

## **Self-Directed Teams and Employee Work Outcome: An Assessment of Team Based Management**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper assesses the relationship between self-directed team and employee work outcome of deposit money banks operating in Rivers State, Nigeria. A survey research design was adopted with the use of structured questionnaire to collect data on the study variables. A total of 113 employees of the deposit money banks were surveyed and the data generated were analyzed through the use of t-statistics. Pearson moment correlation was used to test the stated hypotheses with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings showed that self-directed teams significantly influence employee work, outcome of work place productivity and customer satisfaction. It is therefore important for banks to embrace team formation in order to foster better network of customers and employees. Hence we recommend that employees join teams in the work place as it will assist them to get current and relevant information from shared perspective that will help them to satisfy customers and enhance their productivity.*

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**Keywords:** *customer satisfaction, employee work outcome, self-directed team, workplace productivity.*

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### **Introduction**

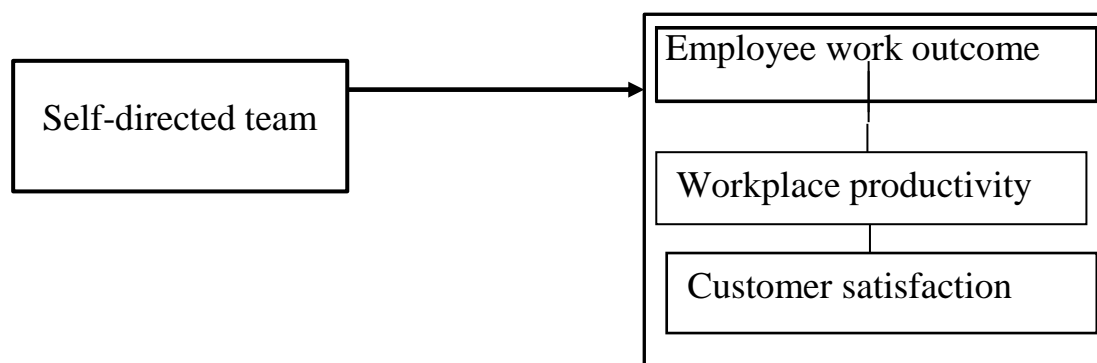
Organizations around the globe are now indoctrinating teamwork spirit for the fact that team work is said to bring about harmony among employees (Ashish, 2015). Moreover Teamwork has become so important that it is invariably the way organizations today regardless of size operate so as to be effective and efficient. Work teams are made up of persons who have common vision who work together to create aspired outcomes. Furthermore, most time employees in organizations who make up a team come from various cultures, have different educational prowess and analyze information in different ways; this sometimes affects their performance (Kathreine, 2012). More so, the major problem faced by workers in the banking sector include frequent employee turnover, lack of customer satisfaction which has led to various complaints from customers and low morale exhibited by employees.

There is often a misconception and misinterpretation of how differences among team members can sabotage the progress of the team and subsequently the organization, though

most firms are aware of the significance of teams (Gilley, Gilley, McConnell and Velliquette, 2010). More so, in terms of teams, organization applies teambuilding extensively in order to build and improve employees. Buller and Bell (1986) observed that a major intervention strategy in enhancing organizational performance is teambuilding. However, despite the importance of team building to the organization (Williams, Graham and Baker 2002), inquisition on the effectiveness of building a team in the organization remains incomplete, unsatisfactory and difficult (Rushmer 1997).

On this backdrop lies the relevance of this study, also in Nigeria, few researches have been carried out on team building. Hence, this research work look forward to highlight the relationship between team building and employee work outcome within the Nigerian organizations. Also, in Nigeria, organizations follow the trend in the international sector, with team formation being a prevailing and common practice internationally, this have not received much research consideration Hence, the study looks forward to determining the effect of self-directed team on employee work outcome.

