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CONSULTATIVE PARTICIPATION AS A DETERMINANT OF INSTITUTIONAL STABILITY AMONG SELECTED PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTHWEST, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study examined the effect of Consultative participatory decision making on institutional stability among selected public universities in southwest, Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised the selected public universities staff in southwest, Nigeria. A total of 393 structured questionnaires were administered to elicit information from the target respondents. Data gathered were analyzed using multiple regression models. The result showed that consultative participation significantly affect institutional stability as it was significant on institutional stability ($t=-0.259$, $t=2.016$, $t=6.791$ and $t=6.0336$, $p<0.05$) Thus, in conclusion, it was shown that all the constructs of the explanatory variable were significantly and positively related to institutional stability among selected public universities in Southwest Nigeria. Finally, it was recommended that university Administrators in southwest Nigeria should strictly adhere to consultative participation as to ensure institutional stability.

Keyword: Consultative Participation, Institution, Stability

1. INTRODUCTION

Participatory decision making, according to Somech (2002), remains a central theme in business, policy and research practice. Therefore, the focus of management has been to establish the positive effects of management practices on performance. Participation in management has been used interchangeably to mean shared leadership, employee empowerment, employee involvement, participatory decision-making, dispersed leadership, open-book management, or industrial democracy (Steinheider, Bayerl & Wuestewald, 2006). These coinages have come about as a result of the long quest to enhance employee contribution to management decisions so as to achieve organisational objectives and productivity. However, this has become a major challenge of management in recent time. Organisations that focus on their employees tend to increase employee satisfaction, commitment and organisational success (Gannon & Sterling, 2004). Through participatory decision making, productivity is expected to increase since commitment by employees towards implementation of decisions is to achieve enhanced productivity and overall organisational goals. In this regard, the research identifies ways of increasing productivity in an organisation through participatory decision making methods and also suggests practical

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solutions to management problems. The outcome of the research would assist management of Universities to identify and appreciate the role of participatory decision making in tertiary institutions' management.

Many organisations have experienced lack of commitment by employees towards implementation of decisions taken by top management, which undoubtedly has serious repercussions on organisational success in Nigeria. It is for this reason many organisations are employing methods for employees to participate in decision making process which has led to setting up of Committees within organisations. However, some employees are creative and innovative and can contribute immensely to the success of organisations, it is expected that they should be consulted or given chance to participate in decision which will also build their skills, confidence and also boost their morale. Many scholars have worked on participatory decision making on different dependent variable such as Khattak, Igbal and Khattak (2013), Zubair, Bashir, Abrar, Baig, Hassan (2015) to mention few, but the previous literatures neglected potential linkage between participatory decision making and institutional stability especially in a university system where time management is very essential to ensure that activities are carried out within time frame thus become the focus for this study. The specific objective is to examine the effect of consultative participation on institutional stability among selected Public Universities in Southwest, Nigeria.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Wagner 1994 (in Shaed, Ishak & Ramli, 2015) defined Participative decision-making as a process of involvement among employees and administration in sharing information processing, decision making and problem solving in an organisation. Participative decision-making is also defined as a process which allows employees to exert some influence over their work and the conditions under which they work. Furthermore, employees' participatory decision making involves the process of sharing important information between managers and employees to generate new ideas and possible alternatives, plan processes and evaluate results to achieve an organisation's objectives (Scott-Ladd, Travaglione & Marshall, 2006).

Consultative participation refers to practices where management encourages employees to share their opinions regarding work-related concerns, yet retains the right to make all final decisions. Examples of consultative participation include regular meetings with supervisors, attitude surveys and employee suggestion (Bhatti, Nawar & Akbar, 2011). Consultative techniques imply that a manager asks for and receives involvement from employees but maintains the right to handle the decision while in the democratic form, there's a full participation and the group not the individual heads and makes the final decision by consensus or majority (Luthans, 2005).

According to Hasim, Alam and Siraj (2010), Consultation in decision-making refers to a situation where the head seeks others' opinions and recommendations on an issue but finally makes his or her own decision (Edmondson, 2003). However, a situation can arise when the head is not able to consult with everyone to get a unanimous recommendation. The researcher posited further that, consultative participation is a formal means where employees can take part in decision making. This is usually done through the use of quality circles. Quality circles are seen as a group of employees from different levels of a company who meet regularly to discuss ways of improving quality and to resolve problems related to production. With quality circles, employees are made to participate in the group of their strength to be able to make sound decisions.

