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PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the present study was to determine the extent to which employees would like to participate in decision making concerning various organisational issues, especially those concerning: the work itself, working conditions, human resources issues, and corporate policy and planning. The sample consisted of 146 participants, including managers, middle managers, and junior officials from a South African development corporation. A questionnaire to measure employees' desire to participate in decision making was specially constructed for this investigation. It was found that employees with higher academic qualifications were more desirous to participate in decision-making at all levels than employees with lower academic qualifications. This was also true for employees in higher job grades than in lower job grades. Men were more desirous to participate in decision making than women. The implications of the findings are discussed.

OPSOMMING

Die doel van die huidige studie was om vas te stel in watter mate werknemers sal wil deelneem aan die besluitnameproses van organisasies, veral rakende die volgende sake: die werk self, werksomstandighede, menslike hulpbronaangeleenthede en korporatiewe beleid en beplanning. Die steekproef het uit 146 deelnemers, insluitende bestuurders, middelvlakbestuurders en junior amptenare van 'n Suid Afrikaanse ontwikkelingskorporasie, bestaan. 'n Vraelys wat die begeerte van werknemers meet om aan die besluitnameproses deel te neem, is spesiaal vir die doel van hierdie ondersoek, ontwerp. Dit is bevind dat werknemers met hoër akademiese kwalifikasies meer begerig is om aan die besluitnameproses op alle vlakke deel te neem as werknemers met laer akademiese kwalifikasies. Dit was ook waar vir werknemers in hoërvlakposte vergeleke met werknemers in laervlakposte. Mans was ook meer begerig om aan die besluitnameproses deel te neem as vroue. Die implikasies van die studie word bespreek.

The concept of participation dates back to the Greek Polis which was advocated by Plato in *The Republic* (Passmore & Fagans, 1992). Plato believed that the best interests of the city state would be served by the direct participation of citizens via the Polis in matters of governance. Over the years, a typology of the Polis mushroomed in various parts of the world, the most common being Quality Circles or the Scanlon Plan in the US, Workers' Councils in Europe and the Kibbutz in Israel (Cotton, 1993).

Participative management is already a popular style of management in South African organisations. However, as Fuchsloch (1989) argues, although participative management has become a buzzword for management in the 1980's, it has as yet not become sufficiently entrenched in South Africa to say that its practice has been successful.

Participation in decision making is, according to Bendix (1992) an industrial democratic value and it can, therefore, not be imposed on people. Bendix points out that workers' participation is actually intended to promote the extension of industrial democracy in the enterprise, in the form of joint government by employees. And Nel (1994) expresses the view that democracy at work is actually the 21st century challenge of organisational transformation.

Witte (1980) observed that "up until a few decades ago, very little was known about how much influence workers felt they should have in different types of corporate decisions" (p.58). This was due to the fact that the few relevant findings available in published studies were based on such general questions as "should workers participate in making important decisions"? The 21st century organisation cannot continue asking the very same general questions because there is already sufficient empirical evidence showing that employees desire not only to participate in organisational decisions, but also to participate and influence decisions in specific areas which affect them.

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A number of authors, (eg. Sibson, 1994; Nel, 1994; Larkin & Larkin, 1994; Denton, 1991; Nkomo, Fottler & McAfee, 1988) identified specific issues in which different employees would like to participate in decision making, and they further grouped these issues into four broad areas: the work itself; working conditions; human resource issues, and corporate policy and planning.

Quite recently, Magjuka (1993) commented on a study of Employee Involvement Processes which involved more than 900 US manufacturing companies. Of the 1 600 potential subjects, 923 responded, yielding a response rate of 57%. The results of the survey indicated that with respect to their participation in decision making, employees addressed work issues that fall into the same four broad areas.

A few empirical studies confirming employees' desire to participate in decision-making in these areas are mentioned below:

1. The work itself

In most instances decisions relating to "the work itself" should include "decisions on work-methods, technical matters, equipment, performance and production standards" (Sibson, 1994, p. 102).

