

**PARTICIPATORY DECISION MAKING: A TOOL FOR STAFF EFFECTIVENESS IN
PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ILORIN WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT,
KWARA STATE, NIGERIA.**

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Abstract

Employee participation in decision making has been recognized as a managerial tool for improving organizational performance. This study examined the relationship between participatory decision making and staff effectiveness in secondary schools, Ilorin west local government area of Kwara state, Nigeria. Specifically, the study assessed: (i) the relationship between participation in academic planning and staff effectiveness; (ii) the relationship between staff participation in co-curriculum planning and staff effectiveness and (iii) the relationship between staff participation in school administration and staff effectiveness. The study was a descriptive research design of correlation type, random sampling technique was used to select 50 private secondary schools and 10 staff were selected per school in Ilorin west local government. Purposive sampling technique was used to select administrative officers (Proprietors, Principals, Vice-Principals and Bursars). Questionnaire was used to collect data for the study, the instruments were validated by the experts and also tested for reliability. The reliability coefficients realised for PDQ and SEQ were 0.82 and 0.76 respectively. Main and operational hypotheses were tested using Pearson product-moment correlation statistics respectively at 0.05 level of significance. The results revealed that there was a significant relationship between staff participation in decision making and staff effectiveness ($p > 0.05$). The study concluded that participatory decision making plays significant role in enhancing staff effectiveness which would consequently facilitate realisation of educational goals of the secondary schools in Ilorin-west local government, Kwara state, Nigeria. The finding observed that staff of Private schools in Ilorin west local government in Kwara state are allowed to involve in academic decision making in their respective offices, their official duties were performed at the right time and this lead to effective job performance. It could also be stated that, job effectiveness of the personnel who are allowed to participate in decision making is likely to be more effective than that of their colleagues who are not allowed. This finding supports the view of Adare (2010) that schools principals no longer make decision on their own, because they need information and advice from several sources especially teachers and pupils to act rationally.

Keywords: *Participatory decision making, Staff effectiveness, Private Secondary Schools.*

Introduction

Employee participation in decision making has been recognized as a managerial tool for improving organizational performance by striving for the shared goals of employees and managers. This is actualized by way of allowing workers' input in developing the mission statement, establishing policies and procedures, pay determination, promotion, and determining.

Employee participation in decision making has become a significant topic in Human Resource Management (HRM), and is regarded as one of the chief ingredients of employee voice, which many management scholars have observed to be a growing management concept (Gollan & Wilkinson, 2007). Several studies have shown that allowing employees to participate in decision making leads to increase in motivation, job performance, and organizational growth (Kim, McDuffie & Pil, 2010). However, many studies also have conflicting views on whether or not an increase in employee participation directly affects organizational performance. Some critics, such as Locke and Schweiger (2001) believed that worker participation is merely a managerial technique that can be used effectively in certain situations.

School administration involves decision-making process concerning issues and problems facing the school. The decision made could be on getting teaching and learning resources, enrolment of students, mobilization of community in the school activities, allocation of resources, introduction of new curriculum, students and staff discipline, staff training and methods of improving pedagogy and educational research (Ogunsaju, 2012).

The importance of staff participation in the attainment of education objective cannot be over emphasized in private secondary schools in Ilorin west local government of Kwara state, Nigeria. In spite of its apparent merits in administrative efficiency and effectiveness, there are still many school administrators particularly in Nigeria public secondary schools, who do not give adequate attention to staff participation in decision making process. They consider staff participation in decision making as a threat to the administration. As it was stated in Jung (2014) teachers were usually excluded by school administrators in the process of decision making and not endowed with the obligation to implement school policies. The decision making on school staffing, curricular and resource allocation had been conventionally made by the school heads or members of administrative/managerial teams. This is attributed to administrative inefficiency in Nigeria education sector especially secondary schools.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between participatory decision making and staff effectiveness in private secondary schools in Ilorin West Local government, Kwara state, Nigeria.

