



SPIRITUAL RESOURCE USE AND TRADITIONAL VALUES: AN APPROACH TO WOMEN NEGOTIATING CONTEMPORARY JOB MARKETS IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *This study examines how women in Nigeria creatively appropriate spiritual resources and African values to negotiate contemporary challenges of unemployment. In particular, it explores how women draw on spiritual resources to challenge the status quo and how African values are used to enhance employability and job creation. Through qualitative case studies of three female entrepreneurs in Nigerian cities, this paper aims to reveal how spiritual resources such as prayer, meditation, and rituals can generate positive energy and a sense of self-confidence. Similarly, traditional values such as hard work, determination, and resilience are examined as drivers that help women develop the skills and resources necessary not only to gain meaningful employment but also to create employment. The study hypothesises that the effective deployment of spiritual resources and African values is an important way for Nigerian women to gain an economic foothold in an increasingly precarious job market. Moreover, the paper underscores the importance of reframing the concept of unemployment to understand the issue's gendered implications and create inclusive solutions to the problem.*

KEYWORDS: Religion, Spiritual Resources, African Traditional Values, Job Market, Unemployment.



INTRODUCTION

The National Bureau of Statistics holds that the unemployment rate for women in Nigeria was 27.2% in 2020, compared to 21.8% for men. As of 2021, the women's unemployment rate in Nigeria was estimated to be around 35.2%, which is higher than the global average. This evidence shows that women are greatly affected by the reality of unemployment. In Nigeria, the labour force participation rate among females is 52.2% and among males is 65.9% for 2023. The labour force participation rate is the proportion of the population aged 15 and older that is economically active. Since 1990, female labour force participation has decreased. Compared with labour force participation in the lower-middle-income group, the gap between men and women is quite enormous in Nigeria.

Female unemployment (% of the female labour force (modelled ILO estimate) in Nigeria was reported at 5.143% in 2023, according to the World Bank collection of development indicators, which they compiled from officially recognised sources. Nigeria - Unemployment, female - actual values, historical data, forecasts and projections were sourced from the World Bank in April 2024. Women in Nigeria face various challenges in accessing education, job opportunities, and equal pay, which contribute to the high unemployment rate.

Certain factors are fingered as responsible for the trend, for example, ethnicity, marital status, religion and et cetera (Adeliyi et al. 2022). For Fadayomi (1991), women's lower economic status compared to men can be attributed to several factors. These include African cultural discrimination against women in agriculture, a high rate of urbanisation, low levels of education and skills, women's preference for work in the informal sector, the traditional assumption that women's roles in the household are supportive, and adverse rules and regulations for women in public service. The ideas expressed by the author above are relatable. For example, traditionally, women do not own land even for farming, and they must depend on a male family member or land to be apportioned to them for farming. Moreover, rural-urban migration is most often followed by the movement of families, which cuts off the women from their farm work with no corresponding job opportunity in the new settlement. Further to the above, the low level of education of these women fuels the restriction to work in the formal sector. There seems to be an unwritten rule in most African societies that has assigned women supportive roles; therefore, their contributions are expected to be merely supplementary to the males. The women who have defied such gender roles to explore the corporate world and formal sector employment are sometimes viewed as either competitors to the male gender or deviants.

Adebisi and Akinsooto (2016) proposed in their study that women's apprenticeship is a way forward in addressing the challenges that women face in the job market. At the same time, they both agree that even the apprenticeship skill can be affected by gender issues such as patriarchy, family, and traditional primordial views about women's roles. The foregoing has necessitated the current study to explore how women are creatively appropriating spiritual resources and African values in negotiating contemporary challenges in the job market in Nigeria. Drawing on qualitative analysis of in-depth interviews of three case studies, the paper explores how an interplay of spiritual resources and traditional values serves as a source of resilience for women in the negotiation of job markets in Nigeria. The paper argues that women's reliance on spiritual resources results in ongoing navigation of the gendered and material boundaries undergirding Nigerian job markets while harnessing traditional African values. The paper concludes with an insight into the significance of spiritual resources and traditional values, which serve to support



women in their negotiation of job-market cultures in Nigeria, which may not have been captured in the feminist theory of religion.