Between 1974 and 1976, Witte (1980) conducted a study at Sound International in the US. The aim of the study was to determine the extent to which employees and managers felt that employees needed more power to decide on various organisational issues. The results of the study revealed that workers desire more participation in decisions that directly affected their jobs: for example, determining an acceptable level of daily production and the necessity to install new equipment.

A study conducted early in 1963 in which more than 1,000 employees were involved showed that 86% of the employees had a desire to participate in only those decisions affecting their jobs (Larkin & Larkin, 1994).

The above empirical studies indicate that employees desire to take part in decisions that affect their work methods, the equipment they use, as well as other performance related

issues. And Mdongo (1995) suggested management should leave operational decisions to the operatives themselves.

2. Working conditions
Nkomo, Fottler and McAfee (1988) proposed that decisions relating to working conditions should include, among other things, those relating to the number of working hours, lunch and tea breaks, safety measures, health issues, rest rooms, protective clothing, noise reduction and lighting.

Marchington (1980) reported that, in a study conducted at Kitchenco, 35% of the respondents in the sample of 141 expressed the desire to participate in decisions that affected their working conditions (while only 22% desired participation in corporate decision and planning). McLaren (1982) and Nel (1994) were also of the opinion that participation should provide people with a meaningful influence over any decisions that impact upon their work environment. It is also a prevailing view among designers of work stations that employees should participate in the design of their work environment and be allowed to personalise it with forms of self expression (Carrel, Kuzmits & Elbert, 1992).

3. Human resources
Decisions relating to human resources normally include those relating to recruitment; selection; pay; promotion; disciplinary procedures; training and development policies, and performance appraisal systems (Nel, 1994).

A study by Marchington (1980) at Kitchenco revealed that 56% of the respondents held a common view about employees' influence over recruitment. Their view is that "since we are working on the shop floor, we have a good idea about the need for extra labour, and management can learn from this"(p. 53). According to Denton (1991) employees should not only be allowed to participate in the allocation of their manpower needs, but also be empowered to the extent where "they even hire, fire and reward each other"(p. 76).

Wheatley and Szwejczewski (1995) supported these views. They suggested that self-managing teams should even be free to make decisions without recourse to managers or supervisors on a wide range of issues formerly handled by management layers above them, including planning, organising and recruitment.

4. Corporate policy and planning
Decisions relating to corporate policy and planning normally deal with strategies such as the development of new product lines, launching of new business ventures, mergers, corporate investments, relocations, long range forecasting and distribution of profits (Denton, 1991).

Most of these activities are traditionally assigned to top management, but Denton (1991) argues that there is no reason why many of these duties cannot be performed by even lower-level employees who are given enough information and training. Denton suggests that participation by employees even at this level can be very profitable for an organisation. He refers to a report by the National Association of Suggestion Systems (NASS) where employee participation (through Suggestion Schemes on management issues) saved US organisations $2.2 billion in 1988. That was a 10% increase on 1987. He further indicates that organisations of the twentieth century, like SRC and Glaxo, have moved further towards decentralisation and worker autonomy than any traditional managers have ever imagined possible. With the shift from the hierachical to flatter organisational structures, it can be expected that a broader group of employees will have a stronger voice in the strategic and financial decisions which affect not only an organisation's capital expenditure, but also its inventory system as well as its product line. In support of this view, Maasdorp (1994) argued that:

> "it is a management myth that workers want to decide only petty issues like the cost of canteen meals, while leaving the really tough matters to the top brass. This is usually true only when employees' access is blocked because we have designed organisations which have ignored individual potential for competence, responsibility, constructive intent and productivity" (p 24).

Empirical studies such as those mentioned above strongly indicate that employees should be given an opportunity to decide in *which* decisions they would like to be involved.

Statement of the problem
A general problem facing South African organisations is uncertainty about the extent to which employees should be allowed to participate in organisational decisions. It is McLaren's view (1982) that every person who is affected by the result of a decision should have the opportunity to participate in the making of that decision. But, because of fear of undue interference by employees and a reduction in management's power to control their workers, some organisations have prescribed the types of decisions in which employees should participate.

