

Models of Participative Management that Can Be Applied in Romanian Public Institutions

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Abstract

Improving the efficiency of a public institution but also increasing the professional performance can be achieved by implementing a participative management.

In this paper we will focus on participative management that will approach from the point of view of a process of change, using elements from the theory of exchange (Chardwick-Jones, 1976), as well as from the point of view of cognitive-expectation theory. Thus, following some research in the field, we proposed three managerial models in order to support the implementation of a participative type of management in the Romanian public institutions. All these models can lead to organizational success and advocates a flat organizational structure, shows that the management team receives ongoing monitoring and guidance from the public administration managerial professionals and also shows the interaction between managerial team, staff at the central level and the associates.

Key words: participative management, participation, cooperation, theory of exchange, models
J.E.L. classification: M12

1. Introduction

Participative leadership is thought to motivate employees as a result of their line managers' involvement and engagement in the various aspects that define their key roles in the organization. This, in turn, purchases the psychological contract and commitment of organizational members as a result of the sense of responsibility bestowed upon them by management, and this, in turn, induces their motivation to work.

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2. Theoretical background

Participatory leadership is defined as a process in which a leader and his or her subordinates make joint decisions or have a shared influence in decision-making (Koopman and Wierdsma, 1998). Participatory leadership also entails consulting with colleagues and considering their opinions and suggestions when making decisions. As a result, it is a process in which the leader has a professional relationship with the group members. The leader employs a consultative approach to encourage group participation in decision making, and the approach is democratic and that decisions are made while organizational members are engaged. According to Gaertner (2000), more flexible and participatory management styles can significantly and positively enhance organizational contribution. Organizations must ensure that leadership strategies improve employee commitment rather than compliance, as is the case with autocratic leadership styles.

Before making a final decision, participative leadership consults with subordinates and evaluates their opinions and suggestions (Mullins, 2005).

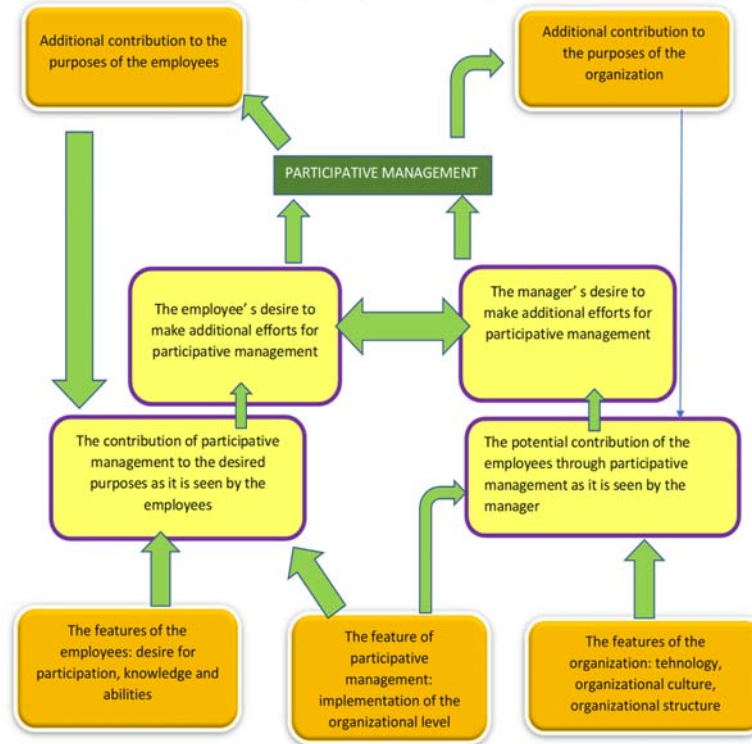
Participatory leaders accommodate employee concerns through the use of participative decision making (PDM), which allows employees at all levels of the organization to be involved in the final decision. According to various studies, participative decision-making (PDM) has a number of potential benefits, including increasing employee job satisfaction and the level of innovation in organizations (Somech, 2002).

According to Somech (2002), motivated employees believe they are doing something worthwhile and that their contributions are valued. As a result, participative leadership focuses on followers' intrinsic motivation by enriching subordinates' jobs with autonomy, variety, and empowerment. Furthermore, when employees participate in democratic decision making, they realize that their ideas are respected and taken into account by higher-ups; they feel connected to the organization as if they are important parts of it, and they strive for maximum performance. Somech (2002) opines that, when participatory decision-making strategies are implemented in the workplace, both leaders and employees benefit greatly. It improves employee motivation, increases the level of innovation in organizations, improves decision-making quality, and contributes to organizational success.

