

MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES



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DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNANCE STUDIES

*The Local Governance Studies Degree; is it making a difference in local
authorities operations?*

The cases of Bulawayo, Gweru, Harare City Councils and Chirumhanzu RDC

By

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A dissertation furnished and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Faculty of Social Sciences Degree in Local Governance Studies at the Midlands State
University

GWERU, ZIMBABWE

MAY 2014

MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY

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DEGREE PROGRAMME : Bachelor of Science in Local Governance Studies Honors Degree

YEAR THIS DEGREE WAS GRANTED: 2014

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DEDICATION

To my mom, your love and support is astounding and unrivalled.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly and foremost, I would like to acknowledge the supremacy of God Almighty, the starter and finisher of all my work. He is the one that made this paper possible. My heartfelt thanks to my mothers, Mrs. A. Nhamo and Mrs. A. Mauze for the inexplicable and undisputed support you always gave and are still giving, you are God given. You saw me through. I will also acknowledge the input of a great woman, my supervisor, Mrs. Makanza, for the much needed guidance on this paper, you are a role model, and may God bless you.

I would like to thank all my LGS classmates for the unparalleled support and help on and off campus. You are an amazing group. In particular, I would like to appreciate the following for their unwavering inspiration and unforgettable support which is second to none;

Joseph Maiwasha, Tinashe Mukutyu, Bonita Nyawo, Tariro Matinyadze;

Mr. Sithole, Bulawayo City Council;

Mr. Chigayo, Gweru City Council;

Mr. Chanda, Gweru City Council and

Mr. T. Tsoka, Chirumhanzu RDC;

Mrs. R. Matachi, Chirumhanzu RDC;

Without you this manuscript and work piece would still be a dream yet to be lived. Your dedication to my success is astounding and therefore deservedly and greatly appreciated.

I salute you.

May God richly bless you all.

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ABSTRACT

Operational challenges in Zimbabwean local government have been and are largely still a common phenomenon. They span from financial, human, administrative and institutional operations. However addressing them has always been the big question. Human capital with the adequate skills has been lacking especially after the 2008-10 brain-drain that saw most skilled personnel flee to greener pastures. Service delivery has also been on the decline and training for capacity building became a priority. In 2004, the Midlands State University launched a 4 year degree programme-the Local Governance Studies Honors degree that was aimed at capacitating human resources in local government with the necessary skills for effective management that countered the operational problems and ultimately improve service delivery. These human resources would fill key posts in local government. This study therefore sought to analyze the impact of the degree in the operations of local authorities. The study was carried out at Harare, Bulawayo, Gweru City Councils and Chirumhanzu RDC. The primary objective was to investigate whether or not the LGS degree had made a difference to local authority operations. Literature review substantiated that operational problems in local authorities were a concern, however efforts to address them by capacity building through academic training were few in motion and unconsolidated. The researcher used purposive sampling and a sample of 25 respondents from the 4 local authorities comprising LGS degree holders and local authorities' management. 9 of the 25 were LGS degree holders and all responded to the questionnaires and interviews. Questionnaires and interviews were the research instruments used to collect data and descriptive research design was employed. Collected data was collated, presented and analyzed to which conclusions were drawn. Findings indicated that the degree has a rich skills base and most degree holders have found it useful. It was mostly useful and effective in administration, in particular strategic planning. However findings indicate that even if the degree is useful, its impact is yet to fully materialize as other challenges like financial resources, management counterparts' support and politics are a hindrance. In financial management the degree needs more depth. Recommendations from the study include considering depth in financial management modules, making local government qualifications prerequisites in local government and that local government management should consider the LGS degree as a skills rich programme and enroll their staff in the programme.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

LGS	Local Governance Studies
RDC	Rural district Council
RTI	Research Transparency International
IDAZIM	Institute for Democratic and Alternative Zimbabwe
RDCA	Rural District Councils Act
UCA	Urban Councils Act
PCLGRUD	Portfolio Committee on Local Government Rural and Urban development
LA(s)	Local Authority (s)

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- Local governance -** A variety of institutions (governmental and non-governmental) and processes which collectively determine the way in which political and administrative decisions are made and implemented within a locality. **(Book Team, 2009)**
- Decentralization -** refers to the restructuring or reorganization of authority so that there is a system of co-responsibility between institutions of governance at the central, regional and local levels according to the principle of subsidiarity, thus increasing the overall quality and effectiveness of the system of governance, while increasing the authority and capacities of sub-national levels. **(UNDP, 1999)**
- Service delivery -** is the immediate output of the inputs into the local governance system such as human resources, finance and administration, inter alia. It includes water provision, refuse collection, housing and road networks by a local authority to its residents
- Degree -** shall refer to the BSc. Local Governance Studies Honorary Degree
- Research -** is a structured enquiry that utilizes acceptable scientific methodology to solve problems and create new knowledge that is generally applicable. **(Dawson, 2002)**
- Difference -** shall refer to an impact or change.
- Operations -** refers to the activities undertaken by a local authority in providing a service. These include administration, human resource management, and finance management, among other.

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CHAPTER I

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The concept of local governance is as old as humankind but has gained paramount significance and attention only recently over the past three decades as a result of democratization of countries which has resulted in more decentralization (Shah and Shah, 2008). Only until recently has it begun to gain widespread acceptance and recognition as governance and administration of political, economic and other spheres of activities gradually evolved in the new era of governance. National governments from across the world have realized that local and lower tiers of government areas need more empowerment, and a considerable degree of autonomy for more effective service delivery because of their proximity to their publics. This is expected to give birth to more involving, transparent and localized decision making at grassroots levels with citizenry directly affecting those issues which bear a significant impact on their very own lives. Importantly, local governments gradually became central in development, from economics to politics and their roles and responsibilities also changed to becoming crucial players in sustainable service provision and development at large.

The role played by local authorities cannot therefore be underestimated. As responsibilities, authority and resources for local development and good governance increased on the periphery (local governments) through decentralization, it became imperative that local authorities' delivery of local services be as effective. The operations for these local authorities must therefore be well managed, as failure to do so will negatively affect service delivery. Such has been the case in Zimbabwe, service delivery has been and still on the decline. Poor administration, corruption, unavailability of safe water, potholes, deteriorating public infrastructure, failure to

manage waste, *inter alia*, are a sure sign of a failed local government. These challenges, combined with rapid urbanization, call for an urgent response with a new approach to governance that can give the system a turnaround. This study will therefore analyze whether an academic qualification like the Local Governance Studies Degree has equipped human resources in local governance with the skills and capabilities to manage and revive the system before it meets its total demise.

This chapter opens the study, giving a historical background to the research, and the statement of the problem. It will as well give direction to the study by providing the research study objectives and questions, the justification of the study, delimitations and limitations as its main focus.

1.1 Background of Study

Since local governments are the closest levels of government to the people, their performance bears directly on the very lives of their citizenry, (Chakaipa, 2010). Unfortunately, many a times, according to the Global Forum on Local Development (2011) the merit of their proximity to the locals is often neutralized by the lack of effective, proper or adequate means and contrivances to involve the local populace. At times officials in local governments lack experience, and in some instances are biased towards particular interests and groups, therefore ultimately failing to act in the interest of the public. (Global Forum on Local Development, 2011). Such are some of the telling signs of a failing and collapsing local government system in Zimbabwe laden with institutional incapacities and challenges.

For a number of years Zimbabwe's local government was envied by many nations, with the capital Harare fondly known as the Sunshine city. Local government by then was alive; more

self-financing and even urban Councils were financially strong to the extent that they were credited by international financial institutions resulting in their ability to secure financing from them reducing over-reliance on rates and central government. Capacity building efforts in rural district councils through what was called “learning by doing” were strongly in motion on institutional capacitation, human resources development and capital projects (Chakaipa 2010).

Those were the 1990s and the system has since changed. Noting some serious operational weaknesses in Zimbabwean local authorities, Chakaipa (2010) stated that by 2010 all local authorities in Zimbabwe had serious operational challenges, with service delivery failing or collapsed. Although the years 2010 and 2011 showed some signs of economic revival operational challenges remained a concern. Most of the challenges stem from poor management; a system that lacks organization and supervision. Revenue inflows in most if not all local authorities, remain low (Zhou and Chilunjika 2013). According to the Zimbabwe Institute (2005) this is due to a variety of factors as failure by local authorities can be on substance (failure to fulfill set standards) or on process (failure to follow necessary procedures for satisfactory service delivery)

Property rates valuation in local authorities remains a challenge. While Zhou and Chilunjika (2012) note that property tax, if well managed, is a potential source of revenue for most urban local authorities, tax revenue from these has remained minimal and underutilized due to a shortage in valuers, misleading valuations, and ineffective collection mechanisms. Property tax revenue lack has been worsened by failure by local authorities to update property or land registers. The Rural District Councils (RDCs) Act (29:13), third schedule, sections 96 and 97,

provides for scales for land development levies. This requires up to date registers for sufficient collection and calculations of the unit values. According to Chakaipa (2010), the property and land databases are obsolete and the related consequences are unfortunate as new land owners particularly the beneficiaries of the Land Reform programme are not billed. Failure to keep up to date databases is further exacerbated by an acute lag in Information Communication Technologies in local authorities, where e-government is long overdue.

The Portfolio Committee on Local Government, Rural and Urban Development (PCLGRUD) (2012) unearthed some irregularities on water rates in Gutu Rural District Council which were overpriced. Substantiating these concerns Zhou and Chilunjika (2012) noted that rural local authorities were yet to come up with schemes to marshal royalties from mining and agriculture in their areas. Elsewhere urban local authorities tend to rely on high service charges. As revenue from other sources dwindles, local authorities have tended to maximize on the ever available user charges. Such rates however are uneconomic and residents end up resisting paying. Furthermore, these local authorities fail in most cases to bill residents on time. Residents having little financial resources at their disposal, receive their bills when they would have exhausted their meager earnings on other priorities. In cases where residents may go to Council Halls to pay their rates, the environment may not be very friendly as few paying points would be available. The Council employees manning them at times lack client centeredness and expected professionalism, Chakaipa, (2010).

The Urban Councils Act (UCA) (29:15) Section 305 mandates local authorities to submit financial accounts for auditing within 120 days after the end of each financial year. In the case of

rural district councils, the Rural District Councils Act (29:13) Section 135 provides for the same. However, some local authorities have been failing to comply with the provisions. In cases where the accounts are in place local authorities such as Chirumhanzu and Chimanimani RDC have been failing to submit in time. This has caused serious financial management challenges in most local authorities, casting doubt on the ability of their financial personnel, their probity and capabilities in many local authorities. This also has a substantial effect on financial planning as information required for the following year would not be available. Other operational areas of concern relate to strategic planning. Master, strategic and rolling plans in most local authorities are excellent at a glance, but do not work. Chakaipa (2010) notes most “gather dust in shelves” as most lack relationship with budgets and the operational environment especially in Rural District Councils. This may mostly be because consultation with stakeholders (employees, business community, the public, among others) is weak as plans are prepared by “technocrats” and internally a “them and us” culture between management and the employees may also be contributory. According to Sithole et al (2013) plans are not well communicated to employees and ultimately there is no ownership and the shared vision approach is completely lost. The planning process bears weak plans which are products of a poor and weak management system.

Management organization and supervision is central as it determines the culture an organization has. Most local authorities have become breeding grounds for corruption; a cancer that has persistently corroded the public sector and its advancement. This is largely due to weak or non-existent internal control mechanisms which support management supervision. Shoddy land development deals, illegal stands allocation, fraud and embezzlement among others have reduced or rechanneled revenue intended for Council coffers to other illegal pockets. The Portfolio

Committee on Local Government, Rural and Urban Development (PCLGRUD) (2012) report on Gutu RDC and Chiredzi RDC and Town Council revealed that the allocation of residential stands was not above board and was biased, with Council employees owning most of the stands, or a stand or more allocated to 2 individuals. These stands, according to the PCLGRUD (2012) were mostly not serviced, with no water or at least proper access roads, apparently a desperate attempt by local authorities to clear outstanding housing backlogs.

Corruption in the local authorities' procurement system is common, with the Portfolio Committee on Local Government, Rural and Urban Development (PCLGRUD) (2012) noting tender procedures were flouted as employees of Gutu RDC supplied goods to Council themselves at high prices resulting in colossal losses for Council. Nepotism in recruitment and selection has also been rife, as concerns about bloated staff compliments in local authorities' non critical "easy to employ" departments has become corrosive on revenue for salaries. They put pressure on already strained Council budgets and most of these are semi-skilled or unskilled. Another instance is of Gweru City Council which made all its 2012 contract workers permanent by 2013 before the elections (Gweru City Council, 2013). At the same time the Portfolio Committee (2012) reported that filling of senior posts was not timeous, and this affected decision making as acting officials vacillate and hesitate in making bold decisions that are central to the operations of Council. Flouting of recruitment procedures has its own consequences on the quality of decisions made; some dismissals were done based on emotion and not the law and facts, (Chakaipa, 2010) with the victims taking legal action taking Councils to courts. Unfortunately Councils in most cases have been directed to reinstate them, at a great cost. For instance a circular was issued to City of Harare reversing their decision for the reinstatement of

Engineering and Housing Directors as well as the Treasurer. It was costly to Council as money was unnecessarily spent on staff that was suspended (Mushamba, 2010).

Corruption in local authorities has led to the loss of a desirable culture in local authorities, ethical uprightness and acceptable levels of professionalism. At Chimanimani RDC illegal transfers of funds from other accounts to finance salaries and illicit conversion of donor funding for capital projects to recurrent/operational costs (Zimbabwe Institute, 2005) have become the norm. Managerial decision making and policy formulation in the allocation of resources and prioritization are other concerns affecting local authorities. Client centeredness has declined as some local authorities are infamous in not prioritizing their core-business, are deficient in initiative and seldom enjoy in solid relations with their citizens, Chaeruka and Munzwa (2009). Lately the 70:30 service delivery to staff costs best practice has practically been reversed as most local authorities are in the habit of prioritizing salaries at the expense of meaningful service delivery. The City of Harare is one where salaries have been more than attractive while service delivery has been suffering grossly. According to Hughes (2003) the Principal (electorate) - Agent (elected officials) relationship would have been compromised when the agent behaves like the principal; and as a result all sense of responsibility and duty as a patriotic public official has disappeared.

In response to the challenges in the sector, the Midlands State University then, at its inception in 2004, introduced, as a first, the only Degree programme (Local Governance Studies) with a wide module curriculum aimed at working toward addressing the problems in Zimbabwean local governance through human resource capacitation. (www.msu.ac.zw). The concepts of the degree,

covering human resource management, local government finance, administration, legislation, political science, project management, service provision among other key modules were a response to new challenges that required a sustainable local governance system which could be guaranteed by sufficient throughput into the local governance system of a well-trained and skilful human resource.

According to the Midlands State University (www.msu.ac.zw), there is need in most local authorities to provide services affordably and effectively to a diverse populace. The degree in Local Governance Studies was therefore introduced to address the operational challenges jeopardizing the efficient delivery of services and the enhancement of both the rural and urban livelihoods through human skills capacity building. To this end, the study will analyze whether or not the LGS Degree has provided answers to these challenges to improve on operations.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Local authorities have been and are facing operating challenges in human resources, administration and management, financial management that have seriously affected their capacities to deliver services effectively. The University became the only tertiary institution in the country producing local governance dedicated human resource to occupy key positions in local authorities (www.msu.ac.zw). The study will investigate whether or not the degree programme has addressed some of the operational challenges bedeviling local authorities.

1.3 Research Objectives

The primary objective of the study is to analyze the impact of the Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Local Governance Studies in the operations of local authorities. The specific objectives of the study are:

- ✓ To assess the relevance of the LGS Degree to the operations of local authorities
- ✓ To analyze the contributions the Degree has made in improving the operations of local authorities.
- ✓ To identify the operational areas in which the Degree made the most and least impact
- ✓ To identify the factors inhibiting the Degree and its concepts to make maximum impact in improving the operations of local authorities

1.4 Research Questions

- ✓ Are the concepts of the degree relevant to local authorities' operations?
- ✓ How effective has been the LGS degree in addressing operational challenges in local authorities?
- ✓ What are the significant areas in local authorities operations that the Degree has impacted most and least?
- ✓ What are the major problems affecting the application of the Degree in local authorities?
- ✓ What are the possible recommendations to improving the effectiveness of the Degree in the operations of local authorities?

