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Impact of Employee Participation in decision making at Engen

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DECLARATION

I Mvelo Mchunu declare that:

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ABSTRACT

Employee participation is the process whereby employees are involved in decision making processes, rather than simply acting on orders. Employee participation is part of a process of empowerment in the workplace. It is important for employees to participate effectively in decision making, and strengthen their level of influence to all existing structures. The main aim of the study was to ascertain the impact of participation in decision making at Engen and whether employees are satisfied with their current participation in the organization.

The study used non-probability sampling and th e sample comprised of one hundred respondents who are employees at Engen in Durban office, Kwazulu-Natal. This office was selected because it was convenient for the researcher and respondents were easily available and accessible. Of the sample, 34.2% of respondents are Sales staff and a total of 28.9% of respondents worked for 0-5 years for the company and 23.7% have worked for 6-10 years. The results of the study revealed that 55.3% of respondents do participate in decision making within the organization, 57.9% of respondents find direct participation more effective. A salient finding of the study was that 55.3% of respondents feel employee participation is important in decision making an d considering everything 47.4% of respondents are satisfied with employee participation.

The recommendations to South African employees are to be equipped with enough relevant information to enable them effective participation in organizational affairs. South African employees must improve skills and competencies required for effective employee participation. Organization need to develop and enact Participation in decision making policies and procedures that are aligned to Labour Relations Act. Management must sufficiently acknowledge the contribution made by employees to participation in decision making pr ocess. The government must promote the concept of employee participation in all work places. This could be done through workshops, seminars and information dissemination amongst all employees a nd trade unions.
 The Labour Relations Act 66 (1995) be written in simplified English and be translated in all other official languages so that it can be easily understood by all stakeholders.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Global events, spearheaded by technological, economic and political changes, have revolutionalised communication around the world, removing national barriers to trade and competitiveness (Slabbert and De Villiers, 1998:7). According to Parker (1998:11) all countries affected by this revolution face a major challenge of planning, implementing and maintaining political democracy. It is no wonder that the annual survey of International Human Rights by Freedom House (a United States Group) indicated in 1995 that out of 191 countries in the world or 61% are now democracies with democratic values.

South African political democracy has also become the criterion for business system, processes, structures and procedures. This new focus in South African organization is founded in the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995 (LRA) and the countries post apartheid constitution. Both the Act and Constitution dictate participative practises at both organizational and national levels respectively. It is this participative that is a prerequisite in a company's pursuit of world class status, since it results improved employee morale. This improved morale eventually translates in improved productivity, better quality products and enhanced service to customers.

One of the major challenges facing Engen management is their ability to have all employees involved and support their strategic vision for the organization. This research analyses the possible foundation of an agreement between employers and employees against the backdrop of the increased participation of employees in decision making over the past several years. This study provides an overview of managerial and employee's approaches to decision making, a snap shot of the organisation, a discussion of the process and changes made to the organization structure or model to accommodate and increase employee participation and a summary of lessons learned. It is evident that joint governance between employees and management should be the ultimate goal for the organization to achieve a lasting solution.

1.2 Motivation for the Study

This study was conducted to ascertain the level of employee participation in decision making, whether employees at Engen are satisfied with current participation. The study was motivated from researchers experience in dealing with challenges facing employee participation in decision making. (Bendix 2001:679) states that while South African employers have realised the need to change, they have not taken concrete steps to effect it, and though there is hardly a South African organization which is not undergoing second order change, the changes have merely manifested themselves in uncoordinated programme such as quality circles and team building, such initiative may not secure employee commitment and motivation. It is not surprising that research done by Veldsman and Harilall (1996:15) found that many South African organizations lack the zeal to co-ordinate the respective factors which make up the key variables in employee involvement. It was concluded that these organization had not yet accepted work-place democratisation, let alone redefining the relationship between management and employees. In line with the findings of Veldsman and Harilall (1996:15) is the Chicago-based international survey research report as reported by Hoffmeyer (1997). The findings from a sample of 23 000 South African employees showed, among other things, that there was a lack of employee involvement in decision making process in their organizations. The study revealed among others, that a lack of readiness existed to transform people management, and that work-place management does not enhance employee's satisfaction (Veldsman, Van Der Linde and Conidaris 1998:6-9). The study was conducted to benefit current employees (union or non-union members) and potential employees in South African working environment, the management and petro-chemical industry in South Africa. The study was intended to make a unique contribution to researchers and academics. To inform the government about the current employer/employee relations, therefore changes can be made with reference to the research.

1.3 Focus of the Study

The study focussed on individual employees, groups and organizations with a direct interest in the existence, survival and growth of the organization. (Parker 1998:70) indicates that it is the unique relation between employers and employees that make world class organization what they are.

1.4 Problem Statement

Engen employees have been accusing management of being autocratic, not trustworthy and the atmosphere in many work-places was still adversarial and confrontational. Informal discussion with the human resources management team of Engen in Durban indicated that the organisation was aware that there are problems regarding the level of employee participation in decision making, but they are uncertain of how to resolve such problems. There are mechanisms that are used by employees to engage management but some decisions haven been taken by management without reaching consensus with employees.

Engen employees confirm that there are multiple limitations which are attributed to lack of employee participation in decision making, as a results employees have been asking for all inclusive decision making structure. According to employees it is imperative that management highlight the importance of employee participation at all levels within the company, this is deemed to be one of the organizational failures when comes to employee participation in decision making. This study was conducted because there was no sufficient equivalent research done to investigate existing problems. The ultimate goal was to create an environment which can produce an organizational culture that promotes cooperation, commitment to organizational goals, and rewards for all employees and management.

1.5 Objectives

The specific objectives of this study were:

1.5.1 To ascertain the level of employee participation in decision making.

1.5.2 To examine whether employees are satisfied with their current participation in the organization.

1.5.3 To critically evaluate obstacles and challenges faced by employees when participating in decision making.

1.5.4 To determine as to whether direct or indirect consultations are effective enough to encourage employee participation.

1.5.5 To highlight the importance of employee participation at all levels within the organization.

1.6 Research Questions

1.6.1 How do you assess the level of employee participation in decision making?

1.6.2 How do you measure that employees are satisfied with their current participation in the organization?

1.6.3 What are obstacles and challenges faced by employees when participating in decision making?

1.6.4 Is direct and indirect consultation effective enough to encourage employee participation?

1.6.5 How do you highlight the importance of employee participation within the organisation?

1.7 Limitations of the Study

1.7.1 The sample size was sufficient enough to reflect the factual image of the organization in context when measuring the relationship among employee participation in decision making.

1.7.2 The sample size was restricted to Engen employees who were handed survey questionnaires in Durban and surrounding area, KwaZulu-Natal.

1.7.3 There were no restrictions on:

- Length of service for employees.
- Union or Non-Union members.

- Permanent or Non-Permanent.
- Age, Race and Gender.

1.6.4 The data, which will be obtained from the organizations, could be perceptual measures of employee participation. Normally, instead of perceptual measures, the objective measures are more desirable and they particularly are more consistent in outputs.

1.6.5 The method used in order to collect the data is very common as we have used the Questionnaire method for this research study.

Respondents may have incorrectly answered questions due to misunderstanding or confidentiality concerns.

1.6.7 The participant's response could have influenced by factors such as: ability to understand the questions; degree of honesty when answering the questionnaire; time to answer the questionnaire and general attitude to answering questionnaires.

1.8 Summary

In Chapter one the reader was introduced to why this study was conducted; who the focus group was; the motivation, objectives and limitations of this study. Engen employees displayed dissatisfaction regarding the impact of employee participation in decision making, and management was not all inclusive when comes to decision making. The study focus on employees generally at Engen to ascertain the level of participation in decision making, employee satisfaction relating to participation and existing structures functionality. It is necessary to have an overview of the present employee participation mechanism in South Africa; the origin of employee participation; and the changes in Labour Laws since the birth of democracy in South Africa. The context and objectives of this study are reviewed by means of literature review in the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The development of human resource management in the last few decades certainly emphasise individualism and the direct relationship between management and its employees. According to Porter (1980) employees are encouraged to make their own way in the organisations. Employee participation and involvement are two ways to work the employees harder for their benefit and hence for the benefit of the organisation. The best thing about employee participation and employee involvement is; it makes employees to feel a real sense of worth in the organisation and it gives more power to them within the enterprise. That's why the importance and scope of employee participation and involvement are crucial to the success of the enterprise.

2.2 Definition of Employee Participation

Employee participation is defined as 'a process of employee involvement designed to provide employees with the opportunity to influence and where appropriate, take part in decision making on matters which affect them'. Macgregor (1960) contend that worker participation consists basically in creating opportunity under suitable conditions for people to influence decisions which affect them. It is a special case of delegation in which the subordinate gain greater control, greater freedom of choice with respect to bridging the communication gap between the management and the workers. This serves to create a sense of belonging among the workers as well as a conducive environment in which both the workers would voluntarily contribute to healthy industrial relations.

According to Farnham (1997) employee participation is one of four policy choices for managing the employment relationship. Employee has the right to question and influence organization decision making and this may involve representative workplace democracy.

However, in the context of this study, participation refers to active involvement of employees and other stakeholders in the affairs of an organisation; each stakeholder playing a different role, yet one that contributes to the common good of the organisation and all those who have an interest in it. Thus participation means that employees, employers and other interested parties in an organisation are governed, controlled and directed by participative values that may include but not be limited to shared power, rights, responsibilities, information sharing, commitment to performance and internalised control.

2.2.1 Employee participation and involvement

The terms employee participation and employee involvement first began to appear in management literature in the late 1970's. (Farnham, 1993, p.361) Since the late 1970's lots of companies have implemented some form of employee participation program designed to improve workplace policies and develop and effect operational changes advantageous to both management and workers. Such programs, variously referred to as managed work teams, quality of work life groups, action committees or worker-manager committees, typically provide a forum in which employees may present proposals or ideas to management concerning workplace issues and obtain a management response. Many managers believe that this type of worker-employer cooperation is highly beneficial to both parties and useful for the company itself to compete in a global economy.

A survey of employee involvement practices in 377 British companies, done by the Employment Department in 1991, found that; employee involvement increases with company size and importance of financial involvement schemes have risen from 53 per cent in 1988 to 77 percent in 1991. (Farnham and Pimlott, 1995, p.421) The survey concludes that: "over half of survey companies have a share scheme which all employees can join". The 1990's are a time of encouraging employees to perform better with multiple tasks. Many employers in both non-union and unionized have made employee communications and employee relations a priority. They are establishing employee committees under many names, such as employee advisory committees, quality circles, communication committees, employee involvement teams. These groups meet regularly to address workplace issues and provide a forum for two-way dialog between management

and workforce. For example; people in a company's employee participation complain about some issues, such as working conditions, pay etc., and executives discuss the issues with the group and decide to make changes that will satisfy employee concerns. This type of action will benefit to employers as much as it benefits to the employees because this will show that managers are willing to address and resolve employee's concerns.

Employers that make employee morale and motivation a priority; often get the benefits back with high productivity and better quality. Additionally, if communication between them is strong and responsive, employees won't want to distance themselves from management. From the management's view, the time and effort spent on participation and involvement can be seen; by not having to deal later with unions or the threat of a strike. Employers who take steps to maximize the communication and minimize the obstacle of employee participation will have a stronger relationship.

Unions generally do not like employee participation groups and the term employee participation because the participation groups reduce the need for that type of organisations. If employers effectively and successfully deal with employee concerns within the organisation, then it is less likely that employees will turn to a union for assistance. That's why generally, trade unions prefer the term 'industrial democracy' instead of 'employee participation'(Elliott, 1978, p.124). According to Elliott industrial democracy indicates sharing of power and a right for their members as an industrial equivalent of the political democracy. Elliott continues that both employee participation and industrial democracy mean involving workers more in business affairs and improving industrial efficiency. As Hyman and Mason, cited by Salamon (1998, p.354) state industrial democracy: "little currency in contemporary market-driven economies where any worker or activist and displaced by defensive struggles to retain individual employment and to protect employment rights". And finally, Salamon (1998, p.354) cites Wall and Lischeron as differentiating participation from collective bargaining by emphasizing: "the involvement of employees in the decision making processes which traditionally have been the responsibility and prerogative of management".

There are two types of methods of participation. These are direct and indirect. Direct method takes place which allow individual employee or workgroup to involve in the decision making process such as briefing groups, quality circles. Direct method is more about involvement. On the other hand indirect method affects mass of employees where Works Council and/or collective bargaining represent their role and discuss the issues with management. Also the level in organisation has an impact on the differentiation. Such as; involvement occurs in the people who are lower level in organisation. But participation happens in the high level in organisation. Finally, Salamon (1998) shows the differentiation according to the objective of participation. This is where involvement, task centered, concerned primarily with structure and performance of operations. On the other hand participation, power centered, concerned with more fundamental managerial authority. Overall the scope of participation will depend on a variety factors. These include the attitudes of parties involved, the nature of ownership and organisational characteristics, the length of experience among employees and the extent to which participation is based on statutory requirement or voluntary agreement.

In their recent study Marchington et al. (1992) divides the definitions of employee participation into three categories. First one is; employees taking part in decision. "Any process whereby workers have a share in the reaching of managerial decisions in the enterprise" Clarke et al. (1972) "Those at the bottom of the enterprise hierarchy take part in the authority and managerial function of the enterprise" Walker (1975) Secondly; employees influence managerial actions. "Influence in decision making exerted through a process of interaction between workers and managers and based upon information sharing" Wall and Lischeron (1977) " Considerable variety of interpersonal and structural arrangements which link organisational decision making to the interests and influence of employees at various levels" Heller (1983) " Equal power to determine the outcome of decisions" Patemen And thirdly; control over decision making. "Any process through which a person or group of persons determines what another person or group of persons will do" Guest and Fatchett (1974) "Individuals or groups may influence, control, be involved in, exercise power within, or be able to intervene in decision making within organisations" Brannen (1983)

Employee participation may take different forms, from formal structures to experiments, from improved communication to joint responsibility. But most importantly it starts with communication, without communication there won't be any participation. This communication involves information passing from management to employees. After that it continues with consultation where management listens the feedback and may make any changes if they see it necessary. Later on it continuous with collective bargaining where the terms and conditions of employment negotiate between managers and employees or their representatives. The last step of employee participation will be joint regulation where both parties are expected come to an agreement and make decisions.

2.3   Types of Participation Concept

It can be seen from the above definitions that participation is a wide concept which is also associated with several other concepts. Mosoge (1996:9) notes that the following concepts are associated and at times interchangeably used with participation: delegation, consultation, influence, collective bargaining, representation and the concept of small group dynamics. In order to give a comprehensive definition of Participation, the above concepts are explored in the ensuing paragraphs.

2.3.1 The concept of delegation

Delegation implies allowing or giving power to subordinates to execute organisational decisions. Indeed, participation can be defined as the delegation of decision-making power from managers to employees, allowing the employees to make decisions without consulting their supervisors. According to Van der Westhuizen (1995:172) however, delegation means that the manager assigns duties to others, and divides work in such a way that it is executed effectively. In a way, delegation lightens the managers' workload and ensures that he/she manages instead of focusing on functionally executed tasks. But in this context delegation restricts participation to only operational aspects of the organisation.

Against the above backdrop, Van der Westhuizen (1995:174) makes a distinction between participation and delegation. Whilst participation refers to joint decision making, delegation refers to the assignment of duties. The implication is that, unlike

delegation, participation accords employees an environment where their views are heard by management. Both management and employees jointly work together to reach a decision. On the other hand delegation merely assigns duties for execution. But in a participative environment employees themselves should take part in the process of delegating. This means that they make suggestions within their teams and indicate among themselves which tasks an individual is supposed to execute. This implies that there are two forms of delegation: one is done by the manager alone by way of assigning duties while the other is executed in the context of participation where employees themselves take part in the act of delegating duties. In this study the latter usage of the term *"delegation"* is adopted.

Through delegation employees either individually or in their teams are given authority. Such authority enables them to make organisational decisions that would otherwise have been the preserve of management. But delegation of authority is not possible without effective delegating skills residing within organisational leadership. Therefore, participation through delegation means that employees, team leaders and overall management are equipped with the necessary skills to ensure its effective use. In this regard Robbins (1997:496) notes that the parties involved and to whom authority is to be delegated must be clear about what is to be delegated and the expected results of their use of authority. The above implies that delegation is not possible without information sharing between management, individual employees and their teams.

But every act of delegation comes with constraints. Individuals' or teams' authority to make and implement decisions independently is not unlimited. Robbins (1997:496) notes that authority is delegated to teams or employees to make specific decisions within clear parameters. The success of employee participation thus depends on whether Management has clearly specified team parameters or boundaries. It is evident from the above, that delegation as a concept may interchangeably be used with Participation. Thus, through delegation, employees/ teams are empowered to solve problems and even make recommendations to management. Delegation therefore, may be viewed as the highest degree of employee empowerment. It does not only distribute power within the organisation but it also develops employees' abilities as they carry out the delegated

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duties. Delegating tasks to employees, involving them in team meetings for planning and decision-making equips them with capabilities from which organisations too may also draw later.

2.3.2 The concept of 'consultation'

Consultation refers to the available opportunities for participation to employees by Management. Through consultation, management seeks the advice of employees, takes cognisance of their feelings and interests before a decision is made. According to Mosoge (1996:13) Consultation refers to the mode in which managers secure employee participation. Thus, consultation allows exchange of ideas and different points of view to take place between management and employees, and among employees themselves.

Consultation is directly related to participation. Through it, people in the organisation are able to reach technically correct decisions. The wider the consultations are within the organisation the more employee participation is envisaged. In organisations where snap decisions are made employees are rarely consulted. Such organisations tend to be autocratically managed. On the other hand, where there is Consultation there is also full employee participation. Management shares problems and seeks solutions from all the people. In the process alternative views and solutions are generated and evaluated and consensus reached. This enables such organisations to reach quality decisions. However the extent to which consultation leads to quality decisions depends on how much relevant information is shared among the involved parties.

2.3.3 The concept of 'influence'

Bendix (2001:656) defines participation in terms of the amount of influence employees are able to exert on organisational decisions. Influence therefore refers to the effect employees have on organisational decisions that affect them and their work. Conley (1989:368) defines it as employees' capacity to shape organisational decisions through either formal or informal ways. Participation thus can be conceptualised as the distribution of power or influence within an organisation.

Mosoge (1996:14) asserts that 'influence' is one of the three aspects (the other two being 'power' and 'consultation') that determines the quality of employee participation within an organisation. Mosoge (1996) further indicates that employees value participation only if they believe that there is potential for real influence. Real influence in this regard refers to employees' tangible effect on organisational decisions.

2.3.4 The concept of 'collective bargaining' and 'representation'

Employee participation may be through collective bargaining. In such a case trade unions engage in negotiations with management in order to influence decisions executed at higher organisational levels. Van Rensburg (1998:16/3) indicates that in the context of employment relations collective bargaining takes place against the background of differing and sometimes conflicting interests of employees and employers. Keith and Girling (1991:292-293) add that the adversarial parties have to formalise procedures during the process of collective bargaining and may at times require the services of a mediator. Van Rensburg (1998:17/9) distinguishes between two forms of collective bargaining: distributive and integrative bargaining.

The two forms are briefly discussed below.
Distributive bargaining : This form of bargaining is associated with the typical bargaining positions between management and unions. It takes place when the two parties' interests are in conflict. It involves the two parties making proposals, counterproposals and compromises.

Integrative bargaining: This form of bargaining occurs when there is a common problem at the workplace. The involved parties work together to define the problem, analyse it, gather, exchange and explore information and creative solutions.
During the process of collective bargaining, interaction takes place between union officials and management. Through such representation, employees are able to impact on decisions taken by management. Mosoge (1996:16) however, questions the effectiveness of employee participation through representation because it decreases the participation of the general populace of employees. This type of participation may breed alienation as it creates a gap between the expected and actual responses of the representatives.

