

# Testing the Relationship of Employee Empowerment and Organisational Performance: Organisational Studies in The Gambia

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## Abstract

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The research aimed to test the new measures of employee empowerment in a collectively social oriented society. The study applied questionnaire-based survey to obtain data and test the relationship between employee empowerment and organisational performance. A total of 80 completed questionnaires from the senior HR personnel from 40 organisations in the Gambia took part in the survey. Ten employees were engaged in a face-to-face interview, 2 private and 8 public organisations from among the 40 organisations that participated. Both SPSS and SmartPLS were utilised to analyse data. MGA is used to determine the difference private and public organisations. The study has indicated a significant relationship between employee empowerment and organisational performance. The findings revealed a small but not significant difference between the private and public organisations in their definition of employee empowerment in the Gambia based on MGA report. The findings discovered that the social nature of employees cannot be disputed, and a strong recognition of employees promotes organisation performance. HR department and organisational flexibility relates more to employee's empowerment and has effect on attitude and behaviour. The study recommends further large-scale research in other environments outside the Gambia.

## Abstrak

**Kata kunci:**  
Pemberdayaan  
Karyawan;  
Pemberdayaan;  
Gambia; Kinerja  
Organisasi

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguji pengukuran baru pemberdayaan karyawan dalam masyarakat berorientasi sosial secara kolektif. Penelitian ini menggunakan survei berbasis kuesioner untuk memperoleh data dan menguji hubungan antara pemberdayaan karyawan dan kinerja organisasi. Sebanyak 80 kuesioner lengkap dari personel SDM senior dari 40 organisasi di Gambia mengambil bagian dalam survei. Sepuluh karyawan terlibat dalam wawancara tatap muka, 2 organisasi swasta dan 8 organisasi publik dari 40 organisasi yang berpartisipasi. Penelitian ini dianalisis dengan SPSS dan SmartPLS. MGA digunakan untuk menentukan perbedaan organisasi swasta dan publik. Studi ini menunjukkan hubungan yang signifikan antara pemberdayaan karyawan dan kinerja organisasi. Temuan tersebut mengungkapkan perbedaan kecil tetapi tidak signifikan antara organisasi swasta dan publik dalam definisi pemberdayaan karyawan di Gambia berdasarkan laporan MGA. Temuan tersebut menemukan bahwa sifat sosial karyawan tidak dapat disangkal, dan pengakuan yang kuat dari karyawan meningkatkan kinerja organisasi. Departemen SDM dan fleksibilitas organisasi lebih berkaitan dengan pemberdayaan karyawan dan berpengaruh pada sikap dan perilaku. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan penelitian dengan skala lebih besar dilakukan di lingkungan lain di luar Gambia.

## 1. Introduction

Today employee empowerment is defined and approached based on how it serves the interest of the organisation and employers. At most, employee empowerment is

addressed from the condition of the organisation rather taking an inclusive approach to embrace the true picture of the empowerment embedded with the structure of the organisation. Within the organisation design doctrine, empowerment is clearly labeled under the principle of centralization or decentralization and formalization or informalization of information, communication and decision-making processes of the organisation as the means-end chain defining organisational outcome.

Employee empowerment received prominence since the research undertaken by [Kanter \(1979\)](#) in which he labelled employee empowerment as related to structural power within the organisation. She emphasised that *“workplace empowerment provides employees with access to information, support, resources and opportunity for growth and development to enable them to do their job at the best of their abilities”*. She characterised that the key element in empowerment is access to information under two very important categories of *“formal and informal”* information that enhance the ability of the employees to willfully contribute to organisational performance.

The ideas of employee empowerment were core to the argument of the early Theorists of Human Relations and Social Psychology schools of thought way back in the early 1900s. A notable reference and intervention was laid down at the Hawthorne Studies in the USA between 1920s & 1930s led by Elton Mayo ([Cole & Kelly, 2015:42](#)). The key conclusions of the Hawthorne studies stressed that employees as people are social animals both inside and outside the organisation and group membership is very important to the individuals. The strong emphasis is on the categorization of the employee as “social man”. After the Hawthorne studies, other contributions that followed notably among many of whom hailed from the academic background is Parker-Follet amplifying the essence of social man and she is credited with the use of the word “empowerment” in her early work. Parker-Follet also contributed to the ideas of group and the value of group in the Gestalt concept. The *“Gestalt concept of wholeness in which she believes can be applied to the collective mind of the group as well as individual mind. Follet resolutely opposes the idea that being part of group involves surrendering one’s power to that group, being part of a group makes people more powerful as individual”*. Others like [Maslow \(1954\)](#) made significant contributions in his human motivation studies ‘hierarchy of needs theory, [McClelland \(1975\)](#), needs theory, etcetera, ([Cole & Kelly, 2015](#)).