Despite the above beneficial arguments in supporting participative leadership, Yammarino and Naughton (1992) stated that the time and effort spent calling meetings, enlisting ideas, and trainees may have an impact on deadlines. Subordinate active participation may be regarded as a loss or division of powers, generating hostility at the managerial level. This could have an effect on the effectiveness of leaders, which in turn may have an impact on work performance. Some workers may not want to be involved in job decision-making. Subordinates may see their participation as "doing management's job" when the leader is distrusted or when there is a poor labor relations climate. When governments try to involve the community in education reform, health care, economic and social development, it may be perceived as "down loading," especially if these activities are undertaken alongside other programs and economic cutbacks. Broad-based participation in short-term projects appears to be less advantageous than implementing a participation model among a group of employees who will be part of the same team for an extended period of time and have become very knowledgeable and proficient at their job. Inability to recognize this can lead to a lack of trust in the process and the leaders, as well as resistance to change.

The effort or investment in management can involve making time and facilitating participative management by providing adequate feedback on the questions and suggestions raised. Heads of department have to deal with additional requests, they need to consult regularly with employees as a group. They are expected to behave in a participative style that requires different attitudes and abilities from those previously used, as were the people selected in the past. Increased involvement in the functioning of the organization is expected from the employees, as well as an active contribution of ideas. In this model it is assumed that different groups will want to make this extra effort, only if there is enough confidence that this effort will lead to an improvement in their position, or to results with positive values. The two groups referred to in the model are managers and employees. Each group makes its own values. Management wonders what is the potential contribution of employees, through participative management, to organizational goals as listed by management. Employees want their cooperation to depend on expected success. Figure no. 1 presents a diagram of the model proposed by us.

Figure1 The Ciclic Model of participative management



Source: Authors' contribution

To simplify the presentation, we will focus on the two groups, managers and employees, which stand out very well in the figure. We can say that it is a simplified version of a complex reality, but it allows us to evaluate participation as a way to gain influence, or as a right. The main objective of the model is to create a language that facilitates a debate about participation in which the interdependent relationship between workers and management is placed in the context of achieving different goals.

If we look closely at figure no. 1 we are talking about the Cyclic Model which for participative management is a dynamic process through which expectations, choices, behavior and reinforcement take place in a succession, and tomorrow's choices are largely determined by today's experiences. Behavior often precedes a change of attitude. The continuity of the consultation is largely determined to the extent that both groups see their goals and interests as a result. This shows us that we do not believe in the continuity of participative management, if it is a tool for the interests of one of the partners. The frequent debate in the literature on the true managerial reasons in the introduction of participative management refers to the limited value. The implication of this is that participative management offers a lesser chance of increasing influence, if the manager initially sees it as a tool, it seems only partially true. This view assumes that management is the only party that is able to determine the nature of participative management. However, participative management does not have the approval of the employees involved and has no possibility to maintain or develop. If in the eyes of the manager, employees have a certain contribution to do something, then without doing so it becomes an interesting option and a negotiating situation. The extent to which the situation assumes a bargaining measure is partly determined by the extent to which management is dependent on employees' efforts and opportunities to sustain their influence. Participation is a relational concept and therefore the circular mutual influence of each group's actions on the other is crucial.

According to Watson, 1986, we consider, on the one hand, that the employment strategy will be a reflection of the dominant values and the attitude of the manager and on the other hand the circumstances perceived by the manager, making the relationship with work a problematic factor, by the efforts of employees. The literature provides us with a number of circumstances or contextual factors that can improve the relative positioning power of employees. In this sense we list some

examples are: a complex organizational structure, complex tasks for which mutual knowledge is required, a tight labor market with the consequence of high labor costs, strict social legislation, a high level of unionization and finally a society friendly to democracy.

The dominant values, preferences and visions of the manager determine or temper the strength of the relationship. Some of the factors can be explored. Our focus is on structural factors, such as task characteristics, organizational and environmental structure, and cultural factors.