Research Questions

1. How do spiritual resources such as prayer, meditation, and rituals create a sense of self-confidence regarding job creation for women?
2. How do traditional values such as hard work, determination, and resilience drive women to develop the skills and resources necessary to create employment?

METHODS

This research is qualitative and has employed a case study design. The case study is not a research method but a design that adopts several qualitative methods such as interviews, surveys, and/or focus groups. Yin (2014:16) posits that the design is “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (which is regarded as the ‘case’) in depth and within its real-world context”. In a broader sense, the design can be engaged in studying subjects, such as a person, group, place, event, organisation, or phenomenon, and is commonly used in social research (McCombes, 2023), such as this current one. Marthyn (2008) explains further that this design is especially useful when attempting to test theoretical models by using them in real-world situations. It is appropriate to use the design in this present research because it has more capacity than any other research design to help the researcher gain concrete, contextual, in-depth knowledge about how women negotiate the job markets in Nigeria via the use of spiritual resources and traditional values. It would have been nearly impossible to keep the research project focused and manageable using a quantitative design, for example, given the number of women in Nigeria whose population must be counted and the limited time and resources, which may also not have reflected the real-life experiences of these women.

One major criticism of case study design is the issue of validity (how the findings can be generalised to other cases) and reliability (their consistency and repeatability). However, Yin (2009) explains that a case study is not based on samples and therefore does not bother with generalisation but rather is concerned with replication, which can be achieved by the researcher minimising the influence of unwanted elements since it is carried out in natural settings. All these (consistency and repeatability) can be established, according to Yin (2014: 101-104), by developing a “case study protocol”. The protocol should consist of the following components: (a) an outline of the entire study, including its objectives; (b) a detailed description of the field procedures to be used and how the researcher will proceed in the field, including data collection techniques; (c) a set of carefully defined questions that the researcher wishes to answer, which should shape the methods of data collection; and (d) clear guidelines for data analysis and reporting the findings of the case study. In the same line of thought, Punch (2005) holds that a case study involves an in-depth examination of a particular occurrence or event that represents a specific class of phenomenon. The careful analysis of a case can result in the generation of significant hypotheses that can be applied to comparable situations. This can be extremely useful for researchers, as verifying these hypotheses through multiple similar cases can help in developing theories or making generalisations. In essence, case studies provide a foundational understanding of a particular phenomenon that can be used to generate hypotheses and test



theories. Data for this research were collected through interviews administered via an online Google form. Below is the case study interview protocol:

Interview Protocol

1. How do you perceive and define spiritual resources within the context of your negotiation of contemporary job markets in Nigeria?
2. What specific spiritual practices, such as prayer, meditation or rituals, do you employ in your pursuit of employment opportunities or entrepreneurial ventures?
3. How frequently do you engage in prayer, meditation and other religious rituals?
4. How do you attribute the influence of spiritual resources to your sense of self-confidence and empowerment in navigating job market challenges?
5. How would you further explain the connection between these spiritual resources and your success as an entrepreneur?
6. Can you describe instances where spiritual resources have directly contributed to your challenging societal norms or gender biases in the job market?
7. How do you reconcile the use of spiritual resources with the practical demands and constraints of contemporary job markets in Nigeria?
8. How do cultural and societal factors influence the selection and utilisation of specific spiritual resources and traditional values among women in their pursuit of employment or entrepreneurship?
9. How do women perceive the impact of spiritual resources and traditional values on their overall well-being and resilience in the face of unemployment or job insecurity?
10. Can you mention the traditional African values that are most important to you regarding the job market?
11. Why do you consider these values the most important to you?
12. How have these values driven you to develop skills and resources to create employment?
13. How do you integrate traditional values such as hard work, determination and resilience into your strategies for seeking employment or establishing businesses?
14. What specific skills and resources are most crucial to you in job creation?



