RESEARCH ARTICLE

The (non)linearity of religion and work motivation? Exploration across gender, age, marital, and employment status

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ABSTRACT

Religion and work motivation have been acknowledged as critical factors affecting workplace behaviors. While many studies have juxtaposed these two variables, the effort to really explore the connection between these factors is almost non-existent. Exploring the interconnection of these two factors is arguably essential either to understand workplace behavior to a greater extent or to enhance the sensemaking of religion–work motivation comprehension. The cross-sectional analysis involving 928 respondents from various religious affiliations suggests the linearity of religion–work motivation pairs. The present study concludes that intrinsic religiosity aligns with both identified regulation and intrinsic motivation; extrinsic religiosity–social aligns with extrinsic regulation–social; and extrinsic religiosity–personal aligns with introjected regulation.

INTRODUCTION

The extant social science literature has recorded the efforts to connect religion and motivation. For instance, religion has been linked to the motivation for progressive movement involvement (Hutchison, 2012), moral motivation (Frierson, 2015), and student motivation to learn and obtain good grades (Rettinger & Jordan, 2005). Nevertheless, except for one study (Morris & Hood, 1981), no other studies tried further to explore the link between religion and work motivation. This is somewhat surprising considering the interest in diverging religion into the cognitive, affective, and conative spheres (e.g., Assouad & Parboteeah, 2018; Fernando & Jackson, 2006; Parboteeah et al., 2008) in workplace setting had been started years ago. To add more emphasis on the matter, literature also recorded that religion influences individual preferences and circumstances in the workplace and work-related matters (Linando, 2023a), strengthening the urge to explore further how religion relates to an individual's work motivation.

At least three arguments demonstrate the importance of constructing a religion-work motivation nexus. First, religion and motivation share similar roles as driving factors underlying and maintaining human behavior. Religion is a conditioning agency that forms behavior patterns and serves as the standard conduct source (Tuttle, 1942). Similarly, work motivation incorporates the factors that

energize, channel, and endure human behavior over time, especially in the workplace (Steers et al., 2004). Second, past business and management studies have recorded that these two variables potentially intersect, with religion hypothesized as the more extensive entity yielding a noteworthy effect on motivation (e.g., DiClemente & Delaney, 2005; Kaasa, 2016).

Lastly, the ever-growing attention toward religion's role in the workplace calls for a deeper and more meaningful exploration of religion and work motivation interconnectedness. For instance, Fallatah and Syed (2017) encourage scholars further to explore the nexus of religion and work motivation. (Bissell, 2012) also mentions religion among the factors related to work motivation. From a broader perspective, the literature also recorded scholarly efforts to decode motivation concepts from various religious viewpoints, such as Islamic (Linando, 2021) and Christian (McCleskey & Ruddell, 2020).

The present study mainly aims to shed light on the link between religion and work motivation. Henceforth, further theory-building surrounding these two variables could advance. In so doing, the results of this study also potentially narrow the existing gap pointed out by many scholars (e.g., Héliot et al., 2020; King, 2008; Tracey, 2012): that business, management, and organization researchers are often neglecting the influences of religion on the workplace matters, despite the growing importance of this particular discourse.

Motivation is commonly divided into intrinsic and extrinsic (Porter & Lawler, 1968). Intrinsic motivation leads the workers to do work activity because they like it, and work brings satisfaction to them. In contrast, extrinsic motivation demands external stimuli that produce desirable consequences that later satisfy the workers. Among the classic theories frequently being used to explain work motivation are Herzberg's two-factor theory of satisfaction and motivation (Herzberg et al., 1959), Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943), and Self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

In short, Herzberg's theory suggests that employee satisfaction is primarily predisposed by the intrinsic elements of work, such as achievement and personal growth, which are labeled as 'motivators.' On the other hand, extrinsic factors in the workplace do not give satisfaction, yet the absence of these factors could lead to dissatisfaction. Among these factors are supervisor support and working conditions, also called 'hygiene.' The second theory mentioned above is arguably among the most popular theory of motivation. Maslow proposed that individuals' needs are like a pyramid. The needs should be fulfilled from the bottom, then gradually proceeding to the higher needs. The rock-bottom is physiological needs (e.g., air, water), then move to the safety needs (e.g., health, property), love and belonging (e.g., family, friendship), esteem (e.g., respect, self-esteem), and self-actualization (the desire to actualize oneself).

