

# Examining the Role of Employee Participation in Decision-Making Processes On Employees' Performance in Nigerian Manufacturing Sector

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

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# ABSTRACT

This study examines the effect of employee participation in decision making on employee's performance in the Nigerian manufacturing sector. The study formulated one research hypothesis, in line with the research objectives. This study employs survey research approach through the administration of structured questionnaires on employees of manufacturing firms in Lagos, Nigeria. Specifically, the research instrument (questionnaire) was administered on 400 employees of Vitaform PLC, Rite Foods Ltd and Olam Nigeria. However, only 283 copies were retrieved, out of which only 279 copies were found useable. Therefore, the study was based on data obtained from 279 respondents. The study employed both face and construct validity. The face and construct validity of the study's instrument was established by testing conducted by independent evaluators who had expertise in the fields of human resource and organizational behaviour. The test-retest approach was used to test the reliability of the research instrument, by delivering the study instrument to a chosen group of 35 respondents that are employees of two water processing plants. The first and subsequent pilot study showed a positive correlation, resulting in a value of  $\alpha=0.73$ , 0.81 for employee participation and employee performance, respectively. The findings revealed that employee participation in decision making significantly affect employees' performance in the Nigerian manufacturing sector. Given the research findings, it can be concluded that employee participation in decision making is an important driver of employees' performance in the Nigerian manufacturing sector. Therefore, it is recommended that manufacturing firms in Nigeria should allow members of staff to participate in decision making, as it tends to enhance the performance of employees.

## Methodology

Survey research approach using structured questionnaires administered to 279 employees from three manufacturing firms

## Key Variables

Employee participation in decision making and employee performance in Nigerian manufacturing companies

## Main Finding

Employee participation significantly affects performance with reliability coefficients of  $\alpha=0.73$  and 0.81

**Keywords:** Decision Making, Employee Participation, Employee Performance, Manufacturing Sector

# INTRODUCTION

The importance of employee participation in organizational decision-making processes has gained more attention in recent years. Significant performance gains have been observed by organizations implementing participative management techniques. This is explained by the inclusive character of these strategies, which give staff members the chance to actively participate in collaborative decision-making processes. Employee participation benefits the company and the individual by encouraging employees to assume accountability for organizational results and fostering a sense of ownership.

According to Maikudi et al. (2025), participatory processes have been demonstrated to increase employee productivity and satisfaction by giving people more autonomy and control over their work. By allowing employees to actively participate in decisions that impact their roles, organizations can cultivate a deeper sense of dedication and motivation, which in turn leads to increased productivity and job satisfaction. Participatory processes include giving employees opportunities to achieve personal and organizational goals, encouraging idea generation, and delegating responsibilities.

The theoretical underpinnings of employee participation in decision-making can be comprehensively understood through the lens of Self-Determination Theory (SDT). SDT posits that individuals are driven by three fundamental psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci, Connell, & Ryan, 1989). Employee participation directly addresses these needs by granting individuals greater control over their work (autonomy), opportunities to develop and apply their skills (competence), and fostering a sense of belonging and shared purpose within the organization (relatedness). Fulfilling these needs through participative practices enhances intrinsic motivation, leading to improved performance and well-being (Gagné & Parker, 2022).

01

## **Early Recognition**

Growing awareness of employee participation benefits in organizational decision-making processes and performance outcomes.

02

## **Implementation Growth**

Organizations implementing participative management techniques have observed significant performance gains, with studies showing positive correlation between participation and productivity.

03

## **Current Focus**

Nigerian manufacturing firms are increasingly recognizing the need to involve employees in decision-making processes to enhance organizational effectiveness.

In the specific context of Nigerian manufacturing, employee participation holds particular relevance. Given the dynamic economic landscape and diverse cultural factors, empowering employees through participative decision-making can foster greater adaptability, innovation, and commitment. This approach can help address challenges such as skill gaps, productivity issues, and employee retention, aligning organizational goals with the aspirations of a diverse workforce in a developing economy.

