

A Study on Factors Influencing Participative Decision Making: Evidence from a Leading Retail Organization in the UAE

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Abstract- Participatory decision-making is essential for enhanced organizational management and success. Many organizations are transitioning from an authoritarian style to a more democratic and participatory approach, as employee involvement improves the quality of decisions and organizational effectiveness.

While prior studies have extensively examined the outcomes of participative practices, comparatively limited empirical research has focused on the factors that influence employees' willingness and ability to participate in decision-making, particularly in Middle Eastern and multicultural contexts.

This study empirically investigates the impact of individual and organizational factors on participative decision-making (PDM), including employee independence needs, organizational identification, leadership style, and organizational culture, using a quantitative case study approach in a private-sector organization operating in the United Arab Emirates.

A structured questionnaire was distributed to 109 middle- and operational-level white-collar employees to collect data for this study. The responses were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The findings indicate that employees' need for independence, organizational identification, leadership style, and organizational culture significantly and positively influence participative decision-making, with individual factors exerting a stronger impact than organizational factors.

By examining participative decision-making within a non-Western context, this study contributes to the existing body of research on participative decision-making (PDM) and provides practical insights for managers seeking to foster more inclusive decision-making practices in multicultural organizations.

Index Terms- Participative Decision Making, Employee Participation, Need for Independence, Organizational Identification, UAE

I. INTRODUCTION

In a rapidly changing business environment, organizational competitiveness increasingly depends on flexibility and adaptability. In response, greater attention has been directed toward employee involvement in decision-making processes. David (2005) identifies human resources as a critical asset for organizational sustainability and global competitiveness, emphasizing participation in decision-making as an important workplace consideration. Numerous businesses are transitioning from authoritarian organizational structures to more democratic and participative forms of operation, allowing employees to express opinions and participate in decision-making. This trend, noted by Irawanto (2015), is believed to lead to better outcomes than traditional hierarchies. The involvement of employees in decision-making is believed to produce outcomes that are difficult to achieve in strictly hierarchical organizational systems. In competitive business contexts, this form of participation is regarded as critical to organizational sustainability, as it allows individuals and groups to safeguard their interests while actively contributing to decision-making outcomes (Oluwatayo et al., 2017).

Participation promotes active contribution by individuals within organizations. Research indicates that employee involvement in decision-making improves performance by fostering motivation and enhancing problem-solving capacity. Granting employees greater decision-making authority increases their sense of responsibility and control over work tasks, leading to higher motivation, job satisfaction, and improved cooperation with management (Vijayasree & Chandran, 2019). The concept of PDM is not new; it has been researched for decades, revealing that individual and organizational factors significantly influence an individual's participation in organizations. However, it remains a complex phenomenon encompassing multiple dimensions. Key factors affecting participation behavior include employee abilities, personality traits, motivation levels, and the work environment. This complexity necessitates careful consideration by management to effectively implement worker participation initiatives (Garib Singh, 2009).

Participative decision-making (PDM) has attracted growing attention from researchers, human resource practitioners, and policymakers in both Western and non-Western settings. Prior studies have offered diverse definitions of PDM and highlighted various individual and organizational factors that influence its successful implementation. However, within the Middle Eastern context, empirical research examining the factors that influence participative decision-making in organizations remains limited, indicating a clear gap in the existing literature. Hence, rather than focusing on the outcomes of employee involvement, this research examines the determinants of participative decision-making (PDM). According to Zhu et al. (2015), employees' willingness to participate in decision-making is influenced by organizational contextual factors. As a result, organizations frequently attempt to foster conditions that support PDM by addressing key human and organizational influences on employee participation.

Previous research on decision-making styles in the Arab region suggests that managers in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) predominantly adopt a consultative management approach and show a high level of commitment to this style (Al-Jafary & Hollingsworth, 1983; Ali et al., 1995; Suliman & Thomas, 2014). The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has a workforce dominated by expatriates, who represent roughly 85% of the population, resulting in a highly diverse organizational environment (Lasrado & Bagchi, 2011). In line with the collaborative orientation of MENA cultures, management practices in the region tend to favor approaches that promote collective decision making and consensus (Ali et al., 1995).

Effectively managing a diverse workforce comprising individuals from multiple national backgrounds is critical to organizational success and development. Participative decision-making (PDM) plays an important role in facilitating the management of such diversity by encouraging inclusive engagement across the workforce. Accordingly, this study seeks to develop a comprehensive understanding of participative management within organizational settings in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). It further examines the impact of several factors on participative management, including the need for independence, organizational identification, leadership style, and organizational culture, all of which have been recognized as significant influences in this area. The research is conducted among middle- and operational-level white-collar employees within a large private-sector retail organization based in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

II. RESEARCH PROBLEM

Employees are considered a strategic asset and the main source of competitive advantage in highly competitive environments. Employee participation is therefore critical for enhancing creativity, encouraging innovative behavior, and achieving superior task performance (Daft, 2002). Participatory planning and management are challenging tasks in businesses due to the numerous challenges encountered in implementing a participatory strategy to address the various issues that organizations face today. Competitive pressures have forced organizations to shift away from traditional hierarchical superior-subordinate relationships in favor of horizontal structures, team-based work arrangements, and boundary-spanning information technologies, even though interest in participation traces back to the early human relations movement (Wagner III et al., 1997, as cited in Muindi, 2011). While traditional organizations have historically emphasized authority and control, participatory practices are increasingly adopted due to a more educated and technologically proficient workforce and a broader societal shift towards democratic values (Oluwatayo et al., 2017).

