

## Effect Of Employee Morale On Productivity In The Ghanaian Public Sector. The Mediating Role Of Delegation.

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### ABSTRACT

Delegation of authority is one of modern trends practiced by managers, and a key management skill in the business world. It enhances human relations amongst organizational members, increases self-confidence among employees and raise the level of tasks accomplishment in tasks. The study sought to assess the effect of delegation on employee morale and productivity in public sector organisations in Ghana. The target population included all the workers in the public sector of Ghana from which the simple random sampling technique was employed to select 128 workers from 20 public sector organisations across the country. The findings from the study show that delegation of authority has a positive and significant relation with employee morale and productivity. Subsequently, the study also revealed that delegation fully mediates the relationship between employee morale and productivity. Based on the findings, it is recommended that organisations should utilise or adopt the concept of delegation in performing organisational duties. Again, organisations should implement measures or strategies that can help build the morale of employees.

**Keywords:** Delegation, Employee Morale, Employee Productivity, Public Sector, Ghana

### INTRODUCTION

According to [1], engaged employees are committed to their jobs and they provide their organizations critical competitive advantages such as efficiency in performance, and fewer turnover among employees. Therefore, it is not shocking that a lot of organisations today identify avenues to make and keep employees committed through delegating some managerial authority to them [2]. Delegation of authority is one of the modern practices horned by managers and is a vital tool for organisational progress. Thus, the role of delegation stands out, contributes and expands the level of enthusiasm among employees and accomplish positive returns for organizations [1]. The main goal of delegation is to ensure organisational tasks are not performed by a single individual or manager alone. Delegation enhances the morale, build the confidence and create a sense of belonging among employees in organizations [3], [4]. [1], opined that delegation of authority enables organizations to attain competitive advantage, increases productivity and achieve efficiency in task completion that lessens the functional burdens of managers. Again, studies have established that application of delegation of authority enhances employee effectiveness, maintain managers' job positions and preserves the processes involved in facilitating businesses' goal achievement, employees' devotion and enhancing organisational performance [5],[6].

Information processing stream indicates that hierarchical organizations that centralize decision-making experience the ill effects of organizational failures as a result of information transmission leaks in passing on information from top level to the bottom of the hierarchy [7]. Therefore, overall strategies formulated by superiors (top management) may be different from those understood and employed by subordinates due to intra-firm communication inefficiencies. In developing countries especially in the public sector, delegation of authorities is partially practiced because of personal perceptions, fear of delegation itself by top management, and the fear of subordinates to be delegated to due to misunderstandings about what needs to be done [8]. Thus, delegating authority poorly could lead to demoralization, frustration, and inability to accomplish set objectives. Nevertheless, delegation provides benefits such as enabling subordinates in decision making as well as encouraging the participation of workers in the activities of organizations [9]. Consequently, management should establish a framework that would enable them lead subordinates to achieve the set goals of organisations successfully [10]. Managers who decide to perform every task by themselves limit the performance of their employees and thus hinder increases in their own performance and the productivity of their organisations as whole. Hence, it is imperative to incorporate delegation of authority in managerial functions and practices so as to increase performance of both management, employees and the organisation as a whole [2]. To this extent, delegation of authority could be a vital element in boosting employees' morale and subsequently their productivity in organisations. Thus, the morale and productivity of employees could be increased when managers or heads of departments delegate some of their authorities to them; as a healthy morale in the workplace plays a significant role in employees' productivity. Yet, most often management undervalue the significance of building morale in the work environment. Thus, [11] elucidates that improving the morale of employees has been a major challenge to employers and management over the years. In this regard, this study sought to assess how employees' morale affect their productivity when mediated by delegation in the public sector of Ghana.

