Antecedents and multi-level benefits of work meaningfulness perceptions of nigerian managers

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Abstract: Work meaningfulness has gained currency in contemporary work motivation literature because it has the capacity to confer certain benefits on employees, organizations and the larger society. Given the beneficial outcomes of work meaningfulness, it becomes expedient to know the extent to which its antecedents relate with these outcomes. Towards exploring this knowledge gap, this article hypothesizes that different antecedents of work meaningfulness (i.e. "need to develop and become self", "need to serve others", "need to unite with others" and "need to express full potential") correspond with its beneficial outcomes at multiple (i.e. individual, organizational and societal) levels of human existence; and that the direct benefits of work meaningfulness are quite pervasive. These hypotheses were tested through a cross sectional study involving the perceptions of two hundred and sixteen Nigerian managers employed by different organizations. Results from structural equation and regression models showed that apart from the inconsequential organizational and societal benefits attributable to the "need to develop and become self"; the other antecedents of work meaningfulness were significantly beneficial at all levels. Although, each antecedent separately had significant impact on work meaningfulness, multiple and hierarchical regression analyses unveiled the intra-psychic tensions between "need to unite with others" and "need to express full potential"; as the positive effect of the former on work meaningfulness was terribly undermined by the latter. Moreover, the direct impact of work meaningfulness on benefits to employees, organizations and society was also significantly positive. The ethical and future research implications of these findings were discussed.

Keywords: Employees; Organization; Work Meaningfulness; Work Motivation; Society

1. Introduction

The fact that people want to create deeper meanings from the work that they perform has long been recognized. Many industrial psychologists and sociologists explicitly account for the injurious work situations that employees can plunge into when their work lacks meaning because it does not provide them with the opportunity to connect with others in society (Hackman and Oldman, 1980; Cascio, 2003; Bunderson and Thompson, 2009; Beadle and Knight, 2012). Work meaningfulness therefore ensures that people are able to connect to a larger society that is greater than or beyond themselves. It involves deliberately submitting oneself to this larger society in order to have a sense of social well-being. This sense of well-being may be experienced as happiness or fulfillment or peace that originates from deep connection with other individuals in society (Dyck, Caza and Starke, 2018); and can serve as a major source of employees' motivation.

Given the potential impact of work meaningfulness on employees' motivation, it is therefore very astonishing that it was abandoned for many years. Its recent resurgence in the work motivation literature is traceable to Michaelson's

(2005) critical essay that emphasized the need for scholars in the field to incorporate the concept of work meaningfulness into work motivation theory.

Fortunately, there has been a renewed interest on work meaningfulness research after this essay was published in 2005. Some of these research efforts have either directly or indirectly identified the antecedents and benefits of work meaningfulness (Scroggins, 2008; Bunderson and Thompson, 2009; Lips-Wiersma and Morris, 2009; Beadle and Knight, 2012; Michaelson, et. al., 2014).

However, one research domain that has not been explored by these recent studies is the extent to which the antecedents of work meaningfulness produce beneficial outcomes at multiple levels of human existence. Even though, scholars report that work meaningfulness confers certain benefits on employees (Chalofsky, 2003; May, et. al., 2004; Michaelson, 2005; Scroggins, 2008; Munn, 2013; Beadle and Knight, 2012); and their employing organizations (Bowie, 1998; Scroggins, 2008; Rosso, et. al., 2010); the motivation to engage in meaningful work that only benefits these two parties tends to be "self- oriented", since employees and their respective organizations are somewhat involved in a symbiotic relationship in which either of them stands to gain something from the immediate sacrifices made by one party, probably in the long term.

Therefore, it is imperative to examine whether work meaningfulness pragmatically benefits the larger society. Although theoretically, work meaningfulness has been shown to promote self-transcendent benefits by maximizing the common good of the larger society (Martin, 2000; Chalofsky, 2003; Michaelson, 2005; Tongo, 2016); it is still important to empirically examine the veracity of this theoretic position.

Consequently, this cross sectional study utilizes the perceptions of two hundred and sixteen Nigerian managers employed by different organizations for the purpose of establishing the extent to which the antecedents of work meaningfulness relate with multi-level benefits (i.e. personal benefits, organizational benefits and societal benefits). The study was divided into eight sections. The first section shall deal with the nature of work meaningfulness. The second and third sections would focus on its antecedents and beneficial outcomes respectively. The fourth section presents the research methods utilized by the study. The results of the research would be discussed in the fifth section. The ethical and future research implications of the study's findings would be explicated in the sixth and seventh sections respectively. Lastly, the eighth section concludes the article by outlining the unique contributions of the study to literature on work meaningfulness.

2. Nature of Work Meaningfulness

The psychological state that work meaningfulness provides individuals has been seen by researchers as one of the most important conditions required to induce work motivation in organizations (Hackman and Oldman, 1980). Therefore, managers are now increasingly charged with the responsibility of providing meaningful work to employees (May, et.al. 2004; Michaelson, et. al. 2014); and individuals are being urged to seek meaning in their various work activities (Frankl, 1992).

Work meaningfulness arises when "the work and/or its context are perceived by its practitioners to be at a minimum, purposeful and significant" (Pratt and Ashforth, 2003: 311). It has been defined as the degree to which the individual experiences the job as one which is generally meaningful, valuable and worthwhile (Hackman and Oldman, 1980). May, et. al. (2004) averred that work meaningfulness is the value of a work goal or purpose, judged in relation to an individual's own ideals or standards. Work meaningfulness is the perceived significance or meaning that an individual draws from engaging in work activities (Barrick, et. al., 2013).

It refers to the degree to which life makes emotional sense and the demands confronted by people at work are perceived as being worthy of energy investment and commitment (Korotkov, 1998). Kahn (1990) also defines work meaningfulness as a feeling that one is receiving a return on investments of one's self in a currency of physical, cognitive or emotional energy.

For the purpose of distinguishing meaningful work from other kinds of work such as significant, purposeful, or

satisfying work, it will be useful to draw on Pratt and Ashforth's (2003) point of view. These scholars argued that work that is meaningful helps to answer the question, 'why am I here on earth?' When someone experiences his or her work life as meaningful, this is a subjective experience of the existential significance or purpose of life (Lips-Wiersma and Morris, 2009).

Consequently, the unique feature of work meaningfulness that helps distinguish it from other concepts is its link with self- transcendence; which occurs when an individual seeks a benefit beyond the inherent egocentric self and identifies with something greater than the individual self. Hence meaningful work has been defined as work that involves self- transcendence either "vertically" through an orientation towards something greater than self, or "horizontally" through a concern for issues that transcend one's immediate self- interest (Schnell, 2011). Therefore, an individual that possesses high levels of work meaningfulness accord deeper self-transcendent meanings to work. In other words, the absence of self-transcendent elements in work undertakings would lead to the manifestation of low levels of work meaningfulness by an individual.