Previous studies have conceptualized participative decision-making (PDM) and identified various individual and organizational factors influencing employees' willingness to participate (Shaed et al., 2015). However, much of the existing literature has examined these factors separately, leaving a limited understanding of their combined influence on PDM. This gap is particularly evident in non-Western and multicultural contexts. Furthermore, empirical research in non-Western contexts, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, remains limited.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE), characterized by rapid economic growth and a highly multicultural workforce, is a relevant context that requires participatory management practices for effective human resource management (Ali et al., 1995; Al-Jaffary &

Hollingsworth, 1983; Yousef, 2000; Muna, 1980). Despite this relevance, there remains a lack of extensive empirical evidence examining how both individual and organizational factors jointly influence participative decision-making.

Accordingly, this study seeks to analyse the influence of selected individual and organisational factors—namely employees' need for independence, organisational identification, leadership style, and organisational culture—on participative decision-making (PDM) within an organisational setting in the UAE.

III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

To address the research problem and achieve the purpose of this study, a set of research objectives was formulated. These objectives are designed to guide the investigation into participative decision-making (PDM) by focusing on both individual and organisational factors that influence employee participation, as well as the implications of such participation within an organisational setting.

1. To identify and describe the individual factors influencing participative decision-making (PDM) within an organizational context.
2. To identify and describe the organizational factors influencing participative decision-making (PDM) within an organizational context.
3. To examine the relationship and extent of influence that individual and organizational factors have on participatory decision-making (PDM) in the setting of an organization.
4. To investigate the implications of employee participation for workers and their organization.
5. To provide recommendations on key findings with respect to further developments in employee participation programs within an organization.

IV. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

This study contributes to existing research by exploring participative decision-making within a multicultural organisational setting in the UAE. By focusing on both individual factors and organisational factors, the study provides a clearer understanding of the determinants of employee participation. Specifically, the study investigates four factors—need for independence, organizational identity, leadership, and organizational culture—and their impact on PDM. These characteristics have not been previously explored collectively, particularly within the context of the United Arab Emirates. Hence, it was hypothesised that this combination would make the most significant contribution to the comprehension of the respective field.

From a practical perspective, the findings provide valuable insights for managers seeking to foster greater employee involvement in decision-making processes. Understanding the factors that support or hinder participation can help organisations develop leadership practices and organisational cultures that promote inclusion, collaboration, and effective problem-solving. Acquiring a comprehensive knowledge of these attributes will empower managers to effectively engage workers who possess the most suitable qualities for a specific assignment and expedite the process of problem-solving. This knowledge serves to enhance the formulation of successful initiatives aimed at fostering participatory behaviour inside an organisation.

Given the increasing recognition of employees as a key source of competitive advantage, fostering participative decision-making can enhance employee engagement, creativity, and commitment (Wang et al., 2022; Daft, 2002). The study therefore supports the development of more effective participatory management practices, particularly in diverse organisational settings.

V. LITERATURE REVIEW

5.1 Employee Participation in Decision Making

The concept of participatory decision-making (PDM) has been widely studied over the years, particularly since the 1980s, when firms faced new competitive challenges that required enhanced performance (Paul et al., 2000, as cited in Rosemary et al., 2017). PDM is becoming increasingly essential for businesses to function effectively in today's rapidly changing environments, where employees' skills and creative thinking are recognized as significant assets, leading to flatter and more decentralized organizational structures that foster knowledge sharing (Valverde-Moreno et al., 2021).

PDM is a collaborative process in which employees and management engage in information processing, decision-making, and problem-solving (Wagner, 1994, as cited in Shaed et al., 2015). Islam et al. (2020) defined PDM as a consensus-based approach that values individual viewpoints and collaborative decision-making. Likert (1961) describes participation as the active contribution of employee ideas to resolve organizational issues, engaging employees at multiple levels in areas such as goal setting, work organization, expenditure control, and quality of work life (Jayawardena & Fonseka, 1999).

PDM allows both superiors and subordinates to share decision-making roles directly or indirectly (Beardwell & Claydon, 2007) and operates within social, emotional, and psychological settings that shape workplace interactions (Luthans, 2005, as cited in Muindi, 2011). Effective PDM relies on employees being informed, with management consulting and negotiating with them during decision-making (Graham & Bennett, 1998, as cited in Muindi, 2011). Furthermore, Elele and Fields (2010) emphasize that employees are more inclined to demonstrate commitment and high performance when supervisors involve them in decisions affecting their work. This participative approach is consistent with the assumptions of McGregor's Theory Y and its implications for decision-making ethics.

Empirical studies consistently relate PDM with positive organizational outcomes, including improved employee-management relationships, stronger teamwork, and enhanced job satisfaction and organizational effectiveness (Scott-Ladd et al., 2006; Vijayasree & Chandran, 2019). Participative leadership has also been shown to increase openness to change and improve information flow, contributing to a more proactive organizational culture (Cotton et al., 1988). Moreover, participation satisfies higher-level employee needs, leading to stronger performance, morale, and organizational commitment (Jayawardena & Fonseka, 1999).

