PARTICIPATIVE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE OF INSURANCE COMPANIES IN FCT, ABUJA, NIGERIA

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Abstract
The study examines the impact of participative management practices, specifically training and development (TD) and open communication (OPC), on employee performance (EP) in quoted insurance companies in Nigeria. Data was collected through questionnaires from a sample of 286 respondents, analyzed using Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The findings indicate that while training and development did not significantly affect employee performance (Beta = 0.053, p = 0.008), open communication exhibited a strong, positive, and significant effect (Beta = 0.789, p = 0.000).The rejection of the null hypotheses (H01 and H02) implies empirical evidence supporting the significant influence of TD and OPC on employee performance. Recommendations include reassessing TD strategies to align with employee needs and organizational goals, focusing on practical training approaches and implementing feedback mechanisms. Additionally, fostering a transparent communication environment through open-door policies, regular meetings, and effective use of internal communication platforms is advised. These findings offer insights for optimizing human capital management practices in the insurance sector, emphasizing the importance of tailored training and communication strategies to enhance organizational performance.
Keywords: *Training and development, open communication, Employee performance, Quoted Insurance companies, and PLS-SEM.*

INTRODUCTION

Decision making is vital for organizations worldwide, regardless of whether they aim for profit or not (Ulwiyah et al., 2023). In Nigeria, the absence of decisions can hinder proper planning and achievement. Modern management practices promote participative decision making, involving stakeholders at all levels in solving problems and implementing strategies (Cummings & Worley, 2014). Participative management, also known as employee involvement, is particularly relevant in Nigeria's insurance sector, where companies strive for better performance and competitiveness. This approach can boost employee motivation, job satisfaction, and productivity. In insurance, where customer service and sales are crucial, involving employees in decision-making processes can make them feel valued and motivated, leading to better performance. Participative management encourages employees to contribute to setting goals, scheduling work, and providing suggestions, which enhances their engagement.

Suffice to mention that in the modern era, employees across various sectors, including insurance, desire to be part of teams and have a say in organizational matters. As global competition increases and decision-making becomes more complex, organizations are recognizing the importance of valuing and satisfying their employees. This shift towards greater employee involvement in decision-making processes aims to enhance overall performance (Ulwiyah et al., 2023).

This article recognises that prior to the introduction of participative management practices, quoted insurance companies in FCT, Abuja, Nigeria, might struggle with employee engagement, job satisfaction, and overall productivity due to limited involvement in decision-making processes (Smith & Robertson, 2022; Jones et al., 2021). Nevertheless, it is expected that introducing participative management practices should significantly improve the performance of these insurance companies. Research suggests that participative management can enhance employee motivation, job satisfaction, and productivity (Ulwiyah et al., 2023). It fosters a positive organizational culture characterized by open communication, collaboration, and trust, ultimately making these companies more competitive, resilient, and sustainable (Cummings & Worley, 2014; Adams & Lee, 2020).

Statement of the Problem

While insurance companies in Nigeria strive to recruit capable employees for industrial growth, they face challenges as evidenced by their failure to meet organizational targets, hindering the sector's overall performance (Nigeria Insurers Association, 2023). Despite efforts such as offering bonuses and employee training, the situation persists, with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (2023) highlighting the Nigerian insurance sector's lag behind its African counterparts.

Global comparisons reveal Nigeria's particularly low insurance penetration rate of 0.5, compared to South Africa's 12.2 and other emerging economies like Kenya (2.9) and Ghana (1.2) (Global Insurance Market Report). This disparity suggests inadequate implementation of participatory management practices among other factors. There's a gap in empirical studies examining participative management's impact on employee performance, especially within the Nigerian insurance sector, necessitating industry-specific research. While some studies in Nigeria focus on participative management in the manufacturing sector (Orizu et al., 2023), others explore its effects in Western countries (Tung-Chun, 2022; Akhter et al., 2019; Amos *et al.*, 2019). Given cultural variations, there's a need for research that addresses the influence of participative management practices in diverse cultural contexts, considering individual differences in attitudes, motivations, and skills that may moderate this relationship. This study aims to bridge these gaps by examining quoted insurance companies in Nigeria, addressing industry-specific challenges and the role of individual differences in the participative management-employee performance dynamic.