Williamson and Johnson (1991:16) indicate that this leads to claims by the general population of employees of improper representation.

2.3.5 The concept of small group dynamics

Employee participation can also occur between small groups. Slabbert, Prinsloo, Swanepoel and Backer (1998:17/4) define a small group as one that consists of between two to twenty people in face-to- face interaction as they execute their duties. Small Groups include *inter alia* briefing groups, quality circles, autonomous working groups, and self- management teams. Through such groups, employees are able to influence decisions that are either related to their jobs or those that relate to managerial authority and policy making. At the same time organisations ensure that work is effectively performed. Effective performance is normally the result of the joint effort and contribution of each of the group members. Uys in Slabbert *et al* (1998:17/3) indicates that to achieve organisational goals the activities of the groups have to be co-ordinated; and quality and employee productivity has to be accounted for.

Small groups can either be formal or informal. Formal groups are created by the organisation to perform specified tasks; and membership is granted on the basis of skills or knowledge. The members interact and meet to execute official organisational policy. Thus the relationship between members is also official and focuses on executing the group's goal. Unlike the formal groups, informal groups develop spontaneously; and their goals centre around interpersonal relationships. Membership is voluntary, meetings are informal, with no agendas, and are held outside normal working hours. Relationships between members are also informal. Members are interpersonally attracted to those of similar interests (Uys in Slabbert *et al* 1998:17/6).

Most employees in an organisation are members of both the formal and informal groups. This means that informal groups influence employee decisions taken in the formal group context. The two groups thus cannot be separated from each other; and in order to improve productivity in the organisation, Management should encourage employee participation through the formally constituted groups; while at the same time acknowledging employees' need to belong to the informal groups.

The different concepts related to participation have been discussed in the preceding paragraphs. Based on the discussion as presented, a definition of employee participation may be formulated as follows: Employee participation is a process of interaction between management and employees (or their representatives) through which employees as teams, groups or individuals are empowered to influence managerial decisions and organisational policy, or to identify and solve work-related problems without managerial interference. This is done through consultation between employees and management or collective bargaining between the two parties. Participation can also be in the form of delegating of duties. Duties may be delegated by management or team leaders to employees, with employees themselves taking part in the act of delegating.

2.4   The Participative Model of Management

There is no doubt that organisations that aspire to become globally competitive have to implement a participative form of work-place governance; built on empowered teams, a consensus form of decision- making, information sharing, partnering relationships and a two-way communication system between Management and employees.

Therefore the participative model of work-place governance is explored further under the above building blocks.

2.4.1 Team building and empowerment

It is imperative to point out that in order to encourage full co-operation and participation, all employees and their teams must be empowered to do so. The question to be asked at the moment is how participative organisations empower their teams.

According to McDermott, Brawley and Waitte (1998:6) this is done by management relinquishing much of the core work in the organisation to the teams. Within the team, employees work with their peers as well as across the different teams to make and implement decisions that result in increased productivity. The teams plan, set priorities, co-ordinate with others, measure results and take corrective action in the case of discrepancies. Osburn, Moran, Musselwhite and Zenger (1990:8) note that in cases where teams are fully developed, employees can also be entrusted with the responsibility of handling personnel issues like absenteeism, team member selection and evaluation. But for teams to handle the responsibilities as explained above, they have to be trained in three

critical areas (Osburn *et al*; 1990:18) to enable them to acquire the following skills:

Technical skills

Cross–training in technical skills ensures that team members are equipped with the ability to perform different kinds of tasks within the team itself; and that they are flexible with regard to job performance. Individual members are also trained in specific skills designed to broaden their personal contribution to the overall effort.

Administrative skills

In team-based organisations, individual team members are assigned jobs which were traditionally done by supervisors. This means that former supervisors take on new roles as facilitators giving guidance to the team members as they perform. Therefore team members have to be given training which enables them execute such tasks as: recordkeeping, reporting procedures, budgeting, scheduling, monitoring, evaluating team members and any other aspects traditionally the domain of supervisors and managers

Interpersonal skills

As members of the various work teams, employees are required to communicate effectively with one another. Communication may be either in groups, face-to-face or with people outside the team. As they play the new roles of supervisor or manager, employees are bound to face explosive issues like interpersonal conflict. Against this reality employees have to be provided with skills-building training into the appropriate areas. It is vital that team members master among others: listening, conflict and group problem-solving skills.

Empowered with the relevant skills, employees in each team are positioned to work towards the achievement of the identified organisational goals through a sense of communal responsibility among themselves. Empowered employees are also able to effectively take part in decision-making that impacts on their work and the organisation. According to Bergman (1992:50) both employees and management work co-operatively; ensuring that decisions made enhance shared responsibility within the organisation. Osburn *et al* (1990:41) indicate that team empowerment through the acquisition of the

above skills impacts on the teams in the following ways.

- The teams become flexible as they conform to changing conditions within the organisation. Empowered employees are not only able to perform tasks within their teams but can also execute tasks from other teams because of cross-training in the technical skills.
- The teams become fluid in a sense that they do not have permanent members. They are able to replace current members with new members, re-tool to perform new functions and "farm out" other functions as the situation may warrant.
- They become lean as they strive to meet their goals more economically and with fewer people.
- They are responsive in a sense that the acquired skills enable them to appropriately react as they seek out, meet, and exceed the changing demands and expectations of both the internal and external customers.
- They become proactive because they are equipped with the ability to exercise foresight to prevent crises. In this regard, teams plan innovations to meet anticipated needs and continually streamline for increased productivity and global competitiveness.
- The overall impact of team empowerment is to create a sense of satisfaction among the employees. It is this satisfaction that elicits commitment from the work force; forcing employees to perform to the best of their abilities.

By supporting team development and empowerment the participative model of governance does not only equip employees with the ability to participate in operational duties, but also in the managerial process. Team participation in managerial processes will be explained further in the ensuing paragraphs.

2.5 Team Participation in Managerial Processes

Managerial processes entail all major actions that concern strategy formulation and implementation. McLagan and Nel (1995:47) indicate that management processes are central to the economic success of an organisation. Such processes are the powerful determinants of the organisations' culture. If organisational planning, vision, mission, strategy, policy formulation and all other management processes take place in authoritarian environment, participation can only be theoretical. But if employees take part in the formulation and implementation of the above processes, then participation becomes real. It is therefore imperative that organisations re-design their managerial processes in such a way that they support team/ employee development and empowerment. This will enable employees to take part in organisational management.

Unfortunately Rice and Schneider (1994:446) note that research has revealed that employees normally report decision deprivation in managerial rather than operational duties. This could partly be attributed to employee's lack of the necessary knowledge and skills that enable them to participate. However, the participative model of management is designed to equip teams and all employees with the skills that enable them to actively take part in all managerial processes of planning,vision, mission and policy formulation, goals and objectives setting, decision-making, problem-solving and organising. This is discussed in the paragraphs that follow.

2.6 Team Participation in Organisational Planning

Planning is a managerial activity that maps out a blueprint showing the intentions of an organisation (Kroon and Van Zyl, 1990:125 – 126). Through planning, the organisation establishes its purpose, which is later accomplished by the organisational strategy. Participative organisations involve their teams in strategy development, vision and policy formulation. They also ensure that their employees, customers, suppliers and trade Union representatives are given a chance to bring to the fore their knowledge regarding strategy and policy formulation.

Once strategic decisions and policies have been participatively reached, organisational leadership ensures that they are internalised by all employees. This helps in their

implementation. Internalisation can be through open dialogue, questions and even challenges. McLagan and Nel (1995:106) indicate that through dialogue and questions employees are given the opportunity to ask questions about the strategy and discuss its operational implications. A well-understood strategy can easily be implemented.

In cases where organisations are team-based, individual teams are also given the latitude to formulate their own strategies and policies as long as they are in line with the overall organisational strategy. By getting involved in planning team activities, employees contribute to the strategic planning of the entire organisation. Murgatroyd and Morgan (1993:135 – 137) suggest the following steps to enhance team participation in an organisation's strategic planning.

- Each team is accorded the opportunity to suggest and evaluate ways of improving performance.
- Ideas from the different teams are all brought together; amendments, rejections and additions are made to the original ideas.
- Management then refines the accepted ideas and declares goals without further discussion.
- Each team decides on how best to accomplish the declared goals.
- Performance is then monitored monthly by progress reports and displays of progress from each team.

Team involvement in organisational planning allows employees as a team to direct not only the individual team activities but all the other organisational activities. This is because planning, whether at team or organisational level acts as a guide to all other managerial and operational activities.

2.7 Employee/ Team participation in Vision, Mission, Policy Formulation and Strategy Development

Employees as a team collectively formulate the teams' visions. Such visions have to be in line with the overall organisational vision to ensure congruence between the teams' and the organisation's vision. McLagan and Nel (1995:105). Murgatroyd and Morgan (1993:94–95) suggest the following ways to ensure that teams participate in the

formulation of the overall vision of the organisation.

- Management appeals to the consciences of all employees regarding the importance and need for an organisation's vision.
- Employees are requested to write their own images of what the organisation should be; employees are then requested, in their groups to compile an aggregate of suggestions, or to eliminate ideas from the previous step.
- Employees are requested to describe values that underpin their images concerning what the organisation should be.
- Management proposes a mission statement based on the vision, image and value Statement.
- The mission is given to the teams for comment and improvement; and both the vision and mission are finalised by management after taking employees' views into cognisance.

When a vision is formulated through the above process, employees own it. It is this sense of ownership that encourages all teams to strive towards the attainment of the formulated vision. Indeed, by allowing employees to participate in the formulation of the vision, the participative model of management stimulates their commitment to the final mission; the overriding purpose of the organisation.

Employee participation in vision and mission formulation inevitably gives them the opportunity to participate in policy formulation. This is because the policy of an organisation provides the premises upon which its mission may be executed. The organisation's policy is supported by rules, regulations and procedures for the accomplishment of the mission. It is against this scenario that the participative model of management supports team involvement in the designing of such rules. Van der Westhuizen (1995:52) indicates that collective formulation of the policy and the rules that support it ensures employee commitment to the rules and procedures that support the Policy. It also ensures successful delegation of duties and authority.

2.8 Employee/ Team participation in Goals and Objectives Setting

An organisation's goals and objectives describe what the organisation wants to achieve both in the short and long term. This means that goals serve to operationalise the organisation's mission. Participative organisations encourage and support team participation in the goal-setting process. MacLagan and Nel (1995:108) note that once teams determine their goals participatively, "… there is deliberate integration with customers and other key stakeholders. The team overtly decides what it will and will not do. People are clear about their roles, responsibility devolves, and the strategy becomes action that can be taken". Furthermore employees who participate in identifying and setting organisational goals became more committed and productive.

Enhanced task performance and increased production are the ultimate results of joint goal- identification or -setting between employees and management of organisational goals. Increased production comes as a result of the self-evaluation process the teams undertake to determine whether the set goals have been achieved, or whether the team has added value to the organisation as it pursues the identified goals.

However it is important to note that during the process of joint identification of the organisation's or team's goals, individual employee goals have to be acknowledged; and where possible, must be addressed to prevent employees from being distracted from organisational goals. It is against this background that Mclagan and Nel (1995:110) Decision- making refers to the making of a choice between several alternatives with the aim of taking the most suitable action to solve problems or handle a situation. Mclagan and Nel (1995:110) regard decision- making as the essence of management. According to Hoy and Miskel (1991:30) the process of decision-making involves several steps some of which require employee participation since the decisions to be taken may directly affect them. Because of this fact, the participative model of management acknowledges the role of individual employees and their teams in decision–making. Hoy and Miskel (1991:30) note that the model promotes a consensus-style of management. Through the consensus-style of management, teams and employee teams are given the opportunity to take part in decision- making, and solving problems that affect them, their jobs and the organisation as a whole.

From the above, it can be seen that a participative model of management allows employees as individuals or within their teams to make decisions independently and to solve the day-to-day problems they encounter at the workplace. McLagan and Nel (1995:111) summarise the manner in which employees are allowed to participate in decision- making through the following quotation.

"The person who sweeps the floor must decide which broom to use, where to start sweeping, and what to suggest as long-term solutions where persistent or dangerous spillage causes problems. An insurance sales person must decide which policies to offer a client. An executive must decide which strategies the company will adopt and which it will not".

The implication of the above quotation is that participative organisations give the people power to make decisions in areas where their competence and skills allow them. In the same vein, different teams within the organisation are given the latitude to make decisions as teams as long as such decisions enhance the overall mission of the organisation. Though decisions may at times be independently made by either team leaders or managers, participative organisations normally strike a balance between independent, consultative, consensual and delegative decision-making (McLagan and Nel, 1995:114). This means that team leaders/ managers may make independent decisions only in cases where they have enough information and only when the commitment of employees to such decisions is either assured or unnecessary. In any other instances however, employees need to be involved in the decision-making process.

To enable employee participation in decision- making, participative organisations put in place a number of structures specifically designed for the purpose. Though quality circles present the most valuable approach to employee participation in identifying and solving problems related to production methods and delivery services, work-place forums and teams too play a major role in organisational decision- making. Osburn *et al* (1990: 227) note that a problem-solving approach for a work-team would comprise the following elements:

- Logical, easy-to-remember set of problem-solving steps;
- Set of tools and techniques to help team member solve difficult problems;
- Procedures for using the process effectively in team sessions; and
- Method for training team members in all the above.

The above problem-solving approach can strengthen employees' ability to deal with problems enhanced by:

- Augmenting the basic problem-solving process with special tools and techniques that enable individual employees and teams to work through problems;
- Developing ground rules for using the process in team problem-solving sessions;
- Training all team members in team problem-solving techniques; and encouraging learning for both managers and employees. Managers should be equipped with the skills to train employees, and employees should be given the skills to solve problems.

2.9 Employee participation in organising

Organising refers to the arrangement of people, resources and time in a manner that facilitates the accomplishment of organisational objectives. Mosoge (1996:92) notes that the task of organising entails assigning duties, authority and responsibility that accompany such duties to individual employees or teams.

To enable employees assume duty, authority and responsibility, participative organisations institute a *"hands-off"* plan for supervisory and support- group tasks. Osburn *et al* (1990:281) defines a *"hands-off"* plan as a systematic process designed to identify specific tasks that can be passed on to the team. This means that as employees or teams demonstrate the ability to take over specific duties and responsibilities, the supervisors or managers relinquish such duties, responsibilities and authority that accompany them to the employees. Therefore employees participate in organising when the leadership in the organisation adopts specific methods to ensure that teams and individual employees are involved in executing the various sub-tasks of organising. As employees or teams demonstrate their ability to perform, organisational leadership will:

2.9.1 Delegate specified duties to teams

Delegation means that the manager assigns some of the work to the employees along with the authority and responsibilities that accrue to it. Employees who had work assigned to them, expected to achieve the desired results without consulting their managers. Delegation thus is the highest degree of empowerment. It not only distributes power but it also develops employees' abilities. Indeed Kreitner and Kinicki (1998) contend that "…delegation gives non-managerial employees… more than a voice in decision-making." The question that now arises is: how does Management enhance Employee Participation through the delegation of duties? According to Canter and Canter (1992:49); delegation should be done in such a way that employees are motivated and committed to execute the assigned tasks. Kreitner and Kinicki (1998:325) add that management should view delegation as a process which should be developed and nurtured.

2.9.2 Refine organisational structures

In this regard Leadership completely divorces itself from structures that support Authoritarianism. McLagan and Nel (1995:79) indicate that the new structures have to:

- Reflect and reinforce transparency;
- Ease information- flow across organisational levels;
- Focus on the customers for increased competitiveness;
- Deliver added value; and
- Enable team members to define team needs in order to accomplish their work and sustain continuous improvement.

2.9.3 Encourage employees to coordinate organisational activities

Coordination implies that the various organisational activities are synchronised into one whole for effective implementation of participative practices. McLagan and Nel (1995:50-51) assert that co-ordination or ensuring congruence ensures that no area within the organisation remains an outpost from which Authoritarianism may stem to discredit participation. It is evident from the foregoing paragraphs that participative organisations are founded on Empowered Teams. But apart from empowerment of teams and employees the participative model of work-place governance is also founded on information-sharing between management and employees, a two-way communication system, and partnering

relationships. These aspects are discussed in the paragraphs that follow.

2.10 Communication as a building block of the participative model of management

Laws and Smith (1992:147) assert that communication between management and the shop-floor is essential in an organisation; and characterises the participative model of work-place governance. This means that regular and effective two-way communication between Management and employees is essential for the mutual exchange of information between the two parties. Through communication information is transmitted to employees, and in the process employees' attention is focused more systematically on product market competition, and a quality ethos can be created across the organisation. Canter and Canter (1992:49) note that communication to individual employees may take the form of Company House Journals, news letters, video presentation and chairman's forums. Through such communication individual employees are provided with information on major employment related issues. This form of communication, however moves downward from management to employees; and does not contribute to meaningful employee participation (Spurr, 1990:14-17). Employees hardly contribute to the issues involved. Communication to groups of employees manifests itself in the form of briefing groups. Through briefing groups, employees are informed of high-level or strategic decisions, organisational decisions, rationales behind changes of decisions etc. Through this type of communication employees become aware of how they will be affected by managerial decisions.

But the participative model of work-place management prescribes a two-way communication system in which both employees and Management exchange information. Hyman and Mason (1995:81) indicate that this form of communication is designed to bring about zero-defect in production standards. Employees use their knowledge of the production processes and the various aspects of the organisational systems to identify problems. They share information in this regard with management to ensure high production standards. Information-sharing could be in form of suggestion schemes, attitude surveys, quality circles, teams or work-groups.

2.11 Partnering as a building -block of the participative model of work-place Management

Relationships within the organisation are the smallest personal units in which Participation occurs, and form the foundations of either an authoritarian or participative Organisation (McLagan and Nel, 1995:132). This implies that when the relationships are adversarial, coersive or dependent they create authoritarian organisations. But as opposed to authoritarian organisations, participative organisations are founded on Partnering Relationships which acknowledge employees' independence and co-operation. Partnering Relationships are founded on trust among all stakeholders. This means that partnering creates an amicable relationship among managers and staff, team members, unions and Management, the organisation and its customers and suppliers. According to McLagan and Nel (1995:131), product quality, customer retention and organisational productivity are enhanced through such relationships.

From the above it can, therefore, be argued that by acknowledging partnering relationships, a participative model of management acknowledges the value of both employees and employers in the organisation; and the need to put each party's talents to use for the benefit of the two parties and the organisation. Sujansky (1991:50) indicates that it is incumbent upon management and the employees to create an environment where a partnering relationship can be nurtured. Management for instance has to recognise and acknowledge employee participation in the management processes, interact with the employees, provide leadership in form of direction and guidance jointly determine mutual goals, identify performance criteria, scope of authority, give feed back, solicit and avail employees of the needed resources. The manager's role in the creation of an environment with partnering relationships is to assume a number of roles.

As coach the manager encourages excellence, develops skills as trainer, and demonstrates appropriate behaviour as a model. As facilitator, leader and evaluator, he/she guides the process; provides vision and direction and appraises results respectively (Sujansky, 1991:51). On the other hand, employees' role in the relationship is under pinned by the manager's recognition of their capabilities. In this regard Sujansky (1991:51) asserts that employees have to initiate action, provide ideas and practice self-management. They must

also be open and honest, receptive to new ideas, learning, information and skills. Thus employees' relationship with their managers are characterised by behaviours which enhance the Partnering Relationship.

When a partnering relationship is finally established, employees are able to solve problems, look for opportunities, personal and business growth. Meanwhile, managers are enlightened by employees' ideas and inputs. This makes them well positioned to move businesses ahead as they improve product quality, retain customers and increase productivity. The overall effect is creation of a competitive business, which becomes a leader in the corporate world. A partnering relationship, however, will not mature unless employees are equipped with self- management skills, broad business understanding, knowledge of business finance and economics, critical thinking skills, integrative skills, mutual learning and decision-making skills (McLagan and Nel, 1995:144-155).

