

## Leaders and Employees' Perspectives on Participative Management as an Empowerment Strategy to Improve University Employee Performance In Indonesia

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**Abstract:** This study examined participative management as one of the empowerment strategies to improve employee performance including commitment, attendance rate, and quality of customer services. This study was conducted to examine how participative management as a strategy influence university staff performance, and how employees and their unit leaders regard this relation. It involved leaders of the units and employees within the specified university structure in Indonesia. Results show that participative management is related with the increased employee performance, but this finding is perceived differently by university head leaders and their subordinates. The empowerment strategy enhanced staff performance through promoting positive work attitudes in terms job satisfaction, self-autonomy, tasks meaningfulness, and security. Differing positions influenced perceptions on those effects. Future studies are necessary focussing on other elements to pursue broader insights about the impacts of participative management system on performance.

**Keywords:** participative management, empowerment, leadership, work attitudes, performance, employees

### Introduction

Participative management as a staff empowerment strategy has become influential in studies during recent years (Bass, 1990; Huang, 1997; Yukl, 2010). Previous studies explored how this approach related to the improvement of employee performance.) suggested that participative management improved employee performance in terms of productivity, and job satisfaction. Numerous findings both from meta-analyses and empirical studies support this argument that participative management related to positive employee work attitudes and high levels of performance in organisations (Sashkin, 1984; Miller & Monge, 1986). Specifically, many studies reported its effects on elements of performance including withdrawal behaviour,

organisational commitment, and customer service quality (Angermeier, Dunford, Boss, Smith; Likert, 1967; Yukl, 2010).

Referring to employees' work attitudes, researchers found significant effects in promoting the self-autonomy feelings, task meaningfulness, security feelings in jobs, and job satisfaction (X. Huang, Shi, Zhang, & Cheung, 2006; Sashkin, 1984). Further, the changes of employees' work attitudes were predicted as mediators of participative management strategy to gain the improved performance behaviour (X. Huang, et al., 2006). Overall, research revealed that implementation of participative management significantly enhanced organisational performance.

Although the overall findings indicated strong effects on the performance, not all the studies drew consistent conclusions. Studies by Wagner (1994) found the average effect of participation on performance and job satisfaction was not significant. Coyle-Shapiro (1999) also did not find any significant relationships between participative management and organisational commitment. He said that although some studies showed significant effects, these could be due to individual perceptions of the respondents. The inconsistent effects were acknowledged by Heckscher (1995) that participative management was rarely effective in improving organisational effectiveness because leaders failed to break down bureaucracy. Different findings of this style could be affected by different participants' roles in the study.

In order to examine how differing perceptions of the roles of both employees and leaders influence participative management effectiveness, this study proposes a model incorporating an investigation of both employee and unit leaders, that was limited to administrative units within universities. The reasons are that participative model impact on non-academic members is rarely explored (Angermeier, et al., 2009). The research questions developed from this study are:

- (1) Does empowerment using participative management have direct effects on employees' performance in terms of commitment, lower level of withdrawal behaviour, and quality of customer services in the units?
- (2) Does participative management improve positive work attitudes of employees on level of self-autonomy, meaningfulness of tasks, job satisfaction, and security perception?
- (3) How do leaders and unit heads perceive effects of participative management on employee performance at work?

