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MECHANISMS OF HOLDING ELECTED OFFICIALS ACCOUNTABLE LIMITATIONS AND AREAS FOR POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENT.

THE CASE OF BEITBRIDGE MUNICIPALITY.

BY

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The undersigned certify that they have read and recommend to Midlands State University for acceptance of a dissertation entitled: Mechanisms of holding elected officials accountable, limitations and areas of possible improvement. A case of the Municipality of Beitbridge , submitted by NKOSINESISA L. MOYO in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Local Governance Studies.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my beloved daughter Minenhle and my parents for their undying support rendered during this course of my study. Honestly, you were a source of inspiration that enabled me overcome all obstacles along the way. Even when pressure seemed to get the best of me, you were always by my side hence the completion of this project.

Abstract

There has been a country wide outcry from citizens about the poor performance of councilors and that they are not doing what the electorate wants them to do. Throughout all the local authorities in Zimbabwe it has been realized that, there is poor oversight, judgment and overwhelming corruption which has in turn led to serious poor service delivery. What is not disputable in Zimbabwean politics is that the ordinary citizens have in most cases been by and large remained political spectators quietly suffering the effects of mishandled democratic principles enshrined in chapter 9 of the 2013 constitution and its ugly consequences on the performance of local authorities. This study therefore assessed the different political accountability tools at the electorate's disposal in the Municipality of Beitbridge to hold elected councillors accountable for their activities and programs. The study was directed mainly to the councillors and residents to determine the types of accountability mechanisms used in the principal-agent relationship, the degree of familiarity to these tools; elections, social audits, public hearing and participatory budgeting and also the benefits and constraints of their use. The mechanisms/ tools of holding elected officials were chosen from diverse sources of literature. The research followed the guidelines of descriptive research. Data was collected through interviewing purposively and administering questionnaires randomly. The major findings revealed that respondents had limited knowledge about the mechanisms of holding councillors accountable and their extent of use. The researcher therefore recommends citizen participation and access to information be improved to increase the use and effectiveness of the mentioned mechanisms of holding elected officials accountable.

Acknowledgements

Declaration

I, Moyo Nkosinesisa L declare that this dissertation is based on my own work. It has not been submitted before for any degree for examination at any other university.

Signed... Date...

List of Acronyms

MDC   - Movement for Democratic Change

MLGPWNH   - Ministry of Local Government Public Works and National Housing

MRRPA   - Masvingo Residents and Rate Payers Association

NGO   - Non Governmental Organizations

RDC   - Rural District Council

ZANU PF   - Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front

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Introduction and background of the study

1.0 Introduction

This research intends to analyse the mechanisms of holding elected officials (Councillors) accountable specifically focusing on the limitations as well as possible areas of improvements in the Municipality of Beitbridge in Zimbabwe. This chapter introduces the whole study by giving the research background, the objectives of the study, research questions, problem statement, and justification of the study. In addition, study limitations and delimitation are also included in this chapter.

1.1 **Background of the study**

Councillors in Zimbabwe form an important arm of local governance in both rural and urban areas and a part of the broader local government system. The Zimbabwean local government system is democratic in nature and derives its authority and guidelines directly from the constitution of the country. According to chapter 14 section 3 of the Zimbabwean constitution there are urban local authorities to represent and manage the affairs of urban people in Zimbabwe. These urban authorities shall be managed by councils which are composed of elected councilors who are elected by registered voters (Constitution of Zimbabwe 2013). The electoral process by residence is not just for choosing good councilors and mayors rather it is also a mechanism to hold these elected officials accountable to service delivery, (Shah, 2006). On the other end, councilor's main role among others is representing the interest of the electorate in local authority policy formulation and administration towards improvement of service delivery (Mushamba, 2010). Councilors are accountable to the electorate in areas

pertaining to service delivery. It can therefore be argued that holding elected officials politically accountable means political, legal and financial education needs to be availed to ordinary electorate.

Holding elected councilors accountable to the electorate has become central in improving governance of public institutions (Makumbe, 1996). The definitions of accountability are multiple and relative depending on people and context. For the purpose of this study, accountability is defined as the whole process by which public office holders account or inform their actions to citizens or the population that they represent (Kamete, 2006). As a concept, accountability gives rights and obligation to the electorate to question activities and programs of councilors that they elected into office (Goetz, 2001). Accordingly elected officials should be answerable to the electorate by justifying their actions and inactions (World Bank, 2005).

The study area of this research is the Beitbridge Municipality (BM) which is located at the border with South Africa. There are six administrative wards in BM with each ward represented in the council with an elected councilor. Moyo, (2014) pointed out that for the past decades BM has not been performing well in terms of providing service delivery to ordinary residents. Water shortage, budget misallocations and misprioritization, mal-administration dysfunctional street lights are among notable challenges being experienced in Beitbridge. A plethora of social, economic and political factors has been attributed to this. A study by Siwela, (2015) reported that a few elected councilors have exhibited the culture of accounting to residents on council programs and activities. To this end this study will assess factors that limit residence to hold elected councilors accountable with the aim of exploring possible areas of improvements.

Malena (2009) indicated that lack of political will and knowledge on the electorate side is an obstacle in holding elected officials accountable. However,factors that are limiting residents

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to hold councilors accountable in Zimbabwe are still to be fully explored. Siwela, (2015) pointed out that the question that is still unanswered adequately is on whether it is practically possible for the electorate to remove non performing councilors from office through the electoral process before the lapsing of the term. It is against this background that this study is to assess mechanisms of holding elected councilors accountable focusing on the limitations and possible areas of improvement. The specific case study is the Beitbridge Municipality in Zimbabwe.

1.2 Statement of the problem

There has been a country wide outcry from citizens about the poor performance of councilors and that they are not doing what the electorate wants them to do. Throughout all the local authorities in Zimbabwe it has been realized that, there is poor oversight, judgment and overwhelming corruption which has in turn led to serious poor service delivery. What is not disputable in Zimbabwean politics is that the ordinary citizens have in most cases been by and large remained political spectators quietly suffering the effects of mishandled democratic principles enshrined in chapter 9 of the 2013 constitution and its ugly consequences on the performance of local authorities. This study therefore assesses the different political accountability tools at the electorate's disposal to hold elected councillors accountable for their activities and programs.

1.3 Study objectives

The general objective of the study is to analyse the mechanisms of holding elected officials accountable. The study will specifically address the following research objectives.

   I.   To analyze how councillors in the Municipality of Beitbridge are held accountable.

II. To examine the effectiveness of the mechanisms of holding elected officials accountable in the Municipality of Beitbridge.

III. To identify the challenges faced by the Municipality of Beitbridge in holding Councillors.

IV. To come up with plausible recommendations of addressing the political accountability challenges encountered in the Municipality of Beitbridge.

1.4 Research Questions

The study will address the following specific objectives.

I. How are councillors in the Municipality of Beitbridge being held accountable?

II. How effective are the accountability mechanisms in holding elected officials accountable in the Municipality of Beitbridge?

III. What are challenges faced by the Municipality of Beitbridge in holding Councillors accountable?

IV. What can be recommended to address political accountability challenges encountered in the Municipality of Beitbridge?

1.5 Study delimitations

The study only focuses on holding elected officials (councilors) accountable through the electoral process limitations and areas for possible improvement in the Municipality of Beitbridge. The study finds it prudent to concentrate on the Municipality of Beitbridge as it was not possible to study all local authorities in the country. Findings of the study although they can be used as literature to other studies they are a reflection of issues in the Municipality of Beitbridge only.

1.6 Study limitations

The study was self-sponsored which reduce extensive travelling across the study area due to limited financial resources. However,the fact that the researcher is a resident in the study area (Beitbridge) enables the researcher to walk during data collection thus ensuring collection of reliable data. In the initial stages of the study resistance from respondents was experienced. This constrain was experienced due to the fact that central government and local authorities are controlled by political parties the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). The study was therefore seen as an opportunity to score political points against one another. To militate against resistance from research participants, the purpose of the study was explained to respondents as purely academic, the issue of confidentiality was also outlined to participants that their information and personal details will remain secret and can be revealed to anyone outside the researcher.

1.7Summary

This chapter has provided a snapshot of the study by introducing the topic and outlining the background of the study. The chapter touches on the problem statement which is what has caused the researcher to undertake the study. Research objectives and research questions are also highlighted in the chapter. Assumptions under which the research study is premised are also explained in the chapter. The chapter further looked at the significance of the study, limitations and delimitations of the study are also explained. The next chapter delves into the literature review.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

In a critical engagement with the notion of holding elected officials accountable, politics, citizen's participation and democracy are the major themes that cannot be left in seeking possible ways to improve accountability. This chapter focuses on literature pertinent to holding elected officials accountable through the electoral process. Being accountable on the part of councilors is embedded in the broader concept of political accountability which is discussed in details in this chapter. Lastly, the chapter included case studies on how elected council officials are being held accountable in selected councils in Zimbabwe and in other countries.

2.1 Conceptualizing accountability

Holding elected officials (councilors) accountable through the electoral process falls within the political accountability discourse. However, understanding the broader context of accountability is important in which the political accountability which is the core of the study is embedded in. According to Posner (2007) the concept of accountability has its roots in public financial management. However, to date the concept of accountability has been extended to almost all institutions that are responsible in making decision on behalf of the public. Such institutions include, parliament, local authorities, central government among others. The central task of public office holder either by election of appointments is for the improvement of social economic lives of the people that they represent (Shah, 2009).

Understandably, there is no single definition of accountability. In its broadest term accountability is defined as the rights of users or electorate to demand feedback and explanations elected officials, duty bearers and representatives on issue related to programs implementation (Peters, 2001). In democratic societies, the essence of electing a representative is for that elected individual to represent the concerns of those who elected them. According to Maravall, 2007) accountability is a relationship between rights holders and service providers, where service providers are obliged to account for their activities and programs.

Related to the above, political accountability which is the core of this study has been defined as the ability or duty of elected officials to report to the electorate their activities and programs (Madzivanyika, 2011). Political accountability is implemented through parliamentary portfolio, elections and political parties in demanding accountability from government sectors (IDEAS, 2011). Consequently, the electorate have freedom and right to demand such report from officials that they choose to represent them. Political accountability begins with the realisation that all citizens should be active participants in the democratic process of electing leaders (Fung 2001). Electing leaders gives the electorate a say in the decisions that affect their lives and access to resources that are theirs thus enforcing political accountability from leaders (ibid).