In a paper published by [Badjie et al. \(2019\)](#) addresses employee empowerment as a factor coined around the word “recognition” as a significant concept that matters to creating value to the organisation through employees. In that study, employee empowerment was labelled as a multi-dimensional construct and came up with new constructs for employee empowerment. Accordingly, the view of employee empowerment is to take a inside-out and outside-in approach to include both internal and external variables that define the attitude and behaviour of employee as social beings. This current study is therefore adopted the new constructs and measures of employee empowerment to explore the relationship between employee empowerment and organisational performance. Additionally, the study was done to establish whether there is a significant difference between private and public organisations regarding their perception of employee empowerment in the Gambia.

The study takes place in the Gambia for the simple fact that, the Gambia is a uniquely a social entrenched society that value recognition of people in a working setting as a motivating factor as [Badjie et al. \(2019\)](#) equate 'recognition' to a local word labelled as "Inimbara or Alnimbara" which literally means 'you on it or you are on the job'. This is a recognition strongly valued in the Gambian context and it is highly rewarding to self-satisfaction and fulfillment for others to see or observe that you are doing a good job. The word is more rewarding to some Gambians than monetary reward. The society is collective and too emphasis is put up on physical face appearance, attitude, behaviour or performance that will be positively recognised by others. This gesture can earn people social connection points or benevolence when mutual reciprocity is at the heart of societal engagement. This study takes place in the Gambia for first time and contextualized to the local values in terms of social relations that transcend to cloud social relationships in organisations in the Gambia.

Organisational performance is a highly contested phenomenon regarding how it is viewed and measured from different context. According to [Mafini \(2015\)](#) the criteria to measure organisational performance is controversial and inconsistent across different fields of study. This makes it difficult to identify a unique measure of organisational performance agreeable and acceptable to all. Many authors give their own measures of organisational performance e.g. profitability, return on assets and return on sales [Way et al., \(2015\)](#); employee performance, operating performance and financial performance, [Ketkar & Sett \(2009\)](#); human resource-related performance and market-related performance, [Ngo & Loi \(2008\)](#); Employee empowerment as a key influential variable relates to many variables that enhance positive outcomes for the organisation. Simply put, employee empowerment resonate with employee engagement and involvement and many researches has supported the assertion that employee empowerment creates human resource outcome such employee satisfaction, employee involvement, employee commitment and employee positive perception towards the organisation all then to promote organisational performance. Employee as the basic ingredient that defines employee performance that translate to operational performance and then financial performance. The study adopts the organisational performance measures that relates to strategic human resource management concepts such as profitability, growth and sustainability agreeable to both private and public organisations. The study was then tasked to answer;

1. How does employee empowerment relate to organisational performance?
2. How does the concept of employee empowerment differ in private and public organisations in the Gambia?

There is a sharp different between private and public organisations in the Gambia in terms of management practice. The level of employee empowerment will be tested through the following control variables; "*organisation type, existence of staff association, HRD reporting relationship to the head of organisation, HRD membership to the board, and staff Association membership to the board*". These control variables illustrate the level of flexibility or tolerance level of the organisation in allowing employees with certain discretionary measures deem fitting to get the best out of the management (employer)-employee relationship. In this regard the study focused on contingency theory as the foundation of the argument in this study.

Contingent theory postulate that there is no one best way to management of organisational practice and depends on so many factors or variables. The research therefore, embrace the definition of [Paauwe \(2004\)](#) “contingency theory states that the relationship between the independent variables (e.g. HRM policies and practices) and the dependent variable (performance) will vary according to the influences such as company size, age and technology, capital intensity, degree of unionization, industry/sector ownership and location”.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Overview of Employee Empowerment

The description of employee empowerment is often narrowly focused on internal influence of the organisation’s environment, failing to take note of the fact that, when employees joined an organisation, their lives have changed for good or for worst and that, factors of positivity or negatively is not only limited to the internal structures of the organisation but also extended beyond, to the family and the greater community.

