

RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Workers' Participation in Decision Processes and the Performance of Public Sector: The Case of Federal Road Safety Corps Anambra State Command, 2011 - 2022

Obi Yves Mary Virginia, Ph.D<sup>1</sup>, Chukwueloka Stella Chioma<sup>2</sup>, Emenike Ekene<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>*Department of Public Administration, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State Nigeria.*

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**Corresponding Author:** Obi Yves Mary Virginia, Ph.D, Department of Public Administration, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State Nigeria.

## Abstract

This study overviews employee's participation in decision making in Nigerian Public sector using Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) Anambra state Command with a view to ascertain the level of workers participation in decision-making, and determine its impact on FRSC corporate performance between 2011 - 2022. The study is quantitative in nature and used researcher's structured Likert scale questionnaire format to generate data from 360 respondents, which was complemented by extensive review of related literature. SPSS version 20.0 tools were used to analyse the data. Results of analysis reveal workers do not participate in decision-making but are solely responsible for its implementation; and prevalence of corporate poor performance in FRSC Anambra state Command. Therefore, the study observes a statistically significant relationship between workers' participation in decision-making and corporate performance in the public sector. Primarily, the study recommends the democratisation of decision making in the FRSC Anambra state Command in order to enhance performance.

**Keywords:** Decision Processes, Workers, Participation, FRSC, Nigeria.

## 1. Introduction

Human activities at group/organisational levels are becoming increasingly complex, volatile, and highly competitive with challenges and negative influences on their performances, which require different levels of flexible and adaptive decisions continually (Kozioł-Nadolna & Beyer, 2021; Paul, Niehoff, & Turnley, 2010). Such decisions are precursors of continual changes in organizational policies and structures in pursuit of survival and growth in the midst of presenting challenges and competitions. The decisions direct human actions towards specific goals, and choosing the best alternative from among different alternative courses of action will lead to the actualisation of such goals (Eze, Ogbuka & Ugwu, 2022). Thus, where there are no goals and no alternatives means of

actualising them, decision tends to be absent. Thus, wherever an organisation that has target exists, there must be the need at one time, or the other to choose what should be done, by whom, where and how it should be done. Irawanto (2015) identified the human factor i.e. workers or personnel and their integration into participatory decision-making process as one of the primary determinants of the effectiveness of such decisions.

The integration of workers as used herein refers to the process of liberalizing workers' involvement in the processes of generating, preserving, and analysing relative information for purposes of making inductive or deductive opinions that guide the pursuit of organizational goals for a better outcome or performance. These scholars contend that workers'

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capacity to generate new ideas, identify challenges and gaps, boast new policies, and exhibit dedication is an indispensable success or good performance factor for any organisation. Consequently, workers' participation in decision-making (PDM) process becomes a pivotal platform for organisations to exploit their creativity and ingenuity, and elicit their unalloyed commitment to policy success and outcomes. This paper conceives workers' participation in the light of Arrigo & Casale' (2010, p.2) conceptualisation as "the participation resulting from the practices which increases the scope for employees' share of influence in decision making at different tiers of Organizational hierarchy with concomitant(related) assumptions of responsibility".

