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Full Length Research

Role of Participative Management in Enhancing Organizational Performance: A Study of Nigeria Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission in South East Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated the role of participatory management in enhancing organisational performance at the upstream regional office in Owerri. The research design adopted in this study was a descriptive survey research design. The area of this study is the Southeast Zone of Nigeria, with Owerri as the regional capital. The upstream regional office in the Southeast is the Owerri regional office. The population of the study consisted of all staff of the Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission who consented to participate in the study. Hence, a population of 283 staff of all cadres was obtained. The sample of the study comprised 283 staff of NUPRC Owerri regional headquarters who were conveniently selected. The study instrument was a questionnaire titled 'Impact of Participatory Management of Organisational Performance Questionnaire (IPMOPQ)'. The face validity of the instrument was determined by three experts, two from the Department of Business Administration, Paul University Awka. And one from the Statistics Department from the same institution. To test the reliability of the instruments, the Cronbach's alpha method of reliability was used, and a reliability index of the instrument of 0.72 was obtained, which made the instrument reliable. Data collected from the survey were analysed with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and simple regression analysis to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance, since each relationship involves one independent variable and one dependent variable. Results revealed that industrial democracy and integrated communication significantly improve performance; transparency, feedback, and inclusive structures lead to better team collaboration and execution; participative decision-making positively affects organisational performance; therefore, joint decision-making results in clearer planning, accountability, and quality outcomes; and investment in intellectual capital improves performance, and training, knowledge-sharing, and innovation correlate positively with operational efficiency. Based on the findings, the study recommended that regular training and knowledge-sharing programmes should be implemented to build employee capacity and innovation, encourage grassroots staff to contribute ideas and suggestions by creating safe, inclusive platforms for expression and re-engineer organisational structures to support decentralisation and employee-led initiatives, among others.

Keywords: upstream regional office, participative management, organisational performance

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INTRODUCTION

Organisations worldwide are increasingly embracing participative management, as it plays a significant role in organisational performance, strengthens employee commitment, and fosters innovation. Chimaobi and Mbah (2021) stated that participatory management focuses on empowering employees in order to achieve organisational goals. It is, therefore, considered to be more effective than vertical organisational structure due to the recognition of employee ideas and opinions (Hawthorne, 2020). Participative management simply refers to the involvement of employees at various levels of the organisation in decision-making processes that affect their work and the overall direction of the organisation. One major feature of participative management is industrial democracy, where employees want to be part of the decision-making team. It is an employee-centred approach to leadership which has gained more attention for horizontal organisational structure, which focuses on the ability of employees to come up with innovative ideas that emphasisecollaboration and teamwork (Oyo-Ito, Worlu, & Udoh, 2020).

In addition, Participatory Management (PM) is interchangeably used often with employee empowerment or participative decision-making. This relates to how employees are given the freedom to make decisions and evaluations of existing and unforeseeable problems (Oyo-Ito, Worlu, & Udoh, 2020). It is when employees who are influenced by decision-makers are given a chance to make decisions in the organisation. By so doing, employees are empowered to make contributions on how to provide solutions to organisational problems.

Participatory management proffers benefits at all levels of the organisation and also creates a sense of ownership in the company, which in turn provides a sense of responsibility and motivation to employees to increase their productivity in order to achieve organisational goals (Ugwu, Chimaobi & Nnaji-Ihedunah, 2020). It enhances the ability of employees and makes them play an active role in the growth as well as support the vision of the organisation (Bunteng, 2022). Perspective management does not mean relinquishing authority; instead, it delegates authority and matches people with the level of responsibility and accountability to achieve the goals of the organisation because you may not know what people can achieve if you do not try them.

The impact of participative management on organisational performance can be analysed across several dimensions: Okoimah (2020) defined Participatory management is that element that induces worker satisfaction, motivation and commitment to work when the work environment is perceived to be supportive and encouraging. Participative management respects all members of an organisation as an infinite resource able to contribute knowledge and creativity to improving its ability to solve the main problem facing the organisation. By encouraging participative management, managers are in effect decentralising authority within their organisations (Amosa et al., 2019). Participative management style is based on the involvement of employees in decision-making and problem-solving in the company, as well as on supporting their high autonomy and own initiative and creativity (Nwankwo, 2023).

Employee motivation, employee ability, employee role, and organisational support have been considered among the most important factors in the organisation that help encourage and drive the positive emotion among employees to enhance their efforts and performance (Butali & Njoroge, 2018). It is noted that without a proper motivation policy, frequent training and development, clarity of role, and organisational support, the organisational performance may go up and down. These variables are to be studied and explored further in this study and how each factor impacts the organisational performance.

