

EMPIRICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE LINK BETWEEN PARTICIPATORY DECISION-MAKING AND FIRM PERFORMANCE IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Background. Participatory decision-making maintains a leading theme across business, policy, and practice research. The success of any organisation depends on involving the workforce's entire capacity to produce new ideas and ways of working to outsmart the competitors and have a competitive edge in the industry they are operating in.

Research aims. The focus of this study was to examine participatory decision-making and firm performance in the Nigerian banking industry. The study precisely sought: to determine the effect of employee participation in work decision on service quality of the firm, to ascertain the relationship between consultative participation and firm profitability, and to investigate how representative participation can affect the timely delivery of firm service as well as to determine the impact of short-term participation on the productivity of the firm.

Methodology. In the course of this study, several relevant literary works were reviewed. The survey method was used to collect data of which 300 copies of the questionnaire were distributed and 288 were retrieved. Regression analysis and Pearson correlation coefficient were used to test hypotheses.

Key findings. The results show that a significant and positive relationship exists between service quality and employees' participation in work decision. Similarly, a weak significant positive relationship exists between consultative participation and firm profitability. Furthermore, there exists a positive relationship between timely delivery of firm service and representative participation. On the other hand, there is no positive relationship between productivity of the firm and short-term

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participation. When employees are allowed to participate in decision-making, it gives them a sense of responsibility for their actions as they see themselves as an important member of the organisation. The study, however, recommends that for the promotion of creativity as well as innovation in the organisation, employees should be allowed to participate in decision-making.

Key words: decision-making, participatory decision-making, consultative participation, performance

INTRODUCTION

In today's turbulent environment and extreme competition, firms constrained by competitive pressures and fast changing business environment are forced to seek ways to be more flexible, adaptive, and competitive (David, 2005). Essentially, firms are realising that a human being is really the best and most important asset to have (David, 2005). The success of any organisation then depends on involving the workforce's entire capacity to produce new ideas and ways of working to outsmart the competitors and have a competitive edge in the industry they are operating in. Participatory decision-making maintains a leading theme across business, policy, and practice research. Management focus has been to make known the positive or negative effects of these practices on performance (Somech, 2002). Participation in management has been used interchangeably to mean shared leadership, employee empowerment, employee involvement, participatory decision-making, dispersed leadership, open-book management, or industrial democracy (Steinheider et al., 2006). These coinages are a product of the long pursuit to improve workers input to organisation decisions in order to achieve organisational goals and better performance. This has, however, posed a big task to management in recent times. Organisations that tend to focus on their employee's involvement increase employee satisfaction, commitment, and organisational success. The Nigerian banking sector has been the focal subsector, and little has been known about the influence of its employee involvement in decision-making on firm performance. The particular attention in banking sector emanates from the conviction that the sector is a potential instrument of modernisation, a creator of jobs, and a generator of positive spill-over effects as it plays a key role in supporting the real sector (Tybout, 2000). Employee involvement and

participation in decision-making are promoted for different reasons and embedded in various institutional settings across industries and countries. Some involvement arrangements are initiated mainly in order to improve productivity, while others have productivity as one of its several objectives, for instance, most banks in Nigeria share a part of their profit among their employees. As mentioned earlier, participatory decision-making has received much attention in the area of research mostly in the developed economies and one probing concern raised is the fact is whether these findings can be generalised across nations. Do the findings of these studies carried out in the developed economy also apply to the Nigerian context? Some researchers are of the opinion that allowing employees to participate in decision-making is a risk to the organisation. To some, with suggestions coming from many people within the organisation, it will lead to slow decision-making, unproductiveness, indecisiveness, and incompetence (DeBrin, 2007). In reality, evidence shows that when management allows employees to be involved in decision-making, absenteeism is reduced; organisational commitment is enhanced, performance is improved, employee turnover is reduced, and job satisfaction increases (Luthans, 2005). There is a sense of belonging in the employees which in return increases their level of self-worth and a feeling of importance within the organisation. Many organisations have competent employees who can make adequate decisions that would improve the firms' performance and better the lot of the organisation, but the management of the organisations find themselves searching for competent people outside the firm to fill strategic management positions and make decisions (Corsentino, & Bue, 1993). Therefore, many such organisations have witnessed a lack of commitment from employees towards the execution of decisions taken by top management which undoubtedly has serious implications on organisational success. The banking sector is key among the drivers of the economy and a major contributor to the real sector, the growth engine of the economy. It also plays a key element role in the successful transformation of most economies that have seen sustained growth in their per capita income. The focus should, therefore, be in the banking industry and those factors that may foster its growth. Thus, the justification for this study to focus on the banking sector in Nigeria.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The core objective of the study is to examine participatory decision-making and firm performance in the Nigerian banking industry.