It is clear from the contents of the foregoing paragraphs that the participative model of governance equips all the concerned employees with the ability to participate meaningfully in all organisational processes. It is built not only on employee empowerment but also on consensus decision- making, it emphasizes learning and skills acquisition; a two-way communication system based on information-sharing; and development of partnering relationships.

The above eventually lead to the following.
- Organisational power is no longer determined by management alone, but is also subject to agreed- upon limitations which include various formal checks and balances.
- All employees have access to vital information which enables them to participate and take decisions jointly within their teams.
- Employees are constantly consulted and are able to voice out their opinions concerning relevant issues even when such opinions may be contrary to Management's.
- Management feels confident about delegating responsibility to individual employees or team leaders because such individuals are given the skills and

knowledge required to perform the responsibilities.

- Employees feel well-positioned to engage in collective bargaining.
- Leaders become accountable to the employees.
- Employees' needs and aspirations are reflected in all organisational decisions that are taken jointly.

Consequently all employees become committed to working towards increased production and ensuring the competitiveness of their organisations by:

- Using their time constructively;
- Taking note of every detail regarding their tasks;
- Putting extra effort in their tasks;
- Trying to get things right the first time;
- Becoming innovative;
- Making suggestions when called upon by management or the team leader;
- Developing trust among themselves; and with management;
- Searching for and making constant improvements;
- Enjoying their jobs; and
- Giving loyal support to the organisation where required.

2.12 Statutory provisions for employee participation in South Africa

One of the aims of this paragraph is to examine in some detail the statutory provisions as well as the economic imperatives for employee participation in South Africa; and to determine the extent to which South African companies have embraced participation to enhance their global competitiveness.

2.12.1 The constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996)

After the interim constitution of 1993, a new constitution was negotiated in the constitutional assembly in 1996. The constitution advocates peaceful co–existence and access to development opportunities for all South Africans. Articles related to language equality, human dignity, freedom of speech and access to information have fundamentally influenced the conduct and management of employment relations in South Africa by encouraging and supporting employee participation as explained below

Language

Apart from English and Afrikaans, the constitution recognised nine other African languages; giving all South Africans the opportunity to participate in parliament, government, schools, work-places etc in a language they are comfortable with.

Equality

All South Africans were declared equal before the law and given the right to equal protection. The article on equality thus outlawed discrimination based on race, colour, creed, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, disability, language, culture, age and birth. By outlawing discrimination, all South Africans are guaranteed participation in various spheres of life.

Human Dignity

The article on human dignity gives everybody the right to have his/her dignity respected and protected. This is vital if employees are to participate in their organisations.

Freedom of speech

Freedom of speech, as guaranteed in the constitution ensures that everybody expresses his/her opinions without fear of being victimised. This is essential in the work-place if employees have to participate effectively.

Access to information

Information-sharing is essential for effective employee participation. Therefore, by ensuring that all citizens have the right of access to information held by the State, or an organisation, the Constitution ensures that an employee has access to all relevant information for effective participation. Thus employees are in a position to make informed decisions when equipped with relevant information.

Legislation based on the above aspects, provides guidance to all South Africans with regard to participating at macro (national) and micro (organisational) levels. Employee Participation at organisational level however is specifically spelt out in the TRA below.

2.12.2 The labour relations Act 66 of 1995 (LRA)

The LRA supports the democratic values upon which the constitution is based. The Act seeks to promote Participation through work-place forums, collective bargaining structures and other parallel structures. Several authors (Du Toit, Woolfrey, Murphy, Godfrey, Bosch and Christie, 1998:254–255; Finnemore, 1998) assert that work-place forums are designed to facilitate joint problem-solving and employee participation as opposed to adversarial collective bargaining. According to Du Toit *et al* (1998:48) the LRA provides a legal framework for orderly collective bargaining, employment relations, policy formulation by unions and employers; and employee participation in decision- making.

2.12.3 Formal participative structures in South Africa

Work-place forums

The LRA provides for the establishment of a workplace forum in case a majority trade union requests it. Work-place forums are structures that are designed to facilitate meaningful interaction between employees and management. Through such interaction both employees and employers attempt to reach agreement on matters outside the arena of normal wage negotiations. The forums are designed to move the South African employment relations system away from adversarialism to a system built on participation, co–operation and co– determination. Thus the LRA dictates that the forum is consulted on various issues related to employees; jobs and working conditions. In the process employees are able to exchange ideas and different viewpoints with their employers or managers. According to Slabbert and Swanepoel (2002:220) the following are the general functions of Work-place forums:

- Promoting the interests of all employees, unionised and non-unionised;
- Enabling consultation between employees and the employer with a view to reach consensus;
- Facilitating employee participation in decision- making; and enhancing work-place efficiency.

In order to promote employees' interests, Management consults and allows them to participate and take decisions on any or a combination of the following issues:

- Workplace restructuring;
- Changes in the organisation of work;
- Partial or total plant closures;
- Mergers or transfer of ownership when it affects employees;
- Employee dismissal based on operational requirements;
- Meetings;
- Criteria for merit increases or the payment of discretionary bonuses;
- Training and education;
- Product development; and
- Export promotion.

But while the LRA is clear on the need to consult employees, it does not specifically indicate whether Management must obtain an agreement with the Forum before implementation of the proposal. Indeed Slabbert and Swanepoel (2002:221) reveal that Management may proceed with the implementation of a proposal despite the Forum's disagreement. But in such a case however, reasons justifying the unilateral implementation have to be supplied. Apart from being consulted, Work-Place Forums are also entitled to participate in joint decision-making with management. In this regard the LRA stipulates that Work-Place Forums must be consulted and a consensus reached on any of the following matters:

- Disciplinary codes and procedures;
- Rules relating to proper regulation of the work-place in so far as they apply to conduct and not related to employees' work performance;
- Measures designed to protect previously disadvantaged population groups; and
- Changes to rules that regulate social benefit schemes controlled by the employer.

Where the employer fails to reach a consensus with the forum, remedy is sought in procedures, which the two parties may have agreed upon. In the event of there being no agreed-upon procedures, the dispute is referred to the Commission for Conciliation

Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA). The CCMA is expected to settle the dispute through reconciliation; but should this fail, the remedy is sought through arbitration.

For both employees and Management to reach a consensus on the matters identified above, they must be equipped with relevant information. The implication here is that employers are legally bound to provide work-place forums with information, to enable them participate effectively in joint decision-making. However, Van Rensburg (1998:18/16) observes that an employer may not disclose information when:

- It is legally privileged;
- It's disclosure contravenes a prohibition imposed on the employer by a court order;
- It is confidential and its disclosure causes substantial damage to an employer or employee;
- It relates to an employee, and it is private and confidential. However in case the concerned employee agrees to its disclosure, the information may be revealed.

Work-place forums have been discussed as one of the formal participative structures dictated by the LRA in South Africa. It is clear that these structures are designed to promote co–operation, work-place efficiency, productivity and eventually the organisations' global competitiveness. However, since their inception, Work-Place Forums in South Africa have experienced numerous problems which have impeded their expressed purpose.

2.12.4 Collective bargaining structures

The LRA accords employees in South Africa an opportunity to participate at both national and organisational levels through the process of collective bargaining. Traditionally, collective bargaining has been associated with adversarialism between the involved parties; each party trying to secure a winning position to the detriment of the other. Thus, such bargaining is characterised by the conflicting objectives of employers and employees. Indeed the parties involved normally aim at self-gain without considering the other(s). In the context of this study, however emphasis is laid on the Integrative Approach to collective bargaining (see paragraph 4.2.4). Slabbert and Swanepoel (2002:283) note that integrative bargaining is designed to create more than a "win-win" situation. This implies that during the bargaining process parties aim at reaching a

settlement which is of mutual benefit to them all. Thus collective bargaining will be viewed as a process through which all stakeholders identify a common problem, define it, analyse it and negotiate with the aim of finding creative solutions that are beneficial to all the involved parties. In this regard Management and employees jointly try to divert their attention from issues that are bound to breed destructive conflict within the organisation. They work together in an attempt to resolve a common problem for the benefit of all those involved. Collective Bargaining can either be centralised or decentralised. Slabbert *et al* (1998:9/18) categorises centralised bargaining into two: broad centralised bargaining and narrow centralised bargaining. While the former involves a number of employers at industry level negotiating with one or more unions, the latter involves one or more unions representing the interests of one or more groups of employees in multi–plants or companies, within a group of companies, bargaining centrally with the company (usually a holding company). With regard to Decentralised Bargaining, Slabbert *et al* (1998:9/18) observe that one or more unions represent the interest of one or more groups of employee s within a particular plant or single company bargaining with Management at a particular plant. Whatever the form of Collective Bargaining engaged in by the different stakeholders, the resultant Collective Agreements should be able to create peaceful relations between employers and Management, reduce adversarialism and enhance organisational production.

But in order to understand the context of collective agreements and how they have been used in South Africa to create a climate that supports increased production, an analysis of the four major components of Collective Agreements as in the paragraphs that follow:

It is evident that the conclusion of any collective agreement consists of inputs, a converting process (the collective bargaining process), outputs (results of the process) and feedback. Slabbert *et al* (1998:9/5) – 9/4) define inputs as the forces or factors that influence the conclusion of collective agreements. Such forces could be either primary or secondary. Primary forces are either environmental, competitive, public sentiments or factors internal to the organisation. Secondary forces are either individual or group influences. Managing environmental forces, no doubt, impacts on the collective bargaining process to the extent that the resultant collective agreements are signed according to the

need for an organisation's survival in the global market or a specific environment in which the organisation operates.

Meanwhile, public sentiments and community views too, are major influences on acollective agreement. This means that any collective agreement reached at should reflect the needs of employees as members of the community and the goals of the organisation. Finally, Internal Environmental Factors refer to the factors or systems from within the business and the organisation itself. Thus a final Collective Agreement will no doubt be influenced by such factors as the structure, strategy, culture and leadership within the organisation. With regard to the Secondary Forces, Slabbert *et al* (1998:9/13) indicate that they are derived from primary forces. Secondary Forces are therefore the processes through which primary forces are narrowed down into concrete and comprehensive influences that enable the stakeholders to negotiate amicable solutions. Such forces consist of individual and group influences, that interact with goals of the parties, issues being discussed, labour law and precedents in bargaining.

2.13 Summary

South Africa's re-entry into global economy in 1994 necessitated the shift from employee exclusive attitudes which from decades polarized employees, to employee participation in decision making. A model which gives representation platform to employees from the lower level to the higher echelons of decision making within the organization. Such policy shift has yielded positive results in some companies but has also been subjected to great criticism from other sectors. Most organization in South Africa are moving towards a trend of ensuring that employees are involved in almost all, if not all, the structures of the organization. Organization arising from such participation and collective decision making is an integral foundation for economic success in South Africa.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to discuss theoretical research methodology issues, that is, the quantitative paradigm and the influence on research methodology with specific reference to this study. It also touches very briefly on the history of research and against this backdrop, the choices made are justified. This explains and justifies the choice of techniques employed for gathering data. In this case and, in particular, in order to put into perspective the methodological approaches, the researcher regards the outline and reflection on the process of development of the study, especially with reference to methods, as very important and worthy of mention.

3.2 Dimensions in Research

An essential part of being human is to strive continually to know oneself and one's environment better. This "passion to grasp the nature of each thing as it is" (Plato), is manifested primarily in the statements we make about reality (Mouton and Marais 1993:3). Mouton and Marias (1993:7) go on to say that social sciences research is a collaborative human activity in which social reality is studied objectively with the aim of gaining a valid understand of it.

Scientific research is one of society's most important functions. The progress society has made in the last centuries and the improved quality of life we have today is due to the advances made in science. Ghauri & Gronhaug (2003:83) believes that research philosophy depends on the way that the researcher thinks about knowledge. Three main philosophical positions in relation to research are positivism, interpretivism and realism. They are different, if not mutually exclusive view about the way in which knowledge is developed and judged as being acceptable.

3.2.1 The theory of research

The term research has been used in so many contexts and with such a variety of meanings that it is difficult to sort it all out. True research is a quest driven by a specific question which needs an answer. According to Walker (1975), to research is to search or investigate exhaustively. It is a careful or diligent search, studious inquiry or examination especially into investigation or experimentation aimed at the discovery and interpretation of facts, revision of accepted theories or laws in the light of new facts or practical application of such new or revised theories or laws, it can also be the collection of information about a particular subject.

Saunders (2002:3) defines research as something that people undertake in order to find things in a systematic way, thereby increasing their knowledge. Two phrases are important in this definition: 'systematic research' and 'to find out things'. 'Systematic' suggest that research is base on logical relationships and not just beliefs to find things out suggests a multiplicity of possible purposes for research. Ghauri and Gronhaug (2003:3) expand further that research is a process of planning, executing and investigating in order to find answers to our specific questions. In order to get reliable answers to our questions, we need to do this investigation in a systematic manner, so that it is easier for others to understand and believe in our interpretation.

In Saunders (2002:26) theory is defined by GG, Kornhause & Lazarsfeld (1995), as 'a formulation regarding the cause and effect relationship between two or more variables' which may or may not have been tested. There is probably no word that is more misused and misunderstood than the word theory. Specifically, Keith & Girling(1991) defined theory as being 'a set of interrelated constructs, definitions, and propositions that present a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among the variables, with the purpose of explaining and predicting the phenomena'.

Although theory can be derived in a number of ways, it can only be tested quantitatively. Reason being that theory is expressed in a system of propositions specifying how sets of constructs (variables) are related and the conditions under which they are related. Thus to test a theory, its constructs (even imperfectly) in a sample must be measurable whether the

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constructs are related (or differ) in the manner prescribed by the theory by ruling out change and other assumed causes.

3.2.2 The Importance of Literature Review

Given the importance of argumentative context of scientific research, a literature survey answers the following objective of whether the central theme of the investigation relates to other research and existing theories. Ghauri and Gronhaug (2003:3) further argues that it allows for an explanation to be given in the introduction to the study in which the basic argument of the research has been integrated in a wider framework of relevant theory and research.

Saunders (2002:43) agrees that literature review is essential and demonstrates an awareness of the current state of knowledge in the subject and its limitations and how the current research fits in this wider context). Taken from Saunders (2002) state that knowledge does not exist in a vacuum and is only valued when viewed in relation to other people's work in so far as it agrees or is disagrees from other people's work and findings.

Secondary data was obtained from published and unpublished studies, texts; research carried out by various organisations on the subject and as well as desktop studies reviewing several internet based resources. Government legislature was also accessed to understand in detail the mechanics of the several instruments that make reference to employee participation in decision making. This formed the basis of formulating the essence of this study.

3.3 The Research Paradigm

The design of any study begins with the selection of a topic and a research methodology. These initial decisions reflect assumptions about the social world, how science should be conducted, and what constitutes legitimate problems, solutions, and criteria of "proof." Different approaches to research encompass both theory and method. Two general approaches are widely recognized paradigms: quantitative research and qualitative research.

A paradigm is a perspective based on a set of assumptions, concepts, and values that are held by a community or researchers. For the most of the 20th century the quantitative paradigm was dominant. During the 1980s, the qualitative paradigm came of age as an alternative to the quantitative paradigm, and it was often conceptualized as the polar opposite of quantitative research. Each represents a fundamentally different inquiry paradigm, and researcher actions are based on the underlying assumptions of each paradigm. (Internet 3.2)

3.3.1 Qualitative Research Methods

A study based upon a qualitative process of inquiry has the goal of understanding a social or human problem from multiple perspectives. Qualitative research is conducted in a natural setting and involves a process of building a complex and holistic picture of the phenomenon of interest.

Phenomenological inquiry, or qualitative research, uses a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in context-specific settings.

Where quantitative researchers seek causal determination, prediction, and generalization of findings, qualitative research seeks illumination, understanding, and extrapolation to similar situations. Qualitative analysis results in a different type of knowledge than does quantitative inquiry. However, it is not necessary to pit these two paradigms against one another in a competing stance. Patton (1990) advocates a "paradigm of choices" that seeks "methodological appropriateness as the primary criterion for judging methodological quality." (internet 3.2) The main criticisms that are often levelled at qualitative research are those that relate to its perceived non-scientific approach. This usually comes from those who are used to using only quantitative research. However in order to produce good qualitative research a clear and rigorous research method is also needed.

3.3.2 Quantitative Research Methods

Logical positivism, or quantitative research, uses experimental methods and quantitative measures to test hypothetical generalizations. (Internet 3.2) It is important to recognize

that systematic observation and testing can be accomplished using a wide variety of methods. Many people think of scientific inquiry strictly in terms of laboratory experimentation. However, it is neither possible nor desirable to study all phenomena of interest under controlled laboratory conditions.

Quantitative research is an inquiry into an identified problem, based on testing a theory, measure with numbers, and analyzed using statistical techniques. The goal of quantitative methods is to determine whether the predictive generalization of a theory hold true. Broadly speaking, quantitative research is thought to be objective whereas qualitative research often involves a subjective element. It is thought that in gaining, analyzing and interpreting quantitative data, the researcher can remain detached and objective. Often this is not possible with qualitative research where the researcher may actually be involved in the situation of the research. (internet 3.3)

Quantitative research if carried out with care and in a rigorous manner can carry with it a great deal of power and influence. For many years it has been the most dominant kind of research. It features a high level of reliability and can be used to gather large amounts of information into understandable forms. (internet 3.3)

Quantitative research is inclined to be deductive. In other words it tests theory. This is in contrast to most qualitative research which tends to be inductive. In other words it generates theory. Quantitative designs of research tend to produce results that can be generalized. According to Ghauri and Gronhaug (2003:3) the most obvious difference between quantitative research and qualitative research is that quantitative research uses data that are structured in the form of numbers or that can be immediately transported into numbers.

3.3.3 The Method Chosen for this Study

The distinction between quantitative and qualitative research is important to be able to identify and understand the research approach underlying any given study because the selection of a research approach influences the questions asked, the methods chosen, the statistical analyses used, the inferences made, and the ultimate goal of the research. When critically reviewing scientific research, the questions asked, and the answers given, will differ depending upon whether the research is quantitative or qualitative.

The importance of the study should dictate what type of research methodology is employed and for the purpose of this study, and considering all critical aspects thereof, it has been decided that this study will be conducted by means of deductive, quantitative method using the survey technique since the many positive features mentioned enable it to be seen as the best option.

3.4 The Research Strategy

Empirical research is conducted to answer or enlighten research questions. Strategic choice of research design should come up with an approach that allow for answering the research problem in the best possible way and within the given constraints. This means that the research design should be effective in producing the wanted information within the constraints put on the researcher. The choice of research design can be conceived as the overall strategy to the information wanted. As mentioned by GG, Kornhause and Lazarsfeld, 1995, state that research designs play the role of master techniques while statistical analysis of the data collected was termed servant techniques.

3.4.1 Survey Research

Survey strategy is a popular and commonly used deductive approach used in business research. It is popular since it is a highly economical manner of collecting large amounts of data. By using the survey strategy, the researcher has more control over the research process. According to Saunders (2002:92) surveys include cross-sectional and longitudinal studies using questionnaires or interviews for data collection with the intent of estimating the characteristics of a large population of interest based on a smaller sample from that population.

Survey research is used to determine the characteristics of a population so that inferences about the population can be made. Today the word "survey" is used most often to describe a method of gathering information from a sample of individuals. This "sample" is usually just a fraction of the population being studied. According to Peil (1995:56) survey methods are a useful source of information on population distribution, attitudes and behaviour. Questions can be asked personally in an interview or impersonally through a questionnaire. In this study, after much thought and consideration, a questionnaire was

used as the preferred research tool. This was done due to the large population of the study and the dispersed location of the respondents. If well used, surveys can provide reliable, valid, and theoretically meaningful information.