If work meaningfulness connotes "transcending the self" in some ways, this raises interesting questions about the processes by which it is created and what lies beyond the self (i.e. the "other"). In other words, it would be important to know the antecedents of work meaningfulness, as well as the composition of the "other". The next sections of the article expound these issues.

3. Antecedents of Work Meaningfulness

Work meaningfulness does not operate in a vacuum. Lips-Wiersma and Morris (2009) had comprehensively highlighted the contributions that many disciplines in humanities (e.g. philosophy, psychology, theology, etc) have made in tracing its sources or antecedents. However, these authors concluded that these disciplines are too fragmented in terms of accounting for the holistic experience of work meaningfulness. They therefore decided to distil a framework that fully captures the antecedents of work meaningfulness through data obtained from an extensive action research.

Due to the rigorous research based process that Lips-Wiersma and Morris (2009) undertook in creating this framework and the fact that it accounts for the inherent tensions between humans' egocentric and self-transcendent needs, it shall be adopted by this study. The framework entails four main antecedents of work meaningfulness. These are the "need to develop and become self", "need to unite with others", "need to serve others" and "need to express full potential". Other sources of work meaningfulness (e.g. individuals' search for reality and inspiration) that Lips-Wiersma and Morris reflected in the framework are outside the scope of this study because they do not highlight the intra-psychic tensions arising from the "egocentric and transcendent selves" of individuals. Hence these other sources of work meaningfulness are extricated from this study. Therefore, the four main aforementioned antecedents of work meaningfulness shall be the focus of this study. They are briefly discussed below.

3.1 Need to Develop and Become Self

Developing and becoming self involve moral development, personal growth, and staying true to oneself. Moral development influences the experience of meaningful work through daily practicing of virtues. Work meaningfulness is also experienced through personal growth and "being true to oneself" by engaging in ongoing learning and maintaining one's personal identity respectively (Lips-Wiersma and Morris, 2009).

Rosso, et. al. (2010) equates the "need to develop and become self" with the "need for authenticity". Authenticity refers to a sense of coherence or alignment between one's behaviour and perceptions of the "true" self (Sheldon, et. al., 1997). Authenticity connotes the extent to which individuals believe they are consistently behaving in line with their interests and values (Sheldon and Elliott, 1998). Feelings of authentic engagement in work are often experienced as meaningful because they indicate the development of the self-concept (Spreitzer, et. al., 2005).

3.2 Need to Serve Others

Serving others pertains to 'making a difference and meeting the needs of humanity". While making a difference is

related to the positive contributions an individual makes within his/her organization; meeting the needs of humanity connotes a transcendent cause that stems from a resolution to address the social, economic or environmental problems of society (Lips- Wiersma and Morris, 2009).

When individuals perceive that they are making a difference or having a positive impact on their work groups, coworkers, organizations, or other persons or entities beyond the self, they feel more competent of effecting positive change, and thus are very likely to experience higher levels of work meaningfulness (Grant, 2008).

3.3 Need to Unite With Others

Unity with others involves sharing values, belonging and working together. Lips- Wiersma and Morris (2009) assert that work meaningfulness could be induced when individuals share similar values, people depend on each other while performing work tasks and a social bond is created in the process.

The "need to unite with others" plays a critical role in the formation of work meaningfulness in a large portion of literature pertaining to the meaning of work. Previous studies suggest that membership in, identification with, and emotional feelings of connection with social groups through work provide individuals with meaningfulness by enabling them experience a positive sense of fate, common destiny and humanity with other people (Homans, 1958).

3.4 Need to Express Full Potential

Expressing full potential catalyzes work meaningfulness because individuals feel empowered to exercise control over work outcomes (i.e. gain mastery) and gives them the ability to change their viewpoints or situations at any particular point in time (Lips-Wiersma and Morris, 2009). Satisfaction of the "need to express full potential" contributes to work meaningfulness because it makes individuals feel that they have the competence and capacity to exercise control or effect change in their work environments (Baumeister and Vohs, 2002).

It is important to note that the antecedents of work meaningfulness depicted above may either arise from a "self-orientation" or "others orientation". Two of them (i.e. the "need to develop and become self" and "need to express full potential") are "self –oriented"; while the remaining two antecedents (i.e. "need to serve" and "need to unite with others") are "others oriented" (Lips- Wiersma and Morris , 2009).

At this juncture, it is tempting to intuitively believe that antecedents possessing the "others orientation" will more likely correspond with beneficial outcomes at all levels of human existence (i.e. individual, organizational and societal levels), when compared with those having the "self- orientation". However, it is expedient to first of all identify the overall benefits of work meaningfulness before dwelling on this presumption. Consequently, the next section of the study focuses on the benefits of work meaningfulness.

4. Multi-level Benefits of Work Meaningfulness

Unlike other organizational concepts that tend to confer benefits on those that are strictly involved in employment relationships; work meaningfulness has been viewed as not only a particular good for employees and their employing organizations, but a good whose equitable distribution should be an object of common concern (Beadle and Knight, 2012). In light of this argument, Yeoman (2014) sees work meaningfulness as a fundamental human need, which all persons in society require so as to satisfy their inescapable interests in freedom, autonomy and dignity.

Work meaningfulness is a fundamental human need because it is associated with work that is freely entered into; allows employees exercise their autonomy and independence; enables them develop their rational capacities; provides a wage sufficient for physical welfare; supports employees' moral development and does not interfere with employees' conception of how they wish to obtain happiness (Bowie, 1998). Therefore, one can easily infer that work meaningfulness is aimed at promoting employees' dignity, freedom and autonomy (Bowie, 1998; Michaelson, 2005; Yeoman, 2014).

This means that a just society should endeavour to make available to its people jobs that secure the opportunity to develop important human capabilities (Yeoman, 2014). Empirical findings from organizational research indicate that

employees who hold such meaningful jobs experience some beneficial outcomes. These outcomes include job engagement (May, et. al., 2004; Soane, et. al., 2013); enhanced job satisfaction (Wrzesniewski, et. al., 1997); work-life balance (Munn, 2013; Tummers and Knies, 2013); increased work effort (Tummers and Knies, 2013); and entire well-being (Campbell, et. al., 1976).

These beneficial outcomes are restricted to the individual level of existence because only employees derive pleasurable feelings from them. Hence they can be collectively viewed as the "subjective value of work meaningfulness" (Schor, 1992; Gini, 2003; Nash and Stevenson, 2004; Michaelson, 2008; Wolf, 2010). However, empirical evidence also shows that work meaningfulness is connected to an avalanche of benefits for organizations, including organizational commitment and identification (Cardador, et. al., 2011), occupational identification (Bunderson and Thompson, 2009), customer satisfaction (Leiter, et. al. 1998), job performance (Grant, 2008; Hackman and Oldman, 1976), reduced labour turnover (Scroggins, 2008; Soane, et. al., 2013) and organizational citizenship behaviour (Purvanova, et. al. 2006).