According to Galeazzo et al. (2021), employee participation has a good effect on organizational outcomes in addition to individual success. According to the authors, involvement enables a range of viewpoints to be taken into account, resulting in more thorough decision-making. Because their participation creates a sense of accountability and ownership, employees who participate in decision-making are more inclined to accept and carry them out successfully. Because workers communicate directly with one another instead of only through hierarchical channels, this approach also improves cooperation and communication within the company. Furthermore, employees receive a strong message of trust when important information is shared during participatory decision-making processes, which improves organizational connections (Philip & Arrowsmith, 2021).

Several studies (Kwon & Kim, 2025; Maikudi et al., 2025) have demonstrated that involving employees in decision-making processes positively impacts organizational outcomes. A study by Maikudi et al. (2025) found that employee participation significantly improves job satisfaction, suggesting that workers who participate in decision-making are more satisfied. Additionally, it was found that job satisfaction has a significant positive impact on employee commitment, confirming that satisfied employees show higher levels of commitment, and that employee participation significantly influences employee commitment, indicating that participatory workplaces foster organizational loyalty. Finally, the relationship between employee commitment and participation is somewhat mediated by job satisfaction, suggesting that in public universities in Adamawa State, Nigeria, involvement both directly and indirectly increases commitment through satisfaction.

Kwon and Kim (2025) found that participatory decision-making greatly increases cognitive flexibility, which in turn mediates its effect on creativity. For creativity, the direct consequences were more noticeable. These findings highlight the theoretical and practical value of participatory decision-making in promoting creativity and flexibility in South Korean organizations. There are, however, conflicting results. Cotton et al. (2014) found that, when analyzed in its different forms, participatory decision-making (PDM) has a minimal impact on performance. These differing viewpoints draw attention to the continuous discussion about the benefits and ramifications of employee involvement in decision-making.

The divergence of findings across the globe shows the need for further research to examine the link between employees' participation in decision making and employees performance. Furthermore, the bulk of the studies on the subject matter focus on the service sector with minimal studies on the manufacturing sector. In addressing this research gap, this study examines the effect of employees' participation in decision making on the employees' performance in Nigerian manufacturing sector.

## **Research Hypotheses**

In line with the research objective, the following hypotheses will guide the study:

$H_01$ : Employees' participation in decision-making does not significantly affect employee performance in Nigerian manufacturing sector.

# **LITERATURE REVIEW**

## **Conceptualising Employee Performance**

The idea of employee performance has been considered one of the most significant and extensively studied variables within the field of work and organizational studies (Omar et al., 2016; Chiaburu et al., 2017). Because employees are crucial to the success of any organization (Worlu et al., 2016; Alessandri et al., 2017). Given the critical role that employees play in the overall success of the company, every business organization wants to get the most out of its workforce.

Depending on how, why, and for whom it is being measured, employee performance is also considered to be a multifaceted and highly subjective notion. The availability of employee training opportunities (Bhat & Rainayee, 2016), organizational climate (Nugraha, 2025; Ariyanti et al., 2025), managerial support (Adiyanto & Fajri, 2025), and involvement in decision-making (Maikudi et al., 2025) are some of the factors that have been identified by a number of researchers as having an impact on employee job performance.

It has also been said that performance is a concept that is unstable and subject to change, which may be caused by both short-term and long-term factors. Another way to define employee job performance is the degree to which a worker fulfills their assigned responsibilities and engages in pertinent behaviors and actions that support the objectives of the company. From the standpoint of the Nigerian manufacturing sector, this study investigates the connection between workers' job performance and their involvement in decision-making.

## **Conceptualising Employee Participation in Decision Making**

The process through which workers actively participate in organizational decision-making, either directly or through representative procedures, is known as employee participation. There are several degrees of participation, including tactical (like allocating resources), strategic (like establishing goals and developing policies), and operational (like assigning tasks). By utilizing the workforce's expertise, experience, and inventiveness, employee participation improves organizational effectiveness. According to self-determination theory, participation is inherently motivating because it meets psychological demands for relatedness, competence, and autonomy. When workers are involved in decision-making, their engagement and job satisfaction considerably rise. Employee engagement to the organization's objectives is also strengthened by participation since it gives them a sense of accountability and ownership for results.