The theoretical literature on delegation gives several reasons for the use of delegation to make more efficient decisions. Hence, several studies have been conducted on delegation of authority, employees' productivity or morale. For instance, the impact of the delegation of authority on employees' performance has been established in literature by [1], [6]. Also, other studies have concentrated on delegation of authority in business organizations and their rate of effectiveness [12], [13], and [14]. Despite the extensive research conducted on delegation and its effect on employee performance, not much has been done on how delegation affects the morale of employees or how it influences both the morale and productivity of employees. Furthermore, employers are continuously offering various incentives, including higher wages, promotion, training, just to mention a few in order to boost employees' morale and consequently their productivity. Yet, the contribution of delegation of authority has been overlooked in building employees' morale and productivity. In this regard, this study sought to assess how delegation affects employees' morale and productivity in the public sector of Ghana.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Concept of Delegation

Delegation of authority is one of recent practices by managers, and a key management skills in the business world [1], [8]. [15], defined delegation of authority as a practice of allotting tasks and authorities in organisations. Thus, delegation is theorised as the activities involving leaders assigning part of their authority corresponding with given task to subordinates [5]. Again, delegation of authority is also regarded as authority transferred from top management

through to executives and to other managers [2]. Hence, delegation of authority is said to have occurred when decision-making powers are bestowed on subordinates by superiors. But, delegation takes place when someone with authority bestows upon another the power to perform a specific task. Yet, the ultimate responsibility for task accomplishment usually rests on the individual who delegated the authority in the first place. Based on this, the study describes delegation as the transfer of part or full authority and right to certain individuals in organizations to accomplish a particular task or execute plans towards the achievement of organisational goals. That is, the transfer of authority to make decisions and complete specific tasks.

Delegation of authority is a tool that builds and promotes superior-subordinate relations within organisations [16]. It rises the motivational levels among employees and enable them to achieve positive returns for their organisations, managers and other stakeholders [1]. In terms of organization, it helps to attain competitive advantage, increases productivity levels and provides speed in completing tasks efficiently. For managers, delegation helps in lessening functional loads, gaining the satisfaction of employees and building support and confidence among managers and employees. On the side of employees, delegation helps in accomplishing functional empowerment by making employees confident and motivated for excellence in their performance. Delegation of authority reinforces relationships among members in organizations, improve self-confidence among employees and increases the level of tasks accomplishment and speed of plans execution [17]. In any case, the absence of delegation usually leaves individuals disappointed, apathetic, and undertrained, whereas managers are burdened with huge amounts of work [8]. It is therefore hypothesized that;

### **Concept of Employee Morale**

Morale is the most essential psychological state of mind of an individual which is conveyed in the form of self-confidence, zeal and devotion towards an organization. Thus, morale is viewed as a person's attitude towards being part of an organization and it reveals the satisfaction and the sense of accomplishment they obtain from being a part of the group [18]. Hence, employees' morale refers to the total viewpoints, attitudes, fulfilment and self-assurance that they feel at work [19], [20]. Accordingly, morale is an indispensable element of organizational success for it mirrors the attitudes and opinions that individuals and groups have towards organizational goals. Good morale is demonstrated by employee zeal, willing conformance with rules and instructions and readiness to liaise with others in realizing organizational goals. On the other hand, poor morale is demonstrated by aloofness, resistance, sentiments of dissuasion and aversion of jobs.

Organisations today are endeavouring to keep up positive morale among its workers, since workers with positive morale perform better, reduce the rate of absenteeism and waste, tend to be devoted and consequently increase the productivity of organisations [18]. Therefore, it is vital to know the factors such as leadership style, absence of incentive schemes, imprecise promotion procedures, unsafe working environment, ineffective communication and just to mention a few [21], [22], and [23] that influence the morale of employees and how to redress them. Thus, [24] stated that there is no single factor that regularly describes good or poor morale, but morale could be affected by a combination of factors. One crucial stage in enhancing employees' morale is to build a culture where the members in the team understand that their wellbeing and morale at work is significant [25]. At the point when the morale of employees is high, productivity and attitude towards work progresses. Morale is more impacted from the top down (management) than from the bottom up (first line employees). Morale can be a driving force for organisational development [26]. For that reason, [27], revealed that the morale of employees is significant for the following reasons; improving

productivity, performance and quality, greater consideration for details, a safer working environment and increased efficiency.