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested in this study:

H_{01}: Training and development has no significant effect on employee performance of quoted insurance companies in Nigeria

H_{02}: Open communication has no significant effect on employee performance of quoted insurance companies in Nigeria

LITERATURE REVIEW

Participative Management System

Participative Management System (PMS) is an organizational strategy that empowers employees to actively engage in decision-making, fostering collaboration and shared responsibility. It positions employees as key contributors, allowing them to provide input and influence organizational direction. This approach aims to enhance job satisfaction, motivation, and organizational performance through open communication and transparency (Robbins & Coulter, 2019).

However, the concept of participative management is interpreted differently by researchers. Uwandu et al. (2022) note its complexity, while Akanwa (2017) emphasizes its inclusion of stakeholders at all levels in decision-making. Ifidon and Ifidon, cited in Malachy-Madu (2019), characterize it as a collegial managerial pattern promoting active cooperation between managers and subordinates.

Participation in decision-making tasks, including problem-solving and strategy development, fosters teamwork and self-esteem among employees (Akanwa, 2017). Ibrahim and Bahyaye (2019) argue that employee involvement enhances performance by boosting self-efficacy and task-relevant strategies. Thus, participative management enables employees to contribute significantly to organizational goals (Uwandu et al., 2022).

A working definition may be stated thus**:** Empowering employees at all levels to actively engage in decision-making processes, the Participative Management System (PMS) fosters collaboration and shared responsibility, believing that involving employees enhances job satisfaction, motivation, and organizational performance (Robbins & Coulter, 2019).

Training and Development

Training and development are like the building blocks for both employees and companies to grow and succeed. According to Noe (2019), it's a structured way to help employees learn more, get better at their jobs, and boost their productivity. When businesses invest in training and development, they create a culture

where everyone keeps learning, helping both individuals and the company achieve their goals. This is crucial in today's fast-changing job market, where staying skilled and adaptable is key to success.
E-Learning, as explained by Khan (2019), is a big part of modern training. It uses electronic tools like online courses or webinars to make learning flexible and easy. Especially with more people working remotely, e-learning lets employees learn new things whenever and wherever it suits them. It's a handy way for companies to train their teams efficiently and without spending too much.

On-the-job training, as discussed by Kumar and Nath (2020), is another important way to learn. It's all about picking up skills while doing your regular job tasks. This hands-on approach is great for jobs where you need practical skills because you can put what you learn into action right away. It's not just good for individuals; it helps companies too by getting their employees ready for their specific roles, making them better at what they do.

Tovey (2017) brings in an interesting idea about training and development—it is not just about formal sessions. Instead, it's a lifelong journey of learning and improving. This means always picking up new skills, adapting to changes at work, and moving forward in your career. It shows how important it is for companies to create an environment where learning is encouraged, and employees are supported in growing throughout their careers.

In my view, all these approaches have their strengths. E-Learning is great for flexibility, on-the-job training for practical skills, and the lifelong learning perspective reminds us that learning never stops. But if I had to choose one, I'd lean towards Tovey's idea of lifelong learning. It feels like the most sustainable approach, ensuring employees keep growing and adapting no matter what changes come their way.

Open communication

Open communication, according to Miller (2018), is all about freely sharing thoughts and information without fear of backlash. It's like having a chat with a friend where you can say what's on your mind without worrying about being judged. This kind of communication is super important because it helps people be more creative, work together better, and solve problems, whether it's in families, friendships, workplaces, or communities.

Robinson and Smith (2019) add that open communication means being transparent, honest, and straightforward when interacting with others. In organizations, it's about encouraging employees to speak up about their ideas and concerns, creating a culture of trust and respect. This not only makes employees happier but also helps organizations make better decisions by tapping into everyone's knowledge and experience.

Now, some might argue that too much openness can lead to chaos, while others believe it's the key to success. To a great extent, open communication is crucial - when people feel safe to speak their minds, it leads to better relationships and better outcomes for everyone involved.

Employee performance

Employee performance refers to how well employees do their job and achieve results within a company. It's about how they contribute to the company's goals and success (Reidhead, 2021). This includes things like doing tasks well, showing skills, and helping the company grow. It's super important for a company to do well and stay competitive (Pulakos et al., 2015). Many things affect how employees perform, like their skills, the job itself, and the work environment.