The figure below shows an assumption of this cyclical process, in which the factors presented on the right side of the image provide for the adoption of an employment strategy that places a strong emphasis on participative procedures and on the approach to improving involvement. The dominant values, the preferences and the points of view of the manager, determine or temper the value of a relationship.

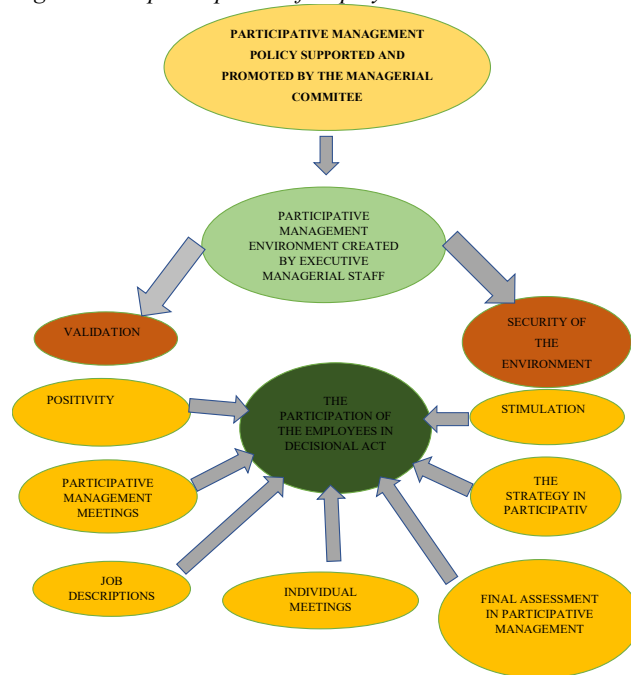
In the structure of organizations Mintzberg (1979) distinguishes five ideal configurations: simple structure, bureaucratic mechanization, professional bureaucracy, divisive and adaptable organization. The shape of each type and the way in which coordination takes place is strongly intertwined with the nature of the environment, primarily with its stability and complexity.

In a simple, stable environment, internal processes take a predictable course. This leads to routine and formalization. Tasks are specialized and short-circuited. Coordination takes place by standardizing procedures. There is little need for participative management: the functioning of the organization does not require it and the potential contribution of employees is generally modest. In this situation, participative management serves the communication channel best.

In an organization with a complex dynamic, the possibilities of participative management are completely different. The functioning of such a network of organizations depends on the good vertical as well as on the horizontal consultation. Good results are conditioned by the use of valid employee expertise. Participative management is a coordinating mechanism in the organization.

Participative management as a communication channel is characterized by routine tasks, poor expertise and coordination through standardization, which leads to satisfaction or frustration. Participative management as a coordination mechanism with complex tasks, relevant expertise and coordination through consultation leads to the use of expertise and better results.

Figure 2 The participation of employees in decisional act.



Source: Authors' contribution

Participation, a term increasingly used today, has different connotations in various contexts. In the case of vocational training, participants have the opportunity to learn directly and concretely

through real-life examples. In the case of a community activity, participation means that the whole community, even those who often do not express themselves, participate in decision-making and are interested in the future of the community to which they belong. In the case of gambling, participation means the opportunity to play for money. There are many examples that show that participation means involvement. By extrapolation, participative management assumes that employees, as well as bosses / directors, contribute and influence decisions within the organization. It does not mean that we are talking about a cooperative management, in which each employee has an identical contribution in the decision-making process. A majority vote or a match of ideas does not imply the final resolution for the issue under discussion.

In participative management, appointed heads / directors are responsible and accountable for decision-making, with the involvement of directly involved employees actively participating in providing feedback, analyzing, making suggestions and recommending solutions in the decision-making process. These are just a few of the steps you can take when setting up a new service or organization.

Benefits of participation:

- Loyal employees
- Useful and desired employees
- Respected employees
- Employees' opinions matter

When employees support a certain decision but the law, the financial part, the board of directors / director or the boss do not support that decision, the employees may feel disappointed; they may even state that their opinion was no longer necessary if it could not be considered. It is desirable for the director / boss to tell them that, although a decision was unanimously supported, they were determined to resign due to non-management factors. When employees are divided on a particular situation it is reflected when it manifests itself as a management decision. Misunderstandings affect work. It is desirable that the manager, with the help of employees, invest more time and effort to make a decision that will reduce that syncope.