Employee participation may be direct or indirect. Direct participation involves active employee involvement, while indirect participation occurs through representative bodies (EPOC, 1997, as cited in Cabrera et al., 2003). Consultative participation, where employees provide input while decision authority remains with management, is widely recognized as a central form of PDM (Cotton et al., 1988). Strauss (1963, as cited in Abdel-Halim & Rowland, 1976) identifies consultation as a key decision-making approach, particularly in cultures that value collective input. Evidence from Arab organizational contexts indicates a strong preference for consultative and participative decision-making styles (Al-Jafary & Hollingsworth, 1983; Ali et al., 1995).

Employee engagement reflects employees' emotional and psychological connection to their work and organization and is closely associated with improved performance, commitment, and retention (Garg, 2014). The effectiveness of PDM depends largely on voluntary employee involvement, which is shaped by both individual and organizational factors (Zhu et al., 2015). Accordingly, organizations must cultivate supportive environments that encourage participation (Oluwatayo et al., 2017). In line with this perspective, the present study focuses on key determinants of PDM, including employees' need for independence, organizational identification, leadership style, and organizational culture.

5.2 Need for Independence and PDM

Vroom (1960) describes independence as the employees' inherent need for self-expression, personal judgement, and autonomy in their work. Those with a strong need for independence are more likely to engage in their occupation and exhibit lower levels of authoritarianism (Abdel-Halim & Rowland, 1976; Jayawardena & Fonseka, 1999). Khoshnaw and Alavi (2020) define job autonomy as the degree of freedom, independence, and discretion employees have over how, when, and where their work is carried out, including tasks, goals, and performance criteria. Li (2018) found that employees with autonomy and effective task management are more likely to engage actively, discover new approaches, demonstrate self-efficacy, and explore new opportunities.

Lunjew (1994) suggests content theories of motivation can help evaluate the relationship between participative decision-making and autonomy, highlighting that employee motivation in organizations is influenced by higher-level needs, and PDM is a strategy to meet these needs (Garib Singh, 2009). Further, Mulcahy (2018) suggests that organisations can support employees' self-esteem by providing autonomy and valuing their ideas and feedback. Supervisory trust further enhances self-esteem by allowing employees to work comfortably and effectively, leading to improved well-being, performance, and job satisfaction (Tingo & Mseti, 2022).

Highly autonomous individuals prefer challenging projects to showcase their competence and skills, which positively impacts their level of participation and satisfaction in the workplace (Busara, 2016). Employee autonomy in an organization significantly impacts retention, productivity, and satisfaction, as it allows them to choose their work arrangements and perform tasks at their own pace, thereby enhancing overall engagement and performance (Bradler et al., 2013). Employees who have the freedom to express their ideas and opinions creatively, influencing decisions, are more proactive, involved, and motivated. This fosters a shift in organizational culture from micromanagement to an environment that empowers employees, allowing them to work autonomously, deliver results, and contribute to the organization's overall betterment (Duan et al., 2019).

5.3 Employee Identification with Organization and PDM

Stinglhamber et al. (2015) define employee identification with an organization as the perception of unanimity with or belongingness to an organization. Organizational identification refers to the alignment between employees and their organization via shared values and goals, leading to stronger commitment to organizational roles. The concept has been defined in multiple ways in the literature. Johnson et al. (1999) describe organizational identification as a cognitive and affective process through which individuals align their personal goals, both internally and externally, with those of the organization. Witting (2006) highlights the value and goal congruence between individuals and the organization, as well as the role of social identity. He describes identification as the process by which individuals connect their sense of purpose with their workplace.

Jayawardena and Fonseka (1999) found that individuals aligning their personal goals with the company's objectives are more likely to exhibit increased participation and active involvement. Simon (1976) posits that employee identification with an organization fosters participation and aligns actions with the organization's best interests, even without direct supervision. This fosters decision-making principles that align with the company's objectives and principles (Miller et al., 2000). Witting (2006) highlighted that organizational identification is linked to work attitudes, behaviors, and outcomes, such as employee decision-making, commitment to shared goals, and interaction, which contribute to the overall functioning of the organization.

Organizational identification, as per Patchen (1970), significantly impacts employee engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational effectiveness. Further, organizational identification comprises a sense of unity with the organization, supportive attitudes and behaviors toward it, and the perception of shared attributes among organizational members (Albert et al., 2000; O'Reilly and Chatman, 1986, as cited in Witting, 2006).

White and Ruh (1973) found a positive relationship between PDM, job participation, employee identification, and motivation. High organizational commitment, motivation, and identity levels lead to greater participation. The effectiveness of participatory decision-making (PDM) depends on the degree of alignment between the organization's objectives and its employees', emphasizing the importance of organizational identification in order to facilitate successful PDM (Oluwatayo et al., 2017).

5.4 Leadership Style and PDM

According to Swanepoel et al. (2000), an organization needs a leadership style that fosters employee commitment to execute business strategies, achieve goals, obtain a competitive edge, and optimize human capital (Lo et al., 2009). Leadership is conceptualised differently across disciplines, leading to varied interpretations of its meaning and significance. Randeree and Chaudry (2007) describe leadership as the ability to gain the support of key individuals for the attainment of organisational goals. Yukl (2006, as cited in Hasbullah, 2008) defines leadership as a combination of personal traits, conduct, impact, social interaction styles, role relationships, occupation, and perceived influence. Mosadeghrad (2003) defines leadership style as a set of managerial behaviors, qualities, and talents impacted by individual and organizational values, leadership interests, and staff trustworthiness in varied circumstances (Rad & Yarmohammadian, 2006).