RESULTS

Table 1: Responses of Case Studies to Interview Protocols.

S/N	Protocols	Case Responses
1	How do you perceive and define spiritual resources within the context of your negotiation of contemporary job markets in Nigeria?	1st Case Response: Well, prayer helps boost my confidence that I'll get a job, and when I don't get the job, I'm reminded that I need to work harder and be the best in the room. 2nd Case Response: Prayer doesn't take away hard work. 3rd Case Response: I believe prayer is important, but not the be-all and end-all. In negotiating contemporary job markets in Nigeria, spiritual resources can be perceived and defined as intangible assets or strengths derived from an individual's spiritual beliefs, practices, and values. These resources can encompass a range of aspects, including faith, resilience, integrity, ethics, and a sense of purpose. In Nigeria, where spirituality often holds significant cultural and social importance, spiritual resources play a crucial role in navigating the challenges of the job market. Here's how I perceive and use them: 1. Resilience and Coping Mechanisms: Spiritual beliefs and practices provide individuals with inner strength and resilience to withstand the uncertainties and setbacks often encountered in job hunting and career advancement. Drawing upon one's faith and spiritual practices offers solace during difficult times and motivates perseverance. 2. Ethical Decision-Making: In a competitive job market where ethical dilemmas may arise, spiritual resources guide individuals to make principled decisions aligned with their values and moral compass. This enhances credibility and trustworthiness, which are highly valued by employers. 3. Networking and Community Support: Spiritual communities often serve as networks of support and solidarity, offering mentorship, advice, and connections that can be beneficial in job searches and career development. Engaging with like-minded individuals with similar spiritual values expands one's professional network. 4. Sense of Purpose and Direction: For many Nigerians, spirituality provides a sense of purpose and meaning beyond material pursuits. This can help individuals clarify their career goals, aspirations, and motivations, leading to more focused job search strategies and career choices. 5. Stress Reduction and Well-Being: Practising mindfulness, meditation, or prayer as part of one's spiritual routine contributes to overall well-being and mental health, which are essential for navigating the pressures and demands of the job market effectively.
2	What specific spiritual practices, such as prayer, meditation or rituals, do you employ in your pursuit of employment?	1st Case Response: Prayer and Worship. 2nd Case Response: I simply pray and ask my family members to put me in their prayers. 3rd Case Response: 1. Prayer: Incorporating prayer into your daily routine can provide a sense of guidance, peace, and clarity



	opportunities or entrepreneurial ventures?	during the job search or entrepreneurial journey. I pray for wisdom in decision-making, for opportunities to present themselves, or for the strength to persevere during challenges. 2. Meditation: Meditation helps calm the mind, reduce stress, and enhance focus, all of which are valuable qualities when seeking employment or starting a business. Practising mindfulness meditation regularly also promotes self-awareness, allowing me to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for growth. 3. Ritual: Rituals can be symbolic actions that help anchor your intentions and foster a sense of purpose or connection to your goals. For example, I made specific affirmations before starting my job search each day. Rituals serve as reminders of commitment and dedication to my pursuit. 4. Gratitude Practice: Expressing gratitude through prayer, meditation, or daily reflections can shift your mindset towards abundance and positivity, even in the face of challenges. Recognising and appreciating the resources, skills, and support you already have can empower you to approach your job search or entrepreneurial ventures with optimism and resilience. 5. Community Engagement: Engaging with spiritual communities or support networks can provide encouragement, inspiration, and practical assistance during your journey. Participating in group prayers, meditation sessions, or discussions can offer valuable perspectives and connections that may lead to employment opportunities or collaborative ventures.
3	How frequently do you engage in prayer, meditation and other religious rituals?	1st Case Response: Very often, at least thrice a week. 2nd Case Response: Very often, more of an everyday activity. 3rd Case Response: As often as I can.
4	How do you attribute the influence of spiritual resources to your sense of self-confidence and empowerment in navigating job market challenges?	1st Case Response: A spiritual exercise that I practice regularly is giving and sacrifice. And most often, I get opportunities which I believe my spiritual practice has afforded me. 2nd Case Response: I would say it's a booster. 3rd Case Response: It boosts my confidence and gives me positive energy and thoughts
5	How would you further explain the connection between these spiritual resources and your success as an entrepreneur?	1st Case Response: I've received words of knowledge in the place of prayer and worship, which helped me avoid certain mistakes and potential business losses. So yes, spiritual resources are quite important for any entrepreneur. 2nd Case Response: I don't consider myself an entrepreneur yet. 3rd Case Response: There is a connection between spirituality and my entrepreneurial life. My spiritual life sparks up my work.
6	Can you describe instances where spiritual resources have directly contributed to your challenging societal norms or gender biases in the job market?	1st Case Response: I do not have any instance of this yet. 2nd Case Response: Unfortunately, I can't right now. 3rd Case Response: When I was applying for my lecturing job, my spiritual resources paved the way for this job