## **Literature Review**

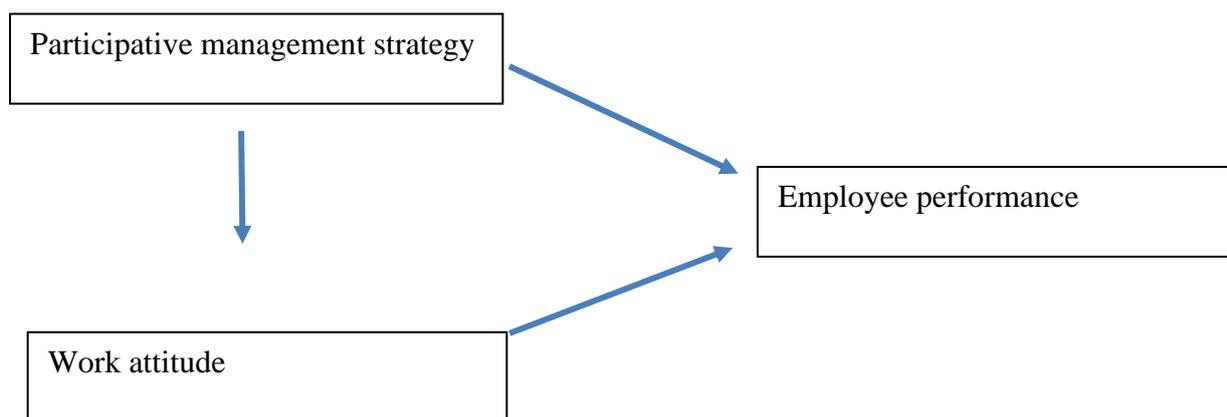
Participative management is based on the core value of its underpinning theories. Key (2000) regarded participative management as the empowerment strategy focusing on employees as

persons and emphasizes their engagement in organizational efforts to make their organizations successful. Subordinates are well-trained and prepared, allowing their optimum contribution to the achievement of organizational objectives. Power is streamed from top to bottom level. They are also provided with a favourable organisational climate (Lawler, 1986; Likert, 1967) where leaders implement human empowerment through power sharing (Burhanuddin & Aspland, 2012; X. Huang, et al., 2010). A supportive relationship between leaders and subordinates is fostered (Laschinger, Finegan, Shamian, & Wilk, 2004). This in turn influencing motivation, increase staff commitment, unit services, quality, and attendance rate at work. Further, Sashkin (1984) argued the model enhanced performance, productivity, and happiness through enhanced autonomy, meaningfulness, and decreased isolation. This is also consistent with past findings indicating subordinates were happy with their fundamental needs, that motivated employees to work hard and attain maximum achievements (Organ, Podsakoff, & MacKenzie, 2006; Laschinger, et al., 2004; Ugboro, 2006). Thus, is argued to be directly linked with the employees' experience in job elements.

However, in practice, people possibly differ in the way they perceive the extent of participative management and its effects on performance. Depending on what factors characterising the situation (Dorfman & House, 2004; House & Mitchell, 1974), organisational members at different job levels, such as employees and leaders may regard their performance differently (Yukl, 2010). This may moderate the effectiveness of participative management (Jones & George, 2006; Vilkinas & West, 2011).

### **How participative management as empowerment strategy relates to performance**

This study examined the interrelationships among Participative management, work attitude, and performance behaviour are the three constructs. It is hypothesized that participatory management style, as an independent variable, will influence employee attitudes and performance, as dependent variables. Figure 1 depicts how these factors interact with one another and the direction of their connections, followed by the description of the three constructs. There are two sorts of hypothesized correlations between variables: (1) participatory management and employee work attitude have direct effects on employee performance; and (2) employee work attitude mediates participative management impacts on performance.



**Figure 1. Relationships between participative management, work attitude and performance**

### **Participative management**

Participative management has sometimes been referred to as ‘System 4’ (Likert, 1967), an approach that empowered employees through distributing knowledge, information, rewards, and authority to members (Key, 2000; Miah & Bird, 2007; Sashkin, 1984). How organisations viewed as participative can be assessed by examining leaders’ behaviour in practising their roles in the dimensions of leadership, motivation, interaction, communication, goal setting, and decision making process (Likert, 1967).

### **Employee work attitudes**

Hackman and Oldham (1980) proposed that the development of work attitude indicators was relevant to the conceptual model of the relationships between job characteristics and employee performance. Sashkin (1984) argued that these indicators explicitly included feelings of self-autonomy, the meaningfulness of tasks, feelings of job security, and job satisfaction. Self-autonomy related to the independence experienced by employees. Many studies found when employees are encouraged to take responsibilities, they would performed better and achieved high performance goals (Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Spector, 1986; Haslam, et al., 2009; Rank, Carsten, Unger, & Spector, 2007. Managers were challenged to provide conditions where subordinates could experience positive feelings. Ugboro (2006) defined meaningfulness as task values recognized by employees when accomplishing their jobs. They can experience such feelings because participative leaders automatically encourage people through empowerment strategies for doing important jobs, the (Haslam, et al., 2009). This increases staff performance in accomplishing organisational objectives (Nielsen, Yarker,

Brenner, Randall, & Borg, 2008). The construct "job security" referred to a sense of stability and safety in the workplace. Many research findings identified it as an antecedent variable to job happiness and productivity (Kreitner & Kinicki, 1992; Yukl, 2010). Leaders who treated their subordinates valued this job attribute potentially contribute to high levels of employee performance at work (T.-C. Huang & Hsiao, 2007).

