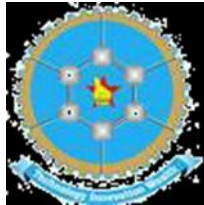


**THE EFFECTIVENESS OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
FUNCTIONS ON THE PERFORMANCE OF SELECTED URBAN LOCAL
AUTHORITIES IN ZIMBABWE**



By

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APPROVAL FORM

The undersigned certifies that he has read and recommended to the Department of Entrepreneurship and Business Sciences, Chinhoyi University of Technology, for acceptance a dissertation entitled “The effectiveness of Human Resources Management Strategies functions on the Performance of selected Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe,” submitted by Sharon Chisango in fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Human Resources Management.

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15/06/24

Date

DECLARATION

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OF MY FAITH.**

ABSTRACT

The success of organisations both public and private, hinges on the quality and effectiveness of its human resources. There is a dearth of studies that have addressed the relationship between employing good HRM functions on the performance of Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe. This study was conducted to address this knowledge gap. The primary objective of the study was to establish the impact of HRM strategies on the performance of selected Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe. The study was aided by the Best Fit Model, Resource Based View, Stakeholder Theory and Human Capital Theory. A pragmatic research philosophy was adopted and a cross-sectional survey design was used in the study. The target population comprised of approximately 8582 municipal workers (lower level employees, top executives, middle level managers and HR administrators) employed at City of Harare, Bindura Town Council and Mutare City Council. Stratified random sampling was used to select two hundred and seventy six (276) Municipal employees. The sampling method was guided by the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table. Reliability was checked using Cronbach's alpha (α). Quantitative data were validated through exploratory factor analysis, convergent validity and discriminant validity before carrying out structural equation modelling. Data were analyzed using SPSS® version 21 and AMOS® version 21. Qualitative data were presented using thematic analysis and NVivo software. The study findings indicated that Human Resources Management strategies positively affect the implementation of policies in Urban Local Authorities (ULAs) and service delivery. The research findings identified internal and external factors which hindered successful implementation of HRM strategies in Urban Local Authorities. Internal factors identified were management leadership style, organisational culture, attitude of employees and employee participation whereas external factors included political, economic, social and technological aspects. The study also revealed that ULAs faced HRM challenges like bureaucratic tendencies, lack of government support, resource constraints and political interference when implementing HRM strategies. ULAs were therefore recommended to prioritize implementation of HRM strategies and make better use of HR information systems for enhanced institutional performance. It also recommended the adoption of HR functions like Recruitment and Selection, Performance Management and Reward Management for improved institutional performance.

Key words: Human Resources Management, Service provision, Urban Local Authorities performance, Zimbabwe

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AGFI:	Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index
AMOS:	Analysis of Moment Structures
AVE:	Average Variance Extracted
BTC:	Bindura Town Council
CBD:	Central Business District
CFI:	Comparative Fit Index
COH:	City Of Harare
CR:	Critical Ratios
DF:	Degrees of Freedom
EFA:	Exploratory Factor Analysis
GFI:	Goodness of Fit Index
GOZ:	Government of Zimbabwe
ILO:	International Labour Organisation
HEI:	Higher Education Institutions
HR:	Human Resources
HRM:	Human Resources Management
HRP:	Human Resources Planning
KMO:	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
LA:	Local Authority
LG:	Local Government
MDG:	Millennium Developmental Goals
MLGPW:	Ministry of Local Government and Public Works
MTC:	Mutare Town Council
NGO:	Non Governmental Organisation
OECD:	Organisation for Economic Development
PERF:	Performance
PESTEL:	Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal
PPE:	Private Partnership Engagements

QUALQUAN:	Qualitative Quantitative
SD:	Standard Deviation
SDG:	Sustainable Developmental Goals
SHRM:	Strategic Human Resources Management
SICC:	Squared Inter-Construct Correlations
SOEs:	State Owned Enterprises
SPSS:	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
ULA:	Urban Local Authorities
UK:	United Kingdom
WHO:	World Health Organisation
ZIMSTAT:	Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

In today's fast paced corporate climate, the significance of Human Resources Management Strategies cannot be overemphasized. Human Resources Management is essential to the success of any organization (both private and public) since it influences hiring, training, culture development and alignment with corporate objectives, among other important areas. In public sector organisations, Urban Local Authorities (ULAs) as miniature governments play a crucial role towards social and economic development. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of 17 interconnected global goals established by the United Nations in 2015. They aim to address various global challenges, including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace, and justice. This study is therefore firmly anchored on the view that employing effective Human Resources Management practices could be a panacea for enhanced organisational performance in ULAs, which overallly spurs national growth and development of the Southern African country. This study sought to investigate human resources management dynamics in the perspective of Zimbabwean Urban Local Authorities (ULAs). In this chapter, the researcher focused on the following critical aspects namely; background of the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, research hypotheses, and the scope of the study among other issues.

1.1 Background of the Study

Numerous municipal governments have discussed the value of implementing Human Resources Management (HRM) strategies. Over the last two decades, strategic planning has become increasingly important in the management of public service. However, Local government in particular, as well as public organizations, are becoming more and more deviant with regards to their service delivery mandate and strategy implementation. Fundira (2023) contends that an organization lacking plans comes across as inept and lacking direction. It is not an exaggeration to suggest that the implementation of HR strategic plans, especially in this day and age, where public organizations are viewed as under-performing and wasteful with their public resources, could contribute to the legitimacy and image of Local Government authorities among other things. The public's overall perception has been

that public managers and leaders in local government must accomplish more with less, which calls for strategic thinking to cut down on waste, (Fundira, 2023).

Globally, service delivery by most ULAs and other State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), particularly in developing and less developed countries, had attracted much attention in the past. Many researchers claimed that efficient service delivery is an important driver of economies towards global competitiveness and sustainable development, (Nicolò, Zanellato & Tiron-Tudor, 2020). A thorough search of the literature uncovered Human Resources mechanisms and strategies as one possible determinant of service delivery in state owned enterprises such as urban councils (Kulaba, 2019). Fan, Ouyang, Nguyen, Park and Chen (2019) assert that municipalities if efficiently managed, could be ideal catalysts for citizens' economic and social emancipation in third world and underdeveloped countries. It therefore follows that in ULAs, service delivery is of utmost significance in any economy. The delivery of services such as refuse collection, waste management, water and health services is closely connected with the living conditions of urban inhabitants, (Marumahoko, Afolab, Sadie, & Nhede, 2020).

In Europe, most Local Governments are already reinventing towards a more sustainable and powerful institutions. According to Ngwenyama (2014), the internet has provided a paradigm shift in Local Governments from traditional bureaucratic entities which focuses on standardization, departmentalization and operational cost efficiency to the e government paradigm which emphasizes coordinated network building, external collaboration and customer services. Based on a poll of Web development authorities and a content analysis of city websites, the findings reveal that many European countries are already embracing this new paradigm. These cities prioritize external collaboration and networking in the development process above technocracy and they have implemented customer oriented principles, (Ngwenyama, 2014).

In the African context for most cities and towns, colonialism played a significant role in modelling Urban Local Authorities functions, roles and responsibilities, (Kulaba, 2019). Chatiza (2010) suggests that administratively, colonial systems were aimed at addressing the native issue based on the perspective that the economic needs of the white citizens were always superior to those of their black counterparts. In South Africa, the ideologies of compaction and urban expansion management, designed part of the post-apartheid

preparation agenda towards changing the inept, inefficient and disjointed landscape inherited from discrete spatial planning frameworks since the beginning of the new millennium, (Chakaipa, 2010).

In Botswana, several government attempts to enhance public service delivery, failed dismally to have the anticipated effect. Due to increased government's criticism about the deteriorating service delivery, several efforts were made to resuscitate the service delivery function, (Tshukudu, 2022). Several calls were made to review the previous reform efforts and implementing a performance management plan that included new reform initiatives like decentralization, computerization of the personnel management system and performance management, (Tshukudu, 2022).

In Zimbabwe, the history and progression of urban settlement can be traced directly to colonialism, (Chakaipa, 2010). Before colonialism, the chief nature of native human settlements was totally dispersed but densely populated rural settlements. There were no major cities and towns except for a few abandoned pre-colonial states of Great Zimbabwe, Khami and Dhlobo, (Marumahoko et al., 2020). This can be explained by basically two vital aspects of society then; that human population was still very paltry as compared to modern population and that economic activities were centred on primary initiatives like farming, fishing, small scale mining and limited trade particularly in small commodities, (Marumahoko et al., 2020).

According to Part 11 of the Urban Councils Act Chapter 29:15, The Urban Local Government system in Zimbabwe is comprised of four (4) types of ULAs, namely Local Boards, Town councils, Municipalities, and Cities. The differences between the four being that, municipalities and cities are the owners of land within their jurisdiction, while Local Boards and Towns do not have the same privilege, (Chakaipa, 2010). Furthermore, in cities, there are elected officials of councils who are known as (Councillors). These are presided over by the Ceremonial Mayor as emphasized in Part V of the Urban Councils Act (Chapter 29: 15). This means that councillors together with the Mayor are responsible for making policies and By-laws which govern ULAs. Moreover, these officials are also responsible for implementing policy and ultimately discharge their mandate and obligation to the citizens.

In addition, the Urban Councils Act (Chapter 29: 15) part II specifies the type of goods and services which Urban Local Authorities are mandated to provide and perform. According to Nicolo et al., (2020), these include; refuse collection, parceling out serviced land, health and welfare services and water treatment among others. Maibheki, Chatiza, Chisango and Chisiri (2021) define Urban Local Authorities as public entities aimed at providing community services at local levels using locally available funds and funds obtained from central government. Agranoff and McGuire (2004) reiterate that, when the local government system is proficient in exercising its mandate, then the corporate governance principle of Transparency and Accountability becomes central to the decision-making process in Urban Local Authorities. Ultimately, Urban Local Authorities will be able to provide and maintain top notch quality service and infrastructure, (Agranoff & McGuire, 2004).

Currently, in Zimbabwe, all Urban Local Authorities were under the Ministry of Local Government. Moreover, the existing Legal and Operational Framework specified that Local Government (LG) referred “to the provision and maintenance of public services and infrastructure at local levels using funds generated from the local community, in addition to grants and loans from central Government, and other sources”, (Zimbabwe Institute of Local Government: Policy Review, 2005). In essence, LG in Zimbabwe was associated with the setting up of voluntary, participatory and democratically elected structures which resonated with the needs of the locals and ensured these needs were translated into tangible initiatives and projects which were aimed at maintaining or improving critical services. All Zimbabwean Urban Local Authorities including rural and urban district councils were granted the Urban Local Authorities planning status as highlighted in Section 10 of the Regional Town and Country Planning Act, 1998 Chapter 29:12. These powers were accorded to Urban Local Authorities with the aim of improving service delivery. However, urban and rural district councils were given their own discretion to come up with strategic plans since they were independent planning establishments.

The context under which Local Governments in Zimbabwe develop and implement various HRM policies is faced with budgetary constraints and cultural opposition to change, Marumahoko et al., (2020) states that the issue of budgetary inadequacy for public service delivery is common in developing nations like Zimbabwe, where there is typically a significant gap between planned activities and available resources.

Over the previous two decades, Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe had been largely criticized for their continued failure to meet their mandate. Poor service delivery had been rampant and falling short of resident's expectations, (Chirisa, 2019). The social media was always awash with criticism and grievances from rate payers who felt that they were being short changed by most Urban Local Authorities. In addition, the expression of dissatisfaction by the Central Government through the parent Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing had aggravated the resident's displeasure, (The Herald, 20 August 2013). An objective assessment proved that this criticism was a reflection of what was happening on the ground. Most Urban Local Authorities had failed to provide effective and efficient solutions towards progressive service delivery. Infrastructure development and maintenance was at its record low, roads rehabilitation had been neglected, local clinics had gone for years without adequate provisions and schools had also remained stagnant for years, (Musingafi et al, 2013). However, despite the mentioned flaws, most Urban Local Authorities had continued to collect revenue from the residents to the disappointment of most citizens.

Of late, most Urban Local Authorities had developed Human Resources Management initiatives which were aimed at improving the performance of employees for improved service delivery, (Cantele & Zardini, 2018). Some Urban Local Authorities also developed performance management systems which were basically aimed at monitoring and evaluating the performance of their workforce with the view of enhancing service delivery. In most cases, some of these initiatives would be directives from the Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing with the motive of enhanced human capital development for sustainable growth and development. However, in some isolated cases, the Human Resources department of the responsible municipalities would come up with HRM related initiatives. However, despite all the above mentioned government efforts, service delivery had declined and the situation had been exacerbated by the hyper inflationary pressures and declining economic environment.

In the views of Cantele and Zardini (2018), a municipality that provides excellent Human Resources Management strategies presents brighter opportunities for enhanced service delivery and sustainable development. However, a thorough search of literature revealed that unlike their counterparts in developed countries, most Urban Local Authorities in the developing world did not adequately cater for the needs of their employees through providing

a conducive atmosphere for growth and attractive remuneration packages. In addition, rural Local Authorities had failed to attract highly skilled and qualified personnel due to unfavourable HRM policies. This had further put a pit-stop to their quest to compete with Urban Local Authorities and they had since been labelled inefficient entities, (Tran & Dollery, 2021).

Research evidence revealed that many Urban Local Authorities had specified in their strategic plans the need to manage their workforce, to attract competent staff, retain skilled personnel and to motivate employees for increased organisational performance, (Chisango, et al, 2023). However, the prevailing macro economic variables particularly the worsening economic environment, labour migration, socio- cultural factors had exacerbated the Urban Local Authorities conditions. Despite all these efforts, service delivery in most Urban Local Authorities had remained poor. Figure 1.1 below depicts the problems indicated by residents on the quality of service delivery in Southern Africa;

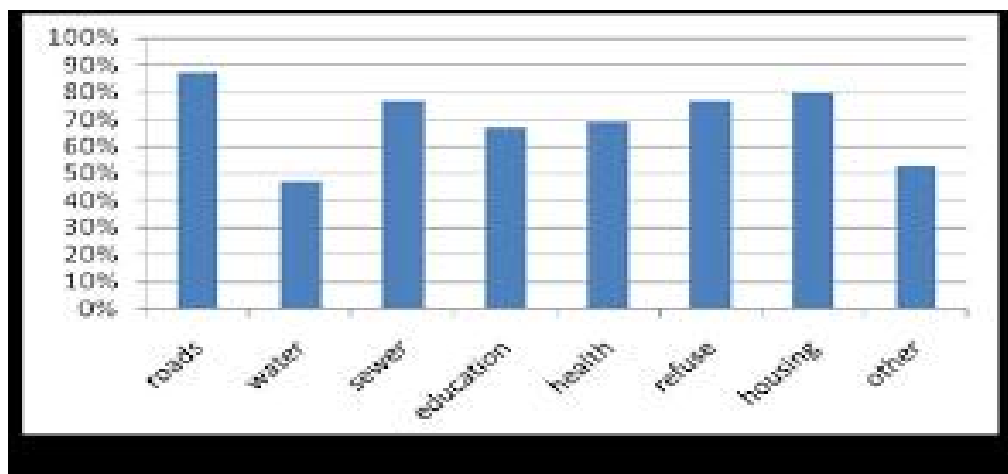


Figure 1: Problems indicated by residents on the quality of service delivery

Source: Author's Analysis of Secondary Data (2021)

In Africa, poor Urban Local Authorities performance remained a challenge that was encountered by many countries in the continent. According to Chigwata, De Visser and Ayele (2021), the worsening service delivery was however, not unusual to Zimbabwean ULA's alone. Zimbabwe's Urban Local Authorities during the post independence era (1980-1990) were amongst the top ranked State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) in sub-Saharan Africa. However, research evidence suggests that various factors chief amongst them corruption,

mismanagement, poorly designed policies, economic downturn and political woes increasingly undermined employee's motivation and the desire to work, (Muchadenyika, 2014; Poperwi, 2018). According Maibheki et al., (2021), evidence of poor governance across most urban Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe was abundant. The authors further bemoaned the lack of efficient and effective Human Resources Management strategies in most Zimbabwean urban Urban Local Authorities which are aimed at attracting, motivating and recruiting employees.

To enhance employee performance and public sector services, policymakers and stakeholders have implemented a variety of HRM-focused initiatives, including performance-based bonuses (Bradley, 2019; Poperwi, 2018). Thus, studies have advised tying HRM objectives and organizational objectives together in order to accomplish organizational goals and improve performance in (ULAs) in Zimbabwe (Muchadenyika, 2014; Poperwi, 2018). In an effort to enhance the productivity and quality of services provided by human resources (HRs) in the public sector, the Zimbabwean government launched the Integrated Results-Based Management (IRBM) initiative in 2005 (Zvavahera, 2014). (Chikwariro, Bussin & De Braine, 2021). However, the performance of organisations did not improve quickly after then. The primary cause for this was attributed to a misalignment between organizational and HRM objectives (Ngwenyama, 2014; Sixpence, 2021). Additional research revealed that there was no correlation between employee performance and pay and benefits, which negatively impacted both institutional performance and job satisfaction (Ngwenyama, 2014; Sixpence, 2021). Furthermore, Poperwi's (2018) study raised concerns about the IRBM system's counterproductive implementation because it prioritized HRM above other significant service delivery difficulties. However, there is no knowledge on the existing gaps between human resources management strategies and organisational performance.

In the contemporary business world, many governments had realized the significance of having Human Resource Management Strategies in Local government. In Zimbabwe, Public institutions specifically Urban Urban Local Authorities were increasingly being devilled as the public had negative perceptions towards their operations. Chigwata et al., (2021) emphasized the importance of having HRM strategies in an organisation. They argued that an organisation without human resources management strategies is like a ship without a compass and such organisations are bound to sink. Adam (2020) also argue that, organisations without

HRM strategies are directionless and ineffective. Therefore, the use of Strategic Human Resource Management in these poorly performing Urban Local Authorities could help enhance Urban Local Authorities' performance and legitimacy. It is against this background that the researcher sought to carry out a study on the effectiveness of human resource management (HRM) strategies and performance of selected Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe.

1.2 Statement of the problem

There has been a significant deterioration of institutional performance in Zimbabwe's Urban Local Authorities. Such deterioration is evidenced by the reduction in the quality of service delivery offered by most Urban Local Authorities. The quality of services offered by ULAs was now pathetic in Zimbabwe with most Urban Local Authorities failing to exercise their mandate (Chigwata et al, 2021). The ten year old decade of socio-economic challenges from early 2000-2020 has led to significant human resources related challenges. Most Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe had been manned by shortage of critical and experienced, qualified staff, nepotism and subjective recruitment policies. Furthermore, poor employee retention strategies have led to mass exodus as evidenced by the high turnover rate, according to the Report of the Auditor-General (2019: 5). The situation in Urban Local Authorities has also been exacerbated by the lack of relevant knowledge, sophisticated and dynamic skills needed to address human resources issues. Furthermore, Urban Local Authorities are experiencing a sharp increase in population, yet their infrastructure and social services are still insufficient. Inadequate service delivery had remained a steamy issue in the last two decades to the extent that it had courted international attention. In addition, there was also an outcry of mismanagement in most urban ULAs by the residents, with pressure groups bemoaning lack of transparency and accountability by those in charge. Several strategies had been employed to try and improve service delivery in most urban cities to no avail. None of these have touched on the role played by people management in ensuring Urban Local Authorities performance. It therefore became imperative to carry out a study on the effectiveness of Human Resources Management strategies and performance of Urban Local Authorities in the Zimbabwean context.

1.3 Research Objectives

The main objective of this research was to investigate the effectiveness of HRM strategies on the performance of selected Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe.

1.3.1 Sub Objectives

In order to achieve the main research objective, the following sub objectives were be used;

1. To ascertain the extent to which service provision by Zimbabwean municipalities fell short of ratepayers' expectations.
2. To establish the impact of HRM strategies on service delivery in Urban Local Authorities.
3. To assess the factors hindering successful implementation of HRM Strategies in ULAs.
4. To identify the challenges that were faced by Urban Local Authorities in implementing HRM strategies.
5. To recommend practical solutions from the empirical study that could be used concerning HRM strategies in Zimbabwean Urban Local Authorities.

1.4 Research Questions

The main objective of this research was to investigate the dynamics of HRM strategies on the performance of selected Urban Local Authorities. As such, the research objectives were decoded into the following research questions:

1. To what extent did service provision by Zimbabwean municipalities fall short of ratepayers' expectations?
2. What was the impact of HRM strategies on service delivery in Urban Local Authorities?
3. What are the factors hindering successful implementation of HRM strategies in ULAs in Zimbabwe?
4. What are challenges faced by Urban Local Authorities in the implementation of HRM strategies?
5. What practical solutions from the empirical study could be used to improve HRM Strategies by ULAs in Zimbabwe?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

H1: Recruitment strategy had a positive impact on Urban Local Authority performance.

H2: Reward Management strategy had a positive impact on Urban Local Authority performance.

H3: Training and Development strategy had a positive impact on Urban Local Authority performance.

H4: Performance Management strategy had a positive impact on Urban Local Authority performance.

H5: Human Resources Management strategy had a positive impact on Urban Local Authority performance.

1.6 Significance of the Study

Numerous studies had been undertaken by different scholars and organisations world wide, who investigated the relationship between service delivery and the performance of Urban Local Authorities. None of the studies however specifically examined the nexus between dynamics of HRM strategies and the performance of Urban Local Authorities. The study thus derived its significance from the weight of the subjects under investigation. Although the study was limited to Zimbabwe, it is important to note that the value of the study's findings, conclusions, and recommendations speak to a broader range of stakeholders and therefore cannot be over-emphasised. The following are some of the study beneficiaries;

1.6.1 Urban Local Authorities

The contribution of the present study to Urban Local Authorities particularly with regards to improving service delivery cannot be over emphasised. Urban Local Authorities were operating in uncertain and highly volatile environments. Therefore, the study became useful for them to identify which strategies were significant in enhancing employees' performance in the public sector. Furthermore, the findings also informed Urban Local Authorities on how

best to enhance their performance through improved HRM practices with a view to ensuring Urban Local Authorities sustainability.

1.6.2 The Researcher

The researcher undoubtedly gained immense research knowledge on how to write a PhD thesis as well as supervise potential PhD students. It also laid a strong foundation for the researcher in her career as an academic. In addition, this current study was done under the guidance and thorough mentorship of two academic mentors (the supervisors). The researcher therefore, gained knowledge on the PhD supervision process. In light of the foregoing, the present research also offered the researcher a chance to learn professional mentorship. Finally, the successful completion of this study gave the researcher a sense of self-actualization, which is the highest-level need according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

1.6.3 Governments

This study would benefit most governments worldwide, however the chief benefactor was the Government of Zimbabwe (GOZ) since the study was carried out in the Zimbabwean context. Moreover, the research findings of this study would assist the GOZ to draft and implement policies which were aimed at enhancing service delivery in most Urban Local Authorities. Other governments regionally in Africa and world would also derive equal benefits on the management of people in Urban Local Authorities for efficiency. The governments are set to craft and implement most appropriate HRM initiatives that are conducive for local authority sustainability and desirable performance in their respective countries.

1.7 Delimitations of the Study

Research delimitation refers to the scope of the study and this refers to boundaries regarding the contextual, geographical, periodical confinements of the research. The study focused on local authority performance and how it was influenced by HRM strategies in Zimbabwe. Geographically, the research was limited to three Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe namely, (Harare City Council, Mutare City Council and Bindura Municipality). The period of research is 2021 to 2024.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Human Resources Management: This refers to “a systematic, consistent and thorough approach to managing and improving human capital of an organisation in which all the facets of that process are completely incorporated into the organisation’s overall management”, (Lussier & Hendon, 2018).

Organisational Performance:

This refers to “the extent to which the organisation is able to meet the needs of its stakeholders for its own survival”, (Guttermann, 2023).

HRM Strategies:

Thakur (2022) defines HRM Strategy as “policies which encompasses all personnel-related tactics that aim to enhance an organisation’s competitive edge by addressing strategic business challenges and objectives”.

Employee Performance:

This refers to “the outcome of an employee’s ability to complete tasks in both quantity and quality while adhering to the responsibilities assigned to them”, (Ratnasari, 2019).

Public Sector:

This refers to “all businesses owned and run by the government including schools, hospitals, institutions and other public services. Public sector organisations provide the crucial well-being and prosperity of a society”, (Baa & Chatteraj, 2022).

Service:

This refers to “any act or performance that one party can offer to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything”, (Huotari & Hamari, 2017).

Competency assessment:

This refers to “a competency assessment is the measure of an individual employee’s performance based on your company’s criteria for standard performance”, (Ratsanari, 2019).

Local Government:

This refers to “a kind of governance which is an institutional and legal organisation that ensures that people within a given territory act collectively to ensure their welfare”, (Ndreu, 2016).

Performance review:

This refers to “a performance review is a written evaluation of how well an employee has performed in the specified period”, (Pollit & Bouckaert, 2004).

1.8 Organisation of the Study**Chapter 1: Introduction**

This chapter presents the introductory aspects of the study by presenting the background of the study, statement of the problem as well as the objectives of the study. The chapter also presents the research questions, which were later addressed as the research developed as well as the significance of the study. Also covered by the chapter are the delimitation and limitations of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter focuses on a review of related literature, however staying within the confines of the research objectives. In reviewing the related literature, the conceptual framework and theoretical framework were discussed. Empirical evidence is also highlighted in this chapter with a view of ascertaining the research gap.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

In this chapter, focus was on drawing extensive research methodology that was to be employed in the study. In particular, the chapter covers the research philosophy, research design, target population, sample size, sampling method, research instruments, data collection procedures, data presentation and analysis methods, reliability and validity as well as ethical

considerations.

Chapter 4: Quantitative data Presentation and Analysis

The chapter looks at data presentation, analysis and discusses quantitative data findings. Within this chapter, the research questions posed earlier in chapter one, were answered. The results in this chapter are reported in a factual objective style with no discussion. The data were presented using SPSS version 21 and Amos Structural Model. The research findings from the study were also discussed in this chapter. This chapter draws all the discussion together around the purpose of the investigation taking into account findings from the literature and other secondary research.

Chapter 5: Qualitative Data presentation, analysis and

The chapter presented findings obtained from qualitative data collections. Data were analyzed, interpreted and discussed using common themes and NVIVO software. Common themes were also presented using word cloud.

Chapter 6: Discussion of findings

The chapter discussed the findings of qualitative data. The major objective of this chapter is to explain any new knowledge or insights which the research would have unveiled. This chapter was also aimed at evaluating and characterize the relevance of research findings in light of what was previously known about it. Findings were supported with latest scholarly works.

Chapter 7: Conclusion and Recommendations of findings

This chapter summarized the research findings by giving conclusions and recommendations. Contribution of the study through practical and theoretical implications were also given. Lastly, areas for future research were also indicated.

1.9 Chapter Summary

The study sought to investigate human resources dynamics in the context of Zimbabwean Urban Local Authorities. Accordingly, in this chapter, the researcher presented the following

major aspects: background of the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, hypotheses, and the scope of the study among other issues. . The next chapter will focus on the review of related literature in the area of study, both globally and locally. The literature to be reviewed will be guided by the research objectives and the review covers both theoretical and empirical literature.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

Chapter Two reviews literature related to Human Resources Management Strategies and Urban Local Authorities (ULAs) performance. The chapter begins by elucidating the theoretical framework where theories of Human Resources Management which include the Best Fit theory, the Resource Based View theory, Stakeholder theory and the Human Capital theory are elaborated. The chapter also defines the key term Human Resources Management as defined by different scholars. Human Resources Management functions are also defined in the context of Local Municipalities. This chapter also discusses the role of the government in managing and overseeing the work of municipalities as independent bodies and looks at the importance of ULAs to the economy. A discussion is also made on the role of Human Resources Management in improving organisational performance of Urban Local Authorities as well as how effective and efficient practices enhance public trust. A conceptual framework is unveiled which highlights the main constructs of the study.

Furthermore, Chapter Two also traces the historical development of Human Resources Management during the Industrialization era and its contribution to the emergence of Human Resources Management in the contemporary modern day world. The Chapter also highlights the key pillars of Human Resources Management that are necessary for the functioning of Urban Local Authorities. An in-depth discussion of the relationship between Human Resources Management and performance of Urban Local Authorities is made for Africa with a bias towards the Zimbabwean environment. An overview of Human Resources environment in Zimbabwe is done as well as Acts of Parliaments and By-laws governing the operations of Urban Local Authorities. An empirical review of literature is done with an attempt to establish how much work has been done by other scholars in relation to Human Resources Management functions on the Urban Local Authorities performance. In so doing the researcher identifies gaps which the present study sought to close. At the end of the Chapter the researcher summarizes the chapter.

2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of this study is based on the four main theories namely; Best Fit theory, Resource Based View Theory, Stakeholder Theory and Human Capital Theory as illustrated in the Figure 2 below;

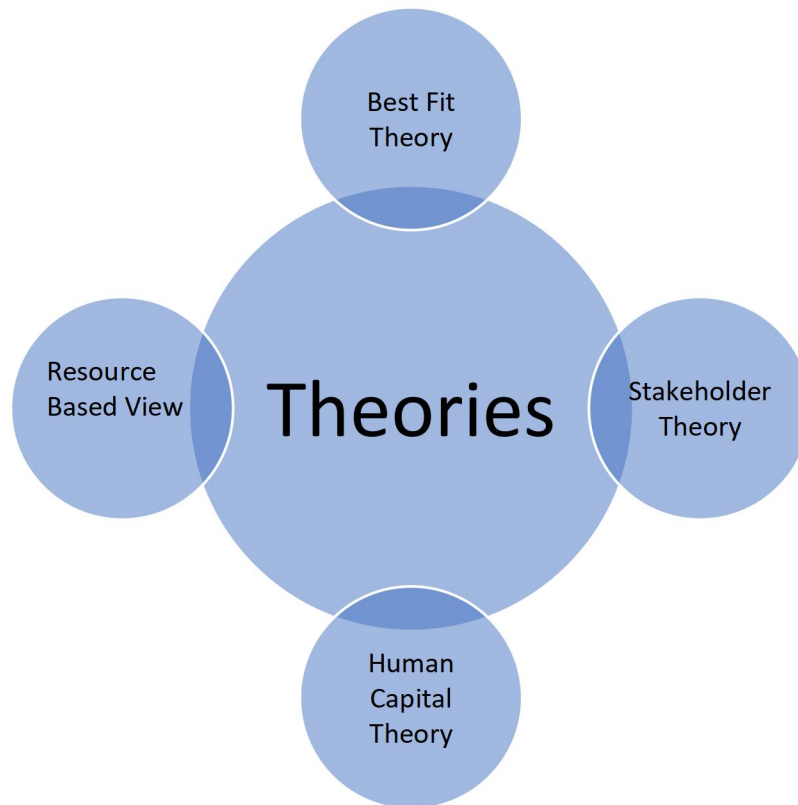


Figure 2: Theoretical Foundations

Source: Author (2022)

For the purposes of this research study, the researcher made use of four theories namely; the Best Fit Theory, the Resource Based View Theory, the Stakeholder Theory and the Human Capital Theory. These theories are better placed to explain the dynamics of Human Resources Management strategies. The theories are explained in detail below and the justification for using these theories are emphasized.

2.1.1 The Best Fit Theory

Several scholars confirm that the Best Fit Model/ Theory is better placed to explain

organisational dynamics. In HRM, the term Best Fit Model describes a strategy in which HR procedures are in line with the business objectives and environment of the company, (Gumbie et al., 2023). This model tries to maximize the organization's strengths and capabilities for improved organizational performance while taking into consideration its particular demands and problems. The evolutionary theory, upon which the Best Fit model is predicated, holds that firms can adjust to their surroundings, market dynamics and technology advancements by harmonizing their HRM policies with their business strategy.

According to the Best fit perspective, HR strategy becomes more successful when it is linked to the business environment, (Gasela, 2021). By measuring the degree of vertical integration between an organization's HRM policies, practices and business strategy, it investigates the close relationship that exists between HRM and strategic management. According to the Best practice school thought, putting some best HR Practices into effect can boost organizational performance as evidenced by improved quality and efficiency, reduced absenteeism and attrition and improved employee attitudes.

The Best Fit approach, according to Barney (2019), examines the intimate relationship between HRM and strategic management. It implies that HR practices that complement one another enhance both corporate performance and employee motivation. Additionally, Jonga (2014) supports common practices that can create a competitive edge, such as job stability, selective hiring, self-managed teams, high compensation, contingent rewards, training, minimizing status gaps, information exchange and horizontal integration. These procedures align with the competitive external incentive structure that both employers and job seekers anticipate.

According to Fan et al., (2019), business strategy, organization size, technology, location, labour market management skill preferences, industry sector economic conditions, and matching organization environment elements are all necessary for effective HR policies. According to Harrison and Wicks (2021), decision-making in HRM necessitates a universal or Best fit approach that outlines the advantages of different systems practices by adhering to prescriptive best practice methodologies. Research has demonstrated that attaining great performance requires alignment between HR strategies and business. Successful businesses apply best practices when they draw conclusions from their past.

Thus, it is crucial to remember that different strategies might be required for different organizations.

2.1.2 The Resource Based View (RBV) Theory

The RBV theory as illustrated by Barnes (1991); Huselid et al (1997); Lepak and Snell (1999) amongst many other scholars, emphasizes human resources as the most important asset in an organization hence, organisations that seek to gain competitive advantage must capitalize on enhancing individual abilities, and applying good employee retention strategies. According to Saukkonen and Kirjavainen (2019), the RBV is a strategic management paradigm that emphasizes a firm's internal resources and competencies as a source of competitive advantage. In addition to intangible assets like intellectual property, brand reputation and organizational culture, these resources and competencies also include concrete assets like physical infrastructure, technology and financial resources (Varadarajan, 2020). According to Marginson (2019), the RBV posits that companies can attain a durable competitive advantage over their rivals by securing special and valued resources and capabilities.

The RBV theory was used particularly for this study's theoretical framework because it provides a holistic theoretical bridge between human resources management strategies and overall business as indicated by (Marginson, 2019). Scholars like Brewster (2004); Kulaba et al., (2019), argue that for a long time, the Human Resources Management literature was consumed by an external perspective. Barney (2019) further argues that external factors such as the government policies, labour market, and competition within the industry or national culture had a direct influence on HRM practices in most businesses. However, the Resource Based View opposes the idea, arguing that the success of a firm is largely a result of its specific and distinctive potential associated with the way it organizes its resources, (Barney, 2015; Marginson, 2019 & Huselid et al, 2017). According to Nathaniel et al.,(2021), the RBV theory regards internal resources like Human Resources as significant contributors of a firm's performance and success and are a crucial source of sustainable competitive advantage, (Barney, 2019) argues that to obtain competitive advantage a resource must be;

The researcher saw it fit to use this theory for this study because it recognizes the

importance of human resources in an organization. This is supported by Okeke and Agub (2016) who assert that the tacit knowledge that gives an organisation a competitive advantage will emanate from internal development. Thus it is important for organisations to continuously develop their human resources. Moussa and El Arbi (2020) further purport that, mapping the perceived role of strategic human resource management practices in sustainable competitive advantage will enhance employee loyalty, commitment and engagement with the company. The RBV Theory shows the importance of deploying the scant human resources in a way that produces the best results for as little cost as possible to the organisation, (Kulaba et al., 2019). Therefore, an organisation's human resources are often regarded as a key source of its competitive advantage as human beings add value, are heterogeneous, non imitable and cannot be easily substituted, (Gasela, 2021).

2.1.3 The Stakeholder Theory

Harrison and Wicks (2021) define Stakeholders as people with significant input and vested interest in a company. Harrison and Wicks, (2013) also support this definition by stating that stakeholders can be individuals, groups or organisations with specific interest in the organisation's operations and processes. Most organisations largely depend on stakeholder's participation for the achievement of their stated goals. Gannon et al., (2020) argue that, it is imperative for organisations to engage in strategic relationships with their various stakeholders. The author's further allude that, relationships with Stakeholders can either positively or negatively impact on the organisation's strategic decisions and thus ultimately contribute towards the realization of organizational goals. This means stakeholders may be partly accountable for the success or failure of a firm to implement a strategy. Velter (2020) concur with Gannon et al. (2020) and further emphasize that stakeholders are important for an organisation's success especially when aligning crucial decisions and strategic goals. They are also regarded as equally able partners in an employment relationship and their contributions are treated with utmost respect. The assertion resonated well with Moussa and El Arbi (2020) who proposed a comprehensive model, indicating that in order to generate organizational wealth, the relationship of a firm with its critical stakeholders is crucial.

Harrison and Wicks (2021) posit that the Stakeholder theory is an idealistic theory

because it recognizes that, stakeholders who are treated well tend to reciprocate with positive attitudes and behaviors towards the organisation. The behavioral reciprocity comes in the form of divulging crucial information, loyalty buying or purchasing more goods and services, engaging in stock trading, tax holidays or incentives, employee retention and engagement. Employees may further exert more effort towards their work. Hanelt, Bohnsack, Marz and Antunes (2021) indicate that the contemporary business world requires organisations to frequently interact with their environment for successful achievement of organizational goals. If there are any changes in the environment, it becomes inevitable for organisations to incorporate such changes in all its systems and processes, (Hanelt et al, 2021). To that end Kajongwe, Munoneka and Masamba, (2022) propose that the connection between stakeholder's actions and the accomplishment of different corporate performance goals may be studied within this framework,

The Stakeholder theory was chosen as a theoretical foundation for this study because it recognizes the inherent advantages of taking into account vast ideas emanating from various groups. The theory was also chosen because local governments are public establishments which serve public interests hence it is important to include stakeholder concerns and voices in the administration of such entities. Agranoff and McGuire, (2012); Freeman, Harrison and Wicks, (2013) also support the use of the Stakeholder Theory by citing that the theory promotes a practical efficient, effective and ethical way of managing organisations in a highly complex and turbulent environment. Zimbabwe is one country which has faced a turbulent economic environment for the past two decades. Hence the use of this theory will go a long way towards understanding the situation local government authorities face. Hanelt et al., (2021) also support that an organisation that manages for stakeholders, is determined to allocate more resources towards satisfying the needs and demands of its various stakeholders in order to simply retain their willful contribution and participation in the productive activities of the firm. This researcher further utilized the Stakeholder theory because it is a theory which allows businesses, church groups and NGOs to meaningfully contribute towards the good of the communities in which they serve. Gannon et al., (2015) further supports this assertion by acknowledging that stakeholder management has transcended academia and is increasingly taking centre stage and has since been adopted by most HRM practitioners as a method for integrating Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) into managerial

decision making.

2.1.4 The Human Capital Theory

According to Marginson (2019), the Human Capital Theory focuses on personal attributes, competencies, and knowledge that enable an employee to be productive for the benefit of the organisation. Founded by Schultz (1961), the theory holds that the human capital concept proposes an investment in an organisation's human capital through training and development which could raise their future income through promotions thereby increasing their lifetime earnings. Schultz (1961) emphasizes that, employee knowledge, skill and attitude acquisition enhances the means of production. The theory recognizes that investment in human capital through training initiatives is expensive but organisations should nonetheless view training as an investment rather than a cost, (Marginson, 2019). The author further alludes that, developing employees is done so that they may climb up the organizational ladder through promotions as well as increasing personal incomes. The skills and knowledge that they acquire are utilized in implementing chosen strategies.

In their remarks, Nathaniel et al., (2021) indicate that the Human Capital Theory regards human capital as possessing critical skills with limited industrial experience. Therefore, an organization's means of production and individual outputs depend on the rate of return from the human capital they possess. In their argument, Nathaniel et al. (2021) further assert that if organizations are determined to increase their output, then there is need to invest more in human resources. This sentiment is also shared by Huselid et al. (2017) who posits that, organizations must constantly invest in their human capital and advocate for continuous learning which is often regarded as a cornerstone for developmental initiatives in an organisation. According to Stone, Cox and Gavin (2020), successful investment in human capital results in a firm gaining sustainable competitive advantage. Several research analysts of the theory converge on the view that, investing in human resources development improves the skills, knowledge, and abilities of the employees flowing within and into the organisation and this results in successful strategy implementation, (Moussa & El Arbi, 2020). Stone et al. (2020) further elaborate on their assertion by affirming that, human capital theory recognizes that employees are heterogeneous and this means they are cable of coming up with different initiatives which

could assist the organization in its quest to achieve organizational objectives.

The Human Capital Theory was chosen for the purposes of this study because employees are the most important tool which is responsible for driving the organization towards the intended destination. Local governments can only achieve their service delivery function if employees who are the core drivers are incorporated, motivated and valued. Thus, it is imperative for local governments to develop the human capital through training and other developmental initiatives, (Nathaniel et al, 2021). Some view human capital as a tangible resource. In this regard, human capital development could be considered as a firm's investment that will improve the competence of their employees to achieve competitive advantages (Gannon et al., 2015). This implies that any organisation that aims at distinguishing itself from the rest, needs to invest in its employees so that they acquire the requisite knowledge and skills that are necessary in a competitive business environment in order for them to be effective and efficient in the discharge of their duties (Velter, 2020). The significance of human capital development in a firm's performance and in achieving sustainable competitive advantages is well documented in various literature. Hence, the researcher saw it fit to include the theory for this study.

2.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Below is Figure 3, which the researcher used to show the conceptual framework that illustrates the relationship between independent and dependant variables;

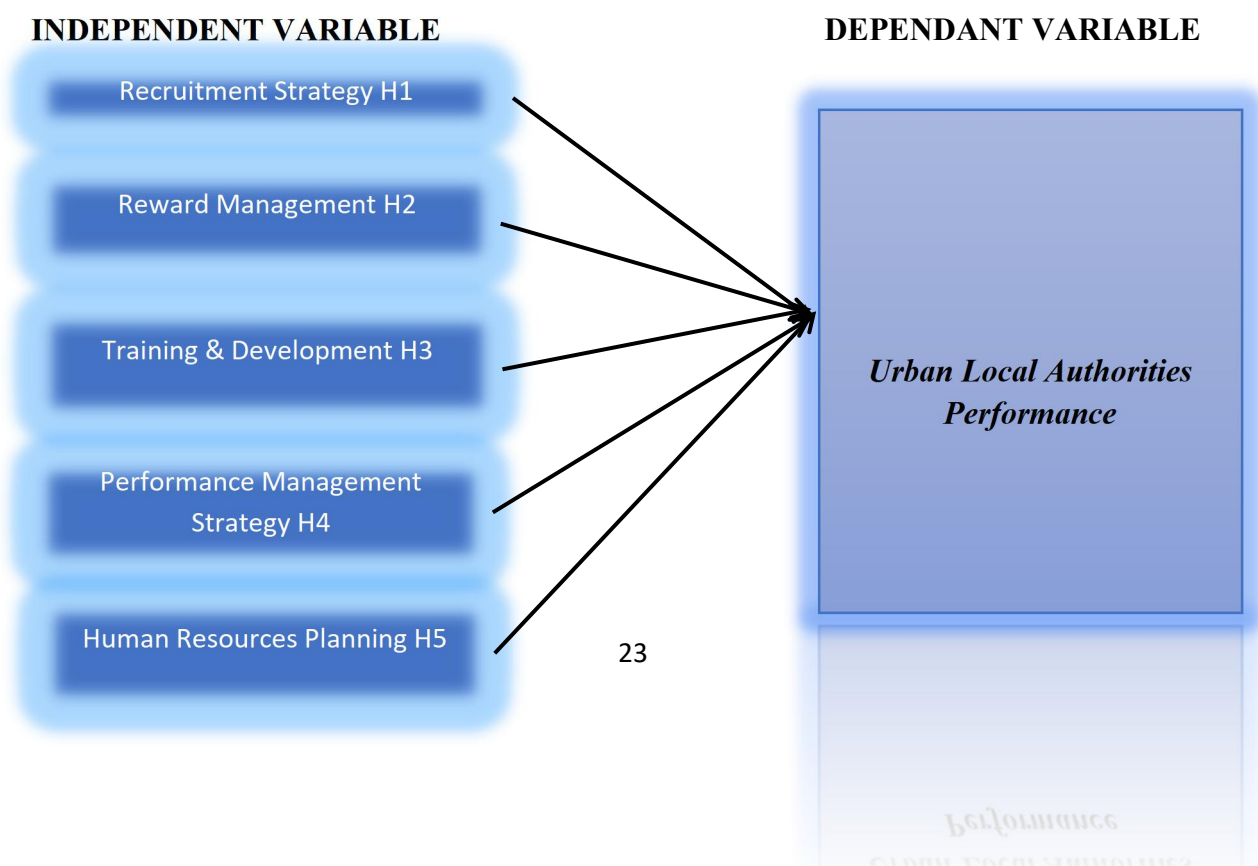


Figure 3: Conceptual Framework

Source: Source: Author (2022)

In her quest to build a conceptual framework for the present study, the author identified the following five HRM related constructs as having an influence on the performance of Urban Local Authorities: Recruitment strategy, Training and development strategy, Human Resources planning strategy, Performance Management strategy and Reward Strategy.

