

Organizational Culture and Employee Satisfaction of Tertiary Institutions in Bayelsa State

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Abstract: This research investigated the link between organizational culture and employee satisfaction (both cognitive and affective) among the employees in the tertiary institutions of Bayelsa State, Nigeria, and at the same time, it has filled the voids of regional relevance, causation clarity, and specific facet satisfaction in the context of African higher education. A cross-sectional, quasi-experimental design, and complete enumeration survey was used, and 379 questionnaires were distributed to the whole population of employees. All the 379 were returned; 39 were incomplete or unusable, so only 340 responses were valid for further analysis. The Pearson correlation method using SPSS was applied for data analysis. The analysis has shown a very strong positive correlation between organizational culture and cognitive satisfaction ($r = .807, p < .001$), accounting for 65% of the variance. It was also strongly correlated with affective satisfaction ($r = .677, p < .001$), explaining 46% of the variance. The null hypotheses were rejected, in both cases. The results indicate that organizational culture is the major factor in the improvement of the alignment of rational roles and emotional well-being, with its influence being more pronounced on the cognitive than on the affective dimension. The study emphasizes the necessity of long-term research that is culturally sensitive in areas where there has been less representation. For the tertiary institutions, the recommendation is to develop the clan and adhocracy cultures through value-based training, participatory decision-making, and relational initiatives as a means of enhancing satisfaction, retention, and institutional resilience which means the practical benefits of culture change leading to overall resilience of institutions.

Keywords: organizational culture, employee satisfaction, cognitive satisfaction, affective satisfaction, and tertiary institutions.

INTRODUCTION

Organizational culture indeed could resuscitate the dying work-passion of an employee's thereby igniting job fulfilment for such employees. Again, organizational culture could significantly determine the quality of the work environment, the attitudes, and the sense of

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belonging to the organization. Employees with tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State are increasingly demonstrating presenteeism due to lack of satisfaction on the job (Sinizibe & Frank, 2023). This has affected the overall institutional effectiveness and staff performance. One of the several ways in which this could be addressed is to reawaken the culture of the organization. Empirical evidence shows that a good culture translates to very high level of employee job satisfaction (Chinomona & Mofokeng, 2016; Martins & Nienaber, 2018; Adewale & Ghavifekr, 2019). Participatory and supportive cultures have not only been able to boost employee job satisfaction but also the loyalty of employees and performance of the institutions in the context of higher educational institutions in Nigeria, Bayelsa State included (Martins & Nienaber, 2018; Adewale & Ghavifekr, 2019; Ugwu et al., 2020). One of the effects of such culture is among others the promotion of open communication, employee recognition, and collaboration, which contribute to the collective rise of employee motivation and decrease of turnover intentions (Martins & Nienaber, 2018).

Employee satisfaction has been a major focus of organizational psychology, and it has been thoroughly investigated for its strong effects on both individual and firm-level outcomes. Locke et al. (1976) defines job satisfaction as a pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job experience, stating that its roots are in value matching and need satisfaction which in turn lead to motivation and productivity. His definition has been criticized for being static and non-causal as it does not provide empirical quantification. Spector (1997) builds on this by categorizing causes (e.g., organizational support, pay) and consequences (e.g., turnover, absenteeism), and pointing out cultural and gender differences, yet, he mentions inconsistencies in measurement across areas such as supervision which limits the possibility of generalization.

Interestingly, organizational culture at Bayelsa tertiary institutions is one of the major factors that cause low employee satisfaction in an indirect way; the weak norms, decision processes that lack transparency, and bad work environments all come around to rasing the issue of morale and retention. The interaction of these factors leads to the following: employees being absent, low productivity, and engaging less with colleagues and co-workers. Empirical data and literature have indicated a strong positive correlation between supportive and fair cultures and job satisfaction/performance (Dirisu et al., 2018; Tadesse & Debela, 2024). On the part of Bayelsa, local studies have pointed out poor physical and psychosocial conditions at work, along with lack of employee involvement in decision-making, as the immediate causes of dissatisfaction (Asiegbu et al., 2023; Poazi & Akubo, 2024). The signs of these problems can be seen in the form of less engagement, more turnover intentions, and limited institution performance. This study is designed to examine the influence of organizational culture on employee satisfaction. Specifically, the study examine the correlation between organizational culture and cognitive and affective satisfaction of employees of tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State. The following hypotheses were formulated for the study and stated in a null form:

H₀₁: Examine the correlation between organizational culture and cognitive satisfaction of employees of tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State.