Job satisfaction is described by Bush and Middlewood (2005) as an employee's attitude toward their work. Because this characteristic is linked to motivation, its fulfillment contributes to job satisfaction. Nguni et al. (2006) defined it as a positive emotion resulting from highly valued job outcomes. The majority of empirical investigations have found that leadership behavior is inextricably linked to job satisfaction. There have been significant links found between participatory management and mental health and job happiness (Kim, 2002; Spector, 1986). Individual demands were met through participative management behaviour that exhibited a high level of human factor concern (Nguni, et al., 2006). (Maslow, 1987). As a result, this personality type had a bigger impact on job satisfaction than on work productivity (Pereira & Osburn, 2007). Miller and Monge provide an in-depth analysis (1986)

### **Employee performance**

Investigating how participative management contributes to organisation effectiveness, this study focuses the examination on employee performance in terms of quality of customer services, organisational commitment, and withdrawal behaviour.

### ***Organisational commitment***

Employee's desire remain attached to a specific job has been termed as organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Porter, Crampon, & Smith, 1976). In a study by Lok and Crawford (2004), the links between participative management and commitment were discovered. These authors found that this management strategy had a considerable impact on employee loyalty at work, with no significant differences across responders. Employee perceptions of job qualities were discovered to be the most powerful factor influencing higher employee commitment (Dubin, Champoux, & Porter, 1975). This situation may arise if managers used a participative management system that originally provided favorable job designs, such as in arranging the workload, organizational structure, a rewards system, compensation, and feedback control. It was suggested that this model should be embraced.

### ***Quality of customer service***

The quality of customer service was argued to be predominantly determined by how the front line employees interacted with their clients (Kelcher, 2000). The extent of satisfaction upon the services provided by public organisations strategically reflected organisations'

overall performance. Employees who were led under participative management style showed high job satisfaction, loyalty, and concern for others. This led to increase motivation to produce quality services for customers (Nguni, et al., 2006; Rank, et al., 2007).

### ***Withdrawal behaviour***

The term employee withdrawal represents negative behaviours as turnover and absenteeism (Hanisch & Hulin, 1990; Rosse & Hulin, 1985). It refers to a failure to go to work and turnover means intentions to leave organisation or resign from the job (Porter, et al., 1976; T.-C. Huang, 1997). Employee withdrawal behaviour was reported as a main problem for management in achieving a higher performance (Angremeier, et al., 2009; Eby, Freeman, Rush, & Lance, 1999; Carsten & Spector, 1987). High levels of resignation and absenteeism not only decreased performance, but also inefficiency in financial resources and time. Hence this issue is argued to be significant targets for human resource management in many organisations.

Studies had been carried out to find the solutions to minimise the effect of this withdrawal behaviour. The findings found that empowerment strategy through participative model affected employee performance positively in many public organisations (Kim, 2002). The rationale for this is that employees' perceptions of participation at work foster positive organizational climates and emotional responses to work, which, in turn, lowers rates of withdrawal, turnover, and absenteeism.

### **Study setting**

Both leaders and managers are perceived to employ participative management system to manage people in many organisation activities. The current study was designed to explore the implementation of participative management practice and its effects on performance behaviour of employees. Some universities in Indonesia were used as the context of study. This procedure was considered necessary since observations and reports indicate insufficient capacity of many administrative staff in dealing with managerial works within a university structure. This was argued as one of the factors inhibiting internal capacities of university organizations in Indonesia to implement their management reform programs (UNESCO, 2006;

Schwartzman, 2001). Participative management as the empowerment of the university governance is visualized in Figure 2.