2.2.1 Hypothesis Development

Numerous studies done previously, have availed some empirical evidence and theoretical backing that employee motivation, satisfaction and organizational performance are likely to be associated with one another. The studies further reveal that employing Human Resources Management functions in organisations improves organizational performance in terms of financial standing, employee satisfaction, increased productivity and employee retention. The researcher developed the following hypothesis and established a research model grounded in pertinent theories and empirical work accordingly.

2.2.2.1. Recruitment strategy and Urban Local Authorities performance

Many researcher's have studied the relationship between Recruitment strategy and Urban Local Authorities performance, (Mutongoreni, 2013; Chatiza, 2010). Similar studies have also been conducted on the contribution of employee resourcing strategies to effective local government systems in Zimbabwe. In a study by Mutongoreni (2023), the study recommended that appointments in local authorities be based on merit. In another study by Lubega (2019), results of the study showed that employee performance is positively correlated with experience, financial standing, education level, and personal training.

Recruitment is the process of luring people to apply for jobs in a company on a timely basis, in sufficient numbers, and with the right qualities, (Lubega, 2019). Sulich (2016) further defines recruitment as the process of drawing in, vetting, and assigning qualified applicants to positions permanent or temporary within an organization is referred to as recruitment.

The relationship between recruitment function and ULAs performance can be explained using the Resource Based View (RBV). This theory was propounded by Bamed (1991) and the theory emphasizes human resources are the most important asset in an organization hence, organisations that seek to gain competitive advantage must capitalize on enhancing individual abilities, and applying good employee retention strategies. The organization's employees are the focus of recruitment, but the organization as a whole is the beneficiary of final performance. The outputs or outcomes that a company generates should be used to gauge its performance (Kusek et al., 2005). Staff members, however, do a great job delivering the results. Thus, thorough, effective, and efficient hiring practices improve the performance of the organization.

Therefore the researcher suggest the following;

Hypothesis 1: Recruitment function is positively linked to Urban Local Authorities performance.

2.2.2.2 Reward function and Urban Local Authorities performance

The importance of aligning an organisation's reward management system to the overall business strategy cannot be overemphasized. Numerous scholars have studied the relationship between Reward management function and the overall performance of Urban Local Authorities, (Chisango et al, 2022; Tshukudu, 2022). Reward system is therefore a vital tool for driving business growth and boosting staff morale.

Research in Human Resources Management considers employee satisfaction ad effective constructs for measuring the reward function. Existing literature suggest that a reward system ought to be developed from and support the business strategy, promote long-term enhancements to company success, initiate and maintain behavioral and cultural transformation and to consolidate with the remainder of HR practice and policy, (Bevan, 2001).

The relationship between Reward management function and ULAs performance can be explained using the Best fit theory and the Equity theory. This theory describes a strategy in which HR procedures are in line with the business objectives and environment of the company, (Gumbie et al., 2023). This model further tries to maximize the organization's

strengths and capabilities for improved organizational performance while taking into consideration its particular demands and problems. The underlying assumption of the Equity theory is that most people expect social justice or equity to prevail in interpersonal transactions, (Cropanzano et al, 2003).

Therefore, the researcher suggest the following;

Hypothesis 2: Reward management function is positively linked to Urban Local Authorities performance.

2.2.2.3 Training and Development function and Urban Local Authorities performance

Many researchers have studied the nexus between Training and Development function and Urban Local Authorities performance. Training is characterized as "a systematic approach to enhance behavior, attitude, knowledge, or skill via a learning process to attain optimal performance in a variety of activities or an activity." According to Milhem et al (2014), the main goals are to help people grow as individuals and to meet the organization's present and future demands. Prior studies have considered Training and development as an antecedent for enhanced service delivery. Training and development efforts are employed as a tool for human resource development to enhance the skills and knowledge of employees (Heatheld, 2020; Hassan et al., 2019).

Empirical evidence revealed that Training and Development is positively related to employee performance. Superior staff performance and enhanced service delivery are the results of pertinent training initiatives and programs (Fuente & Bartram, 2018; Hee et al., 2019). According to Ballies (2009), Ngobese (2017), and Mehlape (2017), it is critical to undertake training in-depth and to make sure that programs are assessed and customized in order to support employees' professional development and peak performance.

Research in Human Resources Management considers enhanced knowledge and skills as effective constructs. According to a hypothesis put up by Garvey et al. (2017), coaching and mentoring are methods of training and development that may be applied to improve worker performance, knowledge, and nurturing abilities. However, research evidence suggest there is a growing concern about the lack of skilled municipal employees who can deliver essential services to under-resourced local communities, (Nama et al, 2022).

The relationship between Training and Development and ULA performance can be accounted for using the Human Capital Theory. Since the foundations were provided by Mincer (1958, 1962), Schultz (1960, 1961), Becker (1962), and Ben-Porath (1967), theories of human capital have advanced quickly. Training has costs and benefits because it is considered an investment, and these may be evaluated using financial metrics like internal rate of return and present value.

This thesis suggest that, training and development leads to enhanced employee performance, improved employee attitudes, skills and knowledge for improved service delivery.

Therefore this thesis suggest that;

Hypothesis 3: Training and Development function is positively linked to Urban Local Authorities performance.

2.2.2.4 Performance Management Function and Urban Local Authorities Performance

Many studies have been conducted globally which attempts to explain the relationship between performance management and ULA performance, (Saft & Lane, 2008; Popewi, 2018; Gasela, 2021). Performance management is one of the most important and beneficial advances in the field of management since the 1960s is the idea of performance management.

Empirical evidence suggests that performance management function is positively correlated with organizational performance. Many studies highlight the importance of KPIs in assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of local authorities. Clear metrics also help in identifying areas for improvement. Research indicates that local authorities that implement robust performance management practices often see better outcomes in areas like public safety, waste management, and public health, (Chikwariro, 2021; Mutongoreni, 2014; Fundira et al, 2023).

The relationship between performance management function and Urban Local Authorities performance can better be explained using the Equity theory. Equity theory looks at how people choose behaviors to satisfy their basic wants and assesses whether or not those choices were successful (Daft and Lane, 2008).

The researcher therefore suggest the following;

Hypothesis 4: Performance Management function is positively linked to Urban Local Authorities performance.

2.2.2.5 Human Resources Planning and the performance of Urban Local Authorities

Numerous studies have been conducted which attempt to explain the significance of Human Resources Planning and the performance of Urban Local Authorities, (Chikwariro, 2021; Chakaipa, 2010; Poperwi, 2018; Mutongoreni, 2014).

Empirical evidence indicates that effective human resources planning (HRP) is closely linked to improved organizational performance. Fundira et al (2023) argues that effective HRP enhances recruitment processes, leading to higher-quality hires. Organizations with strong HRP frameworks often report lower turnover rates. Gasela (2021) highlights that organizations investing in training and development, as part of their HRP, see substantial improvements in employee performance and productivity. Poperwi (2018) reiterates that organizations that integrate HRP with effective performance management systems can set clear performance goals aligned with strategic objectives, leading to improved outcomes.

The relationship between HR planning and Urban Local Authorities performance can better be explained using the Resource Based View, Human Capital Theory, Best Fit Theory and Stakeholder Theory, (Popperwi, 2018; Chihambakwe, 2016; Chikwariro, 2021, Daft & Lane, 2008).

The researcher therefore suggests the following;

Hypothesis 5: Human Resources planning is positively linked to Urban Local Authorities Performance.

2.3 OPERATIONALIZATION OF VARIABLES CENTRAL TO THE STUDY

2.3.1 Definition of Human Resources Management

Chihambakwe (2016) defines Human Resources Management (HRM) as a well knitted set of people centred initiatives that are aimed at coordinating human resources in an organisation.

Gasela (2021) alludes that HRM is a unique method of managing the workplace environment through people with the objective of gaining competitive advantage. This is partly achieved through the acquisition of highly skilled personnel. HRM also involves strategic management of highly committed and motivated workforce using combined sets of cultural, organisational and human resources techniques. Both definitions suggests that HRM is concerned with the management of employment relationships in an organisation. This includes policies such as employment contracts, retention, motivational, participatory and development strategies. The main focus of human resources management is on the ideas, techniques and tools that raise an organization's level of productivity. HR professionals accomplish this by implementing plans and guidelines that boost workers productivity, (Poperwi, 2018).

Researchers like Cantele and Zardini (2018); Huselid et al., (2017) concur that Human Resources Management aims to maximize employee performance. HRM recognizes that an organization's human resources dictates the extent to which organisational objectives are achieved and how successful the organisation becomes. Harrison and Wick (2021) further posits that Human Resources concentrates on drafting, implementing and monitoring people centred policies when managing organisations. The HRM department is mainly responsible for various activities which include; employee recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, reward management, occupational health, safety and wellness, Industrial relations, managing diversity and talent management among others, (Bradley, 2019).

According to Sixpence (2021), HRM encompasses all people related activities which an organisation's management engage in to attract and retain highly competent staff and to ensure that the hired employees perform at the best of their abilities in order to turnaround the organisation's fortunes or to achieve organisational goals. This sentiment is also supported by Ozkeser (2019) who defines HRM as comprising a planned and strategic method of the management of the most crucial asset in an organisation and these are people employed there. These employees may through individual brilliance or collective efforts contribute to the realisation of organisational objectives. The success of any organisation is embedded in the quality and competences of its human resources and these include the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the workforce. Furthermore, Ozkeser (2019) advocates for organisations to provide a conducive atmosphere for employees to grow and develop themselves. According

to Alnidawi et al., (2017); Jonga, (2014), the assignment of procuring and retaining competent employees and workforce capacity building must be prioritized in organisations. However, this is not the case in most organisations as the development of human resources has often been sidelined by line managers and viewed as a cost rather than a long term investment that could bring vast amounts of benefits to the organisation, (Marumahoko, 2020).

2.3.2 Significance of Human Resources Management

In today's contemporary world, the HRM function has evolved. It is no longer concerned about the simple filing, house-keeping and record keeping (Widyanty et al., 2021)). Research evidence reveals that there are a number of benefits which accrue to organisations if they manage their employees well. Tayeh (2018) emphasizes that human resources are crucial in any organisation since employees shoulder the responsibility of providing competitive and exceptional services. She further reiterates that appropriate implementation of HRM strategies in an organisation will help an organisation to outdo its major competitors and gain competitive advantage. Henceforth, it is critical for organisations to promote employee innovation and creativity through applying good HRM practices.

Moreover, Jackson et al. (2014) opines that if major attributes of HRM are practised, an organization is likely to have highly competent performers who are talented and capable of sustaining the organisation in the long run. Tayeh (2018) further highlights that, Strategic HRM within the organization, plays a vital role in predicting, diagnosing and prescribing an organisation's human resource problems with the aim of coming up with sustainable HRM solutions. Strategic integration of HRM practices is also important because it gives organisations a distinct non imitable advantage. Abuhantaash (2018), further highlights that HRM is essential for organisational effectiveness because it equips the organisation with highly trained workforce, enhances employee engagement and commitment levels, utilizes employee's skills efficiently and also helps organisations to maintain socially acceptable behaviour.

2.3.3 Human Resources Management (HRM) functions

In most institutions, Human Resources Management remains a critical avenue for modernization particularly in the public sector, (Pollit & Bouckaert, 2004). Warnich, Carrel, Elbert and Hatfield, (2015) emphasize that public institutions leaders must utilize strategy integration where HRM activities are incorporated into the mainstream organisational activities. Human Resources Management Strategies specifies the vision of the organisation with strong emphasis on HRM initiatives and how these are assimilated with the overall business strategy. Marginson (2019) suggest that for a strategy to be meaningful it must have objectives which must clearly articulate what the strategy seeks to achieve and a course of action which specifies how the strategy will be attained. In public institutions, HR Strategy is not self-governing and therefore it must involve various stakeholder perceptions, (Pollit & Bouckaert, 2004). The above propositions suggest that HRM initiatives do not operate in a vacuum and must therefore be employee centred, courteous and supportive of government's vision, (Tran & Dollery, 2021).

Cantele and Zardini (2018) propounded that HRM Strategies must clearly articulate an organisation's human resources policies highlighting clearly what the organisation seeks to achieve. Therefore, HRM Strategies must satisfy employee's needs and at the same time assist the organisation to achieve its objectives, (Hanelt et al., 2021). Organisations are different in many aspects hence, there is no such thing as a standard human resources strategy, (Walker, 2009). Some strategies are simple and require general declarations of intent whilst others are more detailed. Pollit and Bouckaert (2004) highlights that HRM strategies have two basic strategies which are either High Performance Working standards or Specific strategies which relate to the various HRM functions.

2.3.4 Urban Local Authorities (ULAs)

According to Nathaniel et al., (2021), Urban Local Authorities (ULAs) are defined as any sub-national level of government delegated with authority and power to embark on different functions affecting a certain jurisdiction. Zinyama (2022) reiterates that, the functions played by Urban Local Authorities may be of an administrative nature, governmental, and monetary roles or any others as may be stated by the governing rules and regulations of the established local authority.

ULAs are public institutions with legal person which means they can either sue or be sued in their own name, a sub section of the central government and they are answerable to citizens, (Nico et al., 2018). This subordination to the state figure is a constant requirement found in other definitions (Velter, 2020). According to the definition given by the OECD (2020), the Urban Local Authorities are based on financial governance, statutory and exclusive authority over a jurisdiction of a group of people. Zhou and Chilunjika, (2013) further posit that Urban Local Authorities are local bodies which have legislative and executive authority to preside over communities and in return they render public service delivery in cities and towns. This sentiment is also shared by Thapa (2020) who concurs that Urban Local Authorities possess, administrative, legal and management roles in their jurisdictions. Aijaz (2007) opines that ULAs involves local governing of a town or city whereby the executives find solutions to everyday challenges which are faced in the territory. Sidgwick, (2014) further concurs that Urban Local Authorities are governments of some sub-communities with special authorities to draft laws which apply to the area which they control. The above definitions demonstrate that the management of ULAs have powers bestowed upon them through democratic voting and there is management of local finances in all ULAs. Summarily, this means ULAs also enjoy some powers in the exercise of their mandate.

Godwin (2014) gives a socio-developmental definition of ULAs, he posits that it is a kind of government that manages its private affairs within their jurisdictions. Hanelt et al. (2021), defines ULAs as part of the governance of a country that deals with problems or issues of a population within a certain territory or location. The two definitions suggest that ULAs have some degree of independence or freedom whilst their powers are confined to certain boundaries. Agranoff and McGuire (2004) in their view suggest that ULAs are public entities which are intended to develop the communities in which they operate using local funds and revenue received from the government. The ultimate goal of Urban Local Authorities will be to improve the livelihoods of the people residing in the communities they serve and to promote growth and development of employees. The duo further highlight that, where Urban Local Authorities system is efficient and effective then the corporate government principles of openness, accountability and honesty become key to the operational processes and ultimately, quality services are rendered, (Agranoff & McGuire, 2004).

2.3.5 Human Resources Management Personnel in Urban Local Authorities

The Human Resources Management personnel in Local Government play a pivotal role in ensuring councils are adequately staffed. Jacobson and Sowa (2015) juxtaposed that, in contrast to their private sector counterparts, HRM in Urban Local Authorities impacts either positively or negatively to the wider community. In private sector, the operations of the HRM department may affect only the business but in Urban Local Authorities the impact is high, (Goodman, 2012). Thus, HRM must be done properly for the good of the community and the nation's development at large. Fundira et al. (2023) suggest that in today's modernized business world, it has become imperative for HRM practitioners to constantly navigate the ever increasing challenges posed by the internal and external environment. The above sentiment places the responsibility of modernizing HRM processes and operations in Local Government to HRM professionals. Therefore, successful municipalities must be able to use their employees to mitigate their everyday challenges in order for councils to meet their obligations, (Poperwi, 2018).

2.4 HRM FUNCTIONS USED BY URBAN LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN ZIMBABWE

This research section aims to analyze the literature on Human Resources Management Strategies prevalent in Zimbabwe ULAs. It also aims to assess how these strategies affect Urban Local Authorities performance. HRM Strategies such as human resources planning, recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, reward management and self managed teams will be analyzed. Below is an HRM model as suggested by Balkin (2013) in the Table 1 below;

Table 1: HRM functions in ULAs

HR Function	HR Strategies	Action
Human Resources Planning	Urban Local Authorities must plan for future human resources requirements. Budget for future human resources requirements	

Recruitment and Selection	ULAs must be prudent and proactive in searching for talent. They must hire employees with the right attitude, skills and knowledge. Identify employees who fit well with the local government culture. Adopt virtual platforms to help with sifting of applicants. Internal recruitment must also be prioritized before external adverts are flighted.	Make use of Headhunting Recruitment agencies Psychometric tests
Communication	Always communicate with employees. Participate approach in decision making. Create an open door policy. Develop trust amongst employees. Provide feedback.	Be transparent in all dealings
Reward Management	Recognize employee efforts by rewarding exceptional behavior. Total Reward Approach. Urban Local Authorities must find ways of sustaining multi-currency salaries.	Reduce Wage differentials/Gaps Constantly carry out Job Evaluation exercise
Training & Development	Invest in Training and Development	Training Needs

	to enhance employee skills. Use appropriate Training methods. Prioritize internal promotions.	Analysis
Performance Management	Set Goals together with employees. Monitor performance. Evaluate performance. Provide Feedback.	Use of RBMs or Balanced Score cards

Source: Author (2022)

2.4.1 Recruitment and Selection

Walker (2009) defines recruitment as a process of identifying and recognizing prospective candidates for employment from outside and inside the organisation. On the other hand, employee selection begins with the identification of the right candidates which are suitable for the job. Recruitment in organisations must be properly done in order to engage competent employees who are able to bring change, competitive advantage and sustainable development, (Ngari, 2017). Furthermore, recruitment and selection are regarded as HRM primary functions hence organisations must be safe havens for growth and development. Research further indicates that a successful Recruitment and Selection process impacts positively on the broader facets of organisations whereas a poor recruitment process may have negative consequences on the achievement of organisational goals. Nathaniel et al., (2021) further posits that, employing the wrong candidates is costly to organisations.

Human Resources Managers in Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe are responsible for the recruitment function. A well designed recruitment and selection process helps to identify the right candidates for the job by matching the person specification with the person. Velter (2020) emphasizes that, the major goal of recruitment is to come up with a list of qualified job seekers for vacant posts. Gannon et al., (2015) further indicates that, the success of the enterprise is directly linked to its employees' capabilities.

However, recruitment and selection processes in Local governments in Zimbabwe are often overshadowed by scandals of nepotism and corruption. Fadhil (2019) also indicates that recruitment process is always affected by bias since it is open to subjectivity. As such, most local governments have resorted to panel interviews which are aimed at diluting favouritism and subjectivity. According to the National University of Ireland (2006), prospective candidates must be treated in a professional way which leaves them with a positive company image even after failing to secure the job. Moneva et al., (2020) also emphasizes that recruitment committees must be well versed with the laws of the land with regards to discrimination of prospective candidates. Kajongwe et al., (2022) further argues that, in developing nations, recruitment processes are subjective and there's nepotism.

2.4.2 Reward Management

Most researchers converge on the conclusion that, human resources efforts in the organization must be recognized and appreciated, (Duvnjak & Valentina, 2018; Rollison, 2002; Mason & Barrett, 2006). According to Cook and Hunsacker (2001), reward management is defined as policies and systems which are developed by organisations to compensate for employees effort and to motivate employees to perform better. Chatiza (2010) posits that, there are two types of rewards namely extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic rewards are tangible in nature and include pay, pension and conditions of employment. Intrinsic on the other hand comprises of employees need for achievement, fulfillment and more challenging work.

Mason and Barrett (2006) emphasize that, an organisation's ability to attract competent employees and the ability to pay them gives an organization a competitive advantage. In public institutions, the creation of reward systems is primarily aimed at channeling employee behavior towards the desired output, (Duvnjak, 2018). In most Urban Local Authorities the reward system is different from that of private sector employees. In Urban Local Authorities, remuneration is determined by local by laws. Poslome (2021) argues that, the system of local government is characterized by basic salary, and there's little room for additional rewards. The following model was formulated by Wuryanti (2017) and it depicts the importance of adopting a proper remuneration system in an organization;



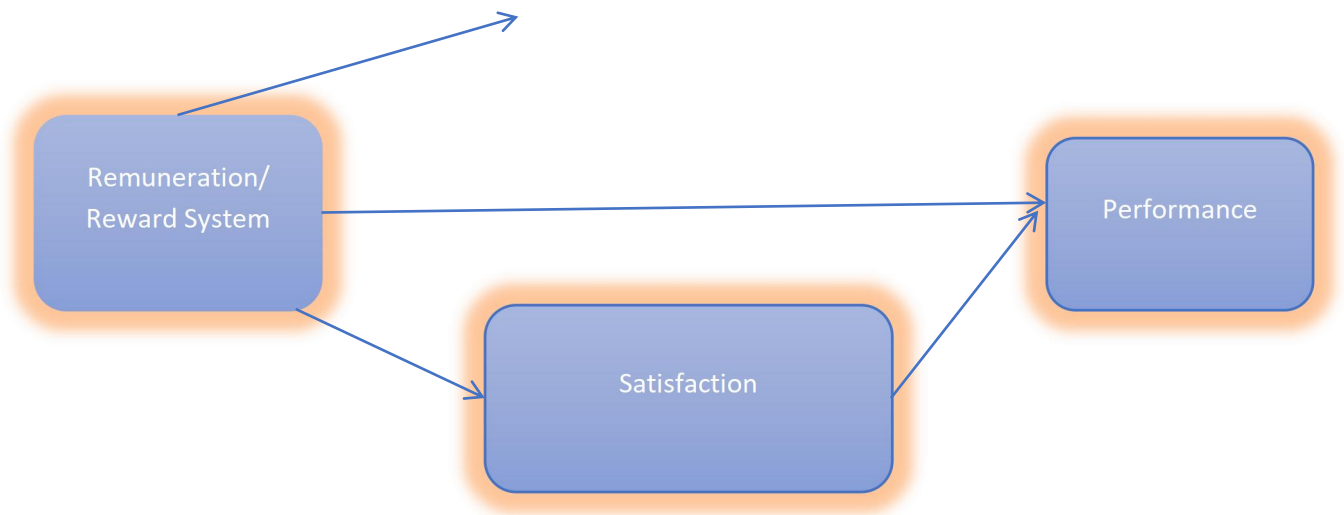


Figure 4: Reward Management Process

Source: Wuryanti (2017)

2.4.3 Employee Training and Development

Training and Development plays an instrumental function in enhancing employee competencies and ability to perform on the job tasks (Lee & Shin, 2019). Training and Development is aimed at improving employee attitudes, skills and knowledge, (Armstrong & Landers, 2018). Most researchers converge that training and development improves an organisation's performance, (Armstrong & Landers, 2018; Lee & Shin, 2019; Sharma & Taneja, 2018). Training is significant because it mould employees and prepares them for future roles thereby enhancing an organisation's performance. Chikwariro et al. (2021) asserts that, training and development reinforces an employee's behaviour on the job and positive behaviour is rewarded. However, research evidence suggests that, training becomes relevant when training needs identification processes have been carried out properly, instead of routine training programmes, (Zvavahera, 2014).

According to Bilgic (2020), training is a continuous knowledge acquisition process that encompasses learning new concepts, attitudes, rules and skills in order to improve performance. Training and development is also defined by Kareem (2019) as a planned, methodical, and ongoing process aimed at changing or developing the workforce's behaviour, knowledge, skills, and attitudes in order to satisfy current and future demands. The above definitions conclude that training results in a change of behavior and enhances employee

performance. As such, Local governments must constantly update their employee skills in order to meet the global changes, gain competitive advantage and stay relevant, (Bilgic, 2020).

Tora (2021) alludes that training and development occurs in three main cycles listed below:

- ❖ Training Needs Analysis (TNA),
- ❖ Training design and Implementation, and
- ❖ Training Assessment.

Most researchers agree that employee training and development impacts positively on organizational performance (Chikuni et al., 2017; Hammond et al, 2020 & Prabhu et al, 2019). In addition, Chigwata (2017) highlight that, in the public sector, the most effective way of training employees is through inducting new employees into the existing organizational culture. This allows the new employees to be assimilated into the already established procedures and approaches.

Prabhu et al. (2019) highlight that, Training and Development programs can be done on or off the job depending with the intended training outcomes and organizational capabilities. Some organisations may choose to conduct a series of lectures, lessons, role playing or demonstrations. In this regard, it is important to ensure that local governments implement Training and Development in an efficient manner. Duvnjak (2018) asserts that people who work in public institutions must be motivated to perform their duties in a manner which enhances quality delivery of services to the general citizens. This suggests that local governments must be properly administered, and must use and distribute resources fairly and efficiently.

In addition, Islam and Ahmed (2018) emphasize that no organization can function efficiently without adequately trained human resources. The authors also suggest that the most significant aspect of Human Resources Development is the transfer of learning, which is the ability of trained employees to implement what they have learnt. Gumbie et al., (2023) also posit that local governments must constantly evaluate employee training programs. Training evaluation according to Barney (2019), refers to assessing whether Training and Development initiatives are moulding desired and valued workers through an efficient and

well integrated training process. The author further points to different models of evaluation namely, input evaluation, process evaluation, product evaluation and outcome evaluation.

Dube (2019), suggest that local government's training and development strategy must be consistent with and aligned to the institution's overall strategy. Meardi (2021) further posit that it is the major responsibility of an organisation to initiate and implement training and development programs in order to gain competitive advantage. As such, Urban Local Authorities have an obligation to ensure that their employees are regularly trained in order to meet the growing global trends and increase the council's competitiveness.

2.4.3.1 Learning and Development

Learning and Development is defined by Pyne (2003), as a systematic process of acquiring nurturing minds to continuously think. It is a process of continuously developing through knowledge, skill and acquisition. According to Clarke (2004), learning and development is an HRM method which is aimed at supporting an organisation's current and future needs in terms of skills development. Ozkeser (2019) suggest that, learning organizations are responsible for facilitating life long employee learning initiatives. The above view is shared by Abuhantaash (2018) who highlight that, learning organizations are responsible for continuously improving employee capabilities in order to improve an organisation's current and future goals. The above definitions suggest that, Urban Local Authorities must design and implement human resources policies which are aimed at enhancing employees' capabilities, (Goodman et al., 2003).

Moreover, Pynes (2003) highlights that, an organisation's learning and development strategy must be people and organisational oriented. Furthermore, a learning and development strategy must focus on human capital growth and development as well as organisational needs, (Goodman, 2003). In Zimbabwean Urban Local Authorities, Learning and developing strategies include mentoring, cross training and professional development, (Pynes, 2003). These training methods are important in successful management and ensuring continuity of services and mission accomplishment, (Goodman, 2003). Learning and development strategy is fundamentally concerned with creating a learning culture and will provide the basis for planning and implementing learning activities and programmes. The idea that individuals should be enabled to invest in their own development seems to have escaped learning

organization theorists who are more inclined to focus on the imposition of learning by the organization, rather than creating a climate conducive to learning.

2.4.4 Succession Planning

The human resources succession planning function emphasizes on having a clearly laid out plan which ensures continuity of operations in organisations. Succession planning is defined by Hirsh (2004) as a process of identifying individuals suitable for future key posts. The process also ensures that these individuals are developed and prepared to execute future leadership roles. Employee succession planning therefore addresses the movement of employees in and out of the organisation. The process has got positive staffing implications in the strategic management of human resources as it addresses employees' movement in and out of the organisation, (Hirsh, 2004).

Available literature reveals that, succession planning is instrumental towards preparing the organisation for the future. It also enables active development of longer term organisational successors through ensuring their career development process. It is also necessary because it enables successful auditing of the organisation's talent pool thereby influencing resourcing and developmental strategies, (Armstrong, 2006) It further fosters an organisational culture through developing a group of people who are seen as a corporate resource and who share key skills, experiences and values seen as important to the future of the organisation.

2.4.5 Workforce Diversity

Embracing diversity aspects is one of the most significant strategies in Human Resources Management. Mushamba (2010) argues that workplace environments are now heterogeneous and workers are now more diverse in terms of abilities, age, gender, sexual orientations and religion. Hence, managing the workforce diversity, has increasingly become a topical issue in modern organisations, (Hussain et al., 2021). Workforce diversity is defined by Hussain (2021) as associating the similar and dissimilar traits of an individual's mind. Barney (2018), define diversity management as the ability of managers to design appropriate policies that accommodate everyone in the organisation.

Dabale et al. (2014) defines Workforce diversity as the differences among employees in terms of age, cultural background, physical abilities and disabilities, race, religion, gender

and sexual orientation. People also differ in their perspectives, opinions and prejudices. This diversity therefore makes the workforce heterogeneous, (Abane et al, 2022). Moreover, Adeyami (2012) defines diversity as a term used to describe when leaders value and take advantage of differences so that each individual can maximize their full potential. Workforce diversity is further defined by Alghazo and Shaiban (2016) as the heterogeneous structure of workers of the same organization in terms of gender, age, race, and educational background. Barak (2016) further defines workforce diversity as employee differences that extend to the values, organisational roles, occupation and behavioral styles. Furthermore, according to various authors, workforce diversity can be classified into different forms or types, such as gender, age, race/ethnicity/nationality, tenure, and functional/educational background. In addition, new traits have been encompassed and these include disability, sexual orientation and religion, (Fan et al., 2019).

The above definitions suggest that workforce diversity involves embracing different people their physical characteristics, differences and innate abilities for the good of the organisation. It also signifies that Workforce diversity if managed properly can be a source of competitive advantage for most organisations. Managing and valuing diversity is a critical component of effective people management, which not only improves workplace productivity but also contributes significantly to human resource management's strategic objectives. Nowadays, companies tend to pay more attention to managing diversity since diversity presents greater opportunities.

Available literature indicates that diversity management strategies lead to an increase in organisational performance, (Hussain, 2019; West & Berman, 2018; Shamian, 2019 & Saxon, 2014). Managing workforce diversity has attracted great attention in organisations because of the potential benefits which organisations enjoy after successfully implementing it. According to Shamian (2019), diversity enforces analytical thinking, employee development and organisational growth.

Zimbabwe has always promoted inclusion and participation of employees in local governments, (Chatiza, 2010). In public institutions, workforce diversity means cities can promote the participation and empowerment of their employees. Furthermore, the government of Zimbabwe has improved regulations with regards to employment of female employees in leadership positions, (Kalev, 2006). Furthermore, managing diversity has also

become significant due to the diverse nature of communities under the jurisdiction of Urban Local Authorities. This implies that local government administrators must integrate managing workforce diversity when developing its strategic human resources policy, (Soni, 2004). However, research on equal opportunities and diversity in Urban Local Authorities has concurred that, there are significant gaps with regards to implementation. There are also notable persistent inequalities with regards to minority groups.

2.4.6 Performance Management

According to Kent and Haldma (2019), performance management in local government is primarily concerned with assisting its leadership to make justifiable decisions with regard to operational efficiency and effectiveness. Furthermore, performance management must be structured to meet the demands of its various stakeholders namely employees, citizens and the government on service delivery, poverty eradication, standards of living development, job creation and socio-economic development. Therefore local government must strategically utilize performance management as a tool to enhance their capabilities, do away with employees' poor performance and ultimately improve service delivery, (Johanson, Almqvist & Skoog, 2019).

For local governments to meet their mandate, they must be convinced that their performance management systems explicitly show what is expected from each employee, (Aleksandrov, Bournmistrov & Grossi, 2020). This sentiment is also shared by Brown (2001) who emphasizes that goals and targets should be clearly stated for employees in an organisation. In addition various researchers like (Kaye-Essien, 2020; Kloot, 1999; Kenta & Haldama, 2019) agree that performance management system must be integrated with overall local governments processes meaning performance must be embedded in the local government's culture. For example, it must be integrated into the structure of the local government, norms, beliefs, values, legislation and business culture. Soomro and Shah (2019) further assert that the local government performance measurement system must timeously provide feedback in order to detect non compliance easily and in order to identify problem areas that need immediate rectification. In addition, Urban Local Authorities should introduce employee supervision in order to check if they are conforming to set standards and monitor if given tasks are being executed as intended, (Brunetto & Beattie, 2020).

2.4.6.1 Performance Appraisal Strategy

One of the most critical HRM functions in modern day organisations is performance management. Both the private and public sector are now appreciating the importance of performance management in business, (Chikwariro et al., 2021). Performance Management is defined by Bin (2011) as an objective centred process which ensures that due processes are in place to achieve set standards. Geissodofer et al. (2018) associate the word performance with business outcomes. Furthermore, available literature reveals that individual employee performance is positively related to organizational performance, (Chandraesaker, 2011; Kyohairwe, 2014; Iqbal et al, 2014; Moyo, 2021).

In the context of public sector management, performance is mainly linked to realisation of set standards. In Urban Local Authorities, employee performance can be measured through achieving individual, team or the institution's goals, (Chatiza, 2010). According to Iqbal et al (2014), employees' individual effort is important in contributing towards organisational performance. Performance Management therefore, focuses on measuring an organisation's actual output versus the expected targets. In Urban Local Authorities, performance management includes the outcomes and consequences of managing socio-economic activities. Monge (2016) postulates that businesses measure performance differently and often prioritize achieving set targets.

Aijaz (2016) suggest that one way of measuring performance in an organization is through the use of performance appraisals. Performance appraisal is defined by Dabale et al., (2014) as a process of measuring and reviewing individual, group or organisation's performance. Performance appraisal is an important aspect of evaluating contribution versus outcome, (Balkin, 2013). The process aims to attract competent employees, retain, motivate and develop them, (Lwamufa, 2007). Bourne (2019) cited that, there are key points which must be adhered to when coming up with a performance appraisal and they are listed below;

- ❖ Performance targets must be set.
- ❖ Employees must participate
- ❖ Constant monitoring and evaluation, and
- ❖ Feedback

Many researchers converge on the idea that performance management is important in both public and private sector, (Bukoye et al., 2022; Cuffe, 2014; Lwamufa, 2007; Mwema & Gachunga, 2014). Firstly, performance management enables employees to assess their behavior and take corrective action where necessary, (Mwema & Gachunga, 2014). Performance management also permits managers and employees to assess historical performance in order to plan for the future, (Jonga, 2014). Bourne (2019) further opines that, performance management allows managers to make crucial decisions on pay related issues against employee contribution. Performance management further improves employees' desire to work (Gasela, 2021). Similarly, Siaguru (2011) suggests that performance management provides room for constructive criticisms and both the manager and the employee comes out of the process as a better person. In light of the above, Urban Local Authorities must strive to develop key performance indicators, constantly monitor and evaluate employee performance.

2.4.6.2 Performance Appraisal Strategy

Performance appraisals contribute tremendously to Urban Local Authorities planning and implementation of Human Resources Management policies. Research evidence suggests that consistently reviewing employees performances through the use of performance appraisal, leads to rapid growth and builds human resources capabilities. Mwema and Gachunga, (2014) define performance appraisal as an organizational wide continuous process, which measures individual employee performance versus the achievement of organisational goals. Jonga (2014) posits that, local governments use performance appraisal to initiate administrative and strategic decisions concerning employees which are related to succession planning and training needs identification among other things. Performance appraisal therefore benefits employees in numerous ways.

Performance Appraisals have increasingly become popular in most local governments. In China, the system dates back to the early 70s. Zimbabwe adopted performance management systems soon after independence, (Chakaipa, 2010). The Zimbabwean government had made great effort towards regulating the local government framework and performance management. In the early 90s a system of performance indicators were developed in order to measure individual work performance. Nowadays, the Urban Councils Act is used to regulate the performance management framework in local government.

Gumbie et al., (2023) highlights that performance appraisals assist organisations to enhance their internal communications between the employer and the employee. In addition, Mwema and Gachunga (2014) indicate that, the use of performance appraisals enable employees to identify what is expected from them in terms of behaviour and targets. The author further alludes that, employees are able to evaluate their own performance and thereby apply remedial solutions where their actual performance falls short of expectation. Moreover, appraisals help in providing feedback to workers about individual behaviour and it also allows employees to provide input into their managers decision making. Performance appraisal also increases employees' motivation to work as reported by Bradley (2019). Similarly, Jonga (2014) found that an effective performance appraisal motivates managers and employees to work harmoniously.

2.4.7 Reward Management as an HR Strategy

In any firm, the Reward management system has garnered significant attention as a defining characteristic of high welfare and performance among employees. Wuryanti and Setiawam (2017) defines Reward Management as the systematic process of developing and implementing pay policies for employees in exchange for the effort or services rendered. The same sentiment is shared by Sixpence (2021) who define reward management as processes, strategies and processes which organisations use to appreciate the value or and contribution which employees bring to the their teams, departments and the organization as a whole. The above definitions concur that, rewards are monetary or non monetary incentives given to a worker in exchange for their effort rendered to the organisation. Poperwi (2018) highlights that, reward management strategies contribute towards an increase in organizational performance especially if the strategy is specifically designed to attract, motivate and retain employees. Conclusively, rewards refer to money given to an employee by the employer. This is sometimes known as pay, salary or wages.

Branca and Marija (2021) posits that, an organisation's reward strategy must be aligned with its employee's values and goals as this enables successful achievement of organizational targets. Osabiya, (2015) further reiterates that employers, who give the most attractive reward packages, have higher employee retention rates as compared to those who remunerate their employees poorly. This position is also supported by Herzberg's two-factor theory which postulates that pay or money is not a motivator. However, the absence of pay leads to

employee dissatisfaction. Thus, if an employer stops paying employees, it causes job dissatisfaction and according to the law this can also be considered forced labour. According to Osabiya (2015), the presence of rewards in organisations motivates employees to work. Research evidence has revealed that rewards are positively linked to employee performance, (Duvnjak, 2018; Osabiya, 2015; Poperwi, 2018).

Contemporary profit-oriented business organisations are consciously aware of growing importance of managing the human resources well. An incentive system is therefore tailor made to reinforce employee workplace attitude and behavior towards achieving organizational goals, (Duvnjak, 2018). Public sector institutions are also not spared from the need to motivate their employees and redirect their behavior towards intended results. However, Branca and Marija (2021) argue that local governments are usually slow in adopting modern reward management practices.

2.4.7.1 Financial rewards

Financial rewards consist of all payments that can be assigned a monetary value such as base pay, contingent pay, financial recognition schemes, sick pay or health insurance among many others, (Wuryanti, 2017). In the business world, monetary rewards are often viewed as critical in attracting and retaining competitive employees. Similarly, local governments are required to provide financial rewards in-order to appreciate the value which employees bring to the organization. Many researchers also concur that financial rewards are strongly related to employee performance, (Duvnjak, 2018; Muchadenyika, 2014; Thomas & Hammond, 2019).

Armstrong (2010) highlights that; incentives may be useful to employees in manufacturing sector in-order to motivate them to produce more. Incentives can further be used when employees have direct control towards their work. Bonuses can also be given as financial incentives to employees, (Armstrong, 2010). Retirement benefits are further regarded as financial incentives which allow employees to be loyal and committed to the organization.

Local governments in Zimbabwe give their employees bonuses and retirement benefits, (Chatiza, 2010). Some private sector companies are now giving their employees retention bonuses. However, public institutions are not liquid enough to afford this, (Smith, 2016), Kuiate and Noland (2019) further suggest that, retirement initiatives are effective at retaining employees as such Urban Local Authorities must design such policies.

2.4.7.2 Non-financial incentives

Non-financial incentives are significant for public institutions like Urban Local Authorities because they operate on tight budgets and hence find it difficult to offer financial incentives. Agbenegah (2019) defines non-monetary incentives as intangible benefits which are given to employees' in exchange for their efforts. Non-monetary incentives are cost effective and affordable. Non monetary incentives include recognition, praise, promotion, challenging roles and responsibilities.

2.4.8 Employee Retention Strategy

There are numerous strategies which HRM departments can utilize in order to promote employee commitment and loyalty. Kraja (2015) cites that, it is the responsibility of the local governments to promote job security and ensure full employment. One of the employee retention strategies according to Libert et al. (2020), is to fulfil employees need for job security. Kraja (2015) defines job security includes being knowledgeable that your job is permanent. The author reiterates that, the commitment and loyalty level in experienced employees is directly linked to their job security. As such, the more positive the workplace environment is, the higher the employees' commitment towards the organization.

Prabhu et al. (2020) further support that, job security requires a certain degree of reciprocity between the employers and employees. It is claimed by Irabor and Oklie (2019) that organizations must clearly indicate to employees that their jobs are safe. This can be done through issuing permanent employment. Secondly, employees have to express their satisfaction by signing and accepting such contracts. Improved job security, is directly linked to employee commitment and loyalty on the job. Ultimately, this leads to increased organizational performance. Available literature revealed that employee retention is positively related to improved organizational performance, (Kraja, 2015; Libert et al, 2020; Oklie, 2019 & Prabhu et al, 2020).

However, Leung (2009) argues that the drawbacks and benefits of job security are still unknown. The author's argument is that employees with high job security may invest significantly in company loyalty whereas those with no job security may take advantage and sabotage the employer. This sentiment is further shared by Dewa and Dziva (2014), who reveal that a high conviction in job insecurity is often associated with job dissatisfaction. With this in mind, local governments in as much as they operate under political, financial

and legal pressures, they must strive to ensure that their employees' jobs are safe and secure in order to enhance employees performance.

