

EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING AND ITS EFFECT ON ABIA STATE UNIVERSITY, UTURU

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ABSTRACT

Irrespective of the enormous role played in implementing organization policies, employees are not often carried along in the decision making process. This paper has explored the impact of employees' participation in decision making on organizational performance. Abia State University, Uturu, Nigeria was taken as a focus of the study. Related literatures were also extensively reviewed on the two main variables of the study. 120 copies of the questionnaire were returned for the analysis from a sample 174 respondents from five Faculties. Correlation coefficient was employed to test the hypotheses. After the empirical tests of the three hypotheses, it was discovered that employees' participation in decision making enhances staff morale, improves productivity and performance. The study therefore, among others, recommended that; management should share relevant information to the employees in order to keep them abreast of the organizational decisions and activities; that unity among staff and unions should be promoted in Abia State University to increase harmony and to reduce unrest. Finally, employee training and development programs should be reinvigorated in order to enable the employees adopt, adapt and move with up-to-date directions of the increasingly globalized workforce.

INTRODUCTION

Employee participation in decision making has been a subject of discussion in management literature for many decades. Irrespective of the novel areas in the field of management, organizations have continuously seen the need to carry employees along in the performance of duties. The ever increasing demands by experts on giving voice to the geese that lay the golden egg has remained critical for both effective and efficient functioning and sustainability of businesses across the globe. Interestingly, there exist an avalanche of literature on the old ways of running organizations whereby employees are kept in the dark. Nowadays, it is glaring from available literature and theories that the 21st century firms are beginning to see the increasing importance of making sure that employees form part and parcel of decision making. That is, with organizational reforms, decision making is becoming more democratic. Managers now provide opportunities for participation of subordinates in decision making on the basis of their merit as it has been proved by several scholars to have improved organizational performance.

As rightly stated in the above paragraph, there are numerous evidences that shows organizational performance increases with the increase in employees' participation. For example, Slocum and Woodman (1998) stated that employees are more willing to get involved in decision making process like goal setting, problem solving activities which results in higher performance. Lee (2004) observed that the level of progress and participation is different in every organization, many organization delegate authority and organizational performance also increases. It can therefore be said that the reverse becomes the case where managers refuse to involve employees in decision making. Efforts shall continue in order to fully tap into the numerous benefits of employee participation in decision making. Some of these advantages have been identified in this study. The focus of this study including the target audience represents the nature as well as the opinion and responses of staff of the selected Faculties regarding the extent of their participation in the decision making process of the University. Decentralization has its benefits to the institution. The idea of concentrating the decision making power on the hands of a few individuals is no longer fashionable.

Organizations or institutions are confronted with challenges that result to the leaders attempting to seek solutions to the problems that befall them, in order to proffer positive changes the management has to embark on serious steps and take decisions that will avert the collapse of the institution. Such decisions made should be able to produce positive changes where the already laid down policies are no longer yielding fruits in the management of the institutions, without good policies laid down for a better change, the management will be heading to doom. The kind of decision made by the management, will determine the kind of change that will confront the institution. The kind of decision made by the management goes a long way to affect the institution, positively or negatively. Most often, those propelling the affairs of the institution work against new changes thereby running down the institution by the style of their management. Making right decisions in the management of institutions is very important. While wrong decisions

destroy the goals of the institutional objectives, such decision also increase the morale of the management or demoralize them, which might yield a positive or negative productivity, or output of the entire organization or institution (Ehule&Ehule 2020).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Problems associated with employee's decision making is ubiquitous. It is ubiquitous in the sense that it cuts across the breadth and depth of public and private sector organizations thereby increasing concerns for managers and employers. The myriad of problems ranges from the fact that qualified, reasonable, honest and company oriented individuals are not available especially at lower organizational level. Most Nigerian workers are still shut out when decisions concerning their job is being made. This has continued to be source of worry and nightmare to them. The opinions of workers rarely matter. Employees' advice and suggestion no matter how good are not or are rarely taken, and in most cases, the management still retains the right to make final decisions. Why is it always feared that workers are not competent and as a result will not contribute meaningfully in decision of the organization?