7	How do you reconcile the use of spiritual resources with the practical demands and constraints of contemporary job markets in Nigeria?	1st Case Response: I'd say pray as much as you prepare, because. If you want any job, make sure you are also qualified for the role. As the scripture rightly puts it, He will make you stand before kings and not mere men. God will not put mediocre men in front of kings. 2nd Case Response: I know that heaven helps those who help themselves. 3rd Case Response: Hard work and spiritual resources are interwoven. As a job seeker, you cannot undermine both.
8	How do cultural and societal factors influence the selection and utilisation of specific spiritual resources and traditional values among women in their pursuit of employment or entrepreneurship?	1st Case Response: I'd say that in some cultures, women are still not allowed to pursue employment because of the stigma of having to care for their children and spouse. So it affects a woman's aspirations to be more. 2nd Case Response: I believe that sometimes, society pressures women into believing that they must fit a certain standard and that prayer is one of the only ways to achieve that. It's untrue. 3rd Case Response: Nil
9	How do women perceive the impact of spiritual resources and traditional values on their overall well-being and resilience in the face of unemployment or job insecurity?	1st Case Response: I'd say most women believe this topic isn't in their favour, as society and spiritual resources would always want them to follow the man's lead. 2nd Case Response: For many, losing their jobs can mean that they didn't pray hard enough. It's life, though. Life happens. 3rd Case Response: Nil
10	Can you mention the traditional African values that are most important to you regarding the job market?	1st Case Response: Integrity, Time Consciousness 2nd Case Response: Truthfulness, Courage and Diligence 3rd Case Response: Hard work
11	Why do you consider these values the most important to you?	1st Case Response: You should be able to do what you say. And deliver on your promise. 2nd Case Response: I don't believe in overstressing myself, and I know that my efforts are also important. And knowing that I have people praying on my behalf is a booster. It's like being protected by the warm blanket of their love. 3rd Case Response: Nil
12	How have these values driven you to develop skills and resources to create employment?	1st Case Response: I have a large clientele that needs my services based on referrals. It's safe to say I've built a business that people trust will deliver on what we promise. 2nd Case Response: I'm confident, and I like to believe that whatever happens, whether or not I'll get the job, is all part of God's plan. 3rd Case Response: Nil



13	How do you integrate traditional values such as hard work, determination and resilience into your strategies for seeking employment or establishing businesses?	1st Case Response: I usually look at people's track records. There has to be a level of consistency with your work ethic. That will show that you're one to put in the work. 2nd Case Response: I am confident, and I express myself well to employers. 3rd Case Response: Nil
14	What specific skills and resources are most crucial to you in job creation?	1st Case Response: Teamwork, diligence, time consciousness. 2nd Case Response: Soft skills and confidence. 3rd Case Response: Nil

DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

Spiritual Resource Use and Job Market: Experiences from Case Studies.

