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## INFLUENCE OF EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT:

### COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BETWEEN USA AND PAKISTAN

*The objective of this study is to explore the impact of employee participation on the forms of organizational commitment. Literature related to employee participation and organizational commitment is critically reviewed. This exploratory study utilizes a questionnaire distributed to a wide sample of middle level employees of Pakistani and USA commercial banks listed at KSE and NYSE. To answer the research question methods like descriptive statistics, scatter diagrams, Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis are used. This study indicates that in both USA and Pakistani settings employee participation has a significant and positive relationship with forms of organizational commitment.*

*Keywords: affective commitment, continuous commitment, employee participation, normative commitment, organizational commitment.*

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## ВПЛИВ УЧАСТІ СПІВРОБІТНИКА В ДІЯЛЬНОСТІ КОЛЕКТИВУ НА ЛОЯЛЬНІСТЬ ПІДПРИЄМСТВУ: ПОРІВНЯЛЬНИЙ АНАЛІЗ США І ПАКИСТАНУ

*У статті вивчено участь співробітника в діяльності колективу на лояльність підприємству. Проведено огляд літератури з цих питань. Попереднє дослідження використовує анкету, поширену серед співробітників середньої ланки в комерційних банках Пакистану і США, зареєстрованих на біржах цих країн. Використано такі методи дослідження, як описова статистика, діаграми розкиду, кореляція Пірсона і множинний регресійний аналіз. Дослідження показує, що і в США, і в Пакистані участь співробітника в діяльності колективу має значний позитивний вплив на лояльність підприємству.*

*Ключові слова: афективна лояльність, тривала лояльність, участь співробітників у діяльності колективу, нормативна лояльність, лояльність підприємству.*

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## ВЛИЯНИЕ УЧАСТИЯ СОТРУДНИКА В ДЕЯТЕЛЬНОСТИ КОЛЛЕКТИВА НА ЛОЯЛЬНОСТЬ ПРЕДПРИЯТИЮ: СРАВНИТЕЛЬНЫЙ АНАЛИЗ США И ПАКИСТАНА

*В статье изучено участие сотрудника в деятельности коллектива на лояльность предприятию. Проведен обзор литературы по этим вопросам. Предварительное исследование использует анкету, распространенную среди сотрудников среднего звена в коммерческих банках Пакистана и США, зарегистрированных на биржах этих стран. Используются такие методы исследования, как описательная статистика, диаграммы разброса, корреляция Пирсона и множественный регрессионный анализ. Исследование показывает, что и в США, и в Пакистане участие сотрудника в деятельности коллектива имеет значительное позитивное влияние на лояльность предприятию.*

*Ключевые слова: аффективная лояльность, длительная лояльность, участие сотрудников в деятельности коллектива, нормативная лояльность, лояльность предприятию.*

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**Introduction.** In Pakistan the concept of HR is flourishing day by day and employers and employees are getting awareness of their rights and demands. The financial market, specifically the banking industry of Pakistan has been facing a cut throat competition which is because of foreign as well as local investments.

The companies, specifically in banking, have changed the gaming rules and adapted new modern techniques for their customers. This led to a major shift in the human skills required for job and employees switched a lot of jobs because of better prospects, both financially and non-financially (Kamal, Yasir, Hanif, Fawad, 2009).

The factors coupled with environmental uncertainty in Pakistan put many organizations in a fierce competition of gaining more and more of the market share. Changing government legal requirement, increased awareness on security issues, new information systems, downsizing demand for a more skilled workforce, and intensifying global competition are just a few of the factors that contribute to the complexity of HRM issues for today's companies. HRM encompasses the activities designed to provide for and coordinate human resources of an organization. The human resources (HR) of an organization represent one of its largest investments.

Employee participation is considered as a combination of different tools designed to increase employee input in various degrees in managerial decision making to affect the aspects of organizational commitment, reduction of employee turnover intention and absenteeism in order to increase employee productivity and motivation. This area has been the focus of attention for researchers.

Employee participation represents the combination of task-related practices, which aim to maximize employees' sense of involvement in their work, and HR management practices that aim to maximize employees' commitment. Varieties of employee involvement practices are included to support the task-related practices. These practices include: training to improve employees' problem-solving and communication skills; financial participation schemes, to enhance the link between effort and reward; and an emphasis on job security and internal promotion, to enhanced employees' commitment to organizational success.