In public administration, the electorate vote for representatives to represent their interest and in the event that the elected officials divert from representing the interest of the electorate the electorate have the right to remove them from office (Chatiza, 2014). These rights and demands can be expressed through participation in local decision-making processes. The voice of citizens must be met by the responsiveness of service providers who must be willing to take the views of citizens into consideration and modify their actions accordingly

Citizen participation is an important pillar in holding elected officials accountable. For any development process to be effective and efficient, citizens and communities should actively participate in demanding accountability from elected officials and leaders (IDEAS, 2011). According to Lisk (1985) local level participation is the active involvement of community stakeholders in making priorities, implementation and monitoring of developmental programmes with the overall aim of raising the standard of living. For Makumbe (1998), active participation becomes meaningful when the poor and marginalised are part of the policy making process and when they are freely allowed to demand accountability from political leaders that they elected into offices. Holding elected officials accountable are embedded in the principle –agent theory discussed below.

Within the context of holding elected councillors accountable in Zimbabwe, three accountability forms can be recognised which are vertical-downward, horizontal and political accountability (Matsika, 2015). The vertical downward accountability is a technique that is used by social actors to like civil society organisations, citizens, and the media in holding both the central and local government accountable to the citizens. This can be done through participatory methods, petitions and holding of public debates (IDEA, 2011). Horizontal accountability is a situation where council officials account to the executive made up of elected Councillors and Mayor. This horizontal accountability is a method of checks and balances within local authorities which oversee other council departments (Matsika 2015, Jelmin, 2011). The third type of accountability is what is referred to as political accountability is discussed in detail below because it is at the core of this study of holding elected councillors accountable through the electoral process.

2.3 Theoretical framework on political accountability

Theoretical framework has been defined as a set of terms and relationships within which the research problem is formulated and solved (Badugela, 2012). In addition, it can also be viewed as a concise description of crucial variables of the problem to be pursued together and how these variables interact to come up with a comprehensive model to address research questions (Kahn, 2011, Creswell and Plano 2011). There are several theories that attempt to political accountability. Analysing all theories related to political accountability is beyond the scope of this study; however, the principle – agent theories described below informs this study.

2.3.1 The Principle-Agent theory

The approach taken in this section focus on how elected officials account to the citizens that elected them into office. In explaining the functioning of this relationship the Principle - Agent theory by Barro (1973) forms the theoretical basis of this study. According to Barro (1973), the relationship between leaders in this case elected councillors and citizens or the electorate is regarded as a Principle- Agent relationship. The electorate are the Principle who elects the agent to represent them in local authorities. Ferejohn (1986) examined the possibilities of the principle to hold the agent accountable to their programs and activities. The conclusion from Ferejohn (1986) was it's only through free and fair elections that non performing elected officials can be removed from their position by the electorate. The promise of electoral democracy in holding elected political officials accountable for their programs and policy ensure a close relationship between public and policy makers (Gailmardy, 2012). In the event that elected political officials (agent) fail to deliver on their promises the principles have the right to remove them by voting them out. However, the

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practical applicability of removing non performing elected officials from their position has failed in many cases. The agent in most cases has the political and financial power to manipulate and divide the principles so that they are not united enough to pass a vote of no confidence.

The central feature of the principle-agent theory is elections which provide checks on the elected agents by demanding accountability of their actions and policies. However, in the event those elections are not held in satisfaction of the electorate it is impossible for principles to hold agents accountable. Within the principle-agent theoretical framework, the agent uses resources entrusted to him by the principles, however the interest of the principle and the agent are not always perfectly aligned giving birth to principle agent conflicts. Such conflicts in Zimbabwe manifest through resident's demonstration, vote of no confidence and suspension of councillors by the relevant ministry.

In conclusion the Principal –Agent theory by Barro and Ferejohn proved to be flexible enough to be utilised as a theoretical framework in this study of holding elected officials accountable through the electoral case of Beitbridge Town Council. In the broader scope of political accountability, the Principal-agent theory has proven to be a bit problematic as it reveals challenges like the indirectness of accountability relationship between the agents and the electorate and the crude insufficiency of the electoral process as a sole accountability tool.

2.4 Local Government System and Political accountability in Zimbabwe

Local governance in Zimbabwe is the lower tier which consists of rural and urban councils, which executes central government at local level (Chakaipa 2010). Mushamba (2010) define local government as the sub-national level of government. Chakaipa (2010) defines local

government as the establishment of participatory and development structures that are rightfully placed to identify the development needs of the people and transforming those needs into provision of services for sustainable livelihoods. Local government established mainly to provide services in a more responsive and efficient way to local communities, to enhance popular participation of citizens in governance so that they exercise their rights and responsibilities. Local government in essence is the closest form of government to interact with regularly officials and councillors on issues of accountability. However, the biggest challenge in local authorities in Zimbabwe is accountability and poor service delivery (Muchadenyika 2013). Number of factors has been attributed to poor service delivery and accountability.

The Ministry of Local Government Public Works and National Housing (MLGPWNH) is the line ministry for local governance system in Zimbabwe. Its mandate is to formulate policies that create an enabling environment for full function of local government instruments (Chakaipa, 2010). All local councils have delegated authority to perform functions on behalf of the government. According to Chikanda (2010) The Ministry of Local Government plays the following roles

   I.   Monitoring and oversight

  II.   Directing

 III.   Promotion and capacity building

 IV.   Facilitating and advising local authorities

The roles and powers of the MLGPWNH outlined above have a huge impact on the functions of local authority's functions particularly in accountability and service delivery. Muchadenyika (2013) pointed out the Minister has the final decision rather than the electorate on cases related to poor accountability by elected officials. Furthermore, the

minister has firm control on almost all local council and the powers to suspend and appoint new administration without consulting the electorate. Unilateral Suspensions and appointments of local authority employees and councillors have been done to councils like Chitungwiza, Gweru and Harare for a number of times since the year 2000. Such appointments totally strip the electorates an opportunity to demand accountability mainly because the appointed commission reports directly to the Minister (Madzivanyika, 2011).

Related to the above, funds for services is obtained from the government and the Minister is the one who approves the budget thus reducing active participation of citizens to demand accountability from elected councillors who are controlled by budgets from the government. In a broader analysis the local government system in Zimbabwe is dominated by vertical accountability were councillors account to the Minister rather than to the electorate (Madzivanyika, 2011). In this case holding elected officials through the electoral process has proved to be difficult as the electorate are silenced by the power of the Ministers who in most cases have been blamed of appointing council officials and commissioners based on political affiliation to the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANUPF) (Zhou and Chilunjika (2011).

Table 1 below is a case example drawn from Chitungwiza Municipality were Ministerial interventions in local authorities robbed the electorate an opportunity of holding elected councillors accountable.

In Chitungwiza Municipality, ministerial intervention has been affecting residential participation in holding elected councillors accountable. A survey carried out with resident's revealed that ministerial unilateral decision of firing elected councillors' replacing them stifle their participation in the day to day running of council activities. The appointed commissions are blamed for not representing the interest of the people but of the Minister who appoints them. These commissions have been viewed as a political decision to silence the voice of the electorate to demand accountability from councillors. In one of the focus group discussions one residents indicated that

"*Here in Chitungwiza as responsible citizens we no longer see the value or essence of electing councillors and mayors because all of them are either suspended by the ZANU PF government expelled before they completed their terms…..this has been going on for a time since the MDC begin to won elections in Chitungwiza…the suspended councillors and mayors are supposed to represent the voices of local residence who elected them hence when they are dismissed, it simply means the government is running the local authority contrary to what the constitution say…The government has totally taken power from people…..therefore there is nothing that can separate the role of the government and local authority. The appointed commissions never hold public consultative meeting or communicate with residents on their programs, plans and projects thus making it difficult to ask for accountability.*

Source Ngoma (2016): An analysis of intergovernmental relations in Chitungwiza

2.5 Electoral process and political accountability

The importance of an election process cannot be over emphasised as it is the basis of democracy (Raunak and Chen, 2015). It is only through an election process that democracy can be defined as it gives power to the people to select officials that represent their interest in the national government or in various arms of government (Chikanda, 2015). The definition of election process is narrow and straight forward as it involves procedures related to electing representatives. According to (Haurovi, 2012) elections are defined as the selection by vote of a person or persons from among candidates for a position especially a political office. In Zimbabwe the election process of all public office bearers is enshrined in Chapter 7 of the national constitution. The important principles of any election in Zimbabwe includes that elections must be held regularly and they must be peaceful, free, fair and they must be conducted by secret ballot (Constitution of Zimbabwe 2013).

Although in a democratic society election may be considered as the functional tool for accountability by allowing voters to remove non performing leaders from office. However, the biggest question is how practical it is. In a study conducted by an independent board in Zimbabwe indicated that four in 10 Zimbabweans (38%) indicated that election work well in removing non performing leaders from offices whilst the majority (56%) indicated that the electoral process is a useless tool in holding elected officials accountable (Afro barometer, 2014).

Overall, the goal of electing officials into position is to represent the interest of the electorate who they are obliged to account to. In a functional democracy, the electoral processes is not only used to elected officials into position but it is also a tool of removing non performing officials from position through a number of processes including vote of no confidence, impeachments among others (Levy, 2006). However, the challenge in the majority of

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countries is that there are a number of limitations hindering citizens to utilise the electoral process in removing non accounting officials from positions. This study investigates these limitations with the objective of recommending solutions to address such limitations.

Holding elected official accountable through the electoral process has been described by the World Bank (2003) as a cornerstone of good governance which demands both answerability and enforcement. Answerability refers to the obligation of public officials to provide information about their actions and to justify them to the public who elected them. Enforcement suggests that the public or the institution responsible for accountability can sanction the offending party or remedy the contravening behaviour. Answerability of councillors to the electorate in Beitbridge town will be evaluated in this study.

2.6 Mechanisms of holding councillors accountable in Zimbabwe

For the Zimbabwean system holding elected councillors accountable to be fully functional, the electorate must be active participants in formulating mechanisms that they collectively use to demand accountability (Chikerema, 2013). As highlighted early and re-emphasised here, councillors have responsibility and stake in keeping the electorate fully informed about local programmes and activities at the same time giving them opportunities to implement local public policy (Chatiza, 2014). The individual citizen, institutions and organisation in Zimbabwe have numerous ways and mechanism of holding elected councillors accountable and influence policies. This mechanism encompasses participating in local government elections, participating and following local authorities budgeting, holding consultative forums with councillors, public hearings from councillors, open meetings of councils and legislative bodies. These mechanisms are discussed in detail below on how they can be used for political accountability of councillors.

