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# Delegation and Employee Prosocial Behaviour in the Hospitality Sector in Port Harcourt

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**ABSTRACT:** *This study primarily examined the relationship between delegation and employee prosocial behaviour in the hospitality sector in Port Harcourt. The study adopted the cross-sectional research survey design. Primary data was generated through structured questionnaire. The population of the study was 1674 employees of 11 selected hotels in Port Harcourt. The sample size was also drawn using the Krejcie and Morgan (1980) sample size determination table. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient. The tests were carried out at a 0.05 significance level. The findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between delegation and employee prosocial behaviour in the hospitality sector in Port Harcourt. Hence, the study concludes that delegation positively enhances employee prosocial behaviour in the hospitality sector in Port Harcourt. Implying that when organizations in hospitality sector actively engage in joint consultation practices, such as open communication, collaboration, and employee involvement in decision-making, there is a notable improvement in prosocial behaviors among employees. Therefore, the study recommends that there is a need to strengthen delegation platforms which involves creating structured forums where both management and employees can engage in meaningful discussions. This could include regular town hall meetings, feedback sessions, and collaborative workshops. By fostering an environment of open communication, these platforms can serve as a foundation for building a positive relationship between stakeholders.*

**KEYWORD:** delegation, employee prosocial behavior, whistleblowing, volunteering, co-worker support

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## INTRODUCTION

Work organizations are faced with the challenges of operating within business environment that has become increasingly dynamic with characteristic volatility. In addition, recent technological breakthroughs and globalization practices have also stimulated hyper-competition

with increased rate of labour mobility and turnover (Alimora & Jonah, 2011; Damsah & Gilbert, 2016). The implication of this is that a committed workforce with knack for extra-roles that support attempts at gaining competitive advantage becomes fundamental and strategic. Aside formal roles assigned to employees, the strategic nature of employees in attending to arising concerns, stretching towards functional and informal voluntary involvement is emphasized. Latef and Azeez (2018) posit that attracting a committed workforce remain central in the face of the evolving competition and further described such workforce as resilient, innovative and dedicated to work goals. The expressed features are simply conceptualized as prosocial behaviour in the works of Brief and Motowildo (1986).

Jayed (2013) defines delegation as an act where managers provide some or a major portion of the authority, vested in their positions, to their subordinates to accomplish certain organizational tasks. Delegation of authority refers to the subdivision and sub-allocation of powers to the subordinates in order to achieve effective results. It is the division of authority and powers downwards to the subordinate; the act of using the power of other people's help. Delegation does not mean surrender of authority by the higher level manager; it only means transfer of certain responsibilities to subordinates and giving the subordinates the necessary authority, which is necessary to discharge the responsibility properly. Delegating the authority to someone else doesn't imply escaping from accountability. Accountability still rest with the person having the utmost authority. The opposite of effective delegation according to Ebang (2015) is micromanagement, where a manager provides too much input, direction and review of delegated work i.e. a management style whereby a manager closely observes or controls the work of subordinates or employees.

The purpose of this paper therefore was to examine the relationship between delegation and employee prosocial behavior in the hospitality sector in Port Harcourt. The specific objectives of the study included:

- i. To examine the relationship between delegation and whistleblowing in the hospitality sector in Port Harcourt.
- ii. To examine the relationship between delegation and volunteering in the hospitality sector in Port Harcourt.
- iii. To determine the relationship between delegation and co-worker support in the hospitality sector in Port Harcourt.

