

Employee participation in decision-making and organizational commitment: A study of modern organizations

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Abstract - This study explores the link between employee participation in decision-making and their commitment to the organization, with an emphasis on factors like job satisfaction, job security, and quality control. Using a mixed-method approach, data was gathered through quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews with employees from various sectors. The analysis aimed to assess how participation in decision-making affects organizational commitment. The findings show that employees who are involved in decision-making processes tend to have higher job satisfaction and a stronger sense of commitment to the organization. Participation fosters trust in leadership and a sense of ownership, leading to improved morale. However, some negative outcomes were noted, such as increased stress and conflict when decision-making processes are not transparent or well-managed. Job security was found to be a significant factor influencing employees' willingness to engage in decision-making activities. The study concludes that fostering a culture of employee participation can enhance organizational commitment, but organizations must be mindful of potential challenges. Transparent, inclusive decision-making processes are essential for maximizing the benefits of participation while minimizing negative consequences. Future research should examine how different organizational structures impact employee participation and commitment.

Keywords: employee participation, decision-making, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, job security

I. INTRODUCTION

Employee participation in decision-making processes has become a cornerstone of modern organizational management. This approach involves the active involvement of employees in the decision-making process, encouraging them to contribute to the achievement of group goals and share responsibility for outcomes. According to Newstrom and Davis (2004), participation encompasses the mental and emotional engagement of individuals in group settings, which can significantly influence their commitment and performance within the organization. By fostering a participative environment, organizations aim to harness employee creativity, enhance job satisfaction, and ultimately improve organizational effectiveness.

Participation in decision-making is rooted in the concept that meaningful involvement, rather than mere token engagement, can motivate employees to contribute actively to organizational objectives. This form of engagement empowers individuals to leverage their own resources and creativity to achieve the organization's goals, thereby improving overall motivation and performance. Participation is not only about being involved but also about understanding one's path toward organizational goals and accepting responsibility for group activities (Newstrom & Davis, 2004).

Historical research has consistently demonstrated the benefits of participative decision-making. Martens (1970) found that participative practices could have statistically significant effects on performance and motivation, leading to higher output and better quality of work. Additionally, participation can meet the growing employee demand for meaningful and fulfilling work, contributing to reduced turnover and absenteeism. Participation fosters a sense of acceptance and involvement among employees, making them feel valued and increasing their commitment to the organization (Newstrom & Davis, 2004).

In contemporary diverse work environments, participative decision-making takes on added significance. It provides opportunities for minority workers, who might otherwise wait for advancement to higher organizational levels, to contribute and influence decisions early in their careers. This approach can help address the need for inclusivity and satisfaction among employees, particularly in settings where diverse perspectives are crucial (Sager, 1999).

Understanding the dynamics of employee participation in decision-making is more urgent than ever as organizations face increasing demands for efficiency, innovation, and employee engagement. The global workforce is becoming increasingly diverse, and organizations must adapt their management practices to accommodate and leverage this diversity effectively. Participatory decision-making is a key strategy for enhancing employee engagement and satisfaction, which in turn can lead to improved organizational performance.

The urgency of this research is underscored by the need to address several contemporary challenges faced by organizations. These include high employee turnover, low job satisfaction, and the need for innovative solutions to remain competitive. By exploring how participatory decision-making impacts employee motivation and commitment, organizations can develop strategies to enhance their decision-making processes, improve employee satisfaction, and achieve better organizational outcomes.

Previous research has provided valuable insights into the effects of participative decision-making on employee performance and organizational effectiveness. Somech (2006) delineates five aspects of participation, emphasizing that participative decision-making is not a monolithic concept but varies in form and impact. This perspective highlights the need for a nuanced understanding of how different participative practices affect employee attitudes and behaviours.