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2.6.1 Local government elections

A broad base of ensuring political accountability is participation of residents in local government elections. According to Shah (2006), electoral process at local level is one among many ways where citizens freely express their views and have a direct opportunity of demanding for the implementation. In addition, citizen participation in local elections does not only lead to the strengthening of decentralised governance but they also facilitate resident's participation in determining the nature and type of officials who best articulates their felt needs and are accountable to them to hold public offices. Braun and Grote (2000) further asserts that local elections is a strong political mechanism in holding councillors accountable because the councillors are expected to be more responsive to local needs thus they can easily account to the electorate. (Murisa, 2007) also states that holding election at local government level enables people to voice their needs and access certain resources through their elected representatives' thus reducing bureaucracy and enhancing efficiency. In Zimbabwe councillors are elected after every five years and non-performing councillors are either replaced or retained. However, in between elections, citizens are empowered by the constitution to pass a vote of no confidence to remove non-performing councillors. All in all, elections are an important political accountability mechanism that can be used in holding elected councillors accountable.

2.6.2 Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS)

Public expenditure tracking system survey (PETS) has been defined by Koziol and Tolmie (2010) as political accountability tools that are used to monitor utilisation of financial and human resources from national to local government to reduce leakages and formulate policies that avoid future leakages. In simple terms, this tracking system refers to the tracing of utilisation of public resources by citizens, Civil Society Organisations and other concerned

stakeholders Graffin et al (2010). PETS trace the movement of resources from its source, how the resources were utilised and assess whether the objectives were achieved. The overall aim is of ensuring that officials rightfully utilise the resources allocated to them and to reduce corruption and leakages. This study will assess whether residence in Beitbridge are given an opportunity to track utilisation of public resources by elected councillors.

2.6.3 Social Audits

Social audits is one of the political accountability tools that allow ordinary residence within a community to analyse on whether what the elected say is matching with practical activities and results on the ground (Ringold et al 2012). Social audits team is composed of members within a society who came together to audit activities of political representatives. To this end, social audits can be viewed as a monitoring system whereby community members collect and analyse service delivery outcomes to check whether council policies are being implemented. Social audits are also used assess on whether resources are being channelled for the planned programs to reduce incidents of corruption and embezzlement by elected officials (Gaventa and Valderrama, 1999). Findings from social audits are announced during public meetings where residence and elected officials interface to debate and seek clarification on issues that are not so clear. Social audits feedback meetings are not for witch hunting as the majority of elected official particularly in Africa would like to call them; rather the aim is for to promote accountability and promoting partnership in projects implementation (Goetz and Jenkins, 2003). This study will assess whether social audits are being implemented by residence in Beitbridge as a mechanism of holding councillors accountable.

2.6.4 Public hearing

A Public hearing meeting is an important tool for the promotion of political accountability as it strengthens community engagement with its leadership (Malena 2014). In public hearing related to local governance meetings, local authorities, local residence, and CSOs gather together to deliberate on public services challenges, provision, and possible solutions. The importance of such meetings is that residents are allowed to register their complaints as well as asking question related to any area they feel elected officials need to clarify (Muchadenyika, 2013). In these meetings, elected officials are expected to sufficiently respond to questions and clarify about the status of councils and challenges being faced. This tool helps in creating an environment of trust and mutual understanding among stakeholders (Mushamba 2010). In this regard, this study will assess on whether, elected councillors in Beitbridge are holding public hearing meetings with the electorate to update them on the success, failures, challenges and opportunities of the program the local council is implementing on behalf of residents.

2.6.5 Participatory Budgeting

Participatory budgeting is yet another platform in which the ordinary citizens are given space to monitor how finances at local level are to be used for a financial calendar (Chikerema, 2013). According to Goldin (2013) participatory budgeting is a democratic deliberation where ordinary citizens decide on municipal or public budget so that they are able to demand for financial accountability of the budget they are part of. Participatory budgeting as a political accountability tool is characterised by the following design features: identification of spending priorities by community members, community' selection of delegates to represent them in council activities such as budgeting, vote on spending priorities and the

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implementation of community projects Chikerema, (2013). In Zimbabwe the Local Acts stipulates that local council budget proposals should be published in local newspaper at least three times so that the public can scrutinise the budget (Chakaipa). According to the Urban Councils Act of 2006 participatory budget is part of the overall strategic effort to promote locals in holding elected officials accountable through participation.

2.7 Impacts of political accountability mechanism

According to Muchadenyika (2013), the above political accountability tools are useful instruments mainly because they are easy to use and understand thus giving an equal opportunity for all citizens to hold elected officials accountable. In addition, these political accountability mechanisms provide a platform for constructive engagement between communities and local authorities in the process of program designing, planning, implementing and evaluating Malena, (2004). Related to the above, World Bank (2004) identified five important outcomes that can be realised from an understanding of political tools used in holding elected officials accountable. The five are as follows.

1. These tools empower communities by teaching their citizenship rights to demand accountability from service providers. Communities' asses the quality of service provided so that they will be able to diagnose problems and offer solutions.

2. Empowerment of communities results in increased participation of community member in planning together with elected officials at the same time evaluating service delivery standards.

3. Increase participation of NGOs, CSOs and media in local governance by acting as local authority watchdogs and facilitating advocacy on improved service and accountability from local government officials.

4. Combined efforts of communities and non-state actors can force elected councillors to be more responsive to the demands of the electorate thus increasing accountability.

5. Increased demand for accountability and responsiveness of elected officials can lead to improved service access and delivery.

This study agrees with the World Bank that the application of political accountability mechanisms in local authorities empower residents and other non-state actors participate in decision making and holding elected officials accountable.

2.8 Holding elected officials accountable the overall Zimbabwean situation

A survey by Afro barometer on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues conducted in Zimbabwe in 2015 presented the following key findings related to political accountability of elected officials from the state president to the ward councillor.

I.   The majority of Zimbabweans (59%) say that elected officials must be accountable to the citizens.

II.   Pluralities indicated that voters should be responsible by taking appropriate action to make sure that all elected officials (from the President to local councillors) do their jobs.

III. Seven out of ten Zimbabweans (71%) indicated that all elected officials must obey the law and must adhere to accountability laws

IV.   Six out of ten Zimbabweans (61%) indicated that ordinary citizens should constantly partner with the media to investigate corruption reports related to elected officials so that accountability will be transparent.

V.   A minority (38%) of citizens are of the point that the country's elections process works well to allow voters to remove non-performing officials from office.

VI.   A substantial minority (37%) emphasis that it not important to make elected officials answerability, instead they preferred elected officials that "get things done," even without the input of the electorate.

The above overall state of accountability of elected officials in Zimbabwe indicated that the issue of accountability is not well implemented. To further understand the state of holding elected councillors accountable the following cases are drawn from selected councils in Zimbabwe.

2.9 Local councils level of political accountability in Zimbabwe

Presented above is the overall situation related to holding elected officials in Zimbabwe as a whole. Below are selected examples of local council and strategies that are being used to hold elected councillors accountable.

2.9.1 Mutoko Rural District Council

Malena (2009) noted that in Mutoko, residence complained about service delivery in the town and lack of feedback from elected councillors, as a result of this citizens protested regularly to seek audience with councillors. A wave of protests forced the RDC to invite citizens to a participatory and series of feedback meeting to clear public grievances. The engagement process resulted in a new interaction, mode of mutual understanding and relationship between Civil Society Organisations, local residence, and the municipal councillors (Mumvuma, 2009). Such engagements and interaction between elected officials created new opportunities for informed constructive negotiations and dialogue between elected officials and citizens. Accountability on the council's side improved.

2.9.2 Masvingo Municipality

A report compiled Masvingo Residents and Rate Payer Association Report (MRRPA) (2012) indicated that elected councillors in Masvingo town holds Mayors accountability meeting with residents and resident's association in the town (Matsika 2016). In these accountability meetings the mayor and his councillors elaborate activities and programs they are undertaking and the challenges that they face. Residents are given the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarity in areas they don't understand. This allows the residents to ask question to council on service delivery and highlight their concerns. However, the major problem with Mayor − Resident interface is that communities are not furnished with the agenda of the meetings prior the meetings thus limiting the level of questioning, discussions and engagements (MRRPA, 2012). However, on the positive side, accountability tools used by residence in Masvingo contributed to improved service delivery, better public policies. According to MRRPA, (2012)   The Masvingo Municipality went on to purchase 3 refuse collection trucks in 2014, waste management which used to be inefficient improved to timely cleaning of public areas due to improved pressure from residents.

2.10 Case studies from other countries

This section focuses on cases studies from other countries where citizens have been holding elected official accountable by utilising different political accountability mechanisms.

2.10.1 Political accountability in Philippines

In the Philippines, accountability tools to monitor the activities of elected public officials were merged with the national constitution. In this new set up officials who were found on

the wrong side of the law were arrested so that they will be answerable to the court of justice (Ramkumar, 2008). In addition, the procurement watches a monitoring organisation created by citizens achieved enormous successes in creating transparent and accountable system to procurement processes by the local authorities in Philippi (Malena, 2009). On the other hand, Ramkumar (2008) pointed out that the efforts of the procurement watch have also been important in establishing functional systems that allows citizens to be active participants in monitoring   government bid and award committees when they award contracts to companies or individuals. In addition, it is the duty of the citizens to monitor that contractors abide by their contracts. Amendments to the constitution to include fit in social accountability related issues by elected officials indicated that the issue of accountability is taken serious in Philippe from the national level to grass roots level.

In addition to the amendment of the constitution, UN- HABITAT (2004) pointed out that the Philippines government crafted the Local Government Code which stipulates that the public and CSOs should freely participate in local council's decision making and monitoring activities. Naga City is one of the local council in Philippines which in 1995 came up with an Empowerment Ordinance to implement the Local Government Code. Naga city established committees in communities which work together with the local council. The overall purpose of such structures was to assess needs of the community and implementing mechanisms for the provision of services. The creation of community structures allowed the electorates to force councillors to be responsive to the demands of the electorate (UN-HABITAT, 2004).

2.10.2 The Indian Case

In India, service users have been empowered to hold local government accountable in the provision of service delivery Ramkumar, (2008). The electorate are empowered to participate

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in setting priorities in service provision thus forcing councillors to work hard as they are closely monitored (McNeil and Mumvuma, 2006). According to Goetz and Jenkins (2003) NGOs such as Janagraha, facilitated the grouping of electorate to form ward committees which are then capacitated and given areas of discussion with ward councillors so that accountability is achieved and published to the whole ward.

In addition, Local Authorities in India has been monitored by the use of Citizen Report Cards which have been pivotal in the process of naming and shaming corrupt elected officials and corrupt public institutions, Gaventa and Valderrama (1999). The immediate benefit of citizen report card is it pressurised elected officials to be accountable to the electorate. In Rajasthan state, series of social audits and public hearing helped in identifying service delivery gaps at the same time holding local government accountable (Goetz and Gaventa 2001). In addition, social audits, public hearing and the use of citizen's report cards in India have been so successful to curtail corruption at the same time increasing programs implementation and accountability by local council officials Malena, (2009). This case study from India indicated that empowering citizen participation in collectively demand for accountability from elected officials achieved positive outcomes in terms of several delivery and accountability.