Our three case studies all mentioned prayer as one of the spiritual resources they engaged in during their negotiation of the job market, recognising that it is not a one-size-fits-all phenomenon and does not replace hard work. Other spiritual resources which they mentioned include meditation, ritual practices such as sacrificial giving and positive words of affirmation, gratitude practice and religious community engagement. In reference to religious community engagement, Kimani (2017), in a similar study in Kenya, enunciates that religious activity, such as church attendance, is an instrument for establishing networks for economic activities in the region and helps establish trading/business relations. The different spheres of engagement with these spiritual resources can be classified as both the private and public practices of the ritualistic dimension and also the experiential dimension in the centrality of religiosity scale; see Stark and Glock (1968) and Huber and Odilo (2012). The third case study defined spiritual resources as intangible assets or strengths derived from an individual's spiritual beliefs, practices, and values. They variously affirmed it aided their service as a coping mechanism, enabled them to make ethical decisions in the face of compromising offers, sparked positive energy, offered them a sense of purpose and direction, reduced psychological stress and increased their mental well-being while still unemployed.

The first case study claims to have had opportunities (favours) that she believes her spiritual practices afforded her. She has received words of knowledge in the place of prayer and worship, which helped her avoid certain mistakes and potential business losses. The third case study got business ideas inspired by spiritual resources. In answer to protocol no. 7, the first and second cases said, respectively, "Pray as much as you prepare, because, if you want any job, make sure you are also qualified for the role. As the scripture rightly puts it, He will make you stand before kings and not mean men. God will not put mediocre men in front of kings. "I know that heaven helps those who help themselves".

The foregoing focuses on the economic effect of religion, which Qunyong and Xinyu (2014) identified as being far from settled. It does not seem as though the discourse will be laid to rest any time soon because the facts of its correlation are undeniable, as exemplified by the cases. This relates to our case studies' experiences where they claim to draw on spiritual resources such as meditation, prayer, ritual exercises like sacrificial giving and positive words of affirmation, gratitude practice and religious community engagement to navigate the challenges



of the job market in specific ways, as earlier in the first two paragraphs of the current subheading. This also aligns with the results of Barro and McCleary (2003), who stated that their research accords with a model in which religious beliefs influence individual traits that enhance economic performance. In a much earlier study, Weber (1958) assessed the impacts of religion or religious belief on economic performances and outcomes through his major thesis that Calvinist Ascetic Protestantism, which hinged on the doctrine of predestination, played a key role in the development of Western capitalism. English and North (2023) support Max Weber's position by summarising several streams of literature that connect with it and presenting several alternative explanations that point to the indirect economic effects of religion. In our contemporary setting, researchers are interested in the field of economics of religion for various reasons, according to Al Fozai (2023), because it offers interesting insights into the impact of non-market behaviour on the economy. It's fascinating to consider how religious norms, values, and traditions can shape human behaviour and ultimately influence economic outcomes, for example, negotiating the job market as it relates to unemployment and job creation in this case.

Traditional values as drivers to skills development for employability and job creation.

Osalusi and Ajayi (2021) note how traditional values in Nigeria emphasise community, family, respect for elders, and hard work. They claim that these values have influenced the country's approach to job creation, as many Nigerians seek stability and security in their employment. From the preceding section, it is seen that religious beliefs matter for economic outcomes. To a very large extent, they reinforce character traits such as hard work, resilience, teamwork, honesty, and the value of time. These values and more are skills necessary for personal development, especially as regards the labour market.

Kawar (2011), in explaining skills for work life, among others, categorises them as follows: 1. Basic literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. 2. Core, key, generic, soft – 'employability' – skills (which may include communication, application of numbers, teamwork, problem-solving, learning to learn, etc.). 3. Higher order skills – (for example logic, reasoning, analysis, synthesis, statistics, etc.). 4. Specialist, vocational, technical, academic skills – (technical knowledge including enterprise, business know-how, financial skills, etc.) 5. Attitudinal and behavioural skills – such as initiative, confidence, willingness, perseverance, determination, etc. 6. Life skills – social, health, and interpersonal skills.

