

## Participatory Human Resources Management and Organizational Development in South-East Nigeria

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### Abstract

This study examined the effect of participatory human resources management on organizational development in South-East Nigeria. The specific objectives are to determine the effect of collaborative goal-setting on organizational development. Similarly, it aims to investigate the impact of employee empowerment on organizational development in South-Eastern Nigeria. A survey was adopted for the study, and a structured questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale was self-administered to collect primary data from the respondents in the study. The population of the study comprises the staff of two manufacturing companies in South-East Nigeria. The research instrument was vetted by three human resources professors who certified it to have high validity. Also, the reliabilities of the constructs were above 0.7, indicating high consistency. The data were presented using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and percentages, while multiple linear regression inferential statistics were used for data analysis. The findings revealed that collaborative goal-setting has a significant positive effect on organizational development, with coefficients of 0.462 and p-values of <0.001. Similarly, employee empowerment has a significant positive effect on organizational development with coefficients of 0.347 and p-values of <0.001. The study concluded that both participatory human resources management constructs, such as collaborative goal-setting and employee empowerment, have a significant positive effect on organizational development in South-East Nigeria. The study recommended that organizations should empower employees and actively involve them in setting strategic and operational goals. This approach fosters a sense of inclusion, guarantees job satisfaction, increases commitment in pursuit and actualization of organizational objectives, and enhances overall performance.

**Keywords:** Management, human resources, collaborative goal setting, employee empowerment, organizational development.

### Introduction

An organization exists because it develops products and designs services that they offer their customers. Undoubtedly, an organization cannot achieve expected growth when it has become difficult to offer customer satisfaction by closing employee service gaps (Olelewe et al., 2025; Okolo et al., 2024). Most importantly, closing the existing gaps in a company cannot happen in a vacuum since a collaborative effort between management, frontline employees, and customers is sacrosanct, given the inseparability of service (Okolo et al., 2024). However, participatory human resource management (PHRM) is an approach to managing human resources that allows employees to contribute their quota in making critical and veritable decisions in matters affecting the success of an organization. Indeed, employees are allowed to actively involve themselves in setting goals, formulating policies, solving stakeholders' problems, and making important decisions.

In today's dynamic business environment, organizations must adopt innovative strategies to enhance performance, sustain growth, and remain competitive. Piasna et al. (2013) reiterated that PHRM has emerged as a key approach that emphasizes employee involvement in decision-making, problem-solving, and organizational planning. This management style fosters a sense of ownership, accountability, and engagement among employees, which are critical for organizational development. PHRM is rooted in the belief that employees, who are the backbone of any organization, contribute more effectively when their voices are heard and their input valued. It is a contemporary approach to managing human capital that emphasizes active employee involvement in organizational processes, decision-making, and policy development (Finio & Downie, 2022).

Unlike traditional top-down human resources management (HRM) practices, PHRM fosters a collaborative work environment where employees are empowered to contribute their insights, ideas, and expertise (Kumar 2018). This approach aims to create a sense of ownership and accountability among employees, enhancing their commitment, motivation, and overall job satisfaction (Bozic, 2023). PHRM is based on the understanding that employees are not just executors of tasks but valuable stakeholders whose engagement can drive organizational success. Interestingly, involving employees in key aspects of management, such as performance evaluations, goal setting, and problem-solving, organizations can tap into diverse perspectives and foster innovation. Moreover, participatory practices help build trust, improve communication, and promote a shared sense of purpose within the workplace (Park, 2024). As organizations operate in increasingly competitive and complex environments, PHRM has become essential for enhancing adaptability and resilience. Companies that adopt PHRM practices are better positioned to attract and retain top talent, foster a positive organizational culture, and achieve sustainable growth (Bozic, 2023).

In South-East Nigeria, a region with a rich entrepreneurial landscape and diverse industries, organizations face numerous challenges, including economic instability, infrastructural deficits, and workforce-related complexities (Bozic, 2023). The application of PHRM is particularly relevant in this context as it can bridge communication gaps, enhance employee satisfaction, and drive innovation (Finio & Downie, 2022). By involving employees in critical processes, organizations in the region can build a more resilient and adaptable workforce that is essential for addressing external pressures and seizing growth opportunities (Saban et al., 2020). However, many organizations in South-East Nigeria still operate under traditional hierarchical structures, which often limit employee participation and stifle creativity. This study sought to explore the effect of PHRM on regional organizational development, focusing on its impact on key areas such as productivity, employee retention, and adaptability to market changes. By examining the relationship between participatory practices and organizational success, this research aims to provide insights into how businesses can foster a culture of collaboration and inclusiveness to achieve sustainable development.