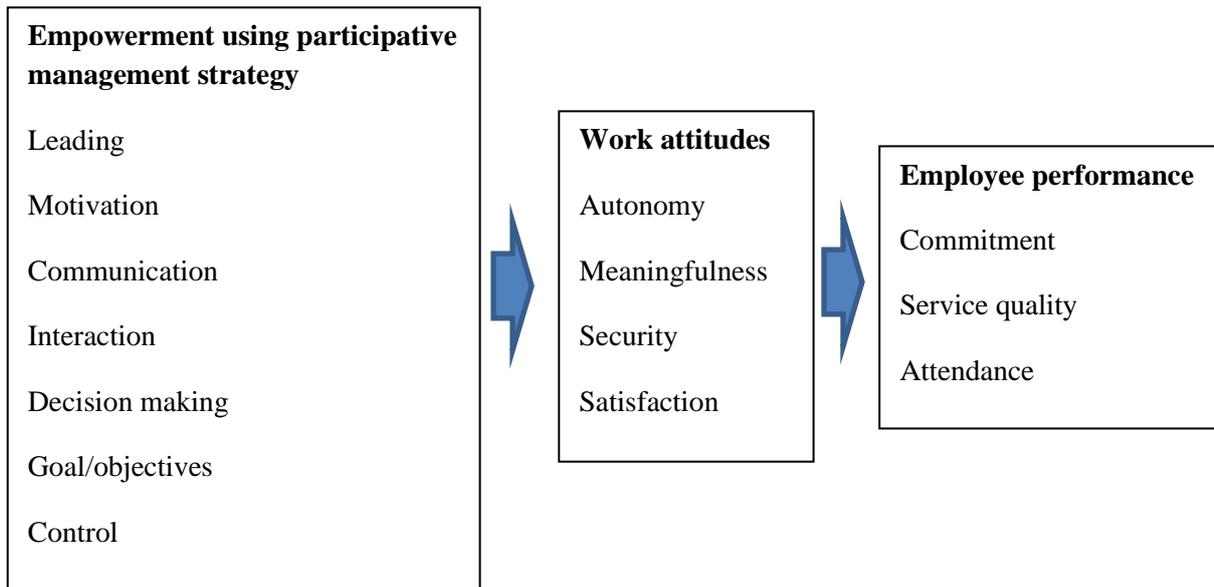


Figure 2. Participative management implementation to enhance employee performance

**Methods**

This study involves staff members selected from private and public universities in Malang City Indonesia. There are 13 universities are registered in this city, and had 2824 employees who consisted of 2329 permanent staff and 495 temporary staff. From this population, 90 unit heads of and 1412 employees and were invited in this study. The multi stage sampling design was employed to select this set of sample members (Gray, 2009; Creswell, 2005; Ross, 2005) by considering sample size table with 5% sampling error to be tolerated (Creswell, 2005; Fowler, 1988). From this figure, 808 persons (292 females and 516 males), 30% coming from private and 70% state universities.

Two sets of survey questionnaires were developed to gather and where appropriate to measure the perceptions of employees and leaders respectively about the use of participative management and its impacts on performance. Items of the two questionnaires were developed from theories and previous research findings. Pilot study was done to examine items' reliability and their factors validity. There are 110 items constructed using five response categories which include: strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree. The developed factor structures were tested using a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010; Kline, 2005; Cramer, 2003) supported by AMOS application (Arbuckle, 2009).

Results of the measurement model for the factors structure were reported into three scales. First, Participative Management scale is used to assess how participative managerial behaviour is practised by leaders. The scale consisted of 42 items, which are constructed with

reference to the profile of organisational characteristics proposed by Likert (1967). The second scale, Employee Work Attitude is used to measure employees' attitudes toward their jobs. This scale consists of 26 items developed from previous studies to measure feelings of security, job satisfaction, task meaningfulness, and security feeling (Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Kreitner & Kinicki, 1992; Likert, 1967; Weiss, Dawis, England, & Lofquist, 1967; Yukl, 2010). The scale for measuring Behaviour of Employee Performance is developed consisting of 27 that assess staff commitment (Porter, et al., 1976; Yousef, 2003), quality of customer service (Kelcher, 2000; Nguni, et al., 2006; Rank, et al., 2007), and attendance (Hanisch & Hulin, 1990; Porter, et al., 1976; Rosse & Hulin, 1985). Scores for the sub-scales were calculated using the principal component analysis. These are treated as the observed variants and used in the path model as presented in Table 1 and Figure 3.