1.5 Justification of the Study

This study, when completed, will be a crucial information source to the Midlands State University and other institutions that may want to offer programmes in local governance or related thereto. To this it will help the University in determining and reviewing the relevance and practicality of the Degree in the local governance field and therefore whether or not it is fulfilling its aims in accordance with departmental expectations. It will also be a reference source to the coming students who may be interested in the same field of study as well providing some answers to some unsolved local governance problems. It will also shed some light to the University and the local governance students on the career prospects in the field of local governance. Furthermore it will provide an insight for local authorities on how they can use the knowledge embedded in the degree to solve operational problems as well as make them aware of the impact the degree has made in the sector. Equally important, the study will be a milestone achieved for the researcher as part of completing a crucial part in the researcher's studies. It will be the researcher's own work that, hopefully, will be used by the department and University at large for furthering more research.

1.6 Delimitation of study

This research will be done at Gweru, Bulawayo, Harare City Councils and Chirumhanzu RDC. Focus will be on their operational administrative and managerial faculties. Since the research will be focused on particular individuals purposively selected with the knowledge pertaining to the research topic, it will be confined to the offices where the operations are actually carried out.

1.7 Limitations

Time

Time was a limiting factor. The researcher had other projects and lectures to attend to. As a result the researcher carried part of the study (data collection) during his free time during the holidays

Budget

Money for travelling impeded the researcher's ability to effectively travel between Bulawayo and Harare more often for data collection. The researcher however managed to gather enough funds for the study through the help of parents and family.

Experience

The researcher's work, since it is a first, might largely be affected by a higher degree of lack of experience.

1.8 Summary

This first chapter is an introduction to the study and has explored the introduction and background to the study. It has also stated the problem that justifies the research study and, equally important, it also includes insight into the objectives and research questions that will guide the whole study as well as providing information on the importance and rationale for carrying out the study. It also highlighted the limitations to the study. The succeeding chapter will review the literature that is pertinent to the study to identify bottlenecks and areas that have been mostly researched.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will review literature related to the topic, past and present, and will give a theoretical framework and the empirical outlook on a plethora of issues, features relevant to local authorities operations in local governance. The previous chapter gave a background on operational challenges affecting local authorities in Zimbabwe and this chapter will dig deep into relevant literature pertaining to the topic. Literature review is crucial in research and Baxter et al (2002) define it as a scientific method for finding, analyzing and interpreting the existing works of other scholars, academics and experts. It is key, according to Burns and Burns (2008) in research as it provides a theoretical framework for research, identify previous works, similar authors' arguments and interests and help the researcher identify the more or less researched areas and contextualize their own study prescribing how the research will be done.

As such this chapter will critically analyze major issues, topical debates and arguments showing scholarly findings and works of convergent and divergent classes (identify relationships or contradictions) of literature relevant to the topic, and in so doing identify areas which have been well researched and those which have been less researched. It will discuss what has been done in relation to the operational challenges and the role of capacity building in skills training in addressing these problems. The analysis of literature in this chapter will be arranged into two major categories that present the local authorities' operational situation in Zimbabwe; which are local government in Zimbabwe and associated challenges and local authorities and operational

challenges in Zimbabwe and how they can be solved through capacity building through the LGS degree.

2.1 Local Government in Zimbabwe and the associated challenges

Mushamba (2010) defines local government as a sub national level of government. In Zimbabwe local government is responsible for a multitude of functions as provided for in the Urban Councils Act (UCA) 29:15 and the Rural District Councils Act (RDCA) 29:13, the primary legislation for local government and recently the Constitution Amendment No.20 of 2013 (Chapter 14, Section 264 and 276) which provides for the establishment and functions of local government. These functions include making by-laws (UCA Sections 227 to 232; Part XI of the RDCA), local planning, development and control.

For a decade and half after independence local government in Zimbabwe was the envy of many nations, with the country exemplary to most sub Saharan countries. The Research Triangle Institute (RTI) and the Institute for a Democratic Alternative for Zimbabwe (IDAZIM) (2010) described the tradition of Zimbabwe's local governance as extraordinary. However, according to the RTI International and IDAZIM (2010) capacity in the local government system began to noticeably decline in the late 1990s arguing it was due to increasing political and economic instability. In 1997 the economy began gradually declining and local authorities were not spared, they felt the constraints on their ability to govern. In the ensuing decade the economy was hit by a world record hyperinflation. Industry at large suffered and the revenue to local authorities decreased. Pressure was on the residents to pay rates, in an economic situation where there incomes were not sustaining, RTI and IDAZIM, (2010)

2.2 Local authorities and operational challenges in Zimbabwe

Local authorities are small democratic units which were created to spur democratic participation to citizens in matters that affect their daily lives, Vosloo et al (1974) in Sithole et al (2013). Local authorities in Zimbabwe have been facing numerous operational challenges. These challenges are most visible and mostly affect their financial, human resources and institutional faculties. According to the Zimbabwe Institute (2005), the failure by the local authorities was either by substance or by process. By substance, it meant local authorities could not fulfill or attain set standards or achievements and by process they would not have adhered to procedures necessary for effective service delivery. The political and economic crisis weakened local authorities' ability to secure or, at least, maintain equipment, recover infrastructure and efficiently deliver services (RTI International and IDAZIM, 2010). The problems presented by the economic meltdown for the last decade, financial constraints, brain drain, political instability among others presented local authorities with challenges that required innovative strategic throughput in all operational areas that ensured service delivery remained afloat and not greatly compromised. However, on the ground operations remain entangled in a plethora of challenges (Sims 2013)

2.2.1 Institutional capacity

According to Jonga and Chirisa (2009), financial, institutional and professional capacities of local authorities should be strengthened as a priority for policy implementation and should not be done away with, whatsoever. However, According to the NPC (2014), the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) noted numerous factors that determine how a local authority

institutional capacity in service delivery. They vary from capacity to lure and keep skilled personnel, availability of apt Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) and management of finance procedures and cordial relations between elected officials and staff of council. A congruent relationship with trust and probity is required for local authorities to deliver effectively. However in Zimbabwean local authorities there are often conflicts between staff of council and elected leadership.

Resolutions of council remain mostly unimplemented by council senior staff worsened by the lack of adequate skills and competencies by elected officials as they end up being dependent on staff in policy review and carrying out their duties (Chakaipa, 2010). This apparently affects the functionality and capacity of the local authorities. The elected officials end up losing their respect and authority, and their decision making may be compromised. In local government environments where political tensions are high; conflicts are likely to spark and therefore call for council staff to act at the highest level of professionalism and integrity (RTI and IDAZIM, 2010). Capacities in local authorities are largely dependent and affected by the strength and effectiveness of management control, exercise in a local authority. Most local authorities had personnel challenges as the brain drain mostly in 2010 (Coutinho 2010) had robbed most institutions of skilled and qualified personnel. This had a huge impact on decision making in most local authorities (RTI and IDAZIM, 2010).

Well performing organizations are important because they produce better services. As such organizational capacity can be improved by strengthening management capabilities that are essential in delivering services (www.capacity.org). Even well-organized development and

intervention efforts may fail when an institutional environment is unsupportive (www.capacity.org). This is even when resources are available. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched a capacity building programme for local government in Zimbabwe in May 2013 that ends in December 2015 (www.undp.org). Human capacity building will therefore focus on human skills to embrace the good governance dimension that upholds responsiveness, transparency and accountability among the other principles.

The ZimAsset national blueprint document even provides for the training of public officials in good governance skills as a necessity. This helps staff in upholding a strong work ethic, enhance professionalism and be client oriented. As such local authorities' management can be helped by the LGS degree in so doing through a variety of modules including local government management, ethics in local governance, human settlements and governance and local government legislation. These provide skills on good governance, appreciation of the legislative environment, ethics and professionalism that strengthen the capacity of a local authority as a whole.

2.2.2 Financial operational challenges

According to the RTI and IDAZIM (2010), the financial challenges that local authorities in Zimbabwe faced; coupled with high inflation, were intense and remain significantly difficult even to date. Local authorities have largely been on their own in relation to revenue generation as transfers from central government had dried up. Financially, new responsibilities were given to local authorities with little or, more often than not, no resources to implement them, but left on their own; what the National Planning Commission (NPC) (2014) referred to as “unfunded

mandates”. However this could be attributed to the failure by local authorities themselves, but concerns related to this are on revenue generation initiatives capacities and management by these local authorities.

i) Revenue generation

While Chikumbu et al (2006) stated that local authorities, being forced to be creative in generating their own revenue, have been praised for the efforts they have achieved in revenue generation; there are a number of issues in revenue generation, particularly in collection. Financial problems have also been accelerated by lack of central government financial support which has been perpetually declining towards zero (Jonga and Chirisa 2009). The RDC Act Sections 96 and 97 Third Schedule provides for land development levies for Rural District Councils (RDCs). According to Chakaipa (2010), the full exploit of these levies has been hindered largely by failure by the local authorities to update their land and property registers.

Concurring, Zhou and Chilunjika (2013) point out that even the country as a whole is yet to prepare up to date registers on commercial, mining, residential and agricultural activities with RDCs yet to strategically marshal fees and benefits from mining and agricultural activities. According to the Zimbabwe Institute (2005), the capacity of RDCs to collect and allocate revenue, weak technical skills, lack of legal instruments to back up their efforts worsen the problem. This has a serious impact on revenue inflows in both rural and urban local authorities. Most new land owners are not billed, for instance beneficiaries of the land Reform Programme as newly fragmented land owners are not captured in the databases and land levy is greatly and negatively affected (Chakaipa 2010).

Tax valuation remains a challenge as well and should not be looked upon at lightly. Zhou and Chilunjika (2013) opine that property tax is a major a major revenue source for local urban local authorities if well managed. This is because, according to Fjeldstad and Semboja (2000), at least in principle, it is difficult to avoid as it is imposed on property that cannot be moved, so it is elusive to evade. However Fjeldstad and Semboja (2000) further go on to say there are some weaknesses to consider before relying heavily on it, such as valuation. This has been the problem with Zimbabwean local authorities apart from keeping up to date databases. The NPC (2014) attributes this to South African local authorities as their inability to retain and attract highly skilled staff in particular non-metropolitan authorities. The same is true in Zimbabwe, even in Council assets that are rented out, rental fees tend to be below economic levels (Coutinho 2010), which stifles chances of increasing revenue inflows. Jonga and Chirisa (2009) however argue that at times urban councils charged sub-economic rates because of the directives from central government through the Ministry hence actual values cannot be in effect.

As a result of these challenges, valuers also need have expertise or adequate knowledge in their field of property valuation. Expertise in analyzing economic trends and database management for properties is clearly important that capacity training to impart skills to the staff is done. The LGS degree can play a vital role in addressing this shortcoming through modules like local government finance, public sector accounting and public management and economic change that involve property valuation, financial and economic analysis. Individuals need to learn to increase their competencies and skills and therefor impact in their areas of operations (<http://www.capacity.org>).

However with user charges, rates have tended to be too high (Zhou and Chilunjika 2013), and most local authorities face resistance from ratepayers as a result and as well as from declining incomes and rising poverty (RTI International and IDAZIM, 2010). High rates have as well called for the intervention of the central government, and this “meddling” according to Coutinho (2010) has affected and limited local authorities’ choices in revenue generation. Fjeldstad (2014) further pointed management capacity in local authorities in Tanzania as contributory to revenue collection failures. The same applies in Zimbabwe relating to many councils’ inability to collect fully the revenues due to them. Fjeldstad and Semboja (2000) asserts there are significant gaps between collected and projected revenue, mainly due to poor administrative capacity to assess the revenue base; poor administrative capacity to enforce the taxes; corruption, including embezzlement of revenues; external pressure on the local finance department to provide optimistic projections. Zhou and Chilunjika (2013) concur that these are the operational problems affecting revenue collection in Zimbabwean local authorities as well.

According to Fjeldstad (2014), in Tanzania, there were capacity building programmes since the late 1990s aimed equipping local government personnel with the skills to expand existing revenue sources and identify potential new sources. This brought about “tax farming” in Tanzania and although it is not yet very successful, it improved revenue and therefore reducing overreliance on central government. Skills include financial management training, valuation and economic analysis. The LGS degree can also be helpful through its skills in modules like Local Government Finance, Public Sector Accounting and local government legislation which focus on local government financing, budgeting, revenue collection strategies, sources of revenue and financial management systems (www.msu.ac.zw) in Zimbabwean local authorities.

However effective management systems need to be in place to monitor and coordinate the process of revenue collection and management. In 2010 the Municipal Development Partnership for Eastern and Southern Africa (MDP-ESA) commenced a capacity building programme in Zimbabwe for strengthening local government administrative and leadership capacity to enhance service delivery (www.mdpafrica.org.zw). This was to enhance public administration evaluations focused on city management. According to the MDP-ESA (www.mdpafrica.org.zw) the programme would also benefit training institutions that have programmes that are aimed at improving management capacity in local authorities. As such degree programmes like the LGS degree aims at providing management skills that foster coordination and supervision of functions. Modules like local government management, local government finance, public sector accounting and human resources management would be central in skills training in the area to counter the above discussed challenges.

ii) Budgeting

Zhou and Zinyama, (2012) note that another area with operational challenges is the budgeting process especially in an economy with an emaciated fiscal environment. Chakaipa (2010) stated that services on most council budgets were overpriced and ratepayers desist from paying. The shift from local to foreign currency was not evaluated properly and most local authorities had to reduce their budgets. There is also the apparent absence of a relationship between budgeting and the planning process. Yilmaz (2008) however states that budgeting and planning should be interlinked, including projected and actual expenditures and that budgeting which is policy oriented and responsive to public inclinations is necessary for the success of budgeting. The

Zimbabwe Institute (2005) also pointed out that most local authorities' budgets are not realistic and there is no will make sure all budgeted revenues are collected. According to Sithole et al (2013) management efforts are "half-hearted". Worse still Chakaipa (2010) adds that billing in time on most Council services to their clients remains a challenge. Bills are more likely to reach residents when they have used up their limited incomes to other needs. This poor budgetary system also raises questions on most local authorities' budget preparation process in terms of public consultation. There are undoubtedly problems with the local authorities' ability to mobilize and willingness to engage the public in budget formulation (Chikerema 2013). This is evidenced mostly by the spending priorities for most local authorities.

If the public ratify and are involved transparently in the budgeting process, spending priorities for local authorities would be public and service oriented, Chikerema (2013). According to the Zimbabwe Institute (2005), local authorities often do not spend collected revenue as purportedly intended in their budgets. They apparently lack the ability to collect revenue and manage effectively and efficiently the limited financial resources that they would have managed to acquire. Local authorities should be service oriented institutions, (Madhuku, 2005). While service delivery continues to collapse, the RTI International and IDAZIM (2010) in a research noted that salaries took up a huge proportion of local authorities' revenue, up to 60 %, against general expenses and infrastructure maintenance (as other major expenditures) as staff complements remained impartially stable and proportionally increased with shrinking budgets. Mapira (2011) aired the same concerns, saying that most urban council officials jeopardize service delivery by paying themselves huge salaries that consume up to 70% of their budgets provisions in lieu of the required 30% best practice (The Sunday Mail, July 25-31, 2010). As a

result service delivery is continually compromised, while salaries become a priority thereby lacking justification of the rationale of their existence to the detriment of their citizenry. Transparency and accountability measures become paramount in addressing budgetary and public finance accountability issues (Zim Institute 2005).

To address the budgeting challenges, skills are also important. An example of the importance of capacity building can be drawn from the Zimbabwe Woman Resource Centre and Network (ZWRCN) which initiated a 5 year programme in 2008 on human capacity building on local government gender budgeting. It was aimed at training in recognising marginalised groups in local government budgeting. The programme was done in Masvingo, Bulawayo, Kwekwe, Gweru and Kadoma targeting council staff, councillors and youths (<http://www.zwrcn.org.zw>). The LGS degree aims as well to capacitate staff in local authorities to address budgeting challenges. The modules on local government finance, results based management and public sector accounting have extensive contributions in areas of budgeting. These include participatory budgeting, which recognizes the role of the community, financial analysis and results based budgeting which can help in addressing these budgeting shortcomings.

iii) Financial management

The challenge of timeous billing also similarly mirrors the timeous availability and submission of final accounts by local authorities for audit. The Urban Councils Act (UCA) 29:15 Section 305 mandates councils to have their final accounts for auditing within 120 days after the end of each financial year for previous budgets, and audited accounts before the end of the year.

