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An Evaluation of the Impact of Organisational Culture on Public Sector Organisational Performance: A Case of Local Authorities in Zimbabwe

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Approval Form
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Abstract

Local Authorities play an important role in the national development of any country as they are the vehicle for basic municipal service delivery. They are the interface of government and its citizenry at the local level meaning that local authorities represent government in action. As such, the same are expected to proffer sustainable services in the right amount and at the right time. However, the recent history of the local authority sector suggests that Councils have fallen way behind in terms of delivering on their mandate due partly to issues beyond their control such as the poorly performing national economy. The Ministry responsible for Local Government in Zimbabwe notes that the peak year where councils were optimally functional was 1996 and this is the level that has been benchmarked. In the main, it may be noted, that Councils in Zimbabwe rank among the most liquid organisations; their revenues are guaranteed in the Constitution and in some way in the relevant Acts of Parliament. As such, it is within the rights of the public to expect local authorities to offer more than they have done since the turn of the millennium.

It may be argued that the set-up of Local Authorities in Zimbabwe is not aligned to the objective of delivering optimal services to communities with the same not responding to the demands of the people as well the operating environment. To significantly alter this negative spiral of performance, it is imperative that Local Authorities deal decisively with issues surrounding organisational culture in order to focus members (councillors and employees), policies and processes towards the achievement of both local and national goals and priorities. This study reviews several literature already proffered on the subject matter in conjunction with primary research with a view to add to the body of knowledge in the area of study.
Dedication

This research is dedicated to the Glory of the Lord and for his blessings on my life. The same is also dedicated to my wife, Tendai, my family and colleagues whose invaluable contributions are forever cherished.
Acknowledgements

The Supervisor, Mr R. Chuma, for the invaluable and insightful guidance during the short space of time that we had for this research. May the good Lord bless him!

I would like to appreciate the input into this research of colleagues at both central and local government levels. Special mention also goes to colleagues working for development agencies and Non-Governmental Organisations across the board for exciting and relevant insights into the local government sector.
Declaration

I, Munashe Huragu, hereby declare that this research is my own work and has not been submitted to any University or related institution

Signed……………………………….. Date…………………………….
1.0 CHAPTER ONE: An Introduction to the Study

1.1 Introduction
This chapter focuses mainly on the background of the study clearly articulating the problems and objectives of the study, the research questions and delimitation and limitations of the study in question. In the same vein, this chapter lays out the general statement on the methodology to be used in carrying out the study. This introductory chapter sets the tone for the rest of the study as the other chapters were guided by the same.

1.2 Background to the Problem
Sound organisational performance is an aggregate result of mutually co-existing factors. Daft (2000) defines organisational performance as the entity’s capability to accomplish goals effectively and efficiently using resources. It is therefore common knowledge that for an organisation to be successful, it has to find the right mix and balance between and amongst some of the following key variables; capital and financing, core competencies, leadership and leadership style, plant and equipment, information communication technology, markets and marketing initiatives and the right products for the right markets. Important to note is that, the aforementioned factors consist of tangible and non-tangible factors wherein some can be assigned costs while some are implied in value. Culture falls into the non-tangible category hence its value cannot be readily determined in monetary terms as other investments such as in recapitalisation of plant and equipment can. When Lundy and Cowling (1996) say that culture simply represents “the way we do things around here”, they may as well be intimating on the point that culture in any organisation is priceless and cannot be attached to any monetary value terms.

According to Ehtesham et al (2004) many researchers such as Ogbonna and Harris (2000); Rousseau (1996); Kotter and Haskett (1992) among others have attempted to examine the relationship between organisational culture and performance. The fascination with the area stems from the underlying need to fully account for the performance of an entity. Within an organization, culture is the one artefact that
influences and affects every single member of the workforce, no matter their position, experience, or seniority. However, its impact on the net performance of an organisation cannot be understated vis a vis other critical organisational success factors. Dennison (1990) affirms this view when he alludes to a number of academics and management practitioners who have impressed upon the point that positive organisational performance can be attributed to how culture in an organisation is shared and inculcated among organisational members.

Organisational Culture as a concept to enhance operational efficiency has not been afforded any significant importance in Zimbabwe public institutions. It may not be a far-fetched assertion that the same particularly Local Authorities lack a critical identity that can be attached to them outside the provisions that give rise to their operations captured in the relevant pieces of legislation (Urban Councils Act Cap 29:15 and the Rural District Councils Act Cap 29:13). At its core, it is important to note that organizational culture is critical in sustaining an entity due to its ability to impact on overall financial performance and productivity. Sun (2008) states rather authoritatively that organisational culture is manifested in the typical characteristics of the organization. Critically, he contends that organisational culture should be regarded as the right way in which things are done or problems should be understood in the organization. However, Brown (1998), brings in a comprehensive definition of culture wherein he says,

“Organisational culture refers to the patterns of beliefs, values and learned ways of coping with experience that have developed during the course of an organisation’s history, and which tend to be manifested in its material arrangements and in the behaviours of its members”

Schein (1985), a prominent scholar in organisational culture, proffered a different approach to the subject in question wherein he refers organisational culture to,

“A pattern of shared basic assumptions that a group learns as it solves its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well
Johnson and Scholes (1990) attempted to intricately expose the concept of organisational culture by coming up with the cultural web model (fig 1) as a means to understand the culture of an organisation. The model represented one of the most important conceptualisation of organisational culture in the context of understanding how the same impacts on an organisation. In the diagram below (fig 1.1), the seven elements i.e stories, symbols, rituals and routines, control systems, power structures, organisational structures, the paradigm are all interlinked and as such Sun (2008) suggests that the cultural web is a useful ideal to make links with the political, symbolic and structural aspects of an organisation. The elements converge into the organisation’s melting pot thereby giving the same a persona and a nature that can be associated with both members and the organisation as a whole. Given the nature of public institutions in the Zimbabwean context, the model provides a good enough basis that is able to define the culture prevalent in the same.
Concerted research in the field of organisational performance indicates that, the achievements of an organization are only possible through the dedication and work of its employees. Bluedorn and Lundgren (1993) assert that a lack of understanding of culture in the public sector is of concern because culture is central to the attainment of strategic objectives. Critically, these strategic objectives have not been apparent to Councils in Zimbabwe. Local Authorities in Zimbabwe have been bemoaned for the lack of real service delivery to their constituents. In their defence, the same have rightfully cited other impacting factors for their poor performance such as the harsh macro-economic environment that has been prevalent since the late 1990s to date which has also seen their counterparts in the private scaling down their operations and some even closing for lack
of viability. This is despite the fact that the sector has some of the most liquid organisations in the country such as the City of Harare. The Mayor of Harare between the years 2009-2013 in his one of his press briefings (Newsday, August 29, 2013) alluded to the cash flow position of Council and the massive potential that Local Authorities possess to positively affect their performance as well significantly enhance their contribution to national economic development. It would therefore not be amiss to say that it is the culture/ identity or the lack of it in Local Authorities that is contributing to the poor performance in service delivery.

Boland and Fowler (2005) believe that public sector performance is critical for national development and at best is measurable through a number of indicators that include ‘value for money’ and ‘quality assurance. They further highlight that satisfying stakeholders is the most significant aspect in gauging the relative performance of the same given that public institutions are not into profit making like their private sector counterparts. From the above assertions, it is clear that Local Authorities in Zimbabwe do not in any way conform affirmatively to the stated performance indicators. Since the run of the millenium citizenry have generally been dissatisfied with the level of basic municipal services available to them; a fact alluded to by the Minister responsible for Local Government in his speech at the National Local Government Merit Awards of 2012 held in Bulawayo. Similarly, it is difficult to suggest that decision making by the authorities in these organisations represents the best value for money as various interventions aimed at enhancing service delivery have not yielded the desired effect. Residents have continued to subsidise poor policies and decisions by Local Authorities and this has caused serious friction with both the Government and representatives of residents. The quality aspect seems non-existent as evidenced, for example, by poor water quality in urban centres that has witnessed the birth and growth of a lucrative bottled water industry in Zimbabwe that is plaguing a perceived quality gap in the sector. Interestingly, Schweppes bottled water, a major player in this sector, writes on its branding that it is City of Harare municipal water that the same company claims is subjected to further treatment for purity.
Faced with the challenge of revitalising national economic performance, the country requires that all its economic pillars stand up and be counted. Local Authorities, as critical economic enablers through the provision of municipal services and infrastructure, must therefore rise to the challenge and deliver on their mandate as is expected by the citizenry. In countries such as Sweden, Local Authorities have taken the initiative to champion economic investment and local economic development by providing a conducive environment for economic prosperity. It is with this in mind that this study explores how Local Authorities in Zimbabwe can leverage culture as a stepping stone to enhancing organisational performance.

Generally, Zimbabwean citizens have got used to poor performance from Local Authorities as this has come to resemble the norm. This however, is not ideal as the same are expected to play a more leading role in the quest for economic transformation that have been envisaged by many national economic blueprints such as the Medium Term Plan 2009-2013 (MTP) and the more recent Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio Economic Transformation 2013-2018 (ZIM ASSET) where key focus has also been placed on improved public sector performance. The increasing impact of globalisation and the increased pace of technological advancement mean that public institutions such as Local Authorities should not lag behind in terms of satisfying their stakeholders and clientele as they may find themselves without a market to serve. It is with this in mind that the purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between organisational culture and organisational performance with emphasis on how the former influences performance.

1.3 Statement of the Problem
In spite of having access to requisite resources such as finance, human capital, equipment, external technical and financial support and legislative back-up; Local Authorities continue to disappoint stakeholders by the level of service delivery they are providing. The turn of the millenium, coinciding with the economic downturn in Zimbabwe, witnessed service levels in the country gradually going down to alarming levels to the current state. However, the need for a paradigm shift in service delivery is
pertinent as is asserted by Parker and Bradley (2006) when they contend management focus in the public sector has remained focused on bureaucratic hierarchy culture that does not allow the entity to achieve optimal performance.

Citizen dissatisfaction and discontent with the Local Authorities has continued to increase with no sign of abating. Many residents continue to voluntarily default on paying rates and service charges citing the poor range and scope of municipal services. The Government of Zimbabwe and other stakeholders have made interventions costing millions of dollars in the local Government sector through such initiatives as the Public Sector Investment Programme but with minimal transformation to service delivery standards.

Given the foregoing, it is apparent that Local Authority quantum performance is supported by a number of pillars. It therefore begs the question; what else can be done to complement other initiatives such as capital injection and recapitalisation? Organisational culture in the public sector therefore represents the gap that can be targeted to address the challenges of poor service delivery.

1.4 Research Aim and Objectives

The main aim of the study is to assess the impact of organisational culture on organisational performance.

Therefore, other objectives of the research are to;

1. Explore organisational culture residents in Local Authorities.
2. Establish whether the current poor service delivery standard by Local Authorities can be attributed to the culture prevalent in the same.
3. Establish whether culture can be targeted to improve internal cohesion thereby enhancing service delivery by Local Authorities
1.5 Research Questions

1.5.1 Major Question

What is the role of culture in organisational performance?

