



UNIVERSITY  
*of*  
LUSAKA

**School of social sciences and technology**

The Effects Of Public Service Reforms On Service Delivery In Zambia: A Case Study Of Kabwe Municipal Council.

BY

NGOSA ESTHER  
STUDENT ID: 22113288

A dissertation submitted to the University of Lusaka, the School of Social Sciences and Technology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Arts in Public Administration

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this research work to my Family and friends, whose unwavering support and encouragement have been a constant source of inspiration throughout my academic journey. I also dedicate this work to all public servants and local government workers who strive daily to improve service delivery in Zambia particularly those at Kabwe Municipal Council whose experience informed this study.

## **Acknowledgement**

First and foremost, I am grateful to the Almighty God for his grace through it all. Secondly, a big thank you and appreciation to my supervisor, Mr. Sande Kaswanga, for the guidance and unwavering support rendered before and during this project. I also extend gratitude to the whole Institute of University of Lusaka for the support rendered in this research project. Lastly, I would also like to thank my colleagues for the help rendered during my stay at the UNILUS institution.

## DECLARATION

I Ngosa Esther declare that this dissertation is my own original work and has not been previously submitted in whole or in part to any other institution. All sources and references are duly acknowledged and cited and assistance explicitly stated.

I further declare that the work presented, reflects the findings of my research, conducted in accordance with the academic standards and ethical guidelines of the University of Lusaka

Ngosa Esther

Signature:

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in dark ink, which appears to be 'Ngosa Esther'.

Date: 25. 02. 26

## Certificate of approval

I Sande Kaswanga certify that I supervised and read this proposal, and I am satisfied that this is the original work of the student under whose name it is being represented. I confirm that the work has been completed satisfactorily and is ready for presentation.

Signature: ...

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of connected loops and lines, positioned to the right of the 'Signature: ...' text.

Date...25/02/ 26

## Abstract

Public service reforms have been widely implemented in developing countries to improve governance efficiency and service delivery. In Zambia, decentralization has been promoted as a key reform aimed at strengthening local government performance. However, despite these reforms, many local authorities continue to experience service delivery challenges. This raises concerns about the effectiveness of decentralization in improving service delivery outcomes at the local level.

This study therefore examined the effects of public service reforms, particularly decentralization, on service delivery at Kabwe Municipal Council. The study adopted a case study design using a mixed-methods approach. Primary data collected from council employees, civic leaders, and residents through interviews and structured questionnaires, while secondary data from policy documents and academic literature. Findings revealed that decentralization reforms have contributed to moderate improvements in service delivery, particularly in community participation and administrative efficiency, also while reforms have the potential to enhance service delivery, enhance citizen participation, accountability, and responsiveness in local governance their success is dependent on sufficient resources, skilled personnel, and effective institutional support. Therefore, this contributes to the understanding of decentralization's role in improving service delivery in local governments, providing insights for policymakers and practitioners, giving understanding on how decentralization reforms influence service delivery at the municipal level. The study recommendations for further research are on comparative analysis of multiple local authorities and the evaluation of long-term impacts of decentralization on service delivery for the strengthening of local governance and reform implementation in Zambia.

In conclusion, decentralization contributed to some improvements in service delivery at Kabwe Municipal Council, but persistent challenges continue to constrain their full impact. The study recommends increasing financial and human resources, strengthening technical capacity, minimizing political interference, improving procurement processes.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CDF – Constituency Development Fund

DMMU – Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit

GRZ – Government of the Republic of Zambia

KMC – Kabwe Municipal Council

MLGRD – Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development

NDP – National Decentralization Policy

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

PSR – Public Service Reforms

WDC – Ward Development Committee

ZPPA – Zambia Public Procurement Authority

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 : conceptual framework .....	17
Figure 2 : effects of decentralization reform .....	47

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 : demographic characteristics .....	25
Table 2 : public service reforms implemented .....	28
Table 3 :challenges in the implementation of public service reforms.....	33
Table 4 : resident's perception .....	37

# Table of Contents

Dedication .....	I
Acknowledgement .....	II
DECLARATION .....	III
Certificate of approval .....	IV
Abstract.....	V
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS .....	VI
LIST OF FIGURES.....	VII
LIST OF TABLES.....	VIII
CHAPTER 1 .....	1
INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1 Background of the study .....	1
1.2 Objectives .....	5
1.2 Research questions.....	6
1.5 Definition of terms.....	6
1.6 Scope of study.....	7
1.7 Significance of the research .....	7
CHAPTER 2 .....	9
LITERATURE REVIEW .....	9
2.0 Overview.....	9
2.1 literature review .....	9
Empirical review .....	13
2.2 Theoretical framework.....	16
Conceptual framework.....	17
2.3 Gaps in the Literature.....	18
Chapter 3.....	19
Methodology .....	19
Introduction.....	19
Study approach.....	19
Sampling Technique and Sample Size .....	21
3.6 Data collection .....	22

3.8 Data analysis .....	22
3.9 constraints .....	22
3.3 Ethical Considerations .....	23
Summary of the study .....	24
CHAPTER 4 .....	25
DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS .....	25
4.1 Introduction.....	25
4.1.1 Response Rate.....	25
4.1.2 Demographic Characteristics of Council Workers .....	25
4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents .....	28
4.3 Awareness and Nature of Public Service Reforms at Kabwe Municipal Council .....	30
4.4 Effectiveness of Decentralization in Improving Service Delivery.....	31
4.5 Perceived Changes in Service Delivery Before and After Reforms .....	32
4.6 Challenges in the Implementation of Decentralization Reforms .....	33
4.7 Stakeholder Participation and Community Perceptions.....	36
4.8 Residents’ Perception of Service Delivery .....	37
4.9. Key Findings of the Study .....	39
4.9.1 Influence of Decentralization on Service Delivery .....	40
4.9.2 Changes in Service Quality Following Reforms.....	41
4.9.3 Constraints Affecting the Implementation of Reforms .....	41
4.9.4 Civic Leaders’ Perspectives on Reform Outcomes.....	42
4.9.5 Residents’ Experiences with Council Service Delivery.....	42
CHAPTER FIVE .....	48
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	48
5.1 Introduction.....	48
5.2 Conclusions of the Study .....	48
5.3 Recommendations of the Study .....	49
5.3.1 Recommendations to Kabwe Municipal Council .....	50
5.3.2 Recommendations to the Ministry of Local Government.....	50
5.3.3 Recommendations to Central Government .....	50
5.4 Implications of the Study .....	50
5.5 Areas for Further Research .....	51
5.6 Summary of the Chapter .....	51

References .....	52
References .....	52

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Public service reforms are a central aspect of governance in many developing countries including Zambia. These reforms are often driven by the need to improve the efficiency, transparency and the responsiveness of government institutions in the delivery of public service. In Zambia the government has implemented various reform strategies over the past 30 years. Some include decentralization, performance-based management, the restructuring of Ministries and the adoption of information and communication technology in the public service delivery. Despite these initiatives, public institutions have continued to face challenges in accessing quality public service for instance in sectors like health, education and the local government. The gap between policy reforms and actual service delivery outcomes raises questions about the effectiveness of these reforms. While some reforms may have achieved measurable improvement, others have been hindered by limited capacity, political interference, lack of resources and even resistance to change. Therefore, this study focuses on decentralization as a key reform in the Zambian public service aimed at improving efficiency, accountability and citizen participation in governance. Decentralization involves the transfer of authority, responsibility and resources from the central government to local government institutions, with the objective of bringing decision making and service delivery closer to the people.

#### **1.1 Background of the study**

Public service reforms have become a major strategy for improving governance, administrative efficiency, and service delivery across the world. Governments have increasingly adopted reforms aimed at enhancing transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to citizens' needs. One of the most widely adopted public service reform strategies is decentralization, which involves transferring authority, resources, and decision-making powers from central government to local authorities. Decentralization is widely regarded as a mechanism that improves public participation, strengthens local governance, and enhances service delivery efficiency.

Globally, decentralization reforms have been implemented in both developed and developing countries as part of broader public sector modernization programs. Public service reforms have become an essential feature of governance in many developing countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. These reforms are often initiated to address inefficiencies in public administration, improve service delivery, and enhance transparency and accountability in government institutions. In many African countries, decentralization was introduced to address governance inefficiencies, poor service delivery, and limited citizen involvement in decision-making processes. Countries such as Uganda, Kenya, and Ghana have implemented decentralization reforms aimed at strengthening local government capacity and improving service provision at community level. However, evidence from these countries shows mixed outcomes, with some improvements in local governance being recorded alongside persistent administrative and financial challenges.

In Zambia, public service reforms have been implemented since the early 1990s as part of structural adjustment programs and governance modernization initiatives. The Zambian government introduced decentralization policies to enhance local government autonomy and improve service delivery efficiency. The Decentralization Policy of 2002, later revised in 2013, aimed at strengthening local authorities by devolving administrative, financial, and political powers to councils. The government has implemented a series of reforms since the 1990s, including the Public Sector Reform Programs (PSRP), decentralization policies, and the Performance Management Package (PMP), all aimed at improving the functioning of the public sector. (M, 2017). These reforms were intended to improve public service delivery in sectors such as infrastructure development, waste management, health services, and community development. Despite the implementation of decentralization reforms, many local authorities in Zambia continue to face significant service delivery challenges. Municipal councils are often constrained by inadequate financial resources, limited institutional capacity, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and political interference. These challenges have raised concerns about the effectiveness of public service reforms in achieving their intended objectives.

Existing studies have largely examined decentralization at national or regional levels, with limited empirical evidence focusing specifically on municipal-level implementation. As a result, there is inadequate understanding of how decentralization reforms affect service delivery at Kabwe Municipal Council. This study therefore seeks to assess the effectiveness of decentralization reforms in improving service delivery at Kabwe Municipal Council.

Kabwe Municipal Council, as one of Zambia's urban local authorities, has been implementing decentralization reforms aimed at improving service delivery and promoting community participation in local governance. However, the council continues to experience challenges in areas such as waste management, road maintenance, infrastructure development, and public engagement. These challenges highlight the need to examine how public service reforms have influenced service delivery outcomes at Kabwe Municipal Council and to identify factors affecting reform implementation as they raise questions about the effect and effectiveness of the reforms implemented. This study, therefore, aims to critically assess how public service reforms have influenced service delivery in Kabwe Municipal Council, identifying successes, challenges, and areas for improvement. (Kaunda, 2021), institutional frameworks continue to undermine the effectiveness of local governance. According to 2022 Census of Population and Housing Preliminary Report of December 2022, Kabwe Central Constituency had a total projected population of 179,275 people in 2022 whereas Bwacha Constituency had 199,391. However, in 2035 Kabwe Central Constituency is expected to have 281,305 inhabitants while Bwacha Constituency 175,020 people with Kabwe municipal. This serves a growing urban population, yet it struggles with numerous service delivery shortcomings, making it a challenge to attain its mission of delivering exceptional value and quality of life through governance and team work. (Council, n.d.)

This study therefore seeks to examine the effects of public service reforms on service delivery at Kabwe Municipal Council in order to provide empirical evidence on the effectiveness of decentralization reforms at municipal level as challenges suggest that decentralization reforms may not be fully achieving their intended objectives.