Singh (2009) stated that in current dynamic working environment and severe competition, organizations are required to adopt techniques which are flexible, adaptive and competitive due to the competitive pressures and rapidly changing market conditions. Organizations are now realizing that their employees are the most important asset and their future depends on more involvement of employees in generating new ideas. Involvement of employees can help in many ways to the organizations which includes looking for creativity, changes in behaviour at work, and in workplace decision-making. In many cases, managers are encouraged to allow a high degree of employee participation and autonomy to increase workforce commitment.

*Purpose.* By identifying the factors that help to foster organizational commitment among banking sector employees, this study aims to provide guidelines to bank officials to come up with policies which would enable them to attract and retain highly effective and efficient employees. In Pakistani context, fostering organizational commitment among employees has become imperative for organizations. This study is an attempt to explore the impact of employee participation on forms of organizational commitment in banking sectors of Pakistan and the USA.

For this study the banks listed at NYSE and KSE are selected because we want to analyse the impact of employee participation practice in a developed and a developing country and secondly, as there is a huge cultural difference. And we want to find out whether there exists any difference in the impact of employee participation on the forms of organizational commitment.

*Research Question.* To what extent employee participation have impact on forms of organizational commitment in Pakistani and the US banking sector?

**Literature Review.** Strauss (2006) said that participation is a process that allows employees exercise some control over their work and the conditions under which they work. It encourages employees to participate in the process of decision-making, which have a direct impact on work environment. Substantial employee participation in management is vital for cross-functional integration and efficient working. Employee participation is a method where a large number of subordinates share a degree of decision-making power with their superiors.

*Theoretical Basis of Employee Participation.* Employee participation practices and their relationship to organizational commitment are proved by Maslow hierarchy of need (1943, 1954, 1968), McClelland's theory of needs (1975) and Douglas McGregor's theory Y (1960). In the section below these theories and their implication regarding employee participation will be explained.

*Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Motivational Need:* Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory was firstly introduced in 1943. He states that employees are usually motivated by their unsatisfied needs. He divided employee needs into 5 general levels (physiological, safety, belongingness, esteem and self-actualization). According to Maslow, employees want and need appreciation for their hard work and a job well done. If employees are given more chance to explore themselves in higher order needs like self-esteem, employees will themselves work for organizational growth as they become more committed. In self-actualization need where employee provides their services to a company for an intrinsic value, enhances employee's commitment to an organization for a higher purpose. However, to analyse how an employee achieves this desired level of self-actualization, we need to examine how much employee participation practices can influence work.

*McClelland's Theory of Needs:* According to David McClelland (1975), regardless of culture or gender, people are driven by 3 motives which are: achievement, affiliation, and influence. For a manager if he/she wants to enhance the commitment level of his employees all of these 3 needs should have to be fulfilled. The need for influence or power is characterized by a drive to control and influence others, a need to win arguments, a need to persuade and prevail could be fulfilled by giving employees more autonomy, more responsibility (financial, direct and representative participation) within the organization.

*Theory of "Y":* Douglas McGregor (1960) in this theory viewed 2 different perspectives of managers regarding employees, in which one viewpoint is negative known as "Theory X" and the other one is positive known as "Theory Y". According to the assumptions of theory Y manager believes that employees love to work, they are self-directed and are committed to organizational objectives. He further added that it is not necessary that objectives of employees and organizations are always different. It is evident through different researches conducted by different researchers in different

times that employee commitment has a direct relationship with the fulfilment of employee's needs, particularly the upper level (higher) needs of employees. Here it is perceived that organizations can gain employee's commitment through delegation of authority, job enrichment and enlargement, management by objectives and different employee participation techniques.

Another study conducted by Kalyal and Saha (2008), in the public sector of Pakistan reveals that employee participation has very little or negative impact on affective commitment and continuous commitment. In this study the effect of participation on normative commitment was not studied. The study also shows there is a very little participation by the employees which is evident by the mean value (2.18) on the 5-point scale.

