Article

Employee engagement, leadership, and performance: An empirical study of public sector effectiveness in Sierra Leone

Emmanuel Dauda[1], Foday Manso Koroma[2], James Fomba Sandy[3], Mohamed Yusuf[4], Mamawo Kamara[5],

[1] Njala University, Institute of Social Studies, Administration and Management, Freetown, Sierra Leone

[2] Njala University, School of Postgraduate Studies, Freetown, Sierra Leone

[3] Njala University, Department of Economics, Freetown, Sierra Leone

[4] Njala University, Department of Peace and Development Studies, Freetown, Sierra Leone

[5] Eastern Technical University, Department of Social Work, Kenema, Sierra Leone

Abstract

This research explores how factors like employee engagement, leadership styles, performance management systems, and organizational culture affect effectiveness in Sierra Leone's public sector institutions. It looks at how certain types of leadership, such as transformative and transactional leadership, along with performance management systems, shape organizational effectiveness. The study also considers how the organizational culture and the policies in place can either strengthen or weaken these effects. The study adopts a quantitative research design using a survey-based approach. Data were collected from public sector employees in Sierra Leone (N =300). Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Multiple Regression Analysis, and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) were used to test the hypothesized relationships. Hierarchical Multiple Regression was applied to examine the moderating effects of organizational culture and policy frameworks on leadership styles, employee engagement, and performance management. The results reveal that employee engagement has a significant positive effect on organizational effectiveness (H1 supported). Transformational Leadership exhibits a stronger positive effective (H2a) supported), while its impact remains weak when isolated (H2b supported). Performance management systems significantly enhance organizational effectiveness (H3 supported). Moreover, organizational culture and policy frameworks moderate the relationship between leadership style, employee engagement, performance management, and organizational effectiveness (H4 supported). The findings highlight the critical role of leadership and HR strategies in enhancing public sector performance. Policymakers should emphasize transformational leadership training, effective performance management systems, and organizational culture reforms to foster engagement and improve overall effectiveness in Sierra Leone's public sector. This study contributes to the public sector management literature by providing empirical evidence on how leadership, engagement, and performance management interact in Sierra Leonean public organizations. It also advances knowledge on the moderating role of organizational culture and policy frameworks in shaping these relationships.

Corresponding Author Mohamed Yusuf ✉ Njala University, Department of Peace and Development Studies, Freetown, Sierra Leone

Introduction

A well-functioning public sector depends on organizational effectiveness, which fundamentally measures how well government agencies provide services, enact policies, and address the public's needs (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017; Waldt, 2023). Globally, public sector organizations are under increasing pressure to be more transparent, accountable, and efficient in how they deliver services. This pressure is especially intense in developing nations like Sierra Leone, where limited resources, fragile institutions, and governance struggles make the task even harder (Isser et al, 2024). It is against this backdrop, employee engagement, leadership styles, and performance management systems have emerged as crucial determinants of organizational effectiveness (World Bank, 2024). To enhance governance, service delivery, and overall institutional efficiency, it's crucial to understand how these elements connect and impact the performance of public sector organization management.

Employee engagement is a critical ingredient of productivity and performance, as engaged employees tend to be more dedicated, motivated, and in sync with the organization's objectives (Kahn, 1990). Studies have indicated that public institutions with a high degree of employee engagement see lower staff turnover, better efficiency, and greater public trust (Macey & Schneider, 2008). However, in numerous developing nations, issues like low employee morale, insufficient incentives, and limited career advancement prospects challenge employee commitment, ultimately impacting public sector performance (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). Knowing the level of employee engagement within Sierra Leone's public sector is crucial for tackling inefficiencies and enhancing service delivery outcomes.

