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Organizational Performance and Employees' Participation in Decision Making

Ernest Ivan-Sarfo
Student, Department of Human Resource and Organisational,
Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana
Peter Akpamah
Lecturer, Department of Business, Bolgatanga Technical Institute, Ghana

Abstract:
The study sought to assess the significance of employees' influence on organizational performance and how restricted is the employee participation in decision making in the Rural Banking system in Ghana. The study highlights employees' expectations of management and their participation in decision making for high productivity and organizational harmony. We used mix methods in this study and collected data through questionnaires and interviews. We targeted eighty (80) participants with ten (10) from management. However, only seventy-two (72) respondents were voluntarily participated with six (6) from management representing 90% of the total respondents. We found that Financial Institutions employed very well qualified individuals, had long serving personnel, and stand the chance of increasing production when these calibres of workers' views are considered in decision-making process. The study noticed a direct relationship between employees voicing and productivity. Management confirmed the impact of employee's voicing on productivity, and that if employees' voicing is fairly treated, it may bring about affirmative behaviour of employees which in turn motivates employees to give up their best at work, that is increasing returns to scale. The study, however, revealed that employees' dissatisfaction affects productivity negatively, because they relax their efforts to work harder when they are denied of their right to be part of decision-making process.

Keywords: Employee voicing, productivity

1. Introduction

Many organizations in most Africa countries usually fold up for countless reasons, though the problem that stands tall among these numerous causes is the denial of the employee opportunity to feel part of these organizations.Management acceptance of ideas of the employee in decision making suggests ownership and cordial relationship between workers and the employer (Millward et. al, 2000). Employees' participation in decision making improves organizational performance and it is also a source of intrinsic motivation for enhancement of employees' performance (Salamon, 2000). Employee's influence advances communication and encourages staff retention in any given organization(Van Buren et al., 2011).It is, therefore, dishearten when some organizations in both public and private sectors especially, the financial sector could not still recognize the incorporation of employees' voice in decision making in Ghana.

The continuous authoritarian form of leadership into modern day banking has its consequences including poor quality service delivering, low productivity and to its extremes, unemployment following collapse of institutions. Employees on one hand may as a matter of fact, withhold information that might be dissatisfaction to themselves and the organization, hence absenteeism and low turnover. Perhaps, the employers on the other hand, may expect certain behaviour of employees, and that would have a long-term effect on resolving the unemployment as well as increasing economic growth and development in Ghana and beyond.

The tradition that only those individuals who have investment with the company should take decisions in organizations has been disputed by Hays & Kearney (2001),and that employees have special skills and spend a significant part of their adult lives in these organizations and can easily contribute meaningfully to the success of the firm. Though, legitimacy within a particular context where organizations should not be ignored, they rather sanction certain forms of voice as legitimate, but not seeking to limit the employees' participation in decision-making (Lewin & Mitchell, 1992).

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Productivity

Productivity is a functional increase in organizational performance with quality at stage through the conversion of input into goods and services(Brewster et al.2007). Every organization aims at maximizing profit and minimizing lost, but this can only be done with the support and commitment of the employee (Boadu, 2011). The level of satisfaction and

willingness of employees determine the amount of effort they put in their work to increase productivity (Wilkinson & Fay, 2011).

For higher achievement levels of employee productivity, organizations must ensure that the physical environment is conducive to meet organizational needs, facilitates interaction and privacy (O'Donoghue et al. 2011). The improvement of working environment results in a reduction in a number of complaints, absenteeism and an increase in productivity (Hammer, 2000). The indoor environment has the biggest effect on productivity in relation to job stress and job dissatisfaction (Doellgast 2008), and it isa strategic approach to environmental management to enhance productivity through improving the performance level of the employees (Townsend 2013).