1.5.2 Sub-Questions

1. Is the lack of a strong culture in Local Authorities responsible for their poor service delivery performance?
2. Why have interventions to enhance service delivery not had the desired positive effect on service delivery by Local Authorities?
3. Have the afore-cited interventions been focused on the right areas to propel improvement in service delivery?

1.6 Research Propositions

1. A strong organisational culture in Local Authorities will improve organisational performance.
2. Optimum service delivery can be reached with a combination of tangible and non-tangible investment into Local Authorities.

1.7 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to provide Local Authorities with a comprehensive basis on how to leverage their performance without necessarily altering their public mandate to serve the people on a sustainable basis. It is an attempt to provide an option that has not been considered as being vital to public sector institution revitalisation and performance in Zimbabwe, that is, culture as springboard for organisation transformation particularly in Local Authorities. Lou Gerstner, former Chairman and CEO of IBM is quoted by Meehan, Gadiesh and Hori (2006), as supporting leveraging culture for performance by saying “culture isn’t just one aspect of the game, it is the game”

1.8 Justification of Research

The economic struggles of Zimbabwe can be traced to a variety of issues and among them is the poor performance of the country’s public institutions. This has resulted in the
economy failing to achieve projected growth targets which are continually revised down yearly. Similarly, Local Authorities are one of the most significant economic enablers in an economy as they provide the services that facilitate industry and commerce as well as livelihoods of all the people. Indeed, various strategies have been crafted to improve the provision of services but these have not been holistic enough to enhance the functionality of the same. Many interventions have tended to support the actual deliverables of Local Authorities such as procurement of equipment and water treatment chemicals without addressing other performance impacting variables. It is therefore the intention of this research to study the role that culture plays in the overall performance of public organisations.

1.10 **Delimitations of the Study**

The findings of this research will only be applicable to 3 Local Authorities in Zimbabwe. However, the same findings can be used as a basis to transform other players in the public sector in Zimbabwe to enhance organisational performance. The research focused on three Local Authorities namely Manyame Rural District Council, Ruwa Local Board, and Bundura Municipality. The residents of the Council area administered by the three will also form part of this research.

1.11 **Assumptions**

The researcher makes the following assumptions:

1. That the information gathered will be given sincerely, accurately and timeously.
2. That Local Authority performance in Zimbabwe is at its lowest ebb.
3. That there is no defined organisational culture in Local Authorities in Zimbabwe.
4. That Local Authorities have a big role to play in national economic transformation.
1.12 Limitations of the Study

- Time Factor
The time available to the researcher is a major limitation given that the researcher is a full time employee of Government in the local Government sector where major transformation is ongoing given the new dictates of the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 20) Act of 2013, which limits time dedicated to the research.

- Financial Constraints
The researcher is severely constrained in his movement for outreach expenses.

- Political Risk
Studies into political institutions carry a degree of risk as they may be viewed negatively by some as cheap point scoring that may have political implications.

It is envisaged that limitations of the study will be partly overcome by the general purpose of the same as well as the significant change in approach to Local Authority management in Zimbabwe that may arise thereof.

1.9 Definition of Terms

Government
Government consists of a governing body with a defined territorial authority. Governments include all departments, ministries or branches of the Government that are integral parts of the structure and are accountable to and report directly to the central authority – the legislature, Council, cabinet or executive head, The Institute of Internal Auditors (2011).
Local Authority
A Local Authority is defined in terms of the Rural District Councils Act [29: 13] and the Urban Councils Act [29:15] as a municipal Council, town Council, local board, rural district Council that oversees the administration of a defined geographical area.

Public Sector
The Collin online dictionary defines the public sector as the part of an economy that consists of state-owned institutions, including nationalized industries and services provided by Local Authorities. The Institute of Internal Auditors says the public sector consists of Governments and all publicly controlled or publicly funded agencies, enterprises, and other entities that deliver public programs, goods, or services.

Public enterprises/ institutions
The Institute of Internal Auditors (2011) says public institutions are agencies that deliver public programs, goods, or services, but operate independently of Government and often have their own sources of revenue in addition to direct public funding. The Institute also says that the same may also compete in private markets and may also make profits.

Mandate
The Oxford dictionary defines mandate as the authority to carry out a policy, regarded as given by the electorate to a party or candidate that wins an election. Mandate is also defined as a command or an authorisation given by a political electorate to its representative(s). (http://www.thefreedictionary.com/mandate accessed 17 December 2014)

Globalisation
Levvit (1983) describes globalisation as the scenario that comes about of the fact that the world is slowly converging into a common market place in which people, irrespective of where they live desire the same products with the same quality. What has emerged from globalisation is the advent of the global village which is a place divorced of borders and other visible or invisible barriers.
1.13 Chapter Conclusion

The chapter mainly focused on problem identification arising from a brief situational background backed by literature, research objectives, research questions and purpose of the study. The chapter that follows will focus on a review of related literature on the relationship between organisational culture and organisational performance.
2.0 CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

The preceding chapter covered the background to the study justifying an apparent need for such a study of the public sector in Zimbabwe particularly the local Government constituent of Councils. Chapter two will bring to the fore available literature relevant to the study in question. The primary focus of this research is to therefore to outline current literature on the subject matter – organisational culture and organisational performance.

2.1 Literature Review Defined

A literature review is an evaluative report of studies found in the literature related to your selected area, (adapted from: http://www.library.cqu.edu.au/tutorials/litreviewpages/accessed 03 January 2014). Literature review is also described as being both a summation and explanation of the current state of knowledge found in books and journal articles, (http://www.lib.uoguelph.ca/assistance/writingservices/lit_review.pdf accessed 03 January 2014). A literature review plays an important part in any research as it provides the much needed context of the research as well laying out a plausible justification of the research. Greener, Dr (2008), intimates that a literature review provides a deep and wide range critique within a particular field. Further to the above, a literature review is integral to the research process as it ensures the researchability of a topic before proper research starts, (http://www.uk.sagepub.com/upm-data/28728_LitReview : accessed 03 January 2014). In summary a literature review is a selection of available documents (both published and unpublished) on a topic which inter alia includes information, ideas, data and evidence derived from a viewpoint on matter with the express view of fulfilling certain aims and express certain views, , (http://www.uk.sagepub.com/upm-data/28728_LitReview : accessed 03 January 2014).

2.2 Culture in its Broad Sense

Culture defines who a people are. Willcoxson and Millet (2000) capture Trompenaar (1993) as alluding to the fact that in its broad sense culture is a way that can be used to differentiate groupings of people. Willcoxson and Millet (2000) emphasise that cultures
are based on historical development over time as groups build and sustain patterns of behaviour as being the norm. Trice and Beyer (1993) are also quoted intimating that cultures serve to give people a sense of belonging through a sense of collectiveness and identity thus breaking down barriers of individualism and emphasising more on the collective aspect as being the best in pursuing the ideal. Thus, culture identifies and differentiates groups by their similarities as well as the apparent differences.

In any society, culture easily portrays a people for who they are and tells a story of a history of their past experiences including seminal ideas that have moved the society forward. Trompenaar (1993) relates organizational culture as serving much of the same purpose as a “vessel” of collective memory. He intimates that organizational culture is broadly a roll-up of the experiences, observations, formative events, preferences, and lessons over time. It is critical to note that there is general agreement that in most instances, those things that do not resonate with the larger population (majority) and people in positions of persuasive and decision making authority are usually filtered out. Whatever that remains after the filtering of the undesired is then moulded into something coherent that most members can relate to (consciously and unconsciously). This coherence has its own deliberate inertia where new experiences and lessons are compared and judged according to what has come before. Essentially, culture can be summarised as a living memory.

2.2.1 Organisational Culture Defined through History.

Since the fascination with organisational culture began to be put in literature, many scholars attempted to define the term basing on unique variables that they felt constituted a complete definition of the same. House et al (2004) aggregated many of the definitions from literature as indicated below;

Author/s Definition

Kroeber & Kluckhohn(1952) Transmitted patterns of values, ideas, and other symbolic systems that shape behaviour of an organization
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>Hofstede (1980)</td>
<td>the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one organization from another. This included shared beliefs, values and practices that distinguished one organization to another.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swartz &amp; Jordon (1980)</td>
<td>Patterns of beliefs and expectations shared by members that produce norms shaping behaviour.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ouchi (1981)</td>
<td>Set of symbols, ceremonies and myths that communicate the underlying values and beliefs of the organization to its employees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin &amp; Siehl (1983)</td>
<td>Glue that holds together an organization through shared patterns of meaning. Three component systems: context or core values, forms (process of communication, e.g., jargon), strategies to reinforce content (e.g., rewards, training programs).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uttal (1983)</td>
<td>Shared values (what is important) and beliefs (how things work) that interact with an organization’s structures and control systems to produce behavioural norms (the way we do things around here).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adler (1986)</td>
<td>Refers to something that shared by all or almost all members of some social groups - something that the older members of the group try to pass on to the younger members and - something that shapes behaviour or structures of the organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denison (1990)</td>
<td>Refers to the underlying values, beliefs and principles that serve as a foundation for an organization’s management system as well as the set of management practices and behaviours that both exemplify and reinforce those basic principles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trompenaars (1993)</td>
<td>Is the way in which people solved problems. It is a shared system of meanings. It dictates what we pay attention to, how we act and what we value.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Goffee (1996) Is an outcome of how people related to one another
Schneider (1997) Shared patterns of behaviour and the meaning of that behaviour
Cameron & Quinn (1999) what is valued, the dominant leadership styles, the language success that make an organization unique
Sullivan (2001) refers to the total lifestyle of a people, including all the values, ideas, knowledge, behaviours and material objects that they share
Wood (2001) the systems of shared beliefs and values that develops within an organization or within its sub-units and that guides the behaviour of its members
Wiesner (2002) A way of looking at organizations by its shared values and behaviour
Thomas & Tung (2003) Refers to evolving set shared beliefs, values, attitudes and logical processes which provides cognitive maps for people within a given societal group to perceive, think, reason, act, react and interact
Anthon (2004) is the set of values, beliefs and understanding shared by an organization’s employees and it ranks among an organization’s most powerful component
Taylor (2004) refers to what is created from the messages that are received about how people are expected to behave in the organization
Wagner (2005) an informal, shared way of perceiving life and membership in the organization that binds members together and influences what they think about themselves and their work

Source: Adopted from: House et.al. 2004

The plethora of definitions is clearly evident that while the concept of organisational culture is widely accepted, it is still an area that researchers and authors are still to find common converging ground on basic tenants of the concept. However, it is agreed in
literature that there are some aspects that are indicative of a culture within an organisation. Schein (2004) points out that in managerial literature there is often the implication that having a culture is necessary for effective performance, and that the stronger the culture, the more effective the organization. Bellot (2011) argues that, ‘this does not necessarily mean that organisational culture is a weak or ill-defined concept, rather this divergence is indicative of a continually developing body of research.

2.3 The Concept of Organisational Culture?

Schein (2004) brings up an interesting take on the concept of culture when he intimates that, the most intriguing aspect of culture as a concept is that it points to a phenomena that may not be visible to the naked eye; that is so powerful in its impact. In that sense he says, culture is to a group what personality or character is to an individual. We can observe resultant behaviour, but more often than not none can see the underlying forces behind certain kinds of behaviour.