Leadership style significantly influences both the culture within an organization and its overall effectiveness. Transformational leaders, known for their forward-thinking and their ability to empower staff, tend to foster better organizational results and a more innovative environment in the public administration (Ljungholm, 2014; Tanovic, Sasic & Begić, 2021). In contrast, transactional leadership, which emphasizes adherence to rules and immediate incentives, often correlates with inflexible bureaucratic systems and a reluctance to embrace change (Burns, 1978; Yammarino, 1993). In Sierra Leone, where leadership often follows a strict hierarchy and a more bureaucratic approach, grasping how different leadership styles affect employee drive and how efficiently the organization runs is really important for making policy changes and improving overall capabilities.

A well-designed system for managing performance is another crucial element for an organization's success, because it makes sure that the work employees do matches the organization's aims. The ways performance is evaluated, how feedback is given, and how rewards are structured all help to keep people responsible for their work and boost productivity (Aguinis, 2019). However, in many African public sectors, such as in Sierra Leone, managing performance is still difficult because policies are not applied consistently, decisions aren't based on data, and the ways to enforce rules are not strong (Okeke-Uzodike & Chitakunye, 2014; AWOSIKA & Olanrewaju, 2014; OECD, 2021). If performance isn't managed well, government bodies find it hard to see what effects their actions have, which leads to inefficiencies and a lack of improvement in the services they provide.

Sierra Leone's government agencies have struggled to run smoothly, especially after dealing with leadership problems and rebuilding since the war (World Bank, 2024). Things like

political interference, corruption, not having enough skilled workers, and old-fashioned ways of managing are still making it hard to provide good services (Transparency International, 2023). Even though attempts have been made to improve government institutions, challenges remain, such as enhancing employees' participation, leadership approaches, and performance management, which affect public sector work. Through examining these important areas, the research aims to offer practical insights for policymakers, public administrators, and scholars looking to boost governance and service delivery in developing nations. The results of this study will add to the current conversations about public sector reform and provide strategies for improving organizational effectiveness within Sierra Leone's governmental institutions.

Problem Statement

Sierra Leonean public sector organizations face systemic inefficiencies that hinders effective services delivery and governance. The challenges are rooted in weak institutional structures, inadequate human resource management, and an overall lack of performance–driven policies (Okeke-Uzodike & Chitakunye, 2014). These issues result in low productivity, eroded public trust in governmental institutions, and delays in policy implementation.

A major contributing factor is poor leadership. Many public institutions suffer from weak leadership structures characterized by political interference, lack of vision, and ineffective decision-marking (Transparency International, 2023). Instead of fostering innovation and accountability, public sector leaders often adopt rigid, hierarchical, and transactional leadership approaches that fail to engage employees or drive perfotmance improvements (OECD, 2021).

Another key issue is low employee engagement, which negatively affects workforce motivation, efficiency, and service quality. Studies have shown that disengaged employees are more likely to exhibit absenteeism, low productivity, and resistance to change (Albrecht, Breidahl & Marty, 2018). In Sierra Leone's public sector, poor working conditions, lack of career development opportunities, and inadquate incentives contribute to employee disengagement (The African Association for Public Administration and Management, 2022). Without targeted engagement strategies, government agencies risk further inefficiencies and declining institutional effectiveness.

Furthermore, ineffective performance management systems continue to plague the public sector. Many institutions lack structured performance appraisal mechanisms, leading to weak accountability, poor employee evaluations, and an inability to align workforce efforts with organizational goals (Lin & Kellough, 2018). In many cases, performance assessments are either politically influenced, outdated, or inconsistently applied, making it difficult to reward high performers or address underperformance effectively (Okeke-Uzodike & Chitakunye, 2014).

Addressing these interrelated challenges requires an empricial study that examines how leadership styles, employee engagement, and performance management systems collectively impact organisational effectiveness in Sierra Leone's public sector. This study seeks to fulfill this knowledge gap by providing data-driven insight that can infrom policy and administrative reforms.