These arbitrary constraints defeat the very purpose of promoting the widely accepted values of transparency and a sense of ownership by employees.

The decisions in which individual employees would like to participate will naturally not be the same but they may overlap. The job levels of employees and their responsibilities may determine the type of decisions in which they would have an interest in participating. Across-the-board arbitrary limitations of participation in decision making will undermine this reality. Employees themselves should, therefore, be given the opportunity to decide in which decisions they would like to participate.

The aim of this study is to determine in which areas employees feel they should be allowed to participate in decision making. The following hypotheses will be tested:

H1: Where decision making in general is concerned, employees with higher academic qualifications will be more desirous to participate in decision making than employees with lower academic qualifications.

H2: Where low level decision making is concerned, it is hypothesised that employees with lower academic qualifications will be more desirous to participate in decision making than employees with higher qualifications.

H3: Where high level decision making is concerned, employees with higher academic qualifications will be more desirous to participate in decision making than employees with lower academic qualifications.

H4 Where decision making in general is concerned, males will be more desirous to participate in decision making than females.

H5: Where low level decision making is concerned, females will be more desirous to participate in decision making than males.

H6: Where high level decision making is concerned, males will be more desirous to participate in decision making than females.

H7: Where decision making in general is concerned, employees in higher grade jobs will be more desirous to participate in decision making than employees in lower grade jobs.

H8: Where low level decision making is concerned, it is hypothesised that employees in lower grade jobs will be more desirous to participate in decision making than employees in higher grade jobs.

H9: Where high level decision making is concerned, it is hy-

pothesised that employees in higher grade jobs will be more desirous to participate in decision making than employees in lower grade jobs.

The rationale of the hypotheses is that, in practice, employees in high job grades usually have high academic qualifications and also that in this particular organisation there are very few women in high job grades. While it is expected that every employee will desire to participate in decisions relating to the job that he or she is doing on a daily basis, and the immediate environment in which he or she operates, it is unlikely that employees in lower job grades will be interested in participating in decisions at high levels. Issues that are addressed at this level are a bit further away from them.

A scale was constructed to measure decision making in general as well as low level decision making (Sections B and C of the questionnaire) and high level decision making (Sections D and E of the questionnaire).

TABLE 1
DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPANTS ACCORDING TO BIOGRAPHICAL/DEMOGRAPHICAL VARIABLES

Demographic variables	M	SD	N	(%)
Age	39,43	8,66		
22-34 years			37	(27%)
35-43 years			58	(40%)
44+ years			41	(33%)
Academic Qualifications				
Lower than matric			40	(27%)
Matric			48	(33%)
Tetriary			57	(40%)
Years of Experience	11,40	6,54		
0-8 years			50	(37%)
9-16 years			54	(40%)
17+ years			32	(23%)
Language Group				
Afrikaans			2	(1,4%)
English			3	(2,1%)
Ndebele			1	(0,7%)
N. Sotho			23	(15,8%)
Sotho			4	(2,8%)
Venda			34	(23,3%)
Tsonga			77	(52,7%)
Swati			1	(0,7%)
Zulu			1	(0,7%)
Gender				
Male			68	(47%)
Female			78	(53%)
Job Grade				
Managers			23	(16%)
Middle managers			85	(58%)
Junior Officals			38	(26%)
Years in Position	6,14	5,94		
0-1 years			51	(35%)
2-7 years			37	(26%)
7+ years			58	(39%)

Note: N= Number of participants

METHOD

The survey research method was used in this study to assess the desire of test subjects to participate in decision making in four broad areas of work: the work itself, working conditions, human resource issues, and corporate policy and planning.

The sample

The number of employees who participated in the study was 153 and this figure represented 67% of the total population of the corporation. The sample was fairly representative since the remaining 33% were labourers whose job gradings were below level 12. Employees whose job grades were below level 12 were not included in the study because their level of literacy was low (generally grade 3 and below), and they probably would not be able to complete the questionnaire. The 153 employees who completed the questionnaires included all administrative and professional staff between level 12 (Secretary and Typist) and level 1 (Chief Executive Officer). However, the number of completed and useable questionnaires was 146. Table 1 represents the distribution of participants in terms of age, academic qualifications, years of experience, language group, gender, job grade and length of service in various positions.

