

PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT AND EMPLOYEE MORALE OF ACADEMIC STAFF IN BAYELSA STATE UNIVERSITIES

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ABSTRACT

There is a paucity of empirical research on employee morale. This study filled this gap by examining the influence of psychological empowerment on workers affective, future goal and interpersonal morale. Using cross-sectional survey research, a sample size of 310 academic staff were obtained from a population of 1563 employees with the aid of Krejcie & Morgan (1970) Sample Size Determination Table. A structured questionnaire adopting Likert 5-Point scale was used to generate data. The hypotheses used Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to ascertain the relationship among the variables of the study. The findings revealed that meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact had a significant positive relationship with affective, future goal and interpersonal morale. It was recommended that academic staff should be exposed to regular professional development programmes, constructive feedback through appraisals, flexible work arrangement and granted autonomy in job duties. These would increase their sense of being valued, ability to meet set targets and foster collaboration and positive interpersonal dynamics in higher institutions.

Keywords: psychological empowerment, employee morale, future goal, interpersonal, academic staff

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In today's competitive academic environment, universities strive to maintain a dynamic and motivated workforce to achieve their mission of providing quality education and groundbreaking research. A happy and satisfied employee is a productive employee (Bhasin, 2018), hence the emphasis on trying to create an environment where employees will have high morale. Employee morale refers to the total attitude, satisfaction, and motivation of employees within an organization (Muskita & Kazimoto, 2017). It reflects how employees feel about their work, their co-workers, their management, and the organization as a whole (Hardy, 2009).

Academic staff are instrumental in shaping the educational experience and driving research excellence, therefore maintaining high morale is very important. High employee morale typically indicates a positive work environment where employees are motivated, engaged, and productive, while low employee morale can indicate a negative work environment with low motivation, disengagement, and potentially lower productivity (Weakliem & Frenkel, 2006).

The benefits of high employee morale to organizations are numerous. Researchers believe it leads to greater effectiveness and efficiency of work processes, improved productivity and greater work efforts (Weakliem & Frenkel, 2006); impacts significantly on academic institution's overall productivity, innovation, and reputation, commitment of academic staff to their institution's goals, deliver exceptional teaching, foster positive student experiences, conduct groundbreaking research, record lower staff turnover, improvement in behaviour (Hebert, 2020; Kanimozhi & Vinothkumar, 2018; Ngambi, 2011; Noor & Ampornstira, 2019).

Organizations face different challenges in building high morale among their employees, hence studies have been done with various individual and organizational processes that could help organizations to leverage on the benefits of high employee morale (Coffey, 2021; Gomathy, 2022; Kanimozhi & Vinothkumar, 2018; Mallik, Mallik & Keerthi, 2019; Ngambi, 2011; Weakliem & Frenkel 2006). These studies highlighted the importance of organizations ensuring they have a good environment that will foster high employee morale.

These notwithstanding, employees in most organizations still record low morale especially in Bayelsa State. Researchers have attributed this to the challenges besetting the academic sector in Bayelsa State such as poor remuneration, delayed promotion, stringent conditions of service (Owota & Elliot, 2022); low performance, lack of optimum participation from workers (Sikpi & Enoch, 2022); inadequate health and safety facilities (Wariowei & Abraham, 2018); brain drain, inadequate training and development, lack of research facilities, obsolete curriculum content, large population of students, examination malpractice (Timi-Johnson & Igbogi, 2018); unfriendly government policies, promotion without attendant financial benefits, non-implementation of promotion areas among others (Sahara Reporters, 2016).

There is paucity of studies investigating the influence of psychological empowerment on employee morale. Psychological empowerment has emerged as a crucial determinant of job satisfaction and morale. Psychological empowerment is a personal belief by workers that their jobs are meaningful, they have the necessary competence to execute their duties, with autonomy granted to them, and are able to influence outcomes in the organization (Spreitzer, 2008). The thrust of previous researches on psychological empowerment had been on employee performance (Mat et al, 2021), organizational learning (Khalil et al, 2011) job satisfaction (Mathew & Nair, 2022; Sefnedi et al, 2023; Sun, 2016; Zolkapli et al 2020;), employee engagement (Monje-Amor, et al, 2021, Nawrin, 2016), with scarce empirical studies on Employee Morale.