It is observed that employee's commitment to organization is strong among those where leaders allow them participate in decision-making. The need for employees to be more involved in decisions that affect their work has been the centre of arguments in current management (Hales, 2000).

Cassar (1999) reported that employee participation is one of the most researched contemporary management practices because it is often associated with enhancing employees' positive attitude and behaviour in workplace resulting in increased levels of affective commitment to organization. In empirical evaluations of employee participation programs, it has been tied to the increased level of affective commitment (Karia, 1999).

According to Elele, Fields (2010), for Nigerian employees, both actual levels of participation and actual and desired participation are related to affective and normative commitment. Neither measure of participation is related to continuance commitment. For the USA, only actual vs. desired levels of participation are positively related with affective and normative organizational commitment. Actual levels of participation are negatively related to continuance commitment.

Affective and normative forms of organizational commitment are both based on employee assessments of the congruence of organizational values, mission, climate, and culture with the ideals of employee (Meyer and Allen, 1997). We anticipate that these types of organizational commitment will be determined by the levels of participation in decision-making for both USA and Nigerian employees (Okurame, 2009). Continuance commitment, however, may be based primarily on the employee's need to remain employed. Indeed, the previous studies suggest that continuance commitment may be associated primarily with the availability of alternative jobs or "side bet" options (Meyer and Allen, 1997).

The study revealed that the 3 forms of commitment are correlated but clearly different from one another as well as from job satisfaction, job participation, and commitment. Affective and continuous commitment are generally correlated as expected with their hypothesized antecedent variables; no unique antecedents of normative commitment were identified. Normative commitment was also associated with desirable outcomes, although not as strongly. Continuous commitment was unrelated or negatively related to these outcomes. (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, Topolnysky, 2002).

Stinglhamber et al. (2002) in their study mentioned that employee participation has a significant positive effect on normative commitment. They concluded that nor-

mative commitment is correlated with organization, supervisor, work group and occupation. They also argue that normative commitment to supervisor and work group might ensue from engaging into a social exchange relationship with them or from being socialized into values of loyalty to these targets.

**Research Methodology.** The broader purpose of the present study has to explore the relationship between employee participation and forms of organizational commitment (affective, normative and continuous commitment) in Pakistan and the USA. This is an exploratory study, therefore, the research methodology is designed in the way to provide evidence to test the hypotheses of the study.

