

**INFLUENCE OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION PRACTICES ON  
RURAL DISTRICT COUNCILS' PROJECT PERFORMANCE. A CASE OF  
BUBI DISTRICT COUNCIL PROJECT IN ZIMBABWE.**

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**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the  
Award of Master of Arts in Monitoring and Evaluation Degree in the Business  
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**DECLARATION**

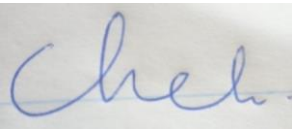
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### **DEDICATION**

I dedicated this work to my family and friends for supporting me throughout this long journey. I also dedicate this work to the communities of Bubi District Council for sharing with me their insights on project performance.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to express my earnest appreciation to my project supervisor, Dr. Charles Weda for professional guidance and persistent encouragement. I would also like to thank Dr Wanjiru for her guidance, encouragement and technical inputs. Thank Mr. Andrew Mdluli for the support with data collection. Mr Bruce Kubheka and Professor. C. G. Mthunzi, thank you for proof reading this document.

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## ABSTRACT

In 1915, the Government of Zimbabwe developed a Monitoring and Evaluation policy that stipulated, among other things, that all Rural District Councils should adopt result based management strategies that have Monitoring and Evaluation practices engrained in them. Despite this policy directive, the influence of these practices on project performance are unknown. This study looked at the influence of the M&E key practices of accountability, results measurement, pause, and reflect on Rural District Councils' projects performance in Zimbabwe. The study was primarily premised on two theories namely, change management theory focusing on unfreezing, changing and refreezing approaches supported by the theory of change approach (TOC). Bubi Rural District was the case study. The quantitative study design adopted Kobo Collect mobile data software for data collection. Key informant interviews and focus group discussions adopted for collecting qualitative data for triangulation. The target population comprised the employees of Bubi Rural District Council, elected councillors, residents and the Council Chief Executive Officer. Data analysis carried out using the Structural Equation Modelling. The results of the study indicated that employees in Rural District Councils appreciate and know the value of pause and reflect practice in monitoring and evaluation but the practice not implemented. Bubi Rural District Council promotes accountability practices such as allowing communities to voice their concerns on the quality of the projects as reflected by a standardized path coefficient with an absolute value of 0.96. However, this is limited by budget restrictions and limited resources available for community involvement activities. The study also showed that Bubi Rural District Council has no mechanism for measuring the progress and success of the Council projects (standardized path direct effect coefficient of 0.012). The key recommendations were that the Rural District Councils should implement the M&E practices to improve project performance. Rural District Council should train teams to plan, coordinate and implement M&E practices to rectify the current situation where there is no team and budget to coordinate these practices. There is a need for further studies to corroborate the findings as this study focused on the Bubi Rural District council only.

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Accountability:** Operationally defined as the obligation to open up project implementation and management to the scrutiny of the stakeholders through allowing stakeholders an opportunity to air their views to enhance project performance.

**Adaptation:** For the purpose of the study, this is a process of intentionally utilising feedback from monitoring and evaluation practices to make project modifications in pursuit of promoting project performance.

**Collaborative Learning:** Operationally defined as setting out time to learn together with stakeholders to identify what works well and what needs to change in order to achieve desired project performance.

**Consultation:** Operationally defined as the process of ensuring that communities are aware of, understand and agree with key decisions meant to enhance project performance.

**Data processing:** Operationally defined as a continuous process of collecting and analyzing information to establish project performance.

**Evaluation:** For the purpose of this study, evaluation is the systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project and programmes to determine whether the intended outcomes/performance have been realised.

**Feedback and Complaints handling:** In order for stakeholders to air their voices in project implementation and performance, there should be predictable complaints and feedback handling mechanisms.

**Indicator Framework:** For the purpose of the study, this is a summary document containing core indicators to measure project performance.

**Information provision:** Operationally defined as the process of ensuring that relevant programme information is available and intentionally provided to stakeholders in a timely manner in order for them to participate in project management.

**Monitoring:** This is a continuous or routine process of collecting data to establish whether project implementation is on course and likely to meet the desired project performance.

**Project Schedule:** For the purpose of the study, this is the allocated timeline for project implementation and well-implemented projects operate within schedule.

**Project:** Operationally define as a planned and budgeted endeavour that has a defined beginning and an end meant to deliver certain outcomes to the targeted community.

**Target Setting:** For the purpose of the study, this is a specific, planned level of a result achieved within a specific timeframe with a given level of resources.

**Theory of Change:** Operationally define as a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is likely to happen in a particular context. It looks at how independent variables are likely to affect the dependent variables to achieve desired project performance.

**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>CIDP</b>	County Integrated Development Plan
<b>CIMES</b>	County Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation System
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>MfDR</b>	Management for Development Results
<b>MIS</b>	Management Information System
<b>NEPF</b>	National Evaluation Planning Framework
<b>NIMES</b>	National Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation System
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>RBM</b>	Results Based Monitoring
<b>RDC</b>	Rural District Council
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>TOC</b>	Theory of Change
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

### **1.1. Introduction**

In the past few decades, monitoring and evaluation have become a defining global feature in almost all organisations including community, government and nongovernmental organisations. Multiple global organisations now perceive monitoring and evaluation as a requisite tool for the improvement of project design, development and implementation. In essence, therefore, monitoring and evaluation has become the epitome of sound project management viewed as being deeply anchored on the assumed assurance of pause and reflect practice, accountability and results measurement practices. Effective monitoring and evaluation systems considered crucial prerequisite for the fulfilment of organisational strategies (Molapo, 2019). However, despite this seeming acceptance of monitoring and evaluation as a pre-condition for successful project development and implementation that results in accountability, outcome measurability and a deeper understanding and implementation of these aspired for requisites, it still remains a challenge for many organisations (Groen & Branda, 2006) including Bubi District Council in Zimbabwe. It is on this basis that the study focussed on measuring the influence of Monitoring and Evaluation practices on Rural District Council projects in Zimbabwe. The study measured the influence of monitoring and evaluation practices in projects implemented by Rural District Councils in Zimbabwe.

## **1.2. Background of the Study**

The implementation of quality projects delivered on time and within budgets hinges on robust mechanisms for measuring performance against set targets to establish achievements. To enhance the uptake of monitoring and evaluation in programs and projects, the World Bank has been supporting many Countries in implementing monitoring and evaluation because of the value the practices bring to programs or project performance. According to the World Bank (2013), Chile and Brazil have long history of sound monitoring and evaluation of their programs implemented for all Government programs. In Chile, for example, the Government with the support of the World Bank introduced ex-ante (before event) and ex-post (after event) evaluation methods and set up guidelines to carry out M&E processes for their programs while in Brazil, the Presidency is taking an active role in promoting performance management through advancement of M&E processes (World Bank, 2013).