This research is carried out to fill this gap by investigating the relationship between psychological empowerment and employee morale, focusing specifically on academic staff in the higher education sector in Bayelsa State of Nigeria. Spreitzer (1995) advocated for additional research to test the efficacy of Psychological Empowerment on other organizational and individual constructs. The dimensions used for Psychological Empowerment was Spreitzer (1995) conceptualization of Meaning, competence, self-determination and impact; while for Employee Morale, the measures of Hardy (2009) were employed. Hardy (2009) also advocated for empirical research to validate their measures of Morale. Several studies have found that employees' that feel psychological empowered are more likely to go the extra mile for the organization (Judge et al 2001; Weakliem & Frenkel, 2006). The aim of this study is to examine

the relationship of psychological empowerment and employee morale of academic staff in Bayelsa State, especially with the foregoing challenges that pose a huge threat to their morale.

The conceptual framework below highlights the relationship between psychological empowerment and employee morale:

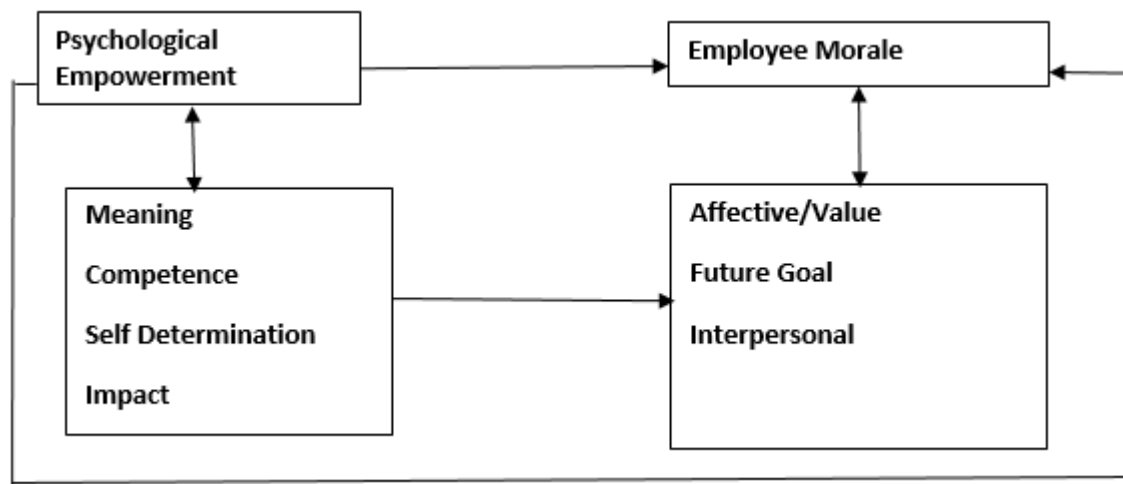


Fig. 1: Relationship between psychological empowerment and employee morale.

(Source: adapted from Hardy, 2009; Spreitzer, 1995, conceptualization)

2.0 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Psychological Empowerment

The word empowerment was first used by Kanter in 1977 to describe improved quality and service in employee attitude to work. Kanter's empowerment focused more on social structures, work environment, and conditions that influence employee's in achieving organizational goals. Kanter believes workers should be granted greater autonomy in utilizing organizational resources and better access to information (García-Ael, & Topa, 2023; Llorente-Alonso, Monje-Amor et al, 2021). According to Spreitzer (2008), this view of empowerment is macro-oriented because it focuses on workplace environment such as the structures, policies and practices that empowers employees to perform optimally. Spreitzer (2008) categorized empowerment into five areas: skill/knowledge based, participative decision making, flat organizational structure, open flow of communication and training. Spreitzer, however saw this aspect of empowerment as being restrictive, as it does not portray employee's real experience of empowerment by the organizational structure, policies and practices in place. Zimmerman (1995) view of empowerment was more encompassing as it categorized empowerment as comprising individual, organizational and community perspectives.

