

# **EFFECTIVE EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION AND SERVICE DELIVERY IN EMBU COUNTY GOVERNMENT, KENYA**

**Maureen Muthoni Njuguna.**

Student, Master of Arts in Public Policy and Administration, Kenyatta University, Kenya.

**David Minja.**

Lecturer, Department of Public Policy and Administration, Kenyatta University, Kenya.

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## **ABSTRACT**

It was envisioned that devolution would take governance to the grassroots and enable an enhance employee participation in decisions making and over sighting which would potentiality translate to efficient utilization of resources as well as better, reliable and efficient public services to the citizens. With all these in place, it would be expected that Kenyans would have already started benefiting through improved service delivery in the counties. However, despite the fact that the creation of county governments ‘promised’ Kenyan citizens better lives ahead, citizens in Embu County are yet to obtain these benefits. The study aimed to evaluate the impact on service delivery in Embu County Governments in Kenya from employee consultation and employee delegation on service delivery. The study was guided by goal setting theory and two factor theory. Descriptive research design was used. Primary data was collected through the use of questionnaire. Data was analysed through descriptive methods. Inferential analysis was done to show the correlation between variables. Data were presented in tables and figures. Ethics were considered by ensuring that confidentiality was maintained and citations were done. The result indicated employees are regularly reassigned, service

quality is connected to employee consultation levels, and the county has formed positive relationships with its clients. Employee consultation participation was specifically related to the delivery of services in a number of areas, including productivity and employee satisfaction. The results indicate that management did not give workers the authority to make decisions about how their jobs were handled, that working conditions were not conducive to employee involvement, and that employee job rotation was not regular in all departments. The study concludes that relationship between employee consultation and service delivery in the County was positive and significant. The study concludes that the relationship between employee delegation and service delivery in the county was positive and significant. Based on study results, the study concluded that the relationship between joint decision making and the service delivery in the county was positive and significant. The study concluded that the relationship between collective bargaining and service delivery was positive and significant.

**Keywords:** Employee Consultations, Participation and Service Delivery.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In many global and national government initiatives, the strengthening of service delivery networks is a top priority as a way to improve the lives of people (Hout, 2009). With the increasingly dynamic global service delivery context, national government systems are moving away from relying on ordinary citizens' responses to more robust systems. The global community recognizes that service delivery results will not be further improved without a framework solution, and relevant sustainability targets such as the Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) of the United Nation (UN) for 2015 will not be reached.

Among other nations, the United States of America (Brazil), India and the United Kingdom have effectively practiced the decentralization of government powers to the local level. International research show that this decentralization of powers impacts the delivery of services to people. However, in providing services to people, these countries have accomplished productivity differently. In Brazil, for example, the Brazilian Workers Party won the municipal elections in 1989, local assemblies were formed to recommend, negotiate and select allocations and spending of financial resources for municipal investment. As such, public involvement has begun to contribute to the delivery of services to people throughout the region. In 1996, households with access to water facilities increased by 18 percent, urban wastewater expansion by 39 percent and public education children doubled (Cheema, 2007). Besley and Burgess (2002) also discovered in their research that decentralization made it easier for governmental responses to service delivery in India's federal government.

Employee participation has been described as a method that allows employees to have some control over their jobs and working circumstances, or as a process in which hierarchical managers and their subordinates share decision-making power (Zohoori, 2008). Another relevant description was made by Robinson *et al.*, (2004), argued that employee participation can be characterized as the positive attitude that a worker has towards the values of an organization. It encompasses, for example, diverse ways like participatory management, workplace democracy, representative involvement, empowerment, quality circles and employee ownership. While each of these proposals is unique, they have the belief that they will become healthier, committed to the business and happier with their jobs by empowering employees to decide on their impacts and increasing their autonomy and control on their working lives (Wagner, 2004).

The real purpose of participation systems, especially for individual workers, is to intensify work and to allow employees to accept ideas for leadership which are not in their interests. The effort to participate in non-union forms of interaction may also be linked to this (Singh, 2009). There is increasing evidence that loyalty to workers improves job efficiency, since the inputs will boost decision-making in quality (Miller & Monge; Markey 2006). Employee improvements due to staff

participation range from improved performance and productivity to lower scrap rates and higher satisfaction levels to customer satisfaction (Tamkin, 2003).

