

Employee Engagement as a Measure for Facilitating Organizational Quality Assurance System in Manufacturing Firms

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Abstract- The study investigated employee engagement as a measure for facilitating organizational quality assurance systems in manufacturing firms in Delta State. Two research questions guided the study and two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The population of the study comprised 90 employees (senior managers and lower level staff) from ten manufacturing firms in Delta State. Instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researchers on a 4-point likert scale questionnaire. The instrument was subjected to a pilot test on 20 employees of small and medium scale businesses randomly selected from Delta State. The application of the Crombach Alpha reliability test on the returned data yielded coefficient values of 0.85 and 0.83 for cluster B1 and B2 respectively with an overall reliability coefficient value of 0.84. Data collected from the respondents were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and t-test. Findings revealed that the benefits of employee engagement as a measure for facilitating organizational quality assurance in manufacturing firms include providing top executives of organizations with practical understanding of the factors that facilitate their employee engagement in organizational quality assurance performance. Further findings revealed that understanding the factors influencing employee engagement in organizational quality assurance system enables top executives of organizations to develop and implement more effective quality frameworks that enhance performance through participative management. The level of the respondents did not significantly influence their mean ratings. Based on the findings, top management of organizations should identify triggers of employee engagement as they have the potency to activate leaders-follower relationship in keying into the quality culture of manufacturing firms.

Keyword: *Employee engagement, organizational quality assurance system, manufacturing firm, facilitating, measure, ISO 9000 framework.*

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the most significant principles in quality management is the inclusion of people at all phases of the improvement process (ISO 9000:2015;

Delduarte, 2021). As a result, during the last decade, numerous management discourses and academic literatures have focused on strategies to improve inclusivity in management processes through employee engagement. The literature has acknowledged the importance of employee engagement in the implementation of quality management practices (Alebaity, 2018). Previous research has indicated that people are considered an organization's most valuable asset in today's business environment (Hassan et al., 2013). This assertion backs up the ISO 9000 systems standards' contention that employee involvement is one of the most important components in quality management literature (Scott, 2016). To successfully and effectively implement a quality assurance system, skilled and committed staff must be fully empowered and capable of participating in decision-making (Aletaiby, 2018). Competent, empowered, and engaged individuals are needed throughout the organization to improve value generation and delivery skills (Fonseca & Domingues, 2017). Employees who adopt their organization's vision and mission contribute to the generation of fresh ideas and perspectives on their company's products and services (Hahn et al., 2014; Gilyard, 2018).

Employees' role in quality assurance has been described as a crucial prerequisite for successful quality management implementation (Olusanjo, 2019). Therefore, to achieve complete quality in product/service delivery employees must clearly identify quality targets defined by top managers, and treat quality as a major factor. Employee participation, in principle, ensures that an employee who knows a problem is considered the designated person to fix the problem, and thus has the ability to make the best decisions possible in reversing the trend (Njie et al., 2008). Employee engagement is defined as "the degree to which employees whose responsibilities are to produce a product or provide a service feel in charge of their job, receive feedback

on their achievements, and are rewarded for the organization's performance" (Olusanjo, 2019). It is a motivational state characterized by exerting one's full self in a work position. Based on this definition, the goal of employee engagement is to ensure that every employee of an organization understands that they are part of an internal continuous improvement process.

The quality assurance systems' concept of employee engagement argues that employees at all levels of the organization should be involved by delegating duties and instilling a feeling of ownership, so that everyone recognizes their contribution and role in the organization. Thus, empowering people in an innovative firm gives them greater autonomy and responsibility, which is required for them to be creative (Manders et al., 2016). Landmark scholars have emphasized and advocated for effective employee participation as the foundation for proper quality management implementation in order to achieve customer loyalty, product quality, continuous improvement, job satisfaction, firm performance, and competitive advantage (Njie et al., 2008).

Implementing Quality management tools ensure high customer loyalty, thus better business, increased cash flow, and satisfied employees, healthy workplace and so on. Quality management processes make the organization a better place to work.

