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Participation in Decision Making as a Non-Financial Incentive for Enhancing Employee Performance in the Enugu State Civil Service (2010–2019)

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Abstract. Persistent problems of low motivation and suboptimal productivity continue to affect the Enugu State Civil Service despite the provision of regular monetary incentives. This study examined participation in decision-making as a non-financial incentive for enhancing employee performance in the Enugu State Civil Service between 2010 and 2019. A descriptive research design was adopted. The study population comprised 10,100 civil servants across twenty ministries, from which a simple random sample of 385 employees was selected using Yamane's (1967) formula. Primary data were collected through structured interviews with key officials and administrators, and were complemented by secondary sources such as journal articles, government reports, and official publications. Instrument reliability and validity were ensured through careful construction and content validation. Data were analyzed using content analysis. The findings revealed that employee participation in decision-making significantly enhances performance by fostering a stronger sense of belonging, ownership, and responsibility among workers. Participatory practices were found to improve motivation, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, creativity, and employees' willingness to share knowledge and collaboratively solve problems. The study further showed that ministries in Enugu State actively utilize non-financial incentives, including participatory decision-making, recognition, training opportunities, and delegated authority. Importantly, structured participatory mechanisms were found to reduce workplace dissent and resistance to organizational decisions, thereby sustaining productivity. The study concludes that participatory decision-making is a powerful and effective non-financial motivational strategy for improving employee performance in the Enugu State Civil Service.

Keywords: Involvement in decision-making, non-financial rewards, Employee performance, Civil service, Enugu State

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1. Introduction

Employee motivation remains a persistent challenge for many organizations, particularly in contexts where workers have limited influence over decisions that shape their work environment. Extensive human resource management literature identifies employee participation in decision-making as a critical practice for improving motivation and organizational performance (Ogu, 2024). Low levels of participation often result in employee disengagement, weakened commitment, and reduced willingness to contribute meaningfully to organizational goals (Babalola, Akpor-Gbakeji, 2020). Consequently, participation in decision-making is increasingly regarded as an important non-



financial strategy for addressing motivation deficits by fostering ownership, satisfaction, and commitment among employees.

Empirical evidence consistently demonstrates that employee participation positively influences performance outcomes. Ojokuku and Sajuyigbe (2014) found that higher levels of participation significantly improved organizational performance among small and medium-scale enterprises in Lagos, Nigeria. Similarly, studies of manufacturing firms in Saudi Arabia revealed that participatory structures enhanced performance by enabling organizations to effectively harness employees' knowledge and skills (Alsughayir, 2008). Beyond organizational outcomes, participation also improves individual employee motivation and well-being by promoting psychological ownership, autonomy, and intrinsic motivation (Tran-Pham, 2024), thereby reinforcing the established link between job satisfaction and performance (Mohsen & Sharif, 2020).

Sector-specific studies further affirm these relationships. Participative leadership has been shown to enhance employee performance and morale in Nigerian academic libraries (Agbese, Ogbemudia, & Obiageri, 2024), while participation strengthens organizational commitment, a key predictor of employee performance (Ogu, 2024). Broader policy and institutional studies likewise demonstrate that inclusive and participatory approaches enhance compliance, cooperation, and performance outcomes across sectors (Odimegwu et al., 2018; Okemgbo et al., 2002; Oramah et al., 2025; Odimegwu & Ikeotuonye, 2023; Anyakora et al., 2021; Anyakora et al., 2024).

Despite this growing body of evidence, employee motivation in the Nigerian civil service has largely been examined through the lens of financial incentives. Persistent inefficiency and low morale, however, suggest clear limitations of this approach. The Enugu State Civil Service a central institution for policy implementation and development has received limited empirical attention regarding participation as a motivational strategy. While effective governance and ethical administration are essential for institutional performance (Okosa, 2022; Okosa et al., 2025; Oba et al., 2025), a significant gap remains concerning how participatory decision-making enhances employee motivation and performance. This study therefore examines the role of participation in decision-making as a non-financial incentive for improving employee performance in the Enugu State Civil Service between 2010 and 2019.

Statement of the Problem

Over the years, financial incentives have been the primary means of motivating civil servants in Nigeria, and most empirical and theoretical studies have focused largely on financial motivation (Isaac & Etim, 2020). Within government circles, it is often assumed that individuals join the civil service primarily for monetary rewards. However, despite regular salary adjustments, high levels of discontent and demoralization persist among civil servants. This suggests that financial incentives alone are insufficient to recognize outstanding performance, achievements, and contributions on the job.