Measuring Instrument

A structured questionnaire called the Participation in Decision Making Questionnaire (PDMQ), consisiting of 40 items was developed and used by the researcher. The advantage of such a structured questionnaire is that it ensures that participants respond only to the items that are listed, thus keeping their responses within the area of interest. It also makes scoring straight-forward and the results lend themselves readily to statistical analysis (Ndimande, 1992).

Of the forty items contained in the questionnaire, the first twenty address issues concerning the work itself (B1- B10) as well as working conditions (C1-C10). The last twenty address issues concerning human resource management (D1-D10) and corporate policy and planning (E1-E10). Thus, Sections B and C cover low level decisions while Sections D and E cover relatively high level or managerial decisions in the organisation.

The items are endorsed on a seven point interval scale, the lowest anchor signifying a total absence of the desire to participate and the highest a strong desire to participate in decision making. It is, however, important to note that in this type of scale, the distances between the scale anchors (eg. no desire and a strong desire) varies.

Procedure

The questionnaires were distributed to seven regional offices of the particular development corporation, including the head office. They were accompanied by a covering letter from the corporation's human resource manager, asking for the subjects' co-operation. The subjects were assured that the data would be kept confidential and anonymous.

RESULTS

The 146 properly completed and useable questionnaires returned were analysed statistically. The forty items were intercorrelated and subjected to a principal factor analysis. According to Kaiser's criterion (1961) seven factors were extracted and rotated to simple structure with the aid of the Varimax rotational procedure. The rotated factor matrix appears in Table 2.

This was done with the view to establishing a small number of subscores: All the items with high loadings on a particular factor were added together. In this way six subscores were obtained (one factor had only one item loading on it and was discarded). Next, the subscores were intercorrelated and subjected to factor analysis. The matrix of intercorrelations appears in Table 3.

TABLE 2
ROTATED FACTOR MATRIX (VARIMAX ROTATION)

Variables	Factor I	Factor II	Factor III	Factor IV	Factor V	Factor VI	Factor VII
B1	0,214	0,221	0,699	-0,039	0,095	0,219	0,212
B2	0,208	0,129	0,699	0,028	0,029	0,295	0,093
B3	0,540	0,139	0,193	0,128	0,018	0,617	0,010
B4	0,280	0,304	0,697	-0,111	0,102	0,168	-0,065
B5	0,259	0,282	0,686	0,227	0,125	0,038	0,239
B6	0,381	0,372	0,698	-0,036	0,078	0,196	-0,059
B7	0,063	0,073	0,237	0,101	0,266	0,482	0,042
B8	0,121	0,232	0,334	0,272	0,064	0,520	-0,056
B9	0,139	0,285	0,590	0,274	-0,035	0,233	-0,062
B10	0,270	0,517	0,362	0,221	-0,037	0,245	-0,040
C1	0,098	0,291	0,591	0,439	0,173	0,051	-0,022
C2	0,293	0,466	0,480	0,341	0,196	0,163	-0,052
C3	0,219	0,594	0,262	0,348	0,058	0,151	-0,039
C4	0,148	0,574	0,334	0,310	0,099	0,012	0,280
C5	0,425	0,691	0,368	0,021	0,056	0,106	-0,013
C6	0,261	0,795	0,203	0,066	0,080	0,135	0,184
C7	0,395	0,542	0,309	0,189	0,270	0,186	0,133
C8	0,311	0,649	0,413	0,126	0,189	0,010	0,188
C9	0,206	0,700	0,262	0,196	0,196	0,201	0,078
C10	0,279	0,639	0,219	0,356	0,163	0,073	0,268
D1	0,243	0,078	0,038	0,806	0,071	0,182	0,154
D2	0,530	0,186	0,197	0,558	0,117	0,136	0,019
D3	0,565	0,246	0,199	0,593	0,076	0,060	-0,064
D4	0,579	0,332	0,154	0,455	0,225	0,198	-0,015
D5	0,135	0,238	0,075	0,445	0,658	0,066	0,102
D6	0,354	0,254	0,138	0,172	0,445	0,216	0,061
D7	0,589	0,352	0,270	0,165	0,321	0,082	-0,107
D8	0,279	0,196	0,056	0,603	0,418	0,192	0,030
D9	0,305	0,350	0,082	0,574	0,197	0,186	0,204
D10	0,472	0,370	0,284	0,391	0,219	0,217	0,096
E1	0,709	0,260	0,355	0,186	0,210	0,078	-0,055
E2	0,676	0,245	0,364	0,284	0,086	-0,046	-0,068
E3	0,807	0,200	0,297	0,129	0,187	0,026	0,064
E4	0,698	0,254	0,347	0,123	0,312	0,097	0,056
E5	0,624	0,249	0,056	0,232	0,180	-0,026	0,478
E6	0,630	0,257	0,085	0,185	0,140	-0,038	0,581
E7	0,686	0,122	0,069	0,345	-0,333	0,158	0,437
E8	0,816	0,160	0,219	0,200	-0,041	-0,081	0,089
E9	0,840	0,214	0,075	0,245	0,172	0,055	0,202
E10	0,822	0,256	0,185	0,051	0,089	0,046	0,050

