

Influence of Job-related Factors on Workers' Desire to Participate in Decision-making

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Abstract: *This study examines the influence of job related variables of blue-collar workers on their desire to participate in managerial decision-making process by using survey data. Among the eighty-one percent of workers who showed strong desire to participate in managerial decision-making process, found significantly different across their years of experience, level of job satisfaction, and nature of employment. The results show that the workers with long years of experience and permanent nature of job showed high desire to participate in decision-making as compared to their counterparts in the respective groups. However, the workers with high level of job satisfaction preferred less to participate in the management decision-making process. Therefore, management is suggested to practice the scheme by considering the influence of job variables in order to get the support of workers for the betterment of organization and minimize the industrial problems. Since workers involvement in managerial decision-making process not only enhances the benefit to the workers and labor productivity but also creates a sense of satisfaction and security among the workers increasing their efficiency.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Workers' Participation in decision-making (PDM), also known as workers' participation in management (WPM) has occupied an important place in the field of industrial and employment relations. WPM is the process of allowing subordinates to express their views on organizational decisions in which management generally feels their prerogative rights. According to Knoop (1995) participation in decision-making (PDM) is the process of sharing decision-making ideas with others to achieve organizational objectives. Noah (2008: 31) expresses his view about this issue as:

"Workers participation refers to any arrangement, which is designed to involve low cadre employees (workers) in the important decision-making within the workplace. This implies that rather than saddling only a group within the enterprise (for instance, management) with the responsibility of making decisions, all those who are to be affected by these decisions (including the workers) would be involved in its formulation and implementation" (Noah, 2008: 31).

One principal characteristic of participative management is giving employees a sense of empowerment (Moss and Rowles, 1997). Academicians believe that providing chances to participate in decision-making not only helps the decisions to be more creative but also acceptable and executable in the organization because of the support of workers. Furthermore, it enhances job satisfaction and productivity of employees. PDM can enhance the quality of decision making by broadening inputs, promotes commitment to the outcomes of the decision making process, improves motivation, cooperation and communication in the workplace (Markey, 2006). It may also reduce workloads of supervisors, encourage skill development in the workforce, and can contribute to improve employment relations in general (Markey & Monat, 1997). Organizations that involve workers in making decisions by applying their knowledge to solve problems will be able to respond today's organizational demands quickly. However, there are controversies in involving subordinates in organizational decision-making process. Some authorities feel that decision-making is their prerogative rights and involving workers in the decision-making process means to lose their rights. On the other hand, some are in favor of WPM. In this regard, Smith (1996:43) points as:

"Many employees believe that when workers are involved, they feed into an infrastructure enabling firms to respond to shifting demands on the organization... organizations that recognize this is likely to involve employees in important organizational processes...many organizations, however, prevent employee involvement and allow only management personnel to participate in decision-making."

Although the term workers' participation or its equivalent has different meanings in different countries, International Labor Organization (ILO) usually refers it to as the decisions taken within the undertakings. Workers' participation, is therefore, a wide and complex category that includes regulatory concepts and techniques that can be numerous and mutually diverse. Through these, workers – mainly through their collective representatives – seek to influence certain decisions made by the enterprises employing them and may share in some of the economic and financial consequences of these decisions (Arrigo and Casale, 2010:3).

Rationale

Although WPM has been considered as the important tool of developing human talent in the field of making decision and supporting tool for the effective implementation of organizational decisions, the industrial relations and psychological literature reveal

little as to what factors induce workers to form their attitudes towards the WPM. This study attempts to fill the gap in the literature. only a very few studies have been made so far to examine workers' desires to participate in the decision-making in relations to their job factors like experience, job satisfaction and nature of employment. In Nepalese context, though workers' desire to participate in different levels and areas of decision-making process has been studied in the works of Ph. D. (Koirala, 1987; Shrestha, 1991; and Adhikari, 2000), its study in relation to job factors is equal to none. In this context, workers' desire to participation as the dependent variable of job related factors would be an empirical contribution in the literature of this kind.

Objectives

The principal objective of this study is to explain the variation of workers' desire towards WPM in respect to their level of satisfaction, experience and nature of employment. Besides, the study also aims to furnish appropriate recommendations to make the organizational successful by the full support of employees through WPM.

Research Questions

The present paper attempts to find the answers of the following questions:

- a. What is the desired level of workers to participate in management?
- b. Does job satisfaction influence on the workers' desire to participation in decision making?
- c. Is there influence of nature of job on the workers' desire to participation in decision making?
- d. How far the workers' desire to participation in decision-making is influenced by their experience?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee participation has different forms and can offer wide-ranging results. These forms of participation can increase employee satisfaction as well as improve organizational efficiency. The forms of workers involvement in management are participation in work decisions, employee ownership, consultative participation, representative participation, short-term participation and informal participation (Cotton et. al, 1988).

