



Does collective decision making mechanism make a difference in effective administration of tertiary institutions in Nigeria?

Bassey Jude U¹, Egbe Aneozeng Awo¹, Bassey Mary O², Egbe Enobong Aneozeng²

¹ Department of Business Administration, Cross River University of Technology, Calabar, Nigeria

² Department of Education Administration and Planning, Cross River University of Technology, Calabar, Nigeria

Abstract

This study focused on investigating the extent of participation of non-academic staff of Cross River University of Technology in the decision making mechanism of their various departments and how they react to decision taken without their involvement. Data was gathered with questionnaire from 200 staff. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistical method and hypothesis tested with chi-square statistic at 0.05 significance level. Findings revealed that staff did not adequately participate in the decision making process of the various departments. Results also indicate an abject lack of commitment to decision outcomes and job satisfaction by administrative staff. It was recommended that heads of department and university management at large should cultivate and sustain a collective decision making culture to boost employees job satisfaction and productivity.

Keywords: collective, decision making, mechanism, effective, tertiary institutions and administration

Introduction

Organizations are complex and managers are face with the situation of making decisions on a daily basis. Understanding this vital concept is critical for every business success, since it will help strategist and authoritarians to make more cautious, organizing relevant information and define alternatives (Saeed, 2018) ^[9].

The first ace in decision making process is to try and make sense of what is going on in a complex organizational situation. Decision making mechanism is defined as a process or method of selecting among available alternatives. Obi and Agwu (2017) ^[7] state that the ability of the decision maker to choose the best option that is capable of achieving the set goals or solve the organization problem, demands structured decision guidelines. These guidelines when put together are referred to as decision-making strategies. Simon as cited by Inyang (2002) opined that decision making process involves or start from identifying and understanding the nature of the problem and search for possible causes and potential solutions. The attainment of any organizational objective depends on the quality and timely decision making. Osmand (2016) stated that organizational performance is determined by the decision taken and their effective implementation. Organizational effectiveness on the other hand, is defined as the ability to secure and utilize resources in the pursuit of organizational goals.

Fundamentally, decision making involves the choice between alternative actions. In some cases, alternative will involved the determination of specific numerical values while in other case, alternative may appear to be strictly qualitative. Qualitative techniques offer leaders, managers or heads of department (as the case may be) methods of analyzing problems using proven techniques of providing information about that problem and assessing the potential outcomes from different decisions, (Ayandele, 2005).

However, this is not an attempt to say that quantitative techniques offer instant solutions or that decision making is simply about the application of quantitative techniques. Rather it provides valuable and fast information about a problem that may not be readily available from any source.

The qualitative or subjective approach to decision making on the other hand, involves the extension of historical data or the development of associated models that attempts to utilize casual variables to make forecast. This approach permits the inclusion of self-information such as: Human factors and personal opinions; in the decision making process. These human factors are usually ignored in the quantitative approach because of the difficulty of quantifying or measuring item.

It is imperative to observe that in Nigeria most organizations, especially the public and even some private organizations employ more of the qualitative approach than the quantitative (Inyang 2004). But what is even more important to our study is not exactly about whether the decision making approach takes a quantitative or qualitative dimension, but rather more specifically concerned about who makes the final organizational decision. Cole (1994) ^[3] opined that involving group members often lead to greater acceptance and commitment to the final decision. He further observed that when a leader or manager allow group members to be involved in the decision making mechanism, authority is decentralized resulting in a feeling of satisfaction, commitment and self-esteem. To Osmani (2016) ^[8], he stated that one of the reasons why groups can be more effective than individuals in making decisions maybe the group's ability to satisfy the need for social belonging.

Low productivity, lack of team work spirit and commitment to decision outcomes have been observed as some of the consequences of the non-involvement of employees in the decision making mechanism of their organizations in

Nigeria, Egbe (2010). This paper aims to investigate the extent or lack of involvement of non-academic staff of the Cross River University of Technology in decision making process of their departments and how they react to decisions taken without their involvement or participation.

Statement of Problem

Most of the decisions taken in organizations and work environments affect the welfare and productivity of its workers either positively or otherwise it is therefore imperative that the group be duly notified and allowed to participate in the decision making process if they are expected to accept and be committed to the final outcome of the decisions. Most regrettably however, leaders and heads of most Nigerian organizations and department have been observed and accused of not allowing employee to participate in the decision making process, as in the case of the non-academic staff of Cross River University of Technology. This results is the demonstrated lack of commitment to decisions outcomes, lack of job satisfaction, self-esteem and low productivity.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated for the study:

1. What is the extent of participation of employees in the decision making mechanism?
2. What is the extent to which employees are committed to decision outcomes?
3. To what extent is teamwork spirit exhibits amongst employees after decisions are taken?