2.4.8.1 Self-managed work teams & Decentralization

Self managed teams have been widely utilized by public sector management researchers as the answer to post-bureaucratic challenges faced by these institutions. Pollit and Bouckaert (2004) argue that the growing demand by the general citizens for quality services, have forced local governments to introduce new work norms that are divorced from rigid bureaucratic tendencies of these institutions. Lane and Wallis (2009) highlight that one of the ways which can be used to enhance workers capabilities is through the use of self managed teams. De Bakker et al. (2019) define teamwork as groups which are responsible for managing their own work both internally and externally. Team members also exercise a great deal of autonomy whilst jointly solving their own problems and are equally responsible for their outcomes, (Jonga, 2014).

It is well established in contemporary literature that team members must synthesize their activities and efforts collectively, (Stone et al., 2020). Gavin et al (2020) further emphasize that, organizational members must be goal oriented and assist the organisation towards achieving its vision. Research evidence suggests that self managed teams have positive relationship with organizational success, (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020; Prado et al, 2020; Stone et al, 2020). In Urban Local Authorities, employee involvement strategies like decentralization give employees room to be creative, innovative and critical thinkers, (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020). However, the issue of self management teams in the public sector is still largely practised on paper. A study done by Kalleberg et al. (2006), revealed that the concept of self management teams in the public sector, is largely dependant upon other organizational characteristics.

2.4.9 Organizational Culture

Research evidence suggests that organisational culture impacts positively on the organisation's performance, (Gheta, 2017; Hoefstede, 2001 & Jonga 2014).The power of organizational culture is embedded and mirrored in an organisation's continuity. Hidi et al., (2021) further asserts that, the use of organisational culture coupled with other HRM functions is a long term panacea towards creating and strengthening an organisation's brand,

self identity, uniqueness and values. Hoefstede (2001) defines culture as the norms, values and beliefs which are shared within a company. He further argues that organisational culture is directly linked to national culture as such; it must be reflective of the country's beliefs, traditions and norms. This view is shared by John (2006) who concurred that national culture put constraints on organisational culture.

In local governments, Handayani et al. (2018) posit that, stakeholder participation and the ability to integrate cultural practices in an organization, has a direct positive effect on service delivery. Chan, Shaffer and Snape (2004) highlight that, organisational culture is assimilated into the way HRM processes are developed, integrated and implemented. For instance, most local governments are bureaucratic in nature and stifle employee growth and initiatives. These public institutions, do not give employees room for creativity, discretion or autonomy. Thus it becomes difficult for the HRM department to reward innovation due to lack of room for empowerment and emancipation, (Prabhi, 2005). Furthermore, Lestari et al., (2020) argue that in countries like Zimbabwe which are still developing, cultures which promote national peace are strongly valued and regarded in social and work relationships and all efforts are put in place to minimize direct confrontations. Conclusively, all Local Government stakeholders must mutually respect and support each other, combine their knowledge, ideas, skills and experience to improve service delivery, (Miguel, 2015).

2.5 ROLE OF HRM IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Human Resource Management plays a crucial role in shaping and directing the public sector operations. According to Meardi (2021) in the field of public administration, HRM is essential to guaranteeing impartiality and conformity to moral principles. This function is made possible through adherence and upholding of good ethical standards. Through the management of healthcare record keeping, promotion, advancement, benefits pay and long term goal and plan creation, staff are empowered to manage a value based system.

High performing HRM teams in effective local governments also play a significant role in the public sector. They aggressively encourage staff members to add to this culture, (Garavan et al., 2019; Nyauchi & Jagero, 2014). In addition, their work teams gain a better understanding and comprehension of organisational goals. Furthermore, a progressive relationship between the Trade Unions and Human Resources Management is a must for successful ULAs.

Through the enforcement and oversight of employment contracts, trade unions agents can improve the efficiency of human resources management on the performance and well-being of employees, (Meardi, 2021).

2.5.1 Training and Development

Offering opportunities for staff training and development is a crucial function of HR departments in public organizations, (Knies et al., 2022). HR must first determine the training needs based on their current workforce and resources before any real Training and Development can take place in Local Authorities (Nyauchi & Jagero, 2014). To assure stakeholder satisfaction in the ever- evolving digital environment, proactive municipal councils are implementing media based training programmes, (Bradley, 2019).

2.5.2 Strategic Partnerships

HR professionals in their role as strategic partners should aggressively seek for bright people who can contribute to the short, medium and long term goals of the local government in their capacity as strategic partners, (Poperwi, 2018). Thistlethwaite et al. (2019) recommended creating a workforce plan that incorporates particular tasks in order to improve recruitment procedures. These activities include talent inventories, which analyze the skills that are available, action plans which increase the number of qualified employees through programs for on-boarding and selection; workforce forecasting which makes it possible to predict future personnel needs and control and evaluation which track goal achievement and offer feedback.

2.5.3 HR Information Systems (HRIS)

HRIS refers to an information system used to record, analyze and manage data connected to human resources in known as a human resources information system, (Andry & Chakir, 2020). Due to external trends like slowing financial development and the rise of smart competition using cutting edge technology, interest in HRIS has surged among global businesses, (Bilgic, 2020; Bradley, 2019). When HRIS is implemented thoroughly, HR professionals can become full business partners by combining their technological expertise and HR experience to improve human services, (Bradley, 2019). Because of this, useful models like the one put forth by Dhanpat et al. (2020) may help HR professionals concentrate

on technology- related competencies and more effectively manage their position in Industry 4.0.

2.5.4 Strategic Management

Establishing organizational goals, assessing the current strategy and examining the internal and external organizational environments are all part of strategic management (Hejase et al., 2016). HRM practitioners can effectively stimulate management support and promote planned personnel activities by using strategic management as a technique of delivering. HRM (Poperwi, 2018). More precisely, the HR decision in public institutions should support heads of policy in their supervisory capacity in order to improve strategic management (Brunetto & Beattie, 2020).

2.5.5 Performance Management

The integration of employee contributions with the strategic goals of the business is known as performance management. A performance management system is intended to hold management responsible for carrying out the organization's values in a well mannered institution, (Meyer, 2017). Therefore, it can be concluded that the GOZ's adoption of the IRBM system aimed to achieve outstanding service in Zimbabwe's Local Authorities as well as accountability for performance outcomes. It is unknown, therefore, how the performance management system is being implemented in respect to HRM and HR professionals.

2.6 CHALLENGES FACED BY ULAS IN IMPLEMENTING SERVICE DELIVERY STRATEGIC PLANS.

2.6.1 Political interference

Political meddling distorts the operations of public sector organizations and their capacity to sustain efficiency, which has severe detrimental impact on successful HRM, (Ahmed & Dantata, 2016). In the guise of party loyalty, some local government politicians purposefully impede institutional processes and uphold a persistent culture of public office abuse, (Mapura & Takabika, 2020). Deployment of cadres, inept employees and blatant corruption are some of the related issues (Makapela & Mtshelwane, 2021).

Oluwu (2009) while discussing decentralization of Central governments, outlines that the major drawbacks of Local governments in third world countries, emanates from the inherent fear which locals have towards their national governments. In most cases, these governments will be militaristic in nature such that their leaders will be well known for amassing wealth in order to sponsor their lavish lifestyles at the expense of the poor masses. In Zimbabwe, the sudden shift in the political outlook, saw the country witnessing a great transformation in which local governments were used for political contestation, (Sibanda, 2017). Chilunjika (2017) further opines that the general populace are the ones who suffered in this fight where local citizens played pawns in a chess game of political wrangling. The consequences of such fights are that, service delivery is neglected and is left to deplete beyond rescusable state whilst leaders pursue their own selfish agendas.

Marumahoko, Chigwata and Nhede (2018) also purport that, the Minister through ministerial powers granted by the Urban Councils Act may interfere with local government processes. Section 315 of the Act gives the Minister power to make directions as s/he deems fit. The following ministerial powers are accorded by the act;

- ❖ Section 318, Power to dismiss Urban Local Authorities executive and replace them with government appointed commissions.
- ❖ Sec 80, Appoint local government board
- ❖ Section 132, Appoint special interest councillors
- ❖ Sect 4, Have unfettered access to the minutes of the proceedings

The above cited ministerial powers have often proved time and again that service delivery suffers as a result of this interference, (Sibanda, 2017). The author further attributes the failure of Local governments to the policies and actions of the national governments.

2.5.2 Lack of Organizational Capacity

Organizational Capacity is the primary foundation needed by Most Urban Local Authorities to achieve their obligation. Many researchers converge that capacity is depicted in various forms, (Collins & Gerber, 2006; Hall, 2008; Terman & Feiock, 2014). The authors argue that most local governments lack the financial capacity to fund their operations. According to Howlett (2009), local governments are unable to raise capital or make life changing purchases on their own. They largely depend on their national governments for funding.

Misigo et al., (2019) further supports this notion by alluding that, most local governments in developing countries lack organizational capacity to mobilize and collect revenue efficiently. In Zimbabwe, the increase in the number of people trading in the informal sector has exacerbated local government's ability to raise funds. Local governments also face the human capital challenge as their environments do not promote prospective employee attraction and retention which promotes service delivery. In addition, most council executives are selfish and would want to save costs by doing away with employee developmental programs.

2.6.3 Bureaucracy

According to Malay and Fairholm (2020), bureaucracy is a complex operational method that is typified by a rigid chain of command, multiple tiers of systems and predetermined channels for decision making. Because of these operational procedures, HR and line managers are subject to a lot of regulations and lack discretion (McDonell, 2017). The range of duties that HR departments can carry out is restricted by the absence of such discretionary authorities. For example, long waiting periods when addressing employee concerns diminishes their trust and confidence in the competence of HRM people.

In a study by Ejersbo and Svara (2018), Local Governments had a major challenge of being bureaucratic in nature and this hampered operational processes. The ULAs bureaucratic tendencies also affected the provision of efficient service delivery to the residents. Previous researches had indicated that public institutions employees' performance was questionable, (Kovo, 2018). Existing literature pointed to poor remuneration and low educational levels as the major reason behind the Institutions inefficiencies. According to research findings from (Best et al., 2017; Ferraz & Finan, 2009; Rasul & Rogger, 2016; Ujhelyi, 2014), monetary incentives, management practices and inefficiencies in public job sector were the most cited arguments which caused bureaucracy in public institutions.

2.6.4 Offering and Maintaining Competitive Rewards

Chatiza (2010) argues that financial budgets in most Urban Local Authorities have always been tight due to poor revenue mobilization strategies and changing policies. Hence, it has always been difficult for most Urban Local Authorities to hire competent and skilled personnel due unattractive compensation strategies. In developing countries like Zimbabwe,

most governments had always struggled to provide for operational, revenue and capital expenditure improvements. Most of the governments were operating on a tight fiscal policy. Chisango et al. (2023) posit that increasing the Human Resources budget is directly associated with an increase in taxes. Thus HR professionals have always been tasked with devising alternative competitive ways of retaining employees. Brown (2020) asserts that employers in Urban Local Authorities may offer low cost health plans, generous retrenchment plans and flexible scheduling among other things.

Furthermore, Suwadi and Rahman (2019) argue that many local governments face the problem of failing to establish an appropriate reward management system which is aimed at improving employees' performance. Mickson and Anlensiya (2020) emphasize that appropriately rewarding employees is the most effective motivator for most workers. Hence, the reward management strategies in local government must be regarded as a significant HRM tool with the ability to transform an organisation's fortunes.

2.6.5 Mass Exodus of Qualified personnel

Zimbabwe had witnessed a massive brain drain in all sectors with the health sector being the most affected. Urban Local Authorities were also not spared from this challenge as governments struggled to maintain institutional knowledge. This made it difficult for Urban Local Authorities to fill in vacancies. On a positive note, the situation allowed most Urban Local Authorities to engage in succession planning.

2.6.6 Corruption

According to Saha and Sen (2021) corruption is a vehicle for breaking the law that exhibits avarice and a total contempt for ethics while dismantling an organizations' internal operations. An organization's effectiveness can be impacted by internal corruption when the organisation's procurement procedures are misused as well as external corruption when important individuals are corrupt, (Jancsics, 2019). Initially, hiring and selection procedures might be the most negatively impacted since employees will be chosen mostly on their personal interests.

2.7 STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION BY ULAs IN ZIMBABWE

There has been mounting concerns for strategy implementation in ULAs due to its importance in organizational performance. Scholars like (Chikuni, 2019; Chikwariro et al., 2021; Gasela, 2021 & Gumbie et al., 2023) note that although there are increasing calls of strategic implementation, more focus has been placed on strategy formulation instead. Researches done previously indicate that most organisations fail to implement more than half of their newly developed initiatives, (Miller, Wilson & Hickson, 2004). As such, priority is largely concentrated on strategy formulation rather than strategy implementation, (Van, Thiel & Leeuw, 2002). However, modern day research indicates that only profit making businesses are concerned with strategy implementation whereas public service institutions have a moral obligation to promote the well being of citizens, (Chikuni et al., 2017), without necessarily examining the implementation process.

Many researchers converge on the idea that strategy implementation is a significant tool which is used to improve an organisation's capabilities, (Branka & Marija, 2021). Strategy implementation also measures, the extent to which organisations have performed against set standards. Financial projections and budgets are also measured when evaluating an organisation's performance. As such, strategic management is an important tool used to transform an organisation's fortunes, (Hitt, Ireland & Hoskisson, 2012). The strategic management process focuses on capitalizing on a firm's strength and managing change effectively. ULAs strategy implementation efforts have been hampered by a myriad of challenges which obstruct the successful implementation process. The challenges which most Urban Local Authorities face come from internal and external factors which are discussed below;

2.7.1 Internal Factors which hamper HRM Strategy Implementation

The barriers to HRM strategy implementation that are faced by Urban Local Authorities emanate from both internal and external factors. Internal factors include the capabilities, knowledge, experience and attitudes of employees. Most researchers concur that the human resource asset is the most crucial asset an organisation can ever possess, (Makhamara, 2017; Ngari, 2017; Tayeh, 2018 & Zacharia, 2014). It is therefore essential for HRM departments in Urban Local Authorities to ensure that councils are manned by employees who are competent

enough to execute their roles. Shahari (2015) notes that competent employees give organisations a distinct advantage hence they must be treated with respect. However, Mutema (2017) argues that most councils are manned by an ageing workforce such that it becomes difficult to execute the institution's strategies. Hence, these employees need to be trained so that they are able to enhance their skills and job knowledge.

The strategic management process is also regarded as a tool which is aimed at modernizing public sector institutions in developing nations, (Heath & Palenchar, 2008). As such both the employees and management must be capacitated to be able to successfully deliver on the mandate. Makhamara (2017) indicates that employees must be adequately remunerated using financial and non financial incentives, they should be retained using employee retention strategies. Furthermore, strategy implementation remains an effective management aspect in making local institutions more responsive to the needs of the locals, (Duvnjak, 2018). As such, the government of Zimbabwe introduced strategic management planning process to ensure all stakeholders were incorporated in governance.

Makanyeze et al. (2013) bemoans lack of employee participation in the strategy development process. However, when embarking on a strategy development process, Strohhecke (2015) notes that, the process must allow for employee participation and involvement. Employees must be included because they are the drivers of the Urban Local Authorities strategy. Furthermore, local council efforts are also hampered by lack of employee commitment and motivation on the job. Chisango et al. (2023) indicates that most council employees are earning below the poverty datum line and as such they are disengaged and demotivated. Chihambakwe (2016) also talks about the negative attitude which most council employees exert on the job as one of the factors which hampers efficient service delivery.

2.7.2 External Factors which hamper successful implementation of HRM strategies

The Zimbabwean Urban Local Authorities operate in a broader macro-economic environment where politics, society, economics and technology may derail any developmental initiatives. Adam (2020), reiterates that, economic, political and legal aspects are the main hindrances in local government operations. Politically, Urban Local Authorities suffer from political sabotage as evidenced by the non availability of central government funding, (Chisango et al, 2023). Furthermore, there is visible political wranglings in most Urban Local Authorities as

seen by the continuous appointment of temporary commissioners by the minister. For instance, council debts were once written off during election campaigns and this negatively affected council operations, (Chihambakwe, 2016). All the above cited political interference, end up affecting service delivery.

The economic environment which most Urban Local Authorities find themselves in is dynamic hence, councils must constantly come up with financial policies which are flexible. Zacharia (2014) indicates that, lack of funding hampers the implementation of HRM initiatives such as training and development, headhunting and outsourcing. The non availability of funds means that, it becomes difficult for Urban Local Authorities to carry out any meaningful developments.

According to Chisango et al. (2023), the ever-growing changes in educational and professional qualifications, have necessitated an increasing demand for better goods and quality services. Consumers are now more aware and conscious of their rights. In a study by Hidir et al. (2021) the authors discovered that employees are now demanding local governments to be transparent and accountable with regards to their mandates. As such, local governments must be consciously aware and factor in the societal expectations in their performance.

In addition, Gumbie et al., (2023) cites that the attitude of public sector employees particularly in Zimbabwean Local Governments must change for improved service delivery. Controlling employee attitudes in Local Government is essential to maintaining smooth operations, a positive workplace environment and community service delivery of the highest caliber. Employee attitudes have a big influence on a lot of different parts of government operations like overall effectiveness, morale, productivity and public perception. Managing employee attitudes calls for a multidimensional strategy that takes into account things like collaboration, communication tactics, policy observance and fostering trust inside the company, Gumbie et al.,(2023).

2.8 Local Government Defined

Local Government and Urban Local Authorities are synonyms used in Local Governance. According to Jephias and Tendai (2020) Local Government (LG) is the section of government which is closer to the citizens and it is aimed at bringing governance issues

directly to the lower communities. Local government also allows citizens to participate in local processes which govern their everyday lives. In the broad definition given by (Jonga, 2014), LG is a gigantic multi faceted public institution which pursues political, economic and social agendas. These aspects are realized through provision of direct sponsorship, local funding, government loans or grants, indirect sponsorship of a wide array of services to its local community. The above definition by Jephias and Tendai (2020) emphasizes the significance of the social and political roles of LG.

Van der Waldt (2007), defines Local Government as an institution with decentralized authority and special powers which can either be general or specific, bestowed upon them by the central government within a given territory. Murimoga and Musingafi (2014) recognize the legal powers which Local Government possess meaning they can either sue or be sued in their own right. The implication of the above definition is that Local Government enjoys autonomous discretion in the exercise of its operations. In addition, LG also borrow a number of government features since they are part of the many government arms.

Local Government in the words of Murimoga and Musingafi (2014) can also be defined as public entities which are self financing, self regulatory, decentralized arms of the government which has a democratically elected body which is responsible for the Urban Local Authorities' performance. This definition depicts local governments not only as administrative units empowered by law to administer particular localities, but also as decentralized political, geographical, social and economic entities that function on a democratic basis in pursuit of their mandate to deliver services to citizens. The above definition is also supported by Shah and Shah (2006) who define local government as public institutions entrusted with local community funds, making rules and regulations and are responsible for the overall mandate of service delivery specific entities and institutions created in four main ways. In countries like Brazil, Denmark, Japan, Italy and France, the country's respective constitutions are responsible for creating Local Government. In countries like the UK and New Zealand there is a regulation which is used of a higher nature. In countries like China, Local Government can be created through the executive order. The above mentioned definition indicates that Local Government provides a diverse nature of social amenities to a given populace.

Chakaipa (2010) defines local government as part of the government which is democratically elected and tasked with governing a particular area. It also comprises of governing bodies

with defined authority which are responsible for crafting, implementing and enforcing rules and regulations within their jurisdiction. Musingafi (2012) posits that Urban Local Authorities are responsible for connecting with grassroots level and ensuring councils provide key essential services needed in their geographical locations. Nkomo (2017) substantiates this by arguing that Local Governance are significant in any economy and governments must strive to invest in Urban Local Authorities for economic growth and development. Moreover, Local Government allows active citizenship participation through the democratic process of electing council officials, (Nkomo, 2017). Local government is responsible for communicating with general population about the council's service delivery mandate.

2.8.1 Dimensions of Local Government

Gasela (2021), reiterates that local government is a multi-faceted and integral approach to governance in any given economy. Local Government is an integral part of democracy which encompasses the social, political, economic and legal aspect of management. Highlighted below are some of the Local Government aspects;

2.8.1.1 Social Perspective

Researchers like (Adeyami, 2012 & Singh, 2009) argue that local government is hinged on the social philosophy of togetherness or oneness. Local Government is the government arm which is closer to the citizens and is often in direct interaction with communities. Ola and Tonwe (2009) alludes that local governments create platforms and environments for interaction. The above researchers conclude that local governments from a sociological perspective are ideal platforms where government and residents interact to solve daily problems. Local governments also make it easy for governments to be reactive to the needs of the local citizens and to mitigate against challenges encountered in any given community. Local governments also provide an opportunity for residents to participate in decision making thereby solving their common problems of descend accommodation, clean water, good transport network and health services among other things. In addition, Besley and Ghatak (2007) argue that efficient management of public institutions is reflective of the citizen's quality of life and this is considered when calculating a nation's per capita income. Moreover, Torjman & Leviten-Reid (2003), posit that local government creates a sense of responsibility for stakeholders since they will be concerned with adhering to Corporate Social

Responsibility and giving back to the communities which they serve. Makanyeza et al. (2013) also weigh in by emphasizing that local governments are public entities which are mandated to improve the livelihoods of citizens.

2.8.1.2 Economic dimension

Adeyami (2012) expounded that local governments are responsible for improving the economic livelihoods of people in a particular area. The economic aspects of local government are directly connected to its economic viability. In this regard, it is imminent that revenue generation and revenue collection are fundamental aspects of local government. Ola and Tonwe (2009) stress that failure by Urban Local Authorities to raise funds could be detrimental to their efforts of improving the social amenities, welfare and health for people living in that community. For most local governments, viability of operations is largely dependent on effective revenue collection strategies meaning such local governments will be better positioned to meet their obligations and service delivery mandate. This financial independence ultimately mean that local governments will be better placed to ward off government intervention. Zhou and Chilunjika (2013) also support that LG independence is important since it leaves councils with a great degree of autonomy rather than constantly knocking at the government's door.

According to Van Donk (2008), Local governments have the responsibility of providing primary services like health, water, refuse collection, road rehabilitation, drainage facilities, land planning and parceling out as well as transportation. In order to successfully perform these roles, local government must work harmoniously with citizens in order to provide a mutual solution to the socio-economic development of a local area, (Omowunmi, 2016). Sing (2009) further emphasizes that local planning requires a more pragmatic based approach towards planning at local level. This planning must incorporate all local stakeholders mainly businesses, churches, employees, Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and residents. Oduro-Ofori (2011) further asserts that in today's business world governments are constantly finding ways of empowering local government to perform economic development activities. Residents are increasingly becoming conscious of the needs of their broader communities, and are now demanding that local governments be transparent in their operations, (Gasela, 2021).

2.8.1.3 Geographic dimension

Ola and Tonwe (2009) allude that local governments can also be defined in terms of geographic jurisdiction of the area which they cover. The geographic dimension of Urban Local Authorities can either impact positively or negatively on the Urban Local Authorities policies, rules and regulations, (Singh, 2009). The problems which local governments face also differ from one geographic location to the other. This is mainly attributed to the different geographic features, interests and preferences of habitats. Thus Tonwe (2011) proposed that different Local governments must employ different strategies to mitigate against their problems. As such, policy makers in local governments must familiarize themselves with local geo-demographic variables in order to proffer long term solutions to existing municipal problems. Despite enjoying geographic jurisdiction over their territory, LG remains a subset of government with limited authority and powers, (Murimoga & Musingafi, 2014).

2.8.1.4 Legal dimension

Adeyami (2012) asserts that Urban Local Authorities have got legal authority which is limited to the area which they serve. Studies by (Adeyemi, 2012; Tonwe, 2011) regard local governments as miniature bodies which have public interest at heart with regards to service delivery. Tonwe (2011) describes the legal facets of local governments as follows;

- ❖ Local governments have minimum autonomy powers. As a public entity, LG has powers derived from the constitution which allow them to raise and collect revenue as well as do financial budgets and control for the area under their jurisdiction.
- ❖ It is a sphere of the government which is chosen by people through democratic processes. The L.G is accountable to the people which they serve.
- ❖ As a legal entity, LG can either sue or be sued in its own name. They can also own, purchase or dispose off property in its own rights. It further has the legal right to sue for any breach of contract.
- ❖ Local government in their legal capacity can also act as defendants in court proceedings whereby it can also be sued for failure to fulfil its various obligations as a buyer, landowner, employer or a debtor.
- ❖ Local government differ from other persons in that they enjoy a continuous life gained from its immortality status. This means that LG will exist forever even though councillors may come and go, governments may change, executives may be booted out, residents

may also move away but Local governments exist forever. In addition, LG powers may alter from time to time yet the legal entity will soldier on without interruption

The above narration affirms that, local governments are independent public institutions or mini governments with discretion and freedom to provide quality services to the locals, (Singh, 2009). Furthermore, the legal aspect of Urban Local Authorities affirms that they are destined to ensure continuity in future years to come. Bin (2011) also asserts that, Urban Local Authorities obtain their legislative powers from national governments. According to Bin (2011), local government power cascades from the national government through decentralization. However, it is important to note that, central governments remain the governments, political power which may be delegated through devolution to local governments by statute. The central government sits at the helm of all local governments and can choose to whip them into submission by restraining their powers, (Tonwe, 2011).

In some nations, the national or federal government exercise much authority and power in the management and administration of local governments, for example, in Russia, Nigeria and the people's republic of China. However, in modern organisations, Urban Local Authorities enjoy great freedom and autonomy for developing, implementing and evaluating their own policies, (Dewa & Dziva, 2014). The above confirms that, most local governments have devolved the powers of managing local governments to Urban Local Authorities. The national governments only interfere when there is a need.

2.8.1.5 Political dimension

Local governments are normally regarded as political hubs for politically motivated individuals. Sekiguchi (2010) defines local government as political institutions which make crucial decisions about citizens residing in a community. The author further posits that local governments are guided by democratic principles. This view is supported by Murimoga and Musingafi (2013) who posit that, most local governments are democratic in nature and select leaders through democratic voting processes. Therefore, local governments allow employee participation in the political space through voting.

Public participation is defined as a process where members share their views, opinions and ideas with management, (Bayraktar & Uslay, 2016). Public participation in local government

is therefore significant because it brings government issues closer to citizen's doorstep. According to Bayraktar and Uslay (2016) public participation promotes citizen's inclusion in setting goals and priorities right. Many researchers agree that politics plays a major role in the operations of local governments, (Bayraktar & Uslay, 2016; Chigwata & Visser, 2018; Moyo, 2021; Murimoga & Musingafi, 2013).

Politically, local governments provide platforms for holding politicians accountable for their promises and actions. Kyohairwe (2014) supports this sentiment by arguing that local governments provide citizens with a chance to scrutinize local government activities. In Zimbabwe, local governments are often taken advantage of for political mileage. Chigwata and Visser (2016) articulate that local governments are often viewed as threats to the country's peace as such, their operations must constantly be monitored and whipped into compliance. Murimoga and Musingafi (2013) argue that local governments in Zimbabwe, have been captured and are under severe threats from political interference and this has negatively affected on service delivery. Moyo (2021) suggests that the ruling party (ZANU-PF) had a tendency of nullifying most council resolutions because most urban councils were controlled by the opposition. The author highlighted that many opposition officials had been arrested or suspended for being members of the opposition party.

Local governments further provide feedback to citizens with regards to governance issues, they cascade information from the national government to the local citizens. Cuffe (2004) posits that local governments convey important messages from national government to local citizens. Conclusively, Local governments are political institutions in local communities, which normally operate under the principle of democracy, (Sekiguchi, 2010). Thus, the political nature of local government is confirmed by its democratic system.

2.8.1.6 Administrative dimension

Local governments are mandated to provide the administrative function in the area which they serve. This administrative function means local government oversees the recruitment and selection of employees, record keeping, filing and other administrative functions. This administrative function just like any other public entity exposes local governments to bureaucratic tendencies. Tonwe (2011) reiterates that there are two types of local government one which offers unified services and the other which offers local service. The one which offers unified services can also be region or state wide whereas the state owned will be

restricted to the individual government, (Tonwe, 2011). According to Bayraktar & Uslay (2016), Local government is defined as an administrative organisation with political interference capabilities. Local governments also provide platforms for influencing or merging of political, organisational and technological processes.

Most governments in the world are unitaristic in nature, (Tonwe, 2011). In a unitary system, local governments are compelled to reduce the roles and weight which national governments carry and to provide services required locally, (Bayraktar & Uslay, 2016). This means the local government allows coalitions or power sharing deals between the central government and the local government. The central government however remains the leading player since it reserves the right to withdraw certain power or abolish the delegated authority. Furthermore, local governments adhere to two main principles of public sector administration namely efficient and responsible performance. Tonwe, (2011) argues that the link between political leaders and administrators is cemented by the administration of public activities, (Svara, 2001).

For instance, the relationship between council administrators and elected officials is illustrated by, (Mossberger, Clarke & John, 2015). The authors argue that, urban councils are manned by appointed Town clerks who supervise the administrative function whilst reporting to elected officials, (Mossberger et al., 2015). According to Svara (2001), elected officials and administrators must be in regular communication with citizens' in order to be responsive to their demands and harmoniously work together towards the development of communities in which they reside.

2.9 ROLE OF URBAN LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN ZIMBABWE

Singh (2022) asserts that Urban Local Authorities play a significant role in stimulating sustainable economic growth and development. They are also responsible for providing and maintaining infrastructure for water and sanitation, housing, waste disposal, road rehabilitation, public lighting, and services such as basic health and education which are all critical in the promotion of economic and social well-being (GOZ & World Bank, 2017). Moreover, Singh (2022) postulates that to perform these functions adequately, Urban Local Authorities also largely depend on central government for funding and to provide complementary infrastructure in areas that are beyond the jurisdiction of Urban Local Authorities.

In recent years, Local governance has drawn considerable attention and gained importance due to its people centered policies as well as its involvement of citizens in decision- making processes, (Haque, 2012). Singh (2009) further emphasizes that it is critical to practice democracy at the local level for improved efficiency at national level. Haque (2012) alludes that local governments are important because they politically educate a lot of people who reside in the areas they operate in. They also ensure that corporate governance principle of accountability is practised. Haque (2012) further purports that local governments enable central governments to be responsive to the needs of the people. This sentiment is shared by Singh (2009) who argue that Local governments serve as training grounds for political leadership in the sense that they educate people about democracy and participation in national politics. Thus, Local government provides opportunities for residents to exercise their voting right with regards to issues pertaining to their own localities.

Furthermore, councillors who would have assumed office through democratically elected processes, will gain vast amount of experience in administrative issues and gain a fair appreciation of national politics, (Singh, 2009). Many scholars have demonstrated the importance of Local governments, from as early as the the eighteenth century. In his studies, Mill (2021) defined local government as democratic schools where transfer of learning about democracy and citizenship participation are imparted to residents. He further emphasizes that, good governance entails improving the livelihoods of citizens, improving the knowledge and virtue of the subjects for the betterment of the society, Miller (2006), further supports that Local governments are also responsible for developing socially acceptable behaviour in a community. They also help to develop creativity and innovative qualities in the citizens coupled with tolerance and compromise. Lastly, local governments also assist organisations with political decentralization and open an outlet for articulation of smaller groups in a large society, (Singh, 2009).

2.9.1 Political education

According to Haque (2012), Local governments are important because they provide a useful platform for citizenship training with regards to citizenship participation, mobilization and political education. This sentiment is also shared by Islander (2015) who suggests that citizenship participation in local government initiatives, equips and educates employees on the following;

- ❖ political debate knowledge,
- ❖ the role of the local government,
- ❖ the voting processes,
- ❖ administrative issues,
- ❖ structure of local governments and
- ❖ Policies, plans and budgets.

In addition, the critical objectives of local government are explicitly stated by many researcher's, such as (Etikan et al., 2016; Fan et al., 2019 & Hidi et al., 2021), who emphasize that local governments enable citizens to make rational choices and strategic decisions pertaining to issues which affect their daily lives, (Haque, 2012). The author further asserts that, citizens are also awarded a chance to vote for competent people into influential positions. They also learn to identify and distinguish capable leaders from manipulative and incompetent representatives. Furthermore, citizens are also educated on financial management issues with regards to revenue and expenditures, (Chikuni et al., 2017). They also learn to debate on critical issues in a more constructive manner. Newton & Deth (2005), further concludes that local government provide citizens' breeding ground for democracy.

2.9.2 Political leadership education

Local governments are also important because they offer political leadership education to the population. Omowunmi (2016) highlights that local governments are better positioned to politically mobilize citizens through political awareness campaigns and political rallies. Thus, local governments are public institutions which could improve democracy at the local level. Local governments further provide an arena for political recruitment through their vibrant campaign processes and these institutions are better placed to train politicians for higher leadership roles, (Omowunmi, 2016). The foundations of political leadership are deeply rooted in local government training especially for citizens who intend to contest in national politics. These local governments are responsible for moulding the citizen into a vibrant contender when furthering their career prospects in national politics. According to Singh (2009), participation through voting provides political education to citizens as well as serving as a training ground for emerging political leaders who may eventually take up state or national-level leadership positions. Haque (2012) also posits that, local governments bring a nation's government closer to its people and allow for constant interaction and feedback. These days such

feedback are provided instantaneously through social media platforms thereby allowing government to react faster. Having cited the above, it is difficult to entirely conclude that lawmakers with vast local government experience may turn to be better national legislators than the ones who do not have it.

2.9.3 Fostering accountability

Another advantage of having Local governments is that they are mandated to ensure that there is accountability through decentralization of power from the central government and this reduces the bureaucrats' powers, (Singh, 2009). Abukaka (2010) emphasizes that accountability in Local governance involves the monitoring and balancing of potential abuse of power by public officials, which therefore limits the potential for corruption among public offices and officials. In support Haque (2012) proposes that local governments are a defence mechanism against the exercise of abusive power by national government officials since concentration of executive powers in the hands of a few elite can be unhealthy for a nation's progress. In this regard, accountability becomes imperative in local governments in order to mitigate against political abuse of power by the government, (Okeke & Agub, 2016). This power must be directed towards promoting citizen's rights. Local governments therefore are designated to reduce oppression and exploitation of citizens whilst respecting their rights. Chirisa (2019) opines that accountability can be used as a way of promoting good governance and efficient delivery of quality services by local governments. Furthermore, accountability can be re-established through promoting local democracy, involvement and citizenship participation. Accountability must therefore be integrated in an organisation's overall strategy. From this perspective, open discussions by the committees of Urban Local Authorities in public meetings can scare civil servants or central politicians in a number of ways (Haque, 2012).

In less developed countries like Zimbabwe, Local governments are used as communication links between central government and the local citizens. They provide a more flexible and instantaneous approach towards good governance and accountability, (Haque, 2012). Conclusively, Havenga (2006) cites that local government fulfills the notion that the government of the people, by the people in that more powers are vested in the local citizens as concerned stakeholders.

2.9.4 Responsiveness and efficiency

Local governments are important because they improve government efficiency and responsiveness. According to Olowu (2012), local governments are efficient because they are better placed to react quickly to the needs of the local community. They also offer the most ideal method of balancing the conflicting needs and demands of the local communities as well as handling the production of public services and goods. This is possible because, locally elected leaders know their constituents better than those at the national level and should be well positioned to provide the public services local residents want. Oluwu (2012) further asserts that physical proximity to the population provides a good platform for citizens to hold local office bearers accountable for their performance. Sikander (2015) also confirms that local governments promote prompt government responses through the availability of local representatives who are better positioned to know the pressing local needs and how they can be achieved in an affordable manner.

Acharya (2018) posits that Urban Local Authorities are significant in modern governance issues since they bring government closer to its people. According to the Urban Councils Act (Chapter 29:15), a local authority is defined as a municipal, town, rural district council or a local board. Zimbabwe categorizes Urban Local Authorities into two main spheres namely urban and rural councils. There are thirty two (32) councils and sixty (60) rural councils in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, council areas are categorized into wards which are run by elected councillors. Chatiza (2010) indicates that in rural areas local government space is further subdivided amongst villages and wards who assemble to form a full council. Zhou and Chilunjika (2013) reiterated that, the MLGPW is also responsible for monitoring operations in these places by giving direction, ensuring sound financial management and that local governance practices are followed.

According to Zhou and Chilunjika (2013), in Zimbabwe there are 32 urban councils which are classified in a hierarchy in terms of size and functions. The Lower Level (4) is occupied by Local Boards, 12 Town councils, (9) municipalities and (7) City councils. Municipalities and city councils are under the general guidance of elected Mayors and Town Clerks or Town Secretaries for smaller towns, who are responsible for their general management, (Huragu & Chuma, 2019). Urban Local Authorities are accountable to the general residents of all urban dwellers therefore they play a crucial and pivotal role in the service delivery. Zimbabwean

Urban Local Authorities are mandated to adequately treat sewage, to provide clean water to residents, maintain clean environments through revenue collection, and maintain decent infrastructure, (Dube, 2019). Table 2 below shows how Zimbabwe's ULAs are organized by size and function;

Table 2: Organization of Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe

32 Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe				
Category	1	2	3	4
Local Government Type	Cities	Municipalities	Town Councils	Local Boards
	Harare	Beit-bridge	Chipinge	Chirundu
	Bulawayo	Bindura	Chiredzi	Epworth
	Gweru	Chegutu	Gokwe	Hwange
	Mutare	Chinhoyi	Karoi	Lupane
	Masvingo	Chitungwiza	Mvurwi	Ruwa
	Kwekwe	Gwanda	Norton	
	Victoria Falls	Kariba	Plumtree	
	Kadoma	Marondera	Rusape	
		Redcliff	Shurugwi	
			Zvishavane	
TOTAL	8	9	10	5

Table 2: Organization of Zimbabwe ULAs

Source: Author (2023)

The Urban Councils Act Chapter 29:15 clearly outlines the functions of urban councils while the Second part of the Urban Councils Act, gives an outline of these powers (Mamvura, 2021). According to Mutema (2012), there are a number of mandates which Urban Local Authorities are expected to fulfill;

- ❖ Water provision
- ❖ Road rehabilitation
- ❖ Refuse removal and disposal
- ❖ Prevention of air, land, and water pollution
- ❖ Operation of fire brigades and municipal police
- ❖ Social services provision, and
- ❖ Provision of recreational facilities and sports facilities

2.10 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES

Traditionally in Zimbabwe, the central government is tasked with setting legal parameters which guide local governments. The new Zimbabwean constitution which came into effect in (2013), provides the guiding framework as outlined in Chapter 14, which restrains national government powers and control when managing and administering local governments. The MLGPW is also mandated to monitor local government operations. According to Chatiza (2010), this seemingly positive gesture is often regarded as a way to interfere with local government operations and affairs. The powers which local government authorities possess, are derived from the MLGPW and are exercised through different legal frameworks like Urban Councils Act, 2015, the Rural District Councils Act, 1988. Section 314 of the Urban Councils Act, 2015, empowers the Minister to instruct a council to suspend any of its resolutions if the minister decides that the resolution or decision was not made in good faith or was not in the public or national interest, (Chatiza, 2010).

Furthermore, the Urban Councils Act, Chapter 29:15 further strengthens ministerial powers. The section gives minister powers to approve or disapprove any decisions made without his or her consultations. In any case, the minister is empowered to nullify the decisions as void. In the same view, the Rural District Councils Act, 1988, also awards the Minister similar powers, freedom and unmitigated powers meaning councils are not able to appeal against any ministerial rulings. However, Mushamba (2010) argues that this ministerial role and the powers which the position carries thereof, contradicts the legal role of Urban Local Authorities.

According to Bland (2010), the relationship between elected council officials and resident council administrators remains a major challenge in most urban councils. The author notes that the majority of elected council officials do not have basic education and most of them

cannot comprehend their roles and duties properly. At the same time, council administrators are educated and experienced. Thus council officials have frequently exerted an advantage over elected councillors with regards to local affairs management. According to Zimbabwe Institute Local Government Policy Review (2005), such educational imbalances are detrimental towards the achievement of Urban Local Authorities service delivery mandate. The tensions between elected councillors and administrators, have also forced the MLGPW to constantly interfere with council activities with a goal of ensuring continuity and creating a harmonious working environment.

2.10.1 The financing of Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe

According to Chatiza (2010), the financing of local government operations is always a mystery in developing countries. In Zimbabwe, most Urban Local Authorities are under opposition leadership, as such central government financing of their operations is minimum. Zhou & Chilunjika (2013) further support that, strategy execution in local government is often hampered by poor funding from the central government. In addition, the Zimbabwean situation has been exacerbated by worsening economic conditions which the country has faced for the last two decades. Fiscal transfers from government have not been coming in consistently such that, most Urban Local Authorities have largely dependent on their independent revenue mobilization blitz. Zhou (2013) cites that most council revenue emanates from the following sources;

- ❖ Rates and taxes,
- ❖ Dividends received from business projects
- ❖ Non Governmental Organisations (NGO) support, and
- ❖ Voluntary organisations

Furthermore, Urban Local Authorities in their quest to maximize revenue collection, have constantly been met with equally resistant force. According to Marumahoko (2010), most residents default on rates payment for various reasons. The Zimbabwean situation has been worsened by illegal structures which have mushroomed and hindered councils from successfully levying taxes. Jonga (2014) also attributes local government's poor revenue collection strategies to inefficient use of revenue collection methods. Moreover, Marumahoko (2010) argues that, the failure to collect revenue is due to poor local governments' financial management systems and misplaced priorities. Most of the councils have failed to invest in

capital expenditure and to provide for basic water treatment costs. The majority of them have prioritized going on expensive trips whilst overlooking their core business of service provision. Marumahoko (2010) further indicates that, most of the councils do not have highly competent employees who are able to direct the ship towards the intended institutional goals.

Zhou and Chilunjika (2013) also assert that, most Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe have dismally failed to constantly upgrade their databases. The mushrooming of illegal settlements have made the problem worse, it is now difficult to levy charges to users of council services while some users in the database cannot be traced. Jonga (2014) further posits that, lack of decisive enforcement when it comes to council by laws has often militated against revenue collection. It has also been observed that poor enforcement of council by-laws has interfered with council officials when they levying fines and penalties against law breakers. Hence, this has resulted in loss of revenue. In light of the above, one can conclude that, Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe suffer from poor revenue collection and strategic management, (Madzivanyika, 2011). The Daily News on 5 October 2015 reported that, Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe had failed to address the problem of service delivery. The article further bemoaned resident's lack of participation in matters that affected their welfare and on developmental issues. Other residents were also aggrieved by receiving bills which were wrongly calculated or for services not rendered. From the above, one can safely deduce that Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe were not adequately funded and were not receiving funds from the central government.