In the African region, countries such as South Africa and Kenya have embraced monitoring and evaluation as a key component of program/project management. South Africa, for example, has a strong mandate from the President and the Presidency Office to manage for results. This entails focussing on the results or outcomes the projects bring to better the lives of the residents rather than celebrating mere achievement of the outputs. There are some performance agreements between the President and the ministries to meet predefined targets in eight outcomes that govern the national development plan (World Bank, 2013). The same report posits that South Africa model of M&E has encountered some challenges because of a lack of direction in ministries to work together and achieve the stated outcome set by the

Presidency Office. The World Bank report further states that World Bank is working with the Ministry of Rural Development and Land Affairs to carry out rigorous evaluation, to help them develop and implement their M&E strategic plan and to sequence their actions to build the foundations of a sound M&E in the ministry (World Bank, 2013).

According to the National Monitoring and Evaluation policy of Zimbabwe (2015), a robust monitoring and evaluation system in Government is imperative for successful implementation of programmes and projects to ensure enhanced project performance not only in central government organisations but also in Local Government structures including Councils.

#### **1.2.1. Project Performance**

In the past, whenever a project implemented, its gravity based on the investment and input made on it. The issue was not the outcome but rather, how much invested on it. This assessment criterion has changed over the years and project performance has taken the centre stage. Governments and other organisations have realised the importance of project performance. In the African region, for example, countries like South Africa and Kenya have embraced project performance as a key component of program/project management. South Africa, for example, has a strong mandate from the President and the Presidency Office to manage for results. This entails focussing on the results or outcomes the projects, its quality and its timely delivery (World Bank, 2013). However, according to the World Bank report, the South Africa model of M&E has encountered some challenges because of a lack of direction in ministries to work together and achieve the stated outcome set by the Presidency Office resulting in poor project performance (World Bank, 2013).



According to the National Monitoring and Evaluation policy of Zimbabwe (2015), a robust monitoring and evaluation system in Government is imperative for successful implementation of national development policies, programmes and projects to ensure efficient and effective service delivery. This study therefore, attempted to find out how project performance; quality, delivery and cost were affected by accountability practices, measurement practices and pause and reflect practices particularly in the Bubi District Council, Zimbabwe.

### **1.2.2. Monitoring and Evaluation Practices`**

Monitoring and evaluation largely been mainstreamed in the context of governmental and non-governmental organisation implementing social programs. An effective Monitoring and Evaluation system to have become a mechanism for improving their projects and accountability. Similarly, countries including Zimbabwe have adopted the system. Gaining an understanding of effective monitoring and evaluation practices have remained a challenge (Molapo, 2019). Tulema (2014) suggests that there is limited knowledge on the practices of evaluation and monitoring systems and related challenges on projects executed by NGOs. Yet, the critical practice on which project success is highly dependent (Molapo, 2019). It is on this basis that the study focussed on measuring the influence of Monitoring and Evaluation practices on Rural District Councils projects in Zimbabwe. The study specifically reviewed the influence of accountability, results measurement, and pause and reflect practice in projects implemented by Rural District Councils in Zimbabwe to determine the influence of Monitoring and Evaluation practices on project performance.

### **1.2.3. Pause and Reflect Practice**

Embedded in most strategic plans, albeit covertly in some, is the practice of pausing and reflecting on a regular basis to identify what is working and what needs to be changed or to be adapted. This practice provides a context for considering the impact of changes in the operating environment, whether the project is going in the right direction, and whether progress and success claimed and how future efforts are be directed and improved (UNDP, 2009). As such, it is imperative that the organization frequently carries out periodic reviews of all aspects of the project objectives and activities. Thus despite the fact that this practice is fundamental to monitoring and evaluation, rarely implemented and sometimes partially implemented (Groene and Branda, 2006). Thus, the aforementioned suggests a poor understanding of the overall ingredients of effective monitoring and evaluation processes to address this gap in knowledge; the study investigated the pause and reflect practice the ingredients for effective program performance in Bubi District Council in Zimbabwe.

### **1.2.4. Accountability Practices**

Monitoring and evaluation practices adopted globally mainly because they provide a context for accountability. The call to be accountable has become a major area of interest during the past few decades. Public projects, in particular, are increasingly under pressure to mainstream accountability practices in an effort to demonstrate project effectiveness and meticulously document their findings in order to earn credibility from both the their sponsors and the public. Thus, mainstreaming accountability practices: the provision of information, carrying out periodic consultations, and encouraging meaningful participation of the beneficiaries and the establishment of systems for recourse through setting up of complaints mechanisms is

critical. This practice also promotes inclusivity in the management of public projects. Furthermore, mainstreaming of accountability practice enhances ownership and sustainability of projects outcomes. Throughout all project phases, it is critical to pause and reflect in a collaborative manner to identify promising practices and lessons learned.

#### **1.2.4. Results Measurement Practices**

An integral part of monitoring and evaluation is measuring the outcome of the project to demonstrate the impact of the project. It is no longer enough to win credibility and accountability on general terms that the project is delivering the required outcomes alone, what is now a requisite is measurement practices to inform and direct project implementation. Consistent with this thought continuum, results measurement follows the trend of centralising measurement of outcomes as a culture of measurement while and referred to it as the age of indicators. Thus, most public projects have included in their strategic plans, measurement as paramount quality and credulity indicators.

#### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

Local Government through the Rural District Councils plays a critical role in improving communities' lives by delivering services like water supply, waste removal, electricity provision, roads construction and repairs among other services. It is therefore imperative for different stakeholders within the Rural District Council (RDC) to work together in improving service delivery. To keep track of how successful the RDCs are in improving project performance, RDCs must design and implement comprehensive M&E systems that have an inbuilt capacity for accountability, pause and reflection and measurement. Available research suggests

that there are gaps and challenges in the effective realisation of M&E practices in NGOs, yet this is a critical practice upon which the success of the project is dependent (Chibonore, 2015). On the same vein, it is a given that Government organisations such as Bubi Rural Council cannot be exceptions. Thus, this study hypothesises that Rural District Councils do not have robust monitoring and evaluation system able to provide accurate data and evidence to inform critical decision making that result in quality projects performance.