Schein (1985) contends that culture consists of three basic dimensions; that is assumptions, values and artefacts. Drennan (1992) brings a simplistic view on culture wherein he says, it is “how things are done around here”. Chatman and Jelia (1994) define organisational culture as “widely shared and strongly held beliefs” in an organisation. This view is strongly supported by Zammuto and Krakower (1991) who believe that the value dimension of culture is reflected in the cultural artefacts found in an entity. Many scholars are of the view that there is an invariable link between culture and change at an organisational level. Martin and Frost (1996) offer an important assertion to the subject of culture wherein they bring in the integration and differentiation perspective to culture and change. The former occurs where a set of values replace previously held organisation-wide values while the later rejects the concept of “an organisation wide consensus” instead rooting for the importance of sub cultures. Nelson and Quick (2011) further identify four functions of organisational culture;

- gives members a sense of identity,
- increases their commitment,
reinforces organisational values, and
serves as a control mechanism for shaping behaviour.

The fourth function, referred to above, entails that organisations can use culture as means to subject members to the ideals that the same envisages and it becomes clearer for members to know exactly what is expected of them in the course of carrying out their duties.

Organisational culture can also be summarised into different characteristics. Some of these were identified by Brown (1995) as being amongst the following: artefacts, language, behaviour patterns, norms of behaviour, beliefs, organisational history etc. Robbins (2005) continues with this line of thought where he asserts that the characteristics of culture are determinant of the behaviour of employees. Allaire and Firsotu (1984) also considered culture to be an outcome of a number of variables. However, while acknowledging that these characteristics do not attempt to establish a linkage between one variable and the next, Senior and Fleming (2006) agree that the same are critical in getting an understanding of an organisation’s culture.

Watson (2006) emphasises that the concept of culture originally derived from a metaphor of the organisation as ‘something cultivated’. Over time, a number of authorities in the study of organisations have suggested that the concept of culture is the climate and practices that organisations develop and manifest around their handling of people, or to the promoted values and statement of beliefs of an organisation (Schein, 2004). He further highlights that ‘the only thing of real importance that leaders do is to create and manage culture; that the unique talent of leaders is their ability to understand and work with culture; and that it is an ultimate act of leadership to destroy culture when it is viewed as dysfunctional’. Culture therefore affords organisations to foster a sense of identity and determines, through such variables as the organisation’s legends, rituals, beliefs, meanings, values, norms and language, the way in which ‘things are done around here’. An organisations’ culture reflects what the same has been good at and what has
worked in the past. More often than not these practices can be accepted without question by long-serving members of the entity.

It is generally agreed that one of the first things a new employee learns is some of the organisation’s legends. Legends can stay with an organisation and become part of the established way of doing things. They usually instil a sense of the expected into new staff. Over time the organisation will develop ‘norms’ i.e. established (normal) expected behaviour patterns within the organisation. Schein (2004) suggests that the most intriguing aspect of culture as a concept is that it directs people to matters and issues that are below the surface, that are powerful in their impact but mostly invisible and to a considerable degree unconscious. Schein (2004) makes use of an analogy where he says that culture is to a group what personality or character is to an individual. Schein (1990) adds that there are visible and invisible levels of corporate culture (the ‘culture iceberg’ analogy - the visible levels (surface manifestations) of the ‘culture iceberg’ incorporate observable symbols, ceremonies, stories, slogans, behaviours, dress and physical settings. The iceberg model is captured in diagram (fig 2.1).
2.4 Underlying Themes of Culture

Brown and Cliffe (2001) identified four themes of organizational culture;

- Culture is a learned entity where it is used as the basis of inducting new employees into the system of any organisation. This theme supports the view by Lundy and Cowlan (1996) where culture is “the way we do things around here”. Sun (2008) believes that by studying definitions of culture, management should be able to comprehend the general trend apparent in their organisations such as behaviours, attitudes and the way of thinking.

- Culture is viewed as a belief system where the same provide the context for the belief system in the day to day life of the organisation. Brown and Cliffe (2001) proffer that
guiding beliefs give direction to daily beliefs where the former rarely change since they are in the realm of the ‘universal truth’ while the later are part of the company culture manifesting on a daily basis. However, Sun (2008) believes that daily beliefs are dynamic and very situational as they respond to the context obtaining at that particular time.

- Culture is viewed as strategy - Sun (2008) relates to the point that any cultural changes should be taken to mean also strategic changes. He also states that in fairness all culture programmes take place within formal and informal strategic planning processes.

- Culture as mental programming – Sun (2008) extensively quotes Hofstede (1980) as saying culture is the “collective programming of the mind, which distinguishes the members of one category of people from another.

2.5 Models of Organisational Culture

a) Schein’s Model of Organisational Culture

One of the most popular models of organisational culture was developed by Edgar Schein (1985, 1992) (fig 2). The framework he proposed has been widely been used in literature to analyse organisational culture. Schein believes that culture needs to be looked at three basic levels;

- Artefacts – these are materialised expressions of the values and assumptions
- Espoused values
- Basic assumptions – shared by group members

Assumptions represent the taken-for-granted beliefs about reality and human nature. Values are the social principles, philosophies, goals and standards that have intrinsic value. The artefacts represent the visible often tangible results of those things hinged in the values and assumptions. He also includes as artifacts the organizational processes by which such behavior is made routine, and structural elements such as charters, formal
descriptions of how the organization works, and organization charts. Schein (1985) further argues that, it is the basic assumptions that hold the key to understanding culture. A comprehensive summation of the three levels will lead to an analysis where one can deduce an organisation’s culture. Schein (1985) proposes that the structure of organizational culture could best be thought of as consisting of different layers.

Fig 2.2 Schein’s model of organisational culture

Schein, (1999) characterizes organizational culture as consisting of three levels. The first lever, the behaviour and artifacts level represents the most visible level, which is characterized by our behaviour and artifacts around us. This observable level of culture consists of behaviour patterns and outward manifestations of culture. These cultural characteristics can be observed in the physical layout of work environments, dress
The second level the espoused values of an organization to a large extent determine behaviour Schein, (1999). Schein (2004) says that, all group learning ultimately reflects someone’s original beliefs and values, their sense of what ought to be, as distinct from what is. He says that when a group is first created or when it faces a new task, issue, or problem, the first solution proposed to deal with it reflects some individual’s own assumptions about what is right or wrong, what will work or not work. These values are not observable as our physical behaviours and artifacts. These values are the difference between stated values and operating values. For example, “this company values quality” or “we value our customers”. The operating value on the other hand is the actual manifestation of value that is truly in force. It may be intimated strongly that most people in the organization will attribute their behaviour to the stated value.

The third level of getting an understanding of culture according to Schein, (1999) involves getting the deepest level of assumptions and beliefs. The essence of culture is in the learned values, beliefs, and assumptions that become shared. Literature is awash with concern that usually over the course of time these are taken for granted as the organization continues to be successful. These components are relegated in importance as long as the members of the organization agree that these values, beliefs and assumptions of their founders and leaders led the organization to continued success, and are therefore correct.

b) Denison’s Model

Another captivating model of organisational culture was proposed by Denison (2000). The model takes from where Schein (1985) left of. At the cornerstone of the model are the beliefs and assumptions that are a reflection of the deepest levels of organisational culture. Denison (2000) states that ‘the assumptions provide the foundation from (1) more surface level cultural components such as values and observable artefacts – symbols, heroes, rituals etc - are derived; and (2) behaviour action spring” his model is based on four distinct cultural traits which he believed had a strong influence on organisational culture;
Involvement
The emphasis lay on the importance of empowering members and building around teams. Generally the level of commitment to the cause is ostensibly high as a result.

Consistency
Effectiveness of organisations are dependent on strong cultures that are highly consistent, well-coordinated and well integrated. Denison believed that consistency was a powerful source of stability in firms.

Adaptability
Denison contented that adaptable organisations are driven by customers, are not risk averse and learn from mistakes. Essentially the same are learning organisations and these stand a better chance of survival in the harsh operating environment.

Mission
Having a well-defined purpose in life is critical for any organisation as it sets future direction for the setting of organisational goals and strategic objectives that are a recipe for success.

2.6 Types of Organisational Culture
Because organisations are different, it follows that even their organisational cultures differ in manifestation, form, level and extent. It can also follow that in any organisation; there could be sub-cultures that feed to the main organisation-wide culture. Bradley and Parker (2006) propose a classification under the Competing Values Framework. The CVF is a tool that looks at the internal and external environments of an organisation juxtaposed with competing demands of the same on one hand and between control and flexibility on the other. These conflicting demands constitute the two axes of the competing values model.

Organisations with an internal focus emphasise integration, information management and communication, whereas organisations with an external focus emphasise growth, resource acquisition and interaction with the external environment. On the second
dimension of conflicting demands, organisations with a focus on control emphasise stability and cohesion while organisations with a focus on flexibility emphasise adaptability and spontaneity.

Combined, these two dimensions of competing values map out four major ‘types’ of organisational culture revealed in theoretical analyses of organisations (Zammuto, Gifford and Goodman, 1999).

(i) The internal process model involves a control/internal focus in which information management and communication are utilised in order to achieve stability and control. This model has also been referred to as a ‘hierarchical culture’ because it involves the enforcement of rules, conformity, and attention to technical matters (Denison and Spreitzer, 1991). The internal process model is reflective of bureaucratic organisations particularly resembling the system of administration and management existent in public institutions the world over where there is reliance on formal rules and procedures to exercise control over organisational activities and members, Bradley and Parker, (2001)

(ii) The open systems model involves a flexibility/external focus in which readiness and adaptability are the lifeblood of the organisation in its bid to realise growth, resource acquisition and external support. The model has also been referred to as a ‘developmental culture’ because it is associated with creative leaders with a vision that takes cognisance of the dictates of the external environment (Denison and Spreitzer, 1991). Organisations in this kind of situation display dynamism and entrepreneurial tendencies, their leaders are risk-takers, while rewards are linked to individual initiative, Bradley and Parker (2001).

(iii) The human relations model involves a flexibility/internal focus in which training and the broader development of human resources are utilised to achieve cohesion and employee morale. This model of organisational culture has also been referred to as ‘group culture’. It is associated with trust and participation through teamwork. Members of the organisation are incorporated intrinsically into the affairs of the organisation. Managers in organisations of this type seek to encourage and mentor
employees on the expectations and duties to the overall good of the enterprise, Bradley and Parker, (2001).

(iv) The rational goal model involves a control/external focus in which planning and goal setting are utilised to achieve productivity and efficiency. This model of organisational culture is referred to as a rational culture because of its emphasis on outcomes and goal fulfilment, Denison and Spreitzer, (1991). Organisations of this type are production oriented, and managers organise employees in the pursuit of designated goals and objectives, and rewards are linked to outcomes, Bradley and Parker (2001).

As a result of these competing demands constitute the two axes of the competing values model as depicted in the diagram (fig 3) below.