The participation of workers in the decision process harvests their "unique talents and commitment towards unlocking organizational deadlocks and/or improving on the organizational derivatives and objectives outside the inherent retrogressive organizational bureaucracy" (Ike, Ezech & Etodike, 2017, p. 935). Their inclusivity, which can take place through the establishment of Co-Partnership (Chand, 2014), Suggestion Scheme (Milner, Kinnell & Usherwood, 1995), Joint Consultation Scheme/Project (Java & Okpu, 2014), Unionism (Meli, 2020), and Management by Objective (MBO) (Thompson, Luthans & Tarpenting, 1981) changes their inimical perceptions; work behaviours; and increase efficiency and effectiveness (Ike, Ezech & Etodike, 2017; Idiakheua & Obetoh, 2012). Equally, it increases workers' morale and relationship with the organization, increased loyalty (Ankita, 2015), enhances correspondence and collaboration (Noah, 2018; Verma, 2017), facilitates productivity, and helps organisations to achieve the ultimate goals (Ankita, 2015). However, Verma (2017) identified workers' lack of ownership perception, lack of secret/classified official facts and information due to the involvement of many people, and time-consuming nature of the process as hindrances and disadvantages of workers' participation in decision processes. Other issues include thematic limitations required for secrecy, crisis associated with withdrawal of the right to participate, and possibility of false and conflicting interest etc. Nevertheless, avalanche of literature attest to the potency of workers participation in decision processes as a tool for enhancing organizational performance (see Barinua & Kornom, 2022; Dede, 2019; Ugwu, Okoroji & Chukwu, 2019; Babjohn, Parimala & Thejanjali, 2018; Bearn, 2015; Tunga, 2013).

Thus, Eze, Ogbuka & Ugwu (2022), Koziół-Nadolna

& Wiśniewska (2020), and Kuruppuge & Gregar (2020) argued that decision-making is one of the most important factors that decide the success or failure of any project venture. Decision-making can be programmed or un-programmed (Asefeh, Safari & Zavareh, 2011), strategic, tactical, or operational (Musso & Francioni, 2012), but whichever way, decision-making structures the mechanisms and dynamics for actualising goals. Koziół-Nadolna & Beyer (2021, p. 2784) aptly defined it as "a process of making a choice from a number of alternatives to achieve a desired result that best fits with organization's goals, objectives, desires, values". As a process, it identifies and specifies the presenting problems, gathers relevant information about them, determines possible solutions and different ways of arriving at the solutions, chooses the best alternative, applies or implements the selected alternative, and reviews its outcome (Anderson, et al., 2015; Vrba & Brevis, 2002). Empirical inquiries conducted by some scholars such as Blake (2010), Gunther (2011), and Gilgoff (2009) revealed that the management of any organisation lacks the required knowledge and ability to drive such processes towards effective performances without input from workers or staff. They tend to rely mostly on rules, which are unclear, uncertain and subject to frequent change, and highly disrupted by emotions, sympathies, and antipathies, and these undermine effective decisions. Thus, comprehensive in-put from staff is required for effective decision-making and enhanced performance (Drucker, 2004).

Dominant position in the literature holds that workers' participation in decision processes has significant positive impact on organisational performance. However, virtually all the accessible and reviewed literature focused on the private sector with little or no attention to the public sector. The need to investigate the public sector arose. With this in mind, the current investigation used the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) Anambra state Command as case illustration due to the organisation's promotion of over 865 staff in 2022 to higher positions as reward for excellent performances. The FRSC was established in February 1988 through Decree No. 45 of the 1988 as the FRSC Act cap 141 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria (LFN), which was amended by Decree 35 of 1992 and later passed by the National Assembly as Federal Road Safety Commission (establishment) Act 2007. The primary responsibilities of the Corps according to Federal Government of Nigeria (2007) include among others:

- i. Preventing or minimizing accidents on the highway;
- ii. Clearing obstructions on any part of the highways;
- iii. Educating drivers, motorists and other members of the public generally on the proper use of the highways;
- iv. Designing and producing the driver's license to be used by various categories of vehicle operators;
- v. Designing and producing vehicle number plates
- vi. The standardization of highway traffic codes;
- vii. Giving prompt attention and care to victims of accidents
- viii. Conducting researches into causes of motor accidents and methods of preventing them and putting into use the result of such researches;
- ix. Determining and enforcing speed limits for all categories of roads and vehicles and controlling the use of speed limiting devices;
- x. Regulating the use of sirens, flashers and beacon lights on vehicles other than ambulances and vehicles belonging to the Armed Forces, Nigeria Police, Fire Service and other Para-military agencies;
- xi. Providing roadside and mobile clinics for the treatment of accident victims free of charge;
- xii. Remove and detain any vehicle which has been parked in a manner that causes an obstruction on a highway and the owner or driver of the vehicle shall pay a sum of N200.00 (Two Hundred Naira) for everyday or part thereof of such detention in addition to any other penalty which may have been prescribed under this Act;
- xiii. Regulating the use of mobile phones, seat belts and other safety devices by motorists, etc.

