



**BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION  
FACULTY OF COMMERCE  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS  
MASTERS OF LEADERSHIP AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE**

**THE IMPACT OF LOCAL AUTHORITY ADMINISTRATION ON ITS PERFORMANCE. A  
CASE OF MAZOWE RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**BY**

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## **DECLARATION**

I, **Mazula Cohen Tinashe**, do hereby declare that this dissertation is a result of my own investigation and research, except to the extent indicated in the acknowledgments, bibliography, references, and comments included in the body of the report, and that it has not been submitted in part or in full for any other degree to any other university.



15/12/22

**STUDENT SIGNATURE**

**DATE**

## **DEDICATION**

To all the rural councils whose quest is to enhance service delivery.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Much appreciation goes to my supervisor Doc Matambo for the guidance rendered and my wife Yvonne and my three kids (*the rabbits*) for their unwavering support during my stressful moments.

## **ABSTRACT**

This study analysed the impact of local authority administration on its performance using a case study of Mazowe Rural District Council. The study sought to analyse how local authority administration affects the performance of the organisation; to examine administrative factors which affect local authority performance; to evaluate the effectiveness of administrative institutional frameworks on ensuring sound local authority performance and to proffer solutions to enhance local authority performance. The literature highlighted local authority administration to be intricately linked to the overall performance of the organisation. However, various factors both internal and external had the propensity to affect administration which resultantly impact on the wholistic performance of the local authority. The study used case study of Mazowe Rural District Council using a qualitative methodology. Documentary search, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews formulated the basis of data gathering instruments. The study discovered that factors such as corruption, leadership attributes, lack of autonomy, poor revenue collection strategies, conflicts, lack of resources, bureaucratic inefficiencies, biased recruitment and poor remuneration impeded effective performance. The study concluded that these factors affected the overall performance of local authority through sabotage, low morale, loss of corporate integrity, poor services due to unsupervised work, slow decision making and inefficient oversight frameworks to ensure sound performance. To that end, the study recommended target-based performance management system, training and development, establishment of sound regulatory and oversight frameworks, motivation, public private partnerships and adoption of conflict resolution policy

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>APPROVAL FORM</b> .....	i
<b>RELEASE FORM</b> .....	ii
<b>DECLARATION</b> .....	iii
<b>DEDICATION</b> .....	iv
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	v
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b> .....	vii
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b> .....	xi
<b>ACRONYMS</b> .....	xii
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	1
<b>1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY</b> .....	1
<b>1.3 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM</b> .....	4
<b>1.4 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION</b> .....	5
<b>1.5 MAIN RESERCH OBJECTIVE</b> .....	6
<b>1.5.1 Secondary research questions</b> .....	6
<b>1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY</b> .....	6
<b>Policy makers</b> .....	6
<b>1.7 ASSUMPTIONS</b> .....	6
<b>1.8 LIMITATIONS</b> .....	6
<b>1.9 DELIMITATIONS</b> .....	7
<b>1.10 DISSERTATION STRUCTURE</b> .....	7
<b>2.1 INTRODUCTION</b> .....	9
<b>2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</b> .....	9
<b>2.2.1 The Systems Theory</b> .....	9
<b>2.2.1.1 Cooperative Systems</b> .....	9
<b>2.2.1.2 System Equilibrium</b> .....	10
<b>2.2.1.3 Inducement-Contribution</b> .....	11
<b>2.2.1.4 Acceptance</b> .....	12
<b>2.2.1.5 Organic Knowledge</b> .....	12
<b>2.3 LITERATURE REVIEW</b> .....	13
<b>2.3.1 Conceptualizing local authority administration</b> .....	13
<b>2.3.2 Systems and structure of local governance.</b> .....	14

2.3.2.1 The French local government system .....	14
2.3.2.2 The Anglo-Saxon System of local governance .....	15
2.3.2.3 The Marxian System .....	17
2.4. Tenets of sound local authority administration.....	18
2.4.1 Accountability.....	18
2.4.2 <i>Equity</i> .....	20
2.4.3 Transparency .....	20
2.4.4. Autonomy .....	21
2.4.5 <i>Ethics</i> .....	21
2.4.6 Sound financial management .....	22
2.5 Effectiveness of administrative institutional frameworks which ensure sound performance of local authorities .....	23
2.5.1 Legal framework .....	23
2.5.2 The Ministry of Local Government Rural and Urban Development (MLG).....	24
2.5.3. Local government Board .....	25
2.5.4 Minister of State for Provincial Affairs Office. ....	26
2.5.5. Finance Committee .....	26
2.6 Challenges faced by local authorities .....	28
2.6.1 Population Increase.....	28
2.6.2 Inadequate Finance .....	28
2.6.3 Autonomy .....	29
2.6.4 Poor leadership .....	30
2.6.5 Debt Management .....	30
2.6.6 Corruption .....	31
2.7 CONCLUSION.....	32
3.1 INTRODUCTION.....	33
3.2 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY .....	33
3.3. RESEARCH APPROACH .....	33
3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN .....	34
3.5 SAMPLING AND TARGET POPULATION .....	35
3.6 DATA COLLECTION TOOLS AND PROCEDURES .....	36
3.6.1 Documentary search .....	36
3.6.2 In-depth interviews .....	36
3.6.3. Focus group discussions.....	37

<b>3.7. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS</b> .....	38
<b>3.8 DATA ANALYSIS</b> .....	38
<b>3.7.1 Thematic analysis</b> .....	38
<b>3.7.2 Content analysis</b> .....	39
<b>3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION</b> .....	39
<b>3.9 CONCLUSION</b> .....	40
<b>PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS</b> .....	40
<b>4.1 INTRODUCTION</b> .....	40
<b>4.2 RESPONSE RATE</b> .....	41
<b>4.2.2 In -depth Interviews</b> .....	41
<b>4.2.3 Focus group discussions</b> .....	41
<b>4.3 RESEARCH FINDINGS</b> .....	42
<b>4.3.1 Factors affecting local authority performance</b> .....	42
<b>4.3.2 How the factors are affecting local authority performance?</b> .....	47
<b>4.3.3 Evaluation of institutional frameworks for ensuring sound local authority administration</b> .....	51
<b>4.3.4 What has been done and how effective are the measures?</b> .....	54
<b>4.3.5 What can be done to alleviate the challenges?</b> .....	56
<b>4.4 ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS</b> .....	58
<b>4.4.1 Factors affecting the performance of local authorities</b> .....	58
<b>4.4.2 The impact of institutional frameworks on performance</b> .....	61
<b>4.4.3 What can be done to improve performance of the local authority</b> .....	64
<b>4.5 CONCLUSION</b> .....	66
<b>CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	67
<b>5.1 INTRODUCTION</b> .....	67
<b>5.2 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS</b> .....	67
<b>5.2 CONCLUSIONS</b> .....	68
<b>5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	69
<b>5.3.1 Training and development</b> .....	69
<b>5.3.2 Performance Management</b> .....	70
<b>5.3.3 Conflict resolution strategy</b> .....	70
<b>5.3.4 Public Private Partnerships</b> .....	70
<b>5.3.5 Motivation of employees</b> .....	71
<b>5.3.6 Sound Regulatory frameworks</b> .....	71

**REFERENCES** ..... 72  
**APPENDIX A** ..... 76  
**APPENDIX B**..... 78

## **LIST OF TABLES**

Table 4.2 ..... response rate of respondents to in-depth interviews.

## **ACRONYMS**

CEO- Chief Executive Officer

DDC- District Development Coordinator

LGB- Local Government Board

MLG- Ministry of Local Government

NGO-Non-Governmental Organisation

SADC- Southern African Development Committee

UN- United Nations

USD- United States Dollars

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The discussion seeks to analyze the impact of local authority administration on the performance of the whole organization using a case study of Mazowe Rural District Council. This chapter will be made up of background of the study, problem statement, research questions, objectives, significance of the study, assumptions, limitations and delimitations. The dissertation structure will also summaries the chapter.

#### **1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

Local authority administration as explained by Mapuva (2014) encompasses the establishment of institutions made up of hierarchies, structures and systems which sets the framework for service provision. In the same line of thought, Stoker (1988) avers that local authority governance is embedded in processes of administration involving private, formal and various economic organizations in the making of decisions which determine provision of local service. Distilling from the above explanations, local authority administration can thus be understood to refer to a systematic network involving formal and informal partners in the administration of local communities to ensure essential services are rendered to communities. The establishment of such formal institutions of local administration according to Austin (2016) can be traced back to the era of industrialization whereby multitudes of people ‘flocked’ into urban areas in search of employment. The intense migration into towns as articulated by Chakunda (2015) necessitated the need for communities to be organized and run in a systematic manner. Hyden (1992) concurs advancing that in America, that great industrial revolution opened a paradigm shift in the manner in which societies were organized because the large spontaneous influx of people from rural communities into towns created a need for the establishment of an administrative system whose mandate was to oversee how people would be able to be able to serve in the new industries. What is striking according to Hopkin and Kaufman (2019) was that the shift from agrarian economy to manufacturing economy gave birth to the emancipation of policies bent on ensuring a ‘blotted’ labor supply in the emerging industries. Less attention was thus paid on issues regarding social amenities. To that end, Pierson (2015) notes that instead of the laissez-faire approach that dominated the social thought of the day, political ideologies amidst the 19<sup>th</sup> century began to be

biased towards the economic realm to meet the demands of the ever-growing industrial communities.

The growth therefore of populations in cities in England created an unescapable need for services such as policing, public transport and other social services such as accommodation (Atkinson, 2002). It is therefore in this regard that acts, policies and instruments and formalized structures began to be established. Innes (2013) stresses that in England, a Local Government Commission for England was established to review administrative arrangements and facilitated enactment of the 1972 Local Government Act which brought about the introduction of a two-tier system of governance wherein local authorities were granted authority over expenditure. However, despite the reforms and changes made, Simon (2014) argues that much of the concentration was biased towards ensuring political policies regarding industrial development was achieved. Pollit (2012) concurs advancing that the center of focus revolved around fulfillment of the political ideology of accommodating as many industrial workers as possible and little on improving the service delivery. The then existent nexus between politics and administration of local authorities appeared to compromise administrative efficiency and effectiveness as observed by Bhagwan and Bhushan (2005) who claim that Parish Councils which provided local administration under the Commons Act of 1899 were reportedly to have violated the rights to protect unclaimed common land by parceling out land to bourgeoisie with a view to increase industrialization. Thus, the irregularities which characterized the zeal to industrialize in the 19<sup>th</sup> century gave birth to administrative malfeasances under the guise of facilitating state policies. It is thus against this bedrock that this study intends to interrogate how local authority administration can affect its performance in the Zimbabwean context.

In America, Hall (2019) comments that local authority reforms saw the establishment of a federal system of administration in which 50 states which enjoy autonomy from the government in the administration of their jurisdictions. Muchadenyika (2015) affirms that each state has its own constitution and has substantial autonomy in how it administers its state. However, administration structure in each state differs. For example, some states are run by an elected Mayor and Council. In this type of administration, the mayor has limited powers and is only a ceremonial leader. Other states are administered by a Commission. Voters elect commissioners who serve as heads of various departments. The other is led by a Council Manager. The city hires who administers the

city departments. However, the various existent administrative structures have been castigated by Hall (2019) for creating imbalances in terms of development in the various states. Furthermore, Simon (2014) protests that the limited role of the state in the administration of the states has seen uneven pace of developments the various states. Some states due to geographical, economic and social challenges tend to lag behind in terms of development. In the same line of thought, Atkinson (2002) bemoans how development is skewed against racial lines to the detriment of states dominated by African-Americans such as Mississippi and Louisiana. It is thus on this basis that this study intends to analyze the impact of local authority administration on its performance in the Zimbabwean context using a case study of Mazowe Rural District Council.

In the African context, Chigwata (2017) informs that upon attainment of independence, most states such as South Africa, Zimbabwe and Nigeria adopted a system of administration which was used by their colonial masters. However as noted by Madhekeni and Zhou (2012), the political needs of colonial masters have influenced local governance to this day. Mushamba (2020) concurs commenting that the colonial system of administration was premised on ensuring racial marginalization of the black populace through excessive state control of local councils. With reference to South Africa, Chigwata and De Visser (2018) claim that apartheid policies were instigated to perpetuate differentiation of systems and structures based on racial lines. Resultantly, whites were served by white local authorities, Indians and Colored had their own management committees while blacks remained marginalized in townships with black led local authorities. It is thus against such an inherited system of administration whose mandate was to segregate a particular social group. Local authority administration inherited concepts of bias and segregation henceforth, this study intends to assess the impact of local authority administration on its performance.

In Zimbabwean context, Muchadenyika (2015) stresses that upon independence, black local authorities were overwhelmed with challenges precisely from their inception. They lacked autonomy, financial adequacy and sound administrative aptness such that Mushamba, Bhoroma, chirisa and Chaumba (2014) claim that the colonial concept of excessive state influence over local council continued to precipitate post-independence. In agreement, Chatiza in Wekwete (2015) reiterates that the post-independence Zimbabwean context of local administration was characterized by subjugation of local authorities by the central government. This resulted in what

Chatiza in Wekwete (2015) describes as opaque resource sharing antithetical to local democracy. Furthermore, Mushamba et al (2014) make reference to the effects of the Economic Structural Administration Program which impoverished local governments in terms of socio-political processes, economic and finance owing to retrenchments of many people. Councils were starved of resources from rate payers and the policy according to Chakunda (2015) weakened administrative structures of most local authorities. It is thus in this context that this study seeks to analyze the impact of local authority administration on its performance on the bedrock of government policies.

Despite reforms being adopted to improve local authority administration such as the adoption of the 1996 Principles of Decentralization which made momentous breakthrough in ensuring substantive transmission of functions from national government. However, the reforms suffered stillbirth owing to the 1997 economic collapse amid political polarization due to the growth of opposition parties in local authorities (Chigwata and De Visser, 2018). Thus, the venturing in of opposition politics opened a new Pandora box in the structures and systems of local governance. A more rigorous oversight came into being especially in most of the urban councils dominated by the opposition party (Zimbabwe Democracy Institute Report, 2017). However, the imprints of government influence targeting local council administrators remained visible. Chakunda (2015) argues that during the tenure of Chombo as Minister of Local Government, council administrators such as Mudzuri, Gweru chamber secretary and Harare councilors experienced suspensions. Chigwata, Marumahoko and Madhekeni (2019) claim that government actions were motivated by sinister political aims rather than sincere desire to improve governance of local authorities. It is therefore on the basis of abrupt and unplanned changes of administrators in local authorities that local authority administration in Zimbabwe needs interrogation to ascertain its impact on performance.

### **1.3 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Against the background in the preceding section, the problem is poor service delivery by local authorities. According to Taruvinga (2022) Mazowe Rural District Council is at loggerheads with its residents Association over poor service delivery in the area. Furthermore, the council's Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Mr Mufandaedza has been implicated in many irregularities characterized by irregular sale of stands, irregular tender procedures and conniving with some

councils to subvert council procedures in various administrative processes to corruptly acquire at least 20 stands each. In the same line of thought, there appears to be conflicting relationships between the CEO and his line managers such that the scores are settled in the public domain as reported in the public media by Taruvinga (2022). The CEO defied a resolution by the council's finance committee to reimburse \$50 000 scandalously deposited by Thinkers Table into the council's estate account without being formally given an offer letter. The CEO unanimously defied council resolution and authorized the company to operate in the district. To that end, residents who had leases were affected through double allocation of stands. In addition, the council workers union is up in arms with administrators over salary arrears. Despite the council owing its employees, a fleet of vehicles for top management was purchased by the council (Zvarivadza, 2021). It is thus against this background of problems that this study intends to interrogate the impact of local authority administration on its performance using Mazowe Rural District Council (MRDC) as a case study. The study will be different from other studies by giving new insights into the nexus between local authority administration and its performance since most of the studies conducted on local authorities mainly centered on urban councils such as Harare and Mutare and less on rural district councils. To that end, the study will contribute to the body of knowledge by unearthing how administration influences the wholistic performance of the organization in the context of rural district authorities.

#### **1.4 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION**

- ❖ How does local authority administration affect the performance of the organisation?

##### **1.4.1. Secondary research questions**

- ❖ What theoretical and conceptual issues underpin local authority administration and its performance?
- ❖ What local government administrative factors affect performance of Mazowe Rural District Council?
- ❖ What is the effect of local authority institutional frameworks on the performance of the organisation?
- ❖ What recommendations can be proffered with regards to the impact of local authority administration on its performance?