Table 1. Variables included in the model

Latent Variable	Manifest Variable	Description
Participative Management (PM)	LEAD	Leadership
	COM	Communication
	MOTIV	Motivation
	INT	Interaction
	GOAL	Goal setting
	DM	Decision making process
	CONT	Controlling
Employee Work Attitudes (EWA)	MT	Meaningful tasks
	SA	Self-autonomy
	JOBS	Job satisfaction
Employee performance (EP)	SEC	Feeling of security
	OC	Organizational commitment
	QCS	Quality of customer service
	EWB	Employee withdrawal behavior

## Results and Discussion

Results of SEM analysis consist of two parts, the measurement and structural models results. Measurement model assesses the strength of relationships between latent variables and their manifest variable, while structural model examines strength of relationships among latent variables. Results of the measurement model are presented in Table 2. Constructs of Participative Management as perceived by employees (PME) and leaders (PML) are reflected strongly by their manifest variables respectively. Loadings range of 0.56 to 0.87 indicating manifest variables are effective reflectors of both constructs. EWAE and EWAL constructs are also adequately reflected by their manifest variables. These are shown by their loadings that range between 0.60 and 0.81. Manifest variables of EPE and EPL are ranged between 0.30 and 0.88 indicating manifest variables effectively reflect the two constructs in the path model.

Path coefficients of structural model are derived from effects of the independent variable (PM) on its dependent variables EP and EWA. Associations between these three latent variables are presented in Figure 3 and Table 3 and can be explained in two different parts which include (a) the relationships between PM, EWA and EP for employees and leaders separately and (b) the links between the leaders' and the employees' perceptions.

Table 2. Measurement model

Variables		Direct effect				
Latent	Manifest	UnstEst (B)	S.E.	C.R.	P	StdEst ( $\beta$ )
PME	LEADE	1.000				.741
	MOTIVE	1.126	.046	24.370	***	.835
	COME	1.156	.046	25.088	***	.857
	INTE	1.180	.046	25.676	***	.875
	DME	1.084	.046	23.352	***	.803
	GOALE	1.121	.046	24.253	***	.831
	CONTE	1.059	.047	22.764	***	.785
EWAE	SAE	1.000				.633
	MTE	1.239	.071	17.387	***	.784
	SECE	1.250	.072	17.486	***	.791
	JOBSTE	1.004	.067	14.927	***	.635
EPE	OCE	1.000				.880
	QCSE	.532	.050	10.637	***	.468
	EWBE	.336	.046	7.258	***	.296
PML	CONTL	1.000				.594
	GOALL	1.182	.075	15.724	***	.696
	DML	1.190	.072	16.497	***	.747

	INTL	1.357	.077	17.674	***	.834
	COML	1.359	.079	17.229	***	.799
	MOTIVL	1.199	.072	16.555	***	.751
	LEADL	.976	.072	13.474	***	.565
EWAL	JOBSTL	1.000				.714
	SECL	1.147	.055	20.936	***	.810
	MTL	.997	.050	19.937	***	.766
	SAL	.796	.050	15.790	***	.600
EPL	EWBL	1.000				.321
	QCSL	1.752	.221	7.934	***	.639
	OCL	2.134	.260	8.207	***	.794

Note: UnstEst = unstandardized estimate, S.E. = standard error, C.R. = critical ratio, P = p-value, StdEst.( $\beta$ ) = standardised estimate; \*\*\* = < 0.001

Table 3. Structural model

Variables		Direct effect				
Criterion	Predictor	UnstEst.(B)	S.E.	C.R.	P	StdEst.( $\beta$ )
EWAL	PML	.877	.064	13.601	***	.730
EPL	EWAL	.446	.056	7.951	***	.866
EWAE	PME	.527	.040	13.058	***	.618
EWAE	EWAL	.066	.032	2.087	.037	.073
EPE	EPL	1.035	.068	15.323	***	.745
EPE	EWAE	.169	.088	1.908	.056	.069

