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## Team-Based Family Culture and Employee Involvement in the Nigerian Manufacturing Firms

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### **Abstract**

*This paper examined the relationship between team-based family culture and employee involvement in the Nigerian manufacturing firms. The research design method employed is the survey method. The simple random sampling technique was utilized. A sample size of 292 was determined using Taro Yemen's formula. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to test the postulated hypotheses. The paper revealed that a positive and significant correlation exists between team-based family culture and participation, empowerment, as well as with teamwork. The study concludes that team-based family culture correlate significantly with employee involvement in manufacturing firms. The paper identified members support, interdependency, solidarity and co-cooperativeness as indicators of team-based family culture. The paper concludes that team-based family culture create in the employees cohesiveness and commitment to teamwork needed to bring about innovativeness and creativities that is highly needed to build competitive advantage by organizations, and also the willingness to assist team members and others when need arise. It recommends that, organizations should put in place structures that encourage team solidarity and cooperativeness that make her employees develop sense of family in their organizations. In addition, organizations should encourage interdependence and member's support so as to make their employees develop the willingness to step in to assist others when the need arises even in the most selfless manner. Moreover, organizations should encourage collaboration among team members in order to create harmonious working relations among organizations members, which drive successful effective employee involvement, among others.*

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**Keywords:** *Team-based family culture, employee involvement, participation, empowerment, organizational competitive advantage.*

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### **1. Introduction**

Across the globe, the need for improved organizational productivity has brought about renewed pressures on managements to intensify its efforts to develop survival strategies in order to contain the intense pressures of local and foreign competition. Today, managers understand that their organizations' successes require more than conventional strategies, and it is no longer acceptable to treat corporate threats and challenges with kid's gloves. Managers are therefore seriously developing strategies which are capable of empowering their organizations to gain competitive advantage over their rivals.

Without doubt, a team-based structure in organizations' processes that make employees support each other, collaborate and have a sense of family with fellow employees and the organization is vital to pull every organization's member in the same direction to ensure the attainment of organizational goals and objectives. By developing a team approach to

business, organizations can leverage on the collective efforts and bonding of employees to build competitive advantage in the market place (Obiekwe, 2017). When an employee sees his or her team or department as a family, he becomes more committed and loyal to the organization and exerts effort to make her succeed. Team-based family culture is one of the dimensions of organizational family culture identified by Obiekwe (2017). Other measures include firm-based family culture and consultative family culture (Obiekwe, 2017; and Obiekwe, 2018).

Team-based family culture refers to the values shared at team level that give an organizational member a sense of family in the team, and is aimed toward creating a harmonious working relationship among team members in order to utilize their collective commitment and effort to achieve organizational effectiveness and improved performance. Indicators of team-based culture include caring about fellow worker, recognition and reward of team members, members support, interdependency, team solidarity and co-cooperativeness (Obiekwe, 2017; and Obiekwe, 2018).

Employee involvement is a process by which employees are empowered to participate in firm processes as to achieve individual and organizational efficiency and performance” (Sofijanova & Zabijakin–Chatleska, 2013). Employee involvement is aimed at encouraging the participation of employee in organizations decisions in order to solve problems, and increase employee development at work. Management that cannot involve their employees on certain matters concerning their work process at their levels is indirectly planning for the failure and extinction of their organizations. Managers also seek to involve employees with the requisite skills, knowledge and competency as they represent the most essential ingredient for the survival and in building highly successful and effective organizations, (Obiekwe, 2012; Oforegbunam & Okorafor 2010). Accordingly, employees who are great skillful, knowledgeable, and competent are in high demand by organizations

Literature indicates that employee involvement is related to improved organizational performance (Oparanma & Obiekwe, 2017; Markos & Sridevi, 2010), increase in commitment (Heathfield, 2016), and improve job satisfaction, intent to stay and increased job productivity (Mishra, Arya, Kumari & Talreja, 2013), as well as developing of competitive edge over competitors.

The aim of this paper is to empirically examine the relationship between team-based family culture and employee involvement in Nigerian manufacturing firms. The specific objectives are; (1) To examine the relationship between team-based family culture and employee participation (2) To examine the relationship between team-based family culture and empowerment. (3) To examine the relationship between team-based family and teamwork

The research questions could be read off from these and the suggested hypotheses stated thus:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between team-based family culture and participation in manufacturing industry in Nigeria.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between team-based family culture and participation in manufacturing industry in Nigeria.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between team-based family culture and teamwork in the manufacturing industry in Nigeria.