Bubi district in particular faces absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacity challenges leading to weak communities vulnerable to numerous stresses according to United Nations Development Fund [UNDP], 2016). The UNDP report further states that Bubi district collects low revenue from ratepayers that mostly taken up by the administrative costs leaving very little for capital projects. In addition, the Rural District Council develops plans, which rarely implemented because of various challenges including organisational culture not emphasising on results based monitoring. The UNDP report also posit that government structures down to the district level need to be strengthened to support adoption of results based monitoring and reporting.

According to Madhekeni (2012), in 2005, the Government of Zimbabwe established the Results Based Monitoring and Evaluation system (RBME) and a complementing Management Information System (MIS). The above systems deemed critical to assist government in conducting systematic programme planning, formulation and implementation, expected to improve the performance of government's development initiatives, yet the implementation of the programme in Zimbabwe has been an area of controversy with regard to issues of applicability,

benefits and drawbacks. This is more prominent in an environment where there are several institutional, organizational and systematic weaknesses negating Government efforts. In spite of these assumptions, history has it that the RBM system, if properly implemented, can improve programs, projects and projects' performance and subsequently government performance in general (Madhekeni, 2012).

As stated above, the Rural District Councils in Zimbabwe are no exceptions to M&E challenges confronting Zimbabwe in general. These challenges continue to compromise the quality of projects implementation and performance. However, these challenges need to address if Zimbabwe is to enjoy a robust local governance framework epitomised by citizen participation, responsive local institutions, good service delivery, accountability and transparency (Newsday, February 16, 2017). It is against this backdrop that this study explores M&E practices of accountability, results measurement and reflection and reflect how they influence project performance in the Rural Councils in Zimbabwe.

#### **1.4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of Monitoring and Evaluation practices on project performance of Rural District Councils' projects in Zimbabwe.

#### **1.5. Objectives of the Study**

- i. To determine the influence of pause and reflect practice on Rural District Councils' projects performance in Zimbabwe
- ii. To assess the influence of accountability practice on Rural District Councils' projects performance in Zimbabwe

- iii. To examine the influence of results measurement practice on Rural District Councils' projects performance in Zimbabwe

### **1.6. Research Hypotheses**

**H0<sub>1</sub>:** Implementing M&E pause and reflect practice has no influence on Rural District Council's projects performance in Zimbabwe

**H0<sub>2</sub>:** Implementing M&E accountability practice has no influence on Rural District Council's projects performance in Zimbabwe

**H0<sub>3</sub>:** Mainstreaming M&E results measurement practice has no influence on Rural District Council's projects performance in Zimbabwe

### **1.7. Significance of the Study**

The findings of the study would benefit the Rural District Councils in Zimbabwe in planning and implementing development programmes at the local council level which have inbuilt capacity that ensure accountability, allow for pause and reflect practices and have measurable outcomes. The findings if applied would increase project performance in Rural District Councils, as they will be able to better monitor and evaluate their projects. The Councils would also benefit in terms data collected through measurement practices thus creating a pool of data that can inform future projects.

This study would also benefit the communities and ensure the Councils become more accountable in the implementation of their programs. Furthermore, the pause and reflection practice enhance participation, panel discussions and team meetings as the Councils implement the pause and reflect practices. Reports from

Councils would also help residents to know whether their projects implementation is according to plans and that, the expected outcomes achieved.

The findings would also benefit the researcher, as he is involved in project development and implementation in an NGO organisation. This would be beneficial to the employer for decision making and development of plans and policies based on concrete evidence around accountability, reflection and measurement.

Overall, this study would benefit the Rural District Councils in Zimbabwe, Bubi District Council and the residents through provision of recommendations for adopting a culture of learning, accountability and measurement of project performance. It is critical in demonstrating the impact the Rural District Councils projects are making towards the wellbeing of the residents' aspirations and social development outcomes.

### **1.8. Scope of the Study**

The study covered only the Bubi District rural Council because it reflects typical characteristics as other Rural District Councils in Zimbabwe such as rural and geographical location. The few resources available to the researcher and time constraints limited the researcher to Bubi District Council. Furthermore, Bubi Rural District Council, like all other RDCs in Zimbabwe run on similar lines through Government Directives and Circulars.

### **1.9. Delimitation of the Study**

This study delimited to the influence of Monitoring and Evaluation practices on performance of the Rural District Councils projects in Zimbabwe. It further determined whether the specific Monitoring and Evaluation practices have any bearing on the quality implementation of projects in Zimbabwe by RDCs or whether these practices can only be for fulfilling standard operating procedures without any meaningful impact on the attainment of projects performance. There are multitudes of practices in the M&E system, which cannot be a focus of one study. Therefore, this study was limited to only three practices viz: accountability practice, pause and reflect practices and measurement practices because of the limited time and resources available to the researcher.

### **1.10. Limitations of the Study**

Although all efforts put in place to ensure that, the study achieves its objectives but there were unavoidable limitations. Firstly, the study covered one Rural District council in Zimbabwe among 59 Rural District Councils in the country. Generalizing the findings across Rural District Councils posed some challenges due to the number of Rural Districts Councils. However, Rural District Councils are relatively identical in Zimbabwe. Another limitation was the nature of the organisation. Most Government organisations tend to keep tight lids on information particularly if regarded as damaging to the institution. However, to mitigate against this, the researcher explained the importance of the exercise that it meant not only to help improve project performance but also to capacitate the Council employees in carrying out monitoring and evaluation practices.



### **1.11. Assumptions of the Study**

The first assumption of this study was that the Council employees would be able to answer the questions truthfully and not hide information that may seem damaging to the Council. The second assumption was that the COVID Pandemic would not lead to long Council closures that may affect this study. The third assumption is that the researcher have access to the Council project reports that considered private and confidential.

### **1.12. Theoretical Framework**

The study hinged on two theories- the Theory of Change and the Kurt Lewin's Change Model. The two theories form the framework for this study as they both relate to group dynamics and the steps in effecting change.

#### **1.12.1. Theory of Change**

It is difficult to trace precisely when the term theory of change first used to describe linkages of variables in achieving a certain outcome. A hint at its origins can be found in the considerable body of theoretical and applied development in the evaluation field, especially among the work of people such as Huey Chen, Peter Rossi, Michael Quinn Patton, and Carol Weiss (Centre for Theory of Change, 2019). The Theory of Change (TOC) is defined as a rigorous yet participatory process whereby groups and stakeholders in a planning process articulate their long term goals and identify the conditions they believe have to unfold for those goals to be met. These conditions modelled as desired outcomes, arranged graphically in a casual framework (Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance, 2012). The TOC approach will be critical in this study as independent variables are adapted from this theory where planning, sequencing and causal effects will form the mainstay

of the study. The TOC approach which was aligned to the three broad thematic areas (independent variables) of the conceptual framework namely pause and reflect practice, accountability practice and result measurement practice from a global to regional and localised context.

