

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION



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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

**AN INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYEE
EMPOWERMENT STRATEGIES ON PERFORMANCE IN AN
ORGANISATION. A CASE STUDY OF GRAIN MARKETING BOARD.**

BY

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS OF THE BACHELOR OF BUSINESS STUDIES (HONOURS)
DEGREE IN HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT**

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Submitted by **B1649671** in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Bachelor of Commerce (Honours) Degree in Human Capital Management.

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I declare that this research project herein is my original work and has not been copied or extracted from previous source without due acknowledgement of the source.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis and a special feeling of gratitude to my loving parents, for their gratuitous words of encouragement and a push for tenacity. I dedicate them this important professional achievement, because without their presence, support and comprehension I would have not achieved my goal. I love you.

ABSTRACT

The study set out to investigate the relationship between employee empowerment strategies on performance in the Grain Marketing Board (GMB), Aspindale Depot. The employee empowerment strategies, namely: granting effective delegation authority, reward systems, providing adequate information, and positive feedback are the identified independent variables with employee performance as the dependent variable. Each of the empowerment strategies was tested to determine its impact on employee performance. The major limitation of the research was the timing of the research which coincided with the civil service audits. A case study research design was used in this study. Questionnaires were used as methods for data collection in GMB. The study, therefore, sought to evaluate the impact of employee empowerment on organisation performance. GMB with a population of 64 permanent employees was the focus of the study. A sample of 27 employees consisting of managers, supervisors and other junior employees was drawn from various departments at GMB namely; finance, administration and so on. The respondents were selected using random and non-random sampling techniques. Both primary and secondary methods of data collection were used. Data were analysed and presented in the form of graphs and pie charts. The major findings originating from the research were that the management was not doing enough by a way of empowering the employees due to the factors such as the level of education of the employees and bureaucracy in the organisation. Therefore, the employees were failing to meet the expected standards of performance. Employees felt that they were not sufficiently empowered to influence the decision making processes in the district. The study recommends that, GMB should delegate the decision making authority to the lowest appropriate levels so as to improve employee performance.

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ACRONYMS

BUSE: Bindura University of Science Education

GMB: Grain Marketing Board

EE: Employee Empowerment

EP: Employee Performance

HR: Human Resource

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the background of the study; the statement of the problem; research objectives; research questions; assumptions; delimitations; limitations; and the definition of key terms.

1.2 Background of the Study

Employees desire to be caught up in decisions that have an effect on their job. The benefit of high engagement workplaces is that they create a trusting and challenging environment in which employees are encouraged to challenge conventional wisdom and innovate in order to move the company forward. Challenges, such as scientific changes, the need for fast decision making, and the significance of common changes, have been disturbing the company's operation of GMB. This has been troubling the company by bringing to light the reduced self-esteem and performance of workers. In reaction to reduced employee self-esteem and performance, the GMB changed its ways of managing its operations. The GMB has transformed from usual management practise (command and control) into a self-ruled structure that empowers employees at the workplace. This led the researcher to investigate the impact of empowerment on employee performance.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The organization's initiative that is designed for competitiveness is ineffective when subordinates do not feel empowered or dedicated to follow the outlined tasks and objectives. With no in-depth information on how employers view empowerment and how it relates to employee performance, GMB might not be able to yoke completely the efforts of their employees. Consequently, this study was done to investigate the impact of empowerment strategies on employees' performance.

1.4 Objectives

- To establish the employee empowerment strategies which are being employed at GMB.

- To determine the impact of employee empowerment strategies on employee performance at GMB
- To come up with effective ways to maximise the benefits of employee empowerment strategies at GMB.

1.5 Research Questions

- What employee empowerment strategies are being employed in the GMB?
- What is the impact of employee empowerment strategies on employee performance in the GMB?
- Which effective ways that can be used to maximise the benefits of employee empowerment strategies at GMB?

1.6 Significance of the Study

1.6.1 To the researcher:

By carrying out this research project, the researcher gained in-depth knowledge and experience in carrying out detailed research, which serves as a good foundation for future research work.

1.6.2 To the Grain Marketing Board

The result of this study helped the GMB and other companies under its control to plan and implement an effective management style. This research gives the manager the perception of whether empowerment strategies influence employee performance. This study also helps managers to better manage their employees to improve their individual and organisational performance.

1.6.3 To other students:

This research project provides reference to other students in their research work, especially those who are interested in the same subject.

1.7 Delimitations

The research focuses on assessing empowerment strategy in connection to employee performance in the GMB, and the research focused on the depots in Mashonaland West, Mashonaland Central, and Harare Provinces, and it also covers the period of September 2019 to August 2020.

1.8 Limitations

The educational credentials of the majority of the population were low, so it restricted the results of the study because of lack of knowledge. In addition, internet access was restricted to a slot allocated at the campus centre; therefore, the researcher was not capable of accessing huge volumes of online literature on the university. To overcome the limitations, the researcher used questionnaires through easy terminology to provide every employee as well as use her personal finances in order to have internet access facilities offered by private businesses.

1.9 Assumptions

- The information compiled from primary data sources was correct and exact.
- Respondents were offering balanced and accurate information.
- All other factors with the aim of affecting employees' performance were assumed to be stable.

1.10 Definition of Terms

Competence: The capability or potential of a person is to complete tasks assigned (“Gist, 1987”).

Employee Empowerment: The rearrangement of influence stuck between employers and workers – mainly in the form of lifting employee power, accountability and influencing obligation (“Greasley, Bryman, Dainty, Price, Soetanto and King, 2004”).

Employee Performance: The completion of a certain duty considered in opposition to specific values of precision, wholeness, rate, and speediness, the initiative they take, their vision to solve struggle as well as the imagination in the means they make use of their assets, period and power (“Rothman, 2003”)

Impact: The rate at which one influence strategic, managerial or functional outcome at work (“Ashforth, 1990”).

Meaning: The value one puts on the significance of a specified post, based on the individual principles and also morals (“Thomas and Velthouse, 1990”)

Self-Determination: A person’s logic to have a choice to initiate and regulate performance in achieving usual grades (“Deci, Connell, and Ryan, 1989”).

1.11 Summary

This chapter looked at the background of the problem, the statement of the problem, the significance of the study, the objectives, and the definition of the research problem. It also looked at the assumptions on which the study was to be carried out. It was also the purpose of this chapter to outline the limitations and delimitations of the study. A literature review then follows in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the review of the literature and discusses the concept of employee empowerment, types and forms of empowerment, strategy of empowerment, model of empowerment, the impact of empowerment, advantages of empowerment strategies, and basics in relation to employee empowerment and observed review. Moreover, it also looked at the challenges to the success of employee empowerment.

2.2. Concept of Empowerment

Empowerment entails the reformation of authority connecting employers and workers with the aim of increasing worker accountability, power, and influencing obligation (Greasley et al., 2004). Moreover, we can define empowerment as the compromising of power-delegation of rights (Burke, 1986). In a similar manner, Cornwall (1990) defines empowerment as a process of having power given by the customarily authoritative managers in an association and instilled in every person.

However, Randolph (1995) defines empowerment from another perspective. Randolph (ibid) defines empowerment as to classify as well as to liberate the company from the rights that employees have in their resources, useful data, and inner stimulus. Likewise, Conger and Kanungo (1988) refer to empowerment as a process of getting a better view of self-efficiency amongst the workers during the recognition of a situation so as to advance inability and during their elimination by all recognised managerial practise and unofficial techniques to provide useful information.

2.3. Two Dimensions of Employee Empowerment

In their first two definitions, Burke and Cornwall (ibid) on their first two definitions view empowerment as the distribution of authority and power (a relation perception), whilst Randolph et al. view empowerment as a motivation concept (a psychological perception).

2.3.1 The Psychological Perspective of Empowerment

Quinn and Spreitzer (1997) state that psychology (empowerment is as well identified as unprocessed or bottom-up process) focuses on an employee's consciousness of empowerment as well as an employee's internal nature. For example, when a worker has the power to create a judgment, although you do not think that he/she has the ability to create the correct decision, having the right to put up the conclusion that cannot end in a better outcome for the business is not enough. In addition, Spreitzer (1996) says that assets might be decentralised in object realism, except if employees are not informed that those resources are available for their use, then access to resources has little influence on feelings of empowerment. Empowered people discover sense in their labour roles, feel capable of carrying out their labour roles, have a sensation of liberty with regard to the exact way to accomplish accepted results, and also consider that they can have a genuine force on organisational outcome (Mishra & Spreitzer, 1998).

2.3.2 The Relational Concept of Empowerment

Relational empowerment (Conger & Kanungo, ibid.) is referred to as top-down processing. Relational empowerment focuses on delegation of authority and the contribution of power in the organization. Spreitzer (ibid.) states that relational empowerment can be achieved through delegation or sharing of power. Relational empowerment has to do with the organisation and how it should be structured, as well as how the organisational culture should be designed to facilitate empowerment.

2.4 Types and Forms of Empowerment

Soutine et al. (2005) categorised worker empowerment into three types, thus, verbal empowerment, behavioural empowerment and outcome empowerment.

2.4.1 Verbal Empowerment:

Verbal empowerment can be defined as the capacity to shape one's estimation and discuss one's view in dissimilar kinds of groups. Involvement in making decisions is as well an essential element of verbal empowerment. According to Harrison (2002), increased decision-making authority could increase worker managerial loyalty, independence, and job satisfaction (Soutine et al., *ibid*).

2.4.2 Behavioural Empowerment:

Behavioural empowerment can be defined as the capability to work in teams so as to work out problems; to discover a problem that has to be solved; to gather information regarding employment inconveniences; to suggest a solution; and to be trained in new skills and handle extra difficult work. Other aspects of behavioural empowerment consist of group work and reporting (Soutine et al., *ibid*).

2.4.3 Outcome Empowerment:

Outcome empowerment refers to the capability to establish the cause of problems and also resolve them, and the capacity to build change and improvements to the approach with which the job is completed with a view to increasing the efficacy of the organisation (Soutine et al., *ibid*).