Research Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis were formulated for the study:

1. There is no significant difference between decision making mechanism and group participation.
2. There is no significant difference between decision making mechanism and employee commitment to decision outcomes.

Research Designs

The research design adopted for this study is the survey design. This decision was taken to make room for easy generalization and holistic assessment.

Population of The Study

The population used in the study is made up of all the non-academic staff in the Cross Rive University of Technology, Calabar, numbering one thousand two hundred (1200) staffs.

Sample

The sample of the study is made up of 200 non-academic employees randomly drawn from four selected non-academic departments in the Cross River University of Technology. The department consists of Registry, Bursary/Audit, Security, Estate and works.

Instrumentation

Questionnaire was used in gathering relevant data from respondents. Section A of the questionnaire sought information relating to the respondents demographic details, while Section B contain items that are determined the extent

to which decision making mechanism makes a difference in organizational effectiveness. The well-structured 4-point likert type questionnaire had the following responses. To a very great extent (VGE), to a great extent (GE), to a less extent (LE) and to a very less extent (VLE).

Data Analysis

Simple percentages and the descriptive statistical methods were used to analyze the questionnaire. The hypothesis were tested and validated with the aid of the chi-square statistic at 5% lack of significance. A total of 200 copies of the questionnaire were administered, 142 representing 71% were returned, while 58 representing 29% were not returned.

Research Question 1: What is the extent of employee participation in the decision making mechanism?

Table 1

Options	responses	Percentages %
Very great extent	15	10.6
Great extent	25	17.6
Less extent	52	36.6
Very less extent	50	35.2
Total	142	100

As shown above, 10.6% and 17.6% of the respondents respectively, indicates a very great extent and great extent of participation in the decision making process.

Whereas 36.6% and 35.2% of the respondents respectively, indicates that they participate to a less extent and very less extent in the decision making mechanism.

Research Question 2: What is the extent to which employees are committed to the decision overcomes?

Table 2

Options	Responses	Percentages %
Very great extent	17	12.0
Great extent	28	19.7
Less extent	50	35.2
Very less extent	47	31.1
Total	100	100

From the table above, 12% and 19.7% of the respondents picked a very great extent and great extent that decision making mechanism enhances group commitment to decision outcomes. Whereas 35.2% and 31.1% respondents, picked a less extent and very less extent respectively that decision making mechanism enhances group commitment to decision outcomes.

Research Question 3: To what extent is team work spirit exhibited amongst group members after decisions are taken?

Table 3

Options	Responses	Percentages %
Very great extent	15	10.6
Great extent	25	17.6
Less extent	53	37.3
Very less extent	49	34.5
Total	100	100

From the computation above, it shows that 10.6% and

17.6% of the respondents exhibits teamwork spirit to a very great extent and great extent respectively, whereas 37.3% and 34.5% indicates that employees to a less extent and very less extent exhibit teamwork spirit after decisions are made.

Test of Hypothesis

The Chi-square is used to test and validate the hypothesis. The chi-square test examines the extent to which the frequencies that are actually observed in the study, differ from the frequencies that are expected if the null hypothesis is true.

The formula for computing chi-square is given as:

$$\sum \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$$

Where O = Observed frequency

E = Expected frequency

Σ = The summing overall cells

In our analysis, the level of significance is 0.05.

Decision Rule: If the calculated X² value is less than the value of X² table value, accept the null hypothesis and if however the X² is higher than the X² table value, reject the null hypothesis.

The degree of freedom is calculated by the following formula df-(R-1) (C-1)

Where R = Number of rows in the table

C = Number of columns

Hypothesis 1: There is no significance difference between the decision making mechanism and group participation.

Table 4: Expected frequencies computation

Responses	Estate/works	Security	Registry	Bursary	Total
Very great extent	1.2	3.71	10.65	1.44	17
Great extent	1.97	6.11	17.55	2.37	28
Less extent	3.52	10.92	31.34	4.23	50
Very less extent	2.31	10.26	29.49	3.92	47
Total	10	31	89	12	142