3.4.2 Population and Sample Definition

Before deciding how large a sample should be the most logical staring point will be to define the population of the study. Bailey (1991) believes the ideally a study of the entire population or universe would give more weight to findings. However, it is not always possible to study the entire population so a study of a subset or sample of the population is used where results and findings are inferred to the entire population.

There is a wide range of possible options to consider when sampling. The purpose of the study needs to bear in mind and the various strengths and weaknesses as well as the practicality of different sampling methods need to be weighed. Sampling involves selecting individual units to measure from a larger population. The population refers to the set of individual units which the research question seeks to find out about. A sample is representative when it allows the results of the sample to be generalized to the population. The two main types of sampling depends on whether or not the selection involves randomization

3.4.3 Sampling Methods

Sampling methods can be classified into those that yield probability samples and non-probability samples. Probably the best known form of probability sample is the random sample. In a random sample each person in the entire population has an equal probability of being chosen for the sample and every collection of persons has the same chance of becoming the actual sample. Bailey (1991:91) mentions that the basis of all probability samples is the simple random sample in which each individual has an equal, non-zero, chance of being included and all possible combination could occur. A random sample may be chosen in a number of ways, depending on the size of the population. Simple random sampling is usually considered adequate if the changes or selection are equal to at any given stage of the sampling process.

3.5 Questionnaire

Questionnaire-based surveys are one of the most commonly used tools by market researchers to establish consumer preferences. Poor questionnaires can be misleading and most likely yield meaningless data, so an awareness of the techniques of questionnaire design is essential. In addition a sound awareness of the principles of questionnaire design is necessary in order to look more critically at other research and to begin to question the methods and tools of analysis that were used. (Internet 3.4)

3.5.1 Questionnaire Design

The purpose of all academic interviews is to gather reliable information relating to the topic being investigated. Before embarking on some form of interviewing, it is essential to understand precisely what information is required from the respondents and to determine if the information relates directly to the objectives of the research study.

When questionnaires are developed, the different types of questionnaire designs and questions to be asked as well as the nature and sensitivity of the questions need to be taken into consideration before the actual questionnaire is produced. Questionnaires are a form of structured interviewing, where all respondents are asked the same questions, and often offer the same options in answering them (yes/no, ranked on a scale, etc.). The researcher should ensure that the sample is representative and appropriate for the questions being asked so that the completed questionnaire is reliable and valid.

Before choosing the questionnaire as the preferred technique, the (dis)advantage of using a questionnaire must be considered. Questionnaires do not allow the researcher to establish a rapport with the respondents, and do not allow for observation of the respondent. They are also limited in the depth to which the researcher is able to probe any particular respondent, and do not allow for digression from the set format. However, having said that, depending on the situation, questionnaires have several advantages over verbal interviews. Questionnaires can offer confidentiality to respondents, and are generally easier to analyze and turn into quantitative results. The more structured they are, the more easily they are compared later. They also allow for more volume (i.e., they can be sent to greater numbers) to raise confidence levels in the sample.

All survey questions should be put through a "debugging procedure" in which several

quality control questions are asked, including the following:

1. Is the question one which respondents can easily answer based on their experience?
2. Is the question simple enough, specific enough, and sufficiently well-defined that all of the respondents will interpret it in the same way?
3. Does the question contain any words or phrases which could bias respondents to answer one way over another?
4. Is it understandable to respondents exactly what types of answers are appropriate?
5. Does the question focus on a single topic or does it contain multiple topics that should be broken up into multiple questions?

Bailey (1991) mentions that the key word in questionnaire construction is 'relevance'. The word relevance has 3 different facets

1. Relevance to the study's' goals
2. Relevance of the questions to the goals of the study
3. Relevance of the questions to the individual respondents.

3.5.2 Pilot Study

In order to improve results and validity of the questionnaire, a pilot study is recommended. The reason for this in essence is to test the questionnaire on a small number of respondents before committing more resources to the study and also to verify the quality of the questions and their relevance. According to Saunders et al (2000: 305) it is imperative that prior to utilizing the designed questionnaire to collect data, the researcher should first pilot it.

The purpose of the pilot is two-fold. Firstly, it helps the researcher to determine the relevance and the correctness of the research questions, i.e. questions are related to the aim of the study. The researcher fixes any misalignment issues in the questionnaire to ensure that the questions mean the same thing to all respondents and that they will not have problems in answering questions. This is what Saunders et al (2000: 305) defines as the assessment of the validity of the questions and the likely reliability of the data that the researcher will collect. Secondly, it allows the researcher to better judge how long it will

take a respondent to complete the questionnaire.

Piloting the questionnaire is also supported by Bell (1999) as quoted by Saunders et al (2000: 306) when suggesting that researchers should pilot their questionnaires to help them find out the following things that are critical in designing a questionnaire for a reliable study:

1. How long it takes to complete the questionnaire or interview
2. The clarity of instructions
3. Which, if any, questions were unclear or ambiguous
4. Which, if any, questions the respondent felt uneasy about answering
5. Any other comments.

3.6 Measurement

After administering the questionnaire in quantitative research, the researcher ends up with "numbers". These need to be analyzed, and then interpreted in light of the research question and other relevant theory and research findings. In order to create the "numbers" for quantitative research (data), a measurement process takes place. In other words, there is a need to convert some human phenomenon (in the human sciences) accurately into numerical data. The process of converting phenomena into data is called "measurement". (Internet 3.5)

According to Peil (1995: 8) measurements are considered reliable if the results are consistent and if the same people are asked the same questions again, and they will give the same answers. They are valid if they represent the true position whereby the observer reports correctly what happened, the strength of attitudes are accurately recorded etc. A finding may be reliable but invalid or (less often) unreliable but valid.

Measurement is a difficult and complex issue, and noise is always created in the data due to inaccuracies in the process of measurement. Thus, it is vital to minimize noise in by using reliable and valid methods of measurement.

3.7 Validity and Reliability

This study leans on the notion of objectivity in studying a human phenomenon as often happens in ... studies of quantitative design (Kincheloe, 1991: 142). The real difference between reliability and validity is mostly a matter of definition.

3.7.1 Validity

Validity involves the degree to which you are measuring what you are supposed to, or put more simply, the accuracy of your measurement. (internet 3.6) According to Gay (1992: 155) and Marshall & Rossman (1994: 144), validity can be divided into two types: external validity and internal validity. External validity relates to the extent of the applicability of research findings to other contexts, whereas internal validity refers to the consistency of the effect of the questionnaire questions. The latter means that the questionnaire questions must be able to measure what they are intended to measure.

3.7.2 Reliability

According to Babbie (199*: 119) reliability refers to the likelihood that a given measurement procedure will yield the same description of a given phenomenon if that measurement were repeated and validity refers to the extent to which a specific measurement provides data that relates to commonly accepted meanings of a particular concept. (R&R 19**:137) go further in stating that measurements are subjective to random errors and systematic errors, which may affect reliability and validity. Reliability estimates the consistency of measurement, or more simply the degree to which an instrument measures the same way each time it is used in under the same conditions with the same subjects. (internet 3.6)

3.8 Limitation

The Hawthorne effect is clearly an example of a social desirability tendency. As Selltiz et al succinctly state the matter: Most people will try to give answers that make themselves appear well adjusted, unprejudiced, rational, open-minded and democratic (quoted in Smith 1975:136). In South Africa this effect could be quite prominent in the context of when individuals fill in a survey questionnaire, they would want to appear well adjusted and democratic given the past history of apartheid.

All survey studies have certain methodological limitations in common. And, most surveys have additional limitations that are imposed by constraints on time and money and by other factors unique to a particular project. Researchers cannot be expected to conduct a 'perfect' survey study, but at the same time the researcher is expected to have a through understanding of the limitations of their work and have made reasonable judgments about how to spend their limited time and resources.

Limitations within this study may affect the interpretations of the results in the following manner:

- To what extent was the sampling frame representative of the population, and what are the potential impacts of any errors or omissions?
- To what extent was the study subject to sampling error?
- What was the response rate?
- What, if anything, is known about the non respondents?
- Which questions are more sensitive to possible errors or biases than others?

The purpose of this study was to assess the impact of employee participation in decision making at Engen Petroleum and to create awareness and add to the current body of knowledge on this subject. This study was limited to the province of KwaZulu-Natal due to resource constraint such as employee availability and time. However, Kwazulu-Natal has got a significant number of employees due to the physical location of Engen Refinery and Engen Lubricants blend plant.

3.9 Data Analysis

The primary purpose of conducting a survey is to produce data to help answer the research questions. The data has to be collated, organized, summarized, and is described in the following chapter. Unless the entire population of interest was surveyed and the response rate was 100%, the data provided by surveys are estimates of population variables.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

As stated by Ghauri & Gronhaug (2003) in the day to day conduct of human subject research, certain dilemma may arise from concerns about the problems investigated and the methodological procedures used to study them.

As explained by one ethicist in GG,Kornhause & Lazarsfeld(1995)

"The underlying principle guiding research is to proceed both ethically and without threatening the validity of the research endeavour insofar as possible. It thus is essential that investigators continually ask how they can conduct themselves ethically and still make progress through sound and generalizable research" (Kimmel, 1988, p.9)

Ethical questions arise because of competing values or interests related to perceived moral responsibilities. In general, researchers are obliged not to do physical or psychological harm to research participants and to do research in a way that is most likely to produce valid results.

GG,Kornhause & Lazarsfeld(1995) say that ethics are moral principles and values that influence the way a researcher conducts research activities. It is the moral obligation of the researchers to find answers to their questions honestly and accurately. Ethical responsibility starts with the problem formulation.

All social science researchers have an ethical obligation to protect the welfare of the people they study. Although survey studies tend to be relatively innocuous compared to some alternate methodologies, there are three ethical principles that all survey studies should follow.

1. Respondents informed that participation is voluntary and that they may omit answers to any particular questions if they choose. Steps to encourage participation such as a telephone call prior to the questionnaire being sent to obtain permission and to explain the nature and importance to the study and to the industry in general should be considered. However, in the final analysis, people have every right to refuse to participate and should not be coerced.

2. Adequate measures must be taken to protect the confidentiality of respondents. Although overall survey results may be presented publicly, no references to individuals

will be made and no association to any individual responses can be traced.

3. Promises made to the survey respondents that a copy of the survey results will be sent to them should be kept.

According to Ghauri & Gronhaug (2003) questions about fair-mindedness are a source of ethical conflict in science as well as in everyday life. Ethics and evaluation are intertwined in many ways.

3.11 Methodology

3.11.1 Protocol / Procedure Followed

These sections describe each step in the implementation of the survey, and address such questions as:

- What survey method was employed and why?
- When was the survey administered?
- What steps were taken to increase the response rate to the survey?
- What response rate was obtained?
- What was participation in the study like, from the respondents' point of view?
- Did any unexpected problems occur? If so, what were they and how were they resolved?

The covering letter sent with the questionnaire included information about why the respondent should answer the purpose of the questionnaire, how long it will take, and information on how it is to be returned when completed.

The questionnaire included details of on how it should be completed. Although effort was made to keep it short as possible, the fear was that it will not capture the essence of the study and may even render the study useless so the questionnaire was as long as it needed to be to capture the correct level of information so inferences and relationships could be developed thus answering the objectives in a relevant manner.

A pilot study was conducted on (5) individuals who fitted the respondents' profile. Some were from the researcher's environment and some were within the same industry but not part of the sample. Questions were grouped in categories to make answering easier and to get the desired impact. Since the study asked questions on several issues albeit all related,

it made it easier to keep them separated in some manner. This was done to keep a smoother thought flow proc ess for the respondents so they did n ot have to "change gears" mentally.

Very few questions had the option of "other" so respondents were not let of the hook easily by not having to answer a question by taking the easy way out. Where 'other' was used, there was a need to specify their answer. Questions that were perceived to be more difficult to answer were put at the end of the questionnaire to create comfort at the beginning so respondents continued with completion.

Those respondents that did not respond within the time limit they were reminded electronically to complete the questionnaire. Once the cut off deadline passed, respondents that did not respond were regarded as 'non response' error in the analysis.
A letter of appreciation was sent to all respondents who completed and returned the questionnaires with a promise that they will be sent a copy of the results of the study once it was available.

3.11.2 Method of Data Collection

Population of the study

Sampling method

Pilot study

Respondent's profile

Survey Questionnaire Design

Data Collection

Questionnaire Introduction Steps

Protocol for Data Analysis

3.11.3 Respondent's Profile

This study targeted the following individuals within the organisation taking into consideration their role and impact of key areas.

Level in Organization	Involvement in Organization
• Senior Manager • Middle Manager • Manager	very involved in initiating, and making a final decision in the organisation
• Sales force • Supervisor • Marketing assistance	are able to influence and implement decisions in the organization

Reasons for choosing this group of individuals

1. interaction with internal/external customers gives them first hand understanding and knowledge of the situation
2. ability to make lasting change in organization
3. part of policy making team within the organization
4. should have a clear understanding of organization decision making process and what is seen to have a impact of decision making

3.11.4 Procedure in the Survey

The survey was carried out in implementing the following steps

The Population was determined by downloading e-mail list of Engen employees in Kwazulu-Natal from the national database. In light of this study being targeted to employees, issues such as availability and time are often a crucial factor to both employer and employee due to a survey taking place during working hours.

The Sample

Once the population size was established, a simple random selection was made of the population. According to the random sample list issued by Engen Head Office, a population of 2000 requires a sample of approximately 100 respondents. To make provision for incorrect data such as telephone numbers and non-response of some respondents of the sample, a total of 60 respondents were chosen.

3.11.5 The Survey Method

Due to the large sample size and the wide dispersion of respondents, it was decided that the most effective and efficient manner of administering the questionnaire was e-mail. Although there are many disadvantages to using e-mails, there are many more advantages to using e-mails.

3.11.6 The Survey Instruments / Technique

The survey technique chosen was the questionnaire. The questionnaire was chosen given the nature of the study and the requirement of large amount of data as well as the dispersion of respondents in the province of Kwazulu-Natal.

The Questionnaire was designed to extract data in a very simple easy to comprehend manner. The questionnaire was divided into sections so respondents did not need to change gears mentally all the time.

Sections	Intentions
One	Dealt with demographic information being asked. This was done with the intention to find a pattern in the answers based on age, length of service, gender and race.
Two	Sought to understand the level of participation in decision making at the organization
Three	Sought to obtain an understanding regarding the degree of satisfaction with current participation in decision making
Four	Dealt with some sensitive issues seeking the opinion from respondents on their view in connection with obstacles and challenges faced by employees when participating in decision making

3.11.7 The Covering Letter

The covering letter was basically an official introduction to the survey showing that this was an authentic study done for purely academic purposes. The purpose of this letter was:

- to ensure that the respondent understood the context of the study
- to enlighten the respondent of the need and importance for the study

- to make the respondent aware of the time lines

- to give details about the University and the supervisor

- to ensure the respondents understood what was required of them

- to ensure that respondents were aware of their rights in so far are refusing or withdrawing from the study at any given time

- to assure respondents of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses

- to explain how the data will be disposed of once the study was over

- to advise that a copy of the results of the analysis will be sent to them

3.11.8 The Step Taken

1. All respondents were telephoned to introduce the subject and to extend the invitation to participate in the survey by agreeing to fill out the questionnaire.

2. Other than to get agreement for participation, respondents were telephoned to ensure that the correct person was contacted and to obtain or confirm their e-mail addresses.

3. The questionnaire along with the covering letter was sent to the respondents

4. Two days before the deadline as articulated in the covering letter, respondents who had not responded, were contacted and reminded of the need to complete the questionnaire.

5. once the cut-off date was passed, all respondents who did not respond, were categorised as non-response

6. Personal Letters of Appreciation were sent out to those respondents who met the deadline for the questionnaire

7. The questionnaires were counted and coded

8. The data software package SPSS was used to analyse the information and from this the necessary deductions and conclusions were drawn using statistical models and methods.

3.12 Strategy

Porter (1980:17) as quoted from a DBA thesis, "strategy is about making choices, trade offs; it's about deliberately choosing to be different. Organisation need to enhance employee participation in decision making within the organisation. The choice they make will also drive overall strategy of the organisation. Many may chose to limit the impact of participation by choosing just to comply with legislation while others may be totally committed and see this as an opportunity to do several positive things such as improve the decision making process and to make a genuine contribution to addressing the wrongs of yesteryears.

3.12.1 Employee Participation

Employee participation in South Africa is dictated by both the constitution in general and the Labour Relations Act, 66 of 1995 (LRA) in particular. It was also indicated that the purpose for this legislation is without doubt to democratise institutions at all levels of society, including the work-place. Management understand the reason for the establishment of WPFs, namely to increase employee participation, which is also one of the objectives of the LRA. By advocating co-operation between Management/ employers and employees, and enhancing employee participation in decision- making, the act also seeks to advance economic development, social justice, labour peace and work-place democratisation. But employee participation in South Africa is not only dictated by law but also the economic imperatives. Through such a framework employers and employees are afforded the opportunity to co-operate and participate in the development of the core elements of organisational strategy.

3.12.2 Data Capturing and Statistical Presentation

The data and observations gathered were summarised, analysed, compared, interrogated and interpreted so as to reflect the general perception of the population and to either support or reject the objectives of this study. A recommended implementation plan is outlined in the latter part of this paper. The data extracted from the completed questionnaire was coded and entered into the statistical package for quantitative research studies, known as SPSS programming software or Statistical Program for Social Sciences.

The results are presented in two distinct categories, vis a vis; Descriptive Statistics and Inferential Statistics. These are further divided into sub-categories.

Category of Statistics	Sub-category of Statistics
Descriptive	Descriptive frequency statistic
	Comparative descriptive statistics
	Central tendency
Inferential	Correlations
	ANOVA
	Chi-square
	Chronbach Alpha Test (reliability)

3.13 Summary

This chapter has provided an introduction to the basic principles of scientific survey design and outlined the steps that all survey researchers should take, including:

1. Determining if a survey study is the best way to answer the research questions.

2. Obtaining a random or representative sample of sufficient size.

3. Making an informed choice of survey method.

4. Creating a questionnaire that is valid, reliable, and unbiased.

5. Designing a questionnaire and implementation plan that achieve a high response rate.

6. Developing procedures that ensure that people are treated ethically.

In conclusion it is clear that the sociological dimension of research cannot be ignored in any analysis of the process of research. In our previous chapter, literature review and the importance of conducting research in relation to work already conducted was discussed. The forthcoming chapter will extrapolate further on the data collected and the manner and method of analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

Presentation of Results

4.1 Introduction

The empirical data for this study is presented in this chapter. The study was captured and processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 15.0 software. A p value <0.05 was considered statistically significant. Microsoft word was used to prepare graphs and tables. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001) data analysis, helped the human mind to comprehend disparate data as a organized whole. With data analysis an overwhelming body of data can be condensed into amount information that the mind can more readily comprehend because human beings can only handle so much of information at a time. In this way a pattern or relationship can be seen in data which may otherwise go unnoticed.

4.2 Results of the Study

The quantitative results were presented using descriptive statistics in the form of frequency and percentage and they were computed for the demographic variables. The percentages of responses from the respondents were presented and briefly discussed which displayed relationship between variables; made comparisons between respondents; confirms similarities and differences between variables and related these findings to the objectives of this study.

4.3 Analysis of the Data

Data was analyzed using reliability and one-sample chisquare.

4.3.1 Reliability

Cronbach's alpha was computed separately for each the questions relating to decision-making and challenges.

4.3.2 One-sample chisquare

One-sample chisquare was computed to compare the differences between observed and expected proportions for each question.

55

4.4 Profiles of Employees at Engen

The results on the profiles of employees at Engen are discussed under demographics and employment details.

4.4.1 *Demographics*

Data on the age; gender; and race group were analyzed.