This paper, investigates the degree of workers' participation in decisions arising therein in the course of implementing these responsibilities or provisions of the Act, and its impact on the performance of FRSC – Anambra state Command that attracted the massive promotion in 2022.

#### Research Questions

The paper is poised to provide answers to the following questions:

1. Does Federal Road Safety Corps staff Anambra state Command participate substantially in decision processes?
2. Has the status of staff participation in decision processes any positive impact on the performance of Federal Road Safety Corps Anambra state Command?

## 2. Methods

The study adopted a 2023 cross sectional study of 360 respondents drawn the staff of Federal Road Safety Corps Anambra state Command. The participants were drawn from FRSC offices located in the three senatorial districts of the state on equal ratio of 120 from each of the districts. An introductory letter was sent to the Command's state headquarters at Amawbia, which paved way for the researcher's access to the staff of the institution in the senatorial districts. Essentially, the researcher ensured that respondents received full disclosure of the nature of the research, risks, benefits, and opportunities with an extended arm to ask questions. The research complied with the principles of anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents in the course of the inquiry, findings, dissemination, and data storage, and this led to the informed consent of the respondents to participate.

Researcher structured questionnaire whose validity and reliability were professionally tested was used to generate data from the participants. The questionnaires were distributed and collected in sealed form with the assistance of the supervisory unit of the Command in each district within a period of four weeks. The instrument has two sections, namely: socio-demographic and question related sections. The questions were structured in five-point Likert scale format with ratings as follow: SA = Strongly Agree (5points), A = Agree (4 points), NO = No Opinion (3 points), D = Disagree (2 points) and SD = Strongly Disagree (1 point).

In analysing the data generated with the questionnaire, relevant tools in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 were used to find the mean and standard deviation responses for descriptive purposes, wherein responses were validated or invalidated at .05 level of significance. The paper adopted McGregor's Theory X and Y, which highlights the basic factors that drive good workers' performance in organisations as framework of analysis.

Framework of Analysis

McGregor (1960) specifically explored how human factors influenced and were incorporated into organizational behaviour and outcomes, and therefrom evolved the famous Theory X and Y in his book, *The Human Side of Enterprise*. The principal assumption of theory X is that human beings are lazy, avoid work, resist change, and require direction, external benefits/rewards, and coercion if goals are to be achieved (see Helms, 2006). Simply put, the theory advocates authoritarian leadership style where decision lies with management as precursor of good performance.

However, Theory Y proposes differently that the higher order needs of workers super cedes the lower and dominates the individuals. Consequently, the principal assumption of theory Y is that working is a vital component of man, which enables him to accept responsibility, exercise self-direction, and control towards the actualisation of goals as basis for self-satisfaction. Thus, man is essentially creative, aligns personal interest with organizational goals as framework for self-actualisation. The theory, therefore, advocates democratic leadership style where participatory decision holds the key to good organisational performance. Liberal managers use theory Y, which allows workers to grow and develop along organisations as veritable tool for corporate good performance. According to McGregor, the

principles of theory Y are likely to be more productive and efficient in any organization. Guided by the principles of theory Y, this paper investigated the level of workers' participation in FRSC Anambra state Command's decision processes with a view to assess its impact on the institutional performance of the Corps from 2011 to 2022.