According to Yilmaz et al (2008), most public institutions' systems do not produce financial information in time for the public to follow up expenditure. Substantiating, Zhou and Zinyama (2012) noted that production of reports for audit in Zimbabwe was a recurrent problem especially in the public sector. Local authorities cannot be spared; they are the other major victims (Zhou and Zinyama, 2012). The problems accounting personnel face in financial management was because proficient budgetary controls were not in effect and late submission poses serious irregularities in decision making and compromises the aspect of transparency and accountability in public finance (Zhou and Zinyama, 2012). RDCs like Chirumhanzu and Chimanimani have been victims in the 2012-13 year, and this raises questions on the management capabilities of personnel in both their finance and the Administration departments.

In financial institutions like banks, it is important that employees are qualified in financial management or accounting. As such competent skills in these areas the academic qualifications like degrees in Accounting or banking and Finance have made a significant impact in their day to day operations. Capacity building would have been done through obtaining the degrees which are prerequisites in the area of banking. Even in local government, finance departments in local authorities are manned by individuals who are holders of financial management qualifications or equivalent. In the same line the LGS degree has local government financial management modules that aim to equip local government staff in addressing financial management challenges. Issues to do with accountability are important in increasing public oversight in local authorities' operations. Human capacity building helps local authorities staff obtain skills that acknowledge the role of citizen participation financial management by local authorities. The modules include local government finance, local government legislation, public sector

accounting and local government administration. As the degree aims for personnel with key positions (www.msu.ac.zw), they will be given the necessary oversight capabilities to manage departments in monitoring and evaluation that assesses performance in financial departments in their local authorities.

iv) Internal controls and corruption

According to Coutinho (2010), the ineffective internal controls have put most local authorities at risk from embezzlement, fraud and misuse of public assets and funds. Management in most local authorities has failed to put these in place and corruption and other irregularities are on the rise. Corroborating, Yilmaz et al (2008) noted that internal controls at the local level in most developing countries were, in overall, weak. This is aggravated by the absence of effective audits (due to late preparation of accounts) that check the effectiveness of any controls that will be in place, (Zhou and Zinyama 2012). Internal controls are a management tool that management can use to oversee financial, human resources management, and are a control oversight on adherence to procedural practices, safeguarding of assets help largely in combating irregularities in operations including corruption (Coutinho 2010)

Furthermore there are serious issues of corruption in the public sector; local authorities included. According to Sithole (2013), not only does corruption negate efforts on delivery of services, it also damages the reliability of institutions and works against good governance. It fights the advancements of any society and corrodes it like a cancer and has the ability to reduce public management effectiveness. Manyukwe (2010) in Mukonza (2013) revealed that 26 commercial stands were sold illegally in Chitungwiza by the Municipality itself and other vending spaces

allocated corruptly, and land clandestinely converted for individual interest at the expense of public interest among other practices. Mukonza (2013) also revealed that corruption in procurement system at Chitungwiza Municipality was rife. For instance tender(s) for the repair of the local authority's vehicles was given to a firm by the name Glatifin which allegedly has high connections with the municipality's senior officials. Sithole (2013) pointed out that at Gweru City Council corruption was also rampant involving abuse and illicit sale of assets, nepotism and bribery in water connections. The Gweru District Administrator revealed that mismanagement of funds was extensive and the public ultimately paid the price as services would be inflated to offset or subsidize misused funds, (Sithole 2013).

There is evidently lack of professionalism and ethical uprightness in most local authorities which fuel corruption. However concerns are apparently on the effectiveness of management in putting up systems like internal controls that combat such practices (Yilmaz 2008, Coutinho 2010). In a study on Corruption at Gweru City Council, Sithole (2013) noted that officials will more likely be involved in corrupt behavior if they are aware that monitoring systems are not in place and therefore cannot be detected (Kotter 2007). In other cases, senior officials themselves are the architects of some corrupt activities. As such the study notes that corruption alleviating measures like express auditing, effective disciplining of transgressors and codes of conduct were not effectively in place and in addition, employee motivation and weak supervisory systems account for some of the causes of persistence of corruption at Gweru city Council. The Portfolio Committee (2012) also showed that employment processes were contravened at Gutu RDC and procurement systems at Gweru (Sithole 2013) were flouted. As such Bailey (2006) in Sithole (2013) states that corruption negatively affects the capacity of governments as processes are

flouted resources redirected and personnel recruited without consideration of skills and ability. With unskilled staff, as is in most local authorities, service delivery ultimately suffers.

Corruption has many causes but at times it is mainly because of a system that has poor accountability, reporting and supervision mechanism. Weak internal controls are also major contributors. In a way, it means management oversight and coordination will be weak and sometimes that the employees lack education and professional training. Individuals need to strike a balance between personal ambitions and real work demands. The LGS degree has extensive coverage on corruption under the ethics in local governance module that also covers corporate governance. Finance modules like local government finance and public sector accounting cover internal controls as important aspects to safeguard assets and ensure systems and procedures are in place as required. As such training from the degree provides skills that enable local government management to tackle corruption and internal control problems.

2.2.3 Planning

According to Sithole et al (2013) strategic planning was ushered into the local governance system in Zimbabwe in between 1997 and 1998. It is important that stakeholders relevant to a planning process be committed and fully involved and understanding for the implementation to be a success. If plans are implemented with success, a relationship between planning and goals is thereby strengthened through the bridging of the gap between plans and actions Sithole et al (2013). Yilmaz (2008) adds that policy-making and budget planning should be interlinked, however Chakaipa (2010) states that the relationship between planning and budgeting (particularly in RDCs) is weak even though sumptuous plans are there in most local authorities

from master to annual rolling plans and “many gather dust in shelves”. Sithole et al (2013) also note that plans are not crafted in cognizance of the available limited resources and lack stakeholder participation, who end up considering themselves neglected and therefore reluctant to participate in their implementation. Chakaipa (2010) adds seconding that plans must be realistic and inclusive, and should not be prepared by “technocrats” and therefore become inapt for effective implementation as they lack collective ownership and vision. At times employees consider strategic planning a “management thing” and this also relies heavily on the performance of management personnel and their capacities in local authorities in Zimbabwe. Nyanga Rural district Council is of the many RDCs in the country where citizen employee participation is weak in the strategic planning process. However, financial resources that support implementation are limited, if any, and remain a challenge in most local authorities (Sithole et al 2013, Chakaipa 2010)

The RTI International and IDAZIM (2010) attribute weak participation in Zimbabwean local authorities in both budgeting and planning to the centralization of the whole process within the councils. Mushamba (2010) notes that the local government system in Zimbabwe is often associated with a myriad of challenges to which most often cited is the limited participation of citizens in planning, making of decisions and in the process of budgeting. Even though there is some involvement of the public through their councilors in planning and budget consultation, RTI International and IDAZIM (2010) noted that planning and budgeting priorities would have been pre-considered in advance by council senior staff and other local associations would highlight that the whole process is not deliberate and consultations become simply exhibitions of what would have been prepared by Council. This contradicts what Chikerema (2013) stated that

the implementation of programmes should connote the accepted public contribution or input through the accountability and planning processes. There is also evidence that council officials are not aware of what public participation is. In a study by the RTI International and IDAZIM (2010), most officials referred any interaction with the public for instance complaints by the public, sharing beer and the openness of Council meetings to as participatory. Apparently operational capacity of local authorities run by such a calibre of individuals is questionable and greatly at stake.

Planning is an important aspect of success. Failing to plan properly is planning to fail. It is at the core of operations and the existence of local authorities. It gives direction, enables assessment and review of progress. Planning is also central in decision making and it is important that senior staff in local authorities have the necessary skills to effectively carry out planning processes. According to the UNDP, capacity training in strategic planning in South Sudan has helped overcome main strategy implementation challenges in local government (www.undp.org). In the same manner, the LGS degree equips skills and educates local government management in strategic planning in local authorities. Modules like strategic planning, project planning and implementation; change management and result based management are explicitly detailed on strategic planning and change management in organizations. They help managers with skills to overcome planning and implementation challenges as well employee consultation and involvement in planning and managing change.

2.2.4 Information Communication Technologies (ICTs)

According to Dube (2012) one of the greatest challenges that Zimbabwe faces in governance is the lack of engagement and communication between holders of public office and their constituents. There is lack of transparency and accountability in the operations of public officials meaning that they have the leeway to prioritize their own interests at the expense of those of the citizens and this has resulted in serious corruption. Operations of holders of public office are a mystery to the public, with regular cases of corruption like the scandalous salary gate of late. Dube (2012) further adds that lack of engagement leads to the formulation of policies, and the implementation of projects that may not augur well with citizens and are thus rejected leading to wastage of taxpayers' money and stunted developmental growth. The need for a full adoption of ICTs in local authorities cannot be overstated, it is apparent. Ebrahim and Irani (2005) argue that through the use of ICTs government stand to benefit more if properly managed and set up. Dube (2012) therefore argues that the onus is on the Zimbabwe government and local authorities to use e-governance concepts as a means to increase communication between themselves and the public in order to increase accountability and transparency in their operations. Efficiency in operations like billing, databases construction and updating and communication stand to be improved for enhanced service delivery.

The LGS degree has a variety of modules that can help management in local authorities in skills that appreciate and acknowledge the role of the citizens in bringing about service delivery efficiently. As such increasing transparency, accountability and efficiency through ICTs can draw from modules like public management and economic change, results based management as they advocate for new public management and results based management through e-governance. To this end the degree is a skills hub to which staff in local authorities can use to counter their operational problems.

2.3 Local government legal framework in Zimbabwe

Local government in Zimbabwe draws its legitimacy, reference and operational responsibilities and functions mainly from the Urban Councils Act (UCA) 29:15, Rural District Councils Act (RDCA) 29:13, Traditional leaders Act (TLA) 29:17, the Provincial Councils and Administration Act (PCAA) 29:11 among others and lately the Constitution of Zimbabwe (Amendment Act No.20). This study will focus on the UCA 29:15, the RDCA 29:13 and the Constitution of Zimbabwe. There was so much hype about the prospects of constitutionalizing local government in Zimbabwe with varying reasons related to the imbalance in center-local relations (Chatiza, 2010), stipulation of intergovernmental transfers and the relative autonomy of local government from the center, at least in theory (Machingauta 2010)

The Urban Councils Act

The Urban Councils Act of Zimbabwe, according to Sims (2013) governs the four levels of urban councils, (cities, municipalities, towns and local boards). According to Zhou and Chilunjika (2013) the Act provides for a mandatory obligation for councils to enforce rates on all rateable property (Parts 18 and 19) in in their respective jurisdictions and the rates are based on property value in a council's valuation roll, Rothschild (1996) in Zhou and Chilunjika (2013). This is their major source of revenue and is verifiable and predictable (Chakaipa, 2010, Fjeldstad 2014, Zhou and Chilunjika 2013). The Act also provides for other alternatives for revenue generation like Income Generating Projects (IGPs) in Section 221, that they may undertake commercial or industrial activities among others to improve on revenue (Feltoe 2002).

Furthermore, user charges by urban councils are charged through the empowerment of this Act albeit central government regulates them.

Part 19, section 228 of the Act empowers local authorities to make by-laws to improve and enhance operations which are approved (section 229) by the Minister although they can be rescinded by the Minister in the interest of the public. Part 9 of the Act provides for the employees of council, their appointments and functions (town clerk, chamber secretary). The senior employees are also appointed or dismissed by the Local Government Board (LGB), which is established under Part VIII (Madhekeni and Zhou 2013). Sections 285 to 288 provide for the preparation of financial accounts and estimates by local authorities with section 305 providing for the auditing of local authorities within 120 days after the end of each financial year. Section 211 has the procurement system and provides for the deliberation and provision of tenders through the procurement board. The second schedule of the Act outlines the powers of Council which amount to 54 functions for urban councils. The Valuation Board ascertains that the processes of local authorities are up to the required standards and is established under section 241 and addresses issues from owners of property (Mushamba 2010)

The Rural District Councils Act

The RDCA governs the 60 rural local authorities in Zimbabwe and provides for their operations (Machingauta 2010; Madhekeni and Zhou 2013). The provisions of the Act in the operations of RDCs are similar to those of the UCA to urban council with slight discrepancies. As the UCA the RDCA provides for, in sections 66 and 67, the appointment and conditions of service for senior staff of council, which both require the approval of the Minister. Section 70 outlines the

disciplinary provisions for corrupt practices by employees of Council which may, however be reversed by the Minister in writing. Part VIII provides for the committees of Council, typically responsible for, *inter alia*, roads and works, finance, human resources, auditing and environmental management. Similar to the UCA the RDCA also has provisions for contracts and tenders of council under section 79 which sufficiently guide the award of tenders in the councils' procurement system.

Part XIII of the Act has provisions on financial management in rural local authorities. It provides for the preparation of final accounts (Section 119), estimates of council (section 121) and auditing (sections 134-137) among other. Section 80 also provides for Income Generating Projects (IGPS) and Part XI empowers the councils to make by-laws which also need the approval of the Minister. On revenue, Part XII outlines the provisions on levies and other charges that councils can enforce. The First Schedule of the Act outlines the powers of Council which are up to 64 functions.

Local authorities in both rural and urban set-ups have considerable backing from the statutes to enhance or improve on effective operationalization of their activities. However according to Machingauta (2010) the advantages at times are reduced as the central government has the final say in most provisions as they are subject to either Ministerial approval or reversal. Madhekeni and Zhou (2013) are of the same view stating that the two statutes are similar and tighten the control of central government on local authorities through the questionable Ministerial oversight which adversely impacts performance of local authorities. The Portfolio Committee (2012) on this noted that for instance the reason why local authorities at times fail to fill senior positions is

the time taken by the Ministry to approve the candidates long after councils have done interviews. This is one typical case of inefficiency in responding to situations that local authorities face as Mushamba (2010) stated that the local dependency on the centre is a cause for concern, for instance ministerial intervention is provided 250 times in the RDCs day to day operations alone. Machingauta (2010) comments central oversight on the local sphere but cautions against the legal provisions ability to create a local government replete with political manipulations which would be a product of a well-intended legislative provision.

The Constitution Amendment Act No. 20 of 2013

The Constitution of Zimbabwe is the supreme law, and any other law that is inconsistent with it is considered void, (Madhekeni and Zhou 2013). The lack of constitutional backing for local government in Zimbabwe until 2013 has been met with strong calls to give it constitutional support. The previous constitution was extensively silent on local government save for Section 111 which provided for Chiefs, provincial governors, district and regional governors (Madhekeni and Zhou 2013). The new constitution (Amendment No.20 of 2013) has exclusive provisions for local government. Section 3 (2*l*) provides for a decentralized local government system with devolution of power, authority and functions. Section 5 identifies the tiers of government in Zimbabwe stating the national, provincial and metropolitan and local authorities. Chapter 9 stipulates the principles of public administration and leadership which also should be observed by local government.

Chapter 14 is even more explicit on local government. Section 264 provides for devolution of governmental powers and responsibilities and the objectives of devolution. The provisions for provincial and local government and the conduct of employees of both tiers of government are outlined under sections 265 and 266 respectively. Local government also draws heavily from the new constitution on the functions of provincial and metropolitan councils and local authorities in sections 270 and 276 respectively. The constitution also acknowledges and provides for the establishment of urban and rural local authorities (sections 274 and 275 respectively), elections to local authorities (section 277) and that an Act of Parliament must provide for the procedure to be followed by council of local authorities (section 279) under Part 3, which is exclusive to local government. However, to date local government Acts have not yet been harmonized with the new constitution.

2.4 Summary

This chapter explored the various literatures on local government and its operational challenges in Zimbabwe, from an institutional perspective and analyzed the major legal framework from which local government draws its operational legitimacy and functions as well as an overview on the LGS degree. The ensuing chapter will employ the research methodology which will establish whether the literature and findings tally, as well as justify methods that will establish the extent to which the LGS degree has helped personnel in local government tackle these challenges.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter analyzed bodies of work with literature related to this study. There has been significant research on local governance in Zimbabwe and the associated operational challenges and most scholars agree on the challenges but attribute most of them to external factors. Most scholars also acknowledge that human resources in local authorities require training to improve on skills. However, research on the effect of educational qualifications on most local authorities' staff and officials is mainly limited to councilors. Focusing on the possible solutions to the operational challenges in local authorities little is available on the contribution of academic qualifications' impact on human resources performance but rather on legal, institutional and financial among other external reforms. In addressing this shortcoming, this chapter presents the methods used for collecting data, the procedures followed to establish the contribution the LGS Degree has made in addressing operational challenges in local authorities. The chapter will also justify the methods used by the researcher in the data collecting process.