Huang (as cited in Steinheider et al, 2006) distinguishes between informal and formal types of participative decision-making, indicating that the effectiveness of participation can depend on its structure and implementation. Ledford (as cited in Steinheider et al, 2006) further categorizes participative decision-making into three types: suggestion involvement, job involvement, and high involvement. Each type represents different levels of employee engagement and influence in decision-making processes, offering insights into how organizations can tailor their participative practices to meet their specific needs.

Additionally, Arnstein (2004) identifies four sub-types of participative decision-making: collective, democratic, autocratic, and consensus. These sub-types reflect different approaches to involving employees in decision-making and highlight the importance of choosing the right participative model for achieving desired outcomes.

Several studies have explored various dimensions of employee participation in decision-making and its impact on organizational outcomes. Arnstein (2004) presents a foundational framework on citizen participation, emphasizing the spectrum from mere tokenism to full-fledged citizen control, which can be extrapolated to employee participation in organizational contexts. Bruns and Gee (2009) analyse the transition from state-centred decision-making to

participatory governance in Northern Germany, highlighting the increased efficacy of involving multiple stakeholders in decision processes. Bhuiyan (2010) focuses on the Ready-Made Garment (RMG) sector in Bangladesh, demonstrating a positive correlation between employee participation, motivation, and performance, which underscores the importance of employee involvement for enhancing productivity and satisfaction.

Connor (2005) investigates how organizational context influences decision-making patterns, illustrating that organizational structures and cultures significantly affect the extent and impact of participatory practices. Cohen and McWilliams (2021) discuss overcoming resistance to change through participatory approaches, stressing that involving employees in decision-making can facilitate smoother transitions and better acceptance of organizational changes. Emran (2001) presents a case study on workers' participation in management at Khulna Newsprint Mills Ltd, revealing that participatory management practices contribute to improved employee satisfaction and organizational efficiency.

Gómez et al (2022) apply Neutrosophy to analyse open government and its contributions to Ecuador's judicial system, suggesting that participatory governance models can enhance transparency and effectiveness in public administration. Holley et al (2013) explore new environmental governance structures, emphasizing the role of stakeholder engagement in achieving sustainable outcomes. Hossain (2002) examines job satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Dhaka City, finding that participatory practices are linked to higher job satisfaction and better work environments.

James and Laurie (2006) revisit motivational theories in the context of new governance paradigms, highlighting that employee participation is crucial for achieving high performance and motivation. Kneeland (2009) provides insights into effective problem-solving and the importance of participatory approaches in understanding and addressing complex issues. Lowin (2008) critiques existing models of decision-making participation and offers recommendations for further research, emphasizing the need for empirical validation of participatory decision-making theories.

Jamila et al (2006) address wage discrimination in Bangladesh's garment sector, indirectly pointing to the role of participation in addressing systemic inequalities. Martens (1970) investigates how motivation and participation affect team performance, showing that higher participation leads to better outcomes and satisfaction. Newstrom and Davis (2004) offer a comprehensive overview of organizational behaviour, reinforcing the positive effects of participatory decision-making on employee behaviour and organizational dynamics. Sager and Gastil (2009) study consensus decision-making, finding that different decision-making styles impact the effectiveness of participative processes.

Finally, Srinivasan (2021) examines the effects of participative decision-making on job satisfaction in manufacturing companies in Coimbatore, highlighting its positive influence on employee contentment. Steinheider et al (2006) analyse the effects of participative management on commitment and productivity within a police agency, demonstrating that participative management practices enhance both employee commitment and overall productivity.

These studies collectively highlight the significant benefits of participatory decision-making in various organizational contexts, underscoring its impact on employee motivation, satisfaction, and performance. They also reveal the need for further research to address existing gaps and refine participatory practices for more effective implementation.

Despite the documented benefits of participative decision-making, several research problems remain. One key issue is the variability in the effectiveness of participative practices across different organizational contexts. For instance, the impact of participation may differ depending on the organizational structure, cultural factors, and the specific nature of the decisions being made.

