

WORKPLACE TEAM MANAGEMENT AND EMPLOYEE BONDING OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN PORT HARCOURT, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT

The study examines workplace team management and employee bonding of tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The cross sectional survey design was used in the study. The targeted population comprised 190 employees drawn from tertiary institutions in Rivers State whose study sample was derived through census based on the focus of the study. Data was analyzed and results presented in tables showing the mean and standard deviation. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient. The findings revealed a positive and significant relationship between workplace team management and employee bonding using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation tool at a 95% confidence interval. The study concludes that Workplace Team Management: Group Task, Group Reward, Committee System and Wheel Network Communication significantly influences employee workplace team management of tertiary institutions. It was therefore recommended that the leadership of tertiary institutions should use the tested attributes of workplace team management in the study to enhance bonding process of staff members of tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

KEYWORDS: Workplace Team Management, Group Task, Group Reward, Committee System, Wheel Network Communication, Collaboration, Workplace Citizenship

INTRODUCTION

The use of teams has spread rapidly arising from the belief that the development of strong and effective production and managerial teams will lead to the potential for higher performance and increased job satisfaction. There are synergies to be gained from greater levels of involvement in the workforce. The team builder leads the team towards cohesiveness and productivity. A team takes on a life of its own and has to be regularly nurtured and maintained like individual employees. In a team-oriented environment, individuals contribute to the overall success of the organization. They work with other members of the organization to produce these results. While they have specific job functions and belong to specific departments, they are unified with other members to accomplish the overall objectives. The bigger picture drives their actions; and their functions exist to serve the bigger picture. Teamwork is fostered by respecting, encouraging, enthusing and caring for people, rather than exploiting or dictating to them. (Heap 2006) affirms that the crux of the team building approach is love and spirituality which results in mutual respect, compassion, and humanity to work. People working for each other in teams are a more powerful force than skills, processes, and policies, annual appraisals, management-by-objectives etc. Teams usually become great teams when they decide to do it for themselves. According to Dianna (2006), fostering teamwork involves creating a work culture that values collaboration; where people understand and believe that thinking, planning, decisions and actions are better when done cooperatively. Creating a culture of teamwork is dependent on management communicating clearly the expectation that teamwork and collaboration are expected; modelling teamwork in their interaction with each other and the rest of the organization; members talking about and identifying the value of a teamwork culture; rewarding and recognizing teamwork; people discussions within the company emphasizing teamwork and the performance management system emphasizing and valuing teamwork.

Theoretical Foundation

Human Relations Theory by Elton Mayo; which clearly stated the need for a clear understanding of the importance of employees' attitudes, capacity and abilities in terms of organizational effectiveness. This theory sought for a more enlightened treatment of organizational employees'. It is centred on the idea that employees' need companionship and to have a sense of belonging and seek satisfaction in the social relationships that they form within the organization. According to Jaja & Zeb-Obipi (2005), the most popular work under this school of thought was Elton Mayo's Hawthorn Studies, the findings from that study was that groups of employees' quickly become self-governing teams and, individual and social processes play a pivotal role in shaping employees' attitude and behaviour at work, there is a stronger relation between the quality of human relations and productivity; when fully involved in effective consultation between leaders and employees' in decisions which affect employees', they become highly committed to the management and organizational goals.

Group Task

A group is the integration of two or more individuals who are connected to each other through social relationships. Some important things to have in the group are communication, influence, interaction, interdependence, interrelation, shared identification, shared tasks and goals, structure and system (Forsyth, 2006). A study group is essentially all group efforts to help each other learn optimally. Thus there are at least four important things that must be considered for the effort of cooperative learning to function, either as motivation, social cohesion, development and cognitive elaboration. All the four important things should be a mutually reinforcing cohesion when learning takes place. In the first aspect, in view of Slavin (2014), motivational list found a group bonding will help achieve the group's performance and ultimately success will be the success of the group together and motivate learners to be more persistent again in optimizing their performance in the group.

