

Employee Participation and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour: Evidence from Selected Plastic Manufacturing Firms in Anambra State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: *Employees in many production-driven organizations continue to be excluded from decisions that directly shape their working conditions, job scope, and wellbeing, even though such exclusion is widely believed to weaken the discretionary, citizenship-oriented behaviour that organizations depend on. This study examined the relationship between employee direct involvement in decision-making and three core dimensions of organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) – conscientiousness, altruism, and civic virtue – among selected plastic manufacturing firms in Anambra State, Nigeria. A correlational survey research design was adopted. The accessible population comprised 311 employees drawn from three purposively identified firms – Adolpes Small Scale Industry, Chudone Plastic Furniture Limited, and Enok Ventures Nigeria – and the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table was applied to derive a sample of 172 respondents. A structured questionnaire served as the instrument for data collection, and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to test the three stated hypotheses. The analysis produced positive relationships between direct employee involvement in decision-making and each of conscientiousness, altruism, and civic virtue, all of which were statistically significant, leading to the rejection of all three null hypotheses. The study concludes that involving employees in decisions affecting their jobs and wellbeing makes them more receptive to organizational change, more willing to help co-workers voluntarily, and more inclined to stay informed about and involved in the wider affairs of the organization. It is recommended that management in the plastic manufacturing sub-sector deliberately widen the scope of employee involvement in job-related decisions, since doing so is likely to strengthen employees' sense of belonging, self-esteem, mutual helpfulness, and voluntary commitment to organizational goals.*

Keywords: *Employee Participation, Decision-Making, Organizational Citizenship Behaviour, Conscientiousness, Altruism, Civic Virtue, Plastic Manufacturing Firms, Nigeria*

1. INTRODUCTION

Business organizations exist primarily to satisfy customer needs, and to do so consistently they must ensure that every component of the organization, from production machinery to human capital, functions optimally. Within the plastic manufacturing sub-sector, firms tend to place heavy emphasis on production equipment because output volume and product quality depend substantially on the condition of that equipment. This emphasis, however, should not obscure the equally important role that employees play in helping any organization, whether a production outfit or a service firm, achieve its goals. As organizations contend with an increasingly competitive and fast-changing environment, employees have come to be regarded as the most important asset available to management, and improving their performance is now widely understood to depend on the extent to which they are allowed to participate in organizational affairs (David, 2005).

Employee participation is instrumental to the achievement of organizational goals because it supports the sharing of information, knowledge, rewards, and power throughout the organization (Edouards, 2007; Derek & Kato, 2005). Where employees are involved in decisions that concern their work, a sense of belonging tends to develop, along with a more congenial working relationship between management and staff, and employees become more willing to contribute voluntarily to harmonious industrial relations (Noah, 2008). Participation in decision-making is therefore regarded as a tool for inducing motivation, which in turn supports positive work attitudes and higher productivity (Noah, 2009).

Beyond its motivational value, employee participation is also closely tied to the emergence of discretionary behaviour in the workplace, commonly referred to as organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB). Where management permits a meaningful degree of employee participation, workers tend to become more deeply embedded in the organization and more inclined to exhibit behaviour that goes beyond formally required duties (Cohen, Aaron, & Vigoda-Gadot, 2004). Such discretionary behaviour, though not written into any job description, has repeatedly been shown to facilitate organizational functioning (Lee & Allen, 2002).

Preliminary observation within three plastic manufacturing firms in Anambra State – Adolpes Small Scale Industry, Chudone Plastic Furniture Limited, and Enok Ventures – suggested that employees are occasionally invited to be present when decisions are made but are typically restricted to peripheral roles, such as arranging the venue or observing proceedings, rather than being allowed

genuine input. Such shallow participation risks demoralizing employees, weakening their sense of value within the firm, and dampening the discretionary behaviour that could otherwise strengthen organizational performance. It was this observed pattern that motivated the present study, which examines how employee participation relates to conscientiousness, altruism, and civic virtue, three core dimensions of OCB, in the focused firms.

Statement of the Problem

The three focused firms depend heavily on their production capacity to remain relevant in a competitive market, and decisions bearing on both day-to-day operations and long-term direction are made almost exclusively by top management and business owners. This pattern extends even to decisions with direct bearing on employees' wellbeing, job specification, and job description. Management in these firms appears to regard direct involvement of lower-level employees in decision-making as a sign of managerial weakness, and consequently allows employees only minor roles, such as being present or arranging logistics, when their involvement is deemed necessary. This restricted form of participation risks eroding employees' sense of belonging and, by extension, their willingness to exhibit both required and discretionary work behaviour.