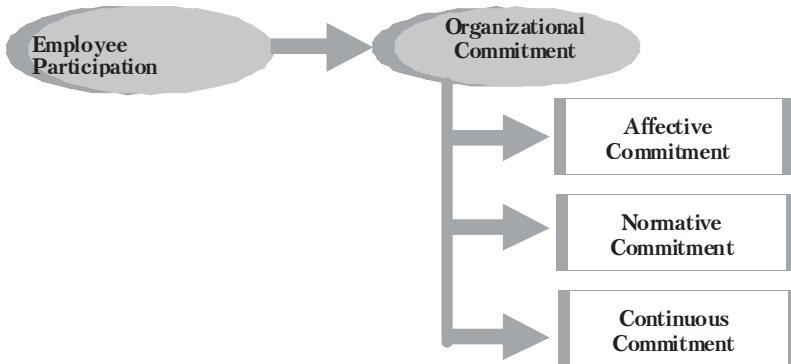


Figure 1. Research Model

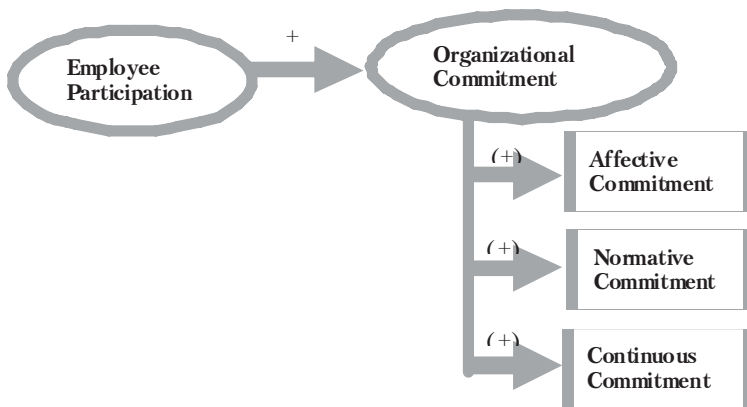


Figure 2. Hypothetical Model

This cross-sectional comparative study is based on the primary data related to the variables collected from HRM professionals working in different commercial banks of Pakistan and USA through questionnaires. The purposive sampling method was used to get a diverse population. All middle level employees of commercial banks listed at KSE and NYSE were included in the population, 10 questionnaires each were sent. The estimated population of study is 620 employees from Pakistan and 570 employees in the USA. The sample selected from the population was 250 employees from each country. Sample size of the study was 42%. So we can consider the sample size as representative.

*Variables Explanation.*

*Employee Participation:* It refers to employers' sharing decision-making with employees by giving an opportunity to have a say in decisions that affect them (Knoop, 1991).

*Organizational Commitment.*

*Affective Commitment* refers to employees' perceptions of their emotional attachment to or identification with their organization (Meyer and Allen, 1991).

*Normative Commitment* refers to employees' perceptions of their obligation to their organization (Meyer and Allen, 1991).

*Continuous Commitment* refers to employees' perceptions of the costs associated with leaving the organization (Meyer and Allen, 1991).

*Instrument Development.*

The survey instrument was developed using a combination of existing scales across the two key themes of the study: employee participation (Erik Poutsma, 2001; Lammers, Meurs, Mijs, 1987) and organizational commitment (Meyer and Allen, 1991).

*Reliability.* The overall reliability for each question separately representing that 43 different questions asked in the questionnaire had Cronbach's alpha value of more than ( $\alpha > .70$ ) signifying the acceptable reliability limit. The instrument was validated in both countries with the help of pilot surveys, and recommendations from both countries were incorporated in the questionnaires.

*Response Rate.* Total 500 questionnaires were sent and 354 were received back. The response rate in Pakistan was 82% and in the USA it was 59.6%, so the total response rate was 70.8%. According to Uma Sekran (2004) the sample size is representative.

*Hypothesis.* Keeping in view the theories and evidences provided in the literature review, it is evident that employee participation has some positive impact on the employee's organizational commitment. Organizations that involve their employees in their success put a very positive impact on their employees. It is also logical that employees have any stake with the organization's profitability or given an opportunity to participate in decision-making in any form, will be more committed to the organization.

*H<sub>1</sub>: Employee participation has positive effect on organizational commitment.*

The hypothesis was structured to find out the relationship of employee participation with organizational commitment and to find out if there was any difference in the relationship if organizational commitment divided into its 3 forms, namely, affective commitment, continuous commitment and normative commitment.

**Results and Discussion.** This chapter presents the information obtained for this research study from the data collected from primary and secondary sources. The analysis has been done in two parts; the first part contains the analysis of respondents' answers to the questions and the second part is the comparative analysis of Pakistan and the USA. Excel 2003 and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 17.0) were used to calculate the descriptive statistics, correlation and multiple regression analyses.

*Pilot Study.* After the focus group discussion and the extensive literature review, an instrument was designed and distributed amongst the same panel of HRM professionals. The response was 84% and all the questions were considered for analysis.



**Results.**

*Research Question:* To what extent employee participation have impact on forms of organizational commitment in Pakistani and USA banking sector?

To answer this research question first we apply Pearson correlation analysis to find out the form of relationship between dependent and independent variables, second we apply multiple regression analysis to find out the extent of relationship and lastly we compare the results obtained in both countries.

The results of descriptive statistics show that most of the respondents were male, aged between 30 and 40, and their qualification was 16 years and more. Most of the respondents belonged to the private sector having permanent or contractual employment status. Values of mean as they all are greater than 3.5 revealed that most respondents agree that employee participation has a positive impact on the forms of organizational commitment.

The Pearson correlation matrix obtained for the research variables (regarding Pakistan) of the study shows that the correlation between employee participation and affective commitment (.312,  $p < .05$ ) depicting that if organizations that involve their employees, affective commitment of employees with organizations increase. The results also show that among 3 forms of organizational commitment, continuous commitment (.451,  $p < .05$ ) is the most highly and significantly correlated with employee participation. This reveals that employees in Pakistani settings have greater continuous commitment if they are involved in organizational decision-making.

