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Influence of Delegation of Authority on Employee Performance in Federal Tertiary Institutions in Adamawa State, Nigeria

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Abstract
This study investigated the effect of delegation of authority on employee performance in selected federal tertiary institutions in Adamawa state, Nigeria. Specifically, it assessed the individual and combined influence of legislative, adjudicative, monitoring/enforcement, and agenda-setting delegation on employee performance. The study used a cross sectional survey design and population of 5,554 employees in three Federal tertiary institutions. The sample size was calculated at 373 using the Yamane formula, plus 20% for non-response. A total of 446 questionnaires were distributed and 410 were returned (91.9%). Structured questionnaire was used to collect data and descriptive statistics and multiple regression was used to analyze the data. The results showed that the regression model was statistically significant (F(4, 405) = 213.413, p < .001), explaining 67.8% of the variance in employee performance ((R^2 = .678); adjusted (R^2 = .675)). Positive and statistically significant relationships were found for all four dimensions with employee performance. Legislative delegation was the strongest predictor ((\beta = .375, p < .001)), followed by adjudicative delegation ((\beta = .263, p < .001)), monitoring/enforcement delegation ((\beta = .137, p < .001)), and agenda-setting delegation ((\beta = .101, p < .001)). The results confirm the applicability of participative management theory and indicate that granting employees the proper authority to make decisions is related to improved employee performance. The study suggests that institutional managers should have clear delegation procedures, give employees enough discretion in decision making and ensure support and supervision is adequate.

KeyWords: Delegation of authority, Legislative delegation, Adjudicative delegation, monitoring/enforcement delegation, Agenda-setting delegation and Employee performance.

Introduction

Delegation of Authority is an organizational practice in which some responsibilities and decision-making powers are transferred to employees who are held accountable for the overall performance of the organization. Delegation can be used to ensure that decision making is at the appropriate level, and that the work can be responded to more quickly, with initiative, accountability and responsibility for delegated work. In general, empirical evidence indicates that there is a positive correlation between effective delegation and employee effectiveness and performance, as employees are provided with more opportunities to make decisions and engage in the activities of the organization (Olajide et al., 2016; Al-Jammal et al., 2015; Tomizh et al., 2022). The study also revealed that delegation of authority has the potential of enhancing employee performance and productivity as managers are perceived as having confidence in their employees and trust them to undertake more responsibilities as observed in the study in Nigeria (Suleman et al., 2025). Delegation is not only about transferring tasks, but also about the clarity of delegated authority, the capabilities of the employees, the trust of the manager and the mechanisms that are in place to supervise and control (Chota & Zenebe, 2022; Jusdienar et al., 2024; van Triest & Williams, 2024).

Delegation is a very relevant concept in tertiary institutions where academic and administrative functions are distributed among faculties, departments, schools, units and professional levels. Decisions need to be made at various organizational levels, especially when employees have specialized knowledge of the tasks, they are responsible for, in such institutional structures. Delegation of appropriate authority can then enable employees to deal with operational issues more quickly, and senior managers can deal with institutional issues. Van Triest and Williams (2024) suggest that managers will delegate authority when the employees possess task-specific knowledge, tasks have more exceptions that require local judgment, and when monitoring costs are relatively low. Similarly, research conducted in educational institutions indicates that delegation can have a positive impact on employee responsibility and performance if employees are granted the necessary authority to carry out delegated tasks (Chota & Zenebe, 2022). The findings suggest that the effects of delegation are closely related to the discretion that is allowed the employee to do their work, not just to accept it.

The role of delegation is further emphasized in the Nigerian tertiary institutions by the interaction between the academic, administrative and managerial functions. The different levels of staff in the organization may possess relevant knowledge that can be used for institutional decision making, operational problem solving and implementation of institutional policies. Thus, empirical studies have linked delegation to employee effectiveness, employee motivation, employee empowerment, and employee performance (Olajide et al., 2016; Wabomba et al., 2022; Ugoani, 2020). This relationship can be compromised, however, if managers delegate without authority, support is lacking, and boundaries of accountability are not clearly defined. Studies in education show that delegated responsibilities can be restricted by the lack of authority, lack of managerial trust, and lack of organizational support (Bakar, 2015). Therefore, the results of delegation will vary not only depending on whether or not responsibility is delegated but also on what kind of authority and to what extent the employees are given to exercise.