2.2. The Employees' Voice

Various terms have been used by academics to explain employees' voice, including empowerment, engagement, involvement and participation (Budd et al., 2010;Dawudu 2010). Voice is an active and constructive approach to improve conditions through discussing problems with a supervisor or co-workers, and taking action to solve the problems(Peccei et al 2010). Voice is defined as positive behaviour with emphasis on expression of constructive challenge intended to improve rather than criticize (Van Dyne and LePine 1998). Voice is therefore, considered as valuable as it alerts management to a potential organizational threat.

Voice is simply the participation of employees in the decision-making process of the organization (Lavelle, etal. 2010). The employee's voice is associated with objectives of employment relations in any given organization (Townsend 2013). Although, voice has been conceptualized and interpreted in various ways, the fundamental idea underlying the perspectives on voice is based on a worker's right to participate actively in all aspects of work life through both formal and informal means (Markey &Townsend 2013).

Employees' voice is appropriately described as any mechanism for a two-way communication between management and workers (Wilkinson & Fay, 2011). In simple terms, employee voice can be defined as the freedom granted to employees at their workplace to have an influence on work-related activities and be involved in the decision-making process (Markey & Hodgkinson, 2003).

2.3. Employees' Participation in Decision-Making Processes

The employee's involvement describes employee's input and influence on decision in a decision-making process. Decisions are varied from high-level strategic decisions to basic day-to-day decisions that affect organization (Townsend 2013). Employee's involvement can be traced back to ancient Rome, the nineteenth-century (Budd et al 2010). Employee's involvement in decision-making process is considered (Rollinson and Dundon2007) as any workplace process that allows employees to have influence over their work and the conditions under which they work.

Employee's participation can either be direct or indirect. With the direct involvement, employees are personally involved in the decision-making process whereas the indirect involves a mediator (Morgan & Zeffane, 2003). Similarly, the autonomy of the employees at all levels in the organization andthe degree of influence they have on decision-making explain their freedom at work(Van Buren et al., 2011). With, the various definitions, the fact remains that decision-making in companies could be influenced by either formal consultative mechanisms or more informal direct communication (Hyman & Mason, 1995).

2.4. Management Acceptances of Employees' Views Affect Production

Voice of the employee is a means of providing employees with rights and justice in the employment relationship (McCabe & Lewin, 1992). The employee's voice has the potential to strengthen employees' morale by impacting on employees' engagement and creativity to enhancing productivity in the workplace (Wilkinson and Fay 2011). Organizations provide employees with a voicing opportunity as a reward and a way of chipping in their hidden talents for organizational growth and development (Lepak et al., 2006; Wilkinson et. al., 2013). The employee's voice improves organizational performance (Dundon et al., 2004; Green & Tsitsianis, 2005) as they have the opportunity to explore and contribute their quota during decisions making process.

An employee's voice is also a key ingredient for high performance as employee's participation is positively related to organizational performance and commitment (Wood & Wall, 2007).The Provision of employees with a voice through direct and indirect mechanisms minimizes conflict, improves communication between managers and employees (Boxall & Purcell 2011). Employee's voice helps to identify and solve problems thereby making way for organizational growth (Brewster et al., 2007). Employee participation is crucial in improving organizational performance as it forms part of intrinsic motivation (Salamon 2000). The employees' participation in decision making process enables discovering of new knowledge for organizational performance (Freeman and Medoff1984).

A study by Wilkinson & Fay (2011) states that employee's voice is critical for employment relations as it enhances organizational productivity. The employee's voice has the tendency of influencing productivity and industrial action which could lead to either organizational growth or failure (Freeman and Medoff1984).The importance of employee's participation is often done targeting employees to contribute more effectively to the business using their skills and knowledge (Wilkinson et al., 2013). Employees' participation in decision-making gives them opportunity to implement their own decisions which by extension gives them self-satisfactory and recognition (Cregan, & Brown 2010). Studies have explained employees' participation as being positively related to greater customer service and of course a factor for organizational growth and development.