Furthermore, organizational development in South-East Nigeria faces significant challenges, including economic instability, infrastructural deficits, and intense competition. These challenges have led to high employee turnover, low morale, and reduced organizational efficiency, which hinder sustainable growth. Unfortunately, Traditional, top-down management styles that dominate many organizations in the region often exacerbate these issues by stifling employee innovation, reducing engagement, and creating a disconnect between management and employees.

More so, PHRM offers a promising solution by fostering employee involvement in decision-making, problem-solving, and policy formulation. Research has shown that organizations with PHRM practices experience higher levels of employee satisfaction, increased productivity, and stronger organizational adaptability. However, despite the potential benefits, many organizations

in South-East Nigeria have yet to fully embrace this approach, often due to a lack of understanding of its impact on organizational development.

## Review of Literature

### Participatory human resources management (PHRM)

PHRM has emerged as a critical paradigm in organizational behavior and human resource management. This approach emphasizes the active involvement of employees in decision-making processes, thereby fostering a collaborative workplace environment. The importance of PHRM lies in its potential to enhance employee engagement, improve job satisfaction, and promote organizational effectiveness (Piasna et al., 2013). PHRM has gained traction as a vital approach to fostering employee engagement and enhancing organizational performance. Rooted in the principles of employee involvement and empowerment, PHRM encourages organizations to involve employees in decision-making processes. Participation is expected to improve performance because employees possess information that is useful for management when seeking organizational improvements. Compared with Fordist approaches, this signals a shift in the role of employees in the production system as being potential problem-solvers. Employees were expected to enjoy greater autonomy, but to ensure that this autonomy was used in the interest of the organization, management needs to introduce practices, including employee participation opportunities that encouraged employees' engagement and commitment to organizational goals (Boselie, 2010).

In addition, while employee participation practices are diverse, the focus on performance impact has meant that their potential for improving job quality has been under-researched. HRM practices that enhance EIP can be a valued feature that allows for more discretion and autonomy, as well as generating feelings of involvement in the work process (Marmot, 2004). The opportunities to improve working conditions through participatory HRM schemes might also depend on the 'intensity' or 'embeddedness' of EIP opportunities (Cox et al., 2006), which may reflect managerial engagement in such practices. PHRM is grounded in several core principles, such as collaborative decision-making, empowerment, transparency, inclusivity, and continuous feedback.

This principle aligns with democratic ideals, where input from all stakeholders is valued, ensures that employees are informed about organizational changes and decisions, fostering trust and commitment, enhances creativity and innovation, as diverse teams are more likely to generate unique solutions, and allows for real-time adjustments and improvements in processes (Men, 2014). One of the primary advantages of PHRM is the increase in employee engagement. When employees are involved in decision-making, they feel a greater sense of ownership and commitment to their work (Bakker et al., 2011). Indeed, engaged employees are more likely to go above and beyond their job requirements, contributing to higher levels of productivity. Organizations that implement PHRM often experience improved overall effectiveness, and by leveraging employee insights and feedback, organizations can make more informed decisions, leading to better alignment between employee capabilities and organizational goals.

### Collaborative Goal Setting

Collaborative goal setting improves the communication network in an organization (Jacob et al., 2022). Collaborative goal setting is a strategy that guides management in deciding what to do and how to set goals as a team. This process typically includes identifying personal and company needs, prioritizing and allocating available resources, and evaluating goal performance over time. The exercise encourages employees to take an active role in streamlining their contributions and responsibilities to achieve the company's goals, increase their engagement, and commitment.

In the healthcare industry, it has been observed that collaborative goal setting is currently being adopted in therapeutics (Renger & Macaskill, 2021). Epton et al. (2017) noted that changes in behavior in the workplace have occurred as a result of the efficacy of collaborative goal setting. Woodard et al. (2024) posited that collaborative goal setting encourages learning, idea sharing, and other forms of engagement that will focus on setting patient-centric goals that will foster patient satisfaction and company growth. Woodard et al. (2024:2) buttressed that “collaborative goal setting is an evidence-based strategy for improving self-care, trust, and clinical outcomes among primary care patients.” However, unlike the top-down hierarchical companies where managers decide employee goals and responsibilities, collaborative goal setting encourages observing, discussing, listening, prioritizing, and evaluating goals and objectives together. It is a process that helps employees to have a sense of belonging, by being given the opportunity to participate in the company’s broader work.

