JOMAID/2025/AU_9.2.3

ASSESSMENT OF WORK RESPONSIBILITY AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN DAURA LEATHER CLUSTER OF KATSINA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated the connection between work responsibility and employee performance in the Daura leather cluster of Katsina state in Nigeria. *A cross sectional survey research design was adopted to study the population of employees and a sample was determined using the formula by Cochran (1977). Due to the absence of a sampling frame, convenience sampling technique was used to select the sample. The data were collected using questionnaire with the help of research assistants. The data were analyzed using SPSS, whereby factor analysis was done to validate the measurement constructs and regression analysis was done to determine the effect of the predictor variables of employee performance and to test the hypotheses formulated. The result of the study found a positive and significant effect between the independent variables of delegation of authority, and empowerment on employee performance. Delegation of authority was found to be the best predictor of employee performance* in Daura leather cluster of Katsina state in Nigeria *which explained 23% of the variance. The study recommended that management should encourage employees' performance through delegation of authority (autonomy) which increases degree of effort and interest in attaining assigned task for the success of the organisations in the cluster and through empowerment (participation) by allowing them to use their initiatives and creativity in decision making and problem-solving towards achieving the objectives of the organisation..*

Keywords: Responsibility, Delegation of authority, Leather cluster, Performance.

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Introduction

Globalisation and rapid technological change have intensified competitive pressures on organisations, requiring them to become increasingly flexible, adaptive, and performance-oriented. In this context, employee performance has emerged as a critical determinant of organisational effectiveness, particularly in labour-intensive industries such as leather production, which encompasses tanneries, artisanal workshops, and manufacturers of leather and leather-related products. These enterprises rely heavily on human effort, skills, and discretionary behaviour to meet quality standards, respond to market demands, and sustain competitiveness.

In Nigeria, the leather industry remains a strategic sector with significant potential for employment generation, value addition, and export earnings. Leather clusters in Katsina State, especially the Daura leather cluster, play an important role in this regard due to their proximity to transnational markets and access to abundant hides and skins from cattle, sheep, and goats. However, despite this strategic advantage, the Daura cluster has continued to experience challenges related to low productivity, quality concerns, limited innovation, and declining competitiveness, which ultimately reflect weaknesses in employee performance (Umar *et al.*, 2015).

Employee performance refers to the set of behaviours and actions that contribute to the attainment of organisational goals (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997). It encompasses task performance, contextual performance, adaptive performance, and counterproductive work behaviours. Prior research suggests that performance is influenced not only by skills and resources but also by motivational and structural factors, including the degree of responsibility, autonomy, and authority granted to employees (Danlami & Abu-Abdissamad, 2019; Hamdan *et al.*, 2015).

Responsibility as a motivational mechanism involves granting employees discretionary authority, participation in decision-making, and the freedom to apply initiative and judgment in their work. It is commonly operationalized through practices such as delegation of authority and employee empowerment. While some scholars view empowerment as a subset of participation, others conceptualize it as a distinct construct reflecting psychological autonomy, competence, and impact (Daft, 2022; Dahie *et al.*, 2016)..

Researchers are still investigating whether responsibility as a motivation to employee through delegation of authority and empowerment consistently results to fast solutions to difficult organisational problems (Hamdan *et al.*, 2015). This is the focus of this study as it relates to the activities of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the Daura leather cluster of Katsina state, Nigeria. The economic gateway nature of Daura leather cluster of Katsina state in Nigeria as a border market and with high number of MSMEs in leather and leather related products such as shoes, bags, belts, etc calls for some delegation of authority and empowerment to subordinates to help improve performance and make up for some of the myriad of problems already facing the leather industry which is affecting its performance such as inadequate financing, infrastructural deficiencies, poor sanitation, poor quality, outdated technology, etc .of which Daura cluster is inclusive as enumerated by the Nigerian Institute of Leather and Science Technology (NILEST), Zaria in its Bulletin (NILEST, 2024).