TABLE 3
MATRIX OF INTERCORRELATIONS OF SUBSCORES IN RESPECT OF PDMQ

	Subscore 1	Subscore 2	Subscore 3	Subscore 4	Subscrore 5	Subscore 6
Subscore 1	1,000	0,724	0,639	0,749	0,581	0,283
Subscore 2	0,724	1,000	0,767	0,643	0,568	0,448
Subscore 3	0,639	0,767	1,000	0,508	0,461	0,530
Subscore 4	0,749	0,643	0,508	1,000	0,637	0,410
Subscore 5	0,581	0,568	0,461	0,637	1,000	0,388
Subscore 6	0,283	0,448	0,530	0,410	0,388	1,000

Only one factor emerged and the results are given in Table 4.

TABLE 4
FACTOR MATRIX OF PDMQ

		Factor I	h_j^2
Subscore 1	Items E6, E7, E8, E9, E10, D4, D7, D10, E1, E2, E3, E4, E5	0,828	0,685
Subscore 2	Items B10, C3,C4,C5,C6,C7,C8,C0,C10	0,873	0,763
Subscore 3	Items B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, B6, B9, C1, C2	0,777	0,603
Subscore 4	Items D1, D2, D3, D8, D9	0,797	0,635
Subscore 5	Items D5, D6	0,692	0,479
Subscore 6	Items B3, B7, B8	0,516	0,266

Following this all the items included in the subscores were subjected to an item analysis. The item statistics are given in Table 5.

