



**ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PERFORMANCE
MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN MALAWI**

MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT THESIS

By

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my own work. It is submitted to the University of Malawi-Chancellor College in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the award of the Degree of Master of Public Administration and Management. It has not been submitted before and it will not be submitted for any degree or examination in any other university.

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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ABSTRACT

This research report is based on a study on analysis of the effectiveness of Performance Management System (PMS) in the delivery of public services in local authorities (LA) in Malawi. The study was motivated by the fact that the Malawi Government introduced PMS in LAs in 2008 and there were indications that no research had been conducted to analyse the effectiveness of the system in the delivery of public services. The main question was: how effective is the PMS in the delivery of public services in LAs in Malawi? The study used a case study design and was conducted in Blantyre and Mzuzu City Councils, and Salima and Zomba District Councils in Malawi from February, 2018 to April, 2018. It also employed triangulation by going beyond the sampled LAs to include the Department of Human Resource Management and Development, the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, the Local Government Service Commission and the Performance Enforcement Department under the Office of the President and Cabinet. Questionnaires, interview guide, focus group discussion guide and document review were used to collect data. The main finding was that PMS was not effective in the delivery of public services in LAs because it was partially and or not implemented. Other findings were that while PMS was founded on strong legal framework, adherence and or enforcement was lacking; lower level LA employees were not targeted; and respondents and participants' perceptions towards PMS were mixed. Factors that hinder implementation of PMS in the LAs included lack of leadership commitment and ownership of the PMS in the LAs; inadequate human resource capacity; inadequate financial resource; and lack of monitoring and evaluation system. The conclusion is that PMS is not well institutionalised and implemented in LAs under study and therefore, not effective in the delivery of public services. The study recommends that LAs under study and central government should take into consideration the suggestions made to ensure effective institutionalisation and implementation of PMS. A study could be conducted to analyse the extent to which PMS is effective in the delivery of public services in all the LAs in Malawi. Further, an assessment on knowledge and skills of LAs top leadership and management that can improve effectiveness of PMS implementation and its impact should be conducted.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	x
LIST OF TABLES	xii
LIST OF APPENDICES	xiii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	xiv
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background	4
1.3 Problem Statement	9
1.4 Research Questions	12
<i>1.4.1 Main Question</i>	12
<i>1.4.2 Specific Questions</i>	12
1.5 Research Objectives.....	12
<i>1.5.1 Main Objective</i>	12
<i>1.5.2 Specific Objectives</i>	12
1.6 Significance of the Study	13
1.7 Summary	14
1.8 Structure of the Thesis.....	14
CHAPTER TWO	16
LITERATURE REVIEW	16
2.1 Introduction	16

2.2 Definition of some key terms	17
2.2.1 <i>Performance Management (PM)</i>	17
2.2.2 <i>Performance Management System (PMS)</i>	18
2.3 Theoretical Framework of Performance Management.....	19
2.3.1 <i>Theories of Performance Management</i>	20
2.4 Differences between Traditional Performance Appraisal and Performance Management.....	24
2.5 Principles of Performance Management System	26
2.6 Characteristics of an effective Performance Management System	27
2.7 Benefits of Performance Management System	29
2.8 Realities of Performance Management	30
2.8.1 <i>Perceptions towards Performance Management System</i>	30
2.8.2 <i>Challenges in the implementation of performance management</i>	32
2.8.3 <i>What should be done to enhance effectiveness of the Performance Management System?</i>	36
2.9 Conceptual Framework of Performance Management System.....	38
CHAPTER THREE	43
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	43
3.1 Introduction	43
3.2 Research Design.....	44
3.3 Study Setting	45
3.4 Population.....	46
3.5 Sampling and Sample Size.....	46
3.5.1 <i>Sampling</i>	46
3.5.2 <i>Sample</i>	47

3.6 Data Collection Methods.....	49
3.6.1 Primary Data	49
3.6.2 Secondary Data Collection Methods	54
3.7 Data Analysis	54
3.7.1 Qualitative Methods of Data Analysis	55
3.7.2 Quantitative Methods of Data Analysis	55
3.8 Data Quality Control	56
3.9 Ethical Challenges and Considerations	56
3.10 Limitations of the study.....	59
CHAPTER FOUR.....	62
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS OF THE STUDY	62
4.1 Introduction	62
4.2 Response rate of the respondents and participants.....	63
4.3 Profile of respondents and participants	63
4.3.1 Distribution of respondents and participants by gender	63
4.3.2 Distribution of respondents and participants by level of education and	
field of training	64
4.3.3 Distribution of respondents and participants by staff cadre and position	
held.....	65
4.3.4 Distribution of respondents and participants by work experience	66
4.4 Results and discussions of the study	67
4.4.1 Status of implementation of PMS.....	68
4.4.2 Employee perceptions towards PMS in councils	90
4.4.3 Major challenges hindering implementation of the PMS in councils in	
Malawi	97

4.4.4 <i>Suggestions on ensuring improvement in the effective implementation ... of the Performance Management System</i>	118
4.5 Summary	124
CHAPTER FIVE	125
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH.....	125
5.1 Introduction	125
5.2 Summary	125
5.3 Conclusion.....	131
5.4 Future Research.....	131
REFERENCES	133
APPENDICES	138

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: The Performance Management Cycle	40
Figure 2: Distribution of respondents and participants by gender	64
Figure 3: Distribution of respondents and participants by level of education	65
Figure 4: Distribution of respondents and participants by staff cadre	66
Figure 5: Distribution of respondents and participants by work experience	67
Figure 6 : Does your organisation have a functional performance management system in place?	72
Figure 7: Functional PMS in place by council.....	74
Figure 8: Does the council have Performance Management Guidelines?	75
Figure 9: Have you ever filled the open appraisal forms since employed in the council?	76
Figure 10: How often is performance appraisal performed annually in your council?	81
Figure 11: The performance appraisal/review and the council objectives are strongly linked.....	83
Figure 12: Indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statement	
according to the situation in your council: The remuneration in your organisation is strongly linked to the employees' performance.	86
Figure 13: Is the performance review of employees used to identify the capacity needs of employees in your council?	87
Figure 14: Which of the following possible criteria is the most relevant criteria used for selecting staff for training in your council?	88
Figure 15: Are the results from the performance review used to make adjustment to employees' work objectives in the council?.....	89

Figure 16: Whether or not the respondents were satisfied with the way PMS was
being implemented in the councils..... 93

Figure 17: Showing how interested respondents were in PMS in their council95

Figure 18: Based on performance of your council in LAPA in 2013, is there any link
between PMS and LAPA?96

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Research sample for the study	48
Table 4: If yes, how did you get an opportunity to hear about PMS in relation to councils?	70
Table 5: Who drives the performance management system in your council?	82
Table 6: Is Performance appraisal/review linked in a significant manner with rewards and sanctions for employees?	85
Table 7: When you get together in your council with the other council employees, how often would you say you discuss performance management system issues?	93
Table 2: Distribution of respondents and participants by field of training	159
Table 3: Distribution of respondents and participants by position held	161

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Letter of identification from the University of Malawi - Chancellor College	138
Appendix 2: Consent Letter to Chief Executive Officer of Blantyre City Council...	139
Appendix 3: Consent Form.....	140
Appendix 4: Questionnaire	141
Appendix 5: Interview Guide.....	152
Appendix 6: Focus Group Discussion Guide.....	156
Appendix 7 Table 2: Distribution of respondents and participants by field of training	159
Appendix 8 Table 3: Distribution of respondents and participants by position held.	161

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CIDA	: Canadian International Development Agency
CEO	: Chief Executive Officer
DC	: District Commissioner
DHRM&D	: Department of Human Resource Management and Development
DPSM	: Department of Public Service Management
FGD	: Focus Group Discussion
LA	: Local Authorities
LAPA	: Local Authorities Performance Assessment
LGSC	: Local Government Service Commission
MGDS	: Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MLG&RD	: Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
PM	: Performance Management
PMS	: Performance Management System
SPSS	: Statistical Package for Social Sciences

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The study was conducted to analyse Performance Management System (PMS) in Local Authorities (LAs) in Malawi. The overall objective was to understand how effective PMS was in the delivery of public services in the LAs in Malawi. In order to do that, the study sought to understand the realities of PMS implementation in relation to implementation status; employee perceptions towards PMS; major challenges to smooth implementation of PMS; and suggestions on ensuring improvement in the implementation of the PMS in the LAs. The aim was to develop a common understanding for the researcher on how PMS was undertaken and the elements that were central to the implementation of PMS in LAs in Malawi.

Performance Management (PM) is a structured but flexible approach to improving performance of employees, sections, divisions or departments and the organisation as a whole. Armstrong (2000: 1) defines PM as a strategic and integrated approach to delivering sustained success to organisations by improving the performance of the people who work in them and by developing the capabilities of teams and individual contributors. At the individual level, PM is basically a participatory process between employees and their supervisors that links the individual's work plan and performance to the overall ministry/department strategic plan (Department of Public Service Management (DPSM), 2008: 6).

Performance Management System (PMS) is an effort to improve performance, efficiency, effectiveness, productivity and accountability of public sector organisations (Dzimhiri, 2015: 159). It involves managers and their subordinates within a framework that sets out how they can best work out to achieve the required results. Furthermore, it is concerned with managing the organisation, everyone in the business, performance improvement, employee development, stakeholders' satisfaction and finally communication and involvement (Armstrong, 2009: 62). In addition, it aims at improving the results of people's efforts by linking these to the organisation's corporate objectives. Further to that, it is based on the principle of management by agreement or contract rather than management by command and its purpose is to ensure effective service delivery.

PM is an important aspect of improving performance of any organisation. In addition, PM is linked to employee performance. It is understood as a means of improving public sector effectiveness and service delivery. As such, interest in PM has increased considerably in the recent years and many governments of the world including the Government of Malawi have adopted it. These countries have adopted PM in order to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of the public services.

The Malawi Government's agenda as enshrined in the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) I (2006-2011); MGDS II (2011-2016) and MGDS III (2017-2022) is to eradicate poverty and improve the socioeconomic condition of its citizens. This agenda is implemented through the public sector that includes LAs. As such, the Malawi Government, with support from international institutions and donors, introduces and implements various reforms to ensure that it is able to achieve

its agenda. One of the government's reform areas is on performance management system.

The Malawi Government with financial support from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) provided through the Good Governance Programme managed by the Institute of Public Administration-Canada launched a Performance Management Policy in March 2008. In addition, the Malawi Government introduced a PMS on 1st July 2008 in the Malawi Civil Service in order to revamp the civil service and improve service delivery (Department of Public Service Management (DPSM), 2008: 6). The basic understanding by the Malawi government was that the system would facilitate achievement of strategic goals in the MGDS which in turn would improve management performance in the delivery of services to the public. The Malawi Government Performance Management Policy and PMS are applicable to LAs in Malawi as LAs are vehicles for delivering government agenda. Hence, the Government's expectation was that the PMS would respond to the limitations observed from the closed performance appraisal system and motivate LAs employees towards improved performance and delivery of quality services to the public.

According to the Department of Human Resource Management and Development (DHRM&D), the launch and introduction of the PMS was one of the steps taken by government to ensure that the civil service and LAs delivered quality services to the public in an efficient, effective, accountable and responsive manner (DHRM&D, 2010 as cited in Chidwala, 2013: 1). Hence, the expectation of the Malawi Government was that the introduction of the PMS in the councils would have large impact on government's delivery of services to the public. Furthermore, it was

in the expectation of the Malawi Government and the public that there would be improved delivery of quality services to the public by LAs. As such, the expectation of the government and even the public was that the civil service and the councils would move in and implement the PMS as directed. However, there were indications that no research had been conducted to analyse the effectiveness of the PMS in the delivery of public services in the LAs in Malawi.

In order to put the research problem into context, this introductory chapter presents and discusses the following areas: background, problem statement, research questions, research objectives and significance of the study.

1.2 Background

Before 2008, the Malawi Government had been using the confidential performance appraisal system which it instituted in 1966 (Nkunika et al., 2013). In this method of appraisal system, subordinates were being observed by their superiors regarding their performance in the job and on the duties performed. Then superiors would write confidential reports on the performance, behaviour and conduct of the subordinates. Confidential reports were being kept confidentially and not shared to any unauthorised person. Later on, the confidential reports would be submitted to top management annually for necessary decision-making against any employee on whom the confidential report was made. In this regard, the confidential reports were the main criteria for making administrative decisions like promoting or transferring any employee in the public service. Key factors that were being assessed in the confidential report included character and conduct of employee, absenteeism,

punctuality, knowledge, quality and nature of work, integrity and honesty, and any complaints against the employee.

This system had limitations which included lack of feedback to employees on their work performance; poor communication between managers and subordinates; and lack of focus on achieving results (DPSM, 2008: 6). In addition, the system did not serve as an effective tool for measuring employee performance because it did not pay much attention to the measurement of performance. Individual employees were being appraised confidentially, without targets and the approach was historical, with no opportunity to improve. As such, it had the effect of undermining employees' competence and motivation which in turn could result in loss of morale and lack of skills development. Furthermore, individual performance was never linked to departmental, divisional and or organisational strategic goals and objectives. It laid much emphasis on behavioural or personality characteristics as central attributes for evaluation of an individual employee.

In 1985, the Herbecq Review Commission made an assessment of the Malawi Public Service in areas that included modifications needed in staff structure, career development, grading and personnel management so as to make the best use of human and financial resources available. One of the recommendations made by the Review Commission was that the Malawi Government should adopt an open performance appraisal and the recommendation was not implemented (Matimba, 2015). Further, the Malawi Civil Service Reform Programs (1994-2001), Malawi Public Sector Management Reform Program (2002-2006) and the Malawi Poverty Reduction

Strategy all pointed to the need for an objective and open Performance Management System (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2010:21)

Adoption and introduction of the PMS in 2008 by the Malawi Government was, therefore, an appropriate approach to creating measurable achievements against target in the public service. Furthermore, it was aimed at reversing the decline in service delivery in the public service including in local authorities. Hence, the move from “confidential” to “open” performance appraisal system (Nkunika et al., 2013: 7) was in line with the Malawi Public Service Act 1994 (Sec 4), Malawi Public Service Regulations (amended) 2010, The PM Policy and Procedures Handbook (2008), the Malawi Public Service Charter (2012) and the Code of Conduct and Ethics for the Malawi Public Service (2012) which emphasize on among other issues the institutionalisation of result-oriented management and meritocratic principles in the public service (Chidwala, 2013). In this regard, it was envisaged by the Malawi Government that implementation of the PMS would enable, for example, the local authorities to align their activities with the objectives of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development which in turn would assist in delivering outcomes of the Malawi Government as provided for in the MGDS I, II & III .

There have been studies and or reviews conducted focusing on assessment of implementation of the PMS in the public service. Findings obtained from different studies, reviews and or reports have shown variations across countries on the realities of PMS implementation in the public service. According to the Commonwealth Secretariat Report (2010:85-86), Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries such as Australia, Finland, New Zealand, United

Kingdom and United States of America adopted PM reforms differently within the period 1980s and 2000s and such countries hold leadership in successful introduction of PM reforms. The same report shows that most Commonwealth African countries including Malawi had a lot of obstacles to overcome in the implementation of performance management in the public service. As such, these countries had made little and or no progress in PMS implementation. It was also pointed out in the report that many public services did not have appropriate mechanisms in place to identify, utilise and reward top performers. Further, the report revealed that Commonwealth African countries which had made the most progress in performance management were Botswana, South Africa, Uganda, Ghana and Tanzania (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2010: 92-93). Some of the lessons learnt from countries that had made most progress in the implementation of strategic performance management in the public service included political will and leadership commitment, enforcement of rewards and sanctions, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms as being key in the successful implementation of PM in the public service. The need for an effective PMS was also identified as critical by all member states of the African Union during the development of the Customer Service Charter on Values and Principles of Public Service and Administration (African Union Commission, 2011). Zvavahera (2013) evaluated the effectiveness of PMS on service delivery in the Zimbabwean Civil Service and found that PMS was fraught with challenges due to its complexity and non-adherence to its tenets by the employer

In Malawi, studies and or reviews have also been conducted on performance management system. A study by Nachamba-Kuchande (2008) on open staff performance appraisal systems for nurses found that Government had designed an

excellent PMS and that efforts were underway to introduce the system in all ministries and departments. In addition, the study revealed that some form of open performance appraisal systems were implemented by some nurse managers on a formal or informal basis. Another study by Chidwala in 2013 found that implementation of PM Policy in the Malawi Civil Service was hindered by such factors as complexity of the public service, absence of follow ups and management support, lack of consultations and motivation factors. Kalowamfumbi (2013) found that PMS was not effectively implemented in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology due to varying challenges which were specific to the Ministry such as inadequate sensitization and training on PMS, structural arrangements in the Ministry, and numerous vacant positions. A report of the Malawi Public Service Reforms Commission (2015: xxi) observes that “ ... there is laxity in the delivery of public services due to lack of a robust result-oriented Performance Management System linked to agreed individual work plans that are closely aligned to organisational performance targets...”.

While it was generally said that the process of adopting and introducing the PMS in local authorities was considered to have greater impact on the overall government service delivery, focus on monitoring, evaluating and even reviewing the implementation of PMS in local authorities was not much. However, where studies or reviews had been conducted on implementation of PMS in LAs, results showed that implementation of PMS indeed faced challenges in LAs.

There were concerns from the general public in Malawi of the low quality of public service delivery in the public sector that includes LAs (Muthethe, 2015). Furthermore, monitoring, review and or evaluation of the implementation status of PMS in councils

had not been much in Malawi. No research had been conducted in Malawi specifically focussing on analysis of PMS in councils in Malawi. As a result, not much was known about the realities of implementation of PMS in councils in Malawi. There is little and or no information about the effectiveness of PMS implementation in LAs. This is a concern since LAs form a significant portion of the public service in Malawi. Information on delivery of PMS in LAs is relevant to inform policy makers on decision making.

1.3 Problem Statement

The Malawi Government conducted various activities after it launched the PM Policy and introduced a PMS in 2008. One of the main activities, with support from Local Development Fund and other donors, was the installation of the system in the LAs and this comprised of training leadership of LAs on PMS between March and June 2008; facilitation of development of LAs Strategic Plans; and development of Annual Work Plans. LAs were also expected by the Malawi Government through the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and the Department of Public Service Management (DPSM) to measure their performance and review their progress quarterly in order to effectively manage their strategic plans. Furthermore, LAs were expected to cascade the PMS philosophy and principles down to the lowest levels of employees after developing their strategic plans and annual performance plans to enable the local authorities' employees to understand, appreciate and support the PMS initiatives. In addition, the Malawi government planned for dissemination of key and relevant PMS documents to the LAs like the Performance Management Policy and Procedures Handbook; Rewards and Sanctions Guidelines on Performance Management; Dispute Resolution Guidelines on Performance Management;

Performance Agreement Forms; Work Plan/Performance Factors Form and Circulars reminding LAs on conducting Annual Performance Appraisals. The basic understanding by the Malawi Government was that the PMS should be conducted in line with these documents and the strategic plans.

Following government's initiative to install PMS in councils in Malawi, the researcher was concerned that there were still great concerns from the general public in Malawi regarding the performance of the public service that includes LAs in Malawi. These concerns hinged on low quality of public services delivery; deterioration of discipline ; deterioration of work ethics; proliferation of fraud and corruption; negative attitudes of people towards public services; and questionable public servants' behaviours (Muthethe, 2015). As such, questions regarding status of implementation of PMS in LAs in Malawi arose in the mind of the researcher.

Much had been written about PMS. Furthermore, there had been studies and or reviews to assess or analyse and or evaluate the implementation of the PMS in the public service. However, few and or no studies had been conducted to specifically analyse PMS in LAs. In addition, where studies or reviews had been conducted on implementation of PMS in LAs, results showed that implementation of PMS indeed faced challenges.

In Malawi, PM is provided for in the Malawi Public Service Regulations, Malawi Public Service Act (1994), Malawi Public Service Charter (2012), the Malawi Public Service Code of Conduct and Ethics (2012) and in Malawi Government Circular Letters. The works of Nachamba-Kuchande (2008), Commonwealth Secretariat

(2010), Chidwala (2013), Kalowamfumbi (2013), Nkunika et al. (2013) and the Malawi Public Service Reforms Commission (2015) and others as earlier mentioned provide some picture on the status of PMS implementation in the public service in Malawi. The experiences from these studies and or reviews may be true for local authorities in Malawi. However, no study had been conducted to analyse effectiveness of implementation of PMS in the delivery of public services in LAs in Malawi. As a result, there was no empirical evidence to show how PMS was being implemented in LAs in Malawi. In the absence of such analysis focussing on the implementation of PMS in LAs in Malawi, not much was known about the implementation of PMS in LAs in Malawi. Furthermore, it was not possible to appropriately determine whether the implementation of PMS in councils in Malawi was indeed on course or not. This presented a research gap and the researcher, therefore, saw it necessary to conduct a study on analysis of the effectiveness of PMS in the delivery of public services in LAs in Malawi in order to establish a case for LAs.

In order to fill the gap and provide insights on the analysis of PMS in councils in Malawi, the study sought to understand how effective PMS was in the delivery of public services in the LAs. In order to do that, the study sought to understand the realities of PMS implementation in relation to implementation status; employee perceptions towards PMS; major challenges to smooth implementation of PMS; and suggestions on ensuring improvement in the implementation of the PMS. The aim was to develop a common understanding for the researcher on how PMS was undertaken and the elements that were central to the implementation of PMS in LAs in Malawi.

1.4 Research Questions

1.4.1 Main Question

How effective is the PMS in the delivery of public services in LAs in Malawi?

1.4.2 Specific Questions

In addition to the main question, the study also sought to respond to the following specific questions:

- i. How is PMS implemented at the local authority level in Malawi?
- ii. What are the perceptions of the local authority employees on PMS in Malawi?
- iii. What are the major challenges in the implementation of PMS at the local authority level in Malawi?
- iv. What should be done to ensure effective implementation of the PMS at the local authority level in Malawi?

1.5 Research Objectives

1.5.1 Main Objective

The main objective was to analyse the effectiveness of PMS in the delivery of public services at local authority level in Malawi.

1.5.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were the following:

- i. To explore the status of implementation of the PMS in councils in Malawi in relation to efficiency, effectiveness, productivity and accountability of councils.

- ii. To assess council employees' perceptions towards the PMS in councils in Malawi.
- iii. To ascertain major challenges that are hindering the effective implementation of the PMS in councils in Malawi.
- iv. To discuss suggestions on ensuring improvement in the effective implementation of the PMS in councils in Malawi.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The Malawi Government adopted PMS as a public sector reform in an effort to improve performance, efficiency, accountability and effectiveness of public service. Hence, the study analysed the effectiveness of PMS in the delivery of public services in LAs in Malawi because PMS is an important aspect of improving performance of any organisation including LAs.

While the Malawi Government adopted the PMS in the civil service and LAs in 2008, not much is known about its implementation status especially in LAs in Malawi. This study, therefore, is of significance because it will provide an analysis and understanding of the realities of implementation of the PMS in LAs in Malawi. Furthermore, the study will contribute to the search for more understanding of the main objective of the PMS in LAs in Malawi. To some extent, the study would also be like a pioneer study on analysis of the effectiveness of the PMS in the delivery of public services in the LAs in Malawi.

In addition, this study will also be a contribution towards the knowledge body on PMS in LAs in Malawi by providing an understanding and additional views on the

implementation of the PMS in LAs. It is again in the expectation of the researcher that the study will provide insight on appropriate strategies on how to overcome factors that hinder the effective implementation of the PMS in LAs in Malawi. The study is also significant on the basis that it will generate recommendations for which employees of LAs would find a way in which PMS will be properly implemented to make it a tool for enhancing performance.

Within Africa, the study will also be significant because few studies have been conducted on analysis of PMS in LAs in Malawi. Hence, it will add to the existing body of knowledge on the same. At International level, the study will again contribute to the existing body of knowledge on analysis of the effectiveness of the PMS in the delivery of public services in LAs.

1.7 Summary

This chapter has presented introduction to the study, background, problem statement, research questions, research objectives, and significance of the study. The next chapter presents literature review.

1.8 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis report is organised in five main chapters and the next chapters proceed as follows:

Chapter Two will present and discuss literature review. The chapter provides the study with a theoretical and conceptual framework to create a deeper understanding of the theoretical and conceptual dimensions within which Performance Management is

discussed. Three main theories of PM; expectancy theory, goal setting theory and equity theory and other concepts underlying this study are discussed.

Chapter Three presents and explains the research methodology and methods used to help respond to the research question. It describes the research design and data collection tools used and explains reasons for choice of the tool.

Chapter Four presents and discusses research findings. The findings and discussions are based on the data collected to address the research question.

Chapter Five presents a summary of findings and makes some conclusions and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a review of literature on PM which has been used in this study. In this regard, the chapter provides the study with a theoretical and conceptual framework to create a deeper understanding of the theoretical and conceptual dimensions within which PM is discussed. Three main theories of PM; expectancy theory, goal setting theory and equity theory and concepts underlying this study are discussed. The discussion further includes definitions of the concepts of PM and PMS; differences between traditional performance management and performance management; principles of PM; characteristics of an effective PMS; and benefits of PMS. Furthermore, the chapter presents realities of PMS implementation in relation to employee perceptions towards PMS; challenges in PMS implementation; and what should be done to enhance effective PMS implementation. Finally, the chapter presents the conceptual framework of PMS.