Emphasis shifted from Structural empowerment to psychological empowerment which is an individual's subjective orientation about work regarding their self-image, feelings, motivation, experiences and self-efficacy (Weidenstedt, 2017). Psychological Empowerment is seen as; micro-oriented (Spreitzer, 2008), individual level of analysis (Zimmerman, 1995), motivational state (Monje-Amor et al, 2021). Zimmerman (1995) opined Psychological

Empowerment has to do with individual perception of personal control and proactive measures taken to improve their lives and having a profound understanding of their external environment. This makes an individual to be actively engaged in his community because he has a greater knowledge of internal and external environmental influences.

Psychological Empowerment involves giving workers the opportunity to control their destiny by participating in decision making. Workers are able to set personal, achievable goals and have access and control over resources that would assist them with self-mastery.

2.2 Dimensions of Psychological Empowerment

The concept of psychological empowerment was introduced by Conger and Kanungo (1988) whom argued that it is crucial to empower employees when they begin to feel powerless in the organization. They saw empowerment as a panacea for employees' feeling of powerlessness. This can be done by identifying the factors that led to the powerless feelings and then replacing them with empowerment strategies and tactics. They emphasized the importance of employees' perceptions of control and self-determination in their work roles. According to their perspective, empowerment is not just about having authority but also about feeling a sense of control and influence over one's work. Conger and Kanungo's work laid the foundation for the understanding of empowerment as a psychological state that arises from an individual's perception of their role in the organization.

Thomas and Velthouse (1990) expanded on the concept of psychological empowerment. They introduced the term "cognitive empowerment" and proposed that empowerment is not a binary state (empowered or not empowered) but rather a continuum. They introduced the concept of "meaningfulness" as a critical component of empowerment, emphasizing that employees need to find their work meaningful and purposeful for empowerment to occur. They identified four dimensions of empowerment in their review as impact, competency, meaningfulness and choice. Thomas and Velthouse's work emphasized the role of intrinsic motivation and the importance of how individuals interpret and make sense of their work experiences in the context of empowerment.

Spreitzer (1995) developed the concept of psychological empowerment further by carrying out an exploratory thematic analysis of the literature from different disciplines and narrowed all the measures used by other researchers to four main dimensions of Psychological Empowerment as: Meaning, Competence, self-determination and impact. These reflected individual's personal experience of empowerment in the organization. She observed that psychological empowerment is multifaceted and multidimensional, and is only experienced when individuals perceive these four dimensions as being present in their work role. She reiterated that these four dimensions must be present to give a full picture of empowerment. If any dimension is absent, it will reduce an individual's efficacy of empowerment.

Meaning, according to Spreitzer (1995) explains how individuals perceive their jobs as being important to the overall success of the organization. There was a synergy between individuals value and behaviour, with that of organizational expectations. Competence involves having the requisite skills, knowledge and experience to perform tasks efficiently and effectively. It encompasses the belief in one's ability and confidence about performance. Self-determination, is employees' perception of freedom in carrying out their task. That is, having the autonomy to

perform one's task. While impact is the employee's ability to influence activities in the organization.

2.3 Employee Morale

The importance of morale in organizational success has been acknowledged by several management practitioners and researchers. Morale is a concept that has gained widespread publicity and relevance in the management literature. However, it is bedeviled with different conceptualization issues. Morale is viewed from various perspectives; as an individual construct (Hardy, 2009), as a group construct (Bewley, 1998; Haddock 2010), as a group and individual concept (Rohner, 1999; Seroka 2009). These views have led to a proliferation of different measures for morale (Linz et al, 2006; Minor et al 2014; Posdakoff et al 2000, 2009).

Cantril (1944, p.234) defined morale as 'a condition of mental soundness marked by a whole hearted decisive resolution to achieve given goals, and by spirited, unyielding, coordinated efforts in the direction of these goals.' Parker and Kleemer (1961, p.96) see morale as 'the attitude held by the individual members of a group which makes them put the achievement of group goals ahead of the achievement of personal goals.' Bateson and Mead (1941, p.206) defined morale as any positive and energetic attitude towards a goal. Guba (1958, p.198) defined morale as 'a predisposition on the part of persons engaged in an enterprise to put forth extra effort in the achievement of group goals or objectives.' These definitions view morale as individual determination to achieve set goals, and putting their own personal feelings at bay in the process. Therefore, the propelling force for employees is achievement of organizational goals.