4.4.1.1 Age

Figure 4.1 Age Group of Employees

Age	Percentage
Between 20-30	10.5%
Between 31-40	31.6%
Between 41-50	39.5%
Between 51-60	18.4%
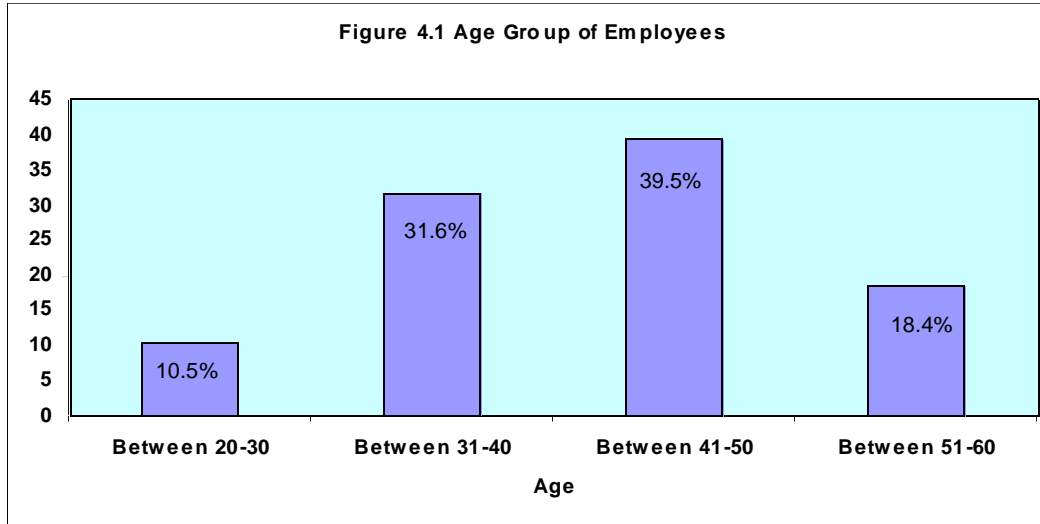
The data in Figure 4.1 reflects that 10.5% of respondents are between 20-30 years, 31.6% of respondents are between 31-40 years. Sampled employees are between 41-50 years contributed 39.5% and in the 51-60 years age category were represented by 18.4%.

4.4.1.2 <u>Gender</u>

Figure 4.2 Gender Group of Employees

42.1%

57.9%
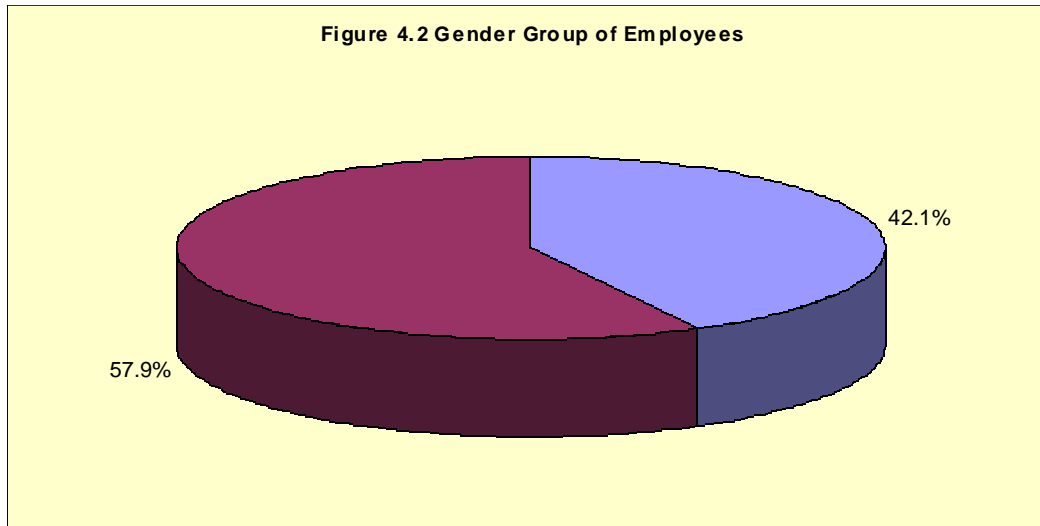
As illustrated in Figure 4.2, the majority of respondents are male at 57.9% and 42.1% of respondents are females.

4.4.1.3 <u>Race Groups</u>

Figure 4.3 Race Group of Employees

White 34.2%

Black 31.6%

Indian 28.9%
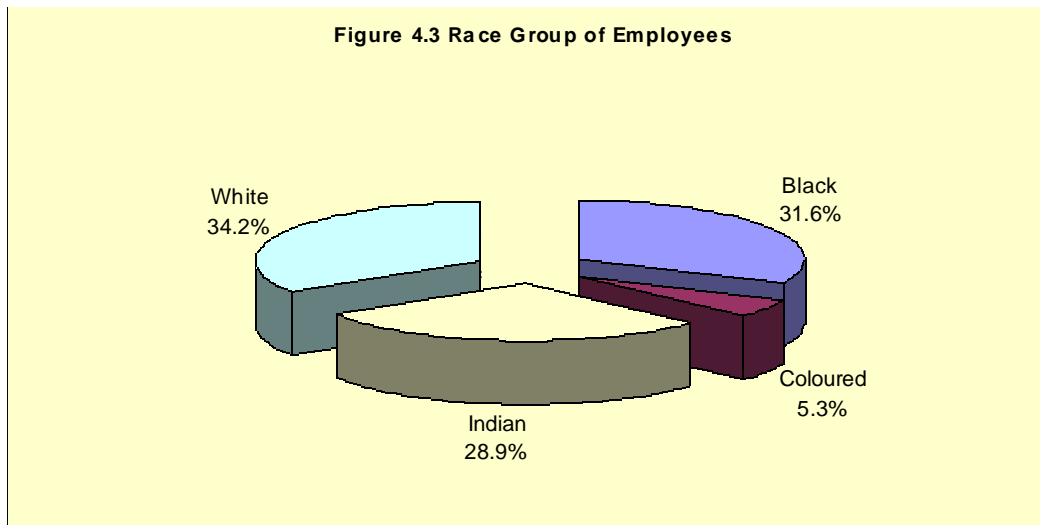
Coloured 5.3%

According to Figure 4.3, the White race group (34.2%) constituted the bulk of respondents followed by Black race group at 31.6%. Indians made up 28.9% and Coloured's, 5.3%.

4.4.2 *Employment Details*

The employment details of employees are presented below.

4.4.2.1 Position in Company

Figure Figure 4.4 Position in Company
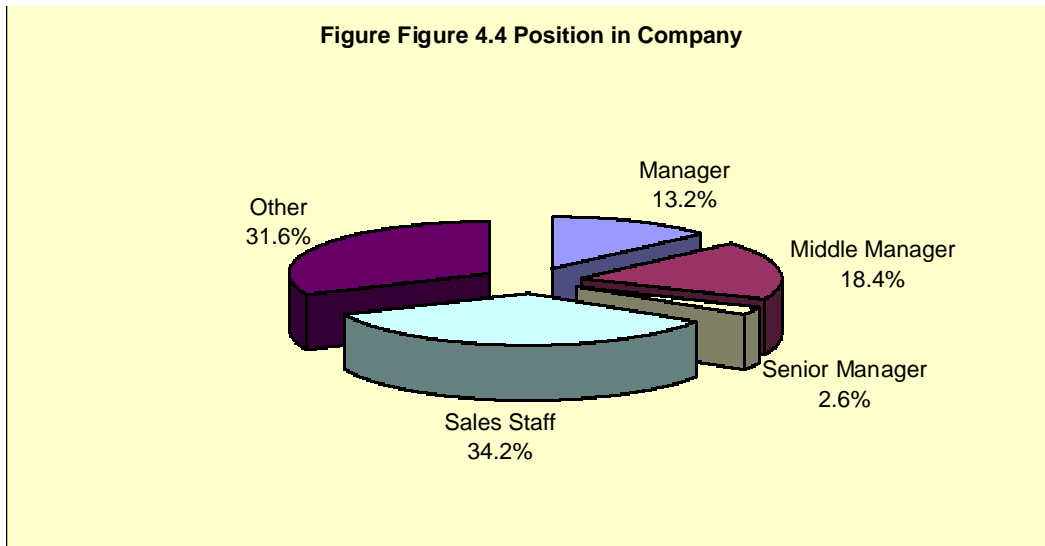
As evidenced in Figure 4.4 that the majority of respondents (34.2%) are made up of sales staff. Other contributed 31.6% of respondents and 18.4% respondents represent middle manager. A total of 13.2% respondents are managers and 2.6% are senior managers.

4.4.2.2 Tenure of Employees

Figure 4.5 Tenure of Employees
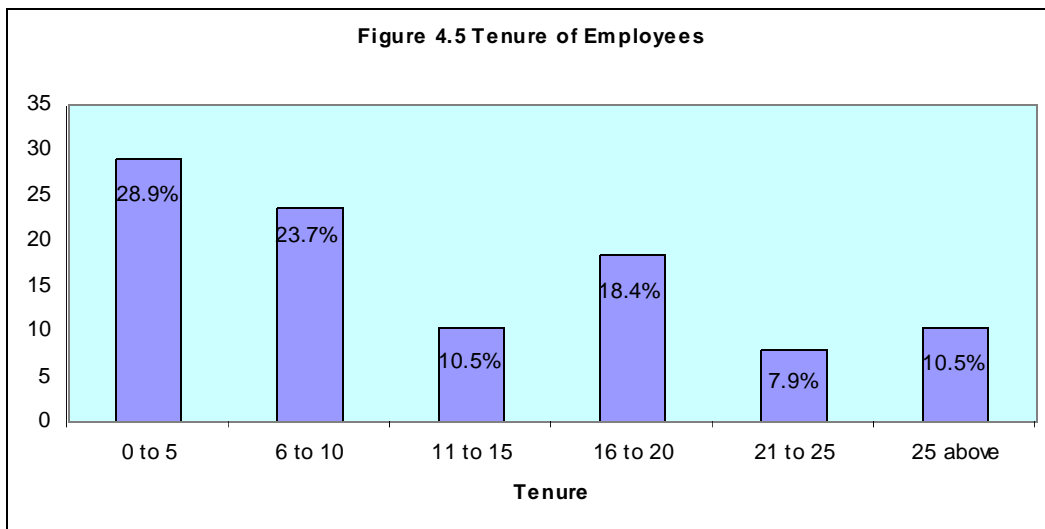
As illustrated in Figure 4.4 most respondents (28.9%) have worked for the company for 0-5 years. A total of 23.7% of respondents worked for 6-10 years for the company, 18.4% have worked for 16-20 years, 10.5% have worked for 11-15 years/25 years above and 7.9% of respondents have worked for 21-25 years in the company.

4.4.2.3 Departments

Figure 4.6 Departments of Employees
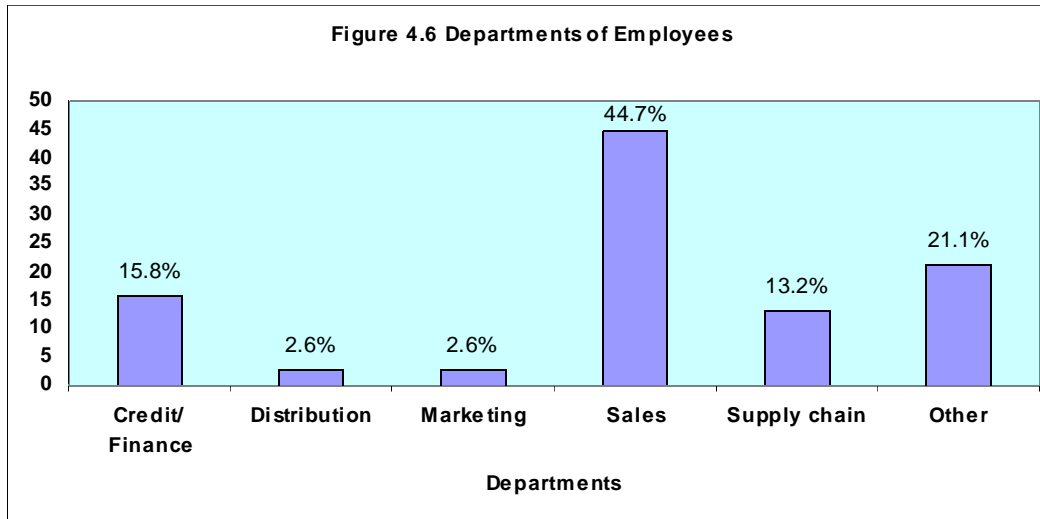
The data in Figure 4.6 shows that the majority of respondents (44.7%) are from sales department, 21.1% of respondents are representing other departments, 15.8% of respondents is made up of credit/finance departments, 13.2% of respondents are from supply chain and 2.6% of respondents are from distribution and marketing departments.

4.5 Level of Employee Participation in Decision Making

The level of employee participation in decision making results are presented by discussing the degree of employee involvement within the organization and level of awareness about existing structures.

4.5.1 *Employee Participation in Decision Making*

Figure 4.7 I do participate in decision making within the organization
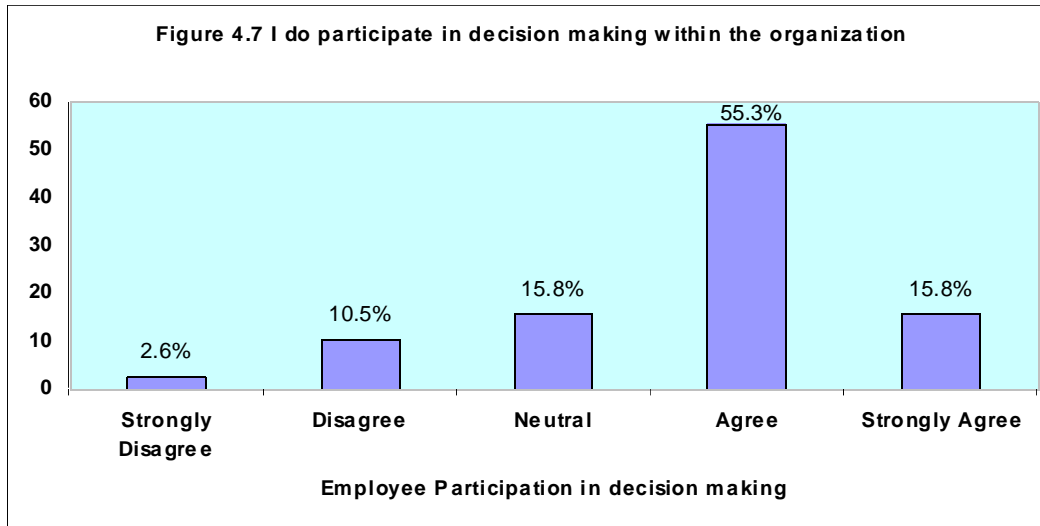
According to Figure 4.7 which is in response to the statement 'I do participate in decision making within the organization', 2.6% Strongly disagreed, 10.5% Disagreed, 15.8% Indicated Neutral, 55.3% Agreed and 15.8% strongly agreed.

4.5.2 *I encourage friends/ colleagues to participate in decision making*

Figure 4.8 I am happy to encourage friends/colleagues to participate in decision making
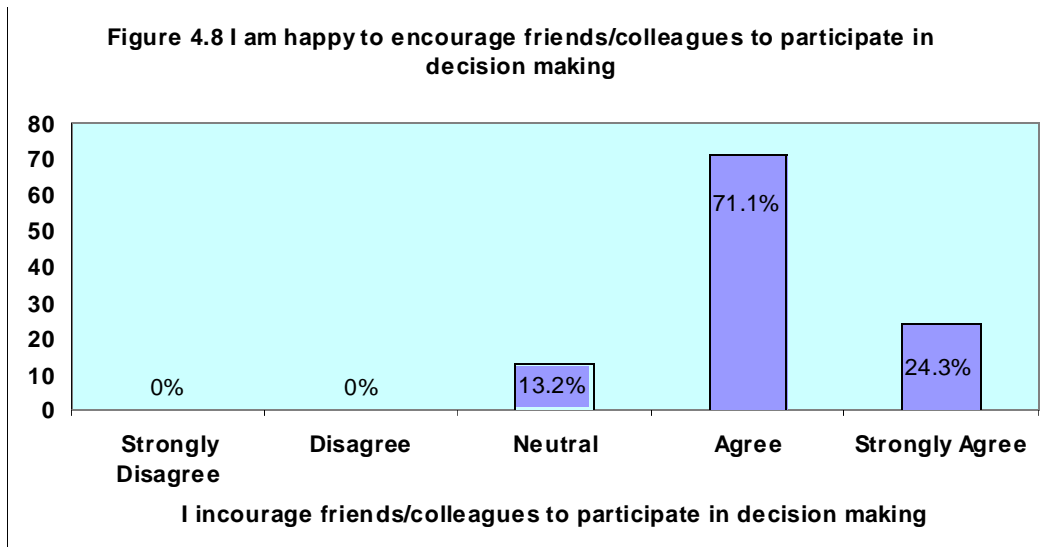
As evidenced in Figure 4.8 the respondents are happy to encourage friends and colleagues to participate in decision making, .0% strongly disagreed, .0% Disagreed, 13.2% Indicated Neutral, 71.1% Agreed and 15.8% Strongly agreed.

4.5.3 *Participation in decision making is adding value to the company*

Figure 4.9 I am made to feel that my participation in decision making is adding value to the company

My participation in decision making is adding value to the company
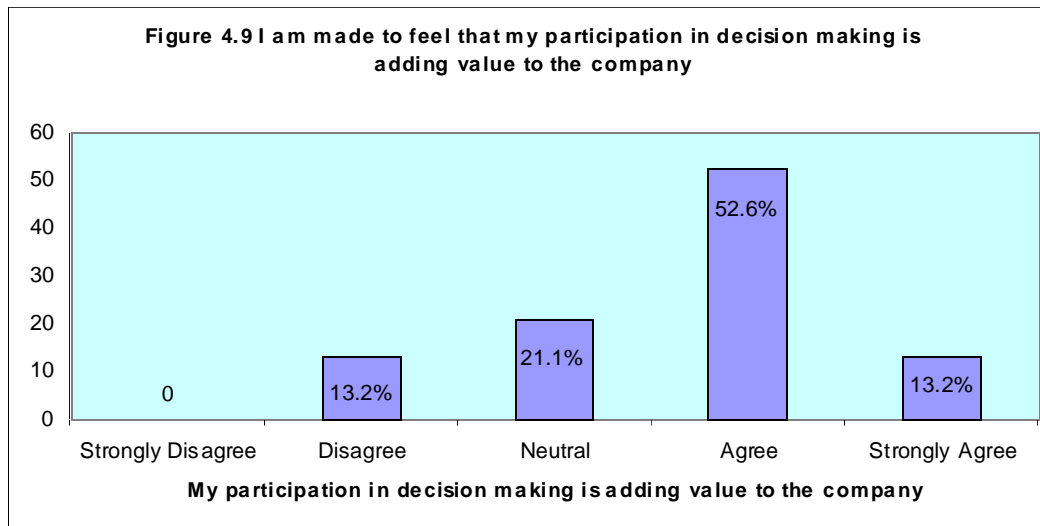
As illustrated in Figure 4.9 the majority of respondents (52.6%) feel that participation in decision making is adding value to the Company whereas 0% Strongly disagreed, 13.2% Disagreed, 21.1% Indicated Neutral, and 13.2% Strongly agreed.