The importance of the leather clusters of the leather industry to the Nigerian economy cannot be overemphasized. Their operations have resulted in Gross Domestic Products (GDP) growth, employment generation, (MSMEs) creation, Greenfields and technological transfers (NILEST, 2024; Umar *et al.*, 2015). According to Muhammed and Yunana (2014); Kolako and Moreki, (2011), the leather industry used to be the second highest contributor to Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings (revenue) after oil. Therefore, Nigeria's desire to attain a $1Trillion economy cannot be realized without improved performance in the leather industry (Shagaya, 2025; Okeke, 2024).

Statement of the Problem.

Despite the strategic importance of the Daura leather cluster, customers have increasingly expressed dissatisfaction with locally produced leather goods due to issues such as poor quality, outdated designs, lack of standardisation, and low competitiveness (Umar *et al.*, 2015; Okeke, 2024; NILEST, 2024). These challenges have contributed to a shift in consumer preference toward imported leather products. This has led to more patronage of imported foreign leather goods than the ones locally made (NILEST, 2024). Employees within the cluster argue that their ability to respond effectively to customer needs is constrained by limited delegation of authority and insufficient empowerment. They report delays in decision-making due to the need for managerial approval and restrictions on the use of personal initiative and creativity (Thomas *et al.*, 2018). In contrast, owners and managers contend that employees are adequately authorized and empowered to perform their duties. This divergence in perceptions suggests a structural and managerial problem whose impact on employee performance remains unclear. This controversy needs to be investigated.

In addition to these practical gaps, existing empirical studies on delegation of authority and empowerment are limited in the Nigerian context and have largely focused on sectors such as banking and general SMEs rather than leather manufacturing clusters (Thomas *et al.*, 2018; Timothy & Abubakar, 2013;). Furthermore, prior findings are inconsistent, and few studies have examined delegation of authority and empowerment simultaneously as dimensions of responsibility motivation in the literature. These empirical and contextual gaps necessitate a focused investigation of the relationship between delegation of authority, empowerment, and employee performance in the Daura leather cluster. It is on this note that, this study sees it as relevant to examine the effect of delegation of authority and empowerment on employees' performance of Daura leather cluster of Katsina state in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The study's main objective is to determine the extent to which responsibility affects employee performance in Daura leather cluster of Katsina state in Nigeria, while, the specific objectives are to:

i. Examine the extent to which delegation of authority affects employee performance in Daura leather cluster of Katsina state in Nigeria.
ii. Identify the extent to which empowerment affects employee performance in Daura leather cluster of Katsina state in Nigeria.

Hypotheses of the Study

The study formulated the following hypotheses for testing.

i. There is no significant effect of delegation of authority on employee performance in Daura leather cluster of Katsina state in Nigeria.
ii. There is no significant effect of empowerment on employee performance in Daura leather cluster of Katsina state in Nigeria.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Performance

Aguinis (2023) defines performance as the measurable outcome of employees' work behaviours, actions, and results that contribute to the attainment of individual, team, and organisational goals Employee performance also refers to the set of work-related behaviours and actions through which individuals contribute to the attainment of organisational goals (Robbins & Coulter, 2021; Borman & Motowidlo, 1997). Unlike outcome-based definitions that emphasize results, behavioural conceptualisations focus on what employees actually do in their roles, thereby offering a more precise basis for assessment and managerial intervention (Daft, 2022). Performance is multidimensional, typically comprising task performance (core job activities), contextual performance (extra-role behaviours that support the organisational environment), adaptive performance (adjustment to change), and counterproductive work behaviour (actions that harm the organisation). These dimensions are influenced by employees' knowledge, skills, and motivation (Robbins & Coulter, 2021; Charbonnier, 2012). Consequently, organisations increasingly rely on both financial and non-financial performance indicators, with the latter particularly relevant in labour-intensive sectors where behavioural quality directly affects output and customer satisfaction (Onwubiko et al., 2024).

Responsibility

Yin et al. (2023) describe responsibility in organisations as an individual's internalized obligation to perform assigned duties effectively and accept accountability for the consequences of work-related decisions and actions. However, Brees et al. (2022) argue that accountability involves employees' perceived obligation to provide explanations for their behaviours and performance outcomes and to accept evaluation by others within the organisation. Similarly, Hamdan et al. (2015) view responsibility as waiving some administrative levels of powers and authorities for lower functional levels to help them in completing quests in order to provide services easily and rapidly for customers and beneficiaries. In their postulations, Khan et al.

