



Effect of Employee Empowerment on Organizational Performance: A Case of Gasabo District Head Office, Rwanda

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Abstract: Employee empowerment is increasingly recognized as a strategic approach to improving public sector performance, although limited empirical evidence exists regarding its influence within Rwanda's decentralized administrative structures. This study examined the effect of employee empowerment, measured through employee autonomy, training, and promotion, on organizational performance at Gasabo District Head Office, Rwanda. The study was guided by Empowerment Theory, Resource-Based View, Human Capital Theory, and Goal-Setting Theory. A descriptive and correlational research design integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches was adopted. The study targeted a census of 126 employees, of whom 115 returned valid questionnaires, representing a 91.3% response rate. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression in SPSS version 29. Findings indicated high ratings for autonomy (mean = 4.16), training (mean = 4.13), promotion (mean = 4.25), and organizational performance (mean = 4.17). Pearson correlation analysis revealed strong positive and significant relationships between autonomy ($r = 0.717$), training ($r = 0.813$), promotion ($r = 0.774$), and organizational performance, all at $p < 0.01$. Multiple regression showed that the three empowerment dimensions jointly explained 80.7% of the variance in organizational performance ($R^2 = 0.807$, $F = 157.074$, $p < 0.001$), with training having the strongest effect ($\beta = 0.483$). All null hypotheses were rejected. The study concludes that employee empowerment significantly enhances organizational performance and recommends institutionalizing autonomy, training, and promotion frameworks.

Keywords: Employee Empowerment; Employee Autonomy; Employee Training; Employee Promotion; Organizational Performance

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1. Introduction

Employee empowerment has become a central pillar of institutional design across public and private organizations, as it redistributes authority, discretion, and responsibility toward personnel who directly execute operational mandates. At Toyota Motor Corporation in Japan, empowerment has been structured through

transformational leadership practices that prioritize intellectual stimulation and individualized support, contributing to employee initiative and performance alignment (Magasi, 2021). Within Tata Consultancy Services in India, empowerment has been formalized through decision-making latitude and structured skill development programmes that align employee roles with strategic objectives (Saranya, 2022). Shopify Inc. in Canada has embedded empowerment into its operational

systems through feedback mechanisms and autonomy protocols that reinforce employee engagement within performance management frameworks (Kumar & Sondhi, 2023), while Siemens AG in Germany has applied empowerment through authority sharing and recognition-based leadership (Sengupta, 2024). Across hybrid work environments in the United States, empowerment has required renewed approaches to autonomy and communication, particularly through digital collaboration tools and adaptive leadership models (Thakur & Singh, 2025). Collectively, these institutional practices demonstrate that empowerment functions as a performance enabler when formalized through structured delegation, transparent communication, and leadership accountability, reinforced by human resource policies that embed training, recognition, and participatory decision-making into daily operations (Coun et al., 2022).

Within the African context, empowerment has similarly been structured through leadership engagement, policy frameworks, and institutional accountability. At Safaricom PLC in Kenya, empowerment has been aligned with participatory leadership and recognition systems integrated into performance contracts (Natukunda, 2021). Within non-commercial banks in Ghana, empowerment has been formalized through structural and psychological mechanisms that align employee behaviour with organizational citizenship expectations (Afram et al., 2022). Dangote Cement PLC in Nigeria has applied empowerment through leadership development programmes and autonomy protocols that reinforce employee commitment (Mbangeleli & Ojugbele, 2023), and in selected Nigerian banks, empowerment has been structured through mutual decision-making and joint resolution implementation in customer-facing departments (Orenuga et al., 2024). Across South African institutions, empowerment has been linked to organizational commitment and performance through delegation, knowledge sharing, and inclusive leadership practices (Modise, 2025). These findings collectively confirm that empowerment operates as a strategic component of organizational performance when reinforced through recognition, autonomy, and participatory governance.

In Rwanda, employee empowerment has been structured through policy-driven mechanisms, performance-linked strategies, and leadership consistency. At the Rwanda Housing Authority, empowerment has been formalized through recognition schemes, career development pathways, and equitable compensation aligned with public service delivery objectives (Kampororo et al., 2021). Within selected public institutions in Kigali, empowerment has been achieved through incentive systems and performance-linked motivation embedded within strategic human resource planning (Rulisa et al., 2022). At the University of Rwanda, empowerment has been integrated into academic staff retention strategies through training,

development, and recognition frameworks (Harorimana, 2023), while International Training and Motivation Africa Ltd has structured empowerment through human resource planning and training systems that contribute to engagement and performance (Ishimwe & Narayan, 2024). World Relief Rwanda has applied empowerment through decision-making authority, access to resources, and training alignment within community-based development programmes (Nyiringabo & Wabala, 2025).

Despite these advances, public organizational performance in Rwanda continues to face operational inefficiencies, policy misalignment, and structural weaknesses that limit institutional effectiveness. At the Rwanda Social Security Board (RSSB), performance has been constrained by outdated training systems and poor integration of institutional reforms; Imanaturikumwe and Oniye (2022) found that despite 92.5 percent of respondents agreeing that RSSB trainings are conducted by eligible instructors, training procedures had not been aligned with new reforms, limiting institutional responsiveness. At the Rwanda Revenue Authority (RRA), Rukumba (2022) reported that all respondents believed the institution no longer rewards employees after training, indicating that capacity-building investment has not translated into measurable performance gains. At the Rwanda Development Board (RDB), Rutaganda and Narayan (2024) found a negative correlation between compensation and employee performance, reflecting inefficiencies in wage policy and appraisal systems, while Uwizeyimana et al. (2023) reported that only 42 percent of public institutions in Rwanda conduct regular performance reviews, confirming widespread deficiencies in monitoring and evaluation. These findings show that public sector performance in Rwanda remains constrained by fragmented planning, inconsistent policy execution, and weak institutional oversight. Although several studies have examined employee empowerment within Rwanda's public institutions, none has specifically assessed its effect on organizational performance in Gasabo District Head Office, revealing a localized empirical gap.