### 3. Data Analysis and Findings

#### 3.1 Respondents' Socio-Demographic information

Out of the 360 respondents, 192 (i.e. 53.3%) are male and 168 (i.e. 46.7%) are females; 268 (i.e. 74.4%) are married while 92 representing 25.6% are single or divorced. 102 respondents representing 28.33% fall within 18-27 years, 183 representing 50.83% fall within 28-37years, while 75 respondents i.e. 20.83% fall within 38 years and above. The data equally reveals that 256 respondents i.e. 71.11% posses first degree and/or diploma certificates, while 104 respondents representing 28.89% posses higher degrees. From these statistics, the respondents are equipped to understand their responsibilities, contribute effectively during decision-making and implementation (if allowed) and are therefore reliable respondents.

Research Question 1: Does Federal Road Safety Corps staff Anambra state Command participate substantially in decision processes?

**Table 1.** Results of SPSS Analyses of responses to questions

S/n	Sub-research questions	Grand Mean	Stand. Deviat.	Standard Error	Tests of Between-Subjects Effects	Sig.	Pairwise Comparisons
1	There are Junior and Senior staff association in FRSC Anambra state Command, and they are represented in the management	2.01	.104	.016	432.119	.000 & .001	@ 95% confidence Interval, no adjustments
2	The management of FRSC introduced and uses Opinion Box mechanism to extract workers' opinion and report on various issues	1.02	.874	.256	965.012	.000	@ 95% confidence Interval, no adjustments
3	FRSC Anambra state Command holds regular staff monthly meetings where issues are discussed	1.02	.874	.256	965.012	.000	@ 95% confidence Interval, no adjustments
4	Decision making is the prerogative of management in FRSC Anambra state Command, who uses regular weekly briefings and circulars to give directives	4.42	.203	.189	119.002	.001	@ 95% confidence Interval, no adjustments

Source: SPSS analysis of responses to research questions

According to table 1, analysis of responses to sub-questions 1 that interrogated whether there are Junior and Senior staff associations in FRSC Anambra state Command, and if they are represented in the management reveal a total grand mean of 2.01 with standard deviation of .104 with a standard error of .016. According to the Tests of Between-Subjects Effects, the mean differences of the responses show significant differences of .000 & .001, whereas it should be significant @ .05 levels. Pairwise Comparism carried out to determine the level of adjustment due to .000 & .001 levels of significances reveals no adjustment. Thus, the ground means of 2.01, which represents 'Disagree' in our likert scale measure was accepted and implies that Junior and Senior staff association do not exist in FRSC Anambra state Command, neither are they represented in the management.

Similar analysis of responses to sub-question 2 reveals a grand mean of 1.02 with a standard deviation of .874 and standard error of .256. A Tests of Between-Subjects Effects to find out the level of difference in their responses reveals a significant difference of .000, whereas it should be significant @ .05 levels. The Pairwise Comparism of the results reveals no adjustment. Thus, the grand means of 1.02, which represents 'Strongly Disagree' in our likert scale measure was accepted and implies that the management of FRSC did not introduce nor use Opinion Box mechanism to extract workers' opinion and report on various issues.

**Table 2.** Results of SPSS Analyses of responses to questions

S/n	Sub-Research questions	Grand Mean	Stand. Deviat.	Standard Error	Tests of Between-Subjects Effects	Sig.	Pairwise Comparisons
5	FRSC Anambra state Command has yards for packing and enough truck for towing accident vehicles and those obstructing traffic on high ways	2.64	.118	.356	164.520	.004	@ 95% confidence Interval, no adjustments
6	FRSC Anambra state Command engages in regular sensitization of motorists, arresting and prosecuting of traffic and FRSC provisions' violators regularly	2.14	.897	.027	804.231	.000	@ 95% confidence Interval, no adjustments
7	The revenue generated by FRSC Anambra state Command from culprits has continued to increase over the years	1.01	.338	.834	211.017	.001	@ 95% confidence Interval, no adjustments
8	FRSC Anambra state Command has eradicated the use of sirens, flashers and beacon lights on vehicles by none ambulances and security personnel vehicles	2.03	.106	.114	768.003	.000	@ 95% confidence Interval, no adjustments
9	The Corps has been providing roadside and mobile clinics services for accident victims, and substantially reduced the use of mobile phones, seat belts and other safety devices by motorists on wheel	1.01	.338	.834	211.017	.001	@ 95% confidence Interval, no adjustments