### **1.1.2 Background of Kabwe Municipal Council**

Kabwe Municipal Council is a local authority established under the Local Government Act of Zambia and is responsible for providing public services within Kabwe District in Central Province. The council oversees services such as waste management, land administration, public health, infrastructure maintenance, market management, and local development planning.

Kabwe is historically known as a mining town and has experienced significant urban growth over the years. This growth has increased pressure on the council to improve service delivery systems. In response to governance challenges and service inefficiencies, the Zambian

government has implemented various public service reforms, including decentralization, performance management systems, and the Constituency Development Fund (CDF). These reforms were intended to improve efficiency, accountability, transparency, and responsiveness in local governance. However, the extent to which these reforms have improved service delivery at Kabwe Municipal Council remains a matter requiring empirical investigation.

### **1.1.3 Problem statement**

Public service reforms, particularly decentralization, have been widely promoted as a strategy for improving service delivery and strengthening local governance in Zambia. The decentralization policy aims to enhance efficiency, accountability, and community participation in service delivery by transferring authority and resources to local authorities. However, despite the implementation of these reforms, service delivery challenges remain prevalent in many municipal councils.

Kabwe Municipal Council continues to experience inefficiencies in the provision of essential services such as waste management, infrastructure development, road maintenance, and public participation in local governance. These persistent service delivery challenges raise concerns about the effectiveness of decentralization reforms in improving public service performance at the municipal level. The continued existence of these challenges suggests that the intended objectives of public service reforms may not be fully realized.

Several studies have examined public service reforms and decentralization in Zambia, focusing primarily on national policy frameworks and broader governance outcomes. However, limited empirical research has examined how decentralization reforms are implemented and experienced at the municipal level, particularly in medium-sized urban councils such as Kabwe. Furthermore, previous studies have largely focused on quantitative performance indicators while providing limited qualitative insights into stakeholder perceptions and institutional challenges affecting reform implementation.

The absence of detailed case study research focusing on Kabwe Municipal Council creates a knowledge gap in understanding how decentralization reforms influence service delivery outcomes at local government level. This study therefore seeks to assess the effectiveness of public service reforms on service delivery at Kabwe Municipal Council and to identify challenges affecting reform implementation in order to provide recommendations for improving local governance and service delivery.

Despite the Zambian government's efforts to implement public service reforms aimed at improving efficiency, accountability, and service delivery, the quality and accessibility of public services remain a major concern. Many citizens still experience delays, inefficiencies, and poor-quality services in sectors such as health, education, and local government administration. These persistent challenges raise questions about the effectiveness and implementation of the reforms introduced over the past decades, including decentralization, performance-based management, and digital transformation initiatives. There is a growing gap between the intended outcomes of these reforms and the actual experiences of service users. This study seeks to assess the extent to which public service reforms have affected service delivery in Zambia, identifying key challenges in implementation, and recommend strategies for enhancing reform effectiveness in the public sector. Inefficiency has long been identified as a critical challenge in the Zambian public sector, resulting in the delayed decision making, limited citizen satisfaction and poor accountability (Bank, 2017). this reform initiative aimed at transferring decision making and resources from the central government to the local authorities as to enhance efficiency, responsiveness and citizen participation in service delivery (GRZ 2013). Thus, inefficiency remains the core study problem, but reform initiatives like decentralization are intended to mitigate it by bringing governance closer to the people

## 1.2 Objectives

### General Objective

1. To examine effects of public service reforms on service delivery at Kabwe municipal council

### Specific objectives

1. To examine the types of public service reforms implemented at Kabwe municipal council
2. To assess the effects of these reforms on the quality service delivery.
3. To identify challenges faced during the implementation of service reforms.
4. To provide recommendations for improving service delivery through reform.

### 1.3 Research questions

1. What public service reforms have been implemented at Kabwe Municipal Council and how have they been applied?
2. How have public service reforms influenced service delivery at Kabwe Municipal Council
3. What challenges affect implementation of public service reforms at Kabwe Municipal Council
4. What guidance can better service delivery while accomplishing the set reforms.

### 1.4 Definition of terms

- **Public Service Reforms:**

Planned changes implemented by government institutions aimed at improving the efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, and transparency of public administration and service delivery.

- **Service Delivery:**

The process by which public institutions provide basic services (such as water, sanitation, waste management, health, and education) to the population.

- **Decentralization:**

The transfer of authority, responsibilities, and resources from central government to local government units such as municipal councils.

- **Kabwe Municipal Council:**

A local government authority in Zambia responsible for the administration and delivery of public services within the Kabwe District.

- **New Public Management (NPM):**

A management philosophy used by governments to modernize the public sector, emphasizing performance, output control, and efficiency, often by incorporating private sector practices.

- **Public Sector:**

The part of the economy that is controlled by the government, including ministries, local authorities, and public enterprises.

- **Accountability:**

The obligation of public officials and institutions to be answerable for their actions, decisions, and the use of public resources.

- **Performance Management:**

A system or process that aims to improve institutional effectiveness by setting goals, measuring progress, and making necessary adjustments

## **1.5 Scope of study**

This study only focuses on the effects of public service reforms on service delivery in Kabwe Municipal Council, located in Zambia's Central Province. The geographical scope is limited to Kabwe District, where the council plays a significant role in providing essential public services such as waste management, road maintenance, sanitation, and community development.

The thematic scope includes an analysis of key public service reforms implemented between 2015 and 2025, such as decentralization, performance management systems, and administrative restructuring. The research investigates how these reforms have influenced the quality, efficiency, and accessibility of services delivered by the council.

The population scope comprises two main groups:

1. Council officials responsible for implementing and managing public services.
2. Residents of Kabwe District who are the direct beneficiaries of these services.

The time scope covers reform activities and service delivery outcomes over the past ten years, providing a current and relevant view of reform impact.

## **1.6 Significance of the research**

This study is significant for several reasons, particularly in the context of Zambia's ongoing efforts to improve public sector performance and service delivery:

1. **Policy Development and Reform Improvement**

The findings of this study will provide valuable insights to policymakers and government institutions on the actual effects of public service reforms. By highlighting what works and

what doesn't, the research can inform the development of more effective and targeted reform strategies that are better aligned with citizens' needs.

## **2. Enhancing Service Delivery**

Understanding the challenges and successes of past reforms can help public administrators and service providers design better implementation frameworks, improve resource allocation, and reduce inefficiencies. This could ultimately lead to improved access to and quality of services such as healthcare, education, and municipal services.

## **3. Academic Contribution**

The research will contribute to the existing body of knowledge in the field of public administration, particularly within the Zambian context. It will serve as a reference point for students, researchers, and scholars interested in governance, public sector reform, and development studies.

## **4. Citizen Empowerment**

By evaluating how reforms affect the end users—ordinary citizens—the study can raise awareness about the importance of accountability, transparency, and performance in public service. It can also highlight areas where citizen engagement and feedback are needed to ensure reforms meet local needs.

## **5. Civil Society and Development Partners**

non-governmental organizations and development partners involved in governance and institutional capacity building may use the findings to guide their interventions, monitor progress, and advocate for reforms that are inclusive and sustainable.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Overview

This chapter presents a review of existing literature relevant to the study on the effects of public service reforms on service delivery, local regional and local with a focus on Kabwe Municipal Council. It discusses the theoretical frameworks that underpin the research, such as New Public Management, Public Choice Theory, and Systems Theory. The chapter also explores previous studies on public sector reforms in Zambia and local government performance, highlighting key findings, challenges, and gaps in the literature. This review provides a foundation for understanding how reforms have influenced service delivery and identifies areas requiring further investigation, encompassing the global, regional and local reviews.

#### 2.1 literature review

This section reviews existing literature on public service reforms and service delivery with particular focus on decentralization. The review examines global, regional, and local studies to establish existing knowledge, identify gaps in literature, and provide a theoretical and empirical foundation for the study.

##### **Public Service Reforms and Service Delivery**

Public service reforms refer to deliberate efforts by governments to improve efficiency, accountability, transparency, and responsiveness in public sector institutions. These reforms are often implemented to address inefficiencies in governance and improve service delivery outcomes. According to Pollitt and Bouckaert (2017) (Pollitt, 2017), public service reforms aim to enhance performance management, institutional accountability, and service quality through administrative restructuring and policy reforms.

One of the most prominent public service reform strategies is decentralization, which involves transferring authority and responsibilities from central government to local government institutions. (*Rondinelli*, 1981) explains that decentralization promotes citizen participation and enhances responsiveness of government institutions to local needs. Similarly, (*Smoke*, 2015) argues that decentralization can improve service delivery efficiency by allowing local authorities to tailor services according to community priorities.

Local authorities like Kabwe Municipal Council are tasked with providing essential services, including waste management, sanitation, road maintenance, and local planning. However, **Mukwena (2015)** and **Lolojih (2021)** observe that many local councils struggle to meet service delivery demands due to limited financial autonomy, delayed government grants, and political interference. Studies have also highlighted a lack of technical capacity, poor revenue collection systems, and minimal citizen participation in planning and budgeting as major challenges. For example, **Mphanza (2020)** found that despite decentralization efforts, most councils remain heavily dependent on central government allocations, which are often delayed or insufficient. However, decentralization reforms have produced mixed results globally. While some countries have recorded improvements in service delivery, others continue to face institutional and financial challenges that limit reform effectiveness.

### **Decentralization Reforms in Africa**

Several African countries have implemented decentralization reforms as part of governance improvement strategies. In Uganda, decentralization reforms have contributed to increased community participation in local governance and improved delivery of social services. However, studies by Francis and James (*Francis*, 2003) indicate that local authorities often face financial constraints and limited administrative capacity.

Similarly, Kenya's decentralization reforms under the devolved governance system have enhanced local decision-making and public participation. Nevertheless, research by World Bank shows that local governments continue to face challenges related to resource allocation and institutional coordination.

In Ghana, decentralization reforms have improved local government accountability and service delivery performance. However, (Ayee, 2008) notes that political interference and inadequate financial autonomy remain major obstacles to effective decentralization. These studies demonstrate that while decentralization has potential to improve service delivery, its effectiveness largely depends on institutional capacity, financial resources, and governance structures.

Studies conducted in Zambia have examined the impact of decentralization on governance and service delivery. For instance, (Chikulo, 2009) Chikulo, found that decentralization reforms improved administrative efficiency in some local authorities and observed that decentralization increased community involvement in development planning processes. However, other studies have highlighted persistent challenges affecting decentralization implementation. Resnick and Mwinga (Resnick, D & Mwinga, N, 2017) found that limited financial autonomy and bureaucratic inefficiencies continue to affect local government performance in Zambia. Additionally, other researchers highlight that political influence and weak institutional capacity often undermine reform effectiveness.