The analysis of the three theories and the concepts intends to provide a general framework for understanding and analysing the results of the research.

2.2 Definition of some key terms

The terms that have been defined below keep appearing in the study.

2.2.1 Performance Management (PM)

There are different definitions of performance management by different scholars. However, all the definitions provide similar principles which promote efficiency and effectiveness in the workplace. Performance management (PM) is defined as a strategic and integrated process that delivers sustained success to organisations by improving the performance of the people who work in them and by developing the capabilities of individual contributors and teams (Armstrong, 2000: 1). It is a means through which employees' performance can be improved by ensuring appropriate recognition and reward for their efforts, and by improving communication, learning and working arrangements. According to Anguinis (2005: 1), performance management is a continuous process of identifying, measuring and developing performance in organisations by linking each individual's performance and objectives to the organisation's overall mission and goals. Furthermore, PM refers to activities, tools, processes and programs that organisations create or apply to manage performance of individual employees, teams, departments and other organisational units within their organisational influence. Roberts (2001), cited in Alam and Banerjea (2012 & 2013: 4), explains that PM involves setting of corporate, departmental, team and individual objectives, performance appraisal system, appropriate reward strategies and schemes, training and development strategies and plans, feedback, communication and coaching, individual career planning, mechanisms for monitoring the effectiveness of PMS and interventions and even culture management. In this regard, PM involves day today management as well as

the support and development of the people in the organisation. Dzimbiri (2015: 158) adds that PM is concerned with managing the organisation, all aspects of the employee performance and development. It is also a mechanism for communication and involvement.

2.2.2 Performance Management System (PMS)

Kloot and Martin (2000), cited in Broadbent and Laughlin (2006: 3), highlight that PMS often “refer to individual performance management or appraisal schemes.” PMS are concerned with the management of “results” (outcomes or ends to achieve) and the nature and functioning of the “determinants” of these results (the means used to achieve these results) at a more organisational, rather than individual, level (Fitzgerald et al, 1991; Fitzgerald and Moon, 1996; Otley, 1999; and Ferreira and Otley, 2005, cited in Broadbent and Laughlin, 2006: 3). Fletcher (1993), cited in Alam and Banerjea (2012 & 2013: 3), defined PMS as it being “associated with an approach to creating a shared vision of the purpose and aims of the organisation, helping each employee understand and recognise their part in contributing to them, and, in so doing, manage and enhance the performance of both individuals and the organisation”. PMS is an integrated system of linking organisational objectives or goals with the key result areas (KRAs) of managers. It strives to create a customer-serving, motivated, accountable, reliable, creative, dedicated, and happy workforce through a shared understanding of what and how is to be achieved. The goal of PMS is to help boost employee performance and, ultimately, the productivity of the organisation.

From the definitions and explanations above, it can also be said that PMS is a method used by managers to enable them successfully manage performance in respect of organisational corporate plans and individual personal performance plans. The purpose is to ensure successful delivery of organisational vision and priorities.

2.3 Theoretical Framework of Performance Management

There are many modern theories that are related to performance management. These include Equity Theory, Expectancy Theory, Cognitive Evaluation Theory, Goal Setting Theory, Control Theory, and Social Cognitive Theory (Donovan, 2001, cited in Ugaddan, 2013: 3). Each of the theories provide theoretical base for performance management.

However, in this study, the researcher focused on the following three theories of Performance Management: Expectancy Theory; Goal Setting Theory and Equity Theory. These theories have been selected because, according to the researcher, they provide more insights and explanations on how performance management works. Furthermore, they look into the individual's perspective to performance management. In addition, they are more concerned with how behaviour is initiated, directed and sustained (Dzimbiri, 2015: 80). In this regard, they are more useful for understanding the consequences of performance management practices on individual employees and can be utilised in the improvement of performance management.

2.3.1 Theories of Performance Management

- **Expectancy Theory**

This is one of the process theories that forms the theoretical base for performance management. It is rooted in the works of Vroom (1964) and Porter and Lawler (1968) as cited in Armstrong (2006:257-260, 2009:38). The theory states that motivation and performance are influenced by the perceived link between effort and performance; the perceived link between performance and outcomes; and the significance of the outcomes to the persons. Effort (motivation) depends on the likelihood that rewards will follow effort and that the reward is worthwhile. In this regard, it is based on the assumption that individuals adjust their behaviours in an organisation on the basis of anticipated satisfaction of valued goals set by them (Salaman, Storey and Billsberry, 2005, cited in Agarwal, 2011). This is a key theory on performance management because it informs approaches to rewards. The theory in this regard, provides that there must be a link between effort and reward, the reward should be achievable and should be worthwhile (Armstrong, 2006:257, 2009: 38; Torrington, Hall and Taylor, 2008: 263, 298; Dzimbiri, 2015: 81-82).

According to Mullins (2005), cited in Dzimbiri (2015: 83), expectancy theory has implications for managers. Among the implications include the following: use rewards appropriately in terms of individual performance and outcomes of high valence should be used as an incentive for improved performance; attempt to establish clear relationship between effort, performance and reward as perceived by the individual; establish clear procedures for evaluation of individual levels of performance; pay attention to intervening variables such as abilities and traits, role perceptions, organisational procedures, and support facilities, which although are not

necessarily direct motivational factors, may still affect performance; and minimise undesirable outcomes which may be perceived to result from a high level of performance, such as industrial accidents or satisfaction from co-workers.

The implications on expectancy theory are relevant to this study because under performance management, managers are expected to provide rewards or recognition for good performance and sanctions for poor performance. In addition, managers are expected to set clear procedures for evaluation of individual levels of performance. However, there is no empirical evidence in councils in Malawi on the status of rewards or recognition and sanctions as well as clear procedures for evaluation of individual levels of performance related to performance management since no research has been conducted on the analysis of the effectiveness of PMS in the delivery of public services in local authorities in Malawi.

- **Goal Setting Theory**

It is rooted in the works of Latham and Locke (1979) as cited in Armstrong (2006: 257, 261) and it is another process theory that forms the theoretical base for performance management. The theory states that motivation and performance will improve if people have difficult but agreed goals and receive feedback (Armstrong, 2006: 257; Torrington et al., 2008: 298). It is based on the idea that one's purpose determines one's behaviour. In this regard, the assumption is that when people set their own goals, targets and standards with the help of their supervisors, they become more committed and motivated to take total ownership in achieving the goals (Dzimbiri, 2015: 83). Goal Setting Theory was found to be exceptionally reliable,

valid, and useful across diverse work situations (Locke et al., 1981, cited in Ugaddan, 2013: 3).

The implication of this theory on performance management is that it provides the rationale for performance management processes, goal and feedback. In addition, it answers the question about the existence of performance standards in employee performance management. Furthermore, it provides foundation for assessing feedback elements of performance management. The theory also makes a solid case for the use of difficult and specific goals to create the strong situations necessary for substantial achievement (Locke and Latham, 2002, cited in Ugaddan, 2013: 4). According to Ugaddan (2013: 4), Locke and Latham (2002) pointed out that performer's participation heightens the importance of the goal, thereby strengthening goal commitment. Goal setting theory appears to be more useful for understanding the consequences of performance management practices on individual employees. As such, it can better be utilised to improve performance management.

The implications on Goal Setting Theory are relevant to this study because under performance management, managers and subordinates are expected to jointly set and agree on individual performance goals and targets like expected outcomes and standards as well as transparent and objective criteria for measuring and communicating performance results and actual accomplishments. Furthermore, supervisors and subordinates are expected to discuss individual's performance against agreed upon work plans, goals and targets and provide feedback. However, the researcher has no empirical evidence on the status on this in local authorities in Malawi since no research has been conducted to analyse the effectiveness of PMS in the delivery of public services in local authorities in Malawi.

- **Equity Theory**

Equity theory, which is rooted in the works of Adams (1965) as cited in Armstrong (2006:257, 261-262) , is concerned with the perceptions people have about how they are being treated compared with others. It states that people will be better motivated if they are treated equitably and demotivated if they are treated inequitably. Equity is in two forms: fairness and procedural equity.

The implication of this theory is that there is need to develop equitable reward and employment practices. Other factors that need to be taken into account from this theory include the following: adequate considerations of an employee's viewpoint; suppression of personal bias towards the employee; applying criteria consistently across employees; providing early feedback to employees concerning the outcome of decisions; and providing employees with an adequate explanation of the decision made.

Kreitner et al. (in Mullins, 2005), cited in Dzimbiri (2015: 86), also suggest practical implications of Equity Theory. Firstly, the theory provides managers with another explanation of how beliefs and attitudes affect job performance. Furthermore, it emphasises on the need for managers to pay attention to employees' perceptions of what is fair and equitable. In addition, it provides that managers benefit by allowing employees to participate in making decisions about important work outcomes. Other implications included are that employees should be given an opportunity to appeal against decisions that affect their welfare and employees are more likely to accept and support organisational changes when they believe it is implemented fairly.

The implications of equity theory are relevant to this study because under performance management, local authorities' managers are expected to pay attention to their employees' perceptions towards what is regarded as fair, equitable and consistency in performance management. However, there is no empirical evidence in Malawi on the employees' perceptions towards performance management in local authorities in Malawi as no study has been conducted to analyse the effectiveness of PMS in the delivery of public services in local authorities in Malawi.

2.4 Differences between Traditional Performance Appraisal and Performance

Management

While the researcher's area of focus is on performance management, it is important to explain the differences between traditional performance appraisal and performance management. The idea is to provide an understanding of how wide and comprehensive performance management is.

Traditional Public Administration approach did not pay much attention to measurement of performance. As such, employees were appraised confidentially, without set and agreed work plans, goals and targets. In addition, supervisors were not obligated to discuss performance outcomes with supervisees and the approach provided no opportunity to address identified performance weaknesses or gaps and or to improve on established strengths. As a result, supervisors acted as judges. There was also lack of interaction between supervisors and supervisees. The approach was backward-looking as it concentrated on what had gone wrong. Furthermore, performance appraisal in traditional public administration laid much emphasis on behavioural or personality characteristics like loyalty, dependability, punctuality and

honesty as central attributes for evaluation of an individual employee. The approach also existed in isolation as there was little and or lack of linking individual performance to departmental, divisional and organisational strategic goals and objectives. Finally, there was lack of accountability for reward for good performance and sanctions for poor performance.

On the other hand, New Public Management pays much attention to performance management. In performance management, employees are appraised openly, with set and agreed work plans, goals and targets. In addition, supervisors discuss individual's performance against agreed upon work plans, goals and targets and this provides an opportunity for improvement. Performance management is also forward looking into the future development needs. Furthermore, supervisors provide feedback to improve supervisee's work performance and they act as mentors or coaches to supervisees. In addition, performance management enhances accountability as it outlines rewards for good performance and sanctions for poor performance.

Performance management is an important aspect of improving performance of any organisation including local authorities. It is aimed at improving service delivery through effective and efficient application of resources. Many countries including Malawi have adopted and embraced performance management in order to enhance delivery of services to the public. The Malawi Civil Service views Performance Management as a structured but flexible approach to improving the performance of employees, sectors, divisions or departments and the organisation as a whole. At an individual level, performance management is basically a participatory process

between employees and their supervisors that links the individual's work plan and performance to the overall Ministry/Department Strategic Plan (DPSM, 2008:6).

2.5 Principles of Performance Management System

Performance Management System is concerned with managing the organisation, everyone in the business, performance improvement, employee development, stakeholder satisfaction and communication and involvement (Armstrong, 2009: 62). It is based on the principle of management by contract and not command (Dzimhiri, 2008:47). Performance Management System emphasizes on development and initiation of self-managed learning process plans as well as the integration of individual and corporate objectives. It is a continuous and flexible process that involves managers and their subordinates within a framework that sets out how they can best work to achieve the results; it focuses on future performance planning and improvement rather than retrospective performance appraisal ; provides a basis for regular and frequent dialogues between managers and subordinates and or teams on performance and development needs; relies on performance reviews to make decisions on performance related pay, as well as individual or team development plans; a process for measuring outputs in the form of delivered performance compared to expectations expressed as objective, targets, standards, and performance indicators. Performance management system also links organisational vision, mission, values and strategic goals to divisional, departmental and individual goals, objectives, tasks and targets (Henekom et al., 1987; Armstrong, 2003; Hughes, 2003 as cited in Dzimhiri, 2008: 47; Bevan and Thomson (1991) and Fletcher and Williams (1992) as cited in Armstrong, 2000: 14-15).

2.6 Characteristics of an effective Performance Management System

This section discusses a set of some characteristics that will likely allow PMS to be successful. One of the characteristics of an effective PMS is that it must focus on individual contribution. Individual goals must be aligned with unit and organisational goals (Anguinis, 2005: 16). In this regard, it focuses on how individual employees will benefit and play their part in the performance management process. In addition, it focuses on individual skills, competencies, strengths and weaknesses and involves performance development to improve future performance. Warren (1972), cited in Armstrong (2009: 21), also defined the feature that a large group of employees must have the technical knowledge and skills to carry out the task. As such, both managers and subordinates being appraised must be trained in order to understand the process, their roles and the skills and behaviours important to the process.

The second characteristic of an effective PMS is that it must be fair. According to Rollins (2015), those being managed and evaluated must believe that it is fair. In this regard, employees must be evaluated against clearly stated goals and objectives that were agreed upon between employees and their supervisors at the beginning of the performance term. Fletcher and Williams (1992), cited in Armstrong (2000: 15), suggested that PMS should apply to all staff, not just part of managerial group for it to be effective. Furthermore, Rollins (2015) pointed out that everyone must be subjected to the evaluation process regardless of how high they have climbed on the corporate ladder. As such, everyone must be evaluated on a level playing field. Thus, evaluations must be based on the same values and principles. Anguinis (2005: 18) says that performance must be evaluated consistently across people and time and to achieve this goal, on-going training of individuals in charge of appraisals is a must.

The third characteristic of an effective PMS is that it must be on-going. An effective PMS includes regular and on-going communication between the superior and the subordinate. Lawler as reported by Risher (2005), cited in Armstrong (2009: 76), says that one of the 'best practices' in performance management is that employees should receive regular feedback on results and their performance throughout the year. In addition, Warren (1972) as cited in Armstrong (2009: 21), produced a perspective that workers must be told in clear terms without threats, how they are doing in terms of expectations. In this regard, the employee must be given open and honest feedback about any issues throughout the process. This assists during annual reviews as issues which are presented are not new. Appraisal meetings consists of a two-way communication process where information is exchanged and not just delivered from the superior to the employees (Anguinis, 2005: 17).

The fourth characteristic is that it is owned and driven by line managers and not by Human Resource Department (Fletcher and Williams, 1972, cited in Armstrong, 2000: 15). Lawler as reported by Risher (2005), cited in Armstrong (2009: 76), says that the way line managers handle performance management is a key to system effectiveness; they need to take control. The fifth characteristic is that top leadership and management of organisations must demonstrate commitment and ownership of the PMS. Top leadership and management commitment and ownership of the PMS sets the pace for PMS to move.

The sixth characteristic of an effective PMS is that it must be carefully documented. It is important that organisations document every employee performance issue. For general performance management, documentation should include the goals and

objectives for each employee for the performance term (Rollins, 2015). In case of performance issue, documentation should include detailed overviews of the problem, expected level of performance and course of action being taken to generate desired results and should be signed by both the supervisor and employee. This documentation acts as reference during official annual reviews. Furthermore, careful documentation saves organisations from wrongful termination litigations.

2.7 Benefits of Performance Management System

There are many benefits of performance management system. Firstly, it is useful in developing capabilities of teams and individuals. In this regard, performance management information can be used to identify performance gaps or weaknesses and institute relevant trainings for staff. Furthermore, it can serve as a valuable input into skills inventories and human resource planning. Secondly, it is a tool for helping management and staff to plan, measure and reward for performance. For example, it can help to determine who should be rewarded for good performance and who should be sanctioned for poor performance. Thirdly, performance management strengthens focus on results and helps management to link an individual's performance to that of the organisation and provides basis for regular feedback. Fourthly, performance management system provides legally defensible reasons for making decisions on areas that include promotions, transfers, postings, rewards and discharges (Dzimbiri, 2015: 163; Nkunika et al., 2013: 6).

2.8 Realities of Performance Management

2.8.1 Perceptions towards Performance Management System

There are many perceptions towards performance management. These have implications on the formulation, adoption, implementation and monitoring of performance management. DeNisi and Pritchard (2006, cited in Zvavahera, 2013: 3) affirm with confidence that attitudes towards performance management affect performance of employees in organisations.

Firstly, some definitions of performance management have a negative connotation among the performers. For example, Warren (1982, cited in Ugaddan, 2013:2) defines performance management as a management's systematic application of processes aimed at optimising performance in an organisation. In this definition, emphasis on 'process' as observed by Ugaddan (2013: 2) somewhat carries a negative connotation in the employees' perception. In this regard, PM is viewed as 'something done to people'. It is perceived as being imposed on managers as something special they have to do. Thus, it is implied as if performance management is done to subordinates and this does not reflect well in terms of subordinates' commitment to performance management.

Secondly, performance management has a top-down orientation. Weiss and Hartle (1997, cited in Ugaddan, 2013: 2) define performance management as a process for establishing a shared understanding about what is to be achieved, and how it is to be achieved, and an approach to managing people that increases the probability of achieving successes. In this definition, according to Ugaddan (2013: 2), subordinates and their immediate supervisors tend to think that performance management is in

incompliance of something that is required or forced. The implication of this kind of thinking, according to Coens and Jenkins (2000) as cited in Ugaddan (2013: 2), is that employees do not look at performance management as helpful or valued element of their job and this affects formulation, adoption and implementation of performance management.

Thirdly, some employees have a negative attitude towards performance management. Buchner (2007), cited in Zvavahera (2013: 3), found that most employees have a negative feeling about performance management system. In addition, Matiza (2001) as cited in Zvavahera (2013: 3) also found that performance appraisal is viewed with mixed feelings in Zimbabwe, the majority of them negative. Such employees feel that the system manipulates them without rewarding their efforts. Thus, they do not feel satisfied with the level of recognition they are provided or feel valued. This affects employees' commitment to and ownership of the performance management which in turn affects their performance in the organisation.

Fourthly, some employees are enthusiastic and have a positive attitude towards performance management system. Such employees view performance management as being more transparent and provides room for continuous improvement due to the one-on-one interaction between supervisors and supervisees. Nkunika et al (2013) conducted a review of the project: Building Capacity to Open-up the Staff Appraisal in Malawi: Moving from a Confidential to an Open Performance Management System in the Public Sector. They made an assessment of the pilot phase (2012/2013) of a five-year program on performance management system in the Ministry of Health in three districts in Malawi supported by Systems Support Development Initiatives

(SSDI) namely Karonga, Chikwawa and Machinga. From the findings, they concluded that the Ministry of Health staff had demonstrated enthusiasm towards the PMS due to the one-on-one interaction between supervisors and supervisees; and the individual work plans that provided clear performance indicators agreed upon with their supervisors. In addition, a study by Mtoo (2013) on challenges of administering open performance review and appraisal system in Lushoto District council in Tanzania concluded that employees viewed open performance review and appraisal system as a good system and that it needs improvements to meet expected goals.

Finally, some employees feel that performance management is additional work on them. As a result, they are not committed to the process. It should be mentioned, therefore, that positive attitudes towards performance management can enhance formulation, adoption and implementation of the performance management system while negative attitudes can slow down progress in the implementation of performance management.

2.8.2 Challenges in the implementation of performance management

There are many challenges experienced in the course of implementation of performance management. One of the challenges in the implementation of performance management is that performance management system itself is complex. In this regard, performance management as a continuous self-renewing cycle involves a lot of processes and stages and this poses a challenge in terms of time, finances and skills and knowledge required to ensure that the processes are effectively completed. Due to its complexity, performance management may not be effectively implemented. A study by Zvavahera (2013) on evaluation of effectiveness of performance

management system on service delivery in the Zimbabwean Civil Service found that the performance management system was fraught with challenges due to its complexity. Thus, it was found that the system was complex to understand and implement and that it was time consuming to administer. In addition, it was found that the system was not understood by most employees even after having received training.

Another challenge in the implementation of performance management is lack of clarity of purpose of performance management. Performance management in this case is a victim of its own expectations in that it is expected to deliver on many areas (Employment Studies Institute IRS, 2001, as cited in Torrington et al 2008: 296). For example, performance management may focus on development, identifying future potential, reward, identifying poor performers, or motivation. In the absence of clarity on the purpose of the performance management, it becomes difficult to effectively implement performance management.

The third challenge on performance management hinges on entrenched paradigms among some leaders which tend not to support the introduction of performance management system in public service. Such leaders feel that performance management system is just like any other policy on paper which is destined to fail and therefore they tend not to support its implementation. A Review Report of performance during the Botswana National Development Plan (NDP) 8 (1997-2002) as presented in Botswana National Development Plan (NDP) 9 (Chapter 19; p.366-388) on PMS reveals that one of the challenges in the implementation of performance management system in Botswana was entrenched paradigms among leaders. Such

leaders viewed PMS as another program destined to fail and that slowed down implementation of PMS in the Botswana National Development Plan 8.

The fourth challenge on performance management is lack of rewards and sanctions from the performance appraisal results. In this case, employees may expect advancement, promotions, bonuses and or pay rise tied to good performance. Such rewards and sanctions may be provided for in the PM Policy; Rewards and Sanctions Guidelines and or in rules and regulations related to performance management system. However, such provisions may not be effected by an organisation due to financial limitations and this may affect employee performance. Furthermore, in certain circumstances, there may be inconsistent performance whereby an employee may be having problems meeting performance expectations and objectives set out in the work plan. In this case, remedial sanctions and or termination may be employed to correct the poor performance. A study by Zvavahera (2013) on evaluation of effectiveness of performance management system on service delivery in the Zimbabwean Civil Service also found that performance related awards had not been effected since 2007 due to financial constraints and non-submission of employees' final ratings to the Civil Service Commission for payment purpose. Furthermore, it was found that few ministries which got performance related salary increases applied them arbitrarily and that advancements and promotions were not tied to performance.

Inadequate finances are another challenge in the implementation of performance management. Formulation, adoption, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of performance management system requires substantial amount of money. However, due to financial constraints, some activities and or all the activities in the performance

management system may not be conducted and this has implications on the performance of employees. A study by Mtoo (2013) on challenges of administering open performance review and appraisal system in Lushoto District Council in Tanzania found that one of the challenges encountered in the implementation of the system was setting unrealistic budgets. It was acknowledged that while financial resources were needed to support the organisational and employees' objectives, most managers failed to meet their expected outcomes due to insufficient available financial resources.

The sixth challenge on implementation of performance management is lack of and or inadequate training or orientations among employees on performance management system. This may arise from selective training with the expectation of the cascading training arrangement and or inadequate finances to orient all the staff on performance management. Chidwala (2013) found that one of the challenges of PM policy implementation in the Malawi Civil Service was lack of full knowledge on the importance of the performance management system. It was found that most civil servants were not aware of the PMS and this was among the factors that contributed to the non-application of the PM Policy in the Malawi Civil Service. Enhanced awareness and civic education among employees on performance management enhances understanding, commitment and ownership of the performance management system. Other challenges experienced in the implementation of the performance management system include lack of continuous performance feedback, unclear performance criteria or ineffective rating instrument, poor working relationship between the supervisor and the subordinates, and lack of appraisal skills and knowledge by the appraiser (Longenecker, 1991, cited in Torrington et al, 2008:297).

2.8.3 What should be done to enhance effectiveness of the Performance

Management System?

There are many suggestions for organisations that wish to enhance effective performance. Many scholars including Dzimbiri (2015) put forward some lessons to enhance effective performance. One of the suggestions to enhance effective performance management System is that there should be top management commitment. For any change to effectively take off, top management have to embrace that change and be committed to its formulation, adoption, implementation and monitoring and evaluation. Resistance and sabotage are natural, neutral and necessary for any change that is being introduced. However, what is important is simply how top management manages that resistance and sabotage. Hence, top management's commitment will likely deal with resistance and sabotage from other staff members in the implementation of the performance management. Chidwala (2013:57) says that for the PMS to succeed there is need for good management and leadership because these two set the pace and make things move. He further says that in the absence of the two, it is unlikely that resources would be readily available.

Secondly, training and orientation of staff on performance management system is key to its effective implementation. This training or orientation enhances understanding of the performance management system and how it will be managed. There is need for both training of trainers as well as cohort training or orientation through workshops and meetings to ensure that many members of staff are made aware of the performance management system and appreciate it. Nkunika et al (2013) conducted a review of the project: Building Capacity to Open-up the Staff Appraisal in Malawi: Moving from a Confidential to an Open Performance Management System in the

Public Sector. Among the findings of the assessment were that structure and content of initial training of trainers was inadequate and that training materials were not cascaded in some districts. Recommendations in the review included cohort training or orientation instead of relying on training cascade. Hence, there is need to enhance communication, awareness and briefings to ensure that members understand and own the change. People become committed to a change and own it if they know what that change entails. Zvavahera (2013) who conducted a study on evaluation of performance management system in the Zimbabwean Civil Service also recommended that employees needed to be thoroughly trained on performance management system.

