

Representative Participation and Institutional Stability of Selected Public Universities in Southwest, Nigeria

BANKOLE, Oluwole Adeniyi & ENITILO Olamilekan
Department of Business Administration, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

Abstract: The study explored representative participation and institutional stability of 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 representative participation significantly affects institutional stability as it was significant on institutional stability ($t=0.475$, $t=6.199$, $t=2.607$ and $t=2.019$, $p<0.05$) 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.

Keyword: Representative Participation, Institution, Stability

Date of Submission: 02-07-2025

Date of acceptance: 12-07-2025

I. Introduction

Recently, it is important for institutions to retain some aspect of their philosophies, learning, knowledge, systems and practices that contributed to their past success (Kolb, 2003). Stability in this context may be welcomed as a sign of viability, the potential to carry on into the future without any rift. In today's rapidly changing environment, organizations are forced to find ways of becoming more competitive, flexible, and adaptive (David, 2005). Therefore, employees are seen to be the main important asset in today's organisations than ever before and their participation in decision making is a crucial issue at the workplace (David, 2005). Shaed, Ishak and Ramli (2015) opine that participation in decision making was used to measure individuals and small groups' performance. In 1970s, researchers began to differentiate the levels of participation in decision making and had divided it into three forms: formality versus informality, directness versus indirectness, and the degree of access or influence (Dachler & Wilpert, 1978). Similarly, participation in decision making can be divided into short-term and long-term participation (Shaed, Ishak & Ramli, 2015).

The importance of university stakeholders cannot be ignored. University is a place where higher knowledge can be acquired. In a simple term, it is the custodian of higher knowledge. The term "stakeholders" has become current and popular trend in many countries including Nigeria. The term is based on the assumption that certain groups and individuals have an interest, or a stake in the activities of an institution (Mokoena, 2011). According to Bush and Heystek (2003), the stakeholders are all those people who have a legitimate interest in the continuing effectiveness and success of an institution. In contextualising this definition, one gets a picture of an ideal situation where various stakeholders in a university setting (parents, staff, students, communities, government and the management) come together and make decisions in pursuit of a common interest. In view of this, the outcome of this study will serve as a policy guide to University administrators on the most virile decision making strategies that can guarantee institutional stability.

Problem Statement

Current organisations keep experiencing lack of commitment by employees towards the implementation of decisions taken by top management, which undoubtedly has serious repercussions on organisational success in Nigeria (Abdulahi & Shafiwu, 2014). 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 unions within organisations, such as Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Non-Academic Staff Union (NASU), Senior Staff Association of Nigeria Universities (SSANU) and National Association of Academic Technologists (NAAT) as representatives for employees during decision making and also delegating responsibilities to subordinates which increases their level of commitment and effectiveness when participating in decision making. However, much dissatisfaction emanating from decisions taken by management has led to many actions taken by employees including strike actions. Much study has been done on participatory decision making such as Bhatti, Nawab and Akbar (2011) but the applicability of institutional stability to this concept (participatory decision making) is not

clear enough, particularly in current public institutions where unionism is so vibrant in checkmating management decisions, thus become need for this study.

Research Objectives

The specific objective is to examine the effect of representative participation on institutional stability among selected Public Universities in Southwest, Nigeria.

II. Literature Review

It is very essential to briefly introduce decision making in this study which Fulop (2005) described as the process of identifying and choosing alternatives based on the values and preferences of the decision maker. Making a decision implies that there are alternative choices to be considered, and in such a case we want not only to identify as many of these alternatives as possible but to choose the one that best fits with our goals, objectives, desires, values. In the same vein, Ahmed and Omotunde (2012) defined decision making as the study of identifying and choosing from alternatives, the best option that suits a purpose. It is usually regarded as a cognitive study as it involves mental and logical reasoning.