Owing to the lack of consensus to the meaning of morale, Hardy (2009) in his research, argued that morale is quite distinct from other concepts like motivation, commitment, job satisfaction, climate and culture. He developed three dimensions of measuring morale which are: affective/value, future/goal and interpersonal. These three conceptualizations differentiate morale from other concepts and situates morale as an individual construct which may be influenced by group interactions.

According to Hardy (2009), affective morale describes how individuals feel, based on the stimuli they are exposed to. Whether these stimuli have a positive or negative effect on their feelings. Future/goal dimension of morale refers to individuals conscious cognitive processing of whether events or interactions are positive or negative to their future goals, through continuous evaluation of such goals. Interpersonal dimension involves relating with others in a group or team and how cohesive that team relationship is.

In recent research to highlight the importance of morale to organizational functioning, Hardy et al (2016) identified three aspects of morale namely value, future/goal and interpersonal. The value dimension of morale is equivalent to the affective morale because it still describes employees' feelings regarding their value in the organization. Do employees believe the organization recognize their efforts and contributions as being useful in the attainment of the overall strategy of the firm? The future/goal dimension explains how employees feeling of morale remains high with their perception of future objectives being met, owing to organizations having clear strategies and objectives. Employees can track their progress through feedback, and are aware of the steps needed in achieving future goals which they are

working towards. While interpersonal relationship has to do with employee's feelings of belonging to the group/organization, a good interpersonal relationship between subordinates and superiors.

Hardy et al (2016) in their research, provided a clear understanding of the concept of morale and how strategies adopted by organizations can influence the morale of employees. Hence this research is carried out to validate their dimensions of morale on Academic staff in Bayelsa State and the influence dimensions of psychological empowerment may have on staff morale. The study therefore hypothesized as follows:

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between Meaning and Employee Morale.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between Competence and Employee Morale.

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between Self-determination and Employee Morale.

Ho4: There is no significant relationship between Impact and Employee Morale.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The cross-sectional survey research design is adopted to ascertain the association between the variables of the study. This is premised on a positivist disposition toward the social world, and the objective nature of the environment and social institutions. The population for the study comprised 1563 academic staff of the four tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The sample size was 310 employees, which was determined using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table. The structured questionnaire was adopted in the generation of data for the study. Psychological Empowerment was measured using Spreiter's (1995) 12-item instrument; while a 15-item instrument was adopted in the assessment of the employee morale, using Hardy (2009) scale. Univariate analysis was performed to examine the strength of each variable item in the questionnaire. Bivariate Analysis was carried out to assess the association between the dimensions of psychological Empowerment and employee morale using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, with the aid of SPSS. All items for the instrument for the variables, are all stated in the positive and with the 5-point Likert scaling adopted as the measurement scale in the study. Presented on the table 1 is the Cronbach Alpha coefficient (α) for the instruments.

Table 1: Cronbach Alpha Reliability Results

Constructs	Dimensions/Measures	No. of items	Alpha (α)
Psychological Empowerment	Meaning	3	0.829
	Competence	3	0.914
Employee Moral	Self-determination	3	0.848
	Impact	3	0.881
	Affective	5	0.890
	Goal	5	0.932
	Interpersonal	5	0.906

Source: Research Survey (2024)

Distributions for the Cronbach alpha for the data indicates that instruments are truly consistent in terms of operationalising related constructs, and as such, understandable and replicable. This follows the substantiality of the Cronbach alpha coefficients (where $\alpha > 0.70$) for all seven facets (dimensions and measures) for the study.

4.0 RESULTS

The outcome of the field work revealed from the 310 questionnaire copies distributed in line with the sample size of the study, only 298 copies were successfully retrieved and usable. The 298 copies were cleaned and coded into the statistical package of the social sciences (version 26) and analysed accordingly.