According to Change Management Coach (2016), getting motivated for the change is all about weighing up the 'pro's' and 'con's' and deciding if the 'pro's' outnumber the 'con's' before you take any action. It is on this basis that this study aims at demonstrating the value of implementing Monitoring and Evaluation practices on Rural District Council projects and through this mind-set and behaviour change, the performance of council projects expected to improve.

#### **1.12.2. Change Model Theory**

The other theory underpinning the study is the change model theory that developed by Kurt Lewin and mostly used in group dynamics and organisational development. Kurt Lewin's change theory model premised on three principles of unfreezing, changing and refreezing was key in this study. The change theory by Kurt Lewin entails creating the perception that a change is needed, then moving toward the new, desired level of behaviour and finally, solidifying that new behaviour as the norm. In essence, the theory assumes that when dealing with development interventions, quality assurance practitioners henceforth termed practitioners; need to recognise that there would be a need for change brought about by the intervention.

After recognising the need for a particular change, practitioners need to put in place measures to move towards that transformation through adoption of certain concrete behaviours and actions which will setup an appropriate environment for the particular change to occur and institutionalising them in projects design,

implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Hence, for the desired change to occur practitioners need to go through the major steps of unfreezing, changing and refreezing as prescribed in Lewin's model of change.

The model emphasises the need to keep everyone well informed about the proposed changes and the rationale behind changes. Furthermore, all should also understand how the changes would benefit all including the organisation. By so doing, a deep sense of ownership and benefit created within the employees and the organisation's beneficiaries fostering a positive response from all stakeholders through embracing the new desired direction of change and working hard towards achieving the ultimate goals.

### 1.13. Conceptual Framework

The relationship between Monitoring and Evaluation practices the Rural District Councils projects performance visualized as shown in figure 1.1.

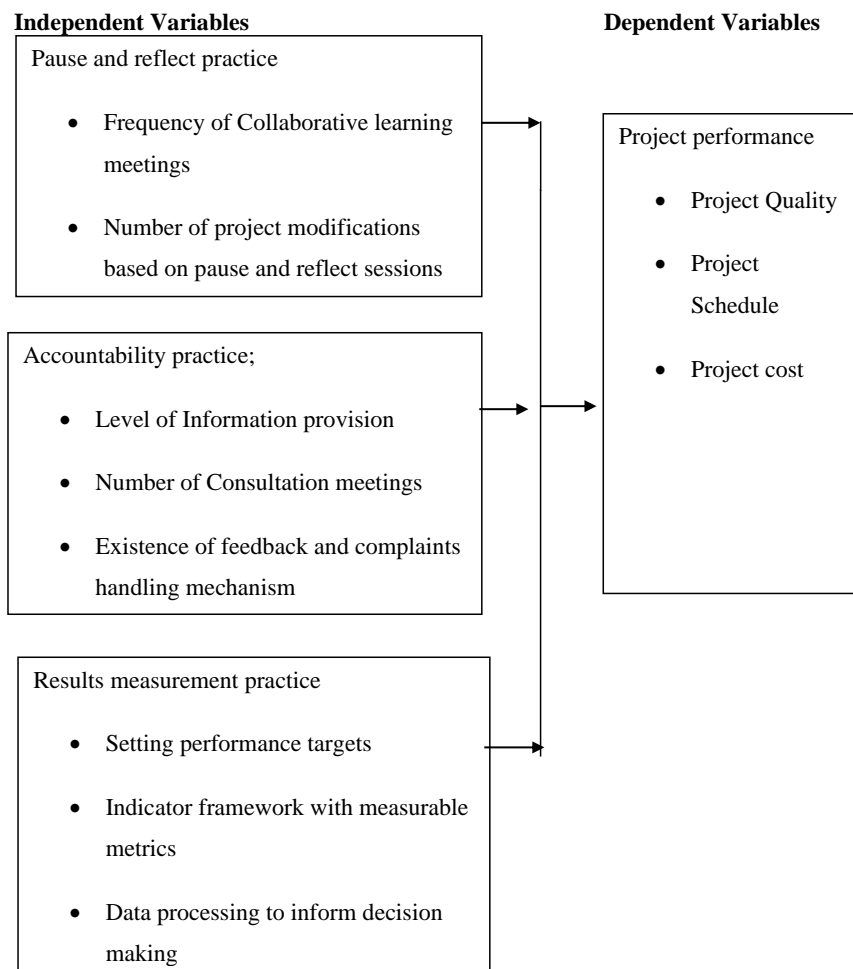


Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Author (2021)

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter explores scholarly literature and research studies providing evidence on the influence of Monitoring and Evaluation practices on Rural District Councils' projects in Zimbabwe. The information contributing to the study derived from various sources including scholarly articles, textbooks and journals was that reviewed in detail in this chapter. The chapter extensively explores the theoretical and empirical literature in establishing the influence of Monitoring and Evaluation practices on council projects. The literature reviewed covers both independent and dependent variables of the study. The chapter will further use the literature and other available related research to demonstrate the relationship between independent and dependent variables.

### **2.2. Empirical Review**

This section reviews the international and others studies conducted currently available concerning this topic in order to demonstrate through understanding of the topic and to what extent the Monitoring and Evaluation practices are important in influencing council projects

#### **2.2.1. Pause and Reflect Practice and Rural District Councils' Projects Performance**

Pause and reflect is contemporary process of setting out time to look back to determine whether the various processes and systems are efficient in delivering an effective project to the communities. This process culminates in possible retooling, redirection and modification of projects. The process further helps to align to new trajectory based on what has been determined as the plausible route stemming from

the recommendations from pause and reflect session. In practice, RDCs can achieve better results if they employ the unfreezing concept in their programming as it gives them the opportunity to pause and reflect on experiences. Essentially, the TOC assumes that by repeatedly carrying out reflection on actions by practitioners can help them learn from previous experiences and outcomes that in future would equip them to respond in the most appropriate way should an unexpected situation arise. In essence, the TOC assumes that when practitioners use their instincts and knowledge from previous experiences they are in a much better position to make viable decisions and proffer sound responses to arising situations that affect the RDCs project implementation, outcomes and desired impact. A typical example of the practical applicability of pause and reflection is that of USAID's funded project in Tanzania titled Promoting Tanzania's Environment, Conservation, and Tourism Activity project implemented in Tanzania to protect biodiversity conservation (United States Agency for International Development [USAID], 2015). The project's main aim is to address factors that were affecting biodiversity conservation to limit private sector's influence on natural resources. Upon realisation that the project's initial TOC was not in tandem with the actual implementation on the ground.