This chapter will explain the research design, target areas and the target population. It will also define sampling and the sampling techniques outlining the sample size, sampling procedure, sample design, sample frame as well as the sources of data. Research instruments will also be outlined; the questionnaires and interviews, explaining their merits and demerits. The chapter will also outline the methods that will be used in data analysis and presentation, research ethics and the preliminary survey.

Rajasekar et al (2013) defines research methodology as a systematic way of solving a problem. It involves how finding out how to go by the research, explaining, telling and envisaging, facts experiences or events. It is also about analyzing how knowledge is acquired and ultimately it gives the researcher a plan of their research. Rajasekar et al (2013) also add that research methodology aids researchers in understanding the calculations measuring techniques like the mean, variance and data distribution as well as understanding the suitability of methods, their accuracy, and efficiency among others.

3.1 Preliminary Survey

The researcher conducted a preliminary survey from June 2012 to July 2013 with the aim of identifying local authorities that would serve as and provide the best samples with individuals that would be purposively selected. The exercise involved inquiring into various local authorities especially in Mashonaland, Manicaland, and the Midlands. The process of creating a sampling frame based on the findings ensued with the aim of developing a working sample.

3.2 Research Design

According to Kumar (2005) a research design is a structure of investigation conceived so as to obtain answers to research problems. The research design helps the researcher to obtain valid, objective and accurate answers to the research questions. To ensure more accuracy and reliable findings, this study will employ both the qualitative and quantitative techniques through the administering of questionnaires and interviews. The rationale is to ensure that the problem is well addressed and effective measures are established that tally with the problem. According to

Rajasekar et al (2013) quantitative research is based on quantity measurement. It is basically related to results with numbers or expressed in numerical terms. As such quantitative research is often not descriptive, but rather iterative because mostly evidence is used. Results are often tabulated or presented in graphical form. It is conclusive and often has a hypothesis and inferential methods are used (Rajasekar et al 2013). The quantitative method is more effective as results can be quantified and conclusions drawn therefrom. In this study, quantitative approach will be used to present the numbers in local authorities personnel, percentage differences and similarities on responses and presentation of findings

On the other hand qualitative research has more to do with the quality of findings other than the quantity (Rajasekar et al 2013). Unlike the quantitative approach, it makes use of evocative words, descriptive in nature and calls for reasoning and in so doing intends to get the meaning or describe the feelings involved in a situation. It therefore cannot be graphed and answers questions like how, who and why in decision making (Rajasekar et al 2013). Being qualitative in nature this study will also make use of the employment of such instruments as interviews and questionnaires to gather information about the experiences, perceptions, opinions and feelings of the respondents at the four local authorities. Experiences and perceptions of the respondents will help the researcher to establish findings on the impact the LGS degree has made in the sector in addressing operational challenges.

3.3 Target Areas

According to Best and Kahn (1993) a target area is a geographical area to which its boundary demarcates it and the researcher is interested in its activities. In this study, the target areas are

Harare and Bulawayo Metropolitan, Gweru City Council and Chirumhanzu RDC offices. The rationale is simply because these are the areas where the researcher will find the people (respondents) with the knowledge and experience required for the completion of this study

Table I: Targeted Areas

AREA	NARRATIVE
Harare City Council	<i>Harare metropolitan, serves as the capital of Zimbabwe, Harare province</i>
Bulawayo City Council	<i>Bulawayo metropoolitan, the second after Harare in the South West of Zimbabwe,</i>
Gweru City Council	<i>City of Gweru, third largest in Zimbabwe, in the Midlands povince</i>
Chirumhanzu RDC	<i>A rural district council in the Midlands, North East of the City of Gweru in the Midlands Province</i>

Source: Preliminary survey (2013)

3.4 Target population

This is the entire group a researcher is interested inform which the researcher wishes to draw conclusions, Creswell (2009). For this study, the target population comprises the LGS degree holders and local authorities' management.

Table II: Target population size and target sample size

Category	Target population	Sample target
LGS Degree Holders	9	9
Council Management	16	16

Source: Preliminary survey (2013)

The above populations are the intended sources of information, to which the questionnaires and interviews will be employed. The researcher will, however, have to develop representative samples of the population so as to obtain information from the target population.

3.5 Sampling

Mugo (2002) defines sampling as the act, process, or technique of selecting a suitable sample, or a representative part of a population for the purpose of determining parameters or characteristics of the whole population. A sample, is a finite part of a statistical population whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole (Mugo, 2002). A sample must be “microcosm” (Yount 2006) that it should represent the population it was drawn from and should have properties that reflect and give the impression of the total population’s characteristics when studied and analyzed (Creswell 2003, Chizinga 2013). For this study, sampling will be done on local authorities, management, and the LGS Degree holders.

3.6 Sample Design

It is how the researcher will select the respondents (Zikmund 2000). It will involve listing the population components that will provide information for the sample and determine the sample size. In this study, the sample will be drawn from the four local authorities categorized into two classes of respondents which are local authorities’ management and LGS degree holders to which questionnaires will be administered.

3.7 Sample frame

Friedman et al (1998) define a sample frame as the units that need to be sampled. For this study, the frame comprises local authorities' management and LGS Degree holders in the four local authorities.

3.8 Sample size

The sample size is influenced by a variety of factors. It can be determined through experience of an individual, or budgetary concerns or mostly when purposive sampling is being used which are the ad hoc methods (Kumar 2005). It can also be defined through statistical methods to calculate the appropriate sample. In most cases a sample of 10-20% of the total population is usually recommended for more representative findings. For this study, the size of the sample will be determined through purposive selection, as there are fewer respondents who will be purposively selected. For the local authorities management respondents will be equal to the number of thematic departments in each local authority based on the availability of (an) LGS degree holder(s) in that local authority to increase on the reliability of findings.

3.9 Sampling procedure

The sampling procedure is basically rested on two methods namely probability and non-probability. Probability sampling is distinguishing characteristic that each unit in the population has a known non zero probability of being included in the sample (Latham 2007). Every element from the population is provided with an equal chance of being selected. It therefore reduces bias from researchers in trying to suit their opinions or desires (Frey et al 2000). According to Latham

(2007) it includes simple random, systematic random, stratified random, and cluster sampling. Simple random sampling involves picking subject randomly from a sample and may be used to select local authority management in cases where target population at a local authority exceeds five.

Non-probability sampling is subjective to the researcher's judgements (Churchill, 2002)) and it may have the disadvantage of generalization and bias. It includes convenience, snowball, quota and purposive sampling even though some scholars do not agree on a holistic classification (Latham 2007). There is deliberate choice of some sample members and this procedure (purposive) will be employed in this study as the respondents for the study are determined by a very small number of available individuals in local authorities which are the LGS Degree holders. Purposive sampling will be used because the respondents (LGS degree holders) have a small target population in local authorities and the only ones with the required specific knowledge about the information required for the completion of this study.

3.1.0 Sources of data

Reference will be made to both primary and secondary sources of data as the researcher will employ both methods to address the study's research questions and objectives.

3.1.1 Secondary data

Hox and Boeije (2005) referred to secondary data as that data which was collected for a different research and then used for another research question. The researcher found secondary data useful for the study background, local authorities' minutes and records. Secondary data was mainly

extracted from books, e-journals, newspapers, and consumed less time and was less costly. It preceded primary data so as to avoid researching information that already existed.

3.1.2 Primary data

Primary data is the original data gathered for the specific research question it is intended for (Hox and Boeije 2005). Questionnaires will be administered and interviews employed in this study for the purposes of gathering primary data in this study to all the respondents in the four local authorities. Under the current research circumstances and conditions, primary data will tally the secondary data. It is however time consuming, costly and calls for commitment and proper planning with schedules and recording instruments. The researcher was nonetheless prepared for this process.

3.1.3 Research Instruments

These will be used to obtain data from the respondents. For this study, instruments will be the questionnaires and interviews for primary data collection.

(a) Questionnaires

According to Oppenheim (2011) a questionnaire is an instrument for research comprising a set of questions for gathering information from the respondents. The questionnaires have both open ended and closed ended questions. Closed ended questions may have possible suggestions; simple “yes” or “no” answers or in areas where possibilities are more obvious and the researcher guides the responses. Open ended questions allow the respondents to explicitly explain their

responses without limitations in. Open ended questions throughout the questionnaires may fail to contextualize the responses and respondents may stray.

The questionnaires in this study are in two sets; one set for the local authorities' management and the other for the LGS degree holders. As such each set will be distributed randomly on a non-preferential basis in each group it is supposed to be administered. The researcher will also ensure the supply is adequate and meets the numbers in the sample. Questionnaires save time because the researcher can just drop them to the respondents. They also reduce bias as respondents will be under no supervision from the researcher and may feel free to express themselves. However with questionnaires one cannot read the non-verbal cues and there is no room for clarification on some issues the researcher feels the respondent did not fully elaborate.

The responses from the questionnaires will be used to determine how the LGS degree holders and management perceive the degree has done; their perceptions on its impact in addressing operational challenges (its usefulness) in their local authorities and their suggestion or recommendation for improvement. Responses will also help the researcher to determine the areas in which the degree impacted most and least, from which suggestion and conclusion can be made and drawn. Collection period of questionnaires from date of administering will be 4-6 days depending on the researcher's travelling schedule. The researcher's choice of the use of questionnaires is based on the notion that the use of open ended and closed ended questions helps in capturing wide areas of information that can give detailed responses that enhance the depth and accuracy of findings.

(b)(i) Interviews

Steinar (2006) describes interviews as any personal interaction facially or otherwise between two or more individuals with a particular purpose. The researcher will use oral interviews. Respondents will be notified at least a fortnight before the interview date. A laptop will be used to record the sessions for future reference. Responses in other cases will also be noted down in a response notebook for future references. Interviews will be employed to both the LGS degree holders and selected management personnel in their local authorities.

The merits of interviews are the researcher can seek clarification upon getting responses that may not be clear hence more accuracy. They also provide instant feedback (Priest 1996). Nonverbal communication can also help the researcher in observations. However, they can be time consuming, and direct communication may compel individuals to be biased.

(ii) Telephone Interviews

This will involve interviewing respondents on the phone. They also involve instant responses. For this study other respondents especially in Bulawayo may be interviewed by telephone as the researcher will not be able to travel many times to the city. They are cheaper but there are no non-verbal cues for the researcher to observe.

3.1.4 Research Materials

Table III: Research Materials

Research Materials	Purpose
Laptop	Record interview sessions
Telephone	Medium for interviewing respondents
Notebook	Recording interview responses, illustrations and diagrams

3.1.6 Data collection procedure

For respondents with limited time, the researcher will hand-deliver the questionnaires and collect in not more than a week and respondents with more time may fill the hand-delivered questionnaires while the researcher waits for them. For both oral and telephone interviews, appointments will be set with the management and LGS degree holders, and for oral interviews the researcher will go in person. Appointments allow council staff to be prepared for the interviews.

3.1.5 Pretest of the data collection instruments

To ensure reliability and validity of results, the researcher will consult with the supervisor on how relevant the questions are to the study topic.

3.1.6 Research Ethics

The researcher will observe all ethical consideration in data collection, presentation and throughout the research process. The researcher will seek participants' consent and adhere as well to all the local authorities' structures, authority and ethical considerations. The rationale for the study will be explained to all the respondents clarifying issues related to personal information and privacy. The research will agree with the participants on how to compensate their time and carry the study with highest degree of probity. The researcher will also respect and observe the confidentiality of all respondents and will use information obtained from this research for the purposes of this study only. Presentation of information will reflect the findings from the respondents to avoid bias and any organizational information that will be considered confidential by the organizations will be treated as such.

3.1.7 Data analysis and presentation

Presentation of collected data will ensure clear communication of results, in a logical manner.

3.1.8 Data presentation and analysis techniques

The researcher will employ accurate and clear data presentation techniques which will include presentations on graphs, pie charts, tabulation figurative analysis and expressions depending on how the findings will be communicated. Both inductive and deductive analyses techniques will be used.

3.2 Summary

This chapter explained the research methodology, sampling, sampling procedure, sample size and the target population as well as the approach (qualitative or quantitative) the researcher will use in the study. Research instruments were also discussed highlighting their merits and demerits and how they will be administered, including the sources of data that included both the primary and secondary sources. The chapter justified the methods to be used and to this, data collected and its reliability and accuracy will justify the validity and qualification of the appropriateness of the research methodology. The ensuing chapter will therefore consider the results obtained through the methods outlined in this chapter and present them with an in depth analysis that produces reliable and working findings.

CHAPTER IV

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter will present and analyze data that was collected through the use of questionnaires and interviews. Collected data from different respondents will be presented and analyzed as recorded in different tables, charts and graphs. It will be expressed in percentage terms reflecting the rate of responses from the respondents from the four local authorities. Preference will be given to the percentage system in providing the standard for effective analysis and interpretation. The researcher will give a summary of all the respondents which also shows the response rate for the entire study. The data will be categorized to show the usefulness and effectiveness of the LGS degree, challenges and suggestions for improving the degree's effectiveness. It is from the analyses, presentation and interpretation that the conclusion and recommendations for the study will be made on the impact of the LGS degree in addressing local authorities' operational challenges.

The researcher categorized the respondents into two categories namely the LGS degree holders and local authorities' management from Bulawayo, Gweru, Harare City councils and Chirumhanzu RDC. The study was based on purposive selection which works with small samples that have comprehensive and relatively large data, 25 questionnaires were distributed, 6 at each local authority except for Gweru which had 7, as there were 3 respondents who were holders of an LGS degree. Interviews were only done with LGS degree holders for the purposes of understanding better the effectiveness of the degree. Questions for the study related to the

experiences by LGS degree holders and their management counterparts in the effectiveness, relevance, and the degree to which the operational problems were addressed by the training and skills from the LGS degree in the four local authorities. Local authorities' management were included as respondents for the purposes of identifying operational challenges, any improvements to these challenges so that they could be compared with the responses from the LGS degree holders. There was also room for respondents to express their own opinions through open ended questions. Table 4.1 shows the response rate from the questionnaires.

Table 4.1 Questionnaire response rate (based on all the four local authorities)

Category	Sample size	Response	Percentage
LGS degree holders	9	9	100%
L.A management	16	15	95%

A 100% response rate was attained on the LGS degree holders, while local authorities' management attained a 94% response rate (15 out of 16).

4.1 Responses Summary

4.1.1 Respondents characteristics

The table 4.1.1 shows the characteristics of the respondents to the questionnaires. In total 79% (19/24) of the respondents were male and 21% (5/24) were female.

Table 4.1.1 Respondents characteristics

Working period in the organization(yrs.)	0-5 years		5-10 years		10 and above		Total Responses
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
LGS degree holders	3	1	3	1	1	-	9
LAs management	-	-	8	1	4	2	15
Totals							24

Source: Research data (2014)

The data shows that 4 out of 24 respondents (17%) had less than 5 years of working periods in their local authorities, all being LGS degree holders with only 1 (4%) of the respondents with less than five working years a female. For 5-10 years working period, the values for LGs degree holders were the same as 0-5 years at 4 out of 24 (17%) with the same proportion of a female (4%) while for management they were 9 (38%) to which 4% was a female. Only 1 (4%) LGS degree holder had above 10 years working in their respective local authority and this is an indication that they went on the degree programme while they had started their employment. 25%, (6/24) of the respondents were management who had a working experience of above 10 years in their local authorities to which 8% (2/24) were female.

An analysis shows that LGS degree holders have not yet accumulated longer working periods, apparently because the degree was launched exactly a decade ago.

The researcher also categorized the respondents into age groups. Generally, respondents were at least 18 years and older. The rationale was to find to establish a relationship between age and the experience or knowledge of operational challenges in respective local authorities. The frequency table for age groups is shown below.

Table 4.1.2 Frequency for respondents' age groups

Age group (in years)	18-29	30-39	40 and above
Frequency	5	13	6

Source: Research data (2014)

The researcher also classified the respondents into their levels of education and work positions. This was to help analysis in identifying the respondents' ability to influence on operations and their knowledge about operational challenges like strategic planning, management and administration issues

Respondents' managerial levels

Only 8% (2/24) of the respondents were in top management, with middle management taking the huge share of 71% (17/24) and the remaining 21% (5/24) belonging to those in lower level management.