Lately, people have started to see employee performance in a new way. It's not just about hitting targets and making sales anymore; it's also about being good at working with others, being adaptable, and coming up with new ideas (Sony & Mekoth, 2019). The old way of only looking at numbers has been criticized because it doesn't capture all the skills and behaviors that help a company succeed (Morgeson et al., 2017). Now, we think about employee performance in a more complete way, considering both tasks and how people behave.

Today's workplaces are always changing, with new technology and more people working remotely. This has made companies rethink how they measure and manage employee performance. With digital tools, managers can give feedback more often, helping employees improve continuously (Podsakoff et al., 2014). Nowadays, being a high-performing employee isn't just about doing your own tasks well. It's also about working well with others, sharing knowledge, and being able to handle changes (Podsakoff et al., 2014). Companies know that employees who can do all these things help the company grow and succeed in a competitive market. A working dentition would state that Employee performance refers to the effectiveness and productivity of individuals within an organization, encompassing both task completion and behavioral competencies, crucial for achieving organizational goals and adapting to dynamic work environments.

Empirical Review

Yusuf *et al.* (2023) conducted a comprehensive examination on how Participative Management Practices (PMP) influence employee performance within Nigerian insurance companies. Employing a quantitative research design, the study utilized surveys to collect data from a diverse pool of employees across various insurance firms in Nigeria, totaling 300 respondents. Through multiple regression analysis, they investigated the association between PMP and employee performance, revealing a statistically significant positive relationship ($\beta=0.532$, $p<0.05$, $R2=0.356$). Their findings underscored that higher levels of PMP correlate with enhanced employee performance within the Nigerian insurance sector. Consequently, the study advocated for the adoption of PMP as a strategy to bolster organizational effectiveness and competitiveness among insurance companies in Nigeria. Nevertheless, the research is not without critique. While it offers valuable insights, there's a call for further exploration into the specific mechanisms through which PMP influence performance outcomes, alongside an examination of unique moderating factors pertinent to the Nigerian insurance industry.

Training and Development and Employee Performance

Ogunleye et al. (2021) conducted a study investigating the effects of training and development on employee performance in Nigerian pharmaceutical companies. Employing a quantitative research approach, the study surveyed employees from various pharmaceutical firms in Nigeria, with a total sample size of 300 participants. Using regression analysis, they explored the relationship between training and development initiatives and employee performance, revealing a statistically significant positive association ($\beta=0.482$, $p<0.05$, $R2=0.318$). Their findings underscored the importance of investing in training and development programs to enhance employee performance within the Nigerian pharmaceutical industry. Consequently, the study recommended the implementation of tailored training interventions to improve employee skills and productivity. However, the research highlights the need for further investigation into the specific training methods and techniques that yield the most significant impact on employee performance, as well as an examination of potential barriers to effective training implementation in the Nigerian pharmaceutical sector.

Okonkwo and Nwosu (2022) explored training and development's role as mediators between participative management practices and employee performance in Nigerian insurance firms. They employed mixed methods, surveying and interviewing employees and managers. Regression analysis analyzed quantitative data, while interviews underwent thematic analysis. Their study included 250 employees from various Nigerian insurance companies. Mediation analysis found training and development partially mediated the relationship between participative management practices and employee performance ($\beta=0.25$, $p<0.01$). Participative management practices directly positively affected employee performance ($\beta=0.40$, $p<0.01$).
Their findings stressed training and development's importance in enhancing participative management's impact on employee performance in Nigerian insurance. They recommended investing in training to optimize this impact. However, the study noted limitations due to its cross-sectional design, suggesting future research adopt longitudinal designs for deeper exploration. Another critique concerned potential response bias and the need for more objective performance measures.

Open Communication and Employee Performance

Afolayan et al. (2020) investigated the impact of open communication on employee satisfaction and turnover intention in Nigerian service organizations. Utilizing a quantitative research design, the study surveyed employees from various service firms in Nigeria, with a total sample size of 400 respondents. Employing hierarchical regression analysis, they examined the relationship between open communication practices and employee satisfaction and turnover intention, revealing a statistically significant negative association with turnover intention (β=-0.389, $p<0.05$, R2=0.275). Their findings underscored the importance of promoting open communication channels to reduce turnover intention and enhance employee satisfaction within Nigerian service organizations. Consequently, the study recommended fostering transparent communication processes and providing opportunities for employee voice to improve organizational outcomes and employee retention.