This study addressed that gap by examining how employee autonomy, employee training, and employee promotion, as dimensions of employee empowerment, influence organizational performance in Gasabo District Head Office, thereby generating context-specific evidence to inform empowerment-oriented policy and management practice within Rwanda's decentralized public administration.

1.1 Objectives of the Study were

1.1.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study was to examine the effect of employee empowerment on organizational performance in Gasabo District Head Office, Rwanda.

1.1.2 Specific Objectives

- i. To determine the effect of employee autonomy on organizational performance in Gasabo District Head Office.
- ii. To assess the effect of employee training on organizational performance in Gasabo District Head Office.
- iii. To investigate the effect of employee promotion on organizational performance in Gasabo District Head Office.

1.1.3 Hypotheses of the Study

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the statistical testing of the study objectives:

H01: There is no significant effect of employee autonomy on organizational performance in Gasabo District Head Office.

H02: There is no significant effect of employee training on organizational performance in Gasabo District Head Office.

H03: There is no significant effect of employee promotion on organizational performance in Gasabo District Head Office.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Employee Empowerment

Employee empowerment has been articulated in institutional literature as a deliberate redistribution of authority, whereby personnel are entrusted with control over task execution, procedural decisions, and operational priorities; this structural shift enhances responsiveness and enables departments to align their actions with broader organizational mandates (Saranya, 2022). Kumar and Sondhi (2022) describe empowerment as a participatory arrangement that embeds discretion into functional roles, so that institutional systems benefit from improved coordination and diminished reliance on hierarchical oversight when personnel engage autonomously in decision-making. Within governance frameworks, empowerment emerges as a mechanism for decentralizing control, allowing operational units to manage responsibilities with minimal interference, supporting service consistency and reinforcing strategic execution (Schermyly et al., 2023). Albayrak and Ertürk (2021) argue that empowerment operates as a principle that redistributes authority toward lower administrative tiers, and that institutional performance improves when empowerment is balanced with accountability and governed by clearly articulated boundaries.

For the purposes of this study, employee empowerment is operationally defined as the process of giving workers the authority, resources, and confidence to make decisions and take responsibility for their tasks, allowing them to contribute ideas, solve problems, and take initiative without always needing management approval (Schermyly et al., 2023).

2.1.2 Employee Autonomy

Employee autonomy refers to the latitude granted to personnel in determining how, when, and through which methods tasks are completed; this structural feature promotes flexibility and enables departments to respond effectively to shifting operational demands (Guo et al., 2022). Autonomy is a condition that permits individuals to organize their work without continuous supervision, and when embedded within institutional routines it contributes to innovation and procedural efficiency across administrative systems (Jang & Kim, 2023). In strategic planning literature, autonomy is a foundational element supporting decentralized execution, with autonomous departments exhibiting stronger alignment with institutional goals when discretion is balanced with performance accountability (Goujon et al., 2024). Autonomy is further described as a governance tool that enhances responsiveness through operational independence, reducing bottlenecks in service delivery when personnel are empowered to decide within defined parameters (Jang & Kim, 2023).

2.1.3 Employee Training

Employee training is defined as a structured process through which personnel acquire operational competencies, procedural knowledge, and task-specific skills that align with institutional requirements, enhancing execution quality and administrative consistency when integrated into long-term planning strategies (Fegade & Sharma, 2023). Training has also been described as a formal intervention that embeds functional expertise into organizational systems; when delivered systematically it contributes to institutional adaptability and reinforces performance standards, particularly where procedural precision and role clarity are required (Uslu et al., 2022). Training functions as a mechanism for institutional capacity building, equipping personnel to manage evolving responsibilities through targeted instructional efforts that strengthen service delivery when learning outcomes are aligned with operational mandates (Fegade & Sharma, 2023). Uslu, Demir, and Yildiz (2022) add that training is a continuous improvement tool that integrates knowledge transfer into administrative workflows, enhancing institutional responsiveness particularly when reinforced through structured evaluation mechanisms.

2.1.4 Employee Promotion

Employee promotion is the formal elevation of personnel within institutional structures, typically based on performance, role suitability, and organizational need; this process contributes to administrative continuity and reinforces strategic planning when advancement is aligned with clearly defined responsibilities (Batse, 2025). Promotion has also been described as a recognition mechanism that validates procedural contribution and supports career progression, enhancing motivation and strengthening retention when merit-based systems are applied consistently (Zhu et al., 2022). As a structural tool, promotion integrates advancement into institutional workflows, facilitating role clarity and improving operational consistency when promotion criteria are embedded within performance management frameworks (Batse, 2025). Zhu et al. (2022) further emphasize that promotion links individual development with institutional goals, so that organizations benefit from improved service delivery when personnel are elevated through transparent, competency-based systems.

2.1.5 Organizational Performance

Mwarenge and Kinyua (2022) explored the internal and external determinants of organizational performance, emphasizing that strategy selection and execution are crucial for superior outcomes, while external market factors such as industry structure and competitive positioning also shape performance. Their study distinguished the economic perspective, which attributes performance to external market dynamics and resource quality, from the behavioural and sociological perspective, which focuses on internal alignment between organizational factors and environmental conditions, concluding that sustainable performance results from integrating internal competencies with external adaptability. This is relevant to the current study because it demonstrates that the effectiveness of an internal initiative such as employee empowerment must be assessed alongside both internal organizational factors and external environmental pressures.