## **1.5 MAIN RESEARCH OBJECTIVE**

- ❖ To analyse how local authority administration affect the performance of the organisation?

### **1.5.1 Secondary research questions**

- ❖ to examine administrative factors which affect local authority performance;
- ❖ to evaluate the effectiveness of institutional frameworks on ensuring efficient and effective local authority performance;
- ❖ to proffer administrative solutions to enhance local authority performance.

## **1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

### **Policy makers**

The study by interrogating the impact of local authority administration on its performance it will be significant in assisting policy makers in coming up with robust policies to redress administrative shortfall regarding to local authority administration.

### **Academia**

The study will also assist the body knowledge by providing new insights into how administration of rural district councils can improve performance.

### **Local Authorities**

The study will assist local authorities to craft sound administrative frameworks that will facilitate effective administration of local authorities. The solutions proffered by the study will act as a benchmark for future theoretical inquiries in explaining how best to explain the correlation between administration and performance of local authorities particularly rural district authorities.

## **1.7 ASSUMPTIONS**

The study assumes that there is a correlation between administration and performance of local authorities. The study further assumes that poor service delivery by local authority is an indicator of poor performance by local authorities. The study further assumes that authority to carry out the study will be granted by the gate keepers.

## **1.8 LIMITATIONS**

Limitations which might be encountered during the course of the study include financial challenges. The study involves field work and the printing of research instruments which have a

cost effect on the study transport and meeting the cost of printing the research instruments. Another limitation which might affect the study is that since the study involves sensitive administrative issues, respondents might falsify information in a bid to ‘fabricate’ the situation.

Furthermore, since focus group discussion is going to be used, some respondents might feel shy to contribute in the public domain thus end up withholding data which might be very crucial to the study. Another possible limitation is that gate keeper might deliberately attempt to shun the study since it might end up opening a pandora box of illicit corporate malfeasance at the local authority.

## **1.9 DELIMITATIONS**

The study will be conducted in Mazowe situated north east of Harare Metropolitan Province and is in Mashonaland Central Province. For purposes of this study, a case study of Mazowe Rural District Council will be used.

## **1.10 DISSERTATION STRUCTURE**

The study comprises of five chapters which are made up of;

### Chapter 1: Introduction

The chapter examines the background of the study. It outlines the problem statement and highlights the objectives and research questions. The significance of the study is explained as well as limitations and delimitation.

### Chapter 2: Literature Review

Literature that informs the study will be reviewed and theoretical framework will be discussed and analysed.

### Chapter 3: Methodology

The chapter explains the methodology to be used in carrying out the study. Aspects such as research design, data collection and sampling are to be highlighted. The chapter will explain how data is to be presented and analysed.

### Chapter 4: Presentation and analysis of findings

The chapter will present research findings then analyse findings as well as discuss results thereof.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

The chapter outlines conclusions of the study and highlights recommendations relating to the impact of local authority administration on its performance.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter reviews literature related to the impact of local administration on its performance. The chapter will further bring to light theoretical underpinnings with regards to how local authority administration affects its performance.

### **2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

A theory as explained by Murphy (2015) refers to a supposition of ideas that seek to explain social phenomenon. In agreement, Nicholas (2014) postulates that a theory is a rational explanation which help to understand events. It encompasses explanations and predictions the way various factors influence or relate to one another. For purposes of this study, the Systems Theory by Chester Barnard will be used to explain the area understudy.

#### **2.2.1 The Systems Theory**

The systems theory as propounded by Chester Barnard explains an organization to be essentially a cooperative system wherein various elements work and contribute together in an integrated manner towards the survival and success of the organization. In his quest to explain the fundamentals of organizational management, Barnard held that management had mora authority to modernize, run and manage technological changes for the public good. Concepts extracted from the theory to be discussed include, cooperative systems, systems equilibrium, inducement-contribution, acceptance concept and skills.

##### **2.2.1.1 Cooperative Systems**

An organization as articulated by Barnard is viewed as a cooperative system made up of biological, physical, social component and personal factors that are intertwined. According to, Griffin (2010), various related components within an organization fundamental lay a critical role in the accomplishment of the broader objective of the organization. In agreement, Sims (2015) is of the notion that, administrators as they execute their mandate, it is vital for them to take into cognizance existence of these factors such that administrative plans of action produce a ‘fit’ with internal variables. To that end, Erk (2014) makes reference to internal SWOT Analysis done strategically to ensure variables within the organization are well coordinated such that they perform in sync. To

that end, Jones and George (2016) reinforce that the various factors such as human capital, technology, infrastructure, institutional frameworks and even the external factors correlate together to accomplish set objectives which no single factor can single-handedly attain alone.

In the same line of thought, Griffin (2010) makes reference to the fact the interaction of an organization is not only limited to internal factors, external factors also have a bearing on the overall performance of the organization. Nicholas (2014) concurs that sound administration is engrossed in the ability to engage administrative models such as PESTEL Analysis so that external dynamics which might negatively affect the performance of the organization are timeously militated. In this context, an organization is seen existing in an environment surrounded by various variables which play a role in contributing to either the success or demise of the entity. To that end, Wilson (2016) stresses the need for both internal and external environmental scanning so that administrators maximize on opportunities posed by the environment and turn threats into opportunities. Furthermore, Atkinson (2002) idealizes that environmental scanning helps organization strategically position itself in the wave of premeditated VUCA environment. For example, changes in policies might create a VUCA environment marred with volatility and uncertainty. Henceforth, by being 'alive' to the various systems and variables surrounding the organization, administrative plans of actions would be strategic. It is therefore on the basis of such various factors which have to be factored by administrators that this study seeks to examine how these internal and external factors have a bearing on local authority administration which in turn impact performance.

### **2.2.1.2 System Equilibrium**

The concept as enunciated by Barnard explains that organizations ought to entice appropriate contributions in order to safeguard its survival. Murphy (2015) clarifies that system equilibrium exists in two interrelated processes. First, it exists between the external environment and the organization. Secondly, between the organization and its employees. The external environment as explained by Travers (2015) responds to the organization depending on what the organization is offering in return. The environment in return has to be conducive enough to ensure the organization survives by offering opportunities and an enabling viable environment. The existent symbiotic relation thus creates equilibrium in the context of organizational survival. For example, if the environment is conducive enough and presents opportunities, organizational performance will be

exceptional and the environment will feel the ripple effect of sound business viability through various developmental projects as well as support mechanisms. Consequently, if the organization does not perform well, various forces might 'weigh' heavily on the organization which threaten organizational survival. Furthermore, if the environment is laden with threats, the performance of the organization might be compromised and a hostile system of disequilibrium erupts which is detrimental to the survival and performance of the organization. To that end, this study will interrogate the various factors from the environment and organization to evaluate their impact on the ultimate performance of local authorities.

The concept further alludes to the equilibrium between the organization and its members in order to facilitate effective performance. Blunt (2017) asserts that a state of equilibrium is attained when there is a balance of employee performance to the overall purpose of the organization and the degree of satisfaction received by members and the organization in exchange. Thus, the organization ought to appreciate contributions rendered by members and respond correspondingly such that contributions become enhanced. Retrospectively, members ought to feel that the efforts they are putting towards the accomplishment of organizational goals are sufficiently being appreciated. Such a state of equilibrium will steer exceptional organizational performance. It thus against this backdrop of exchange of satisfaction between members and the organization that this study will assess the impact of local authority administration on its performance.

### **2.2.1.3 Inducement-Contribution**

Barnard explains that organizational leaders ought to realize that members within an organization need inducements in order to ensure optimal performance. In the same line of thought, Austin (2016) brings to light the fact that two-way inducements can be rendered include through incentives or through persuasive methods. This follows that members will continue rendering substantial contribution to the organization as long as the inducements are deemed higher than the contributions rendered. Relating to persuasive tone, Sims (2015) clarifies that this is attained through propaganda, coercion and inoculation. Through inoculation, Erk (2014) is of the idea that members are educated on organizational values such that they become 'brainwashed' to behave in tandem with those values. However, given the inflationary and turbulent business environment prevailing in Zimbabwe, it becomes important for this study to investigate the correlation between inducement and contribution in influencing local authority performance.

#### **2.2.1.4 Acceptance**

The systems theory informs that effective and efficient administration can only be attained when employees accept orders from leaders to be legitimate and execute them diligently. From the lenses of Hyden (1992), organizations function competently according to the acceptance theory. With reference to Weber's assertions on authority, traditional, legal-rational and charismatic authority are critical in the administration of organizations because they are conduits through which authority is legitimized. Blunt (2017) avers that, the ripple effect of authority lies in the ability to compel employees to go an extra mile even if it means 'walking on water' to ensure unwavering accomplishment of organizational objectives. However, Erk (2014) points out that selection into local authority administration by mayors and councilors in the Zimbabwean context is principally based on election. To that end, perceptions of various stakeholders relating to the political appointment of leadership puts to question the degree to which members will appreciate and recognize the authority to be legitimate. Furthermore, based on various rigging theories surrounding elections in Zimbabwe which spilled over to constitutional court for determination, would the authority of administrators appointed on political basis in local authorities be able to be deemed legitimate? To what extent then would such authority as informed by the acceptance theory be able to influence members to perform exceptionally. This study therefore intends to unravel the impact of local authority administration on its performance from the lenses of the acceptance theory.

#### **2.2.1.5 Organic Knowledge**

The systems theory as given by Barnard articulates that organic knowledge refers to skills learnt as a result of reactions to the various forces emanating from the environment. The forces have an impact on an individual's behavior by modifying behavior of members within an organization. Such reactions get to produce certain distinct patterns of behavior. Thus, Barnard refers to the learned patterns as skills determined by organic knowledge. Nicholas (2014) brings to light the fact that an individual masters skills and patterns to react to the environment. It is those skills which determine an individual's disposition at the work place. In this context, the environment is thus seen determining how employees within an organization behave. In the context of Zimbabwe, the political, economic and social forces have seen various workers unions clamoring for salaries above the poverty datum line by the government appears to pay a 'deaf ear' (Mpofu, 2018). In that regard, Taruvinga (2022) commenting on the Zimbabwean civil service asserts that the prevailing

environment in Zimbabwe characterized by hyper-inflation, economic and social instability has tremendously affected performance of employees as most civil servants have resorted to informal trading even at their work places much to the detriment of performance. Mungwari (2019) concurs stressing that the meagre salaries in the civil service have compelled employees to find alternative ways of financially cushioning themselves. Majoni (2019) exemplifies how teachers have resorted to illegally extorting money from parents through 'extra' lessons. In this context, given the volatile and complex environment existent in Zimbabwe, this study henceforth seeks to assess its impact on local authority administration on the broader performance of the entity based on how management and employee behavior is shaped by environmental factors.

## **2.3 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.3.1 Conceptualizing local authority administration**

Local authority administration as defined by Chigwata and DeVisser (2018) refers to the way operations and systems of governance at a local level are managed. In agreement, Jonga and Chirisa (2009) avers that local authority administration entails the governance by local representative councils which are established by law in executing specific powers within particular defined jurisdictions. The powers invested in local administration as articulated by Wekwete (2015) accords council control which is substantial over finances, staff, local affairs, provision of services and to act in a manner that complements activities of the state. Based on the above explanations, local authority administration can thus be understood to mean the management at a local level through representative councils whose members of the governing body will have been elected or selected locally are mandated by law to act in a specified manner within their defined areas of governance. The operations of local authorities are thus aimed at complementing programs or activities of the central government. From the lenses of Hall (2019), local authority administration is a subordinate and miniature government system which has legal authority to carry out public activities. Mungwari (2019) informs that local government administration is basically premised on three fundamental systems and structural types which are: the French local government system, the Anglo-Saxon local government system and the communist local governmentsystem.

## **2.3.2 Systems and structure of local governance.**

### **2.3.2.1 The French local government system**

Under this type of local administration, local authorities are deemed as the arm of central government at local level. Hopkin and Kaufman (2019) bring to light that in the French system of local administration invests key duties and powers in councils exercised through mayors and principal officers. Amidst local authority management is a 'prefect'. The prefect according to Atkinson (2002) is a civil servant whose objective in governance is to approve, direct or veto on behalf of the French state. To that end, the prefect assumes the role of chief executive thus is the channel of centralization has authority to supervise local expenditures and overrule councils. From the lenses of Austin (2006), the structure was propagated by Napoleon the first with a view to facilitate state reforms at the same time curtailing the influence of the local notables. It thus becomes visible that the French local government system establishes clear lines of authority emanating from the state via the prefect to the municipalities which has a mayor elected locally.

The French system has been applauded by Simon (2014) who observed that it facilitates even development across municipalities since major administrative decision cascade from the central government. Furthermore, the system ensures limited policy discord between the state and local authorities. For example, policy decisions made by the state are quickly adopted by local authorities for implementation at local level such that there becomes a 'fit' between the state and the municipality. However, Pollit (2012) critiques this type of arrangement protesting that it is a ploy by the state to ensure control of municipalities with an objective of maintaining political power. In agreement, Hall (2019) concurs commenting that the French system works to the advantage of the politicians who through local municipalities would manipulate administrative decision via their prefect such that activities and operation in the context of the local authority administration are made in favor of the political rendition of the day. However, the situation and system of local administration in France might fail to mirror the Zimbabwean context. It is therefore in the context of hidden motives by the state to influence local authority administration that this study seeks to interrogate the impact on performance in the Zimbabwean context given that Zimbabwe has its own different system of local authority governance. The study henceforth intends to establish how local authority administration on the bedrock of state influence as

exemplified by the French system through the ‘prefect’ affect its performance using a case study of Mazowe RDC.

### **2.3.2.2 The Anglo-Saxon System of local governance**

This model as articulated by Hyden (1992) is a British system of local administration wherein local councils exercise powers on county and sub county levels. The system is characterized substantial local budget authority and limited state involvement in the administration of local authorities. The system is further denoted by an extensive committee system as opposed to an executive system noted in the French system. Through committees, supervision of the various county administration is ensured. This according to Stoker (1998) fosters autonomy of counties from the central government. For example, in America, Pollit (2012) observed that the country has about 50 states administered through the county system. Hopkin and Kaufman (2019) commend the Anglo-Saxon System reinforcing that the approach buttresses autonomy such that development within the context of each county is context specific thus addresses the lived realities of the each particularly county. Furthermore, autonomy as noted by Simon (2014) facilitates objectivity in administration. The committees will make informed administrative decisions with regards to issues besetting each county. Furthermore, Erk (2014) informs that under this system of local governance, each county has its own constitution that formulates the basis of operations. To that end, the structure of administration under the Anglo-Saxon system of local governance differs.

The Anglo-Saxon System has a Mayor-Council structure. Under this system of administration, there is an elected mayor who has limited power and is just a ceremonial leader. It is the council which makes major administrative decisions on issues affecting local governance. Richards (2018) advances that such an arrangement has had positive administrative results because of substantial autonomy of the council from both the state and mayor. However, Sims (2015) objects the administrative structure commenting that it creates conflicts of interest between the mayor’s subjective intuition and the council’s motives which tend to cause administrative disharmony. For example, since the mayor is the ‘face’ of the council, at times due to grandstanding might act contrary to the expectation of the council causing administrative confusion. Blunt (2014) avers that the mayor under this structure is a public figure who ‘parcels out’ council programs to the people. As such, he commands a greater degree of influence of residence as compared to the administrative council. Resultantly, the mayor might end up politically grandstanding to influence

council decisions by mobilizing residents to act in certain manner much to the detriment of the performance of local counties. However, there appears to be a gap in the Zimbabwean context given that system of administration is different. If therefore a member of administration by virtue of ‘ganging’ up with residents can influence local authority administration, this study becomes compelled to interrogate the impact of administration on the performance of local authorities on the bedrock of influence from residents.

The Anglo-Saxon system embeds the commission administration structure. In this structure of administration, voters elect commissioners who then serve as heads of departments while the presiding commissioner becomes the mayor. Atkinson (2002) comments that such a system of administration ensures the will of the people is factored in at the apex of council administration such that administrative decisions made to a larger extent reflects the will and interest of the people. In agreement, Chigwata, Marumahoko and Madhekeni (2019) advances that since the residents through an elective process have substantial stake in council administration, it underpins administrators to optimum performance in a bid to ensure they satisfy those who mandated them to assume office. However, Griffin (2010) differs with the above assertions arguing that the commission structure instils a lot of power and influence of authority administration in the residents through the elective processes such that there is a lot of interference in the way administration is propagated. Jones and George (2016) appear to share a different notion asserting that despite the noted interference by residents, commissioners appointed are solely based on merit and proven track record of sound performance. Thus, selection into the administrative board is performance based. To that end, the nexus between administration and local authority performance becomes glued on the basis of performance. Hyden (1992) confirms that counties that adopt the commission structure of administration have a record of high performance in terms of service delivery within the area of their jurisdictions. However, the commission structure in America fails to mirror the system of local administration in Zimbabwe henceforth there is a structural gap. In Zimbabwe, those who head local authority departments are appointed by the Human Resource Department in consultation with elected councilors and the chief executive officer. The existent differences thus warrant an investigation to assess the impact of local authority administration on the performance of local authorities in the Zimbabwean milieu given the differences in structure of administration.