According to several scholars, including Amabile et al. (2004) and De Jong and Den Hartog (2007), participative leadership is often regarded as one of the most humanistic approaches to leadership (Lythreathis et al., 2019). Engaging in participatory leadership reflects the extent to which managers value employee input, which is essential for fostering a work environment that supports innovation (Ding

& Shen, 2017; Kurtessis et al., 2017, as cited in Valverde-Moreno et al., 2021). Marchington (1980) posits that the effectiveness of participation is largely dependent on the behavior and attitudes of leaders (Jeremy et al., 2012).

The primary emphasis of this study is on the participatory leadership style identified in the literature. This style relates to leader behavior as perceived by followers, particularly in terms of their involvement in decision-making processes. Valverde-Moreno et al. (2021) suggest that participative leadership encourages knowledge dissemination, supports the development of decision-making capabilities, and positions employees as advocates for participative decision-making (PDM). McGregor (1960) suggests that managers who maintain a positive attitude toward employees, as reflected in Theory Y assumptions, are more likely to enhance engagement and build stronger interpersonal relationships. This perspective supports the development of participative decision-making, where open communication, reduced hierarchical barriers, and an inclusive environment facilitate employee involvement and professional growth (Muindi, 2011).

Participatory leadership, as discussed by Somech (2005), fosters open communication, reduces organizational barriers, and facilitates conflict resolution by promoting effective cooperation and enhancing understanding of organizational dynamics. Such conditions contribute to greater acceptance of shared decisions (Sorenson, 2000). Additionally, Likert (1961) found that participative systems are particularly beneficial for lower-level employees, as they rely on trust and active involvement from senior management in decision-making processes (Clayton, 2016).

5.5 Organizational Culture and PDM

Industries that foster a participatory culture among employees experience increased employee involvement, higher production levels, and reduced resistance to organizational changes, according to various studies (Elele and Fields, 2010; Enamul-Islam et al., 2020). Poskiene (2006) defines organisational culture as a comprehensive aggregation of ideas, commitments, values, assumptions, beliefs, and conventions that are collectively adopted by individuals within an organisation. The presence of a shared culture serves as a unifying force and has the potential to enhance the organization's competitive advantage and promote innovation (Kalsoom et al., 2020).

Daft (2002) highlights that fostering an organizational culture that promotes transparency, authenticity, and autonomy among employees leads to enhanced productivity and team collaboration. Hellriegel et al. (2001) suggest that organizational culture significantly influences employee attitudes, motivation, and job satisfaction, with a positive culture promoting active participation in goal attainment, while a negative one can lead to disengagement and decreased productivity.

Active engagement culture emphasises collective effort and collaboration, focusing on individuals, and fostering confidence and reliance among workers. This culture encourages cooperation within a professional setting, promoting recognition of each other's efforts and accomplishments (Kanungo et al., 2001). Employees also offer mutual assistance and encouragement, fostering a sense of reliance and confidence within the workplace (Marks et al., 2001). A supportive culture fosters empowerment, cooperation, and mutual commitment among supervisors and subordinates. It promotes strong alignment of goals, creating a positive environment for healthy objectives (Williams & Attaway, 1996, as cited in Kalsoom et al., 2020). Wellins and Concelman (2005) suggest that organisations can boost employee participation by fostering a supportive learning culture that promotes effective knowledge exchange (Aninkan & Oyewole, 2014).

In his seminal work, Wallach (1983) classified organizational culture into three categories: bureaucratic culture, innovative culture, and supportive culture. The framework proposed by Wallach is used in this study due to its widespread use and acceptance in the field. According to Wallach, these three categories are essential components that sustain the functioning and vitality of an organization. A bureaucratic culture emphasizes strict adherence to established rules and regulations, leaving employees little opportunity for empowerment and autonomy, as they conform to responsibilities delegated by their superiors. In contrast, a supportive culture prioritizes teamwork and collaboration. This culture also emphasizes individualism, wherein employees actively engage in cooperative activities within a work environment that fosters trust and mutual support.

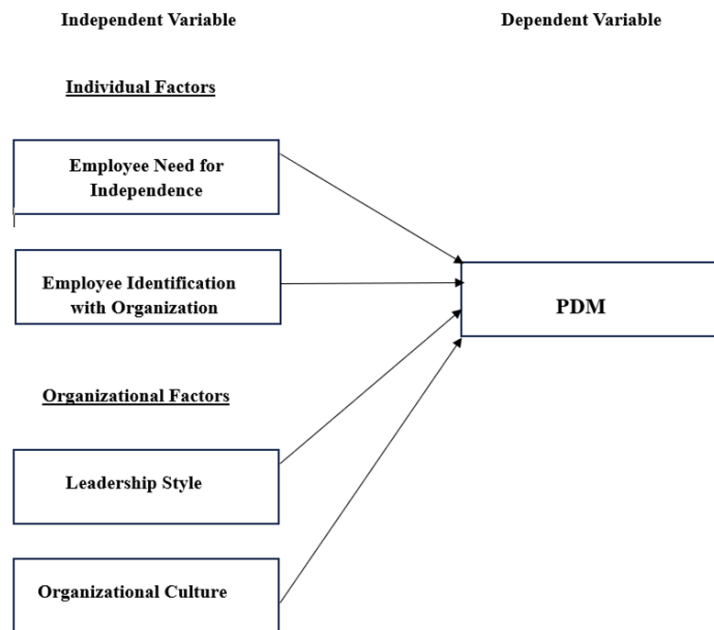
Research has indicated a positive correlation between a supportive organizational culture and employee engagement and job satisfaction (Rashid et al., 2003; Silverthorne, 2004, as cited in Kalsoom et al., 2020). Therefore, the successful implementation of participative decision-making (PDM) depends on cultivating a robust and supportive culture.