Therefore, Participatory management practice is considered as mutual involvement between management and employees in information processing, decision making and problem-solving abilities (Wainaina, Iravo & waititu, 2014). Workers' participation is the distribution and exercise of power, in all its manifestations, between the owners and managers of organisations and those employed by them. It refers to the direct involvement of individuals in decisions relating to their immediate work organisations and to the indirect involvement in decision-making through representatives in the wider socio-technological and political structures of the firm (Beardwell & Claydon, 2007). Also, Cheng (2008) defines participation in decision-making as an organisational practice that is found in participatory management systems. It is an alternative to the administrative practices associated with the bureaucratic model.

In the same vein, Mokoena (2011) described participation as the totality of forms, that is, direct (personal) or indirect (through representatives or institutions) and of intensities; that is, ranging from minimal to the comprehensive by which individuals and groups collectively secure their interest or contribute to the choice process through self-determined choices among possible actions during the decision process. Employee participation is a combination of different tools designed to increase employee input of various degrees in managerial decision making like organisational commitment, reduction of employee intention to turnover and absenteeism, increase in productivity and motivation. There has been significant attention from researchers that focus on the manner in which structure affects employee attitudes.

Representative participation is where employees elect executives or some members to represent their interest in management meetings. With representative participation, employees participate in decision through their selected executives. With this form of participation, employees input and grievances are made known through their representatives. Representative participation is an indirect form of participation because not all workers participate directly in the decision making (Abdulahi & Shafiwu, 2014). Unions are the most used type of representative participation. Representative participation may be organized internally or embedded in external institutional frameworks. Examples of representative participation are work councils, joint work/management committees, local unions, non-union workers' representatives, and workers' representatives on company boards of directors. Representative participation refers to the opportunity given the employees to take part in and influence decisions that affect their working lives. It involves workers exerting a countervailing and upward pressure on management control (Akuoko, Dwumah & Ansong, 2012).

Grimsrud and Kvinge (2006) asserted that representative participation may be organized internally or embedded in external institutional frameworks. Examples of representative participation are work councils, joint work/management committees, local unions, non-union workers' representatives, and workers' representatives on company boards of directors. Much of the theory on operational aspects of representative participation is focused on local unions or workers councils. Nakpodia (2009) describes university education as a learning organisation started in Europe in the eleventh century. Universities are learning organisations at the higher level. In a bid to develop learning for natural development in the learning organisation, countless universities have sprung up all over the globe. Stability refers 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 (Burchell & Kolb, 2006).

Theoretical Framework

Abraham maslow's esteem/ego need will underpin this study because representative participation has to do with putting in place some employees or staff who are experienced and capable of protecting the interests of other members. However, Maslow refers to esteem need as the need for a sense of personal worth and

integrity, strength, adequacy, for mastery and confidence in the face of the world. It means acceptance of self having value (Chukwuma & Okafor, 2014). These needs are closely related to the ideal of status, which is one's rank or importance in the eyes of others.

Research Method

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 representative 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 (Representative Participation variables) on dependent variable (Institutional Stability).

III. Results and Discussion

Presentation of Respondents' Demographic Data

Three hundred and ninety-three (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 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

IV. Discussion of Findings

The regression table is an important table to explain the relationship between representative participation and the institutional stability. From Table 2, the R (correlation Coefficient) gives a positive value of 0.509; this indicates that there is a strong and positive correlation between representative 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 0.259, this implies that non union members, union members, joint work management and committee brought about 25.9% 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 0.249, implying that when all errors are corrected and adjustments are made the model can only account for 24.9% of representative participation in the surveyed tertiary institution. The value of Durbin Watson statistics is 1.685 which showed the absence of autocorrelation in the model due to a large sample. However, four variables were used to measure consultative decision making which are: non-union member, union member, joint work management, committee member and institutional stability which were subjected to multiple regression analysis as shown in Table 2.

From the Table 2, the unstandardized β co-efficient of non union member gives a negative value of -0.024 with $t = -0.259$ and ($P = 0.475 < 0.05$). This result showed that non union members have a negative effect on institutional stability therefore, it was found not significant. This means that respondents' reason for institutional stability is not strongly influenced by non-union members. However, the higher the T-value, the better the result and the negativity of the result showed that non union workers is not relatively common or in existence among public universities in southwest, this is because employees do not feel secured if they don't join union. Moreso, most employees want their interest protected in various institutions. This is in accordance to the findings of Emmanuel and Damachi (2015) that that employee's participation in decision making impacts on organisational performance in Hospitality Industry. As a result of this, most Nigerian organisations do not embrace non union members for security purpose.