## 2. Literature Review

### Concept of Team-Based Family Culture

Business institutions always tend to share some specific values, ideas, attitude and assumptions which will help them achieve their objectives. Embracing and adopting a family-

like approach to business that emphasis support, trust, inter-dependence, openness and commitment in order to build competitive advantages is therefore essential. Team-based family culture is one of the dimensions of organizational family culture (OFC). Organizational family culture is defined as the values, norms, mindset, shared beliefs, and attitude involving a group of people in an organization seeing and relating to one another as a family (Obiekwe, 2017). Organizational family culture is based on the recognition that an employee, seeing him or herself as a member of an organization, will pursue and promote the interest and well-being of the organization and its members. Organizational family culture thus aims at promoting the spirit of community which fosters and enhances teamwork, makes members believe that they are connected to each other, creates a deeper sense of connection among the employees by way of support, genuine caring, and expression of one's mind (Obiekwe, 2018).

Team-based family culture refers to values shared at team level that give organizations' members a sense of family in the team (Obiekwe, 2017). This type of culture operates at the team or departmental level in an organization, and aims at creating a harmonious working relationship among team members in order to achieve organizational effectiveness and efficiency. In this type of culture, there is employee's willingness to step in to assist others when the need arises, or even volunteering to "help before they are asked" even in the most selfless manner, as employees share a value of care and look after each other (Goofee and Jones, 1998).

Indicators of team-based culture include caring about fellow workers, recognition and reward of team members, members support, interdependency, team solidarity and cooperativeness. Companies that operate a team-based culture always cross-trains its employees so that they can be are able to help other members when the need arises (Obiekwe, 2017; and 2018). Heathfield (2016) states that "in an effective team culture, there is collaboration which makes team members understand where the work of their team fits in the total framework of the organizations' operational and strategic goals.

A team-based family culture enhances employees attitude in their teams and manifest in openness, support, trust, information sharing, and cohesiveness that allow organizations develop needed ideas, new thought patterns, and becomes innovative. To ensure a team-oriented culture, Gleeson (2013) has recommended focus on communication, instilling of loyalty and encouraging collaboration.

### **Concept of Employee Involvement**

No organization can succeed without quality employees as they are the engine block for organizational effectiveness (Oforegbunam & Okorafor, 2010). Today, the quality of employees is what distinguishes an organization from another, and not their products, financial base, service establishment, process or even their secret elements. Employee involvement therefore is vital.

Employee involvement is a management initiative concerned with how employees can be best and most appropriately engaged to participate in organizational processes in order to contribute to improvement in the success of their organizations (Heathfield, 2016). It is management process which allows employees to participate in decision making as well as their empowerment in order to utilize their abilities to achieve improved performance (Sofijanovna & Zabijakin–Chatleska, 2013). The need to let employees understand the importance of continuous creativity and need to make them committed to their work in new

and improved ways has added to the growing concern for employee involvement (Kingir and Mesci, 2010; Singh, 2009).

Employee involvement helps to foster trust and a shared commitment to an organizations objective (Kumari & Kumari, 2014), brings about employee receptiveness to changes, leads to creativity and innovativeness, as well as successful implementation of decisions (Muindi, 2011), increase job satisfaction, commitment and motivation, creativity, improve self-worth, empowerment (Carson et al, 1995), reduced turnover and increase productivity (Grates, 2009). It also improves organizations performance (Sofijanovna & Zabijakin–Chatleska, 2013, Oparanma & Obiekwe, 2017), and decisions quality and willingness to accept authority. In addition, it also helps management to identify employees with good organizational qualities (Noah, 2008). Sofijanovna & Zabijakin–Chatleska (2013) identify participation, empowerment and self-managed teams as the key measures of employee’s involvement.

**Employee Participation:** Participation is the direct involvement of employees in decisions that affect their immediate work or job. It is initiative or process in which opportunities are given to employees to partake in decisions, relating to their work or discuss issues to influence managerial decisions. Luthans (2005) noted that the participation of employee is influenced by reasons such as individual personal abilities, experience and type of the duty to be carried out. Indicators of employee participation in organizations are joint consultations, board representation, and committee membership, joint goal and target setting, among others (Apostoluo, 2000; Obiekwe, 2017).

Employee participation in decision-making makes the implementation of decision very easy and successful as employees see those decisions as their own decisions. It also ensures quality, enhances harmony in the organization, improves staff morale, instills a sense of pride and self-esteem and increases employee’s motivations (Rice, 1987; Parshiadis 1987).