The results of previous studies are generally consistent with the positive relationship between delegation of authority and employee performance, but there are some conceptual and contextual gaps. The existing empirical studies on delegation are on delegation as a general managerial behavior, rather than on the type of delegation. Delegation was found to have positive correlation with employee performance in Nigerian SMEs (Olajide et al., 2016), municipalities and public organizations (Al-Jammal et al., 2015; Ugoani, 2020), banking institutions (Tomizh et al., 2022), and educational organizations (Chota & Zenebe, 2022). Additionally, the nature of the task, employee knowledge, and monitoring factors (van Triest & Williams, 2024) are all factors that influence delegation. There is however, limited empirical evidence on the differential impact of each of the four forms of delegated authority (legislative, adjudicative, monitoring/enforcement and agenda-setting) on the effectiveness of employees in federal tertiary institutions. These dimensions should be considered separately, because they are the various dimensions of organizational authority: to create and alter the rules of the institution; to make judgements and to settle disputes; to keep track of and enforce organizational demands; and to determine the priorities of the organization. The present study therefore examines the impact of the four dimensions of delegation of authority on the performance of employees in selected federal tertiary institutions of Adamawa State in Nigeria.

Delegation of Authority

Delegation of authority is a management tool that is the transfer of authority from a superior to a subordinate within a defined range of authority, and the superior shall be held accountable for the delegated authority. Delegation is more than just giving someone a task; it is giving the subordinate enough discretion and authority to make decisions related to the delegated responsibility (Leana, 1986; Lyons, 2016). Delegation is not the reallocation of work, it is the reallocation of decision making power in the hierarchy. Managers' delegation might be associated with subordinate competence, the significance of the decision, managerial workload and manager assessment of the subordinate's capability and trustworthiness (Leana, 1986). Additionally, recent research indicates that the task-related knowledge of employees, task features, and the monitoring capacity of the employees' activities are also influencing delegation decisions by managers (van Triest & Williams, 2024).

Delegation of authority for the purpose of the present study is defined as delegation of authority in the form of legislative delegation, adjudicative delegation, monitoring/enforcement delegation, and agenda-setting delegation. These are the dimensions that are distinct in terms of them being delegated from top to bottom of the hierarchy for decision making. The four-dimensional conceptualization is based on that of Kennedy and Keino (2017) who examined delegation on four dimensions: legislative, adjudicative, monitoring, and enforcement, and on the agenda-setting dimension.

Delegation of legislative authority is the delegating of authority to employees to participate in the development, modification and implementation of organizational rules, policies and procedures. It is the extent to which employees can affect the formal rules and policies that dictate the activities of the organization (Kennedy & Keino, 2017).

Adjudicative delegation is the delegation of authority to employees to make judgments and decisions to resolve issues within their delegated authority. It thus reflects how much discretion is given to employees in decision-making processes beyond that of higher-level managers (Kennedy & Keino, 2017; van Triest & Williams, 2024).

Monitoring/enforcement delegation is the delegation of authority to employees to monitor activities, assess compliance with the required activities and take appropriate action within scope of delegated authority. It is a shift in the organizational structure that involves some decentralization of monitoring and enforcement responsibilities (Kennedy & Keino, 2017). Delegation and monitoring are distinct because delegation does not preclude the use of organizational control, and delegated authority and monitoring can be used in conjunction as aspects of management control (Hofmann & Indjejikian, 2021). (Hofmann & Indjejikian, 2021).

Agenda-setting delegation involves delegating responsibility to employees for identifying issues, proposing priorities and influencing the issues that the organization will address. It goes beyond just delegating decisions that have already been made by management to giving employees some influence in what issues are raised for them to consider (Kennedy & Keino, 2017).

Delegation of authority is defined for this study as the sharing of authority to make decisions, in four areas: participation in rules and policies, judgment in specific issues, monitoring and enforcement, and identification of organizational priorities. The present study adopts this dimension approach to the question by examining the independent effect of the four types of delegated authority on the performance of employees in federal tertiary institutions where the issue has received scant attention.

Employee Performance

Employee performance is the capability of the employee to carry out his/her work and to help the organization achieve its objectives. It involves behaviors and outcomes of performing assigned tasks, being responsive to role expectations, and contributing to the organization's functioning. The quality of work, its efficiency and how it is done are therefore part of employee performance, not just the quantity of work performed (Campbell & Wiernik, 2015).