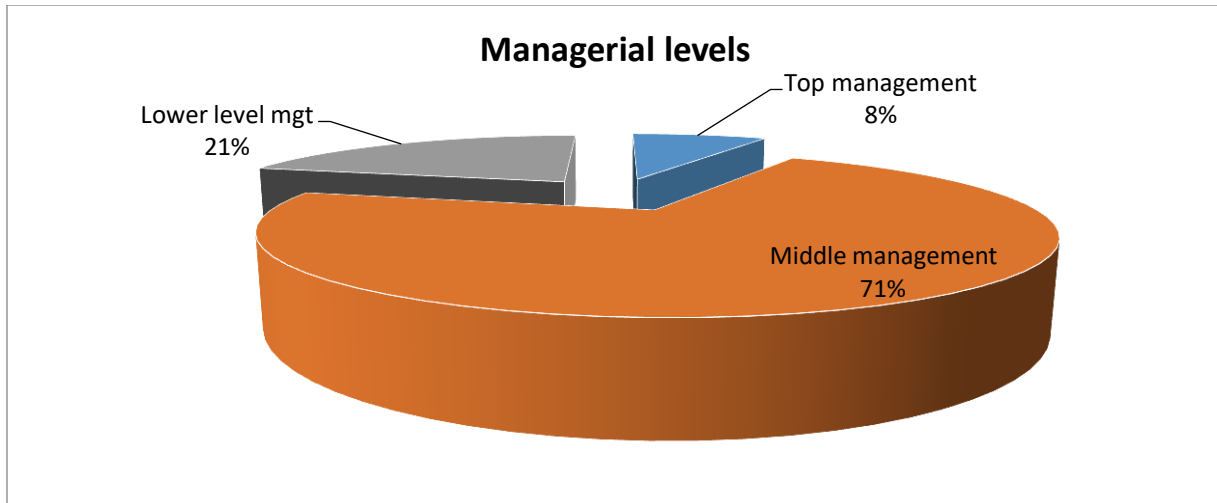


Fig. 4.1.1 Respondents' managerial levels

Source Research data (2014)

Local authorities' management knowledge levels of the LGS degree

Out of the 15 respondents from LAs' management 73% (11) had no idea about the LGS degree, 20% (3/15) rated themselves as average; having just sketchy knowledge of the LGS degree and only one, 7% claimed to have strong knowledge about the degree.

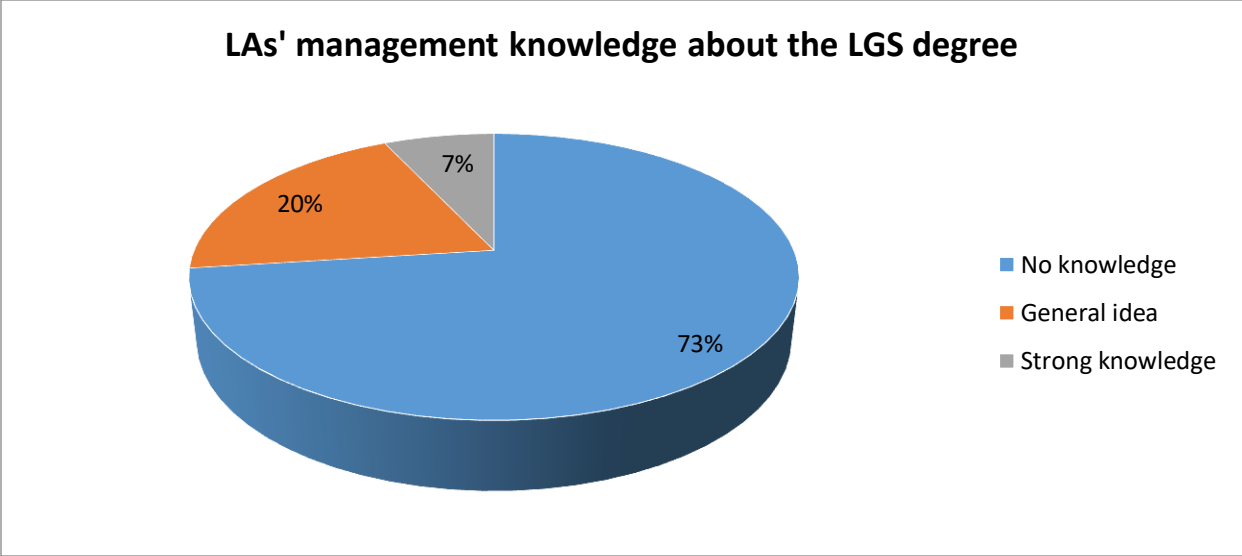


Fig. 4.1.2 showing levels of knowledge by local authorities' management about the LGS degree
Source; Research data (2014)

There is apparently lower staff in local authorities on the degree programme, and through the interviews the researcher observed that 60% of the interviewed management had a cynical perception towards the degree programme.

4.2 Major operational weaknesses identified by the respondents

There was a major consensus from all the responds that financial challenges were the more threatening as witnessed by a 100% (24/24) response rate indicating that. However the data shows that all the 15 LAs' management did not mention any other challenges beside the financial challenges, with LGS degree holders' 67% (6/9) reiterating on corruption as a threatening challenge, 5 out of 9 (56%) mentioned ethical and corporate governance issues, 4 out of 9 (44%) mentioned administration related challenges, 33% (3/9) mentioned human resources capacity related problems and only 22 % (2/9) cited strategic planning process as wanting to be looked into.

Major operational weaknesses mentioned by respondents

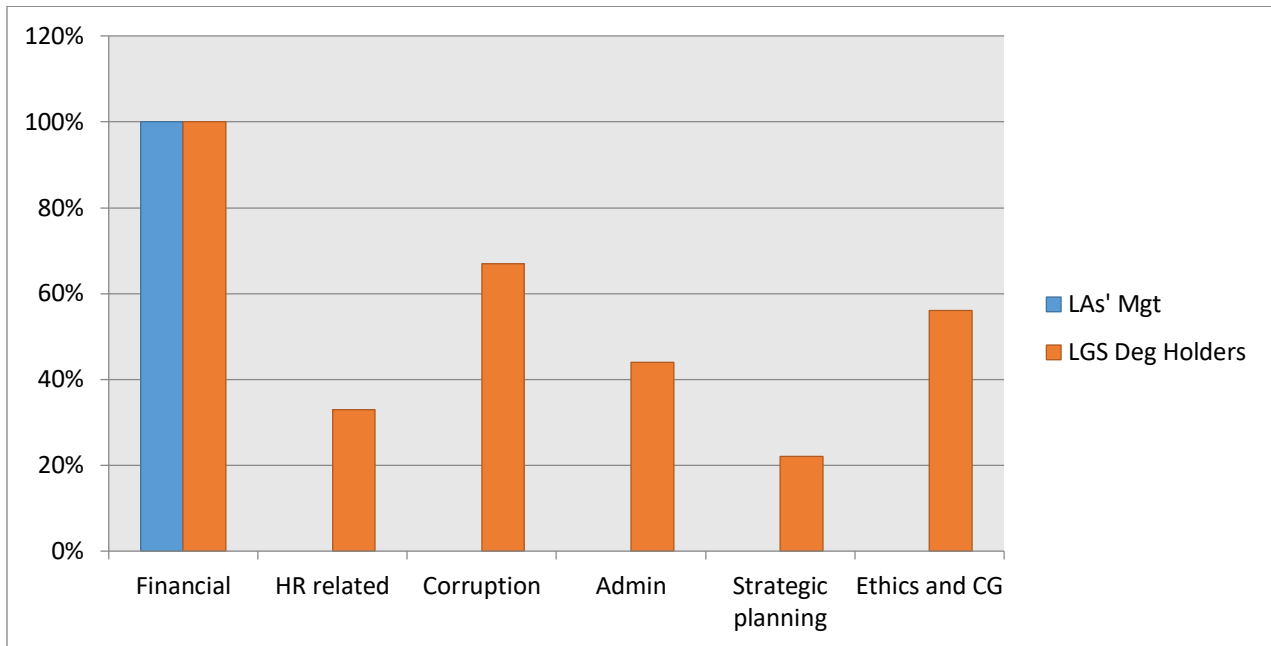


Fig 4.2.1 showing percentage of respondents and the challenges they mentioned

Source; Research data (2014)

4.3 Responses on the usefulness and whether or not the degree is necessary by local authorities' management staff

4 out of 15, (27%) of the management staff had some knowledge about the degree. These stated that the degree had very good concepts which are local government specific and oriented. As such, the degree is unique and specific and covers almost all the major issues in local government management. 20% (3/15) of the respondents from the City of Harare were reluctant to shed light on the performance of the LGS degree holders in the local authority. Nonetheless, for the bulk of the management staff, 73% (11/15) who claimed to have no specific knowledge

about the degree, the researcher inquired to know their perceptions on the performance of LGS degree holders as a yardstick to determine the usefulness of the degree. 2 out of 15 (13%) specifically from City of Gweru stated that LGS degree holders were not active in problem solving and addressing operational challenges. This is however debatable as another 13% (2/15) of respondents from the same local authority with knowledge about the degree had strongly indicated the LGS degree holders were skilled and effective management individuals particularly in administration. However 1 of the 2 respondents who had knowledge about the degree stated also that the degree was too general and lacked depth in some areas like financial management.

Usefulness of the degree according to LAs' management

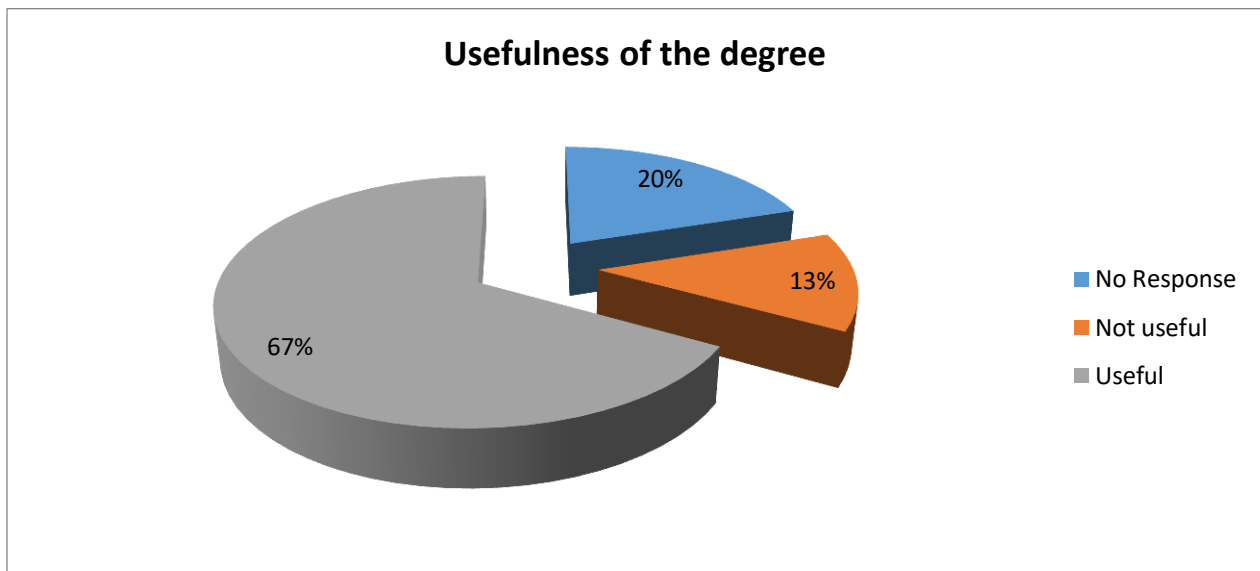


Fig. 4.3 showing degree usefulness according to local authorities' management responses

Source; Research data (2014)

7 out of 15 (47%) of the management staff (67% (7) of the 73% (11) who claimed to have no knowledge about the degree) indicated that department under management of LGS degree

holders had comparatively good performance to which 6 out of 11 (55%) pointed out administration as an area of significant strength. Contrary to the 13% (2/15) who stated that the LGS degree holders were not active in addressing operational challenges, 7 out of the 11 (67%) (7/15; 47%) argued LGS degree holders were skilled management individuals who were actively contributory particularly in strategic planning. 2 out of 15 (13%) (50% of total LAs' management respondents at Gweru City Council) of the respondents from Gweru City Council indicated that LGS degree holders in their Housing and Community services departments were outstanding management personnel in administration.

At Chirumhanzu RDC 3 out of 15 respondents (20%) (75% of total LAs' management respondents at Chirumhanzu RDC) indicated that an LGS degree holder in their Administration department was a skilled and capable manager and 3 out of 15 (20%) (75% of total LAs' management respondents at Bulawayo city Council) respondents from Bulawayo City Council stated that they were pleased and satisfied with the management skills of their LGS degree holders counterparts. Those who did not respond in all the three local authorities, including all the 3 (20%) other management respondents at Harare city Council indicated that they were not comfortable with rating their other management counterparts on their work performance standards.

Specific responses per local authority on performance of LGS degree holders

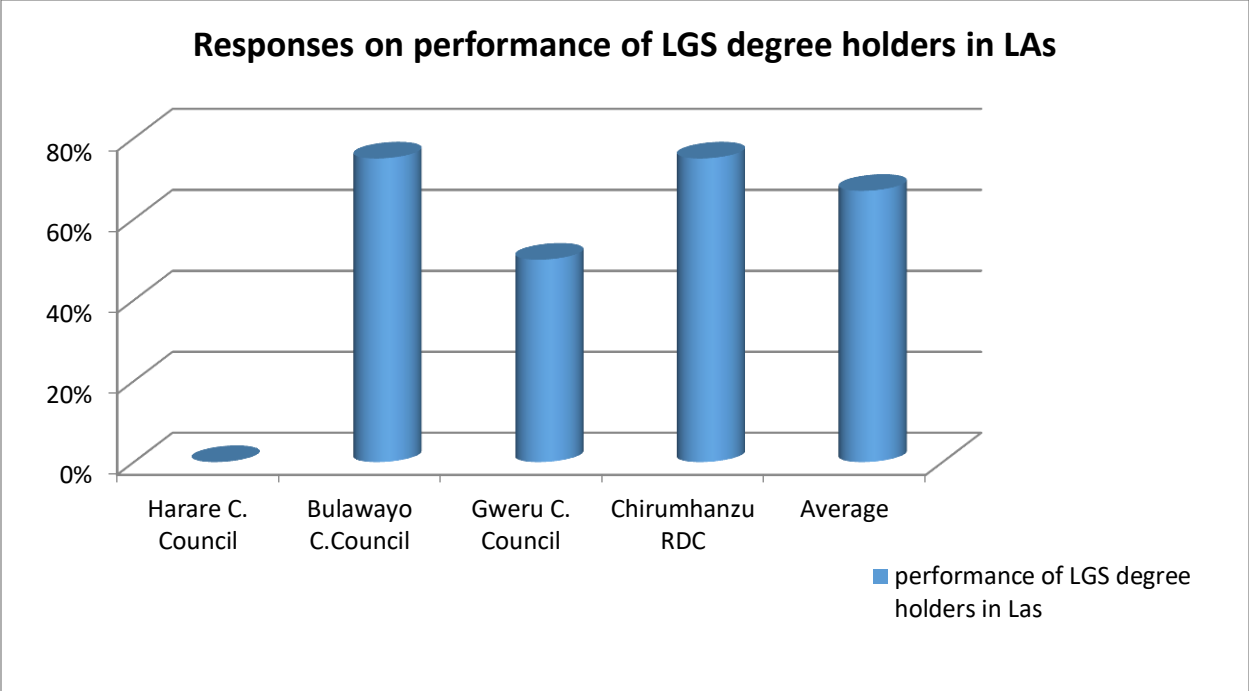


Fig 4.3.1 showing specific responses per local authority on performance of LGS degree holders by local authorities’ management

Source; Research data (2014)

The researcher asked all the local authorities’ management respondents on whether the degree was necessary and would they recommend it in local government. 10 out of 15 (67%) advocated for it as necessary; to which 4 of these were the 27% who had either strong or general knowledge about the degree. 2 out of 15 (13%) indicated the degree made no difference and as a result it is not really necessary. The researcher could not get information from 20% (3/15) from City of Harare.

