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WORKERS PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC STAFF

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between workers participation in decision making and job satisfaction among academic staff in Nasarawa State University, Keffi. The participants of the study were all non-management members of academic staff at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Nasarawa State University, Keffi. A structured questionnaire was prepared and distributed to sixty (60) sample size of the participant. A pilot study was conducted to check the reliability of the instrument, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient yielded 0.77. The study therefore comprised of two major variables, namely participation in decision making, which was the independent variable and job satisfaction which was the dependent variable. A five point scale was used to collect data and analysis was based using frequency analysis and linear regression with SPSS 17. The findings indicated that significantly strong positive correlation was found to exist between job satisfaction and participation in decision-making ($r=0.809$). The findings indicated also a positively strong correlation between participation in decision-making and the University performance ($r=0.567$). The two stated hypotheses were accepted that workers involvement in decision making contributed significantly to job satisfaction and the performance of the University, $p<0.05$. The findings also show that the level of job satisfaction for workers at the University increases proportionately with an increase in their level of participation in decision-making. It was recommended based on the research findings that University management need to work on their relation-oriented style of leadership. They should show trust and do measures for trust building, confidence building and they should share a common vision and they must recognize and encourage accomplishments.

Keywords: Decision Making, Participation, job satisfaction

1. INTRODUCTION

Participation is the mental and emotional involvement of people in group situations that encourages them to contribute to group goals and share responsibility for them. There are three important ideas regarding participation in decision making-involvement, contribution and responsibility. Firstly, participation means meaningful involvement - rather than mere muscular activity. A second concept in participation is that it motivates people to contribute. They are empowered to release their own resources and creativity to achieve the objectives of the organization (Newstrom 2005). Participation especially improves job satisfaction by helping employees understand their paths towards goals. Finally, participation encourages people to accept responsibility for their group activities. It is social processes by which people become self involved in an organization and want to see it work successfully (Newstrom & Davis, 2004).

Participation can have statistically significant effects on performance and job satisfaction (Wagner et al 1997). Participate practices may provide power opportunities earlier to minority workers in an increasingly diverse workforce, since such workers need not wait until reaching higher organizational levels. It also helps to satisfy the awakening employee need for meaning and fulfillment at work. Participation typically brings higher output and a better quality of output. It tends to improve job satisfaction because workers feel more accepted and involved in the situation. Turnover and absences may be reduced if the workers feel that they have a better place to work (Newstrom & Davis, 2004).

1.1 Research Problem

Many researches have been carried out on workers participation in decision making but none have addressed the issues related to job satisfaction and decisions making in Universities. Research has shown that workers participation in decision making has a strong correlation to an organisational productivity. Public Universities are unique in Nigeria because each university is governed by a University Statute which is the basis for decision making. To the best of knowledge, no study has been done to determine the extent to which employees in a public university setting are allowed to participate in decision making and whether this has a bearing on their level of job satisfaction. In Nasarawa State University Keffi, academic staffs are not often given place in decision making in the University. In the planning of academic calendar and academic curriculum, academic staff of the University does not contribute to such planning and as such the decision at the end are inefficient, even in the admission process of the University; and this in a way is contributing to the output level of the University and workers job satisfaction. It is therefore against this background that the research sought to address workers participation in Decision making and job satisfaction in Nasarawa State University, Keffi.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study sought to determine the extent to which workers of Nasarawa State University participate in decision making and establish the extent to which workers participation in decision making affects the level of job satisfaction of workers of Nasarawa State University, Keffi (NSUK).

1.3 STATEMENT OF HYPOTHESES

Based on the objectives of this study, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H₁₁: The level of Workers participation in decision-making has significant effect on their level of job satisfaction.

H₂₁: There is significant relationship between Workers involvement in decision making and University performance.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Workers involvement in decision making, sometimes referred to as participative decision-making (PDM) is concerned with shared decision making in the work situation (Mitchell, 1973). Locke and Schweiger (1979) define it as 'joint decision making' between managers and subordinates. According to Noah (2008), it is a special form of delegation in 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 Worker's involvement in a firm's strategic planning activities. A firm can have a high or low degree of Workers involvement.

