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A MODELLING RELATIONSHIP OF EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT  
IN DECISION MAKING AND ORGANIZATIONAL  
PERFORMANCE: A STUDY OF NIGERIAN INDEPENDENT  
PETROLEUM COMPANY (NIPCO)

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**Abstract**

This survey examines a structural equation modelling of employee involvement in decision making and organizational performance within the Nigerian Independent Petroleum Company (NIPCO). A total of one hundred and thirty five questionnaire were valid and analyzed. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was adopted for the statistical analysis using Amos 21 that allows test of complex relationships between variables. Our model shows that close association exists among variables tested and consistent with the organizational performance. However, for organization to record outstanding performance, motivation plays a key factor, and it was revealed that involving employees in decision making tends to motivate them. One the managerial implications of this study amongst others is the need for management and policy makers to make involvement of employees in decision making a policy. This study can be replicated in the service industry such as banking, telecommunication, airlines, insurance, and manufacturing.

**Key words:** *Employee Involvement, Nigeria, Organization, Performance*

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**Introduction**

Employees are said to be the backbone of organizations (Angadi and Naik, 2011). Their involvement or participation in decision making of an organization plays a vital role in organizations as it affects its performance. Over the years it has become important for management to involve their workers in the decision making of the organization as this has a way of encouraging them to participate effectively in the affairs of the organization. According to the Carrie Nation (2013), one of the advantages of involving employee in decision making is to enable them gain a professional and personal stake in the organization and its overall success. This commitment can lead to increased productivity for the organization. Among other advantages equally identified are that it improves employee morale. Involving them in decision making process enables them to understand the importance of their ideas as contribution to the company, thereby leading to increased job satisfaction and a positive attitude, not only toward their position as staff but to the organization as well.

Secondly, it saves the organization time and money it would have used to outsource external persons because the employees being aware of the company's policies know how to make useful suggestions. And lastly, it builds teamwork

giving employees the opportunity to put forward their opinions and share whatever knowledge they have with others. Doing this encourages a strong sense of team spirit among the workers. This expression of viewpoints opens dialogue between co-workers, with each worker bringing their individual strengths to a project they are working on. This team work advantage of involving employees in decision making is considered a good way of gathering information about the employees as to whether or not they can work in a team environment, and if not, what training would be necessary to correct this. The whole essence of this leads to an increase in effectiveness, and ultimately an increase in good team work and performance; therefore there is a need to allow or permit a high level of employee participation in decision making (Cohen, Chang, and Ledford, 1997); by this, employee can be motivated thereby leading to greater organizational efficiency (Noah, 2008).

### Objectives of Study

The aim of this paper is to examine the impact of involving employees in decision-making on the performance of the organization. However, the basic objectives are enumerated as follows:

1. To determine the impact of involving employees in decision making on the performance of the organization.
2. To determine how communication between employer and employee affects the involvement of employees.
3. To determine the productivity level of involving employees in management affairs.
4. To determine if union representation could enhance employees to make decisions.
5. To determine how working together as a team enhance employee participation.

### Scope of Study

The scope of this survey involves the impact of employee involvement in decision making on organization performance, specifically in the Nigerian oil and gas sector. It tends to cover the form of employee involvement adopted in the past, presently, and in the future, which limits the survey to the downstream segment of the Nigerian oil sector. It will be necessitated by available data which will be collected through questionnaires from both the top management and the middle level staff of the organization.

