EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY

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Abstract

This study was aimed at the assessment of the relationship between employee participation and organizational productivity. The work focus is to determine the impact of employee consultation, employee involvement, and employee delegation on organizational productivity. Important theoretical and empirical literature was examined. This work is based on democratic participatory theory. This study concluded that employee participation in decisions had a positive and significant effect on organizational productivity. The study recommends, among others, that employees should be allowed to make a contribution to policy development as they play a major role in policy implementation and this, among others, will increase organization productivity through employee delegation.

Keywords: Employee Participation and Organizational Productivity
INTRODUCTION

In the past two decades, we have witnessed dramatic advancements in technologies, changes in demography, competition and adjustments in cultural trends. These results give birth to the need for employees’ flexibility, higher qualifications, and skills to secure employment in organizations from that time. Before this time, employees were only seen and not heard in issues concerning their schedules of duty in organizations, but recently, in an effort to promote organizational efficiency, employee participation has been an area of academic concern and recent interest (Lawleg, 2012).

Workers involvement is all about creating an enabling environment in which individuals can have an impact on actions and decisions that influence productivity in their occupation. This makes the management team more proactive in attending to the needs of workers who are considered the organization’s greatest asset. Management researchers have mentioned (cited) many benefits of involving workers in company’s initiatives. They include, enhanced ability in managerial decision-making, positive attitude to work, better employees’ welfare, lower operational cost through reduction of waste, high performance of employees across all section of businesses (Jones, Klami & Kauhanen, 2010). These benefits were further summarized into motivation, commitment, creativity, empowerment and job satisfaction (Light, 2004).

Participation in corporate management initiatives motivates workers to deliver quality services to customers and improve organizational productivity (Bendix, 2010). Carson (2005) concerned (believes) that an average worker learns under proper conditions and that through proper leadership, management motivates employees and makes them more effective. Contingent on leadership styles are the strong influences on employees towards higher corporate productivity. A participation leadership creates benefits for an organization and its workers, as involvement improves productivity of a company and lowers role conflict, role uncertainty, absenteeism and employees’ turnover (Mendes & Stander, 2011). A high rate of workers turnover is a bit (huge) cost to organizations running in millions of dollars annually through reduction in productivity (Grobler, Varnich, Elbert, Carnrell & Hatifed, 2006). The complexity and interdependent nature of modern businesses has made participatory governance in the corporate organizations the open door to their success and survival. New organizations are unable to be managed successfully by the few individuals in authority.

Currently, with the arrival of the theories of "participative management" and with increasing recognition of employees' input, workers frequently have valuable contributions to make beyond the acceptable limits of their normal schedules. Many corporate organizations are currently evolving to engage workers more than ever in decision making. The worker, on the other hand, expects to be asked how he feels about his work and what his ideas are on how best to carry out particular tasks.

Objective of the Study

The purpose of this paper was to examine the potential of employee participation in decision making, towards enhancement of organizational productivity. The specific objectives of study are to:

i. Establish how employees’ consultation impacts organizational productivity.
ii. Examine the influence of employees’ involvement on organizational productivity.
iii. Determine the effect of employee delegation on organizational productivity.
iv. Examine the effect of employee commitment on organizational productivity.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Conceptual Review

Concept of Employee Participation

Workers participation can be defined as a process of involving and empowering workers to use their input towards creating value and improving organizational productivity (Sofijanova & Chatleska, 2013). Employee involvement also means direct participation or engagement of employees towards applying ideas, expertise, and efforts on solving organizational problems and achieving its goals or objectives. According to Beteman and Crant, (2011) the term participation include people’s involvement in decision making processes, in carrying out programs, their taking part in the benefits of growth and involvement in efforts to evaluate. The idea of worker participation suggested a practice, which grants employees considerable opportunity to be call for in decision-making further on the instant borderline of their job (David, 2009). According to Westhuizen (2010), employee participation in his definition is the totality of forms, that is directly or indirectly involvement of individuals and groups to contribute to the decision making process. To Beardwell and Claydom (2007) employee participation can be defined as the dissemination of power between employer and worker in decision making processes, either by means of direct or indirect involvement. In inclusion, worker participation also has to do with employee involvement in decision making at the organization (Busck, Rudsen & Lind, 2010). Employee participation stands for the amalgamation of task-related practices, which focus at magnifying employee sense of involvement in their organization and their commitment to the wider workplace (Bhatti & Mawab, 2011).

