

Performance Management Strategies in Local Government Systems in Zimbabwe: Status Quo and Quo Vadis?

Mutongoreni Noah Ariel, Thakhathi Dovan Reckson, Mupindu Wiseman

African Renaissance

Vol. 21, (No. 1), March 2024

ISSN: 2516-5305 (Online)

pp 75–95

doi.org/10.31920/2516-5305/2024/21n1a4

Abstract

The study examined the status quo and quo vadis of performance management strategies in local government systems in Zimbabwe. Local government systems represent central government at the local level. They are better positioned to serve people in their respective localities, and they are at the forefront of service delivery. However, they exist in an environment replete with challenges ranging from economic and political conflicts, pandemics, environmental governance issues, rising poverty levels, climate change-induced droughts, floods, diseases, and massive technological advancements, among others. Nations globally have repurposed local authorities to attain superior performance through the adoption of a performance management system in order to address these challenges. Local government in Zimbabwe embraced performance management in the late 1990s and took the form of annual performance appraisals. A results-based management system was adopted by local authorities and all government agencies in 2005. The introduction of a performance management regime, however, did not translate into superior local government performance. This study examined the status quo and quo vadis of performance management strategies in local government systems in Zimbabwe. It adopted a mixed-method methodology and, more succinctly, an

explanatory sequential mixed-method methodology. In terms of research philosophy, the study was underpinned by pragmatism, and the study was confined to local government systems in Manicaland province of Zimbabwe. The study found evidence of a performance management system largely driven by the central government. Resource constraints hampered the implementation of performance management strategies, inadequate human capacity, and the prevailing socio-economic and political environment. The future of performance management is tied to the economic and political pendulum of the nation. The study recommended that local government systems be granted more autonomy and capacity in line with the decentralisation mantra. A holistic human capital approach encompassing performance management should be adopted.

Keywords:

Human Capital Management; Local Authorities, Local Government,
Human Resource Strategies, Performance Management Strategies