### **Concept of Productivity**

The conceptualization of worker productivity has gained increasing consideration over the last decade [28]. It is debated that productivity is one of the fundamental factors governing economic production activities, maybe the most essential one [29]. Even though, productivity is regularly talked about by managers, it is hardly ever defined, frequently misunderstood and often jumbled with similar terms, and seldom estimated in proper manner [28]. In a broad sense, productivity can be described as the proportion between a measure of output and a measure of input. The productivity of workers could thus be measured as an output, e.g. sales or units produced, relative to an input, e.g. the number of hours worked or the cost of labour [28]. Hence, productivity can be viewed as the comparative measure of the efficacy of a person, machine, factory, system, and so forth, in transforming inputs into suitable outputs.

### **Relationship between Delegation and Employee Morale**

Delegation is carried out by most organisations because it provides motivation by encouraging participatory management skills to subordinates and thus enhance employee morale [30]. Most organisations would want their managers or superiors to delegate task or authority to subordinates, however, in some instances some superiors may distrust their subordinates. Situations like this may lead to low morale of employees and low performance of the organisation. Low morale among employees makes them lose interests in organisations, especially when management do not place a lot of value on their efforts and performance [31]. Thus, [32], explained that delegation of authority enables employees to feel valued as part of organizations and propel them to be effective in carrying out their assignments. Based on this, the study therefore hypothesized that;

**H1: Delegation has a positive and significant relationship with employee morale**

### **Relationship between Delegation and Productivity**

The productivity of employees is a critical element in achieving organizational goals [33], [34], [35]. Therefore, most organizations find ways of making their employees committed and involved by delegating some authority/responsibility to them [36]. As a result, [1], indicated that delegation of authority has lessened the functional burdens of managers and has led to collaboration and trust among subordinates and their supervisors. When authority is delegated to employees, they feel self-confident and are motivation for excellence in their performance. Thus, [6] revealed that delegation of authority enhances organisational performance. Also, [1], found that delegation of authority significantly predicted employees' productivity and [14], discovered a significant correlation between delegation and employees' work effectiveness. Therefore, it can be deduced that when delegation is done properly, it increases the productivity of employees. Based on this knowledge, the study hypothesised that;

**H2: Delegation have a positive and significant relationship on productivity.**

### **Mediating Role of Delegation on Employee Morale and Productivity**

Morale is an abstract feature that encompasses feelings, sentiments, demeanour and opinions concerning organizations and the people that work therein [37] Hence, morale can be said to be a concept involving many factors and conditions levied on people. Nevertheless, these factors influence people differently and may affect the same individual in different ways over time. Thus, the relative impact of each factor is subject to interactions with other factors which are value by the individual and can be channelled to influence productivity using theoretical or mathematical frameworks [38]. But high morale is generally described by features such as self-

control, self-confidence and preparedness to execute assigned tasks [39] In general, high morale affects productivity positively [40]. Thus, [41] describes different mixtures of morale and productivity such as high morale and low productivity; high morale and high productivity; low morale and high productivity; and low morale and low productivity. This implies that there is always not a positive correlation between the two [37]. As such, management need to work on improving the morale of employees by enhancing the work environment [42], [43] as high morale influences the productivity of employees [40]. Even though, research has revealed a relationship between morale and productivity it cannot be said that the morale of employees is the only predictor of high employee productivity. Thus, there may be other mediating variables which affects the relationship between morale and productivity of employees. In this regard, the study hypothesised that;

**H3: Delegation mediates the relationship between employee morale and productivity.**

### METHODOLOGY

This study employed quantitative techniques to explain the effect of delegation in the relationship between employee morale and productivity among public sector workers in Ghana. The target population included all the workers in the public sector of Ghana from which the simple random sampling technique was employed to select 128 workers from 20 public sector organisations across the country.

#### Reliability Statistics

To ensure reliability, the Cronbach alpha value was used. The Cronbach alpha values for delegation, employee morale and productivity was .714, .854 and .906 respectively. According to [44], numerical values of alpha ranging from 0.7 to 0.95 are acceptable values. This implies that the reliability of the research instruments were high.