Cignitas et al. (2022) identified internal factors as major determinants of organizational performance, arguing that a multidimensional approach integrating accounting, strategic management, entrepreneurship, and microeconomic perspectives is required. While traditional accounting approaches focus on assessing past performance, contemporary management research seeks to improve present and future outcomes; the Balanced Scorecard model was highlighted as a critical innovation combining financial and non-financial measures for a more comprehensive picture of performance. This underscores the importance of evaluating organizational performance holistically, balancing historical metrics with forward-looking indicators to capture the true effectiveness of organizational initiatives such as empowerment.

Musheke and Phiri (2021) described organizational performance as a crucial indicator reflecting how effectively an organization's processes and outputs achieve its objectives, exploring how customer touch points, customer insights, employee experience, and customer-centric processes collectively enhance performance through improved service quality, satisfaction, and operational efficiency. This confirms that measuring organizational performance requires examining multiple dimensions of interaction and experience that directly influence how effectively an organization meets its goals. In line with these perspectives, this study operationally defines organizational performance as the measurable outcome of institutional activities assessed through indicators such as timeliness, quality, effectiveness, and efficiency (Chelangat, 2022).

2.2 Theoretical Review

The study was guided by four complementary theories: Empowerment Theory, Resource-Based View, Human Capital Theory, and Goal-Setting Theory, each explaining a different dimension of the empowerment-performance relationship.

2.2.1 Empowerment Theory

Empowerment Theory emerged from Paulo Freire's 1970 work on critical pedagogy, emphasizing the transformation of passive consciousness into active agency through participatory education. Solomon (1976) and Gutierrez (1990) extended the concept into social work, framing empowerment as a multidimensional construct embedded in relational and institutional contexts (Rodriguez & Nunes, 2023). Kminiak et al. (2023) trace its evolution across social, cultural, and administrative domains, identifying its relevance in decentralizing authority and enhancing procedural discretion, while Martinez (2022) introduces digital and environmental empowerment as contemporary extensions. In organizational literature, Schermuly et al. (2023) examine psychological empowerment in public administration, identifying autonomy, impact, and competence as key dimensions influencing institutional coordination, and Kumar and Sondhi (2022) analyse empowerment as a participatory arrangement that reduces dependency on hierarchical oversight. Albayrak and Ertürk (2021) interpret empowerment as a principle of organizational design that redistributes authority toward lower administrative tiers, enhancing procedural independence.

This study applied Empowerment Theory to examine how decentralized authority enhances employee autonomy within Gasabo District Head Office, enabling personnel to exercise procedural discretion and task control, thereby improving responsiveness and reducing reliance on hierarchical supervision.

2.2.2 Resource-Based View

The Resource-Based View (RBV) was introduced through Wernerfelt's 1984 conceptualization of firms as bundles of resources and expanded by Barney in 1991, who defined value, rarity, inimitability, and organization as conditions for sustained competitive advantage (Seriki, 2023). Beamish and Chakravarty (2021) examine RBV's application in multinational enterprise research, while Ferreira and Ferreira (2025) conduct a bibliometric analysis revealing thematic clusters such as dynamic capabilities and entrepreneurial orientation. Dhoopar et al. (2023) apply RBV to public sector institutions, evaluating performance through internal capabilities rather than external positioning, and Kihara and Ngugi (2021) link resource configuration to performance outcomes in public organizations. This study utilized RBV to assess how internal capabilities such as skilled personnel and procedural systems contribute to organizational performance in Gasabo District Head Office through strategic resource deployment and institutional alignment.

2.2.3 Human Capital Theory

Human Capital Theory was formalized through Schultz (1961) and Becker (1964), who conceptualized education and training as investments in productive capacity (Abrha & Weldeyohans, 2025). Tian and Tóth (2024) revise the framework by incorporating time allocation and informal learning as contributors to cognitive flexibility, while Fegade and Sharma (2023) analyse training practices in public sector organizations, linking instructional efforts to performance consistency and strategic coherence. Uslu et al. (2022) investigate training delivery and motivation, identifying structured programmes as mechanisms for embedding functional expertise, and the theory supports capacity-building initiatives in which personnel development is treated as a strategic lever for service delivery (Nwachukwu, 2024). This study employed Human Capital Theory to analyse how investment in employee training within Gasabo District Head Office strengthens institutional capacity through embedded operational competencies and improved service delivery.

2.2.4 Goal-Setting Theory

Goal-Setting Theory was developed through Locke's empirical studies in 1668 and refined with Latham in 1990, establishing goal specificity, difficulty, and feedback as determinants of task performance (Jeong et al., 2023). Gkizani and Galanakis (2022) conduct a systematic review identifying goal clarity and feedback mechanisms as critical to performance enhancement, and Zhu et al. (2022) link goal attainment to career progression and institutional alignment through their analysis of promotion fairness. Batse (2025) evaluates promotion systems in public institutions, identifying performance benchmarks and transparent criteria as operational extensions of goal-setting principles. This study adopted Goal-Setting Theory

to interpret how performance benchmarks and structured objectives influence employee promotion in Gasabo District Head Office through measurable achievement and alignment with institutional priorities.

2.3 Empirical Review

Jang and Kim (2025) investigated the relationship between job autonomy, work engagement, and innovative behaviour under performance pressure, using a two-wave survey design of 485 employees across South Korean organizations. Structural equation modelling revealed that autonomy significantly increased work engagement ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < 0.001$) and innovative behaviour ($\beta = 0.38$, $p < 0.001$), although performance pressure moderated these effects negatively; the authors recommended balancing autonomy with realistic expectations to sustain performance gains.