Findings from empirical studies revealed that employee predisposition to be engaged is predicated on the extent of leader-follower relationship. Singh (2019) and Yunista (2022) reveal that transformational leaders create greater engagement in the work of subordinates resulting in higher efficiency, satisfaction, and increasing the overall level of employee engagement in the organization. Additionally, Anil and Satish (2019) found that when leaders apply quality management strategies like knowledge-sharing systems and enough education and training, overall organizational performance and engagement improve. Further, Agus and Selvaraj (2020) discovered that the people-oriented quality management dimension of employee engagement might help leaders motivate and prepare their staff for organizational transformation. Hence, leaders can support training and education to improve employee competency and encourage peak performance to increase productivity. Drawing on the upper echelons

theory, organizational outcomes are influenced by the traits and behaviors of a firm's senior executives. Thus, it emphasizes both strategy (Carpenter et al., 2004; Hensellek, 2023) and structure (Hambrick, 2007) as significant aspects in explaining how organizational leadership behaviors influence employee engagement in quality assurance performance (Delduarte, 2021).

While literature highlights the significance of employee engagement in the performance outcomes of quality assurance systems across various contexts, the specific mechanisms and organizational contexts within the employee engagement-quality assurance systems performance relationship, particularly in the manufacturing sector in Delta State, remain largely elusive. This research gap is particularly notable because, theoretically, a large number of prior studies have not used existing organizational theories or models as an overarching lens to investigate the variables that may positively impact employee engagement in a variety of systems, thereby overlooking important elements or mechanisms (Miao et al., 2019).

Therefore, the need for more insight into generalized procedures for improving the level of employee engagement in organizational quality assurance systems in manufacturing firms, particularly in Delta State of Nigeria as well as the mixed results identified in previous studies motivated this research.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

One of the most important concepts of ISO 9000 quality management framework is the involvement of people at all stages of the improvement process. The literature has recognized the significance of employee engagement phenomenon in the application of quality management standards in organizations. Further, quality management theorists have equally joined forces to uphold the potency of employee engagement in facilitating performance of organizational quality assurance systems. Therefore, it may make sense to assume that, competent, empowered, and engaged employees are required throughout the organisation to boost value creation and delivery capabilities. Besides, evidences from the literature have shown that successful and effective implementation of a quality assurance system requires skilled and committed employees with full

empowerment and capability to participate in the decision-making process. However, for this to happen, it is expected that top management of organizations are abreast with measures that trigger employee motivation to identify with the vision and mission of their organizations. Unfortunately, as literature depicts, there appears to be apparent lack of knowledge resulting from scanty research studies on measures that can facilitate employee engagement in the quality assurance systems of manufacturing firms in Delta State. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to provide answers to the following questions:

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the benefits of employee engagement as a measure for facilitating organizational quality assurance?
2. What are the employee engagement measures for facilitating organizational quality assurance?

Hypothesis

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significant:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of senior managers and lower level employees on benefits of employee engagement as a measure in facilitating organizational quality assurance in manufacturing firms in Delta State.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of senior managers and lower level employees on the measures for facilitating organizational quality assurance in manufacturing firms in Delta State.

III. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Upper Echelons Theory

Upper echelon theory is considered relevant to provide a rationale and better understanding of what employees consider as motivations for engagement in organizational quality assurance system. The upper echelon theory propounded by Hambrick and Mason (1984), states that senior executives' experiences, values, and personalities influence organizational outcomes (Hensellek et al., 2023). This theory

espouses that, employees' dedication, loyalty, and engagement with an organization reflect the firm's quality management culture of leadership behaviors, which reflects the highest level of a quality assurance system (Akanmu et al., 2017). Leadership is a widely held belief that requires using one's talents, education, and experience to achieve an organization's mission, vision, and goals (Jiang, 2014). A competent leader is a valuable asset to any organization. Scholars and business executives are continually researching the function of leaders and leadership in order to improve the performance of their organizations (Gilyard, 2018). According to Hietschoild et al., (2014), top management commitment demonstrates the characteristics that assess and encourage employee involvement and quality at higher levels of an organization's hierarchy.

The successful application of the leadership principle to the quality assurance system creates an environment that encourages employees to work as a team, build a trusting culture, and share and flow information, allowing them to learn, change, and adapt quickly to changing circumstances (Yusr et al., 2014). Yusr et al., posit that, when a firm's leadership is committed to quality, it develops a specific talent that allows it to easily adapt to a changing environment. By implication, employees at all levels will have more influence on organizational objectives, particularly if individual and team interests are aligned with corporate goals targeted at improving quality management methods. In a nutshell, employees may be more goal-driven, which benefits the firm. Besides, when employees achieve their goals and have the opportunity to receive rewards for their efforts, they feel more fulfilled (Ejumudo & Efebeh, 2015).

