
**Employee Involvement in the Decision Making Processes and Goal Achievement in
Selected Ministries in Akwa Ibom State Civil Service**

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed at finding out the extent of employee involvement in decision making process and goal achievement in selected ministries in Akwa Ibom state civil service. The study adopted an exploratory and survey research design. The population of the study comprised all the employees working in the Akwa Ibom state civil service; a sample of 388 respondents was determined using the Taro Yamane's (1967) formula and the judgmental sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire tagged "EMPLOYEES INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING PROCESSES AND GOAL ACHIEVEMENT" (EIDMGAQ)". The instrument was both validated and subjected to reliability test using Crombach Alpha as correlation technique. The data obtained was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The result of the analysis proved that there is low level of employee involvement in the decision making processes in the Akwa Ibom State ministries. Also, there is significant extent of employee involvement in the decision making processes in the government ministries based on position. One of the recommendations was that employees at all levels should be actively involved in decision making processes in the government ministries so that all the employees get fully represented in the management of the ministries.

KEYWORDS: Employee involvement, decision making, government ministries and goal achievement

Introduction

One of the greatest underlying factors in the success or failure of any organization is the power of its people and how well that power is focused towards meeting organizational objectives. In a divergent view, Beach (2005) observes that decentralization of authority could also lead to wider participation, which will ultimately result in both increased productivity and higher morale. In recognition of the importance of workers' participation in decision making, Armstrong (2009) notes that people will use their energy to subvert the ends sought by the firm if management fails to recognize their existence. Even though other organizational participants might take decisions, the decision-making capability of the manager will play a major role in the success of the organization. Decision making in organizations has been described as a process of behaviour with the economic model at one extreme and the social model at the other extreme (Kimberly and Rotman, 2007). This description implies that only irrational decision making accords human values precedence over economic values. Leaders must find some middle ground between these extremes for it is evident that neither set of values can be ignored.

Employee involvement in decision making is a very important component of operating for the future enterprise. 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 employee's involvement in a firm's strategic planning activities. It gives the employee an opportunity to express their viewpoints about action. There are a number of ways that employees can partake in decision making; suggestion boxes, in office surveys, etc- but some of the most popular ways are through staff meetings and the usage of trade unions, where applicable. Edelman (2006) noticed that organizations that offer employees with more autonomy and who engage trade unions less (not because they are antagonistic, but simply because they abide by the terms and conditions of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA)) have more committed and productive employees and ultimately a reduced rate of turnover. A firm can have a high or low degree of employee involvement. A high degree of involvement (deep employee involvement in decision making) means that all categories of employees are involved in the planning process. Conversely, a low degree of involvement (shallow employee involvement in decision making) indicates a fairly exclusive planning process (Barringer & Bleudorn, 1999) which involves the top management only.

A deep employee involvement in decision making allows the influence of the frontline employees 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 employee participation in the planning process surrounding the potential innovations may facilitate opportunity recognition throughout the organization (Kemelgor, 2012; Zivkovic et al., 2009). 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, thus, ignoring the importance of employee involvement in decision making.

Statement of Problem

Although modern management insists on the importance of employee involvement in decision-making, some organizations, in Akwa Ibom State are still administrating on the basis of a traditional approach, or on the earlier approaches which relied more upon an autocratic style". In practice, the task of decision-making seems to be an appropriate task of top management. Obviously, this has direct and indirect negative impacts on those organizations, in terms of employees' commitment, efficiency, cooperation between managers and employees and finally on productivity. One paralleling arguments concerns employees' greater commitment to decisions in which they have participated. It is observed that the non-involvement of employees in the decision-making process could lead to job dissatisfaction which eventually would lead to lost man hours, low productivity among others that would adversely affect the fortunes of organizations and eventually the gross domestic product of the nation at large. In view of this problem, it is necessary to examine the extent of employee involvement in decision making process and goal achievement in selected ministries in Akwa Ibom state civil service.

Objectives of the study

1. To examine the extent of employee involvement in decision making processes in government ministries.
2. To investigate the difference in goal achievement due to employees involvement in decision making in government ministries.

Research questions

The following research questions will be answered:

1. What is the extent of employee involvement in decision making processes in government ministries?
2. What is the difference in goal achievement due to employees' involvement in decision making in government ministries?

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant influence of the extent of employee involvement on decision making processes in government ministries.
2. There is no significant difference in goal achievement due to employees' involvement in decision making.

Literature Review

Employee Involvement in Decision Making

Employee involvement is a process for empowering employees to participate in managerial decision-making and improvement activities appropriate to their levels in the organization. Employee involvement is creating an environment in which people have an impact on decisions and actions that affect their jobs. It is not the goal nor is it a tool, as practiced in many organizations. It is rather a management and leadership philosophy about how people are most enabled to contribute to continuous improvement and the ongoing success of their work organization. Decision-making makes it possible to adopt the best course of action in carrying out a given task. It becomes necessary to find out the best way when there are different ways of performing a task and the action finally selected should produce the best results and should be acceptable to both the workers and management. Satisfied workers put in their best efforts and this results in higher output which satisfies management who may come forward to share the gain with the workers, thus, there is improvement in the overall efficiency of the organization.