Worker participation in decision making pertains to employees taking part in decision making (PDM). That is to say, shared decision making in the work environment (Mitchell, 2003). According to Awah (2008), it is an exceptional way of allocating in which the subordinate obtains considerable control and additional freedom to make decisions within their job responsibilities while simultaneously creating a communication gap between the leadership and the employees. It refers to workers' involvement in the company’s strategic planning activities.

It is possible for an organization to have different levels of worker involvement, which indicates that corporate organizations have all levels of workers that are involved in the planning process, but in some companies, only top leadership will take part in the planning process. A high level of worker involvement in decision making enables the frontline worker to interact directly with customers (Barringer & Leudorn, 2009). McFarland (1968) brought it to our understanding that the foundation of participation decision making is based on the firm philosophy and leadership style and in the overall workplace environment. The company’s environment, as it was used by McFarland, involves people, laws, economic and market conditions, and technology.

Workers involvement in decision making is was to do with dissemination of decision making in the work situation (Mitchell, 2010). Locke and Schweiger (2010) in their definition stated that; it is a joint decision making’ between a leader and subordinates. Noah (2008) define it
as a special form of delegation in which the subordinate is given greater control, greater freedom of choice with regard to closing the communication gap between the management and the employees. Its reference is to the degree of workers participation in a company’s strategic planning activities. It is possible for a company to have a high or low level of worker participation. A high level of involvement (worker participation in decision making) means that all classes of workers are involved in the planning process.

**Decision Making**

Barnard attaches great importance to the system of decision making for the functioning of an organization. He defines decision as acts of individual which are the result of deliberation, calculation, and thought involving the ordering of means to ends. Organizational decisions are decisions dominated by organizational purpose. Hence, Barnard argues that organizational decisions are best made at communication centres by executives who specialize in organizational decision-making. Organizational decisions, in contrast to personal decisions, are also the product of logical thought. This does not mean that organizational decisions are positive. Factual premises and reasoning may be faulty. But Barnard argues that the logical processes of discrimination, analysis, and choice are required.

Decision making entails choosing an appropriate action or set of actions to manipulate the strategic factors. Once a strategic factor has been identified and it has been decided what action is to be taken with it, the organizational purpose is reduced to a more specific level, and a search is instituted for a new strategic factor and a new decision process is initiated. Thus the opportunistic element of decision-making consists of constructing means-ends, chains in which purpose is defined and redefined with increasing degrees of specificity and selecting means to accomplish the purposes of the organization.

**Organizational Productivity**

Productivity is a quantification or computation between input and outputs. Inputs are the quantity of resources such as human resource, money, time, physical, technological and effort spent working in the company, while outputs are the result. If the inputs are equivalent to the outputs, the employee is considered productive. When the companies are productive, they achieve more in a given amount of time. In turn, efficiency saves their organization money in time and labour. When workers are fruitless, they take more time to complete projects, which cost employee’s more money due to the time lost (Ikeanyibe, 2009). The significance of higher productivity of the workers in manufacturing company cannot be exaggerated, which include the following: higher incomes and profit; Higher earnings; Increased supplies of both consumer and capital goods at lower costs and lower prices; Ultimate shorter hours of work and improvement in working and living conditions; strengthening the general economic foundation of workers (Nwachukwu, 2008).

The survival of any company is anchored on productivity, and its importance cannot be overemphasized. It is the desire of every company to be productive because productivity forms the principal essence for which every organization exist. To achieve or improve productivity has led many organizations into constant reshuffling practice. This is in agreement with Simon (1957) when he rightly noted that “the issue of productivity has been instrumental to most repositioning exercises that go on from time to time in many organizations”. In fact productivity has often become the most central, contentious and analytical issues in all organizations, be it public or private. Productivity has to do with the actual output per unit of labour. It is strong operator of international capital flows. Meneze (2006) defined productivity as the employee’s ability to produce work or good and services
according to the expected standards set by the employers, or beyond the expected standards. Productivity is calculated by comparing total amount of output to the total amount of input used to produce this output (Bojke, 2012).