VI. METHODOLOGY

6.1 The conceptual framework and operationalization of concepts

The conceptual model is developed based on the literature review, and the hypotheses are formulated accordingly. This section also outlines the operationalization of variables.

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework of Factors Influencing PDM



The following are the hypotheses deduced from the literature review of this study:

H1: Participation in decision-making (PDM) is positively and significantly influenced by employee need for independence.

H2: Participation in decision-making (PDM) is positively and significantly influenced by employee identification with the organization.

H3: The leadership style has a considerable impact on the level of employee participation in decision-making (PDM).

H4: The organizational culture has a considerable impact on the level of employee participation in decision-making (PDM).

Table 1
Operationalization of Variables

Concept	Dimension	Indicators
Need for Independence	Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciation • Opportunity to express skills and abilities
	Assertiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Openness • Strong desire to communicate
	Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Least direction • Discretion in task performance
Identification with Organization	Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of belongingness • Emotional attachment
	Loyalty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra effort and support • Dedication
	Similarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment between individual and organizational goals
Leadership Style	Participative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration and consultation • Opportunity to voice
	Supportive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helpfulness • Equality
	Instrumental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard of performance • Autocracy
Organizational Culture	Sociability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teamwork • Employee opinion
	Communication & Co-ordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free flow of information • Support and cooperation
	Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bureaucratic or non- bureaucratic
	Trustworthiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust and value
Participation in Decision-Making (PDM)	Degree of Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influence on decision concerning one's job • Proposing Suggestions • Influence on decision concerning one's work group

6.2 Research Design and Data Collection

The objective of this section is to explain and provide a rationale for the methodologies employed in the present investigation. The present study focuses on the methodology employed to examine the hypotheses presented in the previous section, as well as the methodologies employed to guarantee the collection of reliable data from the case study organization. The significance of research design depends on its ability to provide a framework for the development of data-gathering methodologies, hence ensuring the validity and reliability of the study findings. There are two major research designs, namely qualitative and quantitative. Sekaran and Bougie (2016) assert that quantitative research methods are distinguished by their focus on measuring variables to validate theories and hypotheses that necessitate quantification or measurement. Typically, this study approach necessitates extensive data sets and employs statistical methods to examine the hypothesis and substantiate the research endeavour. This style is suggested to be the most user-friendly and most suitable for situations where the identification of correlations between variables is necessary. In contrast, qualitative research approaches are employed to cultivate comprehension of the significance, perspectives, and justifications pertaining to societal concerns. These methodologies often employ smaller datasets that are deemed enough for obtaining dependable outcomes, and the process of data collection often persists until saturation is achieved.

The utilisation of a quantitative research design is seen as most suitable for the purpose of testing hypotheses and establishing or confirming correlations between variables (Saunders et al., 2009), which aligns with the objective of this study. The present research aims to examine the various factors that impact employee participation in the decision-making process within the case study organization in the United Arab Emirates. The literature analysis revealed that several factors, namely employee independence needs, identification with the organisation, leadership style, and organisational culture, possess the capacity to facilitate participative decision-making (PDM). To achieve this objective, the study adopts the research onion model (Saunders et al., 2007) as a framework to guide the research design. The study used a descriptive survey research design to assess the conceptual model.

The case study organization has a total workforce of 550 employees, who are strategically located across several regions within the United Arab Emirates. The objective of this study is to investigate the concept of participatory decision-making (PDM). To achieve this, it is advisable to choose participants who occupy positions that enable them to actively participate in decision-making procedures (Scott and Bruce, 1994, as cited in Garib Singh, 2009). Therefore, the focus of this study is on white-collar individuals who hold middle- and operational-level positions within the case organization. The target population consists of 163 individuals who are working in white-collar professions at middle and operational levels within the organisation. This includes individuals in managerial, senior executive, specialist, supervisory, executive, and administrative roles. Each white-collar worker within this population is considered an element.

In this study, a total of 109 subjects were drawn from the target population based on Morgan's table using a stratified random sampling technique at a 95% confidence level. The data collection process encompassed the utilisation of both primary and secondary sources. The research employed a survey methodology to investigate the influence of individual and organisational factors on participative management. This study utilised questionnaires as a means of gathering primary data. Questionnaires are a suitable method for conducting studies as they facilitate the collection of information that is not readily observable, as they elicit responses pertaining to individuals' emotions, motives, attitudes, achievements, and experiences (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

It is vital for a research project to select a well-established instrument with high validity and reliability (Saed et al., 2015). Questionnaires utilised in prior studies were adapted to align with the objectives of the current research, enabling effective measurement of the selected independent and dependent variables. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of 33 statements assessed using a five-point Likert scale. The first section assessed demographic characteristics (age, gender, education, and experience), while the second section examined the variables under investigation. A pilot study was conducted prior to the main survey with 60 white-collar personnel at middle and operational levels who were not affiliated with the organization under investigation.