2.11 STRUCTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

2.11.1 A Global Perspective

Most local governments world-wide are established through a country's national constitution, (Shah & Shah, 2006). For instance, in Europe, countries like Denmark, France, India, Italy, Portugal and Spain local governments were developed through powers inherited from national constitutions. Similarly, in developed Free states like Australia and the United States of America, local governments are established using guidelines from the national constitution. Specifically, in the United Kingdom (UK) and New Zealand (NZ), legislation is passed by the central government which authorizes the establishment of local governments. Furthermore, in communist states like the People's Republic of China, local governments are created by executive order. Canada and Pakistan also favour the executive order which

specifically directs local governments to deliver certain services. Local governments therefore, incorporate the direct and indirect roles of formal organisations and hierarchies, (Shah & Shah, 2006). These institutions also recognize the significance of networking and socialization through community groups thus allowing citizens to embark on collective efforts. Shah and Shah (2006) argue that such efforts are realized by delineating the boundaries for citizen interactions, collective decision making and delivery of local public services.

In France, the local government system places major emphasis on the chain of command. This is ensured through the use of departmental or regional leaders who are entrusted to monitor operations. These people can be CEO's and Mayors of municipalities (communes). Another chain of command is also created through line and functional Ministries. The French system is also known as the dual supervision model of local governance. In France, the country's national government is responsible for ensuring the general public has good services. Shah and Shah (2006) also posit that local governments' main source of funding is the national government.

In the United Kingdom (UK), the British government advocates for a more central role for those entrusted to run public offices. These are mainly field officers or sectoral functional ministries who provide services. Local governments are given a great amount of freedom to run these institutions. They are mainly responsible for property oriented services like road maintenance, refuse collection, water and sewage. The local government also have a limited role function in people oriented services like health, education and social welfare, (Shah & Shah, 2006). Furthermore, the UK government uses a tier system such that each local government operates under a different tier. Hence, local governments in the UK operate under a one tier or a two tier system. There are five types of Urban Local Authorities in England namely, councils, district councils, unitary authorities, metropolitan districts and London Boroughs, (LGG, 2010).

For Australia, the national constitution is silent about local governments. However, it remains the sole obligation of the state to make decisions on local government powers and their boundaries. Local government performs few roles like providing engineering services, community services, environmental services and regulatory services. Furthermore, more than

half of revenue collected in Australia, comes from property taxes whereas, only 20% is obtained from central government, (Shah & Shah, 2006).

Weiss (2005) highlights that, in Malaysia, local government is high centralized with regards to decision making. Local governments in Malaysia are constituted mainly by city councils, city halls, municipal councils and district councils. CIPPS (2008) indicate that Malaysian government does not conduct elections for local government. Councillors are appointed by the state without consulting with federal governments. All local governments perform same roles and duties. Conclusively, Local Governments in Malaysia are unitaristic in nature.

2.11.2 A Regional Perspective

In South Africa, local government is made up of two models namely single tier and the two tier system. The single tiered metropolitan system is mainly visible in urban areas, whereas the two tiered system consist of district and local municipalities for the whole country at large, (De Visser, 2009). Metro poles can make choices between two types of government. The first one is the mayoral executive system which gives mayors authority over all decisions by council and the second option being the collective executive committee system. Non metropolitan areas consist of district councils and local councils. District councils are primarily responsible for capacity building and district wide planning, while local councils deliver basic services like water, electricity, refuse removal and sanitation services.

In Tanzania, local governments consist of urban and rural authorities. Urban authorities are largely constituted in cities, municipalities, town councils, wards and neighbourhood. It also has rural authorities which comprise of districts, townships, village councils and wards. Local government authorities in Tanzania perform the functions of local government within the area which falls under their jurisdiction. Higher level authorities like district, city, municipal and town councils have more authority to manage public affairs within their areas of jurisdiction. Lower levels Urban Local Authorities on the other hand consist of village councils, township authorities, sub villages, wards and neighbourhood whose decision must be approved by higher levels of local government authorities. The country uses a deconcentration system where a regional secretariat represents ministerial linkages to service delivery function such as health and education. Furthermore, the regional secretariat is headed by regional administrative secretary who works in the regional commissioner's office. Regional secretariats are the immediate point of referral for the local government authorities in their

dealings with the central government and they have certain oversights for example local budgets monitoring responsibilities regarding Urban Local Authorities, (Steffensen, Naitore & Peterson, 2004).

2.11.3 Contextualizing Local Government in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe first local authority was formed in 1890 when the British South African Company (BSAC) settled in the country and immediately formed the Salisbury Sanitary Board, (Jordan, 1984). Local governance in the southern African country is usually exercised using legislative powers. Local government is therefore regarded as an independent section of the government. The Urban Councils Act (1996) and the Rural District Councils Act (1996) are the governing legislative acts which are used in the country. Furthermore, the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works (MLGPW) is the parent ministry which oversees local governance in Zimbabwe. Thus, local government institutions are regarded as branch of the national government and the MLGPW is responsible for monitoring their activities, (Zimbabwe Institute, 2005). The MLGPW further administers operations using powers derived from the Regional Town and Country Planning Act, the Provincial Councils and Administration Act (2000) and the Traditional Leaders Act (2000). According to Chatiza (2010), these five acts largely drive the objectives, structure and policies of Urban Local Authorities.

2.12 ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Most public sector institutions both in developed and developing countries have accepted the significance of measuring their performance. Manyeruke (2014) posits that public sector management was necessitated by the visible poor performance of public workers and out of public interest, corrective measures were put in place. Globally, most organisations are increasingly facing immense pressure to continuously improve their financial performance and meet stakeholder expectations, (Duvnjak, 2018). Global competition has necessitated the rapid transformations in business as the environment is now unpredictable, (Rodwell et al, 2004). This global pressure is often felt by companies as it affects their competitiveness. According to Jing et al. (2008), human resources are the most vital asset which companies possess and without this resource, an organisation's ability to successfully compete both on local and international ground suffers drastically. Such organisations often fail to realize their potential.

As popular as it is, the concept of organizational performance comes with many definitions. According to Taouab and Issor (2019), organizational performance measures the actual company performance against set standards. This means Organisational Performance is concerned with achieving organizational goals, objectives and set targets. Chandrasekhar (2011) emphasizes the importance of having a conducive work environment which promotes employee satisfaction and such positive conditions, ultimately lead to an increase in productivity and organisational performance. The same sentiment is shared by Iqbal et al (2014) who argue that employees' individual performance is important in contributing towards organisational performance. According to Geissodofer et al. (2018), the word performance is mainly attributable to business outcomes. However, there are other authors who regard performance as unrealistic, (Neely, 2007). The author argues that the way performance is measured , evaluated and monitored is often subjective and differs from one organization to the other. This view is supported by Monge (2016), who argues that business performance measures differ and often prioritizes achieving set targets.'

The 20th century has brought about the new norm where a great transformation was witnessed when businesses decided to incorporate financial and non financial indicators of performance, (Bourne, 2009). It is imperative to incorporate the different multi-dimensional aspects of performance, (Edward, 2019). Organisations are often complex business entities which operate under difficult circumstances and environment. For some organisations, their objective may be to increase financial gain whilst others will be motivated to satisfy customers. Edwards (2019) further argues that the financial aspect in organisations is measured using the market share, annual turnover and return on total assets. The customer satisfaction is measured using the product acceptance level, meeting customer expectation, creating customer loyalty and realignment of organizational goals in line with customer needs. Richer et al. (2017) further alludes that when defining organizational performances, financial indicators must be clearly spelt out. On the contrary, most market based financial indicators favour investor's perception and often finds ways of mitigating against risk. In addition, there are operational indicators which focus on major attributes of success. These include company reputation (image), survival, goal attainment and staying ahead of competitors.

Richter et al. (2017) further reiterate that there is inter-relatedness between operational

effectiveness, organizational effectiveness and financial performance. The authors suggest that an organisation's effectiveness must be reflective of its financial performance because performance improvement remains at the core of organizational success. According to Mishra and Mohanty (2014), when analyzing organisational performance, it is important to measure managerial performance since it has a strong basis on the organisation's financial performance. Further financial measures like Return On Assets (ROA), Return On Equity (ROE), and Return On Sales (ROS) must also be used as instrumental indicators of financial performance, (Mishra & Mohanty, 2014). Richter et al. (2017) in their study urge that businesses must focus on financial indicators that are reflective of stakeholders' expectations. On the contrary, market-based financial indicators are embedded in the investor's view and concentrate on hedging against risk. In addition, operational indicators place major emphasis on key attributes of success which are directly linked to financial performance such as company image, goodwill, reputation, survival, goal attainment and performance in relation to competitors, (Richter et al., 2017).

Moreover, Carmeli (2008) argues that, financial reports can also be used to analyse financial performance. These are considered as critical tools for managing and evaluating an organisation's strengths and weaknesses, (Carmeli, 2002). Beaver, McNichols and Rhue (2005) claim that, accounting information such as the profits, liquidity and long term indebtedness of a firm is significant to assessing financial performance of an organization. In the same vein, the employees' performance towards an organisation is significant in contributing towards organisational performance (Iqbal et al, 2014). The authors further state that, organisations need high performers so that they can achieve their goals and realize the much needed competitive advantage through enhanced service delivery.

Extensive literature review, revealed that, there are numerous trends with regards to organisational performance, (Charaesakar, 2011; Coyle, 2018 & Iqbal et al., 2014). The researcher observed a shift from the traditional internal financial indicators to those concentrating on the overall business vision. On the contrary, the approaches used to measure performance have also shifted, (Bourne, 2021). There is a major shift from concentrating on business financial indicators of performance to a hybrid approach which includes both financial and non-financial indicators. This situation is idealistic because it brings in a more balanced performance measurement methodology, (Bourne, 2021). Graunt

and Gray (2010), further propose that organisational performance relies on the use of financial ratios which are derived from published reports. Organisational performance further considers socio- economic variables like population, customer tastes and buying behavior which have a direct bearing on the organisational performance, (Caballero, Buch & Vaamonde, 2013). These factors negatively impact on the financial aspect of the business.

Groves (2005) work has been expanded upon over the last three decades to include a new focus on building fiscal sustainability, (Godsey & Shulman, 2003). The concept of fiscal sustainability concerns the capacity to meet present and future levels of debt and other financial obligations within the organisation's revenue constraints, (Chapman 2008; Ward & Dadayan 2009; Rose 2010). A careful search of literature on organisational performance shows that most authorities agree on the notion that strategic human resource management influences organisational performance (Atnafu, & Balda, 2018; Edward, 2019; Manikas, 2017 & Mugabe, 2018;). Although the term organisational effectiveness is broader, there is general convergence among the authorities (Farsi et al., 2020).

Performance measurement is instrumental in enhancing transparency, efficiency and accountability in public institutions, (Spekle & Verbeeten, 2009). The UNDP argues that accountability is a process of assessing the implementation of organizational goals or policies that must be accounted for. These must be carried out in accordance with the agreed rules and standards. According to Dayamanti and Aswar (2021) public sector administration globally is undergoing an overhaul where great transformation is being seen in the manner in which these institutions are managed. Citizens are increasingly becoming more educated, conscious and aware of their rights. Global travelling has also heightened citizen's expectations with regards to service delivery, (Beaver et al., 2014). The authors further add that there is also growing complexity of technological advancement and the inspiration of discussion worldwide on best practice with regards to managing performance in the public sector. In the views of Kloot and Martin (2000), continuous reforms on how to manage local government systems globally, have necessitated timeous and true information which can be used to assess Urban Local Authorities performance, (Kloot & Martin, 2000).

Generally, the public regards the public sector as inefficient and staffed with lazy personnel. Thus it is important for public sector institutions to change this public perception through an improvement in their performance. Coyle (2008) further emphasizes that it is

mandatory for Urban Local Authorities to show the general public their financial statements at the end of a given financial year. In the Zimbabwean context, major performance management reviews were introduced in the 1990s when programmes like ESAP were being promoted. This led to the development of strict policies which attempted to introduce sound financial management in the public sector, (Musingafi et al., 2013).

2.12.1 Urban Local Authorities Performance

The beginning of the 21st century saw an increase in public awareness and interest with regards to local government performance. Citizens are now more educated, conscious of their rights and holding local government accountable for their actions. This wave originated from developed countries and diffused to developing nations through globalization. According to Therkildsen (2006), there is continued decrease of public confidence in the way local government institutions are run and this has necessitated the introduction of performance management in Urban Local Authorities. The performance of Urban Local Authorities always grabs the attention of researchers because these public institutions tend to perform dismally due to various inefficiencies, admin problems, poor accountability systems and weak management, (Therkildsen, 2006). Available literature also reveals that public institutions have or are often associated with various dimensions of performance, (Bryne, 2013).

Most Urban Local Authorities are focused on providing positive societal outcomes to the local populace which they serve in areas such as water, housing, infrastructure and social amenities. The Urban Local Authorities mandate is to deliver essential services to the general public. In the views of Dutta and Fischer (2021), Urban Local Authorities can only operate at optimum level if the prevailing macro economic conditions are favourable. This means Urban Local Authorities, can only resume their effective operations, if infrastructure is maintained and is in a commendable state. However, most of key infrastructure in Zimbabwe is now in dire state, mainly because of inadequate funding for infrastructure development at local authority level. The situation has also been exacerbated by rural to urban migration which has put a strain on urban facilities. According to Heymans, Eales and Franceys (2014), cities and towns in Africa are expanding at an alarming average rate of 5% per annum. This population increase comes at a time when the Urban Local Authorities are constrained in meeting the increasing demand, not properly staffed and facing constant interference from their parent ministries.

2.13 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS WHICH CAN BE USED TO MEASURE ULAS PERFORMANCE

2.13.1 Employee Productivity

In today's dynamic business world, organisations are now primarily focused on increasing employee productivity. Employee productivity is defined by Lipsey (2022) as output obtained per unit of input used. Productivity is the translation of worker inputs such as effort, time and resources into outputs, Adeinat and Kassim (2019). Employee productivity is also referred to as the ability of organisations to produce goods and services. According to Lipsey (2022) productivity, also depicts an organisation's efficiency levels and time used to finish a task. Most researchers concur that employee productivity is linked to organisational performance, (Ahmed & Allen, 2019; Iqbal et al, 2019).

Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe are now advocating for productive employees. According to Adeinat and Kassim (2019), productive employees finish their jobs faster and use minimum resources. At organisational level, productivity measures the proficiency of an organisation's production process. Companies which fail to make significant gains in terms of productivity realize low profits. Adeinat and Kassim (2019) emphasize that employee productivity is now multi- dimensional meaning it is now linked to factors like employee motivation, reward management, health and safety, work life balance and psychological contracts among other things.

2.13.2 Financial Report

There are many variables which can be used to measure performance in Urban Local Authorities. Analysis of financial reports is regarded as one of the most significant managerial tool for the evaluation of an organisation's performance, (Carmeli, 2002). Gray (2010) purports that, accounting information related to profitability, liquidity and long term indebtedness is critical in assessing the financial soundness of a company. According to Beaver and McNichols (2005), the public service provides little opportunity for diversification since it has little or no market data and all local government units are required to provide essential services. Therefore, performance measurement relies on key accounting data incorporated into financial ratios and data which is readily available from published financial reports. Gray (2010) also highlights that socio- economic variables such as

population, surface area and degree of urbanization are regarded as factors that impact on financial health of public institutions.

Maibheki et al (2022) opines that financial work has been expanded over the last three decades to include a new focus on building fiscal sustainability, (Groves, 2005). The concept of fiscal sustainability concerns the capacity to meet present and future levels of debt and other financial obligations within the organisations revenue constraints, (Chapman, 2008; Rose, 2010; Ward & Dadayan, 2009). Indicators of performance measures also include assessing liquidity, autonomy, operating performance, collection efficiency and solvency, (Robbins & McNena, 2021).

2.13.3 Financial Analysis

Organisational performance in both public and private sector can also be analyzed using financial analysis. Financial analysis is defined by Alshowishin (2021) as the process of critically assessing and analyzing financial statements information with the objective of making important decisions. Temprano and Gaite (2020) further defines financial analysis as, evaluation of an organisation with the objective of assessing its financial capabilities. It is important for business to analyse their financial statements because it helps determine the credit worthiness of the business. Financial analysis is aimed at giving the users of accounting information a true picture of the company's financial that is the profitability and efficiency of the firm.

In addition, financial analyses also enable the users of financial information mainly creditors, suppliers, customers and debtors to be aware of the business' strength and weaknesses. Alshowishin (2022) argues that financial analysis enable organisations to assess the credit worthiness of a business. Furthermore, financial analysis assists independent parties like investors to make assessments about future analysis and make predictions about the future with regards to how the business is progressing.

Globally, there has been notable transformation with regards to the way public institutions are run. Many researchers have advocated for a more decentralized financial management system which allows citizens to assess the financial health of local governments, (Havenga, 2006; Pina et al, 2009; Pollit & Bouckaert, 2004). According to Pina et al. (2009), local governments must frequently analyse their performance with the objective of improving

their performance, efficiency, transparency and effectiveness. Pollit and Bouckaert (2004) allude that, the obligation to manage financial resources in local governments, lies with Urban Local Authorities, as such they must frequently adopt accounting approaches which promote accountability and improve public opinions. Temprano and Gaité (2020) advocates that, the financial analysis processes can be arranged into different phases during which the financial analyst can make different recommendations as illustrated below;

Table 3: The process of Financial Analysis

Phase	Source of information	Output
1. Define the purpose and context of the analysis	• Nature of analyst's function, for example. Issuing a credit rating • Communication with client or supervisor • Institutional guidelines for developing a specific product	• Statement of purpose or objective of analysis • A list of specific questions to be answered by the analysis • Nature and content of the report • Timetable and budget
2. Collect data	• Financial statements, other financial data, questionnaires, industry, and other economic data • Discussions with management, suppliers, customers, and competitors • Company site visits	• Organized financial statements • Financial data tables • Completed questionnaires
3. Process data	• Collected input data is subject to analysis tools (giving processed data)	• Adjusted financial statements • Common-size statements • Ratios and graphs • Forecasts • Analytical results

4. Analyse/interpret the processed data	• Input data as well as processed data	• Analytical results
5. Develop and communicate conclusions and recommendations	• Analytical results and previous reports • Institutional guidelines for published reports	• Analytical report answering questions posed in phase 1 • Recommendations regarding purpose of the analysis
Follow-up where on-going analysis required	• Information gathered by periodically repeating above steps	• Updated reports and recommendations

Source: Bykova (2022)

2.14 FRAMEWORK FOR PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

According to Bykova (2020), a performance measurement model was developed in 1980 namely the Economic Value Added (EVA). This model was specifically for use by large companies. In the early 1990s, numerous studies on performance measurement surfaced. At the beginning of the 21st century, research on organisational performance measurement adopted a sudden twist as follows:

- ❖ It adopted the earlier EVA models which were developed for large companies.
- ❖ It made new performance measurement standards designed specifically for small enterprises, (Taticchi, Tonelli, Sameh, & Botarelli, 2008).

Available literature recommends that, organisations must adopt multi-dimensional approaches when measuring performance, (Alshowishin, 2021; Bianchi et al, 2015 & Taticchi, 2008). On the contrary some researchers prefer the use of performance framework models. Either way, it is important to measure the performance of local government institutions as this leads to improved service delivery and ultimately the socio-economic development of the nation at large. Bianchi et al. (2015) conclusively opine that, when

measuring performance organisations must use both financial (Profitability, liquidity) and non financial measures (Competitiveness, company image).

2.14.1 Operational Sustainability

Most organisations in the public sector are now emphasizing the need to operate efficiently, (Walker, 2004). According to Khandker, Samad and Badruddoza (2017), operational sustainability is an approach of ensuring that organisations are able to maintain their current standards without risking future resources. Khandker et al. (2017) further defines a sustainable local government as a public institution which is able to continue its developmental mandate for the public interest. Operational sustainability is also defined by Ahrens, Ferry and Khalifa, (2018) as the ability of local government to be self sufficient. In financial terms, operational sustainability also regarded as comprising of self sustainance and independence from borrowing external funds, (Chaudhury, Alam & Dooty, 2022). Chaudhury et al. (2022) posit that local governments are regarded as operationally sustainable, if they meet their expenditures from revenue collected from the citizens rather than relying on government funding for survival.

Pathak (2018) indicates that local governments must engage in a number of capital projects which could enable them to be self sufficient and become less dependant on hand outs. Ahrens et al. (2018), claim that for a local authority to maintain its existence and expand their operations further, it is of paramount importance to achieve optimum self sufficiency levels.

2.15 SERVICE DELIVERY FUNCTION BY ULAs

Services are defined by Johannison (2007), as relating to the provision of both tangible public goods and intangible services. Venter (2010) opines that, Service delivery refers to the provision of public activities, benefits, or satisfaction. For Local governments, the provision of basic retail, social amenities, health, education, and infrastructure maintenance is crucial for daily operational activities. Moreover, service provision is significant for maintaining and improving the local citizen's standards of living, (Pollanen, 2005; Saukkonen & Kirjavainen, 2019). In the neighbouring South Africa, the country's Constitution explicitly spells out that, municipalities are responsible for prioritizing the provision of basic needs to local citizens

and they must ensure that at any given time, residents are provided with minimal of municipal services, (Mafunisa, 2008).

Furthermore, Venter (2010), advocates that Municipalities must continuously strive to enhance the growth and development of the local communities which they serve. Ching and Chan (2004); Venter (2010) advise that in order for local governments to realize an improvement in the quality of services they provide, the sitting government must prioritize addressing the challenges that hinder efficient service delivery in a more coordinated and proactive manner, thus focusing on the long term macro developmental goals.

Municipal Research Services Centre MRSC (1993) defines service delivery as the real making of a service for example refuse collection and disposal or street lighting. Strauss (2005) further attests that in economic terms, service provision can be defined as the transactional exchange of specialized skills and knowledge for money rather than the physical resources. Misigo et al., (2019)) on the other hand argues that, the primary objective of service provision is to change the customer and to make sure the client remains the king. Moreover, Hernandez (2006) affirm that, service provision is significant for alleviating poverty and assisting nations to reach their projected MDGs and SDGs. This is ensured through availing affordable and accessible social facilities like education, health, infrastructure development, and improved ICT services. According to OECD (2010), research evidence suggest that most cities in developing nations are increasingly facing difficulties with regards to service provision. In most African countries in particular, the issue of service delivery is a challenge that needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency. Service provision can be enhanced through women empowerment programmes which provide vast opportunities for self reliance, employment creation and growth.

Layton (2021) propounded that Urban Local Authorities play a crucial role in stimulating sustainable economic growth and development. The Urban Local Authorities are responsible for providing and maintaining infrastructure for water and sanitation, housing, waste disposal, road maintenance, public lighting and services such as basic health and education which are all critical in the promotion of economic and social well-being (Government of Zimbabwe and World Bank, 2017). For adequate service provision by Urban Local Authorities, the central government must provide complementary infrastructure and funding in cities or towns that are beyond the jurisdiction of Urban Local Authorities. This above statement implies that

Urban Local Authorities can only function effectively if the general state of infrastructure at the national level is in good state, (Layton, 2021).

Furthermore, Urban Local Authorities globally have a mandatory obligation to provide public services to diverse citizenry. Services are defined by the UN Habitat (2009) as goods provided and managed to support productive and reproductive societal activities and contribute to human dignity, quality of life and sustainable livelihood. Chikumbu et al. (2009) further highlight that service delivery involves needs assessment, planning, design, execution and post implementation maintenance. Service provision in Urban Local Authorities is therefore guided by the amount of support and aid which the central government is willing to give. Service delivery also gives responsible authorities a platform to ensure accountability and transparency in handling public funds. The above means there's a social contract between Urban Local Authorities and the citizens in that, the LA have an obligation to timeously provide services efficiently and effectively whereas citizens have a financial obligation to pay for services provided.

However, the majority of fundamental infrastructure in Zimbabwe Urban Local Authorities is now in a dilapidated state, due to inadequate maintenance and funding for infrastructure development at local authority level. Urbanization has also constrained Urban Local Authorities funding, where cities and towns in Africa are growing at an alarming rate of 5% per annum thus forcing the Urban Local Authorities to strain its already limited resources, (Heymans et al., 2014). In Chikumbu et al. (2006) bemoans the increasing gap between the actual demand for services by residence and the service provision by Urban Local Authorities. Thus, regardless of the introduction of the decentralized governance system by the government post independence, access to high quality public services has drastically deteriorated.

2.16 EMPIRICAL STUDIES

Moses and Ainebyoona (2022) performed a study in Uganda on the Human Resources Management Strategies and improvement of employee retention in public institutions in Kabale District. The research used a cross-sectional research design supported by qualitative and quantitative research techniques. Three hundred and twenty five (325) public sector employees took part in the study. The research findings revealed that there was a positive relationship between HRM strategies and employee retention in public sector institutions with a Pearson

correlation of 0.994. The study endorsed the authorities to set up a proper structure of rewarding employee performance. It further advised that the structure for promotions be fair and open to everyone.

Hidir, Zunaidi and Pattisiana (2021) carried out a study in the United States of America on understanding human resources management strategy in implementing good government practice. The researchers applied documentary proof due to lack of available literature. Sources used blanketed Google scholar, ERIC publications and database sources. The research found out that, HR governance strategy in the public sector must be a prerequisite when recruiting competitive employees. The study findings also revealed that working in the public service requires personal mastery of the underlying laws and regulations.

Jacobson and Sowa (2015) conducted a study to examine the capacity of government organisations to leverage their human resources for improved performance. The study utilized data obtained from a 2012 survey done in Colorado and North Carolina. The results of the study indicated that there were differences and variations on the extent to which municipalities were implementing Strategic HRM. Results also revealed that some jurisdiction had seen greater adoption of SHRM policies than others. Furthermore, certain factors appeared to be related including the role which HRM played in broader municipal strategic decision making.

Kim (2017) completed a study on human resources management strategies in response to local government cutbacks. The study was focused at exploring numerous HRM Strategies used to cope with cutbacks. It additionally tested the reasons and effects of using these strategies. The research applied a blended approach where both quantitative and qualitative methods were incorporated. The study also attracted interview participants with seventeen (17) directors taken from nine (9) Urban Local Authorities in New Jersey (USA). The study diagnosed essential elements that could justify the use of diverse HRM techniques. Furthermore, the study explored the preceding outcomes of employing different strategies with a bias on budgets, capacity and employee morale. The study findings exposed that many aspects had varied influences on their decisions about human resources strategies in cut back situations. The regression analysis indicated that Urban Local Authorities appreciated the significance of information asymmetry, state political leadership and the functions of Trade Unions was more articulated in the employment of cutback strategies.

Tayeh (2018) conducted a study on Human Resources Management techniques with the goal of ascertaining its effect on people performance in the construction industry. Additionally, the study also sought to discover the significance of HRM techniques in the construction industry. Furthermore, this research study was also aimed at unmasking the aspects which hampered successful implementation of HRM strategies in the construction industry. In-order to achieve these objectives, the study undertook a descriptive analytical approach. Data were collected using questionnaires and one hundred and seventy (170) questionnaires were distributed. Statistical data was analyzed using SPSS by making statistical inferences. The study findings revealed that there were many HRM strategies in construction industry. The study endorsed that there is a mild relationship between HRMS and employees performance in the construction industry. In light of the study findings, the researcher recommended that companies must pay attention to all human resources management roles as they are directly linked to job performance.

Huff (2007) performed a study on high performances in local government, the study was aimed at linking government outcomes with HRM practices. The study used data obtained from the International City Management Association containing the results of an HRM survey done in the year 2000. The research consisted of three hundred and sixty six (366) municipalities. A survey approach was used to select research participants. The results were printed using binary logistic regression analysis. The study findings revealed that municipalities were likely to improve their performance if HRM strategies were properly implemented. The research recommended to further develop and validate the use of municipal bond rating as a measure of a government level based outcome.

Shahani (2015) carried out a study on assessing the HRM practices and their impact on organizational citizenship behaviour in the public sector University of Pakistan. The study utilized a mixed methodology approach to examine the relationship between the two variables. Using a survey method, data was collected from five hundred and fifteen (515) employees working in five public sector Universities. Semi- structured interviews were used to collect data. Hypothetical relationships were also examined with analysis of moment structures done using Amos Version 21. The study findings revealed that HRM practices significantly impact on organisational citizenship behaviour directly. The research finding also recognized the importance of national culture and organisational culture in

organisational citizenship behaviour.

Fadhil (2019) conducted a study on Strategic HRM and organisational performance in Oman. The study was specifically focused at examining observable relationships between High Performance Work Systems (HPWS) and customer satisfaction. The study used a sample of five hundred and twenty one (521) professionals in fifteen (15) government entities in Oman's public sector. An incomplete mediation model was identified and tested using structural equation modelling. The research findings endorsed that high performance work systems have significant positive relationships with employee outcomes and service climate. The results further revealed that both employee outcomes and service climate partially mediate the relationship between high performance work systems and customer satisfaction. The research study recommended public sector officials to adopt and invest in HPWS in-order to enhance positive employee attitudes and behaviors.

Zacharia (2014) performed a research study on performance management and the administration of local government in Ghana. The study explored assertions in the performance management strategies of Urban Local Authorities in Ghana. The study also examined how performance adjustment policy regulated various perspectives of institutional performance and the degree to which local governments were concerned about performance to achieve their mandate. The study adopted a qualitative approach using data obtained from interviews, focus group discussions, observations and documents to construct and interpret research findings. The research results revealed that performance outliers tend to be twisted towards financial and internal organisational aspects of performance rather than incorporating citizen's view about local governments. The study concluded that the utilization of performance information to improve service delivery is necessary but not sufficient without adopting an all inclusive citizen centred approach woven into the formulation, implementation and evaluation of performance management systems.

Abuhantaash (2018) carried out a study on the impact of human resources management on awareness, employee and organizational capability. The study's main objective was to test HRM awareness on organisational capability. A philosophical perspective was used to collect data. Data was collected from University of North Texas. A total of five hundred and fifty (550) questionnaires were distributed to nineteen (19) sections in the University of North Texas. The study findings revealed that employees are conscious or aware that

financial incentives do not motivate them or alter their attitudes towards work. The study also affirmed the significance of incentives in driving behaviour. The thesis proposed re-ordering priorities around HRM practices and organisation's focus on employee partnerships entered into through improving confidence to enhance employee awareness as well as sharing behaviour that can eventually improve employee capabilities.

Chihambakwe (2016) carried out a study on the effects of Management techniques at Harare City Council. The participants were drawn from a sample of Harare City Council employees. The research made use of a qualitative research case design to guide the study's methodology. Research data was collected using an interview guide. The study revealed that, management practices were only written on paper, in reality the strategies were not being implemented or followed. Implementing the strategy was difficult due to factors like political interference, minimum stakeholder inclusion in the strategic planning processes, lack of financial resources to fully fund and implement the strategies.

Kovo (2018) performed a study on local government and the performance of bureaucrats. In this study, the researcher conducted individual surveys combined with Audit Reports from forty five (45) Beninese Urban Local Authorities. The study was aimed at universally exploring bureaucratic tendencies in local authorities. The overall study findings endorsed that, it is significant to have public service policy and regulation in both hiring and appointment decisions.

Ngari (2017) conducted a study to ascertain the relationship between temporal time management and employee performance in Kenya. The researcher selected an explanatory survey design to identify research participants. Simple random sampling was then employed to choose employees from service state corporations. A mixed research approach was adopted which included both qualitative and quantitative methods. Multiple regression models were also employed in this study. The target population consisted of three hundred and seventy five (375) employees who were selected from different sections. Reliability was measured using Cronbach's alpha. As demonstrated by allegations of poor financial management controls, Kenya's service corporations had not performed as envisioned. Service state corporations must be innovative, increase their performance, and embark on extensive marketing of their products and services in order to be self- sustaining. The research study also concluded that, control of temporal time was essential to achieving this goal. The study's

findings showed that workplace negative culture was a critical area in which the employer could focus on, in order to establish a positive work environment.

Makanyeza, Kwandayi and Ikobe (2013) performed a research study to discover the reasons behind poor service delivery in Urban Local Authorities in Kajiado, Kenya. The study was also aimed at discovering the techniques which could be used to improve service delivery in local governments. The study adopted a mixed methods approach and self-administered questionnaires were distributed to one hundred and fifty (150) service users and one hundred (100) were collected and used to make research conclusions. The research findings affirmed that the major reasons behind poor service delivery in local governments were; political interference, political influence, corruption and poor accountability, lack of citizenship involvement, poor implementation of human resources policies, change aversiveness and poor employee capacity. The research findings recommended that citizenship participation must be adopted if Local governments are committed towards meeting their service delivery mandate.

Widyanty et al. (2020) conducted a study to investigate the model of Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) as a competitive advantage in the construction industry. The study was specifically aimed at identifying factors which were linked to companies achieving competitive advantage in this industry. The research data were taken from one hundred and seventy four (174) construction companies in Indonesia. The research study utilized questionnaire method to collect data. The research further used the Structural Equation Modelling techniques to analyze the conceptualized relationship model. The study findings confirmed that, Indonesia's construction industry, could gain competitive advantage through efficient implementation of HRM practices. HRM allows organisations to improve employee's safety concern thereby increasing employees' commitment and productivity. The study recommended that organisations could prioritize integrating human resource management practices with a safety culture, because research findings revealed that, safety culture can be a source of competitive advantage for construction companies in Indonesia. The study also recommended future studies to use these strategic human resource management models in different industry sectors and also adding numerous samples so that results could be representative.

Jackson et al. (2014) and Nicolas et al., (2018) carried out a study on Strategic Human

Resources Management and employee behavior. Their research study discovered a positive relationship between the two variables. The study findings also confirmed an increase in productivity when HRM strategies were incorporated which in turn gave the organization a competitive advantage. The author's study further unmasked that, Training and development enhanced the employee's knowledge, skills and attitudes which then improved an employee's behavior on the job. The research findings confirmed that job aspects like job security, incentives, rewards, and self management teams were essential because they boosted the morale of the employees and improved employee commitment. The study recommended that organisations should be flexible and implement non rigid work schedules in order to reduce employee turnover.

Alnidawi, Alshemery and Abdulrahman (2017) conducted a study on High Performance Work Practices (HPWS). The authors discovered that when employees have a positive emotional connection to their organization, then they are likely to exert maximum effort towards the achievement of the organisation's goals. In research studies previously done, the results revealed that HPWS improved employees' knowledge, competencies and skills, (Jian et al, 2013; Todericiu & Stani, 2015). The researchers also concluded that the significance of strategic HRM practice in increasing an employee's productivity had a positive effect on an organisation's performance.

Luballo and Simon (2017) conducted a study in Siaya county government, on Kenya's HRM practices and service delivery activities. The study showed that human resources management practices have a major influence on public service delivery. The research study also recommended that, HRM departments could adopt strategies and policies in human resource management that assisted workers to improve their abilities, approaches and conduct. Ultimately, the implementation of these HRM practices would lead to an increase in service delivery. The study also recommended that, different HRM strategies could also be developed that aimed at attracting, retaining and motivating employees. The study findings also revealed that, employee training and development was significant in assisting employees to have the competencies needed to execute their duties efficiently. The research study therefore recommended that HRM leadership could continuously and periodically train their employees in order to enhance their performance on the job.

Mwangi (2016) conducted a study which was aimed at assessing how Strategy Execution

affects the efficiency of manufacturing small and medium businesses. The findings of this research illustrates that focusing on the human resource management principles when executing a strategy has a significant impact on the success of small and medium businesses. The study findings also revealed that, organisations that provided training and development on important management issues performed higher. The study recommended that, company leaders could be ahead when describing how to execute new strategies. Bonuses and incentives were also recommended especially when employees achieved targets set. The study further recommended that employees must individually contribute and provide solutions which improve strategy implementation.

Naikuni (2016) performed a study on Strategic Human Resources Management and employee productivity at the Narok County Government, Kenya. The research findings revealed that, SHRM functions were significant if local governments wanted to achieve their set targets. Research findings also unraveled a link between employee resourcing and organisational performance. On the contrary, the study results also indicated that there was a low association between employee resourcing and performance. The study results implied that, county governments must place their major concentration on employee resourcing for them to acquire the right talent with requisite skills and knowledge that would lead to competitive advantage.

Makhamara (2017) carried out a study on Strategic Human Resources Management practices and employee behaviour in the health sector. The research study made use of the Human Capital Theory in order to assess the significance of human resources towards improving organisational performance. The study aimed at analyzing how employee performance impacted on service delivery. The research study therefore assessed HRM functions like recruitment and selection, training, employee participation, reward management and training and development in improving productivity. The study also used a descriptive research survey to gather and collect data. The research study utilized one thousand four hundred and twenty eight (1428) permanent employees as the target population. The study sifted through the target population using simple random sampling techniques. A sample size of one hundred and forty six (146) senior, middle and lower managers was eventually chosen. Data were collected using questionnaires and interview schedules. It was later analyzed and interpreted using SPSS version 22 and multiple regression. The research findings revealed that,

recruitment and selection, training and development, employee participation and reward management all had a positive effect on employees' performance. The research recommended that strategic human resource management approaches be should be adopted, implemented, and evaluated in-order to increase employee performance.

Gbande (2016) conducted a study on the effects of reward management on employee productivity in Benue State. The study used a positivist philosophy and it adopted questionnaires as the major research instrument. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse and interpret data findings. In addition, the study's hypothesis was tested using Chi square. The research findings revealed that productivity in local government is directly linked to reward system. The study recommended that both employers and employees must design appropriate reward management structures which are aimed at increasing employee performance.

Wamwayi (2016), conducted a study on Training and the performance of public universities. The study was aimed at assessing employee training needs and its impact on employee performance. The researcher adopted a blended mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches. A stratified and purposeful random sampling strategy was used to identify research participants. The survey and co-relational design approaches were used in the research. Data were collected using questionnaires. It was later analyzed and interpreted using SPSS version 20 and regression analysis. The study's results indicated that availability of funds had a direct impact on the training exercise. The study also revealed moderators of training and development namely; training duration, method of training and training feedback. It further revealed that training needs assessment and training evaluation must be considered when carrying out the training process. The study recommended that, training programs should be properly designed, implemented and evaluated.

Sang (2015) conducted a study on Human Resources Management practices and labour productivity in the public service, Kenya. The study focused on HRM strategies like performance, reward management, training and development and recruitment and selection. Employee engagement was regarded as the moderating effect on employee productivity. The research used the explanatory research, which is crucial in ascertaining how factors are related. The research targeted all HR practitioners employed in state organisations in Kenya. Pilot testing was carried out to determine the validity of the research questions and the data's

anticipated reliability. Data were collected through questionnaires, and later interpreted using descriptive and inferential statistics. Statistical software of social sciences was used to analyze quantitative data (SPSS). The study's research outcomes indicated that HRM practices had a favorable impact on employee productivity. Additionally, HRM functions like recruitment and selection, reward management, training and development, performance management and training were positively related to employee productivity.

Sajeena (2017) investigated the influence of public sector Recruitment and Selection Strategies in India. The research made use of questionnaires to collect primary data from the study's participants. The study was also aimed at assessing new trends in public sector recruitment and selection techniques. It further aimed to assess the significant challenges which organizations faced. The research findings revealed that most public sector companies in India had a recruitment policy. It further confirmed that most potential candidates were hired because of their qualifications and experience. The study recommended that recruitment and selection strategies must be clearly written and implemented in public sector organisations.

On the other hand, Oh and Mi (2016) conducted a study with the aim of discovering how the recruitment process impacted on employee productivity in both commercial and governmental institutions. The study adopted a survey design; it also utilized a questionnaire to collect data. In order to determine the reliability levels of the instrument, a test-retest reliability approach was used. The study's sample size consisted of two hundred and sixteen (216) respondents in Makurdi, Benue State, who were randomly selected from either private or public institution. The data were analyzed using the t-test analytical tool which is a statistical tool for social sciences. The research findings demonstrated that there was a great difference between the private and public sector recruitment and selection processes, as well as the subsequent productivity realized from those processes. The study findings also revealed that elements that influence the selection process in both private and public sectors are different. The research concluded that, for both private and public sector organisations to thrive and realize their objectives, they must develop competitive selection methods. It further recommended that evaluation of educational qualification, experience and attitude must be a pre- requisite when hiring new employees.

Deressa and Alemayehu (2019), carried out a study on recruitment and selection methods in the public sector, Ambo town. The study used a mixed research approach where quantitative and qualitative data were collected. The research adopted a descriptive research design. Primary data were collected from fifty one (51) public servants using in-depth interviews and questionnaires. Data gathered were analyzed using SPSS version 20 software. The research findings indicated that, the public sector should strive to select the best employee if it aims to become competitive. The study also revealed that most employees were unaware of the recruitment policies used in the public sector. These findings show that there was no fairness and transparency in the way public servants were hired. Some of the challenges encountered in the implementation of a recruitment policy included; increased costs, labour supply shortages, unattractive reward packages and high costs associated with recruitment.

Onchari et al. (2014) conducted a study which was aimed at investigating the impact of recruitment strategies on local government service delivery in Nyamira County's. The study results showed that many recruitment practices had not been adopted by local governments. Modern recruiting techniques, such as the use of the internet, had not been adopted. Interviews and ads were the most widely used recruiting strategies. It was determined that the majority of workers hired by local governments lacked basic experience and skills to help revive programs in their respective departments. Inadequate funds had made it difficult for local governments to carry out their responsibilities effectively. However, in order to increase service delivery, local governments should implement successful and productive modern recruiting methods so as to obtain experienced candidates, skills and expertise. The central government should provide financial assistance to local governments in order for them to carry out their functions effectively. The challenges that local governments faced with their recruiting efforts would be resolved by the newly adopted county government, which would ensure that the right and best skills and experience were adopted.

Misigo et al. (2019) investigated the impact of the organizational culture of Kenya's Ministry of Water and Irrigation on employee success in the public service. The study looked at the connection between organizational culture and efficiency. The study established the influence of organizational principles, communication, remuneration policies, on job success. The results showed that organizational principles, communication, incentive programs, and mission all had a positive impact on success. According to the research, there should be

policies in the civil service which address these variables because they were found to have a positive impact on the organization's success. Only the Ministry of Water and Irrigation was included in the research. The study concluded that organizational principles were critical to the organization's overall success.

According to Maina (2016), the culture of transformational stewardship influences service delivery in Kenyan county administrations. In a descriptive and correlational analysis, the primary data were collected utilizing a standardized questionnaire. The study looked at 363 county executives from Kiambu, Kirinyaga, Murang'a, Nyandarua, and Nyeri counties in Central Kenya for various management categories. The sample size was 90 respondents, and stratified random sampling design was utilized. In addition, descriptive statistics and regression analysis were performed. The findings revealed strong positive linear associations between intra-personal traits, operating mentality, inter-personal traits, as well as consciousness of change, all of which have been shown to have a major influence on delivery of services. Change consciousness is important for county operations; therefore, effective communication methods are required to keep up with the dynamism that devolution brings. Political influence should be minimized, and standards should be set up to establish type of experts required in county management roles. To grasp corporate environment, they should also improve their personal competencies. County governments must improve efficiency and hence provide good service, boost recruitment levels, particularly in county health facilities.

2.17 Research Gap

The above empirical review indicated that the topic on HRM and organisational performance has been reviewed many times particularly in the public sector. However, very few studies were done using Urban Local Authorities as they were regarded as miniature governments. Furthermore, many of these studies were carried out either in Europe or West Africa very few studies on HRM and Urban Local Authorities' performance were done using the Zimbabwean context. Thus the researcher was motivated to fill in this research gap.