Consequently, in 2010 the Enugu State Government introduced selected non-financial incentives within the state civil service to complement existing financial rewards and enhance employee motivation and performance. These measures included continuing professional development, performance feedback, and increased autonomy.

Motivation remains the most critical requirement for achieving high organizational performance and productivity. Its absence adversely affects efficiency and effectiveness. Evidence of persistent inefficiency within the Enugu State Civil Service and Nigeria more broadly has frequently been linked to motivational challenges among civil servants. Despite sustained attention to motivational problems, particularly from a financial perspective, the question of how to raise and sustain employee motivation remains unresolved. This situation has contributed to job dissatisfaction, absenteeism, organizational conflict, lateness to work, low organizational citizenship behavior, frequent strikes, and other forms of workplace indiscipline that undermine organizational survival.

These persistent challenges have intensified calls for the application of non-financial incentives to improve productivity in the Enugu State Civil Service. Against this backdrop, the study addresses the following research question: How has participation in decision-making enhanced employee performance in the Enugu State Civil Service between 2010 and 2019?

Objective of the Study

Examine how participation in decision making enhanced employee performance in Enugu state civil service, 2010-2019.

2. Methods

The research was conducted in Enugu State, one of the states in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria, with Enugu city serving as the state capital. Geographically, the city is located at the foot of the Udi Plateau, from which its name Enugu, meaning “top of the hill” is derived. Historically, Enugu became an important colonial administrative center following the discovery of coal in 1909 by British mining engineers. This discovery earned the city the sobriquet Coal City and stimulated the development of railway networks, commercial activities, and urban settlements. Over the years, Enugu has served as the capital of several administrative entities, including the former Eastern Region and the defunct Federal Republic of Biafra, and it currently remains the capital of Enugu State.

Geographically, Enugu State shares boundaries with Abia, Imo, Ebonyi, Benue, Kogi, and Anambra States. The state enjoys favorable climatic and edaphic conditions that support agriculture, which remains a major economic activity alongside commerce and services. Enugu is also known for its strong educational profile, hosting Nigeria’s first indigenous university, the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, as well as numerous public and private tertiary institutions.

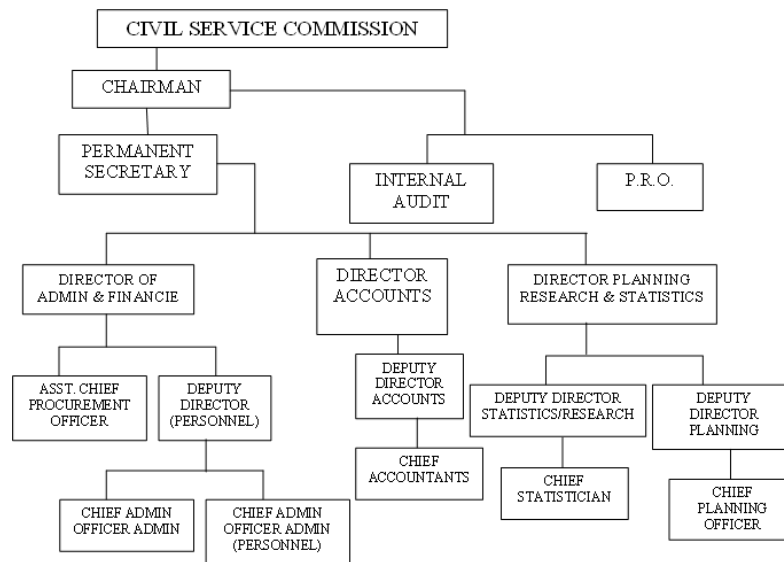
The Enugu State Civil Service originated from the Nigerian colonial administrative system and has undergone several reforms since independence. The Enugu State Civil Service Commission, established under the 1999 Constitution, is the statutory body responsible for human resource management within the state civil service. The Commission comprises a chairman, four commissioners, and a permanent secretary, all appointed by the state governor.

The core functions of the Commission include the recruitment, promotion, discipline, transfer, and retirement of civil servants. These responsibilities are executed through delegated authority to ministries and the Office of the Head of Service, with final approval resting with the Commission. Structurally, the Commission operates through several departments, including Administration, Finance and Supplies, Promotions, Recruitment and Training, and Planning, Research and Statistics, overseeing both ministerial and non-ministerial departments. This institutional arrangement provides an organized framework for the administration and delivery of public services in Enugu State.