**Table 1 Reliability of constructs**

Item	Cronbach Alpha Value
Delegation	.714
Employee Morale	.854
Productivity	.906

#### Confirmatory Factor Analysis

[45], contend that there is no reliable standard for assessing a suitable model so they only gave emphasis to CFI, TLI, and RMSEA as regularly used fit indexes. Similarly, [46], explained CFI, NNFI (TLI), DELTA2 (IFI), RNI, and RMSEA in LISREL8 as fit measures. However, it is not likely to see all these fit measures in a particular work [47]. Yet, some of fit the indices from major classifications has been employed in this work to evaluate the total fitness of the measurement model. Thus, the  $\chi^2/df$  (CMIN/DF), CFI, and RMSEA, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Construct Reliability (CR) were used in this work. According to [48], [49], a normal chi-square (CMIN/DF) value near 1 but not exceeding 3 shows a good fit. With respect to Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the model is regarded as acceptable if it exceeds .93 [50]. Moreover, a Root Mean-Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) of about .05 or less shows a close fit of the model [51]. Additionally, Average Variance Expected (AVE) value greater than .05 is acceptable [52]. The result of the confirmatory factor analysis is shown in Table 2. It indicates that most values fall within the acceptable values discussed.

**Table 2: Confirmatory Factor Analysis**

Construct	CMIN/DF ( $\chi^2/df$ )	CFI	RMSEA	AVE	CR
Delegation	.276	1.000	.000	0.779985	0.566675
Employee Morale	.951	.1000	.000	0.564996	0.435004
Employee Productivity	5.081	.967	.179	0.623204	0.678233

### Effects of Delegation on Employees Morale

A simple regression analysis was used to test the relationship between delegation and employee morale as shown on Table 3. The results of the regression analysis revealed a positive and significant relation between delegation and employees' morale. There is a significant relationship because the p-value (0.00) is less than 0.05 ( $p\text{-values} \leq 0.05$ ). Moreover, there is a positive relationship because the coefficient or the beta value is positive ( $\beta=.458$ ). Thus hypothesis 1 which states that delegation has a significant and positive effect on employee morale was supported. As a consequence there is significant and positive relationship between delegation and employees' morale. The R square value of (.127) shows that (12.7%) of the variations in delegation statements are explained by employee morale and the remaining (87.3%) is due to other factors.

**Table 3 Regression Analysis on the effects of delegation on employee morale**

Model Summary					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.357 <sup>a</sup>	.127	.120	.41966	
a. Predictors: (Constant), Delegation					
Coefficient					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.752	.127		5.907	.000
Delegation	.458	.107	.357	4.288	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Employee Morale					

### p-values $\leq 0.05$ have significant relationship

### Effects of Delegation on Employees Productivity

The results of the simple regression analysis on Table 4 shows that there is a positive and significant relationship between delegation and employee productivity ( $\beta=.345$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ ). Thus, delegation and productivity have a positive and significant relationship. Hence, hypothesis 2 which states that delegation has a significant and positive effect on employee productivity was supported. The R Square of .043 shows that approximately (43%) of the variations in delegation is predicted by employee productivity whilst the rest (57%) can be explained by other factors.

**Table 4 Regression Analysis on the effects of delegation on Productivity**

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.208 <sup>a</sup>	.043	.036	.84686		
a. Predictors: (Constant), Delegation						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.303	.257		12.865	.000
	Delegation	.515	.215	.208	2.392	.018
a. Dependent Variable: Productivity						

**The mediating role of delegation in the relationship between employee morale and productivity**

The steps suggested by [53] were followed in the mediating analysis. The first step in the mediation analysis is to test for the relationships among the variables. The Pearson correlation analysis was used to conduct the test. From Table 5, there is a significant relationship among all the three variables. Thus, there is a significant relationship between delegation and morale, delegation and productivity and morale and productivity.

**Table 5 Correlation Analysis between Delegation, Morale and Productivity**

Correlations				
		Delegation	Morale	Productivity
Delegation	Pearson Correlation	1	.357**	.208*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.018
	N	128	128	128
Morale	Pearson Correlation	.357**	1	.180*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.042
	N	128	128	128
Productivity	Pearson Correlation	.208*	.180*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.018	.042	
	N	128	128	128
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).				

