

Workplace Civility and Employee Engagement of Small and Medium-Scale Enterprises in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State

**Oyeinkorikiye, Stephan Isaiah¹, Spencer Lucky Endurance²,
Tarimoboere Dennis Baghebo³**

^{1,2,3}Department of Management
Faculty of Management Sciences
Niger Delta University Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State

Abstract

The study examined the relationship between workplace civility and employee engagement of small and medium enterprises in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State. The research design adopted in this study is cross-sectional design. The population of the study comprised all small and medium enterprises (SMEs) operating in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State. The researcher, through a purposive sampling technique selected 350 participants from 793 registered SMEs in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire. The research used both descriptive and inferential methods, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was adopted to analyse the data with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software version 25. From the data analysed, it revealed that a significant positive relationship exists between workplace civility and the measures of employee engagement such as (vigor, dedication and absorption). Based on the findings, the study concludes that there is a positive and significant relationship between workplace civility and employee engagement of small and medium enterprises in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State. It was recommended that Management of SMEs should encourage polite and respectful communication among employees to enhance workplace strength.

Keywords: Workplace civility, employee engagement, vigor, dedication, absorption.

1. Introduction

Organisations are fundamental structures through which societies coordinate resources, direct activities, and accomplish collective objectives. Rigid hierarchical systems have been replaced by more flexible, people-orientated structures that prioritise employee well-being and productive working relationships in contemporary organisational operations. To sustain productivity and remain competitive in an increasingly volatile market, businesses must fully leverage their workforce (Armstrong, 2020; Robbins & Judge, 2022). Employees are increasingly regarded as strategic assets whose attitudes and behaviours substantially impact corporate success as systems become more knowledge-driven and service-orientated. Notwithstanding, the advancement of organisational rules, certain workplace difficulties continue to hinder organisational efficiency and undermine employee effectiveness. Many organisations encounter issues such as diminished morale, job dissatisfaction, communication barriers, role overload, and strained

interpersonal connections among employees. Bakker and Demerouti (2017) asserted that these workplace conditions often create psychological distance between employees and their roles, resulting in less commitment and reduced discretionary effort. Employees are less motivated to exhibit enthusiasm or exceed expectations if they perceive their work environment as unsupportive. The concept of employee engagement as a crucial indicator of organisational health has garnered attention due to these circumstances, which has heightened organisational interest in understanding factors that promote workers' active involvement in their roles.

Employee engagement has emerged as a vital topic in organisational behaviour research because of its association with enhanced productivity, higher job satisfaction, and reduced employee turnover. The concept specifies the extent to which individuals dedicate their physical, emotional, and cognitive resources to their occupational responsibilities. Kahn (1990) defined employee engagement as the degree to which workers utilise and articulate themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally in their roles. Schaufeli, et al. (2002) defined employee engagement as a positive and fulfilling psychological condition, typified by vigour, dedication, and immersion in work activities. Saks (2006) defined employee engagement as "the psychological connection individuals establish with their duties and organisational objectives, resulting in proactive and committed work behaviours." These notions collectively illustrate that engagement is a complex state that encompasses employees' motivation, dedication, and emotional attachment to their organisational roles. Employee engagement evaluation is generally structured on three essential elements: energy, dedication, and absorption. Vigour refers to employees' energy, persistence, and resilience in executing job responsibilities, whereas commitment relates to feelings of pride, enthusiasm, and profound engagement in one's vocation.

Absorption refers to intense concentration and involvement in certain tasks, often leading employees to become oblivious to the passage of time while working (Schaufeli et al., 2002; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). These factors are frequently assessed via established instruments, such as the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), which quantifies employees' behavioural and emotional dedication to their roles. Increased engagement levels are associated with improved work performance, greater customer satisfaction, and stronger organisational loyalty.