Note: UnstEst = unstandardized estimate, S.E. = standard error, C.R. = critical ratio, P = p-value, StdEst. ( $\beta$ ) = standardised estimate, \*\*\* = < 0.001

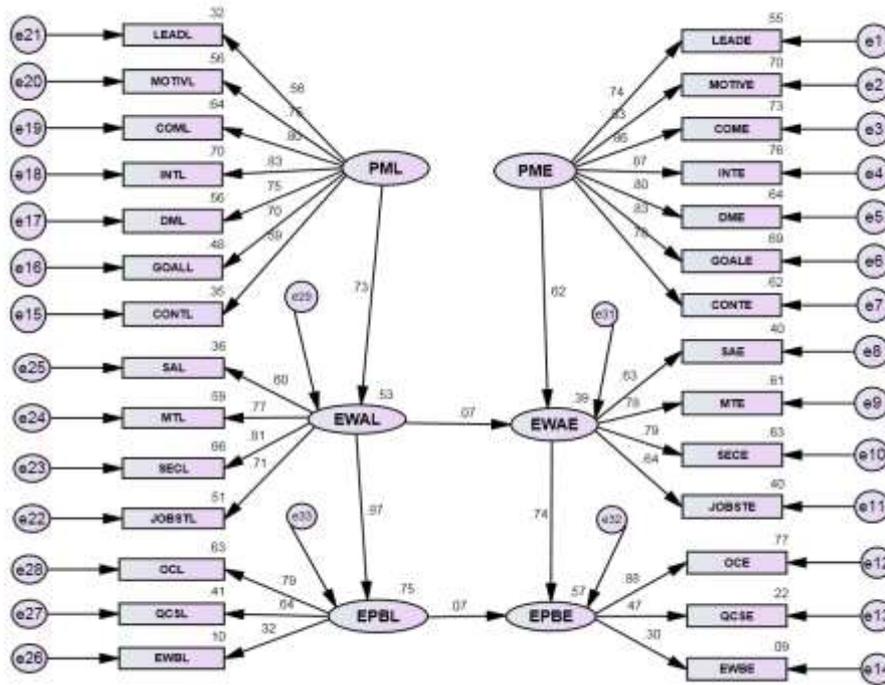


Figure 3. The path model of the relationship between PM, EWA and EP

Looking at employee and leader paths separately, paths of employees' responses indicate that the PME has a direct effect on the EWAE ( $\beta = 0.62, p < 0.01$ ) and an indirect effect on the EPE ( $\beta = 0.62 \times 0.74 = 0.46$ ) through the EWAE. These findings show that the way employees perceive the implementation of the participative management is positively related to the way they see their work attitudes and work performance. In addition, the EWAE construct has a positive and direct effect on the EPE ( $\beta = 0.74, p < 0.01$ ) which indicates that employees who perceive higher work attitudes also perceive a higher performance level. Similarly, the paths in the leader side of the model also indicate that the PML has a direct effect on the EWAL ( $\beta = 0.73, p < 0.01$ ) and an indirect effect on the EPL ( $\beta = 0.73 \times 0.87 = 0.64$ ). In addition, there is also a direct effect of the EWAL to the EPL ( $\beta = 0.87, p < 0.01$ ). These relationships are slightly stronger than those of the employees.

It is initially argued that employees' perceptions are linked to those of their leaders. However, the results indicate that the way leaders perceive participative management (PML) is not related to how employees recognise the participative management style (PME). As shown in the path diagram, participative management perceived by leaders (PML) does not have any direct associations with the three employee-related constructs (PME, EWAE, and EPE). The PML only has indirect effects on the EWAE through the EWAL ( $0.73 \times 0.07 = 0.05$ ) and on the

EPE through (a) EWAL and EPL ( $0.73 \times 0.87 \times 0.07 = 0.04$ ) and (b) EWAL and EWAE ( $0.73 \times 0.07 \times 0.75 = 0.04$ ). However, there are weak associations between leaders' and employees' perceptions about how they perceived both work attitude and performance. In this context, leaders' perceptions on the employees' work attitudes (EWAL) has a direct association with the way the employees appraise their own work attitudes (EWAE). Such an association yields a small, but positive effect on EWAE ( $\beta = 0.07$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). In addition, leaders' perceptions of the employees' work attitude (EWAL) also provide an indirect effect on employees' perceptions on their performance behaviour (EPE) through the EWAE ( $0.07 \times 0.74 = 0.05$ ) and the EPL ( $0.87 \times 0.07 = 0.06$ ).