In setting goals, it is important to keep the organization’s intended functions and prioritized services in mind. Nonetheless, these may change over time, and an organization’s goals should change as the functions and services change. Interestingly, setting goals collaboratively improves employee engagement and job performance, thereby helping the company to meet its goals. The combination of a deadline and clearly defined deliverables drives employees to work in a structured and effective manner. With collaborative goal setting, employees participate in designing how their role will contribute to the company’s main objectives of achieving customer satisfaction and profitability.

Collaborative goal setting creates an environment of alignment between employees and the organization. It furthers the company’s goals while benefiting employee growth and development. Setting collaborative goals increases transparency and ensures that employee needs and concerns are heard and considered. A collaborative goal-setting approach gives employees a sense of ownership over their work, which is vital for employee engagement and long-lasting motivation. Collaborative goal setting requires employees and managers to meet and discuss personal and company goals, listen to each other, and agree on their goals as a team. In view of these contributions, the researchers propose that:

H1: Collaborative goal-setting has a significant effect on organizational development in South-East Nigeria.

## **Employee Empowerment**

The transfer of authority and accountability from managers to employees for decision making and job performance is called empowerment (Dahou & Hacini). However, Ramesh and Kumar (2014) opined that employee empowerment is a topical and germane issue. It is a term used to express how non-managerial staff members can make decisions without consulting their bosses or managers. Saban et al. (2020) asserted that employee empowerment is a fundamental and crucial component of workplace success, effectiveness, and development. Employee empowerment is the process of equipping employees to make their own decisions that, in turn, will affect the organization as a whole. An empowering benefit is that one gets people who are deeply connected to the organization’s success. Employee empowerment is defined as the manner in which organizations give their employees a degree of independence and control in their day-to-day activities. The key principle of employee empowerment is to equip employees with the tools to make relevant and correct decisions (Gorde et al., 2022).

Conversely, it might merely mean giving employees the ability to make some decisions on their own. Employee empowerment has been defined in many ways, but generally means the process of allowing employees to have input and control over their work, and the ability to openly share suggestions and ideas about their work and the organization as a whole. Empowered employees

are committed, loyal, and conscientious. They are eager to share ideas and can serve as strong ambassadors for their organizations (Saban et al., 2020). Additionally, Zeithaml et al. (2018) juxtaposed employee empowerment alongside employee control. In their opinion, it was emphasized that when employees are provided with the resources and authority to work with subordinates, certain control measures must be adopted to monitor employees to eliminate abuse of power. Dabo and Ndani (2018) observed that although empowerment accords employees the authority to deliver quality service, organizational development is suffocated since employees hardly exercise the expected autonomy and power needed to achieve set goals (Dabo & Ndani, 2018).

Moreover, managers feel that by empowering employees, they relinquish the responsibility to lead and control the organization. This is not the case. Empowerment is a culmination of many of the ideas and tenets of employee satisfaction. Empowered employees are not just proud of their work but are more productive than their disempowered colleagues. In general, they are also more satisfied, so they bring in more innovations into their business by making customers happier, which translates into greater profits (Ramesh & Kumar, 2014). This holds in both the individual and collective senses. From a financial perspective, employee empowerment is serious business. Empowering employees leads to organizational encouragement of entrepreneurial traits, thus encouraging employees to make decisions, take action, and foster employees' belief that they can take control of their destinies. This belief may lead to self-motivation and a sense of independence that is translated into greater loyalty and extra effort for the organization.

Empowered employees come to believe that they control their success through their efforts and hard work. These decisions can be small or large, depending upon the degree of power with which the company wishes to invest in employees. Employee empowerment can begin with training and converting a company to an empowerment model. Conversely, it means enabling employees to make their own decisions (Ramesh & Kumar, 2014). It offers immense benefits to empower employees, but it takes significant effort to implement it in the organization. Employee empowerment is a cultural issue, and implementing best practices throughout an organization is germane in creating a positive and trustworthy environment for employees. Organizations that foster an environment of trust, clear communication, delegation, and accountability tend to focus their efforts on empowering employees.