In this study, it is posited that adequate employee engagement policy may enhance performance of organizational quality assurance system, which is in line with the objectives of the organization.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee

Engagement

Drawing on the aforementioned arguments, employee engagement could be seen as a gauge of how dedicated staff members are to the firm, including how much they care about its objectives and core values (Witts, 2023). Every employee bears responsibility for quality management; however, the

organization's top management bears the responsibility of creating a culture of quality in order to achieve desired outcomes. Since they improve participatory engagements, it is crucial to acknowledge outstanding performers and their values. Yusnita et al. (2022) define employee engagement as an emotional and intellectual commitment to the organization, and a representation of the level of personal commitment that employees are willing to make or to invest in their work. Furthermore, organizational behavior researchers have demonstrated that an organization's greatest source of competitive advantage is its workforce. According to Vathanopas & Thai-ngam (2007), "people capital" is what drives a corporation and creates value from available resources; land, buildings, or materials do not produce company productivity. While competitors can copy business models, strategies, products, and services, skilled and capable staff members provide a long-term source of uniqueness (HayGroup, 2004; Vathanopas & Thai-ngam, 2007). The goals a firm can set for itself and its effectiveness in accomplishing them are mainly determined by the skill and dedication of its employees, thereby, requiring, contemporary organizations to consider the employees as unique assets of firms (Wanyoike, 2013).

In the context of quality assurance system, employees are expected to show extra performance by fulfilling customers' demands, identifying ways of quality improvement and displaying innovative and proactive behaviors while solving quality-related issues. This, in turn, indicates that employees' acceptance to well-structured and pre-defined procedures alone may not be enough to proactively and innovatively detect, analyze and solve quality management-related challenges. Therefore, in this study, it is argued that this idea of quality assurance system in-role and extra-role performance aligns with the conceptualization of employee engagement. Engaged employees are characterized by their tendencies to show high levels of energy, absorption, proactivity, persistence, discretion and dedication in turbulent work environments (Ababneh & Macky, 2015). They are expected to agree on the formal quality requirements, procedures and policies during stable business environments (Baily et al., 2017; Chen, 2019; Ababnah et al., 2020), and to adapt change and reach extra-mile by expanding their roles and showing high levels of energy, persistence and

innovative behavior during volatile work conditions and business environments (Altinay et al., 2019).

Quality Assurance System

A Quality Assurance System (QAS) is a method for proactively managing quality that is based on defined standards and processes (ISO 9000; Delduarte, 2021). Starting a beneficial quality management standard (QMS) in the first place is necessary as an acclaimed management strategy towards competitiveness. Hence, the organizational structure, procedures, processes, and resources required to implement quality assurance are referred to as a quality assurance system (Matata & Wafula, 2015). There are a variety of frameworks that are amenable to an effective quality assurance system identified in the literature (TQM, EFQM, The Balance Scorecard, Malcolm Bridge National Award, Six Sigma, etc.) (Akanmu et al., 2017). However, quality assurance systems based on the ISO 9000 quality standards are the most well-known and most implemented by Nigerian businesses (Nigerian National Quality Policy (2020-2025)). As the ISO 9000 quality standards continue to evolve, QAS has tended to intersect with sustainability and transparency initiatives, as investor and customer satisfaction, as well as perceived quality, are becoming increasingly linked to these ISO 9000 factors in contemporary organizations in Nigeria (Matata & Wafula, 2015).

Furthermore, findings from a significant number of researches from prior studies have indicated the positive effect of QAS on organizational performance (Zwain et al., 2017). Organizations can obtain several internal advantages, including productivity improvement, better operating income and quality improvement (Chiarini et al., 2016). The outcomes of QAS implementation have portrayed success with enhanced physical performance of an organization in terms of financial accomplishment, organizational performance, operational performance, product innovation performance, competitive advantage, market orientation, customer orientation, service quality and quality performance (Abanah, 2020). According to Matata et al., (2015), a quality assurance system helps an organization to demonstrate its commitment to quality and customer satisfaction while improving its operations over time. It is designed to boost customer confidence and an organization's legitimacy while enhancing work processes and efficiency, thereby, allowing them to compete more effectively. The authors further

stressed that a quality assurance system creates and streamlines procedures through thorough documentation, enhances and establishes training processes, specifies roles and duties, and improves operational efficiency. In addition, QAS generates and builds partnerships that help retain existing customers; enhances customer interactions; ensures carefully planned improvements based on documentation and analysis; and provides regular audits and performance reviews.

