



INFLUENCE OF PERCEIVED SUPERVISOR SUPPORT AND JOB AUTONOMY ON PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING OF COMMERCIAL BANK EMPLOYEES IN RIVERS AND BAYELSA STATES, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – *This study investigated the Influence of Internal Work Environmental factors, such as perceived supervisor support and job autonomy, on psychological well-being of commercial bank employees in Rivers and Bayelsa States, Nigeria*

Design/methodology/approach – *The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design and collected data from 265 bank employees using structured questionnaires. A blend of convenience and purposive sampling techniques was used to ensure relevant and diverse perspectives. Well-validated scales from prior studies were used to measure the constructs, rated on a five-point Likert scale. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was applied to verify construct validity, while Cronbach alpha confirmed internal*

consistency. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed to test the hypothesized relationships among the variables.

Findings – The results demonstrate that both job autonomy and perceived supervisor support significantly and positively affect employees' psychological well-being. Job autonomy was found to enhance feelings of control and intrinsic motivation, while supervisor support was instrumental in reducing stress and fostering a sense of organizational belonging.

Practical Implications – The findings suggest that banks in Rivers and Bayelsa States can promote employee psychological well-being by institutionalizing job autonomy across departments and actively integrating supervisory support practices. These interventions can help reduce burnout, enhance job satisfaction, and improve retention, thereby enhancing the psychological well-being of commercial bank employees in Rivers and Bayelsa States, Nigeria.

Originality/Value – This study contributes to the limited body of empirical research on workplace well-being within Nigeria's banking sector. It underscores the dual importance of structural (job autonomy) and relational (supervisor support) workplace resources in enhancing employees' well-being, in terms of employee mental health and performance outcomes.

Keywords: Employee Well-Being, Job Autonomy, Organizational Support, Perceived Supervisor Support, Structural Equation Modeling.

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1. Introduction

In today's dynamic and rapidly evolving work environment, organizations and employees alike face escalating challenges driven by globalization, technological advancements, organizational restructuring, and disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic. These transformations have led to heightened volatility and unpredictability in working conditions, necessitating greater adaptability and resilience at both the individual and

organizational levels (Federici *et al.*, 2019; Li *et al.*, 2020; Kniffin *et al.*, 2021). The increasing demands of modern workplaces have placed significant pressure on employees, often leading to heightened stress, reduced job satisfaction, and compromised psychological well-being, especially for employees in the banking sector. The banking sector, particularly in Nigeria, plays a pivotal role in economic stability by ensuring wealth distribution and financial security. However, despite its importance, employees in this sector frequently experience high levels of occupational stress, exhaustion, and burnout, adversely impacting their psychological well-being.

Studies indicate that bank employees are often subjected to excessive work demands, prolonged working hours, and intense performance expectations, which contribute to significant mental and emotional strain (Akingbola & van den Berg, 2019; Oruh *et al.*, 2021). The high-pressure work culture in Nigerian banks has been linked to employee disengagement, job dissatisfaction, and mental health challenges, ultimately affecting overall productivity and workplace morale (Oruh & Mordi, 2020). According to Bakker and de Vries (2021), prolonged exposure as a result of stressful work environments leads to chronic burnout, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a diminished sense of personal accomplishment. Similarly, a study by Karabay *et al.* (2022) found that work-related stressors, including excessive workload, unrealistic targets, and job insecurity, significantly impact the psychological resilience and well-being of employees in financial institutions. Furthermore, the absence of sufficient managerial support and organizational interventions have worsened these challenges which has also increased the likelihood of mental health deterioration among banking professionals (Owolabi *et al.*, 2023).

Recent studies have discussed the importance of nurturing a supportive work environment to mitigate these adverse effects. It has been found that organizations that prioritize job security, provide resources for mental health support, and encourage open communication tend to experience lower levels of employee stress and higher overall job satisfaction (Kim & Wang, 2021; Spreitzer *et al.*, 2021). Also, Ahmed *et al.* (2022) suggest that psychological well-being in the banking sector is influenced by the degree of autonomy, work-life balance, and perceived organizational support. Employees who lack control over their work schedules and feel unsupported by their organizations are more likely to experience elevated stress levels and decreased overall well-being. The detrimental effects of these conditions extend beyond individual employees, as organizations face increased absenteeism, reduced employee engagement, higher turnover rates (Schaufeli, 2021), and overall poor well-being.