**Employee empowerment:** This refers to managerial process aimed at giving employees greater freedom, autonomy and self-control in decision making over their work (Sofijanovna & Zabijakin–Chatleska, 2013). In the view of Apostolou (2000) empowerment refers to the power the employees have to take decisions. Major indices of empowerment include; delegation, training and development, and provision of feedback (Nwachukwu, 2006; Fapohunda, 2013).

According to Siami & Gorji (2011), delegation of authority is strongly correlated with employee performance. It also enables employees to contribute to decision-making process and think actively all time to meet rising challenges that may arise in their work process. Training refers to all activities designed to provide learners with skills and knowledge require for execution of tasks. Improvement of trainee quality, formulation of objectives for different needs and ways of achieving it, are the main objective training and development, skill development, attitude modification and education are the major objectives of training and development (Olaniyan and Ojo, 2008;Nwachukwu, 2006). Nwaeke and Obiekwe (2017) affirms that any organization that put great emphasis on employee training and development is directly planning for long term survival and acquisition of competitive edge over her rivals. This is because, training serve as a major way of empowering employees to acquire requisite high level human capital.

Feedback is essential if an employee must know how he/she is performing in the organization, and if he must appreciate his involvement. When an employee is appraised timely and told where he has performed well or where improvement of effort and abilities are

needed in his services and job duties, he quickly learns and takes necessary corrections to improve in his works. Effective and timely information feedback generates in employees a high sense of support and direction which enables an employee to acquire the right knowledge which can be plough back to make better decision in work processes.

**Teamwork:** A team is a group of people who work interdependently to solve problems or accomplish tasks for which they were setup for. Teamwork is one of the most important ways of employee involvement. Teamwork is an effective way of reducing organizational hierarchy and bringing diverse level of knowledge from employees of same or different level to help an organization generate needful diverse knowledge. Major indices of teamwork include; collaboration, information sharing, shared support and collective responsibility (Fapohunda, 2013; Khattak et al, 2013). Teams depend on the performance of individual members to do great works. Team performance depends on individual member's effort and collective work products (Earley, 1993). Organizations that need improvement and effectiveness on employee involvement process always see teamwork as potential device.

### 3. Methodology

The research design adopted in this paper is the quasi-experimental research design which is also known as survey method. The population consists of employees of selected five manufacturing firms operating in Port Harcourt Rivers State, Nigeria. The total population size of the five selected firms was 1074 employees. The simple random sampling technique was used for the selection of the study respondents. A sample size of 292 employees was selected from five manufacturing firm with a total population of 1074 employees using the Taro Yemen's formula. Out of the 292 copies of the questionnaire distributed for this study, 252 (86.3%) were successfully retrieved. However, 30 were invalidated while 222 (76.02%) copies were duly certified valid for the study analysis. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to test the postulated hypotheses computed using the SPSS at 0.05 level of significance.

**Table 1 showing distribution of the Study Population/ Questionnaire Response Rate**

S/ N	Manufacturing Firms	No. of Employees	Questionnaire Administered/ Sample Size	Questionnaire Retrieved	Number Invalid	Number Valid
1.	Firm A	502	136	118	16	102
2.	Firm B	280	76	65	9	56
3.	Firm C	92	25	23	3	20
4.	Firm D	95	26	20	1	19
5.	Firm E	105	29	26	1	25
.	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1074</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>222</b>

**Source:** Field Survey, 2017

### 4. Data Analysis and Results

The study tested three hypotheses. The first hypothesis related team-based family culture to employee participation. Table 2 presents the test results.

**Table2: Correlation between Team-Based Family Culture and Participation**

		<b>Correlations</b>	
		Team-based FC	Participation
Team-based FC	Pearson Correlation	1	.603**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	222	222
Participation	Pearson Correlation	.603**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	222	222

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

**Source: SPSS Output Version 22.0**

The SPSS window reveals that the correlation coefficient of team-based family culture and employee participation is 0.603. The positive value of  $r$  ( $= 0.603$ ) shows that a strong positive correlation exist between team-based family culture ( $x$ ) and employee participation ( $y$ ). Therefore, based on the positive value of  $r$ , we conclude that there is a significant relationship between team-based family culture and employee participation.

Our second hypothesis related team-based family culture to employee empowerment. Table 3 shows the result of the test.