The other existent structure under the Anglo-Saxon System of local governance is the council manager system. Under this type of administration, a city hires a manager to administer the various city departments. The council manager thus assumes an overarching role in the administration of the local authority. According to Murphy (2015) the hired incumbent will be appointed based on competences such that upon appointed, the council mayor is answerable to residents. The mandate bestowed upon the council manager is purely transformative with a view of ensuring remarkable performance (Pollit, 2012). To that end, administration under this structure is target based. Performance measurement systems are established to benchmark how the council mayor performs such that upon performance review, decisions might be made to reinstate the council mayor based on performance. In this context, it behooves this study to be undertaken to establish how local authority administration in Zimbabwe influences its performance in the absence of such a target-oriented council manager structure of administration.

### **2.3.2.3 The Marxian System**

This type of local governance is existent in Russia and China. Griffin (2010) affirms that under this type of administration, local governments are merely a part of government agencies that serve as economic planning units. In communist China, the focus of local administration is the state. The central government oversees the management of services at local level which include projects such as irrigation, public works and basic welfarism (Jones and George, 2016). In this context, Stoner (2010) avers that various activities of local units are integrated to serve the welfares of their localities. Basing on this type of administrative structure, Stoker (1998) is of the notion that the state exercises a lot of control and influence in ensuring that local units created with the mandate to plan various economic activities perform optimally. However, the Marxian system of local administration is completely different from the Zimbabwean context wherein members into the administration such as councilors are elected on a political ticket and their political ideologies shape and decide how council is administered (Chigwata, 2017). To that end, this study seeks to unpack the impact of local authority administration on its performance with a view to interrogate the how the structure of administration has a bearing on the performance of the organization in its entirety.

In Nigeria, Otieno (2019) avers that the country's local administration is based on a third-tier system wherein powers and authority are divided into the three arms of government which are the

executive, legislative arm and administrative arm. Wekwete (2015) explains that the executive arm is made up of chairman, supervisors, secretary and other local government principal officers. The secretary is a political appointee who in conjunction with the chairman supervises the administrative arm. However, though the Nigerian structure can be noted to be laden with bureaucratic, Otieno (2019) stresses that it helps keep checks and balances with regards to accountability. Supervision by the executive represented by the secretary according to Richards (2018) entails the administration is guided by the nationalistic strategies and vision such that performance thereof becomes underpinned by already set political values and standards. In agreement, Sims (2015) concurs commenting that administration being guided externally tend to improve on objectivity and performance variations are well managed. It is thus against this background that there appears to be a gap with the Zimbabwean context. Despite having a bureaucratic reporting structure in local governance, there appears to be traces of poor service delivery by local councils. It is thus against this backdrop that this study seeks to unpack the correlation between administration and local authority performance.

#### **2.4. Tenets of sound local authority administration**

Local authority administration as articulated by Mpofu (2018) is guided by various precepts which define the operational parameters that reflect efficiency and effectiveness. In agreement, Jonga and Chirisa (2009) aver that the manner in which local authorities are administered should be premised on ‘craft competence’ standards that formulates a yardstick of administrative proficiency. Erk (2014) affirms various tenets that define and explain efficient and effective local authority administration. These tenets embedded in the administration of local authorities if ‘religiously’ executed have a bearing on the ultimate performance of the organization. To that end, the tenets as given by Chigwata (2018) encompass: accountability, equity, transparency, autonomy, ethics and sound financial management.

##### **2.4.1 Accountability**

Accountability in local administration can be explained to be a measure of answerability by a department or an individual regarding an outcome of certain activities or relating to performance. In the same wave length, Mushamba (2010) asserts that accountability holds local authority administrators responsible for their administrative actions. Thus, Chiweshe (2015) is of the notion that accountability is a fundamental concept in local authority administration because it fosters

members to avoid spending time on unproductive behavior and distracting activities henceforth increases a member's ability to value their work. Congruently, Sibanda (2022) stresses the vitality of accountability in local governance highlighting that the tenet helps members strive towards the attainment of performance goals and objectives. In this context, administrators are compelled to be committed themselves to ensure they become answerable to the accomplishment of set goals. Mporofu (2018) advances the above notions buttressing that accountability in local government administration is hinged on focusing on key fundamental precepts which are performance, people, progression and people.

In the context of administrative accountability, people drive performance. Regardless of strategy, the amount of technology, finance and resources, it's the people who will ensure set objectives are accomplished. Hence, accountability should strongly be viewed from the lenses of ensuring people within the organization have been capacitated towards the attainment of predetermined goals so that administrators can be answerable regarding outcomes of specific actions (Cheema, 2005). In agreement, Hopkin and Kaufman (2019) observed that in Germany, local authorities are administered with the appreciation that people are the most important essential resources of an organization. Therefore, administrators put in place programs that help employees feel valued, safe and cared about so that they would be able to perform given mandates. In South Africa, Chigwata and DeVisser (2018) notes that most municipalities such as Ethekekwini, Chris Hani District municipality and Ekurhuleni municipality have adopted employee centered programs bent on improving skills and capacity for their employees to perform towards accomplishment of organizational objectives. For example, Mphokare local municipality has an Employee Benefits Policy which amongst other employee benefits grants financial assistance to its employees. Chris Hani District Municipality has Employee Wellness Unit tailored to help employees in their social, personal and work-related issues. However, the situation obtaining in South Africa to some extent fails to relate to the Zimbabwean context of local authority administration. As noted by Chakunda (2015), the Zimbabwean context characterized by conflicts between residents, employees' unions and local authority administrators signifies existence of a myriad of problems engulfing local authorities. Thus, based on such a gap, this study intends to examine administrative factors which affect local authority performance on the bedrock of answerability to specific outcomes.

### **2.4.2 Equity**

The tenet as explained by Richards (2018) is engrossed in adoption of fairness by administrators in the execution of their obligations. This factor takes into cognizance the various gender dynamics which might influence performance at an organization. According to Otieno (2019) gender disparities in local governance in Kenya have been redressed owing to the adoption of the gender reform policy. Thus, local authorities in the country amidst their values have strategically envisioned the embracement of gender sensitive administrative approaches. For example, owing to Kenya's two-thirds gender principle, county's such as West Pokot have female speaker and through organizations such as Women Democracy Network, governance and leadership skills were trained to equip female county administrators with governance skills. However, narrowing the situation to Zimbabwe, there appears to be gap. According to Muchadenyika (2015) in Zimbabwe local authority administration, societal and structural barriers were noted to be inhibiting emancipation of gender equity in organizations. Mungwari (2019) agrees stressing that this emanates from the fact that in most rural district councils, cultural value systems anchored on patriarchy still dominates henceforth tend to obliterate gender equity approaches in local administration much to the demise performance especially by female counterparts. It is therefore against this backdrop of equity that this study seeks to unpack the impact of local authority administration on its performance.

### **2.4.3 Transparency**

Transparency as explained by Madhekeni and Zhou (2012) refers to holding local authority administrators accountable for their actions and performance. Transparency helps to foster the element of trust between local authority administrators and other stakeholders. Wekwete (2015) notes how most municipalities such as Lobatse, Selibe and Sowa councils have adopted digitalized systems which have improved transparency in the system of administration. In view of the above, Mapuva (2014) commends the principle commenting that transparency encapsulates acting in an open manner and granting free access to information. Information in relation to local authority administration according to Wilson (2016) should be accurate, relevant and complete so that it can be relevantly be used. Thus, in the context of provision of information local authority administrators will benefit by getting valuable feedback from stakeholders pertaining decisions they will have taken. However, in the Zimbabwean context, Mushamba, Boroma, Chirisa and Chaumba (2014) observed a gap in local authorities regarding provision of requisite administrative

information deemed timely, valuable and complete. Though councils such as Ruwa, Chitungwiza and Mazowe and Pfura have adopted websites to improve accountability through speedy and convenient information accessibility, the websites appear to be laden with outdated information and dysfunctional in terms responses to stakeholder concerns. In the same vein, Wilson (2016) avers that transparency in the wake of ineffective deterrent mechanism loses relevancy stressing that the principle will be contemptuously violated much to the detriment of organizational integrity. Kamate (2012) observes how in the Zimbabwean context institutional frameworks have been put to test owing to rampant cases of corporate malpractice. Therefore, based on such a gap on transparency, this study becomes compelled to analyze the impact of local authority administration on its performance.

#### **2.4.4. Autonomy**

Hyden (1992) defines autonomy as the magnitude of discretion enshrined to local authorities in undertaking their various activities. In agreement, Travers (2015) avers that it is the ability of local authorities to independently impact on the well-being of their citizens. In the Philippines, local government units are granted sufficient without unwarranted interference from the state on matter of local importance (Stoner, 2010). This helps in creating an administration that is reliable and efficient in meeting specific needs of their communities without undue external influence. Thus, on the bedrock of autonomy, local authorities perform optimally because authorities have the mandate to take decisions without seeking approval from central government, a move which might delay development, let alone affect performance. However, the aspect of autonomy in local authorities in the Zimbabwean context tends to differ. Chigwata (2017) articulates that the structure and composition of local authority administration in Zimbabwe is characterized by central government involvement even in decision making regarding budget approval. This study therefore intends to interrogate the impact of local authority administration on its performance on the bedrock of limited autonomy.

#### **2.4.5 Ethics**

Ethics according to Hall (2019) provide a morale guide towards the accomplishment of broader organizational vision. Jones and George (2016) concurs commenting that ethics reflect the conduct of organizational members in a manner that preserves or restores integrity of the entity. With reference to the Colorado Revised Statutes Title 18, Article 24, the state law articulates ethical

conduct of public officials. Furthermore, Richards (2018) observed that in most counties in Britain, clearly written documents detailing what constitutes unethical and acceptable conduct is articulated. In addition, Hall (2019) comments that the county put in place enforcement mechanisms through local regulation and local enforcement in a fair, efficient and reasonable directives. In South Africa, Wekwete (2015) notes the establishment of the Office of the Public Protector as an enforcement mechanism that holds public administrators accountable to ethical conduct. Various administrative maleficence has been referred for legal prosecution such as Zuma's iNkandla Scandal and the recent Ramaphosa Phala Phala Farm Gate Scandal through the office of the public protector. To that end, Atkinson (2002) affirms that ethical regulations ought to deter conduct that directly impair public trust in the administration of local entities. However, there appears to be a gap in the Zimbabwean context. Rampant allegations of misconduct by local authority administrators characterized by the then minister of local government Chombo firing many councilors and mayor of Harare. The situation thus depicts an anomaly which warrants further inquiry on the basis of ethics how local authority administration can influence its performance using a case study of Mazowe RDC.

#### **2.4.6 Sound financial management**

The tenet as elucidated by Simon (2014) entails the management of various local authority interrelated factors which include expenditure management, budgeting, revenue, procurement, oversight, reporting and asset management. These various activities for them to be managed properly according to Austin (2016) require local authority administrators to put in place strategies and methods that ensure the attainment of desired financial objectives. For financial soundness to be observed in municipalities, Taruvunga (2022) avers that there is need for observance of arrangements and policies that sanctify habit and tradition to ensure financial probity in local authorities. Richards (2018) articulates the vitality of sound financial management exemplifying that in 2013 in USA, Detroit entered into bankruptcy with a debt of approximately US \$18 billion. In view of such challenges, the Municipal Finance Management Act was propagated to deal with a variety of financial management aspects such as cooperative governance, mayoral responsibilities, debt, budgets, financial reporting and treasury matters. In South Africa, Mungwari (2019) reports that municipalities such as Tshwane and Polokwane have also experienced financial management challenges. It is therefore against such a background of a myriad of financial

challenges experienced in local authorities that this study seeks to assess the impact of local authority administration on the performance of local councils.

## **2.5 Effectiveness of administrative institutional frameworks which ensure sound performance of local authorities**

Institutional mechanisms can be explained to refer to regulations, procedures, laws and norms that regulate organizational conduct towards the attainment of envisioned objectives (Wilson, 2016). The World Bank (2015) concurs explaining that institutional frameworks underpin the legal and professional aspects that regulate organizational administration. Distilling from the above explanations, institutional frameworks can thus be understood to refer to administrative mechanisms put in place so that the organization has the capacity to carry out activities in a manner that ensures enhance performance.

### **2.5.1 Legal framework**

The legal framework for local authority administration is guided by the constitution of the country. According to Chakunda (2015), national legislation as well as by-laws provide a guide to local government operations. Madhekeni and Zhou (2012) articulate that in Zimbabwe local authorities are ‘born’ from central government rather than the constitution expressing that the Rural District Council’s Act and the Urban Council’s Act provides for the establishment of the councils. However, Chigwata and De Visser (2018) note that the Zimbabwean constitution is silent on local government establishment. Reference from the constitution only explains that it is the supreme law of the land and other laws ought to be consistent with it otherwise they become null and void. Chapter 29:15 and 29:13, spells out powers, locus of local authorities and constitute tools through which the Ministry of Local Government monitors, supervises and controls local authorities. In addition, Mushamba et al (2014) avers that the Provincial Councils and Administration Act (Chapter 29:11) empowers resident ministers through local District Development Coordinators power to foster state objectives in local authorities. From the lenses of Chigwata, Marumahoko and Madhekeni (2019), Zimbabwe has a legal framework which accords substantial power, discretion and authority to the parent Ministry leaving local authorities at the ‘mercy of the minister’

There however appears to be scholarly points of divergence in view of the legal framework regulating local authority administration. Mpofo (2018) argues that lack of constitutional

protection of local authorities resultantly means local authorities become subject to the dictates of the parent ministry which is the Ministry of Local Government. To that end, Chigwata (2017) protests that resolutions made by council can be rescinded, amended and reversed to the detriment of the council. Furthermore, various administrative activities of local authorities such as budgets, appointment and by-laws are approved by the ministry of local government. In view of the above sentiments, Zvarivadza (2021) clamors that lack of constitutional fortification postures the danger of local authorities being 'swallowed' by the central government through the parent ministry. It is thus against such a legal framework that this study seeks to evaluate the impact of local authority administration on its performance based on evaluating the effectiveness of legal institutional framework guiding local authority administration.

### **2.5.2 The Ministry of Local Government Rural and Urban Development (MLG)**

The ministry is the apex of broader formulation and implementation of policies relating to the administration of local government. Mapuva (2014) brings to light the fact that MLG supervises statutes that operationalize and establish local authorities in Zimbabwe and is accountable for the performance of local authorities to Parliament, Nation and the Executive. To that end, the minister is the ultimate decision maker on matters affecting local authority administration. With reference to the local government legislation in Zimbabwe, the minister and the president can suspend, nullify or act in place of local authority and suspend resolutions made by council. Reference is made by Muchadenyika (2015) to the Rural District Councils Act wherein the more than 250 instance the minister has the authority to intervene in the day-to-day administration of local authorities. State intervention in the context of local authority administration was applauded by Wilson (2016) who comments that it helps maintain an oversight role by the state to rid corporate malfeasance in the mold of corrupt tendencies and improper tender regularities.

The state oversight role further ensures consistency of policy implementation of state programs in local authorities. Contrary to the situation obtaining in America, where counties tend to enjoy substantial autonomy from the central government. Richards (2018) advances that such autonomy in the context of American states has caused variations in the pace and nature of development. Lack of robust state intervention has culminated in development being determined along racial lines (Hall, 2019). This follows that counties predominated by African Americans have lagged behind in terms of service provision as compared to those dominated by affluent Americans. In

this context, Zvarivadza (2021) buttresses the oversight role of MLG ensures national developmental programs are equitably and evenly implemented across the local authorities

However, some schools of thought differ with the above notions. Madhekeni and Zhou (2012) critiques the overarching role of the minister commenting that it militates against the democratic principles embedded in democracy. Taruvinga (2022) comments that the role of the central government has hidden motives tailored to ensure subjugation of local authorities controlled by opposition parties. This according to Chigwata et al (2019) has been evidenced by the undue ‘targeted’ expulsion of opposition mayors and councilors by Chombo, the then minister of local government. Basing on the opposing views of various scholars on the effectiveness of institutional framework to facilitate sound administration and performance of local authorities, this discussion seeks to interrogate the impact of local authority administration on the performance of local authorities.