4.5.4 *Direct and Indirect Participation are effective*

Figure 4.10 I find direct and indirect employee participation more effective

Direct and indirect participation are effective
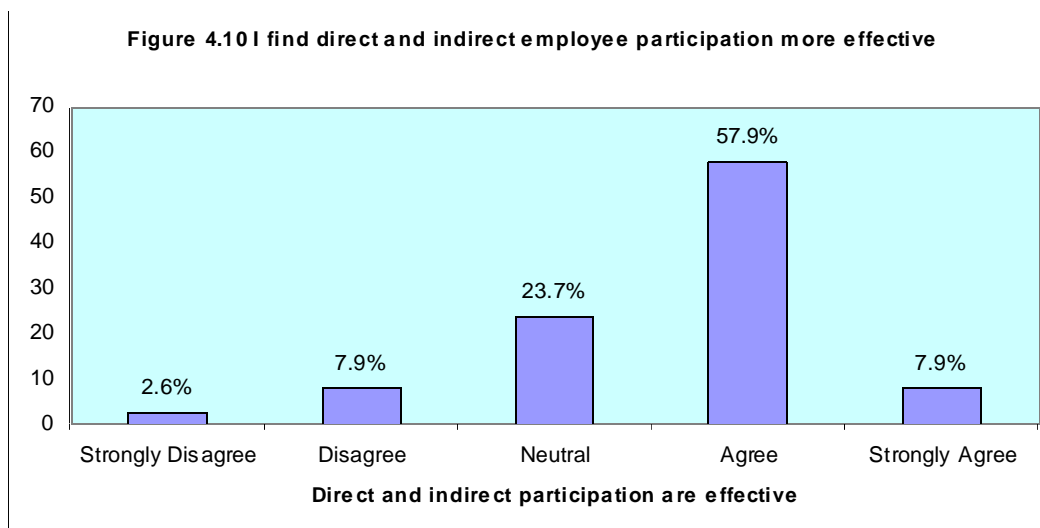
It is evident from Figure 4.10 that 57.9% of respondents agree that direct /indirect employee participation are more effective, 2.6% Strongly disagreed, 7.9% Disagreed, 23.7% Indicated Neutral, and 7.9% Strongly agreed.

4.5.5 *Employee Participation Structures*

Figure 4.11 In my department I know all employee participation structures
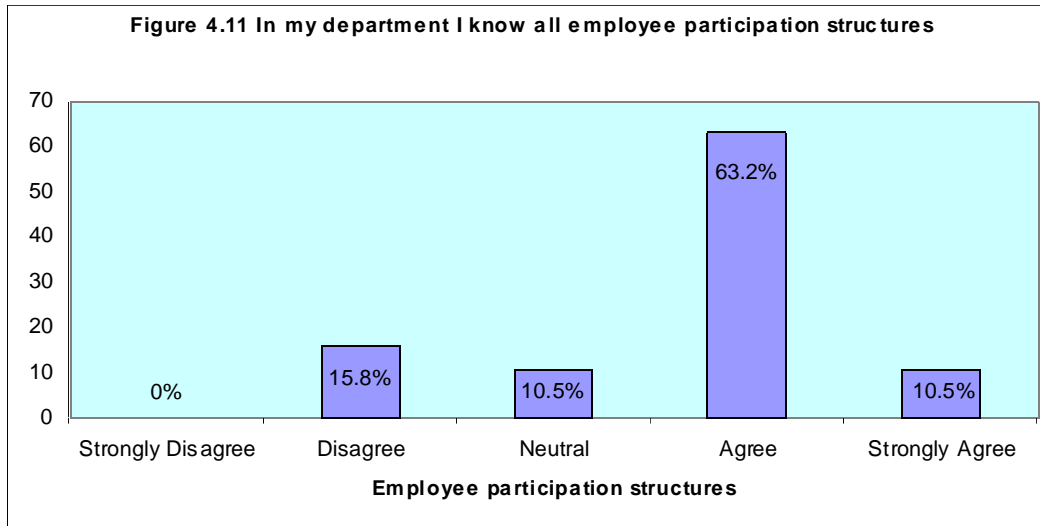
The data in Figure 4.11 reflect that the majority of respondents (63.2%) agree that in their respective departments they are fully aware about employee participation structures, 0% Strongly disagreed, 15.8% Disagreed, 10.5% Indicated Neutral, and 10.5% Strongly agreed.

4.5.6 *Workplace Participation Structures in Decision Making*

Figure 4.12 Workplace participation structures allow me to be hihgly involved in decision making
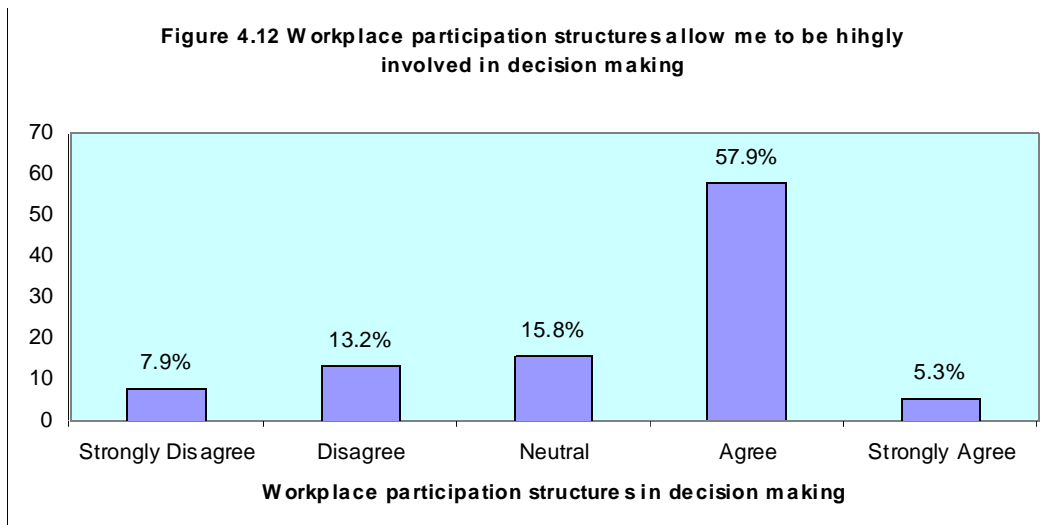
It is evident from Figure 4.12 that 7.9% of respondents strongly disagree that
Workplace participation structures allow them to be highly involved in decision making whereas 13.2% Disagreed, 15.8% Indicated Neutral, 57.9% Agreed and 5.3% Strongly agreed.

4.5.7 *Overall level of Participation*

Figure 4.13 Overall Level of participation in decision making is satisfactory
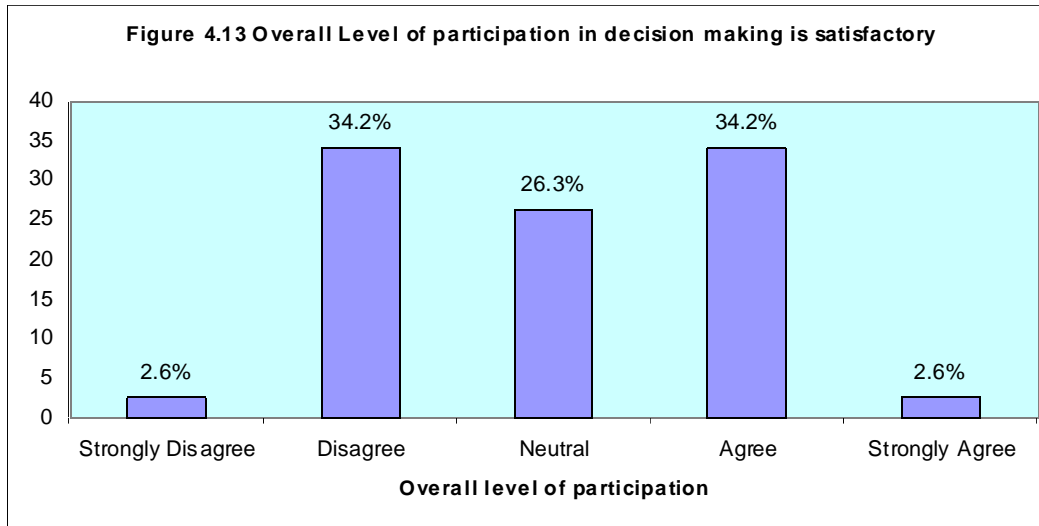
Figure 4.18 illustrates Overall Level of employee participation in decision making is satisfactory, 2.6% Strongly disagreed, 34.2% Disagreed, 26.3% Indicated Neutral, 34.2% Agreed and 2.6% Strongly agreed.

4.6 Level of Satisfaction with Current Participation in Decision Making

This section presents the findings whether employees are satisfied with current participation

4.6.1 *Level of Satisfaction with Employee Participation*

Figure 4.14 Considering everything I am satisfied with employee participation
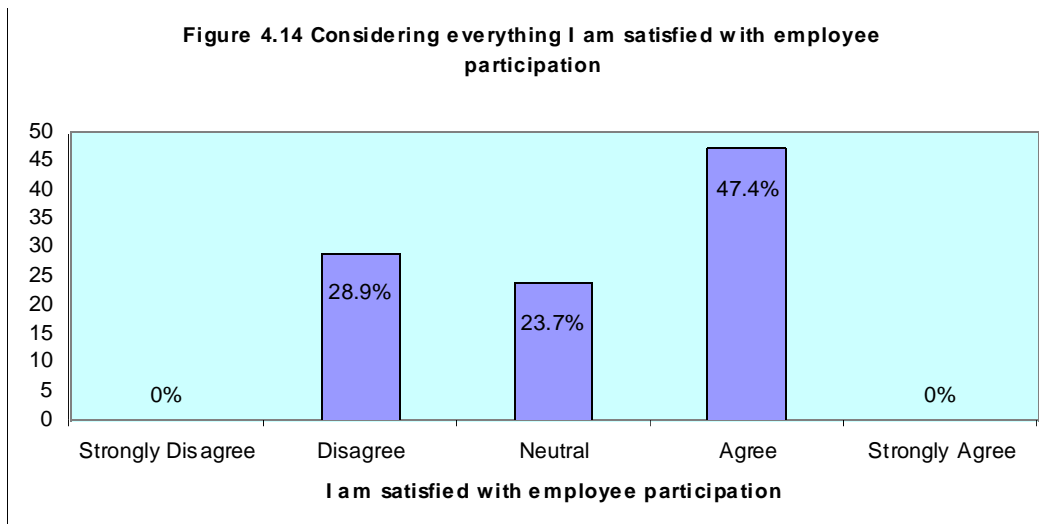
It is evident from Figure 4.14 that the majority of respondents (47.4%) agree that they are satisfied with employee participation. It was concerning that a substantial 28.9% are not satisfied with employee participation. Only 23.7% of respondents remain neutral regarding satisfaction with employee participation.

4.6.2 *I like existing employee participating structures*

Figure 4.15 I like existing employee participating structures
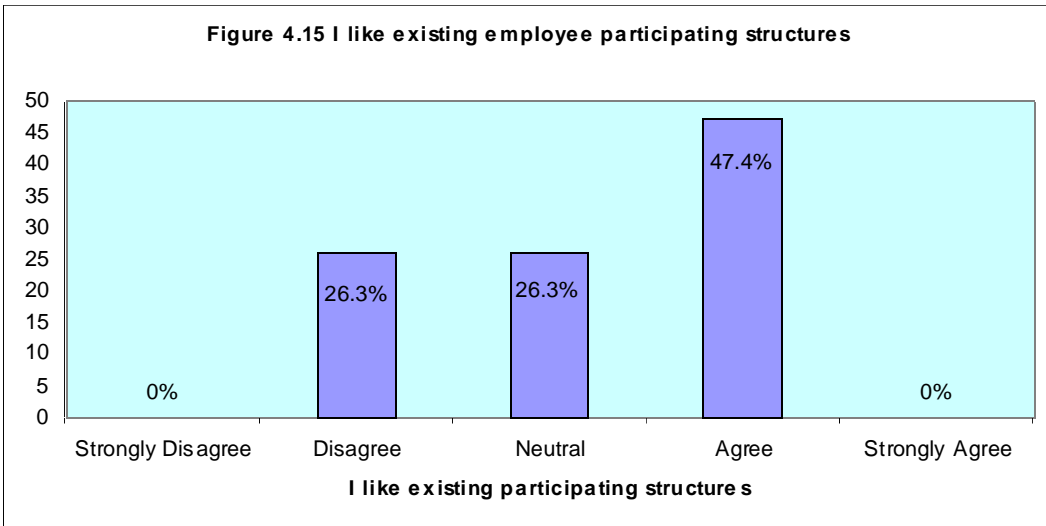
Figure 4.15 clearly highlighted that of the 47.4 of respondents agree to the existence of employee participating structures. Twenty six percent of respondents disagree that they like existing employee structures, and 26.3% of respondents are neutral.

4.6.3 *I feel employee participation is important in decision making*

Figure 4.16 I feel employee participation is important in decision making
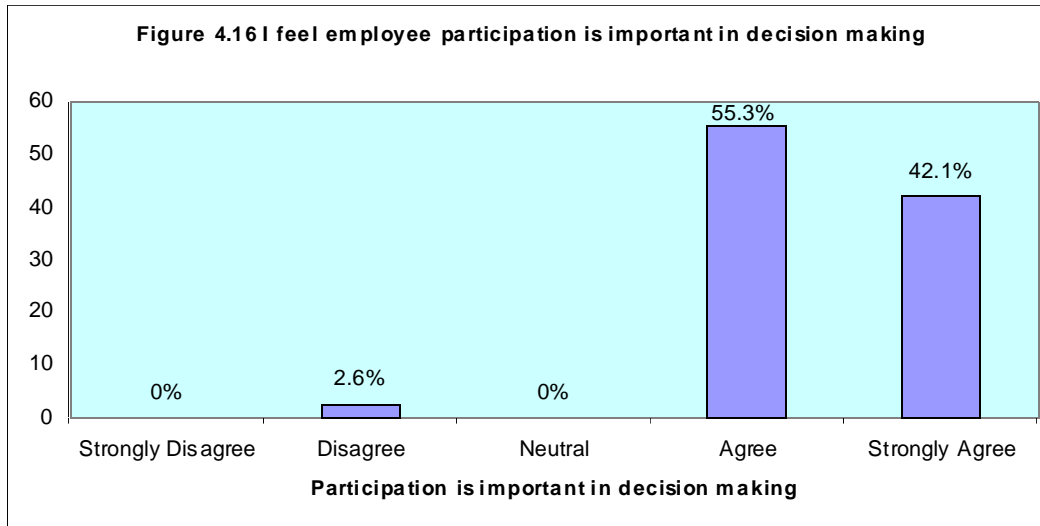
As illustrated in Figure 4.16 a significant 55 .3% of respondents agree that participation is important in decision making. A considerable amount of 42.1% of respondents does feel that employee participation is important in decision making. A small percent (2.6%) disagree that participation is important in decision making.

4.6.4 *I am adequately recognized for my contribution in decision making*

Figure 4.17 I am adequately recognized for my contribution in decision making
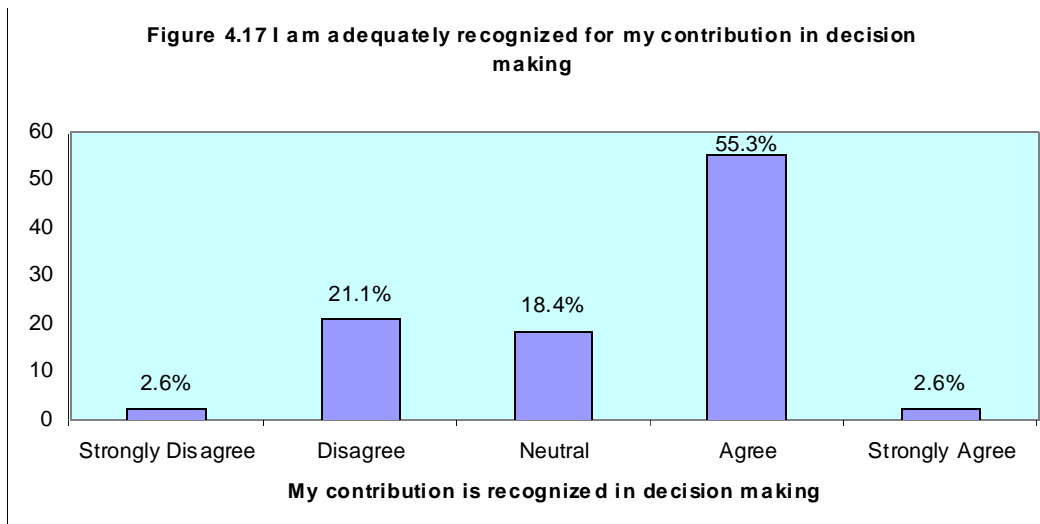
As evidenced in Figure 4.17 the majority of respondents (55.3%) agree that their contribution is recognized in decision making and 21.1% of respondents disagree with the statement. Fair amounts of percentage (18.4%) are neutral, 2.6% strongly agree and 2.6% strongly disagree.

4.6.5 *My participation gives me a feeling of personal accomplishment*

Figure 4.18 My participation gives me a feeling of personal accomplishment
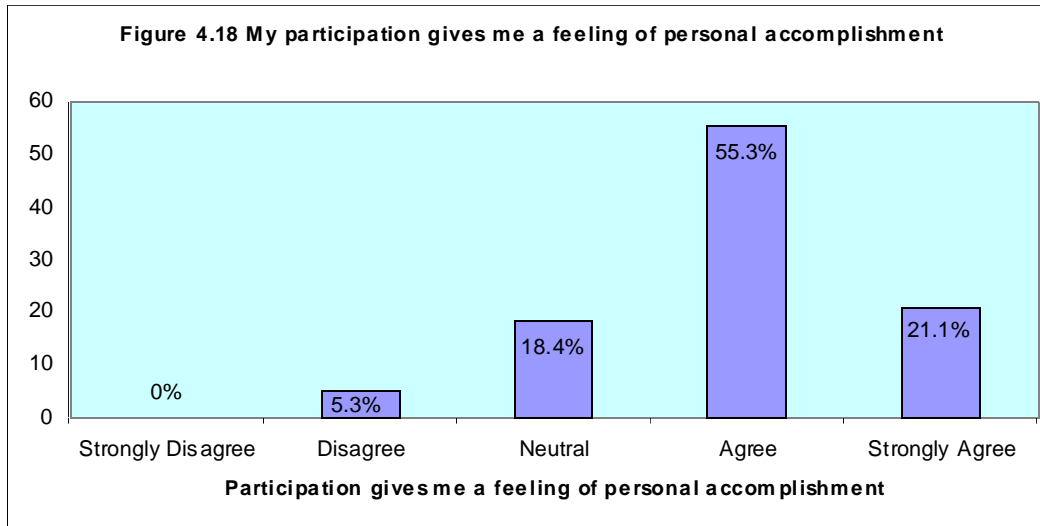
According to Figure 4.18, majority of respondents 55.3% agree that participation gives them a feeling of accomplishment. Close to a quarter of respondents (21.1%) disagree that participation gives them a feeling of accomplishment, 18.4% of respondents undecided and small percentage of 5.3% disagree with the statement.