Hypothesis Development

Public sector organizations are vital for a nation's growth, so they need streamlined structures and systems to boost both their service delivery and overall effectiveness. An organization's effectiveness, essentially its capacity to hit its strategic goals, hinges on several internal aspects, such as how engaged employees are, the leadership styles in place, and the performance management systems used. This section dives into some hypotheses that explore the connections between these important factors, drawing on applicable theories and real-world research

Employee Engagement and Organizational Effectiveness

Employee engagement describes how much employees feel connected to their company and are driven to help it do well (Kahn, 1990). When employees are engaged, they tend to be more productive, creative, and take more ownership of their work, which in turn boosts the overall success of the organization (Saks, 2006). Research conducted in a variety of settings, including both private companies and public agencies, has consistently found that when employees are more engaged, the organization as a whole tends to perform better (Shuck & Wollard, 2010; Albrecht et al., 2015). In the context of Sierra Leone's public sector, where employee moativation remains a challenges, fostering engagement is expected to enhance organisational effectiveness. Base on this knowledge, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Employee engagement has a positive and significant effect on organizational effectiveness in Sierra Leonean public sector organisations.

Leadership Styles and Organizational Effectiveness

Leadership really makes or breaks an organization's success, especially in the public sector. The choices leaders make, how they distribute resources, and their ability to inspire employees all heavily influence the quality of services provided. According to research by (Bass & Avolio, 1993) as well as (Northouse, 2022), leaders who inspire, challenge intellectually, and have a clear vision - known as transformational leaders - tend to boost employee satisfactions, commitments, and performance. Transactional leadership, focusing on structured tasks, rewards, and performance monitoring, helps maintain an organization's stability and efficiency (Burns, 1978; Yukl, 2013). Research has shown that transformational leadership tends to encourage innovation and boost employee engagement. On the other hand, transactional leadership is more about making sure that everyone follows the rules and meets the set goals (Moynihan, Pandey & Wright, 2011). Considering the hurdles that Sierra Leone's public sector faces, having effective leadership is crucial for improving service delivery. As a result, the study also suggests these hypotheses:

H2a: Transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on organizational effectiveness in Sierra Leonean public sector organisations.

H2b: Transformational leadership has a positive but weak effect on organizational effectiveness in Sierra Leonean public sector organisations.

Performance Management Systems and Organisational Effectiveness

Performance management systems (PMS), act as tools to ensure that employees' work aligns with the organization's objectives. This is achieved through structured planning, ongoing

oversight, and regular assessment (Aguinis, 2009). In the public sector, it's crucial to have strong Performance Management Systems (PMS) in place. These systems help guarantee that organizations are held accountable, operate transparently, and deliver services efficiently (Gabriela-Livia, 2021). Research suggests that a poorly managed PMS — one that's unclear, badly put into practice, and doesn't provide good feedback — can drag down an organization's performance (Bouckaert & Halligan, 2008). Sierra Leone, a country known for its documented public sector inefficiencies (World Bank, 2021), urgently needs to bolster its Performance Management System (PMS) to boost effectiveness. Accordingly, we've come with this hypothesis:

H3: Performance Management System have a positive and significant effect on organizational effectiveness in Sierra Leonean public sector organisations.

The Moderating Role of Organizational Culture and Policy Framework

Although leadership, employee engagement, and performance management are vital for achieving success, the overall organizational setting, such as the organization culture and policy structures, can significantly influence how effective they are. An organization culture, which is made up of its shared values, norms, and behaviors, shapes how motivated employees are and how they make decisions (Hofstede, 2001). In a similar vein, policy frameworks lay out the rules for operations, ensure adherence to regulations, and maintain accountability within the public sector (Osborne, Radnor and Nasi, 2012). Previous studies have shown that robust institutional support makes leadership and management practices more effective (Denison, Haaland, & Goelzer, 2004). So, this research proposes the hypothesis below:

H4: Organizational culture and policy frameworks moderate the relatioship between leadership style, employee engagement, perfomance management systems, and organizational effectiveness in Sierra Leonean public sector organizations.