2.18 Chapter Summary

Chapter two focused on the review of related literature in the area of study, both globally and locally. The literature reviewed was guided by the research objectives and the review covered

both theoretical and empirical literature. The next chapter will focus on the research methodology to be employed for this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The previous chapter looked at the literature review on Human Resources Management Strategies and Local Municipalities Performance in Zimbabwe. The chapter also discussed underlying theoretical and conceptual framework in detail bearing in mind the research objectives. Empirical evidence which related to the study using different context were also highlighted.

This chapter outlines the research methodology used to determine the effectiveness of Human Resources Management functions and the performance of selected Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe. The research methodology allowed the researcher to highlight the manner through which the study would be conducted. The study strove to add more knowledge to the human resources management policies used to manage Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe. The research followed guidelines highlighted by Saunders et al (2007) where layers and steps to be used were consistently followed throughout the research process. Therefore, research philosophies that were used will be shown, time horizons and procedures used will also be factored in. The methodology section also integrates the framework, setting, tests, restrictions, and examination strategies of the study. The chapter also sets a clear line on how the objectives of the study will be answered as it acts as a base for the data collection process.

This chapter therefore covers the research philosophy, research design, research approach, target population, sample size, sampling techniques, research instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis and presentation, validity and reliability and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research philosophy

Klockner (2021) asserts that a research philosophy acts as a guiding framework which outlines how a research should be conducted basing on ideas derived from the reality and nature of the knowledge. Research philosophies give a highlight of how human beings view the world and its elements when handling situations. The view is supported by Saunders et al., (2015) who advanced that research philosophy deals with the development and nurturing of knowledge. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) defines a research philosophy as a belief about the way in which data about a phenomenon should be gathered, analyzed and used. There are various reasons why the researcher needs to understand the type of philosophy to be adopted before embarking on a study. Research philosophies help the research to refine and clarify the research method to be adopted, gathering research evidence, and responding to study questions (Saunders et al., 2015).

For this research study, the philosophical foundation was Pragmatism. According to Klockner (2021), pragmatism is a deconstructive paradigm that supports the use of mixed techniques in research, avoids the controversial concerns of reality and truth, and concentrates on what functions as the truth in relation to the research questions that are being investigated. Pragmatism is the philosophy of common sense. It is a paradigm that places an emphasis on useful results and the application of knowledge in practical contexts, (Saunders et al., 2015). The pragmatic research philosophy is a fluid strategy that does not rigorously adhere to theoretical frameworks, instead emphasizing the efficacy and use of the research findings. Pragmatism is a flexible and popular research philosophy because it enables researchers to modify their techniques and approaches in accordance with the particular requirements of their subjects, (Klockner, 2021).

Pragmatism seeks to settle objectivism and subjectivism, various facts and standards, thorough knowledge and various contextualized experiences. Furthermore, Pragmatism does not support contentious metaphysical concepts which include truth and reality rather it is centered on the idea that they may be single or numerous truths open to experiential inquiries, (Cresswell & Clark, 2011). The Pragmatism philosophy also centers on deliberate human investigation. Sharma et al., (2018) argues that as problematic situations arise and are

acknowledged, inquiry is seen as an ongoing process that acknowledges the qualitative aspect of human experience. The uncertainty that comes with challenging preexisting belief systems is a part of recognition. Critical thinking is also used to dispel doubt, which is then put to test in real life. The pragmatic philosophy decisions are made based on how they will actually affect people. The above sentiments are shared by Klockner (2021) who argues that research is not always confined to a single effort, rather it frequently involves a community of inquirers.

The Pragmatic philosophy was employed by the researcher because, as Johnson et al. (2007) and Greene (2008) argue, that pragmatism is just one of several viewpoints that underpin mixed research. In addition, the Pragmatic philosophy base their knowledge on what is effective and produces tangible results, (Denscombe, 2007). They believe that applying knowledge to real world issues makes it valuable. Pragmatists also base their knowledge on what is useful and practical, (Descombe, 2007).

Moreover, for this research study, Pragmatism was chosen because it takes into consideration theories, concepts, views, study hypotheses and outcomes which are not in abstract manner but in accordance to the roles they play as mechanisms surrounding thought and actions also taking into account practical concerns. The major assumption underpinning the pragmatism approach is that knowledge and various beliefs are social constructs found in certain beliefs and habits of people living in different communities (Stuhr, 2015). The view was supported by Parvaiz et al., (2016) who advanced that knowledge world over is socially constructed but some versions of the social constructs match experience of other persons more than others.

Since the 1990's, Pragmatism has been extensively researched in the fields of public administration and policy, (Ansell, 2011; Ansell & Boin, 2000; Garrison, 2019; Lee & Lings, 2009). It is a concept which goes far beyond being merely a method for solving real world problems. The pragmatism approach further takes knowledge and reality differently with the view of making better use of one's existence (Yin, 2019). Through the use of the pragmatism approach, researchers move away from an objective stance of handling matters which once dominated researches over the years to exploring and having an in depth analysis of phenomenon through establishing links between available knowledge and the matter in question (Etikan & Bala, 2017).

Additionally, the researcher utilized the pragmatism approach because it enabled her to handle complex and dynamic organizational matters at local municipalities and the method had an opportunity of yielding better findings without taking an objective stance with the use of already existing knowledge. Instead of questioning the validity and intrinsic value carried by various methods, pragmatism purports the adopting of a flexible approach by carrying researchers from a practical to a theoretical world and the other way (Creswell, 2009). Lee and Lings, (2009) argued that when applied to psychological debates, the pragmatic approach reviews hidden and burning issues at stake thereby showing its importance towards coming up with a dependable research. The approach acts as a window through which new ideas and habits are formulated (Nachmais, 2008). Pragmatism is more dependable than other philosophical approaches in probing the inner world of the organization and its processes, emphasizes knowledge is closely linked to experience and researchers are encouraged to look closely at organizational practices. It focuses on practical study outcomes and rejects forced selections in between research paradigms. The approach is greatly commendable as it allows the researcher to overcome dichotomy which exists between assumptions and action and gives a voice to the ones affected by organizational processes (Flick, 2009). Adhering to the key principles of the pragmatism approach promotes moral responsibility when presenting research information with notable future implications (Coldwell & Herbst, 2004). The thrust of the paradigm is based on what works and posits an argument on the possibility of adopting one philosophy in the same study to fulfill the study objectives. Pragmatism is not linked to any research system hence researchers are free to employ either qualitative or quantitative research approaches with the idea being centered on solving the problem in the best possible manner (Samar, 2017).

Pragmatism argues that the major determinant of various methodological approaches including epistemology, ontology and axiology is the set of study questions. This indicates that research questions and objectives are the important pillars of the research philosophy; one may be the most appropriate for responding to research questions. It can be argued that the mixed methods consisting of qualitative and quantitative research approaches can be used in one study (Saunders et al., 2009). Pragmatism is mainly concerned about bringing out relationships between variables in a study specifically between antecedents and consequences thereby making pragmatism more appropriate. The researcher treasures the reflexive process attached to the philosophy driven by doubt and the feeling that all is not right which fosters

confidence in the event of the problem being solved (Zikmund, 2010). Pragmatism is also more focused on practical outcomes compared to abstract distinctions. The major determinant factor of the research design when using the pragmatic approach was the research problem. The approach permits researchers to make use of any philosophical approach they deem appropriate to effectively address the study questions to proffer solutions to the problem.

3.2 Research Approach

According to Flick (2009), the overall position shaping the way the study is to be accomplished is referred to as research approach. Heale and Twycross (2015), in light of the above posits that, the nature of the research problem to be studied determines the research approach to be used. The author further categorized research approaches into quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods approach.

This research study utilized the Mixed research approach which encompassed both quantitative and qualitative data. According to Field et al. (2012), the Positivists and the Interpretivist research paradigms are the two main sources of inspiration for the mixed method. The adoption of the mixed approach permitted the researcher to establish the true nature of relationship existing between the study's dependent and independent variables, (Bolarinwa, 2015). Creswell (2011) indicates that the use of mixed research approach complements both the quantitative and qualitative research. This opinion is also supported by Field et al. (2012) who posits that emanating from the pragmatic research approach, pluralistic and integrative perspectives signify that both qualitative and quantitative approaches do not work against each other rather they complement each other in enhancing the quality of research findings.

Ragaba and Arisha (2017) also suggest that, the major advantage of adopting the mixed approach in research, is its ability to offset the disadvantages posed by each method. Mixed research approach is important in improving the findings of the research as it promotes triangulation, complementary, development, initiation, development and discovery of research components (Creswell, 2011).

3.2.1 Qualitative Research Approach

Saunders (2019) alluded that qualitative research is primarily concerned with ascertaining, respondent's feelings, emotions, views and opinions. Novikov (2019) posits that, qualitative research is a form of systematic, methodical and procedural inquiry into an in depth analysis

of hidden meanings. Mejias et al. (2018) further posit that qualitative research involves an interpretive and naturalistic approach meaning that qualitative researchers study phenomena in its natural settings. Also qualitative researchers observe and probe people in-order to get deeper insights into research phenomena.

For the purposes of this study, which sought to explore the dynamics of Human Resources Management Strategies on the performance of selected Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe, the researcher chose the qualitative approach because the method provided greater flexibility when carrying out the research. It also enabled the researcher to explore processes effectively. Qualitative data according to Creswell (2011) allows researchers to have various opportunities to construct and develop new theories or models. It also gives the researcher the ability to study symbolic dimensions and social meaning. Furthermore, qualitative research focuses on a naturalistic philosophy which views reality as multi layered, interactive and “a social experience”, (Mejias et al., 2018). This advocates for the use of multi-method strategies of data collection such as structured and semi structured open-ended interviews, participant observation and open-ended questionnaires to study the problem from the participants’ perspective. In addition, the qualitative research methodology was chosen because it derives meaning from the research participants’ perspective (Klockner, 2021; Stuhr, 2015).

The researcher also used qualitative research methods because, it was used by other previous researchers who conducted similar studies and the findings yielded convincing results. This research focused on the dynamics of HRM strategies on the performance of selected Urban Local Authorities thus the use of qualitative research enabled the researcher to ascertain meanings and come up with relevant solutions in relation to the research participants.

3.2.2 Quantitative Research Approach

Saunders (2019) alluded that the quantitative approach is largely concerned with solving problems statistically using numbers where qualitative solutions utilizes respondents feelings, emotions, views and opinions. Quantitative research is the systematic investigation of phenomena by gathering quantifiable data and applying statistical, mathematical or computational techniques, (Saunders, 2015). Creswell (2007) further adds that quantitative research provides data in statistical nature and this enables the researcher to analyze it systematically and formally.

This researcher utilized quantitative research because the method objectively solved societal problems without giving room to researcher bias, (Zikmund, 2009). Quantitative data for this research was collected using structured questionnaires. The method was also chosen because previous researchers who embarked on studies of a similar nature utilized the method, (Chirisa, 2012; Chatiza et al, 2022 & ; Rajan, 2022). The research onion by Saunders (2019) can be used to illustrate the nature of research as shown in the Figure 5 below;

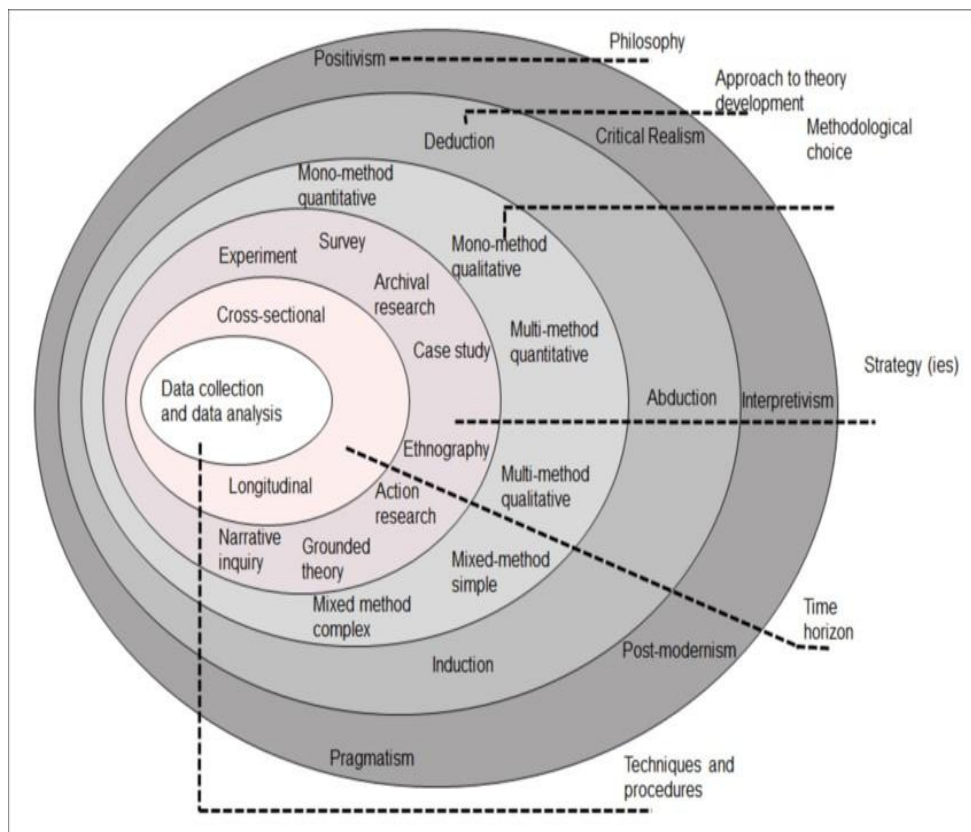


Figure 5. Research Onion

Source: Saunders et al., (2019)

3.3 Research design

Zikmund (2009) suggests that a research design is a layout which clearly articulates the research processes, rules and methods used in data collection. The author further asserts that, a research design is a specific outline or a blueprint with guidelines to be followed when embarking on a research. Cooper and Schindler (2001) stipulates that, a research design is a comprehensive and well-structured outline with useful strategies to proffer solutions to an existing or potential problem in an organizational setup. Research designs are tentative arrangements put in place by researchers to examine variables to be studied with the objective of coming up with a conclusion, (Mejias et al., 2018). Furthermore, Stuhr (2015) concurs that a research design, is an evidence based protocol, process and guideline which allows a study framework and research instruments to be developed (Coldwell & Herbst, 2004).

Novikov (2019) emphasized that, a research design is a plan which allows the researcher to move from one point to another. The view was supported by Nachmias (2008) who articulated that the importance of the research design is seen by its ability to provide a link between theory and arguments that inform the study and its empirical findings. It allows information to be gathered and analyzed ethically for a problem to be solved (Creswell, 2012). The research design acts as a plan which holds various elements of the research to smoothen the process of coming up with findings. It is a consequence of numerous research elements including research questions and objectives, population of the study, sampling strategies and phenomena of interest (Lee & Lings, 2009). The components are integrated in a manner which highlights communion which then gives direction to the type of study to be conducted.

The research design of a study seeks to explain the relationship that exists between variables of the research to give solutions. The main purpose of the plan is to ensure that the information gathered to solve the problem effectively addresses the situation logically and unambiguously. Study designs should link philosophical orientation of the study and the researcher's study assumptions lead to methodological decisions (Flick, 2009). The design is perceived as the actualization of logic through following set procedures which optimizes the validity of collected data in relation to a problem. The research design further sets the manner through which data are gathered and analyzed to provide solutions to the problem (Creswell, 2011).

3.3.1 Descriptive Research design

Research designs can be categorized into descriptive, exploratory and explanatory research designs, (Zikmund, 2009). The author further argues that research design methods can be subdivided into categories namely; case study, experiment or a survey. Bryman (2008) on the other hand indicated that, there are five main research designs namely cross sectional survey, experiment, case study, comparative and longitudinal design. The above contradictions means that research designs can take numerous forms. Most researchers however, converge on the idea that the research problem to be studied determines the study's research design to be adopted, (Kumar & Ali, 2011; Saunders et al, 2009). Creswell (2014) further indicates that a study's research design considers various attributes like the research objectives, purpose, time available, location and the researcher's availability.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher chose the descriptive research design because the design allowed for both qualitative and quantitative data to be collected for analysis thereby allowing for comprehensive analysis to be made on the dynamics of Human Resources functions and the performance of Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, descriptive research designs are inquisitive in nature and makes direct exploration, analysis and explanation of phenomenon understudy, (Bolarinwa, 2015).

3.3.2 Cross- Sectional Survey

In this study, the researcher adopted a cross sectional survey design. This method enabled the researcher to collect data and make conclusions instantly basing on what the researcher found out at a particular point in time. Cross sectional surveys permit the researcher to gather data instantly and timeously. They provide accurate results, give representative statistical conclusions, they are highly representative and enable data gathering. Furthermore, the cross sectional survey was also adopted by researchers who conducted similar studies before, (Chikwariro et al., 2021; Gumbie et al., 2023, Marumahoko, 2020; Rajan, 2022), Hence, the researcher chose the method. Saunders et al. (2019) also support that cross sectional surveys allowed the researcher to make comparisons between variables. In addition, cross sectional survey was ideal because they permitted the researcher to collect huge data samples whilst conducting research. Zikmund (2009) asserts that cross sectional surveys allow the researcher to utilize a structured questionnaire with various questions. Cross sectional studies are usually affordable to carry out and time conscious thereby allowing the researcher to quickly complete them within the given timeframe, (Biros, 2018; Bryman, 2008).

3.4 Population

Saunders (2009) defines population as study units from which data are to be collected, analyzed and conclusions drawn. Population is also defined by Saunders (2012) as a group of people with similar traits which are well defined and which permit a researcher to collect data. Majid (2018) defines a population as a group of targeted people whom the researcher wants to investigate in order to come up with a solution to an existing problem. Etikan and Bala (2016) are of the opinion that, a population as a set of items of the researcher's interest where a study wants to be conducted to get results. Ellam and Tate (2017) defined a target population as group of elements which the researcher wants to focus on and obtain results which are then tested and generalized. It is any collection of specific human beings or items of the researcher's interest. Creswell (2015) argues that, a population should consist of items with similar characteristics to come up with reliable findings even though they may differ from one group to the other. The above definitions all support that a population is an entire group which the researcher intends to obtain information from and that group members of a population share a common attribute.

3.4.1 Justification for the choice of Selected ULAs

The research study sought to examine the effectiveness of HRM functions on the performance of selected Urban Local Authorities' in Zimbabwe. The target population of the study consisted of lower level employees, middle level managers and HR administrators of selected Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe namely, Harare City Council, Bindura Town Council and Mutema City Council. The mentioned ULAs enabled the researcher to fulfill the objectives of the study. Harare City Council (HCC) was chosen because it is the largest ULA in Zimbabwe and it employs more than ten thousand employees. Hence, the findings of the study were representative of the Zimbabwean scenario. Harare City Council's huge target population also allowed the researcher to gather and analyze data more accurately and to gather data which were representative. Furthermore, as the largest ULA and situated in the capital city, HCC was a perfect model or a benchmark of local government's performance in Zimbabwe. In addition, the researcher was a former human resources employee of HCC and this made data collection rigorous.

Bindura Municipality (BM) was chosen due to its proximity and closeness to the researcher who permanently resides and works in that town. Hence, it was easier to collect data, engage

management and to make conclusive observations. **Mutare City Council (MCC)** was chosen because research evidence (Chikwariro, 2021; Kajongwe, 2023) suggests that it is one of the best managed model Local Authority in Zimbabwe. The researchers pointed towards the council's ability to provide clean and safe drinking water, timeous refuse collection and clean city.

From the above, the researcher targeted lower level employees because they are responsible for operational activities in their ULAs. Middle managers were chosen because they are the implementers of human resources management strategies. Human Resources Administrators were chosen because they are responsible for formulating various HR policies, force compliance and conformity. As a result, their insights were immensely valuable for the enrichment of this research study. Therefore, the total population consisted of eight thousand five hundred and eighty two (8582) employees selected from the above three Urban Local Authorities as shown in the **Table 4** below;

Table 4: Target Population

Urban Authorities	Local	Coding Names	Population
HCC	ULA ₁	Middle managers	750
		Low Level Employees	5285
		Administrators	59
BM	ULA ₂	Middle managers	302
		Low Level Employees	144
		Administrators	5
MCC	ULA ₃	Middle Managers	75
		Low Levels Employees	1942
		HR Administrators	20
TOTAL			8582

Source: Researcher's Primary data

The selected ULAs were also illustrated using the Zimbabwe map as shown in the Fig 6 below. The following key was used to show the selected areas on the Zimbabwe map;

Harare	
Mutare	
Bindura	

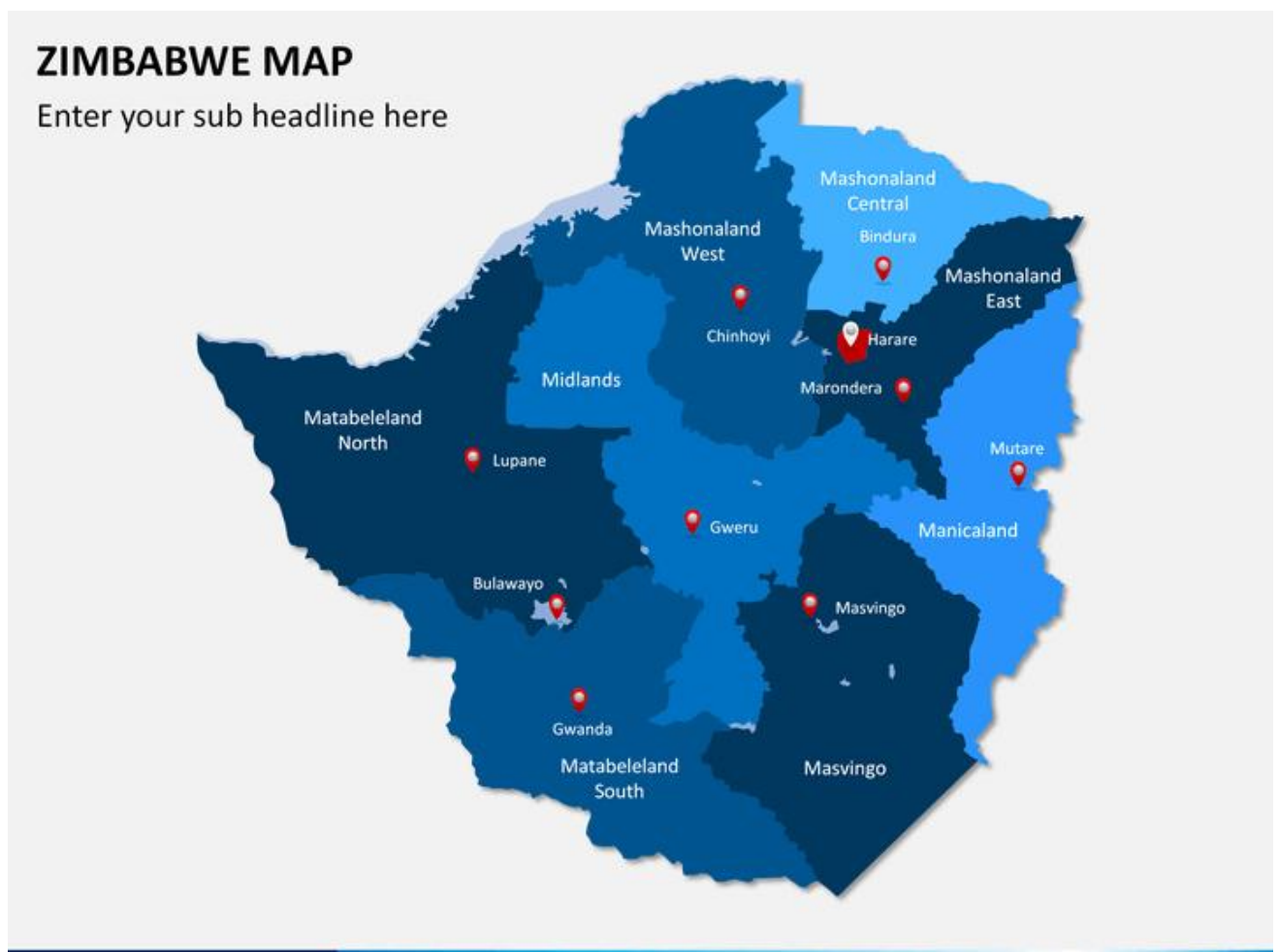


Figure 6. Area of Study

Source: Researcher's Primary Data

The key aspects of the chosen three ULAs were also presented on a table as shown in the Table 5 below;

Table 5: Background information selected ULAs

Local Authority	Harare City Council	Mutare City Council	Bindura Municipality
Geographical Location	Harare Metropolitan	Manicaland	Mashonaland Central
Population Size	1 849 600 (census 2022)	2 224 802 (Census 2022)	1 152 520 (Census 2022)
Year Granted Status	1980 city	1971 City Status	Town Status 1997
Economic Activities	Agriculture Commerce (Industry) Tourism Manufacturing	Agriculture Farming Tourism Horticulture	Mining (Gold, Nickel) Agriculture Farming
Estimated Workforce	+9000 employees	+ 1000	+500 employees
HR Planning	HR strategy & Review workshops done bi-annually	HR Strategy & Review workshops done annually	HR strategy & Review workshops done annually
HRM Challenges	Lack of Resources Strategy implementation Political Interference Ageing workforce Poor remuneration Population Growth	Poor salaries Inadequate resources	Inadequate resources Strategy implementation Poor revenue collection strategies

Source: Researcher's Primary data

Table 5: The key aspects of the chosen three ULAs

3.5 Sampling

Many researcher's recognize that when carrying out a research, it is difficult to consider the entire population due to numerous factors, (Creswell, 2014; Zikmund & Babin, 2008). Bryman and Bell (2001) defines sampling as a research process of selecting a few items to make inferences about a population. Field (2013) indicates that sampling is a method of selecting models from a population in order to approximate and forecast results. Heale and Twycross (2015) defines a sample as a subset of the entire population. The above definitions converge on the aspect that, sampling involves breaking down the entire population into various manageable smaller units which consists of items of similar nature for analysis to be made.

Researchers like (Aaker et al., 2007; Kothari, 2004, Saunders et al., 2009) argue that sampling is largely dependable and produces accurate results as compared to targeting the entire population as it might result in huge volumes of data. Field (2013) also indicates that, the management of small teams is always better than the management of big teams. On the contrary, many researchers also differ on the ideal number for sample size, (Creswell, 2014; Saunders et al, 2009; Zikmund & Babin, 2008). However, they all agree that a sample size must be representative. Kothari (2004) advocates for a larger sample size, the author's argument is that in the event of a low response rate, findings can still be representative.

3.5.1 Sampling Methods

According to Saunders (2013), Sampling can be subdivided into two broad categories namely; Probability and Non-probability sampling technique. Probability sampling techniques can further be subdivided into Stratified, Simple and random sampling techniques. Probability sampling techniques accord research items under study an equal opportunity of being selected. Etikan and Bala (2017) allude that, the choice of sampling procedure is largely dependant on participants' knowledge, degree of accuracy as well as availability of resources.

Ellam and Tate (2018) favour probability sampling as the best method since it is reflective of the study's population. Yin (2009) concurs with Saunders by enunciating that probability

sampling has stand-alone characteristics which represent each known unit and that each unit has non-zero chance of being left out in the sample. Etikan and Bala (2017) further posit that the probability sampling technique makes use of well-known procedures which allow items under study an equal chance of being selected for analysis unlike with non-probability sampling techniques which relies on factors influencing expected outcomes. The concept of sampling gives practicable and alternative means which allow for effective implementation of researches within a limited time frame and constrained budgets (Ragab & Arisha, 2017).

With probability sampling techniques, it is possible for responding to both research questions and objects which require the researcher statistically assume the characteristics of the target population basing on the chosen sample. As a result probability sampling techniques are usually linked with survey and experimental research methods (Saunders et al., 2012). With non-probability sampling the chance of each item being chosen for study is not predetermined and it is difficult to respond to research question and objective making use of the technique thereby making it impossible for statistical inference to be made by the researcher (Saunders et al., 2012).

On the other hand, non probability sampling techniques are subjective since they are based on the researcher's judgement, (Bolarinwa, 2015; Field et al., 2012 & Flick, 2009). In addition, non probability sampling techniques can be subjected to bias during sampling thereby discrediting the research findings. This is mainly attributable to the fact that, randomization is not considered important in non-probability sampling hence items are not given an equal chance of being chosen for analysis. The use of sampling in research improves the quality of findings, saves time and funds from trying to collect data from intricate situations (Saunders et al., 2012).

For this research study, the researcher used both probability and non-probability sampling methods. Probability sampling techniques namely Stratified and Simple random methods were used for Quantitative data. These were chosen by the researcher to eliminate bias and it made it possible for the hypotheses of the study to be tested. For Qualitative data, the researcher used non-probability sampling, the researcher made use of Judgemental sampling because the technique simplified the data collection process.

3.5.1.1 Sampling technique for Quantitative data

For this research study, the researcher chose Stratified random sampling technique for quantitative data. Etikan and Bala (2017) argues that Stratified random sampling technique is used in research to select a sample population that most closely resembles the total population under study. The population is divided into smaller subgroups, or strata based on shared traits. Each sub-population is then randomly sample to create a test group. According to Etikan and Bala (2017), compared to Simple random sampling, this method provides a better coverage of the population and more accurate results by ensuring that each subgroup within the population has proper representation within the sample.

Compared to ordinary random sampling, Stratified random sampling offers a number of benefits. Since researchers stratify the entire population before using random sampling techniques, it first accurately reflects the population under study. This guarantees that the sample has representation from every subgroup within the population.

Stratified random sampling is also advantageous because it reduces the requirement for substantial data gathering from a population, which saves time and money, (Sharma, 2017) Researchers can collect more representative data with fewer resources by concentrating on particular subgroups than they would require for a straightforward random sampling of the entire population. For the study, the researcher made use of Stratified random sampling in coming up with a sample of council workers who completed the questionnaires for the study as the technique allowed the employees to be put in homogeneous groups.

3.5.1.2 Sampling for qualitative data

For the qualitative data, non probability sampling technique namely Judgemental sampling was chosen. Judgemental sampling also referred to as purposive or authoritative sampling is a non-probability sampling method which allows the researcher to pick items for study using his or her judgment or knowledge (Etikan & Bala, 2017). The sampling technique promotes accuracy in coming up with a sample for the study as the researcher carefully chooses the sample for the study thereby minimizing the margin of error. The sampling technique does not give all respondents an equal chance of being chosen for analysis as the decision on who to pick to make up the sample rests with the researcher. Judgmental sampling is adopted in the event of the target population from which the sample has to be selected contains highly intellectual members who cannot be selected using random sampling. The technique puts the

researcher ahead as the key determinant of the sample type to be established as s/he knows what exactly needs to be done to come up with sound study findings. The researcher then chose respondents based on their judgment and knowledge and sets up to find those willing and able to take part in the research process.

For the study, the researcher made use of Judgmental sampling in coming up with a sample which took part in interviews for the study. Top executives, Councillors and HR Managers were selected as research participants for qualitative data. Furthermore the selected people were knowledgeable about the study area and were deemed ideal to proffer accurate solutions to the problem of poor implementation of HRM strategies and poor service delivery in Zimbabwe's Urban Local Authorities.

3.5.2 Sample Size

There are a number of challenges which researcher's face when dealing with the entire population. Saunders (2015) argues that the quality of findings is usually compromised when a study of the entire population is carried out, hence the need of narrowing down the study population into smaller manageable groups which can easily be controlled. Hair et al. (2012) further opine that the sample representing the entire population should be big enough to ensure that comprehensive reflective findings are produced by the study. An optimal sample should be used for the research to lower the risk of sampling error, hence highlighting the need of using an appropriate sample size (Salkind, 2010). The view was supported by Sekaran and Bougie (2016) who articulated that a smaller sample size leads to committing **level 1** error where there is a chance of incorrectly rejecting particular findings which could have been accepted. Too large sample sizes leads to **level 2** errors whereby findings which are supposed to be rejected are accepted due to the nature of the sample size (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

The sample of the study was taken from three Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe (Harare City Council, Mutare City Council & Bindura Municipality). The sample was chosen from the target population of eight thousand five hundred and eighty two (8582) council employees distributed amongst the three selected Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe. From the 8582 employees, a sample of 276 respondents was tabulated using the Krejcie & Morgan (1970) sample size table. Therefore for the study;

Population size (N) = 8582

Sample size (n) = 276

The above numbers were also substantiated by Field (2003) recommendations that a minimum number of two hundred may be chosen as sample size. References were also made to previous research studies done of a similar nature. For instance (Chikazhe; 2022; Chikuni et al., 2017; Chikwariro et al., 2021 & Marumahoko, 2014). Moreover, the sample size of 276 was also useful for the SPSS analytical packages which require large amounts of data for making data analysis and inferences.

3.7 Data Collection Method

According to Saunders (2013) the commonly used methods of collecting data can be broadly categorized under primary and secondary data. For this research, primary and secondary data were used by the researcher to investigate the effectiveness of HRM strategies and the performance of selected Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe. The data collection process allowed research variables to be measured in a systematic manner which enabled the researcher to answer research questions and objectives, test hypotheses and proffer solutions by evaluating outcomes (Coldwell & Herbst, 2004). Saunders et al. (2012) postulate that data collection is a significant stage which involves the respondents taking part in the research process.

3.7.1 Primary Data

Primary data are first-hand information which have never been collected before (Douglas, 2015). Primary data can be obtained through questionnaires, interviews, surveys and experimental methods (Creswell, 2014). The researcher made use of questionnaires and interviews to collect primary data from ULA's employees. Unstructured questionnaires were sent to lower level employees and middle managers. Interviews were conducted on HR administrators, top executives and councilors. The researcher opted for primary data collected directly from the source because it increases the chances of success for the study. The view is supported by Cooper and Schlinder (2001) who acknowledged that primary data is dependable, more reliable and objective in coming out with reflective findings.

3.7.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data is information which was collected from various sources but not solely for the purpose of the study but for other purposes, (Ellram & Tate, 2016). Secondary data is readily available for use by the researcher thereby reducing data collection time. Secondary data collection was done using sources from the internet mainly journal articles, Urban Councils Acts, and HR Annual reports and this assisted the researcher to analyse the relationship between Human Resources Management functions and the performance of selected Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe. The use of secondary data enabled the researcher to analyze the relationships between the study's independent and dependant variables. This view is supported by Washington and Trippier (2017) who articulated that secondary data allows researchers to determine the level of relationship between variables. However, it is important to note that secondary data can be misleading especially where thorough research has not been done, findings may be misleading.

3.8 Research Instruments

Saunders et al. (2012) defines a research instrument as equipment used to collect data. Field et al., (2012) also define research instruments as tools used to collect data from various respondents. Research instruments are used to collect information for analysis and for recommending solutions to the research problem. For this research questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data. Sekaran and Bougie (2016) emphasizes that, the effectiveness of the researcher's data collection instruments determine the quality of data gathered for analysis. The tools further impact on the quality of the research outcome. This means that, if the data collection instruments are not properly structured then the intended objectives will not be achieved.

3.8.1 Questionnaire

Questionnaires are often used in quantitative research to obtain responses about a given phenomena. According to Saunders et al. (2019), a questionnaire is a list of preset questions posed to individuals to gather crucial information about a particular topic. The authors add that when properly constructed, a questionnaire is a powerful tool of obtaining information

from a specific group of people. Creswell (2011) defines a questionnaire as a data collection tool used by researchers to coerce participants into answering semi and structured questions on the researcher's area of interest making it possible for analysis to be done and solutions given. Kothari (2004) defines a questionnaire as a list of printed questions which are completed by a research participant with the aim of giving information.

The researcher chose a questionnaire as a research instrument because questionnaires enable respondents to freely articulate or indicate their opinions without fear of being victimized or identified. Kothari (2004) posits that the use of questionnaires permits the researcher to collect data from large organisations thereby making it a suitable data collection instrument for the research. Questionnaires also enable data to be collected in a uniformed orderly fashion so that data become internally consistent and appropriate for analysis. Saunders (2012) indicates that questionnaires are also useful when resources are inadequate because questionnaires are generally affordable to design and administer. Wilson (2009) further suggests that questionnaires may be distributed physically, by mail or by telephone. These days with the advancements in technology, questionnaires can now be distributed via different social media platforms.

For the purposes of this research study, the structured questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from lower level employees in local government who were not in management positions. Structured questionnaires enabled data to be administered quickly, whether in person, online, or via phone. Furthermore Saunders (2012) opined that, well-structured questions reduce ambiguity, leading to clearer and more reliable responses. In addition, structured questionnaires allow uniformity for easier comparison of responses across different participants or groups. Overall, structured questionnaires play a crucial role in gathering reliable, comparable, and analyzable data, making them an essential component of effective research methodologies. However, Kothari (2004) argues that the use of questionnaires must be done in accordance to written principles and guidelines. Failure to do this leads to misleading results. The structured questionnaire was comprised of five point Likert scale items that elicited respondent's perceptions. The scores were as follows: 1=Strongly Disagree 2= Disagree 3 Neutral, 4=Agree, 5= Strongly Agree. The questionnaire was designed to test the research objectives.

3.8.2 Interviews

Interviews are popular in social science research because they enable the researcher to gather qualitative data. Bryman and Bell (2009) indicate that interviews are a crucial method of gaining deeper insights into individual feelings, opinions, understanding and experiences about any given phenomenon. Therefore, interviews are significant because they enable the researcher to collect valuable information for use during the research. Heale and Twycross (2015) define an interview as a facial interaction between the researcher and respondents. The above definition acknowledges that interviews involve interaction and two way communication between the researcher and the research participant.

Bolarinwa (2015) opined that interviews are advantageous because, they allow the researcher or interviewer to weigh the respondent's level of assertiveness thereby making it a suitable data collection tool for the research. Kothari (2004) posits that interviews enable a long lasting bond to be established between the researcher and respondent. Furthermore, interviews enable further clarification to be made in unclear circumstances, researcher's can probe participants further. For this research study, interviews were advantageous because they allowed the researcher to observe participants' gestures which enhanced understanding on any given topic thereby obtaining comprehensive answers for the research process. Interviews also allowed the researcher to get first hand information from key informant persons who were knowledgeable about local government operations. The key informant persons were also conversant with Human Resources Management Strategies, hence their contributions were of significant importance towards validating the findings of this study. However, it is important to note that poorly crafted interview questions may be misleading and the researcher may end up with inappropriate responses which are not fit for analysis.

3.8.2.1 Interview Guide

Interviews are often facilitated by an interview guide. According to Etikan and Bala (2016), an interview guide is a guideline with questions used by researchers when collecting data. The interviewer asks questions from the interview guide and the participants answer them while the researcher records the responses. The interview guide comprises of questions blending both structured and unstructured questions which are directed towards research participants with the aim of getting information. Furthermore, an interview guide may consist of structured, semi-structured or unstructured questions. Semi structured interview guides allow the researcher to make follow up questions, they are flexible, (Kothari, 2004). A

structured interview guide is rigid in nature and it does not allow the interviewer to deviate from the guide.

For this research study, the researcher made use of a semi-structured interview guide which had open ended questions. Such questions, allowed the researcher to probe. This method was advantageous because it permitted the researcher to come into direct contact with local government Key Informant Persons (KIP). HR Administrators and top executives were categorized as KII. These people provided useful insights on Human Resources Management functions on the performance of selected Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe.

3.8.3 Key Informant Persons

Key informant interviews are qualitative in depth interviews with people who know what is going on in the community. Creswell (2011) defines Key informant persons as knowledgeable people about various community aspects. This knowledge would have been acquired through professional mastery, leadership responsibilities or personal experiences. Cooper and Schlinder (2001) defines Key Informant Persons (KIP) as people who possess first hand information about a particular topic.

Key Informant interviews on the other hand refer to qualitative in-depth interviews of people who are consciously aware of what is transpiring in society. Creswell (2011) argues that, the purpose of key informant interviews is to gather data from informed people like church leaders, community leaders, residents, political leaders who have first hand information about the subject matter under discussion. Key informants help the researcher to have an understanding of compound events because of their practical familiarity. The use of key informant persons was chosen for this research because it had a number of merits. Saunders (2019) articulates that through KII facial expressions, changes of position and other indications of attitudes which give additional information to what is said can be recorded. This allowed the researcher to harmonize verbal and non verbal cues. Thus the interviewer gathered comprehensive data by combining verbal communication with non-verbal signs shown by the interviewee. KII also offered an opportunity for greater flexibility in eliciting information. Ellam and Tate (2016) suggests the following advantages of key informant interviews; information can be obtained directly from informed people, provide flexibility to explore new ideas and issues not anticipated during planning further more the interviews were inexpensive and simple to conduct.

For this research study, the researcher interviewed HR administrators, top executives and middle managers in the three selected ULAs in-order to have a holistic picture about Urban Local Authorities' performance. The issue of service delivery was also an issue which touched the lives of everyone hence, these interviews were of great significance. Furthermore, these interviews allowed the researcher to answer the sub-research questions especially on the factors and challenges hindering effective implementation of HRM strategies in Urban Local Authorities.

However, if questions were not crafted well, key informant interviews could have their own limitations. The researcher therefore took into consideration and devised ways of circumventing them. Furthermore, Bolarinwa (2015) emphasizes that key informant interviews rarely provide adequate information for quantitative data analysis. The author further argues that KII requires careful preparation and planning in order to ascertain the right questions to ask informants. The researcher with the aid of the supervisor planned the appropriate interview questions. To mitigate some of the above cited limitations, the researcher used triangulation whereby KIIs were combined with other methods such as documentary search and questionnaires. Flick (2007) argues that triangulation means extending the activities of the researcher in the process beyond what is normally done for example by using more than one method and this involved linking different methodological approaches.

3.9 Data collection procedure

3.9.1 Permission from Graduate Business Studies

The data collection process was guided by the principles of research ethics. Research ethics guided the researcher during the data collection process as they helped to determine appropriate behavior. Before collecting the data, the researcher first sought for permission to carry out the study from the Graduate School of Business. The permission letter was the primary document which was used by the researcher to seek for permission from the chosen Urban Local Authorities. The permission letter from Chinhoyi University Graduate School of Business, authenticated the research process. The researcher then sought permission from the Urban Local Authorities of Harare, Mutare and Bindura who had to understand the purpose of the research before granting the permission. After being granted permission by all organizations, questionnaires were first administered physically and some online for the

respondents to complete. Clarification was given to the respondents on the purpose of the study and they were assured that the study was being carried out for academic purposes and that their responses would not be disclosed or used for any other purpose but to proffer solutions which would improve the provision of services by Urban Local Authorities.

3.9.2 Informed Consent

Biros (2018) advance that when carrying out the research, there is need for the researcher to practice professionalism so that the rights of the research participants are not evoked. Free and informed consent were prioritized throughout the research process and communicated to research participants. Informed consent involves protecting the respondent's right to autonomy in the data collection process and it seeks to put together the respondent's right of autonomy and that of self-determination. Overlooking the aspect of free and informed consent results in the violation of the respondent's rights thereby making the research unethical. Biros (2018) further posits that there is need for the researcher to seek for authority from the potential respondents before collecting any kind of information from them. Therefore, a consensus was therefore reached between both parties before the commencement of the data collection exercise so that the rights of the potential respondents were protected.