H₀₂: Ascertain the correlation between organizational culture and affective satisfaction of employees of tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Review

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture which refers to the common values, beliefs and norms that influence the behavior of people in a company, has been widely discussed in recently published articles as having a positive or negative impact on performance, innovation and employee outcomes at the same time. Organizational culture represents the totality of the way of life that exists within an organization. It deals with shared belief and orientation that members of a particular organization hold. The systematic syntheses reveal a persistent fragmentation in the concept: researchers use different perspectives (Scheinian layers, Competing Values Framework, and emergent sustainability-culture models), and this diversity leads to different operationalizations that make it difficult to compare studies and translate policies (Tadesse Bogale, 2024; Ketprapakorn & Kantabutra, 2022). The strong organizational cultures i.e. those that stress employee adaptability, teamwork and clan-like characteristics, are positively impacting the companies by engaging workers, inspiring them to be more creative and thereby making the organization more effective as a whole. One such example is the CVF-based cultures (Competing Values Framework) which include clan and adhocracy types that positively correlate with organizational commitment and innovative work behavior as they promote knowledge exchange and provide flexibility in fast-changing environments (Hartnell et al., 2019). Thus, the same goes for the progressive cultures which help the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to manage the digital change and become sustainable by integrating environmental practices, adopting new technologies and thus, becoming more competitive in the long run (Harsch & Festing, 2020). The latest thorough reviews have shown that apart from the positive cultural traits that organizations promote, i.e. employee participation and organization-wide commitment, correlation exists with higher job satisfaction, lower turnover intentions and better revenue and market share as well as other indicators of firm performance which are sometimes more valid than structural elements such as high-performance work practices in predicting outcomes for instance employee attitudes and operational efficiency (Shore et al., 2024).

Employee Satisfaction

Employee satisfaction, although sometimes called job satisfaction, is one of the affects and thinks of the employees regarding their job roles. It has an impact on the employees' attitudes, behaviors, and the whole organization. Recent scholarly meta-analyses and systematic reviews conducted over the last seven years have strongly confirmed its major contributions, such as better individual performance, increased OCB, lower turnover intentions, less burnout, and better overall well-being, which are all mediated through psychological capital, work engagement, and perceived organizational support. For instance, job satisfaction is directly related to positive task performance, innovative behaviors, and corporate-level profitability, since happy employees are more motivated, committed, and proactive in their efforts to meet the company's goals (Katebi et al., 2022). Meta-analytic evidence has also shown that job satisfaction plays a significant role in employee retention by providing a protective shield against stressors, creating a thriving environment at work—marked by energy and learning—

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and producing positive organizational commitment and customer-oriented behaviors in service sectors (Torlak et al., 2021). In the case of teaching professions or any other field, satisfied employees are more engaged, less sick, and more productive. Moreover, the presence of meaningful work and the quality of leadership are recognized as the key factors that facilitate the spreading of these benefits beyond the traditional settings into the modern remote and hybrid environments post-digital transformation (Torlak et al., 2023).

