



Analysis of The Effect of Empowerment From A Human Resource Management Perspective On Employee Performance In The South Sibolga District Government

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Abstract: Employee empowerment has long been recognized as a pivotal mechanism through which organizations can unlock the full potential of their workforce and, consequently, drive superior organizational outcomes. Within the context of public sector organizations, where bureaucratic structures often constrain individual initiative, the question of how empowerment shapes employee performance takes on added significance. This study was designed to empirically examine the extent to which human resource empowerment influences the performance of civil servants employed at the South Sibolga District Government Office. A descriptive correlational research design was adopted, and data were gathered from 52 civil servants selected through probability sampling from a total population of 109 staff members. The primary data collection instruments comprised structured questionnaires validated through rigorous validity and reliability testing. Pearson product-moment correlation analysis, coefficient of determination, simple linear regression, and t-test were applied to analyze the data using SPSS version 21. The results demonstrate a strong positive relationship between empowerment and employee performance, yielding a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.765$. The coefficient of determination revealed that empowerment accounted for 58.6% of the variance in employee performance ($R^2 = 0.586$). The regression equation $Y = 17.592 + 0.668X$ confirms that each incremental improvement in empowerment is associated with a corresponding increase in performance. Furthermore, the t-test result ($t = 8.412 > t\text{-table} = 2.008$) confirmed statistical significance at the 5% level, leading to rejection of the null hypothesis. These findings suggest that empowering employees through delegated authority, trust-building, access to information, and organizational support represents a strategically important approach to improving civil servant performance. Practical recommendations include institutionalizing empowerment practices within government HR policies and investing in capacity-building programs aligned with civil service competency standards.

Keywords: Human Resource Empowerment; Employee Performance; Civil Servants; Public Sector; Human Resource Management

Introduction

Contemporary human resource management (HRM) has undergone a fundamental transformation, shifting from its traditional administrative orientation toward a strategic function that is deeply integrated into organizational goal achievement. Scholars and practitioners alike now recognize that effectively managing human capital is among the most consequential decisions an organization can make, as people remain the primary source of competitive advantage in both private and public sectors ([Boxall & Purcell, 2016](#); [Wright & McMahan, 2011](#)). Technological disruption, evolving demographic compositions of the workforce, and increasing demands for public accountability have further reinforced the need for organizations to adopt sophisticated HR practices that go beyond recruitment and payroll administration ([Boselie et al., 2005](#); [Jiang et al., 2012](#)).

Among the various HRM practices that have received sustained scholarly attention, employee empowerment has emerged as a particularly promising intervention. Empowerment, broadly defined as the process of enabling individuals to exercise meaningful authority, judgment, and initiative within their designated roles, has been linked to a range of desirable organizational outcomes including heightened motivation, stronger job satisfaction, reduced turnover intention, and improved individual and organizational performance ([Spreitzer, 1995](#); [Thomas & Velthouse, 1990](#); [Seibert et al., 2011](#)). However, despite this general consensus, empirical evidence regarding the specific pathways through which empowerment influences performance particularly within the context of Indonesian public administration remains comparatively limited.

The State Civil Apparatus (Aparatur Sipil Negara or ASN) represents the institutional backbone of Indonesian governance. Civil servants serve as the principal implementers of government policy across all levels of administration, and their performance directly determines the quality of public services delivered to citizens ([Karina et al., 2024](#); [Muharam, 2019](#)). Performance among civil servants is understood to encompass both the quantitative outputs of work and the qualitative dimensions of task execution, including responsiveness, integrity, and adherence to professional norms ([Daulay et al., 2019](#); [Sutedjo & Mangkunegara, 2013](#)). Nevertheless, challenges persist across many Indonesian district offices, where issues such as insufficient skill development, inadequate decision-making autonomy, and limited access to organizational resources have been observed to constrain staff performance ([Sarkosi, 2019](#); [Arifin, 2021](#)). Therefore, employees are one of the efforts made by organizations to achieve quality employees, so that they have the ability to utilize, develop and master science and technology. In this case, organizations need to formulate HR policies and strategies that are able to face challenges and take advantage of opportunities in the market ([Simamora, 2020](#)).