Decision-making is defined by Stone and Freeman (2006) as "the process of identifying and selecting a course of action to solve a particular problem". Wehrich and Koontz (2013) define decision-making as "the selection of a course of action among alternatives". In many organizations, managers have been confronted with the tasks of making severe, undesirable and unpleasant cuts of personnel and services in a hasty manner, because, in part, they failed to heed economic values in earlier decisions. Similarly, organizations have often been forced to retract decision, and to act in confusing manners, in chaotic situations, because they failed in part, to heed to human values in reaching earlier decisions. Numerous studies, all point to the fact that employee involvement in decision making does influence organizational effectiveness; some of which includes lower absenteeism, enhanced work attitudes (Steel and Lloyd, 2008), higher individual work performance (Bush and Spangler, 2010), lower employee turnover and increased returns on equity (Vandenberg et al, 2007), and improved organizational learning culture (Thompson, 2012). Employee involvement in decision making is also expected to lead to increased product or service quality, greater innovation, stronger employee motivation, lower

costs but a higher speed of production, and lower employee absenteeism and turnover (Lawler, 2016).

Employee Involvement in Decision Making and Goal Achievement

Employee involvement in decision making is a very important component of operating for the future enterprise. According to McGungale (2011), involvement is helping management to decide in selecting the courses of action in an enterprise. Sen and Khan (2013) assert that with involvement in goal setting, the employees can play a vital role in achieving business target. Workers can select their work schedules which ensure workforce diversity in organization. “Common outcomes of an effective performance appraisal process are employees’ learning about themselves, employees’ knowledge about how they are doing and employees’ learning about ‘what management values’” (Ishaq, et.al. 2009). Greenfield (2014) in an interview stated that “within our ministry and by extension, the public service, this is not the norm. At times, we believe that we are being lectured to, or ordered around as opposed to being listened to or even considered. Of course, this is what happens when the organization communication method is from the top, down. I can safely say, because I am an independent and motivated individual, being ordered around does not make me truly committed to the process, but rather, it makes me look for the end of the month when salary is paid and, the start of the New Year, when my salary increases”.

Bashir et al (2013) asserts that the benefits which accrue to individuals are related to their motivation or satisfaction. Giving employees the opportunity to participate in organisational decision-making processes would help employees to achieve ego self-actualisation, which are the higher order needs of an individual. It provides employees the opportunity to use their private information, which can lead to better decisions for the organisation (Williamson, 2008). Employee involvement in important decision-making would also allow individuals to have an opportunity to experience a sense of achievement in organisations. This is related to the findings from a survey of nurses in urban hospitals where Knoop (2011) found that employees who felt they had influenced decisions reported a higher fulfilment of their work values and higher job satisfaction. Conversely, there is reason to believe that reduced influence, especially after having been asked to participate, may lead to a decline in performance and poorer attitudes toward work (Mitchell, 2006). According to Kearney and Hays (2014), worker involvement has been found to improve job performance in different settings, to improve the quality of decisions due to increased information flow and the effective transfer of ideas (Kearney and Hays, 2014), to enhance workers' willingness to become more psychologically involved in their tasks (i.e., to internalize organisational goals) cited by the same authors, and to achieve improvement in product quality (Cooke, 2012) quoted in Kearney and Hays, (2014).

Methods

Research Design

The research design used for this work was an exploratory and survey design.

The Study Area

The study area was the entire Akwa Ibom State Civil service which included all the ministries, board, agencies and parastatals located at Idongesit Nkanga Secretariat complex, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

The Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of all the 12,563 employees working in the AKS Civil Service (Civil Service Commission, 2011).

Sample Size Determination

The sample size comprised 12,563 Civil Servants drawn from AKS Civil Service. In determining the sample size, the researcher used Taro Yamane's (1967) formula.

Sample and sampling technique

Judgmental sampling technique was used to select the 388 respondents

Sources of Data

The data of the research are of two kinds; primary and secondary data. The Primary Data consisted of oral interview and structured questionnaire while the secondary data made use of textbooks, journals and other related articles.

Research Instrument

The research instrument tagged "EMPLOYEES INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING PROCESSES AND GOAL ACHIEVEMENT" (EIDMGAQ)" was used for data collection.

Validation of the Instrument

The questionnaire was designed by the researcher, while the face, content and construct validation of the research instrument was done by experts in quantitative technique and statistics.

Reliability of the Instrument

A reliability test was conducted with Crombach Alpha as technique correlation, using 40 respondents who were not selected to participate in the main study. The instrument had reliability coefficient ranging from 0.85 to 0.92 respectively and were considered high enough to justify the use of the instrument.

Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics was used to analyse the personal data of the respondents and the research questions, while inferential statistics was used to test the hypotheses.