Cognitive Satisfaction: Recent empirical research considers cognitive satisfaction as an evaluative, facet-based judgement concerning the specific job features (such as pay, promotion, supervision, and working conditions) that are separate from affective reactions, and indicates that it is particularly influenced by the objective HR changes and policy interventions. Survey studies with a large sample using confirmatory factor analysis have reliably isolated a separable cognitive factor throughout that predicts retention intentions, perceived performance, and turnover-related cognitions even after the measure of affect is controlled for; this trend implies discriminant validity and policy relevance for HR metrics (Ain et al., 2024). Cognitive satisfaction, which is described as the cognitive aspect of job satisfaction that encompasses rational assessments of the different job dimensions, including payment, promotion, supervision, and working conditions, in comparison with personal standards, has been a topic of interest in the recent organizational psychology studies for its impact on the employees' feelings and their respective outcomes. The supporters of cognitive satisfaction accent its favorable effects, among which are, besides others, better connections to the objective performance criteria, lower turnover rates, increased organizational loyalty, and higher psychological health than in the case of mere emotional satisfaction, as the cognitive evaluations allow one to consciously adjust expectations to the reality which in turn supports the motivation and people are even thriving in the complex roles (Katebi et al., 2022). In conclusion, cognitive satisfaction, while in the right conditions, can serve as a stable and predictable foundation for positive organizational outcomes, when the organization is not supportive, its inflexibility can be detrimental to holistic well-being and agility, hence, the need for the balanced integration of the cognitive and affective components for the optimum functioning of the employees (Katebi et al., 2022; Torlak et al., 2023; Burić & Kim, 2024).

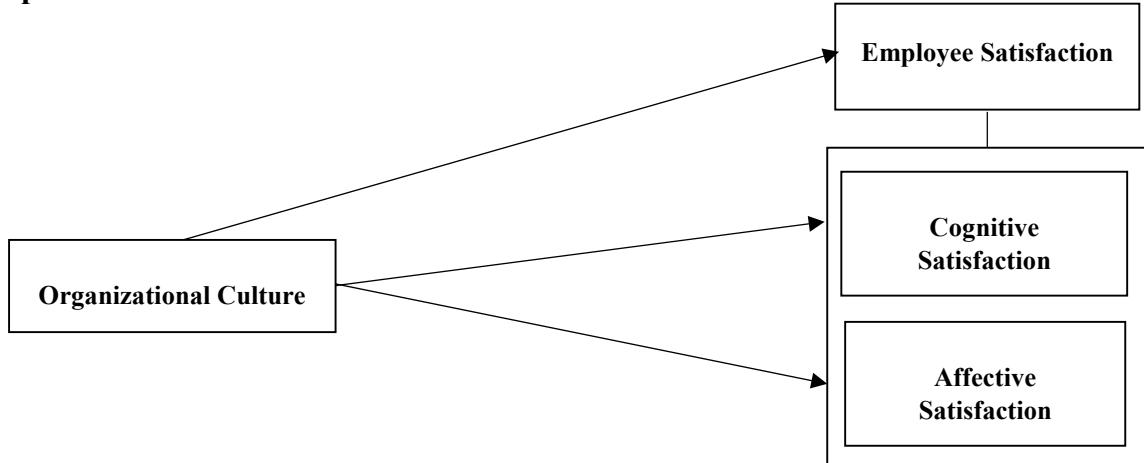
Affective Satisfaction: The emotional aspect of job satisfaction namely affective satisfaction has been the prime focus of research carried out with the help of various methods such as experience-sampling, time-lagged surveys and longitudinal studies in different sectors. The studies have made affective responses the first mediators of the influence of daily work events on short-term outcomes still next-day performance and withdrawal up to the point of predicting of discretionary behaviour (OCBs) and wellbeing. Affective-events theory (AET) along with its latest reviews is the main theoretical framework. It says that emotional responses to specific events at work gradually build up to affective satisfaction which, in turn, affects employee engagement, emotional exhaustion, and affective commitment. Indeed, the most recent time lagged and experience-sampling studies evidence this process and demonstrate the within person variability of affective satisfaction which influences the immediate behaviours even when cognitive satisfaction is statistically controlled. From an empirical standpoint, affective satisfaction is highly sensitive to personal and contextual factors (leadership style, team atmosphere, emotional labour demands) rather than to job characteristics like salary; hence,

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interventions aimed at the leader's emotional intelligence and everyday climate result in more substantial gains in affective than in cognitive satisfaction (Fernández-Muñoz & Topa, 2018).