In essence, QAS has been considered as an innovative management agenda that plays a vital role in the enhancement of a firm's operational performance and accomplishment of its strategic goals. However, establishing a QAS requires a robust and consistent quality culture throughout the organization (Shafiq, 2019). According to a recent study by Rajcoomar (2017), implementing a QAS in organizations improves employees' participation, gives a better understanding of employee needs, reduces communication concerns, reduces mistakes, and improves stakeholder and employee confidence (Rajcoomar, 2017). Thus, these reasonable indications may eventually contribute to enhanced organizational efficiency and competitiveness, allowing employees and stakeholders to better address their needs (Gilyad, 2018). Hence, it may make sense to submit that senior management must commit to providing quality services to the employees and also establish a quality-oriented policy that all the employees must adopt, understand, and obey.

V. METHODS

The descriptive survey research was adopted for the study. The study investigated ten manufacturing firms in Delta State. The population of the study comprised 90 senior managers and lower level employees in manufacturing firms in Delta State. The instrument was a structured questionnaire developed

by the researcher. The instrument was titled "Questionnaire on Employee Engagement as a Measure of Facilitating Organizational Quality Assurance in Manufacturing Firms in Delta State." The instrument was structured on a 4-point scale of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The instrument was validated by two experts in the Department of Measurement and Evaluation, Faculty of Education, and the Unit Head of Quality Assurance at the University of Delta, Agbor, Delta State. Additionally, the instrument was subjected to a pilot test on 20 employees randomly selected from small and medium scale enterprises around Delta State. The application of the Crombach Alpha reliability test on the returned data yielded coefficient values of 0.85 for cluster B1 and B2 respectively with an overall reliability coefficient value of 0.84. Data collected from the respondents were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and t-test. The mean value was used to answer the research questions while the standard deviation was used to ascertain the homogeneity or otherwise of the respondents' ratings. In analyzing the mean, any item with mean scores between 2.49 and 4.00 was deemed to be agreed while any item with mean score between 2.49 and 1.00 was disagreed. For the hypotheses, t-test was used to test all the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significant. Where the calculated t-value was less than the critical value of t, it meant that the variable did not significantly affect respondents' mean ratings and the hypothesis was accepted. Conversely, where the calculated t-value was equal to or greater than the critical t value, it meant that the variable had a significant effect on the respondents' mean ratings and the hypothesis was rejected.

Research 1: What are the benefits of employee engagement as a measure for facilitating organizational quality assurance system in manufacturing firms in Delta State?

Table 1: Mean Ratings of respondents on the Benefits of employee engagement as a measure for facilitating organizational quality assurance in manufacturing firms in Delta State.

S/N	Benefits of Employee engagement in QA	X	SD	Decision
1	Builds leader-follower confidence and trust in the QA system	3.22	0.86	Agree
2	Increases teamwork and collaboration among employees	3.43	0.94	Agree
3	Fosters effective communication and information sharing among employees	3.16	0.78	Agree

4	Helps employees to understand the quality mission and vision of the organization	3.12	0.74	Agree
5	Helps to identify all tasks which are related to quality, allocate responsibility, and establish cooperative relationships leading to employee outcomes	3.33	0.85	Agree
6	Helps in delivering higher-quality products and services and providing speedier customer service	3.28	0.88	Agree
7	Helps to improve employee motivating and satisfaction	3.11	0.77	Agree
8	Builds quality culture in organizational service deliver in employees	3.08	0.78	Agree
9	Employee' participation, gives a better understanding of employee needs, reduces communication concerns, reduces mistakes, and improves stakeholder and employee confidence	3.36	0.89	Agree
10	Enhances employee interactions; ensures carefully planned improvements processes based on documentation and analysis; and provides regular audits and performance reviews	3.20	0.80	Agree
Cluster Mean		3.22		Agree

Data in Table 1 reveal that all the items achieved mean ratings ranging from 3.08 and 3.43 and standard deviations ranging from 0.74 to 0.94. This means that they are all benefits of employee engagement measures for facilitating organizational quality assurance. The cluster mean of 3.22 indicates that the benefits of employee engagement measures for facilitating organizational quality assurance in

manufacturing firms are that it offers a platform to facilitate greater engagement and participation in quality assurance system.

Research Question 2:

What are the measures of employee engagement for facilitating organizational quality assurance in manufacturing firms in Delta State?