TABLE 5
ITEM ANALYSIS OF PDMQ

Item	N	Mean of item (Xg)	SD of item (Sg)	Item-test correlation rgx	Reliability index of item rgxSg
B1	146	5,144	2,159	0,660	1,425
B2	146	5,562	1,827	0,596	1,089
B3	146	5,849	1,616	0,338	0,546
B4	146	5,356	2,110	0,636	1,341
B5	146	4,842	2,103	0,753	1,583
B6	146	5,411	2,036	0,733	1,492
B7	146	5,740	1,816	0,332	0,602
B8	146	5,562	1,765	0,552	0,975
B9	146	5,562	1,762	0,604	1,063
B10	146	5,068	1,985	0,702	1,393
C1	146	5,253	1,871	0,659	1,234
C2	146	4,801	2,090	0,792	1,656
C3	146	4,466	2,232	0,691	1,543
C4	146	3,781	2,248	0,734	1,649
C5	146	5,027	2,247	0,772	1,735
C6	146	4,219	2,306	0,706	1,627
C7	146	4,521	2,311	0,780	1,802
C8	146	4,644	2,264	0,760	1,721
C9	146	4,856	2,231	0,737	1,644
C10	146	3,897	2,209	0,783	1,729
D1	146	5,027	1,997	0,467	0,931
D2	146	4,637	2,020	0,723	1,460
D3	146	4,911	2,024	0,765	1,548
D4	146	4,774	2,050	0,811	1,663
D5	146	5,685	1,605	0,496	0,796
D6	146	5,568	1,890	0,586	1,107
D7	146	5,521	1,905	0,771	1,468
D8	146	5,712	1,527	0,593	0,906
D9	146	4,699	2,001	0,663	1,326
D10	146	4,473	2,105	0,796	1,675
E1	146	4,507	2,317	0,831	1,925
E2	146	4,425	2,246	0,795	1,786
E3	146	4,740	2,219	0,795	1,763
E4	146	4,890	2,226	0,809	1,800
E5	146	3,808	2,391	0,689	1,648
E6	146	3,904	2,373	0,698	1,656
E7	146	3,788	2,305	0,702	1,619
E8	146	4,747	2,234	0,726	1,621
E9	146	4,329	2,332	0,710	1,656
E10	146	4,966	2,245	0,747	1,678

Cronbach's Coefficient alpha = 0,972; K = 40

There were no poor items and the reliability of the scale that emerged was 0,972 according to Cronbach's coefficient alpha – which was very high indeed.

In order to test the employees' level of desire to participate at lower and higher levels of decision making, the items in the PDMQ were further divided into those relating to lower (B + C) and higher (D + E) levels of decision making. The lower level items included decisions concerning the work itself (B items) and working conditions (C items) while the higher level items included decisions concerning human resource management (D items) and corporate policy and planning (E items). The reliability of both scales are high, namely 0,952 and 0,961, respectively, according to Cronbach's coefficient alpha.

In order to test Hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 the sample was divided into three groups on the basis of academic qualifications: those with less than matric; those with matric, and those with tertia-

ry qualifications. The mean scores of the three groups in respect of the total score of the PDMQ were then compared and tested for differences with the aid of a one way analysis of variance. Next, one way analyses of variance were done in respect of the (B +C) and (D +E) scores of the PDMQ. The results of the ANOVAs appear in Table 6.

From an inspection of Table 8, it can be seen that there are statistically significant differences between the mean test scores of males and females in respect of general decision making as well as higher level decision making. Hypotheses 4 and 6 are, therefore, supported. However, Hypothesis 5 runs counter to expectation in so far as male employees obtained a statistically

TABLE 6
ANOVA IN RESPECT OF ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

Factor	Source of Variation	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	p(F)
PDMQ: Total	Between groups	105986,609	2	52993,305	19,990	‹0,001*
	Within groups	347282,675	131	2651,013		
	Total	453269,285	133			
PDMQ: (B+C)	Between groups	26174,482	2	13087,241	18,296	‹0,001*
	Within groups	93703,420	131	715,293		
	Total	119877,902	133			
PDMQ: (D+E)	Between groups	26861,827	2	13430,914	15,884	‹0,001*
	Within groups	110766,061	131	845,542		
	Total	137627,888	133			

* Statistically Significant

From an inspection of Table 6 it is clear that all three analyses of variance yielded statistically significant F-ratios: As far as general participation in decision making is concerned F (2, 131) = 19,990; p‹0,001. For low level decision making F(2,131) = 18,296; p‹0,001 and for high level decision making F (2,131) = 15,884; p‹0,001.

Having established that the means of the three groups differ in respect of the scores obtained in the PDMQ, each group was paired with every other group and their means tested for differences with Scheffé's Multiple Comparisons technique. The results of these comparisons are given in Table 7.

From an inspection of Table 7 it can be seen that, in all three analyses, the group with tertiary qualifications obtained the highest scores on the PDMQ. The differences in means are statistically highly significant (p‹0,001). Hypotheses 1 and 3 are, therefore, supported. However, Hypothesis 2 runs counter to expectation in so far as the group with tertiary qualifications obtained statistically significantly higher scores than the other two groups in respect of low level decision making as well.