Arguably, the "subjective value of work meaningfulness" also applies at the organizational level if the motivation to engage in meaningful work only benefits employees and their employing organizations. This form of motivation tends to be "self- oriented" since both parties are somewhat involved in a symbiotic relationship in which either of them stands to gain something from the immediate sacrifices made by one party, probably in the long term.

Nonetheless, apart from an employee's duty to pursue self- oriented goals, he also has a duty to promote the happiness of other people in society that do not directly contribute to his own well-being (Kant, 1994). This point was buttressed in Wolf's (2010) study on the bipartite value of work meaningfulness. In this study, Wolf posited that the subjective satisfaction that arises from undertaking meaningful work presents just a partial and parochial benefit to employees. Work meaningfulness confers a more holistic value when it has special ties with what she called "ground projects"- projects that enable employees make their own social contributions to the society in which they domicile (Wolf, 2010). The pursuit of these ground projects defines the "objective value of meaningful work" (Yeoman, 2014).

Ground projects provide employees with the material for the narrative formation of their lives, directing them to the responsibilities which ensure that they act appropriately for the good of others in society (Yeoman, 2014). Other scholars have also maintained that work meaningfulness entails engaging in social projects that benefit the general society (Martin, 2000; Chalofsky, 2003; Michaelson, 2005).

Although Wolf's conceptualization of ground projects has only secular connotations; it somewhat resonates with the protestant idea of God's calling. This idea presupposes a World of productive work in which persons engage in specialized work activities for the benefit of some segments of society (Durkheim, 1984); and demands that people seek their self-transcendent calls and make whatever sacrifices required to judiciously and faithfully fulfill the responsibilities and duties associated with them for the welfare of the human family and the glory of God (Werner, 2008; Bunderson and Thompson, 2009).

From the protestant point of view, the transcendent nature of work meaningfulness is unleashed when employees seek the common good of society without expecting anything in return. Such employees have the "others orientation" and are not only concerned about their own welfare. Rather, they have an underlying transcendent motive that is geared towards making positive contributions that maximize societal welfare.

Many scholars believe that these employees see the motivation to engage in meaningful work as a personal calling (Wrzesniewski, 2003; Dobrow, 2006; Bunderson and Thompson, 2009). According to Bunderson and Thompson (2009: 38p) "one's calling is that place in the occupational division of labour in society that one feels destined to fill by virtue of particular gifts, talents, and/or idiosyncratic life opportunities". However, there has been no empirical research based on existing knowledge that relates work meaningfulness or its antecedents with benefits that transcend organizational boundaries. Particularly, it will be imperative to know whether the antecedents of work meaningfulness relate with multi-level benefits derived by individuals, organizations and societies. In order to fill this knowledge gap, three research hypotheses were posed in this study. These are shown below:

First Hypothesis: Antecedents of work meaningfulness (i.e. "need to develop and become self", "need to serve others", "need to unite with others" and "need to express full potential") significantly impact on work meaningfulness itself.

Second Hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between the different antecedents of work meaningfulness and its beneficial outcomes at the individual, organizational and societal levels of human existence.

Third Hypothesis: Work meaningfulness directly and significantly impact on beneficial outcomes at all the levels of human existence.

The above hypotheses were tested through a cross sectional study involving the perceptions of Nigerian managers operating in different sectors of the economy. Details of the research methods deployed by the study are presented below.

5. Research Methods

Given the nature of work meaningfulness, it was needful to design the research around a population of employees that ostensibly has the capacity to autonomously direct their work activities towards actualizing ground projects that benefit people within the society in which they function. Managers of business organizations around the World represent a critical mass of employees that are most likely to undertake work activities allowing them to develop their human capabilities, as well as contribute to the common good of organizations and society.

Therefore, in order to verify the veracity of the three hypotheses posed above, a cross section of managers from different walks of industrial life in Nigeria were administered a questionnaire that measured the study's key variables. These variables were: (i) Antecedents of work meaningfulness (i.e. "need to develop and become self", "need to serve others", "need to unite with others" and "need to express full potential"), (ii) work meaningfulness itself, and (iii) benefits of work meaningfulness at the individual, organizational and societal levels of human existence.

Specifically, the questionnaire was administered to all the two hundred and fifty seven business managers undergoing the Senior Management Programme (SMP), Executive MBA Programme (EMBA) and Modular Executive MBA Programme (MEMBA) of the Lagos Business School (LBS). However, only two hundred and sixteen managers (i.e. 84 % of the research sample) completely filled the questionnaire.

It is expedient to note that LBS is the foremost business school in Nigeria and it has been successfully ranked by the World's financial times in the last five years. Renowned corporate organizations send their managers to LBS in a bid to hone their managerial competences/skills. These organizations pay millions of naira (i.e. Nigeria's currency) for the management education acquired by them at the LBS. The managers are usually from different sectors of the Nigerian economy which include sectors like insurance, hospitality, petroleum and gas, banking, telecommunication, food and beverage, management consulting, manufacturing, and so on. They are also very diverse in terms of their religious affiliation, gender, highest educational attainment, parental wealth background, positions they occupy within organizational hierarchies, and their organizational tenures.

The biographic diversity of the managers involved in this study was captured in section A of the questionnaire. By analyzing the data it was found that 89.3% of them practiced the Christian religion, 10.2% practiced the Islamic religion and 0.47% were free thinkers. 67.1% were men, while 32.9% were women. In terms of their highest educational attainment, 1.4% had PhD degrees, 50% possessed M.Sc. or MA degrees, the remaining 48.6% hold only a degree in B.Sc.

With regards to parental wealth background, 2.9% were born into very wealthy families, 14% were from wealthy families, 31.4% hailed from slightly wealthy families, 40.6% were from poor families and 11.1% were not sure of their parental wealth background. 24.2% occupied lower level management positions, 61.14% were at the middle level management cadre of their organizations and 14.7% were placed at the upper echelons of management in organizational hierarchies. 67.4% have spent more than 5 years in their organizations, 9.35% have spent 4 years, 7% have been with their organizations for 3 years, while 10.7% and 5.6% have been employed by their organizations for just 2 years and 1

year respectively.

5.1 Measures

Section B of the questionnaire was designed using a validated, reliable and multidimensional scale on work meaningfulness constructed by Lips-Wiersma and Wright (2012). This study adapts twelve items in the validated scale for measuring the antecedents of work meaningfulness. These items are as follows:

(i)   I do not like who I am becoming at work. ®

(ii)   At work I feel divorced from myself. ®

(iii)   At work my sense of what is right and wrong gets blurred. ®

(iv)   I feel I truly help our clients.