Empirically, Ikima (2023) found that bank profitability, which is an aspect of organizational development, was significantly and positively influenced by employee empowerment. In contrast, the same study revealed that employee empowerment has a significant negative impact on service quality. Abubakar (2014) conducted a study on how job satisfaction in First Bank Plc can influence employee empowerment and found that employee empowerment has a significant positive effect on job satisfaction. Similarly, Kariuki and Murimi (2015) revealed that organizational performance was significantly and positively influenced by employee empowerment, which has decision making, training, autonomy, and information sharing as proxies. Also, Dahou and Hacini (2018) revealed that there is a significant positive effect of employee empowerment and the proxies of transformational leadership, information sharing, job design, and decision-making authority. In another study, Hanaysha (2016) found that employee empowerment significantly impacted organizational commitment. That indicated that employees became more dedicated to performing their tasks the moment they got empowered by management. In view of these contributions, the researchers propose that:

H2: Employee empowerment has a significant effect on organizational development in South-East Nigeria.

## Organizational Development

Organizational development (OD) can be defined as a planned effort to improve organizational effectiveness and employee well-being through changes in organizational processes, structures, and culture. It is a collaborative, data-driven, and results-oriented approach that seeks to align individual, team, and organizational goals to achieve sustainable performance improvements. Shandra and Banutu-Gomez (2016) defined OD as a planned and systemic transformation of employee beliefs, attitudes, and values, geared towards actualizing business growth. OD supports organizational adjustability to customer, market, and technological changes. The following benefits, according to Shandra and Banutu-Gomez (2016), are derived from OD: continuous improvement, increased profit, improved product and service, quality communication, and employee growth.

Indeed, OD is an effort within an organization to improve its capabilities and overall effectiveness. Not a simple process or quick fix, OD is a structured, organized, and often lengthy endeavor to bring transformational changes to specific areas of an organization or all of its parts, its values, strategy, structure, people, and processes to create a sustainable, resilient organizational culture that can adapt to change and achieve targeted goals for success, growth, and profitability. Data and evidence are used extensively in OD. It is a research-driven process and focuses on modifying human behavior for the betterment of employees and the entire organization. Unlike HRM, which includes hiring, employee retention, and performance management, as well as helping with policies and procedures, OD assesses what is happening within an organization and performs an intervention, attempting to produce positive change and align employees' behavior with the organization's strategy, business processes, and goals (Finio & Downie, 2022).

In a rapidly changing business environment, OD is crucial for maintaining the competitiveness and sustainability of companies. It helps them to improve organizational effectiveness, adapt to new challenges, and support a positive and engaging work culture. OD can have a significant impact on business performance by improving efficiency, productivity, and profitability, including enhancing employee satisfaction and retention. By engaging in a collaborative and data-driven approach to OD, organizations can identify areas for improvement, develop solutions, and implement changes that lead to measurable performance improvements. Organizations apply OD when they are facing challenges such as declining performance, low employee morale, high turnover, or a need to adapt to changing market conditions. OD interventions may include activities such as team building, leadership development, change management, process improvement, and cultural change. The timing and nature of OD interventions will depend on the specific needs and goals of the organization, as well as the resources available for implementing change (Bozic, 2023).

## Theoretical Review

### Locke and Latham's Goal-Setting Theory

The most prominent and impactful theoretical framework on which goal-setting agendas depend is called the goal-setting theory (Jeong et al., 2023). Goal-setting theory emphasizes the reason why different individuals offer better job performance than their counterparts in similar job situations (Galanakis & Georgiou, 2022). It is a powerful approach for encouraging employees' commitment (Yurtkoru et al., 2017) to achieving high job performance by focusing on and meeting deadlines in actualizing the set goals. For Yurtkoru et al. (2017), goal-setting theory examines an employee's performance and satisfaction on the job, which in turn stimulates the commitment of such an employee to the organization. Underscoring this, Locke and Latham (2019) confirmed that individual and group performance are improved through goal setting. In

tune with this, Al Horie and Al Shlowiy (2020:224) stated that "group goals are distinct personal goals." In sports, for instance, the theory is often one of the most applied intellectual exercises. Jeong et al. (2023) avowed that, as a motivational theory, goal-setting theory offers valuable insights into the relationship between the performance of tasks and deliberately set goals.