2.10.3 The Brazilian case

According to Mumvuma and Neil (2006) Brazil has been recognised as an accountability champion as well as a champion in participatory democratic governance. Across all local councils in Brazil, accountability begins by extensive use of participatory budgeting. This approach has opened opportunities for engagement and inclusiveness in decision-making process at local council level. This according to Mumvuma and Neil (2006) has in addition to improved accountability it also led to quality service provision by local councils. For instance, it is reported that the introduction of community participatory planning and budget

tracking processes in the council of Porto Alegre resulted in improved water supply and waste management from 46 % in 1989 to 85% in 1996. Public meetings were also being held once per month in each ward with elected councillors accounting their monthly programs to the electorate.

2.8.9 The Bolivian case

According to Anderson (1999) highlights that in Bolivia accountability of elected officials is within the confines of the enactment of the law Popular Participation law. The purpose of this law is to ensure that elected councillors and council officials work hand in hand with local communities in implementing projects and programs. In this set up the role of the electorate is to effectively monitor such activities (Commins 2007). Under this law, all local councils in Bolivia are obliged to share through public meetings all council management financial resources thus communities are able to hold councils accountable on how they used the financial resources. In addition, Vigilance Committees were established, these committee's monitors council operations and financial processes. This case study shows the importance of formulating legal frameworks that empower citizens and their representative to participate in the running of local authorities enabling them to access information and demand accountability from councils.

2.11 Summary

Holding elected councillors accountable is hinged in the political accountability discourse. In its general form political accountability heavily relies on popular participation of communities in electing officials in position at the same time removing them by elections when they fail to account for their activities. This chapter delves on relevant literature related

to accountability of elected officials (councillors) through the electoral process. The next chapter focus at the research design and methodology that was utilised in this research.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0   Introduction

This chapter will discuss the research methodology. The research methodology discusses the research design which is the overall plan for conducting a research investigation. This chapter consists of techniques and methods used by the researcher for the purpose of finding information to measure and explore the effectiveness of the electoral process as a tool in holding elected officials accountable in Beitbridge Town Council. It also looks at the study population used in carrying out the research and the sampling techniques employed in coming up with the sample size. Sampling procedures used in this study will be discussed in detail. In addition, the chapter will describe the research instruments like interviews and the questionnaires clearly explaining the reason why the researcher opted for them. Primary and Secondary sources of data gathering will also be discussed.

3.1   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Judd (1991) defines research methodology as the analysis of conceptual logic and research procedure by which knowledge is developed. Research methodology involves various methods used in collecting and analyzing data with the aim to detail precisely how the researcher intends to achieve the research objectives. It helps the readers to evaluate the validity and reliability of the results of the study.

According to Saunders (2000), research methodology aims to collect data which would be used to answer the research questions raised in chapter one of the study. Research methodology does not only discuss research methods but also consider the logic behind the methods used in the context of the study and explain why that particular technique was used. Noor (2008) noted that, research methodology is informed by the nature of the problem statement and the research objectives. The main elements of research methodology are the research design, research population, research instruments, data collection procedures and finally data presentation and analysis procedures.

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3.2   RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Scates (1994), a research design is a detailed blue print used to guide a research towards its objectives. He also understood, research design as an overall plan for conducting a research investigation. Mikai (2012) defined; research design as the specification of methods and procedures for acquiring the information needed to carry out the research. It is the overall operational pattern of the project that stipulates what information is to be collected and from which sources and what procedures. A good research design forms the essential framework for research action and minimizes the danger of collecting unnecessary data. The choice of the appropriate research design is derived from the research objectives as well as the cost and the time constraints.

The research undertaken is a descriptive survey within Beitbridge Town Council population, the local business community, ward councilors and the residents. The survey concerns an investigation on the political accountability mechanisms used by the Municipality of Beitbridge. Descriptive survey methods were used to obtain qualitative data. Hox and Boeije (2005) maintain that a survey is carried out when the researcher is interested in collecting data on the observations, attitude, experiences or opinion of the respondents. Scates (1999) added that, survey methods use questionnaires and interviews to draw up conclusions on the entire population where the study has been undertaken. Quantitative and qualitative techniques are both quantifiable and descriptive; hence they were used in this research.

3.3   RESEARCH APPROACHES

Interviews and questionnaires were used to facilitate collection of data for both quantitative and qualitative analysis. Qualitative research contributes towards a better understanding of realities on the ground. Gray (2011) argues that qualitative research enables the researcher to gain a deep, intense and holistic overview of the content under study, often involving, interacting within the everyday lives of individuals, groups, communities and organizations.

Charmaz, (1995) noted that, it goes beyond a mere snapshot or cross section of events and show how and why things happen. Interviews are also flexible as they allow the researcher to move from one issue to other to get an in-depth understanding of the problem under study. The researcher was also able to probe in areas where she did not understand so as to have a better understanding of political accountability and the various statutes and government policies and directives being instituted to the detriment of sound local government.

3.3.1   Quantitative Research

According to Harallambos and Holland (2000) quantitative data are usually in numbers using statistical representations for example pie charts, graphs and tables. Creswell (2003), quantitative approaches involve the process of collecting, analysing, interpreting and writing the result of the study.

•   **Qualitative Research**

Qualitative research was used in the research since most respondents were requested to complete questionnaires and respond to interviews to describe and explain how they felt about political accountability and how it can be improved other than the electoral process as an accountability tool only. According to Mason (2002), qualitative research takes place in a natural setting; the researcher goes to the organisation or site of the participant to conduct the research. The researcher used self-administered questionnaires and personal interviews to gather data.

3.3.2   Mixed Method Design

According to Creswell (2003) mixed method is the use of multi-research methods to explore a research problem. The researcher made use of both qualitative and quantitative techniques in the collection and interpretation of data so that they both complement each other as the weaknesses of another are strengthened by the strengths of another. Bryman (2005) argues that there are many advantages why a researcher can make use of the mixed method design; namely:

•   Both quantitative and qualitative research can be combined to triangulate findings in order that they may be mutually corroborated.

•   The researcher can come up with a more comprehensive account of the area of study if both qualitative and quantitative researches are used.

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- It enables a detailed interpretation and explanation of research findings.

- Employing both approaches enhances the integrity and credibility of findings.

3.4 RESEARCH POPULATION

According to Best and Khan (1993), population is a group of individuals that have one or more characteristics in common that are of interest to the study. Gray (2011) defined population as the totality of people, organizations, objects or occurrences from which a sample is drawn. In this research, the population referred to the totality of potential respondents under considerations. A sample is a subset or a segment of a population under investigation Muchengetwa, (2006).

The composition of the research population

Category	Population	Sample	Sampling technique
Council Management	10	6	Purposive Sampling
Councillors	6	4	Random sampling
Resident Representatives	36	20	Random sampling
Total	**52**	**30**	

Source: Primary Data

3.4.1 Sampling Procedure

According to Wegner (1999), a researcher needs to consider a number of technical details when sampling from a huge population. Saunders et al. (2003) defined a sampling procedure as the process of selecting a representative segment from a whole population to come up with the sample size. Sampling involves selecting part of the population to represent the entire set or population. All the stakeholders in Beitbridge could not all be engaged for the investigation therefore; the researcher came up with a representative sample.

a) Purposive Sampling

The researcher also used the purposive sampling technique in coming up with the sample among the Council staff. Maxwell in Teddlie (2000) defined the purposive sampling technique as a type of sampling in which particular settings, person's events are deliberately selected for the important information they can provide that cannot be gotten as well from other choices. It involves the selection of respondents based on specific purposes associated with answering the research questions. From 236 Council employees, the researcher chose 6 senior and middle managers because of their knowledge concerning the roles of councillors, their relationship between the administration and local citizens and their overall performance. These were chosen based on the knowledge of the researcher since she once did her attachment there and is familiar of the knowledge that the chosen council staff possesses from all departments hence the whole Council was represented. The selected members helped the researcher in answering the questionnaires and responded to interview questions.

b) Simple Random Sampling

As shown in the above table in selecting the 20 resident representative respondents, the simple random sampling technique was used. Cooper and Schindler (2003) defined it as a design in which the units that make up the sample are chosen in a single process of selection from the sampling frame that covers the entire target population. Bless (1995) also defines it as a subset of statistical population in which each member of the subset has an equal probability of being chosen and it is meant to be an unbiased representation of a group. The researcher used simple random sampling which involved selecting the respondents at random from the residential property or home owner's data from the council. The list was placed into a computer data base, then the computer was instructed to randomly select 20 house numbers which I later visited in order to collect data. Also, the same technique will be used in selecting councillors, who are going to participate in the study through using a blind box containing 6 papers written yes or no with 4 papers written yes and the remaining 2 written no and those who pick yes will be eligible to participate in the study. The researcher chose to

use simple random sampling because any resident and councillor had an equal chance of being selected and it is the only method of sampling that is without bias.

3.5   Sources of Data Collection

The researcher used both primary and secondary sources in gathering data. According to Hox and Boeije (2005), primary data refers to data that is collected for a specific research problem at hand using procedures that fit the research problem best. They added that, on every occasion that primary data is collected, new data is added to the existing store of social knowledge. Primary data collection enabled further authentication of research objectives which could have not been found though secondary sources. The data was gathered through the field observation, interviews and use of questionnaires. Primary data gave the current information concerning service delivery and political accountability, hence improving the reliability of the data collected.

The researcher also used secondary data which was gathered from secondary sources such as Council minutes, newspapers, library, Council monthly and annual reports, journals, internet and magazines which revealed the status of organizational standing of Beitbridge Town Council and the state of service provision in Beitbridge. Secondary data complemented the primary data. The researcher managed to gather the data from the secondary sources with the lowest cost as most information was found in Council files.

3.6   RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

The researcher used questionnaires and interviews. The Questionnaires were made up of both closed and open ended questions.

a)<u>Interviews</u>

Kvale (1996) maintains that, qualitative interview seeks to describe the meanings of central themes in the life world of the study. He added that, the main task in interviewing is to understand the meaning of what the interviewees say. The researcher drafted some interview questions which were related to the research objectives. The researcher had face to face

interviews with the Council staff, Ward Councillors and the resident representatives taking down their responses. Face to face interviews are verbal conversation and interaction between the researcher and a respondent. Green in Mikai (2012) highlighted that; personal non-structured interviews helped the researcher to obtain more information from non- verbal language expressed by the respondents. He further indicated that, it allows the researcher to inquire more about the subject under study by further probing to get the desired and perfect responses. In this study personal interviews were carried out which gave the researcher interpersonal contacts with the respondents.