**Theoretical Review**

This work is harboured on Democratic participatory theory. Democratic participatory theory emphasizes on conditions which are crucial for effective participation and functions performed by participation to the individual and society. For instance, Rosseu (1956) argued that through participation in decision making, the individual’s sense of freedom is increased since it gives the worker a very real degree of control over the course of his life and structure of his environment.

Again, it serves to increase the value of individual freedom by enabling him to be his own master. Mills (1965) sees the industry as an area where the individual could gain experience in the management of the collective just as he could in government.

The theory perceived the political ground as a kind of market place in which individuals always try to maximize the benefits and minimize losses they could gather from the political process. It presumes that man is self-centered in the sense that each participant would be motivated by the desire to protect or increase his own personal interest. The theory assumes that increased participation is likely to increase the feeling of efficiency that ordinary citizens possess. This assists to increase the potential so that their activity can have an effect on public policy and lead to a greater sense of control over their communal lives. In essence, greater participation in one sense of life leads to greater participation in other spheres, i.e., the workplace.

**Empirical Review**

Foregoing studies have differing views on the relationship connecting employee participation and organizational productivity. For example, Dede (2019) looked into the relationship between worker participation in decision making and organizational productivity among staff in cross Rivers State Board of Internal Revenue, Calabar. Motivation theory and qualitative data collection approach were employed. The simple and purposive sampling techniques were used to obtained a sample of 80 respondents for study, the questionnaire consisting of 40 questions on the various employee participation scenarios and an interview were administered. Discovery from the work show that when workers participate in decision making implementation becomes easy, and crates a good working environment, increases commitment and satisfaction on decisions taken and also increases employee’s moral since the fell recognized and as part of the team in the organization and the direct consequence of all this improved productivity. The paper recommended that employees should be given the necessary skills and adequate training needed in order to promote creativity and innovation in decision making and work attitude as this enhances organizational productivity.

Anthony (2017) looked into the results of workers’ commitment on organizational performance in Eravenpatru Divisional Secretariat in the district of Batticaloa, Sri Lanka. The three commitments (Affective, Normative, and Continuous) have been taken as independent variables and organizational performance as the dependent variable. Both descriptive and explanatory research methodologies were adopted in this study. A five point Likert-Type scaled questionnaire was constructed and administered among selected staff of Eravurpatru Divisional Secretariat. The result of the study indicates that the Employees’ Commitment (Affective, Normative, Continuous) are significantly related to organizational
Performance in Eravurpatru Divisional Secretariat. The research findings reveal that there exists positive relationship between the three commitments and organizational performance. It has also been proved from the result that there exists strong correlation between the three independent variables and organizational performance. These outcomes in turn are associated with guiding the top management for working towards increasing employees’ commitment level, and the management should hire employees who are likely to become linked to the organization, this shall have a great impact and take the organization towards promising competitive edge.

Umar (2019) examined the relationship between employee’s participation in decision making on organizational performance. A worker is also referred to as an employee. An employee is an individual who works part-time or full-time under a contract of employment, whether oral or written, express or implied, and has recognized right and duties. Therefore, an employee is hired for a specific job or to provide labour and who works in the service of someone else referred to as the employer on the other hand, an organization is an entity comprising multiple people. Such as an institution or an association that has a particular purpose. A pilot study requires a range of few respondents (10-30), it was used by picking respondent at random, and the data collected were analysed using tables and percentages. The research work has found out that involving employee in decision-making is very vital and important in achieving the high peak in performance of an organization. In addition, employee’s participation in decision making positively affect their morale and enhances productive efficiency in the organization. Employee participation in decision-making in an organization influence them positively by making them give in their very best to the growth and development of the organization. However, employee’s nonparticipation in decision making in an organization, can result to conflict between management and employees.