### Literature Review

Workers' participation in management is considered an essential ingredient of Industrial democracy. This concept has been attributed to the Human Relations approach to management brought about a new set of values to labour and management. As obtained in the literature, various views abound regarding the concept of workers' participation in decision making; Mitchell (1973) argue that the concept is all about decision making sharing in work environment, while Noah (2008) sees it as a process whereby subordinates possess greater control in a form of delegation in order to bridge the gap in communication that might arise between the decision makers and their

employees. However, Singh (2009) sees it from another perspective by explaining it as "joint" decision making between management and employees. It has become necessary for management to involve workers in the decision making of the organization as it is a means of harnessing employee expertise in decision to introduce new technologies and to gain employee cooperation and change work practice (Hodgkinson, 1999). By involving employee in decision making, management seeks to gain the consent of the employees to its proposed action on the basis of commitment rather than control (Walton, 1985). These mechanisms are aimed at enabling individual employees to influence management decision-making processes. Essentially, management makes the final decision on whether employees are to be involved and to participate in management decision making. The concept of Workers' Participation in Management (WPM) refers to participation of employees with management in the decision-making process of the organization. Workers' participation also known as 'Labour Participation', 'Employee Participation', or 'Employee Involvement' in management refers to mental and emotional involvement of workers in the management of the organization and considered as a mechanism where workers participate in decision making. Further, the objectives of workers' participation in management amongst others include the following:

- To raise level of motivation of workers by closer involvement;
- To provide opportunity for expression and to provide a sense of importance to workers;
- To develop ties of understanding leading to better effort and harmony;
- To act on a device to counter-balance powers of managers;
- To act on a panacea for solving industrial relation problems.

Employee involvement in decision making is argue to be under participative management known by different names such as shared leadership, employee empowerment, employee involvement, participative decision-making (Kuye and Sulaimon, 2011). According to Probst (2005), it is the extent to which employers allow or encourage employees to share or participate in organizational decision-making. The major aim of this concept is for the organization to benefit from the "perceived motivational effects of increased employee involvement" (Latham, Winters, and Locke 1994). Participation on the other hand has been described by Newstrom and Davis (2004) as the mental and emotional involvement of people in group situations that encourage them to contribute to group goals and share responsibility for them. Newstrom and Davis (2004) recognized involvement, contribution and responsibility as the three main ideas regarding employees' participation in decision. To them the basic benefits of involving employees include the following:

- They are in the best position to ensure and improve quality;
- They are best able to lower costs by eliminating waste throughout the process;
- They are in the best position to speed up their processes by reducing cycle times;
- They are the ideal agents of change when they are in touch with their processes, trained through education and experience, and empowered to act decisively.

### Conceptual Framework

The concept of workers' participation in management is traced to Marxian theory of class conflict where after the struggle between labour and management, both parties agreed that joint corporate participation in decision making could resolve most

of the problems they were experiencing and could also enhance labour productivity, efficiency, and organizational profitability. Over time, management experts have realized that the concept can be a tool for improving the overall performance of the organization as the workers are given the opportunity to engage in decision affecting not only the wellbeing of the organization but theirs as well such as their wages, working conditions and jobs which in turn encourages harmonious industrial relations and creates a conducive environment for increase organizational productivity and efficiency (Kuye and Sulaimon, 2011).

Armstrong (2001) identifies various mechanisms for employee involvement in decision making among which includes attitude survey; that is the ways of involving employees by seeking their views on matters that concern them. This method obtains views about issues that concern them such as job evaluation, pay determination, and performance management in order to assess their effectiveness. The method can also be used to get employees view about personnel policies and how they operate in such areas as equal opportunity, employee development, and health and safety. It was argued that since 1990s, use of employee involvement and participation mechanism in organizational decision making has greatly increased as they are seen as a means of introducing new technology and also gain the corporation of the workers to changes that take place in the organization. As good as this seems, not every organization seems to imbibe this ideology (Hodgkinson, 1999). However, some developed countries have gone a step further than others by legislating on this concept. In Countries like Germany and Japan, systems of workers participation in corporate decision making are considered models for achieving organizational efficiency (Levitan and Werneke, 1984). Germany is said to provide the best example of workers participation in management in the form of co-determination; it has two main laws enacted in 1951 and 1952 namely; the "Works Constitution Law" amended in 1972 and the "Coal and Steel Determination Act." Combined with a special law regulating co-determination in the public services, the above two acts practically govern the involvement of workers' participation in the Federal Republic of Germany (Meyer, 1990). Thus, German operates a unique form of co-determination as it is regulated by the Co-operative Management Law (1951), amended in 1976, and the Workers Committee Law (1952), amended in 1972. The German co-determination law forms the main cruise of German industrial and company policy. The law requires that a majority of companies' supervisory boards' members be representatives of workers. Co-determination in Germany operates on three organizational levels:

The Board of Directors which requires that employers of more than 1,000 workers maintained a board of directors composed of 11 members (five directors from management; five workers' representatives; with the 11th member being neutral. However, this had been amended to include equal number of management and work representatives, with no neutral member.

Management: where a representative of the workers acting in the capacity of Director for Human Resources sits with management and also with the Board of Directors enjoying all the full rights accorded to that position.

Workers Committees: This has two main functions as it elects representatives to the Board of Directors and also serves as an advisory body to the trade union regarding issues such as working conditions, insurance, economic assistance and related issues. The committee is elected by all the workers employed in the organization.

The success of co-determination is said to be attributed to the support it enjoys among Germans in principle. Though there are calls for amendments to the laws but it is quite obvious that not only workers are involved and have a say in the

governance of the organization but this has in turn resulted in greater productivity better pay and conditions of service (Noah, 2009). The system has also reduced industrial conflicts and creates a better way of understanding and addressing challenges within the organization. The workers council provides avenues for handling conflicts within the organization and help to prevent management decisions that would otherwise cause dissatisfaction among the workers.

Similarly, organizations in Japan also engage the concept of workers involvement in corporate decision making through the "joint consultation" concept. This is a process where workers management participate in decision making by sharing information and discussing on issues relating to corporate management and working conditions. The joint consultation system in Japan is organized at various levels of corporate organization. Usually before any decision in made, consensus is sought at all levels of the organization and this procedure is known as "ringi." It has been identified that although the process is time-consuming, it however stimulates exchange of information thereby resulting in fast implementation of decisions within the organization. A major advantage of joint consultation is that it reduces incidence of strikes and other industrial conflicts; and further asserted to improve productivity (Levitan and Werneke, 1984).

### Organizational Effectiveness

Organizational effectiveness is seen as the ability of an organization to achieve expected outcomes. It is an area that is widely researched owing to its importance since the development of organizational theory (Rojas, 2000). However, in spite of its importance, there seems to be variations in opinion among scholars on its definition and operationalization (Cameron and Whetten, 1996). Organizational effectiveness is the concept of how effective an organization is in achieving the outcomes the organization intends to produce (Amitia, 1964); organizational effectiveness includes organizational performance in addition to internal performance outcomes that usually relates to efficient or effective operations and other external measures that are associated with economic valuation (either by shareholders, managers, or customers), such as corporate social responsibility (Sowa, Selden, and Sandfort, 2004). Many broad perspectives are used to view organizational effectiveness; Scott (1998) viewed it from three perspectives which according to him are: the rational; natural; and open system. While Cameron (1978) in his model had earlier identified four approaches to defining organizational effectiveness vis-à-vis (i) the goal model (including both operative and official goals), which defines effectiveness as the extent to which an organization accomplishes its goal; (ii) the second approach is the system resource model, which focuses on the ability of an organization to obtain needed resources; (iii) the third approach is the process model where effectiveness is equated with internal organizational health, efficiency, and well-oiled internal processes and procedure; (iv) the fourth approach is the ecological model where effectiveness is defined in terms of the degree to which the needs and expectation of strategic constituencies are met by the organizations. However, it is important to note that some scholars often use 'performance' and 'effectiveness' interchangeably. March and Sutton (1997) further argued that problems related to their definitions, measurement, and explanation are practically the same.