### **Public Service Reforms and Decentralization in Zambia**

Zambia introduced decentralization reforms as part of public sector modernization programmes aimed at strengthening local governance and improving service delivery. The Decentralization Policy of 2002, revised in 2013, emphasizes devolution of authority and resources to local authorities. According to the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (2013), decentralization aims to enhance efficiency, transparency, and citizen participation in governance. Zambia has undertaken multiple reform programs since the early 1990s, starting with the **Public Sector Reform Program (PSRP)**, which focused on restructuring Ministries, enhancing performance, and improving public finance management. According to the **Zambia Institute for Policy Analysis and Research (ZIPAR, 2019)**, later reforms like the **Performance Management Package (PMP)** and **Decentralization Policy** aimed to shift service delivery responsibilities to local authorities to enhance efficiency and community involvement. The introduction of **performance-based systems**, such as output-based budgeting and service charters, was intended

to instill greater accountability in public institutions. However, as **Simasiku (2017)** notes, the success of these reforms has often been hindered by limited institutional capacity, especially at the local level.

## **Research Gap**

Although existing literature provides valuable insights into public service reforms and decentralization in Zambia, several gaps remain. Firstly, most studies focus on national-level policy analysis or large urban local authorities, with limited research examining how decentralization reforms are implemented at municipal council level. Medium-sized urban councils such as Kabwe have received limited academic attention despite experiencing significant service delivery challenges.

Secondly, previous studies have primarily relied on quantitative performance indicators, with limited qualitative exploration of stakeholder perceptions and institutional experiences of decentralization reforms. Understanding stakeholder perspectives is critical in assessing reform effectiveness and identifying implementation challenges.

Thirdly, limited research has examined the specific relationship between decentralization reforms and service delivery outcomes at Kabwe Municipal Council. This creates a knowledge gap in understanding how public service reforms influence service delivery performance within this specific institutional context.

This study therefore seeks to address these gaps by conducting an in-depth case study of Kabwe Municipal Council using both qualitative and quantitative approaches to assess the effectiveness of public service reforms on service delivery.

Public service reforms have been widely implemented in developing countries as part of efforts to improve governance, enhance efficiency, and increase the responsiveness of government institutions. In Zambia, these reforms have targeted both central and local government institutions, aiming to improve service delivery and accountability. This literature review discusses the nature of these reforms, their theoretical underpinnings, and how they relate to service delivery at the municipal level, with particular attention to the Kabwe Municipal Council.

Although several studies have examined decentralization in Zambia, most focus on national policy outcomes or large urban councils such as Lusaka. Limited research has examined how decentralization reforms operate within medium-sized municipal councils such as Kabwe. Furthermore, previous studies have focused primarily on quantitative performance indicators with limited qualitative exploration of stakeholder perceptions. This study therefore seeks to fill this gap by providing an in-depth case study of Kabwe Municipal Council using qualitative and quantitative approaches.

## **2.2 Empirical review**

Empirical studies on service delivery in municipal councils suggest that local government performance is influenced by administrative capacity, financial resources, and governance structures. Research conducted in Lusaka City Council indicates that decentralization reforms improved public participation but did not significantly improve infrastructure development due to funding constraints.

Other studies conducted in Zambian local authorities have focused on performance management systems and service delivery efficiency. While these studies provide valuable insights into local government reforms, they largely focus on larger urban councils and provide limited evidence on medium-sized municipal councils such as Kabwe.

This empirical review critically assessed the existing research on the topic and their effects, consolidating the findings to identify trends, gaps, and implications highlighting studies done by scholars on the subject matter in local administration.

Public service reforms aim to improve service delivery, enhance accountability, and increase efficiency and Decentralization is a key public service reform, which aims to enhance service delivery by transferring authority and resources from central to local governments. This review examines the impact of these reforms on service delivery in Kabwe Municipal Council, Zambia, drawing from global, regional, and local perspectives.

Globally, public service reforms have shown mixed results. A World Bank report (2018) highlights the importance of citizen engagement in improving service delivery. Similarly, a study by the

United Nations (2020) emphasizes the need for decentralization and local governance reforms to enhance service delivery. Decentralization has shown promise in improving service delivery. A World Bank report (2018) highlights that decentralization can increase citizen participation, accountability, and responsiveness in local governance. Similarly, a study by the United Nations (2020) emphasizes the importance of decentralization in promoting local development and service delivery.

further assessments on effects of public service reforms on service delivery across various local authorities in Zambia and other developing countries. These studies provide practical evidence on how reforms translate into real-world outcomes and highlight both successes and persistent challenges.

Just like Zambia, In Sub-Saharan Africa, public service reforms have faced challenges such as limited capacity and resources. However, countries like Rwanda have made significant progress in improving service delivery through effective decentralization and citizen participation (B, 2017). In Zambia, public service reforms have been ongoing, with a focus on decentralization and improving local governance. A study by the Zambia Institute for Policy Analysis and Research (2019) highlights the need for more effective citizen engagement and participation in local governance to improve service delivery in Kabwe Municipal Council. Even though it has been embraced, decentralization has faced challenges such as limited capacity, resources, and institutional weaknesses.

In the case of Kenya, reforms driven by New Public Management principles improved efficiency in revenue collection and basic service provision. However, they cautioned that donor-driven reforms often overlook local contexts, leading to limited sustainability. Governance also reflects as a challenge of attaining efficiency as there is lack in the operations (B, 2018).

Mphanza (2020) (*decentralization and service delivery in Zambian local authorities: a case of Lusaka and Kabwe, 2020*) conducted a comparative study on decentralization and service delivery in Lusaka and Kabwe Municipal Councils. The findings revealed that while decentralization improved citizen participation and responsiveness, financial and technical limitations continued to hinder effective service delivery in Kabwe. The study concluded that decentralization alone is insufficient without adequate resource allocation. (Evince moses, Mubanga mpundu, 2025)

In another study. An evaluation according to Simasiku (.M, 2017) shows the implementation of public sector reforms in Zambia using a performance-based management framework. The results showed that reforms led to better internal planning and monitoring in some councils, but the intended improvements in service delivery were not fully realized due to poor coordination, lack of political will, and insufficient training of staff. (P.K, 2021) as stated above, the role of institutional capacity in the success of public reforms. Through surveys and interviews in various councils, the study established that successful reform implementation depends largely on local leadership, staff competencies, and community involvement. The research emphasized the need for holistic reform strategies that integrate financial, human, and institutional development.

In Zambia, decentralization has been a key reform aimed at improving local governance and service delivery. The government has transferred some administrative and financial authority to local authorities, including Kabwe Municipal Council. A study by the Zambia Institute for Policy Analysis and Research (2019) highlights the potential benefits of decentralization in improving service delivery, but notes challenges such as limited capacity and resources.

This review draws from existing studies, reports, and academic literature on public service reforms and service delivery in Zambia, with a focus on Kabwe Municipal Council. The empirical findings suggest that while reforms offer a pathway to improved service delivery, their effectiveness depends on factors such as local capacity, political commitment, and the availability of resources. The evidence also supports the relevance of conducting a focused study on Kabwe Municipal Council to evaluate reform outcomes within its unique local setting. The findings suggest that public service reforms can improve service delivery when accompanied by effective citizen engagement, decentralization, and local governance reforms. However, challenges such as limited capacity and resources can hinder progress.

Decentralization has the potential to improve service delivery in areas such as:

1. Health: Decentralized health services can lead to better healthcare outcomes
2. Education: Decentralized education services can improve access to quality education
3. Infrastructure: Decentralized infrastructure development can lead to improved roads, water, and sanitation services.

Therefore, this review highlights the importance of public service reforms in improving service delivery in Zambia by drawing from existing studies, reports, and academic literature on decentralization and service delivery in Zambia, with a focus on Kabwe Municipal Council.

The findings suggest that decentralization can improve service delivery in Kabwe Municipal Council by increasing citizen participation, accountability, and responsiveness. However, challenges such as limited capacity, resources, and institutional weaknesses need to be addressed.

## **2.3 Theoretical framework**

This study is anchored on theories that explain policy implementation outcome in public programs. With a focus of decentralization as a reform, this theoretical framework will integrate perspectives from implementation theories, institutional arrangement and governance

The **New Public Management (NPM)** framework underpins many reforms in Zambia, promoting efficiency, performance measurement, and customer satisfaction. NPM supports restructuring public institutions to operate more like private businesses, with an emphasis on results and accountability. In the context of Kabwe, this could involve adopting cost-effective waste management strategies or digitalize land administration services.

**Public Choice Theory** complements NPM by analyzing the self-interest of public officials. It suggests that without proper checks, bureaucrats may act in ways that serve their interests rather than the public's, a concern that is evident in some poorly implemented reforms in Zambian councils.

Finally, **Systems Theory** views public administration as an interconnected system. Reforms are inputs into this system, which then processes them to produce outputs—namely, improved services. If parts of the system (such as financing or human resources) are weak, the output will be poor, regardless of the quality of reforms.

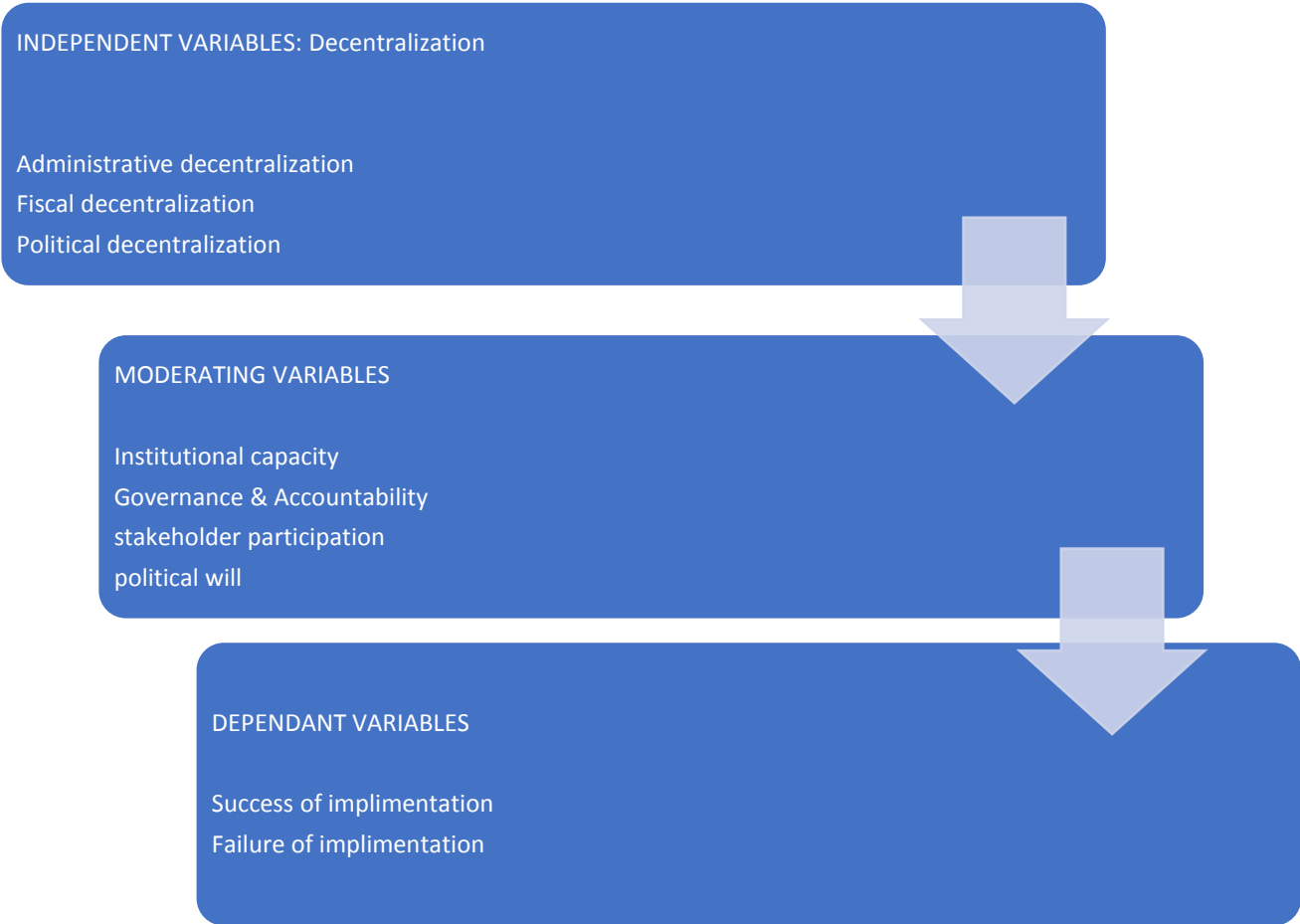
By integrating these theories, this study creates a conceptual foundation for analyzing decentralization reforms and their impact on public program implementation. Ultimately, the framework guides the exploration of how decentralization can lead to successful policy outcomes

when supported by strong institutions and aligned incentives, and conversely, how reforms fail when dominated by weak structures and self-interest.