3.9.3 Anonymity and confidentiality

Sekaran and Bougie (2016) opines that anonymity and confidentiality involves taking into account the dignity and commitment of the respondents since they are connected to their rights. Character and behavior can be linked with one's response thereby raising the need for the respondent's identity to be protected. This was done so that the researcher obtained clear and honesty views from the study participants on the subject matter without fear of victimization.

3.10 Data analysis and presentation

3.10.1 Quantitative data analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 24. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences made it easy for the researcher to analyze data and present research findings. The researcher chose to use data analytical tools to analyze research data as they allowed for data to be thoroughly analyzed without generalizing study findings. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 24 allowed data to be summarized in the form of descriptive statistics including graphs and tables. Chi squared test, regression analysis, t-tests and correlations were used to depict the strength of relationship which existed between variables of the formulated study hypotheses.

3.10.2 Qualitative data analysis

Qualitative data were analyzed using the NVivo Application version 12. This software enabled the researcher to unlock insights in the data and to analyze data in a more professional and appealing manner. The use of NVivo also made it simple for the researcher to organize and manage qualitative data from different sources, (Etikan & Bala, 2017). The use of NVivo was also advantageous because it was efficient and transparent. It also accommodated a rich and large amount of data. Furthermore, the use of data analytical tools allowed for data to be analyzed thoroughly and eliminated the need to generalize study findings.

3.11 Reliability

Zikmund (2009) defines reliability as the consistency of a measure under similar events. Bolarinwa (2015) further argue that reliability is about precision. Zikmund et al. (2010) further supports that research instruments are considered reliable if they can reproduce obtained results several times. Saunders et al. (2015) advanced that reliability is linked to the truthfulness of the research and the efficiency of the techniques used in carrying out the data collection exercise during the research process. Bolarinwa (2015) supported Saunderson's (2009) view defining reliability as the truthfulness resembled by the data collection to come up with study findings and conclusions. To test for reliability of the research instruments, they should be exposed to various situations to determine whether a similar outcome is attained thereby determining the degree of consistency (Bolarinwa, 2015). The following reliability tests were conducted for quantitative data.

3.11.1 Reliability for Quantitative Data

To measure internal consistency of quantitative data, the Cronbach's Alpha was used by the researcher. Etikan and Bala (2017) opine that the approach is widely used by researchers to achieve consistency in the research process. It is used to measure how a group of items are closely related, a measure of reliability of the scale being used. Zikmund (2010) states that, for a research instrument to be considered reliable it must be close to one (1). The Cronbach Alpha approach describes the dependability of average sums of the measurements which are going to be used by the researcher. In the event of the research measurements being parallel, it is posited that they have equal variance and covariance. Cronbach's Alpha is expressed as a coefficient of consistency in the research process for test statistics.

3.11.2 Reliability for Qualitative Data

There have been major concerns with the issue of reliability with regards to qualitative data. Many researchers converge on the argument that, it is difficult to replicate findings given that study contexts differ, (Etikan & Bala, 2017; Ellan & Tate 2017; Stuhr, 2015). The authors argue that, the replication of qualitative studies is difficult to achieve since the research findings reveal the actual situation at the time the study was undertaken.

For this research study, in order to achieve reliability of qualitative data, the researcher made sure questionnaires were designed cautiously making use of more simplified words, straight forward questions (Flick, 2009). Furthermore, a pilot study was done which allowed the researcher to pre test the questionnaire. Pilot testing was conducted before the final data collection exercise so as to test the readiness of the questionnaire to answer research questions. Some sections of the questionnaire were corrected in order to minimize biases and ambiguities. According to Klockner, (2021), pilot testing is significant because it guarantees the practicability and feasibility of the survey. Triangulation of the data collection instrument and techniques was done between the project supervisor and the student so that perfect instruments were used in the data collection process. This also enabled the researcher to make changes to the pre- tested questionnaire.

3.11.1 Validity

Validity refers to the capacity of the research to measure what it is intended to measure, (Heale & Twycross, 2015). It is also defined by Creswell (2011) as the extent to which research findings are precise and depicts a true picture of what is on the ground. It refers to the accurateness of the research findings, (Bolarinwa, 2015). An instrument is said to be valid, if it provides measures that represent a particular notion, (Zikmund & Babin, 2007). Bryan and Bell (2011) identified construct validity, content validity and criterion validity as approaches to assess validity.

3.11.1.1 Validity for Quantitative Data

Ensuring the validity of quantitative data is crucial for producing accurate and reliable research findings. In the context of the current study, the researcher considered Model fit indices and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) during assessment of construct validity. Thorough literature review was also done to ensure proven, well tested and validated questionnaires were used, (Saunders et al, 2012). Furthermore, the researcher consulted her academic supervisors and other experts were consulted to assist in assessing the content validity of the questionnaire.

3.11.1.2 Validity for Qualitative Data

Ensuring the validity of qualitative data is crucial for producing credible and trustworthy research findings. Validity of qualitative data was ensured through Triangulation. (Zikmund, 2010) indicated that Triangulation involves collecting data from multiple perspectives or sources to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic. This can include using different moderators, conducting focus groups in various locations, or having multiple researchers analyze the same data set. By comparing results from different angles, researchers can strengthen their findings.

Respondent validation was also done. Respondent validation, also known as member checking, involves presenting initial findings back to participants to verify whether these results resonate with their experiences. This process allowed participants to confirm or refine interpretations made by the researcher, thereby enhancing the authenticity of the results.

3.12 Ethical consideration

Ethics in research are significant because they assist researchers to draw meaningful protocols to be observed whilst carrying out research in order to accurately report findings. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) indicate that researchers must consider ethics as they seek authority to do their studies and collect data. The authors define ethics as acceptable behavior when carrying out research in relation to research participant's rights. Washington and Kuo (2020) defines ethics as the values, morals and beliefs which make one to behave in a certain way and they differ with location and religion. The above definitions are also supported by Washington and Kuo (2020) who defines research ethics as moral obligation and principles which researchers must strictly adhere to before, during and after carrying out a study. Conclusively, one can deduce that ethics values and respects research participants' principles and morals.

Ethical norms in research support the principles of accountability, trust, respect and justice. Nachmias and Nachmias (2008) emphasizes that ethical issues often emerge from the research topic which the researcher will be looking forward to investigate and the procedures taken. It is therefore significant to address research ethical issues in-order to ensure that the research process produces not only valid and reliable data, but also observes the rights and interests of research participants and protects them from lies, danger and humiliation, (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Creswell (2009) advanced that when carrying out a study, the principles of ethics should guide the researcher to adhere to what is deemed acceptable and not infringe in the rights of those taking part in the research.

In order to uphold ethical values for this research study, the researcher made sure that permission to conduct the research was sought from Chinhoyi University of Technology, Graduate School of Business. Permission was also sought to conduct the research from the three chosen Urban Local Authorities namely Harare City Council, Mutare City Council and Bindura Municipality. Furthermore, the research objectives and purposes were clearly articulated to research participants. Informed consent was sought from the study's participants where the study's participants were told of the purpose of the study, benefits likely to be derived and assured that the study was free from harm. The researcher further ensured that data collection was conducted with minimal disturbances to participants' daily

routine. Research participants were also warned against fabricating, falsifying or misrepresenting research data in order to maximize accuracy and promote the truth.

3.13 Chapter summary

The above chapter evaluated the research methodology used to investigate the dynamics of HRM strategies and institutional performance of selected Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe. The study's research philosophy, research paradigm, research design, population, target population, sampling, sample size, sampling techniques, data collection methods, research instruments, reliability and validity of the study and ethical considerations for the study were also covered in detail. The chapter provided a solid foundation for data collection, conclusions and recommendations to be made. The next chapter focuses on data analysis and presentation of findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

QUANTITATIVE DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

As a follow-up to the methodology, the findings obtained from field data surveys and other secondary data sources are given and examined in this chapter. The primary goal of this section is to show descriptive and inferential statistics that were influenced by the chapter one research objectives. This chapter presents the research data gathered from three local governments in Zimbabwe namely, Harare City Council, Mutare City Council and Bindura City Council. A separate approach was used to analyse data where this chapter specifically analyzed quantitative data only. Data for most of the research questions were obtained from questionnaire responses. Quantitative analysis therefore focused on specific sections that particularly answered the following six research questions;

- ❖ What is the extent to which Urban Local Authorities' falls short of rate payer's expectation?
- ❖ What is the impact of Human Resources Management strategies on the performance of Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe?
- ❖ What are the factors which influence the implementation of Human Resources Management strategies in Urban Local Authorities?
- ❖ What are some of the HRM challenges which Administrators face in Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe?

- ❖ What practical Human Resources Management recommendations, framework/model from the empirical study can be developed for use by Urban Local Authorities so that they could improve their performance?

4.1.1 Chapter Organization

The research study is arranged such that the participant's profile is given first and explores the participants' age, sexual orientation, and other socio-demographic traits. The objective of the study was to determine how Human Resources Management strategies impacts on the performance of Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe. Firstly, this Chapter quantitatively scrutinizes the various relationships discovered in the research, inspects and authenticates the key constructs, and tests the suggested model in order to create a reliable one. The study used correlations and regression to ascertain the relationships between the two research variables. The significance of the test findings, according to Coolican, (2009: 199) "mainly ranged from the significant level of 0.01 to a significance level of 0.05.". Due to the fact that there were two potential outcomes for the comparisons, the study's probability was based on two-tailed tests. The quantitative section therefore presented data on the response rate analysis, demographic analysis, descriptive statistics, exploratory factor analysis, reliability and validity as well as testing research hypothesis. Lastly, the chapter discusses the research findings under common themes.

4.2 Response rate

Out of the sampled 276 potential research participants who were initially considered for the research, 250 questionnaires were completed successfully and were considered adequate for analysis. The response rate for self-administered questionnaire was 91%. According to Hendra and Hill (2018), scientific studies should have reasonably high response rates, and an 80 percent response rate has typically been considered more than sufficient. In general, it shows that, respondents were keen to take part in the study. Fjortoft and Gettig (2017) emphasizes that low response rates are normally subjective and undesirable, they lead to responder bias. In support of this view, Pickett, Cullen, Bushway, Chiricos and Alpert (2018) argue that if a response rate is lower than 60% then it is not representative enough, whilst a

response rate of at least 70% is deemed relatively acceptable. The authors argue that surveys with low response rate produce biased results. With this in mind, the response rate permitted the researcher to carry out the data analysis as data obtained was sufficient and representative. **Table 6** below lists the results of the survey in the mentioned Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe

Table 6: Response rate

CASE	Level	Questionnaires administered		Questionnaires returned	Response rate
BINDURA (BM)	HR Administrators	3		3	
	Middle Managers	2		2	
	Low level employees	25		19	
	Total		30	24	80%
MUTARE (MCC)	HR Administrators	3		3	
	Low Level Employees	85		77	
	Middle level mgrs	2		2	
	Total		90	82	91%
HARARE (HCC)	HR Administrators	7		7	
	Middle level Mgrs	5		5	
	Low Level Employees	144		132	
	Total		156	144	92%
	Overall response rate	276		250	91%

Table 6: Survey Response Rate

Source: Researcher's Primary Data

4.3 Demographics of respondents

According to Kothari (2004), collecting demographic information is crucial for data analysis because it enables researchers to determine the characteristics of respondents. This research study therefore measured seven (7) demographic variables namely age, gender, marital status, level of education, work experience, level in organization and geographic location. The demographic data of respondents are presented in **Table 7** below:

Table 7: Respondents demographics

		Frequencies	Frequencies %
Age Group	18-25	20	8.0%
	26-35	38	15.2%
	36-45	57	22.8%
	46-55	64	25.6%
	56 and above	71	28.4%
Marital Status	MARRIED	119	47.6%
	SINGLE	46	18.4%
	DIVORCED	28	11.2%
	WIDOWED	57	22.8%
Level Of Education	O Level	71	28.4%
	A Level	17	6.8%
	Diploma	27	10.8%
	Higher National Diploma	38	15.2%
	Degree	73	29.2%
	Masters Degree	20	8.0%
	PHD	4	1.6%
Work Experience	0-5 YEARS	68	27.2%
	6-10YEARS	55	22.0%
	11-15 YEARS	54	21.6%

Level	16-20 YEARS	41	16.4%
	21+ YEARS	32	12.8%
	LOWER LEVEL EMPLOYEES	118	47.4%
	MIDDLE LEVEL MANAGEMENT	131	52.6%
Name of Town Council	Bindura Town Council	68	27.2%
	Harare Town Council	105	42.0%
	Mutare Town Council	77	30.8%

Source: Researcher's Primary data

4.3.1 Age of Respondents

The results showed that when it came to age, those between 18 and 25 years were 20 constituting 8% of the respondents. This shows that the sampled Urban Local Authorities were not recruiting young. Further probing through interviews revealed that most vacancies except for critical skills were frozen and required clearance from the Ministry of Local Government. Those between 26 and 35 years were 38 constituting 15% of the total population. Age group 36 to 45 constituted 57 (22% of all the respondents while the 56 years plus constituted the largest proportion as a massive 71 respondents were above 56 (constituting 29% of the respondents). This signifies that councils employed elderly people some who would have retired from elsewhere for instance army, police or ZPS. If this was the case, then the results indicated that, there was likely to be serious implications to adaptation to change as old employees could fail to grasp new trends in technological advancements thereby hampering organisational effectiveness. Alternatively, the aged employees might could have been employed by the Council for a long time and this could mean stability in terms of job hopping amongst employees in search of greener pastures. The findings could also positively show that Urban Local Authorities were hubs for employee retention. Employees who joined them were likely to retire in service and this could be good for experience and adaptation.

4.3.2 Marital Status

A look at marital status shows that a substantial number (119) constituting 48% were married whilst those who were single were 46 (18%), widowed 57 (23%) and lastly divorced were 28 (11%). This signifies that a majority of employees in the Urban Local Authorities were not married (52%). These were either widowed, divorced or single which may imply that such employees were unstable and they could not endure married life especially during these trying times, thus putting Urban Local Authorities in a precarious position on both performance and labour turnover. Researches previously done indicated that unmarried employees also find it hard to follow orders at the workplace due to accustomed independence and self-reliance. Such people may also suffer from societal problems, pressures and stresses which may negatively affect their performance on the job. The high number of disciplinary cases at Harare City Council Employee relations department also validates this line of thinking. On the other hand, the other 48% who were married were likely to bring stability in an organisation through increased commitment as these people had obligations to meet and families to feed.

4.3.3 Gender

The findings of the research study indicated that there were more females than males employed in Urban Local Authorities. Females constituted 68% whereas males were 32% of the total population. These findings are supported by ZIMSTAT (2022) census results which indicate that there were fewer males as compared to females in the country. The study also revealed that most Urban Local Authorities employed more females than males. A study by Harvey (2012) supports this finding by reiterating that local government workforce is predominantly staffed by female workers. This study specifically indicated that, women were better placed to take care and support jobs in local governments. OECD (2012) also emphasizes that the increasing number of women in local government employment, depicts fairness and openness in public institution's recruitment policies.

4.3.3 Academic Profiles

The inquiry also sought to learn about the respondents' academic profiles. Only relevant educational qualifications were considered. The statistics show that an overwhelming majority of respondents (65%) had completed tertiary education (diploma, degree, masters and PhD), while 35% had certificates in areas relevant to their work. The research findings revealed that the majority of employees had more than basic education, thus they understood and interpreted the questionnaire well. The findings also point to the fact that Councils were staffed with employees with requisite qualifications which enabled them to successfully perform their duties and responsibilities efficiently for the achievement of Urban Local Authorities objectives. Furthermore, the fact that the majority of employees were educated meant that, the study respondent's understood the nature of the research work understudy and gave answers which would improve the quality of the research findings. The findings also alluded to the fact that Recruitment and Selection in Urban Local Authorities was being done in accordance to the laws of Zimbabwe which require a prospective skilled employee to have at least 5 ordinary levels. The study further revealed that, most employees occupying lower positions in Urban Local Authorities had certificates and degrees. This revelation points to the fact that there were unemployed graduates who were willing to settle for anything in anticipation of growth and promotions to better positions. It also pointed to the issue of unemployment in Zimbabwe.

The research findings above are confirmed by Marumbwa's (2013) argument that Zimbabwe comprised of a large population who were either holders of various university degrees or were pursuing tertiary education. The higher level of education in local governments implied a better obligation or understanding of business processes, and expectations. This would ultimately lead to an increase in socio- economic developments and an improvement in the quality of service delivery.

4.3.4 Experience

The research similarly looked at the experience of respondents, only 27% were found to be below five years' experience while the rest (73%) had more than six years in their respective stations. The research findings reveal that there was stability in terms of employee retention

in Urban Local Authorities. The 27% who had experience which was less than 5 years, could inject new blood, initiatives and work ethics in Urban Local Authorities without compromising on service delivery. The 73% who were experienced, were there to guide the new comers and act as institutional memory on key issues in the Urban Local Authorities. Further probing through interview analysis revealed that, even though some conditions of employment had not been favorable for most Council employees, there were other non-monetary benefits which Council employees got like residential and commercial stands.

Hence, employees were motivated to stay in Council employment for long periods. Another respondent opined that, people stayed long in Council employment because they were naturally lazy, less ambitious and did not want to work due to the relaxed environments and minimum supervision that Councils offered. These findings can be substantiated using McGregor's Theory X and Y, where he assumes Theory X type of workers are naturally lazy.

4.3.5 Level of employment

The research also sought to find out the level of management the respondents belonged to and to this end two levels were identified namely lower level and middle level. The results show that 118 respondents were from lower level (47%), while the remainder 131 (53%) were middle level management. This implies that the sample was fairly distributed between the two levels. This enabled the researcher to have a holistic view from both employees and managers with regards to Human resources management strategies used in Zimbabwean Urban Local Authorities.

4.3.6 Geographic Location

The, respondents were asked about the local authority they were attached to and 68 (28 %) were drawn from Bindura, while 105 (42%) were from Harare and Mutare had 77 (30%). The research findings revealed that the majority were from Harare City council followed by Mutare City Council and Lastly, Bindura Town council. The findings corresponded to population or the total number of employees in each local authority. Harare City Council

employs over five thousand workers, whereas Mutare City employs slightly over a thousand workers and Bindura Municipality employs less than a thousand employees.

4.4 PRELIMINARY STATISTICS

Kalawole (2020) emphasizes that preliminary statistics is used to test approaches used to conduct a research using small sample size. It is essential to carry out preliminary testing in order to establish sample adequacy, the validity and reliability, normality of research results as well as the proper statistical methods to apply when deducing links between study variables. Kalawole (2020) further highlights that preliminary statistics is advantageous because it allows the researcher to make crucial decisions based on logic and scientific information. Preliminary statistics also ensures that data is interpreted correctly.

4.4.1 Sampling adequacy

The sample size of 276 was tested to ascertain whether it was adequate for factor analysis and other tests which were conducted. To do this the Sampling adequacy determination was used, the researcher utilized the Kaiser Meyer Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. According to Dodge (2008), the (KMO) test also measures how appropriate research data is for factor comparisons. Klein (2015) further highlights that the test is ideal for measuring the suitability of the sampled variables in the model and for the total model as a whole. The model therefore, measures the variance proportion among variables that are similar. The lesser the quantity, the more appropriate the data is for factor analysis. KMO values between 0.8 and 1 indicate that the sample size is adequate. KMO values of less than 0.6 indicate the specimen is inadequate and that corrective action should be done immediately, (Vogt, 2005). KMO values which are close to zero signifies that there are large partial relationships compared to the sum of correlations and this poses a major challenge when analyzing data. When calculating the sample adequacy using KMO, the following formula is used;

$$KMO_j = \frac{\sum_{i \neq j} r_{ij}^2}{\sum_{i \neq j} r_{ij}^2 + \sum_{i \neq j} u}$$

where;

- $R = [r_{ij}]$ is the correlation matrix,
- $U = [u_{ij}]$ is the partial co-variance matrix,
- Σ = summation notation (“add up”).

The findings of the KMO test done for this study are illustrated in **Table 8** below;

Table 8: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.754
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2991.063
	Df	2080
	Sig.	.000

Source: Researcher’s Primary data

Table 8 above shows that the KMO result was 0.754. If the KMO value is closer to 1 then it means that data is appropriate to factor analysis. Values of KMO 0.5 and below are specifically unaccepted as showing the inappropriateness of the sample for factor analysis while values below 0.5 mean that the sample is inadequate. Given that the probability value of the Kaiser Meyer – Olkin measure of 0.754 was far greater than 0.05 the permissible margin of error, it therefore means that the sample was appropriate and sufficient. The results obtained met minimum conditions and permitted Exploratory Factor Analysis to be performed, (Arkkelin, 2014; Field, 2009; Ragab & Arisha 2017).

4.4.1.1 Exploratory Factor Analysis

Thomas and Brad (2014) posit that, exploratory factor analysis is conducted in the way data are arranged, deleting troublesome aspects and dusting data. However, the whole process is performed without influencing the obtained data. Darlington (2004) posits that factor loadings are a result of the quality of individual items and confirms the correlatedness of

variables. For this research study, exploratory analysis was done on Human Resources Management Strategies namely, Recruitment and Selection, Reward Management, Training and Development, Performance Management, Human Resources Planning and Organizational performance (Service delivery, efficiency). According to Truong and McColl (2011), the most ideal factor loading is 0.5 and above (>60%). They also highlight that, a total variance percentage of 50% and above (>50%) is fair. An item is erased when it looks like a one item measurement on a component. This implies that, single items are not valid when one or more items surface, this is known as cross loading.

4.4.2 Normality Test

Klein (2013) posits that a normality test is employed to assess whether sample data has been drawn from the right population which is normally distributed. It is crucial to test the normality state of data as it helps determine the nature and type of statistical tools which should be conducted to infer association. Normality tests were conducted using a number of tests including the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and the Shapiro Wilk test. Visualization of the QQ plots and histograms were also employed. **Table 9** below summarizes the results;

Table 9: Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Improved Overall Performance	.287	249	.000	.787	249	.000
Strategic Human Resources Management	.310	249	.000	.793	249	.000
Attractive Total Rewards Packages	.303	249	.000	.814	249	.000
Positive Working Environment	.271	249	.000	.808	249	.000
Employee Participation	.315	249	.000	.757	249	.000
Recruitment strategy	.075	249	.002	.987	249	.026

Reward mgt strategy	.111	249	.000	.973	249	.000
Training & dvpt Strategy	.110	249	.000	.983	249	.005
Performance mgt strategy	.123	249	.000	.969	249	.000
HRM planning strategy	.100	249	.000	.980	249	.002
Political Interference	.306	249	.000	.773	249	.000
Poor Revenue Collection Strategies	.273	249	.000	.743	249	.000
Embezzlement & Misappropriation of Funds	.302	249	.000	.762	249	.000
Ageing Workforce	.275	249	.000	.729	249	.000
Poor Human Resources Management Strategies	.263	249	.000	.733	249	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

4.4.2.1 The Kolmogorov Smirnov Goodness of fit Test

The Kolmogorov Smirnov Goodness of fit test was used to test data normalcy. It is used to determine whether a sample was taken from a population with a precise distribution, In order for the variables to be regarded as normally distributed, the probability values (sig values) must be higher than 0.05, as can be seen by looking at all the variables for both measures. Values below 0.05 suggest that the variables under study were not normally distributed, opening the door for the use of non-parametric tests to deduce association between research variables. The histogram and QQ graphs, which display a non-normality state of data, can also be used to demonstrate the non-normality state of the data. This suggests that non parametric tests in the form of spear-man rank correlation were used to infer association between research variables.

4.4.2.2 Shapiro Wilk Normality Test

The Shapiro-Wilk test is a hypothesis test that is conducted on a sample and whose null hypothesis is that the sample has been generated from a normal distribution. If the p-value is low, the decision is to reject such a null hypothesis and say the sample has not been generated from a normal distribution. One of the advantages of using the Shapiro Wilk test is that, it is a user friendly statistical package which enables researchers to perform a normality check.

4.4.3 Reliability

Testing for reliability was done using mixed methods approach which encompassed both qualitative and quantitative methods. On qualitative data, the ideas of source veracity, credibility, and conformability were implemented. The researcher picked experts or key informants. For reliability evaluations on quantitative data, the instrument's internal consistency was evaluated using the Cronbach's alpha and composite responsibilities. The Cronbach's alpha is also defined by Ragab and Arisha (2017) as a reliability scale which assesses and measures the proximity of individual or group items. The above definition points that, reliability measures internal consistency. According to Hair et al. (2011) a higher alpha coefficient is needed and recommends that the items should have a relatively high internal consistency. Each research construct was subjected to reliability tests, and the results are compiled in **Table 10** below;

Table 10: Item- Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Recruitment strategy	33.7267	9.348	.669	.973
Reward mgt strategy	33.2677	9.430	.413	.969
Training development strategy	33.8355	9.859	.631	.968
Performance mgt strategy	33.0892	9.359	.218	.969
HRM planning strategy	33.5420	9.712	.338	.969
Political Interference	34.6524	9.370	.532	.969
Poor Revenue	34.8251	9.344	.658	.968

Collection Strategies				
Embezzlement &				
Misappropriation of	34.6645	8.587	.367	.969
Funds				
Ageing Workforce	34.9135	9.460	.594	.968
Poor Human Resources	34.8653	8.934	.664	.968
Management Strategies				
Strategic Human	34.4878	8.383	.391	.969
Resources Management				
Attractive Total	34.3914	8.896	.559	.969
Rewards Packages				
Positive Working	34.4757	7.987	.604	.968
Environment				
Employee Participation	34.7006	9.241	.305	.969
Improved Overall	32.4596	8.865	.669	.969
Performance				

Source: Researcher's Primary data

Cronbach's alpha values for every research construct in Table 10 above were higher than 0.7. The following guidelines were created by George and Malley (2003) and they say that the instrument is generally appropriate and acceptable when the alpha is greater than 0.7: 0.9 is considered excellent, 0.8 is good, 0.7 is okay, 0.6 is doubtful, 0.5 is poor, and below 0.5 is unacceptable. This supports Nunnally's (1978) claim that an appropriate Cronbach's alpha is usually greater than 0.7. Ghazali, Shah and Mahmood (2018) also suggest that complex reliability values are acceptable at 0.7 for both confirmatory and exploratory research. Furthermore, Sarstedt (2017) argues that in defining internal consistency, composite reliability values above 0.9 are considered undesirable, because they infer that they are computing identical phenomena, as such improbable to be a valid measure for a construct. The data set indicated that the study items were convergent and constant across all research constructs, which gave the collected data credibility. The questionnaire used was reliable as it satisfied the internal consistency criteria.

4.4.4 Validity

The assessment of content validity is usually a critical and difficult step in the development of research instruments. Having attained acceptable reliability with the research constructs, data was further subjected to construct validity. According to Field (2005), in order to ensure there is construct validity, there is need to merge both convergent and discriminant validity. However, Hair et al. (2011) argue that, the use of one method between the two is sufficient to illustrate the validity on constructs. For this research study, two (2) different methods of conducting the validity analysis were used: numerically measuring content validity by evaluating assessors who were experts in the field of Human Resources Management as well as top academics at Chinhoyi University of Technology. The researcher used Yaghmale's guide to expert assessment, which specifies the age range for evaluators. Tests for discriminant and convergent validity were also conducted.

4.4.4.1 Discriminant validity

Engellant, Holland and Piper (2016) define discriminant validity as the degree to which measures of various constructs differ or only indirectly correlate with each other. This view is also supported by Mello and Collins' (2001) who posit that, discriminant validity involves revealing that there is no relationship amongst constructs that should not be related.'According to Wang et al. (2015), the identified variables in discriminant variables must be lower than the latent variables. In order to assess the discriminant validity, Squared Inter-Construct Correlations (SICCs) were equated to the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Hair et al, (2014) define AVEs as, the extent of variance anticipated by a construct relative to the quantity of variance which may result from a measurement error. SICCs on the other hand, describes how strong sections in the identical construct are similar to each other. The AVEs are shown in **Table 11** below along with the associated SICCs;

Table 11: AVEs and SICCs

Construct	RCS	RMS	TDS	PMS	HRMPS	LAP
RCS	0.622					

RMS	0.141	0.631				
TDS	0.482	0.122	0.636			
PMS	0.361	0.422	0.087	0.651		
HRMPS	0.436	0.062	0.314	0.174	0.668	
LAP	0.008	0.441	0.008	0.467	0.016	0.752

Note: Diagonal elements in bold represent AVEs

Source: Survey data (2023)

The results in **Table 11** demonstrate that the requirement for discriminant validity was fulfilled because all of the AVEs in bold were higher than the matching SICCs. (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Islam & Rahman, 2016). Therefore, the criteria for diagnostic validity were satisfied. Arkkelin, (2014) and Segars, (1997) both agree that discriminant validity is mostly realized when AVEs are above 0.5 and the square root of AVE is larger than the SICCs. Hair et al. (2017) further posit that, when data have been confirmed to be reliable and valid, then it can be further subjected to the creation of the structural model to assist in authenticating the study.

Table 12: Construct, Items and Factor loadings

Construct	Items	Factor Loadings
Recruitment management strategies	RS1	0.812
	RS2	0.673
	RS3	0.865
	RS4	0.702

Reward management Strategies	RMS1	0.723
	RMS 2	0.789
	RMS 3	0.811
	RMS 4	0.826
Training and development strategies	TDS1	0.625
	TDS 2	0.818
	TDS 3	0.644
Performance management strategies	PMS1	0.865
	PMS2	0.674
	PMS3	0.884
Human resource management planning strategies	HRMPS1	0.675
	HRMPS2	0.822
	HRMPS3	0.745
Urban Local Authorities performance	LAP1	0.742
	LAP2	0.842
	LAP3	0.762
	LAP4	0.856
	LAP5	0.756

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Rotation converged in 10 iterations.

Based on Eigenvalues > 1

Total variance explained = 66.572%

Small Coefficients of less than 0.4 were suppressed

Source: Survey data (2023)

Rotation converged in 10 rounds, as shown in **Table 12** shows that 66.57% of the variance was fully explained. In accordance with Platin & Ergun (2017), the total variance explained exceeded the allowed limit of 60%. RCS, RMS, RCOS, TDS, PMS, HRMPS and LAP were among the components that were recovered from the rotated component matrix solution.

The path diagram below was extracted from AMOS and shows how independent variables (RS, RM, PM, TD, HRP) are being tested against the dependant variables (LAP);

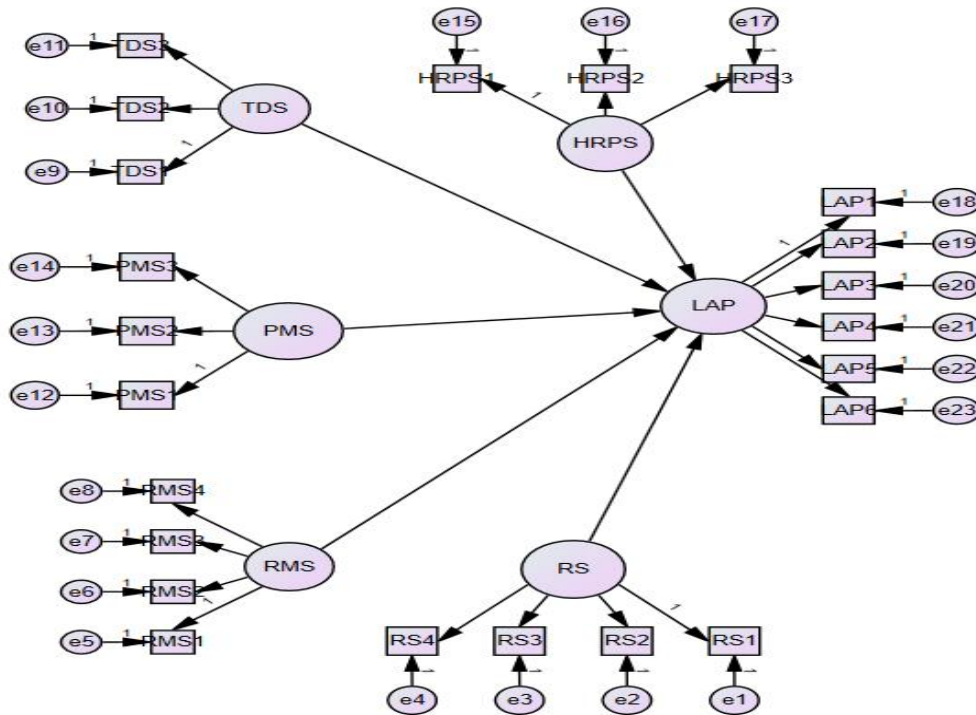


Figure 7. Structural Equation Model SEM

Source: Primary data (2023)

4.4.4 Convergent validity

According to Creswell (2014), achieving convergent validity indicates that things that need to be connected are indeed connected. A measure's convergent validity, according to Franke and Sarstedt (2019), alludes to how well it correlates with other methods used to measure the same construct. Blunch (2008) emphasizes that, the measurement model fit depicts a crucial organisation of the dormant variables and the interrelations among the latent variables in a

theoretical model. The Measurement model illustrates the indicators of each specific construct (latent variable) and assesses the reliability of each component in order to determine the causal relationships, (Mishra & Alok, 2017). The discriminant validity of a construct confirms that it is empirically novel and catches phenomena that other constructs in a model do not. (Franke & Sarstedt, 2019; Henseler, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2015). The prerequisite for causal indicators from a measurement model to sufficiently explain the variation in the latent variable that they are intended to measure is known as convergent validity. (Wang, French & Clay, 2015).

A review of the model's convergent validity was assessed. The measurement model was estimated using Maximum Likelihood Estimation in order to provide more accurate parameter values. Among the measurement model fit metrics taken into account are CMIN/DF (2/Df), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Adjusted GFI (AGFI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation. (RMSEA). (2/Df=2.987, 0.962 GFI, 0.926 AGFI, 0.942 NFI, 0.943 TLI, 0.917 CFI, and 0.059 RMSEA) The measurement model showed measures of model fit that were appropriate.

CMIN/DF results between 3 and 4 indicate a good model match (Zadow, Houghton, Hunter, Rosenberg & Wood, 2017). Makanyeza and Chikazhe (2017) assert that 2/DF must be less than 3 in order to be accepted. GFI, AGFI, NFI, TLI, and CFI must be close to 1 for a model to be deemed appropriate, but RMSEA must be less than 0.07. (Monteiro, Soares & Rua, 2017).

According to Bagozzi and Yi (1988), the minimum cut-off mark for standardized factor loadings should be 0.6. Higher critical ratios (CRs) were also thought to be appropriate and significant. (Bagozzi & Yi, 1981; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Table 4.7 displays the critical ratios (CRs) and standardized factor loadings (λ) for the categories used to evaluate convergent validity.

Table 12: Constructs, Items, λ and CR

Construct	Items	λ	CR

Recruitment management strategies	RCS1	0.683	9.916***
	RCS2	0.765	10.484***
	RCS3	0.802	10.705***
	RCS4	0.823	10.986***
Reward management strategies	RMS1	0.749	10.016***
	RMS 2	0.711	10.007***
	RMS 3	0.602	7.572***
	RMS 4	0.725	10.010***
Training and development strategies	TDS1	0.672	8.063***
	TDS 2	0.775	10.488***
	TDS 3	0.876	12.461***
Performance management strategies	PMS1	0.649	7.701***
	PMS2	0.779	10.498***
	PMS3	0.748	10.303***
Human resource management planning strategies	HRMPS1	0.848	12.315***
	HRMPS2	0.715	10.103***
	HRMPS3	0.745	10.006***
Urban Local Authorities performance	LAP1	0.945	14.759***
	LAP2	0.782	10.190***
	LAP3	0.652	8.517***
	LAP4	0.646	8.249***
	LAP5	0.782	10.190***

Notes: - CR is fixed; *** significant at $p < 0.001$

Source: Survey data (2023)

Descriptive Statistics: Prevalence of HRM Strategies

The researcher used themes as items in a structured questionnaire to allow for the quantification of themes obtained through interviews and the descriptive results are presented in **Table 13** below;

Table 13: Descriptive Statistics on strategies implemented by councils

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Mean response	Std. Deviation
Recruitment strat	250	1	4	2.43	Agree	.492
Reward mgt strat	250	2	4	3.79	Strongly disagree	.415
Training development	249	1	4	2.33	Agree	.544
Perfo mgt strat	250	2	5	3.47	Strongly disagree	.597
HRM plan strategy	250	1	5	3.02	Neutral	.598
Valid N (listwise)	250					

Source: Survey data (2022)

Researchers were agreeing on prevalent of a recruitment strategy and training and development as given by their respective mean scores of (2) which corresponds to agree from the Likert scale used, though authorities at times were accused of being nepotistic in the recruitment process. This may be partially explained by the non-zero standard deviations which means some could have had a different opinion from the agree response. On overall

respondents' strongly disagree with the existence of reward management strategy (3.79, approximately 4), performance management strategy (approximately 4) and neutral on HRM planning strategy (3). The existence of non-zero standard deviations implies that some respondents could have been of a different opinion, though the overall impression carried the day. These results dovetailed with results from interviews as presented in figure 4.1.

4.5 Factor Analysis on Factors affecting implementation of HRM strategies

The research also used themes in the structured questionnaire to ascertain the factors affecting the implementation of HRM strategies in the selected Urban Local Authorities. The responses obtained are presented in the **Table 14** showing Total Variance Figures below;

Table 14: Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1.361	13.606	13.606	1.361	13.606	13.606	1.270	12.700	12.700
2	1.234	12.344	25.950	1.234	12.344	25.950	1.231	12.314	25.014
3	1.206	12.059	38.009	1.206	12.059	38.009	1.216	12.159	37.173
4	1.036	10.362	48.371	1.036	10.362	48.371	1.120	11.198	48.371
5	.992	9.922	58.293						
6	.950	9.505	67.797						
7	.864	8.637	76.434						
8	.846	8.460	84.894						
9	.766	7.658	92.552						
10	.745	7.448	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Source: Survey data

The results obtained from the above table indicated that the variance of the Initial Eigen Values varied between 7-13%. The extraction sums of squared loadings also varied between 10-13% while the rotation sums of squared loadings varied between 11-12%. These findings are also similar to interview analysis findings where it was established that the challenges which Urban Local Authorities were facing can be reduced through strategy implementation.

4.6 Descriptive Statistics: Factors hindering the successful implementation of HRM Strategies in Urban Local Authorities

These themes were then itemized in the questionnaire to actually quantify the popularity of each theme and this resulted in descriptive statistics as presented in **Table 15** below;

Table 15: Descriptive Statistics factors hampering successful implementation of HRM strategies

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Mean response	Std. Deviation
Political Interference	250	1	5	1.91	Agree	.938
Poor Revenue Collection Strategies	250	1	4	1.75	Agree	.794
Embezzlement & Misappropriation of Funds	250	1	5	1.90	Agree	.962
Ageing Workforce	250	1	4	1.65	Agree	.720
Lack of Local Government Support	250	1	5	1.78	Agree	.846
Valid N (listwise)	250					

The **Table 15** above shows that the mean scores for all factors were found to be approximately 2 which corresponds with mean response 'Agree'. This therefore implies that on overall the majority of respondents were agreeing that the factors were indeed militating against implementation of HRM strategies. However, huge standard deviations across all

factors of way above 0.5 imply that respondents held varied views around the mean response, they were others who were widely spaced around the agreeing mean score.

4.7 Descriptive statistics on Performance of Urban Local Authorities (performance deteriorated)

The research sought to find out on the state of service delivery and performance of Urban Local Authorities and to that effect a descriptive statistical analysis was conducted using mean scores and standard deviation and presented in Table 16 below;

Table 16: Descriptive Statistics performance of Urban Local Authorities

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Mean response	Std. Deviation
Efficient Service Delivery	250	1	5	4.04	Disagree	.985
Efficient Revenue Collection	250	1	5	3.66	Disagree	1.195
Refuse collection done timeously	250	1	5	3.71	Disagree	1.257
Overall Performance	250	1	5	4.10	Disagree	.926
Valid N (listwise)	250					

Source: Primary data

From **Table 16** above, the first measure of performance was on efficient service delivery and the corresponding mean score of 4 corresponds with disagree which implied that respondents disagreed with this measure (they viewed service delivery as inefficient). However, the existence of a non-zero standard deviation of 0.985 imply that responses were widely spread around the disagree response, some were agreeable to the item while others disagreed. This is further supported by the existence of a minimum score of 1 (agree) and a maximum score of 5 (disagree). However the overall impression was that service delivery was poor and

inefficient. Efficient revenue collection and timeous refuse collection also had a mean score of approximately 4 which once again corresponds to disagree. The huge variances (standard deviations) in a way imply that some of the Urban Local Authorities of the three could be performing badly while others could have been performing well. The overall performance measure once again had a mean score of 4 (disagree) which implied that overally performance was bad in Urban Local Authorities.

4.8 Inferential Statistics on effect of HRM strategies on Urban Local Authorities

Performance

The research study also sought to determine the inferential statistics on the effect of HRM Strategies on Local performance. The research results are presented in **Table 17** below;

Table 17: Effect of Human Resources Management Strategies on performance of Urban Local Authorities

Hypotheses	Hypothesized Relationship	SRW	CR	P values	Remark
H ₁	RCS → LAP	.002	3.254***	.001	Supported
H ₂	RMS→ LAP	.371	9.008	.123	Not Supported
H ₃	TDS→ LAP	.019	5.398***	.004	Supported
H ₄	PMS → LAP	.392	11.025	.091	Not Supported
H ₅	HRMPS→ LAP	-.113	-11.025***	.000	Supported

Notes: SRW standardized regression weight, CR critical ratio, ** significant at $p < 0.05$, *** significant at $p < 0.001$, NS not significant, Adjusted R square 0.72

$$\text{LAP} = -2.16 + 0.002\text{RCS} - 0.113\text{HRMPS} + 0.019\text{TDS} \quad \text{Equation 2}$$

The model's explanatory power is 72%, as indicated by the modified R square of 0.72. Variation in the Human Resources Management strategies adopted by Urban Local Authorities accounted for 68% of the variability in local authority performance, while variables outside the model accounted for 28% of the variance. Of the three human resources management strategies deployed by Urban Local Authorities only three were found to be statistically significant in explaining variability in Urban Local Authorities performance and these were training and development, recruitment strategy, and human resources planning strategy as reflected by their probability values which were all found to be less than 0.05 (0.004, 0.00 and 0.000 respectively).