USAID Tanzania in collaboration with RTI International applied a pause and reflection approach that examined changes in local wildlife conservation and the priorities of USAID and the Tanzanian Government. Through pause and reflection, the study manages to come up with ways to synchronise the priorities of all stakeholders involved that they used in planning, monitoring and evaluation and learning. Resultantly, they were able to come up with activities that effectively contributed towards attaining the goal of attaining biodiversity targets and indicators hence achieving the desired long-term outcomes/ impact of the project.

In addition, pause and reflect gives project managers and implementers an opportunity to halt implementation, interrogate the efficiency of different processes and approaches used and collectively agree on the way forward. According to Cashman (2012), to thrive and to innovate in today's complex, globally connected world, leaders need sophisticated ways to step back to understand what they are facing within and outside themselves. The pause principle provides pragmatic resources for making the critical move from management efficiency to leadership excellence. It is further stated that the pause and reflect principle is just the right prescription for slowing down, listening, and getting the clarity needed to lead in deep connection with vision and purpose. Therefore, if applied to the local context of Zimbabwean RDCs pause and reflection can contribute immensely in attaining set goals and objectives of the RDC's projects.

#### **2.2.2. Accountability Practice and Rural District Councils' Projects Performance**

As part of the study's conceptual framework, accountability plays a vital role in the success of RDCs projects as it allows maximum participation of all stakeholders in decision-making and actual implementation of the projects. Accountability is the obligation to (i) demonstrate that work conducted in accordance with agreed rules and standards (ii) report fairly and accurately on performance results vis-à-vis mandated roles and/or plans (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], n.d). Therefore, using the TOC approach can allow RDC staff and stakeholders to form strategic alliances and partnerships to promote more responsive and accountable practices in project planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting. Hence, through provision of information, allowing maximum participation in the project, consultation in decision making and setting up proper and effective feedback and complaints handling making mechanism for all stakeholders.

The TOC approach assumes that RDCs projects are likely to be more successful as the project's design and implementation will be responsive to the actual needs of the community as compared to the top-down approaches that used in the past. An interesting study on accountability and transparency called "The Impact of Transparency and Accountability on Service Delivery: An Analysis of Municipalities of Zimbabwe" was conducted in Zimbabwe (International Journal of Governance, 2014). The main purpose of the study is to review reports that insinuated that residents in urban areas were complaining about poor service delivery by municipalities. The majority of the highlighted complaints were in water quality and supply, solid waste disposal and poor sewage systems. Hence, the study seeks to reveal the relationship between transparency, accountability and the quality-of-service delivery by local municipalities. Results from the study reveals that most of the municipalities were using a limited number of information provision tools to deliver information to residents resulting in citizens having little/ no knowledge on what was going on in service delivery and why the municipalities were making certain decisions. This has a negative repercussion as it leads to increased resistance by residents to pay rates and bills, which further worsened the situation. Thus, the study reveals the importance of accountability in municipality programs and recommended the municipalities to improve on information provision and provide citizens with adequate information so that they are up to scratch on what is happening.

The above findings are supported by the Management for Development Results (MfDR) approach which embodies generally accepted tenets of good governance – setting clear objectives, evidence-based decision-making, transparency, and continuous adaptation and improvement (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development – Development Assistance Committee [OECD-DAC], 2008). It is



therefore apparent that accountability if applied to RDCs projects it can go a long way in ensuring better and more successful projects. Furthermore, the focus is on ensuring the lives of the citizens are transformed for the better and the development agencies are held accountable for the action i.e., there is downwards and upwards accountability to enhance transparency and quality delivery of all planned activities.

### **2.2.3. Results Measurement and Rural District Councils' Projects Performance**

Results measurement is a crucial element in project management as it allows practitioners to assess whether an intervention is moving in the right direction to achieve the set goals and objectives of RDCs projects. Results measurement further underlines the value of stakeholders' satisfaction as main success criteria for project implementation and management in addition to the golden triangle of time, budget and quality. The results measurement follows a systematic approach to determine outcomes of the council projects in terms of transformation of the community members' lives. The results are the key deliverables of the council projects, these results measured, and disseminated for decision-making and determination of project success. In essence, to achieve this, councils should implement systems for managing projects with an objective of attaining results called results based management. Results Based Management defined as a broad management strategy aimed at achieving important changes in the way government agencies operate, with improving performance (Achieving better results) as the central orientation. It is first a management system for results (Managing for results) and second, a performance reporting system for results (Accountability for results) (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD-DAC], 2014)

The measurement is systematised using a framework that contains critical elements of the project including the results chain statements, indicators, means of verification and data sources. According to K4Health.org report (n.d), results frameworks, also known as strategic frameworks, serve as a management tool with an emphasis on results. The purpose of results frameworks is to increase focus, select strategies, and allocate resources accordingly.

Independent Evaluation Group (2012) defines a results framework as an explicit articulation (graphic display, matrix, or summary) of the different levels, or chains, of results expected from a particular intervention, project, program, or development strategy. The report by the Independent Evaluation Group further states that in essence, the results framework captures the essential elements of the logical and expected cause-effect relationships among inputs, outputs, intermediate results or outcomes, and impact. The TOC premised on the assumption that by exploring contributing factors that affect the project's outcomes gives suitable evidence on projects contribution to the target population. By setting out clear intermediate and long-term outcomes of the project that are measured using properly defined indicators would allow the RDCs to measure the appropriateness and contributions of their interventions in attaining the desired change their projects seek to achieve.

The Donor Committee carried out one interesting case study in Bangladesh for Enterprise Development (2015) that demonstrated how important regular analysis and usage of monitoring information played a pivotal role in attaining the desired results from projects. The project named Making Markets Work for the Jamuna, Padma and Teesta Chars (M4C). The main goal of the project was to improve market systems for poor people living in Chars of ten districts in North Western Bangladesh. The study

noted that if the MC4 had waited for the final impact assessments the project would have missed worthwhile opportunities to drive the intervention in the desired direction.