4.6.6 *I find employee participation more stimulating*

Figure 4.19 I find employee participation in decision making more stimulating
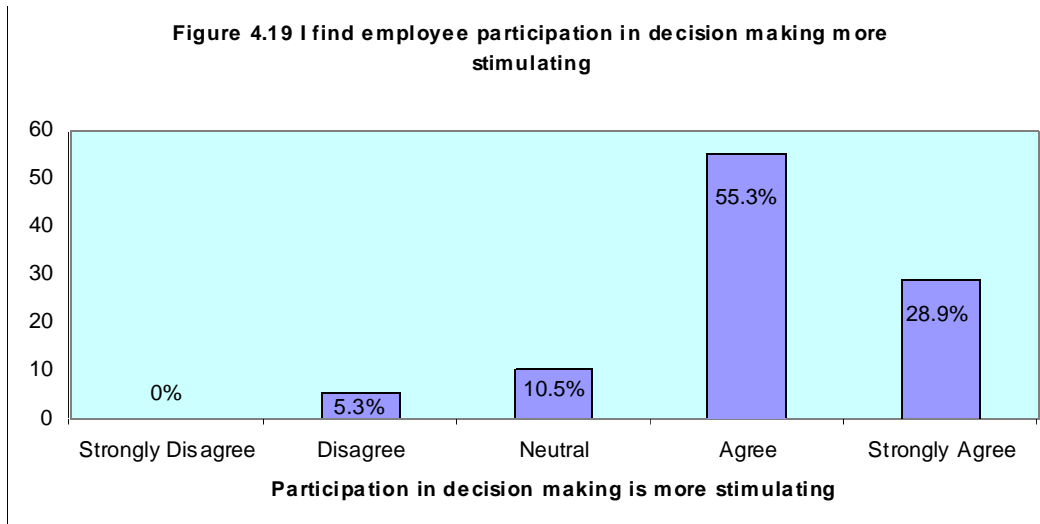
As illustrated in Figure 4.19 a significant percentage of respondents (55.5%) agree to the fact that employee participation in decision making is stimulating. However, 28.9% of respondents disagree, 10.5% remain neutral and 5.3% disagree.

4.7 Management Feedback regarding decision taken

This section analyzes obstacles and challenges faced by employees when participating in decision making. Moreover, management feedback regarding decision taken.

4.7.1 *Obstacles and Challenges faced by Employees*

Figure 4.20 To evaluate obstacles and challanges faced by employees when participating in decision making
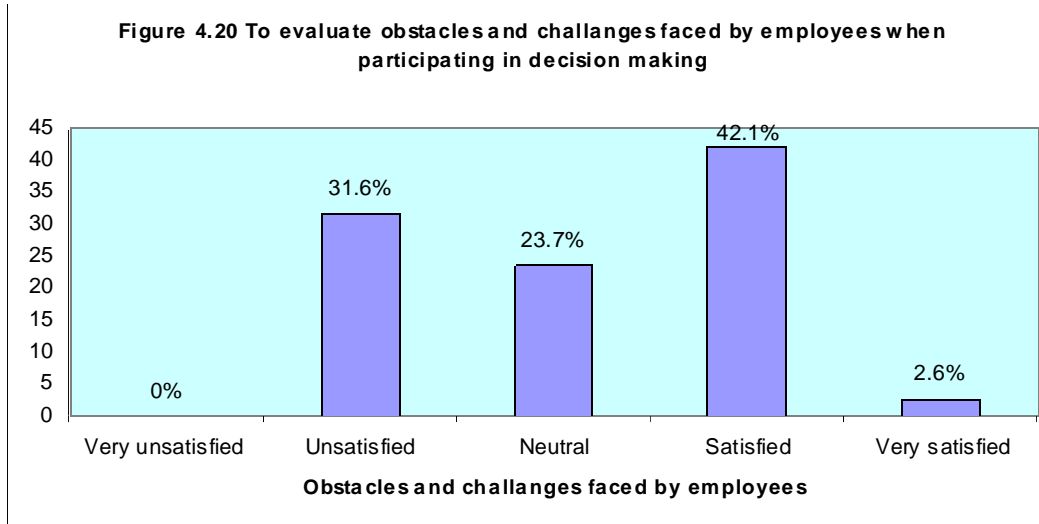
As is evidenced in Figure 4.20, 42.1% of respondents are satisfied with management feedback regarding decision taken. Contrary to that, 31.6 of respondents are not satisfied with management feedback. However, 23.7% of respondents are neutral and small percentages 2.6% of respondents are very satisfied.

4.7.2 *Employee level of influence*

Figure 4.21 Employee level of influence
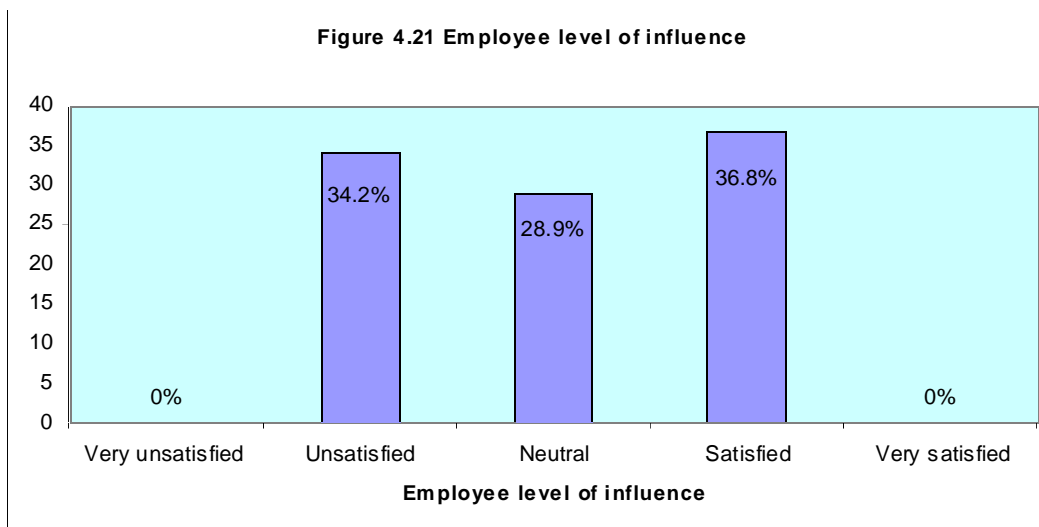
It is evident from Figure 4.21 that most respondents 36.8% are satisfied about level of influence, 34.2% somewhat unsatisfied while 28.9% of respondents are undecided.

4.7.3 *Employee representation*

Figure 4.22 Employee representation
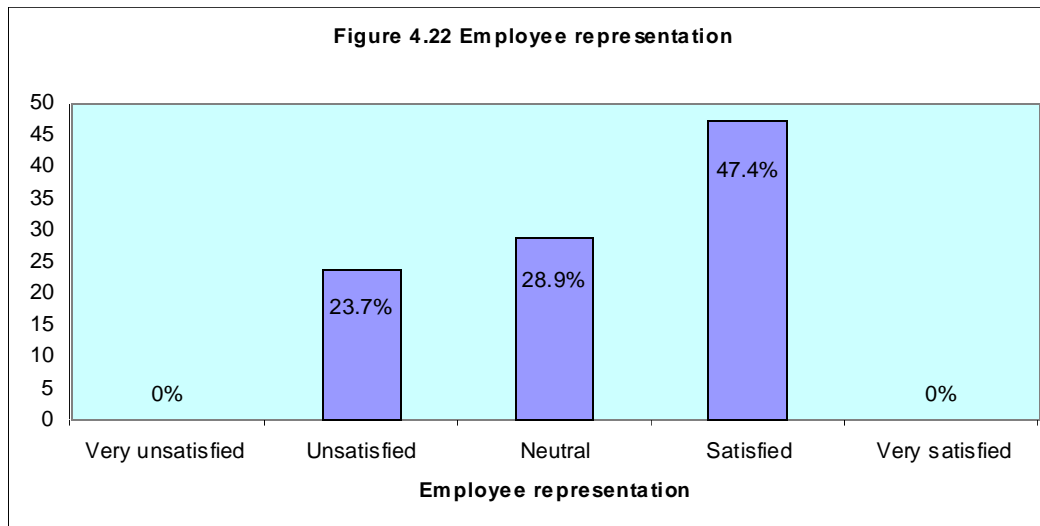
As illustrated in Figure 4.22, majority of respondents (47.4%) are satisfied about representation while 28.9% remain neutral and 23.7% of respondents are not happy with employee representation.

4.7.4 *Communication resources*

Figure 4.23 Communication resources
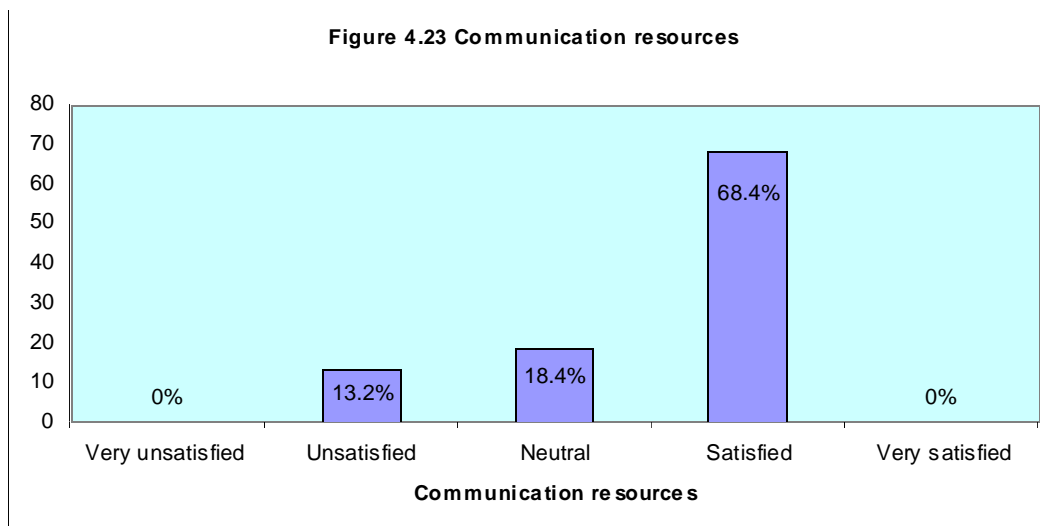
Figure 4.23 illustrates that a significant percentage of respondents (68.4%) are satisfied with communication resources. 18.4% of respondents are neutral and 13.2% are not satisfied with communication resources.

4.7.5 *Time allocated to employee participants*

Figure 4.24 Time allocated to employee participants

60	
50	52.6%
40	36.8%
30	
20	
10	10.5%
0	0% 0%

Very unsatisfied · Unsatisfied · Neutral · Satisfied · Very satisfied

Time allocated to employee participants
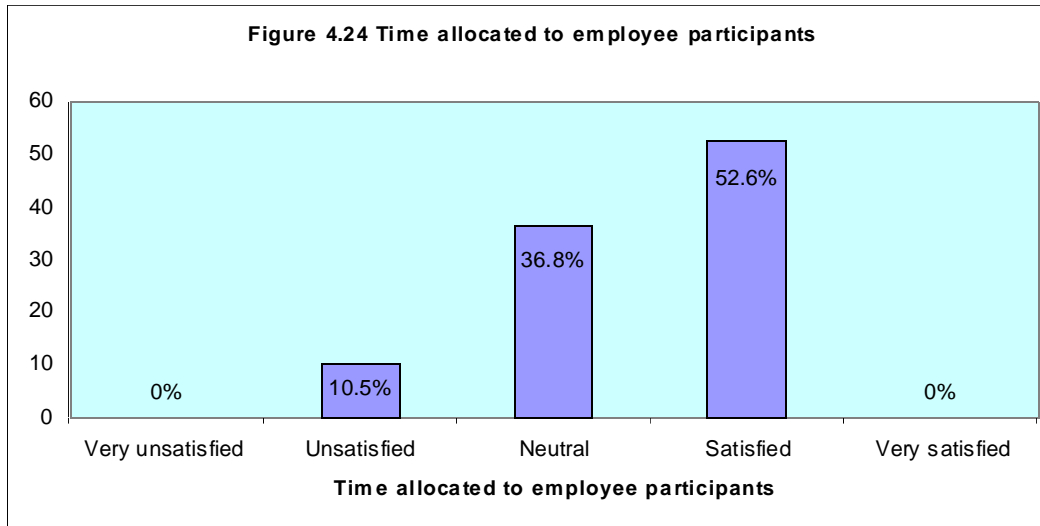
According to Figure 4.24 the majority of respondents (52.6%) are satisfied time allocation while 36.8% of respondents undecided a nd 10.5% of respondents unsatisfied about time allocated to employee participation.

4.7.6 *Language used to communicate*

Figure 4.25 Language used to communicate

90	
80	81.6%
70	
60	
50	
40	
30	
20	13.2%
10	0% 0% 5.3%
0	

Very unsatisfied · Unsatisfied · Neutral · Satisfied · Very satisfied

Language used to communicate
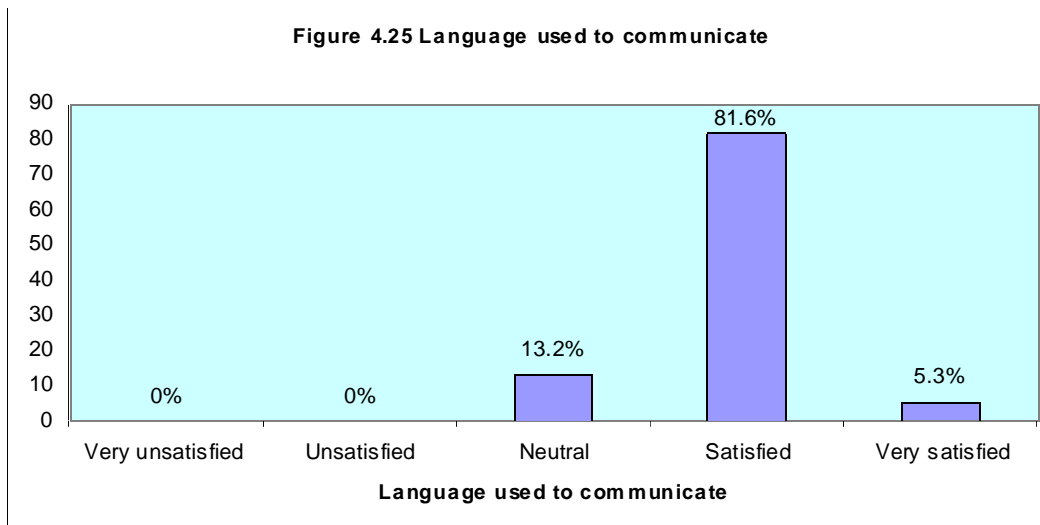
The majority of respondents (81.6%) are satisfied with communication language. At least 13.2% of respondents are undecided about communicating language and very small percentages (5.3%) of respondents are very satisfied with language used to communicate.

4.8 Summary

The quantitative results of this study were graphically presented in this chapter in line with objectives of this study. In the next chapter all these results are discussed to create sense of the data and ultimately establish a comprehensive understanding of this study.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion of Results

5.1   Introduction

This chapter will analyse the results in detail which are contained in the previous chapter. The data collected will be discussed aggressively; the interpretation and explanation of the results will be supported by journal articles and case studies to make it more relevant. The discussions are arranged according to the objectives of this study which are as follows: To ascertain the level of employee participation in decision making; To examine whether employees are satisfied with current participation in the organization; To critically evaluate obstacles and challenges faced by employees when participating in decision making;   To determine as to whether direct or indirect consultations are effective enough to encourage employee participation; To highlight the importance of employee participation at all levels within the organization

5.2 Demographics

In this study we found that 39.5% of respondents are between the ages of 41-50 years, followed by 31. 6% of respondents between the ages of 31-40, 18.4% of respondents are between 51-60 and lastly 10.5% of respondents are between.

An interesting finding was that 57.9% of respondents are male and 42.1% of respondents are female.

As was evidenced in Figure 4.4, a significant 34.2% of respondents are Sales staff closely followed by 31.6% of other employees. However 18.4% of respondents are middle managers, 13.2% are holding manager positions and 2.6% of respondents are senior managers.

According to Figure 4.3, Whites (34.2%) were the largest percentage in comparison to Blacks (31.6%), Indians (28.9%) and Coloureds (5.3%). Furthermore, the results from the sample reveal that males (57.9%) are dominating females (42.1%).

In this study it was found that a large number of respondents (28.9%) have worked for 0-5 years for the company and 23.7% of respondents have worked for 6-10 years (Figure 4.5). This finding reflects that a significant portion of respondents are new to the company.

Almost half of the sample (44.7%) is from sales department (Figure 4.6) which means that the majority of employees are working in sales department. However, 21.1% of respondents are from other departments followed by 15.8% of respondents from credit department, 13.2% from supply chain department and 2.6% of respondents was equally shared by marketing & distribution department.

5.3 To ascertain the level of employee participation in decision making

This section discusses the level of employee participation in decision making; employee willingness to encourage friends and colleagues to participate in decision making; knowledge of employee participating structures.

5.3.1 Level of employee participation in decision making

As was evidenced in Figure 4.7, the majority of respondents (80.1%) are satisfied with the level of employee participation in decision making.

A survey of employee involvement practices in 377 British companies, done by the Employment Department in 1991, found that; employee involvement increases with company size and importance of financial involvement schemes have risen from 53 per cent in 1988 to 77 percent in 1991. (Farnham and Pimlott, 1995, p.421) The survey concludes that: "over half of survey companies have a share scheme which all employees can join". The 1990's are a time of encouraging employees to perform better with multiple tasks. Many employers in both non-union and unionized have made employee communications and employee relations a priority. They are establishing employee committees under many names, such as employee advisory committees, quality circles, communication committees, employee involvement teams. These groups meet regularly to address workplace issues and provide a forum for two-way dialog between management and workforce. For example; people in a company's employee participation complain about some issues, such as working conditions, pay etc., and

executives discuss the issues with the group and decide to make changes that will satisfy employee concerns. This type of action will benefit to employers as much as it benefits to the employees because this will show that managers are willing to address and resolve employee's concerns.

5.3.2 Employee willingness to encourage friends and colleagues to participate in decision making

In this study 86.9% fully agree with the statement and 13.2% remain neutral (Figure 4.8). Managerial processes entail all major actions that concern strategy formulation and implementation. McLagan and Nel (1995:47) indicate that management processes are central to the economic success of an organisation. Such processes are the powerful determinants of the organisations' culture. If organisational planning, vision, mission, strategy, policy formulation and all other management processes take place in authoritarian environment, participation can only be theoretical. But if employees take part in the formulation and implementation of the above processes, then participation becomes real. It is therefore imperative that organisations re-design their managerial processes in such a way that they support team/ employee development and empowerment. This will enable employees to take part in organisational management.

Unfortunately Rice and Schneider (1994:446) note that research has revealed that employees normally report decision deprivation in managerial rather than operational duties. This could partly be attributed to employee's lack of the necessary knowledge and skills that enable them to participate. However, the participative model of management is designed to equip teams and all employees with the skills that enable them to actively take part in all managerial processes of planning,
vision, mission and policy formulation, goals and objectives setting, decision-making, problem-solving and organising. A partnering relationship, however, will not mature unless employees are equipped with self- management skills, broad business understanding, knowledge of business finance and economics, critical thinking skills, integrative skills, mutual learning and decision-making skills (McLagan and Nel, 1995:144-155).

The above eventually lead to the following.

- Organisational power is no longer determined by management alone, but is also subject to agreed- upon limitations which include various formal checks and balances.
- All employees have access to vital information which enables them to participate and take decisions jointly within their teams.
- Employees are constantly consulted and are able to voice out their opinions concerning relevant issues even when such opinions may be contrary to Management's.
- Management feels confident about delegating responsibility to individual employees or team leaders because such individuals are given the skills and knowledge required to perform the responsibilities.
- Employees feel well-positioned to engage in collective bargaining.
- Leaders become accountable to the employees.
- Employees' needs and aspirations are reflected in all organisational decisions that are taken jointly.

5.3.3 Knowledge of employee participating structures

As was evidenced in Figure 4.11, 73.7% respondents acknowledged employee participating structures.

Employee participating structures is a wide concept which is also associated with several other concepts. Mosoge (1996:9) notes that the following concepts are associated and at times interchangeably used with participation: delegation, consultation, influence, collective bargaining, representation and the concept of small group dynamics. In order to give a comprehensive definition of Participation, the above concepts are explored in the ensuing paragraphs.