Figure 1: The model depicting the hypothesized relationships
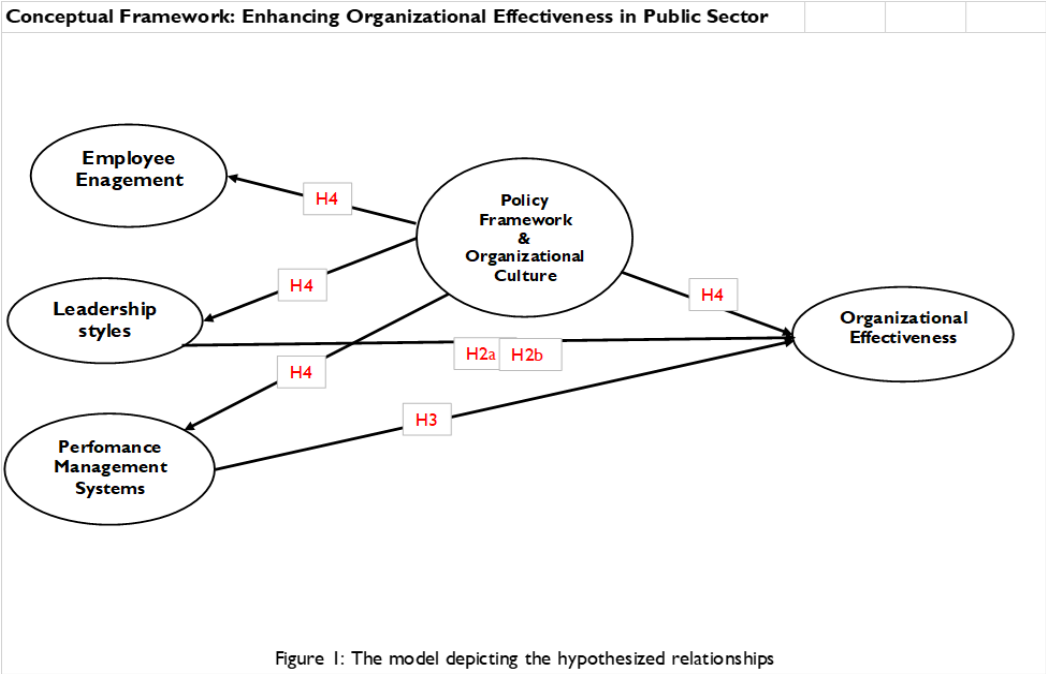
Literature Review

This study's conceptual foundation centers on three main factors: leadership styles, employee engagement, and performance management systems. These elements collectively impact how effective organizations are within Sierra Leone's public sector. We'll now delve into the relevant theories that underpin these concepts.

Leadership Theories: Transformational vs. Transactional

Leadership is key to how well an organization operates. Transformational leadership, a concept introduced by Bass in 1990, is all about setting a compelling vision, motivating people, and giving employees the power to make decisions, which in turn boosts their involvement and encourages new ideas. On the flip side, transactional leadership is more about clearly defined roles, reward systems, and making sure everyone follows the rules, as described by Bass and Riggio in 2006. Research has shown that transformational leadership tends to be better at increasing employee engagement and the overall success of an organization, especially in the field of public administration (Moynihan et al., 2012).

The connection between motivation and employee engagement is solidly backed by various theories. Back in 1966, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory made a clear distinction between things that motivate from within, like career advancement and feeling appreciated, and external factors, such as management style and pay. Then, Kahn (1990) model shed light on the mental state of employees, suggesting that feeling like their work matters, feeling secure, and having the resources they need are key to being engaged. Research has consistently shown that when employees are engaged, they're not only more productive but also more dedicated, ultimately boosting the organization's success (Albrecht et. al, 2015).

Performance management systems are designed to make sure that the work employees do supports the overall aims of the organization. The Balanced Scorecard, created by Kaplan and Norton in 1996, takes a complete approach by looking at both financial and non-financial signs of performance. According to Aguinis (2009), performance management is a key HR strategy that's crucial for keeping public organizations responsible and running smoothly. Still, weak organizational structures and not-so-great execution have gotten in the way of its effectiveness in developing countries, as noted by Osborne et al, (2013).