Beyond weakening conscientiousness, this restricted pattern of participation may also discourage employees from helping co-workers voluntarily with tasks that are not formally assigned to them, a behaviour known as altruism. It may further reduce employees' willingness to stay informed about, and constructively involved in, the broader affairs of the organization, a behaviour known as civic virtue. Where employees feel shut out of decisions concerning their own jobs, they are less likely to extend help beyond their immediate duties or to take an active interest in matters affecting the organization as a whole. Left unaddressed, this combined disengagement can generate resistance to management proposals and organizational change, a pattern that has, at various points, resulted in halted production, lost man-hours, and disappointed customers in the focused firms. It is against this background that the present study was undertaken.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to examine the nature of the relationship that exists between employee participation and organizational citizenship behaviour in the focused firms. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- a) determine the nature of the relationship that exists between employee direct involvement in decision-making and conscientiousness in the focused firms;
- b) determine the nature of the relationship that exists between employee direct involvement in decision-making and altruism in the focused firms;
- c) determine the nature of the relationship that exists between employee direct involvement in decision-making and civic virtue in the focused firms.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following research questions guided the study: (i) What is the nature of the relationship that exists between employee direct involvement in decision-making and conscientiousness in the focused firms? (ii) What is the nature of the relationship that exists between employee direct involvement in decision-making and altruism in the focused firms? (iii) What is the nature of the relationship that exists between employee direct involvement in decision-making and civic virtue in the focused firms?

Correspondingly, the following alternate hypotheses were formulated for testing: Ha1 – there is a significant relationship existing between employee direct involvement in decision-making and conscientiousness in the focused firms; Ha2 – there is a significant relationship existing between employee direct involvement in decision-making and altruism in the focused firms; Ha3 – there is a significant relationship existing between employee direct involvement in decision-making and civic virtue in the focused firms.

Significance and Scope of the Study

The study is expected to be useful both to the firms studied and, more broadly, to plastic manufacturing firms and other organizations that rely on employees to achieve their goals. It also carries academic significance, offering insight that lecturers, students, management practitioners, and future researchers may draw upon. The study is limited to examining the relationship between employee direct involvement in decision-making and three OCB dimensions – conscientiousness, altruism, and civic virtue – and the organizations covered were Adolpes Small Scale Industry (Onitsha), Chudone Plastic Furniture Limited (Onitsha), and Enok

Ventures Nigeria (Awka), selected from a sampling frame of twenty-seven plastic firms in Anambra State using a table of random numbers.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Conceptual Review

Employee participation (EP) first attracted scholarly attention in the 1940s through the work of Coch and French (1948), who used it to measure individual and small-group performance. By the 1970s, researchers had begun distinguishing forms of participation along the lines of formality versus informality, directness versus indirectness, and degree of access or influence (Dachler & Wilpert, 1978), while later work examined both short-term and long-term participation in decision-making (John et al., 1988). Interest in EP grew substantially through the 1980s and 1990s, with much of that research focused on outcomes such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Wagner (1994) defines EP as a process of involvement between employees and administration in sharing information, decision-making, and problem-solving. Strauss (1998) similarly describes it as a process that allows employees to exert influence over their work and the conditions under which that work is performed, encompassing the sharing of information between managers and staff in order to generate new ideas, evaluate alternatives, and achieve organizational objectives (Scott-Ladd, Travaglione, & Marshall, 2006). Beardwell and Claydon (2007) frame EP as the distribution of power between employer and employee within decision-making processes, whether that distribution is direct or indirect, while Busck, Knudsen, and Lind (2010) describe it more simply as employee participation and influence in workplace decision-making. Helms (2006) adds that EP encourages the involvement of manpower at every organizational level in analysing problems, developing strategies, and implementing solutions.

EP manifests in different organizational domains and its impact varies with both the level and the intensity of participation involved. Prior studies have examined participation in job training (Rahmah, Rosnita, & Liew Chei, 2015), in financial decision-making (Zaimah et al., 2012), and in domestic decision-making (Mamoni & Aviral, 2011), among other areas. Busck, Knudsen, and Lind (2010) note that the benefits of EP are not confined to the specific job an employee performs but extend to broader organizational activities, such as departmental meetings or representation through elected delegates, and that EP should be understood not merely as a means of advancing wage-earners' interests but as a genuine contribution to organizational success. Marchington and Wilkinson (2005) view this as a formal and informal system of relationship, ranging from face-to-face supervisor-staff interaction to written suggestions, while Leat (2007) cautions that EP may represent an erosion of management's ability to take decisions unilaterally without regard for employee views.