Employees who join the organisation are not entirely empty vessels and are without purpose. All employees have expectations regarding their involvement and agreement with the organisation. Employees are human beings with highly integrated social networks, a collective orientation for support and help for the maintenance and upkeep of society. Employee empowerment is often defined in terms of ‘*how much discretion and autonomy employees are given*’, ([Kelley, 1993](#)). Many scholars have assumed that empowerment is the same as ‘*delegating or sharing power*’ with subordinates and hence, that the construct requires no further conceptual analysis beyond power concept, [Conger & Kanungo, \(1988\)](#). The foundation of empowerment in management practice is ‘*rooted in power and control*’, and views empowerment as a construct of relations and motivation, ([Kanter, 1979](#)).

According to [Honold \(1997\)](#), employee empowerment is a multidimensional concept and it is difficult to define. Employee empowerment is a complicated factor and for organisations to succeed, by its nature and characteristic must create and define how it serves them. Additionally, organisations must embrace empowerment according to their unique needs and culture, would fail without it, ([Block, 1987](#); [McClelland, 1975](#)). [Kanter \(1979\)](#) defines empowerment as giving power to people who are at a disadvantage spot in the organisation, and addresses employee empowerment from the position to powerless to powerful. According to [Vogt & Murrell \(1990\)](#), empowerment is an ‘*act of building, developing and increasing power by working with others*’ which he terms “*interactive empowerment*”, and of having the ability to influence one’s own behaviour, which he calls “*self-empowerment*”. For [Thomas & Velthouse \(1985\)](#) believes that empowerment relates to the very basis of human existence. They conceive empowerment as occurring as ‘*cognitive variables change*’. In paper published by [Badjie et al. \(2019\)](#), identified four dimensions of employee empowerment; organisation-obligation empowerment, self-obligation empowerment, family-obligation empowerment and community-obligation empowerment.

### 2.1.1. Organisation-Obligation Empowerment (OOE)

The willingness and the pace of employee empowerment has to do with the behaviour of the organisation that depend on the level of stress and competitive challenges, (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). According to Kanter (1979), organisational structures rather than individual employee, provide employees with the power to mobilise resources to “get things done.” Power to is obtained from two sources, work structure i.e. job activities (formal power) and political alliances or political power play (informal power). Formal power results from positions, designed to promote visibility, support decision making, offer recognition and are essential to organisational effectiveness. Informal power is derived from interactive relationship with colleagues, e.g. peers, subordinates and superiors. Informal power build alliances and affiliations through networks, both within and outside the organisation, it enables individuals have clout and to gain cooperation, therefore, increasing work effectiveness and organisational effectiveness (Kanter, 1979).

The study sees employee empowerment from the perspective of the organisation as recognition and consideration for the efforts of the employees in enhancing organisational performance Badjie et al. (2019). Organisation-obligation empowerment emphasised that, recognised employee efforts, involvement and engages to value creation to the organisation which result to employee commitment, job satisfaction and performance. Brymer (1991) address empowerment as full empowerment, limited empowerment and non-empowerment situation.

### 2.1.2. Self-Obligation Empowerment (SOE)

This aspect of employee empowerment addresses empowerment from the individual level and relates more to the psychological empowerment. Psychological empowerment emphasises on individual perception and experience of being empowered, Le et al., (2014) looks at how subordinates are intrinsically motivated to perform their responsibilities to affect their organisation, (Conger & Kanungo, 1988).

Self-obligation empowerment connects more to Bandura’s self-efficacy notion (Bandura, 1986). Its projects empowerment to be a process whereby an individual’s belief in his/her self-efficacy is enhanced. To empower means either to strengthen the belief with a ‘can-do’ mind set with a possibility to self-growth or fulfillment. Personal efficacy stem from internal need-states such as the intrinsic need for self-determination, Deci (1975), the competence motive, White (1959), the need for power, the need for achievement of McClelland (1975), Hertzberg,(1960) crave for responsibility and growth and the need for self-actualization, Maslow (1954), which increases the feeling of individual’s self-worth and affiliation with the organisation. According to expectancy theory, an individual’s motivation to engage or involve is defined by a pre-determined outcome or expectation to performance in each circumstance.

### 2.1.3. Family-Obligation Empowerment (FOE)

The family-obligation empowerment pitched the employee as a family and social person with work related obligations and family/social related obligations to address outside the organisation. Employee empowerment relationship has evolved in a way that, we not

only talk of a contractual or exchange arrangement but relational arrangement. Today organisations are forced to institutionalised work-life balance policies that are meant to give support to employees to help them fulfill their non-work obligations. It is a flexibility approach that can enhance the reputation of the organisation as the best place to work.