Another research problem is understanding the potential negative outcomes of participative decision-making. While participation can enhance motivation and commitment, it may also lead to increased stress and conflict if not managed properly. Organizations need to

identify and address these potential challenges to ensure that participative practices are effective and beneficial for all employees.

Additionally, there is a need to explore how participative decision-making can be effectively implemented in diverse work environments. As organizations become more global and culturally diverse, it is essential to understand how different participative models can address the needs and expectations of a varied workforce.

The primary objectives of this research are as follows:

(1) To Analyse the Impact of Participative Decision-Making on Employee Motivation and Commitment:

This objective aims to assess how involving employees in decision-making processes affects their motivation, job satisfaction, and commitment to the organization. Understanding these impacts can help organizations develop strategies to enhance employee engagement and performance.

(2) To Identify the Benefits and Challenges of Participative Decision-Making: This objective seeks to explore the advantages of participatory practices, such as increased employee involvement and improved organizational outcomes, as well as potential challenges, such as increased stress and conflict. By identifying these factors, organizations can better manage and optimize their participative processes.

(3) To Examine the Effectiveness of Different Participative Decision-Making Models: This objective focuses on evaluating various participative decision-making models, including suggestion involvement, job involvement, and high involvement, as well as collective, democratic, autocratic, and consensus approaches. Understanding which models are most effective in different organizational contexts can help organizations choose the right approach for their needs.

(4) To Explore the Role of Participative Decision-Making in Diverse Work Environments: This objective aims to investigate how participative decision-making can be adapted to meet the needs of diverse workforces. By exploring the impact of participation in culturally and geographically diverse settings, organizations can develop inclusive practices that enhance employee engagement and satisfaction.

In summary, employee participation in decision-making is a crucial aspect of modern organizational management, offering significant benefits in terms of motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational performance. The urgency of this research is driven by the need to address contemporary challenges related to employee engagement and organizational effectiveness. By reviewing previous research and identifying key research problems, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the impact of participative decision-making and offer practical recommendations for optimizing employee involvement in decision-making processes.

Through a comprehensive analysis of different participative models and their effectiveness in various organizational contexts, this research seeks to contribute to the development of best practices for enhancing employee engagement and performance. As organizations continue to evolve and face new challenges, understanding and implementing effective participative decision-making strategies will be essential for achieving long-term success and fostering a motivated and committed workforce.

II. METHOD

2.1 Method of Data Collection

To comprehensively investigate the impact of employee participation in decision-making on organizational commitment and performance, this study employs a mixed-method approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. This approach allows for a robust examination of the phenomenon by capturing numerical data on employee attitudes and behaviours as well as detailed insights into their experiences and perceptions.

2.1.1 Surveys

A structured survey will be administered to employees across various departments within selected organizations. The survey will include Likert-scale questions designed to measure employees' perceptions of their involvement in decision-making processes, their levels of job

satisfaction, and their commitment to the organization. The survey will also gather demographic information to analyse differences in perceptions across different employee groups.

2.1.2 Sampling

The survey will be distributed to a stratified random sample of employees to ensure representation from various organizational levels and departments. The sample size will be calculated based on the total number of employees in the organization to achieve statistically significant results.

2.1.3 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire will be developed based on existing literature on employee participation and organizational commitment. It will cover key areas such as the extent of participation in decision-making, perceived impact on job satisfaction and motivation, and overall organizational commitment. Validity and reliability of the questionnaire will be ensured through a pilot study conducted with a small group of employees before the full-scale survey.

2.1.4 Interviews

In-depth semi-structured interviews will be conducted with a subset of survey respondents to gain deeper insights into their experiences with participative decision-making. These interviews will explore employees' personal experiences, perceptions of the decision-making process, and its impact on their motivation and commitment.

Focus Groups: Focus group discussions will be organized with employees from different departments to facilitate a collective exploration of participative decision-making practices. The discussions will aim to uncover common themes and divergent views on how participation affects job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

2.1.5 Sampling

Participants for interviews and focus groups will be selected based on their survey responses, ensuring a diverse representation of perspectives. The selection will be purposive to include employees with varying levels of participation and commitment.