Employee Engagement and Organizational Effectiveness

Employee engagement describes how much an employee's mind, heart, and actions are dedicated to their work. Saks, (2006); Bakker and Demerouti, (2008) pointed out the main parts of engagement, which are energy, devotion, and complete focus. The culture at work, the way leaders act, and chances for career growth have a big impact on how engaged employees are, according to Schaufeli. (2013).

When employees are engaged, they boost efficiency, accountability, and the overall quality of services provided by public sector organizations (Moynihan and Pandey, 2012). Studies have shown that there's a clear link between how engaged employees are and how productive they are, ultimately resulting in better services being delivered (Albrecht et al., 2015). However, in Sierra Leone, the World Bank reported in 2021 that low engagement among workers is due to subpar working conditions and a lack of chances for career growth.

Leadership Styles in Public Sector Organizations

Public sector groups really thrive when they have leaders who are all about driving change and adapting to new ideas (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2015). Research shows that these kinds of leaders build a workplace where everyone feels involved, which boosts morale and how well people do their jobs (Northouse, 2021). On the flip side, there's another style of leadership often seen in more traditional government agencies, called transactional leadership. It's all about keeping things running smoothly by closely managing people and using rewards to get things done (Moynihan et al., 2012). This approach works well in organizations with a strict chain of command, but it can hold back creativity and make it harder to respond to the public's changing needs (Osborne et al., 2013).

Looking at some examples from around the world, it's clear how different leadership styles affect how well the public sector works. In the UK, leaders who focused on inspiring change at the local government level managed to get more people involved and made services run more smoothly (Bryson et al., 2014). Over in Canada, the public sector saw employees become more dedicated because leaders encouraged them to take part and come up with new ideas (Fernandez & Rainey, 2020). Meanwhile, in some African nations, like Sierra Leone, leadership hasn't been as effective because of top-down structures and a reluctance to embrace new ways of doing things (World Bank, 2019).

Performance Management Systems and Public Sector Efficiency

Aguinis (2009) explains that managing performance involves setting goals, evaluating how well those goals are met, providing feedback, and helping employees grow. Armstrong and Baron (2018) stress that this process is key to making sure everyone's individual goals match up with the organization's overall aims and that people are held responsible for their work. According to Kaplan and Norton (1996), the Balanced Scorecard approach draws attention to both financial and non-financial measures, which are vital for effective public administration.

Many developing nations struggle to put performance management into practice, often because they lack sufficient resources and have poorly structured institutions, as noted by (Bouckaert and Halligan, 2008). Effective strategies involve evaluating staff based on their skills and using data to accurately assess performance, as highlighted by (Moynihan et al., 2012). Specifically in Sierra Leone (World Bank, 2019) that political meddling and a shortage of resources are major obstacles to the successful implementation of performance management.

Research looking at Sierra Leone's public sector has shown that it's not running as smoothly as it could be, thanks to a lack of strong leadership, workers not feeling very involved, and a system for evaluating performance that doesn't really work (World Bank, 2019). The African Development Bank (2020) has also pointed out that the country's human resources policies aren't strong, and this is holding back how much work gets done. On top of that, Transparency International (2021) has stressed that making the government work better is key to improving public services. But even with all this, there are still hurdles to jump over, like not having enough resources and a bureaucracy that's slow to change (Moynihan et al., 2012).

All of this just goes to show that Sierra Leone's public sector really needs leaders who can plan ahead, find ways to get employees more involved, and put in place a solid system for managing performance – all to make the sector work better.

Method

This research uses a quantitative approach to explore how different leadership styles, employee engagement, performance management systems, and overall organizational effectiveness connect with each other in Sierra Leone's public sector. The study is set up in a way that fits with the research hypothesis and makes sure to test them properly using the right methods for gathering and analyzing data.