There are two types of employee participation: tangible and immaterial. Material participation refers to any forms of monetary (financial) involvement by employees in an organization, such as capital, profit, or benefit participation, or other forms of participation, such as stock options. Immaterial involvement has employees engaged in the information, coordination, and decision-making processes of the organization, where it is important to distinguish between types of legal co-determination at board level and additional participation voluntarily offered by management at the establishment level, such as participatory management, because employees share a substantial degree of decision-making power.

A study conducted in South Africa in support of Torke, Schyns and Looise (2015) on the relationship between employee engagement and service delivery found that direct involvement by decision-making and delegation was significantly linked to affective organizational engagement, whereas collective bargaining and consultation were found to be negatively associated with service delivery. However, Meyer *et al.*, (2012) research in Ghana showed that this type of engagement strongly influences service delivery and well-being of staff, turnover, absenteeism, as well as task and extra-role performance through joint decision making, delegation and collective bargaining. Such findings ultimately influence the efficiency of the company.

In Kenya, Kombo *et al.*, (2012) researched employee engagement and service delivery. Employee mediation, collective bargaining, and shared decision making were the independent variables. The study found that participatory decision-making is related to the direct engagement of stakeholders, as well as shared respect and respect for other parties in an organisation, resulting in enhanced service delivery. The relationship was found to be negative and negligible between employee consultation, collective bargaining and service delivery. Participative decision-making is one component of structural empowerment, according to the research, because it allows workers to participate in decision-making processes and so have control over decisions. Employee engagement would bring intrinsic / personal advantages, attitudes and behaviors, such as work satisfaction and decreased absenteeism, according to researchers (Daniels & Bailey 2017).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Development was intended to take governance to the grassroots and allow employee participation to be increased in decision-making and over-sighting, which would translate into productive use of resources as well as stronger, consistent and effective public services for people. With all these in place, it would be predicted that by enhancing service delivery in the counties, Kenyans would have already begun to benefit. However, despite the fact that Kenyan people live better ahead of

the development of the 'promised' county governments, people in Embu County have yet to receive these benefits (Mukabi, 2015).

The correlation between employee engagement and dedication at a bank in Kenya was investigated by Wachira (2013). The findings showed that employee engagement and loyalty to workers can be established through work satisfaction and employee-manager relationships. The goal of this earlier study is to determine the influence of employee participation in the provision of services in the county government and employee fulfillment at commercial banks. A research on the relationship between decision-making, employee engagement and staff morale in public institutions in Ghana was conducted by Addai (2013). The results of this research study indicate that workers engaging in different programs boost work satisfaction and increase the institution's dedication. A different background, which is service delivery in Embu County, was included in the current analysis.

A report on employee participation in the Malaysian private sector was conducted by Parasuraman, Kelly & Rathakrishnan (2013). The findings showed that in most organisations in Malaysia there was no genuine involvement by workers. Management, for the most part, implemented a system of employee engagement without consultation with unions. This study was carried out in a developed economy and therefore warranted future studies to further examine other countries where the role of employees and its effect on service delivery is less understood. The reviewed study presents the contextual gap and conceptual gap and these sets the pace to carry out a study on the effect of employee participation on service delivery in Embu County government, Kenya.

### **Objective of the Study**

- i) To establish the influence of employee consultation on service delivery in Embu County Governments in Kenya
- ii) To examine the influence of employee delegation on service delivery in Embu County Governments in Kenya

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theoretical Literature Review**