**\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

Correlation between delegation and morale is .000

**\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).**

Correlation between delegation and productivity is .018

Correlation between morale and productivity is .042

A two-step hierarchical regression was conducted to test for the mediating role of delegation on employee morale and productivity. The first step predicted the relationship between morale and productivity. The predictor variable (employee morale) were entered in step 1. In step 2, the mediating variable (delegation) and predictor variables were entered. Table 6 summarizes the results of the mediation test of delegation in the relationship between morale and productivity. As shown on Table 6, the effect of employee morale on productive was significant at ( $\beta = .347, p < .05$ ). However, the relationship between morale and productivity became insignificant at ( $p > .05$ ) when the mediating variable (delegation) was introduced, thereby implying full mediation. In other words, delegation fully mediates the relationship between morale and productivity.

**Table 6 Mediation of Delegation on Morale and Productivity**

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.449	.228		15.133	.000
	EM*EP	.347	.169	.180	2.055	.042
2	(Constant)	3.128	.289		10.810	.000
	EM*EP*D	.234	.179	.121	1.303	.195
	D	.408	.230	.165	1.776	.078

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Productivity

**Table 6 Summary of Hypothesis**

Hypothesis	Statement	Conclusion
<b>H1</b>	Delegation has a positive and significant relationship with employee morale	Supported
<b>H2</b>	Delegation have a positive and significant relationship on productivity.	Supported
<b>H3</b>	Delegation mediates the relationship between employee morale and productivity	Supported

### DISCUSSION

The findings from the study discovered a positive and significant relationship between delegation and employee morale ( $\beta=.458$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ ). This implies that, when there is a high level of delegation, there will be a higher level of employees' morale and the lesser the level of delegation the lesser the level of employees' morale. Thus, effective delegation helps to build the morale of employees. The findings of the study confirm with other studies previously conducted such as, [32], [3] [4], who indicated that delegation of authority enhances the moral of employees in organizations and makes them feel confident. Similarly, giving the employees some rights and authority through delegation enhances their morale to accomplish their tasks effectively [2]. Therefore, when task is delegated to employees, it helps them to develop their capacity and skills and feels a sense of belonging, value and appreciation. This entice them to perform their assigned duties adequately and efficiently, thus, enhancing their productivity.

From the analysis, it was revealed that delegation has a positive and significant relationship with productivity. There was a positive relationship because the coefficient or the beta value was positive ( $\beta=.345$ ) Thus when delegation is high productivity will also be high and vice versa. The relationship between delegation and productivity was also statistically significant ( $p = .018$ ). The study findings supported [6], who stated that the application of delegation of authority helps in achieving performance efficiency and employees' productivity. Also, [1], found that delegation of authority significantly predicted employees' productivity and [14], revealed a significant correlation between delegation and employees' work effectiveness. The results implied that employees appreciate it when authority is being delegated to them by reciprocating it with improved productivity. Therefore, if authority is not delegated to employees, execution of tasks will be ineffective and lessen their productivity. Thus, when there is high level of productivity, it helps in the achievement of organisational goals and positive outcomes [2].

The findings showed a significant relationship between employee morale and productivity without the introduction of delegation. This means that morale has a significant relationship with productivity. This finding is supported by a study conducted by [37], which revealed that high employee morale leads to high productivity in organisations. This is because the existence of high morale in an organisation makes for a better working environment where employees can perform efficiently. The findings revealed that when the mediating variable (delegation) was introduced, the relationship between morale and productivity became insignificant,



meaning there was a full mediation. Hence, Employee morale has a direct effect on productivity via delegation. Therefore delegation fully mediates the relationship between employee morale and productivity.

### CONCLUSION

From the findings of the study, delegation of authority is significant in ensuring employees' morale and productivity. The results show that the more authority is delegated the more employees in the public sector will perform the tasks expected from them thereby increasing productivity and as a result, enhancing their morale. Delegation of authority shows that supervisors in the public sector have confidence in the ability of their subordinates to act on their behalf or on the organizations' behalf. Employees on the other hand perceive this as a form of trust and try to justify the trust through effective discharge of responsibilities expected from them by way of higher productivity. Therefore, organisations in the public sector of Ghana should implement measures and strategies that can help create more avenues for delegation. This will help increase the morale of employees and enhance their productivity.

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