Fig 2.3 Competing Values Model

Adapted from Bradley and Parker (2001)

2.7 Theoretical Underpinnings of the Study - Organisational learning and Organisational Learning Theory

This research is underpinned by the organisational learning theory where modern organisations have to keep on adapting to the ever changing operating environment
characterised by the dictates of globalisation, capital deficiencies and increased stakeholder and regulator interest in the affairs of organisations. Notions of organizational learning gained prominence in the nineteen fifties when they were thrown into an ongoing debate between behaviourists and economists. Economic models of the firm had become dominant during and after WWII, yet many researchers, especially those with a behaviourist orientation, were dissatisfied with those models. Behaviourists such as March and Simon (1958) attacked the classical economic theory of the firm on the grounds that its models were overly simplistic and contradicted empirical evidence.

In their book “Organizations” March and Simon (1958) refuted the claim of economic models that organizational decision outcomes are uniquely determined by environmental constraints. March and Simon (1958) amassed an impressive set of arguments which suggest that organizational behaviour depends in important ways on organizational processes which introduce unpredictability into organizational decision making. They evoked (among others) several organizational learning ideas to support their claim, and pioneered a number of themes.

The core learning-related idea is that organizations experience recurrent decision situations, and, in response, develop “performance programs” – highly complex and organized sets of responses. March and Simon (1958) argued that the main occasion for program adaptation arises from sub-standard performance – when performance declines below aspiration levels. Yet, the levels referred to depended on a number of things, including past performance and performance of reference groups. The outcome is that program adaptation is a result of random encounters with improvement opportunities. The focus on organizational learning was sharpened in the Behavioural Theory of the Firm (Cyert and March, 1963). The firm was now conceived as a complex, adaptive system – a system that, due to its internal complexity, was able to display considerable autonomy because it could produce outcomes not uniquely determined by external constraints.
Organizational learning was captured in a “learning cycle” in which organizations responded to external shocks by adjusting the likelihood of reusing specific operating procedures. On a more abstract level, Cyert and March (1963) envisioned a *multi-level hierarchy* of procedures which would accomplish organizational adaptation.

At this point, organizational learning theory conveyed a creative tension between two images of adaptation. On the one hand, learning could be seen as a rational organizational trait, compatible with assumptions of economic theories. In this view, learning processes were rational from the perspective of the organization – they were directed toward performance improvement, and, in the long run, could result in an improved match between organizational arrangements and environmental constraints. On the other hand, learning could be seen as contributing to non-rational. In this view, adaptation processes were regarded as complex and slow and sensitive to small variations in organizational parameters – characteristics more compatible with notions of limited rationality (Simon, 1955), or even absence of rationality. Each notion continued to play an important role in subsequent work on organizational learning, sometimes as premise, sometimes as a possibility worth exploring, and sometimes as a thesis to be tested. Strong support for the limited-rational adaptation perspective emerged with the introduction of the concept of “ambiguity”. March and Olsen, 1975 noted that the rational adaptation inherent in learning models, including Cyert and March’s (1963) learning cycle, is probably unrealistic.

Levinthal and March (1981) introduced a comprehensive, thoroughly formalized learning model which incorporated learning under ambiguity. The model focused on search for new technologies. Ambiguity entered the model at two places; first, the effect of an adopted technology on performance was seen as uncertain. Second, adopted technologies were seen as evolving – they could improve or decay over time. By varying the levels of uncertainty the authors could explore its effects in the model. Simulations of the model revealed that

(i) Returns from search depend on the time horizon.
(ii) In ambiguous environments, identical organizations will learn to specialize on a search strategy.

(iii) Organizational trajectories were characterized by intense path dependence.

(iv) Fast learners would adapt quickly to correct signals but they would also adapt quickly to false signals. Conversely, slow learners would not as easily be confused by false signals, but they were also slow to respond to correct signals.

It is widely accepted in the discourse of the learning organisation that in order for an organisation to survive it needs to learn quicker its conditions and environment. Dixon (1994) says that this concept can be captured in the following inequality;

\[ L \geq C, \text{ where } L=\text{Learning and } C=\text{Conditions.} \]

This research has been housed to lean towards the learning organisation as a precursor to sustained organisational success under the belief that continuous change in the operating environment requires organisations to adapt to the same. While culture is an essential component in describing the relative state of an organisation, it has to be noted that it is not static and is dynamic and hence there is need for public institutions to be constantly on the look out for the changes that the environment imposes on them.

For this research, it is assumed that an organisation that manages to renew and recycle itself certainly manages to produce results that can be sustained through any economic environment. Glynn, Lant, & Milliken, (1994) contend that organizational learning occurs in a complete context which includes the organization and the external environment. The environmental aspect includes elements outside the boundaries of the organization such as competitors, clients and Government. Given the highly volatile nature of the Zimbabwean economy since the year 2000, it becomes critical for Local Authorities to become learning organisations so that they are able to respond accordingly in any situation. A dynamic organisational culture would allow the Local Authority to position and reposition itself when required in order to deliver on its mandate as expected by stakeholders particularly the ratepayers. The diagrammatic presentation below
attempts to represent the interconnectedness and interlinkages between the three variables in the overall performance of a Local Authority.

Fig 2.4 Diagrammatical Presentation of the Theoretical Framework for Study

2.8 Does Culture relate to Organisational Performance?

A strong culture is a business imperative. It enables organisations to operate at relatively lower costs, perform better, and hence grow more quickly, Nancheria, A. (2009). In short, the existence of a strong sustainable culture is one of the prerequisites of organisational performance. Peters and Waterman (1982) are convinced that organisational culture is the prime determinant of organisational performance. This view is strongly complemented by the works of Deal and Kennedy (1982), where they argued that culture, rather than structure or politics, is the prime mover in organisations impacting on overall performance. The rise of Japanese companies in the 1970s and 1980s is credited with the
relook into the role of culture in leveraging company success. However, Burnes (2009) writes that one can draw a conclusion that a review of culture, though having important implications for organisational performance, there is little agreement about the nature of culture and whether there are any benefits in trying to address the same. He believes that there are other more influential factors that are determinant of organisational performance such as markets and capital. However, Burnes’(2000) assertion tends to mirror the arguments around the subject amongst academics. There is indeed an acknowledgement that culture plays a critical role in the life of an organisation but to what extent can entities target culture as one of the precursors to transformation to a desired state remains unanswered.

In considering public sector performance improvement, there are two important issues which need to be addressed;

(i) what is to be measured, and
(ii) how should the information arising from the measurement process be used?

Neither question is easy to answer, although substantial effort has been applied in attempting to do so, particularly in the case of the former. It is common practice in public sector performance management literature to talk about the three Es of:

(i) economy;
(ii) efficiency; and
(iii) effectiveness,

based upon a simple input, process and output model of organisations (Flynn, 1997; Rouse, 1999; Carter et al., 1995). Input resources are generally thought of as physical, human (staff and clients/cases) and financial. Proponents of knowledge management and associated concepts such as ``the learning organisation" would also include informational in this list. Financial inputs are in essence the most important as acquisition of other resource types usually depends upon the funds available. Many measures commonly used in public sector organisations are based on derivatives of this ``economy" or input oriented perspective, usually expressed in terms of cost, budget and staffing totals. Comparisons can then be made across similar types of organisations.
Examples of generic measures used include cost per case, cost per service type, numbers and categories of staff involved. These can then translate into specific measures such as cost per patient, staff-student ratios, unit cost per refuse collection, numbers of employed ancillary, skilled and professional employees, and so on depending on the service rendered in a local authority. Any change in these performance measures simply reflects the "economy" with which the organisation is using its resources and provides little information about the operational processes within the organisation, apart from some rough benchmarking.

Kotter (2012) strongly thinks that organisational culture has the potential to leverage organisational performance. He goes on to further intuit that such a strong culture brings with it ‘a sense of certainty’ to problem solving in and amongst organisational members. However Sorenson (2002) is of the view that the relationship between the many attributes of culture and ultimate organisational performance are not as apparent over time. Support for this view is evident from Kopelman, Brief and Guzzo (1990) who strongly feel that evidence gathered from studies on the matter point to the fact that the results of this relationship are of a mixed bag nature thus proving inconclusive in affirmatively stating a position. Similar to Nelson and Quick (2011), Bulach, Luneburg and Potter (2012) attempted to categorise the effect of organisational culture on two specific areas; employee behaviour and performance, wherein four where identified as follows;

(i) knowing culture of an organisation allows members to understand and comprehend both the organisation’s history and current methods of operation. This is critical in creating a system that can be easily be understood and be taken as a guiding framework for employee behaviour.

(ii) organisational culture can foster a sense of commitment amongst members to the cause as well as its philosophy and values. This can be seen in employees’ improved moral and commitment to the organisational cause.

(iii) organisational culture serving as control mechanism toward desired behavioural outcomes

(iv) different type of cultures may be directly related to better quantum employee performance.
2.9 Managing Culture in Organisations

The burning question that has to be answered is, Can culture be managed? Boyne (2003) suggests a link between organisational culture change and public service improvement. Because culture can be dynamic in nature, it is therefore imperative that one has to understand culture and culture types has an impact on the way reforms or improvements to same will be received in an organisation. Pettigrew et al, (2003) believe that managing culture requires one to thoroughly consider a number of factors i.e. the creation of a conducive climate, top leadership drive - coherent and cohesive, requiring an articulate and precise vision from the top, discrepant action to increase tension among others. However, Hatch (1997), is of the opinion that it may not be entirely possible to manage culture per se but to manage those factors that have a bearing on the organisation’s culture. Writers on the subject do not agree whether it is possible to manage culture but there is an agreement that issues that impact on culture can be managed to certain degree in order to come up with a culture so envisaged by leadership of an organisation. Willcoxson and Millet (2000) believe that in the course of managing culture, it is necessary to identify the attributes of the existing or new target culture i.e the myths, assumptions, values etc that underpin that culture. They further advise that any action taken as a result can only be implemented taking into account the key points that are identified.

Hatch (1997), suggests that it is important to manage with cultural awareness rather than to directly manage the culture. The implications being that to manage culture with its varying aspects may prove difficult but is critical for managers to be aware of the cultural traits that are apparent in their organisations. Legge (1995) attempted to use a metaphor of ‘riding a wave’ to explain managing culture wherein she deposes that the best surfer rider only needs to understand and comprehend weather conditions to calculate the risk and possibility of a successful wave ride.
2.9.1 Case Study - Queensland Public Sector Agencies

Bradley and Parker (2001) conducted a study into public institutions in Queensland Australia where the focus of their research included examining both the extent to which managers’ views on culture reflect the principles of the new public management and the desires of lower level employees, and how they fit within the new public sector management context. Their research intended to explore the rationale that managers’ perceptions of ideal organisational culture would be different to the bureaucratic model of culture (internally oriented), which has traditionally been associated with public sector organisations. Responses to a competing values culture inventory were received from 925 public sector employees. The findings of the study indicated that the bureaucratic model is still prevalent in the public management discourse but public managers had preference to a culture that was more external, and less control focussed.