There has been a growing increase and awareness about the importance of care and consideration for employees in organisations, (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). Organisational care can be defined as structure of values and organising principles centered on fulfilling employees' need, promoting employees' best interests and valuing employees' contribution, (Derry, 1991). Koblenz (2003) numerated the importance of organisational care to the employee as: *'create a work environment founded on dignity and respect for all employees; making employees feel that their jobs are important; cultivating the full potential of all employees; encouraging individual's pursuit work-life balance policy; enabling well-being of individuals and their families through compensation, benefits, policies and practices (e.g. free housing, holiday pay, childcare support, mortgage package);and appreciating and recognizing the contribution of people who work for the organisation'*. Within the concept of social exchange theory, employees' view of organisational support are more likely to engaged in discretionary, extra-roles and unrewarded organisational citizenship behaviours, (Spreitzer, 1996).

#### **2.1.4. Community-Obligation Empowerment (COE)**

This concept of community-obligation empowerment challenges the organisation to have an inclusive approach not only to itself, but with the outside environment as contained in the systems theory view of organisation being a system among other systems. The community in this approach is in two folds referring both micro-environment and macro-environment. Where inclusion is guaranteed to every employee to become part of a team or group, give them a voice of recognition to contribute to the functioning of the organisation. The other community here refers to the macro environment, where the organisation is challenged to become an active citizen of the greater society, to participate in programmes or policies to include working with people and collaborate to support the maintenance and up keep of society to lift the face of the community in a mutual interest as key stakeholder's worth recognizing.

The concept of inclusion is mostly related to the issues of diversity, but the approach of this paper is to address inclusion from the social aspect of inclusion, termed "social inclusion", (Le et al., 2014). Roberson (2006) reported that inclusion is the new workplace diversity management approach that aims at helping organisation's address diverse employees' needs and achieve competitive advantage. Fujimoto et al., (2014), the definition of inclusion at the organisational level adopts 'a work perspective'. Inclusion is the degree to which an employee is accepted and treated as an insider by others in a work system. People join organisations for my reasons and may include job recognition and job security. Employees who join an organisation look forward to job security with support benefits which is empowering to them with their families and societies.

Based on the arguments from the four dimensions, the study posited that;

1. Proposition: employee empowerment does strongly relate to organisational performance

2. Employee empowerment does differ for private and public organisations in the Gambia.

## 2.2. Organizational performance

Organisation performance is today contingent in approach as the effectiveness of performance is highly unpredictable due to multiple factors both within and outside the organisation. Organisational performance in many studies is approached in terms of financial and non-financial dimensions. To some performance is determined not only contribute to the bottom line but also contribute to keep the organisation in existence through hiring the best talent and retaining them for continuity. This research approaches the organisational performance under three dimensions of profitability, growth and sustainability to align with both business and organisational strategic goals.

In the context of organisational behavioural doctrine, the behavioural index in the organisation sits at three levels, individual, group and organisation. Therefore, organisational performance starts with individual job performance that translates into group or team performance thus, defining how well the organisation performs. The three levels of performance are inter-linked as they have consequences on each other to create profitability, growth and sustainability. Guest (1997) from the behavioural perspectives, employees' perception of their behaviours as individuals' impact on group level performance outcomes which affect unit performance and thus organisational profit. This implies that, we need a range of performance measures tied to individual, group and organisational level to enable to establish the definitive organisational performance linkages.

Organisational performance reflects the actual output or results of an organisation as measured against intended outputs (e.g. goals and objectives) as contained in the mission and vision of the organisation. The phenomena of organisational performance is determined by several contributing factors within and outside the organisation and include “operational efficiencies, levels of diversification, organisational structure, top management team composition and style, human resource management, manipulation of the political and social influence and market conformity” (Mafini, 2015). The study adopted profitability, growth and sustainability as the measures of organisational performance for this research.

### 2.2.1. Profitability

The financial dimension is the most dominant indicator of organisational performance which serves as a driver for many activities in and out of the organisation to create shareholder value. Profitability is the act of aggressively engaging for financial gains. Profitability as a dimension of organisational performance will be measured through profit, market share, sales, productivity and return on investment (ROI) as factors that directly affect the bottom line of the organisation and serve as a stimulant for future investment, growth and long-term sustainability.