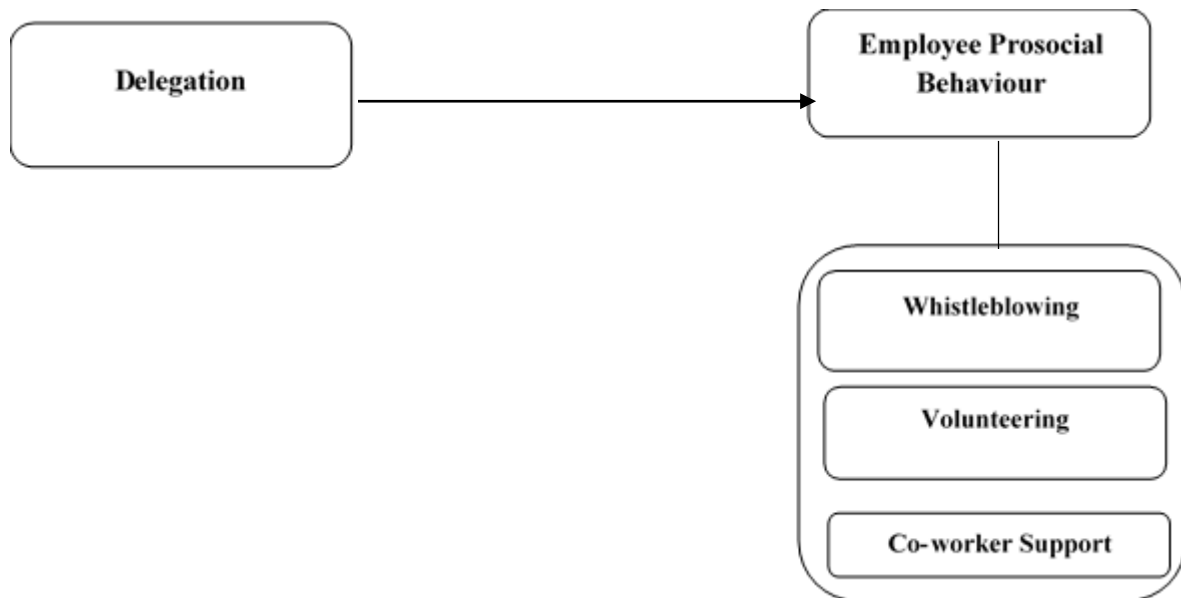


Figure 1: conceptual model for the relationship between delegation and employee prosocial behavioural outcomes.

**Source:** Desk Research (2023)

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical Foundation

#### The Social Exchange Theory

It is a psychological theory that explains the social variables that possess influential force in person's interaction in a reciprocal relationship. The social exchange theory notes that employees respond positively towards the organization when they are favourably treated. In other words, positive organizational behaviour and job commitment is assured when there is the feeling of encouragement from the organization. The theory associated attitude and dedication to democracy via organizational behaviour (Indradevi, 2010). The attitude displayed by employees could be directed both to the organization and co-workers by extension in the form of altruism and other prosocial behaviour. The fundamental anchor on the social exchange theory is that the parties involved voluntarily exchange and give benefits to each other (Chinomona, 2012). Such benefits usually invoke obligations from one party to reciprocate the benefit in return (Yoon and Sur, 2005).

Blau (1964) therefore, expressed social exchange theory as a voluntary action of individuals that are motivated by the returns they are expected to bring and typically do in fact bring from others. This assertion is in line, owing to the fact that social exchange results in feelings of obligations, appreciation and trust which further lay a foundation for social solidarity and order

without necessarily having a binding contracts (Yoon and Sur, 2003; Thye *et al.*, 2002). In the words of Lavelle *et al.* (2009), social exchange relationship can be described as “Subjective, Relationship-Oriented contracts between employers and employees characterized by a mutual exchange of socio-emotional benefits”. Relating the theory of social exchange to this current study, this research opines that efforts by managers or owners of organizations to provide work environment that promotes and encourages workers display of democracy by way of fairness, and job satisfactions among other factors are most likely to stimulate employee pro-social behaviour with its consequential effect on improved performance, improved competitiveness, viability and growth in the long turn.