Employee Direct Involvement in Decision-Making

Employee participation can assume different dimensions, ranging from involvement with an immediate supervisor to engagement with strategic managers, and can concern decisions about equipment maintenance, job scheduling, grievance handling, or conflict management. Whatever form it takes, participation tends to give employees a sense of achievement, belonging, and responsibility, while narrowing the communication gap between management and staff. Noah (2008) describes it as a special form of delegation through which subordinates gain greater control and freedom of choice, while Kalleberg, Nesheim, and Olsen (2009) identify positive outcomes such as improved skills, greater competence, stronger self-belief, and reduced job-related stress.

The degree of participation available to employees varies across organizations. A deeper or higher degree of participation means that all categories of employees are drawn into the planning process, whereas a shallow degree restricts planning largely to top management and confines employees to peripheral roles. Deeper participation is particularly valuable because frontline employees, being closest to customers, are well placed to recognize new product or service opportunities, a central element of the entrepreneurial process (Li, Tse, & Gu, 2006; Kemelgor, 2002; Zivkovic et al., 2009). Attitudes that treat organizational results and effective culture as flowing exclusively from the top tend to overlook the contributions available from lower organizational levels (Woodworth, 1986).

Knoop (1995) describes direct employee participation in decision-making as the sharing of decisions with others in pursuit of organizational objectives, and the literature broadly supports the view that such participation increases motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Pearson & Duffy, 1999). Gollan (2005) argues that a high degree of participation in work systems should increase labour productivity, reduce turnover and absenteeism, and produce a more flexible workplace culture, while comprehensive participation combined with sound employee-relations policy has the potential to meaningfully improve employee performance (Gollan, 2005). Enabling a greater degree of participation, however, requires management to fundamentally change how decisions are made and to relinquish some measure of control (Brown & Cregan, 2008), a trade-off that scholars argue

nonetheless yields benefits for both the organization and the individual when employees are adequately informed and given the opportunity to contribute (Shadur et al., 1999). Documented benefits include improved morale and job satisfaction, greater compliance, enhanced productive efficiency (Chang & Lorenzi, 1983), better use of employees' private information in decision-making (Williamson, 2008), reduced monitoring and supervision costs (Arthur, 1994; Spreitzer & Mishra, 1999), and improved firm performance arising from a wider diversity of perspectives (Kemelgor, 2002).

Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB)

The concept of organizational citizenship behaviour was first introduced by Organ (1988), who defined it as an employee's discretionary behaviour that directly promotes the effective functioning of an organization, independent of the employee's formally measured productivity. Daly, Owya-Hosseini, and Alloughani (2014) similarly describe OCB as a voluntary helping behaviour that is discretionary and promotes organizational effectiveness without expecting direct reward or recognition, while Banki (2010) notes that OCB was originally defined as extra work behaviour that falls outside traditional job-performance measures yet materially affects long-run organizational success.

Farahbod, Azadehdell, Rezaei, and Nezhadi (2012) note that OCB comprises behaviours that are not stated in an employee's job description and that are largely a matter of individual choice, such that their absence is not commonly penalized. Because such behaviours cannot be enforced as obligations or acquired through formal reward (Oplatka & Stundi, 2010), managers can only encourage rather than mandate them (Hutahayan, Astuti, Raharjo, & Hamid, 2013). Korkmaz and Arpaci (2009) add that OCB carries two defining features: it is never an obligation imposed by the organization, and it remains crucial to organizational sustenance. Employees who exhibit OCB are typically willing to undertake extra tasks without expecting reward, deriving satisfaction instead from their organization's progress, whether through simple punctuality or volunteering for activities that are not formally required (Yahya et al., 2011; McKenna, 2012).

OCB is widely regarded in the management literature as a key contributor to organizational effectiveness, efficiency, quality, and productivity (Yilmaz & Tasdan, 2009; Sevi, 2010; Raghoebarsing, 2011), and Vondey (2010) confirms that it bears a positive relationship with effective organizational functioning. Extra-role behaviours of this kind, by supplementing formally required productivity, are increasingly recognized as a source of competitive advantage in the contemporary organizational environment (Mohsan et al., 2011).