The fifth category, which is the attitudinal and behavioural skills, relates more to the present research because it speaks to the personality of those who may be found in the labour market. For our case studies, the most featured traditional values are integrity, teamwork, hard work, courage, truthfulness, diligence, time consciousness, regard for others and self-confidence, which resonate with the religious personality. An individual's personality may be described as a manner of behaviours or qualities which distinguish them in society and help them not only to relate effectively with others but also to navigate life generally. From harnessing spiritual resources and African values – our case studies claim they have a large clientele that needs their services based on referrals. It's safe to say they've built businesses that people trust will deliver on what they promise, and on time. Integrity, as a traditional value, for example, is one of the soft skills that ensures the disposition of a service provider towards trustworthiness that can further employability or job creation. According to the Indeed Editorial Team (2023), employability skills are skills that can be used in almost any job and are easily transferable. These skills include the development of expertise, knowledge, and a mindset that makes one



more appealing to employers. They are also referred to as soft skills, work-readiness skills, or foundational skills. Some of the soft skills identified by this team include communication, teamwork, reliability, initiative, et cetera. Reliability promotes trust between the service provider and the client or employer and is akin to the integrity mentioned earlier in our case study. These ideas are corroborated by Shanti and Dorothy (2013), AfDBG (2022), and the International Labour Conference, 97th Session (2008).

Engaging With the Feminist Theory of Religion

The feminist theory of religion posits that religion can serve as a mechanism of oppression. It diverges from Marxist theory, however, in its view that religion is a product of patriarchy rather than capitalism. In other words, feminist theorists contend that religion is used to reinforce patriarchal norms and values, which can contribute to the subjugation and marginalisation of women. This perspective is grounded in an understanding of how power operates within social structures, particularly in relation to gender. As such, the feminist theory of religion provides a valuable lens through which to analyse the role of religion in shaping social and political realities (Haralambos and Holborn, 2008). According to this particular theory, religion is perceived as an instrument utilised by men to serve their interests, rather than being controlled by a capitalist class. The proponents of this theory contend that the patriarchal nature of monotheistic religions such as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, where God is viewed as the father figure of all believers, provides evidence of patriarchy in religion. In their view, religion is often used by men as a means of controlling women, who are the oppressed in this scenario. By writing a code of conduct that is endorsed by God, the male oppressors assert their authority. This is because, according to religious teachings, men have a divine right to be the masters. As a result, the downtrodden women are repressed by the fear of God, which prevents them from revolting against their oppressors.

The existing teaching in the Christian Bible in 2 Thessalonians 3 verse 10 reads, “For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if **any** would not work, neither should **he** eat.” At least, this particular code under our purview encourages hard work and repudiates laziness generally, because the word “**any**” refers to everyone in that context. The pronoun “**he**” used in our biblical text quoted above sparks a concern about whether the writer also had women in mind while writing the code. It raises the question of whether Paul intended, permitted or simply ignored women’s unemployment in his code. This underscores two of the goals of feminist theology, namely, reinterpreting male-dominated imagery and language and determining women's place in career and motherhood. For Hassey (1989), Christian feminism is a powerful and necessary approach to Christian theology. By advocating for the equality of men and women, this school of thought recognises the importance of women's contributions and acknowledges their inherent value morally, socially and spiritually. It offers a more complete understanding of Christianity by incorporating diverse perspectives and elevating the voices of marginalised individuals. By embracing Christian feminism, a more just and inclusive world can be created that honours the dignity and worth of all people. Porterfield (1987) argues that this can be achieved through reformation along the lines of feminist thought regarding their religion. Harrison (2007) believes that women's contributions are essential to gaining a comprehensive understanding of Christianity. Christian feminists are of the view that throughout history, women's perspectives and experiences have been overlooked or dismissed, leading to a skewed interpretation of Christian teachings. By including women's voices in theological discussions such as the Paul and work discourse, Christian feminists believe that a more balanced and accurate understanding of Christianity and its teachings can be achieved.