Specifically, the study was to:

- find out the level of staff participation in decision making in private secondary schools Ilorin West local government, Kwara state, Nigeria.
- assess the level of staff effectiveness making in private secondary schools Ilorin West local government, Kwara state, Nigeria..
- examine the relationship between staff participation in school academic planning and staff effectiveness in private secondary schools Ilorin West local government, Kwara state, Nigeria..

Research Questions

The following research questions would be raised to guide the study:

1. What is the level of staff participation in decision making process in private Secondary Schools in Ilorin West L.G, Kwara State, Nigeria?
2. What is the level of staff effectiveness in private Secondary Schools in Ilorin West L.G, Kwara State, Nigeria?

Review of Related Literature

School administration involves decision-making process concerning issues and problems facing the school. The decision made could be on getting teaching and learning resources, enrolment of students, mobilization of community in the school activities, allocation of resources, introduction of new curriculum, students and staff discipline, staff training and methods of improving pedagogy and educational research (Ogunsaju, 2012). Schools are grappling with strong pressure from rapid challenging of external and internal environment and needs of an ever-evolving global economy. These pressures are creating new demands on schools to produce effective students with skills to compete (Moran, 2009).

Various authors define decision making differently by focusing on the process involved during decision making, by emphasizing the steps followed during a decision making and by focusing on the participants involved in decision making. Coleman (2005) defines decision-making as the process of specifying the nature of particular problem and selecting among available alternatives in order to solve the problem. This definition of decision-making indicates that a problem precedes any decision and that there must be a number of alternative courses of action from which an optimum course will be selected. Similarly, Law and Glover (2003) stated that decision making may be viewed as the process by which individuals or groups select a course of action from among alternatives to produce a desired result. Decisions are composite of values, facts and assumptions. Each or all of these may be subjected to change from time to time. Decision making, therefore, is not a one-time activity but rather a continuing activity (Oyedepi, 2012). For different decision making activities implementations in needed time first activities should be identified, there should be participatory planning, participatory implementation, there should be evaluation and feedback provision trends. Decision involves policies (the definition of objectives), resources (people, money materials, and authority), and means of execution (integration and synthesis). Insofar as the value content of this type of decision is concerned, the school principal should identify two major values; policy decision that seeks purposive action; executing decision that seek coordination's of action (Mualuko, Nidiku, Mukasa, Simlyu& Achoka, 2009).

The concept of participation in an organization can therefore be summarized as a process by which an organization attempts to unlock the creative potentials of its people by involving them in decisions affecting their work lives (Saygan, 2011). It is a structured effort to enable employees at all levels in an organization to use their knowledge, skills and abilities more effectively in their work and to participate more fully in decisions about their work life. Participation of employee describes the involvement of employee in decision making which is concerned with shared decision making in the work situation (Workneh, 2012). Invancevich, Konopaske and Matteson, (2005) defined employee participation as a joint decision making between managers and subordinates. It is a special form of delegation in which the subordinate gain greater control, freedom of choice in order to bridge the communication gap between the management and workers. It refers to the degree of employee involvement in organization's strategic planning activities. A company can have deep or shallow employee participation in decision making (Somech, 2010.). The employee participation in the planning process leads to potential innovation, which may facilitates opportunity and recognition in the organization (Zivkovic, Mihajlovic & Prvulovic, 2009). Managers provide opportunities for participation of subordinates in decision making on the basis of their merits as it has been proved by researchers to have improved organizational performance (Shire & Bon, 2017).When employees are involved in making decisions, they gain professional and personal stake in the organization and its overall success. This commitment leads to increase productivity as employees are actively

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participating in various aspects of the organization and wish to see their efforts succeed overall. This is not only beneficial to organizational growth, but also on-the-job training for workers. The increase in responsibility expands employee skill sets, preparing them for additional responsibility in the future.