Group Reward

Reward system that's organized will motivate and energize employees because it recognizes the achievements of employees. Reward system is one among the strategies employed by Human Resource Managers for attracting and retaining suitable employees also as facilitating them to enhance their performance in a corporation. Rewarding employees is related to the motivation of the workforce of organization for better performance. Reward system implemented by organization will influence employees' behaviour and attitude towards their job if the rewards satisfy their needs and help them to succeed in their personal goals. A reward is something's that organization offers to employees in response to their contributions and performance which is additionally something that's desired by the workers. Armstrong (2012) stated that reward are some things that recognizes a person's contribution. Reward systems are identified together of the foremost effective factors to maximize employees' productivity (Armstrong 2013). The reward system in an organisation may be a programme that's developed to supply appreciation for top performers and supply incentive for low performers to extend their performance. The reward system in an organisation may be a programme that's developed to supply appreciation for top performers and supply incentive for low performers to extend their performance. The purpose of the reward system according Griffin and Moorhead (2013) is to "attract, retain, and motivate qualified employees".

Committee System

The utilization of committee system promote communication and acceptance of decision reached in the school. Utilization is the systematic and judicious use of a given phenomenon, resources or strategy to achieve set objectives in an effective manner. Committee system provides opportunity for obtaining and sharing of necessary information among staff and students, and members of the committee who participate actively in making decisions feel a sense of belongingness necessary to implement the decisions (Alabi, Mustapha & Abdulkareem, 2012). In the same vein, Ezeigbo (2016) pointed out that committee system is intended to enhance managerial accountability and to maintain the democratic procedures for representation of views. In the view of Ogbogu (2013), committee in educational institutions provides effective advisory services to the management and also improves the decision making process. The existing committees in secondary schools include; disciplinary committee, school plant maintenance committee, sport committee, staff welfare committee and examination committee among others. Similar to this, Alabi, Mustapha & Abdulkareem (2012) reported that there is existence of disciplinary committee, staff welfare committee, and instructional supervision committee and school maintenance committee in secondary schools.

Wheel Network Communication

Organizational communication can be transmitted in a number of directions: downward, upward, horizontally, diagonally, and through the grapevine. These communications can be formal or informal; in either case, the actual pattern and flow of communication connecting senders and receivers are called communication networks. Because this system contains all the communication of the organization, these networks have a pervasive influence on the behavior of individuals functioning within them. Network patterns are derived from laboratory experiments in which the structure of the groupings can be manipulated by the experimenter (Hollingshead, 2012). The major difference among the networks is the degree to which they are centralized or decentralized (Ramos, 2012). Each network pattern is discussed in turn. The wheel network, a two-level hierarchy, is the most structured and centralized of the patterns because each member can communicate with only one other person. For example, a superintendent of schools and those who are his immediate subordinates (assistant superintendent for business, instruction, personnel, and assistant to the superintendent), probably form a wheel network.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study adopted census survey method where all 190 employees drawn from tertiary institutions in Port Harcourt were surveyed. Thus, 190 employees were studied. The study used structured questionnaire as a means of generating primary data from the respondents of the study. Structured questionnaire was used to enable the researcher find out the attitude, knowledge and feelings of respondents on questions asked with respect to the study variables in order to enable the study derived very relevant responses. To ensure the internal reliability, the survey instrument was assessed by means of Cronbach alpha coefficient, using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). Hence, only the items that returned alpha values of 0.7 and above were considered. Cronbach's alpha was used for the coefficient of reliability (or consistency). To empirically evaluate the hypothesized relationships, the spearman's rank order of correlation coefficient (RHO) was adopted. The multivariate analysis which examines the moderating effect of leadership on workplace team management and employee bonding of tertiary institutions in Rivers State was tested using the partial

correlation techniques at 95% confidence interval. The results were presented with the help of SPSS version 23.0 software.

Table 1 Reliability Coefficients of Variable Measures

S/No	Dimensions/Measures of the study variable	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha	Comment
1	Group Task	4	0.892	Reliable
2	Group Reward	4	0.763	Reliable
3	Committee System	4	0.761	Reliable
4	Wheel Network Communication	4	0.789	Reliable
5	Collaboration	4	0.733	Reliable
6	Workplace Citizenship	4	0.739	Reliable
7	Leadership	4	0.759	Reliable
	Overall		0.792	Reliable

Source: SPSS Output, 2023

Scatter graph is one of the techniques used in deciding whether a bivariate relationship does exist between interval scaled variables. In a bid to determine the existence and trend of this relationship, plotted scatter diagram is presented in Figure 1 below where Workplace Team Management is plotted on the X axis and Employee Bonding as the criterion variable is on the Y axis.