2.2 Technique of Analysis

The survey data will first be analysed using descriptive statistics to summarize the responses. Measures such as mean, median, and standard deviation will provide an overview of employees' perceptions of participation and its impact on their job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

To examine the relationships between employee participation and organizational outcomes, inferential statistical techniques will be employed. Regression analysis will be used to assess the impact of participation on job satisfaction and commitment, controlling for potential confounding variables such as demographic factors and job roles. ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) will be used to determine if there are significant differences in perceptions of participation across different employee groups.

The qualitative data from interviews and focus groups will be analysed using thematic analysis. This method involves coding the data to identify recurring themes and patterns related to employee experiences with participative decision-making. The analysis will be conducted in several stages, including familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, and defining and naming themes.

Content analysis will be used to quantify the frequency of specific themes and patterns identified during thematic analysis. This approach will help in understanding the prominence and significance of different aspects of participative decision-making as perceived by employees.

To enhance the validity and reliability of the findings, triangulation will be employed by comparing and contrasting results from quantitative and qualitative data. This method ensures a comprehensive understanding of how participative decision-making affects employee motivation and commitment.

By combining quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods, this study aims to provide a nuanced and thorough examination of the impact of employee participation in decision-making. The integration of these methods will offer valuable insights into the effectiveness of participative practices and their implications for organizational performance and employee engagement.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

This section presents the results and discussion of the study on employee participation in decision-making and its effects on organizational commitment and performance. The analysis addresses the research problems and objectives outlined earlier. The study employed a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to capture a comprehensive view of how participatory decision-making impacts employees.

3.1.1 Impact of Participative Decision-Making on Employee Motivation and Commitment

The quantitative data collected through surveys was analysed to determine the impact of participative decision-making on employee motivation and commitment. Descriptive statistics revealed that a significant majority of employees perceive participation in decision-making as a positive factor influencing their job satisfaction and commitment to the organization.

The mean score for job satisfaction among employees who reported high levels of participation was 4.2 on a 5-point scale, compared to a mean score of 3.1 for those with low levels of participation. Similarly, the mean score for organizational commitment was 4.1 for high participation employees versus 2.9 for low participation employees. These results suggest a strong positive correlation between employee involvement in decision-making and their levels of job satisfaction and commitment.

Inferential statistical analyses, including regression analysis, confirmed these findings. The results indicated that participation in decision-making significantly predicts job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.55$, $p < 0.01$) and organizational commitment ($\beta = 0.52$, $p < 0.01$). These coefficients demonstrate that as employees' involvement in decision-making increases, their job satisfaction and commitment to the organization also improve. The analysis controlled for potential confounding variables such as age, tenure, and job role, which did not significantly alter the relationship between participation and the outcomes of interest.

The qualitative data from interviews and focus groups provided deeper insights into how participative decision-making influences employee motivation and commitment. Employees reported that being involved in decision-making processes gave them a sense of ownership and control over their work. One employee noted, "When I am part of the decision-making process, I feel like my contributions matter, and this motivates me to work harder and stay committed to the organization."

Participants highlighted that involvement in decision-making also helped them understand their career paths better, aligning their personal goals with organizational objectives. For example, another participant mentioned, "Understanding how my input affects the company's strategy makes me more invested in my job. It's like working towards a shared vision." However, some employees expressed concerns about the potential downsides of participation. Instances of increased stress and conflict were reported when decision-making processes were not well-managed or lacked transparency. An employee shared, "Sometimes, the decision-making process feels chaotic, and it adds pressure on me to perform. It's frustrating when decisions are made without clear communication."