Furthermore, organizations including schools are not supposed to be static. Owners expect growth and development. Schools, certainly experience changes in staffing, student enrolment, curriculum development, societal demands on schools and so on which raise their complexity and mount more pressures on the school heads to delegate more tasks and duties (Hammersley & Brundrett, 2024). Fleming (2000) opined that schools can only develop and improve through creative involvement of all those who work in them. He further explained that this empowerment helps to generate commitment and means that all staff regardless of their jobs, contribute their skills and enthusiasm to moving the school forward. Delegation of authority is therefore very important in school management and could be well understood by school heads as well as by the teachers especially its process, benefits and how to make it work to the benefit of the educational system. Imam (2003) also opined that delegation of responsibilities and teachers' participation in decision making process are the most ranked motivational strategies favour by teachers in enhancing their productivity. No school head can do without delegating even if he has eyes on the back of his head. Even the one who insists on being told everything before action is taken will soon find out that he is over-loading himself with matters that his subordinates can easily handle. Shaping children's behaviour is not exactly the same thing as producing soap or baking bread. This former is much more complex and more demanding with the result rather unpredictable. Without proper delegation, the school manager cannot cope successfully.

Obayan (2002) believed that committee is any group interacting in regard to a common explicit purpose with formal authority delegated by an appointing executive. Kinard (2004) opined that committee system as sub-group within an organization formally brought together to advice managers on course of action to make legitimate decision on special issues. Dauda (2000) widened the scope and meaning of committee by adding that committee system is a system of selecting, electing or co-operating members into small unit of large body to study issues or problems and make recommendations to a large body. Though the committee system goes beyond this, the idea of selecting or electing from a large body seems to be an addition to the process of constituting the committee. Adebayo (2004) expressed that scholars right from the medieval times reported and documented to have practiced consultative system of decision making, now referred to as the committee system. In those periods, they were allowed to study, write and consult one another on various issues and thus developed a type of consultative or participatory form of government in their various institutions of learning. In modern organization, committees are increasingly being used as effective administrative tools. In some big decentralized organizations or institutions, committees are the devices used to achieve coordination of activities and sharing of information among the various departments and divisions in the organization. Ijaya (2002) observed that the visible sign of delegation especially in our schools is the increasing use of committees. Therefore, the use of committee system requires that the right persons should be used, the choice of the right persons depends on their skills, abilities and positions in the organization.

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested for this study:

Main Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant relationship between participatory decision making and staff effectiveness in private Secondary Schools in Ilorin West L.G, Kwara State, Nigeria.

Operational Hypotheses

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between staff participation in academic planning and staff effectiveness in private Secondary Schools in Ilorin West L.G, Kwara State, Nigeria.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between staff participation in co-curriculum planning and staff effectiveness in private Secondary Schools in Ilorin West L.G, Kwara State, Nigeria.

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between staff participation in the school administration and staff effectiveness in private Secondary Schools in Ilorin West L.G, Kwara State, Nigeria.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was descriptive survey, the design was considered appropriate for this study because it allowed the researcher to systematically gather respondents' opinions on the relationship between participatory decision making and staff effectiveness in private secondary schools in Ilorin west local government, Kwara state, Nigeria.

The population of the study comprised all the private secondary schools in Ilorin west local government, Kwara state, Nigeria. The target population of the study comprised 500 staff in private secondary schools in Ilorin west local government, Kwara state, Nigeria. Random sampling technique was used to select 10 staff per school which amounted to 500 staff. Purposive sampling technique was used to select administrative officials (Proprietors, Principals, vice-Principals and Bursars). The instrument for gathering data for this study was questionnaires, designed by the researcher and entitled "Participatory Decision Making Questionnaire" (PDMQ), was used to elicit relevant information from the staff in the private secondary schools in Ilorin west local government, Kwara state, Nigeria on the staff involvement in decision making. And "Staff Effectiveness Questionnaire" (SEQ) was used to collect vital information about the productivity of the staff in the private secondary schools in Ilorin west local government, Kwara state, Nigeria. (PDMQ) consisting 15 items attracted response using a likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA) 4, Agree (A) 3, Disagree (D) 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) 1. While statement on SEQ consisting 15 items had Always options (A), Often (OF), Occasionally (OC) and Never (N). Respondents were asked to put a tick () against each of the items to make their choice. The questionnaire designed was validated by experts. Reliability of the instrument using Cronbach Alpha method of reliability at 0.05 level of significance and reliability coefficient of 0.82, and 0.76 were obtained for PDM, and SE respectively. Pearson Product- Moment Correlation statistics was used to test the hypotheses formulated at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: *What is the level of staff participation in private secondary schools in Ilorin west local government, Kwara state, Nigeria.?*