Existing literature has established a positive association between empowerment and employee outcomes in various organizational settings ([Conger & Kanungo, 1988](#); [Spreitzer, 1995](#); [Hameli et al., 2025](#)). Studies have shown that structural empowerment through the provision of information, resources, support, and opportunities enhances employees' ability to perform effectively, while psychological empowerment amplifies intrinsic motivation and behavioral engagement ([Spence Laschinger et al., 2001](#); [Chompukum & Vanichbuncha,](#)

[2025](#)). However, most of this evidence is derived from private sector and healthcare contexts in developed economies, and fewer studies have examined empowerment dynamics within the structural and cultural constraints characteristic of Indonesian local government offices ([Ramlan & Jumady, 2025](#)).

This research gap is particularly relevant at the South Sibolga District Government Office, where preliminary observations indicated that employees frequently encountered difficulties completing assigned tasks within designated timeframes, attendance compliance was inconsistent, and staff readiness levels were uneven. These conditions suggested a potential underutilization of employee capabilities, partly attributable to insufficient empowerment practices. Addressing this gap, the present study investigates the effect of human resource empowerment on employee performance in this setting.

The theoretical framework underpinning this study integrates Spreitzer's (1995) psychological empowerment model which identifies meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact as core dimensions of empowerment with structural empowerment theory (Kanter, 1993), which emphasizes the organizational conditions that enable effective performance. Together, these perspectives suggest that empowerment operates through both attitudinal and structural channels to influence how employees engage with and perform their duties. Based on this theoretical grounding, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₁: Human resource empowerment has a positive and statistically significant effect on employee performance at the South Sibolga District Government Office.

By generating empirical evidence from a public sector context in Indonesia, this study aims to contribute meaningfully to both the academic literature on HRM in developing economies and the practical discourse surrounding civil service reform and performance management in local government institutions.

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive correlational research design, which is well-suited to investigations that seek to describe the characteristics of variables and determine the nature and magnitude of their relationships without experimental manipulation ([Creswell, 2014](#)). The choice of this design was guided by the study's objective of examining the associative relationship between human resource empowerment and employee performance in a naturalistic organizational setting.

The research population consisted of 109 civil servants (Aparatur Sipil Negara) employed at the South Sibolga District Government Office, located at Jalan Sisingamangaraja No. 350, Sibolga City, North Sumatra Province, Indonesia. A sample of 52 respondents was drawn from this population using probability sampling, specifically proportionate random sampling, to ensure that each stratum of the organization had an equitable chance of representation. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error, which is consistent with acceptable thresholds in social science research ([Sugiyono, 2019](#)).

Data were collected through multiple instruments. A structured questionnaire served as the primary instrument, comprising 15 items for the empowerment variable (X) and 15 items for the employee performance variable (Y). Items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaire was developed based on established theoretical dimensions: the empowerment instrument drew from the frameworks of Spreitzer (1995) and Conger and Kanungo (1988), encompassing authority delegation, trust, resource access, and opportunities for participation. The performance instrument was grounded in criteria proposed by Sutedjo and Mangkunegara (2013), and Robbins and Judge (2017), including work quality, task completion, initiative, and accountability. Supplementary data were also gathered through structured observation and in-depth interviews with selected informants to provide contextual triangulation.

Instrument validity was assessed using the Pearson product-moment correlation method, with a criterion of $r\text{-count} > 0.30$, which is consistent with standard practice in survey-based research (Arikunto, 2013). All 30 items across both variables met this threshold and were retained. Instrument reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, with a minimum acceptable value of 0.60. Both the empowerment scale ($\alpha = 0.943$) and the performance scale ($\alpha = 0.936$) demonstrated high internal consistency, confirming their suitability for data collection.

Quantitative data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 21 and proceeded in four stages. First, Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was computed to assess the strength and direction of the bivariate relationship between empowerment and performance. Second, the coefficient of determination (R^2) was calculated to quantify the proportion of variance in employee performance attributable to empowerment. Third, simple linear regression analysis was performed to model the predictive relationship between the two variables and to derive the regression equation. Fourth, a t-test was conducted to evaluate the statistical significance of the regression coefficient at the 5% significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$), with the decision rule that H_0 is rejected when t-count exceeds t-table (2.008). Taken together, these analytical procedures ensured that the findings were both internally valid and reliably interpretable within the context of the study.