Summary of necessity and recommendation of the degree by local authorities' management in all four local authorities

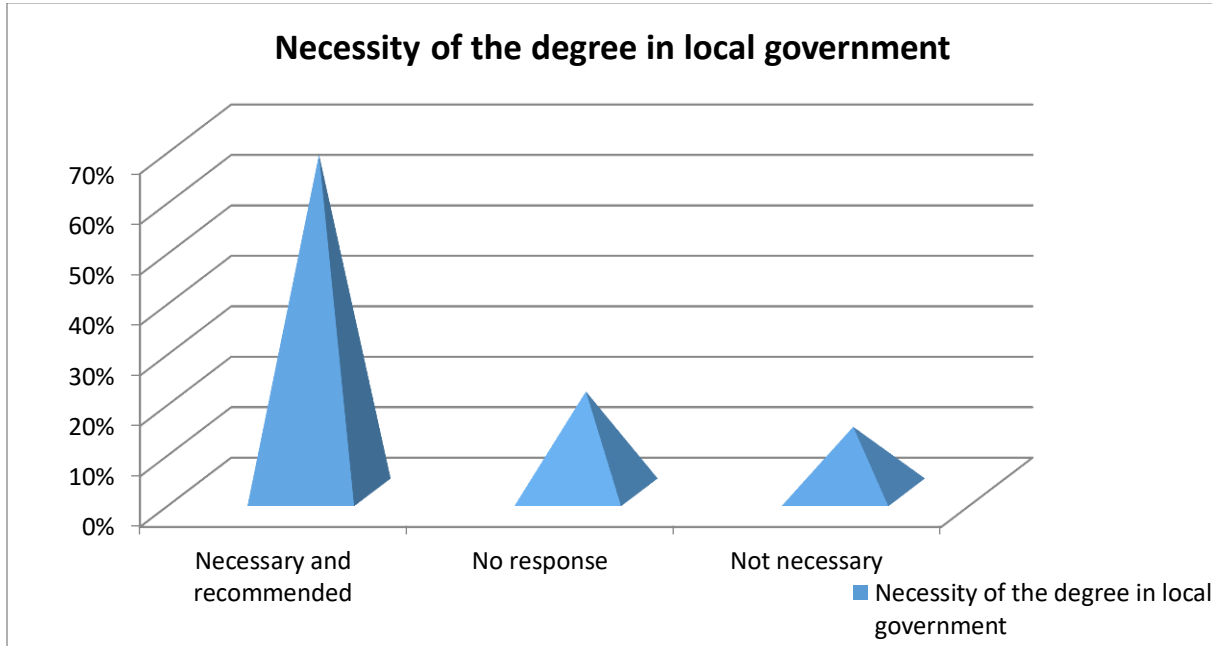


Fig. 4.3.2 showing the summary of necessity and recommendation of the degree in all four local authorities

Source; Research data (2014)

4.4 Summary of specific responses by LGS degree holders of the impact of the degree in the four local authorities

Chirumhanzu RDC

Administration department

There were two respondents who are LGS degree holders at Chirumhanzu RDC. Both respondents are in the administration department. The respondents stated that they were satisfied with the capacity enabled by the degree in administrative operations. Both respondents also

agreed that the degree had effective skills for good administration. The respondents indicated that they draw heavily from the modules of the degree in strategic planning. Modules like strategic planning, local government management, urban and rural development strategies and management of change were identified as crucial in administration. The respondents also stated that the onset of the Zim Asset national blueprint found them at an advantage in comparison to other qualifications like Public Administration, Political Science in terms of results based management. However from the interviews, the researcher observed that respondents were reluctant to disclose on their progress in problems relating to revenue collection including data base management for property updates. They indicated nonetheless that their accounts were in order for an external audit. The respondents were asked to rate the degree's overall effectiveness in their departments

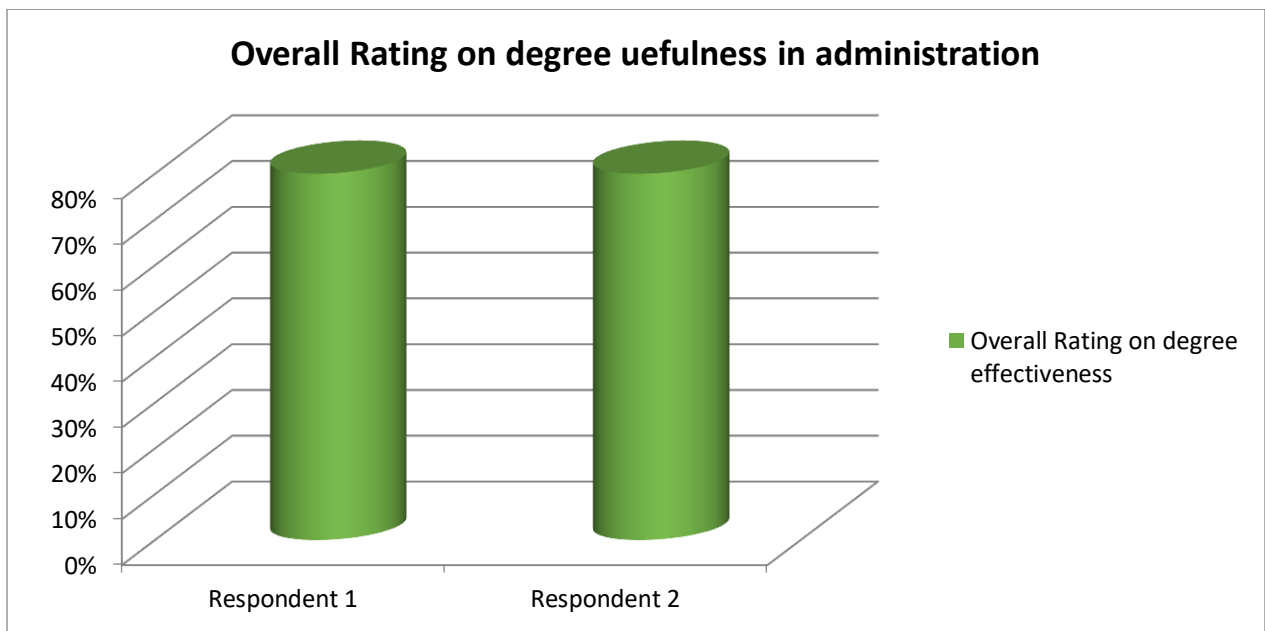


Fig. 4.4.1 showing overall rating of the degree effectiveness in administration at Chirumhanzu RDC

Source; Research data (2014)

Gweru City Council

There were 3 respondents at Gweru City Council in the Chamber Secretary's department, housing and community services. The respondent in administration (chamber secretary's office) strongly asserted that the degree enhanced administration structures and government in operations. The degree was specific and specifically for local governance and basically covers all the major challenges that local authorities face. The respondent indicated that they found the degree skills very useful in planning, local government management and public service. In planning, the respondent stated the degree skills give an appreciation of the whole local government planning system in Zimbabwe, in relation to its structures and processes. Furthermore, the respondent indicated that the degree was helpful in conflict resolution, employee interaction and more importantly policy formulation. The respondent however attributed the ineffectiveness of the degree to politics in the organization and outside, decision making rested on superiors as well as an organizational culture that treats innovation with skepticism.

The respondent in community services had a strong advocacy for the skills the degree offers stating that the degree gave a comprehensive understanding of managing projects, public interaction, planning and management of their respective departments. The respondent also reiterated that they had seen the need to maximize on the existing sources of revenue and had advocated for an update of the databases of all the social infrastructure, market stalls and related income generating infrastructure. The researcher observed that this process was still in progress. The respondent commented the degree on its multi-dimensional approach stating that it gave them an oversight of almost all the major operations of council. However the respondent commented that the ailing economy had negative impacts on their projects and efforts towards

full engagement with the community and financial problems hampered initiative of skills obtained from the degree. In housing, the respondent stated that the degree did not have specific housing modules and that needed to be looked into as housing is a key operation in any local authority. According to the respondent, the degree did not address specific housing issues but nonetheless commented that support from other specialists for instance physical planning enhances operations. However, administratively as a manager, the respondent found the degree quite handy, as stated in results based management, strategic planning, local government legislation and administration.

However, respondents noted that LGS degree holders albeit their skills from the degree, needed support from their management counterparts. One respondent indicated that support from others in management would make an even stronger impact.

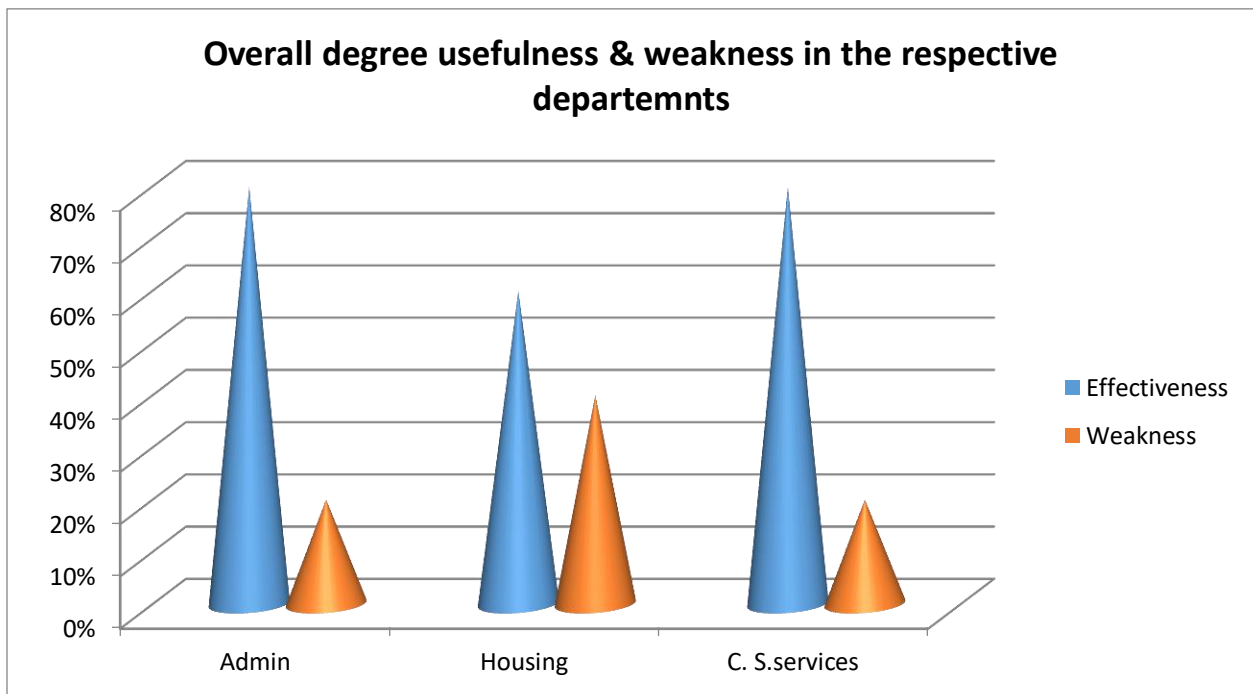


Fig. 4.4.2 shows the effectiveness of the degree in the three departments at Gweru City Council

Source; Research data (2014)

Harare City Council

The respondents at Harare city Council were in Housing. They indicated that their department was one of the most affected by corruption as they rated it high. One respondent commented that addressing corruption was an organizational and all-encompassing process but said that the degree had helped them introduce ethical measures to combat corruption. The other respondent stated that they found the degree and adequate management tool in the housing department in planning, administration of the department and results based management. The respondent indicated they had strong reference to the degree in strategic planning and service provision strategies.

The respondents were however unwilling on discussing specific strategies they employed in their departments. They however indicated that political issues were rife and the organizational culture was an impediment in cultivating the best out of the degree skills. One respondent said that the major problem was their working positions that did not have much of an influence on operations. However in updating property databases in an ongoing process, the respondents indicated that they had played a significant role in the administration process even though some organisational logistical hurdles were slowing the process down. Asked whether the degree had helped them change the way the local authority operates the respondents said the local authority is big, and making an impact in their current positions is an insurmountable task but were rather well equipped and skilled on a personal level. They reiterated that it was not because the degree had weaknesses but that the organizational setup was an impediment.

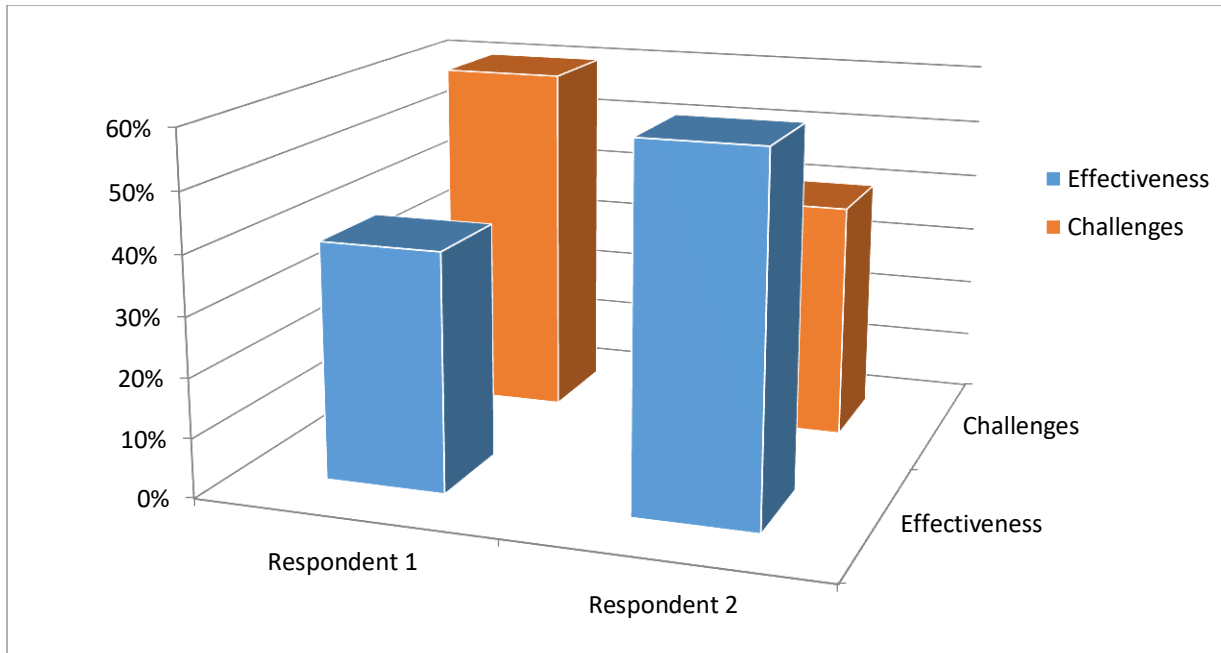


Fig. 4.4.3 shows the usefulness and challenges of the degree in Housing at Harare City Council
Source; Research data (2014)

Bulawayo city Council
Administration, Chamber Secretary Department

The respondents at Bulawayo City Council were in the Chamber Secretary’s department. The first respondent strongly indicated that the degree had an impact on the operations. The respondent argued that they found the relevant to local authorities operations and was satisfied with the skills enhanced by the degree. Both the respondents indicated that administratively, the degree was indispensable as it imparted skills focused on pertinent local governance issues. Specifically the respondent found the degree’s most presence in strategic planning, local government management administration and results based management. On a personal level, the second respondent added that the degree was a tool for molding individuals into professionals who have a high standard of ethic. To this the respondent indicated that they had introduced

integrity management programme to staff with professional socialization as some of the means to combat corruption. The respondents also indicated that they will be putting more staff on the degree programme to enhance on skills.