Organisational performance is the ability every organisation, irrespective of size and market share, strives to retain high performance levels in the business environment in order to remain competitive and survive. Organisational performance is the achievement of the organisational goals and objectives in relation to its standard (Okiomah, 2020). Organisational performance simply refers to how well a firm is doing to get the vision, mission and goals of the firm achieved. Richard, Devinney, Yip and Johnson (2009) explained that organisational performance involves analysing a firm’s performance against its objective and goals. In other words, firm performance comprises real results or outputs compared with targeted output levels, and the analysis focuses on three main outcomes: financial performance, product market performance and shareholder’s return. Every organisation aims to sustain its existence and meet the needs of highly competitive markets by continuously improving its performance (Arinaitwe, as cited in Okwurume & Onuoha, 2020). According to Okwurume and Onuoha (2020), organisational performance is the means of the transformation of inputs into outputs for achieving certain outcomes. Ely and Thomas, cited in Okwurume and Onuoha (2020), described performance as the execution or accomplishment of work, tasks or goals to a certain level of desired satisfaction. There are several ways to understand organisational performance, but a more consistent approach looks at it as the ability of an organisation to act and carry out its operations in a manner that is cost considerate and with outcomes that are satisfactory to stakeholders. This is estimated as far as the following parameters: the efficiency of the organisation's systems and processes, the level of productivity and the extent to which services or products are innovative or creative, and as such, satiating existing satisfaction gaps within markets.

Therefore, for any organisation to be prosperous, the managers need to see their employees as vital resources and keep the staff satisfied, because the performance of any organisation is tied to their employees (Ndu et al., 2022). Employee participation in decision-making is not a current management practice, and if applied appropriately, it will improve organisational performance, productivity and job satisfaction (Zanny, Abba & Hamid, 2020).

It is true that employees need motivation, frequent training and development of their ability, clear role assignment, and support from the management to raise their positive emotions and efforts (Bunteng, 2022); it is equally necessary for them to be involved in all that goes on in the system for maximum performance.

The potential success of a business depends on the performance of the organisation, which means its ability to effectively implement strategies to achieve organisational goals (Almatrooshi et al., 2016). The performance of any organisation depends largely on the level of expertise that its leaders have when it comes to implementing strategies. According to the research of Almatrooshi et al. (2016), it described the essence of leadership as a conditional relationship between a manager and his follower. Because there are always obstacles to achieving organisational goals, it is important that the techniques used by leaders are flexible enough to adapt to change. The performance of the organisation also depends on its employees, who are an integral part of the organisation and form a team that works towards achieving the goals of the organisation and perform various activities to achieve their organisational goals. Quantitative repeatable activities help to leverage processes for organisational success to determine performance levels of management to make informed decisions about where in the process, when needed, to improve performance. Goal achievement is one of the basic criteria for determining organisational performance (Tan et al., 2021).

Participative management is often accompanied by conflict and struggle (Yohe, 2008). The major barriers to implementing participative management processes are as follows:

1. Organisational bureaucracy and structure that focuses on uniformity, consistency, and control from the top.

2. A culture that does not include participative management as a value or norm.

3. Subordinates that lack the desire or knowledge and thus, don't feel competent to participate in decision-making.

4. Increase in workload and job stress.

5. Lack of incentives for participation.

6. Fear of making incorrect decisions.

7. Conflicting managerial priorities.

8. Poor or lack of communication

Achieving goals is the objective of an organisation whose strategic planning is required to meet them. Goals must be clearly communicated with the employee for the intended work to be achieved. According to Hashem, there is a close relationship between organisational objectives and organisational performance concepts (Jenatabadi, 2015). Therefore, the organisation's performance will be evaluated by the areas of employee productivity, customer satisfaction and employee satisfaction. And the performance must be the primary consideration of an organisation to evaluate its operations. This is an important responsibility and requirement of different managers in different companies. Studies have reported that employee involvement and participation can have a positive impact on organisational performance (Okiomah, 2020; Zanny, Abba & Hamid, 2020; Ndu et al., 2022), while some have recorded a negative impact (Ambani, 2016; Butalli & Njoroge, 2018), thus creating an inconclusive scenario. This prompted the researcher to embark on this study to ascertain the roles of participative management in enhancing organisational performance, especially in the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission in South East Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to examine the role of participative management in enhancing organisational performance in the Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission in South- East Nigeria. The specific objectives include:

1. Determine the effects of industrial democracy and integrated communication on the performance of the Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission

2. Examine the effects of participative decision-making on performance in the Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission

3. Assess the effects of investment in intellectual capital on the performance of the Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide this study:

1. To what extent do industrial democracy and integrated communication affect the performance of the Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission?