S/N	Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1.	Academic	500	2.48	0.64	Moderate
2.	Co-curriculum	500	2.41	0.58	Moderate
3.	Administration	500	2.25	0.52	Moderate
mean	2.38		Moderate		Grand

X	
1.00-1.99	Low
2.00-2.99	Moderate
3.00-4.00	High

Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation of the level of staff participation in private secondary schools in Ilorin west local government, Kwara state, Nigeria. It was discovered that academic, co-curriculum and administration had mean scores of 2.48, 2.41 and 2.25 respectively as such is considered moderate. Therefore, the grand mean of 2.38 shows that the level of staff participation in the school system in private secondary schools in Ilorin west local government, Kwara state, Nigeria was moderate.

Research Question 2: *What is the level of staff job effectiveness in private secondary schools in Ilorin west local government, Kwara state, Nigeria?*

Table 2

Mean and Standard Deviation of the Level of staff job effectiveness in private secondary schools in Ilorin west local government, Kwara state, Nigeria

S/N	Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1.	Dedication	500	2.84	0.62	Moderate
2.	Creativity	500	2.89	0.57	Moderate
3.	Quality of work output	500	2.93	0.63	Moderate
Grand mean			2.87		Moderate

Key

X	
1.00-1.99	Low
2.00-2.99	Moderate
3.00-4.00	High

Table2 presents the mean and standard deviation of the level of staff job effectiveness in private secondary schools in Ilorin west local government, Kwara state, Nigeria. It was found out that dedication, creativity and quality of work output had mean scores of 2.84, 2.89 and 2.93 respectively as such is considered moderate. Therefore, the grand mean of 2.87 depicted that the level of staff job effectiveness in private secondary schools in Ilorin west local government, Kwara state, Nigeria was moderate.

Hypotheses Testing

Ho: *There is significant relationship between participatory decision making and staff job effectiveness in private secondary schools in Ilorin west local government in Kwara states, Nigeria.*

Table 1

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	Cal. r-value	p-value	Decision
<i>Participatory Decision Making</i>	500	2.65	.58	.675	.064	Ho Accepted
Staff Job Effectiveness	500	2.92	.53			

p-value> ...

Table 1 shows the calculated r-value (.675) while the p-value (.064) is greater than the significance level (.05). Therefore, the hypothesis (**Ho**) is accepted. This means that there was a significant relationship between participatory decision making and staff job effectiveness in private secondary schools in Ilorin west local government in Kwara states, Nigeria.

Ho₁: *There is significant relationship between staff participation in academic planning and staff job effectiveness in private secondary schools in Ilorin west local government in Kwara states, Nigeria.*

Table 2

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	Cal. r-value	p-value	Decision
Participation in Academic Planning	500	2.65	0.58	.689	.060	Ho₁ Accepted
Staff Job Effectiveness	500	2.82	0.51			

p-value> 0.05

Table 2 shows the calculated r-value (.689) while the p-value (.60) is greater than the significance level (0.05). Therefore, the hypothesis (**Ho₁**) is accepted. This means that there was a significant relationship between staff participation in academic planning and staff job effectiveness in private secondary schools in Ilorin west local government in Kwara states, Nigeria.