2.5. Barriers to the Employees' Voicing

Management's disregard for employees' voice will obviously have negative effective on organizational productivity. When employee's voice is not attended to, it leads to cultural of silence and withdrawal of service, because they lack influence to contest the divergence between the employers' demand and their right (Van Dyne et al., 2003).Employee's voice is associated with high recognition than any other type of voice(Yoon 2012), and organizations that solely depend on management and discourage employees' participation cannot easily resolve grievances and its devastating consequences on productivity (Boxall & Purcell 2011). Whenever employees' right to be heard is ignored, management expresses disappointment at the employees' performance (Dwomoh 2012).There is a negative relationship between employees' input and organizational productivity as management disregards employees' voicing serves as disincentive (Benson & Brown 2010).

The universal obstacles to a successful establishment of employees' voice within a given organization consist of employees 'scepticism, managerial opposition and lack of management appropriate skills to implement voice mechanisms effectively (Blyton and Turnbull, 1998, Wilkinson et al, 2007). Managers ought to initiate some changes in the culture of their organizations to enable effective participation in decision-making process(Townsend 2013).

Employers sometimes fail to understand and appreciate the meaningful contributions of their employees towards growth and development of their organizations and will let them off decision-making process (Purcell and Hall 2012).Management faces challenges of recognizing that their employees form the backbone of their organization (Markey & Townsend 2013), and when given opportunity in decision making, their contributions benefit them and the organization.

Though, it is argued that the provision of opportunity for employees in decision-making process may prolong decisions on very urgent issues which could lead to inefficiency within the organization (Gennard and Judge 2002; Marchington 2001).Wilkinson et al, (2007) state that the behaviours of employees themselves within organizations somehow often prevent their follow employees from voicing during meetings. Also, Tebut and Marchington (1997) have asserted that if the impediments put before employees regarding airing their views in meetings have made them developed very low interest in contributing to decision making within their organizations.

2.6. Conceptual Model

A conceptual model in Figure 1; represents a significant relationship between employees' participation in decision making and organizational productivity. Where management solely decided on issues and asked employees to act, and even with strict supervision may still lead to low productivity and its negative consequences.

However, the opportunity given to employees to have a say regarding organizational management would often bring about organizational growth. This explains the fact that whether businesses remained in operation or not basically depends on management acceptance of employees' views during decision-making in a given organization.
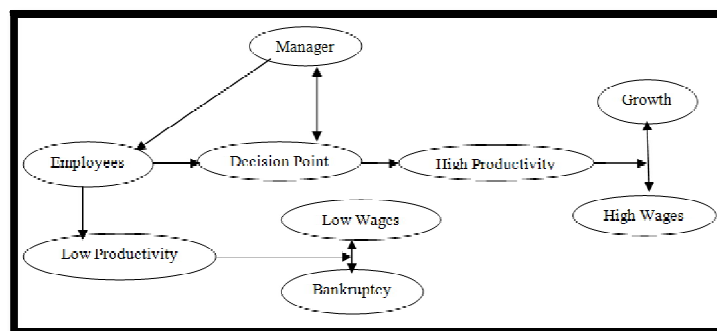

Figure 1: Research Model
Source: Researchers Own Source; December, 2019

3. Methodology

We applied both qualitative and quantitative methods. With the qualitative research method, through in-depth interviews and quantity research method through questionnaire, we targeted total respondents estimated at eighty (80), that is ten (10) research participants from management while remaining represented employees. Data were obtained from some selected Rural Banks in Ghana. The data consist of primary and secondary.

The primary data were obtained from managers, members from top management and employees in the selected financial institutions. The secondary data were obtained from literature earlier authored by others. We designed a questionnaire for each group. The questionnaires contained both closed ended and opened ended items. The questionnaires were administered directly to the target population.