2.5 Elements of Employee Empowerment

According to Fracard (2006), the three elements of employee empowerment include the following:

2.5.1 Style: Empowered employees comprise an operational approach of autocracy and also have team spirit. Workers formulate, implement, and are believed to be responsible for occupational decisions.

2.5.2 Skills: Empowered employees are adept at effective communication and problem-solving. They challenge unproductive policies and discover nuisances.

2.5.3 Personnel Workers: Empowerment is bred to empower an organization. By way of empowering influencers as drivers, wrapped up in a society of empowerment and armoured by empowering organisational practices, workers are likely to develop.

Employee Empowerment Strategies

2.6.1. Articulating the vision of an individual's job

Harrison and John (2002) define vision as a short, brief, and also hopeful assertion of what a company intends to develop into as well as reach at a certain level in the future. Also, they separate mission from vision by denoting that, unlike mission, which has to address an organization's function in the current period, an organization's vision is very goal-oriented.

Every organisation has to clearly explain its vision and mission to its employees to build an environment of encouragement, freedom, and trust needed for an empowered organization. Potterfield (2009) states that a clearly articulated vision of an organisation can represent key traits of empowered individuals and empowered organizations. The employees feel empowered if the organization's mission and vision are clearly explained in a way that is reliable through their ethics and values. (Block 1987) demonstrates how we become empowered as we create a bubble that expresses our desires for what we want to create.

2.6.2 Delegating sufficient authority

Nelson (1994) defines delegation as entrusting power and authority to a worker acting as a representative. Through the preparation in order to delegate, a team is given authority to finish the task, and they imagine responsibility for the accomplishment of work.

To be empowered, the employees must have the right to make decisions without receiving prior consent from a manager and without having their decisions overruled. In this case, Lashley (1999) indicates that the success of a specific initiative can rely on the empowered being given the authority and freedom to make decisions that they themselves consider valuable, significant, and important.

2.6.3 Reward Programs

Rewarding employees is another fundamental strategy in employee empowerment.

Spreitzer (ibid) argues that individual-based performance rewards are essential for empowerment. Personal incentives improve worker empowerment by providing that individual with rewards to participate in and affect decision-making procedures in their occupation and to recognise and reinforce individual competencies.

Additionally, Lawler (1986) denotes that workers can be stimulated to execute well as soon as three circumstances exist. The circumstances are that effectual performance is alleged to be attainable, rewards are alleged to be attached to performance, and the rewards that are attached to performance are appreciated.

2.6.4 Providing adequate information and resources

Organizations implementing empowerment cannot accomplish their goals without having sufficient information systems that allow the employees in the organisation to contact and split information (Bowen and Lawer, 1992). Potterfield (ibid.) shows that the empowered organisation is rather an open structure, where information is shared liberally and where communication takes place in every direction – as well as across departmental borders and yet rising from the line employees to the company chiefs.

2.6.5 Building employees' confidence

Block (1987) states that an excellent approach that improves the opinion of employee empowerment is to articulate their confidence and also establish a realistic high presentation for them. Moreover, according to the Expectancy theory by Vroom, if workers think that they know how to accomplish a definite end result, they are furthermore likely to thrive in acting as such. A variety of ways to enhance employees' self-confidence consist of acknowledging and rewarding employees for their actions; encouraging cross-learning so that employees can gain from one another's knowledge and skills; exhibiting better support and trust in the employee's capacity to complete an assignment; as well as providing an opportunity to the workers by giving them further difficult responsibilities. This shows that the company values its workforce and their individual growth.

2.6.6 Guiding with positive feedback

Benis and Nanus (2010) propose that providing an affirmative response regarding the tasks completed and guiding employees regarding the greatest exercise can support the workforce. It can also help employees to stay on the correct path and grow efficiently. Benis and Nanus

(ibid.) noted that managing a huge labour force is a frightening duty. Conversely, through employees' empowerment, it has happened to be easy since an employee can be responsible and accountable for their actions.

So, to create an effective empowering environment in an organization, those approaches must be considered. Empowerment necessitates that both individual and professional aims are combined. As well, workers can also be empowered to do stuff that is not in the company's concern, and instead, an employee can be empowered to do stuff in the company's concern but not stimulated to do so since it is not in their own self-centeredness.

2.7.1 Theoretical Framework

The following are recognised models in employee empowerment:

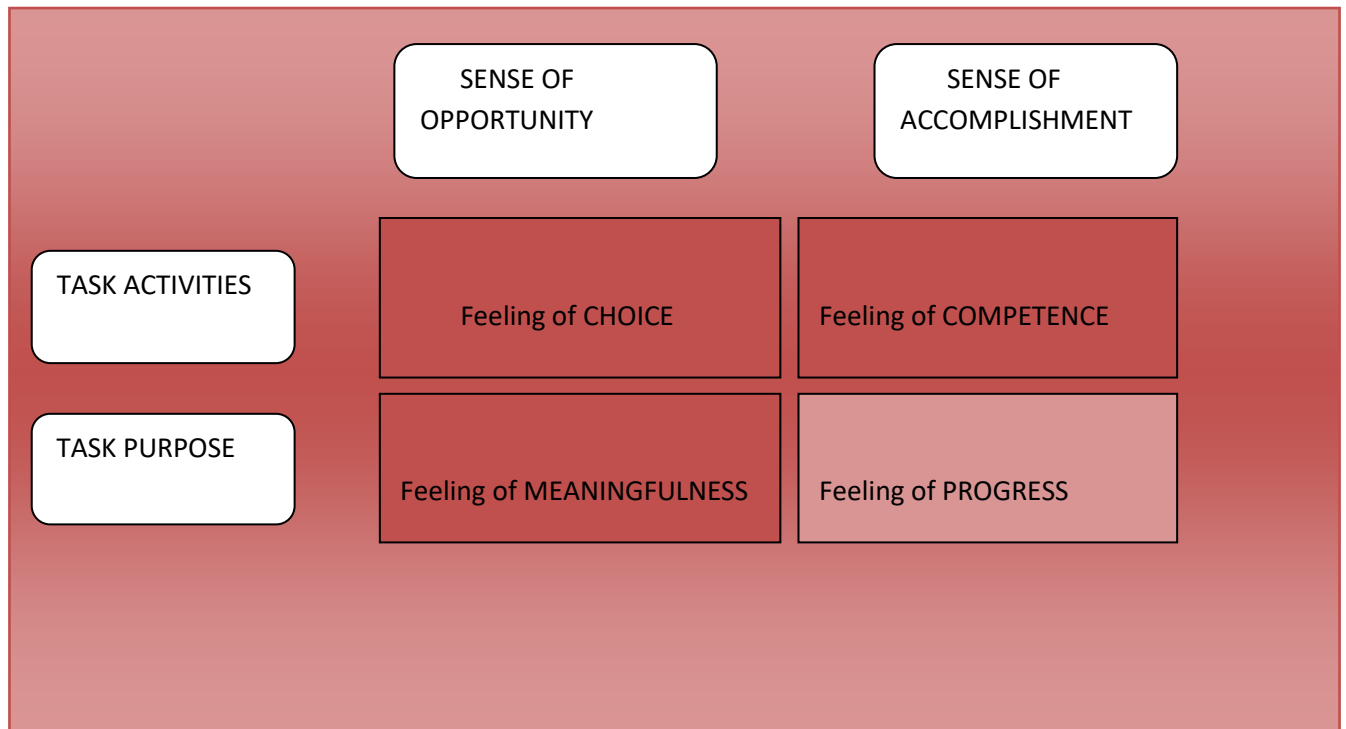
2.7.2 The Thomas and Tyron Model

Thomas and Tyron (1993) say that an individual practises empowerment when he or she is energised by the task they perform. Like Thomas and Velthouse (1990), Thomas and Tymon apply job assessment as a basis for their work, with the exception of the use of growth instead of assessing the impact of tasks. This is known as the feelings in the Thomas and Tymon model (ibid.). They are defined by the authors as follows:

- **Choice** is the ability that a person has to select an action that makes sense as well as to carry it out in a way that appears proper. The sense of being able to choose of being able to use self-judgment and act on knowledge of the job.
- **Competence** is the achievement that a person feels in a skilful performance of a particular task. The sense of competence involves the sense that an individual is performing well, exerting excellent effort on responsibilities.
- **Meaningfulness** is the chance that one feels to follow a valuable mission principle. The sentiment of meaningfulness is the reaction that a person is on a lane that values energy and time and also that a person is on an important task that one's idea matters in the bigger scheme of possessions.
- **Progress:** is the achievement that one feels in accomplishing the duty's rationale. The sentiment of growth involves the logic that the job is still going, that one's activity is to accomplish something (Thomas and Tymon, ibid).

The writers make it obvious that these opinions result from both task actions, also known as behaviours that a person performs, as well as the goal an individual tries to attain, as shown below.

Figure 2.1 Empowerment Grid



Source: Thomas and Tynon 1993, p.9).