Employee involvement also improves the quality of decisions. Top management may not always be able to see the insights that employees closest to operational duties have. Their involvement guarantees that choices are realistic, doable, and pertinent to the situation. In addition to increasing motivation, Nnamseh and Ayandele (2016) discovered that employee involvement in Nigerian companies enhanced organizational performance metrics like productivity, creativity, and customer satisfaction. Businesses that encourage employee involvement frequently report increased morale, decreased absenteeism, and increased productivity. Additionally, because participatory cultures encourage resilience and adaptability, these organizations are better able to adjust to changes in the outside world.



### **Direct Participation**

Employees directly involved in organizational decision-making processes at operational, tactical, and strategic levels.

### **Indirect Participation**

Employee involvement through representatives like trade unions and works councils in organizational decisions.

### **Performance Benefits**

Enhanced productivity, creativity, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment through participative decision-making.

The degree to which workers participate in an organization's decision-making processes is known as employee participation. It is intimately related to autonomy, empowerment, and the more general democratic operation of businesses. Employee alignment with company objectives and a sense of ownership are increased through participation. Self-Determination Theory states that intrinsic motivation requires autonomy, and employee participation directly satisfies this psychological need. Employee participation in participatory decision-making frameworks significantly increases productivity and enhances feelings of justice and belonging.

In a similar vein, while employee involvement in decision-making has been linked to civic engagement and organizational commitment, some research indicates that despite high levels of engagement, a discernible relationship between commitment or citizenship behavior might not always be present, suggesting the existence of mediating factors such as institutional culture or leadership style. Organizational sustainability has also been connected to participation, with findings showing that employee involvement has a beneficial impact on organizational sustainability in the social, environmental, and economic spheres, particularly in settings like South Asia. This implies that involvement not only promotes internal engagement but also makes long-term strategic results possible.

# Theoretical Framework: Self-Determination Theory

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) provides a robust theoretical foundation for understanding the motivational underpinnings of employee participation and its impact on performance. SDT posits that individuals possess three innate psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci *et al.*, 1989). Autonomy refers to the need to feel control and agency over one's actions, competence to the desire to feel effective in one's interactions with the environment, and relatedness to the need to feel connected and accepted by others. Employee participation directly addresses these fundamental needs. By involving employees in decision-making, organizations foster a sense of autonomy, allowing individuals to exert influence over their work and work environment. Participation also provides opportunities for employees to utilize and develop their skills, thereby enhancing feelings of competence. Furthermore, collaborative decision-making processes strengthen social bonds and a sense of belonging, fulfilling the need for relatedness. The satisfaction of these psychological needs, as highlighted by Groen *et al.* (2017), leads to greater intrinsic motivation, engagement, and ultimately, improved job performance and well-being.

## Employee Participation in African/Developing Country Contexts

The examination of employee participation in decision-making holds unique significance within African and developing country contexts, where organizational structures, cultural norms, and economic realities can differ substantially from Western models. Empirical studies illuminate these dynamics. For instance, research in Nigerian firms has found a positive correlation between employee participation and organizational commitment, suggesting that involvement fosters a stronger bond between employees and their organizations. Studies on public sector organizations in Nigeria have emphasized how participative management styles can significantly enhance job satisfaction and reduce turnover intentions, addressing critical issues in rapidly developing economies. Furthermore, the role of employee participation in driving innovation and productivity within the Nigerian manufacturing sector has been explored, concluding that empowering employees with decision-making roles leads to more agile and competitive enterprises. These findings collectively underscore the potential for participative practices to address specific challenges and leverage local strengths within African organizational settings, contributing to improved performance and sustainable development.

# Underpinning Theory

Dansereau et al. (1975) created the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory, which serves as the foundation for this study. It focuses on the nature of the dyadic connection between leaders and subordinates. According to the theory, leaders develop special bonds with each team member, who is divided into "in-group" and "out-group" members. While out-group members receive less attention and fewer possibilities for growth, in-group members usually enjoy high levels of trust, support, and information access.