## 2.4 Conceptual framework

Source: Researcher’s construct (2025). Based on decentralization.

FIGURE 1: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



## 2.5 Gaps in the Literature

While existing research has documented the broad outcomes of public service reforms in Zambia, few studies have focused specifically on **municipal councils like Kabwe**, where the effects of reforms is felt by ordinary citizens. There is a lack of localized, empirical studies that assess whether reforms have translated into improved service delivery outcomes. This study seeks to fill that gap by examining reforms in practice at the Kabwe Municipal Council.

The literature demonstrates that while public service reforms in Zambia are well-intentioned and often aligned with international best practices, their success depends heavily on implementation at the local level. Councils such as Kabwe play a vital role in delivering services, yet face systemic and structural barriers that hinder the impact of reforms. This study will provide much-needed insight into how public service reforms have affected service delivery in Kabwe, and what can be done to enhance their effectiveness.

# Chapter 3

## Methodology

### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter of the research study used mixed method approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods in order to explore the success and failure of decentralization using Kabwe municipal council as a case study. It has introduced the study area, a discussion on the research design, sampling methods, population of the study, sample size, types of data (secondary and primary), data collection tools (specifically for primary data), data analysis techniques, and ethical considerations in conducting the research.

### 3.1 Study approach

The study adopted a qualitative research approach. The qualitative approach was appropriate because the study sought to gain an in-depth understanding of how public service reforms have affected service delivery, based on the experiences and perceptions of council workers, civic leaders, and residents.

A qualitative approach allowed for the Capturing of detailed explanations from respondents Understand attitudes, opinions, and lived experiences. It also gave a chance to explore institutional challenges beyond numerical measurements.

Since the study aimed to examine processes, experiences, and institutional realities rather than test statistical relationships, the qualitative approach was considered most suitable.

It also was appropriate for the examination of decentralization reforms within a real-life institutional context and an in-depth analysis of decentralization as a public service reform within its real-life institutional and administrative context.

Kabwe Municipal Council was selected because it represents a growing urban local authority facing service delivery challenges despite decentralization reforms, making it a suitable case for examining reform effectiveness. The adopted a qualitative–dominant mixed approach within a

case study design was to examine the effects of decentralization as a service reform on service delivery at Kabwe Municipal Council.

Qualitative data enabled a deeper understanding of how reforms were implemented, the challenges encountered, and their practical implications on service delivery. To complement this, quantitative elements were incorporated through structured questionnaire items to generate descriptive statistics on service delivery performance and reform outcomes. The study approach was aligned with the objectives of examining the types of reforms implemented, assessing their effects on service delivery, and identifying implementation challenges. The study ensured a balanced analysis that enhanced the credibility and reliability of the findings. This approach was particularly suitable for assessing decentralization reforms in a local government setting where institutional dynamics, resource constraints, and stakeholder perceptions play a critical role.

### **3.2 Research Design**

The study employed a case study design, focusing specifically on one institution: Kabwe Municipal Council.

A case study design was appropriate because it allowed the research to be conducted with an in-depth investigation of public service reforms within a real-life institutional setting. By concentrating on a single local authority, the study was able to “zero in” on:

Reform implementation processes

Administrative practices

Service delivery outcomes

Institutional challenges

The case study design provided detailed contextual analysis rather than broad generalization across multiple councils.

### **3.3 Study Area**

The study was conducted at Kabwe Municipal Council, located in Kabwe District of Central Province, Zambia. The council is responsible for providing public services such as waste management, land administration, infrastructure maintenance, public health services, and local development planning.

The institution was selected because it has been implementing public service reforms such as decentralization and the Constituency Development Fund, making it suitable for examining reform outcomes at the local government level.

### **3.4 Study Population**

The study population comprised:

Council workers at Kabwe Municipal Council

Civic leaders (Ward Councillors)

Residents of Kabwe District as the service users

These groups were selected because they are directly involved in or affected by public service reforms and service delivery.

### **3.5 Sampling Technique and Sample Size**

Purposive sampling was used to select key informants such as civil service officials

Simple random sampling was used for selecting service users to ensure fairness and representation.

A sample size of about 25 respondents was used.

distributed as follows:

10 Council Workers

5 Civic Leaders

10 Residents

Purposive sampling was used to select council workers and civic leaders because they possess relevant knowledge regarding reform implementation. Residents were selected to provide experiential insights on service delivery.

Formula used to arrive at the sample size of 25:  $n=N/(1+N(e)^2)$  where:

$$n=179,275/(1+179,275(0.2)^2)$$

### **3.6 Data Collection Methods**

Data was collected using structured questionnaires containing open-ended questions. The open-ended format enabled respondents to express their views freely and provide detailed explanations regarding:

The effectiveness of decentralization

Challenges in implementing reforms

Perceived changes in service delivery. The other method was Document Review. This gave an analysis of relevant government reports, policy documents, and academic literature. These methods supported the qualitative nature of the study.

### **3.7 Data collection**

Data Collection Methods:

**Primary:** Interviews with public officials, and questionnaire with service users was used as a source of primary data

**Secondary:** Government reports, journal articles, reports from the UN, World Bank, was used for secondary data.

Extra sources were:

Government of Zambia Public Sector Reform Program (PSRP) documents

Ministry of Local Government

Auditor General's reports

ZIPAR and World Bank publications

Academic journals (Google Scholar)

### **3.8 Data analysis**

#### **Quantitative data**

Analyzed using statistical tools (e.g., Excel or SPSS), presented in charts and tables.

#### **Qualitative data**

Analyzed thematically by identifying key patterns and insights from interviews and documents.

This analysis was used to identify the recurring patterns, themes and factors that explain the effects of decentralization on public service delivery

### **3.9 constraints**

While the study provided a thorough analysis, it was limited by potential constraints such as restricted access to internal council records, limited availability of respondents, and time constraints associated with data collection and analysis.

While this research aimed to provide a comprehensive analysis of the effects of public service reforms on service delivery at Kabwe Municipal Council, several limitations were anticipated.

These included:

1. **Access to Information:** Some official documents, internal records, or performance data may not be accessible due to confidentiality or bureaucratic delays, limiting the depth of analysis.
2. **Respondent Availability:** It may be difficult to secure interviews or survey responses from key council officials or community members due to time constraints or unwillingness to participate.
3. **Time Constraints:** Given the academic calendar and proposal deadlines, the time available for data collection and analysis may be limited, which could affect the scope and depth of fieldwork.
4. **Resource Constraints:** Financial and logistical limitations might restrict the ability to conduct extensive field visits or reach a wider sample within the district.
5. **Bias in Responses:** Some respondents may provide socially desirable answers or withhold critical information, potentially affecting the accuracy of findings.

Despite these limitations, appropriate strategies such as confidentiality assurances, simplified questionnaires, and scheduled interviews were employed to ensure the reliability and validity of this study

### **3.9.1 Ethical Considerations**

Informed consent was obtained from all participants.

Confidentiality and anonymity maintained.

Ethical clearance was sought from relevant authorities

### **3.9.2 Summary of the study**

This study is aimed to investigate the effects of public service reforms on service delivery in Kabwe Municipal Council. The findings drawn from the literature and conceptual framework suggest the following:

Zambia has implemented various public sector reforms, including decentralization and performance-based systems, intended to improve local governance.

- Despite these efforts, service delivery at the municipal level continues to face serious challenges, such as poor infrastructure, limited staff capacity, and inadequate funding.
- Studies on similar contexts indicate that the success of public service reforms heavily depends on institutional capacity, political support, and citizen engagement.
- Kabwe Municipal Council, like many local authorities, has struggled to translate reform policies into tangible improvements in service delivery.

# CHAPTER 4

## DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents, analyses and discusses the findings of the study on the effects of decentralization reforms on service delivery at Kabwe Municipal Council. Data was collected using questionnaires from council workers, civic leaders and residents of Kabwe District. The presentation includes demographic information, shows identified reforms, their effects on service delivery and challenges faced during implementation. The chapter is structured around major themes derived from the research objectives and questionnaire sections. Findings are discussed in relation to existing literature at global, regional (African), and local (Zambian) levels

#### 4.1.1 Response Rate

A total of 25 questionnaires were distributed to respondents. All 25 questionnaires were successfully completed and returned, representing a 100% response rate. The respondents consisted of 10 council workers, 5 civic leaders and 10 Kabwe residents, which provided adequate data for analysis.

#### 4.1.2 Demographic Characteristics of Council Workers

**Table 4.1: Demographic Characteristics of Council Workers (n = 10)**

TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Variable	Summary of Responses
Age	Majority between 30-50 years
Sex	6 males 4 females

Marital status	70% married
Length of service	1-3 years and above 5 years
Academic qualification	Mostly diploma and degree holders
Employment level	Operational and support staff

Table 4.1 indicate that most council workers are within the productive age group and possess relevant academic qualifications, which is important for effective service delivery at Kabwe Municipal Council.

**Age Distribution of Council Workers**

The findings indicate that the majority of council workers were aged between 30 and 50 years, suggesting that most employees fall within the economically productive age group. This age composition is advantageous for public service delivery, as employees in this age range often possess both physical capacity and accumulated work experience.

This finding aligns with studies on local government performance in Zambia, which indicate that service delivery is more effective when institutions are staffed by personnel within the productive age bracket (Ministry of Local Government, 2019). Similar observations were made by Chikulo (2013), who argues that mature employees contribute positively to policy implementation at the local government level.

**Gender Composition of Council Workers**

Results further show that male employees (6) outnumbered female employees (4) among the respondents. Although males were slightly dominant, the presence of female employees indicates a level of gender inclusion within Kabwe Municipal Council.