Finally, the leaders' perceptions on the level of employee performance (EPL) is found to have a positive effect on the perceived employee performance (EPE) that yields a coefficient of  $\beta = 0.07$  and  $p < 0.10$ . This coefficient indicates that in terms of the level of employee performance, employees' and leaders' views are correlated to some extent. It indicates that the higher the performance perceived by leaders, the higher the performance level perceived by employees as well, and vice versa.

## **Discussion**

Participative management was argued as an effective strategy of people empowerment in organisations (Sashkin, 1984). It could be viewed as a multidimensional concept, which incorporated seven operational dimensions including leadership, communication, motivation, interaction, decision making, goal setting, and controlling (Likert, 1967). This study contributes to the explanation of participative management construct and its relationships with changes on work attitudes of employee (self autonomy, feeling of security, meaningful tasks, job satisfaction) and employee performance (organisational commitment, withdrawal behaviour, and quality of customer service).

Results of single level path analyses, in general, show both employees and leaders reported the use of participative management in the university organisations directly and positively influences the levels of employee work attitudes and employee performance. Responses from both employees and leaders indicate participative effect on employee performance is indirect and obtained through work attitudes quality. The fulfilment of the participative elements is assumed to be a driver for employees to have positive attitudes towards their work. In turn, these positive attitudes enhance performance behaviour in terms of high levels of quality of customer services, commitment at work, and lower or less withdrawal behaviour.

Although the effect of participative management on performance are perceived by both occupants as indirect, overall, the strengths of the relationships among the researched variables revealed its positive effects on the improved performance. This finding is consistent with the descriptive results of the relationships among the variables, especially between the independent variables and their dependent variables investigated. It also supports those studies which argued this style had an impact on both performance behaviour and work attitudes (Likert, 1967; Sashkin, 1984). A longitudinal analysis about staff empowerment impact by Laschinger et al. (2004) found that organisations which foster positive perceptions on management improved performance of employees. Similar explanation for these relationships is that participative management creates a favourable organisational environment, where subordinates feel being capable to work independently to accomplish their tasks.

Many studies have related this management style with various elements of employees' work attitude. For example, Rank et al. (Rank, et al., 2007) linked this management practice with positive attitudes experienced by employees, in terms of opportunities to use initiatives and new techniques to carry out the jobs. Employees experienced this positive feeling because such a leadership behaviour provided them with important tasks (Haslam, et al., 2009; Ugboro, 2006). Many other studies supported this finding by highlighting the direct effects of participative style on the feelings of security (T.-C. Huang & Hsiao, 2007), and job satisfaction (Tuuli & Rowlinson, 2009). Employees were provided with autonomy on how the jobs are to be done. So, they felt valued by their superiors. The way in which leaders organised the jobs ensure each individual felt a sense of equity, and they were permanently and steadily involved in organisational activities. Furthermore, these employees were not fearful of threats of a termination during their service. This generated a feeling of job security (Kreitner & Kinicki, 1992; Yukl, 2010) and ultimately fostered positive effects on psychological and emotional well-being and job satisfaction (Nielsen, et al., 2008).

In addition to fostering the positive work attitudes, previous studies reported, that organisations led under the participative strategy had high performing staff members. This style contributes to the increased EP level in terms of organisational commitment (Laschinger, et al., 2004; Mowday, 1999; Meyer & Allen, 1997), good citizenship behaviour (Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Davis-LaMastro, 1990; Jones & George, 2006), and the decreasing level of turnover and absenteeism (Angermeier, et al., 2009; T.-C. Huang, 1997; Miah & Bird, 2007). The meta-analytic reanalysis made by Wagner (1994) also concluded the

significant effects on the elements of this performance. This is in line with the explanation of the relationships between participative management and performance, as viewed by the cognitive model (Miller & Monge, 1986). According to this theoretical framework, participative leaders tended to build individual capacity through allowing individuals to access information about the jobs, and involving employees in important organisational activities. In particular its effects could be more significant in term of relationships between subordinates and their direct leaders (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). These leaders initiated supportive relationships, encouraged a high level of individual and group participation in producing the decisions, and at the same time challenged members with high performance goals that have to be achieved cooperatively. Hence the subordinates would find that their leaders behave in a manner where they are treated with fairness, respect and dignity (X. Huang, et. al., 2010). This in turn predicted the effective management in improving employee performance in the workplace.