Thirdly, involvement and participation of various key and relevant stakeholders at various levels or stages of the change including in the formulation, adoption, implementation and evaluation of performance management system is important if the performance management system is to be effective. This is important because such key and relevant stakeholders may have concerns and or issues to be addressed before, during and even after the change. In this regard, the concerns are clarified and addressed through their involvement and participation. This in turn enhances understanding and ownership of the performance management system and may also reduce resistance and sabotage.

Fourthly, availability and utilisation of the detailed performance management system guidelines is also key to the initiation and sustained and successful implementation of the performance management system. The guidelines should clearly detail the performance management system process and performance management system

measurement for different types of groups of employees in the organization; for example, management, professionals, support staff and daily paid staff.

2.9 Conceptual Framework of Performance Management System

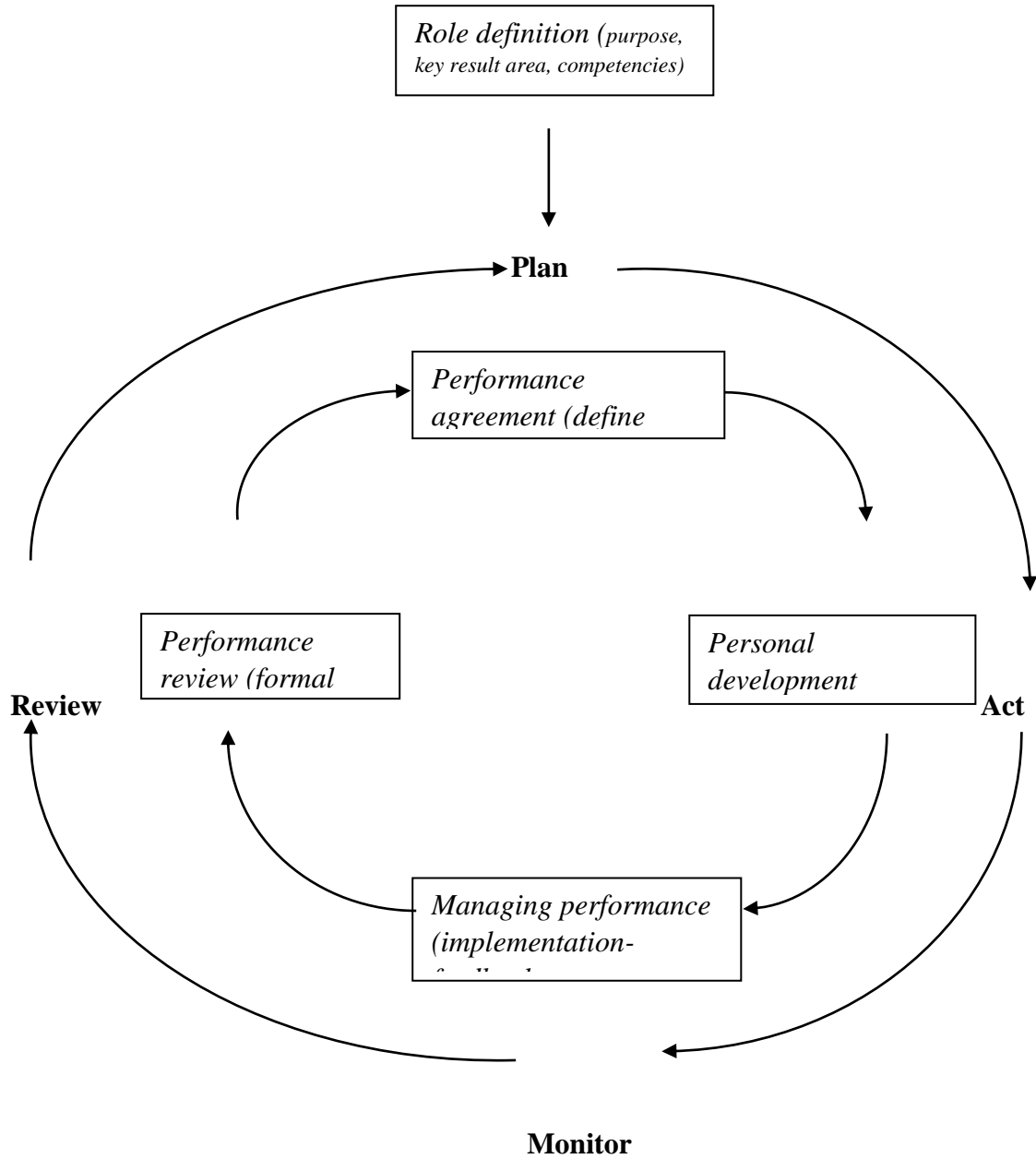
A conceptual framework is defined as a visual or written product, one that explains either graphically or in a narrative form the things to be studied - factors, concepts or variables and the presumed relationships among them (Miles and Huberman, 2014:20). Its primary objective is to convey the fundamental principles and basic functionality of the system which it represents. A Performance Management System conceptual framework provides features or guiding principles for general application in organisations. Thus, it informs our understanding on deciding the approach to be adapted and provides guidance to managers, individuals and teams on performance activities to be carried out in performance management. According to Hallow Council Performance Management Framework (2013: 3), all organisations that want to deliver their services consistently and to a high standard should have a robust performance management framework.

According to Agarwal (2011: 1), there is no universally accepted model or framework of performance management. As such, various experts have explained performance management concept in their own ways. Mabey et al. (1999, cited in Agarwal 2011:1) have prescribed the model or framework of Performance Management System in the form of a performance management cycle with five elements which suggest how performance management system should be implemented in an organisation. The elements of performance management cycle in this regard include setting objectives, measuring the performance, feedback of performance results, reward system based on

performance outcomes, and amendments to objectives and activities. It should be mentioned that a conceptual framework is not just a collection of concepts but rather a construct in which each concept plays an integral role. Rather than offering a theoretical explanation, a conceptual framework provides understanding.

Having explained the concept of performance management as well as the three theories of performance management, the researcher adopts a conceptual framework/model presented by Armstrong (2000: 17) who describes performance management as a continuous self-renewing cycle as illustrated in Figure 1 below. This is the case because the continuous self-renewing performance management system cycle reflects what is advocated in the three theories about performance management. Furthermore, the cycle explains what PMS is all about.

Conceptual Framework for PMS (Armstrong, 2000:17).



Source: Armstrong (2000:17)

Figure 1: The Performance Management Cycle.

As illustrated in Figure 1 above, Armstrong (2000: 17) describes performance management as a continuous self-renewing cycle with five elements.

One of the elements reflected in the performance cycle in this regard is role definition. During this activity, key results areas and capability or competence requirements to do the job are jointly agreed between the supervisor and the subordinates. The second element is performance agreement. The supervisor and subordinate collaboratively define, develop and or review expectations which include performance objectives to be achieved, performance measures and capabilities required to deliver results. Furthermore, individual development goals are also updated at this stage. All these form part of the performance planning stage. The third element is personal development plan. The supervisor and subordinate develop a personal development plan. This entails actions employees will take to increase knowledge, skills and capabilities to improve performance and this is known as performance development stage. The fourth element is managing performance throughout the year. This entails implementation of performance agreement and personal development plan; continuous feedback process; informal reviews; updating objectives and dealing with problems. This ensures employees achieve results through coaching, mutual feedback and counselling. The last element is performance review. This is the formal evaluation of performance over a period and it entails achievements, progress and problems. It forms the basis for a revised performance management agreement and personal development plan and it may lead to performance rating.

2.10 Summary

This chapter has presented a review of literature on PM which has been used in this study. It has presented a theoretical and conceptual framework to create a deeper understanding of the theoretical and conceptual dimensions within which PM is discussed. Three main theories of PM; expectancy theory, goal setting theory and

equity theory and concepts underlying this study have been presented and discussed in order to provide a general framework for understanding and analysing the results of the research. Other areas presented and discussed in the chapter include definitions of the concepts of PM and PMS; differences between traditional performance management and performance management; principles of PM; characteristics of an effective PMS; and benefits of PMS. Furthermore, the chapter has presented and discussed realities of PMS implementation in relation to employee perceptions towards PMS; challenges in PMS implementation; and what should be done to enhance effective PMS implementation. Finally, the chapter has presented and discussed the conceptual framework of PMS. The next chapter presents research methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and explains the research methodology and methods used to help respond to the research question. Methodology is the approach that a researcher uses to investigate a subject. According to Anderson (2013: 419), methodology refers to the theory of how research should be undertaken; the philosophical framework within which research is conducted; and the foundation upon which the research is based. Method refers to the particular techniques and procedures used to obtain or collect and analyse research data (Anderson, 2013: 419). Babbie (1995), as cited in Mtoo (2013: 35), argued that the methodological principles in the social sciences ensure that researchers are able to defend their findings, and are those guidelines that researchers agreed on, that they rely on to give them acceptable research practices. Methodological principles further enable researchers to attain knowledge by providing them with necessary techniques, tools and procedures.

The main aim of this chapter, therefore, is to describe how the research was conducted in order to derive accurate results. Areas of focus in this chapter include research design, study setting, sampling and sample size, data collection methods and tools, data analysis tools, data quality control, ethical challenges and consideration issues, and study limitations.

3.2 Research Design

Research design refers to the framework that guides decisions about the collection and analysis of data (Anderson, 2013: 421). Nishishiba, Jones and Kraner (2014: 352) define research design as the overarching strategy for how the various components of research are assembled to answer the research question. According to Kothari (2004: 31), research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to research purpose with economy in procedure. From the definitions, research design is a conceptual arrangement within which research is conducted; and it constitutes the plan for the collection, measurement and analysis of data.

The researcher largely used qualitative research methods. Qualitative research is defined as an inductive, subjective process of inquiry done in natural setting in order to build a complex, holistic picture described in words including the detailed views of the informants are reported in informal, personal language (Nishishiba et al., 2014; Anderson, 2013; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009; Pope and May, 1990). In this study, qualitative methods were largely employed both at data collection and data analysis. According to Kumar (2011), cited in Nishishiba et al. (2014:49), one of the factors that have to be taken into consideration when choosing a research design is that the selected design should match the purpose of the research. Thus, the design should allow the researcher to collect appropriate data that provides answers to the research question. Furthermore, the research design should fit the objective. In this regard, qualitative approach was largely applied in the study because not much is known about the status in the implementation of the PMS in LAs in Malawi. This is the case because introduction of PMS is a new concept in LAs in Malawi. As such, it

was in the understanding of the researcher that it was council employees themselves who could better provide a picture of the reality of implementation of PMS in the LAs in Malawi.

3.3 Study Setting

The researcher adopted a case study approach because this study was largely qualitative and due to flexibility in data collection available in the method. There are thirty five local authorities in Malawi. Largely, these local authorities are categorized into two distinct categories: urban (city, municipal and town councils) and district councils. In terms of management of human resources, the two distinct categories are different. According to Kothari (2004:113), one of the important characteristics of a case study method is that a researcher can take one single social unit or more of such units for study purposes. Hence, the researcher decided to take four councils for the study. In trying to draw the sample and minimize biases, the researcher considered an element of representativeness of the two categories so that both categories of councils were represented in the study. In addition, the researcher had inadequate funds and time to target all the thirty five LAs in Malawi. Hence, the researcher purposely selected and focused on four local authorities (2 city councils and 2 district councils) from which data was collected. The four LAs were identified on the basis that the leadership of those LAs was among those trained and oriented on PMS between March and June 2008. Furthermore, the four LAs were also identified on the basis of their performance on the Local Authority Performance Assessment (LAPA) between 2011 and 2013. Two of the councils performed well while the other two did not perform well. The LAs which were purposively selected were Blantyre City Council and Zomba District Council (performed well on the 2013 LAPA Report) and Mzuzu

City Council and Salima District Council (did not perform well on the 2013 LAPA Report). However, the researcher is cognisant of the fact that the purposely sampled councils were not representative enough as the researcher employed a case study approach and this will be taken care of when presenting results and making conclusions on the study in relation to generalizability of the results.

The study also employed triangulation by going beyond the sampled LAs and included the Department of Human Resource Management and Development (DHRM&D), the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLG&RD), Local Government Service Commission (LGSC) and Performance Enforcement Department (PED) under Office of the President and Cabinet (OPC).

3.4 Population

Population is defined as the complete set of people or entities that the researcher is interested in studying (Nishishiba et al., 2014: 351). In this study, the target population was the employees in the four selected local authorities namely; Blantyre and Mzuzu City Councils; and Salima and Zomba District Councils.

3.5 Sampling and Sample Size

3.5.1 Sampling

Anderson (2013: 225) defines sampling as a deliberate choice of a number of units of analysis to represent a greater population. According to Nishishiba et al. (2014: 75), sampling is a process of identifying people or entities for a research project. Since this study was largely qualitative, it employed Non-Probability Sampling Method to determine an appropriate sample. In this method, the researcher determined criteria

for identifying respondents and participants in the study. Under Non-Probability Sampling, the researcher adopted Purposive Sampling Method which involved choosing respondents and participants whose experience and perspectives were important to the study.

Under Purposive Sampling, the researcher again employed three methods to determine the sample namely: informant method whereby the researcher identified people (key informants) who had specialised and or unique knowledge and expertise in the issue under investigation. Secondly, the researcher considered the ‘sliced’ sample whereby respondents and participants were selected because they occupied different positions in the local authorities. Thirdly, the researcher also employed the ‘snowballing’ method. This method involved finding new people from whom to gather data on the recommendation of those already included within the sample who may not be willing or available to participate due to pressure of work or other engagements.

3.5.2 Sample

A sample is a subgroup or part of the larger population (Anderson, 2013: 422). According to Nishishiba et al. (2014: 353), a sample is a group of individuals or entities selected for study from a population. Using the methods described above on sampling, the research sample for this study was as presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Research sample for the study

Organisation	Position
Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development	Deputy Director of Human Resource Management
Department of Human Resource Management and Development	Assistant Director of Human Resource Management (Policy & Research)
Local Government Service Commission	Executive Secretary
Performance Enforcement Department under OPC	Chief Policy, Programs and Projects Assessment Officer
Local authorities	Chief Executive Officers/District Commissioners
Local authorities	Directors of Administration
Local authorities	Human resource personnel
Local authorities	Professional and technical officers (sector heads)
Local authorities	Clerical officers
Local authorities	at least one employee from each level of council hierarchy targeted and by performance management system

3.6 Data Collection Methods

Data collection is a process of preparing and collecting data used to gain information about a particular program or research project (Nishishiba et al., 2014: 344). Data collection is an important aspect of any research study. Thus, inaccurate data collection will impact the results of the study and ultimately lead to invalid results. Saunders et al. (2009) add that there is an inevitable relationship between the data collection method the researcher employs and the results the researcher obtains. Since the researcher employed a case study approach, there are several advantages of the case study method. According to Kothari (2004:115), one of the advantages is that the researcher can use one or more of the several research methods under the case study method depending upon the prevalent circumstances. The use of different methods such as depth interviews, questionnaires, documents, study reports of individuals and letters is possible under case study method. Hence, the researcher in this study combined data collection methods. In this regard, primary data collection methods were used together with secondary data collection methods.

3.6.1 Primary Data

Primary data is data that is collected or observed directly from first-hand experience specifically for the purpose of research project. In this study, the researcher employed questionnaire, interviews and focus group discussions to collect primary data.

- **Questionnaire**

A questionnaire consists of a number of questions printed or typed in a definite order on a form or set of forms (Kothari, 2004: 100). In other words, a questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions or other types of prompts for

the purpose of gathering information from respondents. White (2002), cited in Mtoo (2013:40), defines a questionnaire as a series of questions each one providing a number of alternative answers from which the respondents can choose.

In this study, the researcher used a questionnaire which was administered to District Commissioners/Chief Executive Officers, Directors of Administration and some Heads of Departments and sector heads in the selected councils because they are many and it was in the thinking of the researcher that all of them may not be available for in-depth interviews. The questionnaire was structured into two types; open ended questions and closed-ended questions. The researcher used open-ended questions in order to give an opportunity to respondents to express their opinions, views and perceptions in their own words about PMS in local authorities. In addition, the researcher used closed-ended questions with possible answers from which respondents selected the response. To minimise ambiguity and misunderstandings in the questionnaire, a set of instructions and notes were clearly put forward in the questionnaire. The researcher booked an appointment with the respondents and provided them the questionnaires for their feedback. Later the researcher collected the filled questionnaires from the respondents (See Appendix 4: Questionnaire).

The questionnaire technique was employed because it is cheap to administer and it was easy to compile data from standardized answers. Furthermore, this technique is free from bias of the interviewer; answers are in respondents' own words and the respondents have adequate time to give well thought out answers (Kothari, 2004:101). However, the challenge with this technique was that respondents may be frustrated by the standardised answers as they limited respondents to single-

word or short phrase multiple choice responses. As such, some respondents did not even complete the questionnaire.

- **Interviews**

Interview is defined as a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information and focused by him/her on the content specified by the research objectives of description and explanation (Gardner, 1968, cited in Mass Communication Tutorials and lessons: Interview method of data collection, 21/11/2010). Kothari (2004) says that an interview is a technique for soliciting information which commonly involves face-to-face conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee. The main purpose of interview as a tool of data collection, is to gather data extensively and intensively (See Appendix 5: Interview Guide).

In this study, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with key informants (Executive Secretary of Local Government Service Commission, Deputy Director of Human Resource in the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, Assistant Director of Human Resource Management (Policy and Research) at Department of Human Resource Management and Development) and the Chief Policy, Programs and Projects Assessment Officer at PED) because these participants have special and relevant knowledge and experiences on PMS in local authorities. This involved asking informants open-ended questions, and probing. An interview Guide was prepared and a set of open ended questions were set to help explore the required data. Then the interview was conducted with the individual participant. The researcher was booking appointments with the participants and met them in their

respective offices where interviews were conducted. There was no interaction with other staff members in the office where interviews were conducted and the interview data was being recorded in the notepads. During interviews, a good rapport was being established between the researcher and the participants, for example, through respecting the informants' opinions, supporting their feelings, or recognising their responses to ensure that participants cooperated and had enough confidence in the researcher and shared information which was relevant and or useful to the research study. Furthermore, the interviewer played the role of being a good listener and questioner. It was not the role of the interviewer to put forth his perceptions.

This technique was employed because it allowed the interviewer to discover the respondents' ideas, perceptions, suggestions and queries about PMS in councils in Malawi. Furthermore, the technique allowed the participants more freedom in responding in their own words. In addition, the technique offered the opportunity to discover other important aspects which may not be obtained if another technique would be used. Creswell (2014) adds that through interview technique, participants can provide historical information. However, the challenges with this technique were that it was time consuming to administer and the participants did not have such time available. In addition, the interviewer was recording the responses in the notepad. Furthermore, the researcher's presence may bias responses (Creswell, 2014).

- **Focus Group Discussions (FGD)**

A focus group discussion is a data collection method in which data is collected on a specific topic through a semi-structured group interview process moderated by a

group leader. The purpose is to seek open-ended thoughts and feelings from respondents on the topic under study.

In this study, the researcher organised two focus groups (one at each selected district council) of between six to twelve participants consisting of human resource officers; and clerical officers and at least one employee from each level of council hierarchy because the employees in each category had common backgrounds. The researcher prepared a focus group discussion guide and then booked an appointment with the participants and arranged a conference room or office at the council offices where the researcher guided and or moderated the discussions on the topic. Note taking was being made in the course of the engagement with the participants (See Appendix 6: Focus Group Discussion Guide).

Through focus group discussions, the researcher collected large data on the topic within a short time. In addition, through the interactions, the researcher was able to pick up on emotional responses, contradictions, stress, anger, frustration, enthusiasm and other feelings that do not come through a structured questionnaire. Creswell (2014) also points out that this technique allows the researcher control over line of questioning. However, one anticipated challenge with this method was that individual feedback could be generalised or categorised into group sentiments. In addition, group members with strong influence could sway the conversations and would quash feedback from the less vocal participants. To minimize these anticipated challenges, the researcher developed a good rapport with the respondents and properly moderated and or controlled the discussions.

3.6.2 Secondary Data Collection Methods

The researcher used existing documents in addition to interviews and questionnaire for data collection. It was envisaged that the researcher would not analyse something completely new. As a result, the researcher undertook review of documents like academic journals, books, published articles and government documents that are related to performance management as data sources. In this regard, areas where the researcher accessed such secondary data included on internet, councils under study, the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, the Department of Human Resource Management and Development, at Local Government Service Commission and at Performance Enforcement Department. This method was applied because the researcher believes that secondary data sources will not be time-constrained and it will provide exact details on the topic under study. According to Creswell (2014), documents as written evidence serve a researcher the time and expense of transcribing. However, one of the challenges of this technique was that it required the researcher to search out information from hard to find places.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of analysing all the information and evaluating the relevant information that can be helpful in better decision making (Sivia & Skilling, 2006). According to Nishishiba et al. (2014: 344), data analysis is the evaluation of either qualitative or quantitative data with the goal of answering a research question. It is a process of inspecting, cleaning, transforming, and modelling data with the goal of discovering useful information, suggesting conclusions, and supporting decision-making. In this regard, data analysis will help the researcher to derive conclusions out of the gathered information.

The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis.

3.7.1 Qualitative Methods of Data Analysis

- **Data Coding and Categorisation**

After collecting the data, the researcher conducted data entry. Themes, ideas and categories were identified from the raw data set and then the information was grouped according to categories. Then coding and editing was conducted. The idea was to make sense of and reduce data and concentrate on useful information that would be helpful in deriving conclusions. Then tabulation and analysis was made.

- **Narrative Analysis**

The researcher also employed this data analysis approach. Narratives for data was made that included quotations from respondents and participants to show evidence of what respondents said about the issue under study.

3.7.2 Quantitative Methods of Data Analysis

- **Statistical Package For Social Science (SPSS) Package And Microsoft Excel**

Some data that was obtained in this study through unguided open-ended questions was subjected to content analysis. The data was categorized and converted into qualitative data. Such data was then analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel Spread sheets and described in frequencies and percentages.

In addition, SPSS and Microsoft Excel Sheet were used for analysis of responses from respondents on data collected through questionnaires and that based on the

distribution of their demographic characteristics. Such data was also described in frequencies and percentages in readiness for presentation in various forms.

3.8 Data Quality Control

To ensure quality of data to be collected, the researcher conducted a pilot study. The research questions were pre-tested to purposefully selected employees of Mangochi District Council which was not in the sample. The purpose of the pre-testing was to ensure that the questionnaire, interview guide and focus group discussion guide were of appropriate length and that the questions were clear. In this regard, the researcher kept track of how long the interviews and questionnaire were taking to administer. Furthermore, the researcher asked respondents and participants if the questions were clear and if they made sense. In addition, the researcher assessed responses from the respondents and participants and checked if they matched with what the researcher wanted to learn from the pilot study.

Feedback from the pilot study and the suggestions that were made helped to revise the questionnaire, interview guide and focus group discussion guide and the length of administering these tools. It was hoped that this in turn would enhance the reliability and validity of the data that would be collected during the main study.

3.9 Ethical Challenges and Considerations

The researcher faced some ethical challenges during the study. However, the researcher takes cognisance of the importance of taking into account ethical guidelines when conducting research. The basic understanding by researcher is that the actual process of a research involves interfering with people's lives which may

potentially be harmful. Hence, the researcher displayed ethical behaviour that conformed to the ethical guidelines as provided for in various instruments including the 1949 Nuremberg Code to ensure credibility of the research data and results.

One of the ethical challenges that was faced during the study was the issue of achieving anonymity. Anonymity refers to the extent to which the identity of the participants and respondents cannot be known when the research is undertaken. In this regard, the research involved a small number of interviews with some high-profile people in the organisations from where data was collected. As a result, their identities could be deduced by those who know the organisations from which data was collected even if they are not formally named. Furthermore, the researcher gathered qualitative data through focus group discussions and qualitative data cannot be fully anonymised. Another ethical challenge faced was informed voluntary participation. Some respondents and participants were reluctant to participate in the study. As such, they refused to participate in the study despite being briefed about the background and purpose of the study. The other ethical challenge was objective data collection. The researcher's presence on the respondents and participants during data collection might have made some respondents and participants feel uncomfortable.

Since the researcher established the ethical challenges at the planning stage during data collection, ethical considerations were taken into account in order to ensure that the data collected was credible. One of the ethical considerations taken into account in relation to the organisations in which data was collected was the issue of consent. The researcher ensured that someone with appropriate authority was informed about the research and gave permission in advance for the information to be gathered in

their organisations. In this regard, after obtaining authority from the researcher's supervisors and an identification letter from Chancellor College to proceed conducting the research, the researcher sought and obtained consent from the District Commissioners and Chief Executive Officers of the Councils to proceed conducting the study in the said councils. In addition, the researcher sought and obtained consent from Department of Human Resource Management and Development, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, Local Government Service Commission, and Performance Enforcement Department under Office of the President and Cabinet to collect data (see Appendix 1: Identification Letter from Chancellor College ; Appendix 2: Consent Letter).