Self-determination theory mainly focuses on the intrinsic aspects of people's motivation. The theory suggests individuals have three basic psychological needs: relatedness, competence, and autonomy. In addition to these theories, particularly for work motivation discourse, it is also important to mention that Hackman and Oldham (1976) proposed the job characteristics model of work motivation. The model suggests that workers' motivation is influenced by three factors: the psychological states of employees, job characteristics, and individual attributes in responding to job challenges and complexity.

In contemporary discourses, work motivation is a multifaceted construct with various dimensions. Gagné et al. (2015) propose five dimensions of work motivation: motivation; external regulation, which consists of two sub-dimensions, material and social; introjected regulation; identified

regulation; and intrinsic motivation. The present study mainly refers to this multidimensional work motivation construct on building the argumentations.

Extant management studies frequently refer to religious motivation or religious orientation (for a detailed review, see Allport & Ross, 1967) to measure the degree of religiosity. The division between intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientation proposed by Allport & Ross (1967) is arguably the most extensively utilized concept for religion-related study in business and management areas (e.g., Vitell et al., 2009; Weaver & Agle, 2002).

Individuals with a high degree of intrinsic religiosity place religion as their principal motive in life (Allport & Ross, 1967). Many scholars (e.g., Cohen et al., 2005; King et al., 2014) assert that intrinsic religiosity is the actual element indicating personal religiousness. The main characteristic of intrinsic religiosity lies in the normative and substantive aspects innate within individuals (Cohen et al., 2005). Such a characteristic is similarly attached to the work motivation construct's identified regulation and intrinsic motivation. Both identified regulation and intrinsic motivation are value-driven motivations internalized within individuals (Gagné et al., 2015).

These two work motivation concepts differ in the factors that drive motivation. Instrumental values typically trigger identified regulation, while intrinsic motivation aims at innate satisfaction (Gagné et al., 2015). Nevertheless, scholars (e.g., Vansteenkiste et al., 2004) often combine these dimensions as both share analogous autonomous motivation notions. Due to the similar natures of these concepts, I hypothesize that intrinsic religiosity will have a linear relationship with intrinsic motivation and identified regulation. This aligns with many contemporary studies that attempt to correlate religiosity with self-regulation (e.g., Rusman et al., 2023; Ward & King, 2018; Zong & Cheah, 2023).

Donahue (1985) argues that extrinsic religiosity is more about individual perceptions of religion as a source of comfort and societal support than as the indicator of religiosity. Individuals with a high degree of extrinsic orientation are inclined to use religion for their purposes (Allport & Ross, 1967). Furthermore, Kirkpatrick (1989) distinguished extrinsic religiosity into extrinsic religiosity - personal and extrinsic religiosity - social, indicating to what ends religiosity serves individuals. The notion of extrinsic religiosity - social is similar to extrinsic regulation - social. Both concepts place social acceptance as the underlying motive for performing some actions. For instance, the item on extrinsic religiosity – social stated that individuals go to religious services because it helps them to make friends. The same is true for extrinsic regulation – social, which states that individuals put efforts into their current job to get others (e.g., supervisor, clients) approval. The present hypothesis adds to the scholarly concern regarding the paucity of studies focusing on extrinsic aspects of emotion regulation (Nozaki & Mikolajczak, 2020). Henceforth, I hypothesize that extrinsic religiosity-social has a linear relationship with extrinsic regulation-social

Meanwhile, extrinsic religiosity - personal arguably shares a comparable sense with introjected regulation. Extrinsic religiosity - personal is about taking the benefits from particular actions, and introjected regulation is more about avoiding harmful feelings by performing particular activities. Despite the slightly different nuances between these two concepts, these two concepts are still interrelated. The two concepts put oneself as the leading party being fulfilled by performing particular actions. For instance, among the items on extrinsic religiosity – personal is 'What religion offers me the most is comfort in times of trouble and sorrow.' Similarly, introjected regulation enhances individuals' ability to reap comfort and avoid negative feelings. Among the main benefits individuals obtain as driven by introjected regulation are a sense of pride in themselves and evading shame of themselves (Koestner & Losier, 2002).