(2024) posit that responsibility is an employee feeling of (a) control over the job to be performed, (b) awareness of the context in which the work is performed, (c) accountability for personal work output, (d) shared responsibility for unit and organisational performance, and (e) equity in the rewards based on individual and collective performance.

Employees' responsibility usually embedded in delegation of authority and empowerment has widely been recognized as an essential contributor to organisational success with many authors observing a direct relationship between the level of employees' delegation of authority and empowerment and employees' performance, employees' job satisfaction and employees' commitment (Hamdan, *et al.*, 2015). This study aligns with the views of Khan, et al. (2024), given that employees responsibility entails efficient and effective use of organisational resources by ensuring quality output and striving to meet predefined goals as suggested by Diab (2017) through the application of its various dimensions in the workplace.

Dimensions of Responsibility

Scholars and researchers have usually referred to two dimensions to connote the facets of employee responsibility in organisations (Aguinis, 2023; Griffin, 2023; Armstrong & Taylor, 2023).

Delegation of authority: Robbins and Coulter (2021) define delegation as the assignment of authority to another person to carry out specific activities, thereby empowering employees to make decisions related to their work. Delegation is the assignment of decision-making authority to lower-level employees, allowing organisations to become more flexible and responsive (Daft, 2022). Delegation of authority refers to the transfer of responsibility and sufficient authority from a superior to a subordinate to enable the latter to make decisions and carry out assigned duties effectively within defined limits (Griffin, 2023). In most modern organisations, delegation of authority is regarded as an important managerial strategy for improving employee performance because it empowers employees, facilitates faster decision-making, and increases job ownership and accountability (Yukl & Gardner, 2020). Accordingly, Armstrong and Taylor (2023) define delegation of authority as, when a supervisor gives a subordinate the discretion to make a decision.

Scholars such as Daft (2022) contend that, for delegation of authority to be effective, the process of delegation must be explored. Al-Bori and Al-Ameri (2025) argue that delegation of authority involves four stages to be effective, viz; (a) determining the results expected from a position, (b) assigning tasks to the position, (c) delegating authority for accomplishing these tasks and (d) holding the person in that position responsible for the accomplishment of the tasks. Delegation of authority is viewed by scholars and researchers as a motivational factor that makes employee feel valued that could lead to an employee feeling of empowerment (Armstrong & Taylor, 2023; Yukl & Gardner, 2020).

Empowerment: Daft (2022) sees empowerment as allowing employees' to use their initiative and creativity in solving organisational problems in order to enhance performance. It has also been suggested that as a dimension of responsibility motivation, empowerment could enable employees' to use their creativity and initiative to enhance performance (Berlian *et al.*, 2025). Employee empowerment refers to the entrustment of power and responsibility from higher levels in the organisational hierarchy to lower level employees, especially the power to make decisions (Khan *et al.*, 2024). Qasem and Shahkarami (2024) view employees' empowerment as the allocation and assignment of extra powers to the employees working in an organisation. To Aguinis (2023), empowerment means that, employees, managers or teams at all levels in the organisation are given the power to make decisions without asking their superiors for permission.

In contemporary organisations, Duffour and Asante (2025) and Onwubiko et al. (2024) state that empowerment can enhance the responsibilities as well as motivation of employees in their routine work, improve satisfaction level, quality of services, employees' loyalty and productivity. Moreover, Suleman et al. (2025) posit that, empowerment gives employee a feeling of self respect that is worth a lot and ultimately increases the productivity and quality of products and reduces employee turnover. Generally, empirical studies have also shown that responsibility dimensions have effect on employee performance in organisations (Al-Bori & Al-Ameri 2025; Riak & Wanyonyi, 2025; Griffen, 2023).