Modern conceptions make a distinction between various types of employee performance. Task performance involves behaviors directly related to the execution of activities that are part of the organization's technical activities, such as accurately and efficiently completing assigned tasks. Contextual performance includes discretionary behaviors that facilitate the organizational, social, and psychological context within which tasks are accomplished, such as assisting colleagues, cooperating, and being committed to organizational goals (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997). Adaptive performance is the ability of the employee to adjust behavior and working methods to the requirements of the task, situation, and organization (Griffin et al., 2007).

They believe that the size of employee performance encompasses the successful accomplishment of tasks assigned to them and behaviors that facilitate the organization's functioning. Campbell and Wiernik (2015) stress that performance must be viewed in terms of behavior relevant to the organization's objectives and not just as the outcome of the behavior because outcomes can be influenced by other factors that are not under the control of the employee. Hence, the present study defines employee performance as the capability of employees to execute given tasks and behave in such a manner that it enables the organization to achieve its objectives.

Delegation of Authority and Employee Performance.

Delegation of authority is the transfer of tasks and decision-making responsibility to others, while the managers are still accountable for the outcomes of the organization. It enables staff to make decisions, take responsibility and participate in decisions. Hence, the delegation can be effective to enhance employee performance by delegating the decision making to employees who have the appropriate knowledge, thereby increasing the responsibility and decreasing unnecessary dependence on higher-level managers (Al-Jammal et al., 2015; Ugoani, 2020; van Triest & Williams, 2024).

The general trend of the empirical evidence is that delegation of authority has a positive correlation with employee performance. The delegation of authority was found to have a

significant effect on employee performance by Olajide et al. (2016), and Chota and Zenebe (2022) reported that delegation significantly affected employee performance. A recent study by Suleman et al. (2025) also indicates that delegation is one of the main elements that can improve employee performance and productivity. Al-Bori and Al-Ameri (2025) also discovered that there was a significant relationship between delegation of authority and employee performance, indicating that providing employees with the right decision-making authority can enhance the work results.

However, delegation does not always lead to improved performance: it depends on the clarity of delegated tasks, the competence of the employees, the trust of the manager, good communication and the use of suitable monitoring. Van Triest and Williams (2024) suggest that managers will be more willing to delegate autonomy when the employees are knowledgeable about the tasks, and when the advantages of decentralized decision-making are greater than the costs of monitoring. Similarly, delegation can be hindered when managers lack trust of their subordinates or employees are not knowledgeable and equipped to exercise delegated authority effectively (Mbaduet, 2023).

Although there is some empirical research on the impact of delegation on employee performance, there are relatively few studies that have examined the specific aspects of delegation. For instance, Kennedy and Keino (2017) examined the effects of delegation on the four dimensions of legislative, adjudicative, monitoring/enforcement, and agenda-setting delegation, and the results were positive for the first three dimensions, and positive (though not statistically significant) for agenda-setting delegation. The present study extends this literature and suggests the following four dimensions of delegation of authority and examines the individual impacts of each dimension on employee performance in the federal tertiary institutions of Adamawa State, Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

The theory used in this study is participative management which is related to Rensis Likert (1967). The theory emphasizes the importance of the employee's involvement in decision making in an organization and the importance of participation, trust, communication and supportive relationships for organizational effectiveness. It is assumed that employees will be more responsible, committed and demonstrate positive work behaviors if they are trusted and given opportunities to participate in organizational activities (Likert, 1967).

The theory can be applied to the concept of delegation of authority, which is the delegation of authority that can be used to extend participation by delegating appropriate decision making authority to employees within a defined organizational boundary. Delegation is not only about decisions being made at the managerial level, it is about giving employees discretion and responsibility, and allowing them to be involved in the activities of the organisation. Empirical studies reveal that the effective delegation of authority and employee responsibility, involvement, and organizational effectiveness are positively correlated (Al-Jammal et al., 2015; Ugoani, 2020; Suleman et al., 2025). Managers are also more likely to delegate when they have the necessary skills and task-specific knowledge (van Triest & Williams, 2024).

Delegated authority remains within the scope of the organisation, is coordinated and appropriately supervised and managers continue to have overall responsibility. The theory suggests that delegation will be more likely to have positive employee consequences when it is meaningful, responsibilities are clearly defined, and the employee is supported by the manager. Therefore, Participative Management Theory is a suitable theory to explain the expected positive relationship between delegation of authority and employee performance in federal tertiary institutions.