2.7.3 The Spreitzer Model

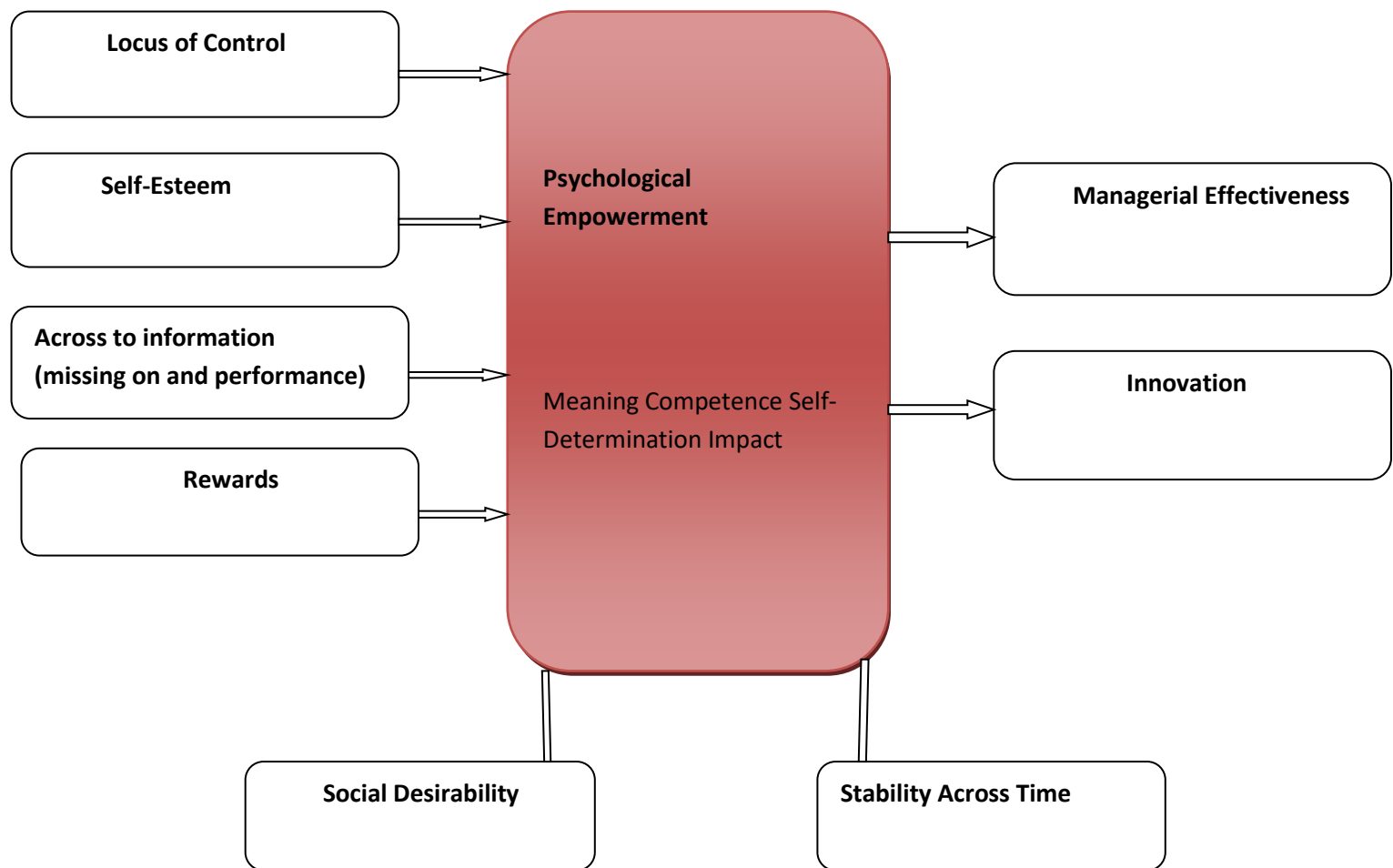
Spreitzer (ibid) suggests and expands a multidimensional gauge to empower in the organisation. She also put more emphases on the idea of Thomas and Velthouse (ibid) that there are four different proportions of empowering employees. Those proportions are known as choice, competence, meaning and impact, which is autonomy.

She states that each one magnitude unites with the other magnitudes to make a general gauge of psychosomatic empower. The four magnitudes can argue to merge in order to produce a construct of mental empowerment. Hence, the shortage of a particular element can reduce, although not utterly eradicate, the overall degree of felt empowerment.

Furthermore, Spreitzer developed a partial homological network of psychological empowerment in the workplace, as revealed in the following diagram. In this system, the

writer recognized and established previous circumstances and cost of psychosomatic empowerment, and also communal structure description of the employment part. As shown in the diagram labelled figure 3, the prior circumstances are locus of control, self-worth, right to rewards and information. Two consequences of empowerment in particular are efficiency and improvement.

Figure 2.2 Partial Nomological Network of Psychological Empowerment in the Workplace.



Source: Spreitzer 1995, p.1445.

2.8 Performance Effects of Employee Empowerment Strategies

Creativity

According to Cornwall and Perlman (1990), the goal of making workers feel accomplished and respected is to slot in critical and innovative ideas. The worker can sense an extra

competence and motivation to create circumstances in an exceptional way, which can guide to improved product improvement.

When companies empower employees to think for themselves as well as obtain initiatives, the employees might discover exceptional habits to add significance to the company, advertise the organisation's forces to the consumers, and change measures that are not skilful anymore. This eliminates a range of the power of the organisation to often innovate and wait in front of the company.

Job satisfaction

Employee empowerment gives the worker some sense of autonomy, which is able to improve contentment. Employees can be calm while doing their work, empowering employees to increase confidence and sense of worth (Mishra and Spreitzer, 2002). Joyful employees offer the greatest consumer services as well as leave an excellent impression of the company with whomever they speak. This results in individual or professional development for the worker and improved sales for the company.

Decision-making

In a planet in which expertise changes on a daily basis and consumers find information, products, and services in increasingly varied habits, the employee needs to create fast results that help the process (Spreitzer and Mishra, 2002). If the organisation spends time and effort providing training in decision-making, the employees are most likely to respond to change quickly and find new ways to meet customer demands efficiently. This removes some of the pressure on management to constantly innovate and stay ahead of the industry.

Loyalty

Chen and Chiang (2005) say that an employee will reveal faithfulness if he or she is trained properly, maintained, esteemed, listened to, and respected in an organization. Employees are expected to perform harder as well to encourage the organisation while the chances arise. The employees, as well, are less likely to leave the organisation and are more likely to suggest other skilled people for job openings.

Embracing change

In this way, empowered employees feel free to confront the status quo, which is crucial for corporations in the current varied, expertise-focused atmosphere (Collins, 1995).

An employee and the company can turn out to be satisfied if they perform things the way he or she has finished them all the time. Except if the employee feels comfortable probing the status quo, those organisations are expected to remain as opponents go speedily past them. Creating an atmosphere where an employee feels liberated to ask, confront, and suggest the latest information helps to keep away from problems and benefits employees as well as employers in the procedure (Collins, *ibid.*).

Better customer service

Green and Tull (1998) put forward that empowering an employee provides outstanding service.

An empowered employee has the authority to make decisions with no supervision. They are allowed to deviate from the script, change the policy, and do what they believe is healthy if they believe it is the right thing to do for the consumer. Mostly, empowered employees are capable of creating a sense of proper consumer service that eventually gives way to better consumer faithfulness (Green and Tull, *ibid.*). Furthermore, an empowered employee gains arrogance and also possession in his or her job when he or she realises that they can implement self-sufficient conclusions when necessary.

Some studies propose that the monetary profits to be empowered can be better than those accomplished during other ordinary plans, such as Total Quality Management (TQM), Just in Time (JIT), or teamwork. For the most part, there is a production advantage since empowerment means that an employee is using accountability to maintain responsibilities like paperwork and utensil management. That is limiting costs that are indirect. Moreover, empowerment can advance an employee's awareness, competency, and ideas, making them effectual in their job (Mishra and Spreitzer, *ibid.*).

2.9.4 Challenges to the Achievement of Employee Empowerment

Mostly, managers are fairly comfy with ideas of empowerment, planning, threat, individual development, and faith. They turn out to be less comfy, nevertheless, in light of the similar features to consider in how we control employees. Managers speculate on the amount of

independence an employee can hold without becoming a loose cannon. They are also concerned about losing control.

In reality, most employers do not like empowerment. They limit the possibility for empowerment by supporting a control system that can be deliberately or not deliberately transmitted messages that they mistrust individuals to operate in empowered ways. These organisational systems and structures create a barrier that creates pressure for compliance and discourages worker initiatives and risk-taking. Spreitzer and Quinn (ibid.) recognised three main obstacles familiar to mainly big companies that can aggressively put off employee empowerment:

a) administrative culture

A bureaucratic culture includes multiple levels of hierarchy, which slows down change. It demonstrates the preservation of the current state during a strong practise of top-to-down transformation, the lack of a reliable vision for the future, temporary professional thoughts, and also a deficiency of management support for real change. Such a bureaucratic culture is armed by an incentive structure that highlights the status quo. Shortly, bureaucratic cultures slow down empowerment by creating obstacles to learning and change.

(Spreitzer and Quinn, ibid.).

b) Conflict on multiple levels

Another obstacle stems from multi-level conflict rooted in many companies. Conflict among tasks is the end result of a structure which creates strong divisions between the various functions of the organisations. Conflict amongst peers is the result of a performance management system that pits people against each other for raises and promotions, creating competition rather than collaboration.

Finally, conflict between employers and employees, rather than focusing on how to achieve goals, creates an unfriendly work environment in which individuals are more concerned with defending themselves than doing what is best for the organization. Each and every source of an argument works to slow down views of empowerment by distracting an employee from doing the right things and realising the requirement for change.

c) Time constraints at home

Another barrier is the intense time constraint imposed on workers. In the current business world, with the tendency towards downsizing and layoffs, one employee may be undertaking the job of two or even three workers. Employees protest regarding having enough time for family life. Working under these kinds of worrying circumstances, employees often point out that it is very hard to think about launching new strategies.

2.10 Employee Efficiency

Employee performance can also refer to behaviour that leads to an outcome, especially behaviour that can change the surroundings in certain ways. Employee performance is a measure of the grades produced in a specific job function or activity during a specific time period connected with organisational objectives. Performance is the result produced by a specific functional unit or personal action over a given period, not the personal characteristics of employees who are performing the work (Spreitzer, 1996).

Furthermore, Harrison and John (2002) suggest that an employee's performance is affected by two general factors: work environment factors (situation) and individual factors. Work environment factors (situations) include the social environment, pressure situations, organisational culture, job involvement, competition, and interpersonal communication. Individual factors include skills, motivation, and knowledge, level of education, perceptions, goals, organisational learning culture, self-awareness, and work experience.

According to Rothman (ibid), the influencing factors to an employee's performance, such as age, diminish performance as an employee gets older. Another factor, gender, leads women to prefer to adjust to power, while men are said to be more aggressive in creating hope and success. Factors such as position or superiority put differences into a need to be satisfied in accordance with the arrangement that they had.