The other ethical consideration was that the researcher informed respondents and participants on the onset of the interaction on the nature, purpose and procedures of the study. Thus, respondents and participants were informed that the data will be used for the research report only. The third ethical consideration was on anonymity and confidentiality. In this regard, the researcher informed and assured the respondents and participants that their identity will be kept anonymous or confidentially and that it will not be disclosed to any unauthorised persons. In addition, the respondents and participants were informed that the researcher will maintain confidentiality and privacy of the information solicited from them. The fourth consideration was that the researcher informed respondents and participants that they were free to discontinue their participation at any time for any reason and that they will not be pressed or forced to give answers to any question asked. After debriefing the respondents and participants, the researcher sought and or obtained informed consent from them to participate in the study and they were requested to sign on the consent form as

evidence of their consent of which they accepted and signed (See Appendix 3: Consent Form).

For those who were not ready and or refused to participate, they were not coerced to participate. The researcher also developed a good rapport with participants through respecting the participants' opinions, supporting their feelings and recognising their responses to ensure that participants cooperated and had enough confidence in the research and shared information which was relevant to the study. The researcher also played the role of being a good listener and questioner and moderator during the key informant interviews and focus group discussions respectively.

3.10 Limitations of the study

The study encountered some limitations. One of the limitations encountered was resources. The researcher did not have adequate time to conduct the research in all the thirty-five (35) local authorities in Malawi. Furthermore, the researcher did not have adequate funds to cover all the costs of the research. Inadequate time and resources made the researcher select case study approach to the study. As a result, the research was confined within the analysis of the effectiveness of PMS in the four local authorities (2 cities and 2 district councils) to ensure that sufficient time was allocated to respondents and participants to participate in the study. Thus, variations in other local authorities were not examined as they were not targeted. However, efforts were made to ensure that the study was as systematic and as objective as possible. The implication of this limitation is that the results may not be generalised to the wider context in Malawi.

The second limitation was on availability and willingness of the targeted respondents and participants to participate in the study. Due to workload in their offices as well as due to other commitments, some respondents were not responding to the questionnaires submitted to them. In addition, some targeted participants were not available and not willing to participate in the study. Since the researcher has worked in the local authorities for fifteen years, he used his skill and familiarity with some respondents and participants to deliver questionnaires to targeted respondents and schedule interviews and focus group discussions with the targeted participants. This assisted as most of the respondents and participants who were contacted participated.

The third limitation was that some questionnaires were returned incomplete and these were not considered for analysis. The fourth limitation was that some respondents and participants failed to give appropriate responses. In addition, some respondents and participants did not provide their true opinions both on questionnaires as well as during focus group discussions. Furthermore, the study captured only the situation and or circumstances prevailing at the time of the respondents and participants participated in the study.

3.11 Summary

This chapter has presented and explained the research methodology and methods used to help respond to the research question. It has described how the research was conducted in order to derive accurate results. Areas that the chapter has explained and or described include research design, study setting, sampling and sample size. Furthermore, the chapter has presented and discussed primary and secondary data

collection methods, data collection tools and data analysis tools. In addition, the chapter has presented and discussed data quality control, ethical challenges and consideration issues, and study limitations. The next chapter presents findings and discussions of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS OF THE STUDY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings and discussions of the study. The presented findings and discussions are based on data collected to address the study/research question whose overall objective was to understand the effectiveness of PMS in the delivery of public services in the Local Authorities (LAs) in Malawi.

The findings are presented in tables, figures and or graphs with some descriptive statistics used. In addition, text analysis is further used to analyse most of the study qualitative data collected. The chapter also gives a brief presentation on the study response rate as well as on biographical data of the respondents.

The study findings and discussions will proceed on the understanding of the current PMS implementation status in LAs in Malawi; employees' perceptions towards PMS; major challenges that hinder the effective PMS implementation; and participatory suggestions on ensuring improvement in the effective implementation of PMS in LAs in Malawi. Different aspects of the findings and findings of other relevant studies including literature will be drawn together in this chapter.

4.2 Response rate of the respondents and participants

Out of 54 questionnaires which were administered, 34 respondents answered the questionnaires representing 62.96%. Through key informant interviews, all the 4 targeted participants from central government were interviewed representing 100% response rate while out of 16 participants targeted during focus group discussions, 13 participants participated and answered questions representing 81.25%.

In total, 74 employees were targeted out of which 51 participated representing an overall response rate of 68.92%. This is a statistically significant response rate from which evidence based reporting, discussions and conclusions could be made in this report.

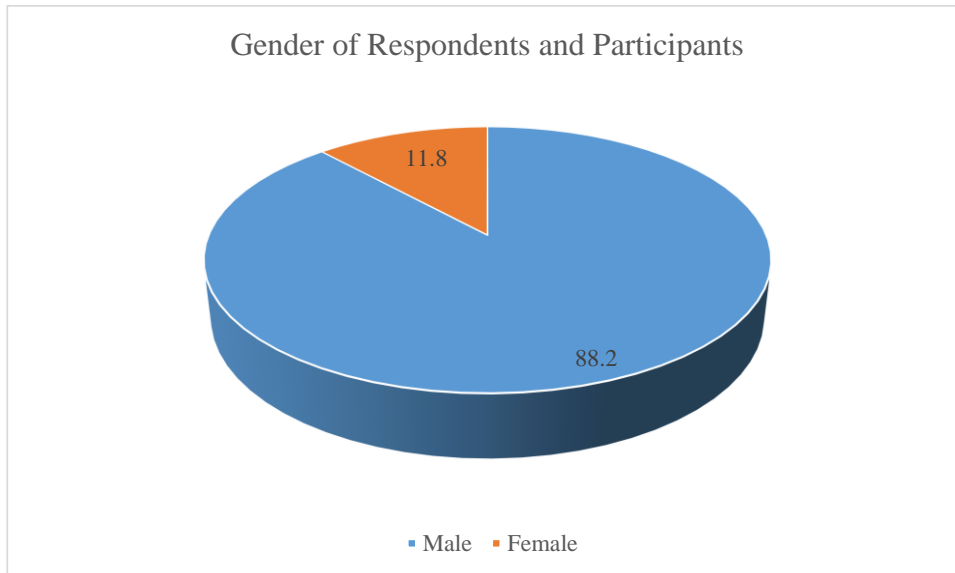
4.3 Profile of respondents and participants

In social sciences research, biographical data of respondents and participants have a significant role to play in expressing and giving responses to a problem. A set of biographical data of respondents and participants that was considered in this study included gender, highest education and field of training, position held, work experience, and staff cadre.

4.3.1 Distribution of respondents and participants by gender

The researcher included gender as a variable in the study in order to get responses from different gender groups. Data related to gender of the respondents and participants is presented in Figure 2 below where 88.2% of the total respondents and participants were male and 11.8% were female. Since the study targeted administrators, human resources personnel, professional/technical officers and clerical

officers, the distribution of respondents and participants by gender suggests that there are very few women in those positions in the local authorities and organisations from which data was collected.



Source: Researcher's own construct (2018)

Figure 2: Distribution of respondents and participants by gender

4.3.2 Distribution of respondents and participants by level of education and field of training

Data pertaining to 'highest education' is presented in Figure 3 below where 43.1% of the respondents and participants had degrees; 29.4% had Masters Degrees; 15.7% had Diplomas; 9.8% had Malawi School Certificate of Education and 2% had PhD. Further analysis showed that the highest percentage (27.5%) of the respondents and participants had either diplomas or degrees in human resource management while 62.7% had degrees in various fields (See Appendix 7: Table 2).

This shows that most of the respondents and participants were well educated and trained in various fields. As such, responses were drawn from a good knowledge base of the respondents and participants.

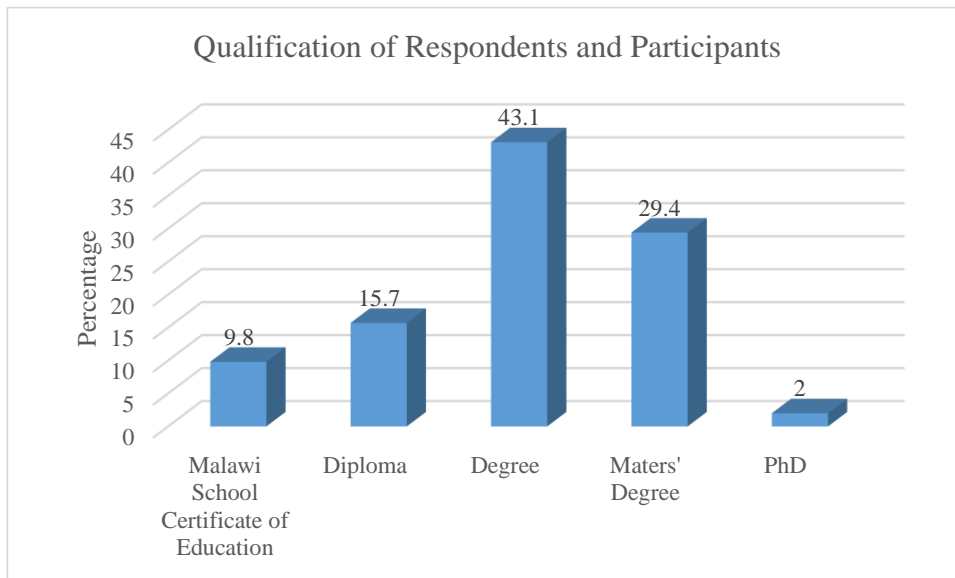


Figure 3: Distribution of respondents and participants by level of education

Source: Researcher's own construct (2018)

4.3.3 Distribution of respondents and participants by staff cadre and position held

The respondents and participants were divided in three major categories of staff cadre: administrative staff, technical staff and supporting staff. The majority (51.0%) were Technical staff; 29.4% were support staff; and 19.6% were administrative staff. Technical staff category comprised more than half of the total number of the respondents and participants. This was due to the availability and willingness of the technical staff to participate during the field data collection which was in contrast to the willingness and availability of the administrative staff to participate. Figure 4 below presents a summary of the results.

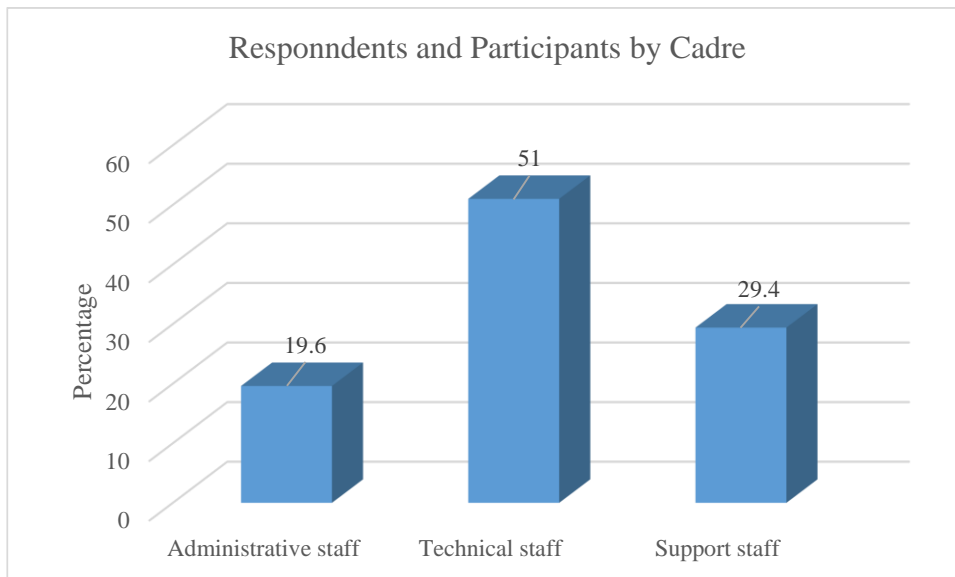


Figure 4: Distribution of respondents and participants by staff cadre

Source: Researcher's own construct (2018)

In terms of distribution of respondents and participants by position held, the largest number were Assistant Human Resource Management Officers represented by 11.8%. Clerical officers and Senior Clerical Officers were each represented by 7.8% ; 5.9 % were Directors of Finance; Deputy Directors of Human Resource Management, Directors of Engineering and District Community Development Officers were each represented by 3.9% whereas the rest of other positions were each represented by 2.0% (See Appendix 8: Table 3) .This combination enabled the researcher to obtain responses from respondents and participants holding various positions which may increase the reliability and validity of the results of this study.

4.3.4 Distribution of respondents and participants by work experience

The majority (25.5%) of the respondents and participants had been in their posts for 21 years and above. Those who had worked in their posts for 6 to 10 years and 11 to 15 years were represented by 23.4% in each category. 19.2% had been in their posts

for 1 to 5 years and 8.5% had 16 to 20 years' experience in their posts. This provided the researcher with sample of staff who had worked with their councils and or their organisations and stayed longer in their positions. They were more experienced and senior officers and therefore were in a good position to provide their experience on PMS in LAs in Malawi. Figure 5 below provides a summary.

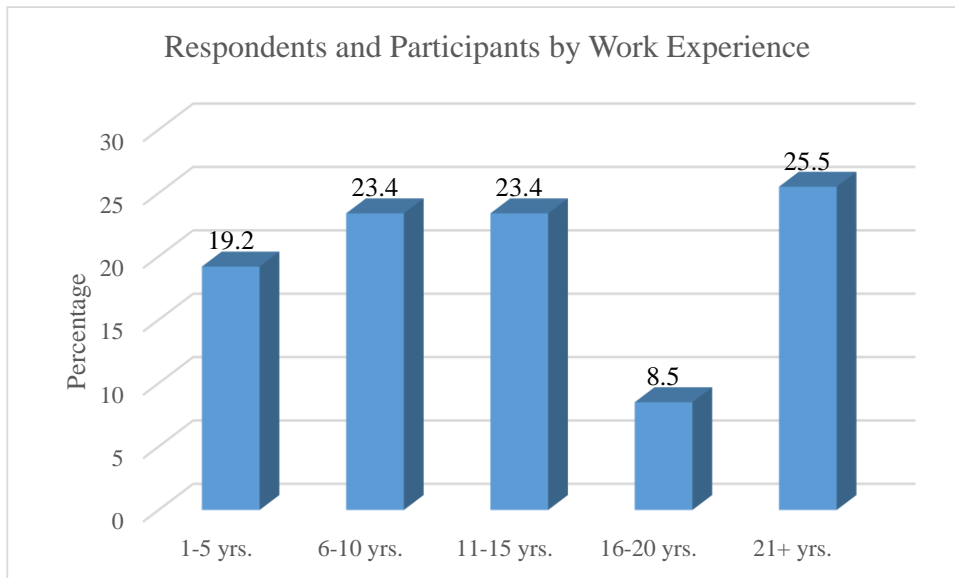


Figure 5: Distribution of respondents and participants by work experience

Source: Researcher's own construct (2018)

4.4 Results and discussions of the study

The results and discussions presented here relate to the status of implementation of PMS in relation to employees' awareness on PMS, employees' participation in PMS, how PMS is being implemented, and the benefits of PMS. The section further presents results and discussions on employees' perceptions towards PMS. In addition, the section presents results and discussions on the major challenges that hinder the effective implementation of the PMS in LAs and suggestions on ensuring improvement in the effective implementation of PMS in LAs in Malawi.

4.4.1 Status of implementation of PMS

The first objective of the study was to explore the status of implementation of PMS in LAs in Malawi. On this key study area, questions were designed to capture employees' awareness of PMS, employees' participation in PMS implementation, how PMS is being implemented, and benefits of PMS in councils. Results and discussions are presented below.

The study revealed that implementation of PMS in councils is founded on strong legal framework. Councils are mandated by law to institutionalise and implement PMS. For example, the Local Government Act (1998) Second Schedule Section 22(e) (iii) provides that “councils shall take charge of all decentralised services and activities which include but not limited to human resources management and development” and this includes PMS. Furthermore, the Public Service Act (1994) under Section 4 states, “Entry into and advancement within the public service shall be determined solely on the basis of merit...” The Malawi Decentralisation Policy (1998) and Malawi Public Service Regulations (MPSR) (2010) also provide for PMS institutionalisation and implementation in councils. In addition, according to the Performance Management Policy and Procedures Handbook (2008), each local authority is mandated to install and or institutionalise PMS.

However, results of the study showed that PMS is not effective in the delivery of services in councils as it has not been systematically institutionalised despite the mandate already provided for in various legal instruments. It is partially and or informally and or not implemented in some councils under study. This finding contradicts one of the provisions in the Performance Management Policy and

Procedures Handbook (2008) which clearly lays down prerequisites and steps for introducing and implementing PMS at Department/Ministry and or council level including how periodic reviews will be carried out. Furthermore, it clarifies the monitoring role of DHRM&D in PMS implementation. Hence, how can the MLG&RD and DHRM&D allow councils to operate without an effective PMS in the presence of strong legal framework? This has implications on the performance of employees as well as public service delivery in councils. Furthermore, it shows that there is a serious problem which councils and central government need to sort out to enhance performance in councils in Malawi. This confirms that there is laxity in the enforcement of rules, regulations as well as policies related to PMS in local authorities in Malawi. PMS was introduced in local authorities in Malawi in 2008 to address shortfalls of the closed system of appraising employees and in turn improve work performance and productivity of employees. Hence, this finding reveals that PMS is ineffective in the delivery of public services in local authorities in Malawi.

- **Employees' awareness on PMS in councils**

Most respondents (97.1%) were aware of PMS which was introduced in LAs in July 2008. Some respondents indicated that they had heard about PMS through orientation workshops on PMS either in their previous work stations or their current work stations while others said that they had heard about PMS through training of trainers' workshops on PMS. Furthermore, others said that they heard about PMS through circulars on PMS from the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (Refer to Table 4).

Table 4: If yes, how did you get an opportunity to hear about PMS in relation to councils?

	Frequency	Percent (%)
Through circulars on PMS from Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development	9	27.3
In my previous work station during a PMS orientation session	5	15.2
In my current work station during PMS orientation session	13	39.4
In PMS training of trainers workshop	6	18.2
Total	33	100

From the results in Table 4, a larger proportion (72.8%) of the respondents indicated that they had either been trained or oriented on PMS in their councils. This confirmed what was said at central government that some top council officials were trained and or oriented on PMS implementation when PMS was introduced in LAs in 2008.

However, it was established that most of the employees who were aware about PMS were from top council leadership and management. This was the case because where PMS was being partially implemented, it was revealed that PMS was targeting top council leadership and management members. As such, employees at lower level had inadequate and or lack of knowledge and understanding of PMS because PMS

trainings and or orientations were conducted to only few top council management members who were expected to cascade the same training or orientation to employees at the lower level. Such trainings or orientations were not cascaded to the employees at the lower level as expected. The implication of this is that there was less focus on employee contribution or performance on the job in the councils as not all employees were targeted by PMS. One of the characteristics of an effective PMS is that it must focus on individual employee contribution. The understanding by the researcher is that it is the aggregate of individual contributions that informs institutional PMS. Hence, how can PMS be effective in the delivery of public services in local authorities when there is less focus on individual employee contribution? This finding contradicts Armstrong (2000) who believes that performance management concerns everyone in an organisation and not just managers as both the managers and team members are accountable for the performance of their organisations. Furthermore, it contradicts the suggestion of Fletcher and Williams (1992) as cited in Armstrong (2000:15) that PMS should apply to all staff, not just managers for it to be effective. In addition, it is inconsistent to the Performance Management Policy and Procedures Handbook for The Malawi Civil Service (2008) which also provides that the PMS applies to all employees in the civil service as well as in local authorities.

If such a system is not well understood and owned by some council employees just because it does not target them, then it is an indication that PMS is not well institutionalised and not strong in its application in the councils. It was clear from the findings that the current PMS was not helping to improve quality of public service delivery in councils in Malawi. This finding is consistent to the finding of Zvavahera

(2013) who evaluated the effectiveness of PMS in service delivery in the Zimbabwean Civil Service and found that PMS was not effective in the delivery of services.

Results also revealed that 58.8% of the total respondents indicated that their councils had functional PMS; 29.4% indicated that their councils had no functional PMS while 11.8% indicated that they did not know whether or not their councils had a functional PMS in place. Figure 6 below provides a summary of results on the same.

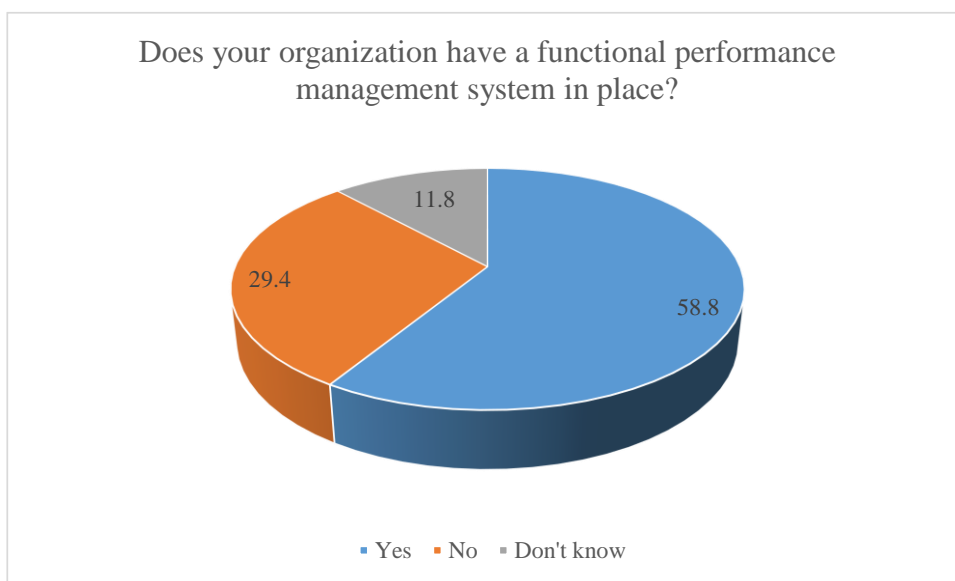


Figure 6 : Does your organisation have a functional performance management system in place?

Source: Researcher's own construct (2018)

Participants during key informant interviews and focus group discussions stated that each council was required to develop a strategic plan and identify critical areas of service delivery. One of the principles of PMS is that there should be a link between strategic plans of the organisation and work plans of employees. However, participants stated that such updated strategic plans were not available in some of the

councils. They further stated that although PMS was legislated for, it was not functional as it had not been systematically institutionalised in councils in Malawi. The implication of this finding is that PMS is not sorting out shortfalls/limitations observed in the closed system of appraising employees. This is the case because one of the limitations in the closed/confidential system of appraising employees was that there was no linkage between strategic plan of the organisation and employee work plan.

Among the participants during focus group discussions who further reported that PMS was not functional, it was reported that the council acts on distribution of performance appraisal forms only. Joint setting of targets; filling and or completing performance appraisal forms; and joint performance reviews were not being done. It was also revealed that there was laxity among those entrusted with the task of enforcing PMS implementation coupled with non-commitment to adhere to central government directive on PMS implementation. PMS was introduced in local authorities in order to promote communication between supervisors and employees and to provide performance feedback. The implication of the finding is that the PMS is not sorting out limitations which were there with the confidential/closed system of appraising employees. As such, it is ineffective in the delivery of public services in local authorities.

Further analysis showed that most respondents who indicated that their councils had a functional PMS in place were from city councils while most respondents who indicated that their councils either do not have and or do not know that their councils have a functional PMS were from district councils as presented in Figure 7. This may

suggest that there is increased awareness among employees on PMS in city councils as compared to district councils.

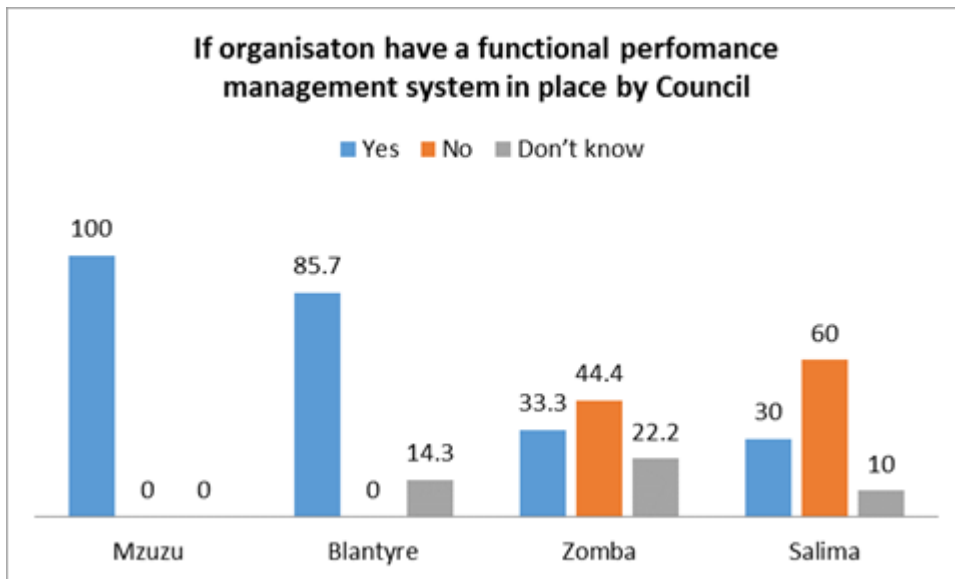


Figure 7: Functional PMS in place by council

Source: Researcher's own construct (2018)

On whether or not councils had Performance Management Guidelines, a significant proportion (61.8%) of the respondents accepted that their councils had Performance Management Guidelines; 26.5% indicated that they did not know whether or not their councils had Performance Management Guidelines while 11.8% indicated that their councils did not have Performance Management Guidelines. Results are presented in Figure 8 below.