Both probability and non-probability sampling were used in this study. Random sampling was adopted in selecting employees, whilst non-random, that is the quota sampling was used to select members from the top management team of these Rural Banks. The analytical and inferential statistics were used in the study. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Excel software were used for the analysis. The data were decoded and presented. Descriptive statistical tools such as tables, graphs and pie charts were used.

4. Presentation and Data Analysis

After data collection, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Excel software were used for the analysis of data and with broad description of the findings presented through percentages, tables, graphs and pie charts.

4.1. Demographics Characteristics of the Respondents
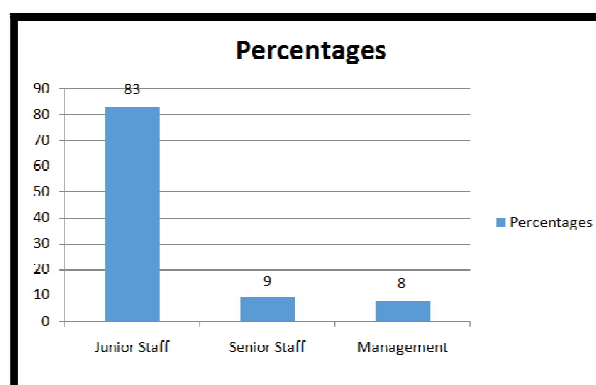
4.1.1. Sex of the Respondents

Out of the seventy-two (72) respondents, 67% represented males, whiles the remaining were females with a representation of 33% as demonstrated in Table 4.1.

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Male	48	67
Female	24	33
Total	72	100

Table 1: Sex of the Respondents
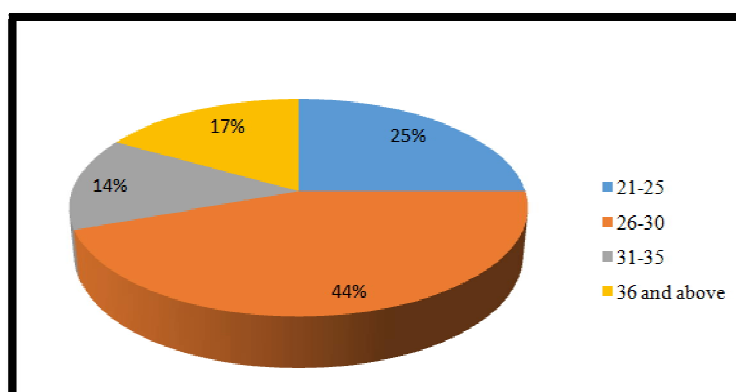*Source: Field Data, December, 2019*

4.1.2. Staff Category

Employees participated in the study represented 92% while management members stood at 8% as showed in Figure 4.1.

Figure 2: Staff Category
Source: Field Data, December, 2019

4.1.3. Age Grouping of the Respondents

In Figure 4.2, the data indicate44% of respondents were between 26 and 30 years, followed by ages between 21 and 25 representing 25%. It was found that those with ages 36 and above constituted 17%, whiles ages within 31 and 35 made up 14%.

Figure 3: Ages of Respondents
Source: Field Data, December, 2019

4.1.4. Highest Academic Qualification of Respondents

Analysis made on the level of education of respondents in Table 1indicate that 38 out of the 72 of total respondents, representing 52.78% had Bachelor's degree, 16 of the respondents representing 22.22% were diploma holders and 16.67% were holders of Master's Degree and Professional qualifications such ACCA and ICA (Ghana). It was also found that 8.33% representing 6 out of the 72respondents attained Senior High School Certificate.

Level	Frequency	Percentage
Degree	38	52.78
Diploma	16	22.22
Masters	12	16.67
Post-Secondary	6	8.33
Total	72	100.00

Table 2: Highest Academic Qualification of Respondents
Source: Field Data, December, 2019

4.1.5. Years of Service

In Table 2, the data show that over 47% of respondents had working experience of 1 to 4 years, whiles 31.94% of respondents had working experience of 5 to 9 years. Also, it indicates that 11.11 % of respondents had years of working experience between 10 and 14. We found that those who had been working for 15 to 20 years constituted 5.55 % whiles those who had worked for more than 20 years were 3 respondents representing 4.18%.