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Irawanto (2015) asserted that consultative employee involvement is emphasized, requiring employees to understand a recent problem and later make a decision on its solution.

In view of this, three concepts were highlighted from the approach and they are:

- i. emotional and mental involvement;
- ii. motivation in contributing to the organisational performance, and
- iii. accepting responsibility.

From the above fact, Participation involves individuals or groups in the process. Individual participation techniques are those in which an employee somehow affects the decision making of a manager. Group participation techniques use consultative techniques and democratic techniques. University is a complex social organisation occupying a strategic position in the education ladder within the university context as learning organisation, fertile ground for the development of the individual. University education is the culmination of a long process of human development which starts formally from the elementary level, running through primary and secondary school organisations in the Nigeria setting, for instance. Indeed, it is a very long drawn process, spanning chronologically and sequentially through several years of studies in all kinds of knowledge and skills (Nakpodia, 2009).

Burchell and Kolb (2006) define Stability as maintaining the status quo in organisational features and processes, including all aspects of acquired learning and accepted practices. Stability can be associated with terms such as centralisation, conflict reduction, conformity, consensus, consistency, continuity, control, formalisation, hierarchy, integration, maintenance, order, security, status quo and standardisation.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Lewins' democratic leadership theory will underpin this study because the theory welcomes input from subordinates and facilitates group discussion through seeking their consent on crucial decisions relating to organisation. This leader type shares plans with the subordinates and offers multiples option for group consideration in order to avoid rift or disagreement that could hinder the peace of the institution. This democratic style of leadership encourages members to work freely with each other and leaves the division of tasks to the group. The leader is objective in praise and criticisms and join group activities without over participating. This theory is suitable for participatory decision making because the style of leadership ensures stability and consistency of operation through allowing subordinates to have the sense of belongingness and feel happy to be part of the organisation progress. In view of this, employees will see themselves as an important asset to this organisation and that they are not underutilised as well.

3. METHODOLOGY

This research employed a descriptive survey. The survey was descriptive in the sense that it assisted the researcher gather first-hand information from the respondents. Primary data was used for the study to gather information through a structured questionnaire adapted from the work of Hasim, Alam and Siraj (2010) to elicit information from respondents which are: Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Federal University of Technology, Akure, Obafemi

Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Lagos State University, University of Ibadan and Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye.

The study population was 24,001 staff of the six selected tertiary institutions in Southwest, Nigeria. These six universities were purposively selected out of the entire 13 public Universities in Southwest, Nigeria. Three hundred and ninety three (393) respondents were sampled using Yamane (1967) sampling Model. Closed ended questionnaire was employed and the questionnaire was based five point likert scales which is divided in to three sub- sections. Section A was used to extract demographic information about respondents. Section B was used to elicit questions on consultative participation and section C was used to extract responses on institutional stability. The data generated were analysed using multiple regression to test the effect of explanatory variable (Consultative Participation variables) on dependent variable (Institutional Stability).

4. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Presentation of Respondents' Demographic Data

This section presents the analysis of data, interpretation and discussion of the findings with regards to the objectives of the study. 393 respondents were sampled, 295 questionnaires were filled and returned which represented 75% response rate which thus implies that the selected Southwest Universities 'staff response rate to the information needed for this study is very high and adequate for data analysis. The response of the respondents is analysed in.

The table 1 indicated that the male distribution was 187 (63.4%), while the female were 108 (36.6%). Therefore, male staff is more than the female staff. From the researcher's observation, most units or department in the selected Southwest Universities are being coordinated by male member of staff which implies that male staff are considered to be more effective in participatory decision making than female staff among the selected Southwest Universities.

Considering the staff's marital status, 100 (33.9%) of the total respondents were single, 191 (64.7%) were married while only 4 (1.4%) of the total respondents were divorced. The summary of the response gathered here shows that the larger populations of respondents are married putting years of experience distribution into consideration, it implied that married staff are relatively matured, confident and courageous enough to contribute reasonably while participating in decision making.

