufficient literature on previous scientific investigation that links corporate ethical values, organizational justice, workplace stress, and psychological and social well-being in one study.

### Hypotheses

Ho1: Corporate ethical values and organizational justice do not significantly contribute to workplace stress and psychological and social well-being of commercial bank workers in Ogun East Senatorial District, Nigeria.

Ho2: Corporate ethical values and organizational justice do not combine and contribute significantly to workplace stress of commercial bank workers in Ogun East Senatorial District, Nigeria.

Ho3: Corporate ethical values and organizational justice do not combine and contribute significantly to psychological well-being of commercial bank workers in Ogun East Senatorial District, Nigeria.

Ho4: Corporate ethical values and organizational justice do not combine and contribute significantly to social well-being of commercial bank workers in Ogun East Senatorial District, Nigeria.

Ho5: There are no significant relationships among corporate ethical values, organizational justice, workplace stress, psychological wellbeing, and social wellbeing of commercial bank workers in Ogun East Senatorial District, Nigeria.

### Methodology

#### Research Design

This work adopted a descriptive correlational research design. The study aims at finding the relationship among the variables of the study and the predictive ability of the independent variables on the dependent variables of the study.

#### Population of the Study

The population of this research work is made up of all the commercial bank employees in Ogun East Senatorial District of Nigeria.

#### Participants

The study used a sample of 120 employees from the population using simple random sampling technique. Eight banks were randomly chosen among 50 branches of commercial banks distributed in the major cities of Ogun East Senatorial District and 15 employees were then randomly selected from each bank.

#### Instrumentation

##### (i) Job Stress Inventory (JSI)

The Job Stress Inventory (JSI) was developed by Curbow (2000) to measure occupational stress in the workplace. It can also be used as a screening test for the individual or organization when assessing employees' mental and physical health, as the two are often related to job stress. The inventory consists of 20 items formatted as a 5-point Likert scale. Responses ranges from 1 = Never to 5 = Always. An example of the items on the scale include '*I feel tired even with adequate sleep*'.

The scale has an alpha value of 0.76 to establish internally consistence of the items. The construct

validity of the scale was considered by a pattern of stronger correlations with conceptually similar and dissimilar instruments. Average correlation with similar instruments was 0.69 while average correlation with dissimilar instruments was found to be -0.58. The scale was revalidated for the purpose of this work using Cronbach's alpha to ascertain the reliability. The outcome revealed  $\alpha = .68$

(ii) *Psychological Well-Being Scale (PsWBS)*

The Psychological Well-Being Scale (PsWBS) was developed for bankers in Nigeria by Onunkun (2017) to assess psychological well-being of individuals in different fields of endeavour. It has six items and presented in a 4-point Likert scale format. Responses were designed to be from strongly disagree to strongly agree represented by 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively.

The instrument showed internal consistency reliability of .57 using Cronbach's alpha, as well as good construct and predictive validity, showing expected relations with emotional intelligence ( $r = .528, p < .05$ ), life skills ( $r = .521, p < .05$ ), potential to drug abuse ( $r = -.239, p < .05$ ), and depression ( $r = -.520, p < .05$ ) outcomes. For this study, the reliability index is  $\alpha = .73$ .

(iii) *Social Well-Being Scale (SWBS)*

The Scale was developed for bankers by Onunkun (2017) to assess social well-being of individuals in different fields of endeavour. It contains 23 items and is presented as a 4-point Likert-type instrument and possible responses is from strongly disagree to strongly agree. A sample of the item is '*I am surrounded by people who accept me for who I am*'.

The SWBS has good internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .78), as well as good construct and predictive validity, showing expected relations with emotional intelligence ( $r = .533, p < .05$ ), life skills ( $r = .621, p < .05$ ), potential to drug abuse ( $r = -.307, p < .05$ ), and

depression ( $r = -.423, p < .05$ ) outcomes. It has a reliability value of  $\alpha = .81$  in this study.

(iv). Corporate *Ethical Values Scale (CEVS)*

This instrument was developed by Hunt, Wood, and Chonko (1989) to measure workers' view and perception of organizational ethical values. It is a five item scale presented in a 5-point Likert format scale. The responses is from 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree. It has Cronbach's alpha of .79 reflecting good reliability of the instrument. The value of reliability index for this particular study is  $\alpha = .73$ . The scale was revalidated for the purpose of this study in Nigeria and a Cronbach's alpha of .74 was achieved.

(v) *Perceived Organizational Justice Questionnaire (POJQ)*

The questionnaire was originally designed and developed by Price and Mueller (1986) to measure organizational justice in a formal setting. It has 18 items arranged to be a 6-point Likert-type format. Responses are to be from strongly disagree to strongly agree. One of the items is '*I am rewarded fairly in view of the amount of experience I have and my immediate supervisor considers my point of view. This questionnaire has general coefficient of 0.905 and the reliability value for the present study is  $\alpha = .77$ . This instrument was revalidated for this current study with  $\alpha = .68$  which showed high internal consistency.*

### Procedure

All the instruments used for this study were administered by the researchers individually after getting the permission from the relevant authority, particularly from the branch managers of the selected banks used for this study. All the distributed instruments were retrieved immediately from the respondents.