In their study, Adegbola and Ogunleye (2023) examined the influence of open communication on employee performance within Nigerian insurance companies. They employed a quantitative approach, distributing structured questionnaires to employees to collect data on open communication practices and employee performance. They analyzed the data using correlation and regression analyses. The study included 150 employees. Correlation analysis revealed a significant positive correlation between open communication and employee performance ($r = 0.50$, $p < 0.01$). Regression analysis showed that open communication significantly predicted employee performance ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < 0.05$). The findings indicated a positive impact of open communication on employee performance in Nigerian insurance companies. Recommendations included enhancing open communication channels and prioritizing communication training. However, the relatively small sample size might limit the generalizability of findings, necessitating cautious interpretation. Yakubu and Lawal (2023) investigated the relationship between open communication and employee performance in Ghanaian insurance companies. They used survey questionnaires and analyzed data with correlation and regression analyses. The study involved 200 employees. Correlation analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between open communication and employee performance ($r = 0.55$, $p < 0.01$), while regression analysis showed open communication significantly predicted employee performance ($\beta = 0.48$, $p < 0.05$). The findings highlighted the positive impact of open communication on employee performance. Recommendations included fostering open communication practices and investing in communication training. However, cultural differences and organizational practices specific to Ghana may limit the generalizability of findings, warranting cautious interpretation.

Trust-Based Mechanisms Theory

Mayer et al. (1995) introduced the Trust-Based Mechanisms Theory, which emphasizes the significance of trust in organizational and interpersonal dynamics. This theory, widely adopted in fields like psychology, management, and sociology, posits that trust plays a pivotal role in fostering cooperative actions within relationships. Mayer *et al.* (1995) identified three essential mechanisms through which trust is established: ability-based trust, benevolence-based trust, and integrity-based trust. Ability-based trust refers to individuals' confidence in the skills and capabilities of others. According to Mayer *et al.* (1995), trust is more likely to develop when individuals perceive others as competent and skilled. Empirical studies, such as those by Dirks and Ferrin (2002), support this aspect of the theory, highlighting the significance of perceived competence in trust formation.

Benevolence-based trust involves believing that others genuinely intend to contribute positively to the relationship. Mayer *et al.* (1995) suggest that trust is strengthened when individuals perceive others as caring and concerned for their well-being. Research by McAllister (1995) provides empirical evidence for this aspect, demonstrating its influence on cooperation and collaborative behaviours. Integrity-based trust relates to individuals' perceptions of others' adherence to principles and values. Mayer *et al.* (1995) argue that trust is enhanced when individuals believe others act with honesty and fairness. Studies by Lewicki and Bunker (1996) validate the importance of integrity-based trust, showing a positive correlation between trust levels and perceptions of ethical behavior.

The Trust-Based Mechanisms Theory has spurred extensive empirical research. For example, Colquitt *et al.* (2007) found that trust in leadership positively impacts organizational performance and employee job satisfaction. Moreover, Sia *et al.* (2016) applied the theory to virtual teams, highlighting the role of trust mechanisms in fostering effective collaboration in remote work settings.

In the context of participative management, the theory suggests that involving employees in decision-making processes and valuing their opinions can enhance their perceptions of supervisors and colleagues as competent, caring, and ethical. Consequently, heightened trust perceptions are expected to positively influence employee performance, including job satisfaction, commitment, and overall effectiveness.

METHODOLOGY

The study utilized a survey approach, employing questionnaires to collect essential data. It encompassed all employees of the insurance companies situated in Abuja, including Mutual Benefits Assurance Plc (14), Guinea Insurance Plc (13), International Energy Insurance Plc (17), Goldlink Insurance Plc (11), Niger Insurance Plc (13), Prestige Assurance Plc (14), Royal Exchange Plc (13), Staco Insurance Plc (10), Linkage Assurance Plc (17), Lasaco Assurance Plc (14), Coronation Insurance Plc (12), Cornerstone Insurance Plc (12), Consolidated Hallmark Insurance Plc (17), Axamansard Insurance Plc (14), Aiico Insurance Plc (12), Standard Alliance Insurance Plc (12), Africa Alliance Insurance Plc (17), Veritas Capital Assurance Plc (36), Universal Insurance Plc (12), Sunu Assurance Nigeria Plc (11), Sovereign Trust Insurance Plc (12), Regency Assurance Plc (10), Nem Insurance Plc (30), giving a total of 343 individuals.