Despite the widespread recognition of the importance of employee engagement, many organisational environments continue to exhibit patterns of disengagement. Disrespect, inadequate interpersonal relationships, inadequate communication, and inadequate appreciation may serve as obstacles to employees' complete engagement with their obligations. Incivility, as exemplified by dismissive communication, slander, sarcasm, and discourtesy, has been observed to create adverse emotional environments that erode trust and lower employee morale in numerous organisational contexts (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). The propensity of employees to invest effort in their work may be influenced by feelings of alienation and reduced organisational commitment as a result of exposure to such practices. The significance of cordial interpersonal conduct, which is commonly referred to as workplace civility, has been the subject of increased scholarly interest due to the dynamics of the workplace.

Workplace civility is a key behavioural standard that may foster harmonious interactions and enhance effective organisational environments. It signifies patterns of polite and respectful interactions that elevate

dignity and professionalism among employees. Andersson and Pearson (1999) characterised workplace civility as behaviour that reflects mutual respect and adherence to professional conduct standards in organisational settings. Porath and Pearson (2013) defined workplace civility as consistent expressions of courtesy, attentiveness, and respect toward co-workers that enhance professional relationships and foster cooperation. Clark (2019) defined workplace civility as polite communication and professional interactions that promote collaboration and mitigate workplace conflict. These notions collectively emphasise that civility is a behavioural guideline that affects employee interactions and determines the quality of corporate relationships.

In organisational contexts, workplace civility is typically exhibited through behaviours, including polite communication, collaborative teamwork, acknowledgement of efforts, and constructive feedback systems (Porath & Pearson, 2013). Such behaviours foster the development of psychologically healthy workplaces that enhance employees' well-being and encourage reciprocal cooperation. In contrast, incivility at work can create stress, conflict, and discontent among employees, resulting in decreased engagement and impaired organisational performance. Employees in circumstances marked by disrespectful interactions are more likely to experience stress, irritation, and emotional fatigue, thereby diminishing their willingness to engage actively in organisational activities (Clark, 2019). These observations suggest that workplace civility could be a crucial determinant of employee engagement inside businesses.

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) play a crucial role in Nigeria's economic framework through their contributions to job creation, innovation, and community advancement. These firms promote entrepreneurship and are essential for economic diversification and poverty reduction (Aremu & Adeyemi, 2011). In Bayelsa State, SMEs function within industries including retail services, hotels, transportation, manufacturing, and small-scale production operations. These firms generally operate with constrained personnel and resources, rendering interpersonal ties among employees a crucial factor in operational success. SMEs, characterised by their informal structures, rely significantly on close working connections and direct communication among employees, highlighting the necessity of fostering courteous and supportive workplace cultures (Olowookere et al., 2020).

Employee engagement remains a major concern for organisations, particularly small and medium-sized firms (SMEs), whose daily operations and productivity primarily rely on human interactions. Reports of impolite behaviour, disrespect for one another, poor communication, and insufficient recognition processes have been linked to employees' declining morale and less commitment to work activities in numerous Nigerian organisations (Fapohunda, 2016). By discouraging employees from actively participating in organisational procedures, these behaviours generate unfavourable work environments that reduce employee engagement and productivity.

Employee engagement has been studied empirically from a variety of organisational perspectives. For instance, Akinwale and George (2020) found that employee engagement was significantly impacted by the organisational climate in specific industrial enterprises in Lagos State. In a similar vein, Oladipo and Abdullahi (2018) discovered that effective organisational communication increased employees' commitment and engagement in Abuja's service-based organisations. In a different study, Olowookere, et al. (2020) found that in southwestern Nigerian small firms, supportive work environments enhanced

employee performance. Workplace civility as a behavioural determinant of employee engagement was not specifically examined in this research, although they provide insightful information on engagement-related aspects. Instead, they focused mostly on variables like communication, leadership, and work climate. Furthermore, only a little amount of empirical attention has been given to SMEs, specifically in Bayelsa State. Based on this it is crucial to investigate the relationship between workplace civility and employee engagement in small and medium-entreprises (SMEs) in Bayelsa State.

