

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my late wife Susan Wanjiku Isabirye, my children Faith Namakika Isabirye, Edwin Isabirye, Derrick Kiryagana Isabirye, Eric Gichohi Isabirye and my wife Catherine Waringa Njoroge.



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7. Above all, God the Almighty, for blessing me with the strength, health and will to prevail and finish this work.

DECLARATION

I declare that this is my original work, done and presented by me to the Faculty of Arts at the Rand Afrikaans University under the academic supervision and guidance of Prof. J.A Slabbert.




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The logo of the University of Johannesburg features two stylized birds facing each other, with their wings spread and heads tilted upwards. Between the birds is a sunburst or starburst symbol. Below the birds, the text "UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG" is written in a sans-serif font, with "OF" centered between "UNIVERSITY" and "JOHANNESBURG".

ABSTRACT

This research focused on employee participation in South African organisations as a tool for global competitiveness. Chapter one outlines the background to the study, its aims, statement of the problem and the research methodology.

World wide socio-political and political changes were discussed. It emerged that such changes have revolutionised and democratised countries and their organizations. Despite being recognised as a democratic country now, many of South Africa's organisations are not yet fully democratic. Such organisations face the danger of being out-performed globally by those organisations that have already democratised themselves, as dictated by global trends.

Using a theoretical exploration of relevant literature, the research was designed to determine the extent to which organisations in South Africa have positioned themselves to compete globally through the use of employee participation at the workplace. A theoretically-oriented method was utilised since the concepts of Global Competitiveness, or being "World-Class", and that of Employee Participation are relatively new in South Africa. It is argued that the method contributes, *inter alia*, to the uncovering of generalisations that could be investigated by future researchers using more accurate and complex designs. At the same time, a broader understanding of the concepts of Global Competitiveness and "World-Class" is gained.

From a detailed discussion of the concept "World-Class" it is evident that "world-class" organisations design their strategies, structures and leadership processes in such a way that customers' needs are continuously met. To ensure that customers are provided with high quality products, globally competitive organisations continuously benchmark their systems, processes and results against those of the best organisation in the world.

It is argued that Employment Relations Management as a sub-system of the wider organisational system has to be designed and managed in a way that ensures the satisfaction of the organisation's employees and external clients. It also has to be benchmarked to ensure that it continues to deliver optimally. This necessitates a paradigm shift in the management of Employment Relations, from the typically Unitarist approach that characterised the work-place prior to the country's democratisation in April 1994, to an integrated approach that takes cognisance of the interests, values and needs of all stakeholders. Such an approach would, no

doubt, encourage employee participation and joint governance between employees and Management.

Chapter 4, specifically deals with employee participation in South African organisations. Despite the legal and economic imperatives for Employee Participation in the country, literature indicates that South African organisations still lag behind those that are globally competitive, with regard to the use of Employee Participation as a tool for Global Competitiveness.

In view of the findings, a number of recommendations are made to enable the country's organisations to become "*world-class*". Among several other recommendations it is suggested that government continues supporting employee participation through legislation. However, strict law enforcement is discouraged and it is recommended that it should be avoided. Instead government should focus on facilitating greater convergence between employees and employers as regards the mutual perceptions and organizational goals.



OPSOMMING

Die fokus van hierdie navorsingstudie is op werknemerdeelname binne Suid-Afrikaanse organisasies as instrumente tot globale mededingendheid. Die agtergrond tot die studie, insluitend die doelwitte, probleemstelling en navorsingsmetodologie, word in die eerste hoofstuk uitgelig.

Daar word aangedui tot watter mate lande, met inbegrip van hul organisasies, deur wêreldwye sosiopolitiese-, ekonomiese- en tegnologieverandering gerevolusioneer en gedemokratiseer is. Tenspyte daarvan dat Suid-Afrika haar huidiglik roem as demokratiese land, kan organisasies binne die land egter nie as volledig demokraties geag word nie. Daar word aangetoon dat hierdie organisasies se prestasies oortref en bedreig sal word deur ander organisasies wat hulself reeds volgens globale tendense gedemokratiseer het.

Deur middel van die teoretiese ondersoek van toepaslike literatuur, is die navorsing sodanig ontwerp ten einde te bepaal tot watter mate organisasies in Suid-Afrika geïntegreer is om globaal te kan kompeteer met behulp van werknemerdeelname binne die werkplek. 'n Teoreties-gegronde metode is nagevolg aangesien die konsep van globale kompeteerbaarheid, oftewel 'wêreldklas', en die begrip werknemerdeelname relatief nuut in Suid-Afrika voorkom. Die argument is voorgelê dat die metode onder andere sou bydra tot die blootstelling van veralgemening wat deur toekomstige navorsers verder ondersoek sal word met gebruik van meer akkurate en komplekse ontwerpe. Terselfdertyd is daar breër insig verkry ten opsigte van die begrippe globale mededinging en 'wêreldklas'.

Vanuit 'n breedvoerige bespreking van die begrip 'wêreldklas' is dit duidelik dat wêreldklas organisasies hul strategieë, strukture en leierskapsprosesse op so 'n wyse ontwerp, dat kliëntbehoefte deurlopend in ag geneem word. Ten einde te verseker dat kliënte van hoë kwaliteit produkte voorsien word, 'benchmark' global-kompeterende organisasies deurlopend hul stelsels, prosesse en resultate teen dié van die beste ter wêreld.

Daar word aangevoer dat Diensverhoudingebestuur as substelsel van die groter organisatoriese stelsel ontwerp moet word, en so bestuur word dat werknemertevredenheid en bevrediging van eksterne kliente se behoeftes verseker word. Daar moet ook ge-'benchmark' word om te verseker dat die beste aflewering van dienste verseker word. Ten einde hieraan te voldoen word 'n paradigma-verskuiwing in die bestuur van diensverhoudingebestuur genoodsaak wat van deur 'n tipies unitaristiese benadering voor die demokratisering in April 1994 in die werkplek gekenmerk is, tot 'n geïntegreerde benadering wat die belange, waardes en behoeftes van alle betrokkenes in ag neem. Hierdie benadering sal sonder twyfel werker-deelname en gesamentlikebestuur tussen werknemers en bestuur aanmoedig.

Hoofstuk 4 handel spesifiek oor werknemerdeelname in Suid-Afrikaanse organisasies. Tenspyte van wetlike en ekonomiese noodsaaklikhede ten opsigte van werkerdeelname in die land, dui die literatuur aan dat Suid-Afrikaanse organisasies steeds agterblywend staan teenoor globale kompeterende organisasies met betrekking tot die gebruik van werknemerdeelname as instrument tot globale kompeteerbaarheid.

Met inagneming van die studie se bevindings word etlike aanbevelings gemaak ten einde die land se organisasies behulpsaam te wees in hul strewe na 'wêreldklas' status.

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