## Measuring Organizational Performance

Organizational performance according to Mitchell (2002), can be measured in four ways:

1. **Relevance:** it is degree to which organization's stakeholders think the company is relevant to their needs. Clients judge the relevance of products and services by buying them, employees by working hard, shareholders by buying or holding shares and so on.
2. **Efficiency:** How well the organization has used its available resources both human and capital to accomplish its set goals and objectives. It can also be seen as "The optimal transformation (activities) of inputs into outputs." Utilization of means to achieve results and objectives, which Salem (2003) termed rational use of resources.
3. **Effectiveness:** it is the degree to which the organization is successful in achieving its strategy, mission, and vision. It can be seen as achievements of results, objectives, goals. Further, it focuses on target groups, beneficiaries, and clients on medium and long-term perspectives. It is much more difficult to measure and assess at strategic level.
4. **Financial Viability:** how the organization is able to make profit and involve in long-term investment.

These measures of organizational performance are said to be affected by the organization's motivation and capacity, and its interaction with the external environment.

### Relationship between Employee Participation in Decision-Making and Organizational Performance

It has been argued that employee involvement in decision making contributes immensely to organizational performance as it increases the quality of decision making by increasing the inputs and promotes commitment to the outcomes of the decision making process in the workplace and also a significant relationship has been discovered between employee' involvement in decision making and organizational performance (Kuye and Sulaimon, 2011). This view is supported by researchers that employees attitude can affect organizational productivity positively when they are willing and are more committed to organizational goals that are in relation to productivity. In addition, this willingness and commitment come when they are involved and allowed to actively participate in the decision making of the organization (Markey, 2006). Further, Markey (2006) shows that employee involvement in decision making does not only impacting positively on workers' performance in the organization but also enhances organizational performance thereby leading to a higher productivity. In addition, involving employees in decision making is not only considered necessary in enhancing the performance of an organization, it can also enhance employee perceptions of fairness (Wagner, 1994). Non-involvement of employees in the decision-making process have led to job dissatisfaction which eventually resulted to lost man hours, low productivity that invariable affected the fortunes of organizations and even resulted to low gross domestic product of the nation at large (Williamson, 2008). Hence, we propose the following hypotheses, which are also depicted in figure 1:

H01: There is no relationship between involving employees in decision making and organizational performance.

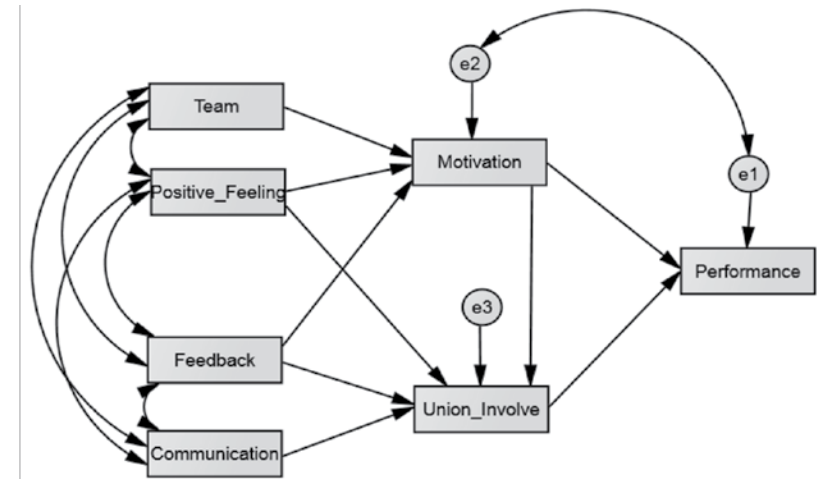
H02: There is no relationship between communication and the ability to make decision.

H03: There is no relationship between decision making by employees and productivity of the organization.

H04: There is no relationship between union representation and involvement of employees.

H05: There is no relationship between team work and employee participation.

Figure 1 Research Model



Source: own processing

As depicted in figure 1, the model will focus on the relationship between the dependent construct that is employee involvement that consists of variables such as team, positive feeling, feedback, and communication; and the independent construct that is organization performance. Further, the model specification will also focus on the relationship between the variables and shall be empirically tested.