Table 5: Computation of X²

Depts.	Response	O	E	O-E	O-E ²	$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E^2}$
Estates/Works	Very great extent	1	1.2	-0.2	0.04	0.03
	Great extent	1	1.97	0.97	0.94	0.48
	Less extent	6	3.52	2.48	6.15	1.75
	Very less extent	2	3.31	-1.31	1.72	0.52
Security	Very great extent	2	3.71	1.71	2.92	0.79
	Great extent	5	6.11	-1.11	1.23	0.2
	Less extent	15	10.92	4.08	16.65	1.52
	Very less extent	9	10.26	-1.26	1.59	0.16
Registry	Very great extent	14	10.65	3.35	11.32	1.05
	Great extent	20	17.55	2.45	6	0.34
	Less extent	23	31.34	8.34	69.56	2.22
	Very less extent	32	29.46	2.54	6.45	0.22
Bursary/Audit	Very great extent	0	1.44	-1.44	2.07	1.44
	Great extent	2	2.37	-0.37	0.14	0.6
	Less extent	6	4.22	1.78	3.17	0.75
	Very less extent	4	3.97	0.03	0	0
Total		142				12.07

Decision: Since the computer X² is 12.07, which is less than the table value of 14.68, we therefore do not reject the null hypothesis.

Hypothesis II: There is no significant relationship between decision making mechanism and group commitment to decision outcomes.

Table 6: Expected frequencies computation

Responses	Estate/works	Security	Registry	Bursary	Total
Very great extent	1.06	3.27	9.40	1.26	15
Great extent	1.76	5.146	15.67	2.11	25
Less extent	3.66	11.35	32.59	4.39	52
Very less extent	3.52	10.91	31.33	2.22	50
Total	10	31	89	12	142

Table 7: Computation of X²

Depts.	Response	O	E	O-E	O-E ²	$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$
Estates/Works	Very great extent	2	1.06	0.94	0.88	0.88
	Great extent	1	1.76	-0.79	0.58	0.33
	Less extent	7	3.66	3.34	11.16	3.05
	Very less extent	0	3.52	-3.52	12.40	2.52
Security	Very great extent	1	3.77	-2.27	5.15	1.58
	Great extent	5	5.46	-0.46	0.21	0.04
	Less extent	15	11.35	3.65	13.32	1.17
	Very less extent	10	10.91	-0.91	0.83	0.08
Registry	Very great extent	10	9.40	0.6	0.36	0.04
	Great extent	18	15.67	2.33	5.43	0.35
	Less extent	26	32.59	-6.59	43.42	1.33
	Very less extent	3	31.33	3.67	13.47	0.43
Bursary/Audit	Very great extent	0	1.26	-1.26	1.59	0.26
	Great extent	1	2.11	-1.11	1.23	0.58
	Less extent	6	4.39	1.61	2.59	1.59
	Very less extent	5	4.22	-0.78	0.67	0.14
Total		142				13.32

Decision: Since the computed X² is 13.32, which is less than the table value of 14.68. We therefore accept the hypothesis, which states that “there is no significant relationship between decision making mechanism and group commitment to decision outcomes.

Discussion of Findings

The sum of empirical findings reveals that the existing decision making mechanism in non-academic departments of the University of Calabar, does not allow the participation of employees in decision making process. It is suggestive therefore to observe that decision is taken only by the management and the heads of department. Analysis further reveal that due to their non-involvement in decision making process, the non-academic staff are not therefore usually committed to the outcome or to the successful implementation of such decisions.

Again, it was revealed that the absence of collective decision making procedure, results in an abject lack of satisfaction, esteem and teamwork spirit in the employees. These actually has a direct and inherent correlation with their present and future productive capacities. This revelation is also consistent with the findings of Nwachuckwu (2012), and Obi *et al* (2017) [7] who made similar discovery through their studies.

Conclusion

There is a need for heads of departments and units to involve employees in the decision making process to facilitate their smooth day-to-day running. Actually, this is a means of decentralizing authority and influence in their various departments. Participation can also enhance employee commitment to decision outcomes, improved decision quality and employee job satisfaction. It has also been established that group participation is avenue for employee empowerment and offering employee greater motivation and commitment to organizational goals and objectives. It makes employees much more enthusiastically concerned about the successful implementation of decision outcomes because of their participation in taking them, than otherwise. Collective decision making process also creates an environment that makes reliable information more readily available to employees, instead of depending on

ramours and grapevine sources. Accordingly, this access to adequate information, affords employees the correct understanding impetus and background to contribute meaningfully to the overall success and effectiveness of the organization.

Recommendations.

The following recommendations are therefore deemed imperative The University and other public organization should ensure that collective decision making mechanism be cultivation in order to enhance group commitment to decision outcomes and create a sense of satisfaction and esteem in the group. Leadership should be approached with a democratic posture, such that the Opinion and sentiments of members of a group are considered in the decision making process and in the formulation and implementation of corporate goals. Members of group or department should be notifies and given enough time react before certain changes or decision are made or taken, especially those which specifically affect their welfare and work generally.

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