2. What are the effects of participative decision-making on performance in the Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission?

3. What are the effects of investment in intellectual capital on the performance of the Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were stated to guide the study:

1. Industrial democracy and integrated communication have no significant effect on the performance of the Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission.

2. There is no significant effect of participative decision-making on performance at the upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission.

3. Investment in intellectual capital does not significantly affect the performance of the Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission.

METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted in this study was a descriptive survey research design. The area of this study is the Southeast Zone of Nigeria, with Owerri as the regional capital. The upstream regional office in the Southeast is the Owerri regional office at no. The population of the study consisted of all staff of the Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission who consented to participate in the study. Hence, a population of 283 staff of all cadres was obtained. The sample of the study comprised 283 staff of NUPRC Owerri regional headquarters who were conveniently selected. The study applied census sampling by using all the population. The use of convenience sampling was to ensure that participants are willing to participate in the study and willingly contributed to the study. The method of data collection adopted was a qualitative data collection method. Quantitatively, the study instrument was a questionnaire titled 'Impact of Participatory Management of Organisational Performance Questionnaire (IPMOPQ)'. This comprised 6 clusters. The questionnaire was structured into a 4-point scale of strongly agreed (4), agreed (3), disagreed (2), and strongly disagreed (1). The face validity of the instrument was determined by three experts, two from the Department of Business Administration, Paul University Awka. And one from the Statistics Department from the same institution. To test the reliability of the instruments, the Cronbach's alpha method of reliability was used. The researcher administered the instrument to 20 workers from other companies that were not part of the study sample. The reliability index of the instrument of 0.72 was obtained, which made the instrument reliable.

Data collected from the survey were analysed with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and simple regression analysis to test the hypotheses at the .05 level of significance, since each relationship involves one independent variable and one dependent variable. The decision rule is that if the p-value < 0.05, reject the null hypothesis (significant effect), and if the p-value $\geqslant$ 0.05, fail to reject the null hypothesis (not significant).

RESULTS

Research Question One: To what extent does industrial democracy in communication affect performance?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of effect of industrial democracy in communication on Organizational performance

S/N	Item	Mean	Std. Dev	Remarks
1	Communication is transparent	3.39	0.77	Very high
2	Employees can express opinions	3.46	0.75	Very high
3	Coordination through communication is effective	3.50	0.70	Very high
4	Fairness is ensured by democratic systems	3.41	0.79	Very high
5	Staff feel heard and informed	3.44	0.72	Very high
6	Goals are clearer with good communication	3.52	0.68	Very high
	Overall Mean	**3.45**	**0.74**	Very high

Table 1 shows data on the effect of industrial democracy's communication on organisational performance. Data from the table revealed that the cluster mean of items 1-6 is 3.45. This amount is above the benchmark score of 2.50 on a 4-point rating scale. This implies that industrial democracy in communication has an effect on organisational performance to a very large extent. Specifically, industrial democracy helps employees express themselves, ensures fairness, makes them feel heard and informed, and makes clearer goals achievable to a very high extent. The table also reveals that the cluster standard deviation for items 1–6 was.74. This also shows that the respondents' answers are moderately close to the average and each other regarding the effect of participative management on employee motivation, further validating the average.

Research Question Two: What is the effect of participative decision-making on performance?

Table 2: **Mean and standard deviation of effect of Participative Decision on Organizational Performance**

S/N	Item	Mean	Std. Dev	Remarks
1	Shared decisions improve outcomes	3.61	0.671	Very high
2	Contribution increases commitment	2.55	0.702	High
3	Efficiency improves through joint decision-making	2.59	0.691	High
4	Collaborative planning yields better results	2.57	0.713	High
5	Work quality improves	3.62	0.661	Very high
6	Targets are better achieved collectively	3.60	0.672	Very high
	Overall Mean	**3.59**	**0.690**	**Very high**

Table 2 shows data on the effect of participatory decision-making on organisational performance. Data from the table revealed that the cluster mean of items 1-6 is 3.69. This is above the benchmarkscore of 2.50 on a 4-point rating scale. This implies that participative decision-making has an effect on organisational performance to a very high extent. Specifically, participative decision-making helps improve outcomes, commitment, quality work, and better results to a very high extent. The table also reveals that the cluster standard deviation of items 1-6 was 0.690. This also shows that the respondents are not far from the mean and the opinion of one another in their responses on the effect of participative decision-making on organisational performance, adding further validity to the mean.