(v)   I personally think I contribute to products and services that enhance human well- being at work.

(vi)   I make a difference that matters to others at work.

(vii)   I enjoy working with other colleagues at work.

(viii) I can talk openly about my values when making decisions at work.

(ix)   I feel that my colleagues and I support each other at work.

(x)   I create and apply new ideas or concepts at work.

(xi)   I experience a sense of achievement at work.

(xii)   I am excited by the available opportunities for me at work.

The first three items measured the "need to develop and become self". The fourth, fifth and sixth items measured the "need to serve others". The seventh, eighth and ninth items measured the "need to unite with others" while the tenth, eleventh and twelfth items measured the "need to express full potential". A Likert scale with seven layers (i.e. 1-7 scale) ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree was presented to the respondents so as to enable them express the extent to which the above needs have been satisfied in their working lives. The Cronbach's alpha reliability estimates for scales measuring "need to develop and become self", "need to serve others", "need to unite with others" and "need to express full potential" were 0.60, 0.79, 0.74 and 0.83 respectively.

Section C of the questionnaire entailed six items that measured work meaningfulness. These items were drawn from Spreitzer (1995) and May (2003) studies that measured the extent of meaning that individuals experienced while undertaking their various work-related activities. The items are shown below:

(i)   The work I do on this job is very important to me.

(ii)   My job activities are personally meaningful to me.

(iii)   The work I do on this job is worthwhile.

(iv)   My job activities are significant to me.

(v)   The work I do on this job is meaningful to me.

(vi)   I feel that the work I do on my job is valuable.

The above six items that measured work meaningfulness were submerged in a (1-7) Likert scale. Respondents were instructed to evaluate the degree to which they derive meaning from their disparate work activities by ticking a particular point in the scale which ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The scale's Cronbach's alpha reliability estimate was 0.91.

Sections D, E and F of the questionnaire were composed of items that measured the beneficial outcomes of work meaningfulness from the perspectives of individual, organization and society respectively. A condensed scale of Sirgy, et. al. (2001) involving five items that measured quality of work life (QWL) was employed in section D of the questionnaire for the purpose of measuring the benefits of work meaningfulness to the individual.   The items in this section of the questionnaire are as follows:

(i)   I am satisfied with what I am getting paid for my job.

(ii)   My job helps me stay both physically and mentally fit.

(iii)   I have good friends at work.

(iv)   I feel appreciated by my organization.

(v)   People within my profession respect me as an expert in my field.

Another abridged scale of Williams and Anderson (1991) measuring organizational citizenship behaviours was adapted in section E that defines the organizational benefits accruable from work meaningfulness. The items enlisted in this part of the questionnaire are:

(i)   I help others in my organization that have been absent from work.

(ii)   I help others in my organization that have heavy workloads.

(iii)   I always give advance notice when unable to come to work.

(iv)   I sometimes take undeserved work breaks ®.

(v)   I always adhere to informal rules devised to maintain order at work.

Section F of the questionnaire had a scale that was constructed in order to measure the benefits of work meaningfulness to the general society. The items in this scale are as follows:

(i)   My job enables me to positively contribute to a specific sector of society.

(ii)   I better the lives of underprivileged people in society by engaging in my job assignments.

(iii)   My job allows me to positively contribute to the lives of those that are somewhat maltreated   in society.

(iv)   My job provides me with the opportunity to put smiles on the faces of people in society.

(v)   I will always like to be in contact with people in society that can benefit from my job assignments.

Using a (1-7) Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, the questionnaire items measuring benefits of work meaningfulness at all levels of human existence were presented to the respondents. The Cronbach's alpha reliability estimates for the scales measuring the benefits of work meaningfulness at the individual, organizational and societal levels were 0.84, 0.65 and 0.81 respectively. Both the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and the Stata statistical package were used for data analyses.

5.2 Dealing With Common Method Issues

One of the major causes of common method variance is deriving the measures of both the predictors and outcomes of a particular concept from the same source or rater (Podsakoff, et. al., 2003). Unfortunately, since work meaningfulness is a concept that can only be subjectively experienced by an individual in the process of working, it would not make much sense to obtain measures of the antecedents and benefits of work meaningfulness from different sets of raters.

Although common method variance stemming from the problem of consistency motif (Podsakoff, et. al., 2003) was not envisaged in this current study because it would be very difficult for respondents to relate the four antecedents of work meaningfulness with all its beneficial outcomes; a decision was still made to psychologically separate respondents from the primary objective of the study.

Psychological separation was achieved by ensuring that the main purpose of the study was not disclosed to the respondents. They were only told that the purpose of the study was to understand their work behaviours. Furthermore, respondents' social desirability and apprehensions were addressed by telling them that their responses to the questionnaire will be treated in strict confidence and used for academic purpose only.

While filling the questionnaire, research assistants ensured that the respondents were in a serene environment that was devoid of distractions and they were in very relaxed moods. This latter action helped to reduce context induced moods. It is believed that these procedures should be able to deal with common method problems that could have emanated from the study. Therefore, the statistical remedies to these problems were left out because of their inherent inadequacies (Podsakoff, et. al., 2003).

6. Data Analysis and Discussion of Results

The means, standard deviations and zero-order correlations of key variables utilized by this study are displayed in **Table 1**. As depicted in Table 1, the need to develop and become self, need to serve others, need to unite with others and

need to express full potential were all positively and significantly related with work meaningfulness (r = 0.26, 0.50, 0.46 and 0.68 respectively, p< 0.01). All the antecedents of work meaningfulness also had positive and significant relationship with each other. For example, row four of the Table shows that the need to develop and become self, need to serve others, and the need to unite with others were all highly related with the need to express full potential (r= 0.28, 0.57, and 0.70 respectively, P<0.01). In addition, the Table also shows that apart from the insignificant relationship which the need to develop and become self had with benefits existing at the organizational and societal levels (i.e. r= 0.09 and 0.12 respectively, p> 0.05); the other antecedents were positively and significantly related with all beneficial outcomes irrespective of the level of human existence.

Due to the above results on the correlation of key variables, it was needful to test for multi-collinearity before examining the hypotheses developed in this study. Therefore, the Durbin-Watson test for multi-collinearity was conducted in order to ensure that the relationship between the variables does not impair the use of regression models for our analysis. The decision rule for Durbin-Watson test states that when the value is close to 2, it implies that multi-collinearity is absent. The values of Durbin-Watson test for multi-collinearity of variables involved in the various regression analyses undertaken by this study are approximately 2. Consequently, it suffices to state that multi-collinearity is absent.