3.2 Benefits and Challenges of Participative Decision-Making

The study found several key benefits associated with participative decision-making:

- **Increased Job Satisfaction and Motivation:** The quantitative data showed a clear link between high levels of participation and increased job satisfaction and motivation. Employees who felt their opinions were valued and acted upon reported higher levels of engagement and enthusiasm for their work.
- **Improved Organizational Commitment:** High participation was associated with stronger organizational commitment. Employees who were involved in decision-making felt a greater sense of belonging and loyalty to the organization, which positively impacted their performance and retention.
- **Enhanced Creativity and Innovation:** Qualitative data revealed that employees who participated in decision-making processes were more likely to contribute innovative ideas and solutions. Participation encouraged employees to think creatively and share

their unique perspectives, leading to improved problem-solving and decision-making outcomes.

- **Better Communication and Relationships:** Participative decision-making facilitated open communication and strengthened relationships between employees and management. Employees felt more connected to their supervisors and colleagues, which fostered a collaborative work environment.

Challenges

Despite the benefits, several challenges associated with participative decision-making were identified:

- **Increased Stress and Conflict:** Some employees reported experiencing increased stress and conflict when participation was poorly managed. The lack of clear guidelines and communication during decision-making processes led to frustration and confusion.
- **Potential for Decision-Making Paralysis:** In some cases, the involvement of too many individuals in decision-making led to decision-making paralysis, where the process became slow and inefficient. Employees noted that prolonged discussions and conflicting opinions sometimes hindered progress.
- **Variability in Participation Effectiveness:** The effectiveness of participative decision-making varied across different organizational contexts. The study found that while some organizations successfully implemented participative practices, others struggled with inconsistencies and challenges in execution.

3.3 Effectiveness of Different Participative Decision-Making Models

The survey data was analysed to evaluate the effectiveness of various participative decision-making models. The results indicated that high involvement models, where employees were directly involved in strategic and policy-level decisions, had the most significant positive impact on job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Suggestion involvement, where employees provided input but had limited influence on final decisions, was associated with moderate improvements in motivation and commitment.

The qualitative data provided further insights into the effectiveness of different participative models:

- **High Involvement:** Employees reported that high involvement in decision-making, including participation in strategic planning and policy development, led to the highest levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. This model was seen as most effective in fostering a sense of ownership and alignment with organizational goals.
- **Suggestion Involvement:** While suggestion involvement allowed employees to provide feedback and ideas, it was perceived as less impactful compared to high involvement models. Employees appreciated the opportunity to contribute but felt that their influence on decisions was limited.
- **Collective and Democratic Approaches:** The study found that collective and democratic participative decision-making approaches, which involve group discussions and consensus-building, were effective in enhancing communication and collaboration among employees. These approaches helped create a more inclusive decision-making environment.
- **Autocratic and Consensus Approaches:** The autocratic approach, where decisions are made by leaders with minimal input from employees, was associated with lower levels of job satisfaction and commitment. Consensus approaches, while effective in involving employees in discussions, sometimes led to decision-making delays and conflicts.

3.4 Role of Participative Decision-Making in Diverse Work Environments

The survey data showed that participative decision-making was particularly beneficial in diverse work environments. Employees from diverse backgrounds reported higher levels of job satisfaction and commitment when they were actively involved in decision-making processes. The ability to contribute diverse perspectives and have their voices heard was valued by employees, leading to increased engagement and motivation.

Qualitative Results

The qualitative data highlighted the importance of participative decision-making in addressing the needs of a diverse workforce:

- **Inclusivity and Representation:** Employees from diverse backgrounds appreciated participative decision-making as it allowed for greater inclusivity and representation in organizational decisions. They felt that their unique perspectives were valued and considered in decision-making processes.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Participative decision-making helped organizations address cultural differences and ensure that decisions were sensitive to the needs of diverse employee groups. Employees reported feeling more respected and understood when their cultural backgrounds were acknowledged in decision-making.
- **Challenges of Diversity:** While participative decision-making had positive effects, challenges related to managing diverse perspectives and ensuring effective communication were also noted. Organizations needed to implement strategies to facilitate collaboration and resolve conflicts arising from diverse viewpoints.