### **2.5.3. Local government Board**

The institution is provided for in the Urban Council’s Act under section 116 consisting of members whom are appointed by the minister. Chiweshe (2015) enunciates that the role and duty of the institution is specifically to offer general guidance relating to the organization and supervision of employees in the service of councils. Amongst the duties of board encompasses summoning any local authority administrator to produce records for purposes of supervision or disciplinary action. To that end, the institution aids administration of local authorities by buttressing issues relating to accountability and transparency. This according to Mushamba (2010) compels local authorities to act in the best interest of the public by accomplishing their mandates thus the board becomes a watch dog of local authority performance.

However, Madhekeni and Zhou (2012) contests the institution in facilitating sound local authority administration. Form their lenses, the minister has the propensity to subjectively appoint candidates on the basis of political ideology at the expenses of merit. In the same wave length, Wekwete (2015) brings to light the fact that in modern day local governance, the board has been on a rampage of targeted investigations, dismissals and suspensions of elected mayors and councilors particularly from the opposition political parties. Resultantly, Mapuva (2014) avers that this has had drastic effects on the ultimate performance of local authorities as administration experiences abrupt and unplanned change. Muchadenyika (2015) further claim that some rural

district councils have thus engaged the philosophy of ‘hero worshiping’ in a quest for lenient supervision by the board. This according to Mpfu (2018) is evidenced by the parceling out of stands and other undue privileges by local authorities to political bigwigs such as Obert Mpfu who according to various media platforms owns vast tracks of prime business land in Victoria Falls amongst a host of other municipalities. It is thus against such a tightly contested terrain that this study becomes moved to investigate the impact of local authority administration on its performance on the bedrock of highly critiqued institutional frameworks.

#### **2.5.4 Minister of State for Provincial Affairs Office.**

Each of the ten provinces in Zimbabwe has a minister of state who is appointed by the president as the resident minister. The role of the resident minister according to Mushamba et al (2014) is to chair provincial councils in spearheading provincial development. Mungwari (2019) further clarifies that the resident minister decentralizes powers to district development coordinators (DDCs) who supervises local authorities at district level. The decentralization of authority according to Madhekeni and Zhou (2012) assists in ensuring that local authorities are supervised at local level and that national strategic plans from the central government are organized and monitored from the grassroots thus facilitates effective local authority performance.

However, Sibanda (2022) differs with the above sentiments clamoring that the downside of this institution in assisting administration improve performance is that resident ministers and DDCs are politically appointed rather than elected such that there bound to be biased influence of decision making in favor of certain political ideologies to the detriment of sound local authority performance. Based on such divergent scholarly views, this study thus seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of administrative institutional frameworks in facilitating sound local government performance.

#### **2.5.5. Finance Committee**

The finance committee according to Wilson (2016) is mandated to provide budget oversight, financial analysis capital recovery and management and advice so that local authorities operate with adequate financial resources in the provision of services. Activities done by this institution include auditing.

Auditing in the context of local authorities according to Travers (2015), can be explained to be the process of auditing as an institutional mechanism to ensure sound local authority performance refers to an object, independent assurance of the soundness of internal control mechanisms in the attainment of set goals. In agreement Atkinson (2002) stress that auditing as a control mechanism evaluates and reports stressing the risks and deficiencies posed by an organizational systems and operations towards the achievement of objectives. To that end the primary role of this institution is to provide assurance that is objective and independent to administrators on how risks can be managed in relation to financial reporting, internal control mechanisms, legislative compliance and risk management.

In the United Kingdom, Blunt (2017) stresses that local authorities provide arrange of financial services which are funded by government grants, taxes, rates and funds raised from various commercial activities. Resultantly, a finance department become pivotal in providing accountability systems that assures the House of Commons on how local authorities utilize their funds. Stoner (2010) appreciates how in United Kingdom the department enjoys autonomy from the central government. Proposed budgets are approved by county committees and the role of the state is minimal. In local authority administration in Zimbabwe, the situation appears to be different. Local authorities through the finance committee after crafting a budget, submit proposals to the DDC for onward transmission to the MLG for approval.

The existent bureaucratic processes as articulated by Chigwata (2017) might pose a performance risk because depending on the subjective statute of the minister, the budget might not be approved or might be ordered to be revised to the detriment of planned developmental projects. Madhekeni and Zhou (2012) observed that the MLG has the powers to intervene in financial matters of local authorities. Chombo once ordered the scrapping of council rates owed by residents. Though the move was widely critiques by various political commentators, the policy was adopted. It is thus against a background of dynamics surrounding local authority finances that this study seeks to interrogate the effect of local authority administration on its performance.

## **2.6 Challenges faced by local authorities**

### **2.6.1 Population Increase**

Local authorities according to Muchadenyika (2015) are beset with a plethora of impediments which have a bearing on the overall performance of the organizations. Austin (2016) avers that the in the United Kingdom, the growing population owing to migration has culminated in most counties experiencing financial challenges in sustaining the ever-booming populace. Colworth (2021) envisions that by 2029 London is expected to be home to approximately 10 million people. This is worsened by the war between Russia and Ukraine which has exacerbated push factors for migration. In this context, service provision has thus been strained. In Nigeria, migration from caused Boko Haram terror groups have seen a boomerang of populations in Nigerian states with approximately 2.1 million people classified as Internally Displaced Persons (Otieno, 2019). Articulating the geopolitics of forced migration, Wekwete (2015) states such as Bono have come under immense pressure to house refugees fleeing from Boko Haram insurgency. Resultantly, local authorities have neither been spared by the blunt caused by migration. Otieno (2019) declares that poor service delivery by local authorities in most West African states have been attributed to political insurgences and pandemics. However, in Zimbabwe where migration patterns have seemed to be stable, Chiweshe (2015) comments that perpetual poor service delivery at the hands of local authorities need further unpacking. To that end, this study seeks to interrogate the impact of administration on the performance of local authorities.

### **2.6.2 Inadequate Finance**

The downing of covid 19 and the impact of the Russia-Ukraine war has had a financial bearing on municipalities ability to sustain themselves financially (Smith, 2022). The advent of covid-19 saw municipalities straining their budgets in a bid to counter the pervasiveness of the plague. Smith (2022) observed that in France, the effects have been twofold. Firstly, some municipalities such as Saint-Étienne were almost bankrupt, secondly, the pandemic led to changes in regulations monitoring local authorities' financing channels. Furthermore, Colworth (2021) explains that financial crisis caused the collapse of Dexia bank which was a critical financier of local governments in France. In South Africa, due to covid 19, local authorities were left at the mercy of government grants for financial assistance. According to Mungwari (2019) about four metropolitan municipalities in South Africa collected R4billion less and were owed about R230

billion. Furthermore, about R5 billion was used on covid-19 response measures as of December 2020. This follows that government regulations halted capital projects through lockdowns.

However, Mungwari (2019) comments that the local authorities' woes were eased by the global fund which injected about US\$ 12.3 million as of July 2021. In Nigeria, Otieno (2019) claims that financial inadequacy emanates from the hosting of Joint-Account by local governments and the state to the effect that local authority funds might be diverted for other purposes deemed major by the state to the detriment of service provision. In the Zimbabwean context, the situation appears to be different. While other countries enjoy global funds to ease financial woes faced by municipalities. In Zimbabwe, Zvarivadza (2021) alludes to the fact that sanctions imposed on the country has suffocated borrowing rights of the country from global institutions such as the IMF. Consequently, a shrink in the national fiscus has a ripple effect on the propensity of the central government to financially support local authorities. In this context, this study aims to investigate the impact of administration on its performance on the basis of inadequate financial support.

### **2.6.3 Autonomy**

In China, Richards (2018) comments that officials who administer local authorities hold office on the basis of how the local economy performs thus meritocracy to hold office is strongly hinged on economic performance. Thus, political loyalty also has a bearing in local governance in China. It is therefore in the Chinese context that the hand of politics is seen perforating the fabric of local governance though applauded to be based on merit. Seemingly in Kenya, Taruvinga (2022) claims that the Big Bang Devolution has necessitated decentralization of local government activities such that local communities substantially play a role in determining the type of development they want and have an integral role to play in the implementation of development projects with limited state interference. However, the situation might fail to mirror the Zimbabwean context. De Visser and Mapuva (2013) notes how the state through various statues and instruments has strongly immense itself in determining how local authorities are administered. For example, the approval of budgets, appointments and municipality developmental projects are solely in the hands of the central government through the MLG, whose minister is appointed by the president. It is therefore against this background of limited autonomy that this study intends to assess the impact of administration on the performance of local authorities using a case study of Mazowe RDC.

#### **2.6.4 Poor leadership**

Leadership as explained by Stoker (1998) is the ability to influence individuals or groups to behave in a manner that leads towards the accomplishment of set objectives. The qualities of leadership in local authority administration have argued to be largely determined by the mode of appointment thereof. According to Richards (2018), in United States of America, the Council-Mayor type of administrator is upheld because the city hires a manager to administer the various city departments. In this context, the principle of meritocracy and competence is strongly applied such that the candidate will be proficient enough to administer the city to great performance. In Zambia however, Chiweshe (2015) comments that councilors vote and choose a mayor who then becomes the figurehead of the council. This arrangement has been critiqued because the person is mainly selected on political lines and ability to convince other councilors rather than competence and resultant performance. Mungwari (2019) further avers that in Zambia, once elected to lead, the new government by Hakainde Hichilema has adopted policy reforms which has seen local authorities being mandated to report submit performance report such that administrators strive to ensure competence-based management systems. This has therefore seen a change in trajectory in local authority administration in Zambia anchored on performance. Narrowing down the Zimbabwean context, Mpofu (2018) argues there appears to be disparities in the enforcement of performance-based policies in local authority administration. While sound policies which underpin performance are existent, adherence to policy in the context of local governance has been diluted by political loyalty. Chigwata et al (2019) assert that councils belonging to the ruling party seem to be spared from the 'guillotine' of MLG expulsions and chastening despite perpetual administrative irregularities. This follows that opposing led councils have consequently experienced 'targeted' interventions which resulted in dismissals, suspensions and prosecution of council administrators. It is therefore based on this background of poor leadership supervision that this discussion seeks to interrogate the impact of administration on the performance of local authorities.

#### **2.6.5 Debt Management**

Debt management according to Simon (2014) are strategies implored by local authorities in a bid to recover what the organization is owed. Most local authorities have experienced operational challenges owing to debts owed. In European Countries such as Ireland, Spain, United Kingdom and Portugal, Hopkin and Kaufman (2019) affirm that they are bound by article 126 and 140 of

the Maastricht Treaty which articulates that general debt must not exceed 60% of gross domestic product. To that end, Blunt (2017) clarifies that the treaty underpins economic importance of management of budgets by local authorities since according to the unified methodology, local government debt adds into the national public debt. Erk (2014) states that in United Kingdom, the European Charter of Local Governance embeds the principle of financial self-determination which guarantees financial autonomy such that local municipalities are responsible for local finance sustainability and debt management. Thus Austin (2016) avers that in most developed states, most local governments have been successful in debt management owing to strategies implored. For example, through changing debt conditions by debt conversion, advance refunding, debt consolidation and compromise, local governments have been able to minimize the pervasiveness of debts.

In most African States, revenue debts have been noted to be problematic in most local authorities. For example, in South Africa, stresses that most municipalities have engaged strategies to reduce dependence on debt by ensuring tax policies contribute immensely in avoiding debt distress. Hall (2019) articulates how digitalization, rationalizing tax, combating tax evasion, dealing with corruption and effective tax administration have been the mainstay of local authority exceptional performance. However, in Zimbabwean context, Chakunda (2015) claims that debt management has proved to affect most local authority administration resulting in state intervention. To that end, Taruvinga (2022) critiques the timing and manner the state intervenes. For example, in 2013, the government through MLG scrapped rates owed to councils by residents without thorough consultations with local authorities. Mpfu (2018) declares that the decision caught most local authorities unprepared hence posed a challenge on administration as it had to impulsively respond to the new environment of uncertainty. It is thus against this background that this study intends to unpack the effects thereof on the ultimate performance of local authorities.

### **2.6.6 Corruption**

Corruption in the context of local authorities has been exacerbated by institutional capacities and other factors which compel individuals to opt for self-enrichment. Hall (2019) avers that the vice exposes the ineptitude of governance systems in local authority institutions. To that end, democratic institutions and the rule of law are eroded in the context of corruption. In view of the above, South Africa established the office of the Public Protector as a mechanism to ensure

corruption in public entities is reduced. This has seen numerous high-profile people such as the former President Zuma being asked to respond to allegation of Nkandla scandal. Furthermore, the office has also summoned the current President Ramaphosa to explain the Phala Phala Farm Gate scandal. However, the situation in Zimbabwe appears to fail to mirror the South African counterpart. Chigwata et al (2019) argues that since the creation of Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission, to date no single meaningful prosecution has taken place but corruption continues to be deeply entrenched in the various facets of systems of governance. Consequently, local authorities have not been spared. Mungwari (2019) is of the notion that at local authority level, corruption has been institutionalized such that there exists a network of syndicates that act corruptly to extort or alter procedures. In view of the above sentiments, this study become compelled to analyze how local authority administration affects its performance on the bedrock of corruption.

## **2.7 CONCLUSION**

The chapter explained the theoretical framework which was informed by the Chester Barnard's Systems Theory wherein themes such as cooperative system, system equilibrium, inducement-contribution, acceptance and organic knowledge formulated the bedrock of analysis of the area under study. The chapter further reviewed literature relating to the impact of local authority administration on its performance and conceptualized local authority administration, tenets of sound local authority administration, institutional frameworks for sound local authority performance and challenges faced by local authorities were discussed from the view point of various scholarly perceptions.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter will discuss the methodology and procedures to be harnessed in data collection on the impact of local authority administration of its performance using a case study of Mazowe Rural District Council (MRDC). The chapter will discuss research philosophy, research approach, research design, sampling and target population, data collection tools and procedure, data presentation and data analysis and it will outline the ethical considerations underpinning this study.

### **3.2 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY**

Research philosophy according to Babbie (2007) entails a system of assumptions and beliefs regarding the development of knowledge. The philosophy underpins this study is Epistemology which according to Neuman (2014) is based on establishing knowledge-based assumptions as to what constitutes valid, legitimate and acceptable knowledge as well as how the knowledge can best be communicated. Tracy (2013) advances that this type of research philosophy is best used to discover measurable and observable regularities and facts. To that end, the phenomenon observed would lead to the production of meaningful and credible data used to come up with generalizations. In this context, since the study intends to establish cause and effect relating to the local authority affects the performance of the whole organization, an interpretivist approach will be used to gain knowledge and understanding of administration phenomenon. In addition, epistemological principle of establishing knowledge relating to how administration can best come up with profound ways of enhancing performance of an organization.

### **3.3. RESEARCH APPROACH**

The study will use a qualitative research approach. Neuman (2014) asserts that qualitative approach has strength in understanding the insider's views on phenomenon henceforth the approach demands direct individual and regularly participatory contact. In agreement, Creswell (2003) affirms that qualitative approach relies on the gathering of qualitative data such as non-numerical data, for example, pictures and words. This would relevantly assist in this study since secondary data can be used to enrich data on the impact of administration on local authority performance. Additionally, qualitative research is used to pronounce what is seen locally and occasionally to come up with new theories. In this context, by interrogating the cause and effect of local authority administration on its performance, new knowledge is gained which can thus be used as a referral point towards the development of new theories relating to performance of local

authorities. The approach is used when knowledge about a certain phenomenon is still scarce or limited. In this context, since a large volume of literature dwelt mostly focused on urban local authorities, the need to unpack more knowledge on administrative impact on performance necessitates qualitative approach. Thus, from the definitions above, qualitative research can be understood to be a systematic inquiry which through participatory methods allows a researcher to gain in-depth understanding of a phenomenon in its natural setting. It is therefore on this basis that since the study aims to unpack the impact of local authority administration on its performance, a qualitative paradigm would be supreme in unravelling and interrogating cause and effect of various variables underpinning the study.