### 2.2.2. Growth

This is a non-financial outcome of organisational performance which is the essence of organisational development based on strategic decision to make the organisation more

competitive in the future for a better profitability. The growth dimension is addressed using the following indicators; development of new products or services or level of innovation (R&D); geographical expansion or structural expansion; employee training and development; customer satisfaction (customer attraction, trust and loyalty); and selection and retention of talent

### **2.2.3. Sustainability**

This is a non-financial performance outcome but a key factor that keep the organisation in existence, if well entrenched can also help the organisation to make more profit. Sustainability is a dimension that is supported by many factors. The fact that staying long in business with all the challenges establishes the resilience and how effective brand, image and reputation of the organisation is rooted. The sustainability dimension is measured with; longevity; investments outside; alliances and collaborations; and management (employer) –employee relationship.

## **3. Method**

The research used a mixed method approach to data gathering. First, questionnaire-based survey was employed. A total of 80 senior human resource personnel from among 40 organisations (private and public) took part in the survey located from the Greater Banjul Area. The sample is determined from the population of 136 organisations in the Gambia obtained from two organisation directories. A stratified random sampling used with the two directories as sample frame. A total of 100 organisations make the final list based on the following conditions; a) the organisation is either private or public, b) the organisation is within the greater Banjul Area, c) the organisations are in the service business, d) the organisation has employee roll of 100 employees and counting. A total of 150 questionnaires were distributed to 76 organisations that accepted to participate in the survey with a written communication or telephone call notification. Out of the 150 questionnaires distributed, 80 were returned as complete and usable for the research.

Secondly, a face-to-face interview was conducted involving 10 employees that were randomly selected from the list of 40 organisations that participated in the survey. The interview includes 2 employees from private and 8 employees from public organisation to represent the views of the employees. SPSS tool use for the descriptive statistics while SmartPLS was the dominant tool using the SEM approach to determine the relationship of the two variables. Also, multi-group analysis was used to determine whether significant difference exist between private and public organisation in the Gambia.

## **4. Result and Discussion**

The study of employee empowerment for both private and public organisations in the Gambia is first established by key control variables that determined how flexible organisations are in accommodating employees as partners. The control variables include organisation type, existence of staff association, HRD reporting relationship to the head of

organisation, HRD membership to the board, and staff Association membership to the board.

Table 1 below shows that 90% of the survey participants agreed that HR department has a direct reporting relationship with the head of the organisation. This means that human resource and employment issues are central to the organisation, where the head of HR department has clout to influence decisions regarding employees and employment concerns. HR department membership of the board of directors is represented by a small percentage but is a welcome move in the right direction were employment issues and matters of concern to employees are highly regarded in the policy board of the organisation.

Staff Association (union) creation is gaining momentum in the Gambia across organisations. Employees are organising themselves into a unify force to engage and negotiate directly with authorities as matters directly affect them. The table show that 79% of senior HR personnel that participated in the survey affirm the statement. It is a huge boost to employee recognition and empowerment. Only about 33% of the respondent affirmed that statement of staff Association membership to the board of directors. According to [Ketkar & Sett, \(2009\)](#) the degree of employee unionization affects organisational performance and affects the organisation's ability to implement HR oriented initiatives as employees carry the burden of that responsibility. The staff Association membership of the board of directors define the degree of tolerance of the organisation as it places employees in position of power to bargain and directly negotiate their problems to those that matter with a position of strength. the difference between the private and public organisation can be viewed from the table as the result show little difference between the two. Staff Associations in Gambian organisations serve as a conduit to complement the efforts of management in helping employees address family and social problems. Many staff associations have credit union facilities with minimal interest to support employees with financial obligations. [Table 1](#) present the comparison of public/private approach Employee Empowerment.

**Table 1. Comparison of public/private approach employee empowerment**

		Human Resource Department Reports to Head of the Organisation					
		Yes	%	No	%	Missing	Count
Public		43	53.8%	3	3.8%	0 (0.0%)	46
Private		29	36.3%	5	6.3%	0 (0.0%)	34
<i>Total</i>			<i>90.0%</i>		<i>10.0%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>80</i>
		Human Resource Department Board Member					
		Yes	%	No	%	Missing	Count
Public		10	12.5%	36	45.0%	0 (0.0%)	46
Private		11	13.8%	23	28.7%	0 (0.0%)	34
<i>Total</i>			<i>26.3%</i>		<i>73.8%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>80</i>
		Existence of Staff Association					
		Yes	%	No	%	Missing	Count
Public		40	50.0%	6	7.5%	0 (0.0%)	46
Private		23	28.7%	10	12.5%	1 (1.3%)	34
<i>Total</i>			<i>78.8%</i>		<i>20.0%</i>	<i>1.3%</i>	<i>80</i>
		Staff Association Board Member					
		Yes	%	No	%	Missing	Count
Public		18	22.5%	28	35.0%	0 (0.0%)	46
Private		8	10.0%	26	32.5%	0 (0.0%)	34
<i>Total</i>			<i>32.5%</i>		<i>67.5%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>80</i>