4.1 Univariate data distribution

The univariate distribution for the variables (psychological empowerment and employee morale) is addressed using descriptive statistical tools such as the mean and standard deviation. Summaries for the distribution are presented using the tables 2 and 3 in this section.

Table 2: Univariate data distribution for dimensions of psychological empowerment

		Meaning	Competence	Determination	Impact
N	Valid	298	298	298	298
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		4.0098	4.3078	3.8936	3.8965
Std. Deviation		.63512	.54439	.65767	.64099
Skewness		-2.030	-3.161	-1.808	-1.925
Std. Error of Skewness		.141	.141	.141	.141
Kurtosis		2.454	9.463	2.187	3.324
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.281	.281	.281	.281

Source: Research survey (2024)

The table 2 presents the summary distribution for the data on the facets for psychological empowerment, comprising meaning, competence, determination and impact. Evidence from the analysis, offers a position on the extent of manifestations for each of the variables, demonstrating their related expressions in the employees in the organisation. The findings point to the substantiality of the variables as characterising the target institutions at evident levels. The following table 3 presents the distribution for the facets of employee morale.

Table 3: Univariate data distribution for measures of employee morale

		Affective	Goal	Interpersonal
N	Valid	298	298	298
	Missing	0	0	0
Mean		4.0326	3.8763	3.9506
Std. Deviation		.57201	.59445	.62909

Skewness	-2.379	-1.461	-1.365
Std. Error of Skewness	.141	.141	.141
Kurtosis	4.761	1.813	1.342
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.281	.281	.281

Source: Research survey (2024)

Table 3 presents the summary for the data distribution for the measures of employee morale. The outcome of the analysis, identifies employees as expressing substantial levels of morale within the context of the target tertiary institutions. The evidence, indicates that majority of the workers within the institutions are affectively attached to the institution, have a focus and also considerably interpersonal in their disposition at work; thus, indicating that these factors substantially characterise the institutions of interest to this study.

4.2 Bivariate data analysis

Table 4: Relationship between meaning and employee morale

		Meaning	Affective	Goal	Interpersonal
Meaning	Pearson Correlation	1	.577**	.331**	.310**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	298	298	298	298
Affective	Pearson Correlation	.577**	1	.724**	.804**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	298	298	298	298
Goal	Pearson Correlation	.331**	.724**	1	.591**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	298	298	298	298
Interpersonal	Pearson Correlation	.310**	.804**	.591**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	298	298	298	298

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The relationship between meaning and employee morale, within the context of the tertiary institutions is revealed to be significant. This follows the observed influence of meaning on measures such as affective (R = 0.577 and P = 0.000), goal (R = 0.331 and P = 0.000) and interpersonal (R = 0.310 and P = 0.000). The result from the analysis shows that meaning offers a positive impact on employee morale and significantly predicts workers behaviour in the workplace.

Table 5: Relationship between competence and employee morale

		Competence	Affective	Goal	Interpersonal
Competence	Pearson Correlation	1	.888**	.623**	.629**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	298	298	298	298

Affective	Pearson Correlation	.888**	1	.724**	.804**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	298	298	298	298
Goal	Pearson Correlation	.623**	.724**	1	.591**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	298	298	298	298
Interpersonal	Pearson Correlation	.629**	.804**	.591**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	298	298	298	298

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The table 5 presents the result for the test on the relationship between competence and employee morale in the tertiary institutions. The evidence points to the significance of competence in advancing outcomes such as affective (R = 0.888 and P = 0.000), goal (R = 0.623 and P = 0.000) and interpersonal (R = 0.629 and P = 0.000). Evidence from the analysis, demonstrates the significance of competence as a predictor of employee morale in the tertiary institutions.