Research Objectives

The general objective of this study is to examine the relationship between workplace civility and employee engagement of small and medium enterprises in Bayelsa State. The specific Objectives are as follows:

1. To examine the relationship between workplace civility and vigour of small and medium enterprises in Bayelsa State.
2. To examine the relationship between workplace civility and dedication of small and medium enterprises in Bayelsa State.
3. To examine the relationship between workplace civility and absorption of small and medium enterprises in Bayelsa State.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between workplace civility and vigour of small and medium enterprises in Bayelsa State?
2. What is the relationship between workplace civility and dedication of small and medium enterprises in Bayelsa State?
3. What is the relationship between workplace civility and absorption of small and medium enterprises in Bayelsa State?

Research Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no relationship between workplace civility and vigour of small and medium enterprises in Bayelsa State?

H₀₂: There is no relationship between workplace civility and dedication of small and medium enterprises in Bayelsa State?

H₀₃: There is no relationship between workplace civility and absorption of small and medium enterprises in Bayelsa State?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Framework

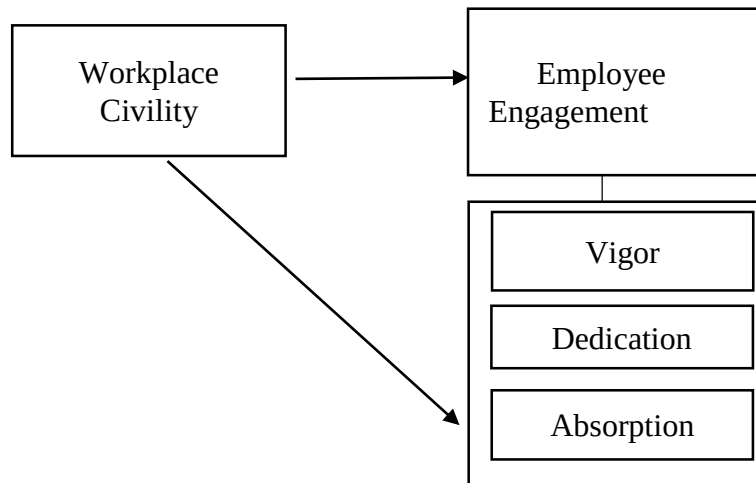


Fig 1: Conceptual framework showing the relationship between workplace civility and employee engagement

Source: Schaufeli, W. B., Salanova, M., González-Romá, V., & Bakker, A. B. (2002). The measurement of engagement and burnout: A two-sample confirmatory factor analytic approach. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 3(1), 71–92. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1015630930326>

2.1.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1.1 Workplace Civility

Workplace civility is the demonstration of respectful, courteous, and considerate behaviour between employees and management within an organisational context. It embodies behavioural standards that foster professionalism, equity, and dignity in interpersonal interactions. Andersson and Pearson's (1999) defined workplace civility as the behaviour that demonstrates respect for others while adhering to the norms of reciprocal respect in the workplace. Porath and Pearson (2013) defined workplace civility as a polite interaction that is characterised by the avoidance of degrading or offensive behaviours, constructive feedback, and courteous conversation. Workplace civility is widely recognised as a critical component of organisational culture, as it impacts the sentiments of equity, trust, and inclusion that employees experience.

Researchers have emphasised the critical role of workplace civility in fostering a psychologically healthy work environment. Cortina et al. (2001) noted that employees in civic workplaces experience reduced emotional stress and fewer interpersonal disputes. This reduction in workplace tension is crucial for the development of cooperation and collaboration, which are indispensable for achieving organisational objectives. The frequent encounters and strong working relationships that are characteristic of organisations make workplace civility especially crucial. Leiter et al. (2011) opined that employees who receive respect from their supervisors and colleagues are more likely to remain loyal to their organisations. In contrast, incivility, which encompasses rudeness, exclusion, and disrespect, can lead to decreased

productivity, diminished morale, and misery. Therefore, it is imperative to foster workplace civility to maintain harmonious relationships and guarantee organisational efficiency.

2.1.2 Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is the extent to which workers commit their mental, emotional, and behavioural efforts to their work-related duties. The term "engagement" was originally used by Kahn (1990), who described it as the psychological presence of workers in their duties as shown by their emotional connection, cognitive focus, and physical participation. Employee engagement, according to Saks (2006), is a beneficial work-related situation that shows people's readiness to go above and beyond their basic job obligations to contribute to the organization's success. Employees who are engaged show tenacity, dedication, and zeal, which boosts organisational effectiveness.