Based on academic qualification, it was also revealed that 32 (10.9%) of the total respondents are NCE/OND holders, 103 (34.9%) of the total respondents are HND/B.Sc degree holder, 83 (28.1%) of the total respondents were MBA/M.Sc. degree holders, 74 (24.1%) of the survey respondents hold Ph.D. degree, while 6 (2.0%) of the total respondents hold other qualifications which implied that staff with HND/B.Sc degree tend to have the required minimum qualifications needed for participation in decision making because they must have been well equipped academically, in their various fields or areas they specialise in.

It was also revealed that the 24 (42.0%) of the total respondents are members of academic staff. 150 (50.9%) of the total respondents are Non-academic staff while 21 (7.1%) of the total respondents are technologists which implies that Non-academic staff are at population advantage due to the complex nature of administrative activities in Nigerian

University system which makes them participate more in decision making than other staff categories.

Finally, It was also shown that 84 (28.5%) of the respondents were within the range of 1-5years of experience, 104 (35.2%) were within the range of 6-10years of experience, 52 (17.6%) respondents were between 11-15years of experience, 35 (11.9%) respondents were between 16-20years of experience while 20 (6.8%) were 21years of experience and above. This indicated that majority of the respondents were within the range of 6-10 years of experience which implied that staff within this range must have been well exposed to different activities and operation of the institution which make them qualify to participate in decision making.

Table 1: Respondents Demographic Distribution

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	187	63.4
Female	108	36.6
Total	295	100.0
Marital Status		
Single	100	33.9
Married	191	64.7
Divorced	4	1.4
Total	295	100.0
Academic Qualification		
OND/NCE	32	10.9
HND/B.Sc	103	34.9
MBA/M.Sc	83	28.1
Ph.D	71	24.1
Others	6	2.0
Total	295	100.0
Employment Status		
Academic Staff	124	42.0
Non-Academic Staff	150	50.9
Technologist	21	7.1
Total	295	100.0
Year of Experience		
1-5	84	28.5
6-10	104	35.2
11-15	52	17.6
16-20	35	11.9
21 Above	20	6.8
Total	295	100.0

4.2 Discussion of Findings

To test this hypothesis, four variables (suggestion box, recommendation, quality circle and regular meeting) were used to measure consultative participation. From Table 2, the R (correlation Coefficient) gives a positive value of 0.657; this indicates that there is a strong and positive relationship between consultative participatory decision making and institutional stability. The R^2 is a portion of the total variation in the dependent variable that is explained by the variation in the independent variables. From the results obtained, R^2 is equal to 0.431, this implies that recommendation, suggestion box, quality circle and regular meeting brought about 43.1% variance in institutional stability among southwest universities, this is further proven by the adjusted R^2 that shows the goodness of fit of the model which gives a value of 0.424, implying that when all errors are corrected and adjustments are made the model can only account for 42.4% of consultative participation in the surveyed tertiary institution. The value of Durbin Watson statistics is 1.773 which showed the absence of autocorrelation in the model due to large sample. However, four variables were used to measure consultative decision making which are: recommendation, suggestion box, quality circle, regular meeting

and institutional stability were which subjected to multiple regression analysis as shown in Table 2.

From the Table 2, the unstandardized β co-efficient of recommendations gives a negative value of -0.009 with $t = -0.259$ and ($P = 0.796 < 0.05$). This result showed that recommendation has a negative effect on institutional stability therefore, It was found non-significant. This means that respondents' reason for institutional stability is not strongly influenced by recommendation. However, the higher the T-value, the better the result and the negativity of the result showed that despite different suggestions from employees, staff are excluded from making recommendation and the recommendation is cantered in management level of the institutions. This negate the findings of Bhatti, Nawab and Akbar (2011) which found that that investment in employee participation in an organisation showed better results, high employees' commitment and productivity, development of desired knowledge, skills, attitudes and other behaviours result in higher job satisfaction and organisational performance.

The unstandardized β co-efficient of suggestion box gives a positive value of 0.103 with $t = 2.016$ and ($P = 0.045 < 0.05$). This result showed that suggestion box has a great significant effect on institutional stability, therefore, it was found significant. This means that respondents' reason for institutional stability is strongly and positively influenced by consultative participatory decision making as shown in Table 2. However, the higher the T-value, the better the result and the positivity of the result showed that university staff are consulted before taking decisions in various units or departments of the institutions in southwest, Nigeria. This is in line with the findings of Bhatti, Nawab and Akbar (2011) which found that that investment in employee participation in an organisation showed better results, high employees' commitment and productivity, development of desired knowledge, skills, attitudes and other behaviours result in higher job satisfaction and organisational performance.