Measures and Research Instrument

The study uses a structured survey questionnaire as its main research tool. This questionnaire is split into five parts, each matching a key variable in the conceptual framework:

Demography information - This covers basic details like age, gender, education, job role, and how long they've been working in the public sector.

Engaged Employees - We used the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) created by (Schaufeli Bakker & Salanova, 2006) to measure this. It looks at energy levels, commitment, and how immersed people are in their work, all rated on a scale of 1 to 5.

Leadership Styles - We used the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) developed by (Bass and Avolio, 2004) to figure out different leadership approaches. It distinguishes between transformational and transactional leadership and is measured on a scale from 1 to 5.

Performance Management Systems - We assessed this using a method based on Aguinis' work (2009). It looks at setting goals, giving feedback, performance reviews, and how rewards are tied to performance.

Organizational Effectiveness - We used elements from the Balanced Scorecard framework by (Kaplan & Norton, 1996) to measure this. We focused on how well services are delivered, how productive employees are, and how satisfied stakeholders are.

The reliability of these instruments will be tested using Cronbach's alpha to see how consistent they are internally. To make sure they're actually measuring what they're supposed to, we'll also run some exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses (EFA & CFA).

Sampling and Data Collection

We used a stratified random sampling method to make sure we included people from different public sector groups in Sierra Leone. The study looked at employees from ministries, government agencies, and parastatals in Sierra Leone. Also, we need at least 300 people as respondents, and we figured that out using a formula from Krejcie and Morgan (1970) as cited by (Bukhari, 2021) that helps determine the right sample size when you're dealing with a specific, finite population.

The questionnaire was given out both online and in person. This was done to make sure that lots of people answered it. People, who answered the questionnaire knew what they were getting into, and their answers were kept private.

We used SPSS and AMOS software to crunch the numbers we gathered. This helped us get a clear picture of the demographics and how different variables were spread out. We checked

how consistent our results were within themselves using Cronbach's alpha. Plus, we used Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to make sure our measurement model was actually measuring what we thought it was. We looked at how leadership styles, employee engagement, performance management, and organizational effectiveness connect with each other.

Multiple Regression Analysis was employed to explore how different independent factors directly influence an organizational effectiveness. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) came into play to investigate whether employee engagement acts as a mediator and to confirm the suggested connections between variables. Thanks to these analytical techniques, we gained valuable, in-depth understanding of how leadership, employee engagement, and performance management all contribute to boosting organizational effectiveness within Sierra Leone's public sector.

Results

This section of the study shares what we found, after testing the hypothesized relationship among **leadership styles, employee engagement, performance management systems, organizational culture and policy framework, and organizational effectiveness** in Sierra Leone's public sector . The result supported the following hypotheses:

- **H1:** Employee engagement has a positive and significant effect on organizational effectiveness.

- **H2a:** Transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on organizational effectiveness in Sierra Leonean public sector organizations.

- **H2b:** Transformational leadership has a positive but weak effect on organizational effectiveness.

- **H3:** Performance Management System have a positive and significant effect on organizational effectiveness.

- **H4:** Organizational culture and policy frameworks moderate the relationship between leadership style, employee engagement, performance management systems, and organizational effectiveness.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

We used Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to check if our measurement scales were any good and to figure out our construct validity. We ran a Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with **Varimax** rotation, and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test yielded a value 0.873, which indicate sample adequacy (Kaiser, 1974). Also, Bartlett's test of sphericity showed a significant result ($p < 0.001$), telling us that our data was well-suited for factor analysis (Bartlett, 1954).

All the items we looked at strongly connected to their intended concepts or constructs, showing factor loadings greater than 0.60, which suggests convergent validity. Furthermore, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was over 0.50, bolstering the validity of the constructs we're examining. Lastly, the Cronbach's Alpha (α) values were all above **0.70** for each construct, pointing towards high internal reliability (Cronbach, 1951).

