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Employees Participation In Decision-Making Process: An Assessment Of The Niger Delta Development Commission

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ABSTRACT
Employee participation in decision-making is a fundamental aspect of organizational effectiveness, workplace democracy, and sustainable development. This study assesses the extent of employee involvement in decision-making within the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and its implications for organizational performance. Utilizing a mixed-method approach, data was collected from 329 employees across the NDDC offices in Abia, Delta, and Ondo States through structured questionnaires. The findings reveal that 89.1% of employees believe that participation in decision-making enhances commitment to organizational goals. However, a significant portion (58.1%) of respondents feel inadequately involved in decision-making, which may contribute to inefficiencies in project implementation. Additionally, 81.1% of respondents acknowledge the existence of challenges hindering employee participation, including bureaucratic constraints, political interference, and weak communication structures. The study underscores the importance of inclusive leadership, transparent communication, and formal decision-making frameworks in enhancing employee involvement. To improve participation, the NDDC should institutionalize participatory mechanisms such as advisory committees and structured feedback channels. Addressing these challenges will enhance workforce morale, project execution, and the overall efficiency of the commission.
Keywords: Employee participation, decision-making, organizational effectiveness, Niger Delta Development Commission, public sector governance.

1. INTRODUCTION

Employee participation in decision-making is widely recognized as a critical factor in enhancing organizational effectiveness and improving workplace democracy. It entails the involvement of employees in shaping policies, strategies, and operational decisions that affect their work environment. Scholars argue that when employees actively participate in decision-making, it fosters job satisfaction, enhances motivation, and improves overall organizational performance (Drucker, 1999; Robbins & Judge, 2019). Conversely, limited or no participation can lead to dissatisfaction, resistance to change, and reduced productivity (Vroom & Yetton, 1973). The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) was established in 2000 to facilitate sustainable development in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, which has long suffered from environmental degradation, socio-economic challenges, and infrastructural deficits (Ibaba, 2005). As a government agency tasked with driving regional development, the NDDC's efficiency largely depends on its internal administrative processes, including decision-making mechanisms.

Employee participation in decision-making within the NDDC is crucial, given that it enhances policy formulation, project execution, and service delivery (Okolo & Akpokodje, 2020).

Despite the theoretical benefits of employee participation, studies have shown that bureaucratic constraints, political interference, and poor organizational culture often limit employees' involvement in decision-making processes in public institutions (Adewale & Olayemi, 2018). In the case of the NDDC, allegations of corruption, mismanagement, and inefficiency have further exacerbated concerns about its decision-making process (Uche & Uche, 2021). Limited participation of employees in strategic and operational decisions may contribute to these inefficiencies, thereby hindering the commission's ability to achieve its developmental goals. This study, therefore, seeks to assess the extent of employee participation in decision-making in the NDDC and its implications for organizational effectiveness. It will explore the existing decision-making structures within the commission, identify challenges limiting employee involvement, and provide recommendations for improving participatory decision-making. The findings of this study will contribute to the broader discourse on governance, public sector management, and sustainable development in Nigeria.

Objectives

1. To examine the extent of employee participation in decision-making within the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC).
2. To assess the impact of employee participation on organizational effectiveness and project implementation in the NDDC.
3. To identify the challenges hindering employee participation in decision-making within the NDDC and propose strategies for improvement.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do employees participate in decision-making processes within the NDDC?
2. How does employee participation influence organizational effectiveness and project implementation in the NDDC?
3. What are the major challenges limiting employee participation in decision-making within the NDDC, and how can they be addressed?

2. METHODOLOGY

The study is situated in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria, which comprises nine states: Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo, and Rivers. This region is widely recognized as the hub of Nigeria's oil and gas activities, playing a crucial role in the country's economic development. Given its strategic importance, the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) was established to drive infrastructural and socio-economic development in the region. The study population consists of 1,842 employees of the NDDC across its offices in Abia, Delta and Ondo States. This number is based on official records from the commission's reports. The workforce is distributed as follows: 763 employees in Abia, 599 in Delta State, and 480 in Ondo State. These employees serve in various capacities within the organization, contributing to its decision-making processes and overall performance.