Incidentally, the goal-setting theory that was developed by Edwin Locke and Gary Latham has become one of the most influential and empirically supported frameworks in organizational behavior and motivation psychology. First articulated in Locke's (1968) seminal paper and further expanded by Locke and Latham (1990, 2002), the theory posits that setting specific and challenging goals significantly enhances task performance. Locke and Latham's theory is based on the premise that human behavior is purposeful and directed by goals (Locke, 1968). The theory identifies clarity, challenge, commitment, feedback, and task complexity as key elements that underline effective goal setting in a business environment (Locke & Latham, 2006). In the workplace, goal setting is widely used to enhance employee performance and productivity. Apparently, management practices such as performance appraisals and incentive systems often incorporate goal-setting principles (Locke & Latham, 1990). Additionally, goal-setting may be less effective in tasks requiring creativity or innovation, where strict targets can stifle exploration and divergent thinking (Amabile, 1996). Cultural factors also influence goal-setting effectiveness, with collectivist cultures potentially favoring group-oriented goals over individual ones (Erez & Earley, 1993).

### **Social Exchange Theory**

Social exchange theory (SET), initially developed by Homans (1958) and later expanded by Blau (1964) and Emerson (1962), views relationships as exchanges of resources, both tangible (e.g., salary) and intangible (e.g., trust, recognition). According to SET, individuals engage in interactions based on cost-benefit analyses, where they strive to maximize rewards while minimizing costs. In the workplace, SET conceptualizes the employer-employee relationship as a reciprocal exchange. Employers provide resources such as autonomy, support, and fair treatment, while employees reciprocate through loyalty, productivity, and engagement (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Certainly, empowerment aligns with SET's principle of reciprocity. When employees are empowered through autonomy and recognition, they perceive their employer as supportive and trustworthy, thus motivating them to reciprocate with enhanced performance and commitment (Blau, 1964). This reciprocal trust strengthens the psychological contract between employees and employers. Employee empowerment, as an organizational practice, aligns with this theory by fostering conditions that enable meaningful exchanges. Empowered workplaces are more resilient to change, and employees who feel trusted and valued are more adaptable and willing to embrace organizational transformations (Wayne et al., 1997). Furthermore, the study of communication, interpersonal relationships, and organizational behavior is rooted in the social exchange theory (SET) (Kumar & Shailaja, 2024).

SET showcases the interrelationship between individuals and groups, which results in mutual and beneficial resource exchange between them (Nunkoo, 2016). Buttressing this point, Kumar and Shailaja (2024) upheld that human beings associate with each other and one another based on their expectation that the relationship will offer them tangible and substantial benefits. That is to say that human interactions depend on reciprocity and exchange of resources; each party must bring something valuable to the table for the sake of understanding, acceptance, and harmony. In this theory, Kumar and Shailaja (2023) stated that individuals seek social relationships with a special focus on maximizing social and economic benefits while reducing social and economic costs.

In the social science domain, SET has been highly influential (Tripp, 2023) and very significant in giving insights into employee workplace behavior and social transactions (Ahmad et al., 2023). Kumar and Shailaja (2024) described SET as a framework for offering insights into

people's behavior in terms of how they establish, manage, and maintain emotional, social, cultural, economic, and interpersonal engagement amongst themselves. Also, Ahmad et al. (2023) defined SET as people's yearnings to build and sustain a relationship with others, by changing their attitude or behavior towards others in expectation of unlimited reciprocity from them, thereby ensuring acceptance, harmony, and love.

### **Empirical Review**

Brewer et al. (2013) conducted a study to address the challenges of collaborative goal-setting with children and their families in Holland. The study aims to highlight theoretical concepts relevant to rehabilitation goal setting, review clinical studies directly evaluating relationships between goal setting and pediatric rehabilitation outcomes, and provide recommendations to facilitate collaborative goal processes. The study utilized a qualitative approach for this research. The results revealed that the impact of fully collaborative goal setting is sufficiently positive to support the investment of organizational and individual time, energy, and resources to make it an integral part of the rehabilitation process.

Costa et al. (2017) conducted a study on collaborative goal setting with and for children as part of therapeutic intervention in an Austrian–German health-children & youth version setting. The study aims to explore collaborative goal setting with children, parents, and teachers, and children's reasons for their goals based on their perceived self- efficacy, using the Austrian–German Perceived Efficacy and Goal Setting System (AG-PEGS). The study employed a mixed-methods research design. The results revealed that the children's goals focused on activities and participation in all life areas, and half of the parents' goals on activities as relevant for productivity (followed by self-care and leisure), while teachers tended to prioritize goals at the body functions and structures level.