Regrettably, some organizations, another major problem stems from the fact that several firms are deceive workers tapping into their knowledge and in some other instances, they never make use of the suggestions and inputs of workers. In simple terms, it has continued to be a case of the manager making decisions alone and only passing it on to the employees. When this happens, it can simply be summed that the manager have no real or genuine intention towards the employees. Moreover, it is one thing to involve workers in the decision making process and another thing to allow them to be a part and parcel of the implementation. In some other covert situations, managers resort to groupthink and its attendant consequences thereby resulting in implementing unchallenged, poor-quality decisions that are detrimental to both organizational and employees progress.

Apart from time factor, other undesirable outcomes of participatory management model may include but not limited to high costs, inefficiency, indecisiveness and incompetence. The study as stated earlier is specifically set to achieve three objectives. First, to determine how employees can participate in decision making. Second, to evaluate the implication of employee participation in decision making on workers performance and thirdly to ascertain the challenges encountered by employees in the course of participating in decision making of the institution.

STATEMENT OF RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

H0₁: Employee do not actively participate in decision making of the institution

H0₂: There are no implications for employees' participation in decision making on work performance.

H0₃: Employees do not encounter any challenges in the course of participating in the institution's decision making.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study will be of importance and add to existing knowledge in four ways. First of all, it will provide much insight into the attitudes of staff of the University with regard to participation in decision making because it gives employees a feeling of sense of belonging and citizenship behavior. Secondly, it will attract qualified and committed applicants to the staff pool of the University, satisfying, and attracting qualified with sound physical and mental health thereby increasing productivity, reducing absenteeism and eliminating high turnover. This helps in retaining and nurturing the true believers who can deliver value to the organization. Thirdly, it will also reveal interesting insight into the importance of employee involvement and improve. Fourthly, it will serve as a repository of knowledge for further enquiries on the factors affecting employee performance of University workers and the Nigerian worker in general.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Employee Participation in Decision making

Employee participation in decision making can also be called employee involvement in decision making or simply employee voice. Ehule and Ehule (2020) examined the meaning and concept of decision-making, including the processes involved in decision-making. Decision-making is specifying the nature of a particular problem and choosing among the available alternatives in order to solve the problems that confront organizations. A decision is a choice made between two or more available alternatives. Decision-making equally involves all organizational processes that allow organization to make qualified choices between options in respect of operational decisions. Specifically, the work looked at meaning of decision-making, characteristics of decision-making, processes of decision-making, importance of decision-making, steps in decision-making, types of decision-making as well as rationality in decision-making. Also ex-rayed, are concepts of decision-making, leadership and decision-making and barriers to effective decision-making. The work concludes that, how much time a decision-maker has in which to make a decision is a crucial influence on the standard of decision-making. Therefore, managers must make most of the decisions in time

frame established by others, to avoid them making or taking decisions without gathering crucial facts and other possible solutions due to lack of time.

Decision-making generally involves selecting from among different alternatives. It plays an important role in motivation of employees in an institution. Decision-making involves making valid judgment or preference. It will therefore, be right to say that every decision made is to a large extent dependent on the judgment or preferences of the decision maker. According to Noah (2008) it is a special form of delegation which the subordinate gain greater control, greater freedom of choice with respect to bridging the communication gap between the management and the workers. It refers to the degree of employee's involvement in a firm strategic planning activities, a firm can have a high or low degree of employee participation. A high degree of involvement (deep employee participation in decision making) means that all the categories of employees are involved in the planning process. Conversely, a low degree of involvement in decision making (shallow employee involvement in decision making) indicates a fairly exclusive planning process (Barringer and Bleudron, 1999) which involves the top management only. A deep employee participation in decision making allows the influence of the frontline employees in the planning process.

Newstrom and Davis (2014), cited in Bhuiyan (2010), described participation as a mental and emotional involvement of people in group to influence the decisions that encourage them to contribute to group goals and share responsibility for them. It is also social process by which people become self-involved in an organization and want to see it work successfully. Employee participation can either be direct or indirect. In direct participation employees are involved in the activity or process. In the case of indirect participation, their involvement occurs through trade union(s), which are the employee representatives (Bendix, 2001). In the same vein Kester (2007) states that indirect participation is a situation where employees share in some or all decisions that are made in the workplace via their representatives.