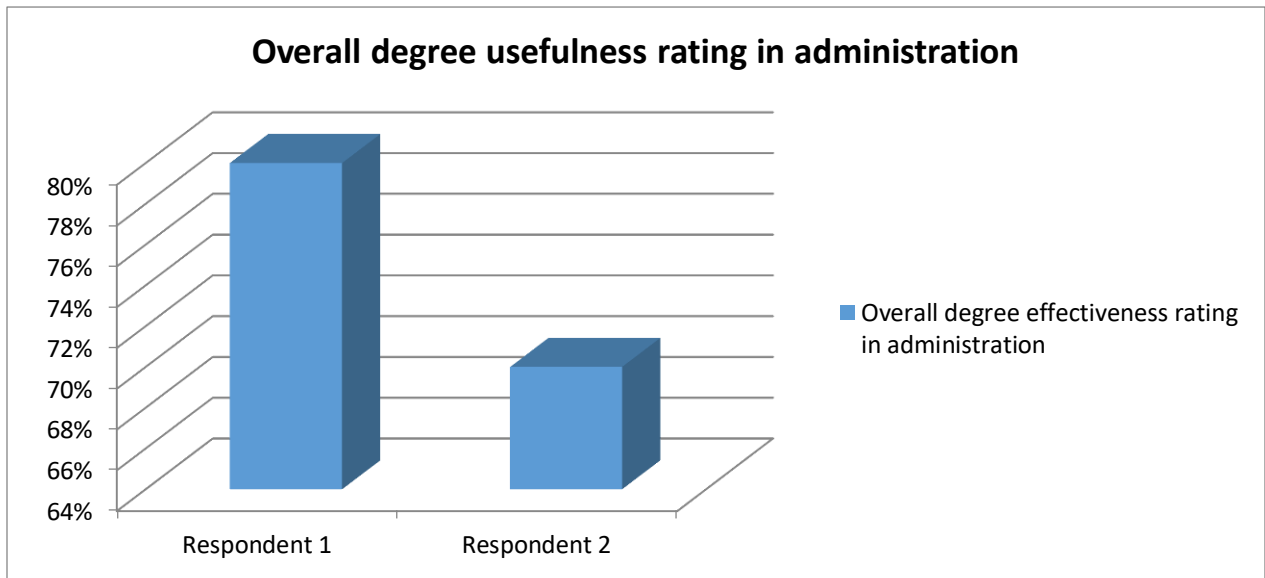


Fig 4.4.4 shows the degree’s usefulness in administration at Bulawayo City Council

Source; Research data (2014)

The respondents noted that the degree needs to address environmental issues, an area that can help management in “green” initiatives. Another area the respondents stated that might need to be included in the degree programme was an overview of major Economics aspects to help managers appreciate the economics in local government and the economic landscape in overall.

4.4.1 Summary of major areas mentioned by respondents in all four local authorities that the degree was found most useful

The following graph shows the frequency of how the degree holders mentioned major areas that they reckoned the degree helped them.

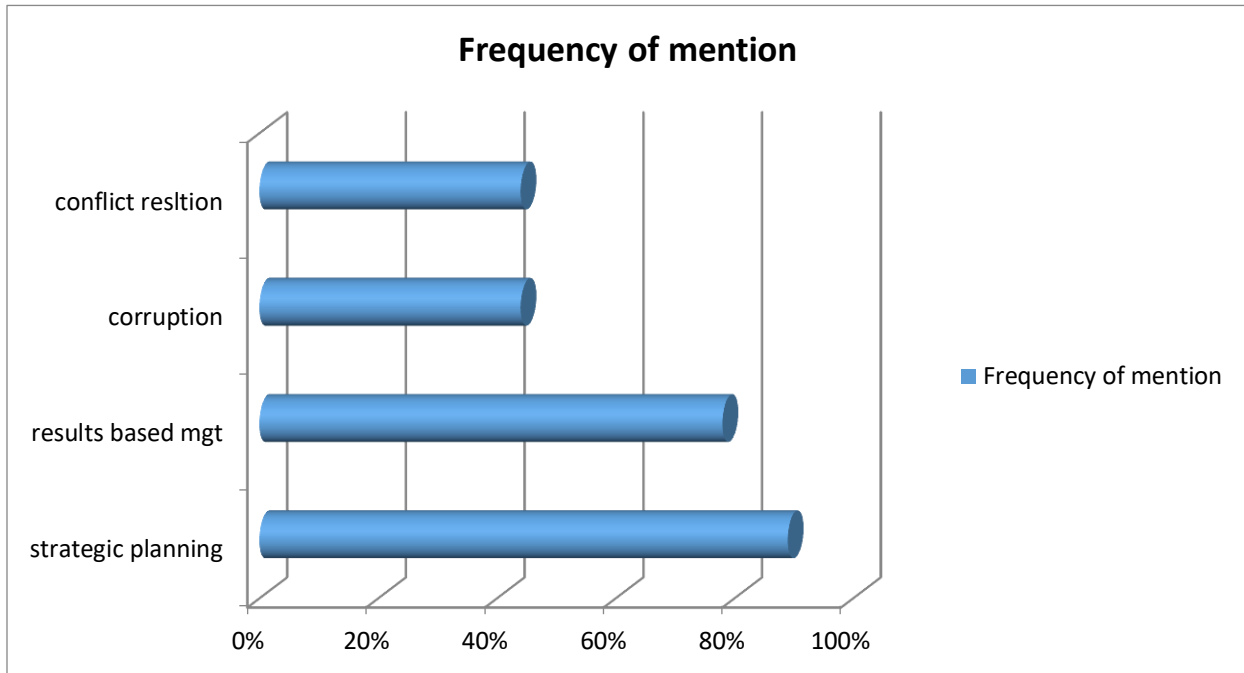


Fig. 4.4.1.1 shows the percentage frequency of how these areas were mentioned by the respondents to be addressed by the degree

Source; Research data (2014)

In the interview sessions the researcher observed that respondents mainly mentioned the above areas as attended to by the degree skills. Strategic planning was mostly mentioned at 89% (8/9) followed by results based management at 78% (7/9) and corruption and conflict resolution both at 44% (4/9).

4.4.2 Overall Departmental ratings of effectiveness of degree in all four local authorities

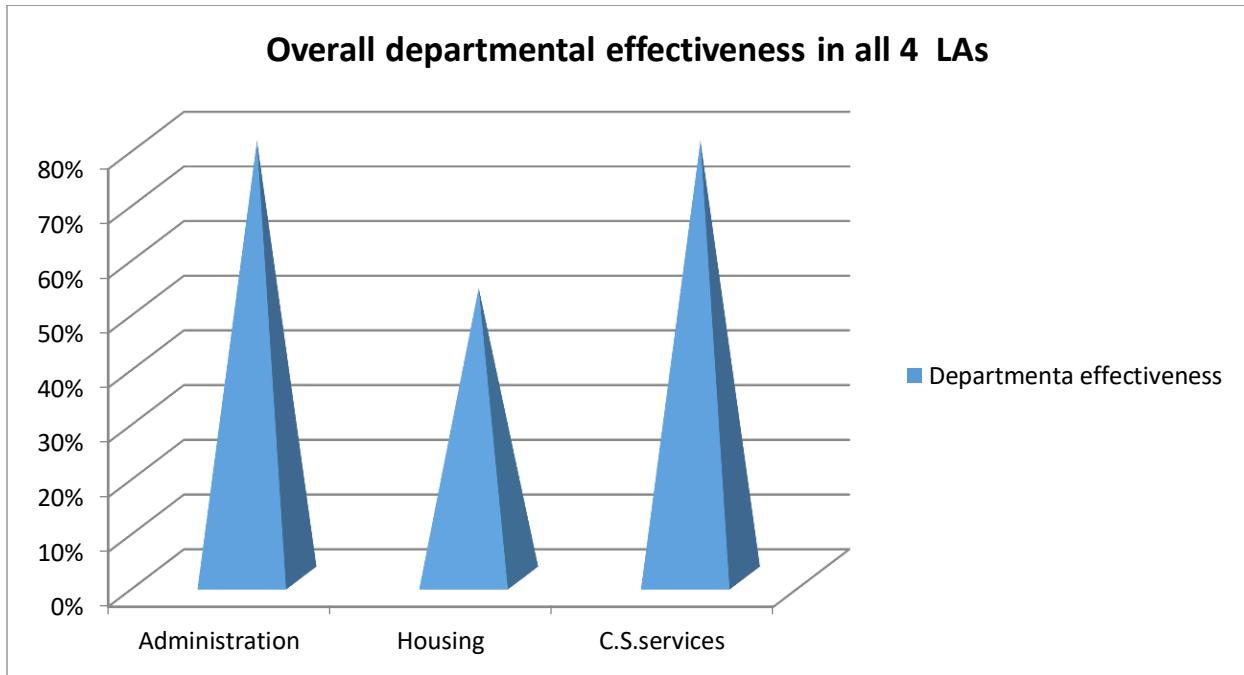


Fig. 4.4.2.1 showing overall degree's usefulness in three departments in the four local authorities

Source; Research data (2014)

The 56% (5/9) of respondents in administration rated the degree to an average effectiveness rate of 80% in administration, while in housing 3 out of 9 (33%) of the respondents mentioned a set of drawbacks and challenges and rated it at 53%. However only one (11%) of the respondents in Community and Social services department rated the degree to an 80% effectiveness rate. Reasons for higher effectiveness rates in administration were that the degree was tailor made for administrative functions and it was really useful in the area. The respondents in housing also mentioned that as an administrative tool even in the housing department the degree was effective although it could not address the technical aspects of the department. The respondent in

community and social services indicated that their department was mainly administrative and found the degree extremely useful.

4.5 Summary of the contribution of the degree in improving local authorities' operations

All the LGS degree holders' (100%) respondents indicated that they have found the degree very helpful and effective in their line of work as well as stating that they have used most of the features of the degree to date. However, 7 out of 9 (78%) of the LGS degree holders responded that in a way the degree had made some difference to the way their local authorities operate. However 7% (1/15) of the local authorities' management that claimed had strong knowledge about the degree stated that LGS degree holders were not actively involved in addressing operational challenges and 10 out of 15 (67%) were not convinced that a local government qualification like the LGS degree was contributing significantly to the operations of their local authorities as they rated "somehow."

Respondents however varied on the specific contributions the LGS degree had made to their operations. 8 out of 15 (53%) of the local authorities' management could not state particular contributions even some of those who stated had sketchy knowledge about the degree and some who stated the degree had somehow made an impact. 6 out of 15 (40%) from the 53% pointed out that they had not that much knowledge about the degree programme but as a qualification it should help in a way. 14% (2/15) of the LAs' management indicated that impact was in human resource capacitation and administration.

Percentage impact of the degree according to the respondents

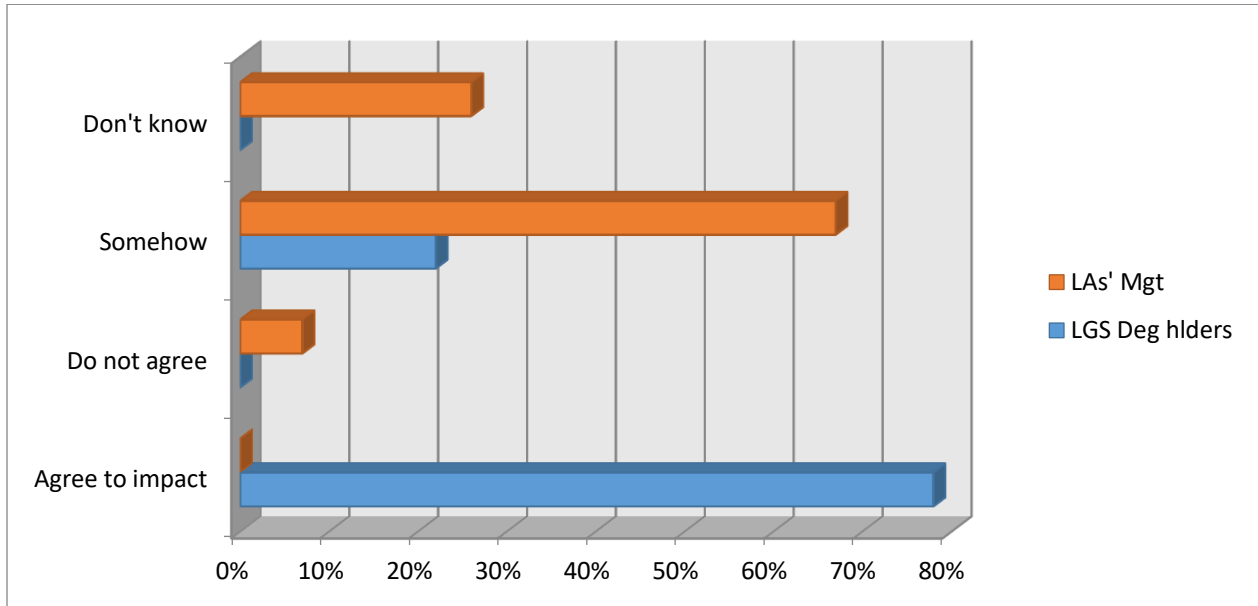


Fig. 4.5.1 shows the percentage impact of the degree according to the respondents

Source; Research data (2014)

The LGS degree holders also had varying contributory factors of the degree's impact but agreed in most. 78% (7/9) of the LGS degree holders found the degree significantly effective in administration and human resource capacitation to which they rated it to an 80% effectiveness rate. One respondent explained that the reasons for this is that before the advent of the LGS Degree individuals in local authorities did not have specific local government qualification for the sector and the degree brought about individuals who had an appreciation of the operations of the sector and therefore were specifically trained for such. 3 out of 9 respondents, (33% of the LGS degree holders) noted that the degree had increased the rate of transparency and flexibility and had a significant impact on administration and curbing corruption and that drew heavily from the ethics module. However, 22% (2/9) of the respondents reiterated that degree holders

needed support from other sectors to successfully impact on corruption. 4 out of 9 (44%) also found it useful in conflict resolution and management.

Summary of the degree’s contribution to operations according to LGS Degree holders

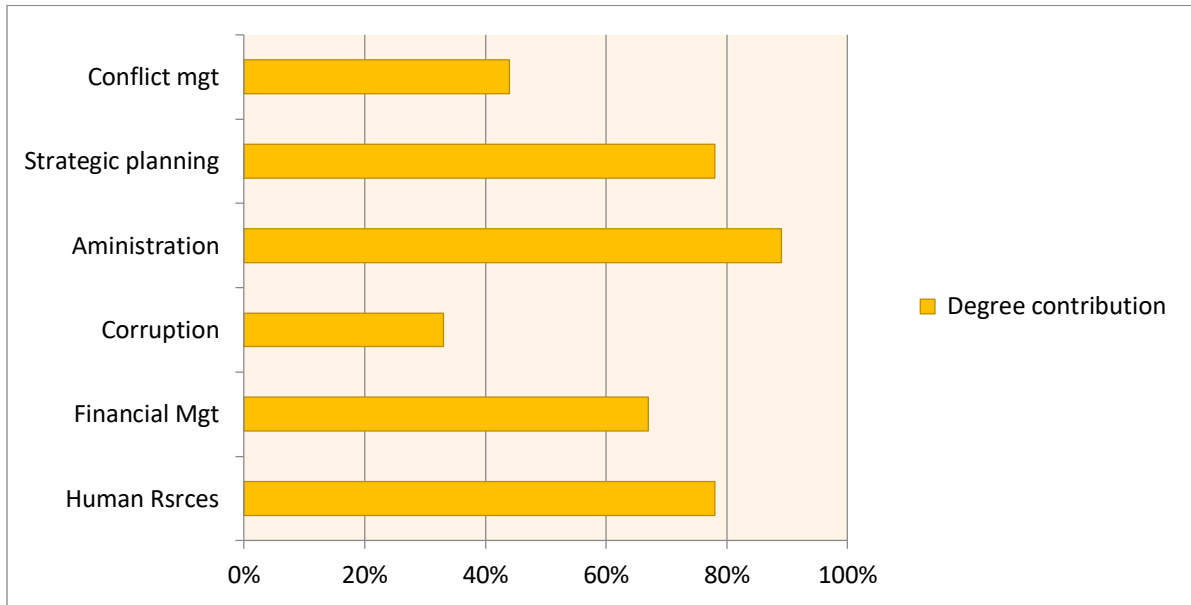


Fig. 4.5.2 shows the summary of the degree’s contribution as advocated by the LGS degree holders

Source; Research data (2014)

The data significantly showed that 78% (7/9) of the LGS degree holders exceptionally commented on finding the degree very helpful in Results Based Management (RBM) and its components. Although 100% (9/9) of the LGS degree holders found financial management challenges major, the degree’s contribution, according to 67% (6/9) of the responses, the degree’s contribution in in financial management was mainly administrative, as cited by 3 out of 9 (33%) of the respondents that there were slight improvements in management of existing

revenue sources and only 4 out of 9 (44%) stated that they had been on the process of updating their databases for revenue collection.

At Chirumhanzu RDC, all the 6 respondents were unwilling to inform on the state of their property databases but however indicated that they were in order for effective revenue collection. City of Gweru had an improved database as indicated by 57% (4/7) (to which 43% (3/7) were LGS degree holders) of the respondents from the city council and a database sheet provided by the one of the respondents. 2 out of 6 (33%) of the respondents from Bulawayo and 2 out of 5 (40%) from Harare City Councils indicated that their local authorities were in constant upgrade of their property databases. Responding to whether the degree has helped in these processes, all the LGS degree holders at Harare (2) and Bulawayo (2) pointed out that the degree had well equipped them and had helped in the process.