Employee engagement, according to Schaufeli et al. (2002), is a good and fulfilling psychological state in the job that is marked by vigour, dedication, and absorption. In contrast to dedication, which is defined by total immersion in one's job and is associated with joy and satisfaction, vigour is defined by increased energy and psychological resilience. "Absorption" is the term used to describe intense concentration and involvement in labour-intensive duties. Collectively, these characteristics illustrate the extent to which engaged individuals demonstrate perseverance, concentration, and commitment toward achieving organisational objectives. Bakker and Demerouti (2017) posited that engaged employees exhibit proactive behaviour, ingenuity, and robust organisational commitment. Employees who are actively engaged are more likely to maintain their loyalty to the organisation, contribute innovative ideas, and collaborate effectively. As a result, employee engagement is frequently perceived as a strategic asset that promotes the sustainability and development of an organisation.

2.1.2.1 Vigor

Vigour is an essential component of employee engagement that is indicative of the extent to which individuals demonstrate physical strength, mental fortitude, and perseverance in their professional responsibilities. Employees' preparedness to exert effort to achieve organisational objectives is reflected in the vigour with which they fulfil their responsibilities. Bakker and Albrecht (2018) defined vigour as the presence of increased enthusiasm, stamina, and determination, which enables employees to sustain performance under challenging work conditions. Vigour is a substantial predictor of productivity and efficiency within organisations, as employees who exhibit it are proactive and resilient in the face of work-related problems.

Organisational support mechanisms, such as equitable treatment, constructive workplace connections, and encouraging supervision, have been identified by researchers as factors in the development of vigour. According to Anitha (2014), when workers feel that their workplace is encouraging and exciting, they are more inclined to be physically active. Ugwu, et al., (2014) observed that employees in supportive work environments exhibit increased work energy and persistence in the Nigerian context. This implies that vigour is a manifestation of the organisational environment as well as an individual characteristic. In typical organisational settings, personnel who demonstrate high levels of vigour are more likely to

maintain performance levels, manage tasks efficiently, and demonstrate a strong commitment to achieving organisational objectives.

2.1.2.2 Dedication

Dedication is the emotional investment and sense of purpose that individuals derive from their professional responsibilities. It represents the feelings of pride, enthusiasm, and substantial engagement in the work of employees. Albrecht (2015) asserted that dedication involves a deep identification with one's work, along with motivation and commitment to achieving organisational objectives. Employees who demonstrate dedication frequently regard their work as significant and are motivated to improve the organisation's performance. Employees are encouraged to maintain favourable attitudes and demonstrate loyalty to their organisation as a result of this emotive connection. Employees' perceptions of recognition, equity, and organisational support significantly influence their level of dedication at work.

Saks and Gruman (2014) observed that employees who are recognised for their accomplishments develop stronger emotional bonds with their organisations, which results in higher levels of dedication. Ologbo and Sofian (2013) found that employees who experience supportive leadership and strong workplace connections are more likely to demonstrate pride and dedication toward their work responsibilities in a Nigerian organisational environment. It implies that organisations foster commitment by cultivating cultures that prioritise employee engagement and recognition. Dedication is a critical component of employee engagement in organisational contexts, as committed individuals are more likely to demonstrate endurance, maintain morale, and align their personal aspirations with the organization's objectives.

2.1.2.2 Absorption

Absorption is the degree to which employees are wholly absorbed and focused on their daily responsibilities. It denotes the extent to which employees focus their attention and concentration on their responsibilities. Shuck and Wollard (2010), noted that absorption occurs when employees become profoundly involved in their work, which leads to increased focus and fewer distractions. Employees who demonstrate high levels of absorption frequently become profoundly involved in their responsibilities and exhibit a strong commitment to the efficient execution of their work. Absorption is influenced by employment qualities such as autonomy, task variety, and the significance of the work. Employees are more likely to develop profound attention when their roles provide opportunities for learning and innovation (May, et al., 2004).