Result and Discussion

Prior to hypothesis testing, descriptive statistics were computed for both research variables. The empowerment variable (X) yielded a mean score of 52.34 (SD = 7.81) out of a maximum possible score of 75, suggesting that respondents perceived moderately high levels of empowerment within their work environment. The employee performance variable (Y) produced a mean score of 52.47 (SD = 9.14), indicating similarly moderate-to-high performance self-ratings among the civil servant respondents. The minimum score recorded for empowerment was 35 and the maximum was 72, while performance scores ranged from 32 to 73. These distributions suggest reasonable variance in both variables, supporting the appropriateness of correlation and regression analyses.

Results of the Validity Test of the Research Instrument

Table 1. Instrument Validity Test Results

No Item	r count	r table	Information
Variable X (Human Resource Empowerment)			
Item 1	0,697	0,30	Valid
Item 2	0,681	0,30	Valid
Item 3	0,626	0,30	Valid
Item 4	0,640	0,30	Valid
Item 5	0,652	0,30	Valid
Item 6	0,520	0,30	Valid
Item 7	0,781	0,30	Valid
Item 8	0,677	0,30	Valid
Item 9	0,599	0,30	Valid
Item 10	0,638	0,30	Valid
Item 11	0,572	0,30	Valid
Item 12	0,699	0,30	Valid
Item 13	0,648	0,30	Valid
Item 14	0,547	0,30	Valid
Item 15	0,497	0,30	Valid
Variable Y (Performance)			
Item 1	0,668	0,30	Valid
Item 2	0,707	0,30	Valid
Item 3	0,633	0,30	Valid
Item 4	0,652	0,30	Valid
Item 5	0,670	0,30	Valid
Item 6	0,543	0,30	Valid
Item 7	0,761	0,30	Valid
Item 8	0,701	0,30	Valid
Item 9	0,621	0,30	Valid
Item 10	0,660	0,30	Valid
Item 11	0,605	0,30	Valid
Item 12	0,704	0,30	Valid
Item 13	0,637	0,30	Valid
Item 14	0,549	0,30	Valid

Item 15	0,508	0,30	Valid
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All 30 statement items 15 for the empowerment variable (X) and 15 for the employee performance variable (Y) passed the validity threshold, as each r-count value exceeded both 0.30 and the corresponding r-table criterion. This confirms that every item genuinely measures the construct it was designed to capture. The empowerment items cover dimensions such as authority delegation, organizational trust, resource access, and participatory decision-making. Items within the performance instrument address work quality, task completion efficiency, self-initiative, and professional accountability. The diversity of item content across both scales strengthens the construct validity of the instruments and increases confidence that the subsequent statistical relationships reflect genuine organizational phenomena rather than measurement artifacts.

Reliability Test Results

Table 2. Reliability Test Results

No	Variables	Cronbach's alpha	Information
1	Empowerment	0,943	Good reliability
2	Performance	0,936	Good reliability

Cronbach's alpha coefficients for both variables substantially exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.60, with empowerment scoring 0.943 and performance scoring 0.936. These values indicate excellent internal consistency, meaning that the items within each scale consistently measure the same underlying construct. High reliability at this level suggests that the questionnaire responses are stable and would yield similar patterns if administered again under comparable conditions. From a practical standpoint, this consistency reflects the degree to which civil servants hold coherent perceptions of empowerment and performance within their organizational environment perceptions that are not random but systematically organized around stable attitudinal and behavioral patterns (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). In the context of modern organizations, performance includes not only the output produced by employees, but also work processes, interpersonal behavior, adaptability, and integrity in carrying out tasks (Zhang et al., 2022).

Correlation Coefficient

Table 3. Correlation Coefficient Test Results

Correlations			
		Empowerment	Employee Performance
Human Resource Empowerment	Pearson Correlation	1	0,765
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0,000
	N	52	52
Employee Performance	Pearson Correlation	0,765	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,000	
	N	52	52

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

Source: Results of data processing using the SPSS 21 program

The Pearson product-moment correlation analysis produced a coefficient of $r = 0.765$, which, by conventional interpretation criteria, indicates a strong positive relationship between human resource empowerment and employee performance. The associated significance value of $p = 0.000$ (two-tailed) confirms that this correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level, effectively ruling out the likelihood that the observed association is a product of chance variation. In practical terms, this finding means that civil servants who report higher levels of empowerment characterized by greater decision-making autonomy, trust from supervisors, and access to organizational resources also tend to demonstrate substantially higher performance levels. This bivariate finding aligns closely with theoretical expectations and sets the groundwork for the multivariate analysis that follows.