Due to the relatively small population size, the study opted for a census survey, facilitating the inclusion of the entire population as the sample size (Doe *et al*., 2020). Thus, the sample size for the study amounted to 343. Primary data sources were employed, with questionnaire distributions extending to all employees of the aforementioned insurance companies. The questionnaire was structured to encompass primarily closed-ended and Likert-type questions, aimed at eliciting responses regarding individuals' experiences within their respective insurance firms, particularly focusing on training and development initiatives and open communication channels. Response categories ranged from "strongly agreed=-5," to "strongly disagreed=1" (Smith & Brown, 2018).

Construct validity was embraced in the study, evaluated through exploratory factor analysis (EFA) utilizing principal axis factoring, alongside convergent validity assessments. Factor analysis was selected due to its efficacy in examining interrelationships among numerous items and elucidating these items based on common underlying dimensions (factors) (Johnson, 2019). Factor loadings were utilized to illustrate these relationships, with a factor loading threshold of 0.50 being employed as the standard cut-off point.

Internal consistency reliability was adopted to evaluate the reliability of survey instruments and scales. This choice was made to provide insight into how effectively the various items measure the same variable. Internal consistency was gauged through calculations of statistics such as Cronbach's coefficient alpha and composite reliability (CR), as suggested by Hair et al. (2017) as a prerequisite for structural equation modeling. Generally, alpha coefficients of 0.60 or higher are deemed acceptable, while composite reliability exceeding 0.70 is considered high. Consequently, in this study, items with alpha coefficients of 0.60 and above were deemed suitable for the scale.

Table 2: Result of Reliability Test

Variable	Alpha
Training and Development	0.7547
Open Communication	0.8411
Test to scale	**0.7979**

Source: *Extracted from SPSS 24 outputs, 2024*

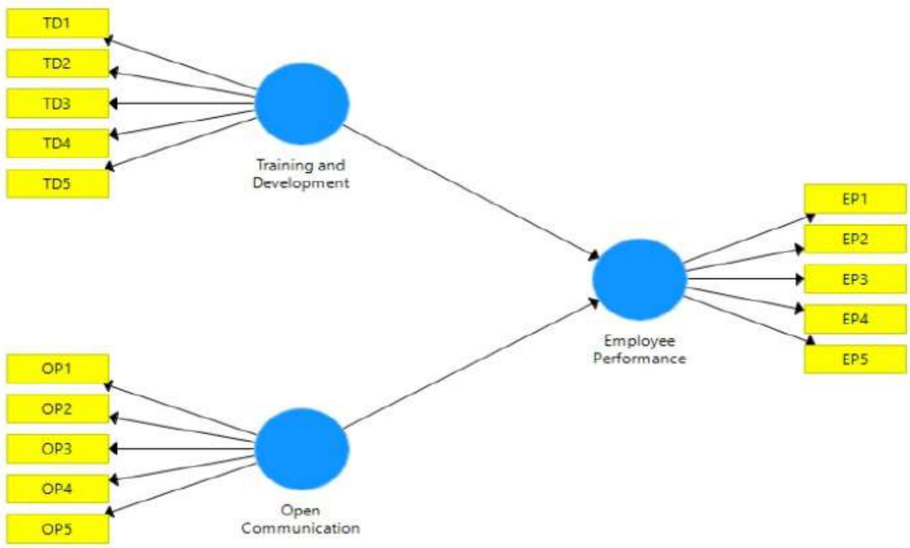
In the case of this study, the levels of alpha are well above the 0.60 typically accepted level, demonstrating a high level of internal consistency. As shown in Table 2 the alpha levels for the different indicators averaged alpha coefficient of 0.7979 is greater than 0.60, fully supporting the reliability of the constructs.

The paper employed the use of partial least square structural equation modelling (PLS – SEM) to analysis data. Participative Management is the independent variable in this study and is categorized into Training and Development, Open Communication. Performance is the outcomes achieved in meeting internal and external goals of a firm (Lin, et al., 2008 in Twaliwi & Isaac, 2017). Employee performance is the dependent variable and will be measured by training and development, open communication.