#### 4.1. Descriptive Statistics of Employee Empowerment

The employee empowerment was measured with 4 dimensions that include organisation-obligation empowerment, self-obligation empowerment, family-obligation empowerment and community-obligation empowerment. A total of 14 items contained the measurement for the 4 dimensions on a 7-point Likert scale. This construct remarkably rates average variance extracted at (.52), with a satisfactory Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of (.81). The composite reliability is satisfactorily indicated with score of (.87), while the rho\_A is scored at (.82). The item loadings are satisfactory ranging from .65 to .79 as the recommended cut-off mark (Wong, 2013; Ringle, Wende & Becker, 2015). Table 2 shows descriptive statistics of employee empowerment.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of employee empowerment

Employee Empowerment	Mean	Perception (%)		Private Org.		Public Org.	
		+	-	+	-	+	-
Org.-Obligation Empowerment	5.156	76	24	81	19	72	28
Self-Obligation Empowerment	5.209	79	21	89	11	72	28
Family-Obligation Empowerment	6.004	88	12	88	12	87	13
Com.-Obligation Empowerment	4.753	61	39	65	35	58	42

Source: primary data (Nov. 2019)

As vividly portrayed from Table 2, the construct of employee empowerment has seen a strong approval based on the results with mean score above 5 for the three dimensions. The overall perception is favourable toward private organisations with a better greater positive response compared to public organisations. This demonstrates that private organisations are highly flexible compared to public organisation as far as engagement and involvement of the employees is concern. The eminent inherent bureaucracy and formalisation in public organisation give little room for employees in public organisation to take initiatives through their discretionary measures.

#### 4.2. Descriptive Statistics of Organisational Performance

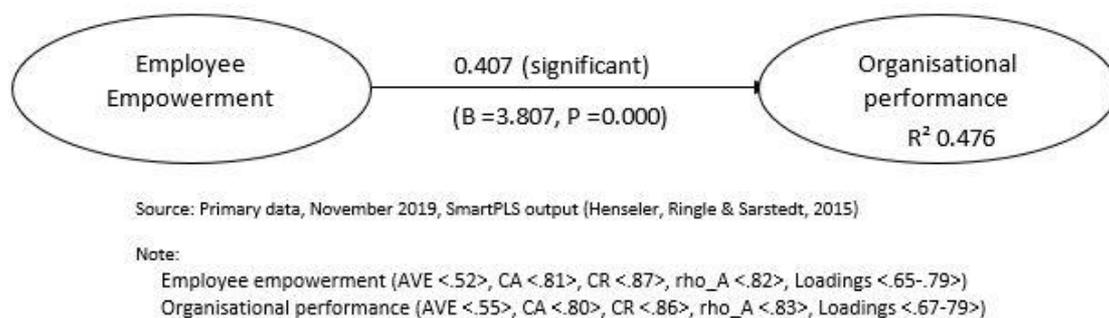
Table 3 shows that organisational performance received overall strong approval with all the dimensions registering a mean score of above the scale of five. Like employee empowerment, private organisations for organisational performance register favourably compared to public organisations with small margins. The study took an explanatory approach to determine the relationship of employee empowerment and organisational performance for private and public organisations in the Gambia. SmartPLS is used to test the study propositions through path modeling and help to determine the predict the relevance of the model in terms of the difference between the private and public organisations.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Organisational Performance

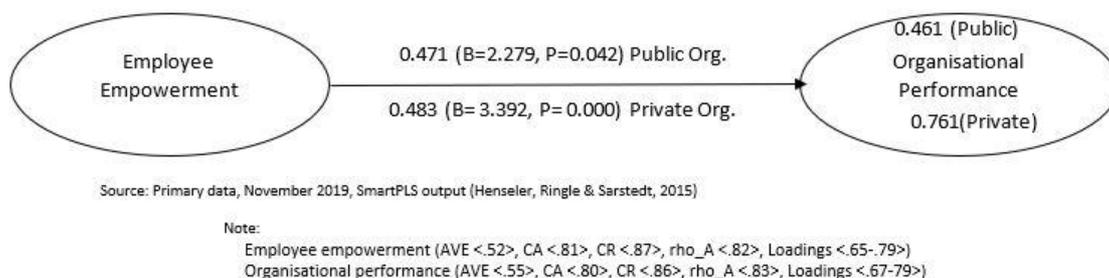
Organisational Performance	Mean	Perception (%)		Private Org.		Public Org.	
		+	-	+	-	+	-
Profitability	5.384	80	20	98	2	94	6
Growth	6.911	75	25	80	20	71	29
Sustainability	5.098	70	30	74	26	66	34