6.1 Preliminary Analyses

Prior to testing the hypotheses developed in this study, it was expedient to identify and control certain variables that can influence the outlook of key inferential statistical results presented in the next section of the article. Particularly, it was needful to isolate the unique effect of variables that are likely to influence the transcendent nature of work meaningfulness. Previous research has shown that social and institutional variables are likely to impact on transcendent work motivational orientations (Perry, 2000); and social influences from family, churches and schools have been found to correlate with self-transcendent work behaviours (Wilson, 1995; Monroe, 1996; and Perry, 1997). Consequently, this present study captured elements of biographic profiles of research participants that are likely to reflect the social influences from these societal institutions.

Towards this end, the questionnaire requested for information pertaining to participants' parental wealth background, religious affiliation, and highest educational qualification. Since Nigeria possesses a patriarchal or male dominated society in which women's interests are somewhat subjugated, it was needful to know how the phenomenon of patriarchy influenced work meaningfulness; and so the specific genders of respondents were obtained. Two organizational factors (i.e. positions occupied in organizational hierarchy and organizational tenure) that are likely to influence individual's experiences at work were also reflected in respondents' biographic details.

The above biographic variables were subjected to a number of t-test and Analysis of variance (ANOVA) test in order to assess whether they significantly influence each antecedent of work meaningfulness, as well as work meaningfulness itself. The t-test was utilized in ascertaining the influence of gender and religion (Christianity versus Islamic religions), while ANOVA was used in evaluating the separate effects of parental wealth background, highest educational qualification, position in organizational hierarchy, and organizational tenure on the aforementioned dependent variables.

	KEY VARIABLES	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Need to develop and become self	5.72	1.35	(0.60)							
2	Need to serve others	5.91	1.45	0.14*	(0.79)						
3	Need to unite with others	5.55	1.48	0.24**	0.65**	(0.74)					
4	Need to express full potential	5.65	1.39	0.28**	0.57**	0.70**	(0.83)				
5	Work meaningfulness	5.86	1.43	0.26**	0.50**	0.46**	0.68**	(0.91)			
6	Benefit to the individual	5.01	1.49	0.32**	0.29**	0.39**	0.46**	0.64**	(0.84)		
7	Benefit to the organization	5.40	1.18	0.09	0.20**	0.26**	0.22**	0.33**	0.38**	(0.65)	
8	Benefit to the society	5.17	1.44	0.12	0.21**	0.26**	0.30**	0.38**	0.34**	0.51**	(0.81)

Note: N = 216. The Cronbach's alpha internal consistency reliability estimates are on the diagonals; *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlation of Key Variables

Apart from religion, it was found that the other biographic variables did not significantly influence the dependent variables. Specifically, religion significantly influenced only one antecedent of work meaningfulness (i.e. "need to develop and become self") and work meaningfulness itself. This preliminary result implied that only religion qualifies to be treated as a control variable while testing our hypotheses. Hierarchical regression models were further developed for the purpose of establishing the qualifications of religion as a control variable.

Firstly, the impact of "need to develop and become self" on work meaningfulness as well as its effect on all beneficial outcomes was investigated when religion served as a secondary predictor of these dependent variables. Secondly, the effect of work meaningfulness on all beneficial outcomes was also examined in the absence or presence of religion serving as a secondary predictor of beneficial outcomes. With p values > 0.05, it was found that religion did not make any significant contribution to the dependent variables in the two scenarios. Correlation analyses also showed that religion does not have any significant relationship with work meaningfulness and all its beneficial outcomes. Therefore, there is really no need treating religion as a control variable while testing the study's hypotheses.

6.2 Results on Testing Hypotheses

Results obtained from testing the hypotheses are displayed in five different tables (see **Table 2-Table 5**). The left hand side of the Tables presents the regression coefficient, R^2 and p-values of the SPSS results, while the right hand side provides the structural equation regression coefficient, p-values, comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA) values, χ^2 and degree of freedoms (df) associated with the STATA results. The CFI, TLI and RMSEA, χ^2/df were the criteria adopted for accepting the goodness of fit of the structural equation models.

Based on the above criteria, one can deduce that the structural equation models assessing the impacts of work meaningfulness antecedents on beneficial outcomes as shown in Table 3- Table 5 provided considerably better fits than those evaluating the impact of antecedents on work meaningfulness and direct impact of work meaningfulness on beneficial outcomes as depicted in Table 2 and Table 6 respectively. This submission is made because their CFI and TLI were closer to 0.95 (see Hair, et. al., 2009). They also had RMSEA values that were less than 0.1 and possessed χ^2/df values equal to or even less than 2.5 (see Arbuckle, 2006).

	SPSS RESULTS			STATA RESULTS						
Antecedents	Regression coefficients	R^2	p-value	Regression coefficient	p-value	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	χ^2	df
Need to develop and become self.	0.26	0.07	0.00	0.33	0.00	0.84	0.78	0.17	188.39	26
Need to serve others.	0.50	0.25	0.00	0.69	0.00	0.88	0.83	0.16	175.15	26
Need to unite with others.	0.46	0.21	0.00	0.54	0.00	0.86	0.81	0.17	182.25	26
Need to express full potential.	0.68	0.46	0.00	1.08	0.00	0.88	0.84	0.17	182.24	26

Dependent Variable: Work Meaningfulness.

Table 2. Impact of Antecedents on Work Meaningfulness

	SPSS RESULTS			STATA RESULTS						
Variables	Regression coefficients	R^2	p-value	Regression coefficient	p-value	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	χ^2	df
Need to develop and become self.	0.35	0.12	0.00	0.55	0.00	0.94	0.91	0.09	49.33	19
Need to serve others.	0.29	0.08	0.00	0.46	0.000	0.96	0.94	0.08	46.57	19
Need to unite with others.	0.48	0.24	0.000	0.72	0.00	0.94	0.91	0.10	59.34	19
Need to express full potential.	0.46	0.21	0.00	0.88	0.00	0.96	0.94	0.09	51.72	19

Dependent Variable: Benefit to the individual.