The project was distributing high yielding seed inputs and setting up demo plots for the distributed seeds to improve farmer's access to seed. One realisation that made was that it was beneficial to monitor signs that showed if whether activities carried out were working or not. This study revealed the importance of constant monitoring and reviewing results from interventions on assessing the changes brought about by the implemented activities as well as informing decision making during implementation. Establishing a clear and appropriate results measurement framework by RDCs can improve the quality of people's lives as it results in properly designed and implemented projects.

#### **2.4. Summary of Literature Review and Research Gaps**

Through using the TOC approach and change theory by Kurt Lewin, RDCs project are more likely to be successful in attaining the desired results and goals as it allows for proper and responsive project design, implementation and outcome/ impact measurement of the project. Hence, through applying pause and reflect practices RDCs are better able to identify the desired change and what done to reach that change. Accountable and transparent RDCs are likely to be more successful because it will easily respond to the needs of the environment it is operating in as compared to closed ones that operate in a vacuum like manner that resultantly limits their ability to respond appropriately to the needs of the operating context. Results measurement allows the organisation to qualify and justify their efforts towards enriching people's lives as it allows the RDC to make corrective adjustments during project

implementation and assess whether the intervention is achieving both the intermediate and long-term outcomes. Hence, the study will seek to prove that by using the Monitoring and Evaluation practices, RDCs project are likely to succeed as demonstrated by empirical evidence derived from previous studies.

Application and knowledge of the Theory of Change remains limited. This emanates from the fact that the TOC approach remains a novelty to most practitioners particularly in local government agencies in the third world in this case Zimbabwe. There are a few studies carried out in the local context demonstrating the value of using TOC approach on project management especially for Government and local authorities. The critical variance exists between appreciation of the value of monitoring and evaluation and the actual implementation. There are studies carried out on utilisation of M&E in project management for example Hardlife and Zhou (2013) examined the utilisation of Monitoring and Evaluation Systems using the UNDP in Zimbabwe as a case study. In 2015, the Government of Zimbabwe developed the National and Evaluation Policy. The studies cited above were generic and not specific to evaluation and monitoring practices of accountability, reflectivity and measurement. Hence the need to be specific and find out whether these practices are actually implemented in monitoring and evaluation of projects. This study attempts to close that gap where the current body of knowledge focusses on M&E in general but this study would dive deeper looking at the specific practices crucial for project performance.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The quality of any research study hinges on the adoption of sound and applicable research methodology. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) defined research methodology as the specific procedures or techniques used to identify, select, process, and analyse information about a topic. They further stated that, in a research paper, the methodology section allows the reader critically to evaluate the study's overall validity and reliability. The methodology section answers two main questions, the data collection process and how was it analysed? (University of Witwatersrand, no date). The methodology used in the study presented in this chapter. The purpose of this study was to analyse the influence of Monitoring and Evaluation practices on Rural District Council projects. It is anticipated that, through this study, the level of understanding and valuing the identified M&E practices of pause and reflect, accountability and results measurement practices would lead to full adaptation in council projects management.

### **3.2 Research Design**

The researcher adopted a mixed methodology study design using qualitative and quantitative study designs concurrently. However, the COVID-19 preventative measures had a bearing on gathering participants for focus group discussions. This limited the researcher to conducting few focus group discussions than originally planned. The mixed methodology enabled the researcher to tap into the strengths of each of the approaches thereby enhancing the credibility of the findings of the study. The contemporary Monitoring & Evaluation approaches focus on both aspects of

positivism and post positivism hence the selection of the research design heavily influenced by the power of complementarity yielded from a mixed methodology. Quantitative and qualitative methodologies used concurrently to reduce biases and pitfalls that can emanate from each of the methodologies.

Therefore, it is on this background that this study employed two research designs complementing each other in terms of broadening analysis of the findings. The mixed methodologies included the utilization of qualitative and quantitative approaches. A quantitative research approach used to collect quantitative data from council employees complemented by in-depth qualitative interview with focus group discussion participants and key informants. The selection of these research designs was premised on the realization that complementarity would yield to better insights. The quantitative research design provided numeric data that was analysed using MS Excel for descriptive statistics.

The quantitative findings supported by in-depth qualitative data derived from key informants and focus group discussions. Qualitative research produces extracts of verbatim conversation that gives meaning to the 'why' and 'how' of the patterns and trends revealed by statistics produced through the quantitative data. The statements and quotable quotes used to give more meaning to some of the numeric data from quantitative research design. The use of both quantitative and qualitative research designs provided a wide array of issues discovered and thoroughly followed up and triangulated through in-depth interviews with varied stakeholders. This approach was doable since there was strong justification for a small sample for quantitative data collection if combined with qualitative research design. This, therefore, meant few data collectors required which brought down the cost and sped up the completion of the whole data collection component of the study.

### **3.3 Research Site and Rationale**

The study carried out in Bubi district in Matabeleland North Province of Zimbabwe. The district covers 567,382 hectares of land, comprises of farms, mines, and has 23 wards that covers communal, old and new resettlement areas (A1 and A2 Farms). Each ward represented by an elected councilor who act as a development agent for the ward at the community level. The selection of Bubi District was because the researcher is a resident and ratepayer for the district. It also anticipated that these factors would be critical in obtaining approval for the study. In addition, the district is easily accessible by road that lowered the travelling costs, as the study was self-funded.

### **3.4 Target Population**

According to Gilbert (2009), a target population is the totality of objects in the real world the study is interested to cover. The target population for this study refers to one Rural District Council in Zimbabwe because RDCs are the same in Zimbabwe being guided by similar policies and government appointed administrators. The Rural District Council has a staff compliment of about 45 workers (estimated), 23 elected ward Councillors and 1 Chief Executive Officer. The above formed the study population described as the total group of subjects that meet a well-defined criterion or sets of criteria (Ngechu, 2004). The population mainly consisted of council employees, ward Councillors and senior leadership members of the district. In addition, the District Administrator who represents the Local Government at the district level was included in the target population. The main characteristics of this population include people who are directly involved in day-to-day implementation of

the council projects, those at policy level and implementation level. These people are familiar with the council projects and believed they also possess in-depth knowledge on issues concerning improvements ideas and constraints. Table 3.1 shows the numbers per categories.

*Table 3.1: Study population*

<b>Target population</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>
Council employees	45
Ward Councillors	23
District Administrator	1
Chief Executive Officer	1
Total	70

Source: Author (2021)

### **3.5 Sampling Procedures**

This study used both random and purposive sampling for selection of study respondents.