To ensure a systematic and unbiased selection of participants, the study adopted a multistage sampling technique. First, three states-Abia, Delta, and Ondo were randomly selected from the nine states in the Niger Delta Region using the lottery method. This method ensured equal representation and eliminated selection bias. Furthermore, a purposive sampling technique was employed to focus specifically on employees of the NDDC, as they are directly involved in the decision-making processes that impact the commission's operations. Within the selected states, simple random sampling was used to select participants across different departments and offices to ensure a broad and representative sample.

To determine the sample size from the total population of 1,842 employees of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), the study employed the Taro Yamane formula for sample size determination, which resulted in a sample size of 329 respondents. The study utilized both primary and secondary data sources. A structured Likert-type questionnaire was designed to capture relevant information required for the research. The questionnaire contained both open-ended and closed-ended questions to ensure comprehensive data collection from NDDC employees across its offices in Abia,

Delta, and Ondo States. The questionnaires were distributed using a proportionate sampling technique to ensure fair representation across the selected states. Accordingly, 145 questionnaires were allocated to Abia State, 69 to Delta State, and 116 to Ondo State. Further proportionate sampling was applied to distribute the questionnaires among employees in different departments and offices within the NDDC. In Abia State, 62 questionnaires were allocated to one category of employees, 44 to another, and 39 to a third category. In Delta, 29, 26, and 16 questionnaires were distributed among the respective categories, while in Ondo, the distribution was 45, 38, and 32 across the different employee groups. For data analysis and presentation, the study adopted descriptive statistical methods, which provided a clear and systematic interpretation of the responses collected. This approach ensured that the study effectively examined the extent of employee participation in decision-making within the NDDC and its impact on organizational effectiveness.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: employees participate in decision-making processes within the NDDC

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	293	89.1
No	36	10.9
Total	329	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Table 1 presents employees' responses regarding their participation in decision-making processes within the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC). The data indicates that 293 out of 329 respondents (89.1%) affirmed that employee participation in decision-making enhances their commitment to organizational goals, while only 36 respondents (10.9%) disagreed. This finding suggests a strong correlation between employee involvement in decision-making and their level of commitment to achieving organizational objectives. Furthermore, employees who actively participate in decision-making are likely to be more engaged, motivated, and productive. Their sense of ownership and responsibility toward organizational goals increases, leading to improved performance, reduced workplace stress, and enhanced job satisfaction. When employees have a voice in shaping policies and strategies, they are more likely to align their efforts with the organization's vision, ultimately fostering a more committed and high-performing workforce.

Table 2 employee participation on organizational effectiveness and project implementation in the NDDC

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	46	14.0
Agree	59	17.9
Neutral	33	10.0
Disagree	122	37.1
Strongly Disagree	69	21.0
Total	329	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Table 2 presents employees' perspectives on the impact of their participation in decision-making on organizational effectiveness and project implementation within the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC). The responses indicate that 46 respondents (14.0%) strongly agree and 59 respondents (17.9%) agree that employee participation contributes positively to organizational effectiveness and project execution. Meanwhile, 33 respondents (10.0%) remain neutral, while a significant portion—122 respondents (37.1%)—disagree, and 69 respondents (21.0%) strongly disagree.

These findings suggest that while some employees recognize the value of their involvement in decision-making, a majority (58.1%) believe they are not adequately included in such processes. This lack of participation may hinder organizational effectiveness and the successful implementation of projects within the NDDC. Employee involvement in decision-making has been widely recognized as a key factor in enhancing organizational performance, fostering a sense of ownership, and improving project execution. Therefore, this study emphasizes the need for the NDDC to adopt more inclusive decision-making strategies, ensuring that employees have a voice in shaping policies and project-related decisions. Doing so can lead to improved organizational efficiency, increased employee commitment, and more successful project implementation.