Table 3. Impact of Work Meaningfulness Antecedents on Benefits Accruable to the individual

	SPSS RESULTS			STATA RESULTS						
Variables	Regression coefficients	R^2	p-value	Regression coefficient	p-value	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	χ^2	df
Need to develop and become self.	0.09	0.01	0.19	0.06	0.56	0.96	0.94	0.05	28.10	19
Need to serve others.	0.26	0.07	0.00	0.23	0.02	0.94	0.91	0.08	42.56	19
Need to unite with others.	0.31	0.10	0.00	0.29	0.00	0.93	0.90	0.08	43.37	19
Need to express full potential.	0.22	0.05	0.00	0.39	0.00	0.95	0.92	0.08	42.88	19

Dependent Variable: Benefit to the organization

Table 4. Impact of Work Meaningfulness' Antecedents on Benefits Accruable to the Organization

| Variables | SPSS RESULTS | | | STATA RESULTS | | | | | | |
	Regression coefficients	R^2	p-value	Regression coefficient	p-value	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	χ^2	df
Need to develop and become self.	0.14	0.02	0.04	0.13	0.14	0.97	0.96	0.06	31.42	19
Need to serve others.	0.19	0.04	0.01	0.25	0.00	0.99	0.99	0.04	24.02	19
Need to unite with others.	0.26	0.07	0.00	0.24	0.00	0.97	0.96	0.06	35.35	19
Need to express full potential.	0.30	0.09	0.00	0.37	0.00	0.98	0.98	0.05	29.34	19

Dependent Variable: Benefit to the society

Table 5. Impact of Work Meaningfulness Antecedents on Benefits Accruable to the Society

Table 2 shows that with p-values < 0.05, all the antecedents have a positive and significant impact on work meaningfulness. However, the "need to express full potential" had the greatest impact on it, since the regression coefficients (i.e. 0.68 and 1.08) as well as R^2 (i.e. 0.46) value associated with its effect on work meaningfulness was higher than those obtained for other antecedents. This finding reveals that employees do derive more meanings in work tasks that allow them exercise freedom and autonomy than those that enable them satisfy any of the other antecedents of work meaningfulness at a particular point in time.

This finding is reminiscent of the fact that employees' freedom and autonomy have been viewed as the chief pivots upon which work meaningfulness rotates (Bowie, 1998; Michaelson, 2005; Yeoman, 2014). Hence it should be the most impactful antecedent of work meaningfulness.

Table 2 also shows that the "need to develop and become self" had the lowest influence on work meaningfulness. This result suggests that maintaining one's personal identity which is synonymous with the "need to develop and become self" has the most minimal impact on work meaningfulness when compared with other antecedents.

This result may stem from the general believe that efforts aimed at maintaining one's personal identity tend to be entirely "self- oriented" or egocentrically motivated (Ashforth, and Mael, 1989; Ellemers, et. al., 2004). Thus, contravening the self-transcendent nature of work meaningfulness which supposedly constitutes an integral ingredient of other antecedents like "need to help others" and "need to unite with others".

Arguably, the "need to express full potential" is also somewhat "self-oriented". However, while the "need to express full potential" is active and outward directed, the "need to develop and become self" is inward oriented and reflective (Lip-Wiersma and Wright, 2012). Satisfaction of the "need to express full potential" may not necessarily benefit only an employee that had once craved for it. Satisfying this latter need could also confer some self-transcendent benefits on other people functioning in organizations and societies.

Although Table 2 revealed that each antecedent independently and significantly impacted on work meaningfulness in a positive manner; results from multiple and hierarchical regression analyses showed that the positive effect of the "need to unite with others" on work meaningfulness could be undermined by the "need to express full potential". A multiple regression model encapsulating the simultaneous impacts of all the antecedents on work meaningfulness yielded the following equation: $Y = 0.801 + 0.129X_1 + 0.233X_2 - 0.157X_3 + 0.663X_4$.

Where Y= Work Meaningfulness, X_1 = Need to develop and become self, X_2 = Need to serve others, X_3= Need to unite with others and X_4= Need to express full potential. The p-values associated with the impacts of X_1, X_2, X_3 and X_4 were 0.01, 0.00, 0.03 and 0.00 respectively. Since these p-values were < 0.05, it can be inferred that all the antecedents significantly affected work meaningfulness. However, while other antecedents had positive impact on it, the "need to unite with others" produced a negative effect.

The result obtained from this multiple regression test implied that the initial positive and significant influence that

the "need to unite with others" independently had on work meaningfulness; as depicted in Table 2 has been attenuated by some other antecedents. Based on this initial result, it was imperative to know the extent to which the other three antecedents contributed to the crowding out of the positive effect of "need to unite with others".

Consequently, hierarchical regression analyses involving the separate and joint impacts of the "need to unite with others" and one of the other antecedents were respectively undertaken in three different rounds. These analyses entailed an initial observation of the singular impact of the "need to unite with others" on work meaningfulness. This was followed by an examination of the joint impact of "the need to unite with others" and any of the other three antecedents on work meaningfulness. This led to the formation of three sets of hierarchical regression models. Results showed that when the "need to express full potential" was introduced into a regression model that accounts for only the impact of the "need to unite with others" on work meaningfulness; the initial positive and significant effect of the "need to unite with others" became grossly undermined.

It will be important to note that before the incorporation of the "need to express full potential" into the model, the regression coefficient and p-value associated with its impact on work meaningfulness were 0.46 and 0.00 respectively. After the "need to express full potential" was introduced into the model, they became -0.03 and .71. This result indicated that the "need to express full potential" caused a significant reduction of 0.49 in the level of the positive effect of the "need to unite with others".

However, even though the "need to develop and become self" and the "need to help others" were later and alternately incorporated into hierarchical regression models that previously evaluated only the unique influence of "need to unite with others" on work meaningfulness; the positive and significant impact of the latter on work meaningfulness was not crowded out. This implies that only the "need to express full potential" is diametrically opposed to the positive effect of the "need to unite with others" on work meaningfulness and has the capacity of grossly undermining this effect.

The results imply that tensions exist between an employee's desire to exercise control or effect change in work outcomes (i.e. need to express full potential), and their need to work with other people, share their values, and create feelings of belonging (i.e. need to unite with others). Inability to resolve these tensions would lead to loss of work meaningfulness (Lip-Wiersma and Morris, 2009) and its attendant negative consequences, such as burn out and stress (Pines, 2002; Langle, 2003).

Table 3 unveils the direct impacts of work meaningfulness antecedents on beneficial outcomes occurring at the individual level of existence. The Table shows that all the antecedents of work meaningfulness positively and significantly benefit the individual employee. However, it was observed that the "need to unite with others" and the "need to express full potential" tend to be more impactful than the two other antecedents of work meaningfulness. This observation is based on the fact that the regression coefficients and R^2 values associated with the other antecedents (i.e. need to develop and become self and the need to serve others) are quite lower than those obtained for the "need to unite with others" and the "need to express full potential".

However, results obtained from another set of hierarchical regression analyses aimed at understudying the contributions of work meaningfulness to the impact of its antecedents on beneficial outcomes reveal the resilience of the positive influence that "need to unite with others" has on benefits accruable to the individual. Unlike the insignificant effect depicted by a p value of 0.33 > 0.05 that the "need to express full potential" had on benefit to the individual after work meaningfulness was incorporated into the hierarchical regression model; the "need to unite with others" retained its significant impact on this beneficial outcome even with the later presence of work meaningfulness. Within the hierarchical regression model the p-value associated with the impact of "need to unite with others" on benefit to the individual was actually 0.00 < 0.05.