Conscientiousness

Conscientiousness is one of five dimensions of OCB originally proposed by Organ (1989), alongside altruism, courtesy, sportsmanship, and civic virtue. It refers to an employee's acceptance of, and adherence to, organizational rules and procedures in pursuit of organizational goals, even in the absence of direct supervision (Begum, Zehou, & Sarker, 2014). Managers can readily recognize conscientious employees, who tend to be supportive, committed, and fair in their conduct (Daly, Owya-Hosseini, & Alloughani, 2014), and whose behaviour contributes to stronger working relationships with co-workers. Bakhshi, Sharma, and Kumar (2011) describe conscientiousness as a helping behaviour directed at the organization as a whole, evident in behaviours such as punctuality and restraint from excessive breaks.

Conscientiousness was previously described in the literature as general compliance, understood by Ishak and Alam (2009) as a helping behaviour not directed at a particular individual but at employees in general. When employees exceed their formal job requirements, they demonstrate an extra-role awareness of their involvement and task-related engagement (Raghoebarsing, 2011). Biswas (2011) further argues that employees within a supportive organizational culture tend to be more conscious of, and satisfied with, their personal development, and correspondingly less inclined toward turnover intentions.

Altruism

Altruism is a second dimension of OCB proposed by Organ (1988), and it refers to voluntary behaviour directed at helping a specific co-worker with a work-related task or problem. Unlike conscientiousness, which is directed at the organization as a whole, altruism is interpersonal in nature and is typically expressed through acts such as assisting an overloaded colleague, showing a new employee how a task is done, or covering for an absent co-worker without being asked (Organ, 1988). Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, and Bachrach (2000), reviewing the OCB literature broadly, describe altruism as one of the most consistently observed citizenship behaviours across organizational settings, since it directly supports the smooth functioning of work groups by reducing bottlenecks that would otherwise slow down production.

Employees are generally more willing to extend this kind of voluntary help when they feel that their own contribution is recognized and valued by the organization, a condition that is more likely to hold where employees are meaningfully involved in decisions concerning their work. Where such involvement is absent, employees may retreat into a narrower, self-protective view of their job, limiting their effort to what is formally required and withholding the discretionary assistance that altruism represents.

Civic Virtue

Civic virtue is a further dimension of OCB identified by Organ (1988), describing an employee's responsible, constructive involvement in the political and administrative life of the organization. It is reflected in behaviours such as attending meetings that are not compulsory, keeping up with organizational announcements and developments, and offering constructive suggestions on matters affecting the wider organization rather than only one's immediate job (Organ, 1988; Podsakoff et al., 2000). An employee exhibiting civic virtue behaves, in effect, as a responsible member of the organizational community, staying informed and engaged even where such engagement is not formally rewarded.

Civic virtue is closely tied to the opportunities an organization extends to its employees to participate in its affairs. Where employees are consistently excluded from decision-making, they have little practical basis for staying informed about organizational matters or for taking a constructive interest in them, since information and involvement of this kind are ordinarily transmitted through the same channels used for participation. Deeper employee participation, by contrast, is expected to keep employees better informed and more invested in the organization's wider affairs, thereby strengthening civic virtue.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Organizational Support Theory (OST) developed by Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, and Sowa (1986). OST holds that organizational support reflects the degree to which employees believe their organization values their contribution and cares about their wellbeing (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). The theory proposes that, in order to meet employees' socio-emotional needs and gauge the organization's readiness to reward increased effort, employees form beliefs about the extent to which the organization values their input and contribution to decision-making (Orpen, 1994), a belief that Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, and Sowa (1986) label perceived organizational support.

OST is directly relevant to this study because the degree of opportunity extended to employees to participate in organizational decision-making is expected to shape their perception of organizational support, which in turn is expected to influence the extent to which they exhibit pro-social, discretionary behaviour such as conscientiousness, altruism, and civic virtue.

Empirical Review

A number of empirical studies have examined the relationship between employee participation and various organizational outcomes, most commonly performance, commitment, and satisfaction, though few have extended this line of inquiry specifically to the conscientiousness, altruism, and civic virtue dimensions of OCB. Table 1 summarizes selected studies relevant to the present inquiry.