Employee psychological well-being (PWB) is a major aspect of workplace dynamics, as it directly influences job engagement, job satisfaction, commitment, and overall organizational performance. Defined as an employee's overall mental, emotional, and cognitive state regarding their work environment (Diener, 2000; Ryff & Keyes, 1995), psychological well-being encompasses aspects such as emotional resilience, job-related stress management, and the ability to derive meaning from work (Wright, 2010). Several studies have examined the antecedents of employee psychological well-being and have consistently found that factors such as job autonomy and managerial support play crucial roles in enhancing well-being at work (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Kniffin et al., 2021). Research has also shown that employees with greater autonomy experience lower burnout rates and are more engaged in their roles, thereby positively contributing to organizational performance (Slemp *et al.*, 2018). Similarly, managerial support, which includes mentorship, recognition, and encouragement, has been identified as a critical factor in fostering a positive psychological work climate (Gilbreath & Benson, 2004; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Employees who perceive strong managerial support report higher levels of psychological well-being, commitment, and job satisfaction (Grawitch *et al.*, 2017).

While previous studies have established that job autonomy plays a crucial role in reducing stress and enhancing well-being (Slemp *et al.*, 2018; Deci & Ryan, 2000), there is limited industry-specific research focusing on commercial banks in Nigeria. The Nigerian banking sector is highly structured, hierarchical, and characterized by rigid policies that limit employee autonomy (Oruh & Mordi, 2020). Unlike industries such as technology or healthcare, where employees often have greater autonomy over their tasks and schedules, banking operations require strict adherence to policies and customer service protocols. Most studies on autonomy and well-being have been conducted in Western contexts (Gagne & Deci, 2005; Van den Broeck *et al.*, 2016), leaving a gap in understanding how autonomy and perceived supervisor support function within the Nigerian banking system. Hence, the objectives of the study are: (i) To examine the relationship between job autonomy and employee psychological well-being in commercial banks in Rivers and Bayelsa States. (ii) To analyze the relationship between perceived supervisor support and employee psychological well-being in commercial banks in Rivers and Bayelsa States.

2. THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

The Job Characteristics Theory (JCT), developed by Hackman and Oldham (1976), provides a foundational understanding of how specific job attributes shape employee motivation, engagement, and overall performance. The theory suggests that job design plays a crucial role in influencing psychological states, and enhanced workplace outcomes. According to JCT, five key job dimensions contribute to employees' intrinsic motivation: skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and job feedback, and among these dimensions, job autonomy is particularly influential in shaping employees' sense of responsibility and ownership over their tasks. When employees are granted greater autonomy, they develop a stronger sense of control over their work, which enhances motivation and engagement (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Studies (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Wang *et al.*, 2021) have consistently shown that autonomy positively correlates with job satisfaction, productivity, and reduced stress levels, and improved psychological well-being. Also, Social Exchange Theory (SET), originally proposed by Blau (1964) and later expanded by Emerson (1976), provides a framework for understanding workplace relationships. The theory suggests that interactions between employees and their supervisors are based on the principle of reciprocity. According to SEM, positive treatment by the employer fosters a commitment to reciprocate through increased effort and engagement. Perceived supervisor support (PSS) plays a pivotal role in shaping employees' psychological well-being by creating an environment where they feel valued and supported. Employees who perceive strong supervisor support tend to report higher levels of organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and well-being (Eisenberger *et al.*, 2002; Rhoades *et al.*, 2001). A supportive work environment that balances autonomy with supervisor guidance can enhance employees' ability to manage workplace challenges and improve overall psychological well-being. Research suggests that when employees experience both job autonomy and strong supervisor support, they are more likely to exhibit resilience, adapt to change, and engage in discretionary efforts that contribute to organizational success (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Van den Broeck *et al.*, 2016). Moreover, organizations that prioritize a combination of autonomy and supervisor support tend to experience lower turnover rates and higher employee retention, as workers feel both empowered and appreciated (Karatepe & Kilic, 2007).