The Pearson correlation matrix obtained for the research variables (regarding USA) shows that the correlation between employee participation and affective commitment (-.025,  $p < .765$ ) reveals that relationship between affective commitment and employee participation is slightly negative and insignificant. The results also show that among 3 forms of organizational commitment, normative commitment (.231,  $p < .05$ ) is the most highly and significantly correlated with employee participation. This reveals that employees in the US settings have greater normative commitment if they are involved in organizational decision-making.

Regression models are used for predicting the value of one dependent variable from the values of two or more independent variables. The regression model for the study was as follows:

**Equation 1:**

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \epsilon$$

$$E.P = \alpha + \beta_1 AC + \beta_2 NC + \beta_3 CC + \epsilon$$

Employee Participation = Intercept + Coefficient (Affective Commitment) + Coefficient (Normative Commitment) + Coefficient (Continuous Commitment) + error

The result of regression equation 1 show that in Pakistani settings employee participation has 56.2% collective impact on the forms of organizational commitment. It also show that employee participation has a strong a significant impact on affective commitment ( $\beta = 0.304$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). As compared with affective commitment and normative commitment ( $\beta = 0.209$ ,  $p = .000$ ) employee participation have greater impact on continuous commitment ( $\beta = 0.651$ ,  $p = .000$ ).

This also validates and proves our research hypothesis for Pakistan in which employee participation has a significant and positive impact on the forms of organizational commitment.

Regression analysis of Equation 1 for the USA revealed that employee participation has 19.9% collective impact on the forms of organizational commitment (affective commitment, normative and continuous commitment). The regression model for Equation 1 is significant as shown by the value of F and its significance. Results show that employee participation has a strong significant impact on affective commitment ( $\beta = 0.301$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ). Impact of employee participation on normative commitment is positive but slightly insignificant on normative commitment ( $\beta = 0.354$ ,  $p = .004$ ) whereas it has a negative insignificant impact on continuous commitment ( $\beta = -0.079$ ,  $p = .456$ ).

This also partially proves our research hypothesis for the USA in which employee participation has a significant positive impact on affective and normative organizational commitment but negative insignificant impact on continuous commitment. These results are also similar with the study conducted by Elele and Fields (2010) which states that employees in the USA have relatively insignificant impact on organizational commitment if participation level is increased in their job.

*Comparison of the Results for Pakistan and the USA.* For comparative analysis we consider the results of regression equation # 1 for both countries. Regression results on Pakistani data show that employee participation explains 56.2% variation in the forms of organizational commitment in commercial banks of Pakistan while in the US commercial banks this variation is 19.9%. The research reveals that in Pakistani settings employee participation has a positive significant impact on the forms of organizational commitment but when the same variables were compared with the US settings the impact of employee participation is strong positive and significant on normative commitment, weak positive and significant on affective commitment whereas the impact of employee participation is weak, negative and insignificant on continuous commitment.

The results show that in the US there is a number of other job related factors that affect the employees' commitment level. Whereas in Pakistan employees acknowledge organizations efforts towards increasing participation.

**Discussion of Findings.** The study conducted by Kamal, Yasir, Hanif, Fawad (2009) states that most of Pakistani banks did not see employee participation as a driver for enhancing organizational commitment. Findings of the present study reveal that types of employee participation had a positive and significant impact on organizational commitment in Pakistani whereas in the USA that influence is not as much positive and significant.

Our research question was about the extent effect of different types of employee participation on the forms of organizational commitment in developing and developed countries. The results revealed that in Pakistan types of employee participation could cause 56.2% variation in affective commitment. The level of impact of the employee participation was greater on affective commitment than on all other forms of organizational commitment. While results of regression equation revealed that in the USA types of employee participation caused 19.9% variation in the forms of organizational commitment, this level of organizational commitment in the USA is far lower.



We find this low level impact of employee participation in the USA because there is very low differentiation in their power structure and employees feel participation as a mandatory portion of their job. Hence, there is a very small effect on their commitment with organization. As compared to the USA when studying the culture of Pakistan we find organizations possess higher power distance among their employees, and this is the major reason because of which employees value their participation whether in the form of consultation or delegation.