When it comes to comprehending employee participation, LMX Theory is especially pertinent. High-quality LMX connections increase the likelihood that workers will be trusted with responsibilities, encouraged to voice their opinions, and consulted in decision-making. This degree of inclusivity encourages psychological safety and a sense of ownership, which inspires workers to make significant contributions to company objectives (Willie, 2025).

On the other hand, workers in poor LMX connections frequently experience exclusion and marginalization from important procedures, which can lower motivation and productivity. Employers may improve LMX quality throughout the workforce by promoting inclusive leadership and equitable relationship-building, which will promote citizenship behavior, job satisfaction, and participation.

Since research has shown that strong LMX connections lead to improved job performance, lower turnover, and more engagement, this hypothesis is extremely pertinent for analyzing the relationship between employees' performance and their involvement in decision-making (Mahbub et al., 2025). Organizations can guarantee that workers feel appreciated and included in decision-making by encouraging participative leadership techniques, which will create a positive work environment.

## Critical Perspectives and Contextual Considerations

While a significant body of literature supports the positive impact of employee participation on performance, it is crucial to acknowledge that findings are not uniformly positive across all contexts and studies. As noted in the Introduction, Cotton et al. (2014) found that, when analyzed in its various forms, participatory decision-making (PDM) had only a minimal impact on performance, challenging the universality of its benefits. Such discrepancies may arise from methodological differences, variations in the definition and measurement of participation, or the specific organizational and cultural contexts in which studies are conducted. For example, the effectiveness of participation can be moderated by factors such as leadership style, organizational culture, and the nature of the decisions being made. In the Nigerian context, cultural factors such as a strong hierarchical tradition, paternalistic management styles, or differing perceptions of authority could potentially influence how employee participation is received and implemented. These elements may lead to resistance, skepticism, or a diminished sense of empowerment, thereby affecting the expected positive outcomes. Therefore, while theoretical frameworks like SDT and LMX provide valuable insights, it is important to critically assess their applicability and potential limitations when considering the diverse realities of global workplaces, particularly in developing economies where unique socio-cultural dynamics are at play.

# METHODOLOGY

This study employs survey research approach to examine the effect of employee participation in decision making on employee's performance in the Nigerian manufacturing sector. As such, primary data was obtained from employees of manufacturing firms in Lagos, Nigeria. The research instrument (questionnaire) was administered on 400 employees of Vitaform PLC, Rite Foods Ltd and Olam Nigeria.

The study employed both face and construct validity. The face and construct validity of the study's instrument was established by testing conducted by independent evaluators who had expertise in the fields of human resource and organization behaviour. The test-retest approach was used to test the reliability of the research instrument, by delivering the study instrument to a chosen group of 35 respondents that are employees of two water processing plants. The first and subsequent pilot study showed a positive correlation, resulting in a value of  $\alpha = 0.73, 0.81$  for employee participation and employee performance, respectively. Based on the postulation of Pandey and Pandey (2021), it may be concluded that these results are deemed to be acceptable. The study utilizes simple percentages and charts for the demographic data, while simple regression analysis was employed in testing the research hypothesis.

## Model Specification for Hypotheses 1

$$EP = f(EMPART) \quad (i)$$

$$EP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 EMPART + \mu_i \quad (ii)$$

Where:

EMPART represents Employee Participation

EP represents Employee Performance

$\beta_0$  is the constant term

$\beta_1$  is the coefficient of the estimator.

$$\beta_1 > 0 \quad (iii)$$

$\mu_i$  is the error term

In apriori terms, it is expected that employee participation in decision making will be positively related to employee performance in Nigerian manufacturing sector; hence the parameter of Employee Participation should have a positive sign.