However, literature on decentralization in Zambia emphasizes the need for greater gender balance in local governance structures to ensure inclusive service delivery (UNDP Zambia, 2020). Limited female representation may affect responsiveness to gender-specific community needs.

### **Marital Status of Council Workers**

The study found that approximately 70% of the respondents were married. Married employees are often perceived as more stable and committed to their professional responsibilities, which may positively influence service delivery outcomes.

This finding is consistent with public administration studies that associate marital stability with job commitment and reduced staff turnover in public institutions (Phiri, 2018).

### **Length of Service and Institutional Experience**

Findings show that most respondents had served between 1–3 years and above 5 years, indicating a mix of relatively experienced and moderately experienced staff. Institutional memory and experience are critical for the effective implementation of decentralization reforms.

According to the Decentralization Policy of Zambia (2013), experienced personnel are essential for translating devolved functions into tangible service delivery outcomes at the local level.

### **Academic Qualifications of Council Workers**

The study revealed that the majority of council workers possessed diploma and degree qualifications. This level of education is vital for effective policy interpretation, administrative decision-making, and implementation of public service reforms.

This finding supports earlier studies conducted in Zambian local authorities, which argue that higher academic qualifications enhance administrative efficiency and service delivery performance (Mukwena, 2017).

### **Employment Level of Respondents**

Most respondents were drawn from operational and support staff, who are directly involved in the day-to-day delivery of services to residents. Their perspectives are therefore critical in assessing the effectiveness of decentralization as a public service reform.

Literature suggests that frontline staff play a key role in determining whether decentralization reforms translate into improved service delivery (World Bank, 2018).

## 4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

**Table 4.2: Public Service Reforms Implemented**

**TABLE 2: PUBLIC SERVICE REFORMS IMPLEMENTED**

<b>Reform</b>	<b>Description</b>
Decentralization	Transfer of decision-making authority to the local level
Ward Development Committees (WDCs)	Increased community participation in planning
Performance Management Systems	Improved accountability and staff appraisal
Constituency Development Fund (CDF)	Financing of community development projects

These reforms were introduced to enhance efficiency, accountability and responsiveness in service delivery

### **Decentralization and Transfer of Decision-Making Authority**

Findings indicate that decentralization has been implemented through the transfer of decision-making authority from central government to the local level. Respondents noted that Kabwe Municipal Council now has greater autonomy in planning, budgeting, and implementation of local development initiatives.

This finding is consistent with Zambia's National Decentralization Policy (2013), which emphasizes devolving functions to local authorities to improve service delivery. Similar studies conducted in Zambian local governments show that decentralization enhances responsiveness to local needs when councils are empowered with adequate authority (Chikulo, 2013; Ministry of Local Government, 2019).

However, some respondents indicated that limited financial autonomy still constrains full realization of decentralization benefits, echoing concerns raised in previous studies on decentralization reforms in Zambia.

### **Ward Development Committees (WDCs) and Community Participation**

The study revealed that Ward Development Committees (WDCs) have been established to promote increased community participation in planning and decision-making processes. Respondents highlighted that WDCs provide a platform for residents to voice their development priorities.

This aligns with decentralization theory, which argues that citizen participation is central to effective local governance. Studies in Zambia indicate that WDCs enhance inclusiveness and accountability when they function effectively (UNDP Zambia, 2020). However, challenges such as limited capacity and inadequate resources were reported to affect the effectiveness of WDCs at ward level.

### **Performance Management Systems and Accountability**

Findings show that performance management systems have been introduced to improve accountability and staff appraisal within Kabwe Municipal Council. Respondents noted that performance appraisals have helped clarify roles and expectations among council employees.

This finding supports public administration literature which suggests that performance management systems are essential for improving efficiency and accountability in decentralized institutions (World Bank, 2018). In the Zambian context, Mukwena (2017) observes that performance-based management strengthens service delivery outcomes when properly implemented.

Despite these improvements, some respondents indicated that inconsistent monitoring reduces the effectiveness of these systems.

### **Constituency Development Fund (CDF) and Financing of Local Development**

The study found that the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) has played a significant role in financing community development projects at the local level. Respondents reported improvements in infrastructure and social services such as roads, schools, and markets.

This finding is consistent with recent studies in Zambia which show that increased CDF allocations have strengthened local development and service delivery (Ministry of Finance, 2022). However, concerns were raised regarding delays in fund disbursement and limited technical capacity in project management, which affect timely implementation.

Overall, the reforms implemented under decentralization were introduced to enhance efficiency, accountability, community participation, and responsiveness in service delivery at Kabwe Municipal Council. While notable progress has been achieved, persistent institutional and resource-related challenges continue to limit the full potential of decentralization reforms.

The demographic data provided important background information for understanding respondents' perspectives on decentralization and service delivery.

Among council employees, respondents varied in age, gender, length of service, academic qualifications, and employment level. Most respondents had served for more than three years, indicating adequate institutional knowledge of Kabwe Municipal Council operations before and after decentralization reforms. The majority held at least a diploma or degree qualification, suggesting a reasonably skilled workforce capable of understanding policy reforms and implementation processes.

Civic leaders reported varying lengths of service and responsibilities, including oversight, community mobilization, and liaison roles between the council and residents. Residents who participated in the study had lived in Kabwe for more than five years, enabling them to compare service delivery before and after the introduction of decentralization-related reforms.

These demographic characteristics enhanced the reliability of the findings, as respondents possessed sufficient experience and exposure to assess changes in public service delivery.

### **4.3 Awareness and Nature of Public Service Reforms at Kabwe Municipal Council**

Findings from all three respondent categories indicated a general awareness of public service reforms implemented at Kabwe Municipal Council in recent years. The most commonly cited reforms included decentralization of selected functions, financial management reforms, land administration reforms, and improved regulatory and enforcement mechanisms.

From a Zambian perspective, these findings are consistent with the objectives of the **National Decentralization Policy (2013)**, which seeks to devolve functions and authority to local authorities in order to improve service delivery, enhance citizen participation, and promote local development. Studies by Mukwena (2016) and Chanda (2018) observe that while awareness of decentralization reforms exists among public officers, understanding of the scope and operational

implications of the reforms remains uneven across councils. This situation was also evident in Kabwe, where lower-level staff and residents reported limited clarity regarding the nature and intent of the reforms.

Council employees and civic leaders largely confirmed that decentralization reforms aimed at improving efficiency, accountability, and responsiveness to local needs. However, some respondents noted that reforms were not always clearly communicated to operational staff and the general public. This finding echoes observations by the Ministry of Local Government (2020), which identified weak communication and limited civic sensitization as major barriers to effective decentralization implementation in Zambia.

At the local government level, Kabwe Municipal Council reflects a broader national pattern where policy reforms are introduced without adequate institutional preparation or public engagement, thereby weakening implementation outcomes.

Findings from all three respondent categories indicated a general awareness of public service reforms implemented at Kabwe Municipal Council in recent years. The most commonly cited reforms included decentralization of selected functions, financial management reforms, land administration reforms, and improved regulatory and enforcement mechanisms.

Council employees and civic leaders largely confirmed that decentralization reforms aimed at improving efficiency, accountability, and responsiveness to local needs. However, some respondents noted that reforms were not always clearly communicated to lower-level staff and residents. This finding aligns with global literature which emphasizes that effective policy communication is essential for successful implementation (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973).

At the African level, similar studies have shown that decentralization reforms often suffer from weak information dissemination, limiting stakeholder participation. In Zambia, previous research on local government reforms highlights persistent gaps between policy intentions and local-level understanding, a trend reflected in the Kabwe case.

#### **4.4 Effectiveness of Decentralization in Improving Service Delivery**

Respondents were asked to rate the effectiveness of decentralization in improving service delivery at Kabwe Municipal Council. The majority of council employees rated decentralization as average, while a smaller proportion rated it as excellent. Civic leaders expressed mixed views,

acknowledging improvements in selected service areas such as land allocation and community engagement, while highlighting stagnation in infrastructure development and enforcement services. Residents largely rated service delivery as good or average.

These findings align closely with Zambian empirical studies on decentralization. For example, the **World Bank (2017)** and **Zambia Institute for Policy Analysis and Research (ZIPAR, 2019)** report that decentralization in Zambia has produced modest service delivery gains but has not fully transformed local governance due to limited fiscal autonomy. Similarly, Chikulo (2015) argues that Zambian local authorities continue to rely heavily on central government transfers, which undermines the effectiveness of decentralized decision-making.

In Kabwe, respondents emphasized that while responsibilities have been devolved, financial resources and decision-making power remain centralized. This supports arguments by Siachitema (2020) that decentralization in Zambia is more administrative than fiscal, resulting in constrained implementation capacity at the council level.

Respondents were asked to rate the effectiveness of decentralization in improving service delivery. The majority of council employees rated decentralization as average, while a smaller proportion rated it as excellent. Civic leaders expressed mixed views, acknowledging improvements in some service areas while highlighting stagnation in others. Residents largely rated service delivery as good or average, with few indicating excellent performance.

These findings suggest that decentralization has yielded partial success rather than comprehensive improvement. Globally, decentralization is associated with improved responsiveness and efficiency when local governments are adequately empowered. However, African experiences demonstrate that effectiveness depends on fiscal autonomy and administrative capacity. In Zambia, limited fiscal decentralization continues to constrain councils such as Kabwe, reducing the overall impact of reforms.

#### **4.5 Perceived Changes in Service Delivery Before and After Reforms**

A comparison of service delivery before and after reforms revealed modest improvements in areas such as land allocation procedures, waste management, and community engagement. Both employees and residents acknowledged improvements in responsiveness and accessibility of council services.

Despite these gains, respondents identified areas where service delivery had not improved or had worsened, including road maintenance, staffing levels, and enforcement of local regulations. These mixed outcomes support the institutional theory argument that reforms succeed only when supported by strong local capacity and adequate resources (North, 1990).

## 4.6 Challenges in the Implementation of Decentralization Reforms

**Table 4.3: Challenges Faced in Implementing Public Service Reforms**

**TABLE 3: CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PUBLIC SERVICE REFORMS**

Challenge	Description
Inadequate Funding	Limited financial resources to fully implement reforms
Staff Shortages	Insufficient personnel in key departments
Political Interference	Delays and influence in decision-making
Delayed Procurement	Slow procurement processes affecting service delivery

These challenges have negatively affected the full realization of the intended benefits of public service reforms at Kabwe Municipal Council.

### **Inadequate Funding**

Respondents indicated that insufficient financial resources have constrained the effective implementation of decentralization reforms, including the financing of community development projects and operational activities. Limited funding often leads to delays or incomplete projects.

This finding aligns with studies in Zambia, which show that local authorities frequently struggle with inadequate budgets, affecting their capacity to implement reforms and deliver essential services (Phiri, 2018; Ministry of Finance, 2022). Adequate funding is critical to ensure that decentralization achieves its intended objectives.

### **Staff Shortages**

A shortage of qualified personnel was reported as a major challenge. Respondents noted that understaffing affects planning, service delivery, and supervision of local development initiatives.

According to Mukwena (2017), insufficient human resources in local government institutions in Zambia negatively impacts the implementation of decentralization reforms and reduces service delivery efficiency. Staff shortages also place additional pressure on existing employees, potentially affecting motivation and performance.