Ugwu, et al. (2014) opined that employees in Nigerian organisations who perceive the work environment as encouraging and motivating demonstrate increased focus and engagement with their responsibilities. This suggests that personal motivation and institutional support influence assimilation. In typical organisational environments, personnel who demonstrate strong assimilation are more likely to produce high-quality results, minimise errors, and focus their attention on their duties. As a result, assimilation is a critical component that demonstrates the cognitive commitment of employees to an organization's performance.

2.1.3 Workplace Civility and Employee Engagement

Organisational performance is influenced by the interconnected concepts of workplace civility and employee engagement. Civil work cultures foster collaboration, mutual trust, and open communication, thereby increasing employee engagement. In the words of Saks (2006), workers who perceive a courteous and encouraging work environment are more likely to have a deep emotional connection with their companies. Furthermore, when workers get respect, they are more inclined to engage in activities that go beyond their assigned responsibilities. Porath and Pearson (2013) discovered that workplace civility improves job satisfaction and organisational commitment, which are essential indicators of engagement. Cortina et al. (2013) also observed that incivility in the workplace leads to decreased motivation and production. In small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the frequent interactions and dependence on collaboration among employees necessitate workplace civility to sustain engagement. Respectful interactions facilitate collaboration, mitigate conflicts, and promote positive work attitudes. Consequently, organisations that prioritise civil conduct are more likely to achieve improved employee engagement and overall performance.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Social Exchange Theory (SET)

Blau (1964) first introduced the Social Trade Theory (SET), which elucidates social behaviour as a reciprocal trade process between employees and their organisations. The theory posits that relationships are based on reciprocal duties, in which the expectation of reciprocation from the other party is triggered by the favourable actions of one party. Social Exchange Theory posits that employees are compelled to reciprocate positive attitudes and behaviours, such as loyalty, engagement, and dedication, when they receive favourable treatment from their organisations in organisational contexts characterised by respect, fairness, support, and recognition. SET provides a comprehensive explanation of the influence of civic behaviours on employee outcomes within the context of workplace civility and employee engagement. Employees regard workplace civility as a demonstration of organisational support, as it is defined by considerate interactions, impartiality, and courteous communication. When employees receive kindness from their supervisors and colleagues, they interpret it as an indication that the organisation values and respects them. According to Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005), employees develop a sense of obligation as a result of receiving favourable treatment, which in turn leads to heightened emotional and behavioural commitment to their work.

As a result, employees who experience workplace civility are more likely to demonstrate increased engagement, which is characterised by vigour, devotion, and absorption. This is a reciprocal response. Conversely, workplace incivility violates the norms of exchange relationships, leading to emotional detachment, disengagement, and diminished trust. Empirical evidence that supports social exchange theory in organisational behaviour suggests that employees generally align their treatment of the organisation with the quality of treatment they receive. Consequently, it is particularly relevant for elucidating engagement outcomes in working environments.

2.2.2 Equity Theory

In 1965, Stacey Adams put out the Equity theory, which states that workers assess workplace fairness by comparing their own input-output ratio to that of their coworkers. Inputs consist of effort, talents, expertise, and commitment, while outputs include rewards, recognition, respect, and treatment from the organisation. Employees are motivated to maintain or improve their level of contribution when they perceive justice or equity. However, employees may experience disengagement, diminished motivation, and dissatisfaction when they perceive injustice.

Equity theory elucidates the impact of employee behaviour on workplace civility and participation as a result of perceptions of respectful treatment. Workplace civility is the embodiment of impartiality, respect, and equity among employees. Employees acknowledge equity in interpersonal relationships when they believe that they are regarded with respect and fairness in a manner that is consistent with that of their colleagues. This perception enhances their affective commitment and motivation toward the organisation, thereby increasing their engagement. Conversely, workplace incivility, which encompasses exclusion, favouritism, or disrespect, encourages the perception of injustice. Mowday (1991), noted that employees may reduce their effort or psychologically disengage from their work to restore equilibrium in response to perceived inequity. This may manifest as disengagement behaviours, low morale, and diminished commitment in organisational settings. Equity Theory effectively elucidates the influence of workplace civility on employee engagement by examining perceptions of equity. The likelihood of employees maintaining commitment, motivation, and active engagement in their job responsibilities is increased when they perceive impartiality in the workplace.