The study precisely sought:

- To determine the effect of employee participation in work decision on firm service quality.
- To ascertain the relationship between consultative participation and firm profitability.
- To investigate how representative participation can affect the timely delivery of firm service.
- To determine the impact of short-term participation on firm productivity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical framework

The resource-based theory is based on the premise that firm internal resources and capability are very important in achieving and sustaining competitive advantage. The ability of a firm to deploy its resources efficiently and effectively enable them to enjoy a competitive advantage. RBV emphasise that for the firm to enjoy competitive advantage its resources must be valuable, rare, cannot be copied or substituted. According to Barney (1995), competitive advantage depends on the unique resources and how the resources are used by the firm. Ainuddin et al. (2007) noted that resources owned and controlled by the firm can give them a competitive edge and enhance performance. Recently, much resource-based research has focused on intangible assets of the organisation, which include information (Sampler, 1998), knowledge (Spender, 1996), and dynamic capabilities (Teece et al., 1997). Arguably, human resources is one of the most important resources at the disposal of a firm, hence the efficient use of these resources can serve as a competitive advantage for firms.

Participatory decision-making and firm performance

Firms need vibrant employees with the right competency, skills, and abilities to achieve and sustain competitive advantage. More importantly, all other resources at the disposal of an organisation depend on inputs from its employees. Furthermore, participatory decision-making ensures highly knowledgeable workers, with dynamic capabilities and loaded information about the organisation, are used to gain a competitive edge. According to Stoner et al. (2003), decision-making involves identifying and choosing a course of action to resolve a particular issue. Locke & David (1979) note that participatory decision making focuses on sharing influence among individuals who are not on the same organisational level. It is a selection of a course of action from among alternatives. Decision-making can also be said to be the process of sufficiently reducing uncertainty and doubt about alternatives to allow a reasonable choice to be made from among them. Gomez-Mejia et al. (2005) assert that decision-making entails problems, opportunities identification and how to resolve them. According to Beardwell and Claydon (2007), employee participation is direct or indirect involvement of the employer and employees in the decision-making processes. In addition, Busck et al. (2010) suggest, that PDM is employee participation and influence in decision-making at the workplace. Lawler et al. (1992) posit that participatory decision-making focuses on direct delegation of significant decision-making authority to non-management employees in the organisation. Arguably, participative management involves management treating the ideas of employees with respect and consideration in the decision-making process. Previous studies showed that participative management approach is one of the ways to enhance productivity (Tchapchet et al., 2014; Conte, & Svejnar, 1988). Employee participation in decision-making enhances motivation, job performance, and organisational growth (see Gollan, & Wilkinson, 2007; Kim et al., 2010; Bhuiyan, 2010). On the other hand, some studies have conflicting views on whether or not an increase in employee participation directly affects organisational performance. Steel and Lloyd (1988) suggest that employee involvement or participatory decision-making does influence organisational commitment, job satisfaction, and effectiveness. Vanderberg et al. (1999) and Thompson (2002) suggest that participatory decision-making lowers employee turnover, lowers absenteeism, enhances work attitudes,