Harpect (2019) examined the impact of employee participation in decision making on organizational productivity. Three objectives were raised which included: To assess the impact of employee participation in management decision making in EMENITE PLC, to investigate the impact of employee participation in management decision on productivity of the organization, to make recommendation based on the research finding. In line with these objectives, two research hypotheses were formulated and two null hypotheses were posited. The total population for the study is 200 staff of EMENUTE PLC, Lagos State. The researcher used questionnaires as the instrument for the data collection. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. A total of 133 respondents made of human processing engineers, electricians, senior staff and junior staff were used for the study. The data collected were presented in tables and analyzed using simple percentages and frequencies. Employee participation in decision making has been found to have favourable effects on employee attitude, commitment and productivity, even also on the efficiency of the manager. Thus participative management should be seen as an inevitable tool in any organization, both public and private. However, before this could be done or undertaken, a thorough examination of the organization policy should be looked into and amended to reflect this. In this study, some recommendations have been made to increase the importance and benefits of employees’ participation in decision making and its recognition.

Oyebanji (2018) examined the influence of employees’ participation in decision making on organization productivity with particular reference to Ladoke Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH) Teaching Hospital, Ogbomosho, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Purposive random sampling technique was used to select Ladoke Akintola University of Technology Teaching Hospital, Ogbomost Oyo State, Nigeria, while simple random
sampling method was used to select two hundred and five (205) respondents. Data were sourced via a structured questionnaire and frequency, percentage, means, standard deviation and linear regression analysis were employed to analyze the data. Results reveal that both direct participation and representative participation have positive and significant impact on organizational productivity. Furthermore, results indicate that level of employees’ participation in decision making in Ladoke Akintola University of Technology Teaching Hospital, Ogbomoso is very low due to unwillingness of management to share decision-making with employees. The study therefore concludes that employees’ participation in decisions making is an alternative paradigm to organization productivity.

Involvement on Organizational Productivity

Glew, O’ Leary-Kelly, Griffin, and Feet (1995) defined employee involvement as a conscious and intended effort by individuals at a higher level in an organization to provide visible extra-role expanding opportunities for individuals or groups at a lower level in the organization to have a greater voice in one or more areas of organizational performance. Employee involvement includes four elements, namely power (i.e. providing people with enough authority to make work related decisions), information (i.e. timely, access to relevant information), knowledge and skills (i.e. providing training and development programmes), and rewards (i.e. providing intrinsic or extrinsic incentives for involvement) (Cummings & Worley, 2008; Lawler, 1986).

Interestingly, keeping in mind that quality is an indicator of productivity, Geralis and Terzoprslo (2003) found that workforce empowerment practices that promoted employee autonomy substantially improved service quality in banks. Schiemann (1987) discussed how rewards determined by compensation and benefit policies could have a sizeable impact on a number of productivity indicators. A meta-analysis by Guzzo, Jettee, and Katzell (1985) found that training and goal-setting, which encompass knowledge and skills, and information respectively, where the intervention programs with the most powerful effects on productivity. In general, results of their meta-analysis revealed that participative management had quite positive effects on output (Sashicin & Burke, 1987).

Employee involvement has long been seen as an important aspect of organizational life, and a key to achieving increased organizational effectiveness (Shadur, Kienzle, & Rodwell, 1999). The authors mentioned numerous varying definitions and conceptualizations of the construct and proposed that three factors (i.e., communication, teamwork, and participation in decision-making) accounted for the majority of processes and programs used in the field of involvement. Boxell and Macky (2009) stated that a high-involvement goal implied making better use of employee involvement, then, is a broad term, which covers an extremely broad range of concepts (Collins, 1994). Therefore, it is important to delineate the boundaries of this manuscript.

Primary focus is placed on employee involvement as described by Lawler (1986), and the concept is discussed within the confines of human resource (HR) practices that constitute a high-performance work system (HPWS). This decision was made because the practices do provide ample insight about what matters to organizations and what culture they support. HPWS consists of work practices that lead in some way to superior organizational performance (Boxall & Macky, 2009). The authors further described work practices as being affiliated with the way the work itself is organized, including its normal structure and associated opportunities to engage in problem-solving and change management regarding work processes. They also discussed the link between involvement and commitment as firms
that invested in high involvement work practices and processes had better economic performance, including higher productivity, in conditions of low labour turnover. Thus, these work practices that encourage employee involvement can potentially interact with organizational commitment, as well as impact organizational productivity, which, as aforementioned, is a performance indicator.