Source: SPSS analysis of responses to research questions

Similarly, analysis of responses to the sub-question 3 reveals a grand mean of 1.02 with a standard deviation of .874 and standard error of .256. A Tests of Between-Subjects Effects to find out the level of difference in their responses reveals a significant difference of .000, whereas it should be significant @ .05 levels. The Pairwise Comparism of the results reveals no adjustment. Thus, the grand means of 1.02, which represents 'Strongly Disagree' in our likert scale measure was accepted and implies that FRSC Anambra state Command does not holds regular staff monthly meetings where issues are discussed.

In addition, analysis of responses to sub-question 4, which sought to find if decision making is the prerogative of management in FRSC Anambra state Command, who uses regular weekly briefings and circulars to give directives reveals a ground mean of 4.42 with a standard deviation of .203 whose level of significance differences is .006 with no adjustments required. Thus, the grand means of 4.42, which represents 'Agree' in our likert scale measures is accepted and implies that decision-making is the prerogative of management in FRSC Anambra state Command, who use regular weekly briefings and circulars to give directives.

Research Question 2: Has the status of staff participation in decision processes any positive impact on the performance of Federal Road Safety Corps Anambra state Command?

SPSS analysis of responses to sub-question 5 that interrogated whether FRSC Anambra state Command has yards for packing and enough trucks for towing accident vehicles and those obstructing traffic on high ways reveals a grand mean of 2.64, with .118 standard deviation and .356 error. The grand mean of these responses reveal non-sig. differences of .004 whereas the difference is significant @ .005, and the pairwise comparism of the differences reveals no modification. Thus, the ground means of 2.64, which represents 'Disagree' in our likert scale measure was accepted and implies that FRSC Anambra state Command does not have yards for packing and enough trucks for towing accident vehicles and those obstructing traffic on high ways.

Analysis of responses to sub-questions 6 equally revealed a total grand mean of 4.14 with standard deviation of .897 with a standard error of .027. The Tests of Between-Subjects Effects shows a mean difference of .001 whereas the difference should be significant @ .05 levels. Pairwise Comparism analysis carried out to determine the level of adjustment due to .000 level of significance reveals no adjustment. Thus, the ground means of 2.14, which represents 'Disagree' in our likert scale measure was accepted and implies that FRSC Anambra state Command does not engage in regular sensitization of motorists, arresting and prosecuting of traffic and FRSC provisions' violators regularly.

Similar analysis of responses to sub-question 7 reveals a grand mean of 1.01 with a standard deviation of .338 and standard error of .834. A Tests of Between-Subjects Effects to find out the level of difference in their responses reveals a significant difference of .001, whereas it should be significant @ .05 levels. The Pairwise Comparism of the results reveals no adjustment. Thus, the grand means of 1.01, which represents 'Strongly Disagree' in our likert scale measure was accepted and implies that the revenue generated by FRSC Anambra state Command from culprits is not increasing over the years.

Similarly, analysis of responses to the sub-question 8 reveals a grand mean of 2.03 with a standard deviation of .106 and standard error of .114. A Tests of Between-Subjects Effects to find out the level of difference in their responses reveals a significant difference of .000, whereas it should be significant @ .05 levels. The Pairwise Comparism of the results reveals no adjustment. Thus, the grand means of 2.03, which represents 'Disagree' in our likert scale measure

was accepted and implies that FRSC Anambra state Command has not eradicated the use of sirens, flashers and beacon lights on vehicles by none ambulances and security personnel vehicles.