Years	Frequency	Percentage
1-4	34	47.22
5-9	23	31.94
10-14	8	11.11
15-20	4	5.55
20 and above	3	4.18
Total	72	100.00

Table 3: Years of Service
Source: Field Data, December, 2019

4.2. Management Acceptances Of Employees' Views Affect Production

Attempt was made to ascertain the effect of management's acceptance of employees' voicing as that would affect productivity. In table 4.7,69.70% of respondents said it was obvious that prompt positive responseto an employee's voice makes the employee feel motivated to work harder thereby increasing productivity, just as 100% of respondents from management interviewed responded same. Also, 18.18% and little over 12% confirmed that productivity will either remain constant or low respectively, even if management accepts employees' participation.

Response	Junior Staff		Management	
	Frequency	(%)	Frequency	(%)
High Productivity	46	69.70	6	100
Constant Productivity	12	18.18		
Low Productivity	8	12.12		
Total	66	100.00	6	100.00

Table 4: Management Acceptances of Employees' Views Affect Production
Source: Field Data, December, 2019

4.2.1. Management Ignores Employees' Voicing.

The researchers assessed the situation where management completely ignored employees' right to be heard and how it would affect productivity. The results show that 51.52% of the employees interviewed confirmed that organization experience employee's absenteeism when their right to be heard was completely ignored. Little over 33% and 15% of employees saw lateness to work and bankruptcy when their opinions were completely ignored respectively as seen in Table 4.8.

Response	Junior Staff		Management	
	Frequency	(%)	Frequency	(%)
Absenteeism	34	51.52	5	83.33
Lateness to work	22	33.33	1	16.67
Bankruptcy	10	15.15		
Total	66	100.00	6	100.00

Table 5: Management Ignores Employees' Voicing
Source: Field Data, December, 2019

We also established the effects of completely ignoring employees' expressions on management and productivity. In Table 4.8, the results show that when management did not pay much attention to employees' voicing, it has consequences on productivity. In Table 4.8, about 83% of management members agreed that it affects the mood of employees and that of their input, if much attention is not paid to their voicing while 16.67% of management members disagreed with the assertion that no attention given to employees' views has any devastation effects on production.

4.2.2. Other Factors Influencing Productivity

The study sought to find out other possible factors influencing respondents' productivity. In Table 4.10, little over 18% of the employees were of the view that better working environment was a key to their hard work while the same percentage wanted attractive compensation packages. About 15% of the employees interviewed felt management's response to employee's voice was necessary encouragement for work hard. Though, 48.49% of employees responded that all the above-mentioned factors in Table 6were significant for them to put up their best at work.

Moreover, it was observed that all management members interviewed representing 100% pointed to better working environment, attractive compensation package, management response to employees' voicing as that could motivate employees to work much better.

Response	Junior Staff		Management	
	Frequency	(%)	Frequency	(%)
Better working environment	12	18.18	-	-
Attractive compensation packages	12	18.18	-	-
Management Response to employee voice	10	15.15	-	-
All of the above	32	48.49	6	100
Total	66	100	6	100

Table 6: What Motivates Employees to Work Harder (Extrinsic Factors)
Source: Field Data, December, 2019

4.3. Barriers to Employees' Voicing within the Bank

The main barrier identified by the employees was that of managerial control over decisions with a representation of 33.33%.Although, in Tale 4.6, over 33 percent of respondents from management indicated that employees generally show no interest in voicing their concern.