The main survey process was conducted using the structured questionnaire comprising 33 items. The questionnaire was distributed to a sample of 109 participants, selected through stratified random sampling from a target population of 163 white-collar workers at the case organization. Data collection was carried out using the drop-and-pick-later approach. All questionnaires were completed and returned, resulting in a response rate of 100%. In addition, secondary data were obtained from reliable sources, including academic research papers, journal articles, textbooks, company records and bulletins, and online resources.

VII. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The data analysis was performed via IBM SPSS Version 29. This study used both descriptive and inferential statistics to evaluate the variables and test the proposed hypotheses. This study employed various quantitative data analysis techniques, including factor analysis, Cronbach's alpha, frequency analysis, descriptive analysis, correlation analysis, and regression analysis, to analyze the collected data.

7.1 Analysis of Demographic Factors

Table 2
Analysis of Demographic Factors

Variable	Characteristic	%
Gender	Male	71.6%
	Female	28.4%
Age	20-30	13.8%
	31-40	38.5%
	41-50	39.4%
	51 and above	8.3%
Education	Diploma	9.2%
	Basic Degree	38.5%
	PG Diploma	8.3%
	Post Graduate Degree	44.0%
Experience	Less than 5 years	20.2%
	6-10 years	30.3%
	11-15 years	27.5%
	16 and above	22.0%

Among the 109 employees who participated in the survey, 71.6% were male, while 28.4% were female, indicating that male employees predominantly occupy white-collar positions within the case organization. In terms of age distribution, 13.8% of respondents were between 21 and 30 years, 38.5% were between 31 and 40 years, and the largest proportion, 39.4%, fell within the 41–50 age group. Overall, 86.2% of the sample consisted of employees over the age of 30, reflecting a relatively mature workforce. Furthermore, the findings suggest that white-collar employees in the case organization are highly qualified and experienced, possessing sufficient levels of education and professional experience to effectively perform their job responsibilities.

7.2 Analysis of Independent & Dependent Variables

7.2.1 Reliability and Validity of Data

Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the internal reliability of the survey, specifically the extent to which a set of items demonstrates internal consistency and interrelatedness. The Cronbach's alpha value (see Table 3) for the surveyed populations is 0.922. Sekaran and Bougie (2016) assert that Cronbach's alpha value between 0.60 and 0.99 indicates the scale's reliability when analyzing poll variables. According to the table provided, Cronbach's alpha values for both individual variables and the entire set indicate good dependability. This suggests that the data is very consistent internally.

Table 3
Reliability Analysis

Reliability Statistics		
Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Employee Need for Independence	0.768	6
Employee identification with the organization	0.796	6
Leadership Style	0.644	6
Organizational Culture	0.828	6
Participation in Decision Making (PDM)	0.830	5
Overall Value	0.922	29

According to the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (see Tables 4 & 5) below, the KMO values for all the variables are above 0.5, indicating that the sample adequacy is good. In addition, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity yielded a p-value <0.001, which is significantly below the 0.05 threshold. Eigenvalues of both independent and dependent variables were greater than 1.0, and their associated Average Value Extracted (AVE) values were significantly higher than the threshold value of 0.5. The study determined that all five constructs examined were unidimensional, as proven by factor loadings over 0.5. This indicates a robust link between the items and their respective factors or constructions. All variables in this study are considered valid and appropriate for further analysis.

Table 4
KMO & Bartlett's Test

Variable	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity		
		Approx. Chi-Square	Degree of Freedom (df)	Significance Value (p-value)
Employee Need for Independence	0.698	199.014	15	<.001
Employee Identification with Organization	0.743	201.769	15	<.001
Leadership Style	0.619	125.270	15	<.001
Organizational Culture	0.826	232.692	15	<.001
Employee Participation in Decision Making	0.800	195.421	10	<.001

Table 5
Factor Analysis

Construct	Items	Loadings	Eigenvalue	AVE
Need for Independence	N1	0.728	4.023	67.04%
	N2	0.650		
	N3	0.799		
	N4	0.825		
	N5	0.699		
	N6	0.731		
Identification with Organization	ID1	0.762	3.033	50.56%
	ID2	0.768		
	ID3	0.675		
	ID4	0.800		
	ID5	0.436		
	ID6	0.759		
Leadership Style	L1	0.790	3.427	57.12%
	L2	0.766		
	L3	0.626		
	L4	0.632		
	L5	0.599		
	L6	0.688		
Organizational Culture	OC1	0.621	3.288	54.80%
	OC2	0.718		
	OC3	0.753		
	OC4	0.787		
	OC5	0.702		
	OC6	0.841		
Participation in Decision Making (PDM)	P1	0.796	3.002	60.04%
	P2	0.792		
	P3	0.764		
	P4	0.748		
	P5	0.773		

The primary survey data were assessed for convergent validity (see Table 6) using the study of composite reliability, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO), Bartlett test of sphericity, and average variance extracted (AVE). The following evidence demonstrates that all the measures utilized in this study met the criteria for convergent validity, indicating that they accurately assessed the intended constructs. All dimensions have a KMO value greater than 0.5, an AVE value greater than 0.5 (or 50%), composite reliability greater than 0.7, and the Bartlett test of sphericity yields a significant result at the 0.001 level. Thus, it can be deduced that the indicators used for the research satisfy the requirements of convergent validity.