Bradley and Parker (2006) felt that lower level employees expressed a desire for a culture that emphasised human relations values. The study found that Queensland public sector agencies have a predominant culture that reflects a focus on rules and regulations, with little flexibility. O’Farrell (2006) notes that Bradley and Parker (2001) placed a considerable emphasis on: the role of leaders in influencing culture in terms of how they react to crises; what the leaders pay attention to; how resources are allocated; and also that the criteria by which people are selected, promoted and assessed may have a significant influence on culture. O’Farrell (2006) when he reviewed the study recommended that leaders in the public sector should contemplate asking two questions; What are the words your staff would use to describe the culture in the organisation or team you are responsible for? Do you think the description is consistent with your own diagnosis? These questions were meant to assist public managers and policy makers to evaluate and review their agencies’ performance in relation to their mandate.
2.10 Organisational Culture and Public Institutions

Bradley and Parker (2006) contend that for a long time public organisations have revealed a common set of characteristics. These include systems of rationale rules, structural hierarchies, and formalised decision making processes among other characteristics. This rings true for the Zimbabwe’s parastatals and other quasi Government institutions. Further to the aforementioned assertion, they argue that public institutions are known to be subject to political rather than market controls. Dahl and Lindblom in Bradley and Parker (2006) support this view by stressing that these institutions are constrained by political authority and political activities. Could this view explain the nature of the performance of public organisations particularly in the Zimbabwe context where performance is usually linked to political authority Bradley and Parker (2006) are of the view that public institutions have “traditionally under-emphasised developmental and rational aspects of organisational culture because there is little focus on adaptability and risk taking”. These have tended to negatively affect progress towards outcomes such as productivity and efficiency. Literature suggests that traditional organisational cultures in the public sector are likely to impede public service modernisation unless they themselves are changed to become aligned with the modern role of Government as an engine of economic growth.

Christensen et al (2007) reveal that one of the common characteristics of organisational culture in public institutions concerns the informal norms and values that determine the balance between loyalty and neutrality in the relationship between the political leadership and the administrative apparatus. An underlying norm here is that non-elected public administration staff must at all times be loyal to the political leadership in power but simultaneously maintain a neutral attitude. They also noted that too much loyalty creates difficulties when the political leadership changes. Individuals in a public organization will have a certain amount of freedom to choose between different identities and rules. Although this will presumably weaken their chances of influencing common cultural norms, they themselves will still be influenced by such norms. More importantly, Christensen et al (2007) add that administrative culture must strike a balance loyalty and
professional norms, meaning that a civil servant must be politically loyal to the political leadership but simultaneously make decisions based on a solid professional foundation. At the same time, too much emphasis on one’s own professional field may lead to an undesired management by professionals. Also noted is that public managers must strike a workable balance between premises of professional value and premises of fact, meaning that they must take into account professional values that would have evolved over time. Other common features of organizational culture, they contend, in public organizations may be procedural conditions, such as due process, predictability, equal treatment, transparency and information.

### 2.11 Managing Performance

Jones et al., (2000) are in agreement when they contend that today's ever-changing workplace and the impact of globalised economy, development of organisational performance is associated with the development personal performance, skills, knowledge and experience. Cascio (2006), links performance to the degree of achievement of goals of the organisation while Richardo (2001), similarly implies that achieving organisational goals is the same as organisational performance. Performance management is an approach aimed at delivering sustained success to organisations by improving the performance of the people who work in them and by developing the capabilities of teams and individual contributors, (Armstrong and Baron 1998). This view is strongly supported by Reynolds and Albett (1998) who indicate that it is not the capital per se that gives organisations the edge in the markets they compete in but the people (human capital) working in them. Given the above assertion, it is therefore imperative that the focus on transforming organisational effectiveness and efficiency in any sector for that matter is directed to the people who drive organisational activities. Competitive capacity of organisations can be increased by building strong people and effectively managing and developing them.

Power (2000), contend that the increased attention to performance assessment in the public sector coincided with the rise of administrative reform. While Hood, (1994) says
that in the 1980s, economic decline and increased international competition triggered such reform in many countries. The rise of the *New Public Management* could also be credited to this period. The objective of the paradigm shift was twofold; to cut budgets and to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Government bureaucracy.

To achieve the latter objective, market-type mechanisms such as privatization, competitive tendering, and vouchers were introduced in the public sector, and departmental units were bundled into quasi-Government institutions. What emerged during this period was the assertion that politicians should stick to their core business, which is, developing new policies to realize (political) goals. Osborne and Gaebler (1992) had a catchphrase that summarised this notion where they said “steering not rowing.” The duo emphasised that policy implementation should be left to the market or, and if that was not possible, to semi-autonomous organizations operating in a quasi-market environment.

This separation of policy and administration is facilitated through contracts being drawn up between the Government and the organization that implements the policy. The contracts articulate which task has to be carried out and what the executive agent will receive as a “reward.” The agent’s performance is expressed in terms of performance indicators, such as the number of goods or services rendered. Input management is thus replaced by a results-based orientation. This is the type of change in the management of public organisations that is being instituted in Zimbabwe as part of public sector performance reform. All Local Authorities are now required to convert their management to the Results Based Management principle. The adoption of a large number of private sector techniques to measure and improve performance, such as performance indicators is central to this objective. Not only do indicators enable politicians to measure and evaluate the performance of public and private policy-implementing organizations, they also increase the opportunities to account for performance.
2.12 Role of the Public Sector in the Economy

The World Bank Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) reported that that public sector being the largest spender and employer in the developing world, is a significant player in any economy, (http://web.worldbank.org/ WBSITE/EXTERNAL/ EXTOED/ EXTPUBSECREF/ accessed 17 December 2013 ). They contend that the same sets the policy environment for the rest of the economy. Essentially public sector organisations play a key role in creating markets and competition with private sector players. Kane (2004) states that public sector involvement in the economy will not always be successful but is important due to concerns over the following; information market failures, spill overs, social impacts, sunk investment and political pressure. It is evident that the public sector’s role in the markets or economy is more than that of a supplier of goods and services but encompasses other critical national considerations that are concerned with the wellbeing of the state. Public sector organisations are differentiated in comparison with their commercial counterparts in the private sector. There is no profit maximising focus, little potential for income generation and, generally speaking, no bottom line against which performance can ultimately be measured. The vast majority of public sector organisations still generate most of their income from the State, and have to account to several stakeholders. Consequently it was once, and not that recently, considered impossible to measure performance in the public sector.

In his foreword to the World Bank’s ‘Reforming Public Institutions and Strengthening Governance’ Kemal Davies acknowledged the critical importance of a well performing public sector in national economies. He, in the same vein, further acknowledged that transforming the same is ‘complex and difficult’. Parker and Bradley (2006) affirm to this view when they say that reforming the public sector in Australia has been ongoing since the early 1980s. The duo believe that the persona of such organisations as well as the mandate that is placed upon them by their principals makes the process of change or managing change quite a difficult job to effectively complete within a set timeframe. Public-sector involvement in economic development, while not always successful, often stems from legitimate concerns about the following:
a) Information market failures – The regional economy will benefit to the extent that the public sector can improve the flow of information in a regional economy in a cost-effective manner. Free market theory assumes that buyers and sellers have perfect information about all elements of production, employment, and consumption decisions. The usually is not true. Adequate information may be lacking in the case of investors searching for opportunity, businesses looking for markets and niches in the environment.

b) Spillovers – Self-interested buyers and sellers fail to take into account the spillover effects that result in larger costs or benefits for a community or region. Consequently, the market will produce too much when buyers and sellers overlook negative spillovers, such as pollution caused by the production process, and too little when they overlook positive spillovers, such as the overall gain for an area. Negative spillovers justify some Government interventions, such as environmental regulation. In the case of positive spillovers, they create a market for public goods and services, such as water and sewer reticulation systems. For the positive spillovers, private-sector market signals would miss the broader, national benefits from these goods and services if buy-and-sell decisions were left solely to self-interested actors.

c) Sunk investment – If public infrastructure or private resources are left idle, an area misses out on the economic potential of its sunken investment. Economic growth depends upon how a region puts its productive capacity to use. The regional economy can benefit from public-sector efforts to deploy resources for productive use; where for example new growth occur at locations in a city where businesses can take advantage of existing but underutilised infrastructure that will reduce expenditure on new infrastructure development.

d) Social impacts – Improvements in the well-being of specific people and places may be particularly important for low-income, low-skilled residents who are less likely to move from declining areas to growing ones.
e) Political pressure – Serious concerns about the state of a region’s economy will lead to public-sector economic development efforts, good or bad. Economic stagnation or decline prompts demands from voters for economic development initiatives. Even in regions with good economies, there might be concerted efforts to change the status quo in order to prop up public sector involvement in economic growth.

2.13 Conclusion

The chapter explored literature surrounding the study in terms of organisational culture and its underpinnings on organisational performance. The chapter attempted to magnify the role of organisational culture in organisational life and try to deduce whether solutions for the public sector could be drawn out from the available data. Basing on the available literature, yes there has been research toward highlighting the essence of organisational culture. However, a decision could not be ascertained to answer the problem under review in this research to explain impact of culture on Local Authority performance. The chapter that follows- research methodology- will outline the research design and the methods that will be used in extricating answers to the problem at hand.
3.0 CHAPTER 3: Research Methodology

The preceding chapter was an attempt to extensively review literature on the topic under study. This chapter focuses on the research methodology that was used with emphasis on the research design, sampling methods and data collection procedures and also the way data was collected and analysed. Collis and Hussey (2009) emphasised on the importance of appropriate selection of research methods as they help in moulding the quality of research findings.

3.1 Research Design

According to Burns and Grove (2003) research design is a blueprint that allows for total control over all other variables that may affect the validity of the research findings. Zikmund (2000) supports this view when he says that a research design serves as a master plan that clearly specifies the methods and procedures for collecting and analysing the required information. This research is an attempt to establish the impact of organisational culture on Local Authority performance in Zimbabwe. It is important to note that a research adopts either a qualitative or quantitative approach.

Critical to note is that there are three types of research designs;

Exploratory research embodies one or more objectives in its quest for knowledge; mainly to develop insights that will assist in defining the situation confronting the researcher. Similarly, this type of research is undertaken when very little is known about the subject area with very little research taken place prior. The rationale is to unravel ideas or issues that can be used to buttress future research in a particular area. Critical to note is that this research is not about defining the problem of non-performance by Local Authorities and indeed the public sector as the same is widely known in Zimbabwe. This therefore rules out this type of research design for the purposes of this study.
Causal research: Zikmund (2000) states that causal research is used to collect data that facilitates decision makers determine the cause effect relationship between two or more variables. Principally, causal research design explores the effect that one thing has on another. This type of research is appropriate where there is an absolute need to understand the relationship between two variables. Critical to the research is the testing of hypotheses about cause and effect. With this in mind, this type of research design does not fit with this particular research

Descriptive research attempts to give a picture of a situation as it occurs, Burns and Grove (2003). In some instances it is used to justify current practice and make judgment and also to develop theories. It involves observing and describing the behavior of a particular subject without necessarily influencing its state or function, Blaike (2010). In essence it is important to note that, as alluded to by Glass & Hopkins, (1984) descriptive research involves gathering data that describe events and then organizes, tabulates, depicts, and describes the data collection. The underlying objective is to bring out an accurate picture of a population, institution or phenomena and not measure the effect of a variable.

To this end, the research employed the descriptive research design approach due to a number of reasons which include; the subject is not controlled or influenced in any shape or form but seeks to describe the phenomena as it is. This is paramount in the attempt to explain the poor performance being experienced by public sector organisations in Zimbabwe.