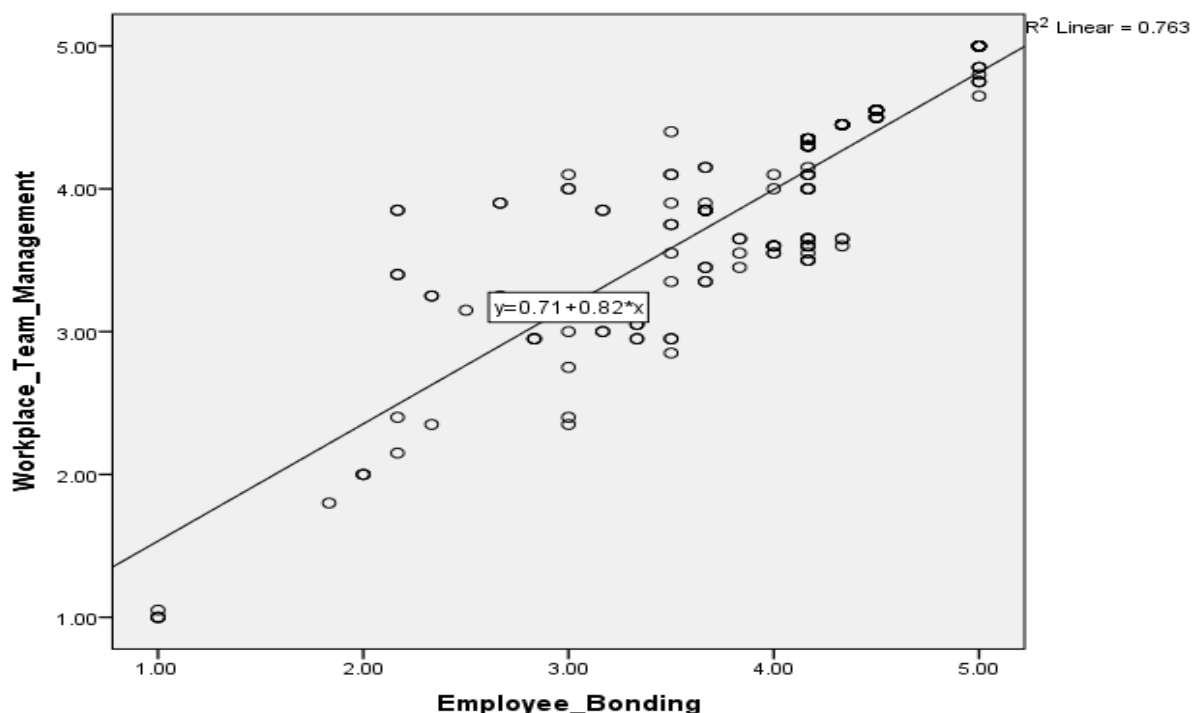


Fig 1: Scatter Graph for the Relationship between Workplace Team Management and Employee bonding

The scatter plot graph shows at R2 linear value of (0.763) depicting a strong viable and positive relationship between the two constructs. The implication is that an increase in workplace team management simultaneously brings about an increase in the level of employee bonding.

RESULTS

The study proposed nine research hypotheses to seek explanations for any existing relationship between workplace team management and employee bonding of tertiary institutions as well as the moderating effect of leadership in such relationship. The Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient was calculated using the SPSS 23.0 version to establish the relationship among the empirical referents of the predictor variable and the measures of the criterion variable. Correlation coefficients can range from -1.00 to +1.00. The value of -1.00 represents a perfect negative correlation while the value of +1.00 represents a perfect positive correlation. A value of 0.00 represents a lack of correlation. In testing hypotheses one to nine, the following rules were upheld in accepting or rejecting our alternate hypotheses: all the coefficient values that indicated levels of significance (* or **) as calculated using SPSS were accepted and therefore our alternate hypotheses rejected; when no significance is indicated in the coefficient r value, we reject our alternate hypotheses. Our confidence interval was set at the 0.05 (two tailed) level of significance to test the statistical significance of the data in this study. Table 2 below shows the result of correlation matrix obtained for workplace team management and employee bonding. Also displayed in the table is the statistical test of significance (p - value), which makes us able to generalize our findings to the study population.