2.11 Empirical Analysis

Awamleh (2013) carried out a field survey on a sample of respondents working in business and government organisations in Bahrain. The study aimed to show the significance of empowerment in improving employees' performance in many ways.

The researcher's revised engaged a descriptive-analytic approach. It utilises primary sources of data. The study relied on related literature review along with primary data collected by means of questionnaires especially designed for the study. The researcher's sample was characterised by the following demographic distribution:

The vast majority of respondents (50%) had working experience longer than twenty years, while (25%) had working experience less than ten years and (25%) had experience of more than thirty years. The majority of respondents (70%) were middle managers level, while (20%) were lower level employees and (10%) were top managers' level.

The major findings of his study revealed that empowerment is a very significant tool in promoting individual performance, thus improving overall organisational performance. He recommended that organisations should organise and carry out more academic and practical activities regarding empowerment to promote awareness of the concept, its importance, and the tools and mechanisms of effective application in real-life organizations. This includes more research, training, and changes that promote employees' empowerment.

Furthermore, Kok (2011) carried out a survey to establish the relationship between empowerment and employee performance in the Malaysian automotive industry. Their aim was to examine the influence of psychological empowerment on employee performance and to identify which of the four (4) dimensions of psychological empowerment has the greatest influence on employee performance. The questionnaires were sent to 107 companies. A total of 89 respondents from 21 companies participated in the survey. The participating companies represented a return rate of 19.6% of the invitations sent to 107 companies. Six (6) hypotheses were developed and tested using Pearson's correlation and regression analysis. The researcher's findings indicate that employees in the automotive industry find that empowerment strongly influences employee performance.

Furthermore, Hasan et al. (2011) carried out a field survey on a sample of respondents working in public and private banks operating in Turkey. The purpose of the study was to investigate the effects of perceived employee empowerment on the performance of employees. Two hundred and eighty (280) questionnaires were distributed, and only two hundred and thirty (230) were returned. The researcher's sample was characterised by the following demographic distribution:

- 49.2% of the employees belong to an age group that ranges from 31–40 years old.
- 54.9 were women and
- 45.5% of the respondents were graduates.

The major findings of his study revealed that perceived employee empowerment has a positive impact on the performance of the employees.

2.12: Justification of the Study

The research carried out by Awamleh (2013), Kok (2011), and Hassan et al. (2011) was carried out in developed countries. Therefore, this research was proposed to be carried out in Zimbabwe, a developing country. Therefore, this research was carried out to examine the impact of empowerment strategies on employee performance in the Ministry of Youth Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment.

2.13 Chapter Summary

This chapter has focused on the review of the empowerment literature, discussing concepts of empowerment, types and forms of empowerment, strategies of empowerment, models of empowerment, the impacts of empowerment, advantages of empowerment strategies, and elements related to empowerment, as well as an empirical review. It also addressed the challenges to the achievement of employee empowerment. The next chapter addressed research methodology, which is how the researcher collects information related to the problem at hand.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this section, the researcher addresses a variety of tools to gather information for the research. The section also addresses features like the research design, information sources as well as research instruments, and also how the data has to be collected, analysed, and presented in order to answer research questions.

3.2 Research Design

The researcher also engaged in the case study, which is the research design. Randolph (1995) refers to a case study as a strategy for undertaking research, which includes a practical study of certain current experience in a real-life situation by means of various sources of facts. Case study research produces quantitative and qualitative data. The researcher used GMB as a case study, observant, participant, and involvement as research tools. The researcher develops a questionnaire to get information from the respondents at GMB.

3.3 Population

In this research, the population was drawn from the Human Resources department, Regional Office, Finance, Administration, and Clerks. The distribution of the population is shown in the table below:

Table 3.1 Distribution of the Population

Department	Total population	Number of respondents
Human Resources	12	5
Regional Office	13	4
Finance	15	7
Administration	23	6
Clerks	40	10
Total	103	32

The researcher chose 31% because it was a large sample size which produced more reliable and valid results (Saunders et al, ibid).

3.3.1 Sample Size

The sample had a total of 32 participants, which is 31% representation of the total population of 103. To determine the number of employees to choose from each department, the researcher used the formula below.

$$\frac{\text{Number of employees in each department}}{\text{Total Population}} \times \text{Sample Size}$$

Source: Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007)

3.3.2 Sampling

The researcher used judgemental sampling, non-probability sampling technique, says Kotler (2002). The use of this approach permits the researcher to use their judgement to choose population members who are excellent prospects for precise information. This happens when the researcher handpicks sample members to conform to a definite standard.

3.3.3 Sampling Methods

Non-probability and probability sampling techniques are the main ones that were used to choose the respondents for the research.

3.3.3.1 Probability Sampling

In this research technique, each component had the same chance of being selected to partake in the research. The researcher uses a simple random sampling technique. Every member was given an equal chance to be selected in the study in order to produce unbiased and also realistic results.

3.3.3.2 Non-Probability Sampling

Non-probability sampling relies on the decision of the researcher. The researcher selected the Regional Manager for inclusion in the research because he has overall control of the organisation at regional level.

3.4 Instruments for Research

Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected from the field. Also, data gathering was collected through questionnaires.

3.4.1 Questionnaire

During the procedure of preparing the questionnaire as well as formulating questions, abstract concepts were converted to tangible questions, which made it easy to obtain the capacity relating to those ideas. According to the employees' level of literacy, the concept was broken into many components, which helped to specify the exact nature of what was to be measured. The questionnaire was designed in such a way that it has both open-ended and closed-ended questions. Open-ended questions were used in such a way that they provided room for respondents' explanations. On the other hand, closed questions were used mostly with the aim of completing them. Open-ended questions give respondents room to formulate their own responses. Hence, respondents could express how they feel independently and in detail. Such growth was most likely to produce valid data. However, those responses were so hard to quantify and also to classify. Open-ended questions were the hardest to analyse since respondents changed due to their level of literacy.

However, questionnaires also have some weaknesses. Thus, the validity was compromised by the inability as well as the unwillingness of respondents to give accurate and full answers. A solution to this problem, Gay (1989) states, is that acknowledged beneficiaries must be individuals with the required data. They must be eager to give out information. In this research, employees had an interest in providing the researcher with the needed information.

3.5 Validity

The research validity was improved by using random sampling; this is because each and every respondent had an equal possibility of being selected. The actual population was represented by the sample.

3.6 Reliability

A reliable tool is one that allows the user to have a steady measure of vital features in spite of fluctuations. An instrument such as the questionnaire was reliable since it reproduced the same response from different respondents.

Greenhaus et al. (ibid) purport that a reliable questionnaire can also be used by different people with different appearances, but it should be able to bring out the same results. Questions were obvious and definite. Alternatively, easy language, which was common to respondents, was used. Open as well as closed questions were used so as to make sure that the information collected was reliable.

Procedures for Data Collection

Primary sources

It is data that is captured at a certain point at which it is produced first and also with the aim in mind (Deci et al. (ibid)). This data was gathered from the ground by the use of structured questionnaires. The observation method is another tool that was used to collect primary data. Primary data was helpful as it permits the researcher to evaluate what the company has. Conclusions and recommendations can be made through the organization's views on the problem. More so, primary data sources were used because they are openly significant to the problem as well as giving the researcher more power over data accuracy. Primary sources provide first-hand information that is up-to-date and accurate as well. However, primary data was time-consuming since it was not readily available.

3.7. Data Analysis Procedure

After the researcher has collected all the needed data, the researcher then goes through the analysis stage whereby the data has to provide answers to the research questions. The process involved editing, coding, as well as data analysis. The data was physically edited for entirety, accuracy, and consistency.

Pie charts, bar graphs, and chart tables were used to present and illustrate the data to be gathered. Tables which require calculations were simple to make, and they show thorough statistical data in brief. Charts can make it easy for the research to come up with a conclusion and can also give a fast overall idea of research results.

3.8 Ethical Points to Consider

Research ethics can be defined as the appropriate behaviour of the researcher in relation to the rights of those who were affected by the research and also those who became the subject

of the research. It is a code of appropriate behaviour for education and the conduct of research.

- **The right to privacy:** The researcher made a declaration that she must not disclose information that the respondents had produced to other people or third parties.
- **Informed concern:** The researcher also gave information to the participants about what was likely to happen during the research in order for them to choose whether to participate or not.
- **Freedom from harm:** The researcher guaranteed security of participants' welfare, protection from dangerous treatment, and protected the participants from dangerous behaviour.
- **Invasion of confidentiality-**The researcher also came up with ideas that help to safeguard authorisation, allow confidential manners to be documented, and allow potential participants to volunteer to offer a free observation to themselves.

3.9 Chapter Summary

The chapter summarised the research design method that was used. It covered collection procedures followed as well as the instruments used to gather information. The next chapter looked at data presentation, data interpretation and data analysis.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the research methodology. Hence, this chapter focuses on data presentation, interpretation and discussion of the research findings. Data was presented using tables, bar graphs and pie charts.

4.2 Sample Response Rate

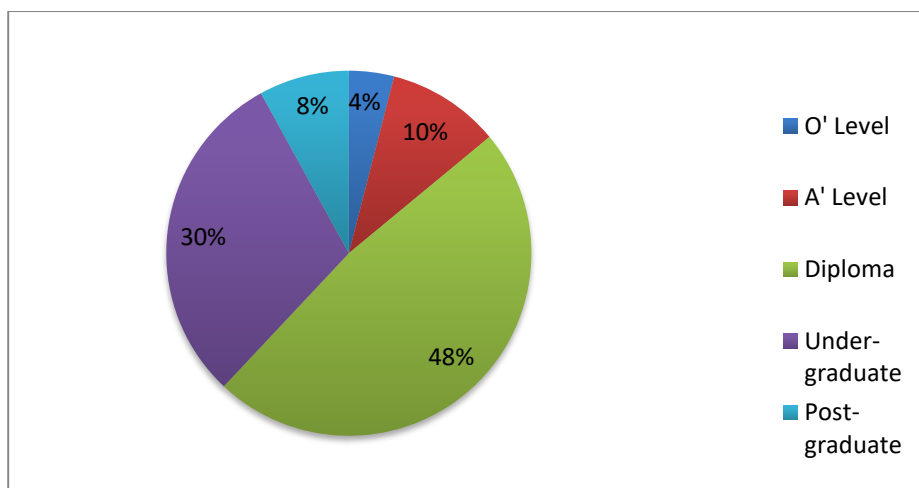
Table 4.1 Questionnaire Response Rate (n=27)

	Total Questionnaires	Non usable Returns	Usable Returns	Response Rate (%)
Human Resources	5	0	5	100
Regional Office	4	0	4	100
Finance	7	1	6	86
Administration	6	2	4	67
Clerks	10	2	8	80
TOTAL	32	5	27	84

The findings in table 4.1 above show the summary of responses from the selected questionnaires. Out of 32 respondents that were targeted, 27 questionnaires were returned. Therefore, giving an overall response rate of 84%. According to Harrison and John (2002), when the sample response rate is above 85%, it is regarded as excellent.