Methodology

The study was of a quantitative cross-sectional survey design aimed at finding out the impact of delegation of authority on employees' performance in selected federal tertiary institutions of Adamawa State, Nigeria. The study population comprised 5,554 employees comprising 2,431 employees of Modibbo Adama University, Yola, 2,370 employees of Federal Polytechnic, Mubi and 753 employees of Federal College of Education, Yola. The sample size of 373 was calculated by the Yamane formula and 20% was added to ensure that the number of respondents would be adequate in case of non-response, resulting in a target sample of 448 respondents. The number of respondents in each of the three institutions was proportionately distributed with 196, 191 and 61 respondents from Modibbo Adama University, Yola, Federal Polytechnic Mubi and Federal College of Education, Yola, respectively. However, because of the easy access and availability of the respondents at the field level, a total of 446 questionnaires were eventually sent out. The respondents were then selected using convenience sampling. A total of 446 persons were sent the questionnaires and 410 questionnaires were returned with a retrieval rate of 91.9%. A structured questionnaire on a five-point Likert scale was used to collect data. Delegation of authority was measured in four ways: legislative delegation, adjudicative delegation, monitoring/enforcement delegation, and agenda-setting delegation, and employee performance was the dependent variable. The delegational items (legislative delegation, adjudicative delegation, monitoring/enforcement delegation, and agenda-setting delegation) all had reliability coefficients greater than .700, with the Cronbach's alpha for employee performance being .750. The overall instrument had a Cronbach's alpha of .842, which is acceptable. Descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis were used to analyze the collected data. The separate and combined effect of the four dimensions of delegation of authority on employee performance was measured using multiple regression.

Result and Interpretation

Table 1. Multiple Regression Result

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p-value	Decision
Legislative delegation	0.375	0.035	0.375	10.788	<.001	Significant
Adjudicative delegation	0.263	0.040	0.263	6.553	<.001	Significant
Monitoring/enforcement delegation	0.137	0.034	0.137	3.983	<.001	Significant
Agenda-setting delegation	0.101	0.028	0.101	3.647	<.001	Significant
Model statistics						
R	0.824					
R^2	0.678					
Adjusted R^2	0.675					

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p-value	Decision
F-statistic	213.413				<.001	Significant
Df	4, 405					
Standard error of estimate	0.2698					

Note. Dependent variable = Employee Performance. B = unstandardised regression coefficient; SE = standard error; β = standardised regression coefficient; R^2 = coefficient of determination. **p < .05.**

The individual and combined effects of the four types of delegation (legislative, adjudicative, monitoring/enforcement, and agenda-setting) on employee performance in selected federal tertiary institutions in Adamawa State, Nigeria were tested using multiple regression analysis. The results presented in Table 1 show that the regression model was statistically significant, R = .824, R^2 = .678, adjusted R^2 = .675, F(4, 405) = 213.413, p < .001. The model accounts for 67.8% of the variance in employee performance; the remaining 32.2% is unexplained variance and may be due to other factors not accounted for in the model as well as random error. The adjusted R^2 of .675 shows that the model still has a lot of explanatory power despite the number of predictors.

Discussion of Findings

The first objective examined the effect of delegation on employee performance and the result showed that there was a positive and significant relationship between the two variables (β = .375, t = 10.788, p < .001); that is, the delegation of authority to employees to formulate, modify, and implement organizational rules and policies is related to the performance of employees. The standardized coefficient is also relatively large, indicating that delegation of legislation was the most powerful predictor of the four dimensions studied. The finding is consistent with the findings of Kennedy and Keino (2017) that found that organizational performance was positively and significantly related to legislative delegation in Twiga Chemical Industries in Kenya. It also correlates with evidence that employee participation and delegated responsibility can increase employee involvement, ownership, and effectiveness in their work, by giving employees more influence on decisions that affect their work (Jusdienar et al., 2024). The findings confirm the participative management approach which suggests that the involvement of employees in decision making of the organization may enhance cooperation, responsibility and performance (Likert, 1967). For federal tertiary institutions, the discovery suggests that if the employees are involved in the rules and policies of the institution, they have a better understanding of the expectations of the institution and feel more responsible for the decisions made, to which they are then required to implement.