A model constant of -2.16 signified that assuming that no HRM strategy was in place performance of Urban Local Authorities was assumed to be negative and this was explained by other variables outside this model. Reward management strategies and performance management strategies despite having huge regression coefficients their p values were all way above the 5% permissible margin of error (0.123 and 0.091 respectively), this therefore implied that they were insignificant in explaining variability in Urban Local Authorities' performance. Human resources management planning strategy had a coefficient of -0.113 which implied that the existing HRM planning strategies were negatively related with service delivery in Urban Local Authorities, however training and development strategies had a coefficient of 0.019 which implied a very weak positive relationship between the variable and service delivery in Urban Local Authorities as a unit increase in TDS led to a 0.01 unit improvement in service delivery in Urban Local Authorities. Similarly, Recruitment strategy with a regression coefficient of 0.002 implied that there was a very weak positive association between the recruitment strategy of Urban Local Authorities and service delivery as a unit increase in this strategy was expected to be met by a 0.002 improvement in service delivery by the local authority. A look at the overall effect of the strategies shows that there was a negative relationship between the predictors and the outcome variables as reflected by a regression coefficient of -0.05.

Key to understanding the Amos Structural Equation in fig 4.1 below;

- ❖ Circles depict study constructs (latent variables).
- ❖ Rectangles (measured variable) represent questions used to measure a construct.

- ❖ Double arrowed curved lines represent factor loadings for correlation between constructs. It does not indicate the direction of the correlation.
- ❖ Single arrowed straight lines affirm a confirmatory factor analysis.
- ❖ Ranges between 0 and 1 imply that, there was low factor loading (meaning insignificant)
- ❖ Factor loadings for double arrowed curved lines are significant or acceptable above 0 and high towards 1.
- ❖ Factor loadings on double arrowed curved lines are expected to be high on construct closer to each other on the proposed model.

Factor loadings on single arrowed straight lines were acceptable on factor loadings which were higher than 0.5 showing that the item used was numerically correct and fit for measuring the construct it directly related to, (Arkklein, 2014; Blunch, 2008; Pallan, 2005).

The results obtained from the study can be summarised by a path diagram extracted from AMOS structural equation modelling in Figure 8 below;

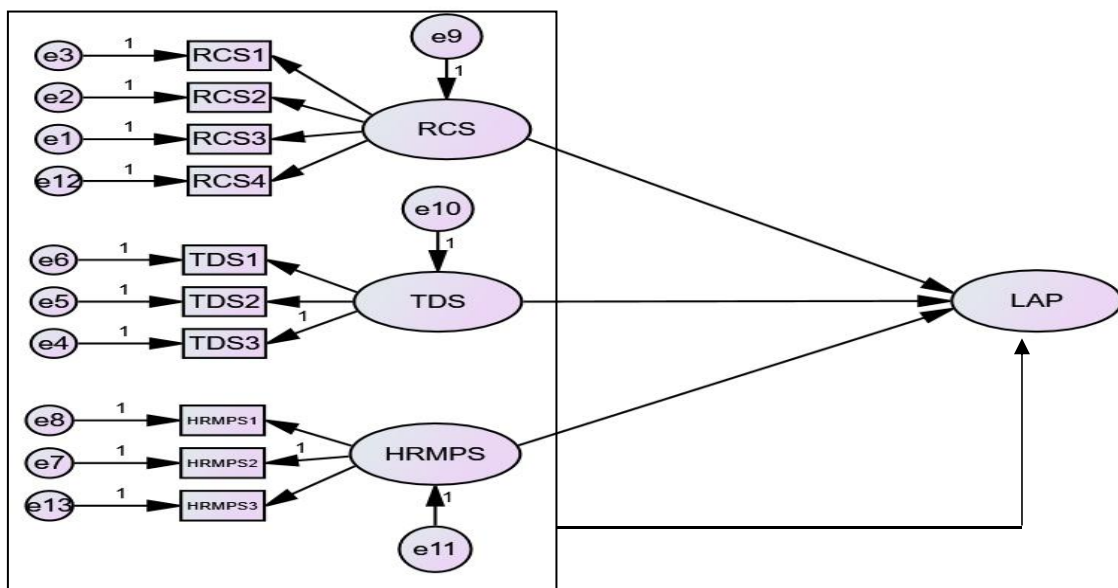


Figure 8. AMOS Structural Equation Modelling

According to Turner (2015), a structural model, as illustrated on Figure 8 above, is also referred to as the inner model. The model depicts the connections or paths among constructs or latent variables. According to Hair et al., (2014), representative calculations executed in

structural model comprise; path coefficients, collinearity, coefficient of Determination (R²), total effect (direct and indirect effects), effect size etc. As was computed on the measurement model earlier on, the study's structural model on Figure 4.3 was also measured based on the following fit indices; CMIN/DF, GFI, AGFI, NFI, TLI, CFI and RMSEA provides a structural model output from AMOSTM to aid in the testing of hypotheses.

Where RCS was recruitment strategy operationalized into four items with their respective residuals, TDS was training and development operationalized into three items TDS1 up to TDS3, HRMPS is human resources management planning strategy operationalized into three items and LAP signifies local authority's performance. Performance management strategy and reward management strategies were omitted on the path diagram as they were not significant in explaining variability in performance of Urban Local Authorities.

4.9 Descriptive Statistics on the Strategies to improve Urban Local Authorities performance

The research also sought to find out on the strategies or recommendation for improved service delivery. The findings are presented in **Table 18** below;

Table 18: Descriptive Statistics on Strategies to improve service delivery

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Mean response	Std. Deviation
Need for Private Partnerships	250	1	4	1.84	Agree	.749
Transparency & Accountability of Funds	250	1	5	1.91	Agree	.912
Government Support	250	1	5	1.76	Agree	.765
Harmonized Revenue Collection System	250	1	5	1.88	Agree	.968
Improved Online Billing System	250	1	5	1.89	Agree	.998
Political Independence	250	1	4	1.84	Agree	.792

Strategic Human Resources Management	250	1	5	2.07	Agree	1.113
Attractive Total Rewards Packages	250	1	5	2.17	Agree	1.133
Positive Working Environment	250	1	5	2.09	Agree	1.101
Employee Participation	250	1	5	1.87	Agree	.798
Valid N (listwise)	250					

From the above **Table 18**, ten (10) items were posed as recommended strategies and all of them had a mean score of approximately 2 which corresponded to agree. This implied that respondents were agreeable to having improved online billing system, harmonized revenue collection system, independence of the councils, attractive remunerations, employee engagement and participation as well as accountability. However, the standard deviations in both cases were huge (close to 1) which signified that across Urban Local Authorities', respondents held divergent views as some could have been disagreeing with the recommendations. This is further reinforced by existence of minimum values of 1 and maximum value of 5 which points to respondents holding diverse views.

4.10 Chapter Summary

The chapter above summarized the quantitative statistics obtained from the questionnaires. The responses obtained were analyzed, interpreted using different statistical packages. Research results were also discussed in light of research hypothesis and major issues raised by the respondents corresponding with literature and other studies. The chapter utilized SPSS version 21 and AMOS structural modelling to interpret quantitative data. The next chapter will analyze, interpret and discuss qualitative data.

CHAPTER 5

QUALITATIVE DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

The chapter interpreted qualitative data which were obtained through face to face interviews. The Interview Guide attempted to answer the main research question on the Effectiveness of Human Resources Management functions on the performance of selected Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe. However, not every question of the survey was covered in the interview guide. While the quantitative discussion concentrated on the frequencies of responses to Likert scale questions, the qualitative discussion focused on the emergent themes that described the Human Resources Management functions on the performance of selected Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe. Word cloud was also used to enhance the quality of common themes under qualitative data. Qualitative data was classified using the following broad themes;

- ❖ The extent to which service delivery by Urban Local Authorities falls short of rate payers' expectations.
- ❖ The impact of HRM Strategies on the performance of selected Local Authorities in Zimbabwe.
- ❖ Factors hindering successful implementation of Human Resources Management Strategies by Zimbabwe Urban Local Authorities.
- ❖ The HRM challenges faced by Urban Local Authorities in the implementation of their HRM strategies.
- ❖ Strategies recommended for improved Urban Local Authorities performance in Zimbabwe.

5.1 Interview response rate

When conducting interviews, one does not start with a predetermined number of interviews but rather should be guided by the Principle of saturation. This is the point where any additional interview will not yield any new sub themes. This point was reached at the 12th interview, thus the number of interviews conducted were twelve (12). Therefore, the response rate was 100%.

The interviewees consisted mainly of top executives in the HRM department, Trade Union representatives and HR administrators. These Key Informant Persons were chosen on the basis of the role they played in the development and implementation of Strategic Human Resources Management both within local government and central government. In addition, those selected were chosen on the basis of their qualifications, experience, availability and desire to take part in the interview process. The data set was cleaned before any form of analysis was applied and data screening checks were conducted to ensure data reliability, validity and usability before data were subjected to other statistical tests.

This chapter therefore presents findings of a qualitative nature that were drawn from interviews held. A total of twelve (12) questions were nominated for analysis because they were comprehensive, coherent and the chosen questions also assisted the researcher to successfully achieve the research objectives. The following **Table 19** summarizes interview participants;

Table 19: Interview Research Participants

Local Authority	Designation	Number	Total	Response Rate
ULA ₁	Top Executives	2		
	Councillors	2		
	HR Administrators	3	7	100%
ULA ₂	HRM Administrators	2		

	Councillors	1	3	100%
ULA ₃	HRM Administrators	2		
	Councillors	0	3	
TOTAL		12	12	100%

Source: Researcher's Primary Data

5.1.1 Interview Responses on Understanding the definition of Human Resources Management

The first question sought to determine if respondents understood what Human Resources Management entailed. The interview question read, “What do you understand by the term Human Resources Management”? Answers provided by respondents in this section were be presented in emerging themes, quotable quotes, word frequency, word tree and word cloud analysis generated using NVIVO software. **Table 20** below presents the interview findings;

Table 20: Employee Understanding of Human Resources Management

N=12		
Emerging Themes on understanding of HRM	No. of respondents mentioning the same theme	%of respondents who mentioned the same theme
Concerned with administrative issues	2	16,67%
HRM is about motivating employees	2	16,67
Focuses on Employee retention	1	8,33%
Disciplining and firing employees	1	8,33%
Monitoring performance	2	16,67%
Rewarding Employees	1	8,33%
Recruiting employees	2	16,67%

Strategic business partner	1	8,33%
Total	12	100%

Source: Author (2023)

The table 20 above showed that a significant number (100%) of interview respondents understood what constituted Human Resources Management. Most Key Informant Persons were HRM people hence they had knowledge on the definition of HRM. Some were highlighting its functions like Recruitment and Selection, Industrial Relations through disciplining employees, administrative role, strategic business partner, attending to queries, monitoring performance, retention strategies and leading employees. One interviewee responded Participant **AA** from ULA₁ reiterated that;

Human Resources Management entails managing the day to day activities of employees from administrative work to ad-hoc payroll and employment queries.

The above response indicates that the respondent was fully aware of the administrative duty and function of Human Resources Management and the day to day duties of an HR officer. Another respondent Participant **AF** from ULA₃ was fully cognizant of what Human Resources Management was, the respondent expounded that;

“Human Resources Management is the management of employee’s entry, stay and exit”

Participant **AD** ULA₁ emphasized that;

“Human Resources Management is the management of people and people related issues”.

Participant **AK** ULA₃ alluded that;

“Human Resources Management plays a pivotal and strategic role in the management of the most important resource which is the employees’.

Participant **AC** ULA₁ emphasized that;

“HRM is concerned with making sure that employees are given protective clothing and salaries on time”.

Participant **AG** ULA₂ defined HRM as follows;

“Human Resources Department is concerned with coming up with policies and strategies which ensure that employees stay motivated, potential employees are attracted, developed and retained in the organization for long”.

The above responses summarised most of the HRM definitions by the respondents. The definition given was sufficient to cover all the basic functions of Human Resources Management. HRM involves employee entry through recruitment and selection. It also manages the stay of employees through coming up with initiatives which promote employee growth and development. Lastly, the HRM function is responsible for managing the exit of employees through managing and processing resignations, retirements, deaths and dismissals. Hence, the above definition was sufficient to cover everything which HRM hinges on. Generally, the responses showed that employees understood what HRM was all about even though they explained it from different angles. From the interview definitions obtained, a word frequency analysis was conducted to determine the words that appeared frequently while unmasking the definitions of Human Resources Management. **Table 21** below shows the word frequency;

Table 21: Word Frequency Analysis

Word	Length	Count	Frequency
Recruitment	11	2	16.7%
Reward	6	1	8.3%
Retention	9	1	8.3%
Strategic	9	1	8.3%
Administrative	15	3	25%
Discipline	10	1	8.3%
Monitoring	10	1	8.3%
Leading	7	1	8.3%
Motivating	10	1	8.3%
Total		12	100%

Source: Researcher’s Primary data

The findings were illustrated using a word cloud format as shown Fig 9 below;



Figure 9. Respondent's understanding of HRM

5.2 Human Resources Management Strategies employed by ULAs in Zimbabwe

This research objective sought to examine the prevalence of Human Resources Management Strategies in the selected Urban Local Authorities, (Harare City Council, Mutare Town Council and Bindura Town Council) and to do this interviews with Key Informants Persons were conducted. Similarly, the answers were presented using emerging themes, interesting quotable quotes and word cloud analysis was generated using NVivo software. The Table 22 below show the main aspects that were raised by respondents.

Table 22: Emerging Themes on existing Human Resources Management Strategies practiced in Zimbabwean Urban Local Authorities

Emerging Themes on the existing HRM Practices	No of Respondents who mentioned	% of respondents
Reward Management	2	16,7%
Performance Monitoring	1	8,3%

Training & Development	2	16,7%
Health & Safety	1	8,3%
Industrial Relations	1	8,3%
Human Resources Planning	1	8,3%
Motivating Employees	1	8,3%
Recruitment & Selection	1	8,3%
Administrative issues	1	8,3%
Succession Planning	1	8,3%
Total	12	100%

Source: Researcher's Primary data

The Table 22 above showed that most employees appreciated the different Human Resources Management Strategies which were in existence in their Urban Local Authorities. Some were highlighting that they were pay related issues, Workshops and seminars, Safety sessions on or before work, hiring new employees, monitoring and communicating their performance, incentivising employees and administering employees. The majority of interview respondents 16,7% associated HRM to compensation and benefit issues and Training and Development issues. To buttress this interviewee Participant **AH** ULA₂ had this to say;

“Our Local Authority HRM department is responsible for recruiting and selecting employees to fill vacant positions. When doing this, preference is given to relatives of employees who are already in council employment. Some consider it nepotism but for us it's a better appreciation and recognition from the employer because our sons and daughters are struggling to find employment after school”.

Still on the Recruitment and Selection Strategy, below are some of the responses obtained; Participant **AB** ULA₁ emphasized;

“Our HRM department is mainly responsible for hiring and recruiting employees. However, this process is not a simple one as it requires a full council meeting and approval from the Ministry of Local Government. The recruitment process usually takes a year, for example the Municipal police who had preliminary interviews in June 2022 are yet to be boarded and we are in 2023”.

Participant **AI** ULA₃ indicated that;

“Our Local Authority HRM department’s primary role is to oversee the recruitment and selection of employees. Sometimes this is done through internal secondments and promotions and times the company advertises externally especially when we have shortage of the required skill and when it wants to do mass recruitment. The Council has a greater obligation to create employment for residence in its locality”.

Participant **AF** ULA₂ also supported that;

“Urban Local Authorities are responsible for recruiting employees in the locality which they serve but this is not always the case. Recruitment and selection is not fairly done, it is flawed and there is nepotism. Recruitment is not done according to qualifications here but it is based on who you know. If you remember well there was a police recruitment saga in 2020 which saw one top boss employing twelve people with the same surname. So you can judge on your own the extent of nepotism and corruption in these Urban Local Authorities when it comes to recruitment and selection”.

Another interesting theme which came up on the HRM strategies employed by Local Authorities in Zimbabwe was the Reward Management Strategy. 16,7% of interview respondents associated the HRM department with compensation and pay issues. Below are some of the interview responses obtained from Participant **AC** ULA₁;

“Our HRM department has a role of paying us consistently and fairly in line with cost of living and inflationary pressures. However, this has not been the case ever since the coming in of the second republic; things took a somersault turn for the worst. We were once considered as the most paid now we are the least paid and nothing is being done to improve that position”.

To buttress this Participant **AD** ULA₁ emphasized that;

“The Reward Management Strategy is at its worst since I joined Council employment. Our salaries are poor as compared to those of employees in government employment. Everyone is earning a flat figure of \$50 USD which is not sustainable in this economic environment but somehow, by the grace of God we still report for duty’.

Participant **AJ** ULA₃ highlighted that;

“The Reward Management function in Urban Local Authorities is poor these days. Councils are struggling to competitively pay employees, employees at times go for several months (up to eight months) without a salary and this has resulted in authorities running with employees whose morale is at its rock bottom”.

Participant **AL** ULA₃ opinionated that;

“Our employer has showed great concern towards remunerating us properly, however all these efforts were constantly being shot down by the volatile economic environment. The exchange rates keeps changing and difficult to really appreciate the employer’s efforts”.

Participant **AI** ULA₃ highlighted that;

“The HRM department specializes more in pay and pay related issues. Whenever, we have pay queries, we approach the HRM department. They are also responsible for leave administration. It is also the department which is responsible for allocating us stands in the event that council fails to pay”.

Participant **AH** ULA₂ juxtaposed;

“The HRM department is the department which employees approach whenever they are aggrieved by pay concerns. However, of late the councils have not been giving us a listening ear because it seems their hands are tied somewhere. Even though they might feel like rewarding us fairly and equitably the current political environment is forbidding them to do so”.

The above citations indicated that most Urban Local Authorities have reward management strategies in place. All the three ULAs are responsible for remunerating their employees consistently and fairly. However, interview participants also indicated that the reward management strategies have been poor of late in most ULAs due to various reasons. Most respondents expressed dissatisfaction on the salaries which they were receiving and appealed to responsible authorities to give a listening ear to their plight. The above revelation on the prevalence of reward management strategies, indicated that some Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe were practising Total Reward Management whereby they were paying their

employees using both monetary and non-monetary incentives. The findings established that one local authority once gave its employees stands in lieu of salary.

Another interesting theme which emerged during the interview question of ascertaining the prevalence of Human Resources Management strategies is the HRM function of Training and Development. Some of the interesting verbatim answers obtained from Participant **AC** ULA₁ are highlighted below;

“Our Council HRM department focuses on training and development. We go for training almost twice quarterly and councils have yearly budgets for these training”.

Participant **AK** ULA₃ had some positive remarks for their ULA;

“I believe credit must be awarded where its due, MY HRM department always ensure that we are adequately trained especially when there is new equipment and new ways of doing things. This enhances our performance on the job and keeps us abreast with the advancing technology”.

The above sentiments were also shared by participant **AL** ULA₃ who highlighted that;

“Our training needs are constantly checked and identified. Subsequently, training programmes which covers the identified deficiencies will be put in place”

Participant **AA** ULA₁ also emphasized that;

“We are frequently trained on Occupational Health and Safety issues due to the council’s commitment towards Zero accidents agenda. This is quite helpful and it has seen a reduction in accidents occurring”.

The interview responses obtained indicated that most respondents agreed that their Urban Local Authorities trained and developed their employees which was a good retention strategy of important skill. Another 8,33% of the interview respondents indicated that there was prevalence of administrative Human Resources Management Strategy at their respective Urban Local Authorities. Participant **AH** ULA₂ indicated that;

“The HRM department at my Local Authority is responsible for day to day office operations, filing, record keeping, administration of contracts and other administrative issues”.

Participant **AJ** ULA₁ alluded that;

“My Local Authority HRM department is responsible for issuing us with different letters we need for example, confirmation letters of employment for bank openings, medical aid or funeral membership”

Participant **AE** ULA₂ emphasized that;

“HRM department is responsible for all administrative work which ranges from recruitment, filing, ordering and distributing uniforms and work suits as well as, keeping an asset register for equipment we use”.

Another interesting theme also emerged when a group of interviewee participants 8,33% respondents indicated that their Local Authority HRM department was engaged in monitoring the performance of its employees. Participant **AG** ULA₂ reiterated that;

“The HRM department is the employer, as the employer it is responsible for setting targets, measuring performance and taking corrective action where actual performance deviate from the set targets”

Participant **AJ** ULA₃ also supported that;

“The HRM department is responsible for monitoring the performance of employees through RBMs and Balance Score-cards. HRM is a bridge which links employees and employers with the objective of coordinating and achieving organisational objectives”

Participant **AC** ULA₁ expressed the following sentiments;

“Every year performance is rewarded at our Local Authority when we host the end of year Christmas party or Long service awards”.

Participant **AK** ULA₃ suggested that;

“At our council, every department is required to set departmental goals which will be guided by the overall Councils strategic goals”.

From the above interview definitions obtained, it was clear that the selected Urban Local Authorities engaged in managing the performance of their employees through setting goals and targets. From the responses obtained, a word frequency analysis was conducted to

determine the words that appeared frequently while unmasking the prevalence of Human Resources Management Strategies in Urban Local Authorities. The **Table 23** below shows the word frequency;

Table 23: Word frequency on HRM Strategies in Urban Local Authorities

Word	Length	Count	Frequency
Recruitment	11	3	25%
Administrative	14	1	8,3%
Motivation	10	1	8,3%
Performance	11	2	16,7%
Pay	3	2	16,7%
Workshops	9	1	8,3%
Safety	6	1	8,3%
Stands	6	1	8,3%
Total		12	100%

Source: Researcher's Primary Data

The obtained interview results were summarised in a word cloud in Figure 10 below;



Figure 10. Emerging Themes on existing HRM Strategies practiced in Zimbabwean ULAs

Source: Researcher's Primary Data (2023)

The Figure 10 above shows that of the five mentioned HRM strategies in Urban Local Authorities, Recruitment strategies dominated over the others as reflected by the centralization of the theme and also the huge font size of recruitment strategy. This was followed by Reward policies (compensation) which has slightly smaller font size than recruitment. The least prevalent were found to be Training and Development and SHRM strategies as they were both located on the periphery of the word cloud with a smallest font size. This therefore implies that the strategies were unpopular in Urban Local Authorities.

5.3 Factors which are hindering successful implementation of HRM strategies in ULAs in Zimbabwe

The researcher also used interviews to establish the factors that affected implementation of HRM strategies and the responses were sifted through using word cloud generator. Some

interesting verbatim responses were noted and summarised for qualitative interpretation and these are presented below. Participant **AA** ULA₁ indicated that;

“The major problem which limits implementation of HRM strategies is lack of financial resources. It’s not like policies are not there, some of them have been shelved for years, we don’t have the resources to implement them. For example, there was a plan to build flats for low level employees but 10 years later the plan is yet to materialize”.

Similar sentiments were shared by Participant **AH** ULA₂ who responded that;

“It is difficult to implement or adopt attractive HRM strategies due to various reasons chief among them being lack of resources. The worsening economic environment also poses a major threat, it is difficult to plan for the future in such uncertain environments”.

Participant **AJ** ULA₃ also bemoaned lack of resources as a chief factor hindering successful implementation of HRM Strategies. The respondent indicated that;

“Our council is not liquid enough to bring into fruition some of its people management strategies due to financial problems. We are currently experiencing liquidity problems to meet our basic financial obligations. The situation has been exacerbated by the poor revenue collection strategies and non -payment by most stakeholders. For example, council is owed millions by the government, so how do you expect it to function properly? Also, the issue of mushrooming illegal settlements and growth of informal sector have made it difficult for councils to collect its dues as some areas like Harare South and Epworth are regarded as no go areas”.

However, another Key Informant person Participant **AC** ULA₁ argued that HR administrators always hide behind the issue of financial resources but they always remunerate top executives handsomely amidst all the lack of financial resources. The participant had this to say;

“I believe council has all the resources it needs to remunerate its employees competitively. However, it is manned by greedy individuals who are elected into office for their own selfish needs. This is evidenced by the numerous on-going court cases where top officials are implicated in misappropriation of funds or embezzlement. So it becomes difficult to have smooth operations when people continue to cut and eat the cake without baking a new one”.

Some interview participants also had a different line of thought. They attributed the factors hindering successful implementation of HRM strategies to Aging work force. One participant **AK ULA₃** argued that;

“Implementation of strategic HRM plans will always remain a difficult task due to the ageing population staffed in most Urban Local Authorities. These people are rigid and resist any notable change. In addition, they are not giving councils any added advantage that’s why the performance of local authorities is always lagging behind. It’s a culture which is embedded in most Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe. There is need for councils to recruit new and young blood for improved operations”.

Another dimension which came out of interview responses was the issue of Employee attitudes in Local Authorities’. Participant **AF ULA₂** had this to say;

“It is always difficult to implement HRM initiatives due to the negative employee attitudes exhibited by most council employees. In the public sector, employees do not want to work, they are naturally lazy. Their attitude towards work is always negative and it is difficult for councils to achieve their goals without changing the mindset of the people who work there”.

This sentiment was also shared by a participant **AI ULA₃** who indicated that;

“The culture of employees in most Local Authorities is quite discouraging, the employees are well known for respecting their tea breaks and lunch breaks. On the job they always do a shoddy job and this have been going on for years in most public sector organisations”.

Another dimension which came up from the interview responses was the issue of interference from central government. Participant **AG ULA₂** indicated that;

“Councils are designed such that most affirmations comes from the Ministry of Local Government. The coming in of the new dispensation witnessed a sudden shift as most of our requests face the same response, not approved! Right now we are seriously understaffed but the Ministry keeps blocking any initiative to recruit”.

This sentiment was also shared by participant **AB ULA₁** who also bemoaned lack of support from central government. The participant had this to say;

“We have the best minds when it comes to Human Resources Management, these people are experienced and have served the council for decades. They always come up with excellent

initiatives which are aimed at improving our employee's welfare. However, their contributions have been constantly blocked by the central government through lack of financial support, ad-hoc policies which prohibit them for implementing them much to the detriment of employees”.

From the above findings, the researcher came up with common themes. The emerging themes on these factors highlighted above were presented in the **Table 24 below**;

Table 24: Emerging Themes on factors hampering implementation of HRM Strategies

N=12		
Emerging Themes	No. of respondents mentioning the same theme	% of respondents who mentioned the same theme
Political Interference	4	33,3%
Embezzlement	3	25%
Negative Employee Attitude	2	16,7%
Lack of Support	2	16,7%
Ageing Workforce	1	8,3%
Total	12	100%

Source: Researcher's Primary data

The **Table 24** above summarized the frequency of popular themes obtained from interview respondents' on the factors hindering successful implementation of HRM Strategies in Urban Local Authorities. The majority of respondents cited Political interference (33.3%) as the major challenge hindering successful implementation of HRM initiatives. Another portion of the study findings, 16,7% of respondents were of the opinion that Embezzlement of funds and lack of support 16,7%. The remaining participants cited ageing workforce and employee attitude.

From the above interview responses obtained, a word cloud analysis was conducted to determine the frequency of the themes mentioned while unmasking the factors which hinder

successful implementation of Human Resources Management. Figure 11 below summarizes the factors;

Figure 11. Factors affecting implementation of HRM strategies

From figure 11 above it can be seen that the dominant factor affecting implementation of HRM strategies was political interference as shown by its centralization and big font sizes. This is however, followed by embezzlement and misappropriation of funds meant for Human Resources Initiatives like training and development, the least of them was poor revenue collection and employing ageing workforce.

The researcher also used interview questions to ascertain the HRM challenges faced by employees and HR administrators in ULAs in Zimbabwe. Below are some of the interesting verbatim obtained. Participant **AD** from ULA₁ alluded that;

“Lack of financial resources hinder any developmental plans which we might want to adopt as an HR department. Modern day employees are motivated by money and needs to be remunerated well, they also need to be continuously trained and all this require money”.

Another participant **AL** ULA₃ also supported the above arguments. The participant, indicated that;

“Most of HR initiatives are often obstructed by the lack of financial resources. Our allocation as HR is always in adequate to meet out financial obligations”.

Another interesting dimension which emerged from the interview findings was the issue of bureaucracy in most Local Authorities. Some of the interesting verbatim are captured below. Participant **AC** ULA₁ had this to say;

“We as HR administrators, we have limited discretionary powers and these in turn limits the scope of roles which HR departments can perform. For example, we have long waiting periods for most functions and this is difficult especially when dealing with employee issues”.

This sentiment was also shared by participant **AK** UL₃ who indicated that;

“The bureaucratic nature of most public sector organizations Local Authorities included, hamper any meaningful changes we might want to implement as HRM department. There is a strict chain of command that we have to follow and pre defined channels which must be followed for decision making”.

From the interview responses, corruption also emerged as one of the common themes. Some of the responses obtained are captured below. Participant **AA** ULA₁ had this to say;

“HRM functions are tainted due to the high levels of corruption cases which always surround council’s recruitment processes. Top executives are always caught up in corruption scandals and this makes it difficult for employees and citizens to have trust in Council’s HRM processes”

The above notion was also supported by Participant **AH** ULA₂ who acknowledged that;

“Corruption and nepotism issues are always high in local authorities and the jailing of their members is not convincing. At one point one HR Director was suspended three times and the funny thing is that he is still in office despite multiple conviction”.

Another dimension which came up during the interview sessions is the issue of lack of top management support. Participant **AF** ULA₂ had this to say;

“There is often lack of support from top management. HRM struggle to make colleagues and top management acknowledge the value of HR operations”.

This dimension was also supported by participant **AI** from ULA₃ who indicated that;

“In most organisations, the HR function is seen as a support function without strategic importance and more often it is often overlooked. As such HR administrators tend to administer rather than strategically manage organizations”.

The interview’ emerging themes were presented and summarized as in the **Table 25** below;

Table 25: HRM challenges facing ULA in Zimbabwe

Emerging Themes	No of respondents who mentioned	% of respondents
Bureaucracy	2	16,7%
Corruption	2	16,7%
Inadequate financial Resources	3	25%
Lack of top management support	2	16,7%
Shortage of skilled Labour	1	8,3%
Government regulations	1	8,3%
High Labour turnover	1	8,3%
Total	12	100%

Source: Researcher’s Primary Data

From the Table 25 above interview responses obtained, a word cloud analysis was conducted to determine the frequency of the themes mentioned while unmasking the HRM challenges which ULA are facing in Zimbabwe. factors which hinder successful implementation of Human Resources Management. The above findings were also presented using word cloud as shown in the Figure 12 below;



Figure 12. HRM Challenges facing Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe

Source: Researcher’s Primary data (2023)

5.5 The role of HRM in the Zimbabwe Urban Local Authorities

The researcher also used interview questions to ascertain the role of HRM in the Zimbabwe Urban Local Council. Below are some of the interesting verbatim obtained. Participant **AD** from ULA₁ alluded that;

“HRM is responsible for the Recruitment and selection of the employees in an organisation. They process requests of different departments and make sure they match the needs of the organisation to the hired person”.

Participant **AG** ULA₂ had this to say;

“HRM is all about hiring the right people for the job”.

These findings indicated that participants associated the HRM role with the hiring and selection of the right employees in an organisation. Another popular theme which emerged is the issue of compensation and benefits. Participant **AC** ULA₁ had this to say;

“HR play a crucial role in Local Authorities, they are responsible for all pay issues whether monetary or non monetary. They also attend to pay queries and complaints”.

This sentiment was supported by participant **AF** ULA₂ who had this to say;

“HRM is responsible about design, implementation, maintenance, communication and evolution of reward management processes”.

Participant **AJ** ULA₃ cited that;

“HR is responsible for creating pay policies and practices, salary and payroll administration....”

Another theme which emerged from the interview findings is the issue of Training and Development. The following verbatim were obtained. Participant **AB** ULA₁ postulated that;

“HR is responsible for training and developing employees so that their skills are constantly upgraded”.

Participant **AK** from ULA₃ indicated that;

“HR is responsible for training and development whereby they will be improving the effectiveness of organisations and the individuals as well as teams within them. With training and development employees will also be designing organisational processes which are designed to improve employees’ knowledge, skills and capabilities”.

Another emerging common theme was performance management. Two participants were of the opinion that HR is responsible for managing the performance of employees. Participant **AD** ULA₁ had this to say;

“HR is plays a crucial function that helps managers to monitor and evaluate employees work. The department is therefore responsible for making sure that a conducive atmosphere which allows employees to work on their targets is achieved”.

This sentiment was shared by participant **AI** ULA₃ who had this to say;

“HR department is responsible for the on going process of communication between managers and their employees which is done periodically in support of attaining organisational objectives”.

Interview respondents also cited that HRM is responsible for strategic management. Participant **AL** ULA₃ had this to say;

“HR plays a strategic role in the management of Local Authorities. They are responsible for setting organizational objectives, analyzing the internal organisation, external organisation environment and evaluating the current strategy”.

The last interview participant **AE** ULA₂ cited that;

“HR nowadays have a new responsibility and it is responsible for utilizing information systems used to record, analyze and manage HR related data”.

The emerging themes were presented in a table format as shown in the **Table 26** below;

Table 26: The emerging themes on the role of HRM in ULAs

Emerging themes	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Performance Management	2	16,67%
Policy Development	1	8,3%
Training and Development	2	16,67%
Human Resources Information Systems	1	8,3%
Strategic Human Resources Management	1	8,3%
Compensation and Benefits	2	16,67%
Recruitment	3	25%
Total	12	100%

Source: Researcher’s Primary Data

The above interview findings were also presented in a word cloud format as shown in the Figure 13 below;



Figure 13. The role of HRM in the Zimbabwe Urban Local Authorities

Source: Researcher's Primary Data

5.6 Ascertaining the extent to which service delivery falls short of rate payers expectations.

The interview findings also sought to establish the extent to which service delivery falls short of ratepayer's expectation. The following responses were obtained from interview KII. Participant **AB** ULA₁ had this to say;

“Service delivery in Harare is at its worst since Zimbabwe attained its independence. The Council has struggled to clean the city, purify and provide clean water, maintain the roads, and collect refuse among other things”.

Participant **AF** ULA₂ also shares the same sentiments. The participant indicated that;

“The economy is currently not doing well and this has also affected the running of our Urban Local Authorities but I can proudly attest to you that Mutare has the safest and very clean drinking water drinking water”.

Participant **AK** ULA₃ also reiterated that;

“The people in charge of Harare City Council should just resign, they have failed dismally. Illegal settlements are mushrooming everywhere”.

Participant **AD** ULA₁ had this to say;

“Our council leadership is just after filling their own pockets, driving in Harare is a nightmare, they have failed to de-congest the city or provide adequate parking yet they are charging us exorbitant parking fines”.

Participant **AG** ULA₂ had this to say;

“Playgrounds have since turned into rubbish dumping zones. Recently, they announced that Cholera is back. I pray Harare will be spared”.

Another common theme which emerged from the interview findings was the issue of deteriorating road infrastructure. Participant **AK** ULA₂ had this to say;

“Roads are in a terrible state, driving in Harare is a nightmare but we hear the Mayor blames Zinara and vice versa. We are not concerned about their fights, we want our roads to be fixed”.

This sentiment was shared by participant **AC** ULA₁ who argued that,

“Councils are well known for signing deals with disadvantages them and the residents at large. The city park deal is not benefiting them as no tangible improvements have been observed. Imagine roads and parking bays are not even marked but we have a company which collects thousands daily”.

Another popular theme which emerged from this interview objective is the issue of disengaged employees with a negative attitude towards their job. The following verbatim were recorded. Participant **AB** ULA₁ argued that;

“The attitude of employees who serve you leaves a lot to be desired. It takes a lot of patience to go and pay your Council bills at Rowan Martin. The employees behave like they don’t even want the money. Why is council failing to embrace technology by providing Ecocash or any online payment platform....?”

This sentiment was shared by participant **AH** ULA₂ who reiterated that;

“If Local authorities are to achieve their mandate then they must start by changing the attitude of their employees. They need to develop a culture where employees like their work and respond to clients positively”

One key informant at ULA₁ gave specifics and summarized the reasons behind poor service delivery in Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe. Participant **AA** had this to say;

“It is impossible for us to collect refuse in Harare as we are operating below capacity. Harare needs 25-30 compactor trucks since it has 611 collection points. Currently only 5 are working, we have tried to purchase an additional 25 trucks but up to now the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe is yet to provide the needed forex”.

Another participant from **AC** ULA₁ had this to say

“Councils are well known for failing to treat their water effectively. However, we are still trying to change that perception and resuscitate the water section which was once taken from us and given to ZINWA. The equipment was run down and we are in the process of getting new equipment”.

The emerging themes were summarized and presented in the **Table 27** below;

Table 27: Emerging themes Service delivery and rate payer’s expectations

Emerging Themes	No of Respondents who mentioned	% of respondents
Refuse collection	1	8.3%
Non provision of clean drinking water	1	8.3%
Poor road rehabilitation	2	16,7%

5.8 Strategies for enhanced Local Authorities Performance

The research study through interviews also sought to unveil the strategies for enhanced Local Authorities in Zimbabwe. To achieve this objective, interviews were conducted with KII. Emerging themes were presented using tables, interesting quotable quotes and word cloud analysis was generated using NVivo software. Some of interesting verbatim responses were captured below. The most common theme was the issue of Employee Engagement. Participant **AC** ULA₁ had this to say;

“Employee’s must be the backbone of all Council initiatives and therefore must participate and be included in organisational decision making for improved performance”.

This sentiment was also shared by participant **AK** ULA₃ who buttressed that;

“Councils must involve everyone including employees and residents in their operations for accountability purposes. We pay their dues so we deserve to take part into knowing how the revenue collected was used”.

Another common theme which emerged from interviews was the issue of Strategic Human Resources Management. Participant **AA** ULA₁ had this to say;

“There is need for Strategic Human Resources Management where the HRM department drives strategy implementation and takes part in strategy formation”.

This was also supported by another interview respondent **AH** ULA₂ who had this to say;

“The HR people must align their organisational goals with the overall goals of the Local Authorities. They must be involved with strategy formulation, strategy implementation and strategy evaluation”.

Another emerging theme which emerged from this research objective was the issue of engaging into strategic partnerships with strategic players. The verbatim captured are presented below. Participant **UD** ULA₁ had this to say;

“If the councils are failing, they can engage in private partnerships like what they did with City Park. The city parking challenge which they were facing ended. Likewise, they can do

the same with rubbish collection, water and other amenities which they are struggling to service”.

This sentiment was shared by participant **AI** ULA₃ who had this to say;

Another emerging theme which emerged from this research objective was the issue of Independence and autonomy. One participant **AB** from ULA₁ reiterated that;

“There is need for total independence of Urban Local Authorities from the government. LA have the capability and skills to run smoothly. However, continued interference cause them to be in between and compromise service delivery”.

This sentiment was shared by one participant from **AG** ULA₂ had this to say;

“It is difficult for us to judge Local Authorities we know who runs these institutions and there’s political wrangling and meddling in the affairs of the councils. The continued interference from Ministry of Local Government makes it difficult for councils to make independent decisions. I suggest councils must be given independent discretion to make their own decisions”.

Another emerging theme which came out from interview responses is the issue of employee engagement. Some KII were of the following opinions. Participant **AJ** ULA₃ suggested that;

“Council employees must improve on their level of enthusiasm and dedication on the job for improved performance”.

This sentiment was shared by another interview respondent **AE** ULA₂ who argued that;

“If Local Authorities in Zimbabwe are to realize any tangible benefits, they need to start with changing their behaviour, attitude and mentality. Employees are the greatest asset an organization may have and must be treated as such”.

Another KIP **AL** from ULA₃ indicated that councils must improve on their revenue collection strategies. The participant propounded that;

“In order to improve their revenue inflows, I suggest councils must adopt online bill payments. If ZESA can do it, why not councils? This way their revenue will increase and perhaps it will be able to meet its obligations. They must also make sure people are

accurately billed and avoid mistakes because people end up losing confidence in the highlighted charge. Unless if someone is benefiting from the flawed process”.

Another participant **AC** ULA₁ opined that;

“Government must continue to support all Urban Local Authorities, if it means subsidizing them then it must do so because the government has a greater responsibility of ensuring it citizens have basic amenities...”

Lastly, another common emerging theme was the “Multi-stakeholder approach”. Participant **AF** ULA₂ had this to say;

“Local Authorities must always adopt a multi-stakeholder approach where all stakeholders have an input in critical matters”

This sentiment was shared by participant **AH** from ULA₃ who had this to say;

“There must be dialogues between civil society, the private sector, residents with the objective of improving local institutional relationships and incorporating specific knowledge into policy making”.

The above common themes were extracted and presented in a table as shown in **Table 28** below;

Table 28: Strategies for enhanced Local Authorities performance

Emerging Themes on the solutions for improved performance	No of Respondents who mentioned	% of respondents
Employee Engagement	2	16,67%
Strategic Human Resources Management	2	16,67%
Private Partnerships Agreements	1	8.33%
Government Support	1	8,33%
Multi-Stakeholder Approach	3	25%
Attractive remuneration packages	2	16,7%
Online billing	1	8,33%

Figure 15. Strategies for enhanced Local Authorities performance

Source: Researchers Data (2023)

5.9 Chapter Summary

The above chapter summarized, analyzed and interpreted research data obtained from interviews. The research data were qualitatively analyzed using NVivo software. Data were also presented in word cloud format. The findings show that there was a positive relationship between Human Resources Management Strategies and Organisational Performance. The study also established that socio-demographic factors which included age, gender and level of education had an impact on the performance of employees. Additionally, the findings of the study concluded that there were factors which affected the implementation of HRM Strategies in Urban Local Authorities which ranged from internal to the external environment. The chapter also summarized responses obtained from interview responses in Word cloud format. Finally, the study confirmed a positive relationship between Human Resources Management Strategies and Organisational Performance. The next chapter presents the discussion of findings in line with related literature.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research findings. The findings are also supported by academic scholars who have carried out similar studies. This section goes on to discuss the findings of the research study so that conclusions can be drawn. Qualitative and quantitative methods and tools were used. The discussions of results in this chapter are premised mainly on the research objectives. The chapter uses prior studies to provide a basis of synthesizing empirical results.

5.1 Discussion of Findings

The chapter was broken down into empirical results and supporting literature in the following sections; Human Resources Management Strategies, factors hindering effective implementation of HRM Strategies, role of HRM in Urban Local Authorities, HRM challenges facing Urban Local Authorities and recommendations for improved Urban Local Authorities performance. Both the quantitative and qualitative approaches were effective methods of collecting and analyzing data. The **Table 29** below summarizes research findings;

Table 29: Summary Qualitative and Quantitative data research findings

Summary of Themes	Sub Themes
Theme 1: Prevailing HR strategies in ULA in ZW	❖ Recruitment and Selection, reward management, performance management, training and development.
Theme 2: Role of HRM in public sector	❖ Training and Development, strategic partnerships, HR information systems, performance management
Theme 3: The Impact of HRM strategies on the performance of ULAs in Zimbabwe	The following strategies were positively related to the performance of Urban Local Authorities; ❖ Recruitment and selection ❖ Performance Management ❖ Human Resources Management Planning

	❖ Training and Development ❖ Human Resources Management practices
Theme 4: HRM Challenges in ULA in ZW	❖ Lack of top management support ❖ Government regulations ❖ Bureaucracy ❖ Corruption ❖ Political Interference ❖ Technology Gap
Theme 5: Extent to which service delivery falls short of ratepayers expectation	❖ Poor infrastructure ❖ Poor sanitation ❖ Poor refuse collection ❖ Disengaged Workforce
Theme 6: Recommended Strategies to improve HRM in ULA	❖ Multi- Stakeholder approach ❖ Private Partnership ❖ Government Support ❖ Strategic Human Resources Management ❖ Attractive Remuneration Package ❖ Employee Engagement

Source: Researcher's Primary data

6.6.2 Prevalence of Human Resources Management Strategies

The research study established that there were Human Resources Management Strategies in place in most Urban Local Authorities. These ranged from recruitment and selection, reward management, Training and development, succession planning, retention strategies, performance management, industrial relations and many others. However, the research findings revealed that these strategies were not being implemented according to laid down procedures although there were policies in most ULA which governed their operations. These findings are supported by Mbugua (2015) who established that most local authorities in

Kenya had HRM policies and strategies but implementation was the major problem. This concurs with Tshukudu (2022) whose findings revealed that Local Authorities must offer attractive rewards to their employees for enhanced employee commitment. Naikuni (2016) findings also support the above results that Strategic Human Resources practices were required by Urban Local Authorities if they were to improve their productivity. The above findings are also supported by Bilgic (2020) findings which revealed that the prevalence and effectiveness of HRM strategies is largely dependant on how well these strategies align with organizational goals, values and the broader business environment. The study's findings is also supported by Poperwi (2018) whose findings recommended that HRM strategies in Local Authorities must focus on talent acquisition, retention and development.