A manager can promote all these benefits by following their input into the decision-making process. The wider the range of knowledge and personal experiences, the better the decisions tend to be. No matter how cognitively and professionally gifted the manager is, he still does not have as much experience as the entire number of subordinate employees. Participative approaches lead to a transparent decision-making process, thus increasing the level of confidence of employees but also the ability of the boss to be a true leader. Transparency adds value to the participative approach. Making decisions through active consultation with employees leads to a decrease in the number of suspicions related to immoral or illegal decisions caused by dubious contexts. A participative preliminary result also involves some costs. It is obtained in time and the decisions are more static than in the situation where it would be taken unilaterally.

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3. Research methodology

The descriptive correlational design was used to collect data from Romanian public institutions employees which promote a participative management in the local public institutions of Arad. The design allowed for the investigation of current phenomena in the field of management (job satisfaction, organizational climate, managerial style), allowing us to describe the real phenomenon of the problem under investigation.

The study target group was 213, from where a sample size of 160 respondents were chosen using Slovens Formula to participate in the study by filling out a questionnaire. From the 160 questionnaires administered, only for 151 the researcher retrieved, edited, coded, and analyzed the data. The response rate was 92.5 percent, which was considered adequate for the study because it

was significantly higher than the 50 percent recommended by Tomaskoviv Devey et al., (1994), proper for a social research. In order to ensure validity and reliability, the research instrument was reviewed by content experts who rated it for wording, relevancy, and omissions, and a content validity index of qualified the instrument as reasonably content validity, according to Amin (2005). Pre-testing ensured reliability, and Cronbach Alpha Reliability Statistics were computed, making the instrument reliable and consistent according to Cronbach and Shevelson (2004), as it is shown in the following table: .

Table 1: The validity and reliability of the tests

Factor	Number of Items	Cronbach Alpha	Content Validity Index
Job satisfaction	16	0.876	0.814
Organizational climate	05	0.887	0.877
Managerial style	9	0.891	0.865

Source: Authors' contribution

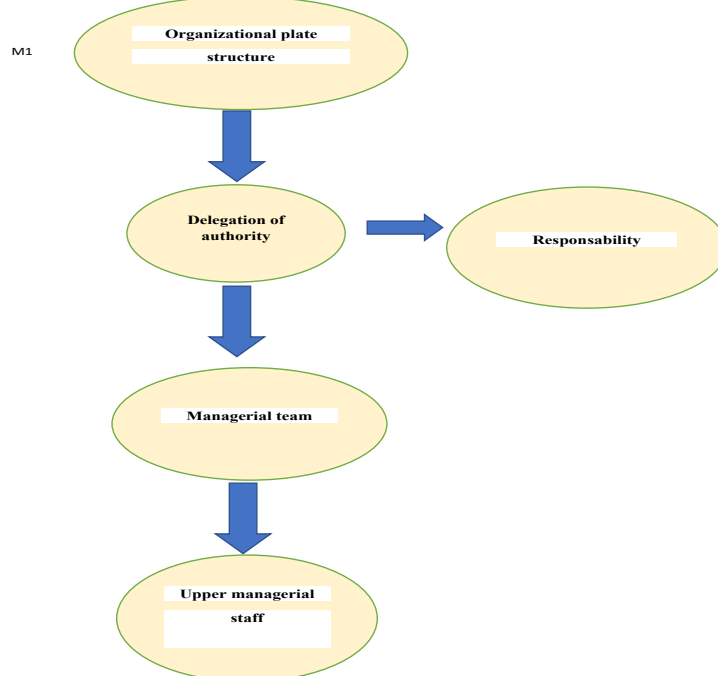
4. Findings

Data from questionnaires were compiled and analyzed in order to identify those models necessary in Romanian public institutions so that increase the use of participative management style in public administration.

There are three very good models resulting from the previous analysis of the data (job satisfaction, organizational climate, managerial style) provided by the study participants. The models at first sight can give us an idealistic impression of what is to be implemented. These models are derived from both quantitative and qualitative data from other previous studies and are presented as follows:

The first participative management model can lead to organizational success. He advocates a flat organizational structure.