Data Analysis, Results and Discussion of Findings

This chapter presents an analysis of data collected for the study. The data are arranged and analyzed in tables following the research questions and hypotheses.

Research Question One

The research question sought to find out the extent of employee involvement in decision making processes in government ministries. In-order to answer the research question, descriptive analysis was performed on the data collected (see table 1)

Table 1: Descriptive analysis of the extent of employee involvement in decision making processes in government ministries

Variables	N	Observed Mean	Expected Mean
Employee involvement in the decision making	388	13.73	12.5

Source: Field survey

The above table 1 presents the descriptive analysis of the extent of employee involvement in the decision making processes in the government ministries. From the table it was observed that, employee level of involvement in the decision making (13.73) was higher the expected mean (12.5). The result therefore means there is remarkable extent of employee involvement in the decision making processes in the government ministries.

Research Question Two

The research question sought to find out the difference in goal achievement due to employees' involvement in decision making. In order to answer the research question, descriptive analysis was performed on the data collected (see table 2)

Table 2: Descriptive analysis of the difference in goal achievement due to employees' involvement in decision making

Involvement in decision making	N	\bar{X}	Mean difference
Much	152	16.43**	2.52
Little	236	13.91*	

Source: Field survey

** Highest mean score

* Least mean score

The above table 2 presents the descriptive analysis of the difference in goal achievement due to employees' involvement in decision making. From the table it was observed that, employees' who had much involvement in decision making had the higher mean value of goal achievement (16.43) than that of their counterparts with little involvement (13.91) in decision making. The result therefore means there is remarkable difference in goal achievement due to employees' involvement in decision making.

Hypothesis one

The null hypothesis states that involvement of employee has no significant effect on decision making processes of the ministries. In order to test the hypothesis, two variables were identified as follows:

1. Employee involvement as the independent variable
2. Decision making processes as the dependent variable.

One-way analysis of variance was used to determine the F-value (See table 3).

TABLE 3: One-way analysis of variance of the effect of employee involvement on decision making of ministries

Groups	N	X	SD
Junior	172	11.74	0.98
Senior	151	14.73	0.71
Management	65	16.67	0.48
Total	388	13.73	2.06

Source of variance	SS	Df	Ms	F
Between group	1385.43	2	692.71	1059.93*
Within groups	251.62	385	0.65	
Total	1637.041	387		

*significant at 0.05 level; df = 2 & 385; critical F - value = 2.99

The above Table 3 presents the obtained F-value as (1059.93). This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical F-value (2.99) at 0.05 level with 2 & 385 degrees of freedom. The obtained F-value (1059.93) was greater than the critical value (2.99). Hence, the result was significant, meaning that there is significant effect of employee involvement on decision making processes of ministries.

The significance of the result caused Least Significant Difference (LSD) test to be prepared in order to reveal the independent groups between which the significant difference lied. From the result it was revealed that the significant difference lied among all the independent groups with the least significant difference (1.94) lying between management and senior, while the highest significant difference (4.92) lying between management and junior.

Hypothesis two

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant difference in goal achievement due to employees' involvement in decision making. In order to test the hypothesis, two variables were identified as follows:

1. Decision making as the independent variables
2. Employees' involvement as the dependent variable

Independent t-test analysis was used to analyze the data in order to determine the difference in goal achievement due to employees' involvement in decision making. (See table 4).

TABLE 4:Independent t-test analysis of the difference in goal achievement due to employees' involvement in decision making

Employees' involvement	N	X	SD	t
Much	152	16.3	0.91	19.05*
Little	236	13.91	1.46	

*Significant at 0.05 level; df = 386; N= 388; critical t-value 1.96

Table 4 presents the obtained t-test-value (19.05). This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical t-value (1.96) at 0.05 level with 386 degree of freedom. The obtained t-value (19.05) was greater than the critical t-value (1.96). Hence, the result was significant. The result means that there is significant difference in goal achievement due to employees' involvement in decision making.

The result of the data analysis in table 3 was significant due to the fact that the obtained F-value (1059.93) was greater than the critical value (2.99) at 0.05 level with 2 & 385 degree of freedom. The result implies that there is significant effect of employee involvement on decision making of government ministries. The result therefore was in agreement with the research findings of Lawler (2016), who stated that employee involvement in decision making is also expected to lead to increased product or service quality, greater innovation, stronger employee motivation, lower costs but a higher speed of production, and lower employee absenteeism and turnover.

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Conclusions

Based on the findings of the research work, the following conclusions are deemed necessary:

1. There is low level of employee involvement in the decision making processes in the Akwa Ibom State ministries.
2. There is significant difference in goal achievement due to employees involvement in decision making.

Recommendation of the study

The following recommendations are deemed necessary:

1. Employees at all levels should be actively involved in decision making processes in the government ministries so that all the employees get fully represented in the management of the ministries.
2. On the part of the employees there should be a show of high level of commitment to their service in order to attract the management attention for their rapid promotion.

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