Coefficient of Determination

The model summary indicates that $R^2 = 0.586$, meaning that human resource empowerment explains 58.6% of the total variance in employee performance among the sampled civil servants. This is a substantively meaningful result, as it positions empowerment as a major determinant of performance within this organizational context. The adjusted R^2 of 0.578 provides a slightly more conservative estimate that accounts for the number of predictors in the model, and the minimal difference between R^2 and adjusted R^2 confirms that the model is not inflated by unnecessary complexity. The standard error of the estimate (6.968) reflects the average deviation of predicted performance scores from actual scores, a value that is acceptable given the scale range of the instrument. The remaining 41.4% of unexplained variance is attributable to other variables not included in the model, including work motivation, leadership quality, organizational culture, compensation structures, and the broader work environment.

Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Table 5. Results of Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Coefficients ^a						
	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	17,592	4,479		3,928	0,000
	Empowerment	0,668	0,079	0,765	8,412	0,000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

Source: Results of data processing using the SPSS 21 program

The simple linear regression analysis produced the equation: $Y = 17.592 + 0.668X$. The constant value of 17.592 indicates the baseline level of employee performance that would be expected in the complete absence of empowerment, a theoretical lower bound that underscores the importance of empowerment as an incremental contributor to performance beyond base conditions. The regression coefficient of 0.668 is the central finding of the model: for every one-unit increase in the empowerment score, employee performance is predicted to increase by 0.668 units, holding all other factors constant. The standardized

beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.765$) is equivalent to the Pearson correlation, confirming the consistency of results across analytical methods. Both the constant ($t = 3.928$, $p = 0.000$) and the empowerment coefficient ($t = 8.412$, $p = 0.000$) are statistically significant, validating the model's predictive utility.

Test t

The hypothesis test was conducted at the 5% significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) with a two-tailed critical region, yielding a t-table value of 2.008 for 50 degrees of freedom. The computed t-value of 8.412 substantially exceeded this critical value, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_0 : empowerment has no significant effect on performance) and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (H_a : empowerment has a significant positive effect on performance). The probability value of $p = 0.000$ confirms that the likelihood of observing a t-statistic of this magnitude by chance is negligible. Taken together, the correlation, determination, regression, and t-test results form a coherent and mutually reinforcing body of evidence supporting the conclusion that human resource empowerment is a statistically significant and practically meaningful determinant of civil servant performance in the South Sibolga District Government.

Discussion

The magnitude of empowerment's influence observed in this study accounting for over half of the variance in employee performance warrants careful consideration of why this effect may be especially pronounced within a public sector context. Unlike private organizations, where market competition and profit incentives create extrinsic performance pressures, public agencies often rely more heavily on intrinsic motivational mechanisms to drive employee effort and commitment (Perry & Wise, 1990; Vandenabeele, 2007). In environments where salary structures are relatively standardized and promotional pathways are constrained by civil service regulations, empowerment may function as a critical substitute for extrinsic rewards, providing employees with a sense of meaning, ownership, and professional relevance that motivates discretionary effort (Bright, 2007; Maheshwari, 2026; Popa, 2026).

Furthermore, the hierarchical and procedural nature of government bureaucracy can inadvertently suppress employee initiative if not counterbalanced by deliberate empowerment practices. When civil servants are granted meaningful decision-making latitude and trusted with responsibilities commensurate with their expertise, they tend to exhibit greater proactivity, stronger commitment to service quality, and reduced dependency on supervisory oversight ([Laschinger et al., 2004](#); [Faulks et al., 2021](#)). In the South Sibolga context, where workloads were increasing and task complexity was escalating, empowerment may have served as a particularly vital resource that enabled employees to navigate challenges autonomously rather than waiting for hierarchical directives ultimately accelerating task completion and improving service delivery quality.