Empirical Studies

Al-Bori and Al-Ameri (2025) was a study on delegation of authority on employees' performance of some selected Yemeni Banks. This descriptive analytical study was carried out across 322 bank employees and the study found that delegation of authority positively and significantly impacted overall employee performance. Administrative, technical, and decision-making delegation dimensions were significant predictors, although financial delegation did *not* show significant relationship.

Sang (2018) was a study on the effect of delegation on performance of tea factories in Kapsabet region, Kenya. The data were obtained by giving questionnaire to 176 employees which represents 30% of the study population. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics: percentages, means, frequencies and standard deviation. Karl Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the effect of employee delegation on performance at 95% confidence interval. The study found a significant relationship between delegation of authority and employees' performance. However, the study did not mention how the sample size was arrived at as the 30% used was not scientifically justified.

A study by Thomas, et al. (2018) on delegation of authority on employees' performance: An empirical evidence from Ikeja division, Lagos, sought to investigate the effect of delegation in SMEs. The instrument of data collection in the study was the questionnaire which was administered on 300 respondents representing the sample size. Descriptive statistics and regression analysis were employed to analyze the obtained data from the respondents. The findings of the study showed that delegation of authority has a significant effect on employees effectiveness. The study is however limited to be generalized due to the fact that, the study's population is unknown and the fact that validity test in the study was not carried out and compared with acceptable thresholds.

Suleman et al. (2025) which was a literature was on Nigerian Public/Private Sector. A survey examining the effect of delegation of authority on employee performance concluded that delegation is essential for accomplishing organisational objectives and enhances employee performance and productivity. Though, the paper was conceptual in nature, there was no underpinning theory which could have better guided the investigation.

Hamdan, et al. (2015) investigated the relationship between delegation of authority and employees' performance at great Irbid municipality in Jordan using a sample size of 200 respondents. Questionnaire instrument was used to generate data for the study. The statistical tools used were means, standard deviation and T values to establish the relationship between the variables. The findings revealed the existence of a statistically significant and positive relationship between delegation of authority and employees' performance. The study is limited to be generalized because the actual population was not ascertained and the determination of sample size was not statistically explored nor was the allocation of the questionnaire to respondents based on any scientific sampling method. However, studies such as Ajlouni and Effendi (2025) and Shikami and Keino (2017) found an insignificant relationship between the variables.

Riak and Wanyonyi (2025) in a study on Public Universities in South Sudan reported a strong positive correlation between employee empowerment initiatives and employee performance, indicating that empowered employees exhibited significantly higher motivation and productivity. However, the study failed to reveal whether the items in the instrument were either self developed, adopted or adapted from previous studies and no validity or reliability tests were carried out to ensure consistency.

Diab (2017) was a study on the impact of employee empowerment and organisational performance in Jordanian ministry of health. The data were collected through questionnaire from sample of 150 employees. Regression statistical tool was used to analyze the data. The results showed significant relationship between employees' empowerment and performance. However, the study did not mention the total population nor was the sampling technique and how the sample size was determined were explained.

Berlian et al. (2025) in a recent study on service industry workforce specifically those employed in hospitality, modern retail, banking, telecommunications, and healthcare organisations found that employee empowerment significantly improved work performance both directly and indirectly via mechanisms like job crafting. However, the study failed to mention the population of employees and how the questionnaire was distributed among the strata. Also, the use of purposive sampling is a limitation to the study's generalisability.

Sankar (2018) was a study on employee empowerment, work performance and its allied factors among teaching and non-teaching women staff in Puducherry, India. Questionnaire was distributed to 100 women employees as respondents to generate the data for the study. Pearson correlation and multiple regressions were used to analyze the data. The results of the study found a significant relationship between empowerment and employees' performance. However, the study is limited to be generalized due to the use of convenience sampling which is not a probability method and the sample size of only 100 women respondents was not justified nor was the actual population mentioned.