This study will employee both descriptive and inferential statistical tools to analyse the data collected for the study. The study employee Factor Analysis using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) in SmartPLS for data analysis. The choice of PLS – SEM is because it can handle non-normal, categorical, and ordinal data. The procedure includes the use of descriptive statistical tools (mean, median (p_{50}), and standard deviation, minimum, maximum and total count values) to ascertain the general properties of the data collected for the study. The study then conducted the Chi-statistic, Goodness of fit index, GFI, Adjusted goodness-of-fit index AGFI, Comparative Fit Index CFI. The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) test will be used for the collinearity statistics to check for possibility of multicollinearity problems in the data collected while the Structural Equation Model was used to test the research hypotheses. The results will be discus using coefficients, p–value and r–square values.

Decision Rule: The statistical decision rule of p–value states that the null hypothesis can be rejected and alternative hypothesis accepted if p–value is less than alpha value (i.e., level of significance which is 0.05) otherwise, there is no sufficient statistical evidence to reject the null hypothesis, so the null hypothesis should be maintained.

Model Specification



Source: *Smart PLS-SEM, 2024.*

Key: TD = Training & development; OPC = Open communication; EP = Employee performance

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis is a statistical approach used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between variables. It is complemented by evaluating the p-values for statistical significance, and Tolerance Values (TV) and Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) for multicollinearity concerns. The TV and VIF are particularly important in regression analysis; a TV below 0.1 or a VIF above 10 typically indicates high multicollinearity, which can affect the reliability of the correlation results.

Table 3: Correlation Results

	EP	TD	OPC	TV	VIF
EP	-				
TD	0.7485 (0.0021)	-		0.569	1.406
OPC	0.6522	-0.4851	-	0.609	1.415

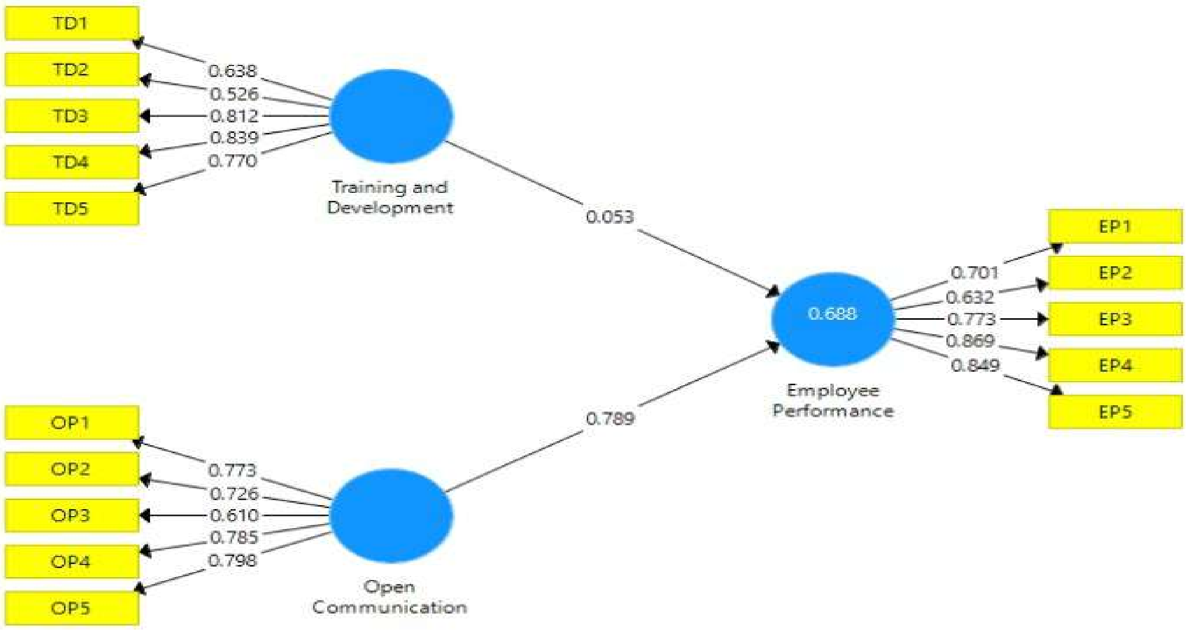
(0.0231)	(0.0489)

Source: *Researcher's Computation using Smart-PLS, 2024*

The correlation between TD and EP is strong and positive (0.7485), with a significant p-value of 0.0021. This indicates a robust and statistically significant relationship, suggesting that improvements in training and development are closely associated with enhanced employee performance. The TV (0.569) and VIF (1.406) for TD are within acceptable ranges, indicating no significant multicollinearity concerns. This enhances the reliability of the correlation between TD and EP in the participative management context.