Table 6
Convergent Validity Analysis

Construct	Composite Reliability	KMO	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Average Variance Explained (AVE)
	>0.7	>0.5	Sig<0.05	> 0.5 or 50%
Independent variables				
Independence Needs	0.879	0.698	<0.001	67.04%
Identification with Organization	0.856	0.743	< 0.001	50.56%
Leadership Style	0.841	0.619	< 0.001	57.12%
Organizational Culture	0.878	0.826	<0.001	54.80%
Dependent Variable				
Participation in Decision Making	0.882	0.800	<0.001	60.04%

The discriminant validity (see Table 7) of the data was evaluated by comparing the squared correlation and average variance extracted (AVE). All squared correlations were lower than the corresponding Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values of the respective variables, except for the AVE value of identification with organization and the squared correlation of organizational culture, which exhibited a marginal exception. Despite this minor deviation, the overall findings suggest that the constructs are sufficiently distinct from one another, supporting an acceptable level of discriminant validity.

Table 7
Discriminant Validity Analysis

Correlations						
		Independence Need	Identification with Organization	Leadership Style	Organizational Culture	PDM
Independence Need		AVE= 0.670				

Identification with Organization	Pearson Correlation	0.574	AVE=0.505			
	Squared Correlation	0.329				
Leadership Style	Pearson Correlation	0.341	0.610	AVE=0.571		
	Squared Correlation	0.116	0.372			
Organizational Culture	Pearson Correlation	0.445	0.732	0.598	AVE=0.548	
	Squared Correlation	0.198	0.535	0.357		
PDM	Pearson Correlation	0.626	0.665	0.510	0.601	AVE=0.600
	Squared Correlation	0.391	0.442	0.260	0.361	

7.2.2 Descriptive Statistics

All constructs were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The descriptive statistics indicate a high level of need for independence (M = 4.379, SD = 0.437), reflecting a strong preference for autonomy among respondents. Identification with the organization also recorded a relatively high mean (M = 4.013, SD = 0.386), suggesting that employees exhibit a strong sense of belonging and alignment with organizational values. Similarly, leadership style yielded a high mean score (M = 4.105, SD = 0.364), indicating that employees perceive their superiors as demonstrating participative leadership behaviors. Organizational culture showed a moderately high mean (M = 3.813, SD = 0.421), implying that the work environment is generally viewed as supportive and encouraging. Participative decision-making (PDM) recorded the highest mean among all variables (M = 4.390, SD = 0.449), highlighting a strong presence of employee involvement in decision-making processes within the organization.

Table 8
Descriptive Statistics

Items	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Need for Independence	109	3.33	5.00	4.3792	0.43737
Identification with Organization	109	3.17	5.00	4.0138	0.38699
Leadership Style	109	3.17	5.00	4.1055	0.36406
Organizational Culture	109	2.67	5.00	3.8135	0.42110
PDM	109	3.00	5.00	4.3908	0.44918

7.2.3 Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses H1–H4 were tested using simple regression analysis to examine the impact of key independent variables on participative decision-making (PDM). The results indicate that all four predictors—need for independence, employee identification with the organization, leadership style, and organizational culture—have significant, positive effects on PDM.

Need for independence significantly predicted PDM ($F(1,107) = 68.899, p < .001$). This indicates that employees’ need for independence strongly influences their participation in PDM. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.392 shows that the model explains 39.2% of the variance in PDM. The coefficient analysis revealed that the need for independence variable exerted a significant and positive effect on PDM, with a coefficient of 0.643, a t-value of 8.301, and statistical significance at $p < .001$.

Similarly, Organizational identity emerged as a significant predictor of participative decision-making (PDM), supported by a significant relationship ($F(1,107) = 84.739, p < .001$). This finding suggests that employees’ identification with the organization plays a crucial role in shaping their involvement in participative decision-making (PDM). Additionally, the coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.442 indicates that 44.2% of the variance in PDM is explained by the model. The coefficient results also confirmed that it exerts a significant positive influence on PDM, with $B = 0.772, t = 9.205$, and statistical significance at $p < .001$.

Leadership style demonstrated a significant predictive effect on participative decision-making (PDM), as evidenced by the significant relationship found ($F(1,107) = 37.594, p < .001$). This indicates that perceived leadership style meaningfully influences employees’ engagement in PDM. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.260 shows that the model explains 26.0% of the variance in PDM. The coefficient analysis further showed that the variable “Leadership Style” had a significant and positive effect on PDM, with $B = 0.629, t = 6.131$, and statistical significance at $p < .001$.

Likewise, Organizational culture demonstrated a significant predictive effect on participative decision-making (PDM), as evidenced by the significant relationship found ($F(1,107) = 60.542, p < .001$). This suggests that perceived organizational culture meaningfully influences employees’ engagement in PDM. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.361 indicates that the model explains 36.1% of the variance in PDM. The coefficient analysis further revealed that the variable “Organizational Culture” had a significant and positive effect on PDM, with $B = 0.641, t = 7.781$, and statistical significance at $p < .001$.

Overall, all hypotheses (H1–H4) are supported, confirming that these variables significantly enhance employees’ engagement in participative decision-making. A summary of the regression results is presented in Table 9 below.