The conceptual frame work showing the relationship between self-directed team and employee work outcome is shown below



**Figure 1:** Conceptual Framework

The study is set to achieve the purpose of empirically examining the influence of self-directed team on employee work outcome with the following specific objectives:

1. To assess the influence of self – directed team on workplace productivity of deposit money banks in Rivers state.
2. To assess the influence of self-directed team on customer satisfaction of deposit money banks in Rivers state.

Consequently, the question addressed in this study is: what is the relationship between self-directed team and employee work outcome of deposit money banks in Rivers state?

### Literature

Team members in self-directed team routinely handle assignment of job, schedule work, and make decision with regards to a given problem. This type of team needs minimal or no supervision from management (Felts, 1995). McNamara (1996) defined self-directed team as an empirical referent of Team Based Management is a multi-skilled team whose members are entrusted with the capacity to coordinate their own activities and are collectively liable for providing a determined value to the organizational product or services. Self-directed teams coordinate and control their own activities such as decisions making regards to specification of job (Cohen et al, 1996). It can also be referred to as self-regulating team, self-empowered and self-superior team and the common characteristics of this team is the degree of freedom it operate on (Lawler, 1986, Kinlaw, 1991).

Members of a self-directed team routinely handle work assigned to them, schedule job, and make related decisions on what to produce and the service to render. More so, Rowley (1997) defined self-directed teams as set of employees who have day-to-day obligation managing themselves and their work. The growing need for firms to become flatter and flexible by reducing interference of management in the organization has also brought about the use of self-directed team, as the work is done with less supervision from the organization (Fisher, 2000). More so, rather than having supervisors to give them instructions on what and how to operate, they gather information, make decisions and achieve the set firms' objectives (Hollander and Offermann, 1990).

Self-directed team has become very famous, as business firms have come to realize that supervisory role play by managers in the firm is not needed as employees in the firm are being capacitated. Self-directed team provides higher empowerment for employee because the members of the team are given free hands to perform their work and to manage themselves, what was normally done by management in the organization (Anon, 1997). More so, the process of implementing self-directed team is not an easy job due to the facts that it requires much planning, organizing, directing, sharing visions objectives, right communication and culture. Leadership is another aspect that is vital to the success of any self-directed team. Robbins (2005) observed that leadership is a key activity in self-directed team, and it is mainly about having to cope with changes that are likely to occur. It is very necessary to note that in order to maximize the potential benefits that can be acquired from self-directed team, individual members of the team should possess different types of skills. Robbins (2005) emphasizes that the appropriate mix of different skills is crucial to team success. It needs people with technical skills, interpersonal skills and skill to make right decision.

The major attribute of self-directed team is that self-determination of the team members is very high in administering their everyday task (Safizadeh, 1991). Another important aspect organizations should be aware of in the development of self-directed teams is the ability to control the activities of such teams. Barker (1993) refers to this control as "concertive" control. He further defined it as a method or collection of thinking that comes from members of the team in other reach an agreement on core values of the team, ideas and team norms that will guide members' behavior. Though it has many advantages, it may be over-emphasized, and rather than liberating the members of the team from managerial controls, it can limit them more strenuously (Senthil, Jane and Bret, 2005).

### **Employee Work Outcome**

Employee work outcome refers to the various possible ways an employee is likely to turn out in a work place or in the organization. It explains the various contributions an employee is expected to make to the success of the organization. Employee's outcome in the organization includes employee productivity, absenteeism, employee turnover, customer satisfaction, commitment, and employee loyalty. Furthermore, the level of employee work outcome is dependent on factors such as motivation, organizational leadership and conducive work environment (Noblet, 2003). However, positive employee work outcomes provide many factors of an efficient and effective organization. Employee work outcome is a product or consequences of action by the employees in the organization. In this instance, work outcome is seen as the attainment of a given tasks. Kuvaas (2006) explained that work outcome is the action or behavior that is applicable to the attainment of organizations objectives.

Furthermore, while problem of competition and core processes of business have effect on

firm's work outcome, many of the main indicators of an effective and efficient organizations are galvanized by the total efforts and employee experiences. The measures of employee work outcome used in this work are work place productivity, customer satisfaction and employee turnover.