### Sample Size

- 400 questionnaires administered
- 283 copies retrieved
- 279 useable responses analyzed

### Target Companies

Vitaform PLC, Rite Foods Ltd, and Olam Nigeria - leading manufacturing firms in Lagos

### Analysis Method

Simple regression analysis for hypothesis testing, with reliability coefficients  $\alpha = 0.73$  and  $0.81$

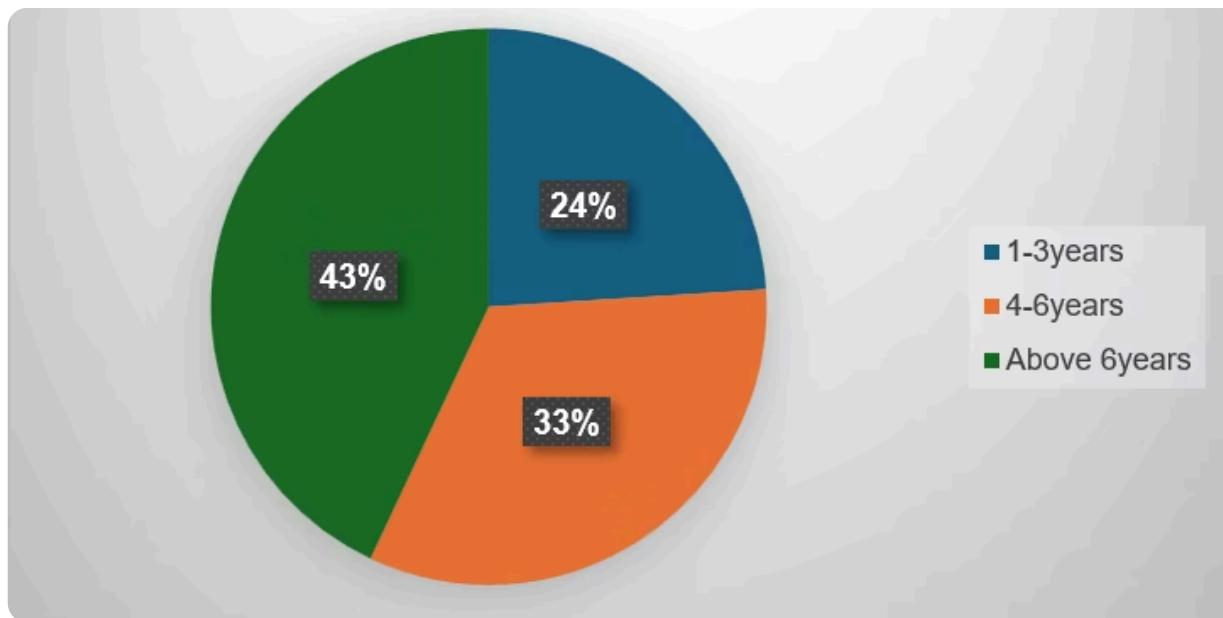
## Study Limitations

While this study provides valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations that offer avenues for future research. Firstly, the reliance on only three manufacturing companies, all located in Lagos, introduces a potential selection bias and may limit the generalizability of findings to the broader and diverse Nigerian manufacturing landscape, encompassing various regions and company sizes. Secondly, the cross-sectional design inherently restricts the ability to establish definitive causal relationships between employee participation and performance; a longitudinal study could address this. Thirdly, potential confounding variables such as specific company culture, industry type, prevailing economic conditions, and distinct management styles were not explicitly controlled for, and their influence warrants further investigation. Fourthly, generalizability concerns arise from the specific geographic and sectoral focus of this study, suggesting that findings might not be universally applicable without further research in different contexts. Finally, a response rate of 69.75% (279 out of 400 administered questionnaires) indicates a need to consider potential non-response bias, which could affect the representativeness of the sample. Future studies could aim to mitigate these limitations by employing more diverse samples, longitudinal designs, and comprehensive control for confounding variables.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study sought to examine the effect of employee participation in decision making on employee's performance in the Nigerian manufacturing sector. This section empirically analyse the data obtained from employees of the targeted manufacturing firms. Therefore, this section of the study presents the results and the discussions. The results start with the demographic data of the respondents, which includes: The years of experience and educational qualification of the respondents. Thereafter, the hypothesis was tested and the results from the test of hypothesis was stated and discussed. 400 copies of the questionnaires were administered on the employees of Vitaform PLC, Rite Foods Ltd and Olam Nigeria. However, only 283 copies were retrieved, out of which only 279 was found useable. Therefore, the study was based on data obtained from 279 respondents.