- **Psychological Well-being**

Well-being is a multidimensional concept that involves individuals' experiences that shape their ability to function effectively in both their work and personal lives (Bandura, 1986). Over time, the growing influence of positive psychology has fueled an increasing academic and

professional interest in psychological well-being, leading to its exploration across multiple disciplines (Henn *et al.*, 2016; Hides *et al.*, 2016). Psychological well-being has resulted in two dominant theoretical perspectives: the hedonic and eudaimonic approaches. From the hedonic perspective, psychological well-being is viewed as a subjective experience centered on pleasure, happiness, and life satisfaction (Weiss *et al.*, 2016; Oprea *et al.*, 2018). It is often associated with high levels of positive affect and the presence of rewarding emotions. Hence, it is an outcome-oriented conceptualization of well-being. In the light of the hedonic paradigm, Currie (2001) defined employee well-being as a combination of both physical and mental health which emphasizes an individual's subjective experiences of happiness and job satisfaction (Henn *et al.*, 2016). Diener *et al.* (1985) further argued that hedonic well-being primarily revolves around positive emotions, fulfillment, and personal gratification.

Conversely, the eudaimonic perspective frames well-being as a lifelong process of self-realization, personal growth, and fulfillment of one's potential. Instead of focusing solely on emotional outcomes, this perspective highlights the importance of developing capabilities, achieving self-actualization, and engaging in meaningful activities (Díaz *et al.*, 2015; Berzonsky & Cieciuch, 2016; Disabato *et al.*, 2016; Urquijo *et al.*, 2016). In this study, however, our focus is on the hedonic perspective because it relates to job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Diener (2009) described employee well-being as a subjective experience that is related to happiness, fulfillment, satisfaction, and the ability to accomplish tasks effectively. Further, Ryan and Deci (2000) and Ryff (2018) reinforced this position and emphasized that employee psychological well-being is strongly tied to positive emotions and an individual's ability to derive joy from their work.

- **Job Autonomy**

The concept of job autonomy (JA) has long been a focal point in organizational psychology and human resource management, attracting extensive scholarly attention. It is widely recognized as a fundamental job characteristic that significantly influences employee motivation, performance, and overall well-being. Hackman and Lawler (1971), described JA as “*the extent to which employees have a major say in scheduling their work, selecting the equipment they will use, and deciding on procedures to be followed*” (p. 265). In essence, job autonomy refers to the level of freedom, independence, and discretion employees have in determining how they complete their tasks. This flexibility allows individuals to adapt their work processes to their strengths, preferences, and circumstances, leading to greater job satisfaction and engagement. Building on this perspective, Liu, Spector, and Jex (2005) further defined job autonomy as the degree of control a worker has over their immediate tasks and

scheduling. Similarly, Parker *et al.* (2020) see job autonomy as the extent to which employees have the freedom to determine how, when, and in what sequence they complete their tasks, while Deci *et al.* (2022) argued that job autonomy is not just about control but also about the capacity to align work tasks with personal and professional values. In this study, job autonomy (JA) is conceptualized as the degree of independence and self-direction that employees possess in structuring their workload, making task-related decisions, and managing responsibilities with minimal supervision. This autonomy not only enhances task efficiency and decision-making but also plays a crucial role in the promotion of psychological well-being by the reduction of workplace stress, increased intrinsic motivation, and improved overall job satisfaction.

- **Perceived Supervisor Support**

The role of supervisor support in shaping employee experiences and overall psychological well-being has been extensively examined in organizational research. Supervisor support is both tangible and intangible expressions of concern, guidance, and assistance aimed at enhancing employees' well-being, improving work-related competencies, and fostering career development (Kossek *et al.*, 2011; Rousseau & Aube, 2010). It involves behaviors such as addressing employee concerns, providing constructive feedback, guiding career growth, and facilitating skill development (Ng & Sorensen, 2008). According to Eisenberger *et al.* (2002), perceived supervisor support (PSS) refers to employees' belief that their supervisors value their contributions, genuinely care about their well-being, and are committed to supporting them. Supervisors act as key agents of the organization, tasked with directing, evaluating, and mentoring their subordinates (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986).