Table 9
Regression Analysis

Hypothesis	Regression Weights	R	R ²	F - Value	Beta Coefficient	t-value	P- Value	Hypothesis Supported
H1	IND→PDM	0.626	0.392	68.899	0.643	8.301	<.001	Accepted
H2	IDO→PDM	0.665	0.442	84.739	0.772	9.205	<.001	Accepted
H3	LDS→PDM	0.510	0.260	37.594	0.629	6.131	<.001	Accepted
H4	ORCL → PDM	0.601	0.361	60.542	0.641	7.781	<.001	Accepted

VIII. CONCLUSION

This research was conducted to analyze several individual and organizational factors that influence participative decision-making (PDM) in a leading retail organization in the UAE. Four major factors—need for independence, organizational identity, leadership style, and organizational culture—were identified through a comprehensive literature review. The findings confirmed that all four factors have a positive and significant relationship with PDM, although their level of influence varies.

The results showed that the need for independence has a positive impact on PDM. Employees with a higher need for independence are more likely to participate actively in decision-making. They tend to value recognition, initiative, and responsibility, and are motivated to be involved in meaningful tasks. This suggests that participative decision-making helps fulfil employees' need for self-esteem and personal growth. It is a significant motivator for employees to participate in all facets of corporate decision-making. Employees with a strong inclination towards independence actively pursue challenging and meaningful assignments to showcase their skills, abilities, and talents, resulting in increased participation and satisfaction in their employment. Similarly, organizational identity was found to have a significant positive effect on PDM. Employees who feel a strong sense of belonging and alignment with organizational values are more willing to engage in decision-making. This shared understanding between employees, and the organization promotes trust, unity, and active involvement.

The study also researched the role of organizational factors. Leadership style showed a positive and significant relationship with PDM, indicating that employees respond well to participative leadership. The results suggest that white-collar employees perceive their superiors as adopting a participative leadership style and are more inclined to react favorably to participatory decision-making. Furthermore, employees are given the chance to voice their opinions during the decision-making process, and their suggestions are actively incorporated by their superiors. However, the influence of leadership was comparatively lower than that of other factors, possibly due to the presence of standardized procedures and the concentration of final decision-making authority at higher management levels.

Organizational culture was also found to have a significant positive effect on PDM. A work environment that promotes teamwork, trust, open communication, and a degree of decentralization encourages employees to participate more actively in decision-making. However, the overall impact of organizational factors was lower than that of individual factors, which may be due to structural limitations such as centralized decision-making and restricted information flow.

In conclusion, this study achieved its objective by demonstrating that both individual and organizational factors influence employee participation in decision-making. All four variables showed significant positive relationships with PDM. The findings highlight the importance of management to strengthen both individual motivation and organizational practices to create an effective participative decision-making system that enhances employee engagement.

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

This study provides recommendations for improving employee participation in decision-making within the case organization. It offers valuable insights into the managerial strategies required to enhance PDM. Based on the findings, the following policy recommendations are proposed for the selected organization.

Delegation should be improved by assigning staff projects or tasks with significant responsibility. This will enhance teamwork and cohesiveness within the organization. Delegating greater authority empowers employees to manage client interactions regularly, often in unique situations, and enables them to make independent judgements. This approach promotes employee engagement by fulfilling their need for autonomy and fostering a sense of belonging. As a result, employees may demonstrate increased dedication, involvement, proactivity, and job satisfaction.

Suggestion schemes should be implemented to provide employees with structured channels to share new ideas with management. As an ongoing process, this can enhance service value and encourage a sense of ownership over organizational activities. Management can also organize consultative forum meetings to further encourage employee contributions. Job redesign approaches, such as job enlargement and job enrichment, can be adopted to improve participation in the case organization. Enhancing job content by incorporating motivation and rewards into existing roles is an effective way to involve employees in managerial decision-making. Job enrichment, especially, allows employees the autonomy to apply their skills and exercise discretion in handling daily business challenges.

Managers should adopt a more participative approach in their interactions with subordinates to foster a positive psychological state among employees. This can encourage employees to feel proud of their association with the organization and develop a strong sense of

identification. Establishing internal policies that prevent discrimination in promotion and remuneration, as well as supporting employees in pursuing further education, would be beneficial. Such practices can improve employees' perceptions of the organization's internal corporate social responsibility, thereby strengthening organizational identity and involvement.

A corporate culture that prioritizes the free flow of information should be established to promote participatory behavior. Allowing employees the autonomy to communicate openly with leaders regarding suggestions and feedback fosters transparency and improves understanding of organizational goals, policies, and vision. An open-door policy demonstrates that management values employee input. Cross-departmental participation can be encouraged through meetings and informal discussions to enhance information sharing and commitment. Senior management can also utilize technology, such as CEO blogs, intranet platforms, and emails, to keep employees well-informed.

Employee engagement can be further enhanced by creating a supportive work environment that enables individuals to achieve their personal and professional goals. Training, recognition, awards, and incentives play a vital role in motivating employees and improving performance. To prepare employees for participation in decision-making, awareness programmes can be introduced to educate them about their roles and rights. Both financial and non-financial incentives can be provided to sustain motivation, while management structures can be adapted to allow greater participation. Additionally, training in management-related functions can equip employees with the necessary skills for effective involvement in decision-making. The management should consistently implement strategies that reinforce organizational values and objectives, encourage dynamism, and strengthen employee identification and engagement. Non-monetary rewards and incentives can motivate employees by fulfilling their psychological needs, such as belongingness and involvement in organizational decisions. Practices such as issuing certificates of appreciation and thank-you notes could be used more regularly, rather than being limited to exceptional situations.

Overall, these recommendations can help improve participative decision-making and encourage greater employee involvement within the organization.

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