### Nigerian Independent Petroleum Company (NIPCO)

Nigeria with population of over 160 million people (National Bureau of Statistics) is the 10th largest oil producer in the world, the third largest in Africa and the most prolific oil producer in Sub-Saharan Africa. Further, the Nigerian economy depends largely on its oil sector which supplies 95% of its foreign exchange earnings. The oil industry is divided into three segments: upstream, midstream, and downstream. However, the survey was conducted within the downstream, which deals majorly with the activities of the petroleum products such as marketing. Therefore, NIPCO is adopted for this survey. Nigerian Independent Petroleum Company (NIPCO) Plc formerly called IPMAN Petroleum Marketing Company Limited (IPMCL)

was incorporated by members of the Independent Marketers Association of Nigeria (IPMAN) on January 8th, 2001 as a Private Limited Liability Company to participate in the distribution of Petroleum Products business across the Nation. The company has since taken a new name “Nigerian Independent Petroleum Company” Plc (NIPCO). The operations of the company which made its debut in 2004 are unique and it offers diversified opportunities for the benefits of its members as well as the nation as a whole. Members benefit in two ways: good return on their investment by way of dividend as well as appreciation in share value and with constant uninterrupted supply of petroleum products. This will significantly assist members and have positive impact on the sales in their filling stations. The NIPCO/IPMAN cooperative, involving the physical financial participation of about 3000 independent oil marketing companies with retail outlets in every nook and cranny of the nation with assets of billions of Naira, has been acknowledged as the second largest employers of labour after the Federal Government in the sector. These indigenous independent petroleum marketing companies came together as a corporate body and went ahead to strengthen their core business by investing on the construction of an ultra-modern fully integrated fuel terminal. However, human capital, which is the one the major components of organization is required and should be readily available in right quality and quantity in order to align the individual goals with the organizational goals.

### Gap in Literature

Various studies regarding employee involvement and organizational performance exist in developed and developing economies; but few attempts have been made at measuring these variables in Nigerian Oil & Gas industry. In addition, many of these studies adopted correlation and regression analysis, while this survey adopts the use of Structural Equation Model in order to ascertain the degree of the model fit of the survey constructs.

### Material and methods

The adopted research design for this survey was a methodological approach that allows the use of primary data gathered from the studied respondents on the effect of employee involvement and organizational performance. The choice of Nigerian Independent Petroleum Company (NIPCO) for the survey rest on its activities and services render to the Nigerian populace; and being the second largest employer of labour in the sector. The study data were obtained from both primary source (self-administered questionnaire); personal in-depth interaction with respondents from NIPCO; and secondary source from organization bulletins and other official documents. However, the data used was obtained through self-administered questionnaire to one hundred and seventy one members of staff at the company headquarters. The total valid questionnaires analyzed was one hundred and thirty five, which represents 78.9% of the total number of questionnaire administered. The category of the respondents for this survey based on their positions in the hierarchy have adequate knowledge about the organizations regarding the company policies, values, and procedures. The research instrument adopted for this survey, which was questionnaire was divided into two; the first was to obtain the demographic characteristics of the respondents such as gender, age, educational qualification;

work experience and so on. The second section requires respondents to indicate their responses on a five-point Likert scale regarding the items emanating from the survey hypotheses illustrated in figure 1. However, Cronbach’s Alpha was used to establish the reliability of the scale adopted for this survey with coefficient value of .821. The hypothesized model in figure 1 was tested using Amos 21, because of the complex attributes of the observed variables and their underlying strong constructs (Steiger, 2007). The model specification for this survey was tested using Structural Equation Model (SEM). SEM represents a number of statistical models used to evaluate the validity of substantive theories with empirical data (Adeniji, Osibanjo, and Abiodun, 2013). This statistical tool was adopted for this survey based on its generality and flexibility.