### **3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN**

This study will use an explanatory qualitative research design. A research design refers to the design for collection, analysis and measurement of data (Babbie 2007). In the same line of thought, Wildermuth and Zhang (2016) avers that it is conceptual structure wherein the research is carried out. Distilling from the above definitions, a research design can thus be understood to refer to a master plan for the intended methods, strategy and structure of research. An explanatory research design according to Neuman (2014) seeks to report and discover relationships amongst various aspects of phenomenon being studied. In agreement, Braun and Clarke (2006) comments that explanatory research searches for causes and reasons by providing supportive evidence and explanations regarding an area under study. This study will adopt an explanatory research design because it will help explain the ‘how and why’ aspect of the impact of local authority on its performance. In this context, the design will compel the study to identify and analyses the effect of various administrative factors and how they affect the performance of the local authorities.

A qualitative explanatory design using a case study is going to be used. A case study as explained by David (2013) is embedded in the qualitative paradigm. Gilber (2010) affirms that a case study is a practical inquiry that examines a phenomenon profoundly and within its real-life milieu. In a case study, the researcher brings together largescale information which is correlated to the study. Creswell (2003) maintains that the merit of using a case study is that the phenomenon can be studied in its natural background such that relevant understanding is expanded on the area being researched. In this context, the study will use a case study of Mazowe RDC to gain in-depth

understanding on the lived realities of how local authority administration can have an impact on the performance of the council.

### **3.5 SAMPLING AND TARGET POPULATION**

Sampling as explained by Noris (2004) is the method of selecting participants to participate in a study from the total population. The study will use non-probability sampling using purposive sampling. Gill and Robson (2010) explain that purposive sampling helps get a sample of respondents with exact characteristics therefore the targeted respondents will be easily accessed. Respondents for this study will be Chief Executive Officer for MRDC, Mazowe District Development Coordinator, MRDC general employees and MRDC middle level employees. The diversity of respondents buttresses the vitality of purpose sampling in the study because the researcher will target specific respondents who have key experience and knowledge on the area being studied. Such a targeted approach according to Babbie (2007) ensures data being collected is enriched, relevant and of high quality because key informants will be knowledgeable on the phenomenon being researched.

The study will also use convenience sampling. Creswell (2003) comments that in convenience sampling, respondents are selected on the basis of their availability. In this context, general employees at MRDC who will be available during the time of the focus group discussion will be engaged. However, Tracy (2013) argues respondents selected on the basis of convenient sampling might not have adequate knowledge on the area thus compromise credibility and quality of research findings. In this case, the study will further use judgmental sampling which according to David (2013) respondents are chosen at the discretion of the researcher judgement. In this context, Judgmental sampling according to Braun and Clarke (2006) enables the researcher to use his knowledge to choose respondents. Employees selected are likely to hold the essential knowledge regarding how local authority administration impact on the performance of councils because they are participants in the area under study.

The study targets 16 respondents. These are MRDC Chief executive officer, four middle level managers at MRDC, Mazowe District Development Officer, two members of MRDC Residents association and seven general employees at MRDC and one local councilor.

## **3.6 DATA COLLECTION TOOLS AND PROCEDURES**

Tracy (2013) comments that data collection is a procedure of retrieving data. Tools to be used by this study to gather data are; documentary search, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.

### **3.6.1 Documentary search**

Documentary search as explained by Norris (2004) involves the scrutinization of any form of printed material such as; texts, records and documents. Udo (2006) concurs affirming that one can easily track the sequential order of events which enriches research findings through enabling thorough explanations which will be detailed based on investigation through various sources of documentary search. Furthermore, Babbie (2007) confirms that the benefit of documentary search is in granting access to a variety of information that could have been problematic to obtain. Documentary search thus accords the researcher the opportunity to familiarise with the current, traditional and existing discourse on impact of local authority administration on its performance. It is on this basis that data obtained from documentary search will be used to strengthen primary data.

### **3.6.2 In-depth interviews**

According to Gill and Johnson (2010) in-depth interviews offer a face-to-face state wherein data is collected by asking probing questions as well as observing the way participants respond and react on issues related to the impact of local authority administration on its performance. This will be utmost in this type of study because face to face encounters permit quick feedback and instantaneous recording of data accordingly saving time. Neuman (2014) asserts that in depth interviews allow researchers to take note of signals from verbal and nonverbal cues. Since the study involves sensitive administrative issues, non-verbal cues will be of key importance for the researcher to note inward emotions from respondents. The non-verbal cues will compel the researcher to further probe in order to gain clarity on issues involving local authority performance. Furthermore, in-depth interviews as articulated by Neuma (2014) offer a chance for rephrasing of questions where respondents might intend to deliberately avoid certain questions. This will be ideal because respondents 'earmarked' for in depth interviews are high profile administrators hence they might deliberately attempt to avoid certain sensitive questions relating to the performance or

regarding administrative blunders they might have made. To that end, through face-to-face in-depth interviews, there will be room for the researcher to tactically rephrase questions until a response is obtained. For purposes of this study, the Chief Executive Officer of MRDC, the Mazowe District Development Coordinator, Middle Management comprising of departmental heads such as Finance Department, Social Service Department, Health and Human Resources are going to be engaged for in-depth interviews on issues relating to the impact of local authority administration on its performance.

### **3.6.3. Focus group discussions**

Tracy (2013) enunciates that, a focus group is a group discussion led by a facilitator used for gathering textual data from an assembly of participants on a particular topic. Babbie (2007) agrees stressing that focus group discussions are interviews steered to several respondents at the same time. The study will utilize this instrument because focus group discussions enable probing further when unclear responses are given to gain clarity and necessary specifications on seemingly vague responses or issues (Given 2008). The research instrument will also be used because it inspires respondents to enthusiastically participate sharing experiences and perceptions on issues related to how local authority administration affects the performance of the entity. If respondents are stimulated to participate as they share and narrate experiences collectively, this enriches the quality of data gathered because of varied depth, experiences and varied sources of data (Gilber, 2010).

Focus group discussions have a strength in providing a platform for respondents to jointly verify and expound ideas raised during the discussions. Since the study involves sensitive administrative issues, some respondents for fear of future ‘backlash’ might decide to falsify information. Thus, during group discussions, some respondents might easily note the anomaly and expediently correct it before it has captured by the researcher. This helps in ensuring data gather is high in validity and reliability. This is critical since this study is investigative in nature. Respondents through this research apparatus will cooperatively propose potential solutions to administrative problems recognized to be affecting local authority performance from the stand point of active participants in the area under study. Thus, solutions proposed are likely to be relevantly effective in diagnosing problems since they will be based on shared practical experiences of respondents and not just abstract ‘bookish’ presumptions. This helps in fortifying the soundness of the study to offer genuine and profound solutions based on practical experienced from active participants in the area

under study. To that end, the quality of data collected is highly enriched and relevantly applies to address what the study was set out to achieve. Mazowe Rural District Council general employees and members of MRDC residents' association will formulate the focus group discussion group.

### **3.7. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

Textual data is going to be presented using themes. Data gathered during this study is to be presented using thematic analysis. Norris (2004) asserts that, thematic analysis emphasizes on examining themes within data. Creswell (2003) agrees commenting that themes which arise reveal prevailing patterns which are then essential for analysis. Therefore, ideas and responses expose patterns that are recurrent and consistent, hence are considered critical and are noted for analysis. Research objectives and research questions are to be used to categorize data into themes

### **3.8 DATA ANALYSIS**

Babbie (2007) explains data analysis to be a subjective method of analyzing content of textual data through organized process of classifying themes. In the same line of thought, Gill and Robson (2010) declare that examination of data is done to comprehend data so that conclusions can be drawn in responding to research questions. In this context, data is therefore tabulated giving it meaning (Tracy 2013). The study will use process tracing technique to generate a viewpoint of causality. Since the study intends to unpack the correlation between administration and performance of local authority, process tracing will help expose the cause and effect of the two variables. This type is ultimate because the superiority of evidence is not judged by the sample size but rather by the observed evidence (Creswell 2003). Through content analysis, the study will gather fragments of systematic and consistent textual data to draw explanations regarding the impact of local authority administration on its performance.

#### **3.7.1 Thematic analysis**

Norris (2004) asserts that thematic analysis is a “method for analyzing, identifying and reporting patterns within data”. Data assembled from focus group discussions and in-depth interviews will be subjected to thematic analysis. Since data attained from focus group discussions is verbal, it will be expressed in written form to be able to thematically analyze it. Distinct ideas originating from focus group discussion and in-depth interviews will be coded for easy identification of vital

themes emerging. Braun and Clarke (2006) declare that thematic analysis is flexible to diverse theoretical frameworks, thus allows for comprehensive and rich description of data.

### **3.7.2 Content analysis**

Gilber (2010) content analysis can be elucidated as a data analysis method for reviewing documents to scrutinize systematic patterns in communication. In agreement, Creswell (2003) avers that content analysis is used to make inferences by interpreting textual material which include oral documents, communication and graphics. Hence, content analysis encompasses systematically appraising textual material. Given (2008) is of the view that by using content analysis, linkages of themes, interactions, words and concepts can be summarized to give a thorough evaluation. Accordingly, this increases the value and depth of data in an area being studied. However, Norris (1997) contends that content analysis can be compromised due to the fact that documents are prone to bias. Thus, documents need to be exposed to thorough scrutiny and examination. Furthermore, numerous sources will be used to show consistencies and contradictions in the data collected.

## **3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION**

Neuman (2014) explains that research principles are moral observances that researchers should follow in conducting and reporting their studies. The study will prioritize protecting the rights of respondents, their privacy and sensitive information will not be divulged. This will be done by keeping their anonymity and privacy sheltered through use of pseudonyms. Once respondents feel their privacy and sensitive information is secure, they are most likely going to freely to divulge apparently personal and private insights relevant to the study without fear of future repercussions.

Access from gate keeper will be sought before conducting the study. Permission will be hunted from the MLG which is the parent ministry in charge of local authorities in Zimbabwe. This will empower respondents to easily contribute without anxiety of victimization. Furthermore, permission from gate keeper will validate the study to be non-injurious since it will have been authorized the MLG. Permission from the gate keeper will induce a zeal in respondents to be eager to participate the study with keen interest so that their contributions will be ‘heard’ and considered at the ‘apex’ of decision making with regards to how best local authority administration can improve the performance of the organization.

The study will seek informed consent from respondents. This will be done by introducing and explaining the mandate of the study so that respondents will be in the picture of real objective of study. Wildermuth and Zhang (2016) brings to light the fact that if respondents understand the purpose of the study, they will knowingly and decisively decide to either take part or reject to take participate in the study, a principle embedded in the best practice of ethical considerations in research (Neuman, 2014). Informed consent will avoid the researcher being sued by respondents for having forced them to participate in the study without their full knowledge and approval. Furthermore, participants by virtue of acquiring their informed consent, will scrap away any skepticism relating to the purpose and intentions of the study such as being misinterpreted to be for political resolves. Thus, respondents will decisively contribute relevantly since they will be cognizant to the purpose of the study. Informed consent will also make respondents offer to partake in the study out of interest to contributing towards issues affecting them.

### **3.9 CONCLUSION**

This chapter explained the research methodology of the study. Discussions revolved around research philosophy, research approach, research design, sampling and target population, data collection tools and procedure, data presentation and data analysis and the ethical considerations underpinning this study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter will focus on data presentation and analysis of research findings. The chapter intends to accomplish the following objectives;

- ❖ To analyse how local authority administration affect the performance of local authority;
- ❖ Examine administration challenges affecting the performance of local authority;

- ❖ Evaluate the effectiveness of institutional frameworks on ensuring efficient and effective local authority performance.
- ❖ proffer solutions to administration challenges affecting local authority performance.

Themes which arose from findings are to be presented and analysed. Pseudonyms will be used to protect the identity and confidentiality of respondents.

## 4.2 RESPONSE RATE

### 4.2.2 In -depth Interviews

The response rate from in-depth interviews was 83%, as indicated by Babbie (2007), such response rate supports in data analysis as it has high validity and reliability. The study conducted in-depth interviews for MRDC CEO, Mazowe District Development Coordinator, MRDC General managers who include; Finance manager, Human Resources Manager, Community Services Manager and Health Services Manager.

Table 4.2: Response rate of respondents to in-depth interviews

TARGETTED INTERVIEWS	ACTUAL INTERVIEWS	RESPONSE RATE
6	5	83%

Source: Fieldwork

### 4.2.3 Focus group discussions

The study intended to engage seven MRDC general employees, two members from the MRDC Residents Association and one local councillor constituting 10 respondents for focus group discussion. There was 100% attendance, all respondents managed to attend the session and the high response rate contributes to high reliability of findings. Furthermore, analysis of data gathered from the two research instruments will support in improving soundness of data since it stemmed from diverse sources through different research instruments.

## 4.3 RESEARCH FINDINGS

### 4.3.1 Factors affecting local authority performance

Most respondents agreed that the major factor hindering local authority performance was corruption. This was echoed by Mai Karasa who expressed concern over the way the CEO was personally involved in the parcelling out of stands. One of the managers interviewed acknowledged that the CEO had actually turned the local authority into a ‘tuckshop’ administered through illicit deals. This according to one of the general employees had robbed the council of huge sums of revenue since the money is pocketed by a few individuals at the expense of the council. However, Mr James, a member of the resident’s association explained that corruption at MRDC had become institutionalised such that it was not only administrators involved but even the general workers. Chiedza, one of the respondents actually detailed how council officials would demand ‘kick backs’ so that those residents who owe council rates would not have their water disconnected. To that end, one of the council workers actually conformed the mishap justifying that the economic environment had become so hostile such that in order to survive, employees had to resort to corruption to cushion themselves from the volatile economic milieu. Such tendencies as lamented by one of the administrators were highly contributing to the underperformance of the entity. This underperformance on the bedrock of corruption as alluded to by a government representative was a collective responsibility of both the citizens and the council staff who are being involved in the illicit conduct. Thus, based on the findings, corruption was noted as a chief factor affecting the performance of the public entity.

Most respondents lamented poor revenue collection as a contributing factor to the demise of local authority performance. One of the managers commented that the residents have not been forthcoming in terms of owning up to the payments of rates as such the council is operating under very strenuous and limited fiscal space. In agreement, a member of the resident’s association claimed that despite council engaging residents through awareness campaigns and debt collectors, response from residents has not been fruitful. One of the employees, Nyathi however stressed that the reason residents have been ‘holding back’ rate payment is emanating from an element of mistrust between council management and residents. To that end, Susan had this to say:

*Honestly how do you expect residents who have gone for months without water*

*and sewer is flowing in their homes to pay rates when council officials seem not to care. Residents in part of Ruyanga have not had water for almost two months but they keep receiving bills, its day light robbery.*

One of the managers however explained that residents ought to understand that regardless of availability of water, they are bound to pay for other components of rates such as refuse collection. Mrs Kativhu was of the view that what irked residents most was the fact that council procured top flight vehicles for management at the backdrop of deteriorating service delivery characterised by water cuts and archaic sewer system which continually burst. One of the managers clarified that the challenge of the sewer system is that it is now old requires complete overhaul, efforts to revamp the system has already begun but is being hindered by lack of adequate funds. Residents thus need to be patient and collectively play their part by paying what they owe to council. With regards to water cuts, one of the managers explained that water rationing is a national catastrophe and not a preserve of Mazowe RDC alone, this is due to below average rains experienced such that council is encouraging residents to use the little water sparingly and to own up to their duty of paying rates so that council can have the funds to embark on projects such as renovating infrastructure and the sewer system. Thus, poor revenue collection was noted as another factor affecting the performance of local authority.

Mr X who is one of the managers expressed concern over the continued interference by politicians in the administration of the council such that major investors have been stalled because of political perceptions. In the same line of thought, Mr James, one of the employees bemoaned how politicians in council meetings would frequently allude to their party manifesto in a bid to ‘coin’ and circumvent council projects to sound like party projects for political mileage. One of the managers alluded to how the Chombo declaration of scrapping council rates owed affected the local authority revenue and the impact of such a declaration has resulted in residents defaulting paying rates with the view that come election time, government will come to their rescue by scrapping arrears.

Most respondents concurred that such external influence on the backdrop of politics has resulted in areas such as Gweshe previously dominated by opposition party to lag behind in terms of development due to political backlash. Council projects are highly concentrated in wards which

resoundingly voted for the ruling party such that some areas have since been neglected because they are considered political misfits. One of the employees explained that instructions cascade from the party through the councillors and whenever meetings are conducted, members from the president's office attend as well as the District Development Coordinator, therefore, decisions relating to development are heavily biased towards wards which are deemed 'pro' ruling party. To that end, one of the managers claimed that council has lost objectivity in its quest to fulfil its mandate because as management they are no longer in control of the local authority as they rely on external players either to approve or decide which project goes where and who gets to officiate.