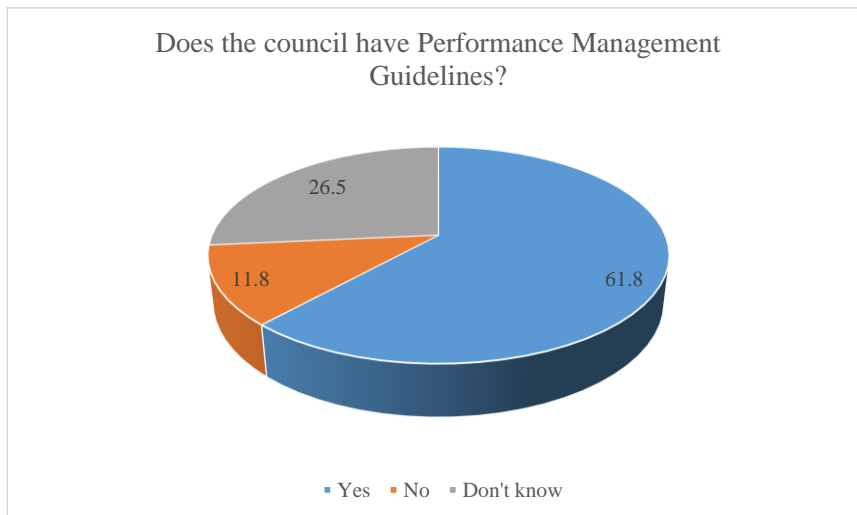


Figure 8: Does the council have Performance Management Guidelines?

Source: Researcher's own construct (2018)

However, it was established that the Performance Management Guidelines which were available were those which were developed by central government through DHRM&D and shared to councils in 2008. As such, it was found that the councils had no Performance Management Guidelines developed by the councils themselves as evidence of institutionalisation of PMS in the councils. The expectation of central government was that each council would develop its own PMS Guidelines and design its own PMS to suit that council given that each council is an entity on its own within the decentralisation set up. However, the availability of the Performance Management Policy and Procedures Handbook (2008) suggested that there was an increased opportunity in councils in terms of preparing objectives for individuals, appraisals, performance-based rewards and sanctions, contracts/agreements, counselling, mentoring and coaching.

- **Employees' participation in PMS in councils**

The researcher was also interested in employee's participation in the implementation of PMS in order to explore the status of PMS implementation in councils.

According to Figure 9 below, 94.1% indicated that they had ever filled the appraisal forms while only 5.9% of the respondents said that they had never filled the open performance appraisal forms since employed in councils.

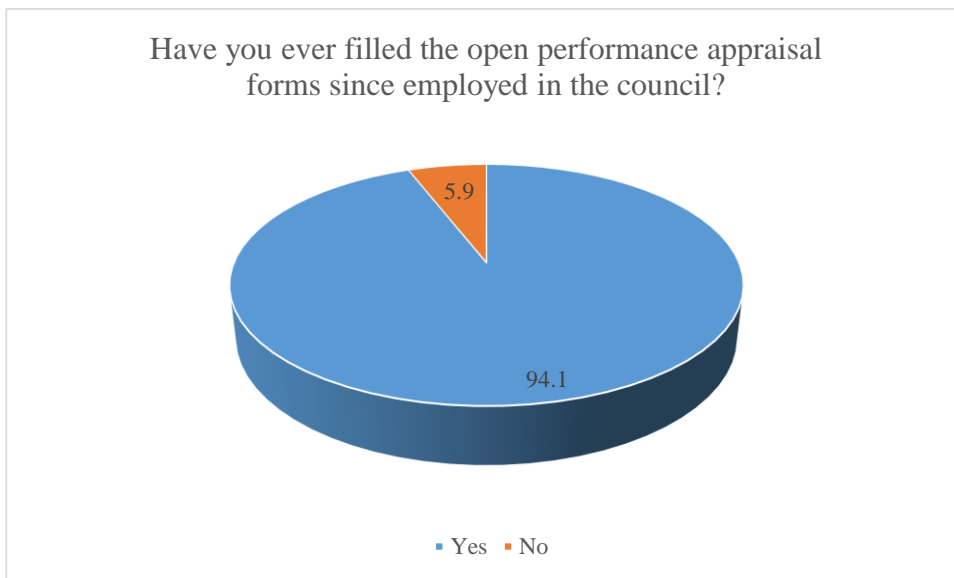


Figure 9: Have you ever filled the open appraisal forms since employed in the council?

Source: Researcher's own construct (2018)

During key informant interviews and focus group discussions, participants revealed that those who had ever filled the open appraisal forms were from council top and middle management levels as those at the lower level were not targeted. The implication of this finding was that PMS was for top and middle management members in local authorities. One of the explanation offered on this was that focus of PMS in local authorities was on top management members in order to ensure that the system is properly and well understood by them so that they can later effectively

institutionalise and implement it. This finding is consistent with the findings of Kgantlapane (2009) who analysed PMS in Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality in South Africa and found that PMS in the Municipality was applicable to senior managers only. However, the finding is inconsistent to one of the characteristics of an effective PMS as an effective PMS must be fair. In this regard, Rollins (2015) pointed out that everyone must be subjected to the evaluation process regardless of how high they have climbed on the corporate ladder. Thus, evaluations must be based on the same values and principles. In addition, the finding is inconsistent to the Performance Management Policy and Procedures Handbook for the Malawi Civil Service (2008) which provides that PMS is applicable to all employees in the civil service as well as in local authorities in Malawi.

Some participants during focus group discussions also indicated that they were sometimes involved in the PMS process in their councils in ensuring that performance appraisal forms were being completed or filled and signed for by officers from Grade K and above. Officers below Grade K were not participating in the performance appraisal. Furthermore, some participants explained that they had never signed or completed PMS agreement forms and or had never been asked by their supervisors to submit performance appraisal forms since they joined their councils.

Other participants from the councils confirmed having completed/filled performance agreement forms but they indicated that there were no follow ups as nobody seemed to care about PMS in councils. Furthermore, participants explained that while the MLG&RD in conjunction with DHRM&D focused on among others, briefing council staff about PMS, its objectives, distribution of PMS agreement forms, and have them

signed, there was no follow up from central government to ensure that institutionalisation and implementation of PMS was being adhered to. This was corroborated by what the participant at the MLG&RD said that they do not follow up and or inadequately follow up on PMS implementation in councils because under decentralisation (sector devolution), PMS as a function is now under the mandate of the council whose Controlling Officer is the District Commissioner (DC) or Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

Among participants who said were aware and ever participated in PMS (in the district councils) , it was established that they were not involved in setting objectives, targets and signing contracts with their supervisors at the beginning of the appraisal process . It was revealed that those involved were just told to fill the appraisal forms at the end of each financial year. In this regard, it was explained that performance appraisal forms were being distributed to staff, completed/filled, signed and copies retained in separate files for easy traceability and yet no objectives and targets were set between the supervisors and their subordinates against which performance would have been rated. This finding is inconsistent to the Performance Management Framework adopted in this study. The framework defines expectations in relation to objectives an employee will achieve, how performance will be measured and the capabilities required to deliver the required results.

This finding suggests that there is less focus on individual employee contribution or performance on the job in councils. How can PMS be effective in the delivery of services in councils in the absence of joint setting of objectives, targets and signing of contracts at the beginning of the appraisal process? This finding contradicts the Goal

Setting Theory as developed by Latham and Locke (1979) which underpins the emphasis in performance management on setting and agreeing objectives against which performance can be measured and managed. Furthermore, the finding suggests that PMS is failing to deal with shortfalls/limitations of the abolished confidential appraisal system because the same limitations which that system had are the same shortfalls/limitations PMS is facing. It was also established that in some councils (city), supervisors and subordinates were involved in joint setting of objectives, targets and signing of contracts at the beginning of the appraisal process and appraisal forms and or reports were retained in personal files. Literature indicates that effective implementation of PMS requires that supervisors and their subordinates jointly set objectives and targets and sign contracts. It is important, therefore, that efforts be made in councils that objectives and targets be jointly set and contracts signed between supervisors and their subordinates.

The study also established that performance appraisal forms were circulated in the councils for officers to fill in or complete and this was expected to be followed by quarterly and or annual assessments with the supervisors. However, it was revealed that some of the participants had never heard that such assessments were being done in their councils. As a result, some appraisal forms were not being completed or filled by officers and such a situation had been there in such councils since 2008. It was also explained that implementation of activities in the councils was not very much referenced to PMS, work plans, strategic plans and or the actual approved council budget document. Updated Council Strategic Plans were not available and joint performance reviews were not being conducted as documentation was not available in

some of the councils. This raises serious questions in terms of where such councils get direction in terms of programs and projects implementation.

The implication of this was that focus on achievement of council aspirations may have been lost in the absence of the linkage between the PMS and council strategic plans. How can PMS be effective in the delivery of services in the absence of updated council strategic plans, annual work plans and joint performance reviews? This finding contradicts the Performance Management Policy and Procedures Handbook (2008) which clearly defines implications of introducing performance management. The policy (2008:7) provides that employees at all levels need work plans or performance factors which are consistent to and or supportive with strategic and annual plans; regular feedback on performance; and a completed annual performance appraisal. The finding also contradicts Armstrong (2009) who believes that if implementation of PMS is to be effective, then one aspect that needs to be properly managed is the performance review process. Furthermore, the finding is inconsistent to one of the main findings of Lawler and McDermott (2003), cited in Armstrong (2009:76), who found that individual performance management practices need to be driven by the business strategy and that ongoing feedback by managers is strongly related to PMS effectiveness. In this regard, employees should receive regular feedback on results and their performance throughout the year. In addition, performance reviews should be done properly and be documented.

The picture being presented in this regard as elaborated by respondents and participants was that PMS was ineffective in the delivery of public services in councils as it is not well institutionalised and implemented. This suggests that there is

less and or no focus on individual employee contribution or performance on the job in councils.

- **Implementation of PMS**

The researcher was also interested to understand how PMS is being implemented in councils in order to further explore the status of PMS implementation in councils.

On how often performance appraisal was being performed annually in councils, 50% of the respondents said ‘once’; 20.6% said ‘twice’;14.7% said ‘never’; 11.8% said ‘don’t know’ and 2.9% said ‘quarterly’. Figure 10 below provides a summary of the results.

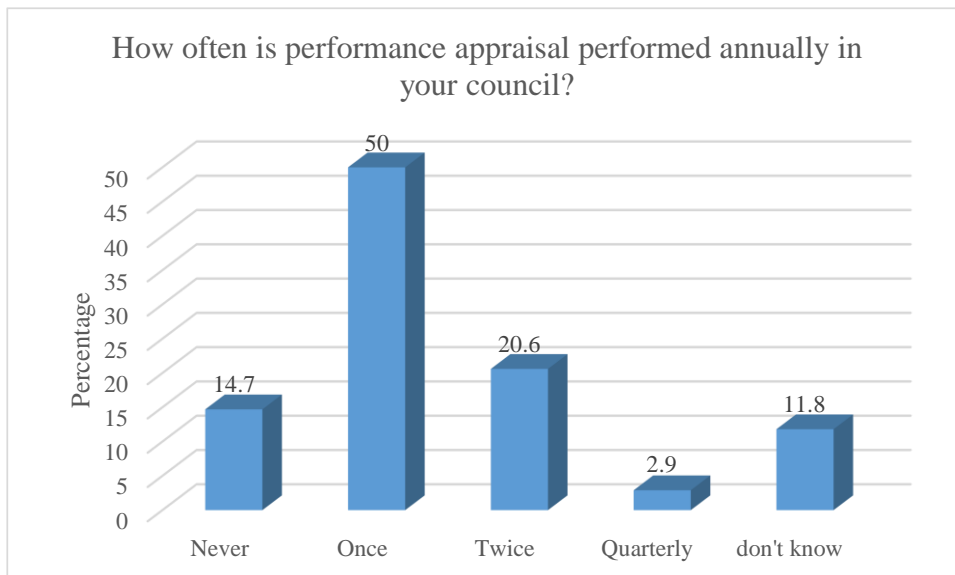


Figure 10: How often is performance appraisal performed annually in your council?

Source: Researcher's own construct (2018)

The results show that a larger proportion (73.5%) of the respondents said that PMS is performed in councils. Participants during focus group discussions indicated that performance appraisals were conducted once a year only among the senior officers in councils and not on all members of staff. In addition, where PMS was being

implemented and appraisal forms were completed or filled and signed for, it was found that the forms were only completed and signed at the end of the financial year (for example under agriculture, health and education sectors). Furthermore, it was indicated that supervisors and their subordinates were not meeting to discuss the performance against the agreed targets as required. These findings are inconsistent to the PMS conceptual framework according to Armstrong (2000: 17). The conceptual framework provides for performance reviews in the PMS self-renewing cycle.

On the question of who drives PMS in the councils, 55.9% of the respondents indicated ‘top management of the council’; 14.7% said ‘managers and supervisors in the council ‘; 11.8% said the MLG&RD ’; 8.8% said ‘don’t know’ while the other 8.8% did not specify who drives PMS in councils. Results are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Who drives the performance management system in your council?

	Frequency	Percent (%)
Other(specify)	3	8.8
The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development	4	11.8
Managers and supervisors in the council	5	14.7
Top management of the council	19	55.9
Don't know	3	8.8
Total	34	100

Results in Table 5 show that council top management, managers and supervisors in the councils and the MLG&RD are key to driving performance management system in councils. A larger proportion (55.9%) of the respondents indicated that top management of the council drives PMS in councils. However, the study has revealed leadership and management challenges in the implementation of PMS.

On the question of whether or not the respondents agreed to the statement that performance appraisal /review and the council objectives are strongly linked according to the situation in their council, the majority of the respondents (70.6%) were optimistic. Those who ‘strongly agree’ made 29.4% while those who ‘agree’ made 41.2%. 2.9% said they ‘strongly disagree’, 2.9% said ‘agree’ , 14.7% said ‘neither agree nor disagree’ while 8.8% said ‘ don’t know’. A summary of the results is presented in Figure 11 below.

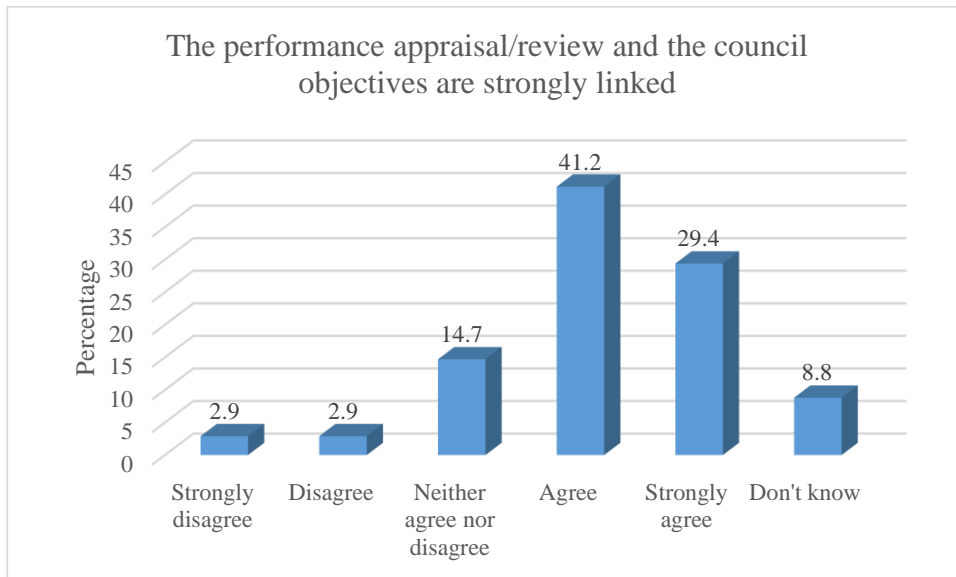


Figure 11: The performance appraisal/review and the council objectives are strongly linked

Source: Researcher’s own construct (2018)

Results from Figure 11 suggest that council objectives and individual employee work objectives are perceived to be aligned. However, participants during key informant interviews and focus group discussions said that performance appraisal/review and council objectives are not strongly linked. This was the case because it was established that performance reviews were not being conducted.

- **Benefits of Performance Management System**

In order to further explore the status of implementation of PMS, the researcher was interested to get information on benefits of PMS. As such, questions were designed to capture whether or not there is linkage between performance review and rewards and sanctions; linkage between remuneration and employee performance; usage of performance review of employee in identifying capacity needs of employee; most relevant possible criteria for selecting staff for training; and use of performance reviews in relation to adjusting employee work objectives.

Asked if performance appraisal/ review is linked in a significant manner with rewards and sanctions for employees in the councils, 26.6% of the respondents thought they were 'linked'; 23.5% thought they were 'somewhat linked'; 20.6% thought they were 'weakly' linked; 17.6% thought they were 'not linked at all' and 11.8% of the respondents thought 'there are strong links' (Refer to Table 6).

Table 6: Is Performance appraisal/review linked in a significant manner with rewards and sanctions for employees?

	Frequency	Percent (%)
Not linked at all	6	17.6
Weakly	7	20.6
Somewhat linked	8	23.5
Linked	9	26.5
There are strong links	4	11.8
Total	34	100

Results in Table 6 above show that a larger proportion (61.7%) of respondents were sceptical that performance appraisal/review is linked in a significant manner with rewards and sanctions. This signalled disjointedness between performance reviews and rewards and sanctions. It was established that performance reviews as well as rewards and sanctions are not well institutionalised in the councils.

On whether they agree or disagree on the statement that remuneration in their council is strongly linked to employee performance, 35.3% of the respondents said ‘disagree’; 29.4% said ‘strongly disagree’; 23.5% said ‘neither agree nor disagree’ while 11.8% said they ‘agree’. There were none who opted for ‘strongly agree’ and ‘don’t know’. A summary of results is presented in Figure 12.

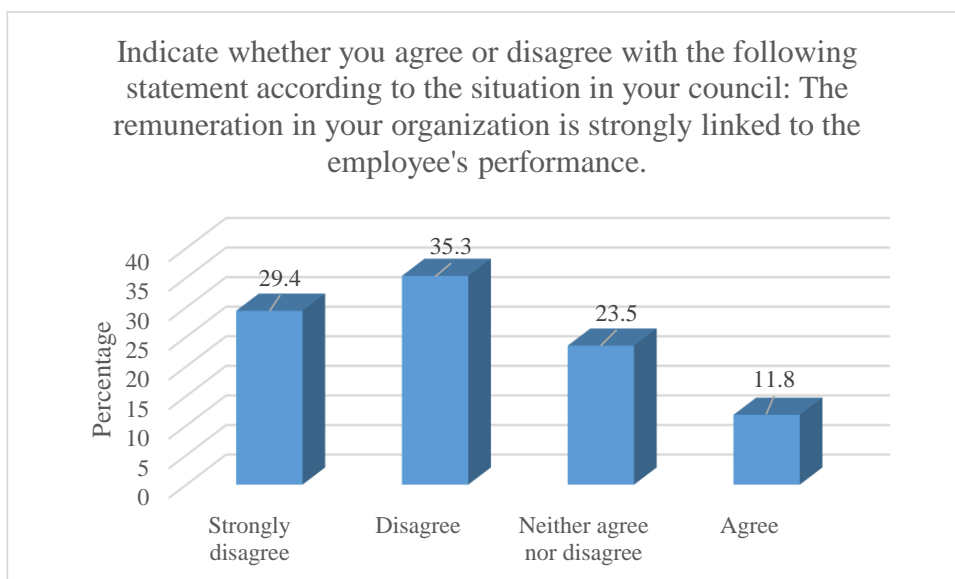


Figure 12: Indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statement according to the situation in your council: The remuneration in your organisation is strongly linked to the employees' performance

Source: Researcher's own construct (2018)

These results show that a significant proportion (64.7%) of the respondents were sceptical as they either 'strongly disagree' or 'disagree' that remuneration in the councils is strongly linked to employee performance. Some participants during key informant interviews and focus group discussions indicated that employee performance may not be linked to pay/salary because they felt that there was lack of systematic performance appraisal/review in their councils as PMS had not been institutionalised. Respondents were also asked if the performance review of employees is used to identify the capacity needs of employees in the council. 41.2% of the respondents said 'sometimes'; 17.6% said 'rarely'; 14.7% said 'often times'; 14.7% said 'not at all' ; and 11.8% said 'always'. None opted for 'don't know'. Results are presented in Figure 13.

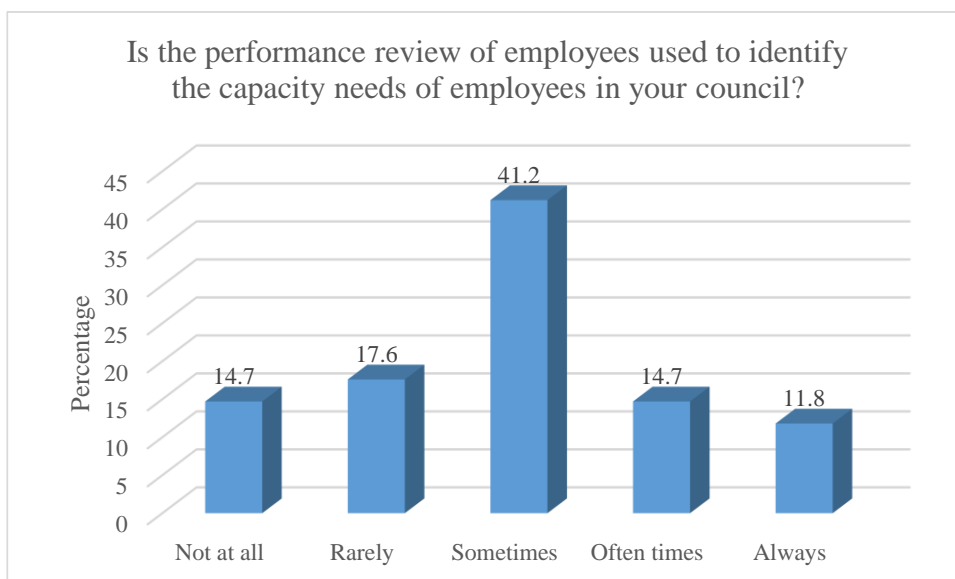


Figure 13: Is the performance review of employees used to identify the capacity needs of employees in your council?

Source: Researcher’s own construct (2018)

When aggregated, a larger proportion (73.5%) of the respondents were sceptical as they either said ‘not at all’ or ‘rarely’ or ‘sometimes’. Participants during key informant interviews and focus group discussions stated that the key performance management strategies in the local authorities include the use of annual work plans and the performance appraisal instrument. Participants also explained that performance management also depended on the initiative of the incumbent District Commissioner (DC) or Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the various heads of departments within the local authorities.

On most relevant criteria used for selecting staff for training in the council, 35.3% of the respondents said ‘organisational capacity needs’; 26.5% said ‘employee initiative’; 20.6% said ‘prerogative of the ministry/department responsible for local

government’; 11.8% said ‘performance review’ while 5.9 % said ‘seniority of staff’.

Figure 14 below provides a summary.

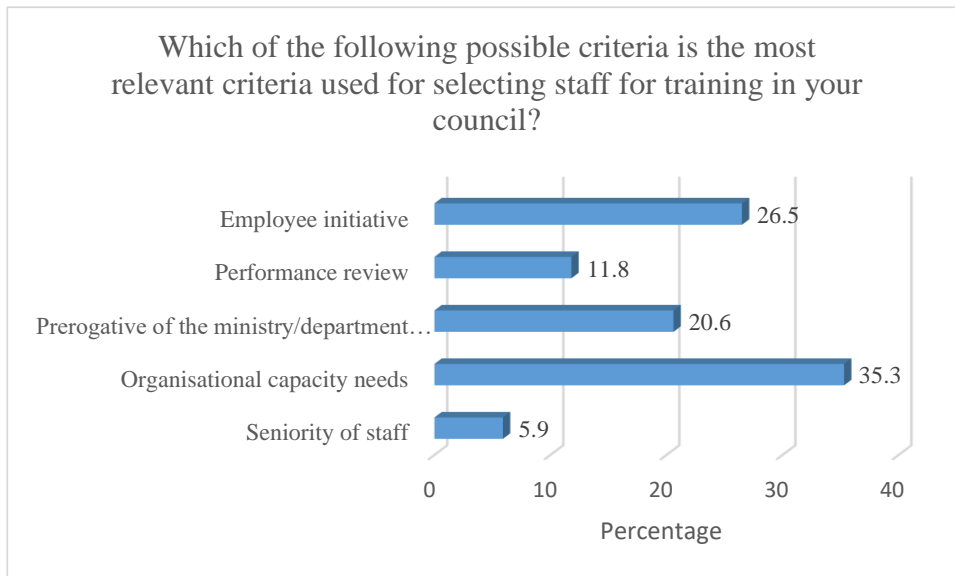


Figure 14: Which of the following possible criteria is the most relevant criteria used for selecting staff for training in your council?