4.3 Educational Qualifications

Figure 4.1 Percentage distribution of respondents by qualifications (n=27)

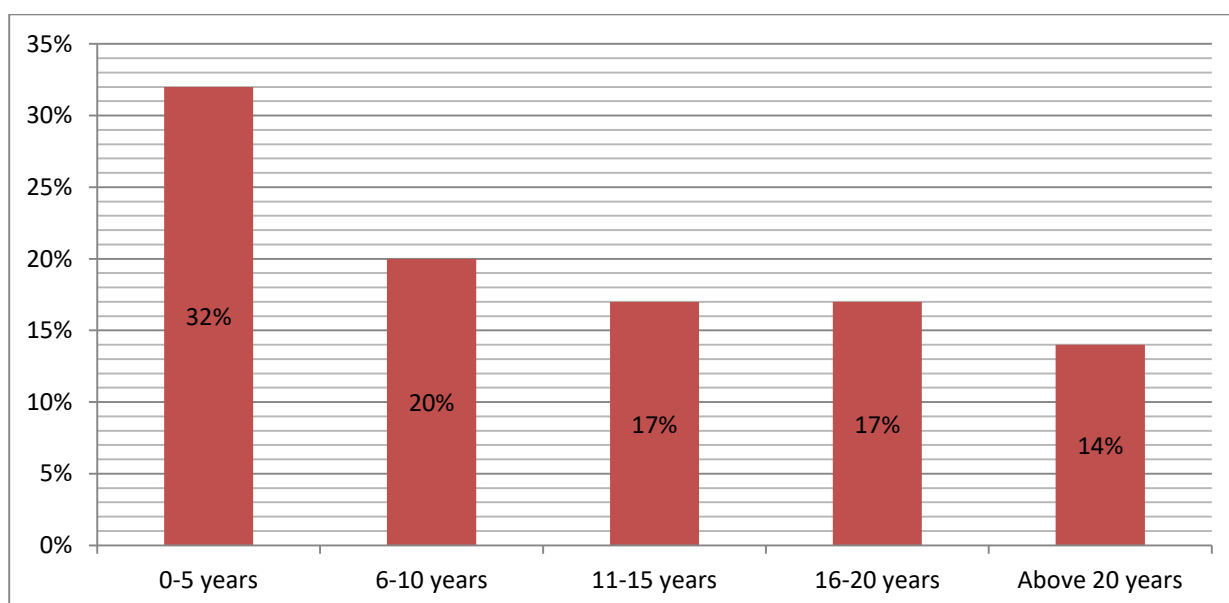


Source: Primary data

The findings in figure 4.1 above shows that the majority of the respondents (48%) had a minimum of a diploma level of education. However, the smallest of the respondents represented by (4%) hold an O' Level certificate.

4.4 Respondents length of service with the GMB

Figure 4.2 Length of service (n=27)



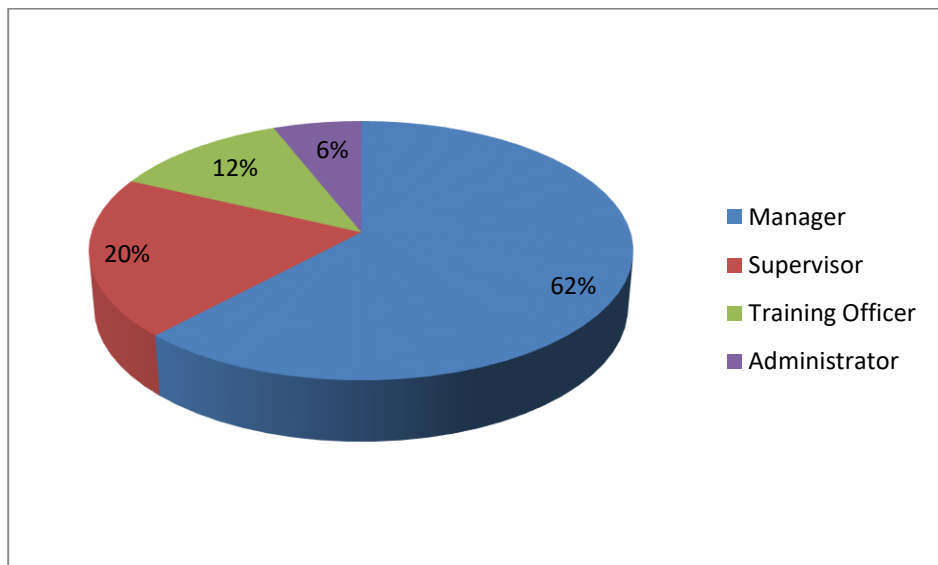
Source: Primary data

The above results indicate that most of the respondents (32%) who have between 0-5 years at GMB. The respondents who had worked for more than 20 years were few and they and they

constituted 14% of the sample. Since most of the respondents have less than 6 years period of service, they were not knowledgeable about the organisation. Therefore, the researcher concluded that there was high labour turnover, for instance, in 2008 people lost their jobs due to economic instability.

4.5 Job Title

Figure 4.3 Composition of the respondents (n=27)

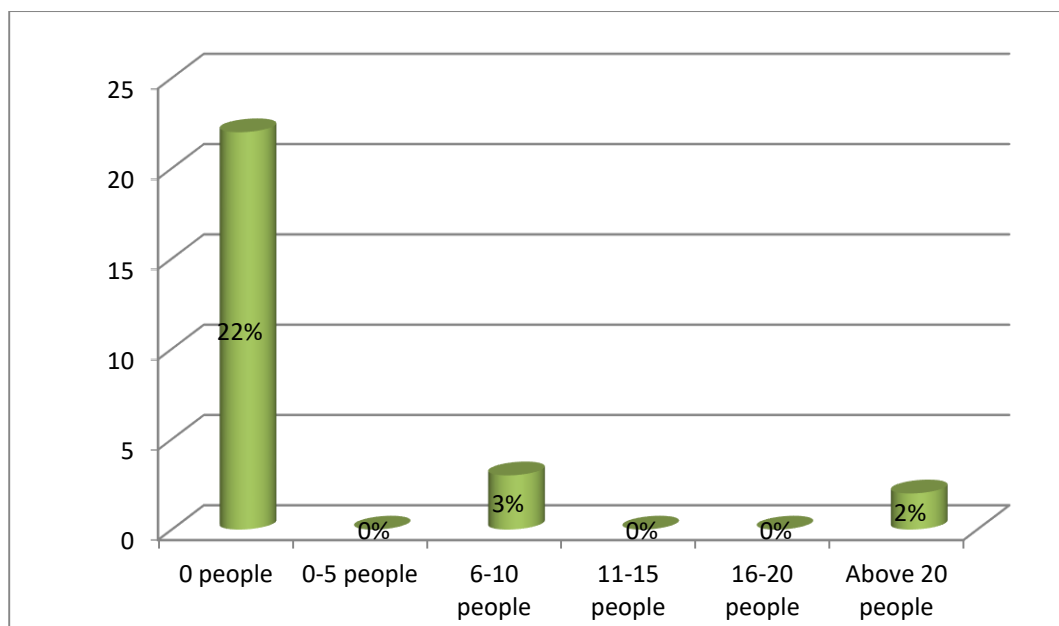


Source: Primary data

Figure 4.3 above shows the results which indicate that most of the respondents were managers (62%).

4.6 Number of employees who report directly to the respondents.

Figure 4.4 Number of employees who reports to the respondents (n=27).



Source: Primary data

Figure 4.4 above shows that 22 employees have no one who directly reports to them. Three respondents have between six and ten people who directly report to them, and two respondents have twenty people who directly report to them. The results show that the structure of GMB was not complicated. Therefore, this means there were fewer barriers in the organisation.

4.7 Participation in decision making

Table: 4.4 Responses related to participation in decision making (n=27)

Statement	Responses (%)				
	SD	D	N	A	SA
1. I am involved in decision making.	1	35	20	13	11
2. I have access to the information so as to make good decisions.	28	30	15	20	17
3. I am given the opportunity to suggest improvements.	43	25	15	11	9
4. I participate in setting the goals and objectives for my job.	10	12	20	15	22
5. Proposed decisions are made at the lowest appropriate level.	2	18	18	30	30

Total (%)	84	120	88	89	89
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Source: Primary data

Key

SD- strongly Disagree

D- Disagree

N- Neutral

A- Agree

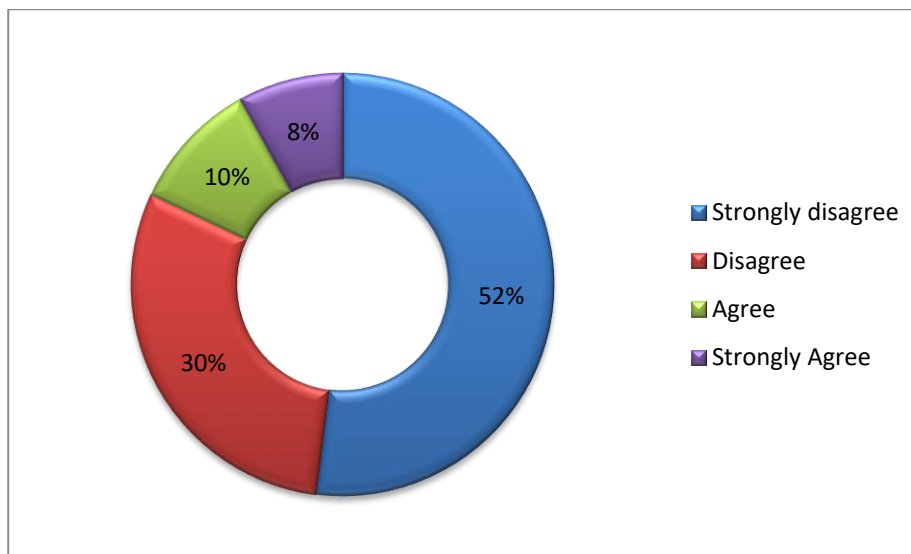
SA- Strongly Agree

There were a series of statements relating to decision making which were provided to the respondents. The table above shows that most of the employees disagreed that they were involved in decision-making. However, 89% agreed. Hence, the results show that employees were not involved in decision-making.