raises individual work performance, and increases returns on equity, and improves organisational learning culture. Employees want to be involved in the decision-making process in their organisation (Faiello, 2000). Studying law enforcement agencies, Corsentino and Bue (1993) found that the lack of employee participation or involvement in the decision-making process is responsible for low morale, stress, and high turnover. Pfeffer (1994) suggests that employee participation has a positive association with satisfaction, performance, and productivity of an employee. Participation in decision-making makes employees gain self-actualisation hence it increases employees' motivation and job performance (Likert, 1969). Studying SMEs in Lagos state of Nigeria Ojokuku and Sajuyigbe (2014), find a robust positive significant relationship between employee participation in decision-making and organisational performance. In the same direction, Alsughayir (2016) using the regression analysis technique examine employee participation in decision-making in manufacturing companies in Saudi Arabia. The results show a significant and positive relationship between PDM and firm performance. Similarly, the Gallup Organization which studied the impact of employee participation in decision-making in 7,939 business units in 36 companies, found that employee participation in decision-making has a direct relationship with increased performance, effectiveness, profitability, customer satisfaction, productivity, and reduction of employee turnover (Konrad, 2006, p. 1). In the same direction, Defourney et al. (1985) found that corporate productivity is generally positively related to measures of workers' participation. Similarly, Conte and Svejnar (1988) suggest that organisations or firms that allow worker participation in decision-making have more productive employees. In the same spirit, Tchaphet et al. (2014) investigated the relationship between employee participation in decision-making and productivity in a South African university. The findings reveal that employee participation in decision-making has a positive association with effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity. Thornton (2009) established a significant relationship between the frequency of employees' consultation and job satisfaction. Similarly, Khattak et al. (2012) found that employee involvement and participation at work has a significant positive impact on job satisfaction and organisational performance. Noah (2008) finds a significant association between the frequency of employee consultations and organisational commitment. According to Cotton et al. (1988), cited by Abdulai & Shafiwu (2014),

participation in work decisions, consultative participation, short-term participation, informal participation, employee ownership and representative participation are forms of participation in decision making. Bradley and Stephen (1987) define quality circles as semi-autonomous work groups, wherein employees can work together and participate in the decision-making process. Consultative participation is seen to have a positive impact on the success of an organisation through job satisfaction, commitment, productivity. Representative participation involves employee's participation in decision-making through their selected executives. Informal participation takes place through the interpersonal relationship between lower and higher level of management. With a strong personal relationship with superiors, employees can indirectly make some contributions on decisions taken by management. According to Stringer (2006), the relationship between subordinates and the supervisor has an impact on employee job satisfaction. Steinhilber et al. (2006) finds a positive relationship between short-term participation, satisfaction, and productivity. Most of the researchers considered in the review showed a positive correlation between the six forms of employee participation and its impact on organisational performance.

HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Abdulai and Shafiwu (2014) posit that employee's participation in work decision is a form of participation that allows employees to have great influence on the decisions made in the organisation. It entails formal and direct methods where employees participate directly in decisions concerning the organisation. This type of participation is noted to yield higher positive impacts because it gives employees a chance to be directly involved in the decision-making process. Babakus et al. (2003), and Lytle and Timmerman (2006) reveal that management commitment to service quality will be determined through the emphasis of management on education, employee empowerment, and rewards. When management is committed to improving the organisation's service quality, employees will have more resources to education and training which aid empowerment, hence they enjoy more authority on their job and are given more responsibility in relation to problem-solving and decision-making

related to service policy and service environment. The following hypothesis is therefore proposed.

H₁: Employee participation in work decision has an effect on firm service quality.

Lawler et al. (1992) stressed the strategic advantage of participatory decision-making by arguing that decisions could be made more flexible and faster when power is delegated to the lowest possible level of the workforce. Arguably, this could reduce overhead costs and enhance firm profit. Allowing employees to participate in the decision-making process through consultation can help boost employee's morale or job satisfaction and productive efficiency (Helms, 2006). The following hypothesis is therefore proposed.

H₂: There is a significant relationship between consultative participation and firm profitability.

Abdulai and Shafiwu (2014) mentioned that representative participation is a form of participation where employees' grievances and complaints are made known through their elected or selected executives in management decision meetings. It is an indirect form of participation as all employees do not participate directly. Since employees believe that organisation they tend to focus on the task at hand and promptly deliver their job. DeBrin (2007) contends that involving a lot of people in the decision-making process at the same time will lead to inefficiency, indecisiveness, incompetence and will also be time-consuming. Hence, allowing only the employees' representative to be involved in decision-making in the organisation will save time and aid better, faster, and timely delivery of service. The following hypothesis is therefore proposed.