Theories of participative management advocate that managers share decision-making power with employees to enhance performance and work satisfaction. The use of participation is believed to increase employee's satisfaction in the sense that participative management focuses on empowering the feeling of employee that their opinion has been regarded and respected in the organization. Thus, participation is important to the success of an organization as employees also show their concern to implement the decision effectively.

Research shows that the more an employee identifies him/herself important to their organization, the more satisfied they are with the challenges of their job resulting in higher

satisfaction (Stringer, 2006). It is reported in the study of White and Ruh (1973) that employees who are more involved, motivated, and identify with the company more, may report a higher degree of participation and satisfaction regardless of any differences in actual participation. The study of Kim indicated that the use of participative management style correlated positively to job satisfaction and concluded that allowing employees to participate in decision-making led to an increase in job satisfaction (Kim, 2002:231). Increase in job satisfaction due to PDM occurs mainly because of the employee's ability to be directly involved in the decisions making process and their emotional attachment in the decision.

Studies have shown that different forms of workers' participation in management contribute positively to the job satisfaction level of workers. Participation in the pay, incentive plans and overall working decisions and consultative participation have shown consistent increases in job satisfaction (White and Ruh, 1973 and Pope, 2008). However, forced representative participation did not give employees a sense of participation and therefore lowered job satisfaction (Bartolke et.al., 1982). In case of informal participation, strength of the relationship between subordinate and supervisor directly affects job satisfaction (Stringer, 2006). Studies have shown a positive relationship between short-term participation and satisfaction (Taylor and Zawacki, 1978). The short-term participation is a single sit-down event with management in which an employee can make an interaction with management, e.g. appraisal interview and feedback session.

The literature discussed here about the relationship between different forms of participation and job satisfaction indicated that participation induces satisfaction of workers positively. Thus, many companies have begun taking more participative measures to make the organization successful with the full support of subordinates. However, there are not remarkable literature that shows the significant association of workers' participation in management to the experience and nature of the employees. Nevertheless, Sodhi et.al (1995) viewed that education, knowledge, skill, ability to participate and activeness of workers are essential factors to make the scheme effective.

Hypotheses

Form the foregone review of the literature, the following null hypotheses have been formed:

- H₁: *Workers with higher job experience tend to exercise more involvement in management decision making than other.*
- H₂: *Higher is the job satisfaction the lower is the desire to participate in decision-making.*
- H₃: *The more secure is the job the higher is the desire to influence the decision of management.*

III. DATA AND METHODS

In order to assess the relationship between job variables and participation desire, at first, views of 372 sample workers working in four textile units located in four different areas in Nepal were collected through a interview schedule. The sample was drawn by

using the Stratified Proportionate Random Sampling Technique.

The relationship between job related variables and desire for participation was tested by the use of Chi-square test and Cramer's V Coefficient. To appraise the relationship, at first, the workers' desired level of participation was identified in Likert's type Five Point Scale on different 11 areas of decision as used in the study of Katuwal (2011). Then, the workers were categorized into high and low desired group based on their total score of participation desire keeping 33 points as a criterion point. The respective numbers of such workers were 303 and 69. Likewise, by using the information given by the workers in the background section of the questionnaire, workers were divided into different strata of experience and nature of employment. Regarding job satisfaction variable, the workers were classified into high, medium and low levels of job satisfaction based on the total score obtained by them in 20 statements of various job factors. The respective numbers of workers falling in these categories of job satisfaction were 61, 170 and 141.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Following section of this study highlights the relationship between job related variables and WPM.

Nature of Employment and WPM: The major determinant of WPM is the nature of job. The permanent nature of job is regarded as more secured that provides status and pride and thereby entails workers for more involvement to make the job more beneficial. As such, the nature of job is assessed here based on the opinion of the respondents with regard to the WPM scheme. The hypothesis was framed to find the association between nature of job and desire of PDM. The data in Table 1 show that there is a significant association between nature of job and workers' desire to participate in decision-making.

Table 1 : Relationship Between Nature of Employment and Workers' Desire to WPM

Nature of employment	Desired level of participation		
	High	Low	Total
Permanent	265(84.39)	49 (15.34)	314(100)
Non-permanent	38(65.52)	20(34. 48)	58(100)
Total	303 (81.45)	69(18.55)	372(100)

Source: Field survey. Chi-square =11.5480* (Significant) * $P < 0.05$, Chramers' V Coefficient =0.1762

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage.