Face to face interviews enabled the respondents to be open and resulted in yielding accurate and honest information. The researcher chose interpersonal interviews as a viable instrument in collecting data because of the caliber of the respondents in the study area. Respondents like residents and ward Councillors who could not write frequently as they speak felt more comfortable in expressing themselves when talking to them face to face explaining to them the logic of the study. The researcher concluded that, interpersonal interviews yielded much data than questionnaires. Those who ignored a questionnaire were willing to talk with an interviewer. The researcher was also able to ask for more information concerning political accountability and explained where respondents did not understand.

Advantages of Interviews

Personal Interviews allows a direct contact between the respondents and the interviewer

- ➢ They enable the researcher to gather more data rapidly

- ➢ There is a room of clarification where respondents did not understand

- ➢ Allows the researcher to deduce certain information from the respondent body language

- ➢ Response rate for the interview is high; almost all interview questions are answered.

Disadvantages

- ➢ It is time consuming

- ➢ Moving around interviewing people involves some costs implications

b) Questionnaires

A questionnaire is a tool used in collecting and recording information about a particular issue of interest. Peterson (1992) is of the notion that a questionnaire is a set of questions designed to gather the data necessary for accomplishing the objectives of the study. The researcher used both closed and open ended questionnaires so that illiterate respondents do not go confused. The questionnaires were developed in line with the stated objectives of the study so as to capture the data that will achieve the research objectives. For a questionnaire to be valid and get the intended results it must be understood by the respondent in the way intended by the researcher and the answer given by the respondent must be understood by the researcher in the way intended by the respondent Saunders et al. (2007). Questionnaires were distributed to the resident representatives randomly regardless of level, gender and qualification to try and fill the questionnaires.

Advantages of Questionnaires

➢ Questionnaires may be a cost effective way of gathering data from a large audience

➢ Participants may not like to be identified for having taken part in research; therefore, questionnaires can be an effective tool to gather information from respondents, who do not like to be identified.

➢ Respondents may be honesty when giving answers if they know that they would not be identified.

➢ Most participants who take part in questionnaires would know what information is being asked about them.

➢ Questionnaires eliminates bias

➢ Useful if topic is personal or sensitive

Disadvantages

➢ The researcher may not know whether the questionnaire was completed by the targeted audience or not.

➢ Respondents may not understand the questions and therefore, give answers that, they may not have given if they had understood the question

➢ Respondents may delay to respond to the questionnaires

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Research ethics are a pre requisite and have to be observed when carrying out a study, thus this study considered and observed the various research ethics like integrity and respondent protection. (Neuman, 2006) articulated that the participants are the ones to grant someone access to their lives, their minds; therefore, permission has to be sought. In line with the above assertion, permission was sought from the Town Clerk and the council Chairperson. A letter proving permission to conduct the research was submitted to the relevant council management. The letter outlined the purpose of the research, and how the research was to be conducted so as to avoid suspicion and resentment from the interviewees, managers and politicians within the organisation. Furthermore, confidentiality was maintained through assuring the respondents that no names will be published and that the acquired information will be used for academic purposes only.

3.7.1 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

The reliability and validity of the research instruments used in this study were tested before their use, in order to counter any errors. According to Maree, (2007) "validity refers to the degree to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure". In this case to ensure reliability and validity the researcher made pre-tested her data collection instruments.

3.7.2 PRE TESTS

In order to evaluate the efficiency of the research instruments, methods and techniques used in gathering data, pretesting was carried out first by seeking approval from the research supervisor so as to ascertain that the wording of the research instruments are can be understood by everyone there by exposing any ambiguities that may be there. Furthermore, once the research instruments were approved by the research supervisor the same instruments were pre-tested in the current local governance class. This exercise thus perfected the value of the instruments and validated them.

3.8 SUMMARY

This chapter has discussed all the research methodology aspects that guided how this study was carried out by the researcher. The chapter further examined the different research designs namely mixed methods, qualitative, quantitative together with its advantages and disadvantages in order to validate the reliability of the chosen research methods in data collection. Furthermore, the chapter looked at the targeted sample population that is council management, councillors and residents representatives and also revealed the required sampling methods that were to be used to determine the sample size population selection. The ethical issues were also covered for credibility. The chapter also looked at the research instruments used to collect data; the instruments were linked to the research questions and literature review on chapter 2 as a way of aligning the research and supporting the argument of the study. The findings and data collected will be presented in the next chapter, 4 and analysed through qualitative and quantitative means.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

The previous chapter looked at the methodology that was used in this study.   This chapter focuses on presentation, analysis and discussion of the research findings. The results are organized according to specific themes which address the main objectives. The major areas covered are demographic information and results on the objectives of the study.

4.1 RESPONSE RATE ANALYSIS

Of the thirty (30) respondents composed of Council Management, elected Councillors and residence representatives who received the questionnaires, the researcher managed to obtain a 100% return response rate from the total population sample. The respondents' rate shows that respondents were enthusiastic and supportive in responding to the questionnaire given to them.

Table 4.1: Percentage of questionnaires distribution and response received

N =30

RESPONDENTS	QUESTIONAIRES DISTRIBUTED	QUESTIONAIRES RETURNED	PERCENTAGE RESPONSE RATE
Council management	6	6	100%
Elected Councillors	4	4	100%
Residence representative	20	20	100%

Table 1: Questionnaire response rate

4.3 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

4.2.1 GENDER

According to the demographic data presented in Table 4.1, of the thirty(30) Council Management, elected councillors and residence representatives who took part in the study, 57 % were female and 43 % were male. In general, there are more female residence in the town.
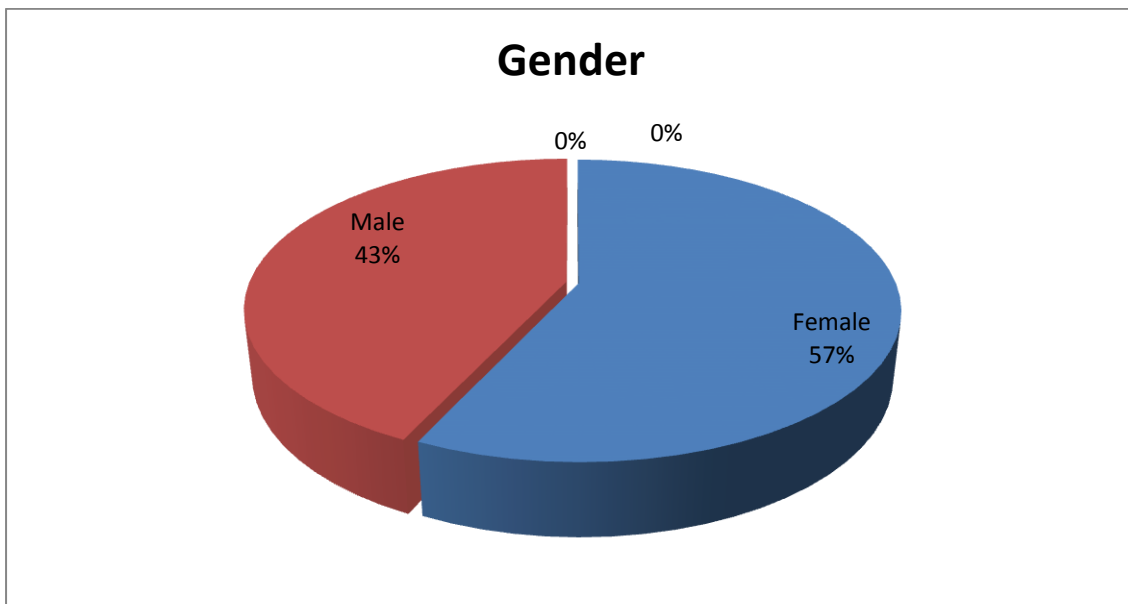
Figure 4.1: Gender of respondents

4.2.2 Respondents period as residents in Beitbridge

The demographic data revealed that the majority (38 %) of respondents had been living in the study area for more than 10 years, while 28 % had been living in the study area for a period between one and five years, 21 % indicated that they had been living in Beitbridge town for a period of five to ten years and 13 % had been living in the town for less than five years. This is illustrated in Figure 4.2 below.
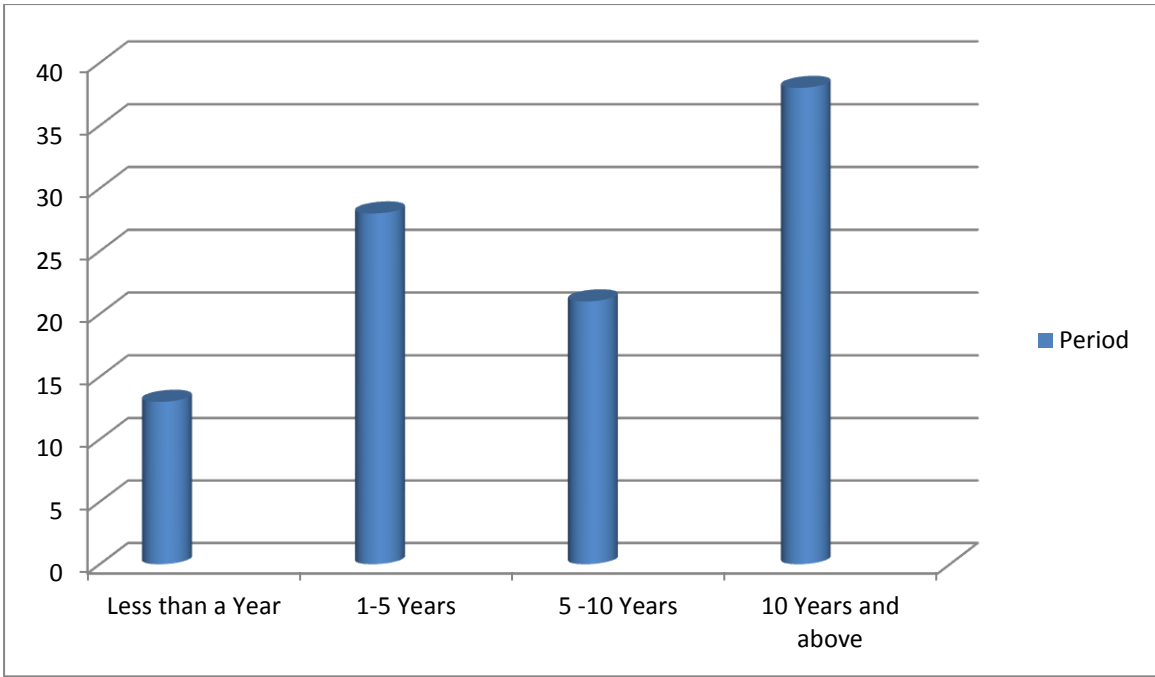
Figure 4.2: *Period of respondents living in Beitbridge town*

4.2.3 Characteristics of respondent's age

The age distribution of respondents shows that the majority of respondents 47 % are aged between 41-50 years, 39 % are between 31-40 years, 1 % are above 51 years and the minority (4%) are aged between 20-30 years. Table 4.3 below illustrate characteristics of teachers by age.