2.3 Empirical Review

Porath and Pearson (2013) conducted a study titled "The Influence of Workplace Civility on Employee Performance and Engagement in Organisations in the United States". The study's objective was to investigate how workplace civility affects performance results, job satisfaction, and employee engagement. The researchers, who comprised representatives from a range of industrial and service businesses throughout the United States, used a cross-sectional survey approach. The data were analysed using correlation analysis and descriptive statistics. The results indicated that personnel who were exposed to high levels of workplace civility reported improved engagement, increased job satisfaction, and superior performance, while those who encountered incivility exhibited withdrawal behaviours and decreased motivation. The research concluded that workplace civility is a critical predictor of organisational efficacy and employee engagement.

Cortina et al. (2001) conducted a study titled "Workplace Incivility and Employee Outcomes in Organisational Settings in the United States". The objective of the investigation was to investigate the influence of workplace incivility on the attitudes and behaviours of employees. Participants in the survey study were drawn from both public and private institutions. Regression analysis was used to examine the data. According to the results, workplace rudeness has a negative impact on job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and employee engagement. The study found that employees' motivation to perform their duties with diligence is significantly reduced by workplace incivility.

The research "Workplace Incivility and Employee Attitudes in Public Sector Organisations in the United States" was carried out by Reio and Ghosh (2009). The study's objective was to investigate the connection between workplace rudeness and outcomes linked to employee engagement. The study used a quantitative survey approach targeted at employees in the public sector. The data was analysed using correlation and regression techniques. The results indicated that rudeness at work considerably decreased employee engagement and increased inclinations to leave. The research concluded that employee engagement is significantly influenced by courteous relationships in the workplace.

The research "Work Engagement and Its Predictors among Nigerian Employees in Enugu State, Nigeria" was carried out by Ugwu et al. in 2014. "The study's aim was to investigate the elements that affect Nigerian workers' participation. Participants from the public and private sectors were included in the researchers' cross-sectional survey approach. The data was analysed using regression analysis. The results indicated that helpful and polite work settings greatly improved dimensions of employee engagement, including vigour, dedication, and assimilation. The study showed that organisational ambiance has a significant effect on employee engagement in Nigerian contexts.

Ogbebor and Iruonagbe (2017) conducted a study titled "Workplace Behaviour and Employee Performance in Selected Organisations in Edo State, Nigeria". The objective of the study was to examine the influence of workplace behaviour on employee engagement and performance. Personnel from selected organisations were incorporated into the descriptive survey methodology employed by the researchers. Correlation and regression analyses were implemented to analyse the data. The findings indicated that employee engagement and performance were significantly improved by respectful communication and healthy interpersonal relationships. The research concluded that workplace civility enhances employee productivity and organisational commitment.

Anitha (2014) conducted a study titled "Determinants of Employee Engagement in Organisations in India". The objective of the investigation was to identify the factors that influence employee engagement in organisational settings. Personnel from service organisations participated in the study, which implemented a survey design. Regression analysis was implemented to analyse the data. The findings suggested that employee engagement was significantly influenced by workplace connections, acknowledgement, and supportive communication. The research concluded that respectful workplace conditions are critical indicators of employee engagement and performance.

Lim and Lee (2019) conducted a study titled "Workplace Civility and Employee Well-Being in South Korean Service Organisations". The objective of the study was to examine the influence of workplace civility on the well-being of employees and the outcomes of their behaviour. Personnel from service-orientated organisations in South Korea were surveyed using a cross-sectional methodology by the researchers. Structural equation modelling (SEM) was implemented to analyse the data. The findings suggested that workplace civility significantly enhanced the psychological well-being of employees, reduced workplace tension, and promoted cooperative behaviour among employees. The research concluded that civility is a critical workplace asset that promotes positive employee attitudes and organisational unity.