Affective satisfaction, the hedonic component of job satisfaction that encompasses emotions like joy, enthusiasm, and positive affect towards one's work, is crucial for employee motivation and organisational effectiveness, according to recent research in organisational psychology. In high-stress occupations like teaching, where positive emotions expand thought-action repertoires and facilitate social support networks that buffer burnout, it drives outcomes tied to emotional contagion and energy, such as organisational citizenship behaviours (OCB), creativity, and resilience (Torlak et al., 2023).

Conceptual Framework



Source: The dimensions of employee satisfaction were adopted from Rahman & Singh (2019).

Theoretical Review

This study is underpinned by Social Exchange Theory. Social Exchange Theory (SET) dates back to classical sociological theories which considered social interaction as a give-and-take process - mainly George C. Homans' behavioral approach (Social Behavior as Exchange) and Peter M. Blau's macro-sociological expansion (Exchange and Power in Social Life), which among other things, define reciprocity, costs/benefits, and contingent obligation as the main factors of interpersonal and organizational exchanges (Homans, 1958; Blau, 1964). The main tenets of the theory are: individuals enter into relationships with the aim to gain the most and lose the least; exchanges create debts that promote stable reciprocity; and perceived fairness and balance in giving and receiving are the main factors influencing attitudes and behaviours (e.g., trust, commitment, citizenship, or withdrawal). Modern literature reviews elaborate these tenets by accentuating multi-level mechanisms, conditional reciprocity, and boundary conditions (power, norms, and institutional contexts) that determine whether exchanges yield positive or negative outcomes (Cropanzano et al., 2017). In the field of organizational research, Social Exchange Theory (SET) is very common and it is used to clarify the mechanism of human resources management (HR) and the like. Recent critics suggest combining

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psychological factors (perceived justice and trust) and various methods (e.g. longitudinal studies and multi-source designs) to make causal claims stronger. SET when carried to the current empirical issues like studies conducted on reciprocity in workplaces, employee green HRM responses, or the sustainability of buyer-supplier collaborations, predicts the same outcome that if an organization sends out signals of investment in terms of support, fair contracts, and eco-friendly practices then the employees will respond positively with cooperation and compliance.

Literature Gap

Research on organization culture and employee satisfaction in the field of higher education has exposed some significant gaps that are detrimental to causal clarity, contextual relevance, and practical utility. Most of the studies used in the literature are cross-sectional designs (Aggarwal, 2024; Tavares & Shouhong, 2024) which do not allow temporal sequencing, and the use of unvalidated instruments that are imported from other countries (e.g., OCAI) is a major threat to construct equivalence in African contexts (Tadesse Bogale, 2024; Dirisu et al., 2018). Moreover, the findings are distorted due to aggregation bias that comes from the mixing of individual and group-level perceptions (Chipunza & Malo, 2017). With regard to theory, reciprocity mechanisms of Social Exchange Theory have been insufficiently tested, while mediators like trust or justice have been ignored, and multi-level boundary conditions like power asymmetries in Nigerian universities have been neglected (Cropanzano et al., 2017; Poazi & Akubo, 2024). On the other hand, the concept of higher education is underrepresented compared to manufacturing/healthcare, and facet-level satisfaction and emerging hybrid work dynamics are still unexplored areas (Wartenberg et al., 2023; Chavez & Murcia, 2024).

METHODOLOGY

This research investigates the influence of the organizational culture on the employee satisfaction in the third-level education institutions. The number of the employees surveyed is 379 which is a considerable part of the total employee population in the tertiary institutions. Hence, 379 questionnaires were duly distributed and collected, so 340 were completed and could be used for the analysis. The research is conducted with a complete enumeration survey method (census) and a judgmental sampling technique. The quantitative nature of the research provides an objective evaluation of the interaction between organizational culture and employee satisfaction. The cross-sectional and quasi-experimental research designs were employed since they provide valuable methodologies for social sciences, human resource management, and organizational behavior. The validation and reliability of the instrument are very important in research, where three main categories of validity defined by Heale and Twycross (2015) are: construct validity, content validity, and criterion validity. The research employed Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient for the data analysis which is appropriate for the evaluation of correlations with either a linear or monotonic relationship.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Test of Hypotheses

Table 1: Organizational culture and Cognitive Satisfaction

		Correlations	
		Organizational Culture	Cognitive Satisfaction
Organizational Culture	Pearson Correlation	1	.807**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	340	340
Cognitive Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.807**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	340	340

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

Source: SPSS Output, 2026.