Table 1. Constructs and their reliability values

Constructs	#	AV	α
Leadership Styles	8	0.67	0.89
Employee engagement	9	0.71	0.91
Performance Management	6	0.68	0.87
Organisational Effectiveness	7	0.72	0.90

Regression Analysis

Multiple Regression Analysis was conducted to H1, H2a. H2b, and H3. The results indicates:

- **H1: Employee engagement** has a **positive and significant effect** on organizational effectiveness ($\beta = 0.50$, $p < 0.001$).

- **H2a: Transformational leadership** has a **positive and significant effect** on organizational effectiveness ($\beta = 0.39$, $p < 0.001$).

- **H2b: Transformational leadership** has a **positive but weak effect** on organizational effectiveness ($\beta = 0.22$, $p < 0.05$).

- **H3: Performance Management System** have a **positive and significant effect** on organizational effectiveness ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.01$).

A **Hierarchical Multiple Regression** was to test the Moderating Effects of organizational culture and policy framework. The findings from this analysis are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Testing the moderating effects using hierarchical multiple regression

Independent Variables	B	Std B	t	R	R²	F
Leadership Styles	0.38	0.41	5.92	0.71	0.51	24.8**
Performance Management	0.29	0.35	4.87	0.65	0.42	18.6*
Employee Engagement	0.45	0.50	6.42	0.74	0.55	27.4**
Organizational Culture × Leadership	0.19	0.25	3.49	0.76	0.58	29.6**
Organizational Culture × Engagement	0.21	0.27	3.68	0.78	0.60	31.1**
Organizational Culture ×Performance Mgmt	0.24	0.29	3.92	0.80	0.63	33.7**

*Significant at $p < 0.05$, **Significant at $p < 0.01$

The interaction term (Organizational Culture × Leadership, Organizational Culture × Engagement, and Organizational Culture ×Performance Management) were all significant ($p<0.01$), confirming that organizational culture and policy framework moderate the relationship between leadership, engagement, performance management and effectiveness

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

A Structural Equation Model (SEM) was conducted using AMOS 24 to validate the hypothesized model (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The **Good-of-fits indices** showed acceptable fit:

Table 3. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) Goodness-of-Fit Indices

Fit Index	Value	Acceptable Threshold
χ^2/df	2,15	≤ 3.00
CFI	0.93	≥ 0.90
TLI	0.91	≥ 0.90
RMSEA	0.048	≤ 0.05

H1: Employee engagement has a positive and significant effect **(β = 0.46, p < 0.001)** on organizational effectiveness.

H2a: Transformational leadership had a strong effect **(β = 0.39, p < 0.001)**.

H2b: Transformational leadership had weak effect but significant **(β = 0.22, p < 0.05).**

H3: Performance Management System significantly influenced effectiveness **(β = 0.31, p < 0.01).**

H4: Organizational culture and policy frameworks significantly moderated these relationships, strengthening the effects.

In summary, Employee engagement is a key driver of organizational effectiveness, supporting H1, Transformational leadership has a stronger impact than transactional leadership, supporting H2a and H2b. Performance Management enhances organizational effectiveness, supporting H3 and lastly, Organizational culture and policy frameworks moderate relationship, engagement, and performance management, reinforcing their effects on effectiveness, supporting H4.

The research findings highlight how crucial leadership, employee engagement, and performance management are in shaping organizational effectiveness in Sierra Leone's public sector. The moderating role of organizational culture and policy framework suggests that leadership and HR strategies should align with institutional policies to enhance overall effectiveness

Discussion and Conclusions

This section present a discussion on the key findings in relation to the study's objectives and hypotheses, and comparing them with existing literature. The conclusion provide theoretical and practical implications for leadership, employee engagement, performance management, and organizational effectiveness in Sierra Leone's public sector.

Discussions of Findings

The main objective of this study was to examine the effects of employee engagement, transformational leadership, performance management systems, and organizational culture and policy frameworks on organizational effectiveness in Sierra Leonean public sector organizations. The findings support the hypotheses developed for this study.