Ironically, it is already clear from the multiple regression results that employees could be plunged into intra-psychic tensions in a bid to satisfy the "need to unite with others" and the "need to express full potential" simultaneously. Yet going by the results of this study, satisfaction of these needs confer more beneficial outcomes on the

individual than the other two needs (i.e. "need to develop and become self" and the "need to help others"). It is believed that the intra-psychic tensions associated with satisfying these two needs concurrently can be resolved when employees decide to jettison the impact of one of these needs on work meaningfulness within specific work and organizational contexts.

Work and organizational contexts emphasizing individualistic work values are likely to motivate employees to clamour for the satisfaction of their "need to express full potential", while those that promote collectivistic work values would probably be more conducive for satisfying their "need to unite with others". The work culture of Nigerian organizations is somewhat similar to those in North America and Europe that thrive on individualism (Orife, et. al., 2002). It is therefore not surprising that participants of this research sample, who are typical Nigerian managers may prefer to sideline the "need to unite with others" in order to project the "need to express full potential" for the purpose of creating their own work meaningfulness.

Nevertheless, results from Table III show that all the antecedents of work meaningfulness personally benefit employees irrespective of whether they are "self-oriented" or "other oriented". With regards to the impact of these antecedents on benefits to the organization and society, results from Tables IV and V indicate that apart from the inconsequential organizational and societal benefits attributable to the "need to develop and become self"; the other antecedents of work meaningfulness were significantly beneficial at these two levels of human existence.

This assertion is coming on the heels of the comparatively high p-values that are associated with the impact of the "need to develop and become self" on benefits reverberating around organizations and society. In terms of its impact on organizational benefits, the regression coefficients were 0.09 and 0.06; R^2 value was 0.01; and p- values were 0.19 and 0.56. In relation to its impact on societal benefits, the regression coefficients were 0.14 and 0.13; R^2 value was 0.02 and p-values were 0.04 and 0.14. Even though the p- value associated with the SPSS result that presents its impact on benefit to society is equal to 0.04 (i.e. slightly < 0.05); the $0.14 > 0.05$ that represents the p value conveyed by the STATA results is far beyond the threshold level. Therefore, it is safer to state that the "need to develop and become self", does not significantly confer benefits to society.

In other words, a desire to maintain one's personal identity does not benefit the organization and society. Thus suggesting that the "need to develop and become self" does not significantly produce self-transcendent benefits. Recall that it was averred that unlike the self-transcendent benefits that can be possibly derived from the "need to express full potential" which is also self-oriented; the "need to develop and become self" exudes only egocentric benefits to the individual. Luckily, Table 1 shows that it produces the least effect on work meaningfulness when compared with other antecedents.

Variables	SPSS RESULTS			STATA RESULTS						
	Regression coefficients	R^2	p-value	Regression coefficient	p-value	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	χ^2	df
Benefit to the individual.	0.63	0.40	0.00	0.92	0.00	0.85	0.81	0.16	266.64	43
Benefit to the organization.	0.33	0.11	0.00	0.36	0.00	0.83	0.78	0.14	232.61	43
Benefit to the society.	0.36	0.14	0.00	0.35	0.00	0.88	0.84	0.13	203.54	43

Independent Variable: Work Meaningfulness.

Table 6. Direct Impact of Work Meaningfulness on Benefits Accruable to the Individual, Organization and Society

The direct impact of work meaningfulness on benefits at the individual, organization and societal levels of human existence is shown in Table VI. The table shows that work meaningfulness has a positive and significant impact on all types of beneficial outcomes. Though its beneficial impact at the individual level of existence is higher than those pertaining to other levels of human existence; there is no doubt that it possesses self-transcendent benefits.

Results from hierarchical regression models also indicate that work meaningfulness significantly impacted on all beneficial outcomes even when it served as a secondary predictor in the models. With p values >0.05, the antecedents of work meaningfulness dropped in significance with regards to their positive impact on the beneficial outcomes after the incorporation of work meaningfulness into the model. Thus, indicating that work meaningfulness mediates the relationship between antecedents and beneficial outcomes. The only exceptions were the resilience of the separate and significantly positive impacts of the" need to develop and become self" and "need to unite with others" on benefits accruable to the individual, as their p values of < 0.05 were still retained after the incorporation of work meaningfulness into the model.

Due to the pervasive benefits of work meaningfulness, it is the collective responsibility of employees, managers of organizations and those that govern societies to see that work meaningfulness becomes a goal that is earnestly pursued. It is needful to discuss the ethical implications of actualizing this goal. This shall be the focus of the next section.

7. Ethical Implications of Study's Findings

Wolf (2010) conceives the "need to express full potential" as an opportunity to develop important human capabilities in ways that foster man's freedom, autonomy and dignity. From Wolf's point of view the satisfaction of the "need to express full potential" defines the subjective value of work meaningfulness. However, results obtained from this study has shown that meeting the "need to express full potential" cannot be restricted to only the subjective value of work meaningfulness; since satisfaction of this need also contributes to the well- being of organizations and societies. This implies that the objective value of work meaningfulness can also be derived from the satisfaction of employees' need to express full potential.

Consequently, the onus is on everyone in society to see that the "need to express full potential" is adequately satisfied. Firstly, individuals must deploy self- leadership strategies aimed at discovering their latent talents and potentials. Without discovering these talents and potentials, it may be extremely difficult to develop the requisite skills and competences required for securing jobs that will enable them unleash their full potentials. In other words, self-discovery of potentials must always precede job search. Specifically, job search should actually involve scouting for jobs that can help individuals express their full potentials.

Since the expression of full potentials is inextricably associated with certain self-transcendent benefits accruable to organizations and society; it may be important for individuals to reflect on the possible beneficiaries of their potentials during job search. This will facilitate the process of directing their potentials towards specific ground projects aimed at benefitting other people within their communities prior to securing employment. Thus, clarity of individuals' potentials and their possible beneficiaries before gaining employment provides the leeway towards securing jobs that promote work meaningfulness.

However, human resources' managers of organizations must endeavour to place their employees in jobs that would allow them maximize their full potentials as well as connect with the beneficiaries of these potentials. Although the slackness of labour markets many a time translates to a scenario in which several potential employees scout for few jobs that are available in organizations; this market condition should not deter organizations from placing individuals in jobs that would allow them gain work meaningfulness.

At the point of recruitment and selection of potential employees, human resource managers should not only be interested in making individuals understand what their job roles entail. It is also imperative for them to be adequately aware of the human potentials that these individuals are equipped with. Having this knowledge would enable organizations place individuals in jobs that maximize their potentials for the good of all in society. Thus, helping them experience work meaningfulness. In support of this notion, previous research findings already indicate that when organizations provide their employees with opportunities to express their full potentials by contributing something of value to other members of the organizational community, employees experience work meaningfulness (Grant, 2007; Grant, et. al., 2008).