The correlation table reveals a very strong and statistically significant positive relationship between Organizational Culture and Cognitive Satisfaction (Pearson $r = .807$, $p < .001$, twotailed), based on a sample of 340 respondents. The Pearson correlation coefficient of .807 suggests that approximately 65% of the variance in Cognitive Satisfaction is attributed to Organizational Culture ($r^2 = .651$), indicating a substantial shared variance. The significance level ($p = .000$) supports that this relationship is extremely unlikely to be the result of chance, thereby exceeding the 0.01 threshold for strong evidence against the null hypothesis of no correlation. This implies that positive perceptions of organizational culture - such as shared values, norms, and supportive practices—are closely linked with the cognitive satisfaction of the employees, which may include their intellectual engagement, clarity of role expectations, and feeling they are contributing meaningfully. The large sample size ($N = 340$) not only increases the credibility of these findings but also extends their relevance in the specific context of the study.

Table 2: Organizational culture and Affective satisfaction

		Correlations	
		Organizational Culture	Affective Satisfaction
Organizational culture	Pearson Correlation	1	.677**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	340	340
Affective Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.677**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	340	340

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

Source: SPSS Output, 2026.

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The correlation table points to a strong, statistically significant positive interrelation between Organizational Culture and Affective Satisfaction (Pearson $r = .677$, $p < .001$, two-tailed) with a total of 340 participants taking part in the study. The r value of .677 tells us that nearly half of the Affective Satisfaction variance can be attributed to Organizational Culture ($r^2 = .458$), thus indicating a major overlap between the two. The very significant finding ($p = .000$) prompts the rejection of the null hypothesis and validates the assertion that the correlation is not a matter of chance. Trust, cohesion, and emotional support are the factors that define a positive culture and they are likely connected with employees' affective satisfaction which includes feelings of belonging, enthusiasm, and overall happiness with the job. Although the link with cognitive satisfaction is stronger, this moderate to strong correlation still stresses the importance of culture in nurturing positive emotions at work. The large number of participants provides a great deal of confidence in the results being consistent and applicable in the field of organizational practice.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

There is a very strong significant positive relationship between organizational culture and cognitive satisfaction ($r = .807$, $p < .001$), rejecting H01. And, there is a strong significant positive relationship between organizational culture and affective satisfaction ($r = .677$, $p < .001$), rejecting H02.

Organizational Culture and Cognitive Satisfaction

According to recent research in organisational psychology, affective satisfaction—which includes hedonic components like pleasure, enthusiasm, and positive affect towards one's job—is crucial to employee motivation and organisational dynamics. Positive emotions extend thought-action repertoires and enable social support networks that buffer burnout, which is especially helpful in high-stress occupations like teaching, where OCB, creativity, and improved interpersonal relations are outcomes linked to emotional contagion and energy (Torlak et al., 2023). According to a meta-analysis, affective satisfaction is more effective than cognitive satisfaction in predicting affect-driven performance dimensions such as adaptive responses during crises and contextual helping. Affective satisfaction also shows stronger correlations with subjective well-being indicators like vitality and positive mood states, as well as overall life satisfaction spillover (Diaz-Carrion et al., 2022). Additionally, in unpredictable work settings, emotional well-being boosts engagement and proactive innovation by increasing intrinsic drive, leading to stronger team bonds and less emotional fatigue as a result of good affective experiences (Katebi et al., 2022).