In order to test Hypotheses 4, 5 and 6, the sample was divided into two groups in terms of gender, that is, males and females, and their mean test scores in respect of general decision making as well as decision making at lower and higher levels were compared through the use of t-tests. The results are given in Table 8.

significantly higher mean score than the female employees in respect of low level decision making as well (p=0,049).

In order to test Hypotheses 7, 8 and 9 the sample was divided into four groups on the basis of job grades: (1) Secretary, Typist, Data Typist and Telkom Operator, (2) Administration clerk and Accounting clerk, (3) Auditor, Personnel Officer and Accountant, (4) Manager, Senior Manager, General Manager, HR Executive and Chief Executive Officer. The mean scores of the four groups in respect of the total score of the PDMQ were then compared and tested for differences with the aid of a one way analysis of variance. Next, one way analyses of variance were done in respect of the (B+C) and (D+E) scores. The results appear in Table 9.

From an inspection of Table 9 it is clear that the three analyses of variance yielded statistically significant F-ratios. As far as general participation in decision making is concerned F(3,142) = 13,989; p‹0,001. For low level decision making F(3,142) =11,191; p‹0,001 and for high level decision making F(3,142) = 12,564; p‹0,001.

Having established that the means of the four groups differ in respect of the scores of the PDMQ, each group was paired with every other group and, because the variances are not homogeneous, Dunnett's Multiple Comparisons Technique was used to test their means for differences rather than Scheffe's Multiple Comparisons Technique. The results of these comparisons are given in Table 10.

TABLE 7
SCHEFFÉS MULTIPLE COMPARISONS TECHNIQUE: PAIRWISE COMPARISON OF GROUPS WITH DIFFERENT ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS IN RESPECT OF GENERAL PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING AS WELL AS LOW AND HIGH LEVEL DECISION MAKING

Variables	Means			Standard Deviations			Groups		
	1	2	3	1	2	3			
PDMQ	Less than Matric	Matric	Tertiary	Less than Matric	Matric	Tertiary	1/2	1/3	2/3
Total score	151,82	209,30	216,67	58,90	45,90	50,32	‹0,001*	‹0,001*	Not significant
(B+C) score	77,72	106,82	109,55	31,69	23,86	24,84	‹0,001*	‹0,001*	Not significant
(D+E) score	74,10	102,48	107,11	31,50	28,03	27,95	‹0,001*	‹0,001*	Not significant

*Statisticallyt significant

TABLE 8
COMPARISON OF THE TWO GENDERS IN RESPECT OF GENERAL DECISION MAKING AS WELL AS LOW AND HIGH LEVEL DECISION MAKING

Variable	Male			Female			Levene F	DF	p(F)	t-value	DF	p(t)
	M	SD	N	M	SD	N						
PDMQ: Total	205,60	56,84	68	185,09	57,46	78	1,059	1 and 144	0,305	2,162	144	0,032*
PDMQ: (B+C)	104,76	29,78	68	95,00	29,60	78	0,188	1 and 144	0,665	1,982	144	0,049*
PDMQ: (D+E)	100,84	31,90	68	90,09	31,60	78	0,509	1 and 144	0,477	2,044	144	0,043*

*Statistically significant

TABLE 9
ANOVA IN RESPECT OF JOB GRADES

Factor	Source of Variation	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	p(F)
PDMQ: Total	Between groups	110870,440	3	36956,813	13,989	‹0,001*
	Within groups	375139,769	142	2641,829		
	Total	486010,209	145			
PDMQ: (B+C)	Between groups	24923,068	3	8307,689	11,191	‹0,001*
	Within groups	105417,740	142	742,378		
	Total	130340,808	145			
PDMQ: (D+E)	Between groups	31208,107	3	10402,702	12,564	‹0,001*
	Within groups	117576,077	142	828,001		
	Total	148784,184	145			