Table 1: Population of Enugu State Civil Service

No.	Ministries/Commissions	Population
1.	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development	531
2.	Ministry of Chieftaincy Matters	511
3.	Ministry of Commerce and Industry	173
4.	Ministry of Education	715
5.	Ministry of Environment and Mineral Resources	323
6.	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development	387
7.	Ministry of Gender Affairs and Social Development	226
8.	Ministry of Health	2,700
9.	Ministry of Human Development and Poverty Reduction	86
10.	Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism	173
11.	Ministry of Justice	211
12.	Ministry of Lands and Housing	354
13.	Ministry of Local Government Matters	122
14.	Ministry of Rural Development	25
15.	Ministry of Science and Technology	38
16.	Ministry of Transport	64
17.	Ministry of Water Resources	54
18.	Ministry of Works and Infrastructure	1,427
19.	Ministry of Youth and Sports	1,110
20.	Civil Service Commission	870
	Total	10,100

Source: Field Work (2021)



Source: Enugu State Civil Service Commission

Figure 1. Organogram of Enugu State Civil Service

The research design employed for this study is descriptive research design. This study has a population of ten thousand one hundred (10,100) (Enugu State Civil Service, 2010). This is consisting of all the officials and staff of different ministries, extra-ministerial department that make up the Enugu State Civil service as a bureaucracy or public institution charged with the responsibility of implementing government policies. Due to the difficulty involved in studying a population of such magnitude, a sample was chosen out of the entire population. The sample size of the above population was determined using Yamane (1967) proportional sampling technique formula.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

where n = Sample size
 N = Population size
 e = Margin of error level of significance
 I = Constant
 n = Sample size

$$n = \frac{10,100}{1 + 10,100(0.05)^2}$$

therefore

$$n = \frac{10,100}{1 + 10,100 \times 0.0025}$$

$$n = \frac{10,100}{1 + 25.25}$$

$$n = 384.76 = \underline{385}$$

From the calculation above, a sample size of 385 workers was used for the study. This sample was drawn randomly from ten (10) ministries out of twenty ministries that make up Enugu state civil service namely: Ministry of Ministry of Agric. & Natural Resources, Land, Survey & Urban Dev., Environment & Mineral Resources, Housing & Urban Dev, Works, Transport & Tourism, Education, Youth & Sports, Information & Strategy and Ministry of Finance.

Random sampling technique was employed for this study which represents probability sampling technique. The population of the is 10,100 which comprised all the employees in the 20 ministries in Enugu state civil service, out of which only employees from 10 ministries were randomly selected for the interview. Data was sourced through interview as direct instrument for gathering data. The interview was carried out with key officers of some ministries, extra-ministerial departments and administrators like the Permanent Secretaries, Directors, Secretaries, Heads of Department,

Administrative staff, Heads of personnel Management, Heads of Finance & Economic Development and others whose offices are connected with financial management.

The data used for the study were collected through two major sources, namely: Primary and Secondary sources. The primary data in the study was obtained through the use of interview instruments. This type of data was gathered from raw data supplied by respondents during the interviews. The primary data was made possible through personal interview on wide range of the staff of the civil service as regards the subject matter. The secondary data were sourced from published materials such as journals, textbooks, newspapers, etc. The researcher also used unpublished materials such as seminar and workshop papers for the secondary data collection. Some publications of the ministry and government were used such as Enugu state civil service annual report. The researcher visited many libraries, bookshops and internet sites to collect the materials for the secondary data.

Reliability entails the accuracy, precision, consistency and dependability over time. In other words, reliability refers to the ability of result to being constant over time when applied to a sample. The questions that were discussed in the group discussion, he also made sure that the questions were not ambiguously presented to the interviewees in a manner likely to communicate different meaning that could generate inaccurate and inconsistent responses. The research question raised in this work, together with the objectives and hypothesis of the study were carefully interrogated with relevant materials to the study. This is to ensure that the result obtained were consistent, dependable and credible when applied to the same situation.

Validity entails the degree to which an instrument measures what it intends to measure. Consequently, an instrument is tailored to achieve the research objectives. The instrument for this research was validated by ensuring that questions were structured in a manner that enabled the researcher obtains information relevant for the purpose and objective of the study. It also reflected on whether the content validity of the research instrument used reflected the true situation of what is being studied and construct validity of the research. The data was analyzed using the deductions from the responses of the respondents in the oral interview conducted in the study area. The study also employed content analytical method in the analysis.