**Work Place Productivity:** People commonly determine the extent to what was achieved or attained but often, this is a poor measure of productivity. The real measure of productivity is how much output is obtained from a given set of inputs (Syverson, 2011). Generally, productivity is seen as the relationship between input and output. It is a connection between output (in terms of goods produced or services rendered) and input (in terms of consumed resources such as material, time, skill) in the conversion process.

**Customer Satisfaction:** In this ever increasing competitive environment, organizations must pay attention to customer needs and values (Emrah, 2010). In other words business organization must be customer oriented which serves as a new means for providing quality services in organization. Customer satisfaction is a fundamental standard to measure performance of organizations and a feasible standard of knowing how well the firm is doing and it provides customer loyalty, repeat purchases, and positive word of mouth to an organization (Gerson, 1993).

In the words of Emrah (2010) customer satisfaction has to do with the amount to which a customer perceives that an organization has effectively supplied a product that satisfied the customer's needs after utilizing the product or service. Furthermore, Oliver (1981) differentiated between satisfaction and attitude. He explained that attitude is the consumer's relatively abiding affective adaptation for a product while satisfaction refers to the emotional reaction following a disconfirmation experience which acts on the base attitude level based on consumption. Customer satisfaction is not only associated to satisfaction gotten from the consumption of goods but also refers to satisfaction derived from services provided.

### **Self-directed Team and Work Place Productivity**

Team activities enable employees to appropriate their talents. In team building, the members learn to work together in diversity because if well utilized, it can lead to greater team success. These talents gathered within self-directed teams will improve motivation of employee and ultimately lead to increase in productivity when applied to daily tasks in an organization (Edmondson and Nembhard, 2009). Fapohunda (2013) opined that team building especially self-directed team provide employees higher liberty and gives them room to participate in taking decisions. According to Conti and Kleiner (2003) organizational teams provides better means of participation of employees and enhances the goal attainment of those employees which eventually influence their performance.

Rather than waiting for formal instructions or being told how and what to do, the team are given targets and members are at liberty to choose the best strategy for attaining the target. Given the potential effect self-directed team can have on employee work outcome, the implementation of it will help to build employee competencies on knowledge-based resources as business environment frequently change. The implication is that it is expected to enhance business performance.

Also, Strydom (2002) states that self-directed team helps to streamline operation, improve flexibility, quality and safety, provide better productivity, higher service quality, and improve systems within the organization and provide greater employee satisfactions.

Therefore we hypothesize that:

**Ho<sub>1</sub>: there is no significant relationship between self-directed team and workplace productivity.**

### **Self-directed Team and Customer Satisfaction**

Felts (1995) observed that firms that are committed to self-directed team to gain higher productivity and better customer satisfaction. He further explained that it helps to improve efficiency, minimize production cycles and ability to react to the changing needs of the environment of the business is enhanced. In a research conducted by Frohman (1995), executives interviewed indicated that for these three problems: customer service, cost reduction and product quality, improved teamwork is one of the most important solutions.

However, organizational team building can affect employee in a situation when team observe or believe that organizational management is merely paying lip service to the formulation of teamwork which can reduce employee morale, hence affect the way they deliver quality service (Fapohunda, 2013). Also, the inability of management to take decisions for self-directed team can sometimes results in time wastage to accomplish the team objectives. This normally occurs when the organization management pock nose into the affair of the group after they have given the team the platform to operate. Therefore we hypothesize that:

**Ho<sub>2</sub>: there is no significant relationship between self-directed team and customer satisfaction.**

### **Methodology**

This study generated data from 113 employees of deposit money banks operating in Rivers State. It was conducted in a non-contrived setting as cross-sectional survey. With a 94.34% response rate attained, 113 copies of the questionnaire were returned and used for analysis in this study that was built around the purpose of hypotheses testing. The data generated from the survey were analyzed using frequencies, mean scores and Pearson's product moment correlation in assessing the relationship between the variables with the help of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS).