#### **Goal Setting Theory**

In 1960, Edwin Locke put forth the target description theory, arguing that the objective setting was primarily connected to success (Locke, 1968). The theory of setting goals is an analytical incentive concept based on claims that influence employees' behavior. The theory of goals postulates a strong correlation between success and target difficulty, with difficult goals producing far more effort than simple goals (Martin and Manning, 1995). This hypothesis indicates that action is

intended and that goals depend on the energies of employees in carrying out specific tasks (Locke & Latham, 1990). Accordingly, the Target Setting hypothesis is effective technique to maximize productivity through feedback, employee participation and engagement (Latham *et al.*, 2002). In 1960, Edwin Locke put forth the target description theory, arguing that the objective setting was primarily connected to success (Locke, 1968). The theory of setting goals is an analytical incentive concept based on claims that influence employees' behavior. The theory of goals postulates a strong correlation between success and target difficulty, with difficult goals producing far more effort than simple goals (Martin and Manning, 1995). This hypothesis indicates that action is intended and that goals depend on the energies of employees in carrying out specific tasks (Locke & Latham, 1990). Therefore, the target setting theory is effective technique for productivity improvement by feedback, participation and commitment of staff (Latham, 2002).

### **Employee Participation**

The participation of employees is defined as a worker engagement mechanism to allow employees to influence and participate in decision-making on issues affecting them where appropriate (Adler, 2008). While organizations promote employee participation as a means of ensuring improved efficiency, various faces are marred by the conceptualization of employee participation. The popular conceptualization, however, considers employee involvement as either direct or indirect in decision-making. Direct involvement is typically concerned with task-oriented employee engagement schemes, either by group or individual staff, and involves initiatives such as team briefings, recommendation schemes, collaboration, quality circles, and overall quality management (Markey, 2007). Direct involvement usually takes place at the organizations' lower levels (Marchington, 2005; Wilkinson *et al.*, 2010).

Works commissions, collective bargaining, traditional advisory boards, and staff representation on the boards of directors include forms of indirect staff involvement. These types differ from country to country, but the role of representation as a means of employee engagement is their main feature. Working councils are one of the most important forms of employee representation in Western European countries, such as Germany and the Netherlands. By comparison, collective bargaining and mutual consultation are the most common channels of indirect engagement in English-speaking nations, such as Australia, the United Kingdom and the USA (Markey, 2007).

However, according to Looise *et al.* (2011), both direct and indirect participation is necessary. Employee participation, both direct and indirect, they say, boosts motivation by making employees feel more welcomed and involved in the firm. Their self-esteem, job happiness, and collaboration with management can all improve. Reduced conflict and stress, increased commitment to goals, and better acceptance of change are all positive consequences that eventually lead to higher performance (Newstrom & Davis, 2004).

Buyaki (2012) claims that it is expected that government ministries in Kenya and departments and their employees can provide quality service in pursuit of their goals with the advent of Performance Contracting (PC). This clearly shows that employee engagement is a significant contribution to the success of government ministries and para-state organizations that are most relevant to health care institutions.

### **Employee Consultation on Service Delivery**

The Gallop Organization (2014) analyzed employee participation in 36 U.K. companies in 7,939 divisions. The results of the study showed that employee engagement by consultation was directly linked to the delivery of services in a variety of fields, such as efficiency, profitability and customer satisfaction. Harter *et al.*, (2015) funded the research. Harter evaluated employee engagement systems that affect 8,000 enterprises in UK with job performance impacts. Companies. The investigator noticed that increased employee consultation was subsequently directly linked to improved performance and higher wages.

The Corporate Leadership Board (2014) conducted a survey of 50,000 staff and found that 20 percent higher than their colleagues are most involved and committed staff. The survey by Sonnentag (2013) of employees from six government-owned companies in the UK showed that high employee involvement in the workplace is necessary to encourage employees to improve skills and also to take measures towards seeking solutions to employment problems. Another study has been developed by Watson Wyatt (2007) in 946 organisations, based in 22 countries. The findings have shown that employees are more likely than non-workers to succeed. Consultative engagement can, in principle, directly influence all staff with respect to their job practices, their company and their working conditions. This commitment is highly contingent on voluntary management decisions and is considered to be HRM activities (Kuye & Sulaimon, 2011).