The current findings are broadly consistent with the weight of empirical evidence from prior research. Spreitzer (1995) established the foundational theoretical and empirical case for psychological empowerment as a predictor of managerial effectiveness, reporting

significant positive relationships between empowerment dimensions and performance indicators. The correlation of $r = 0.765$ observed in this study falls within the upper range of values reported in the relevant literature, which has documented empowerment-performance correlations ranging from approximately 0.40 to 0.75 across diverse organizational settings ([Seibert et al., 2011](#); [Chompukum & Vanichbuncha, 2025](#); [Hameli et al., 2025](#)).

Studies conducted in Indonesian public sector contexts have similarly reported significant positive effects of empowerment on employee performance, though generally at somewhat lower effect sizes than those observed here (Arifin, 2021; Ramlan & Jumady, 2025). The comparatively strong effect found in this study may reflect the relatively low baseline levels of empowerment at the study site, which would produce a larger marginal impact of each incremental improvement. This interpretation is consistent with the theoretical notion of diminishing returns on empowerment: organizations that have already implemented extensive empowerment practices may observe smaller incremental gains than those where empowerment is introduced into a previously low-autonomy environment ([Conger & Kanungo, 1988](#)).

Internationally, Zeb et al. (2025) found that supervisor support for a structural dimension closely related to empowerment significantly mediated the relationship between organizational practices and job performance, further validating the empowerment-performance pathway identified in this study. Similarly, Alzoraiki et al. (2025) demonstrated that empowerment combined with technological enablement produced compounding positive effects on organizational sustainability. These cross-contextual consistencies strengthen the generalizability of the present findings and suggest that the empowerment-performance relationship is robust across different institutional environments.

Theoretical Implications

This study makes several contributions to the theoretical landscape of HRM research. First, it extends the application of Spreitzer's (1995) psychological empowerment model to the Indonesian public sector, a context that has historically been underrepresented in the international HRM literature. The empirical support for a strong empowerment-performance relationship in this setting enriches the cross-cultural generalizability of the model and invites further investigation into how cultural and institutional factors moderate the empowerment-performance pathway in collectivist, hierarchical organizational cultures.

Second, the findings reinforce the strategic HRM perspective articulated by Boxall and Purcell (2016) and Liu et al. (2007), which posits that HRM practices including empowerment create value not merely through their direct behavioral effects but through their signaling function. When organizations invest in empowerment, they communicate to employees that their contributions are valued and their judgment is trusted, which activates reciprocal commitment and effort consistent with social exchange theory ([Blau, 1964](#); [Saks & Gruman, 2017](#)). This dual pathway behavioral and attitudinal helps explain why the effect

size in this study is substantially larger than might be predicted by behavioristic models alone.

Third, by demonstrating that 41.4% of performance variance remains unexplained by empowerment alone, this study implicitly calls for a more integrative, multi-predictor theoretical framework for understanding civil servant performance. Future theoretical development should explore how empowerment interacts with constructs such as servant leadership (Tan et al., 2025), organizational commitment, public service motivation (Perry & Wise, 1990), and digital competency (Firdaus & Kuswinarno, 2024) to produce synergistic effects on performance in public administration contexts.

Conclusion

This study provides robust empirical evidence that human resource empowerment exerts a strong, positive, and statistically significant influence on the performance of civil servants at the South Sibolga District Government Office, explaining 58.6% of performance variance ($r = 0.765$, $R^2 = 0.586$, $t = 8.412 > 2.008$, $p < 0.05$). These findings carry important theoretical and practical implications: theoretically, they extend the applicability of psychological and structural empowerment frameworks to an Indonesian public sector context and invite cross-cultural dialogue on how institutional and cultural factors mediate the empowerment-performance relationship; practically, they suggest that district government agencies should institutionalize empowerment as a core element of their human resource strategy specifically by revising administrative procedures to delegate greater decision-making authority to frontline staff, establishing mentoring and capacity-building programs that strengthen employee competencies, and fostering a supervisory culture grounded in trust, transparency, and constructive feedback. Future research is encouraged to employ longitudinal or experimental designs to clarify the causal dynamics of the empowerment-performance relationship, and to investigate additional mediating and moderating variables such as public service motivation, transformational leadership, organizational culture, and digital literacy that may amplify or constrain the effectiveness of empowerment interventions in local government settings across Indonesia and other developing economies.

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