Research Question Three: What is the effect of investment in intellectual capital on performance?

Table 3:: Mean and standard deviation of effect of investment in intellectual capital on Organizational performance

S/N	Item	Mean	Std. Dev	Remarks
1	Staff training is regularly organized	3.48	0.742	Very high
2	Knowledge-sharing is promoted	3.52	0.712	Very high
3	Performance improves with training investment	3.60	0.671	Very high
4	Intellectual capacity helps reduce errors	3.51	0.723	Very high
5	Knowledge resources are developed	3.56	0.693	Very high
	Innovation and research are encouraged	3.58	0.684	Very high
	Overall Mean	**3.54**	**0.715**	**Very high**

Table 3 shows data on the effect of investment in intellectual capital on organisational performance. Data from the table revealed that the cluster mean of items 1-6 is 3.54. This is above the benchmarkscore of 2.50 on a 4-point rating scale. This implies that investment in intellectual capital has an effect on organisational performance to a very high extent. Specifically, industrial democracy helps employees express themselves, ensures fairness, makes them feel heard and informed, and ensures clearer goals are achieved to a very high extent. The table also reveals that the cluster standard deviation of items 1-6 was 0.715. This also shows that the respondents are moderately not far from the mean and the opinion of one another in their responses on the effect of investment in intellectual capital on organisational performance, adding further validity to the mean.

Hypothesis one: Industrial democracy in communication does not significantly affect organisational performance.

Table 4a: Model Summary

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error
1	0.640	0.390	0.386	0.410

Table 4b: Regression Analysis on industrial democracy in communication does not significantly affect Organizational Performance.

Source	**SS**	**Df**	**MS**	**F**	**Sig.**
Regression	29.15	2	14.575	74.40	0.000
Residual	55.34	282	0.196		
Total	84.49	284			

Dependent: organizational performance
Predictor: industrial democracy

The result in Table 4a and 4b show that R=0.640 which is a positive strong relationship and F-ratio of 74.40 with associated exact probability value of 0.00 was obtained. This probability value of 0.00 was compared with 0.05, set as the level of significance for testing the hypothesis, and it was found to be significant because 0.00 is less than 0.05. The null hypothesis, which stated that industrial democracy does not significantly affect organisational performance, is therefore rejected. Therefore, industrial democracy has a strong positive significant effect on organisational performance.

Hypothesis two: Participative decision-making does not significantly affect organisational performance.

Table 5a: Model Summary

Model	R	R²	Adjusted R²	Std. Error
1	0.630	0.400	0.397	0.408

Table 5b: Regression Analysis on Participative Decision Making does not significantly affect Organizational Performance

Source	**SS**	**Df**	**MS**	**F**	**Sig.**
Regression	20.78	1	20.78	104.30	0.000
Residual	56.31	283	0.199		
Total	**77.09**	**284**			

Dependent: organizational performance
Predictor: Participative decision making

The results in Tables 5a and 5b show that R=0.630, which is a positive strong relationship, and an F-ratio of 104.30 with an associated exact probability value of 0.00 was obtained. This probability value of 0.00 was compared with 0.05, set as the level of significance for testing the hypothesis, and it was found to be significant because 0.00 is less than 0.05. The null hypothesis, which stated that participative decision-making does not significantly affect organisational performance, is therefore rejected. Therefore, participative decision-making has a strong positive significant effect on organisational performance.

Hypothesis three: Investment in intellectual capital does not significantly affect organisational performance

.
Table 6a Model Summary

Model	R	R²	Adjusted R²	Std. Error
1	0.610	0.370	0.367	0.415

Table 6b: Regression Analysis on investment in Intellectual Capital does not significantly affect Organizational Performance

Source	**SS**	**Df**	**MS**	**F**	**Sig.**
Regression	21.95	1	21.95	79.60	0.000
Residual	78.16	283	0.276		
Total	**100.11**	**284**			

Dependent: organizational performance
Predictor: investment in intellectual capital