Recent findings support the alleged relationship: Torka, Schyns, & Looise (2016) find that the direct involvement is significantly related to emotional organizational engagement and the meta-analysis performed by Meyer *et al.*, (2012) show that that this type of commitment has a major impact on employees' wellbeing and good health, turnover, absenteeism and work and extra-role performance. These results eventually affect the company's production. This research focuses on the connection between consultation and service delivery of the differences found in spatial, qualitative and conceptual gap.

### **Employee Delegation on Service Delivery**

Delegation is defined as a higher degree of subordinate participation in the spectrum of decision-making procedures (Yuki, 2012). While some research classify it as a distinct set of decision-making procedures, others consider it to be a type of participatory decision-making (PDM). Most

have maintained, however, that PDM is a method of power sharing, but that delegation is a kind of submission (Leana, 2006). The delegation's objective, according to Leana, is to increase individual autonomy rather than build democracy, i.e. participatory procedures. It's linked to a system that permits employees in a 'temporary authority' organizational ladder to make choices.

According to a Basir (2015) report, the delegation of workplace duties depends on the essence of the job and the relationship between staff, groups or divisions. Chaudhry (2012) found that the degree to which management assigns duties to subordinates in the United States of America is dictated by interpersonal interactions between superiors and subordinates at work. Delegated duties enhance the commitment of employees to work, job satisfaction and productivity, leading to improved organizational performance (Kumar, 2013).

The influence of employee engagement on service delivery was examined by Heller (2013). The study found that power distribution is a required condition for improving efficiency and satisfaction through employee involvement. For several reasons strength can play a role in the identification process: groups can use their power in order to obtain social value in an institution and thus improve their group status. These principles emphasize the importance in the current analysis of the effects of employee participation on the performance of government healthcare institutions in Kenya of considering delegative participation as a dimension.

Chen and Aryee (2011) found that delegations in the Western organization are perceived to be part of good leadership. Decision-taking delegations are one area of concern that covers the assignment and enhancement of the discretion and the authority to execute these tasks by granting subordinate responsibility for tasks (Leanna, 2016; Yukl, 2012). The delegation normally involves a shift of power from superior to subordinate according to the authors. In this sense, the subordinate is no longer a passive recipient and can accept or renegotiate a request. The delegation mechanism is therefore complicated and the investigation of the good circumstances has increased the focus on the effectiveness of the supervisor subordinates' role.

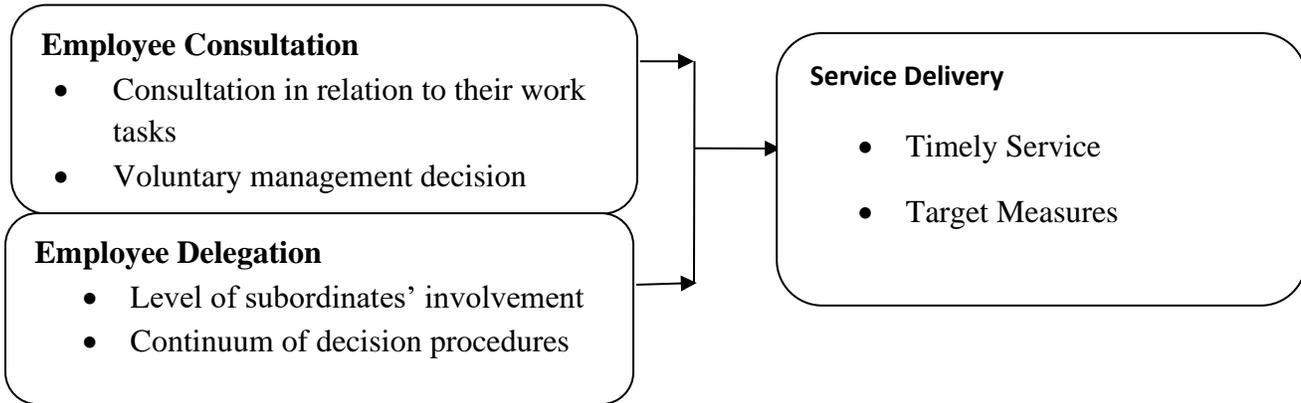
Delegations differ from other decision-making processes, such as consulting, in two ways, according to Leanna (2016): first, delegation involves decision-making by a subordinate rather than a subordinate or subordinate supervisors; and second, delegation emphasizes autonomy of decision-making subordinates. Interestingly, there is no research on the organizational efficiency of the delegation in view of the possible advantages and evidence of its widespread use. Study like Berg et al. (2013) the delegation found to be linked to both job satisfaction and performance findings.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual structure demonstrates how the various variables are interconnected.