Table 2: Correlation matrix for Group Task and Employee Bonding measures

			Group Task	Collaboration	Workplace Citizenship
Spearman's rho	Group Task	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.617**	.961**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		N	165	165	165
	Collaboration	Correlation Coefficient	.617**	1.000	.697**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		N	165	165	165
	Workplace Citizenship	Correlation Coefficient	.961**	.697**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
		N	165	165	165

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

Source: SPSS Output, 2023

The correlation coefficient (rho) result in table 2 was used to answer research question 1. Table 2 shows a Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (rho) of 0.617 on the relationship between group task and collaboration. This value implies that a strong relationship exists between the variables. The direction of the relationship indicates that the correlation is positive; implying that an increase in group task was as a result of the adoption

of collaboration. Therefore, there is a strong positive correlation between group task and collaboration of tertiary institutions in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Similarly, Table 2 shows a Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (ρ) of 0.961 on the relationship between group task and workplace citizenship. This value implies that a very strong relationship exists between the variables. The direction of the relationship indicates that the correlation is positive; implying that an increase in group task was as a result of the adoption of workplace citizenship. Therefore, there is a very strong positive correlation between group task and workplace citizenship of tertiary institutions in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Table 3: Correlation matrix for Group Reward and Employee Bonding measures

			Group Reward	Collaboration	Workplace Citizenship
Spearman's rho	Group Reward	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.527**	.846**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		N	165	165	165
	Collaboration	Correlation Coefficient	.527**	1.000	.697**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		N	165	165	165
	Workplace Citizenship	Correlation Coefficient	.846**	.697**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
		N	165	165	165

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

Source: SPSS Output version 23.0

The correlation coefficient (rho) result in table 3 was used to answer research question 2. Table 3 shows a Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (rho) of 0.527 on the relationship between group reward and collaboration. This value implies that a moderate relationship exists between the variables. The direction of the relationship indicates that the correlation is positive; implying that an increase in group reward was as a result of the adoption of collaboration. Therefore, there is a moderate positive correlation between group reward and collaboration of tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Similarly, Table 3 shows a Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (rho) of 0.846 on the relationship between group reward and workplace citizenship. This value implies that a very strong relationship exists between the variables. The direction of the relationship indicates that the correlation is positive; implying that an increase in group reward was as a result of the adoption of workplace citizenship. Therefore, there is a very strong positive correlation between group reward and workplace citizenship of tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Table 4: Correlation matrix between Committee System and Employee Bonding Measures

			Committee System	Collaboration	Workplace Citizenship
Spearman's rho	Committee System	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.562**	.830**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		N	165	165	165
	Collaboration	Correlation Coefficient	.562**	1.000	.697**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		N	165	165	165
	Workplace Citizenship	Correlation Coefficient	.830**	.697**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
		N	165	165	165

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

Source: SPSS Output version 23.0

The correlation coefficient (rho) result in table 4 was used to answer research question 3. Table 4 shows a Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (rho) of 0.562 on the relationship between committee system and collaboration. This value implies that a moderate relationship exists between the variables. The direction of the relationship indicates that the correlation is positive; implying that an increase in committee system was as a result of the adoption of collaboration. Therefore, there is a moderate positive correlation between committee system and collaboration of tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Similarly, Table 4 shows a Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (rho) of 0.830 on the relationship between committee system and workplace citizenship. This value implies that a very strong relationship exists between the variables. The direction of the relationship indicates that the correlation is positive; implying that an increase in committee system was as a result of the adoption of workplace citizenship. Therefore, there is a very strong positive correlation between committee system and workplace citizenship of tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Table 5: Correlation matrix between Wheel Network Communication and Employee Bonding Measures

			Wheel Network Communicati on	Collaborati on	Workplac e Citizenshi p
Spearman's rho	Wheel Network Communication	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.554**	.870**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		N	165	165	165
	Collaboration	Correlation Coefficient	.554**	1.000	.697**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		N	165	165	165
	Workplace Citizenship	Correlation Coefficient	.870**	.697**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
		N	165	165	165