**Workers Delegation and Consultation on Company’s Productivity**

Workers consultation and delegation has been recognized to encourage organizational commitment, workers job contentment, and make better individual productivity which give on to organizational performance. Absence of workers consultation and delegation in decision making, either singly or through representatives, in a company has been recognized as the crucial factor that keep in existence strive and lack of commitment of organizational employees. This has resulted in loss of lives in the organization and poor productivity.

Organizations are confronting serious competitive pressures and rapidly changing markets. The change mainly require newly discovered trend and technologies, among other factors that make companies look for ways to become some more flexible, adaptive, and competitive. Later on, organizations are consistently very curious in their constant search for competitive policies to gear up their performance (Sighi, 2009).

Secondly, similar to other HR policies and practices, direct involvement influence employee way of thinking which in turn support workers behavior that is favourable for organizational productivity such as, reduced turnover and absenteeism, improved productivity and product quality (Mutua et al 2012). Current finding endorse the assumed relationship; Torka, Sehgyns, and Looise (2010) found direct participation is significantly connected to affective organizational commitment, and Meyer et al (2002) mater-analysis show that this form of commitment mightily, impact worker health and wellbeing, turnover, absenteeism as well as task and extra-role performance. These end result eventually have influence on the organizational productivity.

Subsequent to the above literature on the relationship between consultative and delegation participation, this study concentrated on determining the presumptions by research that by listening to employee needs through delegation and consultative participation, only at the same time of meeting their needs will desired outcomes be gained (Bruson, Charlwaood, & Forth, 2006; Gollan, 2003; Torka et al , 2010). The current body of knowledge is never enough in interpreting particularly the relationship between employee consultation and delegation on performance in organization.

Delegation and consultative participation can likely come into contact with all employees directly in relation to their work, task, work organization and working conditions, such participation is powerfully contingent on a voluntary management decision and can be seen as HRM – practices (Kuye & Sulaimon, 2011). In spite of the vast amount of research on the performance and outcome of HRM – practices, very small work has been done to throw light on the contribution of delegation and consultative participation to organization productivity. The EPOC (European Foundation for Improvement of Living and Working Conditions Group (1977) showed it was valuable to investigate this relationship.

**Effect Employee Commitment on Organizational Productivity**

Commitment represents the strength of an individual’s identification with, and involvement in, an organization. It is a concept that has played an important part in HRM philosophy. As
Guest (1987:503) suggested, HRM policies are designed to maximize organizational integration, employee commitment, flexibility and quality of work’. Beer et al (1984:20) identified commitment in their concept of HRM as a key dimension because it can result not only in more loyalty and better performance for the organization, but also in self-worth, dignity, psychological involvement, and identify for the individual’.

Commitment refers to attachment and loyalty. It is associated with the feelings of individuals about their organization. The three characteristics of commitment identified by Mowday et al (1982) are:

1. A strong desire to remain a member of the organization
2. A strong belief in and acceptance of the values and goals of the organization.
3. A readiness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization.

Appelbaum et al (2000) rephrased this definition as organizational commitment is a multidimensional construct that reflects a worker’s identification with the organization (loyalty), attachment on the organization (intention to say), and willingness to expend effort on the organization’s behalf (discretionary effect). An alternative, although closely related definition of commitment emphasizes the importance of employee positive behaviour in creating commitment. These features of behavior are important in binding individuals to their actions: the visibility of the acts, the extent to which the outcomes are irrevocable, and the degree to which the person undertakes the action voluntarily. Commitment, according to Salencik (1977), can be increased and harnessed to obtain support for organizational and individual interests through such plogs as participation in decisions about action.

The Importance of Commitment: The importance of commitment was highlighted by Walton (1985a). His theme was that improved performance would result if the organization moved away from the traditional control-oriented approach to workforce management, which relies upon establishing order, exercising control and achieving efficiency. He proposed that this approach should be replaced by a commitment strategy that would enable workers to respond best – and most creatively – not when they are tightly controlled by management, placed in narrowly defined jobs, and treated like an unwelcome necessity, but, instead, when they are given broader responsibilities encouraged to contribute and helped to achieve satisfaction in their work’ (ibid: 77).