Table 1: Summary of Selected Empirical Studies

Author(s) / Year	Study Context	Key Finding
Bamidele and Ella (2013)	Academic staff, Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nigeria	Strong positive correlation between participation in decision-making and job satisfaction ($r = 0.809$).
Isichei and Damachi (2015)	Hotels in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria	Employee participation in decision-making significantly impacts hospitality-firm performance.
Ojokuku (2014)	Selected SMEs, Lagos, Nigeria	Participation in decision-making has a significant positive effect on organizational performance.
Saeid, Hassan and Hamid (2011)	Telecommunications firm, Mazandaran Province, Iran	Participation in decision-making is strongly and positively associated

		with employee empowerment ($r = 0.71$).
Wainaina, Iravo and Waititu (2014)	Public and private universities, Kenya	Participation in decision-making significantly influences academic staff organizational commitment.

Beyond the studies summarized above, Khattak, Iqbal, and Khattak (2013) found that employee involvement, measured through empowerment, team orientation, and capacity development, was strongly and positively associated with organizational performance across a sample of Pakistani organizations. Alabar and Hadiza (2013), studying branches of a Nigerian bank, found that employee empowerment had a significant positive impact on service quality. Abdulai and Shafiwu (2014), examining rural banks in Ghana, found a significant association between employee productivity and the various forms of participation available to staff. Jemilohun, Ekanem, and Adebara (2015), studying a hotel and resort in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, found that the overall level of employee participation in decision-making was inadequate, with major decisions concentrated in the hands of the general manager, underscoring that shallow participation of the kind observed in the present study's focal firms remains a common feature of Nigerian organizations.

Research Gap

The literature reviewed confirms that employee participation is closely associated with outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, empowerment, productivity, and firm performance. However, comparatively little empirical work has paired employee participation with specific OCB constructs such as conscientiousness, altruism, and civic virtue, as distinct from OCB in its aggregate form. This represents the lacuna that the present study, spanning all three of these dimensions, was designed to address.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

The study adopted a correlational survey research design, considered appropriate because the study sought to examine the nature of the relationship between a dependent variable, organizational citizenship behaviour, and an independent variable, employee participation.

Population of the Study

The accessible population comprised 311 employees drawn from three plastic manufacturing firms in Anambra State: Adolpes Small Scale Industry, Onitsha (123 employees), Chudone Plastic Furniture Limited, Onitsha (87 employees), and Enok Ventures Nigeria, Awka (101 employees). These three firms were selected from a sampling frame of twenty-seven registered plastic firms in the state using a table of random numbers.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula, which yielded a sample of 172 respondents. Proportionate allocation was applied across the three firms based on their respective population sizes, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Population and Proportionate Sample Allocation

Firm	Location	Population	Proportionate Sample
Adolpes Small Scale Industry	Onitsha	123	68
Chudone Plastic Furniture Limited	Onitsha	87	48
Enok Ventures Nigeria	Awka	101	56

Total		311	172
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Instrument for Data Collection

A structured questionnaire was used as the primary instrument for data collection, designed to capture respondents' perceptions of the degree of direct involvement they are afforded in workplace decision-making, as well as the extent to which they exhibit conscientious, altruistic, and civic-virtue behaviour at work. The questionnaire was accordingly organized into four sections: respondent background, employee direct involvement in decision-making, and one section each for conscientiousness, altruism, and civic virtue.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The face and content validity of the instrument were established through expert review. Reliability was assessed prior to full administration to confirm the internal consistency of the questionnaire items.

Method of Data Analysis

Data obtained from the field were analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC), a statistic well suited to establishing both the direction and strength of the relationship between two continuous variables. PPMC was applied three times, once for each hypothesis, to examine the relationship between employee direct involvement in decision-making and, in turn, conscientiousness, altruism, and civic virtue.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis one, that there is a significant relationship existing between employee direct involvement in decision-making and conscientiousness in the focused firms, was tested using PPMC. The analysis produced a positive correlation coefficient that was statistically significant, indicating that as employees are afforded greater direct involvement in decisions concerning their jobs and wellbeing, their display of conscientious behaviour increases correspondingly. On this basis, the first null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted.

Hypothesis two, that there is a significant relationship existing between employee direct involvement in decision-making and altruism in the focused firms, was similarly tested using PPMC. The analysis again produced a positive correlation coefficient that was statistically significant, indicating that employees who are more directly involved in decision-making are correspondingly more willing to help co-workers voluntarily with tasks outside their formal duties. The second null hypothesis was therefore rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted.

Hypothesis three, that there is a significant relationship existing between employee direct involvement in decision-making and civic virtue in the focused firms, was also tested using PPMC. The analysis produced a positive correlation coefficient that was statistically significant, indicating that employees who are more directly involved in decision-making are correspondingly more inclined to stay informed about, and constructively engaged in, the wider affairs of the organization. The third null hypothesis was accordingly rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted.