A high degree of involvement (deep Workers involvement in decision making) means that all categories of Worker's are involved in the planning process. Conversely, a low degree of involvement (shallow Workers involvement in decision making) indicates a fairly exclusive planning process (Barringer & Bleudorn, 1999) which involves the top management only. A deep Workers involvement in decision making allows the influence of the frontline Workers in the planning process. These are the people who are closest to the customer and who can facilitate new product and service recognition, a central element in the entrepreneurial process (Li et al., 2006).

This means that Workers participation in the planning process surrounding the potential innovations may facilitate opportunity recognition throughout the organisation (Kemelgor, 2002). The attitudes that organisational results come from the top, that effective cultures are derived from the upper echelon, often tend to ignore the power and the contributions of those at lower levels (Woodworth, 1986); Thus ignoring the importance of Workers involvement in decision making.

Power distance signifies how individuals regard power differentials within the society or firms. It influences the degree to which participation is practiced. In high power distance culture, decision-making is perceived as a privilege of management, and participation is considered as an infringement to management prerogative. Hence, Worker's are not involved in decision-making. In contrast, in low power distance culture, everyone is perceived to have the potential to contribute to the decision-making process; in fact, everyone is assumed to have equal rights. As such, Worker's consider it their right to participate in decisions that concern them (Verma, 1995).

A range of options through which a Worker can participate in decision making can be viewed on a continuum ranging from participation in ownership of the organization by means of shareholding through involvement in day-to-day operations to the appointment of Workers directors on company boards (Cole, 1997). Share options/profit sharing offers Worker's a chance to own shares in the company and thus participate in financing as well as receiving all the information normally made available to shareholders. This option gives Workers the chance to take a stake in their employer's business, but is scarcely relevant if one considers 'participation' in decision making (Graham and Bennet, 1998 and Cole, 1997).

Consultation is seen as 'participation' only in the sense that Workers are consulted about decisions affecting their working lives. This doesn't imply that employers take any notice of the Worker's' views. Consultation can be implemented through workforce consultative groups such as quality circles. The aim is to improve Workers dialogue, but in most cases, they improve working methods, quality standards and productivity. Where operational matters are concerned, consultations lead to participation in decision making (Graham and Bennet, 1998 and Cole, 1997).

The job enrichment option allows for a greater discretion over the immediate work decisions. It also leads to motivation by increasing responsibility for the Worker's' work outputs and increasing job interest. However, it does not offer real opportunities to participate in even the operational decisions taken in the organization (Graham and Bennet, 1998 and Cole, 1997).

Empowerment through delegation is a participative management style that encourages real delegation of authority. It implies that all Workers will be encouraged to play a part in the decisions affecting their work. In practice, this may be more than a paternalistic method of involving Workers in day-to-day affairs. However, where a bona fide approach to participation is adopted, then it is likely that Workers will in fact become 'empowered' by being able to fully share in decisions affecting their immediate work (Graham and Bennet, 1998 and Cole, 1997).

According to Graham and Bennet, (1998) and Cole, (1997), bargaining is by nature adversarial and its outcomes are therefore dependant on the relative power of the parties and extent to which a compromise is reached. Compared to consultation, collecting bargaining is essentially an active form of Workers participation. Here unionized members are represented by their unions in the decision making process between the owners or employers and the representatives who are Workers Work councils are joint bodies of managers and Workers established to consider and agree on key matters affecting the organization. These are open to all grades and groupings of Workers regardless of union membership status.

3. METHOD

The population of the study was all academic staff at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Nasarawa State University, Keffi. This therefore excluded Deans and head of Departments who substantially are members of the university management board. A simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample size of Sixty (60) participants for the study.

The study comprised of two major variables, namely; participation in decision making, which was the independent variable and job satisfaction which was the dependent variable. Participation in decision making was operationalised by asking respondents to indicate on a five-point scale how frequently they participated on various aspects of decision making.

A structured questionnaire was used and the scale ranged form 5 = always to 1 = Never. Job satisfaction, the dependent variable, was operationalised by asking respondents to indicate on a scale of five points, their level of job satisfaction on various aspects of job satisfaction. The scale ranged from 1=Not satisfied to 5 = extremely satisfied.

A Pilot study was conducted with 10 copies of the questionnaire to the academic staff of the department of Economics, Faculty of Social Sciences, Nasarawa State University, Keffi. The reliability of responses to the items of the instruments was analyzed using the Cronbach Coefficient Alpha aided with the use of SPSS 17 and the result yield 0.77.