### **Data analysis**

The results of univariate analysis revealed that the mean scores (x) obtained for the study variables are: self-directed team (4.12), employee work outcome (4.05) Furthermore at the secondary level of analysis, inferential statistics such as Pearson's product moment correlation coefficients and Regression coefficients including the p-values, were calculated for the purpose of testing the stated hypotheses.

### Relationship between Self-directed Team and Work Place Productivity

**Table 1:** Correlations Analysis indicating the connection between self-directed team and work place productivity

Correlations		Self-Directed Team	Work Place Productivity
Self-Directed Team	Pearson Correlation	1	.987**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	113	113
Work Place Productivity	Pearson Correlation	.987**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	113	113

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

From the above Table 1, it shows that the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation coefficient (r) is 0.987. This given value is very high, which means that a very strong relationship exists between self-directed team and work place productivity. Furthermore, the table also indicated a positive (+) 'r' relationship between self-directed team and work place productivity. This means that direct relationship exist between the variables and further improvement in self-directed team will result in the enhancement of work place productivity of the firms studied.

### Relationship between Self-directed Work Team and Customer Satisfaction

**Table 2:** Correlations Analysis indicating the connection between self-directed team and customers' satisfaction

Correlations		Self-Directed Team	Customer Satisfaction
Self-Directed Team	Pearson Correlation	1	.895**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	113	113
Customer Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.895**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	113	113

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

From the above Table 2, it shows that the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation coefficient (r) is 0.895. This given value is very high, which means that a very strong relationship exists between self-directed team and customers' satisfaction. Furthermore, the table also indicated a positive (+) 'r' relationship between self-directed team and customers' satisfaction. This means that direct relationship exist between the variables and further improvement in self-directed team will result in the enhancement of customers' satisfaction of the firms studied.



### Effects of Self-directed Team on Work Place Productivity

**Table 3:** Summary of regression analysis result showing the effects of self-directed team on work place productivity

Variables	Coef.	t-cal	sig. t	t-tab (0.05, 112)	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F-cal	F-tab (0.05, 2, 110)	sig f
Constant	2.104	4.756	.000	1.96	0.989	0.978	2482.486	3.07	0.000
SDT	.861	20.619	.000						

Dependent Variable; Work Place Productivity

Source: field survey, 2017.

The table above reveals that the coefficient of correlation is 0.989. This shows that significant and very strong relationship exists between self-directed team and work place productivity because r is closer to one (1). Also, the Coefficient of Determination ( $R^2$ ) = 0.978. It implies that 97.8% variation in workplace productivity is explained by variations in in service quality is explained by variations in self-directed team. This indicates that this model has a good fit. This other 2.2% is elucidated by other variables not captured in this model. The F-calculated of 2482.486 had a corresponding significant t-value of 0.000; the researcher therefore concludes that the model is useful. Conventionally  $F-Cal = 2482.486 > F-tab_{(0.05, 2, 110)} = 3.07$  hence the decision above is upheld.

### Effects of and Self-directed Team on Customer Satisfaction

**Table 4:** Summary of Regression Analysis result showing the Effects of self-directed team on customer satisfaction

Variables	Coef.	t-cal	sig. t	t-tab (0.05, 112)	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F-cal	F-tab (0.05, 2, 110)	sig f
Constant	1.802	1.267	.208	1.96	0.895	0.802	222.131	3.07	0.000
SDT	.926	6.899	.000						

Dependent Variable; Customer Satisfaction

Source: field survey, 2017

The table above reveals that the coefficient of correlation is 0.895. This shows that significant and very strong relationship exists between the self-directed team and customer satisfaction because r is closer to one (1). Also, the Coefficient of Determination ( $R^2$ ) = 0.802. It implies that 80.2% variation in customer satisfaction is explained by variations in self-directed team. This indicates that this model has a good fit. This other 19.8% is elucidated by other variables not captured in this model. The F-calculated of 222.131 had a corresponding significant f-value of 0.000; the researcher therefore concludes that the model is useful. Conventionally  $F-Cal = 222.131 > F-tab_{(0.05, 2, 110)} = 3.07$  hence the decision above is upheld.