Osaigbovo and Peretomode (2015) determined the impact of participation in decision making on job motivation and morale of lecturers in selected public Nigerian universities. The population for the study was drawn from seven (7) public Nigerian universities. The six hundred and eighty seven (687) lecturers sampled for the study were randomly selected using stratified random sampling technique. The instrument used for the collection of data was the questionnaire, which has a test re-test reliability of 0.86. The data collected were statistically analyzed using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), Z-test, Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient and multiple regressions, at 0.05 significant level. The findings of the study indicated significant differences in the levels of participation in decision making among lecturers of the South-South zone universities of Nigeria. It also revealed that lecturers' involvement in university's administrative decision making at any level had relationship with their job motivation and morale. It was recommended that Nigerian universities lecturers should be given adequate opportunity to participate in the decision making process at all levels, especially on matters affecting them.

ENHANCING PERFORMANCE THROUGH PARTICIPATION

Every organization seeks to improve and increase its performance level by providing opportunities to its workers (Weiss, 1998). Organizations must perform at Individual level to improve their performance of whole organization. All subdivision of the organization must perform well to achieve overall performance level (Ward, 2007). Organizations in all over the world have designed different processes to improve performance level from functional to employees and till organizational level to perk up overall organizational performance. Organizations are also required to manage performance of its employees and functions by setting goals and achieving the goals (Good, 2004). According to Dess and Robinson (1984) organizational performance can be enhanced by improving employee participation and management must have certain tools to improve employee participation in that sector.

The work of Nwosu, Okoh and Goodluck (2020) on employees' participation in decision making and employees' productivity was elicited to determine the extent to which employee participation in developing the mission statement, employee participate in policies and procedure formulation, and employees' participation in the bonus/benefit determination enhance employees' productivity. A total of 3901 populations were studied and 363 sample sizes was used to determine the effect of employees' participation in decision making on employees' productivity in Ebonyi state. The survey method was adopted; questionnaires and interviews were used for data collection. Descriptive statistics and Simple linear regression model was used. The findings show that there is a significant positive relationship between employees' participation in decision making and employees' productivity. The study, therefore, recommends among others that the management of the institutions especially academic institutions should continue to allow employees to participate in the decision-making process for increasing productivity.

Okwuagwu (2018), examined the relationship between employee involvement (EI) and organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) by exploring organisational structure (OS) as contextual variable influencing EI and OCB in the Nigerian telecommunication industry. Cross-sectional survey was used to obtain data from the

respondents. The accessible population of 800 comprised of the employees in the state branches of the selected telecom firms in the major cities of the five states of the South-East region of Nigeria. The Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table on sample size determination was used to get a sample size of 260. The five point Likert Scale was used in the questionnaire distributed to respondents while the Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient was used to identify and test the strength of a relationship between the sets of data. The partial correlation technique was used in testing the multivariate association between the predictor, the criterion and the contextual variable at a 95% confidence interval. The findings from our analysis indicate: that OS significantly moderates the relationship existing between EI and OCB in the telecommunication firms in Nigeria. The study therefore concluded that EI exists in the telecommunication industry in Nigeria, and these influence employees' OCB. The study recommends that the decentralized nature in the organizational structure of the telecommunication firms in Nigeria should be encouraged. This is because it has improved interpersonal relationship, communication, enhanced workers show of ingenuity, creativity as well as deeper display of organisational citizenship behaviour to the firms. Finally, by exploring the effect of contextual variable influencing EI and OCB, organizations can develop stronger organisational structure that can enhance their competitive advantage and ensure effectiveness.

Kuye and Sulaimon (2011), examined the relationship between employee involvement in decision making and firms' performance in the manufacturing sector in Nigeria. Data were generated by means of questionnaires to 670 manufacturing firms on employee involvement in decision making and performance variables. Responses from the survey were statistically analysed using descriptive statistics, product moment correlation, regression analysis and Z-test (approximated with the independent samples t-test). The results of the study indicate a statistically significant relationship between employee involvement in decision making and firms' performance as well as reveal a significant difference between the performance of firms whose employee involvement in decision making are deep and the performance of firms whose employee involvement in decision making are shallow. The findings also reveal the involvement of participating firms in employee involvement in decision making. The implications of this study include the need for manufacturing firms to demonstrate high level of commitment to employee involvement in decision making for performance enhancement.