Additionally, extrinsic religiosity – personal is also related to guilty feelings (Maltby, 2005), which serve as the basis of introjected regulation (Gillison et al., 2009). Concerning the relationship between extrinsic religiosity and introjected regulation, the current hypothesis broadens the existing body of knowledge that has only been studied by a few scholars (e.g., Davis & Renzetti, 2022). Therefore, I hypothesize that extrinsic religiosity - personal has a linear relationship with introjected regulation

In addition to the proposed hypotheses, I will demonstrate an exploratory analysis depicting the effects of various demographic factors (e.g., gender, age, marital, and employment status) on the tested variables. This analysis might reveal whether all hypothesized paired variables affect each demographic factor similarly.

METHOD

Table 1. Constructs, code, and items used in this study

Construct	Code	Statement
External Regulation (Social)	ERS1	To get others' approval (e.g., supervisor, colleagues, family, clients …).
	ERS2	Because others will respect me more (e.g., supervisor, colleagues, family, clients …).
	ERS3	To avoid being criticized by others (e.g., supervisor, colleagues, family, clients …).
Identified Regulation	IDNT1	Because I personally consider it important to put efforts in this job.
	IDNT2	Because putting efforts in this job aligns with my personal values.
	IDNT3	Because putting efforts in this job has personal significance to me.
Introjected Regulation	INTR1	Because I have to prove to myself that I can.
	INTR2	Because it makes me feel proud of myself.
	INTR3	Because otherwise I will feel ashamed of myself.
	INTR4	Because otherwise I will feel bad about myself.
Intrinsic Motivation	IM1	Because I have fun doing my job.
	IM2	Because what I do in my work is exciting.
	IM3	Because the work I do is interesting.
	IR1	I enjoy reading about religion.
	IR2	It is important for me to spend time in private thought and prayer.
	IR3	It doesn't much matter what I believe so long as I am good. (R)
Intrinsic Religiosity	IR4	I have often had a strong sense of God's presence.
	IR5	I try hard to live all my life according to my religious beliefs.
	IR6	Although I am religious, I don't let it affect my daily life. (R)
	IR7	My whole approach to life is based on my religion.
	IR8	Although I believe in my religion, many other things are more important in my life. (R)
Extrinsic Religiosity (Social)	ERELS1	I go to religious services because it helps me to make friends.
	ERELS2	I go to religious services mostly to spend time with my friends.
	ERELS3	I go to religious service mainly because I enjoy seeing people I know there.
Extrinsic Religiosity (Personal)	ERELP1	I pray mainly to gain relief and protection.
	ERELP2	What religion offers me the most is comfort in times of trouble and sorrow.
	ERELP3	Prayer is for peace and happiness.

Note: (R) = Reverse scored.

The present study gathered 928 usable data from Indonesia. All data were collected through an online questionnaire platform. In addition to distributing the surveys inside the author's social circle, the author solicited the assistance of more than twenty colleagues who live across several Indonesian cities. This is done to guarantee the variety of samples. The present study applied a convenient sampling technique for data collection. The respondents are affiliated with the religious groups acknowledged in Indonesia, which are Islam (69.6%), Protestant (7.7%), Catholic (6%), Hindu (9.9%), and Buddha (6.8%). In terms of age, the author categorized the respondents based on their generations, with 34.6% belonging to Generation Z (up to 24 years old), 47% belonging to Generation Y, also known as Millennials (25 – 40 years old), 14.9% Generation X (41 – 56 years old) and the rest 3.6% are Baby Boomers (more than 56 years old). Most of the respondents were single (51.5%) and married (46%), with only a few minorities divorced (2.5%). The respondents predominantly work full-time (71.7%), followed by owning their businesses (12.1%), working part-time (8.2%), and working as

freelancers (8%). Lastly, the respondents were relatively balanced regarding gender, with 44% male and 56% female.