However 4 out of 9 (44%) of the LGS degree holders indicated that in accounts preparation and financial analysis, the degree's financial modules lacked depth. 33% (3/9) recommended that LGS degree holders may need additional accounting qualification to effectively impact in financial analysis operations. 89% (8/9) of the LGS holders however stated that the degree is strong administration and therefore gives an oversight of other areas of specialization like finance and engineering and doesn't need to be as detailed. 89% (8/9) of the degree holders explicitly stated that they enjoyed the degree's modules advantage of an all-encompassing approach as it gave an oversight with wider skills for almost all the major issues in local governance in a local authority set-up. A further 7 out of 9 (78%) of the LGS degree holders

found the degree indispensable in strategic planning, rating it to decision making and policy formulation. One respondent cited modules like strategic planning and management, local government management being at the core in aiding decision making.

4.6 Impediments to degree effectiveness

Respondents advised that some areas of operations need attention for the degree programme to be more effective. 2 out of 9 (22%) of the LGS degree holders identified organizational culture as an impediment to realization of full benefits from the degree's skills. One respondent indicated that in their organization management had little knowledge about the LGS degree and tended to be skeptical about the degree. Therefore management support is often lacking. They stated that more numbers could help the degree have more impact. Political issues and organizational setups in local authorities at times do not often rest major decisions in the hands of management and this means decisions and policies are not their direct input and therefore may differ from their own initiatives. At the same time there was a general consensus from all the respondents that financial challenges were impeding on implementation of some projects and initiatives that would enhance local authorities' performances.

4.7 Improvements to the degree

Respondents were asked about their opinions on the performance and skills enhancement capacities of the degree and had some suggestions. One respondent suggested that the degree

programme should include environmental studies modules and economics. At Chirumhanzu RDC one respondent indicated that the degree structure should seriously be revised to consider having more depth in financial analysis. In an interview, the respondent stated that when, for instance, the Chief Executive Officer has weak financial knowledge, and they tend to over rely on Finance officers who in turn will then be “running the show”.

4.8 Summary

In this chapter data collected was presented and analyzed through the use of tables, graphs and charts. Percentage terms were used to show quantities and levels of usefulness and effectiveness of the degree. The degree’s usefulness and effectiveness was presented and analyzed on both departmental and overall local authorities’ levels. Data was also analyzed for specific local authorities in qualitative terms on how respondents viewed the degree to be useful and effective in their operations and the challenges they are facing. The chapter also presented the suggestions from the respondents as drawn from their experiences with the performance of the degree. the analysis established that LGS degree holders found themselves well equipped by the degree while most local authorities’ management have little knowledge about the degree. in overall the degree was useful but its impact hindered by a number of challenges, including organizational culture, lack of financial resources and management support, inter alia. The following chapter will present the conclusions drawn from the analysis of the data in this chapter, the summary and recommendations for this study.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The purpose of the study was to assess the impact of the LGS degree in the operations of local authorities. This chapter will summarize the research study, highlighting the main ideas of the entire study's chapters. The chapter will also present the conclusions for the whole study as drawn from the analysis of data from the previous chapter as well as the other chapters. Recommendations will also be presented by the researcher according to the researcher's findings.

5.1 Summary

The research study aimed at assessing the impact of the LGS degree in the operations of local authorities. The research project overview presented highlighted the background to the study, problem statement, significance of the study, the research objectives and questions, delimitation and limitations of the study. The primary objective of the study was to assess the impact of the LGS degree in the operations of local authorities. Local authorities in Zimbabwe have been facing operational problems and service delivery has been on the decline. This has been worsened by the lack of skilled human capital from both that elected official and staff of local authorities. The Midlands State University then introduced the Local Governance studies degree in 2004 that aimed at addressing human skill capacities needs for key positions in local authorities. The research will therefore be beneficial in determining the impact of the degree in

equipping human resources to address these challenges in local authorities to various stakeholders including the local authorities themselves and the university at large. The study was carried out at Bulawayo, Harare, Gweru City Councils and Chirumhanzu rural district council.

The literature review for the study was focused on the operational challenges in local authorities in Zimbabwe (financial, human resources, administration and ICTs). The literature review also outlined how human skills capacity building through the degree can help address the problems. It also discussed the legal framework in Zimbabwe that governs the operations of local authorities in Zimbabwe. Empirical evidence on the challenges on the ground was put forward in the literature.

The researcher employed descriptive research to express the responses on the impact of the degree on operations. The target population was 25 respondents. The sample had 25 respondents; 9 LGS degree holders (3 from Gweru City Council and 2 each from the remaining 3 local authorities) and 16 local authorities' management staff (3 from Gweru City Council and 4 each from the remaining 3 local authorities). All the LGS degree holders responded and 15 out of the 16 local authorities' management responded. The research instruments employed were the questionnaire for all respondents and structured interviews for LGS degree holders, and their demerits and merits were also discussed.

Data collected from the questionnaires and interviews was finally collated by the researcher and was analyzed using tables, graphs and charts. The data showed the LGS degree was useful to most holders although making an impact was a subjective issue and would require more time and increased LGS holder numbers in most local authorities. However there were also impeding

challenges respondents mentioned from politics, lack of resources to lack of management support.

5.2 Conclusion

- ✓ The study established that the LGS degree has equipped local government personnel with the requisite skills for successful local government administration. Findings show that personnel in administration were satisfied than any other department with the skills capacitation by the degree in that area of management. Reasons are because the degree has a strong administrative orientation and therefore a vital tool for individuals who would fill key top positions in local government

- ✓ Findings indicate that degree although useful and effective in operations, LGS degree holders' number in local authorities are still few and the impact on an organizational level might therefore take time to be realized. However results show that the degree has had considerable impact in area where the holders are confined.

- ✓ The study has shown that most local authorities' management staffs who are not LGS degree holders are not aware of the degree and its composition and some view it with cynicism and as a result is not yet fully embraced. This has resulted in low management support for the intake and recognition of LGs degree holders. However findings show that, the degree is slowly gaining wider acceptance.

- ✓ Provisions from the findings indicate that there is no doubt about the competence of the degree as an effective skills capacitation tool in local governance. The degree covers almost all the major aspects of operations of local government in Zimbabwe and has an effective and beneficial multi-field approach with modules covering different areas of operations like finance, human resources and politics.

- ✓ The study has also established that the degree lacks depth in some of the crucial areas of specialization like financial analysis and needs to be revised to enhance its effectiveness in the area. Financial analysis and management is key to operations of local authorities and every senior official must acquaint themselves with it to enhance efficient management

- ✓ Findings overwhelmingly show that the degree has a strong contribution in strategic planning and results based management which all fall under administration. However other areas relating to environmental management and economics may need to consideration to be added to the degree structure

- ✓ Findings have also shown that the degree is a necessary qualification in local government as advocated by both the LGS degree holder and local authorities' management. It has been recommended as an necessary qualification in skills enhancement in local government

- ✓ Although the degree is useful and an effective tool in addressing operational challenges, its impact is still low as ratings from the findings show that operational problems in local authorities are still high. This is because there are other challenges like availability of resources for implementation of initiatives that address problems, lack of management support and will to adopt or endorse decisions and organizational culture that does not easily accept change and initiative. At times political decisions do not rest with the management in local authorities for example budgets, borrowing and some bid decisions need approval from the top (Ministry) and this does not often give management full autonomy for management. Such challenges reverse the gains produced by the skills from the degree and impact can take long to materialize.

- ✓ The presence of operational challenges in local authorities to date from the findings indicate that there are other aspects like macro-economic stability, political stability, organizational culture and availability of resources that need to be addressed so that the impact of the degree skills can be fully realized. Therefore results have shown that the degree is handy, well equipped with skills and useful in varied operational areas but it is yet to make significant impact.

5.2 Recommendations

- ✓ Low LGS degree holders number in local authorities should not be overlooked, they are central to increasing the degree's impact in the sector and therefore local authorities and

their management should seriously consider LGS degree holders for key positions especially in administration

- ✓ Suggestions for inclusion of other modules like environmental management and economics as well as improving the depth of the degree in financial management modules should seriously be considered by the University's department of local governance studies

- ✓ To impact significantly on the operations of local authorities, local government qualifications like the LGS degree should be a prerequisite in the sector as they would have specifically trained individuals into professionals meant for the sector alone. This is similar to financial institutions that employ individuals with financial qualifications only. It increases effectiveness through specialization.

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APPENDIX I
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LGS DEGREE HOLDERS

**AN ACADEMIC STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNANCE
STUDIES DEGREE IN THE OPERATIONS OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES**

Respondents selected through purposive sampling

QUESTIONNAIRE NO..... DATE OF COMPLETION.....

PROLOGUE

My name is Marvelous Nhamo, an undergraduate studying towards a Local Governance Studies Honors Degree at the Midlands State University. I am currently in my fourth year of study and carrying out a research study on the impact of the Local Governance Degree on the operations of local authorities. You have been identified as one of the relevant stakeholders who could help in providing responses and information that will help the completion of the study. Here is my assurance that your information, need be, will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will not, under any circumstances, be used for any other purposes without your consent other than the completion of this study. Your contribution is highly appreciated. Thank you.

OBJECTIVE 1: To assess the relevance of the LGS Degree to the operations of local authorities

In sections where there are boxes, please tick the appropriate

- | | | | | | | |
|--|----------------|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|---------|--------------------------|
| 1. Age | 18-29 yrs | <input type="checkbox"/> | 30-39yrs | <input type="checkbox"/> | 40 yrs+ | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Sex | | | Male | <input type="checkbox"/> | Female | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Working period in this organization | 0-5 yrs | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5-10 yrs | <input type="checkbox"/> | 10 yrs+ | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Work position; | Top management | <input type="checkbox"/> | Middle management | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Other please kindly specify

5. Do you have any other educational qualification post and above the LGS Degree?
- Yes No

Please do not state if not appropriate

6. How do you rate the performance of this local authority in these areas; using the key

Very strong 5 *Strong* 4 *Average* 3 *Weak* 2 *Very Weak* 1

Service Delivery

Management

Public Relations

Financial Management

7. Is this the only local authority that you have worked in? Yes No

If not why did you leave the other one(s).....

.....

8. Have you found the Degree helpful in the line of work?

Yes

No

Maybe

9. Can you say you have used some of the features of the Degree up to this point in solving operational problems? Yes Not at all

OBJECTIVE 2: To analyze the contributions the Degree has made in improving the operations of local authorities.

10. Do you think the Degree has made any significant difference to the way this local authority

operates

Yes

No

Somehow

11. What contribution has the degree made to your organization?

.....

.....

.....

.....

12. In addressing some of your operational challenges, how do you rate the LGS Degree in solving problems in these following areas of specialization like Human Resource Management, Finance and Public Relations?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

13. If you rated any of the above *Weak (2)* to *Very Weak (1)*, what do you think are the reasons for the Degree’s poor performance?

.....
.....
.....

14. What particular operational challenges can you say the degree has helped in addressing?

.....
.....
.....

15. Are you satisfied with the performance of the Degree in addressing these challenges?

.....
Please briefly state why
.....

16. Briefly in your opinion, what do you think the Degree has done so far in your local authority’s operations as a policy making tool?

.....
.....
.....

OBJECTIVE 3: To identify the operational areas in which the Degree made the most and least impact

17. Comment on the effectiveness of the Degree in helping you address financial operational challenges in finance management?

.....
.....
.....

How has the Degree helped you in addressing Human Resources issues in your local authority?

.....
.....

18. What are the specific areas of operations that you can say the Degree has made the most impact in addressing problems?

.....
.....
.....

19. With reference to question 18 what do you think are the reasons for the Degree's impact in those areas?

.....

20. Which areas did you find the Degree less useful/effective?

.....

.....

21. What are the operational challenges that you found the Degree unable to address effectively?

.....

.....

22. Using the scale; *Very strong - 5; Strong - 4; Average - 3; Weak - 2; Very Weak - 1*, rate the Degree according its contribution on how it helped you in the specified area

Area	Rate (1,2,3,4,5)
Ethics and professionalism	
Internal controls	
Decision making	
Financial management	
Human Resources management	
Management	
Public Relations	

Where ratings are **1 and 2** please briefly state why

.....

.....

.....

.....

OBJECTIVE 4: To identify the factors inhibiting the Degree and its concepts to make maximum impact in improving the operations of local authorities

23. Can you say modules of the Degree have the required depth necessary for addressing local governance issues?
24. What can you say are the challenges you met so far in implementing any of the concepts of the Degree?
-
25. From your experience, what can you say are the major weaknesses of the Degree's structure in relation to addressing your operational problems?
-
26. Can you identify other external factors that worsen operational challenges in your local authority?
-
- Do you think the Degree has been able to address some of them? Briefly elaborate.
-
27. What can you say are the external challenges that inhibit the Degree from being making significant impact on operations?
-
-
28. As a local governance practitioner, would you recommend the LGS Degree (concepts) as a tool for management in policy making to improve on operations?
-
-
29. What improvements can you say are needed to make the degree more effective?

.....
.....
.....

The End

Thank You!!

.....
.....
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.....
.....

36. What are the major operational challenges that you have been facing as a local authority

.....
.....
.....

37. What are the causes of these challenges?

.....
.....
.....

38. Have you made any progress as a local authority in addressing these operational challenges?

Yes

No

39. How do you rate your knowledge about the LGS Degree?

V. Strong

Strong

Average

Weak

V. Weak

Please kindly justify your ratings.

.....
.....

OBJECTIVE 2: To analyze the effectiveness of the Degree and the particular changes it has made in improving the operations of local authorities.

40. How many members of staff have been on the degree programme

41. Do you think a specific local government qualification like an LGS Degree has made any differences to the way this local authority operates?

Yes No Somehow

42. Do you think you as an organization you have used some of the aspects of the Degree as in solving these operating challenges up to this point?

Yes Not sure Not at all

43. In addressing your operational challenges are there any specific areas you felt needed special local government educational expertise? Yes No

44. Can you say LGS Degree holders in this local authority have been significantly active and contributory in solving operational challenges that affect you as an organization?

.....

45. How many LGS Degree holders are in this local authority?

OBJECTIVE 3: To identify the operational areas in which the Degree made the most impact and those it impacted least

46. What can you say has been the major drivers in addressing operational challenges in this local authority in the following areas?

<i>Operational challenge</i>	<i>Major drivers</i>

47. Which areas in your organization’s operations do you think can be and have been well addressed by the LGS Degree?

.....

48. Between having a stable and well managed political environment and more local government qualifications, which one do you think your organization needs to improve on operations?

Please briefly explain.

.....

49. Using the scale; *Very strong - 5; Strong - 4; Average - 3; Weak - 2; Very Weak - 1*, in the first column rate this local authority’s strength and your progress (in second column) using; *Poor 1; Satisfactory 2; Good 3*; in addressing areas which rated *Weak and Very Weak*.

Area	Rate	1	2	3	4	5	Progress	1	2	3
Ethics and professionalism										
Internal controls										
Decision making										
Financial management										
Human Resources management										
Management										
Public Relations										

50. Are LGS Degree holders active in helping address the operational weaknesses?

.....
.....

OBJECTIVE 4: To identify the problems affecting the effectiveness of the Degree in improving the operations of local authorities

51. From your personal experience and as part of management, would you advocate for a local government qualification such as the LGS Degree as primarily necessary for improved management of operations?

Kindly state your reasons

.....

52. In your view what do you think has been driving positive operations in your organization between academic qualifications and the political environment? Briefly elaborate.

.....
.....

53. Do you think a local governance/ government qualification as a requirement in local government is rightly justifiable?

Please briefly explain

.....

54. What are the external factors that you can say have helped you address some of your operational challenges?

.....

.....
.....

55. What improvements should be made for the degree to be more effective?

.....
.....
.....

The End, Thank You!!

APPENDIX III
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR LGS DEGREE HOLDERS

Interview Questions

1. Which department do you work in?
2. What are the major operational challenges affecting your department?
3. What specific areas in yours department have you found the degree very helpful?
4. What is your overall rating for the effectiveness of the degree in your department?
5. What are the challenges that you can say are impeding maximum utilization of the skills you obtained from the degree?
6. What is your overall opinion about the degree?
7. What suggestion do you have for improving the degree