4.8 Employees' confidence

Figure 4.6 Responses relating to employees' confidence (n=27)

Statement: My superiors build confidence in me



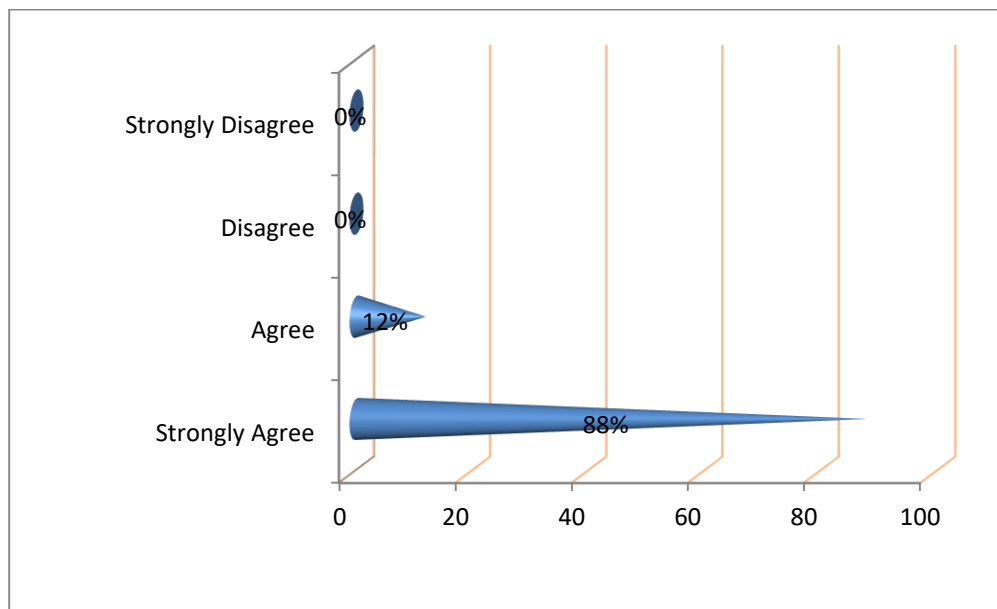
Source: Primary data

According to the question, "My superiors build confidence in me." Figure 7, above, shows that 52% of respondents strongly disagree that their superiors have confidence in them. On the contrary, 8% of the respondents strongly agree that their superiors build confidence in them. Therefore, the responses give an impression that superiors were not building enough confidence in their employees.

4.9 Delegation of authority

Figure 4.7 Responses related to delegation of authority

Statement: I wish management will give more authority



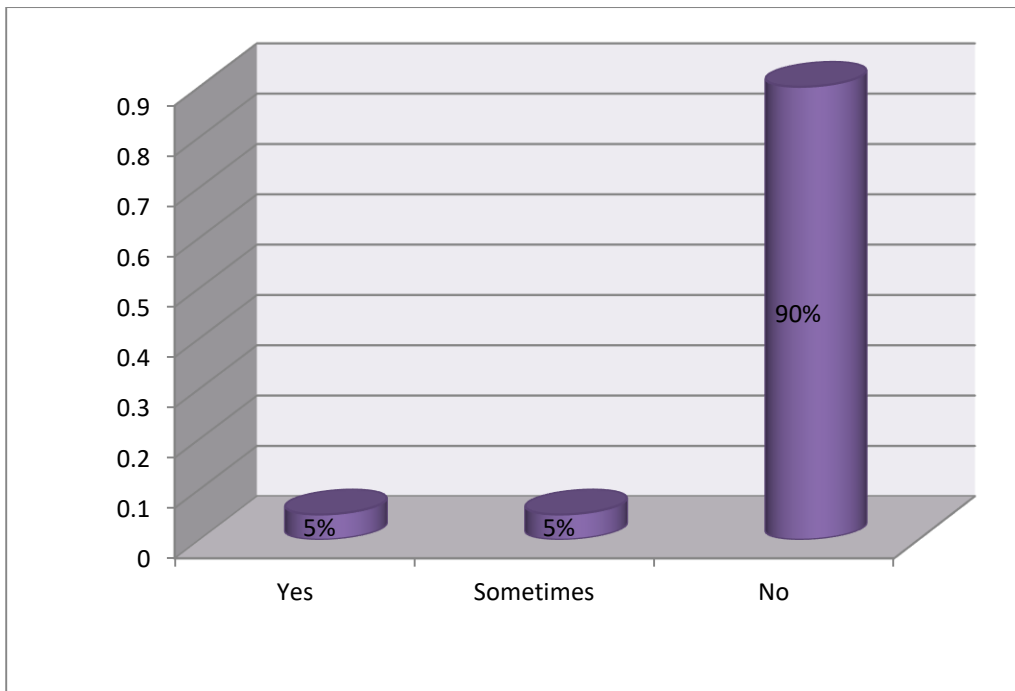
Source: Primary data

According to the statement, "I wish management would give me more authority." 88% of the respondents agreed with the statement. Therefore, the responses show that she was not delegating enough to the employees.

4.10 Performance related rewards

Figure 4.8 Responses related to performance related rewards

Question 9: Are you rewarded for delivering effective services besides your monthly salary?



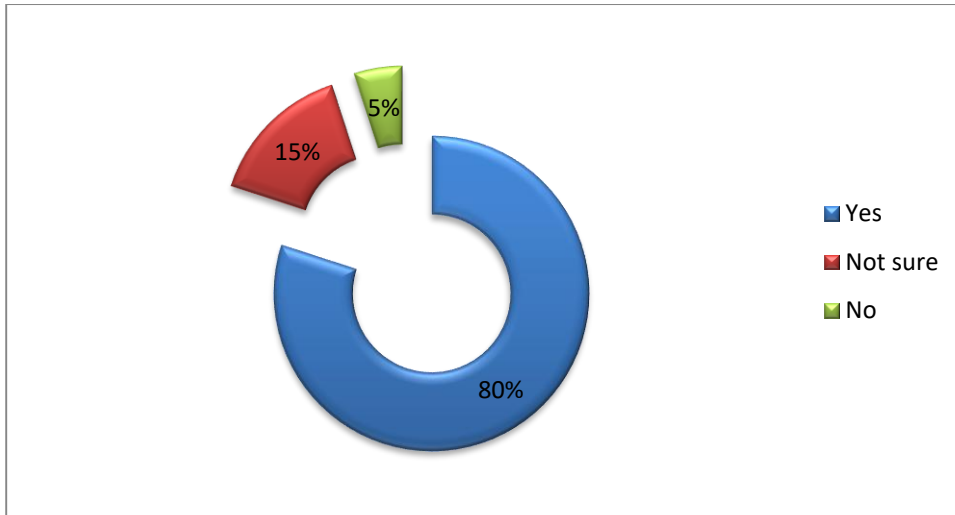
Source: Primary data

The findings in figure 4.8 above revealed that employees are sometimes given performance related awards. This might be due to the fact that employees are not performing so well.

4.11 Employees' view on the relationship between empowerment strategies and performance.

Figure 4.9 Responses related to the relationship between empowerment and employee performance.

Question 8: Do you believe that your performance is directly related to the employee empowerment strategies that are being used in your organisation?



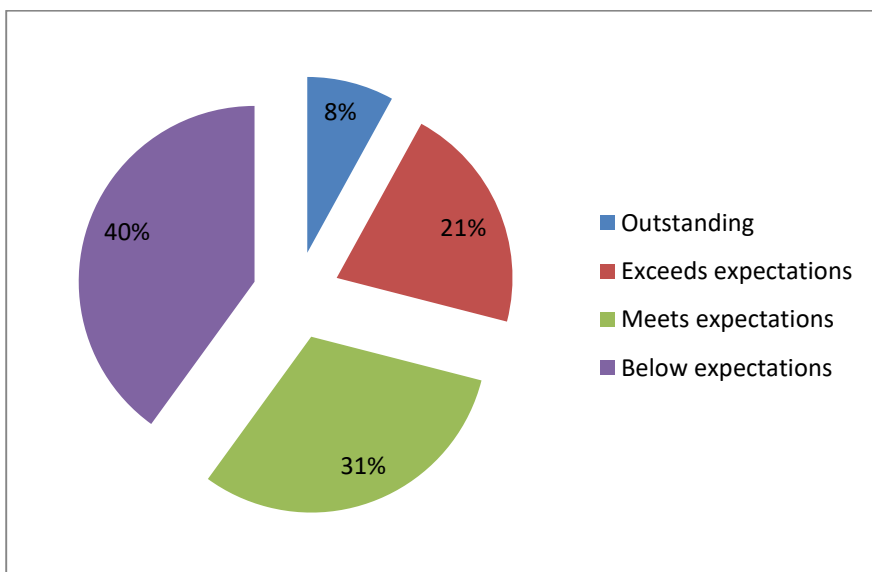
Source: Primary data

Do you believe that your performance is directly related to the employee empowerment strategies that are being used in your organisation?" 80% of the respondents believed that their performance was directly related to the employee empowerment strategies that are being used in the GMB. On the other hand, 15% believed that their performance had nothing to do with empowerment strategies that were being employed by GMB.