**Independent Variables**

**Dependent Variable**



**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research used the descriptive survey design in order that employee participation on service delivery in the Embu County government, Kenya, can be accurately and systematically described. The Government of Embu County has several divisions that are seen as one and county employees are the research team. The total population was 2967 employees working in Embu County. Out of 2967 targeted respondents, 593 was the sample. The representative of workers was a sample size of 593 people (20% of the population), which Mugenda and Mogenda (2003) argued that 10 % to 30% of the research population are a fair representation of the study population. The key data collection tool for this study was standardized questionnaires, which are given to the selected workers in a subsequent process. The data collected was evaluated for general knowledge by means of a descriptive research approach. To define relationships and emerging trends, the data collected was then classified and analyzed. For clarification, the data was cleared and coded by assigning only one code per category for SPSS-based analysis. It was important to produce statistical measurements like frequencies and percentages. Using tables, the results were presented.

**RESULTS AND FINDINGS**

The study targeted 593 employees who constituted 2 ministers, 2 directors and 589 staff members working in various sections within the County. The response rate was 100% from the ministers, 100% from the directors and 77.4% (456 staffs) from the employees working in various departments. On average, a response rate of 92.47% was attained. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2013) these was an excellent response rate and the researcher was able to start analyzing data.

On gender, 63.3 percent of the Embu county employees are male while approximately 36.7 percent are female. On educational level, majority of the respondents had a degree as the highest level of

education (52.17%, 240). Certificate level was education level with the least number of the respondents (4.13%, 19). It was clearly evident that the employees working in the county understands the importance of employee participation in decision making and how this could improve service delivery within the County. On age brackets, majority of the respondents had 26-33 years and 34-41 years with 33.04% and 43.04% representation respectively. Generally, the study indicates that majority of the respondents had 26 to 41 years. On working Experience, majority of the employees 46.74% working in Embu county had worked in the county for 6-8 years, 30.22% had worked for 3-5 years, 16.96% had worked for more than 8 years and 6.09% had worked for less than 3 years. The results indicated that the respondents had adequate knowledge of the problem under investigation, as the targeted staff had the data helpful in achieving the study's objectives.

### **Employee Consultation and Service Delivery**

The findings on this section was on the level of employee consultations done by county management. The results are presented in Table 1.

*Table 1: Employee Consultations*

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Performance review is normally done frequently	1.37	.483
There are frequent Changes in staffing levels	1.63	.740
Outsourcing is done to the majority of departments	2.73	1.250
We are allowed to work overtime	2.79	1.215
Redeployment of staff is normally done frequently	4.79	.410
Training and development has been effectively practiced	3.79	.766
Suggestion schemes have been used in all departments	3.05	1.231
There has been surveys on attitude of employees	1.32	.745
Services quality is related to employee consultation level	4.52	.956
We have built a strong relationships with our clients	4.02	.584
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.001</b>	<b>.838</b>

The results indicates that there was a poor performance review which was scarcely done, there is hardly no frequent changes in staffing levels, respondents disagreed that outsourcing is done to the majority of departments, majority disagreed that overtime pay is allowed and no frequent surveys on the attitude of the employees was done as reflected in the means 1.37, 1.63, 2.73, 2.79 and 1.32

respectively. However, mean of 4.79, 4.52 and 4.02 indicated that there is frequent redeployment of employees, service quality is related to employee consultation levels and that the county has built a strong relationships with its client as evidenced by mean of 4.79, 4.52 and 4.02 respectively. Employee consultation and engagement in decision-making in the County was judged to be inadequate on average. (Average Mean=3.001, Std Deviation=0.838). It was clear that employee engagement by consultation was directly linked to the delivery of services in a variety of fields, such as efficiency and employee satisfaction. Harter *et al.*, (2015) supports the findings that increased employee consultation was subsequently directly related to improved performance and increased satisfaction level by employees.