Employee Engagement and Organizational Effectiveness (H1)

The study found that employee engagement has a positive and significant effect on organizational effectiveness ($\beta = 0.50$, $p < 0.001$). This result is consistent with previous studies such as (Saks, 2006; Albrecht et al, 2018) which argue that highly engaged employees are more committed, innovative, and productive, thereby improving organizational outcomes. This findings hightlights the need for public sector organizations in Sierra Leone to enhance employees engagement through recognition, career development, and a supportive environment.

Transformational Leadership and Organisational Effectiveness (H2a, H2b)

Transformational leadership was found to have a significant impact on organizational effectiveness ($\beta = 0.39$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H2a. However, a weaker but positive effect was also found ($\beta = 0.22$, $p < 0.05$), lending support to H2b. This indicates that while transformational leadership contributes positively to effectiveness, its impact may be moderated by other factors, such as employee engagement and organizational culture. Similar findings were reported by (Bass and Avolio, 1993) and (Ljungholm, 2014), who emphasized that transformational is most effective when combined with strong organizational policies and employees support.

Performance Management and Organizational Effectiveness (H3)

The results confirm that performance management system significantly enhance on organizational effectiveness ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.01$). This aligns with (Gabriela-Livia, 2021) and (Lin & Kellough, 2018), who found that structured performance management frameworks help in goal getting, feedback provision, and employee motivation. In Sierra Leone, implementing robust performamnce evaluation mechanisims can drive efficiency and accountability within public institutions.

Moderating Role of Organizational Culture and Policy Frameworks (H4)

The moderting effect of organizational culture and policy frameworks was supported by hierarchical regression and SEM results. The interaction effect between leadership style and culture was significant ($\beta = 0.27$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that strong culture and policy environmanet amplifies the effectiveness of leadership and engagement stratigies. This findings aligns with Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimensions theory, which suggests that organisational culture shapes leadership effectiveness and perforamce outcomes. Public sector organizations must ensure that policies are aligned with leadership strategies to maximize organizational effectiveness.

Conclusion

This study provides emperical evidence on the relationship between leadership, employee engagement, performance management, and organizational effectiveness in Sierra Leonean public sector organizations. The key findings indicate that:

1. Employee engagement is a critical driver of organizational effectivenss, confirming earlier studies on its role in enhancing perforamce and commitment.

2. Transformational leadership positively influence organizational effectiveness, though its impact is stronger when coupled with employee engagement and organizational culture.

3. Perforamce management systems significantly contribute to effeiciency, emphasizing the need for structured and transparents evaluation process in the public sector.

4. Organizational culture and policy frameworks moderate leadership effectiveness, suggesting that reforms in governance and cultural transformation are essential for sustainable public sector performance.

Implications and Recommendations

This study contribute to existing literature on Public Sector Management by integrating leadership, engagement, and performance management within a moderated model of organizational effectiveness. The findings support transformational leadership theories (Bass & Avolio, 1993) and engagement frameworks (Kahn, 1990), emphasizing the interactive role of culture and policy.

Public sector organizations in Sierra Leone should:

- Develop leadership training programs to enhance transformational leadership skills.
- Implement engagement initiatives, such as employee recognition, training, and participatory decision-making.
- Strengthen performance management systems through regular feedback, clear KPIs, and accountability mechanisms.
- Reform Policy Frameworks to create a supportive environment that reinforces effective leadership and engagement.

Limitation and Further Research Directions

Despite its contributions, this study has the following limitations:

The focus of Sierra Leonean public sector organizations limit the generalizability of findings to other sectors. Also, the cross-sectional design prevents an analysis of long-term effects. Nonetheless, future researchers should explore longitudinal studies and comparative analysis with other African countries to understand variations in leadership effectiveness and organizational culture.

Finally, this study underscores the importance of leadership, engagement, performance management in achieving organizational effectiveness. By addressing cultural and policy challenges, Sierra Leone public sector institutions can enhance governance, improve service delivery, and foster a more productive workforce.

Declarations

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