Source: Researcher’s own construct (2018)

Results from Figure 14 above show that performance review is not the most relevant possible criteria for selecting staff for training in the councils. This signalled limitations with the performance reviews and the manner they were applied. In addition, this signalled absence of a well-structured mechanism of identifying training needs in the local authorities. The implication of this is that councils may lack targeted training.

On whether results from the performance reviews are used to make adjustments to employees’ work objectives, 29.4% of the respondents indicated ‘sometimes’; 20%

said ‘rarely’; those who said ‘often times’ and ‘don’t know’ made 14.7% in each category ; 11.8 % said ‘always’ while 8.8% said ‘not at all’ (Refer Figure 15 below).

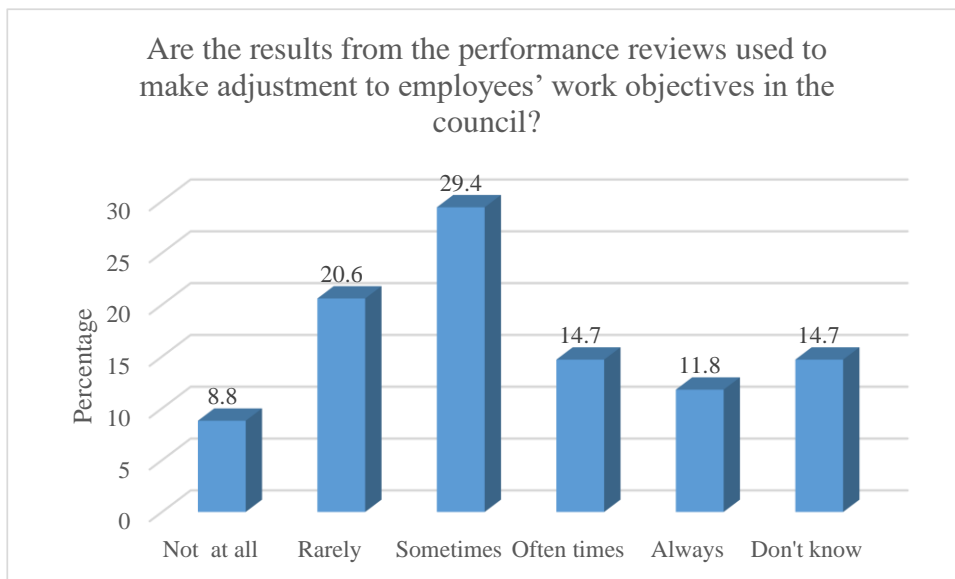


Figure 15: Are the results from the performance review used to make adjustment to employees' work objectives in the council?

Source: Researcher's own construct (2018)

In general, results from Figure 15 show that most respondents (58.8%) were sceptical on whether results from performance reviews are used to make adjustments to employees' work objectives in the councils. This was the case because it was established that performance reviews were not being conducted. This finding is inconsistent to the PMS conceptual framework as developed by Armstrong (2000: 17) which provides for performance review in the performance management cycle.

4.4.2 Employee perceptions towards PMS in councils

The second objective of the study was to assess council employees' perceptions towards PMS in councils in Malawi. The basic understanding of the researcher was that perceptions towards PMS have implications on the effective institutionalisation and implementation of PMS. Hence, respondents and participants were asked to provide their perceptions towards PMS in councils.

The study found that the respondents' and participants' perceptions towards PMS in councils were varied. From what some respondents and participants indicated, PMS is not being implemented and or is partially being implemented in LAs in Malawi. They felt that PMS is just on paper. They explained that in practice there was still a closed system of appraising council employees. One participant who is highly ranked had this to say:

There is no open PMS in councils. PMS is just there in principle (on paper) as there is no strategy to drive its implementation in councils; individual performance appraisal is not being systematically conducted and it is not responding to council strategic needs. Individual performance is not being monitored and there are no updated council strategic plans as well as annual work plans to link them to PMS implementation. What is there in practice is closed PMS in councils because some people are being promoted not objectively (subjectively); sponsorship trainings are being offered to some employees not objectively; actions like postings are not being defensible as some are being challenged in court through injunctions; and the system does not recognise performance of individual employees as well as organisational performance in councils. (Interview, February 2018)

Where PMS was partially being implemented, some council employees have a negative attitude towards PMS as they felt that PMS is just a formality. They explained that appraisal forms were just filled or completed at the end of the financial year just to fulfil central government's requirement. They also felt that PMS has no much impact as it was not very much linked to rewards and sanctions for performance. This is what one participant had to say during focus group discussions:

There is no promotion or consideration for trainings even if you complete everything needed in the performance appraisal forms. There is also no feedback even if you complete or fill the Performance Appraisal forms and submit them. (FGD; April 2018).

This suggests that employees expect rewards and sanctions for performance arising from PMS implementation as provided for in the Rewards and Sanctions Guidelines (2012) on PMS and yet this is not being enforced.

Other respondents and participants felt that PMS was an external and foreign initiative that was introduced in Malawi as a public sector reform to respond to the gaps that were there with the confidential reporting system. This perception confirmed what Ayeni (2002) as quoted by Dzimbiri (2009) said that Public sector reform initiatives in Commonwealth countries to 2002 included...performance management systems...The respondents and participants further perceived that PMS was introduced in Malawi due to pressure from donors like World Bank and others. Participants said that since World Bank and IMF wanted to see how effective their funds were being utilised, they pressured for introduction of open PMS in the public service in Malawi. This is what one of the participant had to say during the study:

PMS is largely being advocated, driven and supported by donors in Malawi. World Bank supported development of strategic plans in 2000 in Ministries, Departments and Agencies in Malawi; Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) through the Good Governance Programme managed by the Institute of Public Administration-Canada supported the development and launch of the Performance Management Policy in March 2008 and introduction of a Performance Management System on 1st July 2008 in the Malawi Civil Service and local authorities; and Local Development Fund (LDF) supported development of Strategic Plans and training of trainers workshops on PMS in councils between 2008 and 2013 facilitated by the Department of Human Resource Management and Development in conjunction with the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (Interview, February 2018).

Furthermore, respondents and participants felt that PMS is a complex process and not user friendly. They indicated that PMS is tough to coordinate especially in departments or sectors that have a lot of employees and a lot of units or sections such as primary education, health and agriculture. One participant during focus group discussions had this to say: “Teachers, their head teachers and Primary Education Advisors feel that the PMS process is complex and they want the PMS Cycle to be reduced.” (FGD, April 2018).

They also said that PMS is not user friendly because the Revised Malawi Government Performance Management Policy and Procedures Handbook for the Malawi Civil Service (2014) which is also applicable to councils in Malawi has a rating part that involves Mathematical calculations. As such, it was established that PMS was not discussed much during various council meetings like during management meetings, departmental meetings, staff meetings and even service

committee meetings (Table 7). Furthermore, it was established that most respondents (62%) were not satisfied with the way PMS was being implemented in councils in Malawi (Figure 16).

Table 7: When you get together in your council with the other council employees, how often would you say you discuss performance management system issues?

	Frequency	Percent (%)
Never	6	17.6
Occasionally	22	64.7
Frequently	5	14.7
Don't know	1	2.9
Total	34	100

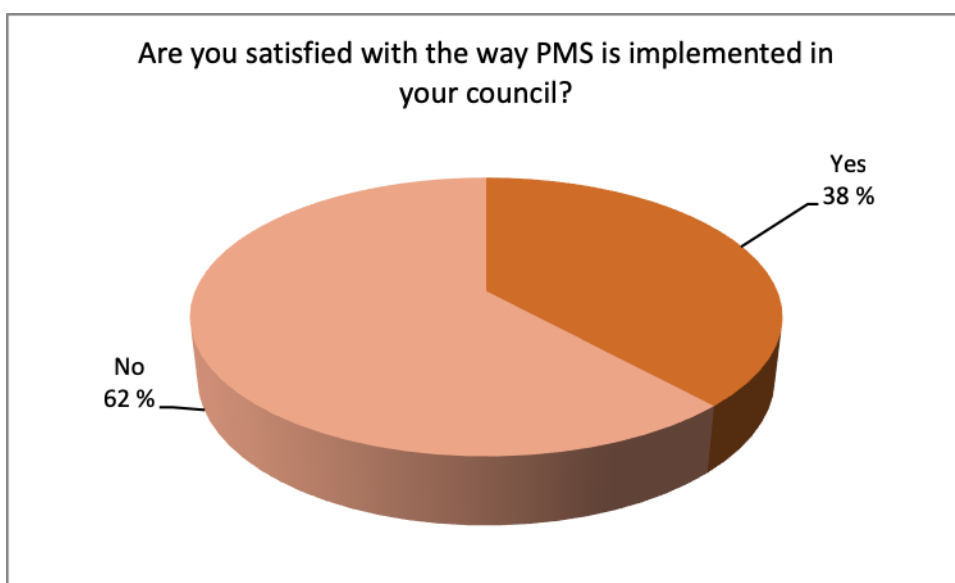


Figure 16: Whether or not the respondents were satisfied with the way PMS was being implemented in the councils

Source: Researcher's own construct (2018)

Further analysis showed that among those who said were not satisfied with the way PMS was being implemented in councils, a larger proportion (71.4%) were from district councils. Participants during key informant interviews and focus groups discussions indicated that PMS is not systematically conducted as it was not very much linked to rewards and sanctions. Furthermore, they indicated that most PMS processes were not systematically conducted to ensure effective implementation.

According to some other participants and respondents, they had the feeling that PMS was a failure because they said that it does not have proper rewards and sanctions. Furthermore, they felt that PMS was for council's middle and top management only and that it does not concern them. They said that this perception was based on the fact that it was these cadre of staff that were completing performance appraisal forms at the end of each financial year.

However, other respondents and participants were optimistic about PMS in councils. They had a positive attitude towards PMS. They said that PMS is a good tool for improving service delivery in councils if properly managed and implemented. If properly implemented, respondents and participants felt that PMS can help council employees to exercise participation, openness, trust and ownership of the individual performance appraisal. Both supervisors and subordinates would become aware of the objectives when performing their duties. Respondents and participants further pointed out that if employees know and understand the boundary of their performance, they can maximise creativity which in turn can result into high performance.

Most of the respondents (94%) said that they were interested in PMS (Figure 17) and this may have been due to the perceived benefits of PMS if properly implemented.

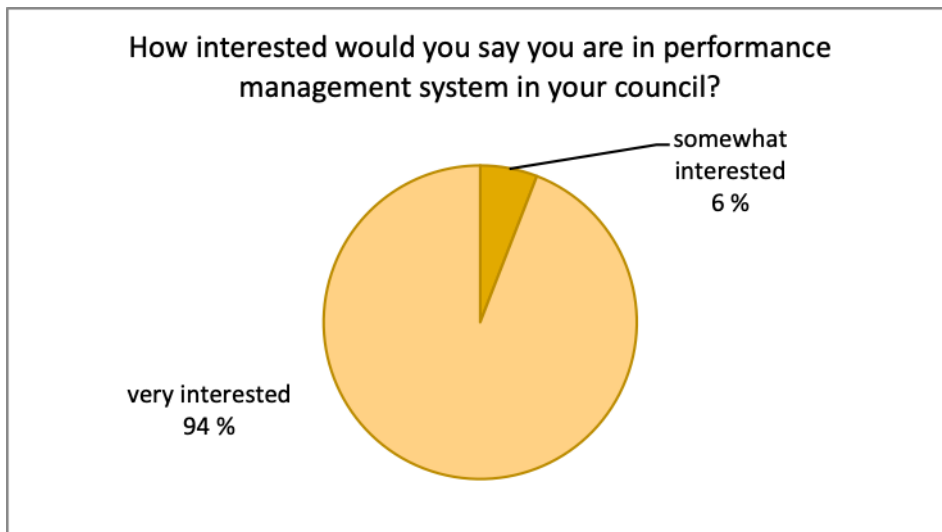


Figure 17: Showing how interested respondents were in PMS in their council

Source: Researcher's own construct (2018)

Respondents and participants also felt that PMS is a good tool for improving service delivery in councils if properly institutionalised and implemented. They felt that PMS is a good system compared to the earlier Confidential Reporting System of Staff Appraisal. They viewed PMS as serving the purpose of linking employee activities to organisational goals. In addition, PMS was seen to be a good system on the basis of the use of performance appraisal information in various administrative decisions like promotions, salary, and transfers/postings administration. Furthermore, they said that if properly implemented, PMS would serve the purpose of developing council employees which would arise from feedback from performance reviews. However, they said that none of the functions is being focused on in councils as PMS was not properly institutionalised.

On the linkage between PMS and Local Authority Performance Assessment (LAPA), 55.9% said 'yes' there is a link; 8.8% said 'no'; while 35.3% said 'don't know'.

Figure 18 below presents a summary:

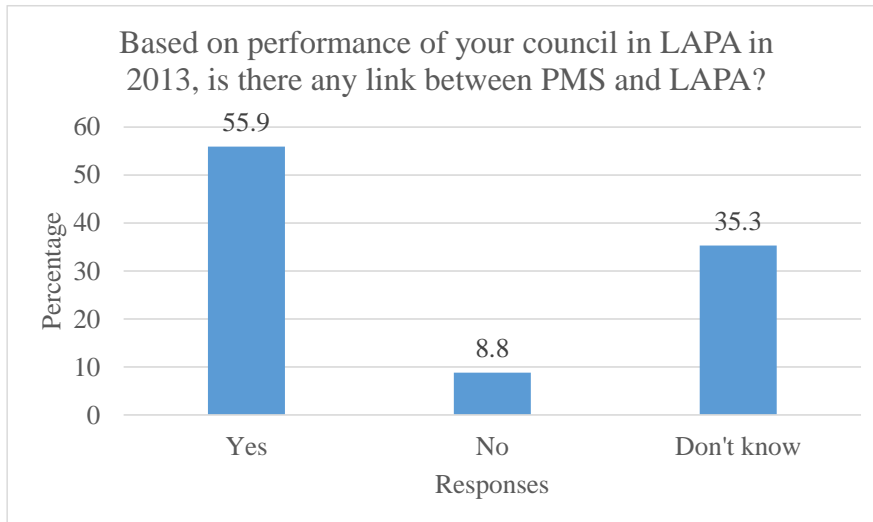


Figure 18: Based on performance of your council in LAPA in 2013, is there any link between PMS and LAPA?

Source: Researcher's own construct (2018)

The results from table 8 above shows that a large proportion (44.1%) of the respondents did not know that there is linkage and or said that there was no linkage. For those who indicated that there is a link between PMS and LAPA , it was explained that Local Authority Performance Assessment (LAPA) focuses on the overall performance of the council while PMS focuses on the individual employee's performance in the council. In addition, it was explained that one of the areas on which councils are assessed under LAPA is on institutionalisation and implementation of PMS in Councils. However, it was established that most those who indicated that there is a link between PMS and LAPA were from council top management. Furthermore, it was established that since PMS is either not implemented or only partially implemented in the councils under study, the results under LAPA assessment

are not attributed to effective implementation of PMS in the councils under study. This signalled that there was a disconnect between PMS and LAPA as PMS is not effectively being implemented in the councils under study.

4.4.3: Major challenges hindering implementation of the PMS in councils in Malawi

The third objective of the study was to ascertain major challenges that are hindering the effective implementation of the PMS in councils in Malawi. Hence, respondents and participants were asked to provide various reasons on what they thought were the major challenges that hinder the effective implementation of PMS in councils in Malawi. The reasons explained below have not been attached to any particular council or organisation despite the fact that the respondents and participants answered to this question based on their observations and experiences in their respective councils and or organisations.

The aim of introducing PMS in LAs in Malawi was to improve work performance and productivity of the LA employees. The basic understanding by the Malawi Government was that PMS would address the shortfalls of the confidential appraisal system. It was envisaged that PMS would form the basis for motivating LA employees towards improved performance and delivery of quality services to the public. However, results of this study revealed that PMS is not effective in the delivery of public services in the LAs. This section, therefore, presents some of the challenges that hinder the effective implementation of PMS in LAs in Malawi. The following were provided as some of the factors that are hindering the effective implementation of PMS in LAs in Malawi.

- **Leadership and management commitment**

Results of this study showed that council top management, managers and supervisors and the MLG&RD are key to driving PMS in councils. A larger proportion (55.9%) of the respondents indicated that top management of the council drives PMS in councils. Sanger (2008), cited in Sole (2009: 7), has argued that an effective introduction of performance measurement and performance-based management requires a committed leader with considerable skill willing to provide significant managerial investment and rewards. However, findings of the study have also revealed leadership and management challenges in the institutionalisation and implementation of PMS in the councils. As a result, PMS was ineffective in the delivery of public services. Armstrong (2009) suggested that one of the main causes of the failure of the PMS is lack of leadership.

It was revealed that councils do not own PMS despite the mandate already provided for by various legal instruments for councils to institutionalise and implement PMS. PMS was not being taken as a priority area for the council. It was pointed out that there is a belief among council employees that central government would initiate and enforce institutionalisation and implementation of PMS in councils. As a result, councils push their problems to central government and still wait from Central Government to enforce institutionalisation and implementation of PMS. It was also found that there were no vibrant communication systems on PMS in councils as there was little and or no talk about PMS in various council meetings. PMS was not being put on the agenda during various council meetings that include management meetings. In addition, it was revealed that where PMS was partially being implemented, lower level council employees were not being involved and or do not actively participate in

its implementation. As result, PMS is not owned by councils as some employees feel that PMS is for top and middle level management members only and that it does not concern them.

The study has also revealed that there was limited commitment and ownership by some top leadership and management members as they were not adequately providing the needed support, guidance and motivation to institutionalise and support PMS implementation. Furthermore, it was revealed that there was laxity among those entrusted with the task of enforcing PMS implementation coupled with non-commitment to adhere to central government directive on PMS implementation. In addition, it was revealed that there was lack of consistent administrative leadership in councils due to frequent postings. It was also established that some council leaders and management members were not taking part in the PMS processes .This finding on leadership challenges is inconsistent to one of the characteristics of an effective PMS. In this regard, for PMS to effectively be implemented, top leadership and management of an organisation must demonstrate commitment and ownership of the PMS. The understanding is that top leadership and management commitment to PMS sets the pace for PMS to move. In addition, top leadership and management that is committed to and own PMS can ably understand how useful theories of PMS are in understanding the consequences of performance management practices on individual employees and utilise them in the improvement of performance. This is the case because these theories which include expectancy, goal setting and equity have implications for managers which include provision of rewards or recognition, joint setting of goals and targets, and provision of feedback.

The finding on leadership and management challenges is also inconsistent to the observation by Lawler (2005) as reported by Risher (2005), cited in Armstrong (2009:76), that executives need to demonstrate their strong commitment to the PMS and the importance of high performance. In addition, it is inconsistent to the finding of Dzimbiri (2009) who found that from both successes and challenges experienced in PMS in the Botswana Public Service, one lesson learnt was that top level commitment was crucial for sustainability of the reform. The finding also contradicts the finding of a survey of human resource managers conducted by Lawler and McDermott in 2003, cited in Armstrong (2009:179), on the nature and effectiveness of PMS in large and small sized organisations in USA which found that it was important that line managers own the PMS. However, the finding on leadership challenge is consistent to the finding of Kalowamfumbi (2013) who found that the Malawi government in general and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in particular, were failing to implement PMS effectively due to varying challenges that were generic to the entire Malawi Civil Service which included lack of leadership and management commitment. Hence, how can PMS be effective in the delivery of services in councils in Malawi in the absence of commitment to and ownership of PMS by top leadership and management? Burns and Scapens (2000) believe that change occurs from the influence of powerful individuals and departments.

The finding on leadership and management challenges is also inconsistent to the findings of Jurnal and Siti-Nibiha (2015) who evaluated the successful implementation of PMS in Sukabumi City Council in Indonesia Local Government and found that PMS adoption relied on directives from senior management and overcoming the council's members' lack of technical skills with training and

increased levels of supervisory and monitoring mechanisms. They found that the mayor played a major role in the institutionalisation of the PMS especially in integrating the outcome-based measures (indicators) into the planning, reporting, monitoring and evaluation and reward systems. In this regard, leadership is critical in designing and deploying effective performance measurement and management systems. Clear and visible involvement of senior executives and managers is a necessary part of successful performance measurement and management system (Bourgault and Tremblay, 1994; Hennessey, 1998; Poister, 2003; cited in Sole, 2009: 7).

Managers have the responsibility to plan, organise, direct, control and budget (Government of Malawi Management Handbook, 2003:7; Northouse (2007), cited in Chidwala, 2013: 56). Through planning, organising, directing, controlling and budgeting, DC/CEO, Administrators, Human Resource Management Officers (HRMO) and other key staff from councils and central government are critical in ensuring that local authorities rightfully play their role for effective institutionalisation and implementation of PMS in councils. Leadership and management in this regard has to be bold to institutionalise PMS, measure achievements and acknowledge failures on PMS and ensure putting in place strategies that would enhance effective and successful implementation of PMS in councils.

The researcher believes that if council leadership and management played their role diligently and rightfully, then subordinates would also be able to fully own PMS and participate in its institutionalisation and implementation. It is good and committed leadership and management that can facilitate effective PMS implementation;

provision of guidance; and mobilisation of resources to enable the councils to deliver quality services to the public. It is also good and committed leadership and management that can assist in instilling sense of professionalism among council employees by among other things taking interest in the institutionalisation and progress of PMS implementation. In addition, good and committed leadership and management can bring formality to the performance management reviews and in turn influence employee commitment to achieving targets and improving performance. Furthermore, good leadership and management may understand objectives of PMS and those of the councils. As a result, they may avoid creating unnecessary tasks that in the end may derail the process of attaining PMS objectives.

The study also revealed that a culture of deliberately ignoring public service rules and regulations, policies, guidelines and procedures had developed and taken root in councils. The study found that a significant proportion (61.8%) of the respondents accepted that their councils had Performance Management Guidelines. The availability of Performance Management Policy and Procedures Handbook (2008) suggested that there was an increased opportunity in councils in terms of preparing objectives for individuals, appraisals, performance-based rewards and sanctions, contracts/agreements, counselling, mentoring and coaching. However, it was found that Council leadership and management were not adhering to instruments related to institutionalisation and implementation of PMS. Furthermore, there was laxity in the institutionalisation and enforcement of implementation of PMS by leadership and management in councils. How can PMS be effective in the delivery of services in the absence of enforcement and adherence to rules, regulations, policies and guidelines related to PMS institutionalisation and implementation? PMS will not be effective in

the delivery of services without enforcement of and or adherence to instruments related to PMS. The researcher believes that it is strong and committed leadership and management that can enforce adherence to instruments related to PMS. They can issue directives and impose adoption, institutionalisation and implementation of PMS in councils in Malawi.

The practical implication of the finding on leadership and management challenges is that there is need for consistent administrative leadership and management in councils. Furthermore, there is need for commitment to and ownership of PMS from leaders and managers of local authorities to improve the effectiveness of the PMS in the delivery of services to the public. In addition, there is need for adherence and enforcement of PMS related instruments. When PMS is systematically and or properly institutionalised in councils, rules and supportive practices developed and put in place, PMS implementation would be effective. The available rules, procedures and guidelines on PMS implementation should help to routinise the PMS implementation and this in turn would improve council performance. In this regard, leadership and management should openly pronounce their support to PMS implementation and impose adoption and institutionalisation of the PMS in councils. They should also make it clear that institutionalisation and implementation of PMS in councils is a serious central government as well as council policy; and that successful PMS implementation is not an option.

- **Inadequate financial resources to support institutionalisation and implementation of PMS**

The study revealed that lack of and or inadequate financial resources was one of the factors that was hindering the effective institutionalisation and implementation of PMS in councils in Malawi. It was revealed that PMS implementation was not being budgeted for and or being inadequately budgeted for by the councils. In addition, participants pointed out that promises in the budget were not being honoured by central government as they said that budget allocations in councils were not tallying with actual funding. Furthermore, it was explained that there was inadequate and erratic funding as well as ineffective accountability in local authorities. Below is what one participant had to say:

The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development need to be serious and support councils financially so that PMS is seen to be operating. Otherwise PMS is a system that is not being taken seriously. No incentives are given to performers and no sanctions are given to non-performers (Participant, April 2018).

This may suggest that councils were not prioritising PMS implementation as allocation of financial resources in the budget sometimes depends on council priorities. Furthermore, this may also suggest leadership and management challenges. In this regard, how can central government as well as councils set PMS agenda for councils without allocating adequate resources for its effective institutionalisation and implementation? PMS implementation may not be effective in the delivery of services in the councils in the absence of sufficient financial resources.

It was established during the study that Councils in Malawi are wholly dependent on central government for their development budget and significantly dependent on the central government for the recurrent budget. This overdependence on central government might have been contributing to stifling the effective institutionalisation and implementation of PMS in councils in Malawi which in turn is resulting in ineffective service delivery. Mustafa (2017) observed that councils have been weak and resource constrained for the past 50 years due to inter-alia overreliance on central government grants which were reduced and disbursed erratically; abuse of revenue generating facilities for district councils; and corruption and plundering of the little that has been generated. Furthermore, Mzembe (2001:1) and Kaluwa et al (1998:2) as cited in Mustafa (2017:3227-3228) observed that the shortage of finances is aggravated by the narrow or low revenue base for the locally generated revenue; lack of effective information systems; inadequate and inappropriate skills and techniques for efficient revenue mobilisation; financial mismanagement and prevalence of corrupt practices and misallocation of funds in some district councils.