## Results and discussion

### Respondents Demography

Table 1 Respondents Demography

<i>Gender</i>		
Male	75	55.6%
Female	60	44.4%
Total:	135	100.0%
<i>Age</i>		
20 – 29 years	36	26.7%
30 – 39 years	52	38.5%
40 – 49 years	21	15.6%
50 – 59 years	18	13.3%
60 – 69 years	08	5.9%
Total:	135	100.0%
<i>Education</i>		
OND/HND	28	20.7%
BSc	60	44.5%
MSc	31	23.0%
Ph.D	15	11.1%
Missing Case	01	0.7%
Total:	135	100.0%
<i>Work Experience</i>		
1 – 5 years	75	55.6%
6 – 10 years	33	24.4%
11 – 15 years	18	13.3%

15 years & Above	08	6.0%
Missing Case	01	0.7%
Total:	135	100.0%
<i>Position</i>		
Top Management	29	21.5%
Senior Staff	63	46.6%
Lower Staff	34	25.2%
Others	09	6.7%
Total:	135	100.0%

Source: Field Survey (2012)

As depicted in Table 1, the frequency of male respondent was 75 representing 55.6% while the frequency of the female respondents represents 44.4%. It is therefore evident that the staff strength of the study organization is more of males than the females. However, the group of respondents that falls within 30 - 39 years has the highest age frequency representing 38.5%, but it is important to note that 80.7% (cumulative percent) of the respondents fall within the active workforce age between 20 - 49 years, while 5.9% indicates respondents that are 60 - 69 years old, which makes this survey appropriate and valid. In addition, it is noted that respondents' educational background is formidable with 44.4% Bachelor degree holders, 23.0% representing Master degree holders, and 11.1% representing Third degree holders. The descriptive analysis of the respondents' position reveals that 46.7% represents senior staff, 25.2% represents lower staff, while 21.5% represents top management.

In terms of model fit, as obtained in the literature, the works of Bentler and Wu (2002), Kaplan (2000) and Hair, Anderson, Tathan and Black (1998) suggest that various goodness-of-fit indicators are used to evaluate research models. In addition, Tomarken and Waller, (2003), argue that if the greater number of the indices shows a good fit, then the probability of a good fit is assured. A model is regarded as acceptable if the Normed Fit Index (NFI) exceeds .90 (Hooper, Coughlan, and Mullen, 2008), and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) exceeds .9 (Bentler and Bonett, 1980). However, the survey Model Fit summary; under the Baseline Comparisons, the Normed Fit Index (NFI) value is .975, which indicates the model of interest improves the fit by 97.5% relative to the independence model; and CFI is .992, which is an indication that the model is accepted. Steiger (2007) argues that the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) value in determining the model fit should be less than 0.07 for the model to be an acceptable fit. The RMSEA value for this model is .055, which makes the study an acceptable model fit, the overall Model Fit is illustrated in Table 2.

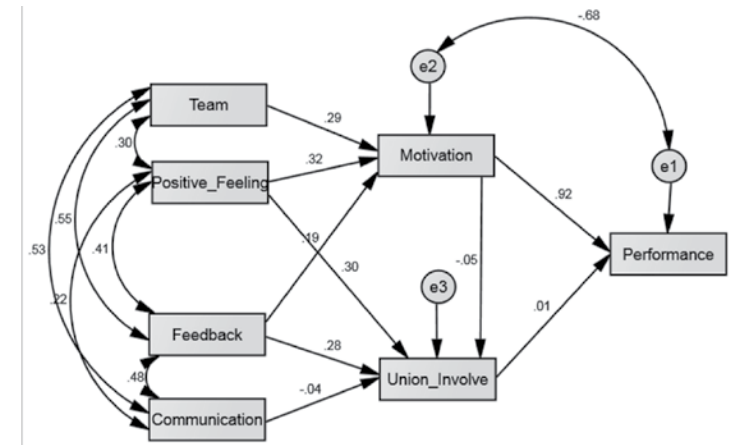
Table 2 Overall Model Fit

Model Fix index	Score	Recommended cut-off value
Chi-Square	7.034	
Degrees of Freedom	5	
Probability Level	.218	
Comparative Fix Index (CFI)	.992	>0.9 (Bentler and Bonett, 1980)
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	.975	> 0.9 (Hooper et al, 2008)
TLI	.956	> 0.9 (Sharma et al, 2005)
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	.055	<0.08 (Browne and Cudeck, 1993; Steiger, 2007)
CMIN	7.034	