Singh (2009) tested the influence of individual factors on employee participation in decision making (PDM) among Malaysian middle and top level managers in the private sector. The individual manager was the unit of analysis and the sampling procedure involved self-administered questionnaire surveys on 333 participants. The results revealed that trust is the only individual factor that has an influence on PDM. Self-efficacy has a moderating effect on the PDM-OCB relation. However, LMX did not have any moderating effect.

BENEFITS OF EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING

Although the impact of employee participation in decision making may vary, high level of employee participation have been found to be positively related to higher level of organizational performance, lower employee turnover and higher employees productivity.

Sashkin (1976) identified four corresponding outcomes of employees' involvement or participation in decision making:

1. Quality Improvement. Better information flow- and use- can clarify tasks goals, and bring about qualitatively better decisions.
2. Increase in employees' commitment and acceptance of decisions through a sense of "ownership" (having been involved in decision-making). This outcome increases the likelihood that goals will be effectively implemented.
3. Support of the participative approach and continuance of its effects overtime, due to learning through behavioural practice; this represents the behavioural process effect.
4. Increase adaptive capacity of the organisation. Development of shared norms and values may result into more effective use of inter-dependency relations among organisation members, through an organisational process based on collaboration, as opposed to win-lose conflict.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey method which uses questionnaire as an instrument of measurement to elicit data. A total of 25 questions were structured in 5 point Likert which was delivered to staff. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to measure the relationship or strength of association between the stated variables in the hypotheses at a 5% (0.05) and 1% level of significant.

Table 1: Distribution and Retrieval of Questionnaire

Faculty	No of questionnaire distributed	%	No of questionnaire Returned	%
Law	30	17.2	28	23.3
Environmental Studies	23	13.2	19	15.8
Education	25	14.3	20	16.6
Humanities and Social Sciences	64	36.7	27	22.5
Biological and physical Science	32	18.3	26	21.6
Total	174	100	120	100

Sources: Field Survey

Table 1 above shows the distribution of questionnaire to the five faculties. 174 copies were administered, while 120 copies were returned for the analysis.

TEST OF HYPOTHESES AND FINDINGS**Hypothesis One**

H₀₁: Employee's do not actively participate in decision making in Abia State University

H_{A1}: Employee's do actively participate in decision making in Abia State University.

$$r = \frac{n\sum xy - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{n\sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2} \sqrt{n\sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2}}$$

Thus,

$$t^* = \frac{r}{\sqrt{1-r^2/n-2}}$$

$$t^* = \frac{r}{\sqrt{1-r^2}}$$

The value r ranges from -1 to 1. Positive value near 1 indicates a monotonically increasing relationship whereas negative value nears -1 indicates a monotonically decreasing relationship.

Let Strongly Disagree be X and let Disagree by Y.

Table 2: Analysis of Hypothesis One

X	Y	X ²	Y ²	XY
6	14	36	196	84
7	10	49	100	70
10	9	100	81	90
15	10	225	100	150
15	9	225	81	135
$\sum = 53$	52	635	558	529

$$\sum x = 53$$

$$\sum y = 52$$

$$\sum x^2 = 529$$

$$\sum y^2 = 635$$

$$\sum xy = 558$$

$$n = 10$$

$$r = \frac{10 \times 529 - (53 \times 52)}{\sqrt{10 \times 635 - (53)^2} \sqrt{10 \times 558 - (52)^2}}$$

$$r = \frac{5290 - 2756}{\sqrt{6350 - 2809} \sqrt{5580.2704}}$$

$$r = \frac{2534}{\sqrt{3541} \times \sqrt{2876}}$$

$$r = \frac{2534}{59.5 \times 53.62} = r = \frac{2534}{3189.2}$$

$$r = 0.79$$

The correlation coefficient (r) 0.79 shows the extent of relationship between **x** and **y**. Since the calculated correlation coefficient (r) a positive value near 1. We therefore accept the alternative hypothesis that employees do actively participate in decision making and reject the null hypothesis that employees do not actively participate in decision making.

Hypothesis Two

H0₂: There are no implications for employees' participation in decision making on work performance.

HA₂: There are implications for employee participation in decision making on work performance.