H₃: Representative participation affects the timely delivery of firm service.

Short term participation is considered as an informal participation which is usually a one-off form of participation. According to Steinhedter et al. (2006), short-term participation enhances productivity through satisfaction. Sashkin (1984) posits that an increase in the employee's sense of ownership has a positive impact on commitment and productivity (having been involved in decision-making), of the worker as well as the organisation at large. Hughes et al. (2008) argue

that a robust relationship exists between employee participation and organisational productivity. Isabirye (2007) posits that organisations, through participative management can improve work performance and productivity.

H₄: Short term participation has an impact on the firm productivity.

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive and correlational research design were employed in the study. The survey method was used in carrying out this study. The researcher used stratified-random sampling techniques to derive the bank staff for the study. A sample size of 300 was determined with the use of Yard formula on the staff of the selected bank in Nigeria. The choice of the bank was based on the fact that the bank was adjudged to be the most customer-focused bank in Nigeria (KPMG, 2014). The instrument use in the survey consists of a two part self-administered questionnaire divided into five segments. The first part was designed to capture demographic information of the respondents. The other part, divided into four segments, was designed to capture information pertaining to construct on the impact of participatory decision-making on firm performance. The questions were designed to avoid ambiguity with the use of simple and clear language. The responses to each of the statements were on a 5 point Likert ordinal scale. The questionnaires were intended to generate responses that assisted the researcher to address the research objectives and test the hypotheses. The questionnaires were carefully distributed and the returned questionnaires were analysed to aid a reasonable conclusion. The hypotheses were tested with use of multiple regression analysis and correlation coefficient to determine the impact of participatory decision-making on firm performance. The data analysis procedure was conducted using the SPSS, statistic software/application. Cronbach's alpha reliability test for the study was found to be 0.807 for the 24 items analysed together. This shows that the research instrument used for this study is reliable.

SAMPLING PROCEDURE

Yamane sample size determination otherwise called Yard formula is a simplified formula to calculate a sample size. It is a statistical formula that involves the application of normal approximation with 95% level of confidence and 5% error tolerance (Yamane, 1967).

The formula involves a finite population that is known with certainty. The formula is given as

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(a)^2}$$

Where

N = population

n = sample size

$(a)^2$ = level of significance

Therefore, in calculating the sample size, we have the following:

$N = 1205$

$a = 0.05$

$n = ?$

$$n = \frac{1205}{1 + 1205(0.05)^2} = \frac{1205}{1 + 1205(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{1205}{1 + 3} = \frac{1205}{4}$$

$n = 300.312$

Approximately 300

Therefore the total number of respondents to be given questionnaires is 300.

Note: In a finite population, when the original sample size collected is greater than 5% of the population size, the corrected sample size is determined by using the Yamane formula.

RESULTS

Testing of hypothesis

Hypothesis one

H₁: Employees participation in work decision have an effect on firm service quality.

Table 1. Regression effect of employees’ participation in work decision and firm service quality

	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1 (Constant)	4.767	.347		13.747	.000
Participation in work decision	-.282	.085	-.194	-3.340	.001
R	.194				
R2 Square	.038				
Adjusted R Square	.034				
F	11.155				
Overall Sig.	.001				

Source: Authors computation, 2016.

The regression result in Table 1 presented above indicates that service quality, which is the dependent variable was regressed on employee participation in work decision, the independent variable which has formal meetings, direct participation, and influence as its decomposed variables. The R (.194) shows that a weak positive relationship between service quality and employee participation in work decision. However, the r-square shows that employee participation in work decision accounts for only 3.8% of the variation in service quality. Thus other factors responsible for influencing quality were not captured by this model. The fitness of the overall composite relationship between service quality and employees’ participation in work decision as captured by F (11.155) above shows that the model is fit in explaining the relationship between service quality and employees’ participation in work decision. Furthermore, the significance of the overall composite relationship between service quality and employees’ participation in work decision as captured by Sig. (.001) above reveals that the relationship between service quality and employees participation in work decision is statistically significant at 5%

confidence level. Thus, there is a positive significant relationship between service quality and employees' participation in work decision. Since the p-value given by .001 is less than 0.05, it shows that there is a significant relationship between service quality and employees' participation in work decision, therefore H1 stating that employees participation in work decision has an effect on firm service quality is supported.