The Religious Orientation Scale (ROS) (Allport & Ross, 1967) was used to measure respondents' religiosity. The scale consists of three dimensions: intrinsic religious orientation, personally oriented extrinsic religious orientation, and socially oriented religious orientation. Meanwhile, The Multidimensional Work Motivation Scale (MWMS) (Gagné et al., 2015) comprises motivation, external regulation of material and social, introjected regulation, identified regulation, and intrinsic motivation was used to measure work motivation in the present study. This study excludes motivation and external regulation - material as these subscales do not align with any religiosity scale. All questions were measured using a 6-point Likert scale, with one expressing 'strongly disagree' and six indicating 'strongly agree.' Table 1 summarizes the detailed items used in the present study.

RESULT

Before proceeding to the hypothesis testing, the author conducted an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to measure the constructs' validity (Hair et al., 2013). The Kaiser Meyer Oikin (KMO) value was 0.89, and the Anti-Image correlation values for all constructs were more than 0.50, meaning that the samples are adequate to advance into a factor analysis. Table 2 summarizes the Anti-Image correlation values. In the factor analysis, the rotated component matrix results show that all construct items are grouped into each component except IR3, IR6, and IR8. The author later deleted these three items.

Table 2. Anti-Image Correlation Values

Indicators	Anti-Image Correlation Value
ERS1	0.73
ERS2	0.7
ERS3	0.75
IDNT1	0.95
IDNT2	0.92
IDNT3	0.92
INTR1	0.93
INTR2	0.94
INTR3	0.87
INTR4	0.88
IM1	0.92
IM2	0.88
IM3	0.90
IR1	0.92
IR2	0.90
IR3	0.90
IR4	0.92
IR5	0.92
IR6	0.79
IR7	0.90
IR8	0.85
ERELS1	0.83
ERELS2	0.71
ERELS3	0.73
ERELP1	0.87
ERELP2	0.86
ERELP3	0.92

Notes: ERS = External Regulation (Social); IDNT = Identified Regulation; INTR = Introjected Regulation; IM = Intrinsic Motivation; IR = Intrinsic Religiosity; ERELS = Extrinsic Religiosity (Social); ERELP = Extrinsic Religiosity (Personal).

Additionally, IDNT1 was loaded into two components, which belong to the identified regulation group and the introjected regulation group. Looking at the question labeled as IDNT 1, 'Because I consider it important to put efforts in this job.', the cross-loading is somewhat unsurprising as this statement seemingly related to both identified and introjected regulation conception. Nevertheless, the author kept this particular item for at least two reasons. First, albeit slightly, the item load is higher in the identified regulation group than in the introjected group. Second, deleting the item will bring the model into another problem against the experts' (e.g., Hair et al., 2013) suggestion that a construct preferably has more than two items to provide a minimum level of theoretical coverage. The factor loading for the remaining items is above 0.50, satisfying the criteria of the items' validity (Hulland, 1999). Table 3 summarizes the EFA results.

Table 3. Rotated component matrix results

Variables	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
ERS1					0.838	
ERS2					0.875	
ERS3					0.825	
IDNT1	0.582		0.576			
IDNT2	0.684					
IDNT3	0.728					
INTR1			0.685			
INTR2			0.724			
INTR3			0.772			
INTR4			0.780			
IM1	0.831					
IM2	0.838					
IM3	0.829					
IR1		0.553				
IR2		0.756				
IR3						0.672
IR4		0.732				
IR5		0.719				
IR6						0.813
IR7		0.630				
IR8						0.733
ERELS1				0.823		
ERELS2				0.889		
ERELS3				0.885		
ERESP1		0.622				
ERESP2		0.571				
ERESP3		0.666				

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
Rotation converged in 31 iterations.
Notes: ERS = External Regulation (Social); IDNT = Identified Regulation; INTR = Introjected Regulation; IM = Intrinsic Motivation; IR = Intrinsic Religiosity; ERELS = Extrinsic Religiosity (Social); ERELP = Extrinsic Religiosity (Personal).

The bivariate correlation test suggests that intrinsic religiosity correlates with identified regulation (beta: 0.42, sig: <0.00), supporting hypothesis 1a. The same is true for H1b regarding the connection between intrinsic religiosity and intrinsic motivation (beta: 0.41, sig: <0.00). The connection between extrinsic religiosity - social and extrinsic regulation - social holds a beta value of 0.17 and a significance value of <0.00, supporting H2. Lastly, the correlation between extrinsic religiosity - personal and

introjected regulation (beta: 0.29, sig: <0.00) supports H3. Overall, these results underpin the hypothesized ties between religiosity and work motivation.