Table1: Mean ratings of respondents on measures of employee engagement that facilitate organizational quality assurance system in manufacturing firms in Nigeria.

S/N	Facilitators of Employee engagement	X	SD	Decision
1	Top management makes employees to be accountable for their own tasks	3.31	0.75	Agree
2	Top management appreciate the abilities and values of employees	3.11	0.88	Agree
3	Encouraging employees to participate in continuous improvement activities in the organization	3.08	0.73	Agree
4	Evaluating the individual performance of the employees to the QA system	3.30	0.79	Agree
5	Encouraging knowledge sharing and learning among employees	3.23	0.78	Agree
6	Promoting open discussion of problems and constraints among employees within the organization	3.45	0.81	Agree
7	Motivating employees towards the organization's goals and objectives	3.50	0.79	Agree
8	Making employees imbibe quality culture in organizational service and values	3.38	0.74	Agree
9	Ensuring that there is equal opportunity for all employees to grow and develop within the organization career ladder	3.25	0.81	Agree
10	Encouraging the use of initiatives and discretion in job performance	3.43	0.72	Agree
11	Getting employees involved in problem solving on matters that relate to their work	3.28	0.83	Agree

12	Top management commitment in supporting employees needs and satisfaction	3.34	0.86	Agree
13	Creating enabling work environment that encourages employees to perform to the best of their abilities	3.20	0.82	Agree
14	Encouraging participative engagement and collaboration of employees on quality issues within the organization	3.26	0.84	Agree
Cluster Mean		3.28		Agree

Data in Table 2 reveal that all the items achieve mean ratings ranging from 3.08 and 3.45 and standard deviations ranging from 0.72 to 0.88. This means that they are all measures for facilitating employee engagement in organizational quality assurance system in manufacturing firms in Delta State. The cluster mean of 3.28 indicates that the measures for facilitating employee engagement in organizational quality assurance system in manufacturing firms in Delta State include top management commitment; continuous improvement; teamwork; quality culture,

employee focus; effective communication among other quality assurance frameworks.

Testing the Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of senior managers and lower level staff on the benefits of employee engagement measures for facilitating organizational quality assurance in manufacturing firms in Delta State.

Table 3: t-test analysis of senior managers and lower level staff on the benefits of employee engagement measures for facilitating organizational quality assurance system in manufacturing firms in Delta State.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	t-tab	Remark
Senior Managers	58	3.18	0.84	98	0.74	1.96	NS
Lower level staff	32	3.24	0.78				
Total	90						

Note: NS = Not Significant at 0.05

Result in Table 3 shows that senior managers had a mean rating of 3.18 and standard deviation of 0.84, while the lower level staff had a mean rating of 3.24 and standard deviation of 0.78. These yielded a calculated t-value of 0.74 at 98 degrees of freedom. Since the calculated t-value of 0.74 is less than the critical t-value of 1.96, the null hypothesis is accepted. This means that there is no significant difference in mean ratings of senior managers and

lower level staff on the benefits of employee engagement measures for facilitating organizational quality assurance in manufacturing firms in Delta State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the mean rating of senior managers and lower level staff on the measures of employee engagement for facilitating organizational quality assurance in manufacturing firms in Delta State.

Table 4: Summary of t-test analysis of senior managers and lower level staff on the measures of employee engagement for facilitating organizational quality assurance in manufacturing firms in Delta State

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	t-tab	Remark
Senior Managers	58	3.21	0.76	987	0.36	1.96	NS
Lower level staff	32	3.18	0.74				
Total	90						

Note: NS = Not Significant at 0.05

Result in Table 4 shows that senior managers had a mean rating of 3.21 and standard deviation of 0.76,

while the lower level staff had a mean rating of 3.18 and standard deviation of 0.74. These yielded a

calculated t-value of 0.36 is less than the critical t-value of 1.96, the null hypothesis is accepted. This means that there is no significant difference in mean ratings of senior managers and lower level staff on the employee engagement measures for facilitating organizational quality assurance in manufacturing firms in Delta State.