3.2 Research Strategy

More often than not qualitative research follows an deductive process. Generally, there are two approaches to reasoning which may result in the acquisition of new knowledge; the inductive – which starts with observation of specific instances and seeks to infer generalisations; the deductive – which starts from generalisations and apply the same to specific situations, Hyde (2000). Research strategy is a plan defining the main study goals to be achieved as well as the measure to reach those goals, while observing the
research paradigm. The researcher needs to understand the research philosophy, as it involves the assumptions about the way the researcher views the subject matter (Buchanan and Bryman, 2009). These perceived assumptions will fortify choice of research strategy and methods. Keeping in view of the current research paradigm and methods of the current study which favours a descriptive research it requires the researcher to find existing or past phenomena on public sector organisational performance in Zimbabwe. This research employed the inductive approach. As Hyde (2000) puts it, the aim of inductive research is to describe social characteristics and the nature of regularities in social life and can introduce models at the data analysis stage where they represent patterns in the data in a simplified form.

3.3 Sampling Approach

3.3.1 Population

Hair et al (2008), defines population is an identifiable group of elements of interest to the researcher. Khan (1993) says a population is a group of individuals that have one or more characteristics in common that are of interest to the researcher. Taking into account that Zimbabwe has 92 Local Authorities which are superintended by Government which is decentralised to sub national structures, provinces and districts and that the country has a population of over 12 million people with a vested interest in Local Authorities, the researcher took the sampling approach in order to manage the process accordingly. Since the sample had to be representative of the population to afford generalisation of the findings, a sampling plan was designed.

3.3.2 Sampling Plan

A sample is a sub-set of the population, Fox (1994). Greener (2008) says that sampling is a practical way of studying people and activities, thoughts, attitudes etc. in relation to business. The sampling plan can either be a probability or non-probability. It is important to note non probability limits the generalisability of findings and is difficult to measure sampling error. Given the foregoing, the probability approach was therefore used to avoid the shortcomings that arise from using the non-probability approach.
3.3.3 Sampling techniques

Fox (1994) asserts that a sample is a portion of the population selected by some clearly defined procedures or a set of respondents selected from a larger population. The sample thus is taken to represent the entire population in order to gain data and insights on the matter under study.

3.4 Sampling Procedures – Probability and Non-Probability Sampling

There are two sampling procedures that a researcher can utilise; probability and non-probability. Kumar (1996) defines probability sampling as an approach in which each element has a known chance of being selected. Probability sampling consists of stratified, systematic and random sampling. It relies on statistical theories of probability with the underlying question, ‘What are the chances’? Ross (1992) says that this type of sampling uses carefully defined procedures which are designed to ensure that each member of the target population has a known non-zero chance of being selected into the sample. As such, the approach allows one to generalise the results from the sample to the whole population. Similarly, Newman and Benz (1998) define non-probability sampling as an approach in which observations are carefully selected on the basis of judgment, convenience, quota and snow ball samples.

Since in probability sampling every unit in the target population has a known chance of being selected, it meant that all stated segments had a chance of being interviewed through the questionnaire. The study took on the stratified sampling method in which the population was divided basing on the socio status of the target population; Government officials, Local Authority officials, the private sector and the general citizenry in Manyame, Ruwa and Bindura. The rationale for this approach was motivated by the fact that the country is vast and cosmopolitan and is too large to be analysed hence it was apparent that stratifying the population in question would yield representative results.
3.5 Data Collection Plan

3.5.1 Cross Sectional Survey

Saunders et al (2009) contend that a cross sectional survey takes on board the measuring of a phenomena at a point in time. It represents an affordable way to collect data particularly under conditions where time and budget resources are severely limited. The cross sectional survey was used through a self-administered questionnaire since information is gathered all at once. The advantages for using this approach mainly center on the applicability and the broad coverage that can be achieved for an extensive study of this nature.

3.5.2 Longitudinal survey

Under this approach behaviour of a phenomenon is captured throughout all its phases, Saunders et al (1997). The difficulty of using this approach lies in the fact that the area under study cannot be easily compressed and is a highly volatile sector depending on the political environment prevailing at the time of the study. Zimbabwe has witnessed a surge in interest by the public in the operations of public utilities given the controversies that the same have been embroiled in.

The survey approach was selected as it is easier to manage on a tight budget, score and code for data analysis purposes. It also provides a credible and objective way of studying and comparing responses of varying groups of people to facilitate generalisation to the entire population.

3.6 Types of Data

3.6.1 Secondary Data

Hair, Jr, Banin, Money, and Samouel (2003) described secondary data as records previously collected for other research purposes. This may however, address issues of the current research study. However, secondary data has its own shortfalls as Hair, Banin, Money, and Samouel, (2003) noted that secondary data seldom fit the purpose at hand
and there is difficulty in quality assessment of the data. Hence for the purpose of this study the researcher mainly utilised primary data to qualify the secondary data on organisational performance. Caution should always be used when using secondary data; hence it is advisable for researchers to check the validity and reliability of the collected data. Use of non-academic, unfamiliar and unknown data sources, is not advisable. Secondary data was used only to validate the trends in performance from Local Authority reports, budgets, systems audits and Council and committee minutes.

3.6.2 Primary Data
According to Collis and Hussey (2009) primary data is information collected from original source through questionnaires, interviews or focus groups for the purpose of completing a current research project. This means the researcher involves himself in devising the data collection method, turning data into knowledge, analysis of data and data interpretation (Hair, Jr, Banin, Money, and Samouel, 2003).

3.7 Data Collection Instruments

3.7.1 Interviews
A number of sources can be used to collect data and these include interviews depending on the best and most convenient source for the researcher. Kvale (1996) regards interviews as a face to face interaction between two people or more on a topic of mutual interest. Although structured interviews are regarded as the best way to gather information.

Interviewing varies in terms of structure and in the latitude the interviewee has in to questions. Patton (2002) categorises interviews into three general forms: the informal, conversational interview; the general interview guide approach; and the standardized, open-ended interview. Interviews typically are much more like conversations than formal events with predetermined response categories. The researcher asks a few general topics to help uncover the participant’s views on the subject matter but otherwise respects how the participant frames and structures the responses. This method is based on an
assumption fundamental to qualitative research: The participant’s perspective on the phenomenon of interest should unfold as the participant views it, not as the researcher views it. A degree of systematization in questioning may be necessary in, for example, a multisite case study or when many participants are interviewed, or at the analysis and interpretation stage when the researcher is testing findings in more focused and structured questioning. The most important aspect of the interviewer’s approach is relaying the attitude that the participant’s views are valuable and useful. The interviewer’s success will depend on how well he has anticipated and practiced his role in ethical issues.

An interview yields data in quantity quickly. When more than one person participates (focus group interviews), the process takes in a wider variety of information than if there were fewer participants—the familiar trade-off between breadth and depth. Immediate follow-up and clarification are possible. Combined with observation, interviews allow the researcher to understand the meanings that everyday activities hold for people.

They also have their drawbacks in terms administrative efficacy for the researcher. Interviews involve personal interaction; cooperation is essential. Interviewees may be unwilling or may be uncomfortable sharing all that the interviewer hopes to explore, or they may be unaware of recurring patterns in their lives. The interviewer may not ask questions that evoke long narratives from participants because of a lack of expertise or familiarity with the local language or because of a lack of skill. For this reason, the researcher decided against using interviews as a research instrument for this study. White (2002) supports the researcher’s disregard for their use by stating that interviews are time consuming, and consideration has to be made on the length of interview, travelling time and transcription of notes or tapes.

3.7.2 Observation

Observations can be one of the least obstructive research instruments, according to Edwards (2001) along with interviews they are the most common used methods of qualitative research. According to O’Hara, et al. (2011) observations are a very important source of data collection in ethnography, action research and phenomenology, however to
get the best of results they are often combined with other methods for data comparison purposes (O’Leary, 2004).

Participant observation demands first hand involvement in the social world chosen for study. Immersion in the setting permits the researcher to hear, to see, and to begin to experience reality as the participants do. Ideally, the researcher spends a considerable amount of time in the setting, learning about daily life there. This immersion offers the researcher the opportunity to learn directly from his own experience. Personal reflections are integral to the emerging analysis of a cultural group, because they provide the researcher with new vantage points and with opportunities to make the strange familiar and the familiar strange Glesne (1999).

However one of the drawbacks and the reason the researcher did not use observation as a data collection method for this study is one highlighted by O’Hara, et al. (2011), the impact of the observer’s biases, cultural connotations and general beliefs on the research target.

3.7.3 Questionnaires
The questionnaire was used extensively to collect data for the purposes of this research. According to Brown (2001), questionnaires are any written instrument that present participants with a sequence of questions or accounts to which they are to react either by choosing among the existing answers or writing their own. Oppenheim (1992) opines that questionnaires are any data collection instruments encompassing checklists, attitude scales, projective techniques etc. It is the most convenient and widely used data collection instrument as large amounts of data can be collected from a large population in a short period of time and relatively less costly than the others. The results using this method are collected easily and quickly quantified and used to compare and contrast with previous research done on the subject.
Advantages of questionnaires

The main advantages of questionnaires are:

- they are relatively easy to analyse
- they are familiar to library staff and managers
- a large sample of the given population can be contacted at relatively low cost;
- they are simple to administer;
- the format is familiar to most respondents;
- they should be simple and quick for the respondent to complete
- information is collected in a standardised way
- they are usually straightforward to analyse
- they can be used for sensitive topics which users may feel uncomfortable speaking to an interviewer about
- Respondents have time to think about their answers; they are not usually required to reply immediately.

Disadvantages of questionnaires

The main disadvantages of questionnaires are:

- if you forget to ask a question, you cannot usually go back to respondents, especially if they are anonymous
- it is sometimes difficult to obtain a sufficient number of responses, especially from postal questionnaires
- those who have an interest in the subject may be more likely to respond, skewing the sample
- respondents may ignore certain questions
- questionnaires may appear impersonal
questions may be incorrectly completed

- they are not suitable to investigate long, complex issues

- respondents may misunderstand questions because of poor design and ambiguous language

- questionnaires are unsuitable for some kinds of respondents, e.g. visually impaired students

- there is the danger of questionnaire fatigue if surveys are carried out too frequently

- they may require follow up research to investigate issues in greater depth and identify ways to solve problems highlighted

The advent of cyber communication channels has made administration of the questionnaires manageable as some were distributed via email particularly to Local Authority officials and Government officials. In touching base with the citizenry, a few were distributed over the internet while a sizeable number were personally administered.

3.8 Data Analysis

According to Thomas (2003) there is a wide range of academic literature that documents the fundamental expectations and processes associated with analysis of qualitative and quantitative data. Strauss and Corbin (1990) noted that many are associates with specific approaches such as grounded theory, discourse analysis Potter and Wetherall (1994) and narrative analysis, (Leiblich, 1998). However the researcher choose to use the ‘generic inductive approach’, as highlighted by Ezzy (2002) and Silverman (2000) it is not labelled within one specific tradition of qualitative approaches. The purpose and justification for using the above approach in this analysis as supported by Thomas (2003) was in line with the aim and objective of this research as there was need to condense varied raw data into summary format. Tables and graphs will be utilised to clearly show depiction and summarise the views gathered from the questionnaires Clear links between the research objective and the summary were derived from the raw data gathered. The research questions were answered through the analysed collected data from multiple reading and survey findings. Based on the information obtained in literature review the
researcher managed to distinguish between importance of information based on the dominance of themes and findings in secondary data.