It was also established that central government as well as councils relied on donor support to implement PMS whose support was not sustainable. For example, it was found that development of Performance Management Policy and Procedures Handbook for the Malawi Civil Service (2008), introduction of PMS in councils in 2008, development of councils' strategic plans, and training few council employees on PMS were supported by donors. The researcher supports the view that for any change to be institutionalised and sustained, a continuous supply of financial, human and material resources is important. In this regard, making available sufficient financial resources in councils is crucial for capacity building as cascading PMS down

to the lower levels requires extensive training and hands-on orientation. If councils do not allocate funds and or allocate insufficient funds for implementation of PMS, then it means principles and values enshrined in the Performance Management Policy and Procedures Handbook for the Malawi Civil Service (2008) will not be upheld. Furthermore, councils and individual council employees will not be able to deliver services to the public as expected. Simbanegavi (2017) advised that local authorities in Malawi needed to be adequately funded for them to effectively play their role. In this regard, councils need to be adequately funded and prioritise PMS if PMS is to be effective in the delivery of services. Furthermore, there is need to make PMS a part of the budgeting process and integrate it with other systems of the councils in order to improve it as a system.

- **Inadequate capacity and Training**

It was found that councils have inadequate human resource capacity both in terms of quantity and quality to implement council's activities including PMS. In terms of quantity, it was established that there were a lot of vacancies in senior and key positions in councils like on Human Resource Management Officer (HRMO) and others due to high staff turnover and frequent postings. It was further revealed that those vacancies were not being filled by either central government or councils. What was established then was that councils were making administrative arrangements where some employees were being appointed on acting basis on some of the vacant positions. As a result, it was observed that some units or sections or departments of the council like the Human Resource Section were weak to effectively facilitate PMS institutionalisation and implementation.

On quality of human resource in councils, respondents and participants revealed that most council employees lack adequate knowledge, skills, and understanding on how to effectively institutionalise and implement PMS. It was acknowledged that some council employees were not skilful and or knowledgeable in appraising their subordinates. The study also established that only few council top management members were trained and or oriented during training of trainers on PMS in 2008 which was facilitated by DHRM&D in conjunction with the MLG&RD. The training was not cascaded to other council employees as per central government expectation. From what respondents and participants said, central government as well as councils were not doing enough to train, orient and sensitise employees on PMS so that they acquire the relevant knowledge, skills and understanding for institutionalising and implementing PMS. Furthermore, some participants still showed that they did not understand the objectives of PMS in councils and how to complete performance appraisal forms. The little knowledge makes them not to appreciate the PMS.

It was established that lack of and or inadequate capacity and capabilities of council employees was one of the factors that hindered effective institutionalisation and implementation of PMS in councils in Malawi. As such, PMS has not been institutionalised and implemented as expected. PMS as a complex and integrated process requires the strengthening of individuals as well as the councils. In this regard, it requires different set of skills, abilities and knowledge for its effective institutionalisation and implementation. Council leadership and management as well as central government is aware that council staff need skills and competence development. The study found that central government as well as council leadership do not build adequate capacity and capabilities of council employees for effective

institutionalisation and implementation of PMS. Council employees were expected to be trained and or oriented on PMS institutionalisation and implementation, but only few were trained and the training was not cascaded to the lower and middle level council employees. In addition, lack of capacity and or capability within the councils may suggest that Performance Management Policy and Procedures Handbook for the Malawi Civil Service (2008) and PMS were delinked from and or weakly linked to council practices. Thus, respondents and participants were sceptical that staff remuneration, identification of capacity needs of employees, selecting council employees for training, and rewards and sanctions in councils were linked to PMS.

Results of the study also revealed that Performance review is not the most relevant possible criteria for selecting staff for training in the councils. This was the case because only a small proportion (11.8%) of the respondents said that performance review is the most relevant possible criteria for selecting staff for training in the councils. In addition, 73.5% of the respondents were sceptical on the statement that performance review of employees is used to identify the capacity needs of employees in councils. These responses indicated limitations with the performance appraisal system and the manner it was applied. Furthermore, they suggested absence of a well-structured mechanism for identifying training needs in councils. While some council employees were undertaking various courses to enhance their capacities or capabilities, it was reported that some of them were not linked to performance gaps which could have been identified during the PMS cycle. This was the case because it was also established that performance reviews were not being conducted. Lack of performance reviews results in lack of proper documentation on PMS implementation as well as lack of feedback practices which are very critical in determining the degree to which PMS could be rated effective.

The practical implication of the finding on criteria for selecting staff for training is that councils may lack targeted training. As such, some council employees may be requesting financial assistance to undertake various programmes or courses of their choice which might not have direct link to their tasks. This finding is inconsistent with some provisions of the Performance Management Policy and Procedures Handbook for the Malawi Civil Service (2008) which clearly highlights steps for handling good and poor performance. Since it has been found that currently PMS is not systematically institutionalised and implemented, identification of performance gaps and targeted engagement in skills development courses in order to enhance effectiveness in the delivery of services in councils was weakly being done. This to some extent meant that there is less focus on individual contribution or performance on the job in the councils. However, some councils have Human Resource Development Plans developed and reviewed every year where council employees advise human resources of the programmes that they wish to be considered for in the following year.

- **Lack of proper rewards and sanctions**

It was found that where PMS is partially being implemented rewards and sanctions on performance were not being utilised. There is lack of and or inadequate enforcement on rewards and sanctions related to PMS. Good performance was not adequately being recognised and rewarded while poor performance was also not adequately being sanctioned. For example, for participants who had ever been appraised, it was reported that the performance of such employees was not rewarded or sanctioned. They said that one explanation to lack of rewards and sanctions in councils could be that councils have inadequate financial resources to support various council activities

including supporting PMS. As a result, participants wondered why implement and or enforce implementation of PMS in the absence of proper rewards and sanctions.

The Performance Management Policy and Procedures Handbook for the Malawi Civil Service (2008) under Section VI provides an elaborate rewards and sanctions guidelines for rewarding good performance and penalising consistent non-performers. Central government developed reward and sanctions guidelines to encourage councils to institutionalise and implement PMS. According to the Malawi Government Rewards and Sanctions Guidelines on Performance Management (2014), effective recognition enhances employee retention, motivation and increases employee productivity which contributes to organisational performance. In this regard, council leadership and management was supposed to set procedures, set targets and ensure that there was stability in the councils. Council employees who perform well were supposed to be rewarded or recognised and this would ensure stability. Furthermore, those who consistently fail to perform and conduct themselves according to rules and regulations were supposed to be sanctioned and this would again ensure stability in councils. This is the case because in many organisations, incentive measures such as rewards or recognition and sanctions are used to motivate employees to increase performance and this in turn ensures consolidation of sustenance of PMS. Literature also indicates that salaries, advancements and promotions have to be tied to performance. In this respect, PMS has to link individual employee's performance to rewards and sanctions so as to facilitate retention and encouragement of good performance and to effectively discourage poor or non-performance.

However, results of the study also revealed that there was disjointedness between PMS and rewards and sanctions in councils in Malawi. It was found that 64.7% of the respondents were sceptical on the statement that remuneration is strongly linked to employee performance as they either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement. In addition, a large proportion of the respondents (61.7%) was sceptical on the statement that performance review is linked in a significant manner with rewards and sanctions in councils. Instances of disjointedness between performance appraisal and rewards and sanctions occurred due to failure to follow established procedures and guidelines to enforce rewards and sanctions. It was revealed that rewards and sanctions system was not well established and institutionalised in councils to enforce PMS adoption and institutionalisation and to motivate council employees to improve council performance. Rewards or recognition and sanctions were partially and or not being applied in councils. In addition, there was lack of and or inadequate information in councils from which decisions could be made on whether to reward or recognise good performance and or encourage under-performers. While it may be said that lack of and or inadequate financial resources in councils hinders the application of rewards or recognition and sanctions, the researcher shares the view that lack of strong and committed council leadership and management is also partly to blame as leadership and management is supposed to coerce application of rewards and sanctions on performance in councils.

The practical implication of this finding is that there is no effective recognition of employees in councils as rewards and sanctions appear to exist on paper. As such, a large proportion (61.8%) of respondents were dissatisfied with PMS implementation in their councils. Some participants felt that there was no need to work hard but

should work so that they get paid. They further explained that implementation of PMS in councils has no significant positive results for them. The researcher maintains that public service delivery will remain poor in councils as long as employees are not rewarded or recognised and sanctioned according to performance. Furthermore, the public will continue to raise concerns about councils hinging on low quality of public services delivery; deterioration of discipline; deterioration of work ethics; proliferation of fraud and corruption; negative attitudes of people towards public services; and questionable public servants' behaviours as long as rewards and sanctions are not institutionalised in councils.

- **Lack of monitoring and evaluation system**

It was revealed that there was lack of a monitoring and evaluation system on PMS in the councils. There is no system put in place to monitor progress of institutionalisation and implementation of PMS in the councils. According to the respondents and participants where PMS was partially conducted, appraisal forms were filled only once a year and these were hardly followed up. As such, no dialogue and feedback was provided on PMS. Hence, some respondents and participants wondered how effective PMS would be in the delivery of public services in the absence of a well-structured system of monitoring and evaluating the PMS in councils. Furthermore, some participants explained that no evaluation of the PMS has been conducted in councils since it was introduced in 2008.

PMS was introduced in the councils in Malawi in 2008 and the expectation of central government and other key stakeholders including council employees was that implementation of PMS would be monitored at intervals in order to keep a check on

the success and or failure of the system; and evaluated at some intervals by central government with the view to assess how well PMS was being implemented and to correct deviations in the implementation process.

Lack of a monitoring and evaluation system on PMS activities in the councils signalled the absence of a well institutionalised and implemented PMS in these councils. This finding is consistent to one of the findings of Wild, Chambers, King and Harns (2012) who reviewed existing evidence on common constraints and incentive problems in service delivery across multiple developing countries (including Malawi) and found that lack of effective performance oversight is one of the constraint and incentive problems in service delivery especially where formal processes are not followed or enforced and or informal processes are insufficient.

Dunn (1994), cited in Dzimbiri (2009: 51), points out that monitoring provides policy-relevant knowledge about the consequences of adopted policies and or programmes, thus assisting policy-makers in the implementation phase. Furthermore, he says that evaluation yields policy-relevant knowledge about discrepancies between expected and actual policy performance, thus assisting policy-makers in the policy assessment phase. Hence, PMS as a complex process, needs continuous monitoring and evaluation if it is to be effective in the delivery of services in councils. In this regard, performance monitoring as an on-going process in PMS would help councils to assess the degree of compliance, discover unintended consequences, identify implementation obstacles and constraints and locate sources of responsibility. Furthermore, performance evaluation would help look at whether the council is

performing or underperforming and why there is underperformance and this could be conducted either quarterly or annually.

Monitoring and evaluation of PMS in councils was supposed be conducted by either councils themselves and or by central government through DHRM&D or MLG&RD or LGSC or PED under OPC. In addition, it was at the discretion of either councils or central government to hire consultants to evaluate PMS institutionalisation and implementation in councils. However, the study found that no such formal monitoring and evaluation was being conducted in the councils to establish whether there have been a positive change in councils as a result of introduction of PMS in councils since 2008. In addition, it was verified that the councils were not submitting appraisal reports to DHRM&D or MLG&RD and or LGSC as was required by the Performance Management Policy and Procedures Handbook for the Malawi Civil Service (2008). One of the principles of PMS as provided for in the policy and procedures handbook (2008) is that appraisals for non-contract employees should be completed on a financial year basis and that the appraisals should be completed by 31st August while contract employees should have their appraisals by the anniversary date of their contract.

How could PMS be effective in the delivery of public services in councils in Malawi in the absence of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms? Armstrong (2009) points out that one of the key features of PMS that determine the degree to which PMS would be rated effective is the presence of a formal evaluation system of PMS. The implication of the finding on monitoring and evaluation challenges is that it is may be difficult to track and assess whether or not targets were being met, and key aims and

executive priorities of the councils were being achieved. Hence, central government as well councils need to develop monitoring and evaluation mechanisms or strategy on PMS. This mechanism or strategy will be intended to keep track of effective institutionalisation and implementation of PMS in councils.

- **Frequent postings in and out of councils of key staff**

Postings of council employees are provided for in the staff regulations as they are based solely on the exigencies of service. However, it was found that frequent postings (almost every year) of some senior and key staff in leadership and management positions like DC and other council top management members is one of the areas of concern for effective institutionalisation and implementation of PMS in councils. It was established that frequent postings sometimes create human resource gaps in councils in terms of quantity and quality as new faces might not have been trained and or oriented on PMS institutionalisation and implementation. Furthermore, sometimes there are no replacements and or handovers among officers after postings.

- **Lack of ownership of PMS by councils**

It was established that councils do not own PMS despite the mandate already provided for by various legal instruments for councils to institutionalise and implement PMS. PMS was not being taken as a priority area for the council. It was pointed out that there is a belief among council employees that central government would initiate and enforce institutionalisation and implementation of PMS in councils. As a result, councils push their problems to central government and still wait from Central Government to enforce institutionalisation and implementation of PMS. It was also found that there were no vibrant communication systems on PMS in councils

as there was little and or no talk about PMS in various council meetings. PMS was not being put on the agenda during various council meetings that include management meetings. In addition, it was revealed that where PMS was partially being implemented, lower level council employees were not being involved and or do not actively participate in its implementation. As result, PMS is not owned by councils as some employees feel that PMS is for top and middle level management members only and that it does not concern them.

- **Weak enforcement of laws, policy and guidelines related to the implementation of PMS in local authorities by local authorities and other relevant institutions**

The study found that PMS is founded on a strong legal framework which is provided for in various legal instruments. However, it was established that a culture of deliberately ignoring public service rules and regulations, policies, guidelines and procedures had developed and taken root in councils. As such, it was revealed that councils were not adhering to instruments related to institutionalisation and implementation of PMS. Furthermore, it was found that there was weak enforcement of rules, regulations and policies by relevant councils and other institutions. In addition, it was observed that the councils and other relevant institutions were not playing their roles rightfully in the institutionalisation and implementation of PMS. There is still a belief among some council leadership as well other employees that central government would still initiate, provide direction and enforce institutionalisation and implementation of PMS in councils.

- **Complexity of the councils**

It was established that within the decentralisation set up, local authority service is complex especially in district councils and therefore it makes it difficult to institutionalise and implement PMS. The complexity comes from the multiple tasks, including any other duties that officers must carry out and the number of masters who must be attended to. Furthermore, the complexity comes from the multiple sectors/departments/units that have devolved to the council. For example, health, education and agriculture sectors which have several units/departments are among the sectors that have devolved to councils. In addition, within the local authority service set up, some of the supervisors are less qualified than their subordinates. This also inherently poses a challenge as the subordinates wonder how a less qualified supervisor would assess them under PMS if properly implemented. The main purpose of introducing PMS was to motivate council employees at all levels and some council employees see no merit in having less qualified supervisors being involved in appraising more qualified subordinates in the performance appraisal process.

- **Complexity of the PMS**

It was found that the rating part that involves mathematical calculations makes PMS complicated to implement. As such, PMS is not user friendly because of that rating part. Furthermore, PMS is not user friendly because it is very bureaucratic and it involves a lot of processes and or activities and these hinder the effective institutionalisation implementation of PMS.

4.4.4 Suggestions on ensuring improvement in the effective implementation of the Performance Management System

The fourth objective of the study was to obtain and discuss suggestions on ensuring improvement in the effective implementation of the PMS in councils in Malawi. Hence, a question was designed to capture respondents' and participants' suggestions on ensuring improvement in the effective implementation of PMS. The suggestions explained below have not been attached to any particular council despite the fact that respondents and participants responded to this question based on their observations and experiences in their respective councils and or organisations. As such, the following were provided as some of the suggestions that if well implemented would ensure improvement in the effective institutionalisation and implementation of PMS in councils in Malawi.

- **Leadership and management commitment**

If PMS is to be effectively implemented in councils, those entrusted to implement it and or oversee its implementation must be committed to it. Furthermore, for any change to effectively take off, those entrusted to implement it must embrace it and be committed to its formulation, adoption, and implementation and monitoring and evaluation. It was explained that leadership and management commitment will likely set the pace for PMS to effectively move. Leadership and management commitment will also deal with resistance and sabotage from other staff members in the implementation of the PMS in case there may be some employees who may be resisting and trying to sabotage the effective implementation of the PMS.

- **Provision of adequate financial resources**

Councils should develop realistic budgets to meet the required resources for implementing PMS and other activities. Furthermore, councils should make provisions in the budget for implementation of PMS. While councils are mandated to raise revenue from local sources, this has to be complimented by a direct transfer of funding from central government of at least 5% of the national revenue as well as grants to councils (Local Government Act, 1998). This is the case because the Malawi National Decentralisation Policy (1998) recognises that central government still has a part to play in financial assistance. In this regard, it was suggested that central government should be committed to providing adequate funds and honour the approved budgets for councils. Furthermore, it was suggested that central government should minimise overreliance on donor support for PMS implementation as their funding is erratic and cannot sustain PMS implementation. One respondent had this to say:

Expectations of effective implementation of PMS in councils without provision of adequate financial resources to the councils is like building castles in the air; councils need adequate funds to effectively implement PMS. Therefore, it is imperative that authorities provide what is necessary for proper and effective implementation of PMS and more benefits will be realised. (Respondent; February, 2018).

There was a general feeling among respondents and participants that with adequate financial resources, PMS can effectively be implemented in councils.

- **Capacity building for human resources**

In terms of filling vacancies, councils should initiate recruitment of officers below the DC/CEO like HRMO and others by requesting authority from DHRM&D and then lobbying LGSC and or the council's Appointments and Disciplinary Committee (ADC) to recruit and fill the vacant position as per the mandate. It was also suggested that after filling the established vacant positions, councils and or central government should provide adequate remuneration in order to retain employees in council service. In terms of enhancing employee quality, it was suggested that council employees should be taken through rigorous orientation and or training on PMS in order for them to appreciate and understand PMS. This in turn will likely strengthen human resource capacity in terms of both quantity and quality for effective implementation of PMS in councils.

- **Training, orientations and or sensitisation on PMS**

Supervisors and their subordinates in councils need to be properly and adequately trained, oriented and or sensitised on PMS if PMS was to be effectively institutionalised and implemented. Through trainings, orientations and or sensitisations meetings, council employees would acquire adequate and relevant knowledge, skills, attitudes and understanding on PMS institutionalisation and implementation. Furthermore, it was suggested that there is need for both training of trainers as well as cohort training or orientation and sensitisations on PMS through workshops and meetings to ensure that many members of staff are made aware of the PMS and appreciate it. The basic understanding of the respondents and participants was that with relevant knowledge, skills and understanding on PMS, supervisors and their subordinates would be able to properly and effectively implement PMS in

councils. In this regard, the relevant knowledge, skills and understanding on PMS will help council employees get ready to take care of some critical elements of the PMS process which include development of council strategic plan; development of individual performance contracts; setting clear goals; preparation or review of job descriptions; development of individual work plans; selecting performance factors; and completing performance report form.

- **Enforcement of rewards and sanctions for performance in councils**

There is need to enforce rewards and sanctions for performance in councils. It was suggested that good performance should be recognised or rewarded while poor performance should be sanctioned. Recognising or rewarding good performance and sanctioning poor performance would act as motivation to employees and energise them to effectively institutionalise and implement PMS. This is the case because the presence of rewards and sanctions will help employees understand why they should effectively institutionalise and implement PMS in councils.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation**

There is need to be conducting on-going dialogue and feedback meetings on PMS. In addition, there is need for conducting biannual and annual performance review meetings in order to evaluate progress on PMS. The basic understanding of the respondents and participants was that an annual meeting to evaluate progress on PMS does not have the same benefits as ongoing dialogue and feedback. Furthermore, feedback that is delivered when it is most relevant enhances learning and provides the opportunity to make necessary accommodations in order to meet objectives. Respondents and participants also suggested that where PMS is partially being

implemented supervisors and employees have to move towards meeting formally twice a year in order to review how the employees were carrying out their duties; amend the work plan so as to take into account of any changes in priorities or new tasks and agree on any areas in which the employee needs to improve and the action to be taken.

- **Minimise issuing of frequent posting instructions in and out of council for some key senior council staff**

Local Government Service Commission (LGSC) in conjunction with the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLG&RD) and other line ministries should minimise frequent issuing of posting instructions for some senior and key council staff like DC and other council top management members. Furthermore, posting instructions should be done within a minimum period of stay at one council. Hence, it was suggested that there is need to review policies on transfers and postings for council senior officers. This will minimise frequent and avoidable postings and transfers which in turn will enhance stability of council employees.

- **Ownership of the PMS in councils**

Since councils are mandated by law to implement PMS, councils themselves should own PMS if the system is to be effectively implemented. They should stop relying on central government to be reminding them on PMS implementation. Furthermore, it was suggested that PMS should be put as a priority in the council and it should be put on agenda during various council meetings. It was also suggested that there is need for putting in place vibrant communication systems on PMS in councils by enhancing talk about PMS in various council meetings including during management meetings.

In addition, councils should be making a deliberate move to have PMS on their agendas and make it as a routine activity supported by the budget. Employees engage with what they feel part of and value what they help to build. Ownership will likely enhance effective implementation of PMS in councils.

- **Enforcement of laws, policy and guidelines on implementation of PMS in local authorities**

Implementation of PMS in councils is a statutory requirement. Councils, MLG&RD, DHRM&D, LGSC and PED under OPC are key in the implementation of PMS in councils. Participants explained that the law mandates councils to implement PMS. Furthermore, they indicated that DHRM&D is mandated to assist councils to develop strategic plans which are key in the effective implementation of PMS. As such, respondents and participants suggested that these institutions or organisations should enforce and or adhere to the laws, policy and guidelines related to PMS if PMS is to be effectively implemented in councils.

- **Complexity of the councils**

It was suggested that PMS should be implemented per sector. It was felt that this will reduce the bureaucracy which is now available in councils as the DC/CEO is the Controlling Officer for the council. Furthermore, it was suggested that councils should develop guidelines on how they will implement the PMS in their councils. In addition, the role of the DC/CEO on management and implementation of PMS with regard to devolved sectors should clearly be defined.

- **Complexity of the PMS process**

Respondents and participants suggested that a flexible PMS needs to be designed to suit each council in order to accommodate all council employees at all levels. They felt that PMS process should add value to councils in order to encourage employee ownership and participation in the process. As such, they suggested the PMS process should be simplified in such a way that it should be efficient and be as simple as possible while still providing necessary value to the council and its employees. They also suggested that individual contracts should be signed between subordinates and their supervisors.

4.5 Summary

This chapter has presented key findings and discussions of the study. On the status of PMS implementation, the chapter has presented findings and discussions on legal framework status on PMS, awareness among council employees on PMS, employee participation in PMS, how PMS is implemented and benefits of PMS. The chapter has further presented findings and discussions of employee perceptions towards PMS; challenges that hinder the effective institutionalisation and implementation of PMS; and suggestions on ensuring improvement in the implementation of PMS in councils in Malawi. The next chapter presents the summary, conclusion and way forward.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

5.1 Introduction

The Malawi government introduced performance management system in local authorities in Malawi in 2008 in order to improve work performance and productivity of local authority employees. The aim of the study was to analyse the effectiveness of PMS in the delivery of public services in LAs in Malawi. It tried to answer the following question: How effective is PMS in the delivery of public services in LAs in Malawi?

The key finding of the study is that PMS is not effective in the delivery of public services in the LAs under study in Malawi because it is either not implemented or only partially implemented. However, the study has also established some positives about PMS implementation in the LAs under study.

5.2 Summary

- **Implementation status of PMS**

PMS in LAs in Malawi is founded on strong legal framework. Councils are mandated by law to institutionalise and implement PMS. However, PMS is not effective in the delivery of services in the councils in Malawi because it is either not implemented or only partially implemented. Furthermore, there is laxity in enforcement and adherence to the legal framework related to PMS implementation. Where PMS was partially

implemented, it was found that most respondents were aware about PMS and those who were aware were those in the top council leadership and management. Furthermore, the performance of some categories of employees was not measured as only top and middle council management members were targeted. In addition, some councils did not have updated council strategic plans to be linked to PMS. Other findings and observations made included the following: availability of PMS guidelines developed by the central government which provided an increased opportunity in councils in terms of preparing objectives for individuals, appraisals, performance-based rewards and sanctions, contracts/agreements, counselling, mentoring and coaching; appraisal forms were being completed/filled once a year and yet targets were not set at the beginning of the appraisal period on which performance would be rated; there were lack of performance reviews; rewards and sanctions were not being enforced ; and there was lack of proper documentation on employee performance.