Park and Kim (2022) examined the differential effects of autonomy on organizational performance depending on financial incentives, analysing a four-wave panel dataset from 1,024 employees in Korean firms using moderated mediation models. Results showed that autonomy paired with group incentives increased organizational output by 16.7 percent, while individual incentives had no significant effect; the authors recommended aligning autonomy practices with collective reward systems. Sun (2023) studied employee autonomy and business performance using a case analysis of Google's management model, finding a 22.4 percent increase in innovation output and a 15.9 percent rise in employee satisfaction under the 20 percent time policy, and recommended replicating autonomy-driven models in knowledge-intensive sectors.

Fegade and Sharma (2023) conducted a systematic literature review of forty-two peer-reviewed studies published between 2020 and 2023 to evaluate the impact of employee training on organizational efficiency. Quantitative synthesis revealed that structured training improved task accuracy by 17.6 percent and service delivery speed by 12.4 percent, leading the authors to recommend allocating at least 3.5 percent of annual budgets to training with quarterly evaluations. Yimam (2022) investigated training and employee performance at Bahir Dar University using a cross-sectional survey of 316 administrative staff, finding that training improved task completion rates by 19.3 percent and reduced procedural errors by 11.8 percent. Satomi et al. (2023) evaluated training and development practices across three Nigerian ministries surveying 412 employees, finding that training improved competencies by 21.8 percent and reduced operational errors by 14.6 percent, and recommended integrating appraisal systems with training modules.

Duru et al. (2023) examined promotion practices and employee performance at the University of Abuja using structured questionnaires administered to 337 staff;

multiple regression analysis showed that fair promotion practices explained 26.3 percent of performance variance ($R^2 = 0.263$, $p < 0.01$), leading to recommendations for annual audits and transparent benchmarks. Zhu et al. (2022) analysed promotion fairness and engagement among 512 employees in Chinese public institutions using structural equation modelling, finding that fair promotion increased engagement scores by 22.6 percent and reduced turnover intention by 18.9 percent. Ayenew (2023) conducted a systematic review of twenty-five peer-reviewed articles on promotional strategy, finding that transparent promotion frameworks improved financial performance by 14.2 percent and operational efficiency by

11.6 percent, and recommended integrating promotion systems with strategic planning.

Although these studies confirm strong associations between autonomy, training, promotion, and performance, they were conducted predominantly in corporate, academic, or high-performance environments in South Korea, Nigeria, China, and the United States. None specifically evaluated these relationships within Rwanda's decentralized district-level administrative structures, leaving a clear empirical gap that this study addressed by examining employee empowerment and organizational performance in Gasabo District Head Office.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