Figure 3. The Participative Model no. 1 which could lead to the organizational success

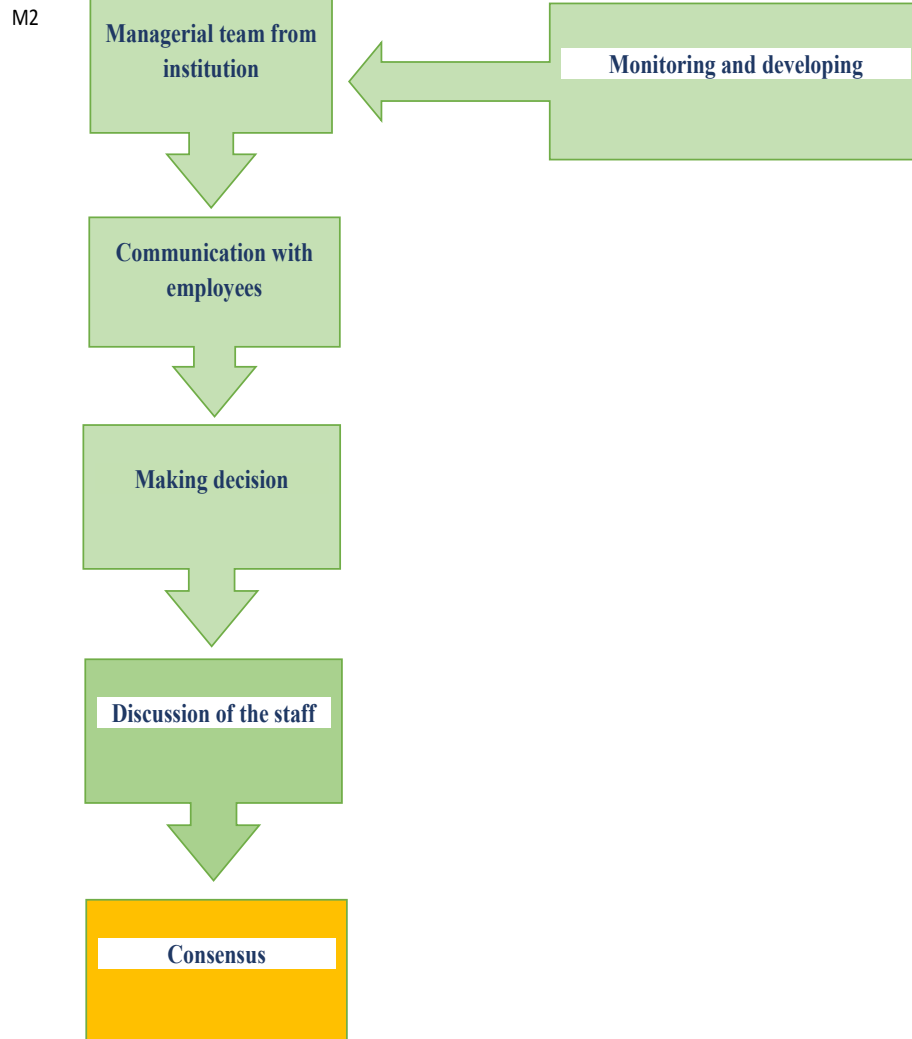


Source: Authors' contribution

The model describes how the members of the management team become responsible in the execution of the functions held by the institution. In this model, the members of the management team delegate the authority of the staff or other committees. There could be many benefits to delegating authority to staff. Leithwood (2006) quoted in Bush (2011: 90) agrees with the statement that staff delegation and participative management are significantly linked to the effect of change in training capacity while developing the right formal leaders for the future. Participative management requires flattened organizational structures. Delegating authority to a management team is associated with a participative approach. The management team is also responsible for carrying out the tasks.

The second model of participative management.