Table 6: Relationship between self-determination and employee morale

		Determination	Affective	Goal	Interpersonal
Determination	Pearson Correlation	1	.929**	.619**	.838**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	298	298	298	298
Affective	Pearson Correlation	.929**	1	.724**	.804**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	298	298	298	298
Goal	Pearson Correlation	.619**	.724**	1	.591**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	298	298	298	298
Interpersonal	Pearson Correlation	.838**	.804**	.591**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	298	298	298	298

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The outcome for the test on the relationship between self-determination and the measures of employee morale, points to the significance of determination in driving positive outcomes in affective (R = 0.929 and P = 0.000), goal (R = 0.619 and P = 0.000) and interpersonal (R = 0.838 and P = 0.000). The findings reinforce the position of self-determination as significantly influencing the morale of employees in the tertiary institutions.

Table 7: Relationship between impact and employee morale

		Impact	Affective	Goal	Interpersonal
Impact	Pearson Correlation	1	.970**	.774**	.759**

	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	298	298	298	298
Affective	Pearson Correlation	.970**	1	.724**	.804**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	298	298	298	298
Goal	Pearson Correlation	.774**	.724**	1	.591**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	298	298	298	298
Interpersonal	Pearson Correlation	.759**	.804**	.591**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	298	298	298	298

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The table 7 presents the result on the relationship between impact and employee morale. The findings from the analysis presents impact as a significant predictor of employee morale within the context of the tertiary institutions. The findings show that impact significantly influences employee morale measures such as affective ($R = 0.970$ and $P = 0.000$), goal ($R = 0.774$ and $P = 0.000$) and interpersonal ($R = 0.759$ and $P = 0.000$). Findings this way, point to the significance of impact as a predictor of employee morale.

5.0 DISCUSSION

The role of psychological empowerment in the outcome of employee morale is demonstrated through the evidence and findings of this paper. The evidence presented, affirms to the significance of dimensions such as meaning, competence, determination and impact, in driving employee morale and thus enhancing outcomes such as affective, goal and interpersonal behaviour in the organisation.

The findings of the study indicate that academic staff in Tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State believe their work is meaningful to the success of their institutions and hence influenced their affective, future goal and interpersonal morale. This is not surprising because they are seen as knowledge disseminators who are instrumental in producing graduates that meet the needs of society, and legitimate producers of knowledge (De Jong & Del Junco 2023). This shows that the organization values their contributions to knowledge. This corroborates Hardy et al (2016) contention that meaningful work boosts employee's morale. The findings support the views of Suresh and Jaleel (2015) on the imperatives of job-related activities that focus on enriching roles and ensuring they offer meaning and a sense of direction to the workers. When employees believe their work is important to the overall success of the organization, it motivates them and leads to positive attitudes (Akpolat, 2023; Bailey et al 2019; Scroggins, 2008). This also supports the assertions by scholars that employees' feeling of meaningfulness is highly amplified by positive interpersonal relationships at work, opportunities for growth and development owing to the value placed on their contributions by their organisations (Britt, et al, 2001; Sandoghdar, & Bailey 2023). Employees who see their work as being meaningful to the success of the organization, attaches great value to their contributions and influence (Rosso et al 2010).

Employees' feeling of competence have a significance influence on their affective, future goal and interpersonal dimensions of morale as shown in the findings of the study. Employees with the requisite skill and knowledge have greater confidence in their abilities and hence exhibit high morale. Studies have shown strong support of this (Arulsamy et al, 2023; Rosi & Rozke, 2022; Rosi et al, 2023). A strong interpersonal relationship in organizations directly influences employees' competency and meaning dimensions of psychological empowerment (Linden et al 2000). Employees who are competent are more confident in meeting job demands successfully and efficiently (Gunawan, & Gunawan, 2019; Sharma & Sinawi, 2020), thereby enhancing affective morale. They are able to steer a clear path for themselves towards achieving their aspirations and opportunities for growth. The career growth trajectory of academic staff in Nigerian higher institutions is a clear testament to this finding, as each stage of growth is clearly defined and requires individual's hard work in achieving them (Ajufoh et al, 2024). This clearly buttresses the fact that workers with the requisite skills, knowledge and ability have a feeling of self-efficacy which boosts their morale.