Independent Variables : Employee Empowerment

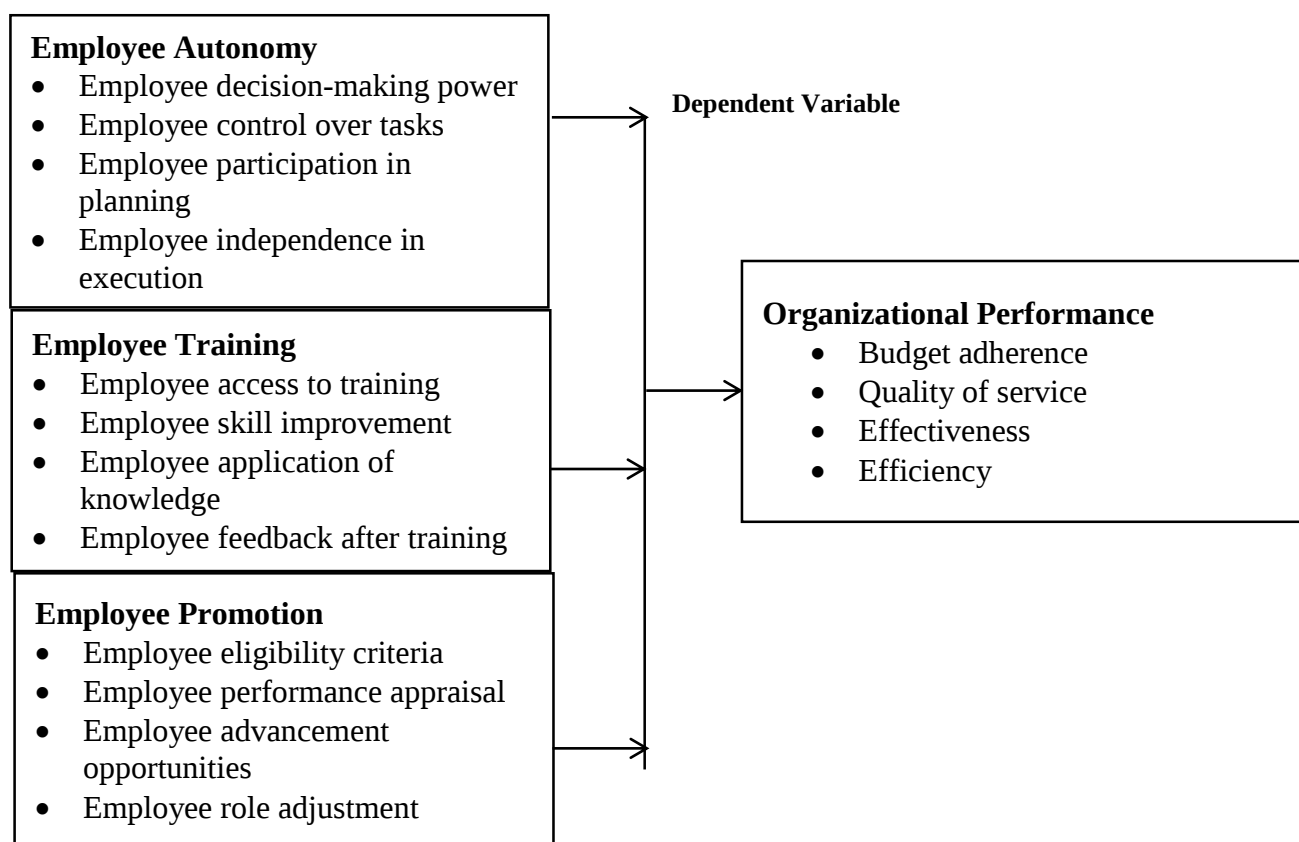


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework, Source: Researcher (2025)

3. Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive and correlational research design to examine the relationship between employee empowerment and organizational performance in Gasabo District Head Office. The design combined quantitative and qualitative approaches to capture both measurable outcomes and contextual realities: the quantitative approach used structured questionnaires to collect

numerical data on decision-making power, training, promotion, and performance indicators, enabling statistical analysis of relationships across departments, while the qualitative approach applied interviews and document reviews to explore employees' perceptions of autonomy, training, and promotion, enriching interpretation of the quantitative results. The target population comprised 126 staff members employed across the departments of Gasabo District Head Office, namely administration, education, health, infrastructure and urban planning, agriculture and

livestock, finance and economic development, social affairs and gender, legal affairs, ICT and innovation, and environmental protection, as documented in the district's organizational chart and staffing records (Afram, Manresa, & Mas-Machuca, 2022). Because the population was limited in size and centrally managed, a census method was applied to include all 126 employees, eliminating sampling error and ensuring full coverage of empowerment and performance variables (Kumar & Sondhi, 2022). Table 1 presents the distribution of the target population across departments. Data were collected using three complementary instruments: a documentary technique that examined internal reports, performance evaluations, training records, and promotion guidelines to trace historical patterns and current practices and support triangulation (Fegade & Sharma, 2023); a structured questionnaire composed of closed-ended items targeting autonomy, training, and promotion indicators, distributed both physically and electronically to all 126 employees to ensure consistency and facilitate statistical analysis (Yimam, 2022); and semi-structured interviews with selected employees across departments to capture contextual understanding of how empowerment influences motivation, task execution, and service delivery (Jang & Kim, 2025). Collected data were processed through editing, in which each questionnaire was reviewed to confirm completeness and consistency across entries (Albayrak & Ertürk, 2021); coding, in which closed-ended responses were converted into numeric symbols aligned with the study's empowerment and performance variables (Sun, 2023); and tabulation, in which coded data were organized into frequency tables converted into percentages to simplify interpretation (Duru, Okafor, & Nwankwo, 2023).

Prior to full-scale data collection, a pilot study was conducted with 13 employees, representing 10 percent of the population, drawn from Nyarugenge District Head Office and excluded from the main study to prevent bias, in line with the recommendation that pilot testing is essential for identifying operational challenges and refining research instruments before full implementation (Albayrak & Ertürk, 2021). Instrument validity was assessed through the Content Validity Index (CVI), computed as the ratio of the number of relevant items (n) to the total number of items (N); a CVI of 16/20 yielded a value of 0.80, which exceeds the acceptable threshold of 0.70 and confirms that the instrument possesses good content validity (Zhu, Li, & Chen, 2022). Instrument reliability was assessed through Cronbach's alpha, with a threshold above 0.70 considered acceptable (Batse, 2025); the four constructs, each measured with four items, yielded alpha coefficients of 0.842 for Employee Autonomy, 0.873 for Employee Training, 0.816 for Employee Promotion, and 0.861 for Organizational Performance, confirming strong internal consistency across all scales.

Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, version 29), applying both descriptive and inferential techniques, consistent with the view that public sector research requires both approaches to adequately interpret organizational outcomes (Chelangat, 2022). Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize demographic characteristics and variable responses; means were interpreted as very low (1.0–1.8), low (1.9–2.6), neutral (2.7–3.4), high (3.5–4.2), and very high (4.3–5.0), while standard deviations of 0.5 or below indicated homogeneous (high-consensus) responses and above 0.5 indicated heterogeneous (varied) responses. Bivariate Pearson correlation analysis was applied to examine the strength and direction of the relationship between each independent variable and organizational performance, with statistical significance assessed at the 0.05 threshold using the two-tailed significance value. A multiple linear regression model was then used to predict organizational performance from the three empowerment dimensions jointly, specified as $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \varepsilon$, where Y represents organizational performance, X_1 , X_2 , and X_3 represent employee autonomy, employee training, and employee promotion respectively, β_0 is the constant, β values are the regression coefficients, and ε is the error term.