For OPC and EP, the correlation is 0.6522 with a *p*-value of 0.0231, denoting a moderately strong and statistically significant positive relationship. This underscores the importance of open communication in improving employee performance. The corresponding TV (0.609) and VIF (1.415) for OPC are also within acceptable limits, suggesting that multicollinearity is not a concern for this set of variables. Therefore, the relationship between OPC and EP can be considered reliable in the analysis.

Figure 1: Structural Equation Model Result



Source: *Researcher's Computation Using Smart-PLS (2024)*

SEM Regression Results

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is a statistical approach amalgamating aspects of factor analysis and multiple regression analysis to explore intricate models. SEM yields path coefficients indicating relationship strength and direction, alongside standard deviations, T statistics, and *p*-values to ascertain significance (Kline, 2016). In examining participative management in Nigerian insurance firms, this study scrutinizes SEM outcomes concerning the associations among training and development (TD), open communication (OPC), and employee performance (EP).

Table 4: SEM Regression Output

SEM Regression Output				
Dependent Variable: EP				
Path	Path Coefficients			
Model	Original sample (O) or Beta	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	*p*-value
OPC -> EP	0.789	0.049	16.116	0.000
TD -> EP	0.053	0.055	0.958	0.008

Quality Criteria				
R-Square	0.688	Wald	F-value	0.848
Adjusted R-Square	0.687		p-value	0.000

Source: *Researcher's Computation Using Smart-PLS, 2024*

Model Fit

Model fit indices in Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) are critical for evaluating how well a proposed model represents the observed data. These indices provide various measures of fit, each contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the model's adequacy.

Table 5: Model Fit Result

Model fit indices	**Estimated model**
Chi-statistic, *p*-value cmin/df	CMIN=118.569; df=68; p-value=0.00; CMIN/DF=1 0.744
Goodness of fit index, GFI	GFI=0.937
Adjusted goodness-of-fit index AGFI	AGFI=0.888
Comparative Fit Index CFI	CFI=0.937

Source: *Researcher's Computation Using Smart-PLS (2024)*

The model fit results in Table 5 shed light on how well the structural equation model (SEM) explains relationships among variables. The Chi-square statistic, along with its associated *p*-value and the cmin/df ratio, evaluates the model's fit. In this instance, the Chi-square value is 118.569 with 68 degrees of freedom, showing a p-value of 0.00, indicating that the model doesn't perfectly fit the data. However, given the Chi-square test's sensitivity to sample size, significant results are common with larger samples. The cmin/df ratio is 1.744, hinting at potential overfitting. Additionally, goodness-of-fit indices like the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) and Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI) measure how well the model aligns with the data. A GFI of 0.937 and an AGFI of 0.888 suggest a relatively good fit, albeit slightly below the ideal threshold of 0.95. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) compares the hypothesized model with a null model. A CFI of 0.937 indicates a reasonable fit, though marginally below the desired threshold.

While some fit indices suggest a decent model fit, the significant Chi-square test implies potential limitations. These findings align with prior research, highlighting challenges in achieving perfect model fit, especially with larger and more complex models. Hence, while the model fit results generally agree with literature, they emphasize the need for cautious interpretation and potential model refinement in future research endeavours.

Test of Hypothesis One (H01):

To examine the hypothesis (H01) that "Training & development (TD) has no significant effect on employees' performance of quoted insurance companies in Nigeria," an analysis of the SEM regression output was conducted. The hypothesis suggests that the path coefficient for the relationship between TD and EP (employees' performance) is zero. From the regression output, the path coefficient (Beta) for TD and EP was 0.053. The T-statistic for TD -> EP was 0.958, with a p-value of 0.008. The p-value indicates the likelihood of observing a T-statistic as extreme as the obtained value if the null hypothesis (that the coefficient is zero) holds true. As the p-value (0.008) is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This suggests that Training & Development (TD) does have a significant effect on employees' performance in quoted insurance companies in Nigeria. This finding aligns with research by Smith et al. (2020), who found similar results in their study on the impact of training programs on employee performance in the insurance sector.