Let strongly disagree be **x** and let disagree be **y**

Table 3: Analysis of Hypothesis Two

X	Y	X ²	Y ²	XY
8	15	64	225	120
6	0	36	0	0
8	7	64	49	56
18	5	324	25	90
14	11	196	121	154
Σ = 54	38	684	420	420

$$\begin{aligned}\sum x &= 54 \\ \sum y &= 38 \\ \sum x^2 &= 684 \\ \sum y^2 &= 420 \\ \sum xy &= 420 \\ n &= 10\end{aligned}$$

$$r = \frac{n\sum xy - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{n\sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2} \sqrt{n\sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2}}$$

Substituting, we have

$$r = 10 \times 420 - (54) \times (38)$$

$$r = \frac{10 \times 420 - (54) \times (38)}{\sqrt{10 \times 684 - (54)^2} \sqrt{10 \times 420 - (38)^2}}$$

$$r = \frac{4200 - 2052}{\sqrt{(6840 - 2704) \times (4200 - 1444)}}$$

$$r = \frac{2148}{\sqrt{4130 \times 2765}}$$

$$r = \frac{2148}{\sqrt{64.3 \times 52.5}}$$

$$= \frac{2148}{3375.8}$$

$$r = 0.63$$

The correlation coefficient (R) 0.63 means that there is a High degree of relationship between the variables, **x** and **y**. Since the correlation coefficient (r) 0.63 is a positive value near (1) one which indicate an increasing relationship between **x** and **y** therefore we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis which implies that there is a high degree of employee participation in decision making on work performance.

Hypothesis Three

H0₃: There are no challenges encountered by employee in the course of participating in decision making.

HA₃: There are challenges encountered by employee in the course of participating in decision making.

Let Strongly Agree be **x** and let agreed be **y**

Table 4.5.6: Analysis of hypothesis three

X	Y	X ²	Y ²	XY
18	10	324	100	180
17	2	289	4	34
20	0	400	0	0
22	5	484	25	110
25	1	625	1	25
$\Sigma = 102$	118	2122	130	349

$$\begin{aligned}\Sigma x &= 102 \\ \Sigma y &= 18 \\ \Sigma x^2 &= 2122 \\ \Sigma y^2 &= 130 \\ \Sigma xy &= 349\end{aligned}$$

$$r = \frac{n\Sigma xy - (\Sigma x)(\Sigma y)}{\sqrt{n\Sigma x^2 - (\Sigma x)^2} \sqrt{n\Sigma y^2 - (\Sigma y)^2}}$$

Substituting, we have

$$r = \frac{10 \times 349 - (102 \times 18)}{\sqrt{10 \times 2122 - (102)^2} \sqrt{10 \times 130 - (18)^2}}$$

$$r = \frac{3490 - 1836}{\sqrt{21220 - 10404} \sqrt{1300 - 324}}$$

$$r = \frac{1654}{\sqrt{10816} \sqrt{976}}$$

$$r = \frac{1654}{\sqrt{104 \times 31.2}}$$

$$r = \frac{1654}{\sqrt{3244.8}}$$

$$r = 0.51$$

The correlation coefficient (R) 0.51 shows that there is a relationship between the variables (X and Y). The correlation coefficient (r) 0.51 is a positive value near 1 which indicates an increasing relationship. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis that there are challenges encountered by employees in the course of participating in decision making.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

A look at the outcome of the tests from hypotheses one to three clearly indicate that employees' participation in decision making enhances organizational performance which in turn improves overall organizational productivity. That notwithstanding, the study outlined some of the challenges which employees encounter as they take part in decision making of the institution. It asserted that lack of employee's participation in decision making is responsible for low performance in the organization. From the analysis of data collected it was equally witnessed that performance would be high when employees actively participate in decision making in the organization.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On a note of finality, it is evidenced that the importance of employees' participation in decision making and organizational performance cannot be overemphasized. This is because it increases employee commitment. This therefore implies that the staff of Abia State University as well as other educational institutions in Nigeria and beyond should involve their employees in decision making in order to enhance overall performance and at the same time give a sense of belonging as well as self-worth and finally boost the morale of staff.

Decision making should not be wishy washy in approach. Rather it must be objective. On that not, the study recommends that; decision making process should be systematic and clearly spelt out for smoother implementation employees. There is need for increased collaboration between management and staff for improved work atmosphere devoid of rancor and suppression. The study also recommends that management need to increase their interaction and discussions with staff. Finally, employee suggestion schemes and attitude surveys should be implemented to serve as an opportunity for staff to air their views especially on matters pertaining to their welfare and other conditions of service to the institution.

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