3.9 Conclusion

The chapter focused on the research methodology with emphasis on the research design, methods and data collection instruments. The study adopted the descriptive approach in its design where probability sampling was employed to gather data through self-administered questionnaires. Chapter four will focus on data presentation and analysis.
CHAPTER 4: Data Presentation and Analysis

4.1 Introduction
This chapter will dwell much on data presentation and analysis. Graphical presentations in the form of charts, graphs and tables were utilized to give a much clearer view of trends and perceptions. The researcher read and analysed all data, identified and defined all key categories. Most of the general categories of this chapter were derived from the research questions, while some specifics were derived from trends in secondary and primary data collected. The researcher is certain these key categories will be able to provide answers to the research questions while providing new information on the subject matter of which future studies could be based on. All statistical analyses and descriptive statistics for the study were carried out using SPSS and computed.

4.2 Response Rate
According to David (2003), in research a sample of 30 is considered statistically significant if it is representative of the population. David (2003) insists that a research sample of 30 individuals will always be representative of the entire population if the research is carried out in an appropriate and structured manner.

A total of 90 questionnaires were distributed equally to residents in, Bindura, Ruwa and Manyame (Beatrice). Of the total number of 90 questionnaires administered to participants in the form of interviews, 59 were returned constituting 65% response rate from the total sample. Those distributed to the Ministry responsible for Local Government were distributed equally at both the district and provincial level for the areas concerned. It is important to note that the Ministry plays supervisory role from the the centres with the district level reporting directly to the province who in turn report to head office in Harare. The table below shows the province and district that each Local Authority under study fall under;
Fig 4.1: Table showing District and Province for each Local Authority

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Authority</th>
<th>District Name</th>
<th>Province</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manyame RDC</td>
<td>Seke</td>
<td>Mashonaland East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bindura Municipality</td>
<td>Bindura</td>
<td>Mashonaland Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruwa Local Board</td>
<td>Goromonzi</td>
<td>Harare Metropolitan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The nature of the research required that the views of all stakeholders in local Government issues needed to be heard in order to come up with a balanced analysis. In each district area of study each sector/stakeholder identified had 10 questionnaires distributed as follows;

Fig 4.2: Distribution table showing retention of questionnaires to the researcher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Min of Local Government officials</th>
<th>Local Authority officials</th>
<th>Residents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Distributed</td>
<td>Returned</td>
<td>Distributed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manyame RDC</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bindura Municipal</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruwa Local Board</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 4.3 Bar graph depicting age variations of the sample

Figure 4.3 above reveal that out of the total 59 people who completed the questionnaires 32.56% were in the age range of 21-30; 37.21% were in the age range of 31-40; 16.28% in the age range of 41-50 and 13.95% in the age range of 51 years and above. Critically, the questionnaires managed to capture basically all the age groups as envisaged by the researcher. The majority of respondents among the citizenry were those in the age group of 31-40 followed by 21-30, then 41-50 and last the 51 and older age group. Interestingly, the trend displayed in the graphs above revealed that interest in the affairs of public institutions, which are mainly funded by taxpayer’s money, waned as people got older as evidenced by the 15% response rate of the 51 years and above age group. It could also be
explained that the demographics of the sample target reflected that the majority of the populace are found in the 21-40 years age groups. This age group, which falls in the economically active section, given the economic conditions in Zimbabwe is severely affected by the poor performance of Local Authorities.

Figure 4.4 Pie Chart depicting distribution of respondents according to sex

The responses received from the distributed questionnaires revealed that 51.6% of the respondents were male while the remainder of 48.84% were females. The results proved to be more or less reflective of statistical data of both the 2002 and 2012 Zimbabwe national census surveys where at least 51% of the population were females. It could therefore be that interest in the performance of Local Authorities in matters of service delivery transcends gender connotations and stereotypes. It could be also be explained in the context of the continued impact and spread of the global village concept even in the previously tradition intensive societies in rural Zimbabwe that women have now a greater say in the provision of basic services that affect their livelihoods.
4.3 Culture as a Social Construct

Fig 4.5: Pie chart indicating percentage view of culture as a social construct

In any community setting, a way of life for the inhabitants is easily deducible and can be taken to represent ‘the way we do things around here’. Similarly, while trying to gauge an understanding of culture among the respondents, it was apparent that culture as concept was viewed as a social construct that evolves over a long period of time in a community. It becomes normal for certain attributes to be associated with that group of people or community. These attributes could be surmised to be reflective or to represent a culture of a community. It was evident from the responses that there were some attributes and persona that could be attached to a people or a company to represent the way they do business. For example, courtesy and respect were two attributes that came out strongly from the respondents, 62%, and were felt as being essential. Without these and other attributes, one could not be described to be fully conforming to societal expectations. As a result, it can easily be determined that a person could be classified as an outcast even in his home area by not conforming to a certain criterion of behaviour. Similarly, this could be transmitted to organisations operating within the sample area. It was apparent that Local Authorities in these areas were expected to mirror their societies in general as they were part and parcel of the socio-economic fabric of the communities which they served.
In that regard, it is deducible that the same were expected to serve and protect those interests and attributes of their respective societies.

4.4 Identifying Contemporary Organisational Culture in Local Authorities

Who brings an organisational culture to a Local Authority? Is it the political leaders in office or Council management? An analysis of the data revealed that it is a difficult exercise to identify any typology or form of culture to associate with any of the Local Authorities under study. It was difficult for the respondents to clearly articulate whether a Council displayed any cultural traits in the way they conducted their business. However, there were some norms that manifested themselves during data collection;

- **Performance Culture** – there was a frustration amongst the respondents that Local Authority officials could not be held to account for the performance of their portfolio. In the event of poor performance there was no recourse action that could be sought against the same as all were on open ended ‘life time’ contracts. While performance culture embedded in the sample Local Authorities was not linked to any value system, employee perspective or collaborative underpinnings in terms of enhancing service delivery. The Local Authorities were solely burdened with the duty of providing all the facets of basic municipal services yet the same could be sub contracted to third parties at mutually beneficial terms and conditions. This lack of appreciation of the contemporary dynamics of service delivery came out strongly as an area of concern amongst the respondents in the face of the hefty perks that were more often than not punctuated with lucrative performance bonuses. Respondents, particularly the residents, felt that there was an unjust mismatch between the reward system in Councils and performance output. It was simply a culture of rewarding mediocrity and incompetence that characterised Local Authorities that irked the ratepayers.

- **Lack of Timeliness** – Timeliness in service delivery was a major borne of contention with respondents in as far as delivering what was needed at the right time. The Government was not happy with the way Local Authorities dealt with matters of
efficiency in terms of deliverables such as water, roads; grass cutting etc. This was buttressed by the numerous calls made by The Minister responsible for local Government in his speeches for Councils to diligently pursue value for money the service delivery agenda on behalf of Government. For residents it was a reason for them to withhold paying their rates and charges to the Local Authorities concerned. Their argument centred on the point that, for instance, they were fetching most of their water requirements from boreholes and therefore did not see value in paying for the little water that ran out of their taps.

- **‘We know it all culture’** – The data revealed that there was little to no consultation of the stakeholders by the Local Authorities in as far as the needs of the communities resident in the sample areas were concerned. Respondents were not aware of the strategic plans of their Local Authorities and neither were they shared to stimulate community involvement in the achievement of the strategic goals. These strategic plans such as budgets were only found at the Ministry of Local Government offices for statutory obligations only and were not made available to stakeholders. It can be argued that there was a deliberate attempt by Council officials not to disclose to stakeholders the strategic direction of their entities. In short, there was little room for the consultation and participation of stakeholders in the affairs of the Local Authority affording Council officials unfettered powers to decide on behalf of residents pertinent service delivery issues. To this end, it was evident that the consumer/customer/resident who is a direct beneficiary and taxpayer in the Council area was not considered important in the operations of a Council.

- **Performance Measurement** – it was felt that there was no basis or parameters that were used within Local Authorities to measure performance. Only recently, as at November 2013, has there been an attempt to introduce a performance measurement regime in Local Authorities under the Integrated Results Based Management (IRBM) principle adopted by the Government of Zimbabwe in 2005 to guide operations of all public institutions in Zimbabwe. That nine after the adoption of the IRBM principle, only 17 have embraced the concept out of 92 Councils is evident of a resistance to transform to results oriented mode for Local Authorities. There exists a fear of being
measured for results to define and measure competency on the part of the executive. A close analysis of the performance contracts (entered between the Chief Executive Officer/ Town Clerk/ Town Secretary and Council Chairperson/ Mayor) of the three Local Authorities submitted to the Ministry revealed that the contracts did not provide for action in the event that agreed targets were not met.

Additionally, it was clear that indeed there was no solid understanding or comprehension, on the part of the accounting officers concerned, of the concept of performance management and how the same affected the overall performance of their organisations. This assertion from the secondary data was supported by views raised by respondents who felt that there was indeed a lack of accountability in terms of senior officers’ performance. The executive functionaries were not trying to take responsibility for the performance of the organisations under their command. In fact, analysis of secondary data revealed that at one point or the other some of the accounting officers have faced revolt from the Councillors who have tried to oust them on various issues. The volatile nature of the local Government sector for professionals could explain the fear to take responsibility for the general strategic direction on the part of the chief executive officers.

- **Quality Function** – Quality is a buzz word that is used as a differentiation factor in gaining competitive advantage in any industry and commerce. From that perspective, Local Authorities neither considered nor infused quality in their operations. An analysis of reports, systems audits and minutes submitted to the Ministry responsible for Local Government revealed that Local Authorities were primarily concerned with addressing demand rather providing the requisite service. The fact that lucrative industries, such as the mineral water industry, have been born out of the deficiencies in meeting the residents’ demands was testament to the capacity gap that could be plagued to bridge the service delivery question.
4.5 Measuring and Transforming Organisational Culture

Given the ambiguity around defining organisational culture, it is hard to effectively measure culture from the responses obtained from the questionnaires. Taras et al (2009) contend that “by quantifying values, assumptions or practices along four to eight cultural dimensions or factors,” with individual models varying depending on the author’s area of expertise. Whilst they highlight that the superiority of the self-reporting questionnaire approach remains controversial, they acknowledge that, ‘because alternative methods such as observation or experiment are more resource demanding, the self-report questionnaire remains the most popular method of quantifying culture.’ Further to that, Taras et al (2009) acknowledge that there are very real practical challenges when measuring culture, and argue that ‘a single model cannot comprise all aspects of such a highly complex, multidimensional and multi-layered phenomenon’. But what is particularly evident from the results is that as Pellegrin et al (2011) assert culture is simply a collection of behaviour and can therefore be changed.