### **Political Interference**

Political influence in decision-making and resource allocation was highlighted as a barrier to effective reform implementation. Some respondents indicated that political considerations sometimes override technical priorities, leading to suboptimal service delivery outcomes.

This challenge has been documented in Zambian decentralization studies, where political interference is reported to undermine local governance, reduce accountability, and limit the independence of councils (Chikulo, 2013; UNDP Zambia, 2020).

### **Delayed Procurement Processes**

Delays in procurement procedures were identified as another challenge. Respondents stated that bureaucratic delays slow down the implementation of development projects and service delivery activities, reducing the overall impact of reforms.

Literature on public sector reforms in Zambia suggests that delays in procurement processes are a common obstacle, affecting timely project execution and weakening community trust in local authorities (World Bank, 2018).

Overall, the challenges identified — inadequate funding, staff shortages, political interference, and delayed procurement — present significant barriers to effective decentralization and improved service delivery at Kabwe Municipal Council. Addressing these challenges is critical to ensuring that public service reforms achieve their intended objectives.

The study identified several challenges affecting the implementation of decentralization reforms at Kabwe Municipal Council. Key challenges included inadequate financial resources, limited human resource capacity, political interference, and weak accountability mechanisms.

These challenges are widely documented in Zambian literature. The **Auditor General's Reports (2018–2022)** consistently highlight poor financial management, delayed disbursement of funds, and weak internal controls in local authorities across Zambia. Respondents in Kabwe echoed these concerns, noting that delayed funding often disrupted planned projects and compromised service delivery quality.

Political interference emerged as a significant challenge, particularly in project prioritization and resource allocation. This finding supports observations by Phiri (2017), who notes that political influence at the local government level in Zambia often undermines professional administration and equitable service provision. Civic leaders in Kabwe reported that political considerations sometimes outweighed technical planning, resulting in uneven development outcomes.

Human resource constraints were also prominent. According to the Ministry of Local Government (2021), many councils in Zambia operate with inadequate staffing levels and limited technical expertise. Kabwe Municipal Council reflected this national challenge, with respondents citing insufficient skilled personnel as a major barrier to effective implementation of decentralized functions.

The study identified several challenges affecting the implementation of decentralization reforms at Kabwe Municipal Council. Key challenges included inadequate financial resources, limited human resource capacity, political interference, and weak accountability mechanisms.

Council employees reported that responsibilities were often devolved without corresponding funding, making it difficult to execute assigned functions effectively. Civic leaders highlighted political influence in decision-making and prioritization of projects, while residents expressed concerns about delays and uneven service provision.

These findings mirror regional African studies which show that decentralization reforms often fail due to resource constraints and political capture. Public choice theory provides a useful explanation by illustrating how self-interest among political actors can undermine equitable service delivery.

## **4.7 Stakeholder Participation and Community Perceptions**

Stakeholder participation emerged as a critical factor influencing policy implementation outcomes at Kabwe Municipal Council. While some respondents acknowledged limited consultation through ward development committees and public meetings, many residents reported minimal involvement in decision-making processes.

Zambian studies emphasize that community participation is a core principle of decentralization. The **National Decentralization Policy (2013)** explicitly promotes citizen engagement as a mechanism for enhancing accountability and responsiveness. However, research by Mulenga (2018) and Zulu (2020) indicates that participatory structures in many Zambian councils remain weak or symbolic. The Kabwe findings confirm this trend, as limited participation reduced community ownership of public programs.

Where participation occurred, residents reported improved understanding of council operations and greater trust in service delivery processes. This supports empirical evidence from other Zambian councils, such as Chipata and Solwezi, where enhanced community engagement has been associated with improved accountability and service outcomes (ZIPAR, 2021).

Stakeholder participation emerged as a critical factor influencing policy implementation outcomes. Respondents indicated that community involvement in planning and feedback mechanisms remained limited. Where participation existed, residents reported better understanding and acceptance of council decisions.

Civic leaders acknowledged that public service reforms such as decentralization and CDF have contributed to improved service delivery, particularly in community infrastructure development and citizen participation. However, they noted that service delivery remains weak in areas such as road maintenance and waste management.

Global literature emphasizes participatory governance as a cornerstone of successful decentralization. Similarly, African governance studies link community engagement to improved accountability. In Kabwe, limited participation reduced ownership of reforms, contributing to mixed implementation outcomes.

## 4.8 Residents' Perception of Service Delivery

**Table 4.4: Residents' Perception of Service Delivery (n = 10)**

**TABLE 4: RESIDENT'S PERCEPTION**

Service area	Resident's perception
Waste Management	Moderate improvement
Road Maintenance	Poor
Market Management	Good
Drainage Systems	Poor
Land Administration	Average

The results show that while some improvements have been made, residents are still dissatisfied with critical services such as roads, garbage collections and drainage.

### **Waste Management**

Residents reported a moderate improvement in waste management services. While some areas have experienced more regular collection and cleaner environments, challenges such as delayed collections in certain wards remain.

This finding aligns with decentralization theory, which suggests that local authorities can respond more effectively to community needs when decision-making is devolved (Chikulo, 2013). In Zambia, improved waste management in some municipalities has been linked to increased local oversight and accountability mechanisms (UNDP Zambia, 2020).

### **Road Maintenance**

Respondents rated road maintenance services as poor. Potholes, ungraded streets, and delays in repairs were frequently mentioned, highlighting a persistent gap in infrastructure development.

Literature on Zambian local governance indicates that road maintenance is often hindered by inadequate funding and weak planning capacity at the municipal level (Ministry of Local Government, 2019). The findings suggest that decentralization alone is insufficient without adequate resources and technical capacity.

### **Market Management**

Residents indicated a good perception of market management services. This includes orderly operation of markets, collection of market fees, and maintenance of market infrastructure.

This result demonstrates that certain areas of service delivery have benefitted from decentralization reforms, particularly where clear structures, such as market committees, are in place to monitor operations (Phiri, 2018). It highlights that community participation and local oversight can enhance service delivery outcomes.

### **Drainage Systems**

Drainage system management was rated as poor by residents. Flooding, blocked drains, and inadequate maintenance were cited as major issues.

This reflects broader challenges in Zambian municipalities, where local governments struggle with insufficient funding and technical expertise for effective drainage management (World Bank, 2018). Residents' perceptions indicate that decentralization reforms have not fully addressed infrastructure weaknesses in this area.

### **Land Administration**

Land administration services received an average rating. Residents acknowledged some improvements in processes such as land allocation and registration but noted delays and bureaucratic inefficiencies.

Studies in Zambia show that local governments face challenges in land administration due to political interference and staff shortages (Mukwena, 2017). While decentralization has enabled some decision-making at the municipal level, systemic challenges remain.

Overall, residents' perceptions reveal mixed outcomes of public service reforms under decentralization at Kabwe Municipal Council. Areas such as market management and waste collection show improvement, whereas road maintenance, drainage systems, and land administration continue to face significant challenges. This thematic analysis highlights the need for targeted interventions to strengthen service delivery across all sectors.

### **Respondents' Verbatim Responses**

To complement the quantitative findings, respondents were asked open-ended questions regarding the impact of public service reforms. Selected verbatim responses are presented below.

On decentralization effectiveness, one council worker stated:

“Decentralization has helped us involve the community more, but we still struggle because funds are not enough to complete all projects.”

A civic leader explained:

“The Constituency Development Fund has improved small projects in the wards, especially classroom blocks and market shelters, but delays in disbursement affect implementation.”

A resident commented on service delivery:

“Garbage collection has improved compared to before, but some areas still go weeks without collection.”

Another resident stated:

“Roads are still a big problem. Even with reforms, we have not seen major improvement in infrastructure.”

Regarding challenges in reform implementation,

one council employee noted:

“We are understaffed in key departments. Even if policies are good, implementation becomes difficult.”

These verbatim responses confirm the quantitative findings that reforms have resulted in moderate improvements but are constrained by financial and capacity challenges.

#### **4.9. Key Findings of the Study**

Based on data collected from a total sample size of **25 respondents** comprising council employees, civic leaders, and residents of Kabwe District, the study established the following key findings:

**Moderate Effectiveness of Decentralization Reforms:** The study found that decentralization reforms at Kabwe Municipal Council have led to moderate improvements in service delivery rather than trans-formative change. Most respondents rated the effectiveness of decentralization as average, indicating partial success.

**Improved Service Delivery in Selected Areas:** There were observable improvements in specific service areas such as land allocation procedures, community engagement, and accessibility of council services. These improvements were largely attributed to administrative decentralization and closer interaction between the council and local communities.

**Persistent Financial Constraints:** A major finding was that decentralization has not been adequately supported by fiscal decentralization. The majority of respondents indicated that insufficient and delayed funding from central government significantly constrained effective policy implementation at Kabwe Municipal Council.

**Institutional Capacity Gaps:** The study revealed limited human resource capacity and technical expertise at the council level. Inadequate staffing and skills shortages reduced the council's ability to effectively implement decentralized functions.

**Political Interference in Implementation:** Political influence was identified as a critical factor affecting prioritization of projects and allocation of resources. This interference undermined professional decision-making and contributed to uneven service delivery outcomes.

**Limited Stakeholder and Community Participation:** Although decentralization promotes participatory governance, the study found that community involvement in decision-making processes remained limited. Where participation occurred, it positively influenced accountability and service delivery outcomes.

**Uneven Service Delivery Outcomes:** Despite reforms, some service areas such as road maintenance, law enforcement, and infrastructure development showed minimal improvement or deterioration, indicating implementation gaps.

**Need for Adoption of Best Practices:** Respondents acknowledged that Kabwe Municipal Council could benefit from lessons and best practices from other Zambian councils and international experiences, particularly in fiscal autonomy, transparency, and use of digital systems.

#### **4.9.1 Influence of Decentralization on Service Delivery**

The majority of respondents described decentralization as having a moderate level of effectiveness. This indicates that while decision-making authority has been partially transferred to the local level, the council's capacity to fully utilize this authority remains limited.

Evidence from the study suggests that decentralization has improved community involvement, particularly through Ward Development Committees, which allow residents to contribute to the identification of development priorities. As a result, Kabwe Municipal Council has been able to

implement ward-based projects that reflect local needs, including market structures, classroom blocks, and sanitation facilities funded through the Constituency Development Fund.

However, respondents noted that decentralization has not significantly reduced service delivery delays. Limited financial allocations and inadequate staffing continue to slow implementation, reducing the potential benefits of decentralized governance.

#### **4.9.2 Changes in Service Quality Following Reforms**

The findings indicate that service quality at Kabwe Municipal Council has experienced noticeable but limited improvement. Council workers reported that the introduction of performance management systems has improved internal accountability and clarified staff responsibilities. These changes have enhanced supervision and coordination in some departments, particularly in environmental health and market administration.

From the residents' perspective, improvements in waste management were acknowledged, although service delivery remains inconsistent across different areas of Kabwe. Some residential zones experience regular waste collection, while others continue to face irregular or delayed services. This variation highlights persistent capacity challenges within the council.