Kumar (2018) conducted a study on the role of employee empowerment in driving organizational development, particularly in the context of global human resource management practices in India. The study aims to know the importance of Employee Empowerment, to understand various strategies that should be used for employee empowerment, and to study various steps to empower employees. Both qualitative and quantitative methods of approach were employed in this work. The results revealed that employee empowerment increased employee morale and motivation, higher levels of innovation and creativity within teams, and enhanced organizational agility and adaptability.

Gorde et al. (2022) conducted a study to examine the importance of employee empowerment and its impact on organizational development from selected employees of private educational institutions in the city of Pune, India. The study aims to analyze employee empowerment best practices in organizations, the advantages and disadvantages of employee empowerment, and challenges in the employee empowerment process. The study utilized both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The results revealed that organizations that implement employee empowerment practices perform better in the competitive arena, and satisfied and motivated employees always contribute to the profitability of the organization.

### **Methodology**

This study presents the method and procedure that were applied. The research design adopted for the study was a descriptive survey. This design is considered apt because it enables the researcher to generate data through standardized collection procedures based on highly structured research instruments and well-defined study concepts and related variables. The population in this research is all the employees of manufacturing firms located within the southeastern region of Nigeria. The total population comprised 2,700 staff of Innoson Vehicle Manufacturing (1,700 staff) and Juhel Nigeria Limited (1000 staff). A sample size of 219 was determined using the Taro Yamane approach. The respondents were conveniently selected, and a well-constructed and

self-developed questionnaire titled “Participatory human resources management and organizational development in South-East Nigeria” was used to get the desired information from the staff. The questionnaire was divided into two sections (A and B).

Section A was for a collection of information on the personal data of respondents, while Section B consisted of questions that elicited responses from the respondents in relation to the constructs. The 5-point Likert scale, such as Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Undecided (UD), and Strongly Disagree (SD) was adopted. The researcher collected the needed data through the use of a questionnaire and its administration in the selected firms. The administration of the questionnaire was carried out by the researcher. A total of 219 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to elicit responses from the staff and retrieved on the spot by the researcher. A total of 18 questionnaires were wrongly filled and were not returned, leaving the researcher with 201 valid questionnaires. Responses from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages, and inferential statistics such as multiple linear regression analysis. Descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages were used in analyzing demographic variables and research questions, while the regression was also used to test the stated hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance.

## **Results**

This section presents the results of data analysis and the discussion of findings based on the objectives of the study. Specifically, this section covers the demographic characteristics of the respondents, descriptive statistics of the variables, reliability analysis, hypothesis testing, and discussions of the findings about existing literature.

### **Demographic characteristics of the respondents**

The demographic information of the respondents includes gender, age, educational qualification, and years of work experience. These characteristics provide context to better understand the perspectives of the respondents.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the respondent (n=201)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	120	59.7
Female	81	40.3
<b>Age</b>		
18-30 years	51	25.3
31-40 years	101	50.2
41-50 years	29	14.4
Above 50 years	20	9.9
<b>Educational Qualification</b>		
Diploma	31	15.4
Bachelor's Degree	98	48.8
Master's Degree	49	24.4
Others	23	11.4
<b>Years of Work Experience</b>		
0-5 years	45	22.4
6-10 years	75	37.3
Above 10 years	81	40.3

Table 1 is the demographic profile of the respondents; the responses provide crucial insights into the workforce composition. Regarding gender, the data reveals a noticeable gender gap, with 120 males (59.7%) and 81 females (40.3%), indicating a male-dominated workforce. In terms of age distribution, the majority of respondents fall within the 31–40 years age bracket (101 respondents, 50.2%), signifying that most participants are in their mid-career stage. The second-largest group, 18–30 years (51 respondents, 25.3%), highlights the presence of younger employees, while smaller proportions are observed in the 41–50 years (29 respondents, 14.4%) and above 50 years (20 respondents, 9.9%) categories. This distribution suggests a workforce primarily composed of young to mid-career professionals, reflecting a dynamic and relatively youthful demographic.