Table 4. Hypothesis testing results

Paired Variables	Correlation Value	Significance Value
IR & IDNT (H1a)	0.42	***
IR & IM (H1b)	0.41	***
ERELS & ERS (H2)	0.17	***
ERELP & INTR (H3a)	0.29	***

Notes: ERS = External Regulation (Social); IDNT = Identified Regulation; INTR = Introjected Regulation; IM = Intrinsic Motivation; IR = Intrinsic Religiosity; ERELS = Extrinsic Religiosity (Social); ERELP = Extrinsic Religiosity (Personal); *** = p-value <0.01.

In addition to the hypothesis tests, the author is eager to see whether religiosity and work motivation constructs share a similar pattern regarding the demographic factors' group variances. The author ran analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests to fulfill this purpose. The author ran the ANOVA tests for both religiosity and work motivation constructs on each demographic factor: age, gender, marital, and employment status. Notably, intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity – social- bear consistent results across demographic characteristics. The degree of intrinsic religiosity varied across age, gender, marital, and employment status groups (all p-values are <0.05), meaning that individual factors influence religiosity. On the contrary, regardless of age, gender, marital, and employment status, all individuals bear a similar degree of extrinsic religiosity - social (all p-values are >0.05). Table 5 summarizes the ANOVA results, and further discourses will be discussed in the next section.

Table 5. Analysis of variance

Variable	Age		Gender		Marital Status		Employment Status	
	F	Sig.	F	Sig.	F	Sig.	F	Sig.
IR	20.65	***	6.46	**	20.94	***	4.56	***
IDNT	9.89	***	1.42	0.23	5.90	***	3.74	**
IM	14.22	***	0.35	0.56	11.42	***	13.01	***
ERELS	1.29	0.28	0.29	0.59	1.12	0.33	0.73	0.54
ERS	8.36	***	0.86	0.35	12.08	***	7.25	***
ERELP	2.78	**	9.34	***	4.20	**	2.18	0.09
INTR	0.23	0.87	4.59	**	2.16	0.12	2.16	0.09

Notes: ERS = External Regulation (Social); IDNT = Identified Regulation; INTR = Introjected Regulation; IM = Intrinsic Motivation; IR = Intrinsic Religiosity; ERELS = Extrinsic Religiosity (Social); ERELP = Extrinsic Religiosity (Personal); ** = p-value <0.05; *** = p-value <0.01.

DISCUSSION

The present paper explores two critical issues related to religion and work motivation. First, religiosity correlates with work motivation, potentially further driving workplace behaviors. Second, to discover which demographic factors generate the variety of religiosity and work motivation degrees.

The test results support all hypotheses, suggesting these connected religiosity-work motivation pairs: intrinsic religiosity-identified regulation (H1a); intrinsic religiosity-intrinsic motivation (H1b); extrinsic religiosity (social)-extrinsic regulation (social) (H2); and extrinsic religiosity (personal)-introjected regulation (H3). The results further illuminate the potential roles religions play in the workplace. In particular, these findings add to the knowledge of the previously known role of religions in the workplace, that religion as a source of motivation influences organizational values (Day & Hudson, 2011), subjective well-being (Byrd et al., 2007), and attitudes toward work (Chusmir &

Koberg, 1988). In particular, the present study completes the portrait of religiosity and work motivation linkage previously initiated by Morris & Hood (1981), who demonstrate the connection between intrinsic religion and work orientations.

The exploratory results also propose which demographic variables (age, gender, marital, and employment status) potentially affect the linearity of paired religiosity-work motivation variables. For instance, the statistical tests for intrinsic religiosity-identified regulation and intrinsic religiosity-intrinsic motivation pairs might fluctuate when gender is considered. The ANOVA tests show different patterns of intrinsic religiosity, identified regulation, and intrinsic motivation upon gender consideration. This remark supports previous studies' findings (e.g., Amorose & Horn, 2000; Tosyali & Aktas, 2021; Zhang et al., 2016) that gender might affect these three variables.