Finally, analysis of responses to sub-question 9 reveals a grand mean of 1.01 with a standard deviation of .338 and standard error of .834. A Tests of Between-Subjects Effects to find out the level of difference in their responses reveals a significant difference of .001, whereas it should be significant @ .05 levels. The Pairwise Comparism of the results reveals no adjustment. Thus, the grand means of 1.01, which represents 'Strongly Disagree' in our likert scale measure was accepted and implies that the Corps has not been providing roadside and mobile clinics services for accident victims, and has not reduced the use of mobile phones, seat belts and other safety devices by motorists on wheel substantially.

#### 4. Discussion of Findings

From the analysis of data, this study observes a FRSC Anambra state Command practices top-down hierarchically structured decision-making culture that ignores workers' contribution. The analysis reveals among others that there is no workers' union in FRSC whose activities would have been the most organised form of workers' participation in decision-making. Scholars like Ike, Ezech & Etodike (2017) and Meli (2020) held that unionism enables the management to harness the potentials of workers and destroy anti-commitment forces towards effective actualisation of goals. Further to this finding, the management of FRSC did not introduce nor use Opinion Box mechanism to extract workers' opinion and report on various issues. This is equally contrary to earlier observations made by

Milner, Kinnell & Usherwood (1995) and Idiakheua & Obetoh (2012) among others that Opinion Box or Suggestion Box scheme is an effective platform for workers' participation that ensures efficient goal actualisation. To complicate matters, the management of FRSC Anambra state Command does not holds regular staff monthly meetings for discussing matters of importance. These show that decision-making in FRSC Anambra state Command is the prerogative of management who uses regular weekly briefings and circulars to issue directives. According to Ankita (2015); Kumar & Taunk (2013), Noah (2018), and Verma (2017), this system of decision-making decreases workers' morale and relationship with the organization, exerts negative influence on workers'

loyalty, correspondence, and collaboration. Therefore, it undermines productivity and effective actualisation of the corporate goals of the institution.

Further, this paper observes the prevalence of poor performance indices in FRSC Anambra state Command. The Command does not have yards for packing seized and towed vehicles, and enough trucks for towing accident vehicles and those obstructing traffic on high ways as required by law. Consequentially, accident vehicles and others that are obstructing traffic on high ways pack as long as their owners want. This suggests that Road Marshalls may either be ignoring traffic offences or collecting bribes from offenders. The findings of this paper that the annual revenue of FRSC Anambra state Command is not increasing over the years, motorists use of mobile phones and non-use of seat belts and other safety devices, and the use of sirens, flashers and beacon lights on vehicles by none ambulances and security personnel vehicles still prevail, validate this position. In addition, FRSC Anambra state Command does not engage in regular sensitization of motorists, arresting and prosecuting of traffic and FRSC provisions' violators regularly. Equally, the Corps has not been providing roadside and mobile clinics services for accident victims. These findings are evidences of lack of commitment, indifference to rules and goals, seeming pursuit of individual interests, and poor performance record. The findings align with earlier findings made by scholars like Ike, Ezeh & Etodike (2017), Idiakheua & Obetoh (2012), Ankita (2015), Noah, 2018; Verma (2017) to the effect that workers participation in decision-making leads to changes in work behaviours; increases effectiveness, morale, loyalty, and relationship with the organization; and facilitates productivity, and good performance. In the instant case, workers participation does not exist and the opposites prevail. It, therefore, holds that the massive promotion of staff witnessed in 2022 has no relationship with staff performances.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Inclusive decision-making system exerts significant positive impact on corporate performance. Thus, workers' participation in decision-making is a necessary requirement for the growth and development of any organisation. The implication of this for the public sector is the need to re-model or modernise the dominant top-down decision processes associated with bureaucracy and Nigeria's non-armed forces or paramilitary organisations such as FRSC. Staff participation

in decision-making, if allowed or introduced, shall reduce indifference and non-commitment of workers, increase productivity, and corporate performance. It shall provide fertile ground for the management's understanding of workers' mind-set, harnessing of their various potentials, addressing their needs, and actualisation of corporate goals. FRSC Anambra state Command should embrace practical and effective workers' participatory decision-making as panacea to systemic weaknesses and poor performance.

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