Osibanjo, Adeniji, and Salau (2018) conducted a study titled "Workplace Civility and Employee Job Attitudes in Selected Manufacturing Firms in Lagos State, Nigeria". The objective of the study was to investigate the relationship between workplace civility and employee job views, including satisfaction and commitment. The descriptive survey research approach was implemented by the researchers, who included employees from selected manufacturing organisations. Correlation and regression analyses were implemented to analyse the data. The findings indicated that workplace civility significantly improved employee job satisfaction and organisational commitment, while incivility reduced productivity and motivation. The research concluded that the enhancement of employee attitudes in Nigerian organisations is contingent upon civic workplace conduct.

Harter, Schmidt, and Hayes (2002) conducted a study titled "Business-Unit-Level Relationship Between Employee Satisfaction, Employee Engagement, and Business Outcomes in the United States". The objective of the study was to examine the relationship between organisational performance outcomes and employee engagement. Utilising data from numerous organisations, the researchers implemented a meta-analytic research design. The findings suggested that productivity, profitability, customer satisfaction, and reduced attrition were all positively correlated with employee involvement. Based on their findings, employee engagement is a substantial predictor of organisational success in numerous industries.

Bakker and Demerouti (2008) conducted a study titled "Towards a Model of Work Engagement in Organisational Settings in Europe". The objective of the study was to examine the consequences and causes of employee engagement by employing the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) paradigm. The researchers implemented a theoretical and empirical review methodology, which was supplemented by survey data from European organisations. The findings indicated that employee engagement levels were significantly improved by employment resources, such as social support, recognition, and favourable workplace connections. The research concluded that organisational resources are essential for enhancing the vigour, dedication, and assimilation of personnel.

3. Methodology

This study used a cross-sectional research design, which entails gathering data from respondents at a singular moment to analyse the correlations among the variables being examined (Creswell, 2014). The study population comprises all small and medium enterprises (SMEs) operating in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State. 350 participants were chosen by the researcher using a purposive selection approach among 793 registered SMEs in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State. The instrument was distributed using the simple random sampling procedure. Data was gathered with a standardised questionnaire. The instrument's validity was confirmed by expert review to guarantee the clarity, relevance, and suitability of the questionnaire items. The instrument's reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which measured the internal consistency of the scale (Nunnally, 1978). The gathered data was examined using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) with the aid of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to ascertain the strength and direction of the correlations between the research variables.

4. Results and Discussion

Table 4.1 Questionnaire Administration and Retrieval Rate

Questionnaire	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Copies retrieved	319	86
Copies not retrieved/invalid	31	14
Total	350	100

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Interpretation

The questionnaire administration and retrieval rate showed a high level of response from the participants. Out of the 350 questionnaires distributed, 319 were properly completed and retrieved, representing 86%, while 31 questionnaires, representing 14%, were either not returned or invalid. The high response rate indicates adequate participation and provides sufficient data for reliable statistical analysis and the achievement of the study objectives.

4.2 Test of Hypotheses

In testing the hypotheses using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC), the SPSS Software version 25, was adopted.

H₀₁: There is no relationship between workplace civility and vigor

Table 4.2 Correlations between Workplace Civility and Vigor

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Correlations

			Workplace Civility	Vigor
Pearson's rho	Workplace Civility	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.672**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	319	319
	Vigor	Correlation Coefficient	.741**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	319	319

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

Source: spss windows version 25

Interpretation: The findings revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between workplace civility and vigor ($r = .672^{**}$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that respectful communication, supportive interactions, and courteous workplace relationships are positively associated with employees' energy, resilience, and willingness to exert extra effort toward organizational responsibilities. The strength of the relationship further indicates that workplace civility represents an important relational resource capable of sustaining employees' psychological energy within SMEs.

H₀₂: There is no relationship between workplace civility and dedication

Table 4.3 Correlations between Workplace Civility and Dedication

Correlations			Workplace Civility	Dedication
Pearson's rho	Workplace Civility	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.641**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	319	319
	Dedication	Correlation Coefficient	.641**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	319	319

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

Source: spss windows version 25

Interpretation: The findings showed a statistically significant positive relationship between workplace civility and dedication ($r = .641^{**}$, $p < 0.01$). This implies that respectful and fair workplace interactions are positively associated with employees' emotional attachment, commitment, enthusiasm, and sense of pride toward their work responsibilities and organizational goals. The result further suggests that workplace civility strengthens employees' psychological identification with organizational activities.