Betha, one of the employees grieved how the local authority has been totally submerged in a political web such that politicians are now 'ruling the roost' at the institution. In the same line of thought, Chiedza commented that the CEO has been able to get away with various crimes because of his inclination to political bigwigs from the ruling party. As such, for protection, he directs developmental projects to wards and areas determined by politicians. Thus, such a nexus between politicians and council administrators has resulted in skewed and impartiality in terms of propagation of development in Mazowe RDC. It is thus against this background that external influence was noted to be a factor affecting the performance of Mazowe RDC.

Most respondents alluded to leadership style as another factor affecting the performance of the local authority. The autocratic style by the executive was noted by most respondents to be too dictatorial for employees. However, the top-level administrators due to the 'do as I say not as I do' approach have caused a myriad of inconsistent behaviours resulting in general employees following suit. One of the middle level managers made reference to indecorous behaviour considered unbecoming of top council administrators to be fuelling challenges at the local authority. Mutinha, one of the council employees affirmed that it was prudent for leaders to 'walk the talk' in terms of the need to uphold organisational values. However, through scandals which have rocked the council, respondents felt top administrators have failed to be exemplary in their leadership styles. One of the employees testified how most employees have resorted to corruption and other illicit deals at the institution because their bosses are 'milking' the organisation through irregular tender procedures and stand allocation.

A member of the resident's association grieved how the image of the institution had been brought to disrepute owing to mounting scandals which have gone viral perpetrated by top administrators

at the local authority. Resultantly, actions by top management have had ripple effects on the way general employees behave. A middle level manager expressed concern over the way employees are disregarding the values because they feel if managers are doing it, why can they also not do it. One of the employees openly narrated how they extort money from residents to illegally connect water, sell council gadgets to clients when repairing fault burst water or sewer. Furthermore, employees from the housing department have equally not been spared. Ruzvidzo claims that they have resorted to deliberate double allocation of stands so that they cheat the system to get extra money resonating actions being done by top management of the council. In that context, leadership approach has been castigated by most respondents for failing to positively inspire employees to uphold the organisational values thus affect the performance of the entity

Most respondents further agreed that internal conflicts at the local authority are affecting the performance of the organisation. Mai Karasa expressed concern over the manner in which tensions at the local authority have been published through various media platforms. The lack of adherence to a laid down conflict resolution strategy has resulted in members flocking to the various public media platforms to unearth allegations and scandals relating to council administration. Mr James reiterated that intra-conflicts have culminated in the creation of divisions and faction at the work place such that some belong to administrator X while some belong to administrator Y. This according to one of the managers has resulted in some members refusing to take orders from particular members considered belonging to the other faction.

Paul professed how employees have lacked cohesion and collectivity in the promulgation of their various duties as they strive towards attainment of the broader organisational vision and mission. He had this to say:

*Our council is highly divided and employees are attached to various factions which are well known. This has resulted in some members disregarding certain supervisors who belong to certain faction. Furthermore, in a bid to discredit one another, members resort to public media platforms to spread accusations and allegations which end up tarnishing the image of our local council.*

Mrs Kativhu made reference to how the CEO was heavily publicised in various social media platforms for scandals involving stands. The scam according to one of the employees resulted in the finance committee instructing the CEO to reimburse money he individually authorised from Round Tables without following proper procedures. The CEO did not heed the recommendations from the finance committee and internal conflicts are brewing at the local authority thus affecting the performance of the local authority through divisions.

Another employee concurred echoing that;

*as employees, we no longer understand whom to follow anymore, one supervisor says this, the next moment another one comes and issues directives contrary to the other supervisor. It's like a battle of supremacy which creates a lot of confusion amongst employees and at the end of the day, production is inhibited.*

It is thus against this background that internal conflicts are affecting the performance of the local authority.

Most employees were of the view that the issue of remuneration has drastically affected commitment of employees to the organisation. According to Nyathi, salary existent salary disparities with other colleagues are way far-fetched. One of the managers explained salaries are determined by various factors which include experience, education qualifications and the salary grade in which an employee belongs. However, employees expressed concerned over the margin of difference stressing that general employees feel highly neglected yet they do all the critical hands-on work for the council. In addition, some employees felt let down by council administrators who despite owing employees some salaries, they bought themselves top of the range vehicles. Mr James felt administrators prioritise were 'hurting' the ordinary employee who then become demotivated to work. Consequently, Betha highlighted that such gross selfishness by council administrators resultantly forces employees to engage in illicit shenanigans such as corruption in order to compensate meagre salaries so that they can earn a living. To that end, low remuneration was articulated to be a factor affecting performance of Mazowe RDC.

#### **4.3.2 How the factors are affecting local authority performance?**

Respondents agreed that corruption had a negative dent on the image and performance of the entity. One of the managers affirmed that the council had failed to attract meaningful players and stakeholders due to the publicised corrupt tendencies of Mazowe RDC top officials. Reference was thus made of Muzarabani RDC and Mbire RDC where the districts are experiencing massive boom in investment from external players largely due their stance in upholding values such as transparency, accountability and integrity. One of the employees had this to say:

*Mbire RDC is just a newly established district as compared to ours, but we have been out-paced in development because the CEO there is stern on transparency and professionalism. Look at the way the gas project has been used to propel development in their district. Mbire now boasts of very good road networks. We have vast mineral gold resources here but is corruptly being looted with little benefit to our local community.*

Thus, corruption according to most *respondents* is causing the council to lose substantial investment from serious stakeholders. Furthermore, Mai Karasa protested that through corrupt tendencies, only a few individuals are benefiting at the expense of the council and the community at large. To that end, most employees are being demotivated because they also want a ‘share of the cake’ One of the employees claimed that they have resorted to engaging private repairs of water and sewer so that they can earn extra cash. One of the managers however complained that the private repairs being done have resulted in protests from residents because they are improperly done by council employees some who even lack plumbing expertise. Another manager claimed it is difficult to control such illegal practises because top bosses are being openly corrupt and employees are not receiving their meagre salaries. Resultantly, employees feel they have a leeway of getting extra cash to compliment insufficient salaries but however they compromise the integrity and competence of the council through ‘half-baked’ unsanctioned and unsupervised work.

Lack of adequate resources according to one of the employees had resulted in the council halting many planned developmental projects. One of the managers revealed that the council had intended

to revamp road network and water system but all had been affected by lack of adequate funds. However, a member of the resident's association questioned why the council had failed to effectively utilize devolutions funds as is being done by other districts. A government representative further stressed that devolution funds were rolled by government so that entities such rural district councils can collectively get to identify, plan and implement development within the context of their chosen jurisdiction. To that end, he clarified that government was very particular about how the funds are being spent commenting that a team of auditors were 'globe-trotting' councils with a view to establish if the funds were utilised properly.

Lack of autonomy as reflected by most respondents had resulted in 'foreign decisions' being made which are completely detached from real lived experiences of the community of Mazowe. A member of the resident's association lamented how many residents were evicted to pave way for the former first family projects in the district. Mrs Kativhu further proclaimed that the school was never a priority for the community, water and accommodation were critical areas which needed redress but however many people got displaced for the construction of that school. She bemoaned how their children are not benefitting from the project because of exorbitant prices charged at the school. As such, one of the employees claims from the eyes of residents, the council due to interference from political muscle, it has failed to represent the interest of the community. Ruzvidzo avers that that is also another contributing factor of mistrust and animosity between council and residents. Residents no longer trust the council administrators as shown by the demonstrations held in a bid to oust the current CEO.

Susan felt that interference by external players has also resulted in the council top officials being protected from litigation amid abuse of office. She claims failure for justice to take its course has exacerbated corporate malfeasance at the council hence the council has lost a lot of revenue and potential investment because culprits at council have established a network of organised looting which even involves top government officials and influential politicians. One of the employees brought to light the fact that many mines in the district have been grabbed by relatives and children from the executive with the blessings of the CEO and his administrators. Henceforth, the CEO becomes 'untouchable' in the context of illicit deals 'drowning' the council into collapse. What irks residents most according to Mr James is the fact that despite the district being highly endowed with the precious mineral, the council is failing to tap the resources to benefit the district because

major decision cascade from the external players who have ‘captured’ the administration of the local authority thus poor service delivery.

Most respondents concurred that leaders at the local authority had failed to ‘walk the talk’ in being exemplary and upholding the institution values. Mutinha claimed rampant misdemeanours by council general employees is stemming from the fact that top management openly violate council values. As such, employees become negatively inspired to walk in the footprints of their leaders thus have transformed the entity into a repository of illegitimate pacts. One of the employees stressed that they deliberately delay or divert clients who bring reports so that they ‘nicodemously’ attend to them after hours and syphon money for their personal use. This according to one of the managers has had backlash on the image of the council because work done secretly is being done by incompetent personnel and is not being supervised. Resultantly problems keep recurring and the same residents complain that council is ineffective yet they are the ones promoting the mischiefs. Chiedza had this to say;

*Imagine the CEO personally approving an organisation Round Table to deposit*

*money in the council coffers without following due procedures and personally allocating stands to the same company. How then would you expect ordinary employees to be professional in their approach.*

Thus, in the context of leadership style and approach, most residents felt poor performance was being driven by lack of astute and positive administrative guidance and inspiration to influence employees towards the attainment of set objectives hence the alleged poor service delivery by the local authority.

Respondents further noted internal conflicts to have caused divisions at the organisation such that Mr James observed how some employees would resist certain orders from managers in preference of certain managers. Resultantly this according to Paul has given birth to anarchy and despondency amongst council employees such that even supervision has been compromised. Mutinha relates how some employees belonging a predominant faction would openly scorn supervisors from another pact because they know nothing can be done since the ‘buck stops’ at their boss who always defends them. Thus, Betha claims employees owing to divisions have failed to collectively

work towards accomplishment of a common goal and these fissures emanate from the apex of council administration resulting in under performance by the local authority.

Most departmental managers felt bureaucratic impediments were affecting speedy implementation of developmental programs by the council. One of the managers affirmed that the existent chain of command meant critical decisions adopted a top-down approach. Thus, at times the structure of command would delay council processes as decisions take longer than necessary to be made or get approval. Mai Karasa details how the Mukombachoto-Gurenje Community Water Project almost failed to kick-start simply because MLG was finalising on modalities relating to its commissioning. To that end, respondents viewed bureaucratic challenges to be impeding the performance of the local authority.

Some employees questioned the appointment of some of the members who constituted council administration. Councillors according to Susan were chosen on a political voting system as such some of the councillors lack slightest knowledge on community development and management skills. This ignorance according to Mrs Kativhu results in the council top administrators taking advantage by imposing and unduly influencing councillors to approve certain decisions which are counter-productive to the community but benefit only a few individuals. Furthermore, Nyathi protested how the CEO and other administrative officials from the MLG such as the District Development Coordinator are appointed by the Minister whom himself was appointed on a political ticket. Thus, Paul avers that the appointment system is structured in a way that ensures certain political party ideologies find their way into local authorities and are implemented for political mileage rather than for the betterment of the community at large.

In the same vein, one of the managers grieved how political affiliation instead of merit is informing appointment within the administrative structure of the local authority. The manager brought to light how the invisible hand of the Minister would influence who gets to be in the board which supervises performance by local authorities. Furthermore, the minister is the one who can at any time fire council administrators. In addition, the role of the Minister of State for Provincial Affairs, another political appointee, being the chair of development council, which constitutes all the local authorities in the province would buttress and support political loyalists at the expense of sound local authority administration. This according to most respondents is the reason why Mazowe RDC top officials relentlessly violate principles and values of public administration and seem to have

‘atomic barricades’ which protect them from prosecution while service delivery plummets into a deep chasm of mediocrity.

#### **4.3.3 Evaluation of institutional frameworks for ensuring sound local authority administration.**

The human resources department according to a government representative was failing to come up with strategies to ensure a performance-based approach. According to one of the employees, they deliberately delay performing given tasks with a view of performing them after working hours so that they personally charge clients for their services. One of the members of the resident’s association echoed that residents have resorted to hiring council employees for services because the formal channel takes very long and at times met with no response at all. Thus by hiring council employees, they quickly respond and render services expediently though at a cost. To that end, some of the managers felt assessment of employee performance should be rigorous and performance based. One of the managers reiterated that;

*If employees know that at the end of a review period, they have to account for their performance, this would compel them to work effectively so that they meet expected targets set. That way, such unnecessary delays will be curtailed as race to meet set targets.*

However, some employees felt a target-based performance management system would be disadvantageous to employees since there are some factors beyond the control of employees which might deter employees to meet the set targets. This was however critiqued by Betha who claimed if council does not avail machinery in time, then an employee fails to meet given targets, who then will have to account for that? A senior employee at the council however interjected and clarified that there is a section in the performance management system which allows for projected variance such that despite such set backs as resources, employees have an agreed target frame which they have to accomplish. Another employee stressed that they do not understand the precepts embedded in the performance management document, they just copy and paste information from previous performance periods and submit without thoroughly understanding what they are committing to.

Even if they try seek explanation from their supervisors, they seem to be ‘sailing in the same boat’ of confusion regarding the management approach.

Respondents particularly middle level managers felt the administrative structures posed bureaucratic challenges in terms of decision making. One of the managers felt that the Ministry of Local Government represented by the District Development Coordinator at times would delay critical council processes such as budget approval at the detriment of development. Mr James further echoed that staff from the MLG are already loaded with other government obligations such that they tend to lack an appreciation of the expediency demanded by council issues. To that end, the ‘snail pace’ relating to decision making as decisions are further referred up the administrative strata of MLG thus delay implementation of developmental projects by the local authority.

However, a government representative vehemently uttered that due diligence was imperative at the expense of speed. Administrative structures were put in place by the government to ensure local authorities operate professionally and in the best interest of the public. Henceforth, structures are vital in analysing, perfecting and proffering recommendations to assist local authorities perform better.

Mai Karasa felt that the Local Government Board and other external institutions were a huge set back to the performance of the local authority due to their continued interference in council affairs. One of the managers at the council protested that lack of autonomy at the council had resulted in managers failing to make critical decisions since their considerations can be easily rescinded either by MLG officials or politicians. With reference to lack of autonomy, Mutinha had this to say:

*What is surprising is that we the people on the ground we better understand*

*decisions that get to drive a people-oriented development. However, other people completely detached from the lived experiences of people in Mazowe just get to accept or reject our proposed action plans. The system really needs to be cross-examined to allow local authorities the much-needed autonomy.*

In the same line of thought, Susan questioned the effectiveness of the Local Government Board mandated to supervise local authority administrators but the continued breach of regulations

through corruption and procurement irregularities at Mazowe RDC have gone unpunished. Mr James questioned why despite numerous allegations of abuse of office by the CEO, the local government board seems to be numb and not taking any meaningful action, even to launch an investigation as it is mandated to do. Nyathi however clamoured that the reason why nothing happens to the CEO is because he is considered a ‘sacred cow’ because of council favours he gives to both government and political bigwigs. Resultantly, most respondents felt that as long as the MLG continues to ignore calls for thorough investigations at the council, abuse of office is perpetuated unabated much to the demise of performance by the local authority.

The appointment of those people who man the oversight institutions for local authorities was highly critiqued by Betha. She revealed that the Minister of Local Government in consultation with the executive appoint members to the board as well as District Development Coordinators who supervise and monitor performance of local authorities. The Minister himself is appointed on a political ‘ticket’ by the president therefore his appointees are largely informed by political bias than by merit. Furthermore, Susan added that the inclusion of councillors who by virtue of being politician further reinforce politics of patronage in the administration of the council. Paul hinted that the majority of councillors in Mazowe District belong to one dominant party as such there exist a deliberate structural chain smeared to drive political renditions from the Minister, top MLG officials, various administrative institutions run by people appointed by politicians right to the council CEO himself whose appointment is endorsed by the minister. To that end, most respondents expressed lack of objectivity and merit in people appointed to administer and supervise local authorities hence the existence of corrupt ‘cronyism’ to facilitate the milking of public resources and protection of culprits by those who yield power

Most respondents protested absence of adequate resources for the effective performance of the local authority. One of the departmental managers echoed that most projects had suffered still birth due to lack of resources such as finance and equipment. This was also raised by most general employees who lamented how they had gone for months without receiving their salaries. One of the managers clarified that the council was broke and negotiated with workers union representatives to settle salary arrears by giving employees residential stands. One of the employees however claimed that council was playing ‘cat and mouse’ games with employees because top management is receiving their dues and procuring top of the range vehicles while

employees are owed salaries. This according to Betha demotivates employees. Furthermore, the council does not have enough vehicles to effectively operate. Another employee brought to light the fact that council officials deliberately object to procure machinery such as earth-movers so that they hire from their syndicate companies and get kickbacks.