Source: Field Survey, 2012

The results of Model Fit for Employee Involvement and Organizational Performance is shown in Figure 2. Evidently, close association exists among the variables observed under employee involvement construct. The estimated correlation between Team and Positive-Feeling is .299; Positive-Feeling and Feedback is .412; Team and Feedback is .554; Communication and Feedback is .483; Communication and Positive-Feeling is .219; Communication and Team is .526; and also e1 and e2 displays high degree of correlation with coefficient of -.678.

Figure 2 Results of the Final Model



Source: own processing

## Hypotheses Testing Results

As shown in Table 2, the results of the path analysis, indicate that integrating the existing motivation among employees appears to affect organizational performance more than any other factors tested with a significant relationship of .916 coefficient. However, positive-feeling contributed strongly .324 to the total value of the motivation; team contributed .289; while feedback contributed coefficient value of .190. Further, there exists direct and strong positive relationship between positive-feeling and union-involvement with coefficient value of .296.

Table 2 Hypotheses Testing Results

Hypotheses			Path Coefficient	Remark
Motivation	←	Team	.289	Accepted
Motivation	←	Positive-Feeling	.324	Accepted
Motivation	←	Feedback	.190	Accepted
Union-Involvement	←	Feedback	.282	Accepted
Union-Involvement	←	Communication	-.043	Accepted
Union-Involvement	←	Motivation	-.050	Accepted
Union-Involvement	←	Positive-Feeling	.296	Accepted
Performance	←	Union-Involvement	.014	Accepted
Performance	←	Motivation	.916	Accepted

Source: own processing

Note: All path coefficients are significant at the  $p < 0.001$

In addition, there exists positive relationship between feedback and union-involvement with coefficient value of .282. However, it is important noting that there exist negative relationships between motivation and union-involvement (-.050); communication and union-involvement (-.043). These results suggest that a strong commitment can be expected when employees are effectively involved in decision making in organizations, thereby increasing organizational performance.

## Conclusion

A model fit was developed to examine the impact of employee involvement in decision making in the performance of the organization. The survey variables such as team, positive-feeling, communication, union-involvement, etc. were tested against organizational performance. However, adequate empirical studies supported our proposition; Kuye and Sulaimon (2011) revealed that "firms with high employee involvement in decision making outperform firms with low employee involvement

in decision making;" similarly, Rathnakar, (2012) concluded in his study that "a healthy sign of team spirit and cooperation exist among the employees in the organization." However, our model shows that convergence exist among the variables and was consistent with organizational performance. The results of the statistical analysis revealed the studied hypotheses with the highest coefficient value (.916) for motivation, while variables such as team, positive-feeling and feedback have direct effect on motivation, which implies that inadequacy of these might contribute to the non-performance of organizations. In addition, positive-feeling, communication, feedback play essential role in performance of organization, in other words, communication, which is regarded as two-way phenomenon is vital and also an essential ingredient in high performances of organizations.

## Scope for Further Research

This survey was self-administered and self-sponsored; which was conducted at Nigerian Independent Petroleum Company (NIPCO), Nigeria. This reduces the possibility of generalizing and implementing the findings in other sectors of the Nigerian economy, which implies that the findings should be interpreted with caution taking other sectors that exists in Nigeria into consideration. It is therefore suggested that such research should be sponsored and replicated in other sectors such as health, telecommunications, banking, etc. to be able to make adequate recommendations and implement these suggestions thereof.

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