4.12 The Impact of Empowerment Strategies.

4.12.1 Job Satisfaction

Figure 4.10 Level of job satisfaction as a consequence of empowerment strategies (n=27)

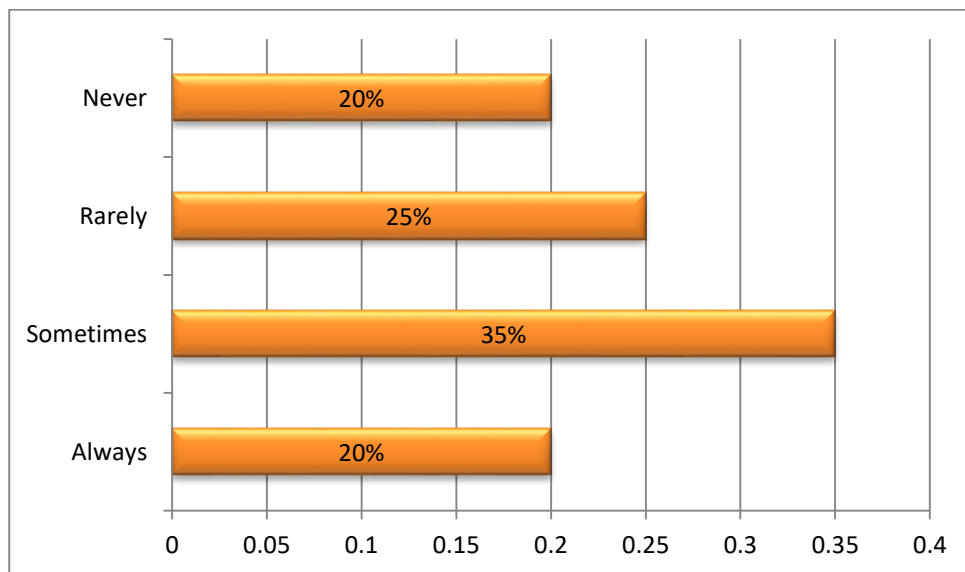


Source: Primary data

Figure 4.8 above shows that, as a consequence of various empowerment strategies, 8% believed that their levels of job satisfaction had been outstanding, while 21% felt it had exceeded expectations. 31% of the respondents felt that their job satisfaction had failed to meet expectations.

4.12.2 Responses in relation to labour turnover

Figure 4.11Frequency with which respondents had considered leaving the organisation (n=27)

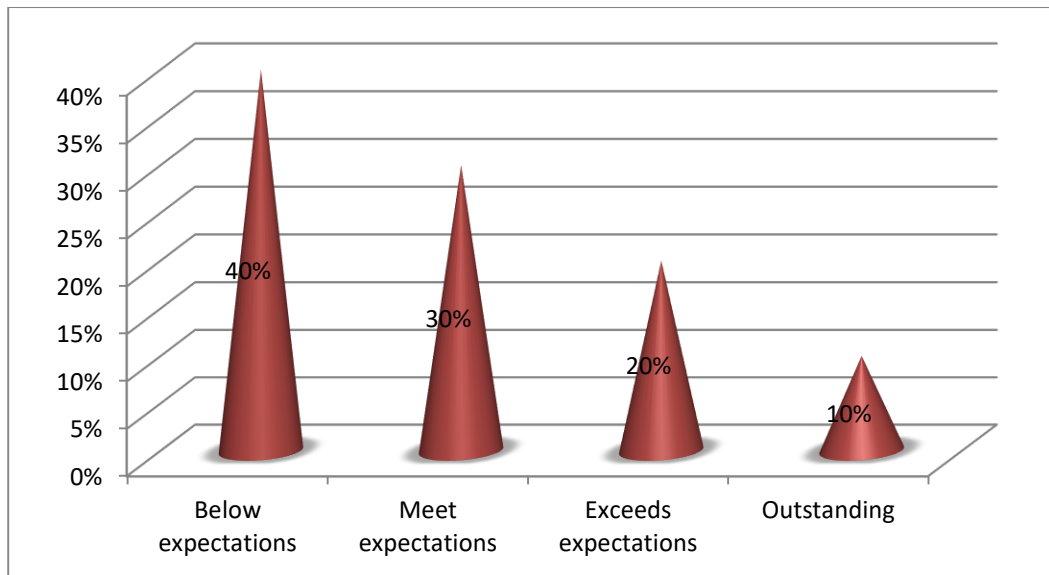


Source: Primary data

Figure 8.3 above shows that 55% of the respondents had experienced frequent occasions on which they had given consideration to leaving the organisation.

4.12.3 Responses in relation to job performance.

Figure 4.12 Level of job performance as a consequence of empowerment strategies (n=27)



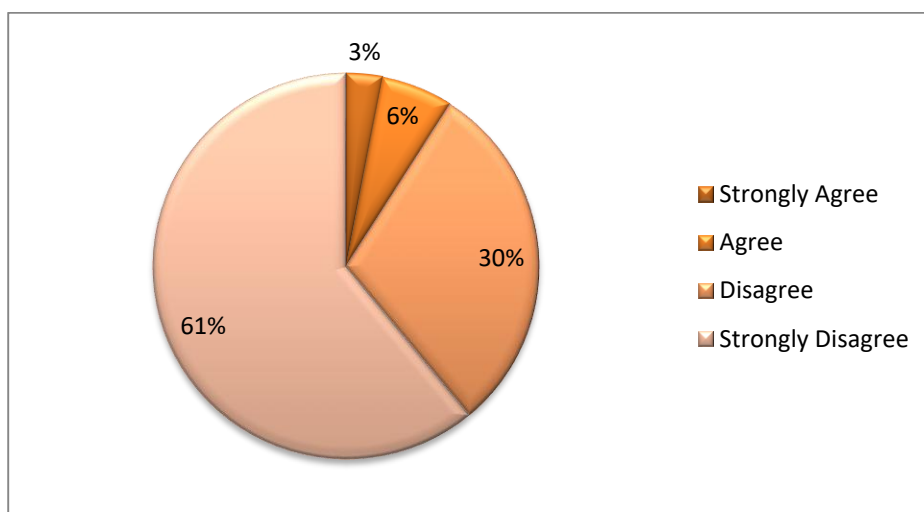
Source: Primary data

Figure 8.5 above shows that, as a consequence of various empowerment strategies, 10% believed that their level of job satisfaction was outstanding. However, 40% of the respondents felt that their job performance was below expectations. Most of the employees had performance that was lower than expectations.

4.12.4 Levels of freedom to challenge the status quo

Figure 4.12 Responses related to freedom to challenge the status quo (n=27).

Question: I feel free to challenge the status quo in the organisation.

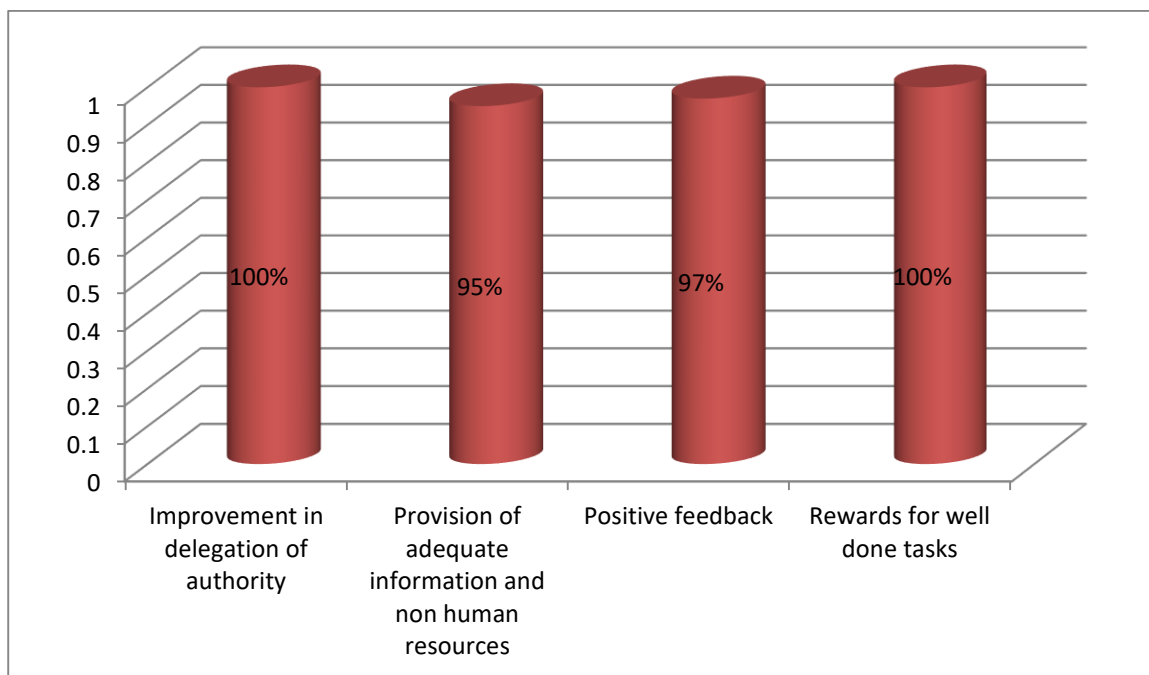


Source: Primary data

According to the statement, "I feel free to challenge the status quo in the organisation", 61% of the employees strongly disagree. The employees might not feel free to challenge the status quo due to factors like bureaucratic leadership style and the structure of the organisation.

4.13 What are the improvements that can be affected to the GMB's strategies in order to enhance employee performance?

Fig 4.13 Proposed ways of improving employee performance (n=27)



Source: Primary data

Employees suggested that top management should give employees power to make decisions so as to enhance performance in organisations. They also suggested that employees should be provided with enough resources and information. The employees also suggested that they should be guided with positive feedback. The employees suggested that they should be given the opportunity to challenge the status quo by suggesting changes that should be implemented so as to achieve organisational objectives.