Respondents affirmed the financial framework lacked viability in sustaining effective performance on the bedrock of the current inflationary trajectory. Mr James reiterated that; the council had struggled to recover from the government directive to scrap rates owed. The pronouncement had left deep chasm of debt and almost led to financial insolvency of the entity. Despite various efforts to encourage rate payers to commit to their dues, residents have become complacent and reluctant because they believe with the impending 2023 elections, government is going to come to their aid again. As a result, the council's financial woes are affecting various facets of its intended action plans.

Most departmental managers applauded the adoption of ease-of -doing business approach by Mazowe RDC through embracing technology to enhance operational efficiency. According to one of the managers, the council had previously used the manual billing system and it was tedious and continuously met with mistakes which resulted in most residents complaining about inconsistencies regarding the system. However, with the adoption of technology, speed and accuracy has been perfected such that complains and queries from residents have been minimal. However, most general employees though they appreciated the change, they stressed implementation of the change was too radical and spontaneous such that they were caught 'ill-prepared'. Nyathi complained that most employees are still not well versed with ICT skills to be fully competent with technology thus it is still hectic and strenuous to 'fit' in and effectively perform under the new 'modus operandi.'

#### **4.3.4 What has been done and how effective are the measures?**

One of the departmental managers claims that council had roped in debt collectors in a bid to recover money owed through rates. However, a member of the resident's association protested engagement of debt collectors citing that council ought to have come up with strategies that foster positive response by residents instead of leaving them at the whims of debt collectors. Mai Karasa revealed that most residents who failed to own up was because of harsh economic conditions prevailing thus there was need for a collective payment plan between council and residents.

Mutinha also observed that debt collectors attached properties of many residents and this resulted in residents losing trust and confidence in the administrators of their council. That perception by residents that council does not understand their concerns resulted in residents ganging up demonstrating at council offices calling for the ouster of the CEO. To that end, one of the managers retorted that despite challenges with residents, debt collectors managed to recover a substantial amount but however their engagement had a cost dent on the council which the manager felt could have been avoided had the authority through members of the resident' association engaged residents for a sound and flexible payment plan which could have amicably resolved the situation without further straining relations between residents and council administrators.

The council had engaged external security agents to deal with corruption. One of the managers explained that council together with members from the police force had jointly engaged awareness campaigns to sensitize residents on the ills of corruption as well as how residents should join hands in the fight against corruption. However, one of the general employees castigated the strategy as a sheer waste of time because police officers in Mazowe have a history of being corrupt as noted by the way they raid illegal gold panners in Mazowe and extort money from them, as such engaging police officers alone according to most respondents was not enough to effectively deal with the corruption at the local authority.

Most respondents felt adoption of technology had made positive strides in enhancing operation efficiency. One of the employees affirmed that technology had greatly improved speed and accuracy such that client queries over double stand allocation and billing had been reduced. One of the managers also appreciated the change to be in line with modern ways of doing business commenting that even supervision had been made easy such that by the click of a button, managers could easily access various files to assist them in fulfilling their mandate. Accounting packages now being used improved transparency and accountability since every cent can easily be traced and accounted for by the department. However, another employee bemoaned how some members are still not yet competent enough to operate ICT gadgets as such the skills gap is compromising performance since they seem to take longer than necessary to complete tasks as they regularly consult and correct mistakes. Mrs Kativhu commented that employees who lacked ICT skills are having great challenges fitting in the new system because of computer illiteracy.

A grievance handling procedure has been developed by management and employees have since been conscientized on how to handle conflicts at the organisation. The document on conflict handling procedure had been distributed to various departments so that members would know how to deal with conflicts without jeopardising the integrity of the organisation echoed one of the managers. Mutinha welcomed the move hoping that it would assist solve the mounting divisions that have rocked the council. However, Mr James expressed the need for managers to lead by example in adopting laid down measures of dealing with conflicts reiterating the popular adage:

*Peace begins with me; peace begins with you and peace begins with all of us*

A collective positive approach regarding conflict handling was necessary for the success of bringing unity at the local authority said a member of the resident's association. But Susan idealised that council administrators had drafted the policy on conflict handling with minimum involvement of employees. As such she felt employees feel short-changed and segregated on such issues which affects them hence felt there was need to consult employees so that the policy would be easily understood and acceptable by employees because it would bear their imprints.

#### **4.3.5 What can be done to alleviate the challenges?**

Most respondents concurred that council needed to craft heavy deterrent measures for corrupt individuals at the entity. Nyathi affirmed that as long as there are no stiff penalties, corruption will continue. In the same line of thought, one of the managers articulated how some local authorities have established a financial intelligence department whose mandate is to carry out internal investigations on the conduct of employee in order to ensure vices such as corruption are quickly detected and appropriate action is taken.

Another employee stressed the need for periodic lifestyle audit to be conducted. Ruzvidzo expressed shock at the lavish life style lived by some general employees some who he said were even owning more than two cars which do not match the salaries they are receiving at the local council. Mai Karasa further questioned the lavish life style of some of the managers to be emanating from shady deals done at the company hence necessitates a life style audit so that they get to account how they managed to amass such wealth when council is struggling to pay them.

Relating to poor revenue collection, Chiedza proposed adoption of a meter system which mirrors that of ZESA whereby clients pay for water they will consume per month, once they have used it

up, the system automatically shuts the water until another payment is effected. One of the managers embraced the idea but claimed the project required substantial funds which at the moment were very limited at the council. Mrs Kativhu was of the opinion that administrators should regularly engage residents through sensitisation campaigns and budget consultation and take that opportunity to educate citizens on the importance of settling their debts. Most respondents concurred stressing that some residents refrain from paying rates out of ignorance thus such council-residents' engagements would enlighten the community that once their local authority has financial 'muscle', development projects can be spearheaded with limited challenges much to improved service delivery in the district.

Respondents pronounced the need for motivation of workers. Mr James claimed motivation through meaningful remuneration would be ideal. Another employee, Susan averred that what was required was not just a salary raise, but a meaningful remuneration reasonable enough to motivate and cushion employees from the dire economic woes. Betha had this to say;

*The allowances we are currently receiving are insignificant and have failed to make the intended impact, that is, to cultivate commitment. So, council needs to evaluate remuneration in a rational way considering the poverty datum line.*

Respondents further underscored training and development to redress skills gap. Paul testified that the skills gap existent makes training and development an urgent priority. Nyathi highlighted leadership complexities to be solved if council top managers could be sent to attend leadership and management refresher courses so that they become reinvigorated with trending and contemporary leadership styles which will help improve the way the council is being guided to ensure a competitive advantage. In the same line of thought, Ruzvidzo weighed in commenting that training and development in the context of improving the skills competences should never be a pre-requisite of administrators alone but ought to be inclusive of all employees. He made reference to technological changes at the institution to have necessitated council administrators to facilitate workshops so that employees would receive requisite ICT skills to perform competitively.

Most respondents advocated for the need to outsource recruitment from private entities to ensure impartiality and objectivity in the process. According to Chiedza, private recruitment agencies would ensure rightful candidates with requisite qualifications occupy appropriate positions thus

they would perform effectively. A member of the resident's association also reiterated that people recruited ought to have proven track record of competence so that the local authority is assured the incumbent will bring innovative ideas which will help transform the performance of the local authority.

#### **4.4 ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS**

##### **4.4.1 Factors affecting the performance of local authorities**

Findings from the study revealed that local authority administration was marred with a plethora of challenges that were affecting its ultimate performance. Chief among them was corruption. Most respondents felt corruption was being exacerbated by the economic woes being experienced by employees under the backdrop of mounting salary arrears by the local authority. This was explained by the Systems Theory's concept of organic knowledge wherein external forces from the environment have the propensity to alter people's behaviour. Stoker (1998) reinforces that within an organisation, members are exerted to external pressure which compels them to learn and come up with means to ease the pressure. Such actions might be legitimate or illegitimate. Resultantly, as employees struggle to find means to an end, Chester Barnard informs that patterns of behaviour which are distinct emerge. In this context, Taruvinga (2022) asserts that the prevailing VUCA environment in Zimbabwe has triggered corporate malpractice as employees seek to free themselves from the yoke of economic bondage through vices such as corruption. Most respondents alluded to the fact that corruption impeded performance because it short-changed the entity of funds which would have been diverted by council officials for their personal gains. Furthermore, corruption was unveiled to lead to half-baked projects which would not be supervised by experts from the local authority. Consequently, this would lead to client dissatisfaction thereby tarnishing the image of the entity. DeVisser and Mapuva (2013) inform that malpractice within local authorities have had a negative dent on the entire spectrum of effective performance by deterring investment which will mean local authorities would have denied themselves 'extra financial assistance' from external players. To that end, Richards (2018) buttresses explaining that local authorities will thus be overburdened by single-handedly having to meet various service provision demands which would have been made easier by virtue of having external players on board. It is thus against this backdrop that Chigwata, Marumahoko and Madhekeni (2019) reiterate the vitality of local authorities to instigate mechanisms of instilling corporate values such as

transparency and integrity to minimise corporate malfeasance. In the same line of thought, Wekwete (2015) upholds that transparency helps invigorate trust between local authority administrators and other critical stakeholders. To that end, corruption was unveiled as one of the factors affecting local authority performance.

The study revealed lack of autonomy to be inhibiting the performance of local authorities. Respondents alluded to various external players such as MLG, politicians and even some members from the security sector to be using their influence to ‘arm-twist’ decisions at the entity. Interference as was alluded by most respondents caused administrators to lose objectivity in fulfilling their mandate hence poor performance by the local authority. Chirisa and Jonga (2009) affirm that autonomy underpins administration to specifically focus on meeting explicit needs of their communities without unwarranted peripheral influence. According to the Systems Theory’s concept of system equilibrium, external influence results in an organisation having to alter its premeditated course of action in a bid to accommodate environmental factors, in doing so, Chester Barnard stresses that it leads to disequilibrium within the organisation through frustration or burn-out. To that end, most employees revealed how they were demotivated by the continued political interference such that administrators at the local authority were having to consult politicians to endorse decisions. That way, some respondents revealed that the local authority had been ‘captured’ by external influential people.

External influence according to the Systems Theory’s Inducement-Contribution concept, explains that such a symbiotic relationship exists to derive benefits. Certain individuals within an organisation create structures and linkages which become conduits of extracting benefits at the detriment of the entity (Zvarivadza, 2021). Most respondents revealed that the reason why top administrators escape the wrath of the law for abuse of office is because of the protection they enjoy from influential politicians and security officers whom they give benefits such as stands and tenders. However, findings from the discussion showed that interference had resulted in the erosion of corporate values as administrators freely violate public administration regulations unperturbed. Resultantly, the local authority has been rocked by many scandals and contrition as residents demonstrated calling for the ouster of the CEO due to poor service delivery. In this context, lack of autonomy was revealed as a factor affecting local authority performance.

The study further unpacked leadership attributes to be ineffective in influencing effective performance-oriented approach. Most employees claimed divisions amongst leaders had resulted in the emergence of factions such that employees would disregard and resist orders from certain supervisors in preference to particular supervisor of their faction. Such divisions at the work place according to Sims (2015) had a dent of the legitimate authority of leaders to the effect of causing an upheaval amongst followers. The Systems Theory' concept of acceptance informs that followers can only effectively execute their mandate if they deem leaders to have legitimate authority. In agreement, Weber alludes to authority to be power by a leader to influence followers to strive towards the attainment of specific organisational goals due to the authority of the leader whom they deem to have legitimate authority over them. Therefore, in the absence of legitimate authority owing to divisions and conflicts within the local authority, performance is compromised.

According to Erk (2014), organisational harmony and unity are key pillars which propel competitive advantage due to collective efforts of members in the accomplishment of set targets. With reference to the concept of cooperative system embedded in the Systems Theory, all the components of an organisation ought to function towards a common goal by cooperating and complementing one another. Thus, all facets of the organisation correlate collectively to achieve planned objectives which no solitary factor can single-handedly accomplish alone. To that end, if divided, that lack of cohesion and team work curtails the overall performance of the organisation. As professed by one of the employees who revealed that they always sabotage supervisors from the other faction so that the manager loses credibility. It is thus against this background that failure by leadership to be uniting and goal-oriented that divisions have stemmed up to be an attribute of leadership affecting the performance of the whole organisation.

The study revealed bureaucratic challenges to be affecting the performance of the local authority. Most respondents explained how decisions took longer than necessary to be approved resulting in some projects being delayed or losing relevance. Blunt (2014) asserts that organisation success is engrossed in the concept of total quality management framework wherein time is critical factor in determining the effective and successful performance. One of the managers explained how the decision to approve a livelihood project was delayed. When the green light was finally given, the funds set aside had already been channelled to other trivial purposes. Thus, it was noted that the

channel of command was stalling the speed and pace of development resulting in poor service delivery.

The study further unpacked remuneration to be very low enough to motivate employees to be fully committed to performing their duties diligently. Most employees felt they are being remunerated below the poverty datum line as such are constantly at the whims of economic lethargies. One of the managers confessed it was increasingly getting difficult to motivate employees because most of them are still owed their salaries by council. The systems theory's concept of inducement-contribution articulates that employees need inducements such monetary in order for them to perform effectively. Austin (2016) underscores the vitality of motivation affirming that has the propensity to compel employees to 'walk on water' for the organisation. Therefore, through appropriate inducements, employees become committed to render their services to an organisation unwavering. Therefore, this study discovered poor remuneration to be a factor affecting the performance of local authority.

#### **4.4.2 The impact of institutional frameworks on performance**

Finding from the study showed that biased appointments compromised performance of local authorities. Most respondents critiqued the dominant political 'imprints' visible in the appointment of positions such as CEO and Local Authority Board members. One of the respondents questioned why the legal framework vested too much authority on the minister of local government to dismiss individuals, approve appointees, budgets and various operations of local authorities. This according to most respondents created 'cronyism' bent on clandestinely milking the entity of resources. The systems theory makes reference to the fact that individuals within a system establish linkages and networks which produce certain behavioural patterns. These patterns learnt, determine how individuals perform through concerted influence. In this case, appointees bear allegiance to the one who appointed them, as such their performance becomes informed by ideologies and dictates of their appointing master. Chigwata (2017) comments that the unjustified and targeted expulsion of opposition local authority mayors by the then Minister of Local Government Ignatius Chombo was smeared with political motives of curtailing the dominance of opposition forces in local authorities. Furthermore, Madhekeni and Zhou (2012) assert that the way the minister flexes his authority instils fear and prejudices local authority administration into political subjugation. To that end, the authority vested in the minister by the legal framework

according to the study causes local authorities to be vulnerable through the appointment of loyalists recruited on the principle of patronage rather than merit henceforth hinders effective performance of local authority by virtue of having wrong people occupying wrong positions.

Lack of adequate resources was revealed by the study to be another aspect crippling various administrative institutions in ensuring sound performance of local authority. Most respondents alluded to the fact that council coffers were strained as such remuneration had failed to be motivating. Furthermore, most employees expressed that council did not have adequate tools and machinery to ensure effective service delivery. One of the respondents revealed that council had resorted to hiring machines such as earth-movers thus creating conduits of illicit deals through tender irregularities and inflating figures. However, the systems theory informs that for effective organisational performance, all facets of the organisation should be well equipped with appropriate competences in order to contribute meaningfully towards the accomplishment of the broader vision of the organisation. In this context, the study revealed that some departments at the local authority are failing to contribute immensely owing to lack of resources.

Oversight institutions such as Local Authority Board and Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption were noted to have comprised organisational effectiveness by failing to execute their duties diligently. Most respondents revealed that challenges bedevilling the entity resulting from abuse of office by top officials, oversight institutions are yet to substantially bring the allegedly culprits to book. A member of the resident's association explained they expected the institutions to investigate or even issue warnings just to show visibility on the matter, but surprisingly they remained 'numb'. Chigwata and DeVisser (2018) expressed concern at how ZACC since its inception had failed to prove its worth commenting that despite corruption being unearthed through various media platforms, ZACC is yet to prosecute those implicated. The Systems Theory brings to light the fact that components that contribute to the equilibrium of an organisation ought to perform effectively so that members would accept their presence. Without which, their presence would remain irrelevant. Thus, respondents felt oversight institutions ought to audit, probe and prosecute perpetrators as per their constitutional mandate so that integrity and transparency is upheld. In this context, by failing to execute their duties diligently, oversight institutions were noted to have compromised performance of the local authority by letting malpractice perpetuate unabated.