The study acknowledged limitations that could affect the accuracy and generalizability of findings, including the possible reluctance of some employees to respond honestly due to confidentiality concerns and the potential influence of expectations of compensation on response accuracy; these were mitigated by assuring anonymity and clarifying that data would be used strictly for academic purposes. Time constraints and limited access to departmental records also constrained the depth of documentary analysis, and these limitations were considered during interpretation to preserve transparency and contextual accuracy. Ethical integrity was maintained throughout the research process: questionnaires were coded to protect respondent anonymity, informed consent was obtained after explaining the purpose of the study, a formal introductory letter from the University of Kigali validated the research intent, approval was secured from Gasabo District authorities, data were reported in aggregate form to protect individual privacy, all referenced works were properly acknowledged, and participants retained the right to withdraw from the study at any stage without consequence.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Descriptive Statistics on Study Variables

Respondents rated their agreement on a five-point scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). Means were interpreted as very low (1.0–1.8), low (1.9–2.6), neutral (2.7–3.4), high (3.5–4.2), and very high (4.3–5.0); standard

deviations at or below 0.5 indicate homogeneous (high-consensus) responses, while values above 0.5 indicate heterogeneous (varied) responses.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Employee Autonomy

Item	Mean	Std. Dev.
Employees are allowed to make decisions affecting their daily responsibilities	4.18	.388
Employees have control over how tasks are executed within their roles	4.17	.396
Employees participate in planning activities affecting departmental operations	4.10	.350
Employees execute tasks independently without constant supervision	4.18	.388
Overall	4.16	.381

Source: Field data, 2026.

Table 6 shows that all four autonomy items recorded high means ranging from 4.10 to 4.18, with an overall mean of 4.16, indicating that employees widely perceive themselves as having decision-making power, control over task execution, participation in planning, and independence from constant supervision. All standard deviations were below 0.5, signifying homogeneous responses and a strong consensus across the workforce. This finding aligns with Guo et al. (2022), who noted that granting latitude to personnel in determining task methods promotes flexibility

and responsiveness, and with Schermuly et al. (2023), who emphasized that decentralizing control allows operational units to manage responsibilities with minimal interference, thereby supporting service consistency. The homogeneity of responses suggests that autonomy is not confined to a privileged few but is a widespread institutional culture across Gasabo District departments, consistent with the tenets of Empowerment Theory (Albayrak & Ertürk, 2021).

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on Employee Training

Item	Mean	Std. Dev.
Employees have access to training programs relevant to their professional duties	4.06	.518
Employees experience improvement in skills after institutional training sessions	4.13	.585
Employees apply acquired knowledge from training to improve work performance	4.10	.383
Employees receive feedback after training sessions to enhance future performance	4.23	.420
Overall	4.13	.477

Source: Field data, 2026.

Table 7 indicates that employee training items recorded high means between 4.06 and 4.23, with an overall mean of 4.13. The first two items, on access to training and skills improvement, recorded standard deviations above 0.5 (heterogeneous), suggesting that perceptions of training access and its impact on skills vary somewhat across departments, whereas application of knowledge and post-training feedback were homogeneous, reflecting consistent agreement. These findings are consistent with Fegade and

Sharma (2023), who defined training as a structured process embedding functional expertise into organizational systems, and with Uslu, Demir, and Yildiz (2022), who argued that training functions as a continuous improvement tool enhancing institutional responsiveness. The results validate Human Capital Theory's proposition that investment in training builds productive capacity (Abrha & Weldeyohans, 2025).

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics on Employee Promotion

Item	Mean	Std. Dev.
Employees understand the eligibility criteria required for promotion	4.27	.483
Employees undergo performance appraisal before being considered for promotion	4.28	.522
Employees are provided advancement opportunities based on merit and performance	4.17	.444
Employees experience role adjustments after receiving promotions	4.26	.441
Overall	4.25	.473

Source: Field data, 2026.

Employee promotion recorded the highest overall mean among the independent variables (4.25), with individual item means ranging from 4.17 to 4.28, indicating strong agreement that promotion criteria are transparent, merit-based, and linked to performance appraisal. This finding supports Batse (2025), who explains that promotion functions as a structural tool integrating advancement into

institutional workflows, and Zhu et al. (2022), who found that fair, competency-based promotion enhances motivation and retention. The results are consistent with Goal-Setting Theory, which holds that specific, transparent performance benchmarks act as powerful behavioural regulators (Gkizani & Galanakis, 2022).

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics on Organizational Performance

Item	Mean	Std. Dev.
Activities are performed within estimated budget across departments	4.13	.585
Services meet quality standards set for public sector institutions	4.10	.383
Operations are effective in achieving departmental goals and service targets	4.28	.522
Resources are used efficiently to support organizational performance	4.17	.444
Overall	4.17	.484

Source: Field data, 2026.

Organizational performance recorded an overall mean of 4.17, classified as high, with the strongest agreement on operational effectiveness in achieving departmental goals (mean = 4.28) and comparatively more varied perceptions of budget adherence (SD = 0.585). This mixed pattern of homogeneity and heterogeneity mirrors the multidimensional approach to performance discussed by Cignitas et al. (2022), who argued that performance reflects both financial discipline and non-financial strategic

outcomes, and aligns with Musheke and Phiri (2021), who found that customer-centric processes and employee experience are vital drivers of organizational success. The results suggest that while Gasabo District Head Office performs strongly overall, consistency in budget adherence across departments could be further strengthened.

4.2 Inferential Statistics

Table 5: Correlation Matrix

Variable	Statistic	Autonomy	Training	Promotion	Performance
Employee Autonomy	Pearson r	1	.597**	.661**	.717**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	–	.000	.000	.000
Employee Training	Pearson r	.597**	1	.601**	.813**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	–	.000	.000
Employee Promotion	Pearson r	.661**	.601**	1	.774**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	–	.000
Organizational Performance	Pearson r	.717**	.813**	.774**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	–

Source: Field data, 2026. ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); N = 115 for all pairs.