The concept of delegation

Delegation implies allowing or giving power to subordinates to execute organisational decisions. Indeed, participation can be defined as the delegation of decision-making power from managers to employees, allowing the employees to make decisions without

consulting their supervisors. According to Van der Westhuizen (1995:172) however, delegation means that the manager assigns duties to others, and divides work in such a way that it is executed effectively. In a way, delegation lightens the managers' workload and ensures that he/she manages instead of focusing on functionally executed tasks. But in this context delegation restricts participation to only operational aspects of the organisation.

Against the above backdrop, Van der Westhuizen (1995:174) makes a distinction between participation and delegation. Whilst participation refers to joint decision making, delegation refers to the assignment of duties. The implication is that, unlike delegation, participation accords employees an environment where their views are heard by management. Both management and employees jointly work together to reach a decision. On the other hand delegation merely assigns duties for execution. But in a participative environment employees themselves should take part in the process of delegating. This means that they make suggestions within their teams and indicate among themselves which tasks an individual is supposed to execute. This implies that there are two forms of delegation: one is done by the manager alone by way of assigning duties while the other is executed in the context of participation where employees themselves take part in the act of delegating duties. In this study the latter usage of the term *"delegation"* is adopted.

The concept of 'consultation'
Consultation refers to the available opportunities for participation to employees by Management. Through consultation, management seeks the advice of employees, takes cognisance of their feelings and interests before a decision is made. According to Mosoge (1996:13) Consultation refers to the mode in which managers secure employee participation. Thus, consultation allows exchange of ideas and different points of view to take place between management and employees, and among employees themselves.

The concept of 'influence'
Bendix (2001:656) defines participation in terms of the amount of influence employees are able to exert on organisational decisions. Influence therefore refers to the effect

employees have on organisational decisions that affect them and their work. Conley (1989:368) defines it as employees' capacity to shape organisational decisions through either formal or informal ways. Participation thus can be conceptualised as the distribution of power or influence within an organisation.

Mosoge (1996:14) asserts that 'influence' is one of the three aspects (the other two being 'power' and 'consultation') that determines the quality of employee participation within an organisation. Mosoge (1996) further indicates that employees value participation only if they believe that there is potential for real influence. Real influence in this regard refers to employees' tangible effect on organisational decisions.

The concept of 'collective bargaining' and 'representation'
Employee participation may be through collective bargaining. In such a case trade unions engage in negotiations with management in order to influence decisions executed at higher organisational levels. Van Rensburg (1998:16/3) indicates that in the context of employment relations collective bargaining takes place against the background of

differing and sometimes conflicting interests of employees and employers. Keith and Girling (1991:292-293) add that the adversarial parties have to formalise procedures during the process of collective bargaining and may at times require the services of a mediator. Van Rensberg (1998:17/9) distinguishes between two forms of collective bargaining: distributive and integrative bargaining.

5.4 To examine whether employees are satisfied with current participation in the organization

This section examines whether employees are satisfied with current participation in decision making; discusses the importance of employee participation; acknowledgement of employee participation in decision making.

5.4.1 Level of satisfaction with current participation in decision making

Figure 4.14 illustrate that the majority respondents 47.4% were of the opinion that considering everything employees are satisfied with current participation in decision

making. It has been confirmed by survey results that considerable amount of employees like existing participation arrangement.

Employers that make employee morale and motivation a priority; often get the benefits back with high productivity and better quality. Additionally, if communication between them is strong and responsive, employees won't want to distance themselves from management. From the management's view, the time and effort spent on participation and involvement can be seen; by not having to deal later with unions or the threat of a strike. Employers who take steps to maximize the communication and minimize the obstacle of employee participation will have a stronger relationship.

Unions generally do not like employee participation groups and the term employee participation because the participation groups reduce the need for that type of organisations. If employers effectively and successfully deal with employee concerns within the organisation, then it is less likely that employees will turn to a union for assistance. That's why generally, trade unions prefer the term 'industrial democracy' instead of 'employee participation'(Elliott, 1978, p.124). According to Elliott industrial democracy indicates sharing of power and a right for their members as an industrial equivalent of the political democracy. Elliott continues that both employee participation and industrial democracy mean involving workers more in business affairs and improving industrial efficiency.

5.4.2 I like existing employee participating structures

Close to half the sample (47.4%) like existing employee participation structures, followed by (26.3%) undecided respondents. As Hyman and Mason, cited by Salamon (1998, p.354) state industrial democracy: "little currency in contemporary market-driven economies where any worker or activist and displaced by defensive struggles to retain individual employment and to protect employment rights". And finally, Salamon (1998, p.354) cites Wall and Lischeron as differentiating participation from collective bargaining by emphasizing: "the involvement of employees in the decision making processes which traditionally have been the responsibility and progative of management".

At Engen there are two types of methods of participation. These are direct and indirect. Direct method takes place which allow individual employee or workgroup to involve in the decision making process such as briefing groups, quality circles. Direct method is more about involvement. On the other hand indirect method affects mass of employees where Works Council and/or collective bargaining represent their role and discuss the issues with management. Also the level in organisation has an impact on the differentiation. Such as; involvement occurs in the people who are lower level in organisation. But participation happens in the high level in organisation. Finally, Salamon shows the differentiation according to the objective of participation. This is where involvement, task centered, concerned primarily with structure and performance of operations. On the other hand participation, power centered, concerned with more fundamental managerial authority (p.357). Overall the scope of participation will depend on a variety factors. These include the attitudes of parties involved, the nature of ownership and organisational characteristics, the length of experience among employees and the extent to which participation is based on statutory requirement or voluntary agreement.

5.4.3 Employee participation is important in decision making

According to Figure 4.16, 55.3% of the sample confirms that employee participation is important in decision making, and contrary to that 42.1% strongly feel that employee participation is not important in decision making. Empowered with the relevant skills, employees in each team are positioned to work towards the achievement of the identified organisational goals through a sense of communal responsibility among themselves. Empowered employees are also able to effectively take part in decision-making that impacts on their work and the organisation.

According to Bergman (1992:50) both employees and management work co-operatively; ensuring that decisions made enhance shared responsibility within the organisation. Osburn *et al* (1990:41) indicate that team empowerment through the acquisition of the above skills impacts on the teams.

5.4.4 Adequately recognized for contribution in decision making

As was evidenced in Figure 4.17, 55.3% of respondents agree that they are adequately recognized for their contribution in decision making. However, 21.1% totally disagree with the fact that employees are recognized for their contribution in decision making. It is important to note that during the process of joint identification of the organisation's or team's goals, individual employee goals have to be acknowledged; and where possible, must be addressed to prevent employees from being distracted from organisational goals. It is against this background that Mclagan and Nel (1995:110) Decision- making refers to the making of a choice between several alternatives with the aim of taking the most suitable action to solve problems or handle a situation. Pearce and Robinson (1991:3) regard decision- making as the essence of management. According to Hoy and Miskel (1991:30) the process of decision-making involves several steps some of which require employee participation since the decisions to be taken may directly affect them. Because of this fact, the participative model of management acknowledges the role of individual employees and their teams in decision–making. Hoy and Tarter (1993:9) note that the model promotes a consensus-style of management. Through the consensus-style of management, teams and employee teams are given the opportunity to take part in decision- making, and solving problems that affect them, their jobs and the organisation as a whole.

5.4.5 Employee participation in decision making is stimulating

In this study 55.3% of respondents agree that employee participation in decision making is stimulating, 28.9% find employee participation not stimulating and 10.5% are neutral. To enable employee participation in decision- making, participative organisations put in place a number of structures specifically designed for the purpose. Though quality circles present the most valuable approach to employee participation in identifying and solving problems related to production methods and delivery services, work-place forums and teams too play a major role in organisational decision - making. Osburn *et al* (1990: 227) note that a problem-solving approach for a work-team would comprise the following elements:

- Logical, easy-to-remember set of problem-solving steps;
- Set of tools and techniques to help team member solve difficult problems;
- Procedures for using the process effectively in team sessions; and
- Method for training team members in all the above.

The above problem-solving approach can strengthen employees' ability to deal with problems enhanced by:
- Augmenting the basic problem-solving process with special tools and techniques that enable individual employees and teams to work through problems;
- Developing ground rules for using the process in team problem-solving sessions;
- Training all team members in team problem-solving techniques; and encouraging learning for both managers and employees. Managers should be equipped with the skills to train employees, and employees should be given the skills to solve problems.

5.5 To critically evaluate obstacles and challenges faced by employees when participating in decision making

This section discusses the results of the respondent's obstacles and challenges when participating in decision making

5.5.1 Obstacles and Challenges faced by Employees

As was evidenced in Figure 4.20, 42.1% of respondents are satisfied with management feedback regarding decision taken. Contrary to that, 31.6 of respondents are not satisfied with management feedback. However, 23.7% of respondents are neutral and small percentages 2.6% of respondents are very satisfied.

According to Mosoge (1996:13) Consultation refers to the mode in which managers secure employee participation. Thus, consultation allows exchange of ideas and different points of view to take place between management and employees, and among employees themselves.

Consultation is directly related to participation. Through it, people in the organisation are able to reach technically correct decisions. The wider the consultations are within the organisation the more employee participation is envisaged. In organisations where snap decisions are made employees are rarely consulted. Such organisations tend to be autocratically managed. On the other hand, where there is Consultation there is also full employee participation. Management shares problems and seeks solutions from all the people. In the process alternative views and solutions are generated and evaluated and consensus reached. This enables such organisations to reach quality decisions. However the extent to which consultation leads to quality decisions depends on how much relevant information is shared among the involved parties.

5.5.2 Employee level of influence

According to Figure 4.21, 36.8% of respondents are satisfied with employee level of influence. Contrary to that, 34.2% of respondents surveyed are not satisfied with employee level of influence, and 28.9% decided to remain neutral.

Bendix (2001:656) defines participation in terms of the amount of influence employees are able to exert on organisational decisions. Influence therefore refers to the effect employees have on organisational decisions that affect them and their work. Conley (1989:368) defines it as employees' capacity to shape organisational decisions through either formal or informal ways. Participation thus can be conceptualised as the distribution of power or influence within an organisation.

Mosoge (1996:14) asserts that 'influence' is one of the three aspects (the other two being 'power' and 'consultation') that determines the quality of employee participation within an organisation. Mosoge (1996) further indicates that employees value participation only if they believe that there is potential for real influence. Real influence in this regard refers to employees' tangible effect on organisational decisions.

5.5.3 Employee representation

Figure 4.22 illustrates that the majority respondents (47.4%) were of the opinion that employee representation is adequate. However (28.9%) of respondents are not sure whether about employee representation, and 23.7% of respondents are not satisfied with representation.

Employee participation may be through collective bargaining. In such a case trade unions engage in negotiations with management in order to influence decisions executed at higher organisational levels. Van Rensburg (1998:16/3) indicates that in the context of employment relations collective bargaining takes place against the background of differing and sometimes conflicting interests of employees and employers. Keith and Girling (1991:292-293) add that the adversarial parties have to formalise procedures during the process of collective bargaining and may at times require the services of a mediator. Van Rensburg (1998:17/9) distinguishes between two forms of collective bargaining: distributive and integrative bargaining.

The two forms are briefly discussed below.

Distributive bargaining : This form of bargaining is associated with the typical bargaining positions between management and unions. It takes place when the two parties' interests are in conflict. It involves the two parties making proposals, counterproposals and compromises.

Integrative bargaining: This form of bargaining occurs when there is a common problem at the workplace. The involved parties work together to define the problem, analyse it, gather, exchange and explore information and creative solutions. During the process of collective bargaining, interaction takes place between union officials and management. Through such representation, employees are able to impact on decisions taken by management. Mosoge (1996:16) however, questions the effectiveness of employee participation through representation because it decreases the participation of the general populace of employees. This type of participation may breed alienation as it creates a gap between the expected and actual responses of the representatives. Williamson and Johnson (1991:16) indicate that this leads to claims by the general population of employees of improper representation.

5.5.4 Communication resources

According to Figure 4.23 a significant percentage of respondents (68.4%) are satisfied with communication resources. 18.4% of respondents are neutral and 13.2% are not satisfied with communication resources.

Laws and Smith (1992:147) assert that communication between management and the shop-floor is essential in an organisation; and characterises the participative model of work-place governance. This means that regular and effective two-way communication between Management and employees is essential for the mutual exchange of information between the two parties. Through communication information is transmitted to employees, and in the process employees' attention is focused more systematically on product market competition, and a quality ethos can be created across the organisation. Hyman and Mason (1995:75) note that communication to individual employees may take the form of Company House Journals, news letters, video presentation and chairman's forums. Through such communication individual employees are provided with information on major employment related issues. This form of communication, however moves downward from Management to employees; and does not contribute to meaningful employee participation (Spurr, 1990:14-17). Employees hardly contribute to the issues involved. Communication to groups of employees manifests itself in the form of briefing groups. Through briefing groups, employees are informed of high-level or strategic decisions, organisational decisions, rationales behind changes of decisions etc. Through this type of communication employees become aware of how they will be affected by managerial decisions.

But the participative model of work-place management prescribes a two-way communication system in which both employees and Management exchange information. Hyman and Mason (1995:81) indicate that this form of communication is designed to bring about zero-defect in production standards. Employees use their knowledge of the production processes and the various aspects of the organisational systems to identify problems. They share information in this regard with Management to ensure high production standards. Information-sharing could be in form of suggestion schemes, attitude surveys, quality circles, teams or work-groups.

5.5.5 Language

The majority of respondents (81.6%) were satisfied with communication language, and very small percentages (5.3%) of respondents are very satisfied with language used to communicate. At least 13.2% of respondents were undecided about communicating

5.6 Summary

This chapter discussed the findings of this study supported by journal readings and statutory provisions. Employee participation in decision making contributed a lot in creating a partnership between an employer and employee by opening up opportunities to all concerned employees with the ability to participate meaningfully in all organisational processes. However all employees should feel well-positioned to engage in collective bargaining. Employee's needs and aspirations must be reflected in all organisational decisions that are taken jointly. The next chapter provide recommendations for existing and future employees; Engen Management; and the Human Capital industry.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1   Introduction

In chapter six the study is concluded by providing recommendations for future research on this topic: recommendations to existing and future employees; recommendations to employers; the petro-chemical industry and recommendations to South African Government.

The relationship between employers and employees in South Africa during most of the 20th Century has been characterised by conflict and hostility between the parties. It was clear to the new government that urgent attention had to be given to labour relations in order to rebuild the country's economy and introduce industrial democracy. Participation between employers and employees and their representatives is much better than energy and time consuming adversarial behaviour. Employers should be encouraged to support participation in decision making with employees and so move towards the ideal of industrial democracy in South African workplaces.

6.2   Implications of this Research

The findings also suggested that management might be able to increase the level of commitment in the organization by increasing satisfaction with employee participation, employee participating structures, and employee level of satisfaction. One way of addressing this could be by increasing the interactions with employees in staff meetings and increasing guided discussions of topics related to these issues. Employees could be interviewed to determine their perceptions of management′s ability to address these issues. Changes in organizational variables, such as employee participation, employee input in decision making, could then be made in an effort to increase organizational commitment.

6.3 Recommendations for Future Studies

- The method used in order to collect the data is very common as we have used the Questionnaire method for this research study. Other methods could have been used for this research study like group discussions/discussion forum.

- This sample size is not sufficient enough to reflect the factual image of employee participation in decision making, in context with measuring the relationship among employee participating structures, employee representation and employee level of satisfaction.

- The current study looked at a homogenous population and sample, with similar backgrounds, levels of education and income. A truly representative sample would look at a heterogeneous sample comprising a number of different companies (mining, agriculture and textile) in different industries. To enhance external validity, future research efforts should obtain a representative sample from more organizations.

- The data, which was obtained from Engen employees, was in the shape of perceptual measures of employee participation in decision making, employee participating structures, employee representation, employee level of satisfaction in decision making. Normally, instead of perceptual measures, the objective measures are more desirable and they particularly are more consistent in outputs but observing the methods for research we are limited to use it.

6.4 Recommendations to Existing and Future Employees

Recommendations are provided for existing and future employees. The Labour Relations Act (No. 66 of 1995) recognises and regulates established workplace forums to promote employee participation in decision-making.

- South African employees must be equipped with enough relevant information to enable them effective participation in organizational affairs.

- South African employees must improve skills and competencies required for effective employee participation.

- Employees within the organization must be able to control the outcomes for which they are held accountable.

6.5 Recommendations to Employers

- Management within South African organizational is still traditional. The industry must be transformed and adapt to modern international labour practise.

- Organization need to develop and enact Participation in Decision Making policies and procedures that are aligned to Labour Relations Act. These fair policies and procedures will lead to fair decision making by the organization leadership.

- Management must sufficiently acknowledge the contribution made by e mployees to participation in decision making process.

- Communication and transparency regarding Participation in decision making can also enable organization to avoid inadequate dissemination of information.

- Visible management support and commitment to the organization participation in decision making process motivate employees and strengthen relationships.

6.6 Recommendations to Petro-Chemical Industry

- South African companies must adopt a holistic approach to the management of Employment Relationship where all the dimensions of the Employment Relationship are integrated and balanced.

- South African companies are still hard on people and hard on performance, instead of being soft on people and hard on performance.

- South African comp anies must promote right corporate culture designed to enhance increased productivity and competitiveness.

6.7 Recommendations to South African Government

In light of the above findings and the identified factors which impede reciprocal understanding in the South African work-place, and which occasionally frustrate industrial tranquillity and the organization competitiveness, the following recommendations are made.

- Government continues with its policy of supporting employee participation through legislation. Government should be inclined towards facilitating greater convergence between employers and employees with regards to mutual perceptions and organizational goals.

- A research and training unit be established by Department of Labour. The role of

such a unit should be to empower employer/employee representatives, trade union officials, shop stewards and other concerned stakeholders by offering them introductory courses concerning employment relations of the 21st century.

- The concept of employee participation and global competition must be widely promoted in all work places. This could be done through workshops, seminars and information dissemination amongst all employees and trade unions.

- The Labour Relations Act 66 (1995) be written in simplified English and be translated in all other official languages so that it can be easily understood by all stakeholders. Clear and simple guidelines to assist both employees/unions and employers in the effective application of the Act be drawn and made available to all concerned parties.

- Seminars and workshop concerning labour related matters like employee productivity, participation and organizational competitiveness be jointly held by trade unions officials, government representatives and employers. This will help to forge more compatible views, values and perception among all stakeholders.

- Organization should consider encouraging managerial staff to take short courses concerning employment relations. Emphasis in such courses be put on benefits of co-ordinated participative programme and the need for managers to evolve into customer centred leaders. Managers who successfully complete such courses should be recognised by awarding certificates to them. As a way of encouraging the practise, enterprises that formally allocate resources to upgrade employment relations expertise among their managerial staff should be considered for tax concessions.

- Employment relations and labour economics as subjects be introduced and made compulsory non-examinable subjects in grade 12 in all high schools. It will equip grade 12 learners (potential employees) with knowledge regarding employee participation and work-place democratization. It is also hoped that such aspect would lessen the burden on potential employers as regards equipping employees with relevant knowledge.

6.8 Summary

It is hoped that favourable consideration of the above recommendations by policy makers in public and private organizations and government will enable all stakeholders to co-operate more efficiently as regards the maintenance of improved employee relationship. This will no doubt eradicate adversarialism and support environment supportive of increased quality production.

It is vital that as stakeholders strive to achieve the above goals emphasis is laid on creating a common ground upon which all partners may base to achieve the common goal. Such a common ground could be achieved during training at labour training and research unit as proposed in the recommendations. If all stakeholders for instance agree that employee participation is essential for global competitiveness, and that the results of excellent performance by the organization is for the benefit of all, they will jointly work together to ensure success.

Though the findings have been listed and recommendations given above, it is vital to note that this has been a theoretical study based entirely on literature exploration. It is therefore important that future researchers conduct empirical studies to test the validity of the findings. It is the researcher's convictions that the literature as presented and analysed in this study will enable future researchers to identify research questions which will then be investigated empirically.

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