They also advocate for the full inclusion of women in all aspects of church life, including leadership positions and ministry roles.

However, how would the feminist theory of religion explain the fact that spiritual resources aided our Cases' Resilience, served as Coping Mechanisms, strengthened them to make ethical decisions in the face of compromising offers, sparked positive energy, offered them a sense of purpose and direction, reduced psychological stress and increased their mental well-being, offered them insights that helped them in job creation if religion is always an instrument of domination and oppression? While the evidence of the claims of feminist theorists that the male oppressors assert their authority by writing a God-endorsed code of conduct could be seen in the text reviewed above, the author asserts that religion and spirituality are not always perceived by everyone as an instrument utilised by men to serve their interests. Some women have developed creative ways of responding to their peculiar situations with the same instruments. It is the position of this paper that, though not exonerating religion/spirituality from contributing to women's unemployment in Africa, a broader approach, which will include systemic and social-structural reappraisal, is inevitable. For example, how is the meaning of unemployment negotiated in our contemporary world? Unemployment means the share of the labour force without work but qualified, available and seeking employment. This definition does not take into account the labour force (women) that are not qualified due to being denied opportunities for formal education as a result of male-child preferences. It does not consider the labour force, mostly women, who were pressured by family members (husbands) to resign from their jobs to take up roles as full-time housewives or other jobs with fewer man-hours. It is therefore important to reframe the concept of unemployment to enable a clearer understanding of the issue's gendered implications as highlighted above. It will foster an all-inclusive solution to the problem of unemployment. Rethinking the definition of unemployment is long overdue, arising from the present compelling realities. Unemployment may therefore be redefined as the share of the labour force without work but qualified, or unqualified due to denied opportunity for formal education, or available and willing yet seeking employment, or pressured by family or other systems to resign from their jobs to take up roles as full-time household carers.

CONCLUSION

This research explored the use of spiritual resources and traditional values by women in Nigeria's job market. The case study design, which employed interviews, provided a comprehensive understanding of the subject by developing a case study protocol, which ensured that the findings were valid, reliable, and applicable to other contexts. As such, data for this research were collected through online interviews administered via Google Forms. This qualitative approach was particularly useful for testing feminist theoretical models in real-world situations, as it allowed for concrete, contextual knowledge about how women navigate the Nigerian job market. In summary, the study shows that spiritual resources play a crucial role for women in the job market, as they help them develop skills necessary for personal development. In the three case studies, prayer was identified as one of the spiritual resources used to negotiate the job market, recognising that it is not a one-size-fits-all phenomenon and does not replace hard work. Other spiritual resources include meditation, ritual practices such as sacrificial giving and positive words of affirmation, gratitude practice, and religious community engagement.



The study also identified religious community engagement as a key spiritual resource that helps establish networks for economic activities and trading/business relations. The different spheres of engagement with these spiritual resources are aligned with both private and public practices of the ritualistic dimension and the experiential dimension of religious experience in the centrality of religiosity scale (measures of religiosity). From the study, it is seen that spiritual resources also aid in resilience, serve as a coping mechanism, strengthen ethical decisions, spark positive energy, offer a sense of purpose and direction, reduce psychological stress, and increase mental well-being while still unemployed. The first case study claimed to get opportunities (favours) that she believes her spiritual practices afforded her, while the third case study gets business ideas inspired by spiritual resources. Our case studies also consider traditional values to be important for economic outcomes, reinforcing character traits such as hard work, resilience, teamwork, honesty, and the value of time. These values are essential for personal development, especially in the labour market. By harnessing spiritual resources and African values, the case studies claim to have a large clientele that needs their services based on referral, claiming that integrity as a traditional value ensures the disposition of a service provider towards trustworthiness, which can further employability or job creation.

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