#### **4.9.3 Constraints Affecting the Implementation of Reforms**

The study identified several factors that hinder the successful implementation of public service reforms at Kabwe Municipal Council. Insufficient funding was the most frequently cited challenge, affecting the council's ability to procure equipment, maintain infrastructure, and expand service coverage.

Additionally, human resource limitations were found to negatively affect performance, particularly in technical departments. Respondents reported that existing staff are often overextended, resulting in reduced efficiency and slower response times.

The findings also revealed that political influence in administrative processes affects project prioritization and implementation. Delays in procurement procedures further weaken service delivery and contribute to negative public perceptions of the council.

#### **4.9.4 Civic Leaders' Perspectives on Reform Outcomes**

Civic leaders generally perceived public service reforms as a positive step toward improved governance, especially in terms of promoting transparency and citizen engagement. The Constituency Development Fund was identified as a key reform that has enabled wards to undertake development projects based on community needs.

Despite these gains, civic leaders expressed concern over the slow release of funds and limited technical expertise at the council level. These challenges were seen as reducing the long-term sustainability of reform outcomes and limiting the council's capacity to deliver services efficiently.

#### **4.9.5 Residents' Experiences with Council Service Delivery**

Residents' responses suggest that overall satisfaction with service delivery remains moderate. While improvements were reported in areas such as market management and public health inspections, critical services including road maintenance and drainage systems remain inadequate.

The study also found that awareness of public service reforms among residents was uneven. Some respondents demonstrated knowledge of decentralization and CDF initiatives, while others were largely uninformed. This indicates the need for improved public communication and civic awareness initiatives by Kabwe Municipal Council.

#### **4.9.6 Discussion of Findings**

This section presents qualitative findings of the study and discusses them in relation to the research objectives and existing literature on public service reforms and service delivery. The qualitative data were obtained through interviews and open-ended questionnaire responses from council employees, civic leaders, and residents of Kabwe District.

The findings of this study show that public service reforms introduced at Kabwe Municipal Council have generated gradual and uneven improvements in service delivery. Although certain reforms have strengthened local governance and citizen participation, several operational and institutional constraints continue to limit their overall effectiveness.

This supports the relevance of the top-down and bottom-up implementation theory, institutional theory, and public choice theory. The interaction between central government directives and local implementation realities reflects top-down and bottom-up dynamics. Institutional weaknesses

explain uneven implementation outcomes, while political and bureaucratic interests highlighted by public choice theory help explain persistent challenges.

### **Discussion of Findings in Relation to Study Objectives**

#### **Objective 1: To Examine the Type of Public Service Reforms Implemented at Kabwe Municipal Council**

The study established that Kabwe Municipal Council has implemented several public service reforms aimed at improving governance and service delivery. Respondents identified decentralization policies as the primary reform guiding local government operations. Participants explained that decentralization was introduced to enhance local autonomy, improve decision-making, and promote community participation in development processes.

Respondents also identified the establishment of Ward Development Committees as an important reform mechanism designed to increase citizen involvement in planning and monitoring development projects. Civic leaders emphasized that these committees serve as a link between the community and the council, enabling residents to participate in identifying priority development needs.

Additionally, the implementation of the Performance Management System was identified as a reform intended to improve employee accountability and institutional efficiency. Council employees reported that performance appraisal systems have improved monitoring of staff productivity and service delivery standards. The Constituency Development Fund was also highlighted as a reform supporting local infrastructure development and community-based projects.

These findings support literature by Smoke (2015), which suggests that decentralization reforms are introduced to strengthen local governance and improve service delivery through increased participation and accountability. Similarly, Ribot (2002) argues that local governance reforms empower communities and enhance responsiveness of local authorities to citizens' needs. The findings therefore demonstrate that Kabwe Municipal Council has adopted reform strategies aligned with national decentralization policies, although the effectiveness of these reforms varies across service sectors.

## **Objective 2: To Assess the Effect of the Reforms on the Quality and Efficiency of Service Delivery**

The study revealed mixed outcomes regarding the impact of public service reforms on the quality and efficiency of service delivery. Several respondents reported improvements in community engagement and responsiveness of council services. Civic leaders explained that Ward Development Committees have enhanced transparency and allowed communities to contribute to development planning. Residents also reported improvements in waste collection services and management of trading facilities.

Council employees noted that the Performance Management System has improved staff accountability and service monitoring, which has contributed to increased efficiency in some departments. These findings align with studies by Andrews (2013) and the World Bank (2018), which indicate that public sector reforms improve efficiency, accountability, and service responsiveness.

However, respondents expressed dissatisfaction with certain service delivery areas. Residents highlighted persistent problems in road maintenance, drainage infrastructure, and land administration services. They reported delays in project implementation and limited accessibility to council services. Council officials attributed these challenges to inadequate funding, shortage of equipment, and bureaucratic administrative procedures.

The findings therefore suggest that although public service reforms have contributed to improvements in selected service areas, they have not significantly enhanced overall service delivery quality and efficiency. This supports Grindle's (2004) argument that institutional reforms alone cannot guarantee improved service delivery without adequate resources and strong institutional capacity.

## **Objective 3: To Identify Challenges Faced During the Implementation of Reforms**

The study identified several challenges that affect effective implementation of public service reforms at Kabwe Municipal Council. The most prominent challenge reported by respondents was inadequate financial resources. Council employees explained that limited budget allocations restrict implementation of development projects and maintenance of public infrastructure.

Another challenge identified was shortage of skilled human resources. Participants indicated that the council lacks sufficient technical staff to effectively implement reform programs and manage service delivery operations. Civic leaders also highlighted political interference as a factor influencing prioritization of development projects, which sometimes results in unequal service distribution across communities.

Additionally, respondents reported delays in procurement processes as a major administrative challenge affecting project implementation. Residents expressed concern that delays in procurement reduce efficiency and public confidence in local government institutions.

These findings are consistent with Polidano (2001), who argues that public service reforms in developing countries are often hindered by institutional weaknesses, inadequate financial support, and political influence. The findings therefore confirm that implementation challenges significantly limit the effectiveness of reform initiatives and reduce their potential to improve service delivery.

### **Summary of the Discussion**

findings indicate that Kabwe Municipal Council has implemented several public service reforms aimed at improving governance and service delivery. The reforms have contributed to increased community participation, improved accountability systems, and moderate improvements in selected service delivery areas. However, persistent financial constraints, institutional weaknesses, and political challenges continue to undermine reform effectiveness.

Overall, the discussion demonstrates that decentralization as a public service reform has the potential to improve service delivery at Kabwe Municipal Council. However, the effectiveness of these reforms is constrained by systemic challenges related to financing, human resource capacity, and governance. While positive outcomes are evident in selected service areas, sustained improvements require strengthened institutional support, adequate funding, and reduced political interference as it has been shown in the existing literature which emphasizes that successful public service reforms require adequate financial support, strong institutional capacity, and stakeholder collaboration. The study further highlights the importance of strengthening community participation structures and improving administrative efficiency to enhance service delivery outcomes.

### **Service Areas Showing Limited Progress**

The findings further show that certain sectors have recorded minimal improvement despite the introduction of reforms. Road infrastructure and drainage systems remain underdeveloped in many parts of Kabwe, increasing vulnerability to flooding and environmental health risks.

Land administration was also identified as an area requiring attention. Delays and inefficiencies in land allocation processes were reported by both council workers and residents, indicating the need for system modernization and stronger regulatory enforcement.

### **Areas Requiring Improvement**

Respondents from all categories recommended improvements in:

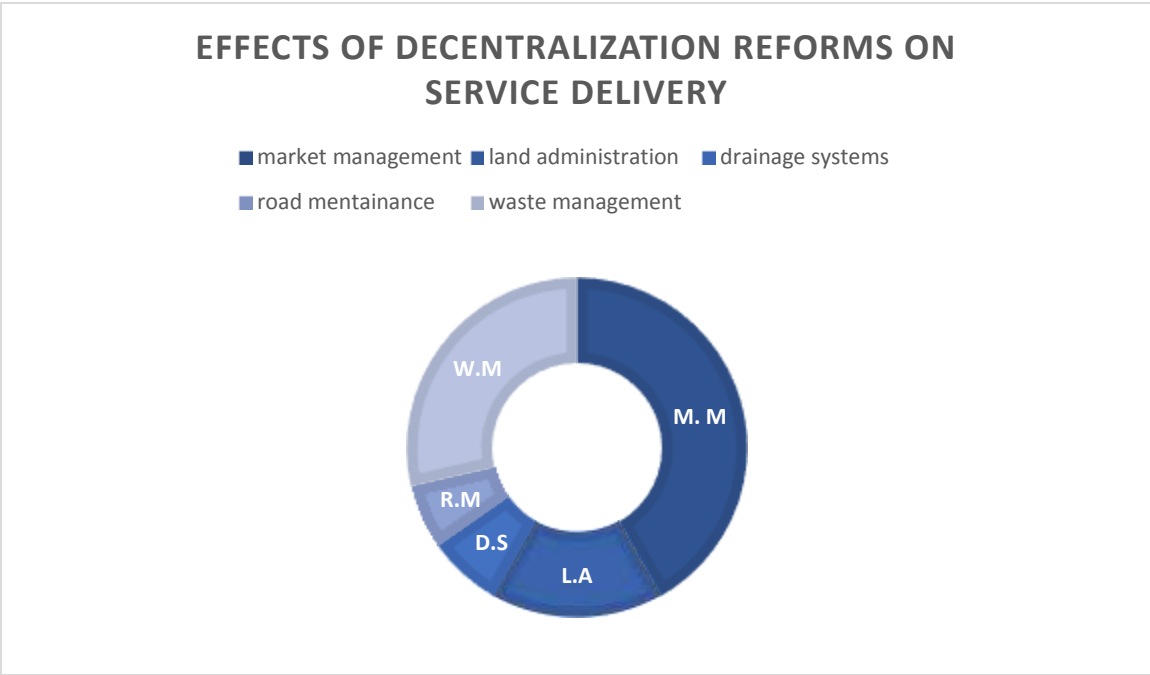
- Financial resource mobilization
- Recruitment of qualified personnel
- Strengthening law enforcement
- Improving land allocation systems
- Adoption of digital service delivery platforms

These areas were identified as critical for enhancing service delivery at Kabwe Municipal Council.

## **4.10 Summary of Findings**

In summary, the findings demonstrate that public service reforms at Kabwe Municipal Council have contributed to incremental progress rather than comprehensive transformation. Reforms such as decentralization and the Constituency Development Fund have strengthened community participation and localized development planning. However, persistent challenges related to financial capacity, staffing, governance, and infrastructure continue to constrain effective service delivery.

The study emphasizes the need for sustained investment, capacity building, and institutional strengthening to enhance the long-term impact of public service reforms in Kabwe District.



**FIGURE 2: EFFECTS OF DECENTRALIZATION REFORM**

This chapter presented and discussed the findings of the study on decentralization reforms at Kabwe Municipal Council. Using data from 25 respondents, the study established that while decentralization has contributed to improvements in certain areas of service delivery, its overall impact has been constrained by financial, institutional, and political challenges. These findings provide the basis for the conclusions and recommendations presented in the next chapter.