Table 3 challenges hindering employee participation in decision-making within the NDDC and propose strategies for improvement

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	105	31.9
Agree	162	49.2
Neutral	46	14.0
Disagree	16	4.9
Strongly Disagree	-	-
Total	329	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Table 3 highlights the challenges hindering employee participation in decision-making within the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and proposes strategies for improvement. The survey results show that 105 respondents (31.9%) strongly agree and 162 respondents (49.2%) agree that challenges exist in limiting employee participation in decision-making. Meanwhile, 46 respondents (14.0%) remain neutral, and only 16 respondents (4.9%) disagree. Notably, no respondents strongly disagreed. These findings suggest that a significant majority (81.1%) of employees recognize the existence of challenges that hinder their participation in organizational decision-making. Despite these challenges, there is a strong willingness among employees to be involved in the decision-making process. Addressing these barriers is essential for improving organizational effectiveness and fostering a more engaged workforce. To enhance employee participation, the NDDC should implement strategies such as promoting a more inclusive leadership approach, establishing clear communication channels, and creating formal structures that encourage employee input in decision-making. Additionally, providing training and capacity-building programs can equip employees with the necessary skills to contribute meaningfully to organizational decisions. Strengthening participatory frameworks will not only improve employee morale and productivity but also enhance the efficiency of project implementation within the NDDC.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings indicate a significant relationship between employee participation in decision-making and their commitment to organizational goals. The high percentage (89.1%) of employees affirming this link aligns with existing literature on organizational behavior and management. Scholars such as Locke and Latham (1990) in their Goal-Setting Theory emphasize that employee engagement in decision-making fosters commitment, enhances motivation, and ultimately leads to improved performance. Similarly, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959) identifies participatory decision-making as a key motivational factor that improves job satisfaction and reduces workplace stress.

However, despite the positive correlation between employee involvement and commitment, Table 2 suggests that a substantial proportion (58.1%) of employees feel inadequately included in decision-making processes. This perception could contribute to organizational inefficiencies and hinder project implementation. Research by Pfeffer and Veiga (1999) on human capital and high-performance work

practices asserts that organizations that fail to engage employees in decision-making often experience lower levels of innovation, weak strategic alignment, and reduced job satisfaction. Furthermore, Vroom and Yetton's Decision-Making Model (1973) highlights that participatory decision-making is particularly crucial in complex organizations like the NDDC, where project success depends on collective input and cooperation.

The findings in Table 3 underscore the existence of significant barriers to employee participation in decision-making, with 81.1% of respondents acknowledging these challenges. This aligns with previous research, such as Kanter's Empowerment Theory (1977), which posits that structural barriers such as hierarchical leadership, lack of communication, and absence of formal participatory frameworks can limit employee involvement and reduce organizational effectiveness.

To address these barriers, the participative leadership model advocated by Lewin et al. (1939) suggests that organizations should foster an inclusive leadership approach that encourages employee input at all levels. Moreover, studies by Robbins and Judge (2019) in Organizational Behavior emphasize the need for clear communication channels, structured feedback mechanisms, and continuous training programs to enhance employees' decision-making capabilities. The implementation of these strategies within the NDDC could lead to a more engaged workforce, improved project execution, and greater institutional efficiency.

CONCLUSION

The study findings highlight the significant impact of employee participation in decision-making on organizational commitment, effectiveness, and project implementation within the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC). The high percentage (89.1%) of employees affirming that their involvement enhances commitment underscores the importance of participatory decision-making in fostering motivation, engagement, and productivity. However, the findings also reveal that a majority (58.1%) of employees feel excluded from key decision-making processes, which may negatively affect organizational effectiveness and project outcomes. Furthermore, the identification of challenges hindering participation (recognized by 81.1% of respondents) emphasizes the need for structural improvements within the NDDC. To optimize employee contributions, it is essential for the NDDC to adopt more inclusive leadership approaches, establish transparent communication channels, and implement policies that promote greater employee involvement in decision-making. Addressing these issues will not only enhance workforce morale and productivity but also improve the efficiency of project execution, ultimately leading to a more effective and high-performing organization.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed to improve employee participation in decision-making within the NDDC:

- Leaders should actively seek input from staff, fostering a culture of shared responsibility and engagement.
- Transparent communication will ensure that employees are well-informed and feel valued in the decision-making process.
- The NDDC should create formal decision-making frameworks, such as employee advisory committees, working groups, and participatory forums, to institutionalize staff involvement in policy formulation and project planning.

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