Consequently, employees often perceive the level of support received from supervisors as a reflection of the organization's overall commitment to their well-being and development (Levinson, 1965; Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986). For instance, when supervisors actively listen to employee concerns, communicate critical organizational decisions, and apply employee-centered policies (Dominguez-Falcon *et al.*, 2016; Karatepe & Kaviti, 2016), employees interpret these actions as signals of the organization's investment in their professional growth. As a result, supervisor support is instrumental in improving psychological safety in the workplace, where employees feel comfortable expressing concerns, sharing ideas, and seeking assistance without fear of negative repercussions (Edmondson, 1999; Newman *et al.*, 2017). Research also underscores that when supervisors offer consistent guidance, career coaching, and constructive feedback, employees demonstrate higher levels of job satisfaction and commitment (Agarwala *et al.*, 2014; He *et al.*, 2011; Jokisaari & Nurmi, 2009; Karatepe, 2014).

- **Job Autonomy and Psychological Well-being**

Literature has recognized consistent findings on the impact of autonomy on various outcomes among employees, including job satisfaction, motivation, creativity, and overall performance. For example, studies in organizational behavior and human resource management postulate that when employees have greater control over their work processes, decision-making, and task execution, they exhibit higher levels of engagement and commitment to organizational goals (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Auh *et al.* (2011) found that employees who enjoy some level of job autonomy view their workplace from a more positive perspective. JA is found to be related to higher job involvement (Hassan, 2014) and higher job satisfaction (Taylor & Westover, 2011). According to Saragih, (2011); Wang *et al.*, (2021), employees with higher autonomy will likely experience lower stress levels, reduced burnout, and greater job satisfaction compared to those in more rigid, controlled work environments. Also, job autonomy empowers employees with a sense of control over their work processes, which enhances intrinsic motivation and fosters a positive psychological state (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Furthermore, research in self-determination theory (SDT) highlights autonomy as a core psychological need that, when satisfied, contributes to higher levels of motivation, well-being, and job engagement (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Van den Broeck *et al.*, 2016). Based on these review this paper hypothesizes as follows:

H₁: There is no significant relationship between job autonomy and employee psychological well-being of Commercial Bank staff in Rivers and Bayelsa State in Nigeria.

- **Perceived Supervisor Support and Employee Psychological Well-being**

The influence of perceived supervisor support on employee well-being has been well-documented in organizational literature. Studies overwhelmingly report a strong positive relationship between PSS and perceived organizational support (POS), which in turn promotes employee well-being (Yoon & Lim, 1999; Rhoades *et al.*, 2001; Eisenberger *et al.*, 2002). Employees who perceive high levels of support from their supervisors experience lower stress levels, reduced burnout, and an increased sense of job security (Munn *et al.*, 1996; Hatton & Emerson, 1998). Supervisory support plays a crucial role in reducing workplace stressors and promoting psychological resilience. For example, Kalliath and Beck (2001) found that strong supervisor support significantly mitigates burnout and lowers employees' intentions to quit. Similarly, Munn *et al.* (1996) identified supervisor support as the strongest predictor of job satisfaction and retention. Moreover, when employees experience consistent supervisor

support, they are more likely to develop stronger emotional connections with their organization which reinforces their sense of belonging and loyalty (Herriot & Pemberton, 1997).

Conversely, a lack of supervisor support has been linked to adverse outcomes, such as decreased job engagement, increased workplace conflicts, and a higher likelihood of turnover (Hatton & Emerson, 1998; Karatepe & Kilic, 2007). Employees who feel unsupported by their supervisors often experience heightened stress and dissatisfaction, which ultimately undermines their psychological well-being and work performance (Newman *et al.*, 2011; Ng & Sorensen, 2008). While extensive literature underscores the positive relationship between perceived supervisor support and employee well-being, some studies present a nuanced perspective. For instance, Eisenberger *et al.* (2002) and Maertz *et al.* (2007) suggest that in some cases, excessive supervisory intervention may inadvertently lead to employee dependence, reducing their sense of autonomy and self-efficacy. Smith (2005) further notes that while supervisor support generally enhances retention, it may not always be a decisive factor in long-term career commitment, as employees may seek external opportunities for professional growth. Hence, this paper hypothesizes as follows:

H₂: There is no significant relationship between perceived supervisor support and employee psychological well-being of Commercial Bank staff in Rivers and Bayelsa State in Nigeria.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study focused on assessing the relationship between perceived supervisor support, job autonomy, and psychological well-being among bank employees in Rivers and Bayelsa States, Nigeria. A total of 265 bank employees participated in the study. To ensure the selection of respondents with relevant expertise and insights, the study employed a combination of convenience and purposive sampling techniques. This approach allowed the researchers to capture diverse perspectives while maintaining the relevance of the responses to the research objectives. Data collection was conducted through a structured questionnaire, which was carefully designed to measure the three key constructs of the study perceived supervisor support, job autonomy, and psychological well-being. Each construct was measured using well-established and validated scales from prior studies. The questionnaire adopted a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from “Negligible Extent” (1) to “High Extent” (5), allowing respondents to indicate the degree to which they experienced each of the measured variables.

Perceived supervisor support was measured using validated items adapted from Eisenberger et al. (1986, 2002), which have been widely recognized in organizational behavior research for assessing the degree to which employees feel supported, valued, and encouraged by their supervisors. Similarly, job autonomy was evaluated using established scales from Hackman and Lawler (1971) and Deci *et al.* (2022), which capture employees' perceptions of their independence and discretion in task execution, decision-making, and work scheduling. Psychological well-being, a crucial outcome variable in the study, was assessed using validated scales from Weiss et al. (2016), Oprea et al. (2018), and Henn et al. (2016), which focus on employees' subjective experiences of well-being, including job satisfaction, mental health, and emotional resilience.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the adapted scales, the items underwent expert review and pretesting before the full-scale implementation of the survey. Construct validity was further verified through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), which examined the factor structure of the measurement items. All items loaded significantly onto their respective constructs, demonstrating a satisfactory level of convergent validity. Furthermore, the internal consistency of the scales was confirmed using Cronbach Alpha coefficients, all of which exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). To examine the hypothesized relationships among perceived supervisor support, job autonomy, and psychological well-being, the study employed structural equation modeling (SEM). SEM is particularly valuable in organizational research, as it enables the testing of complex models with multiple dependent and independent variables while mitigating measurement errors (Hair et al., 2019).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 4.1: PLS-SEM Assessment Results of Measurement Model

Latent Variable	Indicators	Convergent validity Loadings f^2 >0.70	Indicator reliability >0.50	Internal consistency		
				Reliability AVE	Composite Reliability Cronbach's Alpha (CA)	Reliability coefficient
	JA1	0.814	0.663			

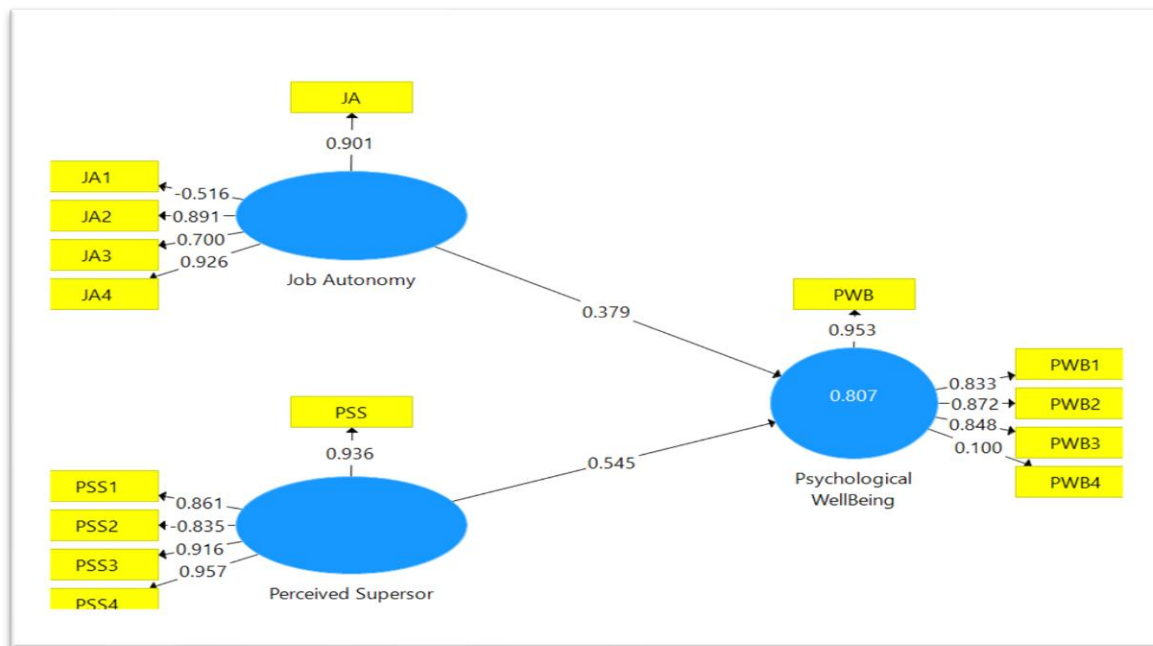
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	JA2	0.891	0.534	>0.50	>0.70	>0.70	
	JA 3	0.702	0.527	70-95			
JA	JA 4	0.926	0.611	0.644	0.825	0.851	0.82
	PSS1	0.936	0.530				
	PSS2	0.861	0.518				
PSS	PSS3	0.835	0.637	0.814	0.896	0.853	0.82
	PSS4	0.916	0.587				
	PWB1	0.833	0.570				
	PWB2	0.872	0.584				
PWB	PWB3	0.848	0.529	0.618	0.872	0.840	0.80
	PWB4	0.100	0.534				