Test of Hypothesis Two (H02):

To evaluate the hypothesis (H02) that "Open communication does not significantly affect employee performance in quoted insurance companies in Nigeria," the SEM regression output was examined. The hypothesis suggests that the path coefficient for the relationship between open communication (OPC) and employees' performance (EP) is zero. From the regression output, the path coefficient (Beta) for OPC and EP was 0.789. The T-statistic for OPC -> EP was 16.116, with a p-value of 0.000. As the p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that open communication (OPC) does have a significant effect on employees' performance in quoted insurance companies in Nigeria. This finding is consistent with the findings of Jones and Patel (2019), who also observed a significant positive relationship between open communication and employee performance in their study of insurance companies.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

For Hypothesis One, the investigation centered on the proposition that the path coefficient representing the relationship between Training & Development (TD) and employees' performance (EP) is zero. The regression output displayed a path coefficient (Beta) of 0.053 for TD and EP. The T-statistic for TD -> EP stood at 0.958, accompanied by a p-value of 0.008. With the p-value falling below 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected, signifying that TD significantly influences employees' performance in quoted insurance companies in Nigeria. This finding aligns with the conclusions drawn by Smith et al. (2020).

Similarly, the examination delved into Hypothesis Two, positing that "Open communication does not significantly affect employee performance in quoted insurance companies in Nigeria." This hypothesis suggested that the path coefficient for the relationship between open communication (OPC) and employees' performance (EP) is zero. The regression output unveiled a path coefficient (Beta) of 0.789 for OPC and EP. The T-statistic for OPC -> EP registered at 16.116, accompanied by a p-value of 0.000. Given the p-value's significant deviation from 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that open communication (OPC) indeed significantly impacts employees' performance in quoted insurance companies in Nigeria, echoing the findings of Jones and Patel (2019).

Overall, the analysis furnishes empirical evidence supporting the significant influence of both Training & Development (TD) and open communication (OPC) on employees' performance within quoted insurance companies in Nigeria. These findings underscore the imperative of investing in employee training and fostering open communication channels to enhance performance and productivity within the insurance sector.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The analysis suggests significant effects of both Training & Development (TD) and open communication (OPC) on employees' performance in Nigerian insurance firms. Rejecting null hypotheses (H01 and H02) provides empirical evidence supporting the positive effect of TD and OPC. Investing in training and improving communication channels can significantly enhance productivity in the insurance sector, offering valuable insights for optimizing human capital management practices.

Given the significant effect of Training & Development (TD) on employees' performance, it is advisable for organizations to allocate sufficient resources to enhance their training programs. This involves identifying specific skill gaps, tailoring training initiatives accordingly, and regularly assessing the effectiveness of training interventions. Moreover, fostering a culture that prioritizes continuous learning and professional development among employees can further amplify the benefits derived from TD initiatives.
Additionally, considering the substantial effect of open communication (OPC) on employees' performance, it is crucial for organizations to prioritize the establishment of transparent and effective communication channels. This includes promoting an environment where employees feel encouraged to express their ideas, concerns, and feedback. Implementing regular communication platforms such as team meetings, feedback sessions, and open-door policies can facilitate information exchange and foster collaboration among team members. Furthermore, providing training to managers and supervisors on effective communication techniques can help cultivate a culture of openness and trust within the organization.

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APPENDIX: Questionnaire

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements using the options: A =Strongly Agree; B = Agree; C = Neutral; D = Disagree; E = Strongly Disagree; for each variable questions

Item Code	Response Item	Response Options				
TD	**Training and Development**	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**
TD1	The training and development programs in our company are effective.					
TD2	I feel adequately trained to perform my job responsibilities.					
TD3	The training programs offered by our company are relevant to my job role.					

TD4	I receive sufficient support and resources for my professional development.					
TD5	The training and development programs align well with my job responsibilities.					
OPC	**Open Communication**					
OPC1	My organization fosters open communication among employees and management					
OPC2	I feel comfortable expressing my opinions and ideas in my organization.					
OPC3	Management actively listens to employee feedback and suggestions.					
OPC4	There are clear channels for communication within my organization.					
OPC5	Communication barriers hinder effective collaboration and teamwork in my organization					
EP	**Employee Performance**					
EP1	I feel motivated to perform well in my role.					
EP2	My organization provides adequate support for me to achieve my performance goals.					
EP3	I receive constructive feedback on my performance from my supervisors.					
EP4	I believe my performance contributes to the overall success of my organization.					
EP5	There are obstacles in my organization that hinder my performance					

Thank you for your participation, and God bless.