Timothy and Abubakar (2013) investigated the impact of empowerment on service quality in Nigerian banking industry using a sample size of 200 employees. Questionnaire was used to generate data for the study. Simple regression analysis was used to analyze the data. The result showed that employees' empowerment leads to higher levels of performance (service quality). However, the study failed to conduct normality and reliability tests and the items were neither said to be developed, adapted or adopted from previous studies. However, studies such as Duffour and Asante (2025) and Qasemi and Shahkarami (2024) found insignificant relationship between empowerment and employee performance. Since empirical studies have suggested or shown the importance of responsibility motivation dimensions in the workplace, it is logical therefore to anchor this study on a theory in its investigation.

Theoretical Framework

Many theories have been propounded by scholars to explain the relationship between responsibility and employees performance in organisations. However, this study is anchored on three complementary motivational theories as postulated by Robbins and Coulter (2021). First, Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) posits that autonomy, competence, and relatedness are fundamental psychological needs that drive intrinsic motivation and performance. Delegation and empowerment satisfy autonomy and competence needs, thereby strengthening responsibility motivation and enhancing performance. Second, McClelland's Needs Theory (1965) emphasizes the need for achievement and the need for power as drivers of behaviour. Delegation and empowerment align with these needs by allowing employees to influence outcomes and pursue standards of excellence. Third, Herzberg's Motivation–Hygiene Theory (1959) identifies responsibility, achievement, and recognition as intrinsic motivators that promote satisfaction and performance. Delegation and empowerment therefore operate as motivational factors rather than merely administrative tools. Together, these theories provide a coherent explanatory foundation for examining how responsibility-based practices influence employee performance in the Daura leather cluster. Consequently, these theories are selected as the theoretical framework for this study.

Methodology

This study adopted the cross-sectional survey research method which enabled the researchers to collect detailed and factual information from the respondents at a point time. The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire and was administered on the respondents by the researchers and 3 research assistants. The questionnaire was filled by the respondents at their convenience and retrieved. The target population comprised employees of (MSMEs) operating within the Daura leather cluster that had participated in capacity-building programmes organized by the Nigerian Institute of Leather and Science Technology (NILEST), Zaria, and sponsored by the Katsina State Government. Although, official records indicated 142 registered MSMEs in Daura cluster under the Katsina State Enterprise Development Agency (KASEDA) and 170 MSMEs from Katsina State that participated in NILEST, Zaria trainings (without cluster disaggregation).

The absence of a comprehensive and disaggregated sampling frame made it impossible to determine the exact number of eligible employees. In line with established survey research practice for large or indeterminate populations (Research Advisors Table, 2006; Cochran, 1977; Krejcie & Morgan, 1970), a sample size of 384 respondents was determined using the sample size formula by Cochran (1977) as thus: n0=z2p(1−p)e2n0=e2z2p(1−p) where *z* is the z-score (e.g., 1.96 at 95% confidence), *p* is an estimated proportion (often 0.5 when unknown), and *e* is the desired margin of error (set at 0.05). Substituting these values into the formula: n=(0.05)2(1.96)2(0.5)(0.5)=0.00253.8416×0.25=0.00250.9604=384.16

This sample size exceeds the minimum recommended threshold for large populations and enhances the statistical power and generalisability of the findings (Sekaran, 2003). Respondents were selected using convenience sampling due to the informal nature of the cluster and the lack of a complete employee register. Umar et al. (2015) in his study on the same Daura cluster faced the same challenge but adopted a sample size of 147 respondents for their study.

The study adapted the delegation of authority survey by Hamdan et al. (2015), empowerment motivation by Indranil (2018) and performance items from Charbonnier (2012) and used the five – point Likert-scale to enable the respondents indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the items in the questionnaire. To ensure validity of the instrument, the study made use of results obtained from the factor analysis loadings with none of the items having a loading of less than.70 based on the test of validation of instrument (Hair *et al.,* 2010). On reliability, this study conducted a pilot study to test the efficacy of the instrument on employees of Katsina leather cluster of Katsina state in Nigeria who were not included in the main study. The results of the reliability test obtained showed performance with reliability coefficient of 0.836, delegation of authority .814 and empowerment with .827, all above the Cronbach alpha of .70 as suggested by (Sekaran, 2003). The data for this study was analyzed through the statistical method of multiple regressions (Hair *et al.,* 2010) and used the Statistical Packages for Social