Discussion of Findings

The finding that direct employee involvement in decision-making relates positively and significantly to conscientiousness, altruism, and civic virtue is consistent with the study's theoretical anchor, Organizational Support Theory. Where employees perceive that the organization values their contribution and involves them in decisions that affect their work, they appear more inclined to internalize organizational rules and procedures voluntarily, to extend help to co-workers beyond what is formally required, and to remain engaged with the organization's broader affairs. These patterns are consistent with Organ's (1988, 1989) original conception of conscientiousness, altruism, and civic virtue as related but distinct expressions of organizational citizenship behaviour.

The findings also align with the broader empirical pattern documented in Table 1. Bamidele and Ella (2013) found a strong positive relationship between participation in decision-making and job satisfaction among academic staff, while Isichei and Damachi (2015) and Ojokuku (2014) both found that employee participation was significantly and positively associated with firm performance in the hospitality and SME sectors respectively. Saeid, Hassan, and Hamid (2011) similarly found a strong positive relationship between participation in decision-making and employee empowerment, and Wainaina, Iravo, and Waititu (2014) found that participation significantly influenced organizational commitment among academic staff in Kenyan universities. Taken together, these studies and the present findings reinforce the view that participation in decision-making, whatever the specific outcome examined, tends to strengthen employees' psychological attachment to their organization and their willingness to go beyond formally required duties, whether that willingness is expressed toward the organization as a whole, as with conscientiousness and civic virtue, or toward individual co-workers, as with altruism.

The findings are also consistent with the pattern observed by Jemilohun, Ekanem, and Adebbara (2015), who found inadequate participation in a Nigerian hospitality firm, and with the preliminary observation that motivated the present study, namely that decision-making in the focused plastic firms remains concentrated among top management. Where such concentration persists, the present findings suggest that employees' conscientious, altruistic, and civic-virtue behaviour are all likely to suffer correspondingly, reinforcing the case for management to widen the scope of participation available to lower-level staff.

5. CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between employee direct involvement in decision-making and three dimensions of organizational citizenship behaviour – conscientiousness, altruism, and civic virtue – among selected plastic manufacturing firms in Anambra State, Nigeria. The evidence gathered indicates that a significant positive relationship exists between employee direct involvement in decision-making and each of the three dimensions examined. It is concluded that involving employees in decisions relating to their jobs and wellbeing makes them more receptive to organizational change, more inclined to exhibit conscientious, rule-abiding behaviour at work, more willing to help co-workers voluntarily, and more engaged with the wider affairs of the organization, even in the absence of direct supervision. Firms that continue to restrict employees to peripheral roles in decision-making risk undermining all three forms of discretionary behaviour, with potentially adverse consequences for production continuity, workplace cooperation, and customer satisfaction.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are advanced:

- Management in the focused firms, and in the plastic manufacturing sub-sector more broadly, should increase the level of involvement and participation extended to employees in matters relating to their jobs and affairs, as doing so is likely to strengthen employees' sense of belonging and self-esteem.
- Decisions with direct bearing on employees' wellbeing, job specification, and job description should not remain the exclusive preserve of top management; structured channels for lower-level employee input should be established.
- Management should move beyond assigning employees peripheral roles, such as venue arrangement, toward substantive involvement in the decisions that affect their work.
- Since direct involvement in decision-making is also associated with altruism, management should create opportunities, such as team-based work arrangements, that allow employees who are already consulted on decisions to translate that engagement into voluntary mutual assistance with co-workers.
- Since direct involvement in decision-making is also associated with civic virtue, management should keep employees regularly informed about organizational developments and should invite their input on matters beyond their immediate job, so as to sustain their constructive interest in the wider affairs of the organization.
- Future research should extend this line of inquiry to the two remaining dimensions of OCB not covered in this study, namely courtesy and sportsmanship, and should consider replicating the study across a larger sample of plastic firms to strengthen the generalizability of findings.

Limitations of the Study

The studied firms were initially reluctant to release information relating to their decision-making processes, which delayed data gathering. This was resolved once management was assured that the findings would benefit both the organization and its employees by supporting a more congenial workplace. As with any single-region, cross-sectional study, findings should be interpreted with

reference to the specific context of the three firms studied and may not generalize without qualification to plastic firms operating under different organizational or regional conditions.

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