The same logic applies to extrinsic religiosity (social)-external regulation, where age, marital, and employment status bear different result patterns for the paired variables. Age has been known to influence how individuals maintain and perceive social interactions (Charles & Piazza, 2007). Similarly, employment (Kim & Trail, 2010) and marital (Dykstra & Fokkema, 2007) status affect how individuals socialize. Lastly, extrinsic religiosity (personal)-introjected regulation pair produces different results under age and marital status influences. Age plays a significant role in religion's position for personal comfort, especially for the elders (Lowis et al., 2009). On the other hand, marital status, especially in Indonesia, where this study takes place, is considered a crucial social status alongside religion, where these two elements frequently intersect (Himawan, 2020).

Finally, answering the research question of the present study, whether or not religion and work motivation have a linear pattern on individuals, the answer is yes; the two variables are linear, given that the two variables are correctly paired. By proper means, those value-driven, moved by social acceptance and personal interest-based work motivation should pair with religiosity stimulated by similar factors. One should also note that gender, age, marital status, and employment status might affect individuals' religiosity and work motivation.

The remarks created by the present study should consider several limitations possessed by this study. First, the cross-sectional approach might limit the results' interpretation. For instance, the findings might be limited to a specific timeframe, and a claim to generalize the conclusions might be challenging. Second, the results might also be subject to cultural bias, for instance, where marital statuses influence extrinsic religion for personal ends. Since the research was done in a place where marital status matters much, it may affect the results. Third, the present study only shows the bivariate correlations among paired religiosity-work motivation elements. Future studies might want to extend this initial progress of connecting the two variables by regressing the variables into job-related antecedents or consequences (i.e., job satisfaction) and seeing whether the paired variables hold similar patterns.

Furthermore, the absence of a construct bluntly measuring the influences of religion in the workplace is also a gap that future researchers want to address. Past studies conclude that religiosity influences the workplace by examining the regression result of religion/religiosity on work-related variables (e.g., Kutcher et al., 2010; Osman-Gani et al., 2013). A scale directly measuring that religious beliefs drive workplace behaviors potentially opens a new discussion area on religion in workplace discourses.

The present study has asserted two important variables in workplace association: religion and work motivation. Future studies could consider incorporating other peripheral layers into the test to complete the portrait of these two variables' roles in the workplace. Instances of intriguing layers

could contribute to how individuals prone to discrimination can manage their motivation at work (e.g., Zapata-Téllez et al., 2022). How religious identity augments the complication of the work circumstances (e.g., Linando, 2023b). Also, how could demographic variables influence individuals' work states over time (e.g., Linando et al., 2023; Shi et al., 2023)? Another potential viewpoint is exploring how religion affects individuals' work-related behavior and orientation. Such an approach has been initiated with an exploration of religiosity effect on career success (Linando & Mayrhofer, 2024), perception of organizational values and ethics (Chukwuma et al., 2024), and hope at work (Jurek et al., 2023). The results of the present study stand as the initial takeoffs for exploring further exciting avenues.

CONCLUSION

The outcomes of the data testing lead to the conclusion that the designated religiosity-work motivation pairs partake in a linear relationship. This study opens an avenue for further exploration of religion's role as a workplace behavior determinant. The present study also shows that although religion and work motivation connect linearly, demographic factors (such as age, gender, employment, and marital status) should not be neglected upon reflecting on an employee's workplace behavior. In particular, age and marital status correlate with all variables except extrinsic religiosity (social) and introjected regulation. Gender correlates with intrinsic religiosity, extrinsic religiosity (personal), and introjected regulation. Employment status connects with intrinsic religiosity, identified regulation, intrinsic motivation, and external regulation (social). These demographic factors influence employees' religiosity and work motivation, which might affect how they behave in the workplace. Lastly, notwithstanding the limitations mentioned in the previous section, this study places an essential milestone in exploring the interconnection of religiosity and work motivation.

DECLARATION

Data access statement

The data described in this article are reasonably available from the corresponding author.

Declaration of Interest's statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Additional information

No additional information is available for this article.

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