Hypothesis two

H₂: There is a significant relationship between consultative participation and firm profitability.

Table 2. Correlation between consultative participation and firm profitability

		Profitability Level	Consultative Participation
Profitability Level	Pearson Correlation	1	.232**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	288	288
Consultative Participation	Pearson Correlation	.232**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	288	288

Source: Authors calculation, 2016.

The relationship between the variables consultative participation and firm profitability was investigated using Pearson correlation coefficient. The result from Table 2 above shows that there is a significant positive relationship of (0.232) between both variables at 0.001 level of significance. Thus, as obtained from the table ($r = 0.232$, $P < 0.05$, $n = 288$). The Pearson correlation of $r = 0.232$, therefore, implies that a weak positive relationship exists between consultative participation and firm profitability. Since the p-value given by .000 is less than 0.05, it shows that there is a significant relationship between consultative participation and firm profitability, therefore H2 saying that there is a relationship between consultative participation and firm profitability is supported. This result is consistent with the finding of DeBrin (2007) that consultative participation can reduce inefficiency, incompetence and enhance decision-making, and Tchaphet et al.

(2014) that employee participation in decision-making has a positive association with effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity.

Hypothesis three

H₃: Representative participation affects the timely delivery of firm service.

Table 3. Regression effect of representative participation on the timely delivery of firm service

Model		Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.752	.243		7.201	.000
	Representative participation	.496	.062	.426	7.968	.000
R		.426				
R2 Square		.182				
Adjusted R Square		.179				
F		63.486				
Overall Sig.		.000				

Source: Authors calculation, 2016.

From the regression result in Table 3 presented above the following was observed, the table regressed the dependent variable, timely delivery of firm service on representative participation which was further decomposed into elected employees, influence and all employees. The R-square coefficient of determination shows that there exists a positive relationship between timely delivery of firm service and representative participation. The coefficient further indicates that the model, timely delivery of firm service = f (representative participation) can only explain 18.2% of the factors that influence the timely delivery of firm service. The F-stat (63.486) above explain the overall fitness of the composite relation between timely delivery of firm service and representative participation. This implies that the relationship between timely delivery of firm service and representative participation is a good fit. Furthermore, the significance of the relationship between timely delivery of firm service and representative participation is captured by Sig. (.000) in Table 3 above. Thus, there exists a positive relationship between timely delivery of firm service and representative

participation. Since the p-value given by .000 is less than 0.05, it shows that there exists a significant relationship between timely delivery of firm service and representative participation, therefore H3 claiming that representative participation affects the timely delivery of the firm service is supported.

Hypothesis four

H₄: Short term participation has an impact on firm productivity.

Table 4. Regression effect of short-term participation and firm productivity

Model		Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.315	.325		10.208	.000
	Short term participation	.094	.080	.069	1.169	.243
R						.069
R2 Square						.005
Adjusted R Square						.001
F						11.155
Overall Sig.						.000

Source: Authors calculation, 2016.

From the regression result in Table 4 presented above the following was observed, the table regressed the dependent variable, the productivity of the firm on short-term participation which was further decomposed into strategic one-off meeting, board meeting, and major decision meeting. The R-square coefficient of determination shows that there is no positive relationship between firm productivity firm and short-term participation. The coefficient further indicates that the model, productivity of the firm = f (Short term participation) does not account for the variation in the productivity of the firm. The F-stat 11.155 explains the overall fitness of the composite relation between firm productivity and short-term participation. This implies that the relationship between firm productivity and short-term participation is not a good fit. Furthermore, the relationship between firm productivity and short-term participation is not statistically significant in the table above. Thus, there is no positive relationship between firm productivity and short-term participation. The p-value of 0.243 is

greater than 0.05, thus the analysis above revealed that there is no significant relationship between firm productivity and short-term participation, and thus, H4 stating that short-term participation has an impact on firm productivity is not supported. This result negates the findings of Steinheider et al. (2006), that short-term participation enhances productivity through satisfaction.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the findings of this study, it is established that employees' participation in work decision is positively related to firm service quality. It is also established that there is a positive relationship between consultative participation and firm profitability. It was ascertained that representative participation has a significant effect on the timely delivery of firm service. This study contributes to the existing knowledge in HRM research by providing insight on the relationship between employee participation in decision-making and performance of banks in Nigeria. Finally, it was observed that short-term participation does not have a significant effect on firm productivity. Based on these findings, the following recommendations were given:

1. For the promotion of creativity as well as innovation in the organisation, employees should be allowed to participate in decision-making. This seems to be the only way to get the best out of the employees with diverse talents and skills that can be used to boost the performance of the organisation and to be able to withstand the competitive pressure from the environment that is volatile and fast changing.
2. To ensure proper functioning and effective execution of decision-making tasks and responsibilities, employees should be given the required training, so as to acquire the necessary skills for making a quality decision. This will serve as an aid for an easy decision-making process in the organisation.
3. For the easy flow of information from employees to the top management team through the various unit heads in the organisation, a good relationship between superior and subordinate officer should be encouraged, as this will serve as a forum for easy consultation by the supervisors to the employees.

4. In order to accommodate the demand of the employees, companies must relinquish their centralised control management with the aim of promoting flexibility, participation and decisiveness as well as subsequent improvement in individual and organisational performance. The organisation can decentralise into zones and regions in order to accommodate the urge for participation among the employees which include some managers of the organisation.

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EMPIRYCZNA OCENA ZALEŻNOŚCI MIĘDZY PARTYCYPACYJNYM PODEJMOWANIEM DECYZJI A DZIAŁALNOŚCIĄ PRZEDSIĘBIORSTW W NIGERII

Abstrakt

Tło badań. Uczestniczenie w podejmowaniu decyzji to główny temat badań biznesowych, politycznych i praktycznych. Sukces każdej organizacji zależy od zaangażowania całej siły roboczej w opracowywanie nowych pomysłów i sposobów pracy, aby wyprzedzić konkurencję i zyskać konkurencyjną przewagę w branży.

Cele badań. Głównym celem było zbadanie udziału w podejmowaniu decyzji i wyników firmy w nigeryjskim sektorze bankowym. Badanie miało na celu: określenie wpływu udziału pracowników w podejmowaniu decyzji dotyczących jakości usług firmy, ustalenie związku między udziałem konsultacyjnym a rentownością firmy oraz zbadanie, w jaki sposób udział reprezentatywny może wpłynąć na terminowe świadczenie usług przez firmę, a także na ile określa wpływ krótkookresowego uczestnictwa na produktywność firmy.

Metodologia. W trakcie badania poddano przeglądowi istotne publikacje poświęcone powyższej tematyce. Wykorzystano ankietę do zebrania danych, z 300 przeprowadzonych uzyskano 288 zwrotnych. Z kolei do testowania hipotez wykorzystano analizę regresji i współczynnik korelacji Pearsona.

Kluczowe wnioski. Wyniki pokazują, że istnieje istotna i pozytywna zależność między jakością usług a udziałem pracowników w podejmowaniu decyzji. Istnieje natomiast słaba istotna pozytywna zależność między udziałem konsultacyjnym a rentownością firmy. Ponadto istnieje pozytywny związek między terminową dostawą usług firmy i reprezentatywnym udziałem. Z drugiej strony nie ma pozytywnego związku pomiędzy produktywnością firmy i krótkoterminowym uczestnictwem. Kiedy pracownicy mają prawo do udziału w podejmowaniu decyzji, daje im to poczucie odpowiedzialności za swoje działania, ponieważ postrzegają siebie jako ważnych członków organizacji. W badaniu zaleca się, aby w celu promowania kreatywności oraz innowacji w organizacji pracownicy mogli brać udział w podejmowaniu decyzji.

Słowa kluczowe: podejmowanie decyzji, uczestnictwo w podejmowaniu decyzji, udział w konsultacjach, wyniki