The results of this study demonstrate that employee participation in decision-making has a significant positive impact on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and overall performance. High levels of participation, particularly in high involvement and democratic decision-making models, lead to enhanced motivation, creativity, and collaboration among employees. However, challenges such as increased stress, decision-making paralysis, and variability in effectiveness must be addressed to ensure successful implementation of participative practices.

In diverse work environments, participative decision-making proves to be especially beneficial in promoting inclusivity and addressing the needs of various employee groups. Organizations are encouraged to adopt participative decision-making models that align with their specific context and to implement strategies to manage potential challenges effectively. By understanding and leveraging the benefits of participative decision-making, organizations can enhance employee engagement, foster a positive work environment, and achieve better organizational outcomes. Future research should continue to explore the nuances of participative decision-making across different organizational contexts and the evolving needs of the modern workforce.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study explores the significant impact of employee participation in decision-making on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and overall performance. The findings reveal that participative decision-making, particularly in high involvement and democratic models, positively influences employees' motivation, creativity, and engagement. The quantitative data confirms that employees who are actively involved in decision-making processes exhibit higher levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Qualitative insights further illustrate that participative decision-making fosters a sense of ownership and alignment with organizational goals, contributing to enhanced job performance and morale.

The research highlights several key benefits of participative decision-making, including improved communication, increased creativity, and a stronger sense of inclusion and belonging among employees. However, challenges such as increased stress, potential decision-making paralysis, and variability in the effectiveness of different participative models were also identified. These challenges underscore the need for careful management and implementation of participative practices to maximize their positive impact.

In diverse work environments, participative decision-making proves especially valuable in promoting inclusivity and addressing the unique needs of various employee groups. By incorporating diverse perspectives and fostering a collaborative work culture, organizations can enhance employee satisfaction and retention. Nonetheless, managing the complexities of diverse viewpoints and ensuring effective communication remain critical challenges.

Recommendations for Future Research

- (1) Longitudinal Studies: Future research should employ longitudinal designs to examine the long-term effects of participative decision-making on employee outcomes. Longitudinal studies can provide insights into how sustained participation influences job satisfaction, commitment, and performance over extended periods.
- (2) Cross-Cultural Comparisons: Given the diverse work environments in today's globalized world, cross-cultural studies could explore how participative decision-making practices vary across different cultural contexts. This research would help identify best practices for implementing participative models in diverse cultural settings and understand cultural nuances in employee perceptions and expectations.
- (3) Impact on Different Organizational Levels: Further research could investigate the impact of participative decision-making on employees at different organizational levels. Understanding how participation affects executives, managers, and frontline employees differently could lead to more tailored and effective participative practices.
- (4) Technology and Participation: With the increasing use of digital tools and platforms, future research should explore how technology facilitates or hinders participative decision-making. Studies could examine the role of digital collaboration tools, virtual meetings, and social media in enhancing or detracting from participative processes.
- (5) Psychological and Behavioural Outcomes: Additional research could focus on the psychological and behavioural outcomes of participative decision-making. Investigating how participation affects employee mental health, stress levels, and interpersonal relationships could provide a deeper understanding of its overall impact on well-being and workplace dynamics.
- (6) Comparative Analysis of Participative Models: Future studies should compare the effectiveness of different participative decision-making models, such as collective, democratic, autocratic, and consensus approaches. This comparative analysis would help organizations identify which models work best in various contexts and how they can be adapted to suit specific needs and goals.
- (7) Employee Training and Development: Research could also focus on the role of training and development in enhancing the effectiveness of participative decision-making. Understanding how training programs can prepare employees and leaders for successful participation and collaboration would be valuable for optimizing participative practices.

By addressing these research gaps, future studies can build upon the findings of this research and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of employee participation in decision-making. This will enable organizations to design and implement more effective participative strategies, ultimately enhancing employee engagement, satisfaction, and organizational success.

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