# Analysis of Demographic Features of Respondents



**Figure 1: Respondents' Years of Experience**

Source field survey - 2025

Figure 1 shows that 43% of the respondents have 1-3 years experience, 33% of the respondents have 4-6 years experience, while 24% of the respondents have over 6 years experience. This implies that most of the respondents were relatively experienced.



**Figure 2: Respondents' Educational Qualification**

Source field survey - 2025

Figure 2 reveal that the respondents have the following educational qualifications 18% (SSCE), 31% (OND/NCE), 37% (HND/B.Sc/BA), 10% (M.Sc./ MA) and 4% (Doctorate). This implies that most of the respondents are relatively educated.

# Hypotheses Testing

The null hypothesis formulated for this study was tested using simple regression analysis.

## Hypothesis one:

$H_0$ : Employees' participation in decision-making does not significantly affect employee performance in Nigerian manufacturing sector.

To test this hypothesis, the data was subjected to regression analysis for possible contributions of the variables. The result of the analysis is presented in the Table 4.1

**Table 1: The regression result for hypothesis 1 (Dependent Variable- Employees' Performance)**

Variable(s)	Coefficient	T	P-Value
<b>Constant</b>	1.328	2.736	0.009
<b>Employee Participation</b>	0.499	3.162	0.003
<b>F-Stat= 9.996(0. 003)</b>			<b>R-Square= 0.208</b>

*Authors' Computation from SPSS 26*

*Source: Field Survey (2025)*

$$\text{EMPART} = 1.328 + 0.499\text{EP}(3.162)^*$$

\*Significant at 5% level

The result on Table 1 indicates that employee participation in decision making has significant effect on employees' performance in Nigerian manufacturing sector. This can be deduced from the probability value of (P-value <0.003), which is below the significant level at 5% (0.05). This suggests that the alternative hypothesis should be accepted since it validates the proposition. It suggests that employee participation in decision making significantly affect employees' performance in the manufacturing sector. Furthermore, the model's suitability for prediction and decision-making was demonstrated by the F-Statistics (9.996, P-value<0.05). The coefficient of determination suggests that 20.8% variation in employees' performance is accounted for by employee participation in decision making.

This finding is consistent with the findings of Maikudi et al. (2025), who found that employee participation significantly improves job satisfaction in public universities in Adamawa State, Nigeria. It also aligns with the study of Kwon and Kim (2025), who found that participatory decision-making greatly improves employee creativity in South Korean organizations. However, this study negates the findings of Cotton et al. (2014), who found that, when analyzed in its different forms, participatory decision-making (PDM) has a minimal impact on performance.

# 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study examines the effect of employee participation in decision making on employee's performance in the Nigerian manufacturing sector. The study formulated one research hypothesis, in line with the research objectives. Regression analysis was employed in attaining the research objective. The findings revealed that employee participation in decision making significantly affect employees' performance in the Nigerian manufacturing sector. Given the research findings, it can be concluded that employee participation in decision making is an important driver of employees' performance in the Nigerian manufacturing sector. Therefore, it is recommended that manufacturing firms in Nigeria should allow members of staff to participate in decision making, as it tends to enhance the performance of employees.

01

## **Encourage Employee Participation**

Manufacturing firms should create structured opportunities for employees to participate in decision-making processes that affect their work and organizational outcomes.

02

## **Implement Participative Management**

Organizations should adopt participative management techniques including quality circles, team-based decisions, and consultative processes.

03

## **Develop Training Programs**

Provide training for both managers and employees on effective participative decision-making processes to maximize benefits.

04

## **Monitor and Evaluate Impact**

Establish systems to continuously assess the effectiveness of employee participation initiatives on performance outcomes.

## **Suggestions for further studies**

Further studies should be conducted to determine the effect of employees' participation in decision making on employees' performance from the perspective of other sectors and a combination of sectors. Other scholars should consider utilizing qualitative research approach, through key participants interview or focus group discussion, as it tends to yield more information.

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# **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

The author declares no conflict of interest

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