The results in Tables 6a and 6b show that R=0.610, which is a positive strong relationship, and an F-ratio of 79.60 with an associated exact probability value of 0.000 was obtained. This probability value of 0.00 was compared with 0.05, set as the level of significance for testing the hypothesis, and it was found to be significant because 0.00 is less than 0.05. The null hypothesis, which stated that investment in intellectual capital does not significantly affect organisational performance, is therefore rejected. Therefore, investment in intellectual capital has a strong positive significant effect on organisational performance.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings showed that the influence of industrial democracy in communication on performance was found to be statistically significant. Respondents noted that open communication and democratic decision-making improved collaboration, reduced conflict, and made goals clearer. Effective communication ensures that employees understand their roles and how they contribute to organisational goals. Democracy in the workplace fosters inclusion, transparency, and mutual respect, which are key to sustainable performance. Nwachukwu (2018) and Udechukwu (2020) affirmed that transparent systems where employees can speak up and understand decisions result in higher productivity. The combination of communication and democratic processes improves both task execution and workplace harmony. This also tallies with Uwandu, Udo-Anyanwu, and Okorie (2022), who focused on participative management and effective communication as predictors of job performance of library staff in Federal Universities in the South East Geo-political Zone of Nigeria and revealed that participative management and effective communication, respectively, are highly and significantly related with job performance of library staff in the South East Geo-political Zone of Nigeria.

The finding also revealed a strong and positive effect of participative decision-making on organisational performance. This suggests that decisions reached through collaboration result in better planning, increased accountability, and superior results. The Path-Goal Theory of leadership suggests that participative leadership clarifies paths to goals, making employees more committed to achieving them. When employees are part of decisions, they understand them better and commit more fully to implementing them (House, 1971). Studies by Iwu and Nwachukwu (2019) demonstrated that participative decision-making in Nigerian regulatory agencies improved strategic alignment and goal fulfilment. Similarly, Osemene (2020) reported increased innovation and project delivery when staff contributed to key decisions. The study by Chimaobi (2022) on the effect of employee participation in decision-making on organisational performance using Afam Power Plc in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, as a case study corroborates this study. It revealed that employee participation in decision-making has a positive effect on organisational performance. Another study by Zang, Abba and Hamid (2020) investigated employee participation in decision-making as a motivational factor for building high performance in the organisation and indicated a statistically substantial relationship between employee involvement in decision-making and motivation for high performance in the workplace. Oyo-Ita, Worlu and Udoh (2020) examined the impact of participatory management on employee productivity in selected banks in Lagos State and showed that there is a positive relationship between participatory management and employees' productivity. The study concludes that participatory management has the ability to align employees with the system of the organisation, which will result in productivity in the organisation. Ezeanolue and Ezeanyim (2020) examined the influence of employee participation in decision-making and organisational productivity in selected manufacturing firms in South-East, Nigeria. The study aimed to determine the influence of employee consultation, employee involvement, and employee delegationon organisational productivity.

More findings showed that investment in intellectual capital (e.g., training, knowledge sharing, professional development) showed a significant positive impact on performance. Respondents agreed that continuous learning and knowledge development led to fewer errors, improved service delivery, and innovation. Organisations that invest in intellectual capital gain a competitive advantage by enhancing human skills, reducing redundancy, and fostering adaptability. This is especially important in the petroleum regulatory sector, which requires up-to-date technical knowledge. According to Edvinsson and Malone (2017), intellectual capital is a key determinant of performance in knowledge-based industries. Similarly, Olowu and Okereke's (2021) finding here showed that training and learning investments directly improved productivity in the Nigerian energy sector. Ugwu, Chimaobi and Nnaji-Ihedinmah (2020) examined participatory management and employee satisfaction in Afam Power Holding Plc in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, and discovered a significant positive relationship between organisational structure, training and employee motivation. Elochukwu (2022) studied the effects of participative management as a success factor on organisational performance: a study of the Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR) and Pipelines and Products Marketing Company Limited (PPMC) in the South-East, Nigeria, found that employees' involvement, industrial democracy and integrated communication and investment in intellectual capital have a significant effect on the performance in DPR and PPMC. Also, the hypothesis result revealed that management support has a significant effect on participative decision-making in DPR and PPMC.

Conclusion

The findings of this study reported that all participative management practices have a positive impact on organisational performance. This means that participative management practices affect employee outcomes and organisational performance in UPRC across Southeast Nigeria. This study concludes that participative management is a powerful tool for improving both employee engagement and organisational performance within the UPRC.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Companies should organise regular training and knowledge-sharing programmes to build employee capacity and innovation.
2. Companies should encourage grassroots staff to contribute ideas and suggestions by creating safe, inclusive platforms for express companies on.

3. There should be re-engineering of organisational structures to support decentralisation and employee-led initiatives.

4. Government and professional bodies should encourage participative practices through organisational development policies and guidelines.

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