### **Delegation**

Akrani (2010) noted that delegation takes place when one person gives another the right to perform work on his behalf and in his name and the second person accepts a corresponding duty or obligation to do that is required of him. This means that legally, the delegated authority belongs to the principal, but in practice its exercise is allowed to the subordinates. Ebang (2015) defines delegation as the assignment of responsibility or authority to another person’s (normally from a manager to a subordinate) to carry out specific activities. Delegation means sharing of authority by a superior person to his subordinate’s subject to his/her supervision and control. It is about entrusting someone else to do parts of your job. A manager alone cannot perform all the tasks assigned to him in order to meet the targets, the manager should delegate authority. Delegation involves the assigning of certain responsibilities along with the necessary authority by a superior to his subordinate. Delegation is not a process of abdication. The person who delegates does not divorce himself/herself from the responsibility and authority with which s/he is entrusted. He remains accountable for the overall performance and also for the performance of his/her subordinates (Akrani, 2010).

Delegation does not mean surrender of authority by the higher level manager; it only means transfer of certain responsibilities to subordinates and giving the subordinates the necessary authority, which is necessary to discharge the responsibility properly. Delegating the authority to someone else doesn’t imply escaping from accountability. Accountability still rest with the person having the utmost authority. The opposite of effective delegation according to Ebang (2015) is micromanagement, where a manager provides too much input, direction and review of delegated work i.e. a management style whereby a manager closely observes or controls the work of subordinates or employees.

### **Concept of Prosocial Behaviour**

The concept of prosocial behaviour is faced with a lot of definitional issues even as much work has been dedicated to the demystification of prosocial behaviour construct, with related terms such as extra role behaviours or positive citizenship behaviours (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986; Organ, 1988, Zellars *et al.*, 2002). As Baruch, *et al.* (2004) rightly noted that there may exist no clear-cut definition of pro-social; behaviour in literature even as a glaring overlap is observed with other similar concepts. For instances, Brief & Motowidlo (1986) in their study noted 13 specific kinds of behaviour from employees that are considered pro-social premised on their belief that the various behaviour may be organizationally functional, individually

functional, or dysfunctional. For instance, an old employee in the workplace volunteering to mentor a new employee contributes positively towards the organization's goals. Conversely, an employee offering assistance to co-worker adjudged to be publicly critical of the workplace or even indulge in behaviours considered counterproductive or inimical to the organizational goals and integrity in the eyes of other stakeholders could be viewed as organizationally dysfunctional pro-social behaviours (Vardi & Weitz, 2004).

Even with the observation of definitional issues on pro-social behaviour, Brief & Motowidlo (1986) gave a striking, practically understandable definition by suggesting the following: "pro-social behaviour is behaviour which is (a) performed by a member of an organization, (b) directed towards an individual, group, or organization with whom he or she interacts while carrying out his or her organizational role, and (c) performed with the (intention of promoting the welfare of the individual, group, organization towards which it is directed" . In another perspective, Organ and Konovsky (1989) Defined pro-social behaviour as a kind of behaviour which reflects a combination of social and economic exchange association with the organization. Staw (1984) supported the position of Brief and Motowidlo (1986) when he opined that pro-social behaviour as a construct should not be viewed only from the perspective of actions towards individuals, but also actions towards the organization on employee works. In addition to individually function and organizationally functional prosocial behaviour of employees, there is also the employee pro-social behaviour that is considered role prescribed and those that are extra role (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986).

## **Measures of Employee Behavioural Outcomes**

### **Whistle Blowing**

The concept of whistleblowing has recently been seen in organizations as a subject that requires a systematic study that attracts the attention of the authorities and the public (Near and Miceli, 1985). Researchers discuss the concept of whistleblowing in variety of fields including psychology, sociology, ethics, law and public policy. Both organization and government policy-makers are greatly interested in the successful implementation of legal and organizational stems to promote the reporting of illegal or unethical behaviors. However, researchers can only offer limited number of recommendations for the design and implementation of such systems without establishing a comprehensive theoretical framework on whistleblowing (Park, 2009). The concept of whistleblowing which began to take place in the literature in the 1990s started to be used with the whistling of British policemen to warn criminals. The concept of whistleblowing has been also used in organizations along with the announcement of illegal practices and the disallowance of non-disclosure of those who carry out such practices in many companies.