The unstandardized β co-efficient of quality circle gives a positive value of 0.333 with $t = 6.791$ and ($P = 0.000 < 0.05$). This result showed that quality circle has a great significant effect on institutional stability therefore, it was found significant. This means that respondents' reason for institutional stability is strongly and positively influenced by consultative participatory decision making as shown in Table 2. However, the higher the T-value, the better the result and the positivity of the result showed that there is an established quality circle management, that is constituted group among university staff to improve quality and solving work related problems to be able to make sound decisions. This is in line with the findings of Abdulahi and Shafiwu (2014) that employees participation in decision making in the various forms, decision implementation becomes easy, creates a good working environment, increases commitment and satisfaction on decisions taken and also increases employees' morale since they feel recognized and as part of the team in the organisation and the direct consequence of all this improved productivity.

From Table 2, the unstandardized β co-efficient of regular meeting gives a positive value of 0.317 with $t = 6.336$ and ($P = 0.000 < 0.05$). This result showed that regular meeting has a great significant effect on institutional stability therefore, it was found significant. This means that respondents' reason for institutional stability is strongly and positively influenced by consultative participatory decision making. However, the higher the T-value, the better the result and the positivity of the result showed that Regular meeting with the supervisors, Head of Departments and Directors gives every staff the opportunity to contribute their quota to

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critical issues affecting the organisation, and also enable the management to proffer solution through different suggestion from employees. This is in line with the findings of Bhatti and Qureshi (2007) that employee participation is not only an important determinant of job satisfaction components but increasing employee participation will also have a positive effect on employee's job satisfaction, employee commitment and employee productivity. Naturally, increasing employee participation is a long-term process, which demands both attention from management side and initiative from the employee side. However, all the measures of consultative participation are in accordance with the theories reviewed on this study except recommendation.

The multiple regression equation of the model is:

$$\text{Institutional Stability} = 0.995 - 0.009\text{Rec} + 0.103\text{SB} + 0.333\text{QC} + 0.317\text{RM}$$

Table 2: Regression Results of consultative participation on institutional stability

Model	R	R ²	Adj R ²	DW	B	Std Error	T value	P Value
	0.657	0.431	0.424	1.736				
Recommendation					-.009	.035	.259	.796
Suggestion Box					.103	.051	2.016	.045
Quality Circle					.333	.049	6.791	.010
Regular Meeting					.317	.050	6.336	.000
Constant					.995	.224	4.444	.000

4.3 Test for Significance

The F-test is used to test the overall significance of a model by comparing the F calculated with the F tabulated, the comparison is done on Table 3. The table shows that the calculated value of F distribution gives a value greater than the F tabulated. Hence, we accept alternate hypothesis and reject null hypothesis. This implies that consultative participation will significantly affect institutional stability among Southwest Universities.

Table 3 F-test

F calculated	F tabulated	Ho	Hi	Remark
55.019	2.576	Reject	Accept	Significance

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that participatory decision making attributes are significantly and positively related to institutional stability in the selected southwest public universities, Nigeria. However, all the consultative participation measures (suggestion box, quality circle and regular meeting) were positive but only recommendation value was negative which means most of the staff in the selected southwest public university participate truly in decision making but may be excluded from participating in the recommendation of organisation decisions. Since R (Correlation Coefficient) give positive value which depicts a strong positive relationship between consultative participation and institutional stability.

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5.1 Recommendations

Considering the findings, it was shown that regular meeting, suggestion box and quality circle were significant and positively related to institutional stability. In this case, it is recommended that university administrators should strictly adhere to the use of regular meetings and quality circle as tools of getting to know the mind and reactions of members on crucial decisions that have to do with the organisation as a whole. On the other hand, management should embark on aggressive sensitisation of member of staff on the need to be making use of suggestion box especially, those people that do not want their identity to be known physically and who may have better or useful suggestions.

5.2 Suggestion for Further Studies

This study targeted employees of selected public University in Southwest, Nigeria. There could be different perceptions about participatory decision making and institutional stability among private universities in southwest, Nigeria, other tertiary institutions and other business sector as well. Therefore, further studies can be extended towards these areas highlighted.

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