4.6 Importance of Culture in Local Authorities

An analysis of the results obtained, respondents were sceptical of the role or rationale of prioritising organisational culture as a forerunner to optimal performance by Local Authorities. None of the respondents, in answering on what could be done to improve service delivery, mentioned culture as a prerequisite. This revealed that people in Zimbabwe are not necessarily concerned by the inputs into a process but by the final product delivered to the people. It is a mindset that was evident in the responses obtained as issues such as capital, the national economy, human capital deficiencies, corruption were mentioned as requiring active attention in order to prop up service delivery by Councils. Critically, this is identified by Bluedorn and Lundgren (1993) when they exclaim that the lack of an understanding of organisational culture in the public sector is a serious concern as the same is critical toward the achievement of strategic objectives. It was therefore important to note that the determinants of a highly performing Local Authority were vast and varying in context. Culture, yes, was considered as an ingredient
by the respondents but could not be isolated with certainty as a major factor towards sustainable service delivery.

4.6 General Assertions on Local Authority Performance

Fig 4.9 Graph showing views on Local Authority performance

![Graph showing views on Local Authority performance](image)

Given that the research occurred during a period where national attention had been focused on public sector organisations’ performance, it was not surprising that the majority of the respondents were not entirely happy with the way Local Authorities were carrying out their mandate. As could be expected, residents (17/25) were particularly scathing in their attack on performance of their Councils citing a variety of reasons from misplaced priorities and a lack of understanding of the mandate of a public institution. Their dissatisfaction stems from poor services in the manner of water supply, roads and housing delivery. From the Local Authority sphere it was a case of defending their territory and the level of their performance. Local Authority officials cited a number of issues including a poorly performing national economy, excessive Government intervention in their affairs, an example being the slashing of all debts owed to the same in June 2013 for a period dating back to 2009, the general attrition of plant and equipment and an emerging culture amongst ratepayers of not paying rates and user
charges. Peters (1998) tends to support the assertions by Local Authority officials by claiming that the outcomes in terms of quality of service delivery resulting from a greater client focus are unclear in the public sector. The views on the performance of Local Authorities, it has to be said, are a product of a number of issues given the political nature of the same but crucially respondents cited tangible factors and service delivery indicators as reference for their responses.

4.7 Uncoordinated Government Interventions in service delivery

Some respondents particularly from Local Authorities and the Ministry were not overly impressed by the way Government intervened in Local Authority processes. Some of these interventions were blamed to fuel the culture of non-performance as they merely blanketed the failure of internal management systems to cope with challenges bedevilling Councils. The Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP) allocated in 2013 funds of over US$7 million to a number of Local Authorities for infrastructural development in water and sewer reticulation but the same have not had the desired results. What was telling from the data sifted through was that none of the disbursements were needs based. Some Local Authorities ended up being allocated more than once targeted funding for projects that had already achieved their project objectives. Monitoring and evaluation exercises carried out by the Ministry revealed that in most instances excess project monies were misused to procure executive perks such as luxury vehicles disguised as project and service delivery instruments. It was worth noting that for the year 2013, none of the Local Authorities have been made account for every cent of public monies expended allocated by Government for service delivery. Yet the underlying objective of Government interventions in Local Authorities is to prop up service delivery by its delegated institutions.

Importantly, the lack of an operating framework and synergies among and between Government departments and agencies in Local Authority areas was an area of concern raised by players in the sector. An analysis of secondary data revealed complaints and concerns of the need for greater coordination between Government agencies so as to enhance service delivery by Local Authorities. A case in point refers to the coordination
between the Ministries of Local Government and Finance over the allocation of PSIP funds wherein the Ministry of Local Government has raised concern with its counterpart of the selection criterion of beneficiary Local Authorities. Indeed, while interventions from the Ministry of Finance have in the short term addressed service delivery deficiencies the same have only addresses the symptoms and not the underlying problems that have hindered Local Authorities from effectively delivering on their mandate. Government interventions were therefore not seen to make major differences to the way things were done at Council level as long as bureaucratic hierarchy culture remained unchanged. The interventions merely served to sustain what was essentially an unsustainable culture in local authorities.

4.8 Conclusion
This chapter sought to analyse and interpret data gathered from the questionnaires which will form the basis for making recommendations and conclusions in the next chapter. The data was presented in the form of descriptive statistics, graphs and pie charts.
5.0 CHAPTER 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter focused much on analysis of the data gathered through secondary data as well as the questionnaire survey. Chapter 5 will therefore, present the research findings; come up with conclusions and recommendations based on the research.

5.2 The essence of the research

This study was carried out to assess the impact of organisational culture on Local Authority performance in Zimbabwe. The population for this study was thus divided into three categories; Government officials, Local Authority officials and residents in the sample Local Authorities (Manyame, Ruwa, Bindura). The study sought to find solutions to the following objectives:

1. Explore organisational culture in Local Authorities.
2. Establish whether the current poor service delivery standard by Local Authorities can be attributed to the culture prevalent in the same.
3. Establish whether culture can be targeted to improve internal cohesion thereby enhancing service delivery by Local Authorities.

5.3 Summary of research findings

The major findings from this study are:

1. There is no organisational culture that can be associated with Local Authorities in Zimbabwe.
2. Culture is a social construct and the same reflects in any organisation. It is the operating environment (country/community) that shapes the way organisations and individuals behave.
3. Culture is dynamic and can be changed to suit the environment. It was apparent that during the course of time, values and norms do not remain static but rather transform to also conform to societal underpinnings or expectations as well as regulatory, national policy and legal provisions.
4. The role of organisational culture is not given prominence in the operations of Local Authorities. It is a concept that is not well understood and its value disregarded for organisational success.

5. There is a direct link between culture and the overall performance of Local Authorities. While Local Authorities may not appreciate the value of culture, the norms that were evident revealed a culture that was not geared to achieve optimal performance as they inculcated lethargy in their approach to business.

6. There is need to link the reward system in Local Authorities to organisational performance. There were no performance evaluation techniques applied to support and justify the reward systems employed.

7. There is need to measure performance of Local Authority officials to enhance organisational performance. Performance management as a key management function was not given prominence in Local Authorities.

8. Government interventions have not necessarily enhanced service delivery but have merely sustained the status quo in Local Authorities

In a nutshell, the findings revealed that there was a pressing need to address the organisational culture in Local Authorities if the same are to play the role that is encapsulated in legislation as well as national policies.

5.4 Conclusions

The research focused on the impact of publicity on national branding and it can be deduced from the analysis that:

1. Local Authority performance is indeed a quantum aggregate of factors both tangible and non tangible variables. It is thus imperative that all these factors are given equal measure in attention in order to significantly revitalise and transform service delivery standards in Zimbabwe.

2. A strong performing Local Authority sector can be the catalyst for economic development both at the local and central levels. Local Authorities play an enabling
role through the provision of key infrastructure in the manner of roads, water and housing among others.

3. For the Zimbabwean economy to revitalise, there is an urgent need for a strong Local Authority sector across the country.

4. In a dynamic contemporary global environment, culture can be targeted as a means to achieve optimal service delivery. The world has changed to become one global village and that Local Authorities need to learn and adapt to the dictates of the new world order. The research found that despite culture being a product of socialisation it can be transformed. A weak culture is recipe for failure.

5. While one cannot put monetary value to organisational culture, it is an important element of organisational life in that it knits the various facets of an organisation to foster a sense of belonging among staff in a Local Authority. Prioritising the building of a strong culture in a Local Authorities in Zimbabwe can be the first step in reengineering the local Government sector.

6. Stakeholder participation in Local Authority affairs can improve the level of mistrust that exists between Local Authorities and their constituency.

5.5 Recommendations
After a careful scrutiny of the findings and conclusions, the researcher makes the following recommendations:
1. That management of Local Authorities seriously consider culture as a key determinant of organisational performance
2. That Integrated Results Based Management (IRBM) is introduced with speed in its entirety to Local Authorities
3. That each Local Authority establishes a compliance department to monitor organisational activities.
4. That the Ministry responsible for Local Government establishes a compliance department to effectively play its monitoring and supervisory role in Local Authorities
5. Legislation regulating Local Authorities is revisited to further empower Local Authorities to fully play their enabler role in their areas of jurisdiction
6. That a policy framework is established by Government to guide interactions and interventions in the Local Authority sector by Government department and agencies

5.6 Concluding Remarks
Indeed, organisational culture is phenomenon that has attracted a lot of attention from researchers since the early 1950s where a fascination with the concept struck the early writers of literature on the subject. It is worth noting that organisations that have manifested strong cultures in their operations have tended to gain comparative advantages in the market place. Likewise, Local Authorities have a chance to strengthen their position as the utmost service delivery in the country by giving due recognition to culture as a key determinant of sustainable performance. It is the researcher view that this researcher may be used as further basis for research on the subject matter.
References
5. Boland and Fowler (2005) A Systems Perspective of Performance Management in Public Sector Organisations, School of Management, University of Newcastle
My name is Munashe Huragu. I am a student at Bindura University of Science and Education studying for a Masters’ Degree in Business Leadership. As a requirement of the Programme, students are expected to carry out a dissertation in the last semester of their studies. My topic is as follows;


I therefore kindly, request you to answer the questions on the subject matter as part of my data collection plan.

SECTION A

Personal details – please tick the correct side to indicate your response.

1. Sex: Female…….. Male…………..

2. Age: Below 21-30….. 31-40 …… 41-50…….. 51 and above……

3. Marital Status: Single… Married …… Divorced……

Widowed…….. Others………… (Indicate as appropriate)

4. Highest educational qualification: Grade 7 …… O’Level……..

A’Level…….. Tertiary……..
5. Employment: Civil servant……. Farmer ……. Domestic worker……. Other (s) ____________________________

6. Are you a ratepayer   Yes……. No…….

Section B
1. What do you understand by the term culture?

2. In your view, does culture have any role in the overall performance of any organisation?

3. What attributes of culture do you think are important?

4. In your opinion, do you think public managers in Zimbabwe, particularly in local authorities, attach any importance or value to organisational culture in their organisations?
5. Can you give reasons for your answer?

6. What attributes does your local authority show in the way it operates?

7. In your view, can culture be used to leverage local authority performance in the same way that capital and human resources can?

8. What do you make of the performance of your local authority?

9. In your view, what can you attribute this performance to?
10. Do you think Government has done enough to promote a culture of performance in local authorities? What do you think should be done?

11. What role do you think local authorities play in local and national development? Are they playing this role?

12. What do you think needs to be done to improve the performance of public institutions, particularly local authorities in Zimbabwe?
My name is Munashe Huragu. I am a student at Bindura University of Science and Education studying for a Masters’ Degree in Business Leadership. As a requirement of the Programme, students are expected to carry out a dissertation in the last semester of their studies. My topic is as follows;

**An Evaluation of the Impact of Organisational Culture on Public Sector Organisation Performance in Zimbabwe. The Case of Local Authorities in Zimbabwe post 2000.**

I therefore kindly, request you to answer the few questions on the subject matter as part of my data collection plan.

13. Are you satisfied with the performance of your local Council, and why?

   Yes ............ No.............

14. What do you understand by the term culture?

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15. What role do you think culture plays in an organisation such as a Council?

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16. In your view, does your council exhibit any traits of culture in the way they do business?
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17. If yes, How?
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18. If no, why do you say so?
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19. In general, what do you make of the performance of councils in Zimbabwe?
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20. In your view, what can you attribute this performance to?
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21. What do you think needs to be done to improve the general level of performance for public institutions in Zimbabwe?
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Note: Please tick where appropriate and offer explanations where also required