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

Source: SPSS Output version 23.0

The correlation coefficient (rho) result in table 5 was used to answer research question 3. Table 5 shows a Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (rho) of 0.554 on the relationship between wheel network communication and collaboration. This value implies that a moderate relationship exists between the variables. The direction of the relationship indicates that the correlation is positive; implying that an increase in wheel network communication was as a result of the adoption of collaboration. Therefore, there is a moderate positive correlation between wheel network communication and collaboration of tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Similarly, Table 5 shows a Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (rho) of 0.870 on the relationship between wheel network communication and workplace citizenship. This value implies that a very strong relationship exists between the variables. The direction of the relationship indicates that the correlation is positive; implying that an increase in wheel network communication was as a result of the adoption of workplace citizenship. Therefore, there is a very strong positive correlation between wheel network communication and workplace citizenship of tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Therefore, to enable us accept or reject hypotheses 7 and 8 as well as generalize our findings to the study population the p- value was used as shown below: Similarly displayed in the table 5 is the statistical test of significance (p-value) which makes possible the generalization of our findings to the study population. From the result obtained from table 5, the sig- calculated is less than significant level ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$). Therefore, based on this finding the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between wheel network communication and collaboration of tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Also displayed in the table 5 is the statistical test of significance (p-value) which makes possible the generalization of our findings to the study population. From the result obtained from table 5, the sig- calculated is less than significant level ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$). Therefore, based on this finding, the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between wheel network communication and workplace citizenship of tertiary institutions in Rivers

State. Therefore, the results for the third set of hypotheses with regards to the relationship between market innovation capability and performance measures are stated as follows:

- i. There is a positive significant relationship between wheel network communication and collaboration of tertiary institutions in Rivers State.
- ii. There is a strong positive significant relationship between wheel network communication and workplace citizenship of tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Table 6: Moderating Effect of Leadership

Control Variables			Work Teams Management	Employee Bonding	Leadership p
-none ^a	Work Teams Management	Correlation	1.000	.827	.614
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		Df	0	89	89
	Employee Bonding	Correlation	.827	1.000	.613
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		Df	163	0	163
Leadership	Leadership	Correlation	.614	.613	1.000
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
		Df	163	163	0
	Work Teams Management	Correlation	1.000	.723	
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.000	
		Df	0	162	
Employee Bonding	Correlation	.723	1.000		
	Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.		
	Df	163	0		

a. Cells contain zero-order (Pearson) correlations.

Source: SPSS Output version 23.0

From a critical look at the zero partial correlation, we found that the relationship both between workplace team management and employee bonding are positively correlated with leadership, as the control variable. Removing the effect of this control variable reduced the correlation between the other two variables to be 0.723 and significant at $\alpha = 0.05$. Since the difference between the zero-order correlation and the controlled correlation ($0.827 - 0.723 = 0.104 > 0.01$); hence from the decision rule, there is no significant difference and thus the null hypothesis is accepted and upheld. Therefore, it is concluded that leadership significantly moderate the relationship between workplace team management and employee bonding of tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

FINDINGS

This study examined the relationship between workplace team management and employee bonding of tertiary institutions in Rivers State. This finding supports the review by Fajana (2002) who asserted that teamwork is an integration of resources and inputs working in harmony to achieve organisational goals, where roles are prescribed for every organisation

member, challenges are equally faced and incremental improvements are sought continually. This study examined the relationship between group reward and employee bonding of tertiary institutions in Rivers State. This is consistent with findings from a similar study by Armstrong (2012) who stated that reward system that's organized will motivate and energize employees because it recognizes the achievements of employees. Reward system is one among the strategies employed by Human Resource Managers for attracting and retaining suitable employees also as facilitating them to enhance their performance in a corporation. Rewarding employees is related to the motivation of the workforce of organization for better performance. Reward system implemented by organization will influence employees' behaviour and attitude towards their job if the rewards satisfy their needs and help them to succeed in their personal goals. A reward is something's that organization offers to employees in response to their contributions and performance which is additionally something that's desired by the workers.