Educational qualifications show a highly educated workforce, with a significant number holding a Bachelor's degree (98 respondents, 48.8%), followed by those with a Master's degree (49 respondents, 24.4%). Respondents with Diplomas account for 15.4% (31 respondents), while 11.4% (23 respondents) fall into the "Others" category, potentially reflecting specialized or professional certifications. For work experience, a considerable proportion of respondents have over 10 years of experience (81 respondents, 40.3%), followed by those with 6–10 years (75 respondents, 37.3%). A smaller segment of the workforce has 0–5 years of experience (45 respondents, 22.4%), indicating a blend of experienced professionals and newer entrants in the sector.

### Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the responses to each variable which include collaborative goal-setting, employee empowerment, and organizational development.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Collaborative Goal-Setting	3.514	1.10
Employee Empowerment	3.470	1.36
Organizational Development	3.514	1.98

Table 2 The mean scores for collaborative goal-setting (3.514), employee empowerment (3.470), and organizational development (3.510) indicate generally positive perceptions across all three variables. The standard deviations show varying levels of response consistency, with collaborative goal-setting ( $sd = 1.10$ ) and organizational development ( $SD = 1.36$ ) having lower variability. In contrast, employee empowerment ( $SD = 1.98$ ) shows the highest variability, reflecting more diverse opinions among respondents for this construct.

### Reliability Test

The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha to ensure internal consistency.

Table 3: Reliability Test

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Collaborative Goal-Setting	0.74
Employee Empowerment	0.82
Organizational Development	0.75

Table 3 shows the Cronbach's Alpha values for collaborative goal-setting (0.74), employee empowerment (0.82), and organizational development (0.75), indicating that the questionnaire items for these constructs exhibit acceptable to good reliability. Employee Empowerment shows strong internal consistency, while collaborative goal-setting and organizational development demonstrate moderate consistency. Generally, the scales are reliable for measuring their respective constructs, though minor revisions or enhancements could further improve the consistency of collaborative goal-setting and organizational development.

### Regression Results

Regression analysis, which is an Inferential statistics approach, was employed to test the study's hypotheses. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to assess the effect of collaborative goal-setting and employee empowerment on organizational development.

**Table 4 Regression Output**

Model 1	Coefficient	F-statistics	R-Square	Adjusted	Durban-Watson
CGS	.462[.000]		99.381.698	.691	.400
EE	.347[.000]				
Constant	3.41[.002]				

**CGS= Collaborating Goal Setting; EE= Employees Empowerment; [ ] represent p-value**

The regression results in Table 4 provide critical insights into the effect of collaborative goal setting and employee empowerment on organizational development. Both predictors exhibit a positive and statistically significant influence on organizational development, with coefficients of 0.462 for collaborative goal setting and 0.347 for employee empowerment, and p-values of <0.001 for both. These results suggest that increasing collaborative goal- setting activities and empowering employees significantly enhance organizational development. Among the two predictors, collaborative goal setting has a slightly stronger impact, as evidenced by its higher coefficient value.

The F-statistic of 99.381 with a p-value of <0.001 indicates that the overall regression model is statistically significant. This means that the predictors (collaborative goal setting and employee empowerment) collectively explain a substantial amount of the variance in organizational development, and the relationship between the predictors and the outcome variable is not due to random chance. The R-squared value of 0.691 indicates that 69.1% of the variation in organizational development is explained by collaborative goal setting and employee empowerment. This reflects a strong model fit, implying that these predictors are critical factors in driving organizational development.

### Hypothesis Testing

H01: Collaborative goal-setting has no significant effect on organizational development in South-East Nigeria.

H02: Employee empowerment has no significant effect on organizational development in South-East Nigeria.

### Decision Rule

For H01: If the p-value for collaborative goal-setting is  $\leq 0.05$ , reject H01 and conclude that collaborative goal-setting has a significant effect on organizational development in South- East Nigeria. Otherwise, do not reject H0.

For H02: If the p-value for employee empowerment is  $\leq 0.05$ , reject H02 and conclude that employee empowerment has a significant effect on organizational development in South-East Nigeria. Otherwise, do not reject H02.