Sciences (SPSS) version 23 to process the data. The hypotheses were tested at 5% level of significance based on the study's model

Model Specification

The model for the study is expressed as: $PFM_i = + + +$

Where: is perceptional score for performance by respondent, is the intercept or constant of regression equation, is the coefficient of the independent variable. is the perceptional score of delegation of authority by respondent , is the perceptional score of empowerment by respondent , is the random error associated with the perceptional score of respondent

Data Presentation And Analysis

Multicollinearity test was conducted to ensure that the data through the constructs was heterogeneous and suitable before carrying out regression analysis (Hair et al., 2010). In the multicollinearity test, the Tolerance Value (TV) and the Variance Inflator Factor (VIF) were examined to detect multicollinearity problem. Hair *et al.* (2010) suggested that multicollinearity is a concern if TV is less than .10 and VIF value is higher than 10. Table 1 shows the VIF values and the tolerance values for the independent variables.

Table 1: Tolerance and VIF Values of the latent constructs

	Collinearity Statistics	
Variable	**Tolerance**	**VIF**
	.	
Delegation	.782	1.423
Empowerment	.724	1.567

a Dependent Variable: Performance

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The result in Table 1 showed that multicollinearity does not exist among the independent variables because the TV values are higher than .10 and VIF values are less than 10 (Hair et al,, 2010). The results indicated that the study does not have any multicollinearity problem. Consequently, the multiple regression analysis was carried out with results as indicated in Table 2.

Table 2: Multiple Regression Result between Delegation of authority and Empowerment on Employees' Performance in Daura leather cluster of Katsina state in Nigeria

Model	UnStandardized Coefficients B	Std Error	Standardized Beta	T	Sig.	Collinearity statistics Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	0.842	0.124		6.79	.000		
Delegation	0.226	0.031	0.418	7.29	.000	.782	1.423
Empowerment	0.219	0.030	0.403	7.30	.000	.724	1.567
R	.764						
R Square	.584						
Adj R Square	.582						
F-Statistics	37.76						
D W	1.934						

Source: Field work, 2025.

Results

Table 2 shows the R value of 76% which confirms that a strong relationship exist between the variables in the model. And the model jointly explained 58% of the variance of employees' performance in Daura leather cluster of Katsina state in Nigeria. Also, the significant F – test revealed that, the independent variables in the model significantly predicted the dependent variable with F test result of 33.76 and the Durbin Watson (DW) of 1.934 shows the absence of serial correlation. With the variance of employees' performance determined, the hypotheses of the study can now be tested.

Hypotheses Testing

The first hypothesis (Ho_1) of the study states that, there is no significant effect between delegation of authority and employee performance in Daura leather cluster of Katsina state in Nigeria. Table 2 shows that, the multiple regression analysis between delegation of authority and employees' performance is significant, i.e. Beta = .226, p = .000 at .05 level. Therefore, the research hypothesis (Ho_1) is rejected. This means that, there is a positive and significant effect between delegation of authority and performance since the p-value is less than .05. This is in line with the outcome of the study by Thomas, *et al,* (2018) who concluded that, delegation of authority has significant effect on workers performance in SMEs from Ikeja Division of Lagos state, Nigeria which is supported by theoretical postulations in the discussion of findings.

The second hypothesis (Ho_2) states that, there is no significant effect between empowerment and employee performance in Daura leather cluster of Katsina state in Nigeria. Table 2 shows that, the multiple regression analysis between empowerment and employees' performance is significant i.e. Beta = .219, p = .000. at .05 level. Therefore, the research hypothesis (Ho_2) is rejected. This means that, there is a positive and significant effect between empowerment and performance since the p-value is less than .05. This finding agrees with that of Dahie et al. (2016) who confirmed that there is significance effect between employees’ empowerment and employees’ performance at telecommunication firms in Mogadishu-Somalia which is supported by theoretical postulations in the discussion of findings.