A major drawback, however, is the ephemeral nature of affective satisfaction; it is easily influenced by fleeting workplace events, everyday problems, or mood dispositions, which in turn cause attitudes to be unstable, commitment to be fluctuating, and turnover intentions to be heightened when negative emotions are dominant (Torlak et al., 2023). In comparison to cognitive evaluations, its dependence on fleeting emotions may lead to less robust connections to objective or sustained performance measures, which in turn may encourage short-termism, overconfidence in less-than-ideal situations, or reduced critical thinking when making

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decisions (Diaz-Carrion et al., 2022). Complacency and a lack of willingness to accept criticism are two outcomes of overly optimistic emotional states, according to meta-regressions (Katebi et al., 2022). This can be especially problematic in structured jobs where objective evaluations are necessary for achieving long-term goals and avoiding mistakes. Affective satisfaction, according to recent research (Katebi et al., 2022; Diaz-Carrion et al., 2022; Torlak et al., 2023), can be both a motivating and relational outcome booster when things are going well and a possible cause of attitude instability and inconsistency among workers. The discovery of a robustly significant positive correlation between organizational culture and cognitive satisfaction ($r = .807$, $p < .001$) signals that employees' rational assessments of their jobs- like the fairness they perceive in rewards, the chances they see for personal growth, and how much their values are aligned with those of the organization- are deeply influenced by the hidden rules, values, and practices of the organization.

The findings presented here support the work of Tenaw et al. (2021) who focused on the impact of culture on job satisfaction in Ethiopian public finance offices and reported significant positive effects for cognitive dimensions (skill utilization and accomplishment) among others ($\beta = 6.432$, $p = 0.007$). This conclusion was reached through the application of ordered logistic regression to the survey data taken from a total of 136 employees. In a similar manner, the review by Stasa-Ouzký and Machek (2024) pointed out how clan and adhocracy cultures brought about a more significant cognitive job satisfaction to the employees by means of having structured career paths and being intellectually challenged, thereby accentuating the current strong correlation by stressing the role of culture in rational job evaluations. Haq and Torlak (2025) have even gone further in confirming the previously stated, as they claimed that the employee's satisfaction is moderately increased in the presence of an adhocracy culture ($\beta = 0.563$, $p < .001$) and this is done through giving freedom and providing opportunities for development, which is a regression analysis of 380 Turkish workers and relates to cognitive issues like job security perceptions.

Organizational Culture and Affective Satisfaction

Recent studies in organizational behavior show that there is a positive link between the culture of a company and affective satisfaction which encompasses the work-related feelings of pride and joy. The results indicate that the collaboration-oriented and supportive cultures are the greatest among the employees in terms of vitality and, thus, committing to work, which, in turn, is correlated with their well-being and proactive behaviors. On the other hand, the authoritarian and market cultures can result in emotional dissonance and, ultimately, burnout. What's more, a very strong and positive correlation ($r = .677$, $p < .001$) has been established between emotional satisfaction and different aspects of supportive culture like collaboration. Further research suggests that organizations with flexible, people-focused cultures enjoy high levels of emotional well-being while rigid cultures contribute to emotional deficits. This calls for conducting cultural audits as a means of improving employee satisfaction. Overall, activities aimed at maintaining and strengthening emotional ties, such as team-building activities, are among the recommended practices to ensure a continuous positive culture impact even amidst environmental changes (Haq and Torlak, 2025; Harsch & Festing, 2020; Hartnell et al., 2019; Shore et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As it pertains to employee satisfaction, career development opportunities, training aligned with company values and empowering employees to take independent decisions are some measures that can significantly boost intellectual engagement and maintain organizational fairness. Consequently, this may lead to improvements in retention, productivity and innovation. Conversely affective satisfaction can be boosted by fostering connections offering emotional support and ensuring a psychologically safe work environment—methods include group activities, mentoring initiatives, employee recognition and leadership, with emotional intelligence. What is interesting is that the different strengths between cognitive and affective correlations highlight that while rational satisfaction of the employees is largely dependent on culture, emotional engagement still needs the continuous support of interpersonal and leader practices that are consistent. Therefore, the organizations should implement a strategy that combines structural, developmental, and relational approaches to making the most of their cultural investments so that they can yield.

The following recommendations were made for the purpose of this study:

- i. The management of tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State ought to develop the clan and adhocracy cultural dimensions that are characterized by cooperation and inventiveness, which will help to increase cognitive satisfaction of the staff.
- ii. The management of tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State must to facilitate a supportive and value-based organizational culture in order to increase employees' affective satisfaction.

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