### Method of Data Analysis

All the hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance using Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) and Multiple Regression Analysis. .

**Results****First Hypothesis**

Ho1: Corporate ethical values and organizational justice do not significantly contribute to workplace

stress and psychological and social well-being of commercial bank workers in Ogun East Senatorial Sistrict, Nigeria.

**Table 1: Contribution of Corporate Ethical Values and Organizational Justice to Workplace Stress and Employees' Psychological and Social Well-Being**

	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial eta Squared
Pillai's Trace	.063	12.475	4.000	116.000	.000	.408
Wilk's Lambda	.421	23.991 <sup>a</sup>	4.000	114.000	.000	.561
Hotelling's Trace	3.038	34.252	4.000	112.000	.000	.728
Roy's Largest Root	2.041	71.004	2.000	58.000	.000	.747

a. Exact statistic

b. The statistic is an upper bound of F that yields a lower bound on the significance level.

Results in Table 1 revealed a significant influence of corporate ethical values and organizational justice on the combined dependent variables (workplace stress, employees' psychological and social well-being) (Wilk's Lambda = 23.991,  $p < .05$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .561$ ). The hypothesis stated in null form was therefore not accepted with acceptance of the alternative hypothesis leading. It is then concluded that the contribution of corporate ethical values and organizational justice to workplace stress and psychological and social

well-being of commercial bank workers in Ogun East Senatorial District, Nigeria, is significant. Both corporate ethical values and organizational justice accounted for 29.2% of variance in workplace stress, 26.5% of the variance in psychological well-being, and 24.1% of the variance in social well-being.

**Second Hypothesis**

Ho2: Corporate ethical values and organizational justice do not significantly combine and contribute to workplace stress of commercial bank workers in Ogun East Senatorial District, Nigeria.

**Table 2: Combined Contribution of Corporate Ethical Values and Organization Justice to Workplace Stress**

	B	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	32.674		9.643	.000
Corporate Ethical Values	-.107	-.021	-1.407	.286
Organizational Justice	.341	-.346	10.108	.000

Model Summary

$R = .545$ ,  $R^2 = .297$ ,  $Adj. R^2 = .292$ ,  $F = 125.406$ ,  $p < .000$

Dependent variable: Workplace stress  
Predictors: (*Constant*), *corporate ethical values*, *organizational justice*

In table 2, the result showed that independent variables (corporate ethical values and organizational justice) significantly predicted workplace stress of bank employees in Ogun East senatorial district, Nigeria ( $F = 125.406$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The hypothesis of no combine contribution of corporate ethical values and organizational justice to workplace stress was rejected. The predictor

variables together accounted for 29.2% of the variance in workplace stress ( $R = .545$ ,  $Adj. R^2 = .292$ ). The findings also indicated that organizational justice was a strong predictor of workplace stress ( $\beta = -.346$ ,  $t = 10.108$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

### Third Hypothesis

Ho3: Corporate ethical values and organizational justice do not significantly combine and contribute to psychological well-being of commercial bank workers in Ogun East Senatorial District, Nigeria.

**Table 3: Combined Contribution of Corporate Ethical Values and Organization Justice to Psychological Well-Being**

	B	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	31.776		11.883	.000
Corporate Ethical Values	.407	.228	4.549	.001
Organizational Justice	.328	.261	6.147	.000

Model Summary  $R = .521$ ,  $R^2 = .271$ ,  $Adj. R^2 = .265$ ,  $F = 81.503$ ,  $p < .000$

Dependent variable: Psychological well-being  
Predictors: (*Constant*), *corporate ethical values*, *organizational justice*

Table 3 results showed that the independent variables (corporate ethical values and organizational justice) significantly predicted psychological well-being of bank employees in Ogun East Senatorial District, Nigeria ( $F = 81.503$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The null hypothesis was therefore not accepted in acceptance of alternative hypothesis. The predictor variables together accounted for 26.5% of the variance in psychological well-being ( $R = .521$ ,  $Adj. R^2 = .265$ ). Results also showed

that both corporate ethical values and organizational justice were significant independent predictors of psychological well-being. However, organizational justice was a strong predictor of psychological well-being ( $\beta = .261$ ,  $t = 6.147$ ,  $p < .05$ ) when compared to corporate ethical values ( $\beta = .228$ ,  $t = 4.549$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

### Fourth Hypothesis

Ho4: Corporate ethical values and organizational justice do not significantly combine and contribute to social well-being of commercial bank workers in Ogun East Senatorial District, Nigeria.