Figure 4. The Participative Model no. 2

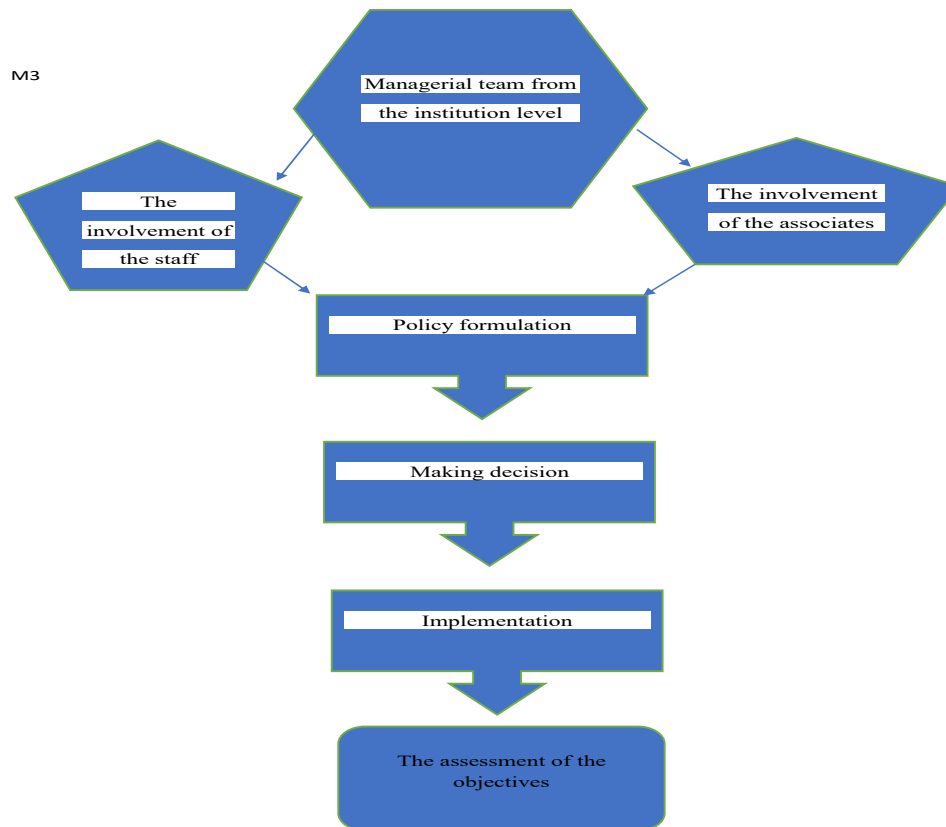


Source: Authors' contribution

The participative management model presented above shows us that the management team receives permanent monitoring and guidance from experts in public administration management. Once the management team has been empowered by experts, it as a structure becomes confident in its ability to communicate information to other staff members through managerial faith. Discussions take place through the participation of all members in the decision-making process. The decision leads to a consensus on the issue. We believe that this model provides essential clues about participative management.

The third model deduced from the data collection of the correspondents participating in this study looks as follows:

Figure 5. The Participative Model no. 3 which could lead to an organizational success



Source: Authors' contribution

This model shows us the interaction of the management team with the central staff and associations. This interaction leads to the formulation of a participative managerial policy. When the policy is formulated, the parties are involved in the decision-making process. Once the decision is made it is implemented. It should be noted that there is a collective agreement on the decision taken. Following the implementation of the decision, the evaluation follows as a way to monitor and ensure the agreed decision. This model is different from the first two because it shows the involvement of both senior staff and associations. This participative model also provides us with the creation of a participative management policy that can provide a framework for all participative initiatives. The model assures us that the evaluation of the process shows us that we are on the right track but it is essential to have checks in all participative management activities.

5. Conclusions

Choosing a plan and implementing a model to increase the participation of subordinates in managerial decision-making lead to a more participative organization. In order for employees to participate in decision-making, it is necessary to have good communication; The more the manager / boss opens the communication channels, the more employees will participate in the management of the institution. The head is preferable to constantly looking for opportunities to open the channel of communication in the institution. He must be open to listening to the achievements but also the

frustrations of the employees in a sincere and not formal or superficial way, showing a real interest and concern towards the employees and towards what they do.

Establishing a routine or regular participative management meeting through which the boss will encourage and allow employees to make personal contributions by using job descriptions as a program to increase employee participation at the management level and prepare annual reports for employee participation in tasks. For work.

Another way to identify proactive employee participation in decision-making is through brainstorming, a method that seeks to make decisions at the community level and not to make decisions directed by the boss / manager.

Both employees and managers have a common desire for respect and seriousness. A manager who discourages and disregards his employees may lose them as an integral part of the institution. On the contrary, if the manager listens to his employees, asks for their opinion, takes them seriously and treats them with respect, then he will gain their trust, self-esteem, respect for institutions and work but also respect for the manager. Employees will be more serious in performing their duties, will make greater efforts to perform tasks and will be more productive. The more positive the manager is towards the employees, the more he exercises leadership. Thus, we can say that participative management means the attention given by the manager / boss, to the employee.

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