VI. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings of the study revealed that the benefits of employee engagement measures for facilitating organizational quality assurance in manufacturing firms in Delta State are that they; Build leader-follower confidence and trust in the QA system; increase teamwork and collaboration among employees; Foster effective communication and information sharing among employees; help employees to understand the quality mission and vision of the organization; help to identify all tasks which are related to quality, allocate responsibility, and establish cooperative relationships leading to employee outcomes; help in delivering higher-quality products and services and providing speedier customer service: help to improve employee motivating and satisfaction; build quality culture in organizational service delivery in employees; employee participation, gives a better understanding of employee needs, reduces communication concerns, reduces mistakes, and improves stakeholder and employee confidence; enhance employee interactions; ensures carefully planned improvements processes based on documentation and analysis; and provides regular audits and performance reviews. These findings are in tandem with the report of previous studies (Gilyard, 2018), which affirm that the successful implementation of quality assurance system depends on the engagement of employees that have sufficient commitment and capability to accommodate the complexities associated with its operations. This stance is in alignment with Fonseca and Domingues' (2017) report, which opined that competent, empowered, and engaged employees are required throughout the organization to boost value creation and delivery capabilities. Furthermore, the findings are equally consistent with Gilyard's (2018) position that employees who adopt their organization's vision and mission help to generate new ideas and perspectives concerning their company's products and services.

Findings of the study revealed that the measures for facilitating employee engagement in organizational quality assurance system in manufacturing firms in Delta State include; Top management makes employees to be accountable for their own tasks; top management appreciate the abilities and values of employees; encouraging employees to participate in continuous improvement activities in the organization; evaluating the individual performance of the employees to the QA system; encouraging knowledge sharing and learning among employees; promoting open discussion of problems and constraints among employees within the organization; motivating employees towards the organization's goals and objectives; making employees imbibe quality culture in organizational service and values; ensuring that there is equal opportunity for all employees to grow and develop within the organization career ladder; encouraging the use of initiatives and discretion in job performance; getting employees involved in problem solving on matters that relate to their work; top management commitment in supporting employees needs and satisfaction; creating enabling work environment that encourages employees to perform to the best of their abilities; encouraging participative engagement and collaboration of employees on quality issues within the organization. These findings are consistent the report of Bidee et al., (2017), which posits that leaders who understand and meet employees' psychological needs recruit and retain engaged workers. This finding aligns with the position of Brupbacher (2017) who found that leaders of organizations who are committed to the intrinsic values of their employees could attain organizational goals easily. Additionally, Ugwu et al., (2014) concur that, leaders that enhance organizational trust and psychological empowerment in individuals increase engagement and retention.

VII. CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATION, AND DIRECTIONS OF THE FUTURE STUDY

Overall, this study contributes to a more recent empirical research on organizational quality assurance system, which has become as a salient aspect to achieve the success of change. Having an in-depth understanding on the predictors of organizational quality assurance system allows the top executives of manufacturing firms to identify and adopt appropriate employee value propositions as

triggers of employees engagement and retention in organizations. This study also contributes to the Upper Echelon Theory by assessing the employee engagement factors as the predictors of the organizational quality assurance system performance in manufacturing firm setting. In terms of practical ramification, the results of the study suggest the need for top executives of manufacturing firms to give considerable attention to human resources, financial resources, physical resources, information resources, and reputational resources in elevating engagement in organizational quality assurance systems.

Several limitations deserve noting inasmuch as they have a bearing on the discussions based on the research findings. First, the population of this study only focused on employees from manufacturing firms located in Delta State of Nigeria. Future study should be conducted among senior management and lower level employees in other sectors of Nigeria's economy. Second, this study used cross-sectional approach in order to collect the data for analysis. Hence, future research should adopt a longitudinal approach for a more in-depth understanding on the phenomenon of organizational quality assurance system. The framework offered in this study is of value in several important ways. First, it contributes to theorizing on the predicting role of employee engagement on organizational quality assurance system among senior management employees and lower level employees in manufacturing firms. Second, it contributes to the empirical evidence in the domain of all the variables understudy. Third, the study pioneers in using Upper Echelon Theory to explain the impact of employee engagement on organizational quality assurance system.

Furthermore, it is suggested that top management of organizations should ensure that they maintain leader-follower relationship in building employee confidence and trust. Understanding the factors influencing employee engagement in organizational quality assurance system enables top executives of organizations to develop and implement more effective quality frameworks that enhance performance through participative management. Managers of manufacturing firms should focus on providing appealing benefits and personalized experiences to their diverse employees as a strategy to increase their retention rate and engagement. Employees with a personal and emotional attachment to the organization, as well as proximity to its

activities, ethics, and values, are considered aligned with their leaders and contribute to organizational performance.

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