Age group	Percentage
20-30 years	4 %
31-40 years	39 %
41-50 years	47%
51 + years	10 %

Table:4.2 Characteristics of respondent's age

4.2.4 Educational Qualifications of respondents

The demographic data indicates that 31 % of respondents had completed ordinary level, 18 % indicated that their highest level of education is advanced level whilst 13 % possess a diploma as the highest level of qualification, 9 % and 2% of respondents had a professional certificate and ZJC respectively as highest level of qualification. Table 4.2 below is an illustration of respondent's highest level of qualifications.

Level of qualification	Percentage
ZJC	2 %
Ordinary Level	31 %
Advanced Level	18 %
Professional Certificate	9 %
Diploma	13 %
Degree	5 %
Other qualifications	1 %

Table 4.3: Educational qualifications of respondents

4.3 Residence knowledge on the functions of elected councillors

The first objective of the study was to analyze how councilors in the Municipality of Beitbridge are held accountable through the electoral process. Results in figure 4.3 below indicate that 77 % of resident's representatives and council management are not aware of the functions of the elected councillors whilst 23 % indicated that they are aware of the functions of the elected councillors.
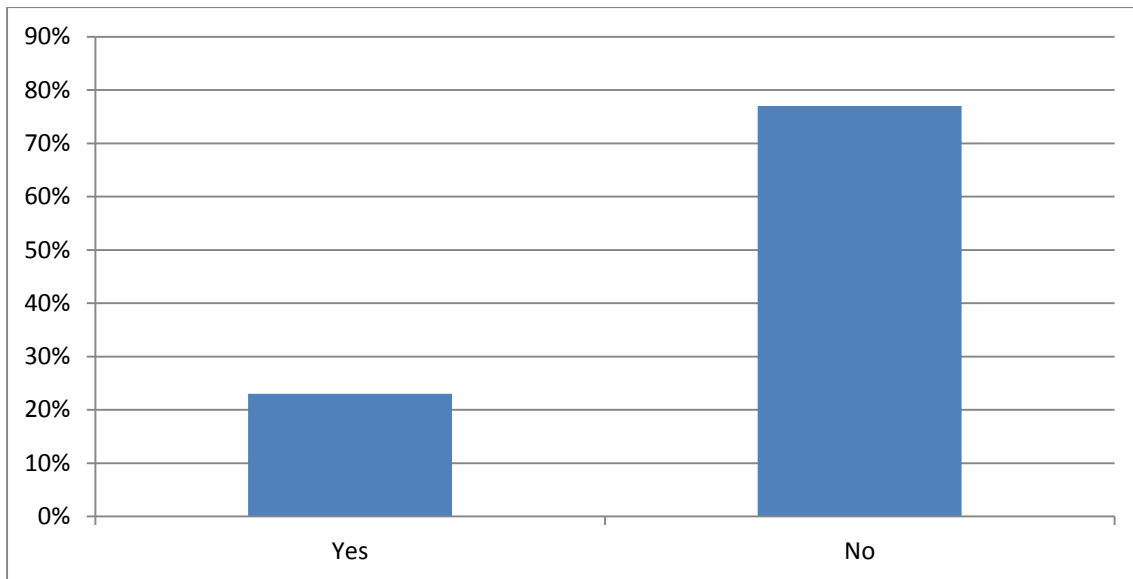
Figure 4.3: *Residence knowledge on the functions of elected councillors*

In relation to the above, key informant interviews with residents representatives, respondents confides their ignorance on exactly function of councillor thus making it difficult to demand for accountability . In addition to resident's ignorance on the functions of councillors, some of the interviewed councillors were not even aware of the functions and job description thus it was difficult for them to account anything to the electorate.

4.4 Residents perspectives on who is supposed to hold councillors accountable

Figure 4.4 below is an illustration of residence perceptions on who is supposed to hold elected councillors accountable. The majority of respondents (57 %) indicated that it is the responsibility of political parties to hold councillors accountable, 16 % indicated that it is the duty of voters whilst 10 % believed that it is the role of local council, 12 % indicated that they don't have an idea of who is supposed to hold elected councillors accountable and 5 %

reveal that it is the duty of residents to hold elected councillors accountable
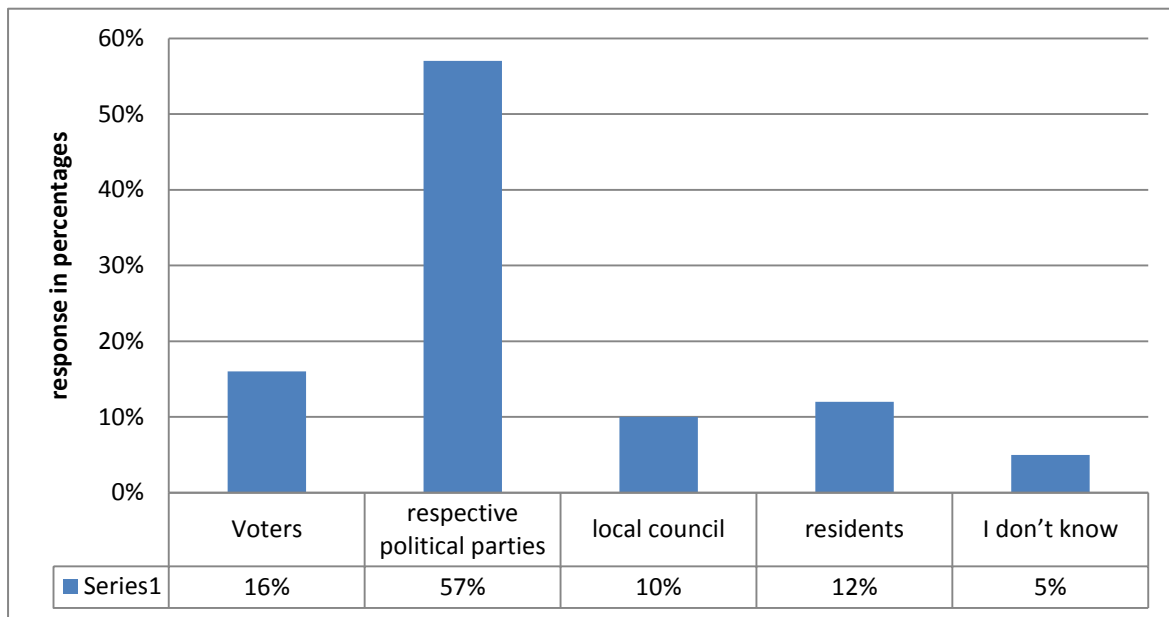
Figure 4.4: Residents perspectives on who is supposed to hold councillors accountable

4.5 Effectiveness of voting in holding councillors accountable

Findings from the study indicate that voting as an electoral process in holding elected councillors accountable is highly ineffective. As illustrated in figure 4.4 below. The majority (62 %) indicated that the mechanisms are highly ineffective and 28 % indicated that it is effective. The reason for the highly ineffectiveness of voting as a mechanism to hold elected councillors accountable was that the majority of residents are not aware that they have a right to remove non performing councillors through vote of no confidence.
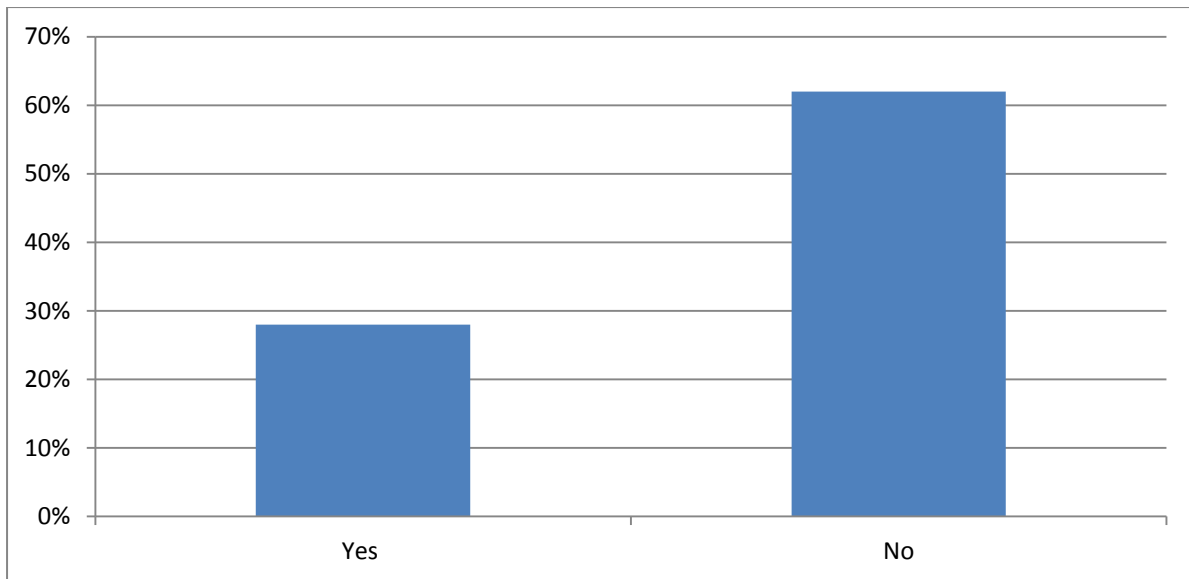
Figure 4.5: Effectiveness of voting in holding councillors accountable

4.6 Residents feedback meetings with councillors

Findings indicate that there are limited feed meetings between elected councillors and residents. As illustrates in figure 4.6 below, 35 % indicated that they hold meeting feedback meeting with councillors once per year, 31 % highlighted that they hold feedback meeting with councillors after every six months, 25% have never hold any feedback meetings with elected councillors that they hold quarterly feedback meetings with elected councillors and 2 % indicated that they hold feedback meetings with elected councillors.