Source: primary data (Nov. 2019)

Organisational performance was measured with three dimensions of profitability, growth and sustainability. The three dimensions were measured with a total of 11 items on the questionnaire. The 7-point Likert scale determined the perception of the participants in the survey. As the construct that carries the burden significantly scored average variance extracted at (.55), a satisfactory Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of (.80). The composite reliability is satisfactory at (.86), while rho\_A is marked with a satisfying score of (.83). The item loadings satisfactorily stood between .67 and .79 in line with expert threshold, (Wong, 2013; Ringle, Wende & Becker, 2015). The results of the analysis of the combination model of private and public organizations are presented in Figure 1, and the comparison of private and public organizations is presented in Figure 2.



**Figure 1.** Structural model (combined private and public organisations)



**Figure 2.** Structural model (comparison, private vs public organisations)

The explanation of the target endogenous variable, the coefficient determinant of  $R^2$  is 0.476 for organisational performance. This shows that Employee empowerment substantially explains 48% of the variance in organisational performance and determines the predictive relevance of the model. The effect of the path coefficient between employee empowerment and organisational performance which is moderately relevant is at 0.407. It is therefore observed that the inner model confirmed that employee empowerment has a moderate effect on organisational performance (41%). The results indicate that the hypothesized path relationship between employee empowerment and organisational performance is moderately statistically significant. Based on the results from Figure 1, both the t-statistics and p-value has affirmed the proposition 1 of the study, “employee empowerment

*does strongly relate to organisational performance*". The results of the study outcome corroborates previous studies that establish that employee empowerment has a significant relationship with organisational performance, (Spreitzer, 1996). To Kanter, (1979) sharing of internal organisational power and control increases organisational effectiveness.

Employees in the Gambia be it private or public view employee's empowerment not only limited to job status or formal positional power that at length give name recognition to the employee both inside and outside the organisation. Empowerment to many employees in the Gambia include the recognition and implementation of work-life balance policy, also the perception of perceived organisational support to employees and beyond. It is widely argued employee empowerment is mostly defined from the perspective of the organisation and as such employer and employees have different orientation towards employee empowerment. Below are some excerpts from the informants in a face-to-face interview.

*"The organisation has many supports facilities for the staff. The school/childcare support extend to parents at the beginning of each academic year for school children in the basic schools. The organisation is a teaching institution, staff members whose children got admission are given tuition waiver until finish and the number is undefined. Ramadan gift in the form of sugar is available every year.*

*Medical insurance is not available but medical allowance is created which is paid as part of the salary to every employee and whether ones visits the hospital or not. The benefits I received from the organisation helps to empower me at home and strengthen my bargaining power at home as the bread winner of the family. It does relief me of troubles of spending on health care or school fees. In the absence of the support, I have to struggle with my little salary to make ends meet which is a daunting task taking note of the pressures from family, home and society", Informant 1 (November 2019).*

*"Our work and family life are well balanced in our organisation. every employee is entitled to annual leave ranging from 14 days or more based on rank. I have always observed my annual leave. Weekends I am off at home with my family and Friday is half day. Maternal leave is available to all women for 6 months. Paternal leave is also granted here which good for fathers to help in the first week to attend to the baby to allow the mother to rest.*

*Many benefits are offered to employees in the organisation. To start with, the organisation makes available medical insurance that cover for the employees and their family members, 6 people.*

*Ramadan gifts available every year to all employees. Soft loan is also available to employees in different forms. The benefits are important because it embolden my role as the head of family especially with the insurance and Ramadan package. The benefits really support and empowers, faced our face from shame within our communities. I am proud of the organisation and support", Informant 2 (November 2019).*

*"The benefits are available especially medical insurance for the employee and family members. Housing and car loan also available to employees but all employees below the officer rank are not entitled to benefit. These benefits are very helpful and kind of empowering to the employees as it reduces burden and stress from them. Benefits strengthen my bargaining position at the family level as the bread winner. The society also respects me because of my affiliation with the organisation. people in my neighbourhood would sometime come to me to guide through something they want from*

*the office. If such assistance is rendered, the recognition and respect from society is enormous”,*

Informant 4 (November 2019).