The study results was also supported by the survey by Sonnentag (2013) that participation of employees in the workplace activities is greatly encouraged to improve skills and also to take measures towards seeking solutions to employment problems. It therefore evident that consultative engagement can, in principle, directly influence employees with respect to their job practices, their interests and their working conditions. These was echoed by Torka, Schyns, and Loise (2016) findings that the employee consultation is significantly related to service delivery.

**Employee Participation through Delegation and Service Delivery**

The findings in Table 2 presents results on employee participation through delegation and how it affected service delivery in Embu County government.

*Table 2 Employee Delegation and Service Deliver*

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Without reference to the immediate boss on one or more of the following problems, the management granted workers the right to make decisions about how their own job is carried out	3.37	.993
Quality of service relates to engagement of employees	4.63	.849
There is evidenced Improved working processes	3.73	1.250
The Health and safety of patients is considered at all times	3.89	1.215
Timely allocation of tasks to employees is paramount	4.69	.910
There is control of absence and attendance of tasks by employees	4.62	.584
The working conditions are conducive for engagement of employees	3.10	.872
There is frequent employee job rotation in all departments	2.68	1.233
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.84</b>	<b>.988</b>

The findings in Table 2 presents that the management did not grant employees the right to make decisions about how their own job is carried out, the working conditions were not conducive for employees engagement and there was no frequent employee job rotation in all departments as shown by low mean of 3.37, 3.10 and 2.68 respectively. Mean of 3.73 and 3.89 indicated that majority of the respondents agreed that there was evidenced improved working processes and the health and safety of patients was considered at all times. Majority of the respondents strongly agreed that quality of service relates to engagement of employees and timely allocation of tasks to employees is paramount as evidenced by mean of 4.63 and 4.69 respectively. Generally, it was established that delegation of tasks was fairly done within the county departments and that employee participation through delegation affected service delivery (Mean=3.84, Std Deviation=0.998). Leana (2016) pointed out that the delegation's goal is to enhance individual autonomy rather than to establish democracy. The author argued that delegation is connected to the structure that allows staff in an organizational hierarchy of 'temporary authority' to make decisions.

The findings were supported by Basihir (2015) that delegation of workplace duties depends on the essence of the job and the relationship between staff, groups or divisions. Chaudhry (2012) supported the findings that the degree to which management assigns duties to subordinates is dictated by interpersonal interactions between superiors and subordinates at work. Delegated duties enhance the commitment of employees to work, job satisfaction and productivity, leading to improved organizational performance. The study concurs with Heller (2013) that delegation is a required condition for improving efficiency and satisfaction through employee involvement. However, decision-taking delegations are one area of concern that covers the assignment and enhancement of the discretion and the authority to execute these tasks by granting subordinate responsibility for tasks. The delegation mechanism is therefore complicated and the investigation of the good circumstances has increased the focus on the effectiveness of the supervisor subordinates' role.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Conclusions**

The study concludes that relationship between employee consultation and service delivery in the county was positive and significant. The results indicate that employee consultation positive change would result to the positive changes in the county's delivery of service.

The study concludes that the relationship between employee delegation and service delivery in the county was positive and significant. This indicates that a positive change employee delegation will result to a positive change in the service delivery.

## **Recommendations**

The study suggests that supportive leadership style which supports employee consultations, such as democratic leadership, be used to encourage various actors to engage in decision-making and service delivery. Employees should be free to make most decisions without consulting their supervisors, according to county management, especially county directors. The study suggested that the County government adopt participative leadership, which could promote service delivery implementation in County governments, and that county government employees be encouraged to air their complaints to top county administrators, rather than relying on authoritarian leadership. According to the findings, county governments should consider adopting sound employee delegation strategies as outlined in the appropriate legislative context. This will allow management to obtain a detailed understanding of the county's activities, which can be used to influence customer service delivery and make informed decisions about the county's performance.

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