Most respondents also revealed that performance management by the human resources department was being ineffective in driving employees to perform effectively. Though employees were complying with the management approach, the study revealed they lacked through understanding of the approach to performance management as evidenced by claims that they would copy and paste work plans from previous performance review periods. Furthermore, employees claimed some of their supervisors also professed ignorance to articulate and explain the performance management system to their junior employees. This was castigated by Richards (2018) who stressed that organisations needed to adopt performance management systems which were well understood by everyone especially implementors. In support, Jones and George (2016) reinforced that an understanding of performance management system was not only a preserve of administrators only but all members of the organisation such that by virtue of understand how their performance id gong to be reviewed, employees become committed to attaining agreed targets thus leading to effective performance. To that end, the systems theory reiterates that when all eth components within an organisation work together with a common goal, that is, employees committing to ensuring targets are met, management committing to provision of all requisite resources for the attainment of targets by employees, an organisation is bound to establish an efficient level of equilibrium which according to Griffin (2010) would propel the organisation towards the attainment of a competitive advantage. Thus, the human resources department through ineffective performance management system was perceived to be a stumbling block to propelling effective local authority performance.

The study further unearthed that the adoption of technology had positively impacted on the improving the performance of the local authority. Most respondents revealed that technology especially on the billing system had made strides in improving speed and accuracy. Murphy (2015) makes reference to change management as pivotal in the transformation of organisation in quest to match demands from both the internal and external environment to improve operational efficiency. One of the managers also professed that technology had enhanced sound financial management through enhancing transparency and improved financial reporting. However, some respondents claimed to lack requisite knowledge to effectively a such contemplated the change because it caught them unprepared regarding skills acquisition. Stoner (2010) brings to light the fact that change management is fundamentally premised on getting people prepared for the impending change so that when change comes, it is well accepted and does not slow-down pace

of operations as people take time to ‘fit’ in the change. Congruently, Chester Barnard’s Systems theory informs that the cooperation of every component in an organisation contributes to organisational effective performance of the whole organisation hence it behoves administrators to ensure the individual components that contribute to the whole are well capacitated through resources and competent skills for their fruitful contribution to the wholistic cause. In this context, some managers revealed there was need to train employees so that they would effectively perform in the new system.

#### **4.4.3 What can be done to improve performance of the local authority**

Findings from the study showed that administrative factors bedevilling local authority performance can be solved by resolved by instigating tough and deterrent measures towards perpetrators of corporate malpractice. Wilson (2016) reinforces the need for organisations to put in place deterrent mechanisms which deter members from violating organisational values such as integrity and transparency through corruption. In agreement, the systems theory highlights that when factors within the organisation causes disequilibrium, the organisation must expediently respond by restoring parity so that all factors contributing to the whole operate collectively for the effectiveness of the organisation. In that regard, a member of the resident’s association articulated the need for periodic external auditing of even lifestyles. Those found wanting were recommended to face the full wrath of the law. Thus, one of the employees reflected the need for collective efforts of all concerned stakeholders from residents, administrators, employees and those from the security sector in order to win the fight the war against corruption. In that context, the study revealed that hash penalties for those who defy council values would be ideal in compelling perpetrators to deter from short-changing the organisation through corporate malfeasance.

The study further revealed that lack of financial resources can be improved through the adoption of effective debt recovery strategies. One of the manages stressed residents owed the council substantial amounts which could have been channelled towards resourcing the entity towards the fulfilment of developmental projects in the district. Blunt (2014) reinforces that vitality of resources towards the accomplishment of organisational objectives commenting that without which, it becomes increasingly difficult and could lead to employee burn out as they toil under strained resources to accomplish their tasks. In this context, the need for outsourcing debt collectors who are impartial and objective to the cause was raised as a possibility to effectively

recover money owed to the local authority. The systems theory asserts that through the inducement-contribution concept, residents can be coercively induced to own up to their financial obligation such that they will have no choice but to comply. In that regard, inducement according to the systems theory, through persuasive methods such as coercion, propaganda and inoculation has power to influence positive contributions by members to the overall well-being of the organisation. To that end, the need for robust debt recovery strategies was revealed to be the panacea to recover money to fund and resource the local authority spearheading it towards effective performance.

The study also unpacked that for effective performance, employees needed to have improved remuneration. Murphy (2015) claims that organisations need to take human resources as an important and critical asset of an organisation whose interests ought to be prioritised at the apex of decision making. Richards (2018) avers that once employees realise the organisation is concerned about their welfare, they will offer unwavering commitment which will impact positively in the accomplishment of set objectives. In support, the systems theory alludes to inducements through rewards to be a stimulating factor which propels members to effectively contribute towards attainment of organisational goals. One of the employees explained that all they wanted was a reasonable salary increment above the poverty datum line to cushion them from the economic woes currently being experienced in Zimbabwe. In this context, improved remuneration was noted to stimulate motivation and employee commitment, thus, a solution towards improved and effective local authority performance.

The study further revealed improved local authority can be granted by ensuring the entity independently makes its own decisions. DeVisser and Mapuva (2013) articulates the proposal by the state to have special interest councillors in local authority as a ploy to reinforce the invisible hand of politics in local authority administration. Mushamba (2010) laments how the functions and powers of local government authorities have been corroded on the bedrock of external influence by those who yield power. One of the respondents expressed concern at how administrators have seemingly become 'captured' by politicians and key security officials such that the council was being used as a cash cow to milk resources for personal gains. Furthermore, one of the employees noted how relationships, networks and cronyisms had been established such that administrators enjoyed protection from litigation because they parcel out benefits to influential

people. Wekwete (2015) appreciates how counties in developed states such as America have been able to stir people-centred development in their jurisdictions because of the autonomy they enjoy from the central government. In this context, administrative functions such as recruitment, ought to be based on merit so that leaders are result-oriented and easily accepted by the entire pool of employees. The systems theory's concept of acceptability cements that employees accept a person as a leader when they deem the leader's authority to be legitimate. Weber in his concept of authority buttressed charismatic, rationale and legal facets to legitimise authority of an effective leader. It is therefore against this background that the study revealed limited external involvement in the administration of local councils would help improve the aptness of administrators to augment performance of local authority.

The study further unpacked the need for a leaner administrative structure to effectively counter bureaucratic challenges. Simon (2014) vitalises the importance of a lean administrative structure to be enabling in ensuring operational efficiency. In the same wave length, Pollit (2012) enunciates that effective administration is anchored on its ability to be expedient in decision making given the volatility of the contemporary business environment, delayed decision making might compromise organisational operations as they might risk being over-taken by events. One of the respondents articulated how a community water projected was almost prejudiced due to the lengthy top-down approach as decision took longer than necessary to commission the project as people plants and animals toiled due to the effects of drought. The systems theory brings to light the fact that for an organisation to be in harmony, members need to appreciate the interrelatedness of systems wherein the effectiveness of one part depends on the effectiveness of the other component. Thus, in the context of delayed decisions due to bureaucratic inefficiencies, the performance of the entire organisation is affected negatively. In thus context, the study revealed that adoption of a leaner chain of command, decisions would be expediently made much to improved performance.

#### **4.5 CONCLUSION**

This chapter highlighted findings from the study. The chapter discussed findings linking with theoretical framework and relevant literature. Themes were developed in the chapter to articulate the root of data presentation and analysis.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The chapter concludes the study. It presents a rundown of the study and draws conclusions from findings of the study. The chapter further elucidates recommendations based on improving the impact of administration on the performance of local authority.

#### **5.2 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The study set out to interrogate the impact of local authority administration on its performance using a case study of Mazowe Rural District Council. Despite the fact that local authority administration is primarily anchored on ensuring effective service delivery, the study discovered that various administrative factors might impeded local authority performance in its quest to fulfil its mandate. Findings from the study revealed that various factors such as corruption. This was attributed to lack of motivation from adequate salaries and failure by administrators to be exemplary. Furthermore, the study revealed how leaders through intra-conflicts have caused divisions within the entity. Resultantly, employees were deliberately sabotaging supervisors due to disruptive factional battles. The study showed that lack of resources had hindered effective performance. This was attributed to poor revenue collection strategies and lack of external investment. A top-down approach was noted as fuelling bureaucratic inefficiencies due to delayed decisions at the detriment of service delivery. Administrative structural facets such as legal,

finance, infrastructure and politics were also noted to be problematic in ensuring effective performance. However, the study showed change management initiatives by administrators to be positively improving operational efficiency through the adoption of technology though technological skills gap still existed.

## **5.2 CONCLUSIONS**

The study concludes the performance of local authority is intricately dependent on sound administration and administration takes into cognisance various internal and external factors which can affect its performance. These factors such as intra-organisational conflicts, corruption, limited resources, low employee commitment, chain of command and leadership attributes impact on the overall performance of the organisation.

The study concluded that based on the administrative challenges. Local authority performance was being affected through lack of common goal. This was evidenced by disruptive conflicts within the organisation which caused divisions and factions amongst administrators as well as general employees. Thus, in a quest to ensure factional dominance, employees would deliberately sabotage operations to discredit a certain faction thus affecting the overall performance of the local authority.

The study concluded that low remuneration was causing poor employee morale. Most employees' commitment was low. This was aggravated by administrators prioritising to purchase a fleet of top of the range personal vehicles for themselves against a backdrop of salary arrears. This had unintended consequences with employees resorting to corruption and conducting private repairs in a bid to get extra money to cushion them from economic woes. Private jobs conducted illegally by council employees were noted to be done by unqualified employees hence were sub-standard and lacked supervision. Thus, council experienced consequential problems trying to rectify problems emanating from unsanctioned and illegal part-time jobs. This ultimately affects the overall performance of the local authority.

Based on findings from the study, conclusions were that external interference affected the performance of the entity. The study showed that administrators had established a network with influential politicians and security agents to get protection at the same time 'milk' the entity of

public resources through parcelling out of stands and unprocedural tenders. This affected the performance of the council in that inefficient companies would fail to complete developmental projects and residents were inconvenienced through double-allocation of stands.

The further concludes that the attributes of administrators were fuelling inefficiencies at the local authority. Leaders were fingered by most respondents to be chief culprits of corporate vices such as corruption and would fail to deal with general employees accused of the same acts because they are also being involved. Thus, failure to walk the talk by administrators was revealed by the study to be fuelling violation of organisational values.

Appointment of administrators was also revealed by the study to be contributing to the mal-performance of the entity. The study revealed that candidates were appointed on the basis of patronage rather than merit hence would dismally fail to lead the entity competitively. Furthermore, appointments endorsed by external players resulted in compromising integrity of leaders as they would work towards 'pleasing' their appointing masters at the detriment of service provision. In addition, the study revealed too much powers vested in the Minister of Local Government to appoint and fire local authority administrators instilled fear in administrators such that they would 'religiously and passively' act according to the dictates and ideology of their appointing master.

The study concluded that efforts were made to improve efficiency of the entity through the adoption of technology. However, the study concluded that some of the employees lacked requisite skills to functionally 'fit' in the new change owing to skills gap.

## **5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the research findings, the study made the following recommendations;

### **5.3.1 Training and development**

The human resources department ought to identify skills gap and proffer training and development especially prior to instigating change. This helps employees to be competent in the new 'era' of change. Furthermore, administrators ought to attend refresher courses so that they get equipped with knowledge and skills relating to contemporary administrative precepts. The courses will help

align leadership style with contemporary administrative demands thus ensure an organisation performs competently.

### **5.3.2 Performance Management**

A robust performance management system should be put in place to ensure employees are evaluated based on how significant they contribute to the organisation. Employees ought to be educated about the importance of performance management and its vitality to both the employee and the organisation. An organisation would be able to note employees under-performing and craft ways of helping them either through training or separation. Those employees performing exceptionally well can be recommended for promoting so that they become motivated and influence average and below average employees to improve their performance with a view of getting promoted as well. Thus, through performance management, an local authority would be able to ensure employee are result oriented in their duties much to the improved overall organisational performance.

### **5.3.3 Conflict resolution strategy**

A clear conflict resolution strategy ought to be in place and all employees should be involved in the established of the conflict resolution policy so that they would accept, understand and implement it. This helps conflicts to be managed effectively before they negatively dent the image of the organisation if ever, they spill in the public domain. By effectively managing conflicts, local authorities will be able to ensure harmony and unity of purpose within the organisation such that each member will feel duty bound to contribute immensely towards the accomplishment of organisational goals thus ensure sound performance.

### **5.3.4 Public Private Partnerships**

Against a myriad of challenges besetting local authorities emanating from lack of resources, engaging private players in community development process will ease the pressure of the ‘purse’ of local authority. Private players such as business people and non-governmental organisations can contribute towards water provision as exemplified by projects such as WASH which resulted in the construction on boreholes in rural communities. The partnerships will further enhance service

provision and help in the completion of local authority projects which might have been abandoned due to lack of resources.

### **5.3.5 Motivation of employees**

Employee motivation particularly through salaries above the poverty datum line is recommended in order to stimulate motivation so that employees would be committed to the organisation. Furthermore, employees through their unions should be periodically engaged by local authority administrators so that once their views regarding conditions of service and remuneration are negotiated, employees feel the organisation is concerned with their affairs henceforth will offer their unwavering support towards the accomplishment of set goals. In addition, if employees are engaged by administrators and made aware of the financial position of the entity, this helps reduce undue speculations and foster an appreciation and understanding by employees. That way, it reinforces the spirit of team work between administrators and employees as they collectively discuss how to navigate through impending challenges. In this context, employees will be intrinsically motivated to be eager to perform well towards the positive good of the organisation realising how administrators value their input since they will have been appraised on the state of affairs at the organisation and how they can assist.

### **5.3.6 Sound Regulatory frameworks**

The conduct of employees should be guided by various local authority regulatory frameworks that denote values such as integrity, transparency, accountability, teamwork, ethics and financial prudence. Such frameworks should be capacitated enough so that a robust oversight is maintained. Establishment of contemporary departments such as financial intelligence unit can be ideal in dealing with corporate malfeasance which might negatively affect the performance of the entire entity if unchecked. Thus, having such frameworks will ensure employees adhere to set expected conducts much to the improved integrity and brand of the organisation as being professional. This will in turn attract potential investors to partner with local authorities in spearheading developmental projects.

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## APPENDIX A



### In-depth Interview Guide

**Position of respondent:** .....

**Department:** .....

**Date:** .....

My name is Mazula Cohen Tinashe, a Masters in Leadership and Corporate Governance student at Bindura University of Science Education. I am carrying out a study on the impact of local authority administration on its performance using a case study of Mazowe Rural District Council. The data to be provided will be used for academic purposes only and confidentiality of information is maintained.

1. How best would you explain local authority administration?
2. Identify administrative factors that affect the performance of Mazowe RDC?
3. How do the factors identified affect the performance of your local authority?
4. Identify administrative institutional frameworks for local authority administration?
5. To what extent do these institutional frameworks ensure effective local authority administration?

6. Identify challenges faced in the administration of Mazowe RDC?
7. To what extent are these challenges impacting on the performance of your local authority?
8. Which mechanisms have been used to alleviate the noted challenges by your local authority?
9. How effective have the mechanisms been in mitigating the stated challenges?
10. Which recommendations do you suggest to alleviate administrative challenges that are affecting performance of Mazowe RDC?

## APPENDIX B



### Questions for Focus Group Discussion

**Position of respondents:** .....

**Department(s):** .....

**Date:** .....

My name is Mazula Cohen Tinashe, a Masters in Leadership and Corporate Governance student at Bindura University of Science Education. I am carrying out a study on the impact of local authority administration on its performance using a case study of Mazowe Rural District Council. The data to be provided will be used for academic purposes only and confidentiality of information is maintained.

1. How can you explain your experiences with the administration of your local authority?
2. Which factors could be contributing to the way your local authority is being administered?
3. Explain how the factors identified are affecting the administration of Mazowe RDC?
4. To what extent are the factors identified impacting on the overall performance of Mazowe RDC?
5. What is your evaluation on administrative institutional frameworks for ensuring effective local authority administration?

6. To what extent are these administrative institutional frameworks ensuring effective performance of Mazowe RDC?
7. Identify challenges faced in the administration of Mazowe RDC?
8. How are these challenges impacting on the performance of your local authority?
9. What has been done to mitigate these challenges?
10. How effective have the mitigating mechanisms been?
11. What can be done to alleviate administrative challenges that are affecting performance of Mazowe RDC?