Ho₂: *There is significant relationship between staff participation in co-curriculum planning activities and staff job effectiveness in private secondary schools in Ilorin west local government in Kwara states, Nigeria.*

Table 3

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	Cal. r-value	p-value	Decision
Participation in co-curriculum Planning	500	2.29	0.52	.596	.052	Ho₂ Accepted
Staff Job Effectiveness	500	2.82	0.51			

p-value> 0.05

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Table 3 shows the calculated r-value (.596) while the p-value (.052) is greater than the significance level (0.05). Therefore, the hypothesis (**H₀**) is accepted. This shows that there was a significant relationship between **staff participation in co-curriculum planning** and staff job effectiveness in private secondary schools in Ilorin west local government in Kwara states, Nigeria.

H₀: *There is significant relationship between staff participation in administration and staff job effectiveness in Ilorin west local government in Kwara states, Nigeria.*

Table 4

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	Cal. r-value	p-value	Decision
Staff Participation in Administration	500	2.41	0.58	.631	.063	H₀ Accepted
Staff Job Effectiveness	500	2.92	0.53			

p-value > 0.05

Table 4 shows the calculated r-value (.631) while the p-value (.063) is greater than the significance level (0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis (**H₀**) is accepted. This depicts that there was a significant relationship between staff participation in administration and staff job effectiveness in Ilorin west local government in Kwara states, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the revealed the level of staff participation in private secondary schools in Ilorin west local government, Kwara state, Nigeria. It was discovered that academic, co-curriculum and administration had mean scores of 2.48, 2.41 and 2.25 respectively as such is considered moderate. Therefore, the grand mean of 2.38 shows that the level of staff participation in the school system in private secondary schools in Ilorin west local government, Kwara state, Nigeria was moderate. This means that the staff participation in the administration in the private secondary schools in Ilorin west local government in Kwara states, was positive and encouraging and this consequently enhance their job effectiveness. The hypothesis tested showed that p-value (0.64) is greater than significance level (0.05). This ascertains that the staff active involvement in the administration of the school system in the private schools in ilorin west local government Kwara state could also determine their job effectiveness . Saeed and Asghar (2012) held that employee performance principally depends upon many factors like organisational behaviour, performance appraisals, employee motivation, employee satisfaction, compensation, job security, organisational structure, and others. No matter how skilled and knowledgeable workers in an organisation are, unless they actively involve in decision making process, their job effectiveness might continue to be discouraging thereby resulting in poor productivity of the organisation.

When the staff in the schools participate in academic, co-curriculum and administrative planning, it could lead to more effectiveness in their job. This finding supported Adesanoye (2000) who submitted that, enhancement of control by rank and file members is deemed essential for increasing organizational effectiveness, since involvement in decision making within the context of a democratic culture appears necessary to foster conditions of human identification, motivation and loyalty.

An employee who is very committed, punctual, accommodating, trustworthy, supportive and loyal to the organisation is likely to perform his job effectively, and reverse is the case when an employee gives little or no regards for all these. In the same vein,

This finding corroborates the view of Desalegn (2014) that, The tasks of school administrators are enormous and there is need to involve staff both academic and non-academic in the management process in order to ensure optimal productivity, efficiency, satisfactory, addictiveness and general development.

Participation of some workers in the school system in Nigeria was not high enough to facilitate their effective job performance. This is because some of the school administrators do not consider staff participation in decision making as an effective way to motivate staff towards effective performance. Sarah, Jolian, Robert and Karl(2011) asserted that, employee participation is a procedure to authorize workers to contribute in decision-making suitable to their rank in the organisation. This will promote the staff sense of belonging and enhance productivity.

The findings of the hypothesis one tested revealed that there was a significant relationship between staff participation in academic planning and staff job effectiveness in private secondary schools in Ilorin west local government, Kwara state, Nigeria. The hypothesis tested showed that p-value (.060) is greater than significance level (.05). This signifies that, administrators give chance for the staff to participate in the academic planning. Because staff in privates schools Ilorin west local government Kwara state, Nigeria are allowed to involve in academic decision making in their respective offices, their official duties were performed at the right time and this lead to effective job performance. It could also be stated that, job effectiveness of the personnel who are allowed to participate in decision making is likely to be more effective than that of their colleagues who are not allowed. This finding supports the view of Adare (2010) that schools principals no longer make decision on their own, because they need information and advice from several sources especially teachers and pupils to act rationally.