**Table 5: Diagnostic Test**

Diagnostic Test	Method Used	Test Statistic	P-value
Normality Test	Shapiro-Wilk Test	.974	.091
	Kolmogorov -Smirnov Test	.127	.064
Multicollinearity Test	Variance Inflation factor (VIF)	X1=2.15; X2=1.98	---
Heteroscedasticity Test	Breusch-Pagan Test	$\chi^2 = 4.21$	0.115

X1=Collaborative Goal-Setting; X2=Employee Empowerment

The diagnostic tests conducted for the multiple regression analysis as shown in table 5 indicate that the model satisfies important assumptions, ensuring its validity for interpretation. The normality tests, including the Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests, yielded p-values

greater than 0.05, confirming that the residuals are normally distributed. The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for all independent variables were below 10, indicating no serious multicollinearity issues. The Breusch-Pagan test for heteroscedasticity resulted in a p-value of 0.115, suggesting that the variance of residuals is constant. Lastly, the Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.89 indicates no significant autocorrelation in the residuals. Therefore, these results confirm that the regression model meets the necessary assumptions, satisfying the appropriateness of the analysis and interpretations above.

### **Discussion of findings**

The study highlights the demographic profile of respondents, revealing a predominantly male workforce (59.7%) with a significant proportion in the 31–40 years age group (50.2%), indicating a dynamic, mid-career professional demographic. The workforce is highly educated, with 48.8% holding a Bachelor's degree and 24.4% possessing a Master's degree, showcasing a strong emphasis on educational qualifications. Work experience is diverse, with a balance between seasoned professionals (40.3% with over 10 years) and newer entrants (22.4% with 0–5 years), which enhances organizational capabilities with both experience and fresh perspectives. The mean scores for collaborative goal-setting, employee empowerment, and organizational development indicate positive perceptions of these variables, although the higher variability in employee empowerment suggests differing experiences among respondents. Reliability analysis indicated internal consistency for the constructs, with employee empowerment exhibiting strong internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.82).

Regression analysis reveals that Collaborative goal-setting (coefficient = 0.462) and employee empowerment (coefficient = 0.347) both significantly and positively influenced organizational development, with an R-squared value of 0.691 indicating that 69.1% of the variation in development is explained by these predictors. Collaborative goal-setting has a slightly stronger impact, underscoring the importance of engaging employees in goal-setting processes to align efforts with organizational objectives.

Furthermore, the study found that collaborative goal setting has a significant positive effect on organizational development. This shows that organizational development will grow as a result of employee participation in setting goals for the firm. This is consistent with Brewer et al. (2013), where it was revealed that collaborative goal setting significantly and positively impacted organizational development since it positively supports investments in time, energy, and resources for both individuals and organizations. Similarly, the study found that employee empowerment has a significant positive effect on organizational development. This indicates that organizational development will improve when the employees are allowed to make important decisions affecting the success of the organization. In line with this finding, Kariuki and Murimi (2015) revealed that organizational performance, which is an indicator of organizational development, was significantly and positively influenced by employee empowerment.

### **Conclusion**

Participatory human resources management plays a crucial role in enhancing organizational development in South-East Nigeria. The findings indicate that collaborative goal-setting significantly contributes to organizational development by fostering alignment between employees and management, improving decision-making, and increasing overall productivity. When employees actively participate in setting goals, they feel a sense of ownership and commitment, leading to higher engagement and performance. Similarly, employee empowerment has a significant impact on organizational development. By granting employees autonomy, decision-making authority, and opportunities for skill development, organizations create an environment that fosters innovation, job satisfaction, and efficiency. Empowered employees are more motivated, proactive, and committed to achieving organizational objectives,

ultimately driving long-term growth and competitiveness.

Overall, the adoption of participatory human resources management strategies, particularly in the areas of collaborative goal-setting and employee empowerment, enhances both employee performance and organizational development in South-East Nigeria. Organizations that embrace these approaches are better positioned to adapt to changing business environments, improve workforce morale, and achieve sustainable success. The study concluded that Participatory human resources management has a significant positive effect on organizational development in South-East Nigeria. Therefore, to enhance organizational development in South-East Nigeria, organizations should adopt participatory human resources management strategies that prioritize collaborative goal-setting and employee empowerment. Similarly, organizations should actively involve employees in setting strategic and operational goals. This approach fosters a sense of inclusion, increases commitment to organizational objectives, and enhances overall performance. Management should implement regular goal-setting workshops and open communication channels to align individual and corporate aspirations effectively. Finally, employers should create an enabling environment where employees have greater autonomy and access to resources needed for decision-making. Providing leadership training, mentorship programs, and opportunities for professional growth can boost confidence, motivation, and productivity.

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