The terms organizational wrongdoing, organizational misconduct, malpractice and wrongdoing are widely used to explain the concept of whistleblowing (Yarmaci, 2018). Whistleblowing is expressed as the disclosure of illegal, unethical, or illegitimate practices under the control of employers by members of the organization (former or present) to persons or organizations that may affect the action (Near and Miceli, 2011). Elliston (2012) likened civil disobedience, an

action that a person performs for moral reasons, to whistleblowing in his study. According to Bouville (2008), whistleblowing is explained as reporting information that an employee (or former employee) believes to be unethical or illegal behavior to the senior management (internal whistle-blowing) or the external authority or the public (external whistle-blowing). In addition, whistleblowing is understood as a form of worker assertion or opposition in the endless war between labor and management, i.e. as a new form of worker resistance, in order to control the worker (Rothschild and Miethe, 1999).

### **Volunteering**

Volunteering as related to extra role-efforts, is the act of an employee getting involved in additional task which may or may not be connected to the job assigned to him/ her with the intention of rendering assistance to the organization (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986). Volunteering activities by employees in the workplace may include: volunteering for activities in the workplace such as committee assignments, speaking involvement. It could also entail simply taking actions/ steps when necessary with a view to correcting non-standard conditions, to remove obstacles to smoothen the way for organizational processes, and to protect the organization from unexpected occurrence (Brief& Motowidlo, 2016).

Penner (2002) expressed volunteering as a long-term planned and non-obligatory form of helping individuals as coworkers or the organization. It is a practice that ensues in a formal organizational setting. In a supportive effort Pearce and Amato (1980) argued that volunteering is one endpoint as the most planned and formal form of helping. Research conducted (Penner, 2002) on antecedents of volunteering basically focused on two theoretical approaches which are the dispositional and the motivational approaches. Penner (2002) contend that other oriented empathy and helpfulness are really the most vital and significant predictors for employee volunteerism. While Omoto and Snyder (1995) established that self-attributed motivational underpinnings predict volunteering. Longitudinal studies provide evidence that prosocial behaviour such as volunteering add to psychological well-being (Li & Ferraro, 2005; Thoits & Hewith, 2001). Volunteering as a measure of prosocial behaviour is expressed differently and also has unique connotations in different countries and culture (Dekker & Halman, 2003).

Wilson (2000) defined volunteering as any activities in which an individual invest his/her own time freely with the primary aim of benefiting others. It is usually without payment negotiation and also not obligatory, but however takes place within the context of an organization (Dekker & Halman, 2003). Even though there is no negotiation of payment, volunteers are not precluded from whatsoever benefit that comes out from the work (Vohra & Bathini, 2014). Volunteering covers a wide spectrum of activities, which could be influenced by different and self-efficacy belief traits, and values. To further bring the term to light, it is pertinent to consider the action of volunteering in two perspectives; prosocial or helping perspective and delegation involvement perspective (Vohra & Bathini, 2014). They however noted that volunteering activity can involve both helping and delegation involvement perspectives.



### **Co-worker Support**

Co-worker support involves assisting one's co-worker. It has to do with employee's willingness to help members of the organization tackle difficulties or challenges encountered by colleague in the course of their job task (Boundenghan *et al.*, 2012). Help is seen as various kind of assistance that is directed towards the nature of identified problem. Helping behaviour is a type of prosocial behaviour in which employee in the workplace goes beyond his/her way to render assistance to co-workers in the organization, ostensibly, to ensure successful execution and completion of their jobs (Organ 1988). Helping co-workers adds value not only to group or peer performance but also contributes towards effectiveness of the organization and employees, own well-being. When employees in the workplace involve themselves in such act, they boost the quantity and quality of peer performance (Podsakoff, Ahearne, & Mackenzie, 1997), enhance performance among group of employees in the workplace (Bachrach, Powell, Collins, & Richey, 2006).