#### **3.5.1 Sampling**

Through purposive sampling, units selected to represent the universe. The purposive sampling technique was utilised in the selection of the focus group discussion and key informant interview participants who provided the information required in this study. This sampling technique used because it is economical, suitable for the purpose and quick. Simple random sampling used to select ward councillors from 23 councillors in the district.



### **3.5.2 Sample Selection**

A purposively selected sample of respondents made it possible for the researcher to comprehend insights from the population from which the sample drawn from. The key research respondents was the Bubi district council staff, Chief Executive Officer, Ward Councillors and the District Administrator. In-depth interviews conducted for the above-mentioned respondents. This meant to provide more insights on the knowledge, attitude, practice and understanding of the influence of Monitoring and Evaluation practices on council projects.

### **3.6 Sample Size**

In considering, the sample size in this study it is important to appreciate first that this study is a case study that studies one RDC the Bubi District Council and therefore, the number of the sample subjects is bound to be small. Secondly, Bubi District Rural Council is typical of other RDCs in Zimbabwe and hence the similarities in the organisational structure, staffing patterns, administrative organisation structures largely, allow for generalisations across other RDCs in Zimbabwe. Thirdly, interviews carried out buttress and corroborate the findings arrived at through the quantitative methodologies and mitigate against the impact of a small sample (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar & Fontenot, (2013). Furthermore, generalisations were limited to the Bubi RDC unless where otherwise. The researcher deemed used Yamane formula to come up with representative sample. Yamane formula is appropriate for determining sample size in cases where the size of target population is either large or small as it gives a representative sample size. The

formula is reliable at 95% confidence level and error margin of 5%. The Yamane formula is as follows;

$$n = N / [1 + N (\epsilon)^2]$$

Where n is the size of the sample, N is the size of the study population while  $\epsilon$  is the deviation of the sample (error term). Hence, using total population of 45 and error term of 5%, the sample size is as calculated below.

$$n = 45 / (1 + 45 * (0.05) * (0.05)) = 40$$

Therefore, the sample size will be 40 respondents for council employees. See table 2 below

*Table 3.2: Sample size*

<b>Study population</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Sample size</b>	<b>Actual</b>
		<b>Ratio= 40/45</b>	<b>Respondents</b>
Council employees	45	0.8889	40
Ward Councillors	23	0.8889	20
District Administrator	1	0.8889	1
Chief Executive Officer	1	0.8889	1
Total	70	0.8889	62

Source: Author (2021)

### **3.7 Data Collection Procedure**

The study was used primary data and to lesser extent secondary data where possible. Interview guides used to collect primary data from respondents. The researcher with the help of the research assistants administered the guides. The key informants' interviews conducted with the identified key informants.

The guides developed in advance and uploaded onto the mobile data collection software. Four simple smart phones procured for data collection. The data collection assistants recruited from the local University to assist with data collection. Thorough training provided covering the content of the data collection instruments, data collection etiquette and ethical considerations in surveys. In addition, the data collection assistants trained on the use of mobile data collection software and basic rapport establishment with respondents and probing skills.

### **3.8 Research Instruments**

The study used a combination of structured and non-structured instruments for data collection. For the quantitative data collection, a structured questionnaire was used with predominantly closed questions administered to the council employees randomly selected using a systematic sampling technique. The data collection schedule (questionnaire) was created and uploaded on Kobo Collect data collection software (Free Mobile data collection software) to speed up the data collection process, reduce data collection errors and also reduce cost for printing questionnaires if using paper survey. The data was collected using mobile phones. The mobile data collection and uploading of data to the server on an ongoing basis enables data quality checks done in real time.

The questionnaires used Likert scale because it requires respondents to respond to a series of statements by indicating whether they agree to a great extent or no extent. Likert scale used because it is easy to understand and responses are easily quantifiable and subjective to computation of mathematical analysis.

### **3.8.1 Piloting of Research Instruments**

The study carried out a pilot study before the questionnaire administered for final and actual data collection process. The objectives of conducting a pilot study were to detect questionnaire challenges and make modifications prior to embarking on the final and actual data collection. The pilot study also assisted in determining the resources needed for the actual study and gave an indication whether the questions would help the researcher to achieve the study objectives. For this purpose, a small sample of about 5% of the total sample collected from Umguza Rural District Council used to test the data collection instruments for any ambiguity in the phrasing or sequencing of the questions.

### **3.8.2 Validity of Findings**

In validating the findings this study was mainly guided by content and face validity. The instruments was evaluated in both content and face validity by determining whether contents of the questionnaire measure the overall research objective and that all the specific research objectives are covered. The research instruments also subjected to experts review for judgment in order to determine whether the questionnaire has enough questions on all the specific research objectives under investigation.

### 3.8.3 Reliability of Research Instruments

The researcher mostly relied on internal consistency reliability a measure of reliability to be able to evaluate the degree to which the tool if repeatedly administered is able to produce similar results. The responses to the related questions should be internally consistent. The Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal consistency or reliability; it tests to see if multiple-question Likert scale surveys are reliable (Cronbach, 1951). The Cronbach's alpha provides a way to observe how closely related a set of test items are as a group. The formula for Cronbach's  $\alpha$  is shown below (N: number of items,  $\bar{c}$ : average inter-item co-variance among items,  $\bar{v}$ : average variance).

$$\alpha = \frac{N\bar{c}}{\bar{v} + (N-1)\bar{c}}$$

An alpha coefficient used to estimate the reliability using the formula. This alpha coefficient is used to observe how closely related questions are as a group. An alpha value greater than or equal to 0.70 considered acceptable. For this analysis, the alpha value and the Guttman's lambda\_6 (G6) value considered to give well-informed results.

To assess how well individual questions reflect the concept that they aim to tap into, the Cronbach method considered for questions that were set in the questionnaire to reflect Pause and reflect, Accountability Practices and Results Measurement. The alpha coefficients standardized alpha coefficients and the G6 values computed for each concept, the results shown in table 1. All the three concepts have an alpha values and G6 values greater or equal to 0.70, which are within the acceptable range.

*Table 3.3: Reliability Statistics*

	Cronbach's Alpha	Standardized alpha	Guttman's lambda_6
Pause and Reflect	0.7	0.72	0.81
Accountability Practices	0.73	0.75	0.92
Results Measurement	0.78	0.78	0.91

Source: Author (2021)

### 3.9 Analysis of Data and Presentation

The quantitative data downloaded from the Kobo Collect server to Excel for data analysis. The findings presented in tables and figures. The interpretation scale used for the Structural Equation Modeling is the one used by Hoyle (1995) that rates 0.50 as large effect, 0.30 as medium effects and 0.10 as small effects. Structural equation modelling (SEM) is a comprehensive statistical approach for testing hypotheses about relations among observed and latent variables. The qualitative data preliminarily analyzed immediately after data collection but the final analysis done using content analysis system looking at all the responses, determining and classifying them according to the preset categories or themes of representative and divergent views.