4. RESULTS

The data set was analysed using frequency count and regression analysis, the result of the SPSS analysis outputs are given below:

Table 1: Gender of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Male	46	76.7
	Female	14	23.3
	Total	60	100.0

The result in the Table above shows that 76.7% of the respondents are male while only about 23.3% of the respondents are female.

Table 2: Age of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	23-29years	9	15.0
	30-39years	12	20.0
	40-49years	14	23.3
	>50years	25	41.7
	Total	60	100.0

The result in Table 2 above shows that 41.7% of the respondents are over 50 years of age, 23.3% between the ages of 40-49years, 20.0% were between the ages of 30-39years while only about 15% of the respondents are between the ages of 23-29years of age.

Table 3: Mode of Teaching

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Full-Time	56	93.3
	Part-Time	4	6.7
	Total	60	100.0

The result in Table 3 shows that 93.3% of the respondents are on full time position while only about 6.7% of the respondents are on part time teaching position.

Table 4: Teaching Experiences

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	0-4years	11	18.3
	5-9years	28	46.7
	10-14years	13	21.7
	>15years	8	13.3

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	0-4years	11	18.3
	5-9years	28	46.7
	10-14years	13	21.7
	>15years	8	13.3
	Total	60	100.0

The result in Table 4 shows that 18.3% of the respondents have teaching experiences between 0-4 years, 46.7% has between 5-9years experiences, about 21.7% of the respondents have between 10-14years teaching experiences while only about 13.3% of the respondents have over 15years teaching experiences.

Table 5: Performance of Supervisory Task

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	58	96.7
	No	2	3.3
	Total	60	100.0

The result shows that about 96.7% of the respondents performs supervisory task while only about 3.3% of respondents don't. The result also shows that 45% of the respondents can be describe as tasks in my job are pre-determined and routine, 35% of the respondents were describe as taking some tasks in my job are pre-determined and routine while only about 20% of the respondents task were not pre-determined and not routine

4.1 Test of Hypothesis

The hypotheses formulated were tested using regression analysis and the output results for each hypothesis are given below:

4.1.1 Hypothesis One

To test the level of Workers participation in decision-making on their level of job satisfaction

Table 6: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.809 ^a	.911	.583	1.742

a. Predictors: (Constant), workers participation

Table 7: ANOVA^d Table

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.160	1	.160	.040	.020 ^a
	Residual	234.168	58	4.037		
	Total	234.328	59			

a. Predictors: (Constant), workers participation

b. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction

The above result from the Model Summary shows that there is strong relationship between workers participation and job satisfaction, $r=0.809$ and 91% of variation in job satisfaction is explained by workers participation. The ANOVA Table shows that the level of workers participation in decision making has significance on workers job satisfaction since the $F=0.040$, $p\text{-value}=0.020$, therefore since $p\text{-value}<0.05$, we reject H_0

4.1.2 Hypothesis Two

To test the relationship between Workers involvement in decision making and University performance

Table 8: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.567 ^a	.693	.530	2.904

a. Predictors: (Constant), workers involvement

Table 9: ANOVA^o Table

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.905	1	1.905	.819	.001 ^a
	Residual	134.908	58	2.326		
	Total	136.813	59			

a. Predictors: (Constant), workers Involvement

b. Dependent Variable: performance

The above result from the Model Summary shows that there is strong relationship between workers involvement and performance, $r=0.567$ and 70% of variation in performance is explained by workers involvement. The ANOVA Table shows that the workers involvement in decision making has significance on Performance of the University; since the $F=0.819$, $p\text{-value}=0.001$, therefore since $p\text{-value}<0.05$, we reject H_0 .

5. Discussion of Results

The findings of the study showed that there is a fairly high level of satisfaction among respondents on aspects relating to participation in decision-making at the faculty level, although dissatisfaction was evidenced in a number of factors. The study showed that employees are given freedom to work with minimal interference from the top management of the faculty. Employees also receive optimal support from management on all matters touching on their daily routines.