However, leaders and employees perceived differently about the management being implemented in their organisations. Leaders' perceptions about participative management had no direct association with what to be regarded by the employees. It revealed that they had different expectations upon this style. The differing perceptions are possibly due to the lack of a common ground about organisational strategies and its vision. They probably had different knowledge about what and how this management approach should be implemented. The contextual factors as well as the different positions, potentially influence perceptions about the management style being implemented and its effectiveness in improving staff performance (Yukl, 2010). Jones and George (2006) and Vilkinas and West (2011) also underlined this as a factor that characterised individual perceptions, and moderated the management effect. Under such a condition leaders are unlikely to obtain substantial supports from subordinates. This leads to constraining the effectiveness of leadership in generating high staff contributions to the success of management. To ensure the effectiveness of this participative management system, leaders, thus, have to employ strategies accounting for the differing status and levels of employees.

Interestingly, unit leaders' perceptions on their employees' work attitude positively influence employees' perceptions on their work attitude in the workplace. Furthermore, leaders' perceptions on the performance also have a direct relationship with employees' perceptions about their own performance behaviour, or yield a direct effect on employees' perceived behaviour. This indicates that they had similar values about the participative

management style. Such a condition, ultimately improved the organisational climate where all members effectively contributed to the attainment of a higher performing organisation.

### **Conclusion**

Findings of this study have a variety of theoretical and practical ramifications. The development of a multidimensional perspective must underpin participatory management. Participative management is defined as having seven dimensions in this study (leadership, motivation, interaction, communication, decision-making, goal setting, and controlling). How much management behaviour is done in each of these aspects can be used to determine the extent to which an organization is seen as participative.

Theorists need to construct a conceptual framework that combines a variety of these characteristics to fully appreciate the extent of participatory management and how it connects to performance behaviour and work attitude. The study should look into the links between these variables at organizational, leader, and employee level.

This study adds to the research that shows clearly how the construct of participative management is built, and related to performance behaviour and employee work attitude, especially in the context of university organisations. Participative management is perceived as an effective strategy for staff empowerment. This strategy could be used by leaders within university setting through involving members in significant activities (Sashkin, 1984). The way these participative leaders manage people at work ensured individuals fully engages in their job. This in turn led to great contributions to the organisational achievements. This study shows that leaders and employees perceived differently about the use of participative management in their workplace. This situation is probably due to the individuals did not have sufficient knowledge or understanding about this style, especially the employees. It could influence the effectiveness of the strategy of the staff empowerment to be implemented. To reduce the negative effect of this issue, leaders need to help subordinates to improve their knowledge about the management being practiced. Leaders and employees need to communicate regularly, to share about the vision and missions, strategies, and goals. This helps leaders to create a supportive atmosphere, where participative management can be accepted by all parts involved.

Finally, administrative or unit leaders within university organizations must establish a management system that is backed by an effective organization structure, staff development programs, and controls in order to attain high levels of staff performance. Employees must be well-informed about the company's policies, goals, and individual roles and responsibilities. This ensures members know well about their work and have similar

conception about the management as expected by leaders in enhancing work motivation, and hence contributes to the high level of organisational performance.

### **Limitations and future research**

Scope of the study is confined to non-academic or administrative employees working in university divisions. Implications of the findings are limited to these respondents. The discussion of the effects of the participative management style is not intended to generalise its conclusions for academic staff or the broader community. Further research needs to include a range of universities in other countries. This would allow scholars to investigate and test the effectiveness of participative management in enhancing university governance, particularly when dealing with varied people in organizational structures.

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