The study found strong support for the influence of self-determination on employees' morale. The findings echo the positions of previous scholars (Abdollahi & Naveh, 2011; Dobre, 2013; Mbugua et al, 2014) on the imperatives of support and relative employee autonomy, particularly, with regard to their functionality, in reinforcing their affective attachments. These, as Shazia et al (2010) noted, are critical to motivating the worker and increasing their morale in the organisation. Employees who have autonomy and freedom in performing their tasks and responsibilities exhibit higher levels of morale in their organizations. Studies (Lodisso, 2019; McKnight et al, 2001) have identified strong interpersonal relationship between employees and management as a percussor of high employee morale. Workers who believe they have freedom and control in their work processes are able to set challenging goals for themselves. Achieving these goals increases their self-confidence, improves their interpersonal relationship in the organizations. This in turn breeds collaborations and reduces competition in higher institutions.

The impact dimension of psychological empowerment positively influences affective states, future goal-setting, and interpersonal morale by fostering a sense of significance and control over outcomes. The study findings showed that when employees feel empowered in this way, they are more likely to experience emotional satisfaction, pursue challenging objectives, and contribute positively to the social fabric of their institution. Academic staff believe they can influence outcomes at work and their actions make a difference. This breeds a sense of satisfaction that their contributions at work are recognized. Employees are able to align personal growth with organizational success, enhancing team morale, collective achievement, support and collaboration. Studies (Mambula et al, 2021; Research Clue, 2013) have found strong support for employees' positive states when they believe their work contributions influence organizational processes.

6.0 CONCLUSION

As academic institutions face ever-evolving challenges and demands, nurturing the psychological empowerment of academic staff emerges as a critical element in sustaining employee morale and overall institutional success. By recognizing and addressing the factors that contribute to empowerment, university leaders can create an environment where academic staff thrive, contributing their best to advance the institution's mission and shape the future of

education. This study, has affirmed that dimensions of psychological empowerment, play crucial roles in the affective, goal and interpersonal dispositions of the employees of tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State. Practices or actions that emphasize and reinforce psychological empowerment within the context in the tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State, influence the behaviour of the employees, leading to a boost in their morale and as such their attachment and focus in the achievement of functional objectives in the organisation.

6.1 Implications for Academic Institutions:

Understanding the impact of psychological empowerment on employee morale can help academic institutions implement effective strategies to enhance job satisfaction and retention rates among academic staff. By promoting a culture of empowerment, universities can foster an environment that encourages creativity, innovation, and collaboration among their academic workforce. This, in turn, can lead to higher student satisfaction, increased research productivity, greater institutional success and meeting the employment need of a country.

Based on the finding that the psychological empowerment dimensions of meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact strongly influence employees' affective states, future goals, and interpersonal morale, higher educational institutions should adopt several key strategies to enhance faculty and staff experiences. These recommendations are designed to foster a positive organizational climate, improve job satisfaction, and drive long-term institutional success.

Ensure that employees understand how their individual roles contribute to the broader mission and values of the institution. This creates a sense of purpose and meaningful engagement. Encourage employees to see the personal and professional significance of their work. This can be done through mentorship programs, recognition of academic and non-academic achievements, and career development initiatives. When management include faculty and staff in decision making, they will feel a stronger connection to the organization.

Regular professional development, training, seminars and workshops enables employees build skills and stay abreast with current trends in their profession which enhances their competence and confidence in abilities. Regular, constructive feedback through appraisals that focuses on strengths and areas for growth helps academic feel competent and supported.

By giving employees, the autonomy to make decisions related to their work and providing flexible work arrangements (e.g., flexible hours, remote work options) to accommodate their personal needs will make them exhibit higher levels of morale. When management allow departments, faculty, and staff to have greater control over decisions that directly affect their work, it will foster sense of self-determination. Regularly share how employees' efforts contribute to the success of the institution, such as student outcomes, research advancements, or community engagement, reinforcing their impact. Create transparent promotion and development paths for faculty and staff, by judiciously following the institutions conditions of service for staff.

Management should build a culture that celebrates diversity and inclusivity, making every employee feel respected and valued. This will increase mutual respect and enhance interpersonal dynamics, thus leading to higher levels of employee morale.

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