The findings revealed that decision making is participatory for all. Above all, the views and opinions of all the stakeholders are considered in informing decision-making at the faculty. To the contrary, the findings showed that a number of aspects touching on participatory decision-making are not accorded adequate attention at the faculty. These include: keeping employees updated with what is happening in the faculty/or University; giving them credit and praise when they do good work or put in extra effort; those in authority making decisions that affect the department all by themselves; award of extra responsibility by the seniors; support for extra training; regular meetings to discuss personal staff development; regular updates on faculty and departmental performance; and giving incentives to work hard and well.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The study found out that most of the employees were satisfied with their jobs as their level of participation in decision making increases. Job satisfaction was related to the factors of rewards, work environment, leadership, administrative supervision, and aspects of the job itself. Level of satisfaction with job characteristics was found to be largely influenced by the level of employees' participation in decision making. These included pay, hours of work, future prospects, difficulty experienced in performing the job, job content and interpersonal relationships. The study showed that monetary rewards were not as important as job autonomy. This provides the basis for further improvement in employees' participation in managerial so as to enhance their levels of job satisfaction. The hypothetical basis of the study was ascertained by confirming that employee participation in decision making increases intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study identified a number of aspects relating to participation in decision making that influence employees level of satisfaction. However, some aspects require improvement going by the low mean rating obtained from their scores. These include keeping employees updated with what is happening at the faculty level and the University; giving them credit and praise when they do good work or put in extra effort; support for extra training; regular meetings to discuss personal staff development; regular updates on department/or faculty performance; and giving incentives to work hard and well. Therefore the suggestion for Vice Chancellors and management is that they do need to work on their relation-oriented style of leadership. They should show trust and do measures for trust building, confidence building and they should share a common vision and they must recognize and encourage accomplishments. This was also suggested by Chughtai & Zafar (2006) that trust in university management was significantly related to commitment of faculty members. The research showed how willing the universities heads were to share power with faculty and involve them in academic decision making. If the faculty members are consulted in the matters affecting their academic life, if they are given academic freedom, if they have adequate representation on the board of studies, and if decisions are made on time, there is an impact on faculty and organizational performance. These findings augment earlier results which suggested that a bureaucratic environment often resulted in a lower level of organizational commitment. The result of this study shows that faculty satisfaction with participative decision making process is important. A member who is committed to his job is also more satisfied with his job and will have the intentions of remaining in the same university. This creates a stable environment in the university and increases its chances of higher educational achievements.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

Section A: Demographic Characteristics

1. Name of Faculty:.....
2. Department:
3. Gender: () Male () Female
4. Age: () 23-29 () 30-39years () 40-49 () above 50 years
5. Mode of Teaching: () Full Time () Part Time
6. Years of teaching experience: () 0-4years () 5-9years () 10-14years () >15years
7. Do you perform supervisory tasks: () Yes () No
8. Statement that describe me: () Tasks in my job are pre-determined and routine
() Some tasks in my job are pre-determined and routine () Tasks not pre-determined and not routine

SECTION B: Variables assessing workers participation in decision making

Key:

Please tick the appropriate box on each of the statements

Always- A
 Mostly - M
 Often O
 Occasionally - OC
 Never - N

Factors	Levels				
	A	M	O	OC	N
I am allowed to take part in departmental decisions in my faculty					
The decisions in my department are made through consultation with members of the department					
The decisions in my department are made by those individuals in the department who charged with the Task					
Only senior academic staffs are involved in the University decision making.					
Should the University Senate be the final decision makers					
Will workers participation in decision making contribute significantly to the University productivity					
I am given credit and praise when I do good work or put in extra effort					
The HOD makes all the decisions that affect the department all by himself or herself					
I have regular meetings with the University authority to discuss how I can improve and develop					

SECTION C: Variables assessing workers job satisfaction

Key:

Please tick the appropriate box on each of the statements

Not at All NA
 Satisfied - SA
 Somewhat satisfied SS
 Very Satisfied - VS
 Extremely Satisfied- ES

Factors	Levels				
	NA	SA	SS	VS	ES
Opportunities for promotion					
Salary					
Recognition for work accomplished					
Support for additional training and education					
Opportunity to utilize your skills and talents					
Degree of independence associated with your work roles (autonomy)					
The challenging and interesting tasks that make up your job					
Immediacy of the feedback (i.e. how soon the feedback is given)					