**Table 4: Combined Contribution of Corporate Ethical Values and Organization Justice to Social Well-Being**

	B	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	20.481		10.277	.000
Corporate Ethical Values	.339	.240	9.428	.000
Organizational Justice	.273	.281	11.385	.000

Model Summary  $R = .498, R^2 = .248, \text{Adj. } R^2 = .241, F = 56.902, p < .000$

Dependent variable: Social well-being  
Predictors: (*Constant*), *corporate ethical values*, *organizational justice*

Table 4 findings of the regression analysis showed that independent variables (corporate ethical values and organizational justice) significantly predicted social well-being of bank employees in Ogun East Senatorial District, Nigeria ( $F = 56.902, p < .05$ ). The null hypothesis was therefore not accepted while alternative hypothesis was accepted. The independent variables together accounted for 24.1% of the social well-being variation ( $R = .498, \text{Adj. } R^2 = .241$ ). It was also revealed that both corporate ethical values and

organizational justice were significant independent predictors of social well-being. However, organizational justice was a strong predictor of social well-being ( $\beta = .273, t = 11.385, p < .05$ ) when compared to corporate ethical values ( $\beta = .240, t = 9.428, p < .05$ ).

#### **Fifth Hypothesis**

Ho5: There are no significant relationships among corporate ethical values, organizational justice, workplace stress, psychological well-being, and social well-being of commercial bank workers in Ogun East Senatorial District, Nigeria.

**Table 5: Relationship among Corporate Ethical Values, Organization Justice, Psychological Well-Being, and Social Well-Being**

	CEV	OJ	PsWB	SWB	WKSTRESS
CEV	1	.313*	.203*	.182*	-.316*
OJ		1	.309*	.221*	-.246*
PsWB			1	.347*	-.273*
SWB				1	-.301*
WKSTRESS					1

\*Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tail)

NOTE: CEV = Corporate Ethical Values, OJ = Organizational Justice, PsWB = Psychological well-being, SWB = Social Well-Being, WKSTRESS = Workplace Stress



Table 5 results revealed that there are significant relationships among the variables of the study. Thus, relationships between corporate ethical values and organizational justice ( $r = .313, p < .05$ ) was significant, corporate ethical values and psychological well-being ( $r = .203, p < .05$ ), corporate ethical values and social well-being ( $r = .182, p < .05$ ) was significant, organizational justice and psychological well-being ( $r = .309, p < .05$ ) was significant, organizational justice and social well-being ( $r = .221, p < .05$ ) was significant, and psychological well-being and social well-being ( $r = .347, p < .05$ ) was significant.

### Discussions

Previous studies have neglected to examine the combined contribution of corporate ethical values and organization justice on workplace stress, psychological and social wellbeing of employees. This study therefore will serve as part of literature in this area of research. The result of this study shows significant combined contribution of corporate ethical values and organizational justice to workplace stress and psychological and social well-being of commercial bank workers in Ogun East \Senatorial Sistrict, Nigeria. In the same vein, both corporate ethical values and Organization Justice significantly jointly and independently predicted workplace stress, psychological wellbeing and social wellbeing of bank employees in Ogun State. This outcome is thus partly in consonance with Torkeleson, Helin, Backstrom, and Schard(2016) that organizational justice has significant influence on job stress among workers particularly in the school setting. It also supports the view of Terzi et al (2017) on the other hand that injustice in workplace often triggers stress and eventually results in work stress. Again, Kamiran and Thomas (2021) in their study on the effect of Teachers' perception on organizational justice on job stress also revealed that all the dimensions of organizational justice played significant role in stress.

Furthermore, the present study agrees with Ajala and Bolarinwa (2015) that organizational justice significantly determined psychological wellbeing. In their finding organization justice predicted all the six phases of psychological wellbeing which could also impart on their social wellness. Rani, Garg and Rastogi (2012) also confirmed positive relationship between organizational justice psychological wellbeing which consequently reduces workplace stress and social integration and wellbeing of workers thereby enhanced. Meanwhile, Sheppard, Lewicki, and Minton (2002) had earlier opined that interactional justice which is a component of organizational justice could lead to some major elements of psychological wellbeing of workers such as autonomy, competence, individual growth and other intrinsic motivation.

In the overall, the findings of the study revealed that the relationships among all the variables are significant, but the strongest relationships exist between psychological and social well-being. There is positive pairwise relationships among corporate ethical values, organizational justice, psychological and social well-being. This implies that there are some common and uniting factors underlying these variables; that is, corporate ethical values, organizational justice, psychological and social well-being share some characteristics. Psychological well-being and social well-being were expected to have a strong correlation with each other since they are both components of well-being. Furthermore, organizational justice and psychological and social well-being were each negatively associated with workplace stress. This finding supported what one would reasonably expect since workplace stress is a negative psychological construct and the other variables are positive constructs. The submission of Ajala and Bolarinwa (2015) therefore becomes imperative, that management at all levels should provide for organizational justice in order to enhance and guarantee overall employees'

wellbeing. Same is needed or required for corporate ethical values in workplaces.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

The outcome of this has shown that corporate ethical values and organizational justice significantly contribute to workplace stress and psychological and social well-being of bank employees in Ogun East Senatorial District of Ogun State, Nigeria; Organizations should endeavor to advocate and enforce corporate ethical values both at management level and among other employees. This can be achieved through consistent orientation programmes and trainings for managers and workers. Organizational justice should also be upheld in workplaces in such a way that all workers will have sense of equal treatment, transparency, fairness and sincerity in their day-to-day dealings at work. This will in no small measure reduce workplace stress and enhance psychological and social wellbeing of employees.

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