The unstandardized β co-efficient of union member gives a positive value of 0.319 with $t = 6.199$ and ($P = 0.000 < 0.05$). This result showed that union membership has a great significant effect on institutional stability. It was found significant: therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept alternate hypothesis. This means that respondents' reason for institutional stability is strongly and positively influenced by representative participatory decision making as revealed in Table 2. However, the higher the T-value, the better the result and the positivity of the result showed that there is a very strong union put in place among public universities in southwest Nigeria, such as ASUU, NASU, NAATS and SSANU which is a mean of participating indirectly or representing employees in decision making at the management level. Union has become so important because staff becomes member automatically after employment. This is in line with the findings of Wainaina, Iravo and Waititu (2014) that employee participation in decision making significantly influences university academic staff.

The unstandardized β co-efficient of joint work management gives a positive value of 0.152 with $t=2.607$ and $(P=0.010 < 0.05)$. This result showed that joint work management 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 representative participatory decision making. However, the higher the T-value, the better the result and the positivity of the result showed that southwest universities encourage joint work management among staff at the departmental level as a means of participation in decision making as shown in Table 2. This is in line with the findings of Muindi (2011) that there is a relationship between participation in decision making and job satisfaction among academic staff in public Universities.

From Table 2 the unstandardized β co-efficient of committee member gives a positive value of 0.166 with $t=2.019$ and $(P=0.045 < 0.05)$. This result showed that committee membership 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 representative participatory decision making. However, the higher the T-value, the better the result and the positivity of the result showed that committee usage among southwest public universities has improved the chance of employees involvement in decision making which enables employees to be duly represented. This is in line with the findings of Akuoko *et al* (2012) that employees involvement in decision making impacted positively on workers' commitment and performance. However, all the measures of consultative participation are in accordance with the theories reviewed on this study except non union membership. The multiple regression equation of the model is: Institutional Stability = $1.779 - 0.024NUm + 0.319Um + 0.152JWm + 0.166Cm$

Table 2: Regression Results of Representative Participation on Institutional Stability

Model	R	R ²	Adj R ²	DW	B	Std Error	T value	P Value
	0.509	0.259	0.249	1.685				
Non Union					-.024	.050	.475	.635
Union					.319	.051	6.199	.000
Joint Work Mgt					.152	.058	2.607	.010
Committee					.166	.082	2.019	0.45
Constant					1.779	.254	6.997	.000

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 representative participation will significantly affect institutional stability among Southwest Universities.

Table 3 F-test

F calculated	F tabulated	Ho	Hi	Remark
25.330	2.576	Reject	Accept	Significance

V. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that representative participatory decision-making attributes are significantly and positively related to institutional stability in the selected southwest public universities, Nigeria. However, all the representative participation measures (union members, joint work management and committee members) were positive except non-union member with negative value which implied that non union workers is not relatively common or in existence among public universities in southwest, this is because employees do not feel secured if they do not join union. Since R (Correlation Coefficient) give positive value which depicts a strong positive relationship between representative participation and institutional stability.