Borman and Motowidlo (1993) add that employee engagement in helping behaviour also increase the organization's competitive advantages and enjoy high levels of association satisfaction for themselves (Hoption, 2016), Turnispeed (2002) argued that the tendency for an employee to voluntarily reach out to other coworkers in the workplace to assist them complete their assigned tasks has vital ethical component, in that the notion of being good stems from employees, values and ethics. Efforts have been made by researches in determining possible factors which can either promote or threaten the possibility of employee engaging in helping act (Deckop, Cirka, & Andersson, 2003; Tang *et al.*, 2008). Meanwhile, prior studies by scholars address various factors, capable of promoting employee helping behaviour, including intrinsic and prosocial motives (Tang *et al.*, 2008), affirmative treatment by coworkers (Deckop *et al.*, 2003), group cohesion and cooperation (Liang, Shih, & Chiang, 2015; Ng & Vandyne, 2005).

### **Delegation and Employee Prosocial Behaviour**

Delegation as a dimension of workplace democracy could be taken to be a cardinal factor which gives encouragement to employees in the workplace, enabling individuals to undertake extra role activities beyond their job description. As earlier noted, delegation is the estate where employee working in an environment feels the presence of strong connection among coworkers in that work environment (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). Delegation is premised on the notion that an employee comprehends how to make good relationship with others. It involves exchanging mutual obligation and commitments that make affiliation between parties. These values steer employee's sense of being member of the group and as such, have interconnectedness with others in the workplace as well as build their soul and spirit (Haryokusomo, 2015). Sheep (2006) in his research submitted that delegation is cardinal to employee's work performance with presence of high-level cooperation among employees.

Employees will normally have a deep connection with others, and that will enhance common internal feelings and care for each other (Soha, Osman, Salahuddin, Abdulkahi, and Ramlee, 2016). Milliman *et al.* (2003) pointed out that this delegation dimension of workplace democracy occurs at the group level of human behaviour and therefore involved social interaction between and among employees in the workplace. Agreeing to the position of

Ashmos & Duchon (2000) and Milliman *et al.* (2003), contend that delegation is anchored on the belief that employees see themselves as connected entities and that there is the existence of a relationship between one's inner self and the inner self of other employees.

According to McMillian and Chavis (1987) delegation is "a feeling that members have of belonging and being important to each other and a shared faith that members need will met by their group commitment. A consistent finding on delegation is that it contributes to employee's well-being, for instance, improved life satisfaction, and reduced feeling of isolation (Prezza, Amici, Roberti, & Tedeschi, 2001). From there expressions, employees in the workplace with a high level of delegation are more likely to engage in prosocial behaviour, which has to do with the willingness to help coworkers, protect colleagues, and/ promote the welfare of others (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1990). Drawing from the assertion of Schwartz & Bilsky (1990), the prosocial behaviour which employees practice in the workplace can easily prosper them to make some discretionary contributions tailored towards helping their coworkers and by extension the organization beyond their duty call (Li, Liang, & Grant, 2010). Supporting the position of Li *et al.* (2010), Manion and Bartholomew (2004) posited that when there is the existence of delegation in the workplace, employees and groups will be characterized by members commitment, formation of consensus, inclusivity, a sense of safety and a contemplative nature which will evolve environment of mutual trust thereby encouraging employees to devote themselves in helping others and the organization. From the foregoing discourse, the study hypothesized thus:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between delegation and whistleblowing in the hospitality sector in Port Harcourt.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between delegation and volunteering in the hospitality sector in Port Harcourt.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between delegation and co-worker support in the hospitality sector in Port Harcourt

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted the cross-sectional research survey design. Primary data was generated through structured questionnaire. The population of the study was 1674 employees of 11 selected hotels in Port Harcourt. The sample size was also drawn using the Krejcie and Morgan (1980) sample size determination table. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient. The tests were carried out at a 0.05 significance level.

## **DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

Table 1 below shows the result of correlation matrix obtained for delegation and Measures of employee prosocial behaviour. Also displayed in the table is the statistical test of significance (p - value).