One key finding of this study points to the insignificant impact of the "need to develop and become self" (i.e. need to maintain one's personal identity) on self- transcendent benefits that are likely to accrue to organizations and society. A viable way of circumventing the inconsequential self-transcendent benefits attributable to the maintenance of one's personal identity is to make social identity more salient.

Social identity has been defined as the perception of oneness with or belongingness to some human aggregate (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). In relation to the organization, social identity has been construed as the cognitive/perceptual awareness that the self constitutes part of the organization (Ellemers, et. al., 2004; Chattopadhyay, et. al; 2004; Meyer, et. al; 2006).

Through training and education that expose employees to the unique attributes of their organizations, social identity within organizations may be highly fostered. By psychologically locating employees' self concepts within the larger organizational environment, managers should be able to reduce uncertainty through the establishment of clearer self-conceptions and self-understanding (Hogg, 1992).

Psychological identification with work and organizational communities are important determinants of work meanings (Weick, 1995). The degree to which employees identify closely with their different organizations and see them as valuable and distinctive from others could go a long way in providing work meaningfulness (Pratt, et. al., 2006). If social identity becomes salient to employees, there is the possibility that this may positively influence other antecedents of work meaningfulness that are not "self-oriented" (e.g. "need to unite with others" and "need to serve others"); as well as reverse the insignificant impact that personal identity or the "need to develop and become self" currently has on the self- transcendent benefits of work meaningfulness.

At the societal level of human existence, it will be necessary for those who govern the affairs of societies to provide an enabling environment that allows the flourishing of the antecedents of work meaningfulness. For instance, the creation of a social environment that socializes individuals into a culture of public service directed at maximizing the general well-being of societal members would definitely facilitate the development of the "need to help others". Such a culture is often manifested by welfare states (e.g. Norway and Sweden).

Apparently, these states tend to be involved in the lives of their citizens at any level. The main goal of welfare states is to create economic equality or ensure equitable standards of living for all. Therefore the welfare state is likely to be more sensitive to the working conditions of the rank and file and the meanings they derive from their disparate work activities than the liberal democratic states. This view was somewhat maintained by Yeoman (2014) when he/she posited that the liberal democratic state ideology is normatively unsatisfactory because it avoids transgressing liberal neutrality by making meaningful work just a preference in the market while placing constraint upon state intervention aimed at promoting the social and economic conditions of workers.

It is therefore necessary for those who govern society to be very responsive to the meanings that employees derive from engaging in work activities. Through the ministry that oversees the welfare of workers; state governments can regularly generate the required statistics that would enable them   measure work meaningfulness on a periodic basis. Identifiable gaps in work meaningfulness could then be filled by liaising with organizational departments responsible for designing jobs. Labour laws that can help engender work meaningfulness should be promulgated and enforced by state governments. This would deter socially irresponsible organizations from jettisoning the phenomenon of work meaningfulness.

8. Future Research Implications of Study's Findings

By solely employing a quantitative research design, this study has found that work meaningfulness impacts on beneficial outcomes across the aforementioned levels of human existence. However, deeper insights into the specific ways by which work meaningfulness can be enhanced across levels are highly needed. It is believed that future studies could gain such insights by utilizing qualitative research designs that can give detailed accounts of the dynamics involved in improving work meaningfulness at the individual, organizational and societal levels. For instance, the

adoption of an ethnographic case study of research design involving a wide variety of geographical zones around the World should provide stronger indications of the complexities surrounding various approaches to uplifting work meaningfulness when compared with the quantitative research design adopted by this study.

Research that compares how people from different cultures (e.g. Japanese versus American cultures) construct work meaningfulness should be useful in understanding the variegated priorities that people around the World give to the antecedents of work meaningfulness. More precisely, future studies showing how work/organizational cultures influence the antecedents of work meaningfulness are also encouraged; as such studies should help shed light on how these cultures accentuate or attenuate the intra-psychic tensions existing between the "need to unite with others" and the "need to express full potential". It will also be useful to know the mechanisms underlying the resolution of these intra-psychic conflicts at the individual and group levels of human existence through such studies.

There is now a growing body of knowledge that links aging to reorganization of motives and values (Kanfer and Ackerman, 2004). Therefore, it will be necessary to conduct longitudinal studies investigating the impact of aging on work meaningfulness and the possible coping or intervention strategies that employees and organizations can adopt so as to forestall loss of work meaningfulness during certain stages of adult development.

Owing to the role of information technology and the changing patterns of work in contemporary times, it will also be expedient to undertake job analysis research involving industrial sectors employing a critical mass of workers. Results from such job analysis research should help redress the gaps associated with work meaningfulness in the current global workforce. Since it is already assumed by this study that social identity would be more impactful on work meaningfulness than personal identity; it will be necessary for future research to assess the extent to which social identity influences work meaningfulness and its antecedents vis-à-vis the impact of personal identity.

9. Conclusion: Theoretical Implications of Study

This study has contributed to work meaningfulness theory in some respects. Firstly, there is now an empirical basis for acknowledging the relative impacts of the antecedents- "need to develop and become self", "need to help others", "need to unite with others" and "need to express full potential"- on work meaningfulness. Particularly, the study's findings reveal that self-oriented antecedents like the "need to develop and become self" significantly impact on beneficial outcomes of work meaningfulness only at the personal/individual level of human existence. Thus, such antecedents do not confer self-transcendent benefits on organizations and society.

Secondly, this study has shown that apart from the inconsequential organizational and societal benefits attributable to the "need to develop and become self"; the other antecedents of work meaningfulness are significantly beneficial at the individual, organizational and societal levels of human existence. The previous notion that the "need to express full potential" is entirely self- oriented" has been challenged by this study's findings. The self-transcendent benefits associated with satisfying this need has given credence to the fact that it pays for all in society to see that man's freedom, autonomy and dignity is promoted in the World of work.

Results obtained from this study also contradict the extant philosophical idea positing that the two antecedents of work meaningfulness possessing the "other orientation" (i.e. "need to help others" and "need to unite with others") only confer self- transcendent benefits (Lips-Wiersma and Morris 2009). The study's findings now show that besides the positive and significant impact that satisfaction of these needs have on organizational and societal benefits; they also significantly influence the personal benefits that employees can derive from work meaningfulness. These results suggest that it pays employees to see that their self-transcendent needs are duly satisfied in the process of working.

Fourthly, antecedents of work meaningfulness embroiled in intra-psychic tensions are the most beneficial to employees. This assertion is based on the already discussed results involving the tensions existing between the "need to unite with others" and "need to express full potential" as well as their immense impacts on benefits accruable to employees.

Fifthly and lastly, the study findings have indicated that the direct benefits of work meaningfulness cut across all

levels of human existence. Therefore, there is need for employees, managers of organizations, and those who govern societies to put work meaningfulness in the rightful place that it belongs.

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