This chapter has presented and discussed the findings of the study on decentralization and policy implementation at Kabwe Municipal Council. The results indicate that decentralization reforms have contributed to some improvements in service delivery but have fallen short of achieving their full potential due to financial, institutional, and political challenges. The next chapter presents conclusions and recommendations based on these findings.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations of the study of effects of public service reforms on service delivery with specific reference to decentralization reforms at Kabwe Municipal Council. The study established that public service reforms have had a positive but moderate impact on service delivery at Kabwe Municipal Council. While reforms such as decentralization and CDF have enhanced local participation and development. The conclusions are drawn directly from the key findings presented in Chapter Four, while the recommendations are proposed to enhance effective policy implementation and improve service delivery at the local government level. The chapter also outlines areas for future research.

#### **5.2 Conclusions of the Study**

Based on the findings derived from a sample size of 25 respondents comprising council employees, civic leaders, and residents of Kabwe District, the study draws the following conclusions:

##### **Decentralization Has Achieved Partial Success**

The study concludes that decentralization reforms at Kabwe Municipal Council have resulted in moderate improvements in service delivery. While certain administrative functions have become more responsive to local needs, decentralization has not fully achieved its intended objectives of transforming service delivery. This indicates that decentralization in Zambia remains a work in progress rather than a completed reform.

##### **Fiscal Constraints Undermine Effective Implementation**

The study concludes that inadequate and delayed financial resources significantly limit the effectiveness of decentralization reforms. Although responsibilities have been devolved to Kabwe

Municipal Council, insufficient fiscal autonomy has constrained the council's capacity to implement public programs efficiently. This imbalance between functions and resources weakens policy implementation outcomes.

### **Institutional Capacity Is Critical to Policy Success**

The findings demonstrate that institutional capacity, particularly in terms of human resources and technical expertise, plays a decisive role in determining the success or failure of public programs. Limited staffing levels and skills shortages at Kabwe Municipal Council reduce the effectiveness of decentralized service delivery.

### **Political Interference Affects Implementation Outcomes**

The study concludes that political influence in decision-making and resource allocation negatively affects policy implementation. Political considerations often override technical planning, resulting in uneven service delivery and compromised accountability.

### **Stakeholder Participation Remains Limited**

Despite decentralization's emphasis on participatory governance, the study concludes that community and stakeholder involvement in decision-making processes at Kabwe Municipal Council remains insufficient. Limited participation reduces community ownership and weakens accountability mechanisms.

### **Service Delivery Outcomes Remain Uneven**

The study concludes that while improvements have been observed in selected areas such as land administration and community engagement, other sectors including road maintenance and law enforcement have shown minimal progress. This uneven performance reflects gaps in implementation capacity and coordination.

## **5.3 Recommendations of the Study**

Based on the above conclusions, the study makes the following recommendations:

### **5.3.1 Recommendations to Kabwe Municipal Council**

The council should strengthen internal institutional capacity through continuous training and recruitment of skilled personnel to support decentralized functions.

Kabwe Municipal Council should enhance stakeholder participation by strengthening ward development committees and promoting regular community consultations.

The council should improve transparency and accountability mechanisms, including timely reporting and monitoring of public programs.

### **5.3.2 Recommendations to the Ministry of Local Government**

The Ministry should ensure effective implementation of the National Decentralization Policy by accelerating fiscal decentralization and improving intergovernmental fiscal transfers.

Capacity-building programs should be intensified to equip local authorities with the skills required for effective policy implementation.

Clear guidelines should be developed to minimize political interference in administrative decision-making at the local government level.

### **5.3.3 Recommendations to Central Government**

Central government should increase financial support to local authorities and ensure timely disbursement of funds to enable effective implementation of decentralized functions.

Legal and institutional frameworks governing decentralization should be reviewed to strengthen local autonomy and accountability.

## **5.4 Implications of the Study**

The findings of this study have important implications for public policy and administration in Zambia. They highlight the need for a balanced approach to decentralization that combines devolution of authority with adequate resources, strong institutions, and effective governance. Policymakers should recognize that decentralization alone is insufficient without sustained political commitment and institutional support.

## **5.5 Areas for Further Research**

The study was limited to Kabwe Municipal Council and a sample size of 25 respondents. Future research could:

Conduct comparative studies across multiple local authorities in Zambia to assess variations in decentralization outcomes.

Employ quantitative methods to measure the impact of decentralization on specific service delivery indicators.

Examine the long-term effects of fiscal decentralization on local government performance.

## **5.6 Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter presented the conclusions and recommendations of the study on decentralization and policy implementation at Kabwe Municipal Council. The study concludes that while decentralization reforms have contributed to improvements in selected areas of service delivery, their overall effectiveness has been constrained by financial, institutional, and political challenges. The recommendations provided offer practical strategies for strengthening policy implementation and enhancing service delivery in Zambia's local government system.

## References

.

## References

.M, S., 2017. Evaluating the Implimentation of public sector reforms in Zambia. *African Journal of Public Administration*, pp. 45-60.

A, A. J. R., n.d. *Decentralization and Local Governance in Ghana*. s.l.:s.n.

Ayee, J. R. A., 2008. The Balance Sheet of Decentralization in Ghana. *Decentralization in Africa: The Paradox of state strength*, pp. 233-258.

Bank, W., 2017. *The Role of Accountability and Governance*, Washington, DC: World bank.

B, C., 2017. *Decentralization and local Government in Rwanda*. s.l.:s.n.

B, K., 2018. Anlysing the Governance structure of local Authorities in Zambia: case of Kabwe District.

Chikulo, B. C., 2009. Decentralization, Local Governance and Service Delivery in Zambia. *Public Adminiatration and Policy Research*, pp. 1(2), 25-34.

Council, K. M., n.d. *Kabwe Municiple Council*. [Online]

Available at: [www.Kabwecouncil.gov.zm](http://www.Kabwecouncil.gov.zm)

[Accessed 04 September 2025].

*decentralization and service delivery in Zambian local authorities: a case of Lusaka and Kabwe* (2020)  
Mphanza, C..

Evanse moses, Mubanga mpundu, 2025. The Mandate of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Deveopment: A Case of Kabwe District, Zambia. *Global Research In Education and Social Science*, pp. 19(1):1-27.

Francis, P. & J. R., 2003. Balancing rural poverty reduction and citizen participation: The contradictions Of Uganda's Decentralization Program. *World development*, pp. 31(2), 325-337.

Kaunda, H., 2021. Assesing the Performance of Zambia's Ministry of local government: Case of rural district. *Zambia Government Policy Review*, pp. 12(2), 75-88.

M, M., 2017. Public Sector Reforms in Zambia. *Zambia Review of Public Administration*, pp. 22(2), 120-134.

P.K, L., 2021. *Decentralisation and local government performance in Zambia: Challenges and Prospects*, Lusaka: UNZA Press.

Pollitt, C. & B. G., 2017. *Public Management Reforms: A Comparative Analysis Into The Age of Austerity*. 4th ed. ed. s.l.:Oxford University Press.

Resnick, D & Mwinga, N, 2017. *Decentralization, Service delivery and Local Goernnace in Zambia*. s.l.:IFPRI.

Rondinelli, D., 1981. Government Decentralization in Comparative perspective: Theory and Practice in Developing Countries.. *International Reviews of Administrative sciences*, pp. 47(2), 133-145.

Smoke, P., 2015. Rethinking Decentralization: Assessing Challenges to a Popular Public Sector Reform. *Public Administration and Development*, pp. 35(2), 97-112.

M, S., 2017. Evaluating the Implimentation of public sector reforms in Zambia. *African Journal of Public Administration*, pp. 45-60.

A, A. J. R., n.d. *Decentralization and Local Governance in Ghana*. s.l.:s.n.

Bank, W., 2017. *The Role of Accountability and Governance*, Washington, DC: World bank.

B, C., 2017. *Decentralization and local Government in Rwanda*. s.l.:s.n.

B, K., 2018. Anlysing the Governance structure of local Authorities in Zambia: case of Kabwe District.

Council, K. M., n.d. *Kabwe Munciple Council*. [Online]

Available at: [www.Kabwecouncil.gov.zm](http://www.Kabwecouncil.gov.zm)

[Accessed 04 September 2025].

*decentralization and service delivery in Zambian local authorities: a case of Lusaka and Kabwe (2020)*  
Mphanza, C..

Evanse moses, Mubanga mpundu, 2025. The Mandate of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Deveopment: A Case of Kabwe District, Zambia. *Global Research In Education and Social Science*, pp. 19(1):1-27.

Kaunda, H., 2021. Assesing the Performance of Zambia's Ministry of local government: Case of rural district. *Zambia Government Policy Review*, pp. 12(2), 75-88.

M, M., 2017. Public Sector Reforms in Zambia. *Zambia Review of Public Administration*, pp. 22(2), 120-134.

P.K, L., 2021. *Decentralisation and local government performance in Zambia: Challenges and Prospects*, Lusaka: UNZA Press.

## Appendix 1

### QUESTIONNAIRE

#### **SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITY OF LUSAKA**

To all respondents:

My name is Esther Ngosa. I am pursuing a degree in public administration at the university of Lusaka. I am conducting research on the effects of service reforms on public service delivery in Zambia.

all information collected through this questionnaire will be treated with strict confidentiality. Participant's identities will be kept anonymous and responses will be aggregated to ensure no individual can be identified. The data will be used solely for the purpose of the academic research. No personal or identifiable information will be shared or published. The research finding will be presented in a way that maintains the confidentiality of all participants to answer the questions, fill your responses in the spaces provided. For questions that have provided answers, pick your answer by crossing (x)

SECTION A:

1. Age

.....

2. choose your sex

- male
- female

3. choose your current marital status

- single
- married
- divorced
- widowed

4. what is your length of service

- less than a year
- 1-3 years
- 4-5 years
- Above 5 years

5. What is your employment level

.....

6. What is your academic qualification

- Grade 9 certificate
- Grade 12 certificate
- College certificate
- Diploma
- Degree
- Master's degree
- Ph.D.

7. What is your role/position in Kabwe municipal council or Zambia's public service

- Management
- Middle management
- Operational
- Support stuff

- Specify your role.....

SECTION B:

8. Are there any public service reforms that have been implemented in Kabwe Municipal council in recent years

- Yes
- No
- If yes, state 2

.....  
 .....

9. How effective do you think decentralization has been in improving service delivery?

- Below average
- Average
- Excellent

10. What challenges have been faced in the implementation of these forms? List 3

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

11. How would you rate the quality of services delivered by Kabwe municipal council before and after the reforms?

- Poor
- Good
- Excellent

12. Has decentralization led to any improvements in service delivery?

- Yes
- No
- If

yes

please

specify.....  
 .....

12. Are there any areas where service delivery has not improved or has worsened even with the adoptions of new reforms?

- Yes
- No
- If yes briefly elaborate

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

8. In what areas do you think public service reforms can bring improvement to enhance service delivery in Kabwe municipal council?

- Financial resource mobilization
- Hiring of personals
- Law enforcement
- Land allocation

9. Do you think there are practices or lessons learned from other councils or countries that could be applied in Kabwe Municipal Council?

- Yes
- No
- If yes give at least 2 examples

.....  
.....

Thank you