6.6.3 The Impact of Human Resources Management and the performance of Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe

The research study revealed that there was a relationship between Human Resources Management Strategies and Urban Local Authorities Performance. The three hypotheses were positively supported with the exception of Reward Management and Human Resources Management Planning. In studies done by Moneva et al (2020), a higher connection between Human Resources Management Strategies and Urban Local Authorities performance was established. Furthermore, successful implementation of Human Resources Management Strategies is often associated with high levels of individual performance, citizenship behaviour and individual well-being (Chikwariro, 2021). Implementing proper Human Resources Management functions is also associated with significant business performance consequences like increased customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, positive word of mouth, profitability and increased market share, (Gannon et al, 2015). Makhamara (2017) findings also confirm that strategic HRM practices influence employee performance which in turn results in efficient service delivery.

The study also established that there was a positive relationship between employee training and development and Urban Local Authorities performance. This was supported by Emeagual and Ogbonmwon (2018) findings which revealed that holistic employee training and development enhanced the employee's knowledge, competency and capacity. Jiang et al. (2012) also concur with the above findings and argue that when a firm develops the human capacity of the employees, it enhances the usefulness and competency of employees which in

turn improves organisational performance. The above findings are also supported by Wamwayi (2016) whose study revealed that employee training is critical for public institution success. Similarly, Stone et al. (2021) established that Training is one of the vital HRM practices that have a positive impact on the quality of the employee's knowledge and skills thus resulting in accelerated employee performance.

The study also affirmed a positive relationship between Reward Management and organisational performance. These findings are supported by Jackson et al (2014) who argue that HRM functions like rewards and incentives boost the morale of the employees and reduce staff turnover. Furthermore, a studies by Samuel (2021) cements the impact of Total Rewards (financial and non financial benefits) on employee performance for organisational effectiveness. Also studies by (Apeyusi, 2012; Branka & Marija, 2020; Cook & Hunsacker; Okeke, 2020; Verma, 2021) all confirm a significant strong relationship between Reward Management and organisational Performance. Furthermore, studies by (Agburu, 2017; Aktar 2012; Apeyusi, 2012 & Karami, 2013) all confirm that where employees are adequately remunerated, they exert more effort and are always committed towards achieving organisational objectives.

This study also affirmed a positive relationship between employee selection and organisational performance. These findings are supported by Makhamara (2017) whose findings revealed that recruitment and selection, training of employees, employee welfare services, employee voice and reward systems all have a significant effect ton organisational performance. Findings are also in sync with Anwae and Shakur (2015), whose findings revealed that proper Recruitment and Selection strategies are effective for improved organisational success. Geissdoerfer et al. (2018) also affirm that recruitment and selection of proper employees is an important part of building a workforce in the public sector in order to achieve organisational goals. Manyeruke (2014) findings also reveal the need to form a team of professionals to oversee the recruitment and selection process. Chirisa (2019) findings revealed that recruitment and selection process had a substantial impact on performance. Velter (2020) findings also revealed that the utilization of multiple recruitment sources as well as the design and implementation of consistent and fair recruitment and selection processes resulted in high organisational performance. In the same vein, Saukken and Kirjavainen (2019) findings revealed that getting the right staff members into an organisation increases engagement of the present employees. Mansor and Hassan (2010) findings equally

show that learning and development is a key strategy to enhance workforce capabilities, skills and competence in order to maintain a sustainable successful work environment.

The research study also affirmed a positive relationship between performance management and organisational performance. This was supported by Aktar et al. (2010) findings which revealed that a more balanced and integrated approach to performance management is needed due to the challenges of the rapidly changing society and technology. Similarly, Ozkeser (2019) findings revealed that Balanced Scorecard is recommended as the best performance measurement tool for Urban Local Authorities. Hakeem (2021) findings also revealed that giving employee's feedback of their performance improved their efficiency and effectiveness in doing things.

6.6.4 The role of HRM in the public sector (ULA's) in Zimbabwe

The research study revealed that HRM play a strategic role in the public sector and numerous roles were established. HR play a crucial role of providing training and development opportunities for council employees. This finding is supported by Knies et al, (2022) whose study revealed that Local Authorities are responsible for identifying training needs, designing the training program, choosing the appropriate training method and evaluating the actual training. Bradley (2019) also concur with the above findings, the author argues that, in this ever-changing technological world, progressive city councils must strive to implement technological based training programmes that ensure stakeholder satisfaction.

The study also revealed that HR is responsible for the fundamental role of creating strategic partnerships. In their role as strategic partners, HR administrators must proactively hire potential employees who contribute towards the achievement of council's short term and long term objectives. This finding concurs with Poperwi (2018)'s findings which indicated that, HR must strengthen their recruitment practices by coming up with a human resources plan that coordinates and integrates different functions. Thistlethwaite et al (2019) also support that HR recruitment activities must develop talent inventories to analyze the available skills, devise plans to increase the number of qualified employees. The author also argue that HR must also do human resources forecasting to anticipate future needs and evaluate performance in-order to provide corrective action. The study also revealed that HR nowadays play a crucial function of managing HR information systems. This finding is supported by Andry and Chakir (2020) whose study finding revealed that HR now uses information system

to collect, record, analyze and manage HR related data. According to Bilgic (2020) this change was necessitated by globalization and global competition. The author argues that global organizations have increased interest in HRIS driven by external trends like slow financial growth and advanced technology.

6.6.5 Factors hindering successful implementation of HRM Strategies in Urban Local Authorities

The research study revealed that there were a number of factors which hindered successful implementation of HRM strategies in Urban Local Authorities performance. Some of these factors the Council had control over them whereas they did not have control over some of the highlighted items. The factors could be categorized under internal and external factors. Internal factors included, organisational culture, leadership style, working atmosphere or environment, employee attitudes, calibre and qualifications. External environment included political, economic, socio-demographic and technological factors. These findings are supported by studies from (Aijaz, 2007; Ayagnepur, 2022 & Hakeem, 2021; Makhamara, 2017, Tayeh, 2017, Zacharia, 2014) whose research findings revealed that employers must align wages or salaries with that operating at the macro- level. In Brown's findings, the study revealed that inflationary pressures in a country also affected the payment to be made to employees.

The study also revealed that most employees in Urban Local Authorities were disengaged and their attitude towards work was negative. Similarly, these findings were in agreement with Hancock, (2020) findings which revealed that attitudes, beliefs and desires of employees at any given time affect their overall performance. Due to poor remuneration in ULAs, the attitude of most employees had certainly deteriorated. In a study by Svara (2021), the research findings revealed that, there was a significant positive relationship between employee attitudes and productivity in Local Governments.

This study also confirmed that socio- cultural factors had a direct impact on organisational culture. The socio- cultural factors also determined the role which Trade Unions were going to take part. These findings are supported by Hancock (2020) who revealed also that the power of Trade Unions also determines the ultimate organisational performance. The literature on this effect, recognized that part of this effect could work through reducing

employee turnover and other mechanisms such as technological and organisational innovations. Furthermore, a study by Archya, (2018) reveals that Unionism is associated with higher productivity although the relationship varies across industries. Similarly, research findings by (Barney, 2019; Gumbie et al, 2023; Mutema, 2017; Poperwi, 2018; Tran & Dollery, 2021 & Visser, 2017), all affirmed a positive relationship between Trade Unions and organisational performance.

This study also revealed that technological factors were a factor which hindered successful implementation of HRM Strategies. A study by Kim (2017) confirms this relationship. This positive relationship between technology and implementation of HRM Strategies was also supported by Mutandwa (2020) who revealed that lack of investment in technology posed a challenge on the implementation of HRM Strategies in Urban Local Authorities. Studies by (Cloete 2016; James, 2006; Johnson, 2011 & Mutandwa, 2020), all cited technology as a factor which obstructed strategy implementation.

In addition, the study findings also indicated that Politics played a significant role as a factor affecting implementation of HRM Strategies in Local Authority. Mutandwa (2020) also affirms that politics plays a crucial role in the HRM strategy formulation and strategy implementation. There is always political interference from the Central government through the Ministry of Local Government. A study by Pina (2011) also revealed that politics played a major role in determining the overall course which Urban Local Authorities take. Research findings by the following authors also affirm the existence of political factors in obstructing strategy implementation in Urban Local Authorities, (Adam, 2020; Chihambakwe, 2016; Cloete, 2016; 2012; Jacobson, 2015; Muchadenyika, 2014, Mutandwa, 2020 & Zvavahera, 2014).

The study also indicated that Urban Local Authorities were struggling to raise funds and resources for implementation of HRM Strategies. These findings are supported by (Chikwariro, 2021; Mutandwa, 2019; Poperwi, 2018) findings which revealed that Municipal governments in particular were facing reduced resources, increased workplace costs and growing demands for services.

6.6.6 Human Resources Management functions and Service Delivery

The research study revealed that there was a positive relationship between Human Resources Management practices and service delivery. This is supported by Luballo & Simon (2017) findings which revealed that HRM practices had a big influence on public service delivery. If Human Resources Management adopted strategies and practices that helped employees develop their abilities, approaches and conduct then this would lead to an increase in service delivery. Sang (2015) findings also reveal that HRM practices had a favourable impact on worker productivity. Chikwariro (2021) study, also concur with the above findings by emphasizing that public organisations should have HR, policies and practices in place for improved organisational efficiency.

Furthermore, a positive relationship between HRM strategies and service delivery is also shared by findings from (Chigwata, 2021; Chikwariro, 2021; Chirisa, 2019; Gumbie et al, 2023; Duvnjak, 2018; Marumahoko, 2020; Mason & Barrett, 2016; Poperwi, 2018; Poslome, 2021 & Svava, 2021). All the above authors agree that, there is a positive relationship between HRM practices and service management.

6.6.7 HRM Challenges Facing Urban Local Authorities

Both the quantitative analysis through structured questionnaires and Interview Analysis done on the challenges facing Urban Local Authorities with regards to the implementation of HRM Strategies. The study established that there was formulation of HRM strategies in all Urban Local Authorities within the study. However, what was lacking was the implementation of the formulated strategy. Various authors, such as (Abane, 2022; Adeyami, 2012; Aijaz, 2007; Bin, 2011 & Chihambakwe, 2016), had argued that more attention had been paid to strategy formulation than implementation, resulting in organizations failing to implement more than 70% of their new strategic initiatives. The studies were also in sync with Chihambakwe (2016) findings that the implementation of strategies in Urban Local Authorities was a challenge due to various factors like political interference, lack of stakeholder participation in the strategic planning process.

The study established that, the problems at the Selected Urban Local Authorities were compounded by lack of complimentary support for infrastructure by the central government. The research study revealed that there was lack of investment in information technology infrastructure and equipment (HRIS). This is supported by findings from the following studies (Ansa; 2016; Chakaipa, 2010; Chigwata et al, 2021; Dube, 2019; Gupta, 2022; Molapo, 2017; Ndre, 2016; Nicolo et al, 2021 & Saha, 2021). The above authors agreed that most councils were failing due to lack of investment in new and latest technology. This had heightened the challenge of service delivery and hampered growth prospects. This made it difficult for most ULAs to gain competitive advantage from the adoption and use of HR related technologies.

The study also revealed that the institutional environment in most ULAs was not conducive for attracting, motivating and retaining employees. This finding is also supported by (Abane 2022; Adam, 2020; Alnidawi et al, 2017; Bukoye, 2022; Kulaba, 2019; Xanthopoulou, 2022 & Zacharia, 2014) findings that Urban Local Authorities had potential for growth if the working environment was favourable. Additionally, in a study done by Tran and Dollery (2016) results indicated that the existence of a common organisational culture, motivated employees and offered the ability to create and exchange information, improving and developing their skills and experience and allowing these ideas to be cross fertilized.

Furthermore, the study also revealed that most Urban Local Authorities lacked capacity to develop due to lack of managerial support on HR related issues. This is supported by studies done by (Aktar, 2012; Agburu, 2017; Apeyusi, 2012; Chikwariro, 2021, Jephias & Tendai, 2020, Murimoga & Musingafi, 2016 & Karami, 2013). The cited authors argue that Central governments should constantly support Urban Local Authorities for improved efficiency since they lacked capacity to fully sustain themselves.

6.6.8 Recommended Strategies for Improved Urban Local Authorities Performance for Sustainable Development

The study recommended that Urban Local Authorities must develop and devise attractive HRM strategies of motivating their employees so that they became committed towards their work. These findings are supported by Widyanty et al., (2020) whose findings established

that an organisation could have an impact on the skills, attitude and behaviors of individual employees so as to be efficient in their job and contribute to the organisation's objectives through Human Resources Management practices. Furthermore, Alnidawi et al (2017) findings supported the issue of employee engagement. Their findings revealed that when an employee had a positive emotional attachment to the company and is proud of being a member of the organisation, the employee will be ready to exercise his or her efforts in the organisation for achieving success.

The study also recommended the use of Multi- stakeholder approach where all concerned parties could come together and work harmoniously for sustainable growth and development. These stakeholders include church organisations, civic societies, NGOs, residents and private companies. This is in line with Makanyeza et al (2013) whose findings revealed that the main strategies to improve service delivery were found to be increasing citizenship participation in the affairs of the Urban Local Authorities.

The study also recommended that ULAs must engage in Private Partnerships with private players as a way of enhancing their operations and expanding their financial resource base. This finding is supported by Robinson (2010) findings which revealed that Local Authorities in developed countries are adopting entrepreneurial approaches in their use of public land to attract private investment and enhance revenue strategies. Furthermore, in a study by Deneha et al, (2023), guidelines to public private partnerships were highlighted. The authors proposed that there is need to improve the legislative framework and expand law enforcement practice. They also advocated for the creation of a State body which regulates public-private partnerships.

The study also recommended that ULAs must reward their employees fairly and consistently for them to perform better on the job. The research study suggests that in order to properly reward employees, ULAs should implement Total Reward Management systems that account for both monetary and non monetary benefits. The Reward management system must also be flexible to adopt to changes in the environment. This finding was also supported by Tshukudu (2022) whose findings revealed that hiring and selecting employees is a crucial part of growing a business and raising employee satisfaction. This finding also concurs with Chikwariro (2021) whose study findings showed that an effective reward system is beneficial since it raises employee participation, engagement and overall performance.

The study also recommended the use of objective Recruitment and Selection methods. This finding was supported by Mutandwa (2020) whose research findings revealed that, most Local Authorities in Zimbabwe were marred by nepotism and subjective appointments. Farnham and Stevens (2000) findings also concur that Local Authorities need to develop less subjective and more effective methods of recruitment and selection at all levels. The authors advocated for the adoption of a competence based approach.

6.7 Chapter Summary

The above chapter qualitatively discussed research findings. The findings revealed that they were HRM strategies currently being practices in Zimbabwean Local Authorities. These strategies include Reward Management, Training and Development, Recruitment and selection, performance management. On the role of HRM in the public sector, the study revealed that HR is responsible for training and development, for HRIS, strategic partnerships and performance management. On the challenges being faced by Local Authorities in Zimbabwe, the study revealed that HR faces the problem of bureaucracy, lack of top management support and financial limitations. The findings were supported with various academic scholars.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

7.0 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented deliberated and discussed on qualitative research. This chapter presents the last section of the thesis which gives a closure of the research. Research conclusions are based on the study's research objectives and related hypothesis. The research conclusions are extracted from the study findings as illustrated in Chapter four and five. The research study further gives implications of the study to local authority policy and practice. The theoretical implications are also discussed. Further implications to the methodology used and existing body of knowledge are provided. The research gives recommendations based on the study's findings and objectives. Lastly, suggestions are made on areas that need further research.

7.1 CONCLUSIONS

The following are the inferences that were taken from the research findings;

7.1.1 To identify HRM Strategies currently being practiced in Zimbabwean Urban Local Authorities

The study was aimed at understanding whether there were any HRM strategies currently being practiced by ULAs in Zimbabwe. The study findings and analysis show that there were several HRM strategies which were being used in Urban Local Authorities and these ranged from recruitment and selection, training and development, reward management, performance management, as well as health and safety. Results implied that if Urban Local Authorities employed good HRM strategies then employees would be engaged and motivated to execute

their duties timeously and efficiently. Ultimately, this could improve ULAs performance. The research findings revealed that Training and Development was also positively correlated to Urban Local Authorities performance. This implied that, ULAs should plan and execute continuous training programmes in line with the goals of the Council. They should also match employee's abilities and skills to enhance effective organisation. Further more, management in ULAs should periodically look at ways to enhance their employees' competencies.

The research also concluded that Reward Management was strongly linked to Urban Local Authorities performance. The implication of the finding is that Urban Local Authorities should strive to give its employees both financial and non financial rewards to cushion against the rising cost of living in Zimbabwe. Urban Local Authorities should also embrace hybrid payment systems where they could use both local currencies and United State Dollars.

In addition, the research findings indicated that Recruitment and Selection were positively correlated to Local Authority performance. This implied that, Urban Local Authorities must make sure they engaged suitable employees with requisite skills and experience who would be able to steer the Council towards meeting its mandate of efficient service delivery for improved performance.

The research study also revealed that Performance Management was strongly related to Urban Local Authorities performance. Performance management were in place in the form of IRBM. However, there was no proof that regular performance reviews were conducted or that data from the performance management system was utilized to inform other HR procedures. The implication of this finding is that Urban Local Authorities should constantly monitor the performance of their employees and provide feedback frequently. Performance Management was important because it enabled employees to constantly evaluate their performance towards set targets and goals.

7.1.2 To analyse factors influencing the implementation of HRM Strategies in Zimbabwean Urban Local Authorities

The study sought to analyse the factors which were influencing the execution of HRM Strategies in Zimbabwean Urban Local Authorities. The findings of this study showed that

there were two broad categories of the factors namely internal factors and external factors. Internal factors consisted of organisational culture, employee attitude, management leadership style, ageing workforce and negative organisational environment. External factors identified included political, economic, social and technological landscape. This implied that ULAs should strike a balance or equilibrium when mitigating against these internal and external job factors for improved performance.

7.1.3 To identify HRM challenges being faced by Urban Local Authorities in implementing service delivery strategic plans

The research also sought to identify challenges which were being encountered by Urban Local Authorities in implementing service delivery strategic plans. The study findings established that Urban Local Authorities faced a myriad of challenges emanating from their bureaucratic nature. Some of these challenges include over dependence on Local Government for support, poor revenue collection strategies, lack of implementation of HRM strategies, demotivated personnel, inadequate resources and constant political interference. The findings of the study implied that ULAs in Zimbabwe should find ways of circumventing these challenges using HRM Strategies for improved performance.

7.1.4 To ascertain the extent to which service provision by Zimbabwean municipalities falls short of rate payers expectations

The first objective sought to establish the extent to which service provision provided by Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe fell short of rate-payers expectations. There was adequate proof from the research findings and interpretation of the results to conclude that service delivery by designated town councils had significantly deteriorated over the past twenty years. The implication is that improved Urban Local Authorities performance resulted in improvement in service delivery.

7.1.5 To recommend practical solutions from the empirical study which can be made about HRM Strategies in Zimbabwean Urban Local Authorities

The study sought to recommend practical solutions from the empirical study which could be developed using HRM strategies for improved ULAs performance. The study findings and

interpretation suggested that Urban Local Authorities should develop and implement HRM strategies like Recruitment and Selection, Training and Development, Performance Management, Reward Management and HR Planning for enhanced institutional performance. Furthermore, ULAs were urged to adopt employee friendly initiatives in order to promote employee commitment, participation, engagement, motivation and retention. On Recruitment and Selection ULAs were urged to be objective and shun nepotism and corruption. They were also urged to adopt technology in the recruitment process so as to sift through large volumes of CVs and to ensure the best and experienced employees are hired.

Additionally ULAs were urged to engage in Public-Private partnerships for strategic developmental engagements. These initiatives will assist Urban Local Authorities to improve on accountability and transparency, revenue collection strategies for improved liquidity. The findings of the study implied that, the performance of Urban Local Authorities could improve if the highlighted strategies were adopted.

7.2 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

7.2.1 Implications for Human Resources Management Theory and Knowledge

The outcomes of the study demonstrate that HRM strategies had a positive impact on Urban Local Authorities performance. Furthermore, the study supported other scholar's findings that HRM practices influenced organisational performance. However, studies focusing on the dynamics of Human Resources Management Strategies and Urban Local Authorities performance in developing countries were few. This study was conducted in a less developed nation Zimbabwe which gives further insight into the relationship of HRM on Urban Local Authorities performance in developing nations. Thus, this research sought to add to the Human Resources Management body of knowledge by examining the relationship between Human Resources Management Strategies and the performance of Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe.

Globally, there had been a dearth of human resources management strategies that had been specifically focused on the impact of Human Resources Management strategies and Urban Local Authorities performance. This study was, therefore, a forerunner in the field of Human Resources Management studies, in that it focused on the dynamism of HRM strategies and

the performance of Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe. From this research, a research model was constructed indicating an established relationship between HRM strategies and the performance of selected Urban Local Authorities as shown in Figure 17 below;

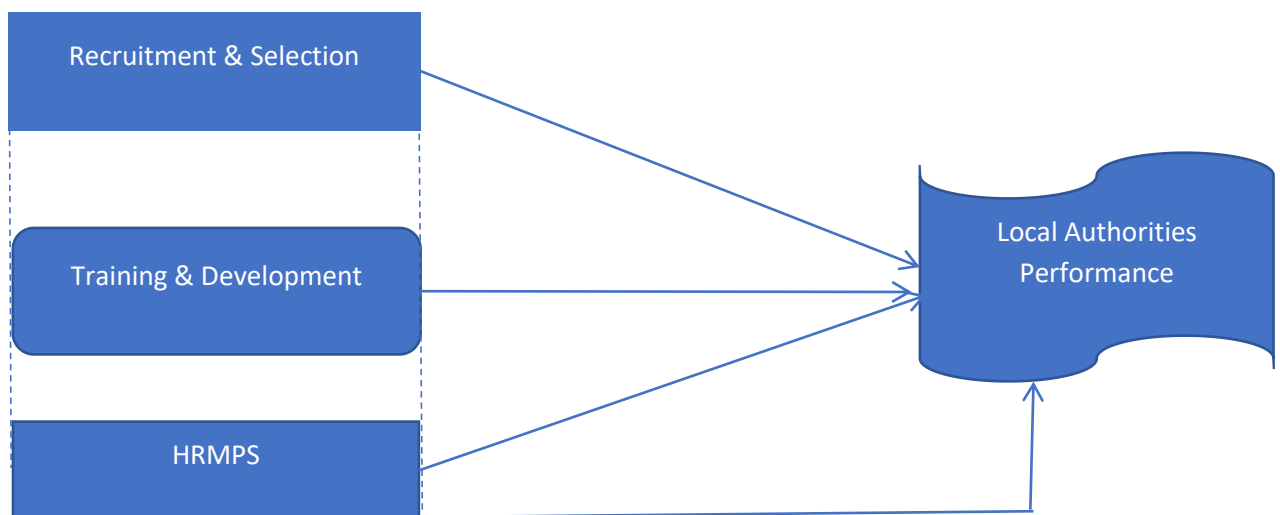


Figure 17. Theoretical framework of the dynamics of Human Resources Management Strategies on Urban Local Authorities performance.

Source: Derived from the study results

As shown in Figure 17 above, Human Resources Management strategies influenced Urban Local Authorities performance and service delivery. HRM strategies like recruitment and selection, reward management, performance management, training and development and human resources planning had a positive impact on the performance of Urban Local Authorities. Therefore, there is need for harmonizing both internal and environmental factors which affect the implementation of HRM strategies. Human Resources Management literature should therefore pay attention to internal and external factors highlighted in the

background and literature review. Internal strategies include organisational culture, employee commitment, management leadership and organisational climate. The external environment encompassed the macro economic variables (political, economic, social, technological and legal). Accordingly, the existing theory should be improved to embrace this finding.

7.3 Practical Implications

The practical implications of the study are as follows;

7.3.1 Policy and Practice

The study findings had several implications for HRM. It was the objective of this study to establish the relationship between HRM strategies and Urban Local Authorities performance. The research findings confirmed a positive relationship between the two. Thus Urban Local Authorities were recommended to employ good HRM practices which would ensure that employees are encouraged, motivated and committed. Bearing in mind that employees are the most important resource in an organisation. Furthermore, the research recommended that in designing programmes and policies that retain employees, ULAs must focus on approaches which engage employees through motivation, high remuneration, job security, proper communication, clearly defined work roles and empowerment.

7.3.2 Urban Local Authorities

Urban Local Authorities just like any other organisation, were challenged to meet or surpass societal expectations by recognizing the norms, interest and values of society in which they operated. Customers nowadays are more educated, sensitive and aware. Hence, they were constantly demanding a change in public services and would hold ULAs responsible for failure to meet their mandates. The study further urged Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe to practice employing good HRM initiatives and to recognize the importance of attracting, motivating and retaining quality human capital. The adopted HRM initiatives should bear in mind that employees were the heart beat of any organisation. Research evidence showed that some firms had often misallocated their resources without achieving their ultimate objectives, (Wilson, 2018). It is therefore imperative for the management in Councils to allocate the human resource efficiently and effectively in-order to reap sufficient returns on investment.

7.3.3 Government of Zimbabwe

The Government of Zimbabwe (GOZ) ratified Africa's Sustainable Developmental Goals (SDGs 2063) and adopted its own Vision 2030 mantra which intended to create smart cities and an overall upper middle class economy. This study therefore would assist the government towards achieving its vision by highlighting strong areas which needed attention in Urban Local Authorities in their quest for sustainable growth and development. Some of the things which were clearly articulated in the SDGs included; clean water provision, refuse collection, good road network and provision of quality health care among others. The GOZ should also be advised to continue supporting local municipalities since the study revealed that most municipalities were failing to sustain themselves. This could be done by periodically giving municipalities funds for water treatment, road rehabilitation and provision of healthcare since these are the basics essential for citizens. The government should also hold municipalities accountable for their actions through publishing their statement of affairs and through regulation using its arm the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works. The Local Government must constantly demand answers from all Urban Local Authorities with regards to service delivery and performance.

7.4 Areas for further study

The current study drew respondents from three Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe only. This implied that the generality of the research outcome was limited to the few selected Urban Local Authorities. Future studies could be improved by extending similar studies across many cities in Zimbabwe. Future studies may also be performed using rural local authorities. Furthermore, comparative studies may be done with Urban Local Authorities in neighbouring countries

In addition, this study focused mainly on analyzing the impact of HRM strategies on Urban Local Authorities performance using an employees' perspective only. Further studies could be conducted using different Rural Local Authorities to validate results. Future studies should also include client perceptions, residents, independent contractors and other interested stakeholders. The studies should focus on improving service delivery and the performance of Urban Local Authorities.

Moreover, the researcher recommended that further studies on HRM strategies and their relationship to other variables like customer satisfaction, job satisfaction, regulatory citizenship behaviour, may be carried out.

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Zimbabwe Urban Councils Act, 1995 (No.24 of 1995).

**Appendix1: GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS: RESEARCH PERMISSION
LETTER**



CHINHOYI UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

RESEARCH CLEARANCE LETTER

NAME AND NATIONAL ID OF RESEARCHER(S): Chisango Sharon ID NO: 03-1360867L/3

SCHOOL OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND BUSINESS SCIENCES

Student ID: 0211448300

APPROVED RESEARCH TITLE: Dynamics of Human Resources Management Strategies and performance of Local Authorities in Zimbabwe

I hereby confirm that the above mentioned Researcher is a Postgraduate Researcher at Chinhoyi University of Technology. The proposed study meets all the requirements as stipulated in the University Policies and guidelines and has been approved by the relevant committees.

The proposal adheres to ethical principles as outlined by the University. Permission is hereby granted to carry out the research as described in the attached approved proposal.

The main objective of the research is: To investigate the dynamics of HRM strategies on the performance of selected local authorities

Expected Outcome: determine a framework for improved HRM with the ultimate objective of improved service delivery in Local Authorities

In addition, the Researcher is urged to adhere to International and national ethical guidelines and all requirements by Chinhoyi University of Technology.

Best Regards,

O. L. Kubiko

Chairperson, University Research Committee - Research Ethics

18/12/2022

Date

Tel: +263 6721 2225/3/5

E-mail: researchandgraduatestudies@cut.ac.zw



1

ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE
TO THE HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER

CITY OF MUTARE



CIVIC CENTRE NO 1 QUEENS WAY
P.O. BOX 910, MUTARE, ZIMBABWE
GENERAL LINE: +263202864412
DIRECT LINE: +263202060271
EXT: 100/111
mchong@mutarecity.org.zw

OUR REF: MN/mm

EMAIL:

TOWN CLERKS DEPARTMENT

Our Ref: MN/mm

12 January 2023

CHISANGO SHARON
Chinhoyi University of Technology
Private Bag 7724
CHINHOYI

Dear Madam

**RE: DYNAMICS OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND PERFORMANCE
OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN ZIMBABWE: A CASE OF CITY OF MUTARE**

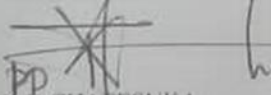
Your letter dated 19 October 2022 on the above matter refers.

I wish to advise that you have been granted permission to carry out a research titled, "Dynamics of human resources management strategies and performance of Local Authorities in Zimbabwe". Case of City of Mutare."

I wish to further advise you that permission is being granted on condition that the research outcome will remain confidential and you will avail a copy to the City of Mutare.

Could you please therefore liaise with the Human Resources Manager on the above matter.

Yours faithfully


K.B. CHARESUKA
ACTING TOWN CLERK

MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

Telephone 203 4 707615

Fax 203 4 797706

REF: ADM/23/8



ZIMBABWE

Office of The Secretary
P. Bag 7706
Causeway,
Harare

14 December 2022

Miss Sharon Chisango
8601 Budiro 5B
Harare

AUTHORITY TO UNDERTAKE AN ACADEMIC RESEARCH: MISS SHARON CHISANGO: CHINHOYI UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY.

The above subject matter and the table below refers.

Please be advised that the Head of Ministry approved your applications to undertake a field research on **'Dynamics of Human Resources Management Strategies and Performance of Local Authorities in Zimbabwe'**.

Kindly be advised that the research findings should not be subject to external consumption and must be solely used for academic purposes. You are required to sign for Official Secrecy before commencement of the research project. In addition, a copy of the completed research project should be submitted to the Office of the Permanent Secretary of this Ministry.

It is hoped that the research findings will help the Ministry in coming up with relevant strategies in the study area undertaken.

I. Chazuka

Principal Human Resources Officer

FOR: PERMANENT SECRETARY FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

Cc: Town Clerk, Bindura Municipality
Town Clerk, Harare City Council
Town Clerk, Mutare City Council





HUMAN CAPITAL DEPARTMENT
TOWN HOUSE, HARARE, ZIMBABWE
POST OFFICE BOX 990
TELEPHONE 752979 / 753000

EMAIL: hrd@hararecity.co.zw

ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO HUMAN CAPITAL DIRECTOR

CITY OF HARARE

Chinhoyi University of Technology
Private Bag 7724
Chinhoyi

3 June 2024

RE: AUTHORITY TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH: SHARON CHISANGO

This letter serves as authority for Sharon Chisango to undertake a research survey on the topic: "Dynamics of Human Resources Management Strategies and Performance of Local Authorities in Zimbabwe"

The City of Harare has no financial obligation and neither shall it render any further assistance in the conduct of the research. The researcher is however requested to avail a soft and hard copy of the research to the undersigned so that residents of Harare can benefit out of it. The research should not be used for any other purpose other than the study purpose specified.

This letter is issued upon payment of \$usd administration fee.

Receipt Number: 14128476

Yours faithfully

RTD MAJOR M. MARARA
ACTING HUMAN CAPITAL DIRECTOR



MUNICIPALITY OF BINDURA

All Communications To
Be Addressed To The
TOWN CLERK
P O Box 15,
BINDURA
ZIMBABWE

666 Tumbos Avenue
Bindura, Zimbabwe
Phone: 7619/7519/7361

Our ref: S4/0026
Your ref:

20 December 2022

Sharon Chisango
Chinhoyi University of Technology
Chinhoyi

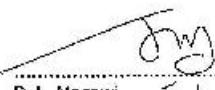
RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT AN ACADEMIC RESEARCH PROJECT

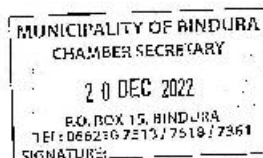
We acknowledge receipt of your letter on the above dated 13 December 2022.

Please be advised that you have been granted permission to carry out your research as requested. The permission is granted on the condition that you should share the results of your research with Council in order for Council to learn from your findings. Additionally, permission is granted on the condition that the research findings will be used for academic and no other purposes.

Should you require any more information in connection with this issue please see the undersigned.

Yours Faithfully


D.A. Masawi
Acting Chamber Secretary
For Town Clerk



Appendix 5: QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondent,

The undersigned is a Doctor of Philosophy student at Chinhoyi University of Technology, where she is currently working on her thesis titled, “The effectiveness of Human Resources Management functions on the performance of Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe. This questionnaire has been sent out to three (3) other Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe. The researcher has been granted permission to collect data from the parent ministry (Ministry of Local Government and Public Works). It will be greatly appreciated if you could answer the questions completely. You are rest assured that information obtained from this questionnaire will be handled carefully, confidentially and be used strictly for academic purposes only.

Yours Faithfully

Chisango Sharon (Email: schisang@gmail.com/schisango@buse.ac.zw 0773194510

CONSENT (please tick in appropriate box)

I hereby consent to participate in this survey and to the collection and retention of my personal information for academic purposes. Furthermore, all of this information will be stored for as long as is necessary for the fulfillment of the stated purpose and in accordance with the applicable laws including the provision of Data Protection Act Chapter 11:12.

Yes ☐ No ☐

SECTION A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LOW & MIDDLE LEVEL EMPLOYEES AT LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES IN ZIMBABWE (BINDURA TOWN COUNCIL, MUTARE TOWN COUNCIL, HARARE CITY COUNCIL)

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Gender

Male ☐ Female ☐

Age

18-25 26-35 36-45 46-55 56 and above

Period of service

0-5years 6-10years 11-15years 16-20years 21+yrs

Educational qualification

O' Level A' Level Diploma Higher National Diploma Degree PHD

Marital Status

Married Single Divorced Widowed

Level in the Organization

Low Level

Middle Level

Name of Town Council

Harare TC Bindura TC Mutare TC

SECTION B

D=Disagree Strongly Disagree, N=Neutral SA=Strongly Agree, Agree

Please complete the information below with a tick or an X

**1. EMPLOYEE ATTITUDES TOWARDS WORK, URBAN LOCAL
AUTHORITIES AND SERVICE DELIVERY MANDATE**

CODES	STATEMENTS	D	SD	N	SA	A
IWC001	My job requires me to interact with customers					
ACN001	I am accurately able to anticipate customer's needs I provide quality services to my clients					
CRC001	Regardless of circumstances, I am courteous and respectful to clients					
EIP001	My Local Authority has properly designed efficient internal business processes					
AE001	My job requires me to adopt certain emotions at times					
IOP001	My Town Council has witnessed improved performance in the past 5 years					
ESD001	There's efficient service delivery at my Town council					
ERCM	There are efficient revenue collection methods at my Town Council					
PATW001	I have positive attitude towards my work					
ILMJ01	I like my job					
AJR001	I am aware of my Job responsibilities					
RSS001	I receive supervisor's support when I'm not sure					
EPLA001	The overall performance of ULAs in Zimbabwe is excellent					
RFI001	There's room for Improvement when it comes to LA service delivery mandate					
LCMSD	My Local Authority is meeting its service delivery mandate					

**2. ASCERTAINING PREVALENCE OF HUMAN RESOURCES
MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES IN ZIMBABWE URBAN LOCAL
AUTHORITIES**

CODE	STATEMENT	D	SD	N	A	SA
EHRMS	There are Human Resources Management Strategies being practiced at my LA					
OHS001	Recruitment& Selection is openly done					
PNILA	Nepotism exists during Recruitment & Selection					
INE01	New employees are Oriented & Inducted on Procedures					
PIR01	My LA prioritizes Internal Recruitment					
RQP	My Town Council recruits Qualified & experience personnel					
NEAC1	New employees are taught the Organizational Culture					
	Reward Management Strategies					
ERMS1	My organization has Clear Reward Management Strategies					
ESP01	Employees are satisfied with their Pay					
ETP	My pay is tied to my performance					
ITR01	My pay is inclusive of both Financial & non Financial rewards					
PCG01	My pay is better than what government is offering					
	Training & Development Strategies					
ETDS1	There are Training & Development Strategies at my Town Council					
OCT01	My town council is committed to Employee Training					
IET001	My Local Authority invests heavily employee training					
EFAT01	Employees frequently attend Training					
ETMU01	The Training methods used are efficient					
	Performance Management Strategies					
EPMS01	There are clear Performance Management strategies at my LA					

EPCM01	My performance is constantly measured					
EPPMP1	I Actively participate in Performance Management process					
PKEP1	My Town Council keeps performance records safely					
	Human Resources Planning Strategies					
EHRP1	There is a clear Human Resources Planning Strategy					
BFR001	My organization budgets for future HR requirements					
EA001	My Town Council frequently performs employee Audit					
CSP01	There is a clear Succession Planning at my organization					

3. FACTORS HINDERING SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF HRM STRATEGIES & SERVICE DELIVERY

CODE	FACTORS	D	SD	N	A	SA
FHSSD1	There are factors which are hindering efficient service delivery					
PI001	Political Interference					
PRCS01	Poor Revenue Collection Strategies					
EMF01	Embezzlement & Misappropriation of funds					
AWF	Ageing Workforce					
PHRMS1	Poor Human Resources Management Strategies					
LLGS1	Lack of Government Support					

4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVED HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT & SUBSEQUENT SERVICE DELIVERY

	STRATEGIES	D	SD	N	A	SA
TAF01	There's need for Private Partnerships					

GS001	Government unconditional Support					
HRCS1	Harmonized Revenue Collection System					
IOBS1	Improved Online Billing System					
PI01	Political Independence					
SHRM	Strategic Human Resources Management					
ATRP01	Attractive Total Rewards Packages					
PWE01	Positive Working Environment					
EP001	Employee Participation					

THANK YOU!!!THE END

Appendix 6: INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. What do you understand by the term Human Resources Management?
2. Can you highlight some of the Human Resources Management strategies that you know?
3. Are these Strategies prevalent at your Local Authority?
4. Explain how Recruitment and selection impact on Urban Local Authorities performance?
5. Do you receive your salary timeously and consistently?
6. If no, how does this affect your performance on the job?
7. Explain how Training and Development impact on Urban Local Authorities performance?
8. Do you have any Performance Management strategy in your organisation?
9. Is the IRBM useful in measuring and evaluating employee performance?
10. Explain how the IRBM system can be improved for better results.
11. Explain how Human Resources Planning impact on Urban Local Authorities performance?
12. Is there a relationship between employee performance and organisational performance?
If yes explain more.
13. What are the factors which prevents the implementation of strategies in Local Authorities?
14. What role does HR play in public institutions like Urban Local Authorities?
15. Are there any HRM challenges which Urban Local Authorities are currently facing in the implementation of HRM Strategies?
16. How do you think these challenges can be overcome?

APPENDIX 8: PLAGIARISM REPORT

Plagiarism Report

by Sharon Chisango

Submission date: 08-Jun-2023 03:13PM (UTC+0300)
Submission ID: 2111725373
File name: 8_JUNE_2023_Final_Plagiarism_check.docx (2.99M)
Word count: 43096
Character count: 251534

Plagiarim Report

ORIGINALITY REPORT

16%	13%	3%	7%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	uir.unisa.ac.za Internet Source	2%
2	Submitted to Midlands State University Student Paper	2%
3	scholar.ufs.ac.za Internet Source	1%
4	hdl.handle.net Internet Source	1%
5	ir.jkuat.ac.ke Internet Source	<1%
6	cedred.org Internet Source	<1%
7	vital.seals.ac.za:8080 Internet Source	<1%
8	researchspace.ukzn.ac.za Internet Source	<1%
9	Submitted to Chester College of Higher Education Student Paper	<1%

17.

LANGUAGE EDITOR’S REPORT

To whom it may concern

I Beauty Dondo (PhD) hereby confirm that I professionally edited Sharon Chisango’s PhD draft thesis entitled ‘Dynamics of Human Resources Management Strategies and the Performance of Urban Local Authorities in Zimbabwe. My task was to make grammatical corrections as well as making the language of the document smooth. I assure whoever is interested that I did not change the meaning or message that the Author intended to put across. As soon as the Author requested me to delete the thesis from my computer I complied.

.....BD.....

PUBLICATIONS (published)

1. **Sharon Chisango**, Raymond Mapuranga & Linda Mlilo Mabwe. Covid 19 and the Work Life Balance in Zimbabwe Private Sector companies. *Zegu Oikosis Journal* Volume 1 (1&2) 26-42.
2. Raymond Mapuranga & **Chisango Sharon**. Emotional Intelligence as a conduit for effective business leadership in a Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous environment *Zegu Futures Journal* (1) 1& 2 40-56.

SUBMITTED TO JOURNAL

1. **Sharon Chisango, Manuere Faitira & Muranda Zororo**. Local Authorities performance in Zibabwe- A sytematic Literature Review. Submitted to UZ
2. **Sharon Chisango**, Obert Sifile and Mapuranga Raymond. The impact of HRM Strategies on service delivery in Local Authorities: A case of Bindura Municipality Submitted to Zegu Oikosis Journal
3. **Sharon Chisango**, Raymond Mapuranga and Lydia Chisango. AI and HRM in the Zimbabwe public sector: Submitted to Zegu Futures Journal.
4. **Sharon Chisango**, Obert Sifile and Nothando Msipa. The Human Resources Management challenges faced by Zimbabwe Local Authorities in enhancing organizational performance. Submitted to Journal Administrative Sciences.