*“There are benefits available to almost all employees except those on contract, medical insurance that covers the employee and part of his/her family, a maximum of 6 people. Car loan, housing loan and Ramadan gifts are all available to employees”,* Informant 6 (November 2019).

*“The organisation has many support benefits for the staff. Medical insurance is available to all employees and six family members are covered. The organisation also has loan facilities for car, housing and construction to employees. All these support facilities provided empowers the employees at home and at community level. They earn respect and admiration in the family and community for what they are able their accomplishment”* Informant 8 (November 2019).

*“The organisation has many relax practices for the employees. 21 days annual leave is available to all employees upon request, but one is never reminded to observe his or leave. The organisation takes advantage of employees’ vulnerability. Weekend is off for me but sometimes I have calls to duty based on need and demand. Sometimes I must travel on trek during weekend to provincial stations to fix problems there. Maternal leave is available to all women for 6 months, paternal leave is also available for 10 days for men. Medical insurance is available to all staff covering their family members. The issue of the insurance raised issues from employees with large families in terms of coverage. The organisation finally agreed to cover six family members including the employee. When it comes to medical support, this organisation is the best. I have witness instances where an employee’s child was sponsored abroad to get medical treatment. The insurance coverage affects family members below the age of 18”,* Informant 9 (November 2019).

*“Many benefits are available to employee in this organisation ranging from medical insurance, Ramadan gifts, school support, housing and car loan. The organisation has a vibrant staff association that has done a lot for employees providing all form of supports to help make employees and their families provided for in complementing the efforts of the organisation. All the above support facilities are good for employees. I am grateful to the organisation for the support. I can stand tall among many due to the support from the organisation. Many things I can accomplish, people will assume is through my own effort without knowing, it’s the organisation that facilitate that possibility. The organisation is really empowering and help one to self-actualized”,* Informant 10 (November 2019).

The above statement justifies the argument that employee empowerment is a recipe for organisational performance. perceived organisational support has been established to influence organisational performance through employee satisfaction and employee commitment. According to (Menon, 1995), *“The greater the empowerment, the higher the internal work motivation, the higher the job satisfaction, the lower the job stress, the greater the job involvement, the more involvement beyond the defined job of the individual and the greater the organisational commitment”*.

The second proposition of the study was answered based on the results of the descriptive statistics and SmartPLS MGA analysis. Figure 2 represent the comparison of private and public organisations. The model is the result of multi-group analysis which show a difference between the two organisations from the scores of the path coefficients and R<sup>2</sup>. The MGA results concurs with the results of the descriptive statistics which demonstrate favourability towards the private organisations in the Gambia compared to public. The

scores on figure 1 shows a difference but to determine whether the difference is significant or not, the MGA analysis determined that through PLS-MGA test, Parametric test and Welch-Satterwait test. All the tests results show no significance in the difference between the private and public organisations in the Gambia. This is also in line with the results of the descriptive statistics. Therefore, proposition 2, “*employee empowerment does differ for private and public organisations in the Gambia*” is affirmed. According to Paauwe (2004), the relationship of key HR outcome (policies and practices) and performance (high productivity) is to a large extent influenced by many factors including but not limited to the following controlled variables as “company size, age, technology, human capital intensity, degree of unionization, industry sector ownership and location”. The outcome to the second proposition corroborates the above statement as organisations in the Gambia are not stand alone even though the environmental context may be different.

## 5. Conclusion

This study makes a significant contribution by testing the new measures of employee empowerment and the outcome is valuable for advancing the argument on employee empowerment. The findings of the research have exposed the disparities between the employers and employees in terms of expectation and perception of employee empowerment in the Gambia. The findings also discovered small but not quite significant difference between private and public organisations in the Gambia based on MGA report. The results demonstrate the linkage of employee empowerment to organisational performance and by implication, management of both public and private organisations should be concern about employees needs and issues as basis of motivation to enhance organisational performance.

The findings recognised that views expressed by senior management representation might not directly represent the position of the employees. Further research effort using this newly developed measures is recommended in a large scale and should have a balance representation of views from employers and employees. Additional research in a different environmental and social context is highly encouraged to help determine the validity and reliability of the measures developed for the Gambia.

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## Authors' Declaration

### Authors' contributions and responsibilities

The authors made substantial contributions to the conception and design of the study. The authors took responsibility for data analysis, interpretation and discussion of results. The authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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#### Availability of data and materials

All data are available from the authors.

#### Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interest.

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No additional information from the authors.

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