4.7 Effectiveness of feedback meeting in holding elected councillors accountable

On the effectiveness of these feedback meetings in holding councillors accountable, 87 % indicated that the meetings are ineffectiveness in holding councillors accountable because they are usually seen as campaign rallies rather than meeting to address challenges faced by residents. Only 13 % of respondents indicated that feedback meetings with councillors are effective. Figure 4.7 below illustrate responses on the effectiveness of feedback meeting with councillors in holding them accountable**.**

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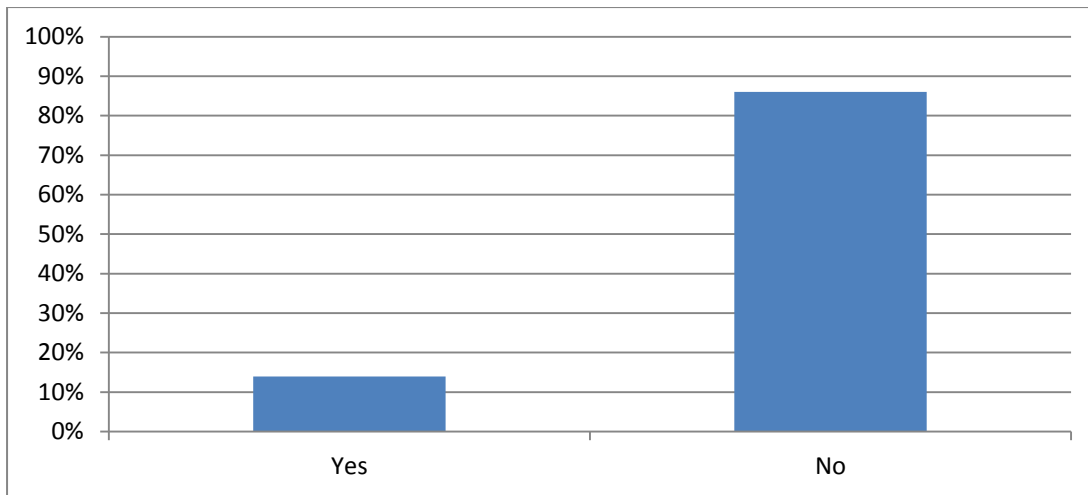
Figure 4.7:Effectiveness of feedback meetings with councillors

4.8Level of community participation in meetings

Interviews with councillors and residence concur that the level of residence participation in accountability meetings is poor. Figure 4.8below illustrate that 56 % respondents indicated that participation in meetings is poor, 21% indicated that Partcipation is average whilst 16 % indicated that participation is good and 7 % indicated that the feedback meeting are excellent.
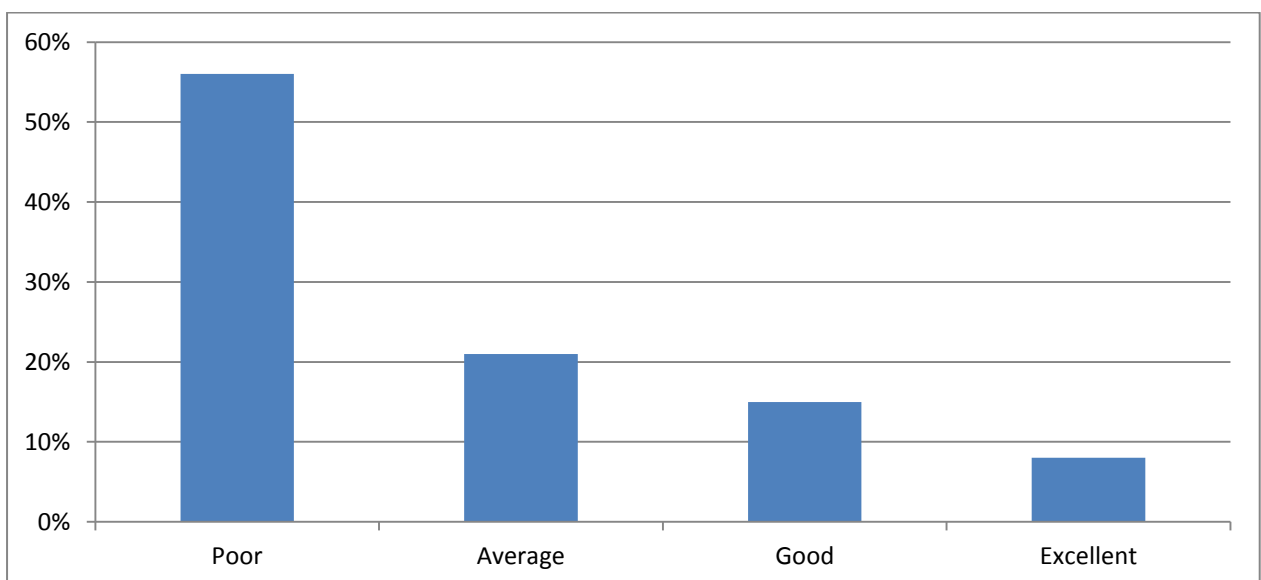
Figure 4.8:Level of community participation in meetings

4.9 Medium of communication used by councillor to account to electorate

Interviewed councillor's residence indicated that beside feedback meetings other platforms are being utilised to enhance chances of holding elected councillors accountable. Figure 4.9 below is an illustration of responses on different platforms used in holding councillors, the use of social media platforms dominates at 75 %, 15 % indicated that poster and fliers are used in communicating accountability grievances and feedbacks whilst 7 % indicated that radio and TV are used in to spread accountability issues and 3 % indicated that they used other strategies.
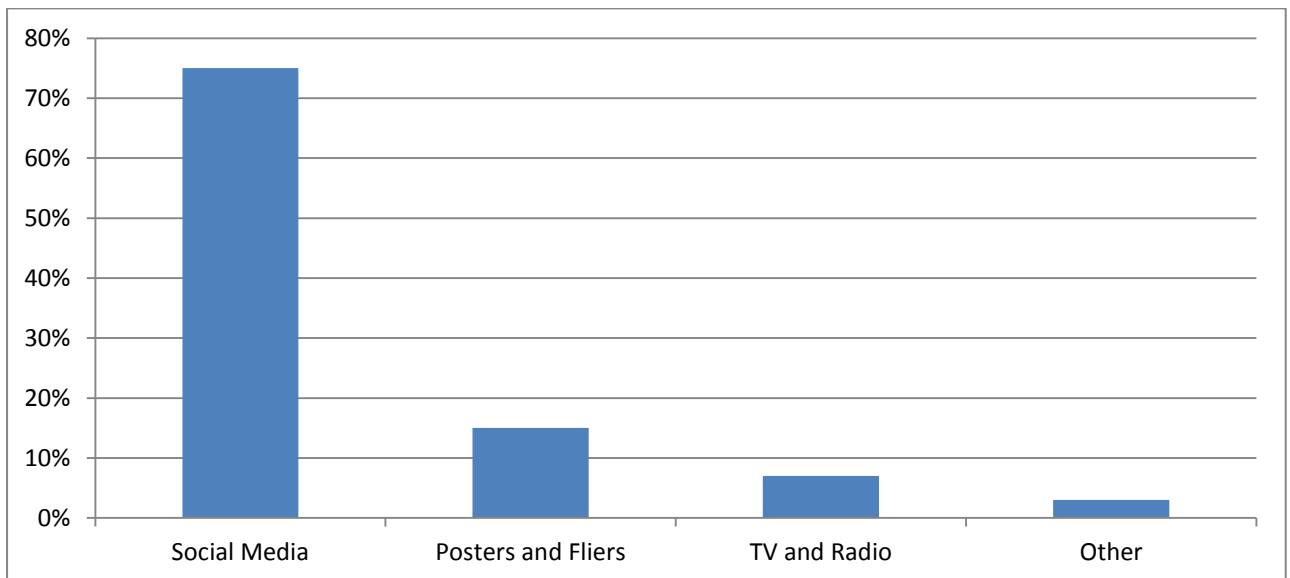
***Figure 4.9**: Medium of communication used by councillor to account to electorate*

According to interviewed councillors the usage of social media allows them to account to the electorate, however interviewed residence highlighted that although social media is being used it is not effective in bringing touchable solution to genuine social service delivery challenges.

4.10 Non electoral process being used to hold elected councillors accountable

Other than the electoral process being used in holding elected councillors study participants were asked on whether other accountability tools are being used to hold elected councillors accountable Table 4.4 below is a summation how respondents agree and disagree to the use of the following accountability mechanisms.

Accountability mechanism	Agree	Disagree
Public expenditure tracking	11%	89%
Social Audit	5%	95%
Public hearing	27%	73%
Participatory budgeting	18 %	82%

Table 4.4:*Non electoral mechanisms being used to hold councillors accountable*

As illustrated above, 89 % of respondents disagreed that public expenditure tracking is being used to hold elected councillors accountable and 11 % agreed that it is being used to hold councillors accountable. On social audit as an accountability tool being used, 95% of respondents disagreed whilst 5 % agreed that it was being used. On Public hearing as an accountability mechanism being used 73 % of respondents disagreed and 27 % agreed that it was being used. Lastly on the usage of participatory budgeting being used, 82 % disagreed that the mechanism is being used in the study are whilst 18 % agreed that it was being used.

Summary

The chapter presented findings of the study in relation to each research questions. The next chapter will focus on summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This final chapter of the study gives an overview of the chapters 1 to 4. The summary of the latter chapters indicates the extent to which the research questions and objectives have been tested, achieved and answered. The findings that emanate from the research are interpreted, and the conclusions thereof are structured into recommendations for improving political accountability in Beitbridge Municipality.

5.1 Summary

Using the Beitbridge Municipality as a case study, the focus of the study was to explore the issues pertaining to holding elected officials through the electoral process focusing on the limitations and areas of possible improvements.

Chapter 1 therefore dealt with an orientation of the study, with particular emphasis on the back ground of the recently upgraded Beitbridge Municipality which has been defined by the 2013 Constitution of Zimbabwe. The objectives of the study were to give an analysis of how councillors are held accountable through the electoral process. Through research by literature review, varying opinions of the political accountability concept were reviewed and analysed. In addition, another objective was to examine the effectiveness of the electoral process in holding elected officials accountable and the kind of challenges that impact the role of the electorate in holding councillors accountable to mention a few. The chapter further looked at the limitations that included political differences, resistance   and lack of cooperation. Delimitations of the study were that the research concentrated on the Beitbridge Municipality only.

Chapter 2 dealt with literature review of the research topic. This chapter focused on the concept of political accountability, its conceptual framework and the salient short falls of the

electoral process as a political accountability tool. It further went on to look local government system as far as political accountability is concerned using the Chitungwiza Municipality, Masvingo City Council and Mutoko Rural District Council as case studies.