However, the study also found several positive developments related to the PMS. Where it was partially implemented, it was observed that some employees were focused on their work as they had concrete objectives to achieve. It was also established that some employees were able to develop work plans and joined their supervisors in agreeing on objectives on which performance would be rated. Furthermore, in certain situations, PMS provided an opportunity to supervisors and their subordinates for partial implementation, especially when they were able to interact and share their strengths and weaknesses on the performance of their jobs in relation to their agreed objectives. In such situations, employees were also able to improve their performance, which in turn had the potential of improving performance

of the council. It was also noted that where PMS was partially implemented, there was an element of enhanced competition among employees to improve their performance through training. Some employees were enthusiastic to go for training so that they could practice acquired knowledge in the councils. Another positive development regarding PMS was that councils were in possession of relevant documents for implementation of the system. Furthermore, some councils were able to put in place their own policies on which performance would be rated. For example, strategic plans were available which were linked to the PMS although in some councils they were not updated. In addition, it was also observed that good performance was being rewarded especially in the education (primary education) and agriculture sectors whereby high performers were rewarded based on set targets. This is part of what PMS entails in order to enhance service delivery in councils.

PMS was not adequately addressing the shortfalls/limitations which were observed in the abandoned confidential system.

- **Employee perceptions towards PMS**

Some were sceptical about PMS. They felt that PMS was just on paper and that there was still closed system of appraising council employees; where it was partially implemented, it was just a formality as appraisals forms were just filled at the end of a financial year to fulfil central government requirement. It has no much impact as it is not linked to rewards and sanctions; and that it is complex and unfriendly.

Others were optimistic about PMS. They felt that PMS was a good tool for improving service delivery in councils if properly institutionalises and implemented. It is a good system compared to the earlier confidential system of staff appraisal.

- **Major challenges that hinder effective implementation of PMS in councils in Malawi**

Councils have inadequate financial resources to support PMS institutionalisation and implementation. As a result, PMS is not prioritised and not made a part of the council budgeting process. In addition, while there are some vacancies in key positions in the LAs, some council employees lack adequate knowledge, skills and understanding on how to effectively implement PMS due to lack of and or inadequate orientation and training on PMS. Furthermore, frequent postings of some key council employees are creating instability in councils as sometimes there are no replacements after postings out as well as no handovers. There was also lack of commitment and interest from top leadership and management to institutionalise and implement PMS in councils. Rules, regulations, policy, guidelines and procedures related to PMS were available but were not being enforced and adhered to. Another challenge was lack of ownership of PMS by councils. As a result, councils do not prioritise PMS and also they do not make PMS a part of the council budgeting process. Furthermore, lack of rewards and sanctions affected effective implementation of PMS. In this regard, good performance was not adequately rewarded and or recognised while poor performance was not sanctioned. The other challenge established was complexity of PMS. It was found that the Mathematical rating part in PMS complicates PMS. Also PMS is unfriendly as it is bureaucratic and involves a lot of processes and activities. The other challenge hindering the effective implementation of PMS was complexity of council setup. Council officials have multiple tasks that they have to carry out and a number of players who must be attended to as many sectors have devolved to the council and this has implications on PMS institutionalisation and implementation. Lack of monitoring and evaluation system also contributed to the ineffectiveness of PMS in

the delivery of public services in LAs in Malawi. Performance reviews were not being conducted. There were no regular follow-ups to monitor progress on PMS and act as reference point during decision making.

PMS has also not been effective in its institutionalisation and implementation in the councils as subtly discussed in this study on the basis of lack of and or inadequate focus on individual employee contribution; lack of feedback practices; and lack of and or inadequate documentation on PMS implementation. The presentation on the major challenges that hinder the effective implementation of PMS shows that these challenges are interrelated. Furthermore, the discussions suggest that the issues were not adequately being addressed by councils themselves and or by central government in order to ensure improvement in the effective institutionalisation and implementation of PMS in councils in Malawi. Hence, when dealing with issues of non-institutionalisation or implementation and partial institutionalisation or implementation of PMS in councils in Malawi, they should be dealt with in an integrated manner as each issue has the potential to lead to the other.

In light of the findings and challenges explained in this study, PMS is still worth canvassing for in local authorities in Malawi. Although the study has revealed that PMS is not effective in the delivery of public services in the LAs due to some of the factors that were established in the study, PMS in its ideal form is a good system. Only that in practice, there are those challenges that are being faced in its institutionalisation and implementation. If well implemented, PMS has benefits. For local authorities, PMS has the potential to help top management achieve strategic business objectives. In this regard, PMS has the potential to link council goals and

individual goals and reinforce behaviours consistent with the attainment of council goals. Furthermore, PMS has the potential to furnish local councils with valid and useful information for making administrative decisions about employees. Thirdly, PMS has the potential to inform council employees about how they are performing and about the council's and supervisors' expectations and what aspects of work the supervisor believes are most important. Fourthly, PMS has the potential to help council managers to use feedback for development purposes. In this regard, council managers can use feedback to coach employees and improve performance on an on-going basis. This is so because feedback allows for the identification of strengths and weaknesses and causes of performance deficiencies. The other benefit is that PMS has the potential to help council managers with information to be used in workplace planning and allocation of human resources. This is the case because PMS are the means through which accurate talent inventories can be assembled. The researcher is also canvassing for PMS in local authorities on the basis that PMS has the potential to help local authorities collect useful information that can be used for various purposes. For example, PMS can allow local authorities for the documentation of important personnel decisions which may be useful especially in the case of lawsuits.

The suggestions on ensuring improvement in PMS institutionalisation and implementation in councils in Malawi suggest that the perceptions as well as the challenges can be dealt with if PMS is to be effective in the delivery of public services in the councils. If the suggestions are not addressed, then the researcher is worried that PMS will indeed just be on paper. The effort, pomp and enthusiasm that was there when introducing PMS in councils in 2008 will not be appreciated. This is the

case because the researcher feels that as long as PMS is not well institutionalised and implemented in councils in Malawi, public service delivery in councils will continue to remain poor. Furthermore, the public will continue to raise concerns about councils hinging on low quality of public service delivery; deterioration of discipline; deterioration of work ethics; proliferation of fraud and corruption; negative attitudes of people towards public services; and questionable public servants' behaviour as long as PMS is not properly institutionalised and implemented. However, this may not be what the Malawi Government as well as Councils themselves had intended when introducing PMS in councils in Malawi in 2008.

5.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, while PMS is not well institutionalised and implemented in councils and therefore not effective in the delivery of public services, there is potential that it can enhance effective public service delivery in the councils. What is required is to consider addressing the challenges being encountered in the process of institutionalisation and implementation.

5.4 Future Research

From the study findings and discussions, it may also be observed that there are a lot of issues on PMS in councils in Malawi. As such, what has been found and discussed in this study is not exhaustive on all the issues affecting and or related to PMS in councils in Malawi. This study contributes to the discussions on PMS strategies that should be taken into consideration by councils as well as central government to ensure effective institutionalisation and implementation of PMS in councils in Malawi.

Hence, there is need to conduct further research in this area to uncover and understand various issues surrounding PMS in councils in Malawi in order to make councils effective, efficient, accountable and productive institutions capable of providing quality services to the public . In this regard, future research is still required to analyse the extent to which PMS is effective in the delivery of public services in all councils in Malawi and the challenges faced by different councils whose pool of experiences can inform in improvements and overall effectiveness of councils through the implementation of PMS. In addition, future research could assess knowledge and skills of council top leadership and management that can improve the effectiveness of implementation of PMS and its impact.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Letter of identification from the University of Malawi - Chancellor College



Principal
Prof. Richard Tambulasi, BA (Pub Admin), BPA (Hons), MPA, Ph.D
Our Ref: PA/4/11
Your Ref:

CHANCELLOR COLLEGE
P.O. Box 280, Zomba, Malawi
Telephone: (265) 01524 222
Fax: (265) 01524 046
Email: principal@cc.ac.mw

Department of Political and Administrative Studies

22nd January 2018

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION: MR DOMINIC MWANDIRA - MA/PAM/14/16

The bearer of this letter is Mr Dominic Mwandira. He is a Master in Public Administration and Management student in the Department of Political and Administrative Studies at Chancellor College.

Our students are required to write a dissertation in order to complete their master's programme. Therefore, Mr Mwandira intends to carry out a data gathering exercise for this purpose in your office.

Any assistance rendered to him in the course of this exercise will be highly appreciated. Let me also point out that the information gathered will be treated as confidential and purely for academic purposes.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'HMK'.

Associate Prof. Happy M. Kayuni, PhD
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

HMK/am

Appendix 2: Consent Letter to Chief Executive Officer of Blantyre City Council

Mangochi District Council
P/Bag 138
Mangochi
29th January, 2018

The Chief Executive Officer
Blantyre City Council
Blantyre

Dear Sir/Madam,

REQUEST FOR CONSENT

I am Dominic Mwandira, Principal Administrative Officer for Mangochi District Council. I am a student at the University of Malawi , Chancellor College; studying for the degree of Master of Public Administration and Management (MPAM) in the 2016/2018 academic years.


I am conducting a study on “Analysis of Performance Management System (PMS) in Local Authorities in Malawi.” The purpose is to get a better understanding on the effectiveness of administering the Performance Management System in Local Authorities in Malawi. To get necessary information for the analysis of Performance Management System in Local Authorities in Malawi, I will conduct Focus Group Discussions and administer questionnaires in two city councils and two district councils and conduct interviews with officials from Local Government Service Commission, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and Department of Human Resource Management and Development to seek views and or opinions of various council employees and officials on Performance Management System. Your council’s selection is based on my understanding that it is one of the councils that can positively contribute to the analysis process.

I, therefore, seek for your consent to administer questionnaires in your council. I propose that I visit your council and distribute the questionnaires on **Thursday 1st February, 2018**. The questionnaires will be distributed to the Chief Executive, Heads of Directorates and officers in the Human Resource Section.

Your consent is sought

Yours faithfully,


Dominic Mwandira
0888 353 788 / 0999 088 788

BLANTYRE CITY COUNCIL	
ADMIN SERVICES DEPT	
RECEIVED	2018 -02- 06
Referred To	
Committee	
File	No.

Appendix 3: Consent Form

University of Malawi - Chancellor College

January, 2018

“Analysis of Performance Management System in Local Authorities in Malawi”

CONSENT FORM

Dear Participant(s),

I am Dominic Mwandira, a student at the University of Malawi , Chancellor College; studying for the degree of Master of Public Administration and Management (MPAM) in the 2016/2018 academic years. I am conducting a study on “Analysis of Performance Management System (PMS) in Local Authorities in Malawi.” The purpose is to get a better understanding on the effectiveness of administering the Performance Management System in Local Authorities in Malawi. To get necessary information for the analysis of Performance Management System in Local Authorities in Malawi, I will conduct Focus Group Discussions and administer questionnaires in two city councils and two district councils and conduct interviews with officials from Local Government Service Commission, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and Department of Human Resource Management and Development to seek views and or opinions of various council employees and officials on Performance Management System. Your selection is based on my understanding that you are the people/one of the people who can positively contribute to the analysis process.

I, therefore, seek for your consent to be one of the participants to this exercise. Be informed that participation in this exercise is voluntary and you can withdraw any time along the discussions if you feel like doing so. It is also worth mentioning that participation in this exercise will not earn you any financial or material benefit or any other benefit other than the benefits which may be realised from the outcome of the Analysis of the Performance Management System in Local Authorities in Malawi. However, your participation is very vital as it will inform the analysis process which will be critical for the effective administration of the Performance Management System in your council as well as other councils in Malawi. Also be informed that your views and or opinions will not be used for any other work apart from for the purpose of this study. Furthermore, you identity will not be disclosed to any other party or in any forum.

By signing this form, it means you have provided consent to participate in this exercise and that you have also provided permission to use your views and or opinions

Name of participant(s) or participants(s) representative

.....Date

Appendix 4: Questionnaire

ANALYSIS OF EFFECTIVENESS OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (PMS) IN THE DELIVERY OF PUBLIC SERVICES IN LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN MALAWI

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE RESPONDENT

The questions in this questionnaire are designed to solicit your views and or opinion on a number of issues pertaining to Performance Management System (PMS) in your council. There is no right or wrong answer. You may indicate your opinion by an 'X' in one of the options aligned to the right of every question. Please make only one selection except where instructed otherwise. In the event that your opinion does not match any of the available options, please choose the one that is closest to your considered judgement, and one that best describes the situation as it prevails in your council but not what you feel should be the case.

The confidentiality of your responses is guaranteed. Your identity will not be passed over to any third party without your consent. The biographical data requested below is for statistical and follow-up purposes only should the need arise.

Biographical Data

1. Name of Respondent:

2. Gender: a) Male 1 b) Female 2 3. Age years

4. Highest Education



- a) None 0
- b) Junior Certificate of Education 1
- c) Malawi School Certificate of Education 2
- d) Diploma 3
- e) Degree 4
- f) Post Graduate Diploma 5
- g) Master's Degree 6
- h) PhD 7

5. Field of Training

6. Position Held.....

7. Number of Years in Post (*work experience*) years

8. Staff Cadre:

- a) Administrative staff 1
- b) Technical staff 2
- c) Support staff 3

9. Name of Council:

- a) Mzuzu 1
- b) Blantyre 2
- c) Zomba 3
- d) Salima 4

10. Type of Council: a) City 1 b) District 2

I. Status of implementation of performance management system

Employee Awareness

11. Have you ever heard of performance management system (PMS) in the councils?

a) Yes 1 b) No 2

12. If yes, how did you get an opportunity to hear about PMS in relation to councils?

a) In a PMS training of trainers workshop 5

b) In my current work station during a PMS orientation session 4

c) In my previous work station during a PMS orientation Session 3

d) Through Circulars on PMS from the Ministry of Local Government 2

e) Through media 1

13. Does your organisation have a functional performance management system in place?

a) Yes 1 b) No 2 c) Don't know 9

14. Does the council have Performance Management System Guidelines?

a) Yes 1 b) No 2 c) Don't know 9

15. During the past year, how often have officials from the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development or Local Government Service Commission and or Department of Human Resource Management and Development contacted your council on issues related to PMS?

a) Often 3

- b) A few times 2
- c) only once 1
- d) Never 0
- e) Don't know 9

Employee participation in performance management system

16. Have you ever filled the open performance appraisal forms since employed in Council?

- a) Yes 1 b) No 2

17. If yes, how many times did you fill in the open performance appraisal forms?

- a) Once 7
- b) Twice 6
- c) Every year 5
- d) Every after two years 4
- e) Every year of promotion 3
- f) Every time of pressure from top management 2
- g) Other time (specify) 1

How performance management system is being implemented

18. How often is performance appraisal performed annually in your council?

- a) Quarterly 4

- b) Three times 3
- c) Twice 2
- d) Once 1
- e) Never 0
- f) Don't know 9

19. Who drives the Performance Management System in your council?

- a) Top management of the council 5
- b) Managers and supervisors in the council 4
- c) Local Government Service Commission 3
- d) The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development 2
- e) Other (specify) 1
- f) Don't know 9

20. Indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statement according to the situation in your council: The performance appraisal/review and the council objectives are strongly linked.

- a) Strongly agree 5
- b) Agree 4
- c) Neither agree nor disagree 3
- d) Disagree 2
- e) Strongly disagree 1

f) Don't know 9

Benefits of performance management system

21. Is the performance appraisal/review linked in a significant manner with rewards and sanctions for employees in your council?

- a) There are strong links 4
- b) Linked 3
- c) Somewhat linked 2
- d) Weakly 1
- e) Not linked at all 0
- f) Don't know 9

22. Indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statement according to the situation in your council: The remuneration in your organisation is strongly linked to the employee's performance.

- a) Strongly agree 5
- b) Agree 4
- c) Neither agree nor disagree 3
- d) Disagree 2
- e) Strongly disagree 1
- f) Don't know 9

23. Is the performance review of employees used to identify the capacity needs of employees in your council?

- a) Always 4
- b) Often times 3
- c) Sometimes 2
- d) Rarely 1
- e) Not at all 0
- f) Don't Know 9

24. Which of the following possible criteria is the most relevant criteria used for selecting staff for training in your council?

- a) Seniority of staff 1
- b) Organisational capacity needs 2
- c) Prerogative of the ministry/department responsible for local government 3
- d) Performance review 4
- e) Personal relationships 5
- f) Employee initiative 6

25. Are the results from the performance reviews used to make adjustments to employees' work objectives in your council?

- a) Always 4
- b) Often times 3
- c) Sometimes 2
- d) Rarely 1
-

- e) Not at all 0
- f) Don't know 9

ii. Employees' perceptions towards performance management system

26. How interested would you say you are in performance management system in your council?

- a) Very interested 3
- b) Somewhat interested 2
- c) Not very interested 1
- d) Not at all interested 0
- e) Don't know 9

27. When you get together in your council with other council employees, how often would you say you discuss performance management system issues?

- a) Frequently 2
- b) Occasionally 1
- c) Never 0
- d) Don't know 9

28. Indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statement according to the situation in your council: Employee performance in your organisation has improved because of the performance reviews.

- a) Strongly agree 5

- b) Agree 4
- c) Neither agree nor disagree 3
- d) Disagree 2
- e) Strongly disagree 1
- f) Don't know 9

29. In general, how would you describe the performance of your council?

- a) Very good 5
- b) Fairly good 4
- c) Neither good nor bad 3
- d) Fairly bad 2
- e) Very bad 1
- f) Don't know 9

30. In general, how do you rate the performance of your council compared to other councils in Malawi?

- a) Much better 5
- b) Better 4
- c) Same 3
- d) worse 2
- e) Much worse 1
-

f) Don't know 9

31. Looking back, how do you rate your council's performance compared to 4 years

ago?

a) Much better 5

b) Better 4

c) Same 3

d) Worse 2

e) Much worse 1

f) Don't know 9

32. Are you satisfied with the way PMS is implemented in your Council?

a) Yes 1 b) No 2

33. In general, how would you describe the performance management system in your council?

a) Very successful 5

b) Successful 4

c) Moderately successful 3

d) Failing 2

e) Totally failed 1

f) Don't know 9

34. The Malawi Government through the Ministry of Local Government and rural Development has been conducting Local Authority Performance Assessments (LAPA) in local authorities and the last assessment made was in 2013. Based on the performance of your council on the LAPA, is there any link between PMS and LAPA?

a) Yes 1 b) No 2 c) Don't know 9

For Questions 35-37 below, answer in your own words in the spaces provided

35. What are your perceptions towards PMS in your council?

III. Major challenges that hinder the effective implementation of performance management system

36. The Malawi Government introduced the PMS in local authorities in July 2008, what do you think are the major challenges that are hindering the implementation of this system in your council?

IV. Suggestions on ensuring improvement in the effective implementation of the performance management system

37. What suggestions would you put forward to enhance effective implementation of PMS in your council?

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Thank you for taking your time to fill and complete this questionnaire. I appreciate your assistance.

Appendix 5: Interview Guide

January 2018

ANALYSIS OF PERFORMANANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN MALAWI

Biographical data

1. Name of Respondent:

2. Gender: a) Male 1 b) Female 2 3. Ageyears

4. Highest Education

5. Field of Training

6. Position Held

7. Number of Years in Post (work experience) years

8. Staff Cadre:

a) Administrative staff 1

b) Technical staff 2

c) Support staff 3

d) Others (specify)

9. Name of Organisation

I. Status of implementation of performance management system

Employee Awareness

10. In July 2008 the Government of Malawi, through the Department of Human Resource Management and Development (DHRM&D) formerly known as Department of Public Service Management (DPSM) introduced the Performance Management System in the civil service as well as in the local authorities, are you aware of this development? (*Probe*)

11. As the Malawi Government demonstrated seriousness and commitment when it introduced the PMS, what were the main activities involved in the installation of the PMS in local authorities in Malawi?

12. Are local authorities' employees aware of the performance management system and its objectives? Explain. (*Probe*)

Employee participation in performance management system

13. In your view, how are local authorities implementing the performance management system? (*Probe*)

14. What is the role that your office plays in the implementation of the performance management system in local authorities in Malawi? (*Probe*)

Benefits of performance management system

15. What are the benefits of performance management system in local authorities in Malawi? (*Probe*)

16. In general, how would you describe the PMS in local authorities in Malawi?

(Probe)

17. The Malawi Government through the Ministry of Local Government and rural Development has been conducting Local Authority Performance Assessments (LAPA) in local authorities and the last assessment made was in 2013. Based on the performance of the local authorities on the LAPA, is there any link between PMS and LAPA? Explain

II. Perceptions towards performance management system

18. What are your perceptions on the implementation of PMS in local authorities in Malawi?

iii. Major challenges that hinder the effective implementation of performance management system

19. During introduction and or installation of the PMS in local authorities in Malawi in 2008, where do you think did the authorities or system developers not get it right and or could have done better?

20. What do you think are the major challenges that are hindering the implementation of PMS in local authorities in Malawi?

IV. Suggestions on ensuring improvement in the effective implementation of the performance management system

21. What suggestions do you put forward to ensure successful implementation of the PMS in the local authorities in Malawi?
22. Do you have any other information related to this discussion you would like to share with this researcher?

End of interview. Thank you

Appendix 6: Focus Group Discussion Guide

JANUARY 2018

ANALYSIS OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN MALAWI

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE INTERVIEWER ON FGD

1. The FGD Guide must be administered to a group of between six to twelve participants of carefully selected human resource officers and clerical officers at each selected council.
2. Please administer the guide only with the consent of the discussants/participants. Inform them that the interview is voluntary and that their identity will remain anonymous. If for some reason, any of the participant is not comfortable to participate, he/she should be allowed to leave.
3. Please record all the deliberations during the discussions. Where there is need for clarifications ask the discussant through the facilitator.
4. Safely keep completed FGD Report.
5. Thank the discussants for their participation as you begin discussions and end.

ANALYSIS OF PMS IN LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN MALAWI

I. Status of implementation of performance management system

Employee Awareness

1. The Malawi Government introduced a Performance Management System in the civil service as well as local authorities in Malawi in 2008. Are you aware of this?*(Probe)*
2. Does your council have a functional PMS? *(Probe)*

Employee participation in performance management system

3. Have you ever been involved in PMS implementation in your council? *(Probe)*
4. How often do officials from the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development as well as Local Government Service Commission and or Department of Human Resource management and Development (DHRMD) contact your council on issues related to PMS?

Benefits of PMS

5. What are the benefits of PMS in your council? *(Probe)*.

II. Employees' perceptions towards performance management system

6. How interested would you say you are in performance management system in your council? *(Probe)*.
7. In general, how would you describe the performance of your council? *(Probe)*

8. The Malawi Government through the Ministry of Local Government and rural Development has been conducting Local Authority Performance Assessments (LAPA) in councils and the last assessment made was in 2013. Based on the performance of your council on the LAPA, is there any link between PMS and LAPA? Explain
9. What are your perceptions towards PMS in your council?

III. Major challenges that hinder the effective implementation of performance management system

10. The Malawi Government introduced the PMS in local authorities in July 2008, what do you think are the major challenges that are hindering the implementation of this system in your council?

Iv. Suggestions on ensuring improvement in the effective implementation of the performance management system

11. What suggestions would you put forward to enhance effective implementation of PMS in your council?

Appendix 7 Table 2: Distribution of respondents and participants by field of training

Field of training	Frequency	Percent
Accountancy	3	5.9
Administration and management	1	2.0
Agriculture	1	2.0
Agriculture and Environment	1	2.0
Architecture and Town Planning	1	2.0
Business Administration	2	3.9
Civil Engineering	2	3.9
Education and Rural Development, physical Planning	2	3.9
Engineering	1	2.0
Environmental Sciences	1	2.0
Finance	1	2.0
Fisheries	1	2.0
Forestry	2	3.9
Human Resource Management	14	27.5

Irrigation Engineering	1	2.0
Managing Rural Development and Community Development	1	2.0
MBA Healthcare and Hospital Management	1	2.0
Medicine and Public Health	1	2.0
Project Management	2	3.9
Public Health	1	2.0
Real Estates	1	2.0
Rural Development	1	2.0
Social Sciences	3	5.9
Social Work majored in Community Development	1	2.0
No field of training	5	9.8
Total	51	100

Appendix 8 Table 3: Distribution of respondents and participants by position held

Position held	Frequency	Percent (%)
Ass. Director of Investment	1	2.0
Ass. Director of Leisure	1	2.0
Ass. Director of Administration Services	1	2.0
Assistant District Agriculture Development Officer	1	2.0
Assistant District Registrar	1	2.0
Assistant Human Resource management Officer	6	11.8
Chief Accountant	1	2.0
Chief Administrative Officer	1	2.0
Chief Executive Officer	1	2.0
Chief Planning and Development Officer	1	2.0
Chief Policy, Programs and Projects Assessment Officer	1	2.0
Chief Public Works officer	1	2.0
Clerical Officer	4	7.8
Deputy Director	1	2.0

Deputy Director of Human Resource Management	2	3.9
Director of Engineering	2	3.9
Director of Finance	3	5.9
Director of Health and Social Services	1	2.0
Director of Parks, Leisure and Environment	1	2.0
Director of Planning and Development	1	2.0
District Agriculture Development Officer	1	2.0
District Commissioner	1	2.0
District Community Development Officer	2	3.9
District Forestry Officer	1	2.0
District Social Welfare Officer	1	2.0
District Youth Officer	1	2.0
Environmental District Officer	1	2.0
Executive Secretary	1	2.0
Human Resource Management Officer	1	2.0
Principal Fisheries Officer	1	2.0
Principal Health Services Administrator	1	2.0
Principal Irrigation Engineer	1	2.0

Senior Administrative Assistant	1	2.0
Senior Clerical officer	4	7.8
Senior Environmental Health Officer	1	2.0
Total	51	100.0