The permanent workers were inclined more to participate than non-permanent workers including contract, part-time and daily wages workers. The low participation desire of the non-permanent workers in managerial decision-making process may be attributed to the fear of victimization from the management, if they had opposed the views of management in the discussion table. Nevertheless, the permanent workers may not feel such kind of fear in organization and they want to increase their voice in organizational decision and desire more to take part in management decision-making process.

Experience and WPM: Experience is another major job content that indicates

the maturity and rationality of persons to deal any matter in their life. Thus, the present study has also attempted to evaluate the workers' desire to participate in management in relation to their years of job experience.

Table 2 : Relationship Between Experience and Workers' Desire to WPM

Experience Level	Desired level of participation		
	High	Low	Total
1-5 years	38(66.67)	19(33.33)	57(100)
5-10 years	99(80.49)	24(19.51)	123(100)
10 and above	166(86.46)	26(13.54)	192(100)
	303(81.45)	69(18.55)	372(100)

Source: Field survey. Chi-square =11.5085* (Significant) * P < 0.05; Chramers' V coefficient =0.1759

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage

The data in Table 2 show significant positive relations between experiences of the workers and their desire to participate in decision-making process of management. Comparatively, the higher degree of desire for participation was observed among the workers having the job experience of 10 years and above, and decreased gradually with the decrease in the experience. The finding summaries that the interests in the involvement in decision-making increases with the increase in the work experience of workers.

Job satisfaction and WPM: Among other factor, job satisfaction is widely discussed component in the field of WPM. There is a common belief that providing chance for worker to involve in organizational decision-making process with management increases their level of satisfaction. Nevertheless, here, we attempted to know that how far satisfied and dissatisfied workers show inclination to participate in managerial decisions. The data in the Table 3 highlights their association.

Table 3 : Relationship Between Job Satisfaction and Workers' Desire to WPM

Level of Job Satisfaction	Desired level of participation		
	High	Low	Total
Low	120(85.11)	21(14.89)	141(100)
Moderate	143(84.12)	27(15.88)	170(100)
High	40(65.57)	21(34.43)	61(100)
	303(81.45)	69(18.55)	372(100)

Source: Field survey. Chi-square =12.2254* (Significant) * P < 0.05; Chramers' V coefficient =0.1813

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage

Contrary to the general notion that job satisfaction increases in the effective implementation of a participative management scheme in organization, this study shows that the workers of high job satisfaction demonstrated apathy towards participation in management and *vice versa*. The 85 percent of workers of low job satisfaction level showed higher desire to take part in managerial decision-making process with a view to influence managerial decision in favor to their benefit and thereby to satisfy their needs.

However, only 65.57 percent of highly satisfied workers had expressed strong desire to participate in management. Thus, it might be concluded that workers who are satisfied from their job generally do not like to involve in managerial decision-making process. They may feel that it is the worthless to involve in management decision-making process if management has itself been fulfilling their needs without their active participation in management. They do not want to take the burden of making decision. However, the dissatisfied workers wants to be involve in the managerial decision with a view to full their employment related demands.

V. CONCLUDING REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Workers' participation in management does not only increase benefit to the workers and labor productivity but also creates a sense of satisfaction and security, and increases the real sense of efficiency among the workers. However, the success of this scheme depends on how far the workers like and appreciate it. Liking of the program depends, among others, on the personal job variables of the principal partner, i.e. workers, of the program.

In this milieu, eighty-one percent of respondents in this study showed strong desire to participate in managerial decision-making process to convince managers to make the decision in favor of them. Thus, management, in order to get the support of workers for the betterment of organization and minimize the industrial problems, has to welcome and encourage employees' involvement in the decision making process. Since, workers involvement in managerial decision-making process creates the confidence among the workers with the feeling that they have not been cheated by management and put worth workers together responsible towards the effective implementation of the decision.

The workers who shown low desire (18.55 %) to participate in the decisions due to fear of victimization from management, problem of job security, low level of experience and apathy towards the program as well should also be encouraged to involve them in management decisions, because, organization can get valuable insight from the workers for the overall development of organization. It is also suggested to implement the program keeping the experience, employment pattern and level of job satisfaction in centre. To make the program fruitful, the workplace should be created as such place where all kinds employees can work together in order to accomplish organizational activities effective and efficient way with full of cooperation.

Finally yet importantly, future research on workers' participation including which types of participation are the most preferred and favored by the workers are necessary to investigate for the effectiveness of the scheme in Nepalese organizations.

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