A commitment strategy sounds inelastic (‘the American dream’ as Guest, 1990 put it) but it does not appear to be a crude attempt to manipulate people to accept management’s values and goals, as some have suggested. In fact, Walton did not describe it as being instrumental in this manner. His prescription was for a broad HRM approach to the way in which people are treated, jobs are designed and organizations are managed. He believed that the aim should be to develop (mutuality’ a state that exists when management and employees are interdependent and both benefit from this interdependency. The importance of and its relationship to commitment was spelt out by Walton (1985b:64) as follows:

The new HRM model is composed of policies that promote mutuality – mutual goals, mutual influence, mutual respect, mutual rewards, and mutual responsibility. The theory is that policies of mutuality will elicit commitment which in turn will yield both better economic performance and greater human development.

But a review by Guest (1991); of the mainly North American literature, reinforced by the limited UK research available, led him to the conclusion that: High organizational
commitment is associated with lower labour turnover and absence, but there is no clear link to performance. Swailes (2002) confirmed that despite the best efforts of researchers the evidence for a strong positive link between commitment and performance remains.

Some commentators have asserted that commitment is a distinct although closely linked entity. As cited by Buchanan (2004), the US Corporate Executive Board divides engagement into two aspects of commitment: rational commitment, which occurs when a job serves employees’ financial, developmental, or professional self-interest; and emotional commitment, which arises when workers value, enjoy and believe in what they do and has four times the power to affect performance as its more pragmatic counterpart. The Corporate Executive Board (2004) indicated that engagement is the extent to which employees commit to some work or something in their organization, how hard they work, and how long they stay as a result of that commitment. Wellins andconcelman (2005) suggested that to be engaged is to be actively committed. And Macey and Schneider (2008) observed that:

Organizational commitment is an important facet of the state of engagement when it is conceptualized as positive as positive attachment to the large organizational entity and measured as a willingness to exert energy in support of the organization, to have personal identification with the organization. Robson et al. (2004) suggested that the closest relationship of commitment to engagement was ‘affective commitment, i.e. the satisfaction people get from their jobs and their colleagues and their willingness to go beyond the call of duty for the sake of the organization’. Salanova et al. (2005) saw commitment as part of engagement but not equivalent to it. The relationship between employee commitment and workers’ performance or productivity has been studied under various disguise. Khan, (2010) investigated the impact of the employee commitment (Affective commitment, continuance commitment and Normative commitment) on employee job performance from a sample of 153 public and private and public sector employees of oil and gas sector. The results revealed a positive relationship between employee commitment and employee’s job productivity. Therefore, job productivity emerged as a determinant of employee commitment. This Khan (2010) advised managers to pay special attention to antecedent of employee commitment and all the factors which foster employee commitment so as to increase employee performance and subsequently increase organizational productivity.

Habib (2010) investigated the interdependency of job satisfaction and job performance, effect of employee commitment and attitude towards work on performance using a survey data collected from 310 employees of 15 advertising agencies Islamabad (Pakistan). They found that employees having greater employee commitment perform well and employees having good attitude towards work are highly satisfied as compared to employees who are less inclined towards that work. Ali, (2010) found that there is positive relations between corporate social responsibility and employee commitment as well as between employee commitment and organizational productivity. They therefore concluded that organizations can improve their performance through employees’ commitment by engaging in social activities since such activities also include the welfare of employees and their families.

Conclusion

From the literature reviewed, this study comes to the conclusion that worker participation in decision-making has a useful and remarkable effect on organizational productivity.
Recommendations

As a result of the findings and conclusion, the following advices are necessary:

i. Management should ensure that employees’ consultations are properly carried out to improve organizational productivity.

ii. Management should think about how important it is for employees to be involved in making decisions in order to improve the productivity of the company.

iii. Management should make sure that employees have the authority to do their jobs better.

iv. Management should provide incentives to motivate employees in order to improve employee commitment to organizational goals and objectives.
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