4.14 Discussion of findings

As shown in figure 4.1, (48%) of the respondents in the GMB hold certificates in diplomas. According to the results, the empowerment strategies were not fully implemented even

though the educational qualifications were better. Lawler (1992) asserts that dissimilarities in employee welfare subsist because of differences in educational qualifications. Furthermore, most of the respondents (32%), as revealed by figure 4.2, have no more than six years of service with GMB. Potts and Sykes (1993) speculate that having more employees with a few years of working experience signifies that the organisation might be experiencing high labour turnover, which leads to poor employee performance. Moreover, figure 4.4 showed that there was an apparent organisational structure in the GMB, which improved effective communication. Therefore, Thomas and Velthouse (1990) and Spreitzer, Kizilos, and Nason (1997) argued that if managers provide their employees with effective feedback, employees can feel motivated, which leads to improved performance.

Figure 4.5 above reveals that employees at GMB were not fully involved in decision making; hence, the researcher concluded that, empowerment strategies were not successfully implemented. From the same perspective, Spreitzer (1996) and Conger and Kanungo (1988) argued that employees should be completely involved in making decisions since a sense of psychological empowerment can be promoted by a participative climate. Furthermore, Mishra and Spreitzer (2002) propose if the workers participate in decision making, they find it meaningful in their work, feel knowledgeable to carry out their jobs, have a sense of independence with regard to precise ways to accomplish expected results and also regard as that they can have a real collision on organisational results. Figure 4.6 shows that 52% of respondents strongly disagree that their managers build confidence in them. According to Block (1987), employees should be assured that the organisation appreciates the particular obligation and helpful contributions they make to the organisation. Block (ibid) further explained that the manager should articulate self-assurance in their employees by creating a realistic advanced level of performance for them.

Figure 4.9 shows that most employees (80%) assumed that their performance was directly related to the employee empowerment strategies that were being used in GMB. The result in figure 4.13 showed that most of the respondents (40%) felt that their job satisfaction was below expectations. Janssen et al. (1997) say that empowerment grants employees a sense of sovereignty, thereby improving job satisfaction. Thus, employee empowerment develops confidence and a sense of worth since the employees can be more comfortable at work. Furthermore, Kanter (1989) declares that empowering employees eventually results in

improved profits, whilst enhancing customer satisfaction directly. Moreover, table 4.2 shows that the employees were not liberated to challenge the status quo in the organisation. Spreitzer and Quinn (1997) and Deci, Connell, and Ryan (1989) found that empowerment by forming barriers to change and learning is reduced by a bureaucratic culture. Moreover, Cornwall and Perlman (1990) note that this closes the opportunities for innovation and creativity in an organisation. In addition, Gist (1987) agreed that innovation is the key to expansion; it brings out advantages in the market in relation to consumers and competition, as well as workforce advantages such as performance and talent.

The research points out those employee empowerment strategies were not implemented effectively because employees' performance was compromised at GMB. Henceforth, the outcomes above correspond with Awamleh (2013), Kok (2011), and Hassan et al. (2011), who concluded that alleged empowerment has a positive impact on employee performance. One of the recommended developments was that management should provide the employees with sufficient authority to make decisions. Lashley (1999) argued that the attainment of a certain idea depends on the employees that have been empowered, those employees who have been given power and liberty to make important and significant decisions. They also recommended that enough information and resources should be provided to the employees by an organisation. Bowen and Lawer (1992) argued that organisations that carry out empowerment cannot attain their goals without having enough information networks that permit the employees to access and share information. Spreitzer (1996) and Lawler (1986) note that individual performance based rewards are important for empowerment.

4.15 Chapter Summary

This chapter focused on data presentation, interpretation and discussion of the research findings. Therefore, the following chapter provides the summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on data presentation, interpretation, and analysis. This chapter covers the research summary, conclusions, and recommendations originating from the research.

5.2 Summary

The research was carried out to investigate the impact of employee empowerment strategies on organisational performance, a case study of GMB, Aspindale Depot. The results show that the management of GMB was not doing well in applying employee empowerment strategies in the organisation. The employees then confirmed that they were expecting adequate delegation of authority when making decisions from top managers. The employees also showed that the employee empowerment strategies that were employed by the organisation were extremely related to their performance.

Moreover, the outcomes of the study also indicate that performance was affected by the employee empowerment strategies applied in the GMB. The research highlighted that besides employee empowerment strategies, there are some other factors that affect employee performance; for example, levels of commitment of the workers.

5.3 Conclusion

The study set out to investigate the impact of employee empowerment strategies on employee performance, a case study of GMB. The research found out that the GMB managers were not doing so well in giving authority over decision-making to lower level employees. As a result, this led to poor employee performance. Henceforth, from the results of the study, the researcher can conclude that employee empowerment strategies affect employees' performance.

5.4 Recommendations

Due to the above conclusion, the following recommendations were made.

- Top management at GMB must delegate the authority of decision-making to the lowest suitable levels with the aim of improving service delivery to the customers. Therefore, delegation of tasks motivates as well as improves the confidence of employees. Top management should also give employees a room to challenge the status quo in an organisation so that the employees can be innovative as well as creative.
- The researcher also recommends that the GMB should recognise and reward (reinforce) the employees for their hard work. This usually improves employee competency in an organisation, and thereby enhances employee performance.
- The organisation should lead employees with affirmative feedback on whatever has an impact on employees' jobs. The organisation also has to provide enough information and resources to the employees.
- Employees with low educational qualifications should be provided with funds to educate them.

5.5 Recommendations for future research

Due to the limitations of the research, it is recommended that future research should be carried out in dissimilar context so that the results can be simplified from this case study.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1 APPROVAL LETTER

Bindura University of Science Education

Private Bag 1020

Bindura

06 May 2022

The Human Resources Officer

Grain Marketing Board

Post Office Box 66029

Aspindale

Harare

Dear Sir /madam

Re: Request for permission to carry out a research study.

I am a student at the Bindura University of Science Education, studying a Bachelor of Commerce Honours Degree in Human Capital Management. It is a requirement of the university that all students on attachment carry out research projects in partial fulfilment of the degree's requirements. I am therefore kindly seeking permission to carry out a research at

your organisation into the impact of counselling in reducing dysfunctional behaviours at the workplace.

Your reply and assistance will be greatly appreciated.

Yours Faithfully

.....

(B1649671)

HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMET ATTACHEE

APPENDIX 2: COVER LETTER

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION



Dear Sir/Madam

I am a 4th year student at the above mentioned institution, studying towards a Bachelor of Commerce Honors in Human Capital Management and currently an attachee at your organisation. As required by the statutes of the institution, I am carrying out a research project in partial fulfilment of my studies. My research topic is titled **“An investigation of the relationship between employee empowerment strategies and employee performance”**.

Consequently, I kindly ask you to assist me by completing the questionnaire attached to this letter as honestly as possible. The information that you provide will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will be used exclusively for academic purposes.

Please do not write your name on the questionnaire. Your completion and the subsequent forwarding of this questionnaire to the undersigned will be interpreted as implying your willingness to participate in this study. If you feel uncomfortable responding to any question contained in the questionnaire, please feel free to ignore such questions.

Your time and cooperation is sincerely appreciated.

Yours faithfully

.....

(B1649671)

HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT ATTACHEE

APPENDIX 3: A QUESTIONNAIRE FOR RESPONDENTS

Section A: Social and demographic data

Please respond by ticking the appropriate box.

1. What is your highest educational qualification?

O' Level	☐
A' Level	☐
Diploma	☐
Undergraduate degree	☐
Post Graduate degree	☐

Any other (please specify)

2. What is your position in the organisation?

Manager	☐
Supervisor	☐
Training Officer	☐

Any other (please specify)

3. For how long have you worked for GMB?

0-5 years	☐
6-10 years	☐
11-15 years	☐

15-20 years ☐

Over 20 years ☐

4. How many people report directly to you?

0 ☐

1-5 ☐

6-10 ☐

11-15 ☐

16-20 ☐

Over 20 ☐

Section B: Job related data

Respond by ticking the appropriate box in the table below.

5.

S.D: Strongly Disagree

D: Disagree

A: Agree

S.A: Strongly Agree

	SD	D	A	SA
a. I am involved in making decisions that affect my work.				
b. I am given the opportunity to suggest improvements.				
c. The job allows me to handle challenging tasks.				
d. I am given the opportunity to determine the causes of problems and to solve them.				
e. I participate in setting the goals and objectives for my job.				
f. I am allowed to be creative when dealing with problems at work.				
g. Proposed decisions are made at the lowest appropriate level.				
h. I have access to the information I need to make good decisions.				
i. My supervisor keeps me informed of job problems or concerns.				
j. Higher management shares information with people at all levels.				
k. People at my level receive the resources needed to do the job right.				

l. higher management understands my job enough to evaluate my performance.				
m. I wish management would give me more authority.				
n. I can make changes on my job whenever I like.				
o. I feel encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing my work.				
p. My job makes good use of my skills and ability.				
q. I enjoy problem solving.				
r. I am satisfied with my job.				
s. The job is stressful.				

6. How satisfactory is your job?

Outstanding ☐

Exceeds Expectations ☐

Meets Expectations ☐

Below Expectations ☐

7. How satisfactory is your job performance?

Outstanding ☐

Exceeds Expectations ☐

Meets Expectations ☐

Below Expectations ☐

Justify your answer in 7 above:

.....

.....

.....

8. Do you believe that your performance is directly related to the employee empowerment strategies that are being used in your organisation?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Not sure ☐

Justify your answer in 8 above:

.....

.....
.....

9. Are you rewarded for delivering excellent services besides your monthly salary?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Sometimes ☐

10. Do you believe that you have the capability to make the right decision?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure ☐

11. How often do you think about leaving the job to find another one?

Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Ready ☐ Never ☐

Justify your answer in 8 above:

.....
.....

12. What are the improvements that can be effected to the GMB's strategies in order to enhance employee performance?

.....
.....
.....

Thank you for your co-operation

-END-