The findings of the hypothesis two tested revealed that there was a significant relationship between staff participation in co-curriculum and staff job effectiveness in privates secondary schools in Ilorin west local government, Kwara state, Nigeria. The hypothesis tested showed that p-value (.052) is greater than significance level (.05). This signifies that, the staff in privates secondary schools in Ilorin west local government, Kwara state, Nigeria Nigeria engage in co-curriculum decision making, there is cross breeding and sharing of ideas, knowledge, experiences and techniques among them. The knowledge, ideas, experiences and techniques gained by the staff who participated in the co-curriculum decision making help to enhance their effective job performance. This finding aligns with the view of Adare, (2010) that group decision can bring more resource to many decisions than a single individual. Different people bring a variety of information, ideas, and viewpoints. Moreover, group decision helps to facilitate the identification of creative and innovative solution to the problems through participating staff members. Somech (2005) found a positive link between participatory decision making which was significantly and positively associated with teacher empowerment. Accordingly, the author concluded that teachers' empowerment serves as a motivational mechanism that mediates the relation of the participative approach to school and teacher outcomes.

The findings of the hypothesis three tested revealed that there was a significant relationship between staff participation in administration and staff job effectiveness in privates secondary schools in Ilorin west local government, Kwara state, Nigeria. The hypothesis tested showed that p-value (.063) is greater than significance level (.05). This implies that, the staff in private secondary schools in Ilorin west local government, Kwara state, Nigeria fervently participate in administration of the school and this consequently facilitate their effective job

performance. This finding is in tandem with the view of Griffin, cited in Somech(2010) that teachers' participation is thought to give administrators access to critical information closest to the source of many problems of schooling, namely, the classroom. Increased access to and use of this information are thought to improve the quality of curricular and instructional decisions. Accordingly, West (2002) opined that participation encourages staff to discover new opportunities and challenges, to learn through acquiring, sharing, and combining knowledge. This process includes clarification of problems, information seeking, data sharing, resonance of ideas, and synthesis of viewpoints which in turn may promote cooperation and collaboration that foster educative exchanges among teachers and administrators about matters of curriculum and instruction. Teachers in private schools do participate in discovering new opportunities by identifying problems related to learning and teaching for students' achievement. In addition, the finding supports the notion of Sagie, *et al.*(2008)that participative processes may engage teachers in the types of open and collaborative interactions most conducive to learning and change, consequently, this has the potential to promote school and teacher outcomes.

Conclusion

A significant relationship existed between participatory decision making and staff job effectiveness in privates secondary schools in Ilorin west local government, Kwara state, Nigeria. The study revealed that the level of staff participation in decision making was moderate therefore, the level of staff job effectiveness in privates secondary schools in Ilorin west local government, Kwara state, Nigeria was positive and moderate.

Achieving effective personnel job effectiveness in privates secondary schools in Ilorin west local government, Kwara state, Nigeria can be traced to staff participation in decision making, (academic, co-curriculum and administration). This is based on the fact that participatory decision making serves as predictor or determinant to staff effectiveness.

Based on the findings, the study concluded that, effective participation of staff in the school system plays significant role in enhancing personnel job effectiveness which would consequently facilitate actualisation of educational goals of secondary schools in Ilorin west local government, Kwara state, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion, the study recommended that:

- i. the educational stakeholders including state government must develop and implement the policy and procedure to foster appropriate staff participation in schools ;
- ii. regular orientation and sensitisation should be carried out for school administrators with adequate information about importance of staff participation in the implementation of educational goals; and
- iii. There should be a proactive approach in developing the interpersonal skills of persons selected to supervise/management positions in terms of their ability to relate appropriately to staff who report to them and their ability to build teamwork among the staff.

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