Barrier	Junior Staff		Management	
	Frequency	(%)	Frequency	(%)
Inadequate voice mechanisms in place	1	1.52		
Managerial control over decisions	22	33.33		
My personal attitude towards management	3	4.55		
My position within the organization	20	30.30	1	16.67
Peer pressure from co-workers prevents me from voicing opinions	9	13.64	1	16.67
Length of service in the firm	8	12.11	2	33.33
No interest in being involved	3	4.55	2	33.33
Total	66	100.00	6	100.00

Table 7: What Prevents You from Being More Involved in the Decision-Making?
Process within the Bank
Source: Field Data, December, 2019

The same percentage of management members affirmed the length of employees working experience, especially those with less than four (4) years, made them feel reluctant in expressing their opinions and grievances. Moreover, 16.67% each of the position of the employees at the Bank, as well as the pressure from co-workers was cited by other management members interviewed as being barriers to employee's voicing.

5. Discussions and conclusions

The results show that majority of the employees in the Rural Bank were males. The outcome of sex analysisin is agreement with(Markey & Townsend 2013) findings that there were more males than females employed in the financial institutions. There is an indication that any reaction from the employees would impact on the productivity of the company. Management needs to create an atmosphere for the junior staff members who are usually ignored in decision making to enable them express their opinions, since they form majority of the labour force as Freeman and Medoff (1984)stated that junior staff in decision making is necessary, because they are usually deal directly with the customers.

The age brackets found working in these institutions, by implication, they might have the opportunity to work for longer years in the Bank, and, therefore, should be given the chance to take part in decision making at the Bank. The argument byHays & Kearney, (2001) that employees spent a significant part of their adult lives in organization and should be properly trained to occupy management positions in a very near future supports our findings.

Over 90% of employees in most formal financial situations hired the services of very well qualified personnel and stands the chance to increase production when these calibres of workers' views are considered in decision-making processes as being confirmed by Freeman and Medoff (1984), the employees' participation in decision enables discovering of new knowledge for influencing organizational performance. The results show that management must engage employees in decision-making for maximum economic gains, because over 52.78% of the respondents had much working experience and worked for 4 years and above in their respective fields.

We noticed in our analysis, management to an extend supports the idea of employees' full participation in decision making process as the entire members interviewed within management saw economic progress of organizations in the hands of the employee, and over 60% of the employees that took part in the study said same. This could be linked to McCabe & Lewin (1992) findings that Employees' voice is a kind of valuable information that reduces potential organizational conflict while increasing organizational efficiencies and productivity. However, 30% of their colleague interviewed agreed to the fact that employee's participation in decision making process will neither increase nor reduce organizational productivity.

However, we found that 52% of the employees' approach to work encompasses absenteeism and lateness when their right to be heard was completely ignored and as a result low wages followed by bankruptcy. This could be a signal to management on how they handled employees' articulations as they were crucial to productivity. The results confirmed a previous study that a disturbed mind would ordinarily not be able to work as hard as a peaceful mind (Van Dyne et al., 2003). About 83% of management members agreed that if management paid no much attention to employees' voicing, it affects their mood and that of their input which might have negative effect on productivity.

Though, a few management members disagreed with the assertion that no attention given employees' expressions has any devastation effects on production which is in contrast with the statement that forms of part of intrinsic motivation and could improve organizational performance (Salamon 2000; Yoon 2012). Besides, employees' voicing just like any other identified method, Wilkinson and Fay (2011)deployed to support employees to increase productivity is very instrumental and must be given attention.

Employees were interviewed on issues affecting them in their attempt to involve in other far reaching decisions. The findings affirmed the research by Tebutt and Marchington (1997), where employees would only be information receivers which derailed their interest indecisions making process within the organization. This also affirmed previous study by (Markey & Townsend 2013) where employees felt that their opinion was not being listened to by management.

The next barrier identified by employees was that of the position within the Bank. The perception among many employees was that the longer you served, the brighter the employees' chance of being heard of in a given meeting in organizational setting. Then, it buttressed the augment that the easier you can express your opinions to management is determined by how long one has worked with the company and how free of intimidation you would be from colleagues (Wilkinson et al, 2007).

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