The second goal assessed the impact of adjudicative delegation on employee performance and it was found that delegating authority to employees to use their judgment and to solve work-related problems is positively and significantly related to employee performance (β = .263, t = 6.553, p < .001). This finding is in line with Kennedy and Keino (2017), who found that there was a positive and significant relationship between adjudicative delegation and organizational performance. It is also supported by Jusdienar et al. (2024) who concluded that clear responsibility, communication, and trust are important in delegating authority to enhance decision making. In practice, adjudicative delegation allows workers to respond to operational problems with their knowledge of the context of their work without the need for higher level

approval. This is also in line with the study conducted by van Triest and Williams (2024) which revealed that managers' willingness to grant autonomy depends on the employees' knowledge of the task and the type of task that requires local decision making. The present finding thus indicates that employee performance can be enhanced if employees are given the right authority to make decisions within a clearly defined scope of responsibility.

The third objective investigated the impact of the delegated monitoring/enforcement on employee performance. The finding showed that there was a positive and significant result ($\beta = .137$, $t = 3.983$, $p < .001$) which implies that the practice of delegating responsibility to employees in the area of monitoring activities, ensuring compliance and supervising designated tasks has a positive influence on the performance of employees. The result is consistent with the result of Kennedy and Keino (2017) which revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between monitoring and enforcement delegation and organizational performance. The same is also suggested by Ugoani (2020), who found that when responsibility is coupled with accountability, feedback, and proper managerial oversight, effective delegation can enhance employee effectiveness. The positive relationship may be because the employee assigned to review has more first-hand involvement in the process of ensuring that the work process is compliant with the requirements of the organization. This engagement can lead to greater accountability and the ability to detect issues or deviations in operations as they arise, in closer proximity to where they are happening. The finding does not suggest that managerial control is not required, but it does suggest that the monitoring tasks can be delegated to the appropriate person(s) without the loss of managerial control.

The fourth objective was to explore the effect of delegation of the agenda-setting task on employee performance. The result indicated that there was a positive and significant relationship ($\beta = .101$, $t = 3.647$, $p < .001$), meaning that opportunities for employees to identify problems, suggest solutions, and be involved in organizational priorities is related to improved performance. This important relationship for agenda-setting delegation is an important finding and contrasts with Kennedy and Keino (2017), which was positive but not statistically significant. This separation could suggest that the context in which delegation occurs influences how much the employees' participation in prioritizing leads to performance outcomes. In federal tertiary institutions, staff with special knowledge of the academic, administrative and operational processes in the institution may be able to inform management of issues that are emerging and make recommendations for priorities, and increase the sense of ownership of the activities of the institution among the staff.

The findings overall corroborate the Participative Management Theory and extend the existing literature on delegation by demonstrating that there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between each type of delegation (legislative, adjudicative, monitoring/enforcement and agenda-setting) and employee performance in federal tertiary institutions. The results also indicate that the effects of delegation can differ depending on the organizational setting, such as the authority to set the agenda, which was found to have a significant relationship in the present study, but not in Kennedy and Keino's (2017) study.

Conclusion

This study examined the effect of delegation of authority on employee performance in selected federal tertiary institutions of Adamawa state, Nigeria. The results show that each of the delegation types (legislative, adjudicative, monitoring/enforcement, and agenda-setting) was positively and significantly related to employee performance. The most important delegation was legislative, followed by adjudicative, monitoring/enforcement, and agenda-setting delegation. The four predictors combined accounted for 67.8% of the variance in employee performance, suggesting that delegation practices are significant factors to consider in understanding the work outcomes of the employees in the institutions studied. The results are in alignment with the Participative Management Theory, which is based on the importance of employees and their participation, trust, and meaningful involvement in decision-making in organizations. They recommend that tertiary institutions can be supported to make staff members involved in the development of rules and policies of the institution, apply judgment in their work, undertake appropriate monitoring and make suggestions for priorities of the institution. This delegation should come with clear lines of authority, adequate employee skill, communication and management. The findings are only applicable to the institutions studied and may not be extrapolated to other tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Suggestion for Future Study

Further research is needed to evaluate the relationships found in Adamawa State in other tertiary institutions and other public sector organizations in Nigeria to ascertain if the relationships found in the study are generalizable to other organizational settings. A longitudinal study would enable me to obtain a clearer picture of the relationship of delegation practices with employee performance over time and the employee and manager's experience of delegation. Further research could also explore the impact of delegation on performance in relation to other variables such as employee ability, trust in the organization, resources, role clarity, and managerial monitoring.

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