Note: **JA** = Job Autonomy; **PSS** = Perceived Supervisor Support; **PWB** = Psychological Well-Being.

Source: SmartPLS 4.0., output on research data, 2025.

The results presented in Table 4.1 provide a comprehensive evaluation of the measurement model used in the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis. The measurement model demonstrated strong validity and reliability for the constructs of Job Autonomy, Perceived Supervisor Support, and Psychological Well-being. All factor loadings exceeded the 0.70 benchmark, which indicated a strong convergent validity, while indicator reliability surpassed the 0.50 threshold, affirming that each item explained a substantial portion of its construct's variance (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs were above 0.50, further supporting convergent validity (Chin, 1998). In terms of internal consistency, both Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha scores were above the recommended 0.70 level, confirming that the measurement instruments were reliable and suitable for analysis (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).



The path coefficient between Job Autonomy and Psychological Well-being ($\beta = 0.379$) indicates a positive and moderate relationship. This suggests that employees who perceive higher levels of autonomy in their roles tend to experience better psychological well-being. This outcome is supported by many scholarly submissions. For example, the self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) posits that autonomy is a core psychological need that contributes significantly to an individual's well-being. Likewise, employees with greater job autonomy tend to have a more positive outlook on their workplace (Auh *et al.*, 2011), experience higher job involvement (Hassan, 2014), and report greater job satisfaction (Taylor & Westover, 2011). Autonomy is also linked to reduced stress and burnout (Saragih, 2011; Wang *et al.*, 2021), and it improves a sense of control, and encourages intrinsic motivation, and psychological well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

On the other hand, the relationship between Perceived Supervisor Support and Psychological Well-being ($\beta = 0.545$) proved to exhibit a stronger positive influence. This indicates that support from supervisors plays a more substantial role in enhancing psychological well-being compared to job autonomy. This finding aligns with social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), which emphasizes that positive supervisory relationships can lead to improved emotional and psychological outcomes for employees. Also, previous research consistently shows a strong link between perceived supervisor support (PSS) which enhances employee well-being (Yoon & Lim, 1999; Rhoades *et al.*, 2001; Eisenberger *et al.*, 2002). High supervisor support reduces stress, burnout, and turnover intentions (Munn *et al.*, 1996; Hatton & Emerson,

1998; Kalliath & Beck, 2001), while also boosting job satisfaction, retention, and organizational loyalty (Munn et al., 1996; Herriot & Pemberton, 1997).

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Conclusions**

- i. Job autonomy influences psychological well-being of Commercial Bank Staff in Rivers and Bayelsa States, Nigeria.
- ii. Perceived supervisor support affects and psychological well-being of Commercial Bank Staff in Rivers and Bayelsa States, Nigeria.

- **Recommendations**

- i. Commercial Bank Staff in Rivers and Bayelsa States, Nigeria, intending to strengthen the psychological well-being of their employees should prioritize adoption of job autonomy.
- ii. Commercial Bank Staff in Rivers and Bayelsa States, Nigeria, aiming to enhance the psychological well-being of their employees should integrate supervisor support in their operations.

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