H₀₃: There is no relationship between workplace civility and absorption

Table 4.4 Correlations between Workplace Civility and Vigor

Correlations			Workplace Civility	Absorption
Pearson's rho	Workplace Civility	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.703**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	319	319
	Absorption	Correlation Coefficient	.703**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	319	319

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

Source: spss windows version 25

Interpretation: The findings revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between workplace civility and absorption ($r = .703^{**}$, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that respectful and supportive workplace environments are positively associated with employees' concentration, deep involvement, and

psychological immersion in work activities. The result further suggests that workplace civility may particularly influence employees' cognitive engagement and attentional focus within organizational settings.

4.3 Discussion

The findings of this study revealed that workplace civility significantly and positively related with employee engagement dimensions; vigor, dedication, and absorption among employees of SMEs in Bayelsa State. The findings suggest that workplace civility is a relational coordination mechanism through which organizations sustain attentional engagement, emotional commitment, and collaborative workplace functioning within relationally dependent organizational systems.

From the first hypotheses, the findings of the study revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between workplace civility and vigor ($r = .672$, $p < 0.01$) of SMEs in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State. The findings indicate that employees who encounter polite communication, courtesy, and helpful interpersonal interactions are more likely to exhibit elevated levels of energy, excitement, and tenacity in fulfilling their work tasks. The discovery aligns with the research conducted by Ugwu et al. (2014), Leiter et al (2011), Porath and Pearson (2013), as they indicated that supportive working environments favourably affect employees' vitality, resilience, and commitment to their work activities. This study suggests that where productivity is heavily reliant on employee commitment and teamwork, cultivating a culture of respect and politeness can distinctly improve workers' drive, resilience, and overall efficiency. The findings from the second hypotheses revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between workplace civility and dedication ($r = .641$, $p < 0.01$) of SMEs in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State. The result revealed that workplace civility plays a significant role in enhancing employees' sense of pride and dedication to their responsibilities. The finding aligns with the study conducted by Osibanjo et al. (2018), Anitha (2014) and Saks (2006), which revealed that workplace civility positively influenced employee commitment and job attitudes in Nigerian organisations. They noted that supportive workplace relationships and positive communication improved employees' commitment and willingness to contribute to organisational success. This study therefore reinforces previous empirical evidence that workplace civility is an important organisational factor for promoting employee dedication.

The third results from the third hypotheses revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between workplace civility and absorption ($r = .703$, $p < 0.01$) of SMEs in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State. The result revealed that workplace civility contributes significantly to improving employees' focus and cognitive engagement in the workplace. The finding aligns with the study conducted by Shuck and Wollard (2010), which found that positive workplace experiences significantly improved employees' involvement and attentiveness to work activities. Similarly, May et al. (2004) reported that supportive workplace conditions enhanced employees' psychological engagement and concentration, while Ugwu et al. (2014) observed that employees working in supportive organisational environments demonstrated greater focus and involvement in their responsibilities. This study therefore complements existing empirical evidence that workplace civility is a valuable organisational resource for enhancing employee absorption.

5. Conclusion

The study concludes that there is a positive and significant relationship between workplace civility and employee engagement of SMEs in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State. This showed that workplace civility positively influences employees' vigor, dedication, and absorption. Courteous interactions, courteous communication, and supportive interpersonal relationships boost workers' enthusiasm, dedication, and engagement in work-related activities, which in turn improves organisational performance and productivity.

6. Recommendations

Based on the evidence obtained from the analysis, the following recommendations were made:

1. Management of SMEs should encourage polite and respectful communication among employees to enhance employee strength.
2. Managers should consistently recognize and reinforce courteous behaviour to improve worker dedication and commitment.
3. Management should discourage disrespectful interactions amongst employees to reinforce positive work behaviours.

7. Suggestion for Further Studies

The scope of this study was limited to SMEs in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State; therefore, similar studies should be conducted in corporate organisations. workplace civility can also be expanded beyond a unidimensional construct to provide deeper insights into employee engagement.

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