Table 10 shows that employee autonomy correlated strongly and positively with organizational performance ($r = .717$, $p = .000$), employee training showed the strongest correlation with performance ($r = .813$, $p = .000$), and employee promotion also correlated strongly with performance ($r = .774$, $p = .000$). All relationships were significant at the 0.01 level, confirming that increased autonomy, training, and promotion are each strongly associated with improved organizational performance. These results are consistent with Jang and Kim (2025),

whose empirical study demonstrated that autonomy significantly increases work engagement and innovative behaviour, and with Park and Kim (2022), who found that autonomy-supportive climates paired with clear incentives substantially increase organizational output. In the context of Gasabo District, these findings, interpreted through Empowerment Theory (Albayrak & Ertürk, 2021; Kumar & Sondhi, 2022), suggest that decentralized decision-making reduces dependency on hierarchical oversight and accelerates public service delivery.

Table 6: Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.898a	.807	.802	.16554	1.808

Source: Field data, 2026. a. Predictors: (Constant), Employee Promotion, Employee Training, Employee Autonomy. b. Dependent Variable: Organizational Performance.

Table 11 reports an R value of .898, indicating a very strong correlation between the three predictors and organizational performance. The R Square of .807 shows that 80.7 percent of the variance in organizational performance at Gasabo District Head Office is explained by the combined effect of employee autonomy, training, and promotion. The Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.808 falls within the acceptable range of 1.5 to 2.5, indicating no problematic autocorrelation among residuals and

confirming that the regression model is valid. This strong explanatory power echoes Satomi et al. (2023), who found that training substantially reduced operational errors in public institutions, and Yimam (2022), who reported that systematic training directly improves task completion rates, suggesting that Gasabo District's investment in human capital is translating into measurable performance gains.

Table 7: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	12.723	3	4.241	157.074	.000b
Residual	3.042	111	.027		
Total	15.765	114			

Source: Field data, 2026. a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Performance. b. Predictors: (Constant), Employee Promotion, Employee Training, Employee Autonomy.

The ANOVA results in Table 12 show an F-statistic of 157.074 with a significance value of .000, which is below the 0.05 threshold, confirming that the regression model is statistically significant and that the combination of employee autonomy, training, and promotion is a good fit

for predicting organizational performance in Gasabo District Head Office. This result indicates that employee empowerment, taken jointly, is a robust and reliable predictor of institutional performance rather than a product of chance variation.

Table 8: Regression Coefficients

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	.255	.194	–	1.314	.190	–	–
Employee Autonomy	.174	.053	.192	3.283	.001	.501	1.996
Employee Training	.486	.056	.483	8.679	.000	.568	1.760
Employee Promotion	.282	.047	.357	6.000	.000	.497	2.012

Source: Field data, 2026. Dependent Variable: Organizational Performance.

Table 13 shows that the constant (B = .255, Sig. = .190) was not statistically significant, indicating that performance is largely driven by the empowerment variables rather than by factors held constant in the model. Employee Autonomy recorded B = .174, t = 3.283, and Sig. = .001, which is below 0.05, providing grounds to reject the first null hypothesis (H01). Employee Training recorded the largest coefficient (B = .486, t = 8.679, Sig. = .000) and the highest standardized Beta (.483), identifying it as the strongest predictor of performance and providing grounds to reject the second null hypothesis (H02).

Employee Promotion recorded B = .282, t = 6.000, and Sig. = .000, providing grounds to reject the third null hypothesis (H03). Collinearity diagnostics showed tolerance values above 0.4 and VIF values below 3 for all predictors, indicating no problematic multicollinearity. The fitted regression equation is: Organizational Performance = 0.255 + 0.174(Employee Autonomy) + 0.486(Employee Training) + 0.282(Employee Promotion) + ε .

4.3 Hypotheses Testing

Table9: Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Sig. Value	Decision
H01: No significant effect of employee autonomy on organizational performance	p = .001 (< 0.05)	Rejected
H02: No significant effect of employee training on organizational performance	p = .000 (< 0.05)	Rejected
H03: No significant effect of employee promotion on organizational performance	p = .000 (< 0.05)	Rejected

Source: Field data, 2026.

Since the significance values for all three predictors were below the 0.05 threshold, all three null hypotheses were rejected, confirming that employee autonomy, employee training, and employee promotion each exert a statistically significant positive effect on organizational performance in Gasabo District Head Office.

4.4 Discussion of Results

The results of this study provide strong empirical evidence that employee empowerment, through autonomy, training, and promotion, significantly enhances organizational performance in Gasabo District Head Office. The significant positive effect of autonomy ($B = .174$, $p = .001$) confirms the descriptive finding that employees perceive high levels of decision-making latitude (mean = 4.16) and corroborates Jang and Kim (2025), who found that autonomy significantly increases work engagement and innovative behaviour, and Sun (2023), whose case study of Google's management model found that autonomy-driven policies increased innovation output by 22.4 percent. The finding is theoretically anchored in Empowerment Theory, which holds that redistributing authority toward lower administrative tiers reduces dependency on hierarchical oversight and enhances procedural independence (Albayrak & Ertürk, 2021; Kumar & Sondhi, 2022); in the Gasabo District context, this explains why decentralized decision-making, exemplified by department heads permitting engineers and finance officers to exercise independent judgment in their daily operations, translates into faster, more responsive public service delivery.

The strongest predictor in the model, employee training ($\beta = .483$), aligns closely with Fegade and Sharma (2023), whose systematic review found that structured training improved task accuracy by 17.6 percent and service delivery speed by 12.4 percent, and with Yimam (2022) and Satomi et al. (2023), who reported comparable improvements in task completion rates and reduced operational errors following structured training interventions in public institutions. This convergence of evidence, interpreted through Human Capital Theory (Schultz, 1961; Becker, 1964; as cited in Abrha & Weldeyohans, 2025), confirms that training functions not as a cost but as an investment in productive capacity whose returns materialize as measurable organizational performance gains; the slight heterogeneity observed in perceptions of training access ($SD = .518$) nonetheless signals that training opportunities may not yet be evenly distributed across all departments.