In addition, chapter 2 also focused on other mechanisms that can be used by the electorate to hold the elected accountable other than the electoral process. Mechanisms identified include local government elections, public expenditure tracking surveys, social audits, public hearing and participatory budgeting. In the same vein the impact of such mechanisms was verified through some case studies from other countries like India, Brazil and the Philippines to mention a few.

Chapter 3 dealt with the research methodology. In this study the research design used was the descriptive survey method. This approach was preferred because of its ability to focus on the pursued phenomena in terms of attitudes, beliefs and experiences. The sampling techniques adopted were random sampling, purposive sampling and convenience sampling and this choice was mainly driven by the search of the most useful insights that was to be applied by the researcher into the study's particular focus.

Furthermore, the chapter goes on to look at the instruments used in the research study and these include the questionnaires and interviews which were verified and approved by the research supervisor to counter any errors and ambiguities in order to capture in-depth contextual objectives of the study.

Data collected was then presented and analysed in chapter 4. For clarity and further interpretation, findings were presented through bar graphs, pie charts and tables. These helped the researcher to explain further as well as identify the gaps that need to be filled pertaining to holding elected officials accountable.

5.2 Conclusion

Due to the growing pressure for political accountability from the residents, NGOs and CSOs in the Beitbridge it was a premise of this study to analyse the mechanisms of holding elected officials accountable, the limitations and areas of possible improvement. The following conclusions are based on the findings from the research questions.

i) How are councillors being held accountable in the Municipality of Beitbridge?

The findings from the study revealed that councillors are hardly held accountable because mechanisms of holding them accountable were limited though they are empowered by using the electoral process most respondents stressed that it was a common useless tool. However the research provided that followed by the electoral process, participatory budgeting is among the most frequently used political accountability tools in all local authorities in Zimbabwe including Beitbridge. The results implied that most residents are not interested in exercising their rights of holding their agents accountable perhaps because of lack of knowledge.

ii) How effective are the accountability mechanisms in holding councillors accountable?

From the findings that came from the administered questionnaires to the residents most of them were of the view that the political accountability mechanisms like local government elections, participatory budgeting, public expenditure tracking, public hearing and social audits could be effective in an enabled environment as it was noted that elections and participatory budgeting alone cannot be capable of holding the councillors accountable. The councillors on the other hand and other residents were of the view that all accountability mechanisms are effective but it depends on whether people are interested in using those tools or not.

iii) Challenges faced in holding councillors accountable?

It also emerged from the study that there are vast challenges that limit the residents from holding their councillors accountable which respondents raised like lack of transparency, lack of legislative support, ministerial interventions, abuse of law, poor participation and political violence.

From the findings of the study it emerged that improving and strengthening political accountability in the Beitbridge Municipality is critical as this paves way for effective and efficient service delivery and improved participation. Pertinent to this research's findings is the fact that the electorate's weakened state as far as holding the elected accountable with accountability tools at their disposal has contributed immensely to the present dilemmas that include poor service delivery, lack of accountability, transparency and poor participation hence the need to resource, revitalise and activate positive engagement between the principal and the agent.

5.3 Recommendations

From the arising findings of the research, the following recommendations are given to improve the effectiveness of political accountability mechanisms in the Municipality of Beitbridge.

i)   Increase citizen participation initiatives

Without citizens who participate in governance issues, it is likely that they are often unable to effectively hold their agents (councillors) accountable even though they are aware of the mechanisms at their disposal. Thus it is important for the Municipality together with the councillors to work together in encouraging citizenry mobilization. A mobilized citizenry would enable the residence to organize itself to make their needs, wants and demands heard and makes them to be aware of the mechanisms of holding elected officials accountable thereby empowering them. This can be done through supporting the organization of community associations and holding regular meetings on the state of the Municipality. In essence all this ensures effective communication between the councillors and residents.

ii)   Improving and opening up access to information

Increasing access to information on local government issues to the citizens encourages politicians to be accountable. Citizens should have open access to the Municipality's records; up to date minutes, regular audit reports and project regular reports to mention a few. Such data can uploaded regularly or provided in the Municipality's website and social media pages. This enables or gives the residents power to hold elected officials accountable.

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APPENDIX 1
QUESTIONNAIRES FOR RESIDENTS

Dear Respondent

My name is Nkosinesisa L Moyo and I am studying for a Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Local Governance Studies with Midlands State University. I am carrying out a study on the mechanisms of holding elected officials accountable, limitations and areas for possible improvement. A case of the Municipality of Beitbridge. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential. The results of this research will only be shared with those interested in the study. You are kindly being requested to respond to the questions below.

Instructions

i)   Tick the suitable answers in the boxes provided.
ii)   Write your answers on the spaces provided below.
iii)   Do not write your name on the questionnaire.

SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. How long have you been staying in Beitbridge District? 0 – 5 years [   ]   6 – 10 years [   ]   11 – 15 years [   ]   16+ years [   ]

2. Age: [   ]

3. Gender: Male [   ]   Female [   ]

 4. Educational Qualifications: None [   ]   ZJC [   ]   "O" Level [   ]   "A" Level [   ]

5. Professional Qualifications: Certificate [   ]   Diploma [   ]   Degree [   ] Others [   ]

SECTION B: POLITICAL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM INLOCAL AUTHORITIES

 Political accountability can be defined as the elected officials' obligation to answer to the public, and of public servants to the elected officials. It is generally ensured through elections.

6. Do you know the functions of an elected councillor?

            Yes [   ]   No [   ]

7. Do you know that it is your duty to hold elected councillors accountable?

            Yes [   ]   No [   ]

8. How effective is the voting or electoral process in holding councillors accountable?

            Effective [   ]   Not Effective [   ]

ii) Explain your answer

……………………………..
....
....
....

9. How often do you have feedback meetings with your councillor?

Monthly	
Quarterly	
After 6 months	
Once in a year	
Never	

10. How effective are these meetings in holding councillors accountable?

      Effective [   ]   Not Effective [   ]

11. How do you rate the level of community participation in such meetings?

  Poor [   ]   Average [   ]   Good [   ]   Excellent [   ]

12. How does the elected councillor interact with the electorate to consult and give updates?

  Public meetings [   ]   Social media   [   ]

  Fliers and Posters [   ]   Other specify...

13. Who do you think should ensure that the elected councillors are accountable?

   Voters [   ]   Their parties [   ]

   Local council [   ]   I don't know [   ]

14. Do you think the following mechanisms can be used to make Councillors accountable to the electorate?

i) Social audits   iii) Public expenditure tracking surveys

ii) Participatory budgeting   iv) Public hearing   v) Voting

     Agree [   ]   Disagree [   ]

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COUNCILLORS

Dear Respondent

 My name is Nkosinesisa L Moyo and I am studying for a Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Local Governance Studies with Midlands State University. I am carrying out a study on mechanisms of holding elected officials accountable, limitations and areas for possible improvement. A case of the Municipality of Beitbridge. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential. The results of this research will only be shared with those interested in the study. You are kindly being requested to respond to the questions below.

Instructions

i)   Tick the suitable answers in the boxes provided.

ii)   Write your answers on the spaces provided below.

iii)   Do not write your name on the questionnaire.

SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. How long have you been a Councillor? 0 – 5 years [ ]   6 – 10 years [ ]   11 – 15 years [ ]   16+ years [ ]

2. Age: [   ]

3. Gender: Male [ ]   Female [ ]

4. Educational Qualifications: None [ ]   ZJC [ ]   "O" Level [ ]   "A" Level [ ]

5. Professional Qualifications: Certificate [   ]   Diploma [   ]   Degree [   ]

 SECTION B: POLITICAL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM INLOCAL AUTHORITIES

Political accountability can be defined as the elected officials' obligation to answer to the public, and of public servants to the elected officials. It is generally ensured through elections.

6. As an elected councillor how are you being held accountable by the electorate?
....
....
....

7.What challenges or constraints do you face in discharging your duties as a councillor?

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

8. Do you think the electorate is aware that it is your duty to be accountable to them?

Yes [   ]   No [   ]

9. Do you think elections only are an adequate political accountability tool?

Yes [   ]   No [   ]

ii) Explain your answer.

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

10. How do you disseminate information to residents on various operational issues of the council?

Public meetings [   ]   Social media   [   ]

Fliers and Posters [   ]   Other specify...

11. How do you rate the level of community participation in such meetings?

Poor [   ]   Average [   ]   Good [   ]   Excellent [   ]

12. Who do you think should ensure that you elected councillors are accountable?

Voters [   ]   Your respective parties [   ]

Local council [   ]   I don't know [   ]

13. Other than the electoral process as an accountability tool, do you think the following mechanisms can be used to make you Councillors accountable to the electorate?

i) Social audits   iii) Public expenditure tracking surveys

ii) Participatory budgeting   iv) Public hearing   v) Voting

Agree [   ]   Disagree [   ]

APPENDIX 2

MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY
P. BAG 9055, Gweru.

TEL: (263) 54 260450 Ext 2159
FAX: (263) 54 260223

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
LOCAL GOVERNANCE STUDIES

04 MAY 2018(date)

Dear Sir/ Madam

RE: RESEARCH INTRODUCTORY LETTER

The   bearer   Nkosinesisa Lorraine Moyo   Registration
Number...R.136043A......... is a student at Midlands State University studying for a Bachelor
of Science Honours Degree in Local Governance Studies. One of the requirements of the
programme is the submission of a researched dissertation in the final year of the study.   The
student's research topic is: Holding Elected Officials Accountable
Through The Electoral Process, Limitations
And Areas For Possible Improvement. A Case
Of Beitbridge Municipality.
....
....

May you please assist him/her by allowing him/her access to your organisation so that he/she can
use it as a case study. The research is for academic purposes only and findings will not be
published anywhere. Your privacy and confidentiality is guaranteed.

PP S. Chakaipa
CHAIRPERSON

APPENDIX 2

THE TOWN CLERK
BEITBRIDGE MUNICIPALITY
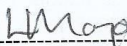P. O Box 164
BEITBRIDGE

07 MAY 2018

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: <u>PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY</u>

I hereby request permission to conduct a research study at your Municipality. I am currently enrolled at Midlands State University doing Local Governance Studies. The study research topic is mentioned in the attached research introductory letter.

Participation in this research is entirely voluntary and there are no known or anticipated risks to participation in this study. All information provided will be used for academic purposes only.

Your approval to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated. If you agree, kindly sign below acknowledging that I should conduct this study at your organization.

Yours Sincerely

NKOSINESISA L MOYO

Cc: Dr. E. P Mutema (Research Supervisor)

Approved by

TOWN CLERK

BEITBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL
2018 -05- 09
THE TOWN SECRETARY
P O BOX 164 BEITBRIDGE
TEL 086 23728/23793