VI. Recommendations

On the part of the university staff, it was shown that unions, committees and joint work management are significant and positively related therefore, it is recommended that staff should ensure that competent staff are chosen or voted for to represent the interest of their members effectively at the decision-making level. In this case, union executives must believe in participation as a genuine means of advancing the interests of their members and not see it as an opportunity to get higher position and power. Through representative participation, the executives representing each union and committee members must be able to make staff inputs and grievances known at the management level. This form of participation will assist in expressing the view of employees in a coordinated manner and where the institutional arrangement influences the control rights of management.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Abdulahi, I., & Shafiwu, A. (2014). Participatory Management and Employee Productivity: A Case Study of Community Banks in the Upper East Region of Ghana. *Business and Economics Journal*, 5(3), 2-10.
- [2]. Ahmed, M., & Omotunde, H. (2012). Theories and Strategies of Good Decision Making. *International Journal of Scientific and Technology Research*, 1(10), 51 -154.
- [3]. Akuoko, K., Dwumah, P., & Ansong, F. (2012). Employee Involvement in Decision Making and Workers' Performance in Selected Organisations in Ashanti Region of Ghana. *Excel International Journal of Multidisciplinary Management Studies*, 2(6), 11-22.
- [4]. Beardwell, J., & Claydon, J. (2007). *Human Resource Management: A Contemporary Approach* (5th ed.). Great Britain: Pearson Education Limited.
- [5]. Bhatti, K., Nawab, S., & Akbar, A. (2011). Effect of Direct Participation on Organisational Commitment of Banking Sector Employees in the Pakistan and United States. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 2(9), 15-23.
- [6]. Burchell, N., & Kolb, D. (2006). Stability and change for Sustainability. *Business Review*, 8(2), 31-41.
- [7]. Bush, T., & Heystek, J. (2003). School Governance in South Africa compare. *A Journal of Comparative Education*, 33(2), 127-138.
- [8]. Cheng, K. (2008). Effect of Shared Decision Making on the Improvement in Teacher's Job Involvement in Hong Kong. *New Horizons in Education*, 56(3), 1-16.
- [9]. Chukwuma, E. M., & Okafor, O. (2014). The Effect of Motivation on Productivity: A Study of Manufacturing in Nnewi. *Managerial Journal of Manageria Studies and Research*, 2(7), 137 -147.
- [10]. Dachler, H. P., & Wilpert, B. (1978). Conceptual Dimensions and Boundaries of Participation in Organisations: A Critical Evaluation. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 23(1), 1- 39.
- [11]. David, F. (2005). *Strategic Management: Concepts and Cases* (10th ed.). Pearson Prentice Hall. New Jersey:
- [12]. Emmanuel, I., & Damachi, G. (2015). Employees' Participation in Decision Making and the Hospitality Industry in Nigeria. An Investigative Study of Selected Hotels in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 1(4), 54-66.
- [13]. Fulop, J. (2005). Laboratory of Operations Research and Decision Systems, Computer and Automation Institute. *Hungarian Academy of Sciences*, 1-15
- [14]. Grimsrud, B., & Kvinge, T. (2006). Productivity Puzzles – should Employee Participation be an Issue? In Norway. *Nordic Journal of Political Economy*, 32(1), 139- 167.
- [15]. Hashim, F., Alam, G., & Siraj, S. (2010). Information and Communication Technology for Participatory Based Decision Making E-Management for Administrative Efficiency in Higher Education in Malaysia. *International Journal of Physical Sciences*, 5 (4), 383-392.
- [16]. Kolb, D. G. (2003). Seeking Continuity amidst Organisational Change: A Storytelling Approach. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 12(2), 180-183.
- [17]. Mokoena, S. (2011). Participative Decision Making: Perception of Schools Stakeholder in South Africa. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 29(2), 119-131.
- [18]. Muindi, F. (2011). Relationship between Participation in Decision Making and Job Satisfaction among Academic Staff in the School of Business University Nairobi. *Journal of Human Resources Management Research*, 1(1), 1-34.
- [19]. Nakpodia, E. D. (2009). The Concept of the University as Learning Organisation: Its Functions Techniques and possible ways of making it Effective. *Journal of public Administration and Policy Research*. 1(5), 079-083.
- [20]. Shaed, M., Ishak, S., & Ramli, Z. (2015). Employee Participation in Decision Making: A Literature Survey in Malaysia. *Malaysian Journal of Society and Space*, 11(13),142-155.
- [21]. Wainaina, L., Iravo, M., & Waititu, A. (2014). Effect of Employee Participation in Decision Making on the Organisational Commitment among Academic Staff in the Private and Public Universities in Kenya. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Management and Social Sciences*, 3(12), 131-142.
- [22]. Yamane, T. (1967). *Elementary Sampling Theory*. Englewood Cliffs: Printice hall.