*Statistically significant

TABLE 10
DUNETT'S MULTIPLE COMPARISONS TECHNIQUE: PAIRWISE COMPARISON OF GROUPS WITH DIFFERENT JOB GRADES IN RESPECT OF GENERAL DECISION MAKING AS WELL AS DECISION MAKING AT LOW AND HIGH LEVELS

Variable		1 Secr./Typist/Data Typist/Telkom Op.	2 Admin. Clerk/ Acc. Clerk	3 Auditor/ Pers. Off./ Accountant	4 Sen. Man. G. Man./ HR Exec./CEO	Groups 1/2	1/3	1/4	2/3	2/4	3/4
PDMQ (Total)	Mean	151,37	200,63	207,12	231,59	*	*	*		*	
	Standard deviation	49,58	59,44	53,02	31,61						
PDMQ (B+C)	Mean	78,83	104,34	103,96	116,75	*	*	*			
	Standard deviation	27,84	30,68	27,74	16,54						
PDMQ (D+E)	Mean	72,54	96,29	103,15	114,84	*	*	*		*	
	Standard deviation	27,57	34,04	28,26	19,98						

*Statistically significant

From an inspection of Table 10 it can be seen that in all three analyses employees in higher job grades obtained the highest scores on the PDMQ. The differences in means are statistically highly significant (p‹0,001). Hypotheses 7 and 9 are, therefore, supported. However, Hypothesis 8 runs counter to expectation in so far as the group with higher job grades obtained statistically significantly higher scores than the group with lower job grades in respect of low level decision making as well.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that employees with high academic qualifications, those in higher job grades, and men are more desirous to participate in decision making in general than employees with low academic qualifications and those in lower job grades, and women. The study has further supported the expectation that these groups of employees will also be more desirous to participate in high level decision making than the other groups. It was postulated that high level decisions do not appeal to employees with low academic qualifications, those in lower job grades, and women. Decisions about managerial issues are complex in nature and need a certain level of analytical ability which employees with low academic qualifications and those in lower job grades may be lacking. It is therefore, unlikely that they would be interested in participating in such decisions.

The fact that men reported a stronger desire to participate in high level decision making than women did can be attributed to the fact that there are actually very few women in high job grades in the organisation concerned. The view is also consistent with Larkin and Larkin's argument (1994) that employees desire to participate only in decisions affecting their immediate jobs.

The study did not support the expectation that employees with low academic qualifications, those in lower job grades, and women will be more desirous to participate in decision making at lower levels than employees with high academic qualifications, those in high job grades, and men. It was found that most of the employees with high academic qualifications are also in high job grades and are mostly male. Their level of responsibilities as managers require them to make decisions about every issue in the organisation, and because of their accountability, managers have an interest in decision making at both low and high levels.

An interesting finding, however, is that in general, the level of desire to participate in certain organisational decisions was relatively low. An inspection of Table 5 indicates that items C4, C10, E5, E6 and E7 of the PDMQ obtained the lowest means: 3,781; 3,897; 3,808; 3,904; and 3,788 respectively. The issues addressed by these items are the prices of canteen meals, the number of rest rooms, the appointment of the board of directors, the CEO and the auditors. The lack of interest in the prices of canteen meals, may be explained by the fact that employees are under no obligation to buy from the canteen which is usually operated by outsiders on contract. They may feel that the setting of prices is a private issue which is not as important as organisational issues. They have a choice to use or not to use the canteen anyway. The lack of interest in the number of rest rooms in the organisation, may reflect that what is important to an employee is convenient access to a rest room rather than the number of rest rooms in the entire organisation.

As far as the appointment of the board of directors, the CEO and the auditors is concerned, the lack of interest shown by employees can be attributed to the fact that these appointments rest on the identification of specific qualities and skills, and most employees realise that they do not know the relevant criteria.

In sum the results of the study indicate that all employees have a general desire to participate in some decision making and that academic qualifications, job grades and gender relate to the areas in which they desire to participate. However, one should be careful not to generalise these results, as the participants in the study came from only one organisation.

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