3. Results and Discussion

Employee participation, as conceptualized by Sagie and Aycan (2003), centers on interaction between supervisors and subordinates during planning and decision-making processes. Analysis of the interview data revealed a dominant theme of belongingness and ownership, as respondents consistently emphasized that involvement from the setting of work programmes to implementation strengthened their attachment to assigned tasks, even when their suggestions were not fully adopted. This finding aligns with Luthans et al. (2006), who described participation as a social process that deepens employees' psychological involvement in organizational success. Another emerging theme was collaborative problem-solving, as participation enabled information sharing and joint decision-making among staff (Ackers, Marchington, Wilkinson, & Dundon, 2006). Modalities such as teamwork, suggestion systems, focus groups, and self-directed work units were identified as practical mechanisms for participation (Apostolou, 2000).

A further theme identified was motivation through perceived organizational support. Participation significantly influenced employees' perceptions of their relationship with the organization, either strengthening or weakening commitment depending on the level of inclusion. Respondents noted that involvement "makes workers see the organization as their own," thereby motivating creativity and responsibility toward organizational objectives. This supports the view that participatory systems integrate human input to optimize performance outcomes (Nwamekwe et al., 2025).

Interview findings also highlighted the utilization of experiential knowledge, as employees closest to service delivery contributed practical insights to decisions affecting their work, thereby improving job satisfaction and performance. Consistent with Butler and Glover (2007), participation was viewed as power-sharing rather than mere physical involvement, reinforcing responsibility and autonomy (Newstrom & Davis, 2004; Agwu & Olele, 2014). Leadership willingness to cede control emerged as critical (Brown, 2012), echoing Coleman's (2004) emphasis on how managerial responses to employee input shape engagement. Empirically, a senior official noted that "once workers are part of the decision, resistance disappears," confirming that participation reduced dissent and enhanced organizational harmony. Overall, the findings corroborate previous research and support the

hypothesis that participation in decision-making enhances employee performance in the Enugu State Civil Service.

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

Conclusion

The results of the present study demonstrate that participation in decision-making is a powerful non-financial motivational tool for enhancing employee performance in the Enugu State Civil Service. When staff actively participate in planning, policy formulation, and implementation processes, a stronger sense of ownership, accountability, and commitment to organizational goals is achieved. Employees involved in decision-making processes also exhibit higher levels of motivation, job satisfaction, and a greater willingness to share their competencies and knowledge to improve performance.

Agencies that encourage participatory decision-making record measurable reductions in workplace dissent, conflict, and resistance to organizational directives. Involving personnel in matters that directly affect their work enhances cohesion, fosters unity, and promotes mutual support among employees, thereby creating a more harmonious work environment. The empirical evidence further shows that empowerment through shared decision-making promotes stronger organizational citizenship behavior, creativity, and accountability. Providing employees with opportunities to express their views and influence outcomes improves both individual performance and the overall effectiveness of service delivery. These findings underscore the urgency of institutionalizing active and purposeful employee involvement as a core strategy for improving efficiency in the Enugu State Civil Service.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that the Enugu State Civil Service institutionalize structured participatory decision-making frameworks across ministries and departments. Formal mechanisms for employee involvement will ensure that participation is not ad hoc but embedded in routine administrative processes. Such institutionalization will help sustain the motivational benefits associated with inclusion and shared responsibility.

There is also a need to strengthen leadership capacity for participative management. Managers and supervisors should receive targeted training in inclusive leadership, communication, and collaborative decision-making to enhance their willingness and competence in sharing authority with subordinates. Leadership disposition remains critical to the success of participatory systems.

Furthermore, government agencies should develop and operationalize effective feedback and suggestion systems, including staff forums, focus groups, and digital communication platforms. These mechanisms will provide employees with structured channels to contribute ideas and innovations that can improve organizational performance and service delivery.

Participatory decision-making should be integrated with existing financial and non-financial motivation policies to create a more comprehensive and balanced employee motivation framework. A multi-dimensional approach to motivation is more likely to address persistent morale and productivity challenges within the civil service.

Finally, future research should adopt longitudinal and comparative designs to examine the long-term impact of participatory practices on employee performance and public sector productivity. Expanding the empirical scope will deepen understanding of how participatory governance can be optimized within the Nigerian civil service context.

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