### Test of Hypotheses and Decision Rule

If the Probability Value (PV) is less than ( $<$ ) 0.05 (Level of Significance), we will reject the null hypotheses and conclude that significant relationship exist between the variables and verse versa.

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**HO<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between self-directed team and work place productivity**

Table 1 shows probability/significant value (PV) of 0.000 which is less than ( $<$ ) 0.05 (level of significance). Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis hence, there is significant relationship between self-directed team and work place productivity.

**HO<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant relationship between self-directed team and customer satisfaction.**

Table 2 shows probability/significant value (PV) of 0.000 which is less than ( $<$ ) 0.05 (level of significance). Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis hence, there is significant relationship between self-directed team and customer satisfaction.

**Discussions**

**Self-directed Team and Work Place Productivity**

Table 1, it shows that the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) is 0.987. This given value is very high, which means that a very strong relationship exists between self-directed team and work place productivity. Furthermore, the table also indicated a positive (+) ' $r$ ' relationship between self-directed team and work place productivity. This means that direct relationship exist between the variables and further improvement in self-directed team will result in the enhancement of work place productivity of the firms studied. The table also shows probability/significant value (PV) of 0.000 which is less than ( $<$ ) 0.05 (level of significance); hence, there is significant relationship between self-directed team and work place productivity.

Fapohunda (2013) agreed with the findings of this research by commenting that that team building especially self-directed team provides employees higher liberty and gives them room to improve on their talent in order to enhance their decisions making process. These talents gathered within self-directed team will improve motivation of employee and ultimately leads to increase in productivity when applied to daily tasks in an organization (Edmondson and Nembhard, 2009). Also, Conti and Kleiner (2003) explained that organizational team formation provides better involvement and enhances employee goal attainment which eventually influences their performance. Given the potential effect self-directed team can have on employee work outcome, the implementation of it will help to build employee competencies on knowledge- based resources as the business environment changes rapidly. The implication is that it is expected to enhanced business performance. In the same vein, Strydom (2002) states that self-directed team helps to streamline operation, improved flexibility, quality and safety, provides better productivity, higher service quality, and improves system within the organization and provides greater employee satisfactions.

**Self-directed Team and Customer Satisfaction**

Table 2, it shows that the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) is 0.895. This given value is very high, which means that a very strong relationship exists between self-directed team and customers' satisfaction. Furthermore, the table also indicated a positive (+) ' $r$ ' relationship between self-directed team and customers' satisfaction. This means that direct relationship exist between the variables and further improvement in self-directed team will result in the enhancement of customers' satisfaction of the firms studied. The table also shows probability/significant value (PV) of 0.000 which is less than ( $<$ ) 0.05 (level of significance); hence, there is significant relationship between self-directed team and customers' satisfaction.



In view of the above findings, Felts (1995) observed that firms that are committed to self-directed team to gain higher productivity and better customer satisfaction. He further explained that it helps to improve efficiency, minimized production cycles and ability to react to the changing needs of the environment of the business is enhanced. In a research conducted by Frohman (1995), executives interviewed indicated that for these three problems: customer service, cost reduction and product quality, improved teamwork is one of the most important solutions.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

From the study findings, we observe that self-directed team as an empirical referent of team based management is necessary in achieving increased employee work outcome in terms of employee productivity and customers' satisfaction. The literature reviewed also supported the outcome of this study. Through the findings of this study, organization in general and managers in particular can increase the general performance of their employee by ensuring that team buildings are encourage in the organization. Hence we recommend that bank employees should be encourage to belong to self-directed team as an efficient and effective medium for gathering ideas, and the ability to utilize their full potentials in the organization in other to enhance their productivity. Also, individual employees should not hesitate to joining teams in the work place because it will assist them to get current and relevant information from shared perspective that will help them to satisfy customers.

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