**Table 1 Correlations Matrix for Delegation and Measures of Employee Prosocial Behaviour**

			Delegation	Whistle Blowing	Volunteering	Co-Worker Support
Spearman's rho	Delegation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.731**	.618**	.816**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	268	268	268	268
	Whistle Blowing	Correlation Coefficient	.731**	1.000	.767**	.696**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
		N	268	268	268	268
	Volunteering	Correlation Coefficient	.618**	.767**	1.000	.628**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
		N	268	268	268	268
	Co-Worker Support	Correlation Coefficient	.816**	.696**	.628**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	268	268	268	268

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

Source: SPSS 23.0 data Output, 2023

Table 1 demonstrates the test for the next three previously postulated hypotheses:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** To ascertain the relationship between delegation and whistle blowing in the hospitality sector in Port Harcourt.

The result in Table 1 showed that a strong positive relationship exists between delegation and whistle blowing in the hospitality sector in Port Harcourt. The *rho* value 0.731 indicates the strength and magnitude of this relationship which answers the research question seven. Also, the relationship is significant at  $p = 0.000 < 0.01$ , therefore, based on these empirical findings, the previously stated bivariate null hypothetical statement is hereby rejected and the alternate is accepted as the study finds that: There is a significant relationship between delegation and whistle blowing in the hospitality sector in Port Harcourt.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** To establish the relationship between delegation and volunteering in the hospitality sector in Port Harcourt.

The result in Table 1 revealed that a strong positive relationship exists between delegation and volunteering in the hospitality sector in Port Harcourt. The *rho* value 0.618 indicates the strength and magnitude of this relationship which answers the research question eight. Also, the relationship is significant at  $p = 0.000 < 0.01$ , therefore, based on these empirical findings, the previously stated bivariate null hypothetical statement is hereby rejected and the alternate is accepted as the study finds that: There is a significant relationship between delegation and volunteering in the hospitality sector in Port Harcourt.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** To examine the relationship between delegation and co-worker support in the hospitality sector in Port Harcourt.

The result in Table 1 specifies that a strong positive relationship exists between delegation and co-worker support in the hospitality sector in Port Harcourt. The *rho* value 0.816 indicates the strength and magnitude of this relationship which answers the research question nine. Also, the relationship is significant at  $p= 0.000 < 0.01$ , therefore, based on these empirical findings, the previously stated bivariate null hypothetical statement is hereby rejected and the alternate is accepted as the study finds that: There is a significant relationship between delegation and co-worker support in the hospitality sector in Port Harcourt.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The first, second and third hypotheses sought to examine the relationship between delegation and employee prosocial behaviour. It was hypothesized that there is no significant relationship between delegation and employee prosocial behaviour. These hypotheses were tested using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Technique. Data analysis exposed that there is a positive and significant relationship between delegation and employee prosocial behaviour.

Our findings corroborate the findings by Boyd, Nowell, Yang, & Hano, (2017) who investigated sense of community, sense of delegation responsibility, and public service motivation as predictors of employee well-being and engagement in public service organization. The result revealed that sense of delegation responsibility is a more powerful predictor of employee engagement compared with public service motivation and sense of community. Concurrently, sense of delegation more strongly predicts employee well-being compared with public service motivation and sense of delegation responsibility. The findings bring additional light and clarification to the predictive power of public service motivation on employee perceptions and behavior, and they demonstrate that delegation experiences have utility in public service settings.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The idea which necessitated this study was to examine the relationship between collective bargaining and employee prosocial behaviour in the hospitality sector in Port Harcourt. From the data generated and analyzed, it was empirically discovered that a strong positive and significant relationship between workplace democracy and employee prosocial behaviour in the hospitality sector in Port Harcourt. Based on results and the findings of the present study, our study revealed that as joint consultation, collective bargaining and delegation increases, it increases the employee prosocial behaviour in the hospitality sector in Port Harcourt.

Therefore, the study recommends that the study also recommends that collective bargaining outcomes should be strictly adhered by organizational managers in order to instigate employee psychological attachment hence prosocial behaviour in the form of volunteering and co-worker support.

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