These results are parallel with the findings of the research study conducted by Centre for Advanced Studies in Engineering, Islamabad, Pakistan (CASE), by Khan, Ali, Ahsan and Mirza in 2001 discovering that in Pakistan types of employee participation had a very strong impact on employee's normative, affective and continuous commitment. While the results are contradictory with the findings of Kalyal and Saha (2008), who stated that in Pakistan types of employee participation has very little or negative impact on affective commitment and continuous commitment.

This study provide evidence that investment in employee participation in an organization shows better results, high employees' commitment and productivity, development of desired knowledge, skills, attitudes and other behaviours result in higher job satisfaction and organizational performance.

*Implication for Management.* Empirical evidence appears to support the view that employee participation practices can influence the forms of organizational commitment. Organizations interested in their growth and in highly committed work force must involve their employees in decision-making. Those organizations, which make effective use of HRM practices on a wider scale, can generate higher returns.

The research provides proofs for organizations that whenever the workforce is not involved in their organization, commitment is adversely impacted. When an employee is not committed to a company, there are multiple effects. The first is the loss of that person's skills and knowledge. The second is the loss of productivity. The third is the financial impact of replacing that individual. The fourth is the impact on employee morale; depending on the reason the employee left the company.

Our study provides evidence that investment in employee participation of an organization for better results, high employees commitment and productivity, developing desired knowledge base, skills, attitudes and other behaviours does result in higher job satisfaction and organizational performance.

The results of the study also advocate that employee participation is a threefold issue. First, organizations must acquire new, credible employees. They must be incorporated into the organizational atmosphere in which they intend them to perform their duties. Once employees are acquired, management must continually revitalize that same workforce, otherwise it will change to something else, and all of the initial hard work will be lost. Second, existing employees must be made feel as though they are a part of the evolving system. Their skills (both technical as well as personal) must continually be sharpened and enhanced with the help of techniques like direct participation and representative participation. Third, if employees are financially involved with in organization they will be more committed to it and their intention to turnover will be reduced.

The conclusion also suggests that management should be able to increase the level of commitment in organization by increasing contribution of employees. One

way of addressing this could be by increasing the interactions with employees in staff meetings and increasing guided discussions of the 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 contribution in policy development, and better work environment could then be made in an effort to increase organizational commitment.

This study also provides an insight to management regarding the employee participation practices and how these practices can eventually benefit management in not only enhancing behavioral outcomes (commitment, motivation, satisfaction) and firm performance. Benefits which management can gain are as follows:

- i. Employee participation practices enhance employee's productive efficiency, employee's morale and also their job satisfaction.
- ii. Employee participation practices help management to reduce employee's monitoring cost.
- iii. Employee participation practices enhance trust of employees to management and a sense of control on the part of employees.
- iv. Employee participation practices may provide more valuable decisions as it gives diversity of perspectives and the results in enhancing organizational performance.
- v. During the survey it was observed that by creating a participative environment within the organization by practices initiates physiological empowerment of employees that results in enhancing employees personal capabilities and reduces employee's needs of showing their power through strikes.
- vi. Employee participation practices may be useful in developing greater individual job responsibility.

*Limitations of the Study.* The results of this study should be viewed with a small number of limitations in mind:

- i. Although out of the sample of 250 each from Pakistan and the USA as many as 205 (82%) in Pakistan and 149 (59.6%) in the US in total (70.8%) responded from commercial banking sector, but the sample size is not large to reflect the factual image of all organizations functioning in Pakistan and the USA, especially in the context of measuring the relationship between types of employee participation and forms of organizational commitment.
- ii. This study considered only commercial banks listed at Karachi Stock Exchange and New York Stock Exchange while the non-registered banks were ignored.
- iii. Other methods could have been used for this research study, like group discussions/discussion forum etc.

*Directions for Future Research.* This research indicates that certain types of employee participation could influence certain forms of organizational commitment; it still does not shed light on the mechanisms through which this is accomplished. Future research directions could include:

- i. Different levels of employee participation and their impact on different employee outcomes.
- ii. Longitudinal studies to establish the causal relationship between the variables.

iii. To enhance external validity, future research efforts should obtain a representative sample from more organizations.

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