**Table 3: Correlation between Team-Based Family Culture and Empowerment**

		<b>Correlations</b>	
		Team-based FC	Empowerment
Team-based FC	Pearson Correlation	1	.297**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	222	222
Empowerment	Pearson Correlation	.297**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	222	222

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

**Source: SPSS Output Version 22.0**

The SPSS window reveals the correlation coefficient of the variables  $x$  and  $y$  as 0.297. Our small positive value of  $r$  (0.297) states that a weak positive correlation exists between team-based family culture ( $x$ ) and employee empowerment ( $y$ ) in the sample of manufacturing firms in Nigeria. Based on this positive value of  $r$ , we have rejected the null hypothesis and conclude team-based family culture correlate positively with employee empowerment.

Our third hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between team-based family culture and teamwork in manufacturing firms in of Nigeria. The result of the test of this hypothesis is contained in table 4.

**Table 4: Correlation between Team-Based Family Culture and Teamwork**

		<b>Correlations</b>	
		Team-based FC	Teamwork
Team-based FC	Pearson Correlation	1	.492**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	222	222
Teamwork	Pearson Correlation	.492**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	222	222

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

**Source: SPSS Output Version 22.0**

Our SPSS window reveal that the correlation coefficient of the variables x and y is 0.492. Our positive value of  $r = (0.492)$  shows a weak positive correlation between team-based family culture (x) and teamwork (y) among the sampled manufacturing firms Nigeria. Based on this positive value of  $r$ , we state that the direction is the same: Since our p-value = (0.000) is less than the level of significance,  $\alpha = (0.05)$ , we conclude that there is a significant relationship between team-based family culture and teamwork in manufacturing firms in Nigeria.

## 5. Discussion of Findings

**Hypothesis 1 (Ho<sub>1</sub>)** examined the relationship between team-based family culture and employee participation. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient was used to test the postulated hypothesis. The analysis showed a strong positive coefficient 0.603 at the significance level of 0.05. This led us to reject the null hypothesis 1 (Ho<sub>1</sub>). The implication of this finding is that team-based family culture correlates very significantly with employee participation. Heathfield (2016) has noted that where effective team culture is in operation, team members comprehend where the work of their team fit in the entire organizational strategic plan. This of course, will lead to better employee involvement in team activities and processes.

**Hypothesis 2 (Ho<sub>2</sub>)** examined the relationship between team-based family culture and empowerment. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient was used to test the postulated hypothesis. Our analysis showed a weak positive coefficient of 0.297 at the significance level of 0.05. We therefore have rejected the null hypothesis 2 (Ho<sub>2</sub>). The implication of this finding is that team-based family culture correlates very significantly with empowerment of employees in manufacturing firms. Possible explanations for this finding could be that the respondents may have felt that their organizations provide opportunities for co-operation and solidarity through teams resulting in their sense of empowerment. It is also possible that there is presence of team cultures that encourages delegation of authority among firm's team members.

**Hypothesis 3 (Ho<sub>2</sub>)** examined the relationship between team-based family culture and teamwork. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient was used to test this hypothesis which was computed using the SPSS software. The analysis showed a coefficient of 0.492 at the significance level of 0.05. The implication of this finding is that team-based family culture correlates very significantly with teamwork in manufacturing firms. This finding is in line with generally held opinion that cultures modeled around team will positively promote team works. This is because a sense of team is heightened when members interdependency, mutual

support, among others that are embodied in team-based family culture.

Denison (2000) notes that many organizations depend on team based approach to improve their performances. In other words, team-based culture reinforces teamwork or team orientations among the employees.

### **Conclusion**

Employees are vital building blocks for companies to develop and execute their strategies and to achieve stated goals and objectives. Organizations with a culture that encourage supportive and friendly work environment, where members see and relate to other as a family derived better business performance as they are likely to perform well in teamwork. Organizations that allow and encourage team structures performs much better than those who have non-team based structures. Team-based family culture in organizations result to team spirit and cohesiveness associated with teams among involved employee due to support and care for team members, commitments to team goals and objectives, and also peaceful and harmonious relationship among employees in an organization.

In all, there is a positive relationship between team-based family culture and employee involvement.

### **Recommendations**

In the light of the above, we recommend that; organizations should put in place structures that encourage team solidarity and cooperativeness that make her employees develop sense of family in their organizations. In addition, organizations should encourage interdependence and member's support so as to make their employees develop the willingness to step in to assist others when the need arises even in the most selfless manner. Moreover, organizations should encourage collaboration among team members in order to create harmonious working relations among teams, which drive successful effective employee involvement, among others. Furthermore, since team-based family culture allow organizations to develop new thought pattern and needed ideas, organizations should ensure focus on honest communication and instilling of loyalty among operational teams within the organization.

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