This finding reinforces views by Ogbomida, Obano & Emmanuel, 2013 who explained that the essence of committee system is to promote participatory decision making, enhance teambuilding, foster mutual healthy interpersonal relationship, relieve school administrators of workload, reduce rumor mongering and enhance accountability. It equally fosters a sense of belonging and motivates individuals' total commitment to the aspirations and goals of the organization. The utilization of committee system promote communication and acceptance of decision reached in the school. Utilization is the systematic and judicious use of a given phenomenon, resources or strategy to achieve set objectives in an effective manner. Committee system provides opportunity for obtaining and sharing of necessary information among staff and students, and members of the committee who participate actively in making decisions feel a sense of belongingness necessary to implement the decisions. The findings of the study support the view of Ogbogu (2013) who asserts that committee in educational institutions provides effective advisory services to the management and also improves the decision making process. The existing committees in secondary schools include; disciplinary committee, school plant maintenance committee, sport committee, staff welfare committee and examination committee among others. Similar to this, Alabi, Mustapha & Abdulkareem (2012) reported that there is existence of disciplinary committee, staff welfare committee, and instructional supervision committee and school maintenance committee in secondary schools.

This is consistent with findings from a similar study by Ramos (2012) who stated that the wheel network, a two-level hierarchy, is the most structured and centralized of the patterns because each member can communicate with only one other person. For example, a superintendent of schools and those who are his immediate subordinates (assistant superintendent for business, instruction, personnel, and assistant to the superintendent), probably form a wheel network. The superintendent is A, and his assistant superintendents are B, C, D, and E, respectively. The four subordinates send information to in Tertiary institutions in Rivers State the superintendent, and the superintendent sends that information back to them, usually in the form of decisions. The chain network ranks next highest in centralization. Only two people communicate with one another, and they in turn have only one person to whom they communicate. Information is generally sent through such a network in relay fashion. A typical chain network would be one in which a teacher (B) reports to the department head (C), who in turn reports to the principal (A), who reports to the superintendent (D). Another example is the grapevine through which information passes

throughout a school building or district between different departments and organizational levels. Our study also propagates the review of Hollingshead (2012) who was of the opinion that organizational communication can be transmitted in a number of directions: downward, upward, horizontally, diagonally, and through the grapevine. The results reveal that leadership significantly moderate the relationship between workplace team management and employee bonding of tertiary institutions in Rivers State. This implies that good leadership encourages workplace team management and employee bonding of tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The findings agree with Adair (2002) who explained that leadership is the ability to persuade employees to seek defined objectives happily. It is the human factor which binds a group together and to improve their level of performance as well as to direct them towards goal achievement. From the above comments, it does suggest that leadership plays a pivotal role in influencing workplace team management and employee bonding. Remarkably, an organization's leadership defines the nature of the entire firm, as such, an organization that has good leadership in place; it impacts the engagement and bonding of employees' positively. Conversely, any leadership that does not support workplace team management and employee bonding will discourage employees' from being engaged. A firm's leadership can moderate the relationship between workplace team management and the bond between employees. An organization's leadership style promotes employee bonding, employee engagement, employee commitment and all these will drive organizational productivity, profit share, happy and motivated workforce, who will work assiduously to attain organizational objectives.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, effective workplace team management and employee bonding play pivotal roles in fostering a positive and productive work environment. Through the establishment of cohesive teams and strong interpersonal connections, organizations can unlock a wealth of benefits that contribute to overall success and growth. Employee bonding cultivates a sense of belonging and loyalty among the workforce. Specifically, the study concludes that group task positively enhances employee bonding of tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Also, group reward positively enhances employee bonding of tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Furthermore, committee system positively enhances employee bonding of tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Likewise, wheel network communication positively enhances employee bonding of tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Finally, leadership significantly moderates the relationship between workplace team management and employee bonding of tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Based on the discussion and conclusion above, the following recommendations are hereby made:

- i. Management of tertiary institution should promote cross-departmental collaboration by creating opportunities for employees from different departments to work together on projects or initiatives.
- ii. Management of tertiary institution should ensure that group rewards are inclusive and accessible to all team members.
- iii. Management of tertiary institution should create cross-functional committees that bring together employees from different departments and levels within the organization.
- iv. Management of tertiary institution should encourage a culture of open communication within the wheel network structure.

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