Discussion of Findings

The study sought to empirically establish the effect of delegation of authority and empowerment on employee performance in Daura leather cluster of Katsina state in Nigeria. The results in Table 2 obtained from the testing of the hypotheses of the study revealed significant and positive effect ($\beta = .226$, $B = .418$, $p < .001$) between the independent variable of delegation of authority and the dependent variable of performance in Daura leather cluster of Katsina state in Nigeria. Thus, ($B = .418$) implies that, a one-unit increase in employee delegation of authority will lead to 0.418 improvements on performance. Therefore, the level of delegation of authority accorded an employee in Daura leather cluster of Katsina state in Nigeria has a significant effect on his/her level of performance. This is consistent with the theoretical postulations of Ryan and Deci (2000) and Herzberg (1959) that delegation of authority leads to employee satisfaction and increased performance by having a feeling of self advancement in the organisation which is consistent with the findings of (Al-Bori & Al-Ameri, 2025; Suleman et al., 2025). However, this contradicts with the findings of Ajlouni and Effendi (2025) and Shikami and Keino (2017) that found insignificant relationship between delegation of authority and performance levels. This may be due to the fact that, unlike formal corporate or public-sector organisations, the Daura leather cluster operates largely within an informal, decentralized, and resource-constrained setting, where managerial trust and delegated discretion may substitute for formalized control systems. In such environments, delegation may play a more salient motivational and coordination role, thereby strengthening its relationship with performance.

Empowerment was found to be positively and significantly associated with employee performance ($\beta = .219$, $B = .403$, $p < .001$). The value of ($B = .403$) indicates that employee who perceives higher levels of empowerment in terms of access to information, resources, participation, and perceived competence tend to perform better. This finding is consistent with need-achievement and motivation-hygiene theories, which emphasize recognition, achievement, and growth as drivers of performance (McClelland, 1965; Herzberg, 1959), and with empirical evidence reported by Riak and Wanyonyi (2025) and Berlian et al. (2025).

Prior studies have reported insignificant or weak relationships between empowerment and performance (Duffour & Asante, 2025; Qasemi & Shahkarami, 2024). One possible explanation for this divergence lies in differences in how empowerment is implemented. In some organisational contexts, empowerment initiatives may be symbolic or poorly supported by resources and authority, thereby limiting their practical impact. In contrast, within the Daura leather cluster, empowerment may be more grounded or embedded in day-to-day operational autonomy and skill utilisation, thereby making its effect on performance more visible.

Even though delegation of authority exhibited a slightly higher unstandardized coefficient than empowerment ($\beta = .226$ versus $\beta = .219$), this difference is marginal and should not be overstated. Rather than indicating substantive superiority of one construct over the other, the results suggest that both delegation of authority and empowerment function as complementary mechanisms through which responsibility motivation enhances employee performance. In the context of the Daura leather cluster, where formal administrative structures are weak and resource allocation is often inconsistent.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study concludes that delegation of authority and empowerment are critical managerial practices that contribute significantly to improved employee performance within the Daura leather cluster. The results further suggest that the informal and decentralized nature of the leather cluster makes these practices particularly effective because they facilitate flexibility, trust, operational autonomy, and rapid decision-making, which are essential for productivity in such a business environment. Therefore, based on the conclusion of this study, the following recommendations if implemented can improve the performance of employees in the Daura leather cluster of Katsina state in Nigeria.

Firstly, in view of the fact that, delegation of authority acts as a motivator in this study, management of Daura leather cluster of Katsina state in Nigeria should ensure that employees are delegated appropriate responsibilities and decision-making authority. This will enhance employees' sense of ownership, responsibility, and accountability, thereby improving their performance. Similarly, while delegating authority, management should clearly define roles, responsibilities, and expected outcomes in order to minimize ambiguity, reduce conflicts, and ensure that delegated authority contributes effectively to organisational goals.

Secondly, given that, empowerment makes employee feels a sense of achievement, management of Daura leather cluster of Katsina state in Nigeria should create an enabling work environment that empowers employee through access to relevant information, resources and training opportunities as empowered employees are more likely to perform effectively and contribute innovative ideas. In addition, management should adopt participatory management approaches that involve employees in problem-solving and operational decisions. Employee participation enhances commitment, motivation, and overall job performance which will lead to the attainment of organisational goals.

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