The significant effect of promotion ($B = .282$, $p = .000$) is consistent with Duru et al. (2023), who found that fair promotion practices explained 26.3 percent of performance variance at the University of Abuja, and with Zhu et al. (2022) and Ayenew (2023), who linked transparent, merit-based promotion systems to higher engagement, reduced

turnover, and improved institutional efficiency. This result is well explained by Goal-Setting Theory (Locke & Latham, 1990, as interpreted by Gkizani & Galanakis, 2022), which holds that specific, transparent, and performance-based criteria function as powerful behavioural regulators; because promotion recorded the highest descriptive mean of all study variables (4.25), it appears that the perceived fairness of Gasabo District's appraisal-linked promotion system is a particularly strong motivational lever for staff.

Taken together, the joint explanatory power of the three empowerment dimensions ($R^2 = .807$, $F = 157.074$, $p < .000$) substantially exceeds the variance explained in several comparable studies, such as Duru et al. (2023), where promotion alone explained 26.3 percent of variance, suggesting that the combined, mutually reinforcing application of autonomy, training, and promotion produces performance benefits greater than any single dimension applied in isolation. This is consistent with the Resource-Based View (Barney, 1991, as cited in Seriki, 2023), which holds that sustained institutional advantage arises from the coordinated deployment of internal resources, in this case, empowered and capable personnel, rather than from any single practice. The findings also extend the work of Mwarenge and Kinyua (2022) and Cignitas et al. (2022) by demonstrating, within a decentralized Rwandan public institution, that internal human-resource-driven initiatives can produce performance outcomes on a scale comparable to those attributed to external market positioning in prior corporate-sector studies. Overall, the results affirm that employee empowerment is not merely a human resource practice but a strategic performance driver whose institutionalization, rather than dependence on individual managerial discretion, is essential for sustaining the gains observed in this study.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

This study examined the effect of employee empowerment, through employee autonomy, employee training, and employee promotion, on organizational performance in Gasabo District Head Office, Rwanda. With respect to the first objective, the study concludes that employee autonomy significantly influences organizational performance; when employees are granted authority over decisions related to their work and operate with minimal supervision, their sense of responsibility and initiative improves, leading to more efficient task execution, improved departmental planning, and overall organizational effectiveness. Regarding the second objective, the study concludes that employee training is a fundamental driver of organizational performance, as well-structured training programmes enhance employee skills,

enable practical knowledge application, and ensure continuous improvement, with training emerging as the single strongest predictor of performance in this study. For the third objective, the study concludes that employee promotion practices have a direct and positive effect on organizational performance, as transparent, merit-based promotion systems increase employee satisfaction, loyalty, and motivation, and align individual growth with institutional goals.

In general, the study concludes that employee empowerment, encompassing autonomy, training, and promotion, significantly and jointly contributes to organizational performance at Gasabo District Head Office, with the three dimensions collectively explaining over 80 percent of the variance in performance outcomes. All three null hypotheses were rejected, confirming statistically significant positive relationships between each empowerment dimension and organizational performance. These findings validate the study's four guiding theoretical perspectives: Empowerment Theory explains the performance benefits of decentralized decision-making; the Resource-Based View explains how internal human capabilities generate sustained institutional advantage; Human Capital Theory explains why investment in training yields measurable performance returns; and Goal-Setting Theory explains why transparent, criteria-based promotion functions as a behavioural motivator. Employee empowerment is therefore not only a driver of productivity but also a foundation for sustainable institutional development, and public institutions such as Gasabo District Head Office should embed empowerment practices into their management strategies as a matter of institutional policy rather than individual managerial discretion.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made to strengthen employee empowerment and organizational performance at Gasabo District Head Office and comparable public institutions:

- i. Management should move beyond task-based autonomy by establishing formal policies that enable staff participation in departmental planning meetings and strategic goal-setting, rather than confining autonomy to routine task execution.
- ii. Departmental authorities should be encouraged to delegate decision-making authority for specific projects to employees, allowing staff to own outcomes rather than merely the process, thereby deepening the impact of autonomy on performance.
- iii. A structured Training Needs Assessment should be conducted before rolling out training programmes to ensure equal access and relevance across all

departments, addressing the heterogeneity observed in employees' perceptions of training access.

- iv. A mandatory post-training feedback mechanism should be implemented, requiring employees to report on the applicability of acquired skills, so that training investments remain practical and aligned with organizational goals.
- v. Promotion criteria should be clearly documented in an employee handbook and communicated to all staff, ensuring that employees understand precisely what is required to advance and reinforcing the transparency already associated with high satisfaction levels.
- vi. Performance appraisals used for promotion decisions should be evidence-based and involve a participatory review process, reducing potential bias and reinforcing the meritocratic culture identified in this study.
- vii. The Ministry of Local Government should support decentralized institutions such as Gasabo District in developing binding policy frameworks that institutionalize empowerment practices, autonomy, training, and promotion, as standard performance-enhancing strategies rather than discretionary managerial options.
- viii. Gasabo District Head Office should strengthen departmental consistency in budget adherence by adopting standardized financial monitoring tools across all departments, addressing the heterogeneity observed in perceptions of budget-related performance.
- ix. Future researchers may build on these findings by examining the effect of employee recognition on organizational performance, the effect of leadership style on employee productivity, the effect of job satisfaction on employee retention, or the effect of communication flow on service delivery within public sector institutions, each of which would offer deeper insight into specific dimensions of employee management and organizational outcomes.

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