### **3.10 Ethical Considerations**

Confidentiality, privacy and data protection respected throughout the study and the respondents and participants assured that the data collected from them treated confidentially and not divulged to other participants or organizations. The study respondents and participants again assured that no names written down during data collection and the data only be used for the intended purposes. Informed consent upheld throughout the study where the respondents and participants fully informed that their participation was voluntary and that there were no monetary or other rewards offered because of their participation. Lastly respondents and participants were not forced to divulge any information they are not comfortable sharing and there were no children participating in the study. All personal biases were under check and balance to avoid personal opinion to murky the findings.

## CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

### 4.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on data presentation and findings. Data collected through a mobile data collection app Kobo Collect. The findings presented in a way that reflects the objectives of the study. The objectives were; to assess the influence of M&E pause and reflect practises on rural district councils` project performance; to determine the influence of accountability practises on rural district councils` projects performance in Zimbabwe; and finally, to examine the influence of M&E results measurement practice on rural district councils` projects performance in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, the chapter outlines the demographical characteristics of the study participants.

### 4.2 Response Rate

The study response rate was 98% meaning that the targeted sample size of 62 participants almost achieved. This achievement attained through the deployment of both online and face-to-face interviews using an enabling data collection software. Data collection done following strict COVID-19 preventative measures like observing physical distancing and limiting face-to-face interactions through online survey. In the study, the respondents' attributes collected were age, gender and length of employment of respondents.

Table 4.1 shows the breakdown of respondents according to age groups. The majority (45.9 %) of the respondents were aged between 30 and 40 years of age. Only 11.48% of the respondents were between the ages 51-60.



*Table 4.1: Age of Respondents*

Age	Percentage (%)
Below 30 years	13.11
Between 30-40 years	45.9
Between 41-50 years	29.51
Between 51-60 years	11.48

Source: Author (2021)

Table 4.2 presents the findings relating to responses on gender. Out of the sample size of 61, 52.46% were females and 47.54% were males. This indicates that more females participated in this study than males. However, the male percentage representation also deemed adequate for the purposes of this study. Generally, women in Zimbabwe have equal opportunities in formal employment as their male counterparts.

*Table 4.2: Gender of the Participants*

Gender	Percentage (%)
Female	52.46
Male	47.54

Source: Author (2021)

The data on the length of respondents' employment with Bubi Rural District Council presented in Table 4.3. The majority (49.18%) of the participants have been

working for the council for a period of 5 years and above. Those who have been in employment for 1– 2 years accounted for only 1.64% of the study participants as depicted by Table 4.3. This indicates that the majority of respondents have a substantial experience in Council work and knowledgeable on council work as informed by experience and practical knowledge of council operations. Table 4.3. Shows the duration of employment.

*Table 4.3 Duration of Employment*

Number of years	Percentage (%)
Above 5 years	49.18
Between 3-5 years	24.59
Between 2-3 years	13.11
Between 1-2 years	11.48
Below 1 year	1.64

Source: Author (2021)

#### **4.3. Presentation of Research Analysis and Findings**

The data obtained from the structured questionnaires was broken down into smaller manageable information based on the conceptual framework. The study was to determine the influence of Monitoring and Evaluation practices on Rural District Council project performance. The monitoring and evaluation practices measured in this study-included accountability, results measurement pause and reflect. The study results were analysed to verify the study hypotheses. Structural equation modelling used for analysis and it includes confirmatory factor analysis. In addition, the Structural Equation Model measures path analysis, partial least squares path

modelling and latent growth modelling. It measured and analysed the relationships observed and latent variables. In a Root Mean Square Error of approximation and standardised root mean square residual 0 indicates the perfect fit and the higher values indicate the lack of fit. The data presented uses tables and figures grouped by latent variable.

#### **4.3.1. Pause and Reflect Practice on Rural District Councils' Projects Performance in Zimbabwe**

This study was to find out whether pause and reflect practices (independent variable) influence council project performance (dependent variable) hence the respondents were asked to rate indicator statements to determine the influence of pause and reflect practice on the dependent variable – the council project performance. Likert item response options were converted to scores where Strongly Agree was given a score of 5, Agree a score of 4, Neutral a score of 3, Disagree a score of 2, Strongly Disagree a score of 1. Descriptive statistics of the survey are shown in table 4.4 below. Mean scores indicated the extent to which the survey respondents agreed or disagreed with the statements that were used. Table 4.4 shows the ratings of the key indicator statements on the influence of pause and reflect practice on rural District Council project performance.

On average, it was agreed by the survey respondents that pause and reflect was an innovative way of influencing council projects and that the views of diverse stakeholders are key in decision making for council projects as shown in Table 4.4 with a mean score of 4.0. The standard deviation of 0.3 indicates a consensus on responses. However, some respondents disagreed that in Bubi district council, lessons learned are acted upon timely to influence council projects with a mean score 2.7 and

standard deviation of 1.0. On whether programmed pause and reflection influence council projects, the ratings were neutral with a mean score of 3.4 and standard deviation of 1.1.

*Table 4.4 Likert scale items rating on pause and reflect practice*

Variables	Description	N				
			Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>L2</b>	<b>Part B: Influence of Pause and Reflect practices on council projects</b>					
PB_2_1	Pause and reflect is an innovative way of influencing council projects	61	3	5	4.0	0.3
PB_2_2	The views of diverse stakeholders are key in decision making for council projects	61	2	5	4.0	0.5
PB_2_3	Programmed and implemented pause and reflection influence council projects	61	1	4	3.4	1.1
PB_2_4	In Bubi district council, lessons learned are acted upon timely to influence council projects	61	1	5	2.7	1.0
PB_2_5	Pause and reflect leads to adoption of innovative ideas which are important on influencing council projects	61	2	5	3.9	0.6
PB_2_6	Pause and reflect influence council projects to meet intended outcomes	61	2	5	4.0	0.5
PB_2_7	Collaborative learning promotes sharing of ideas which influence council projects	61	2	5	3.8	0.8

Source: Author (2021)

The results of the significance test in Fig 4.1 show a standardized path coefficient with an absolute value of -0.047, which is less than 0.00 indicating that there is no direct fit. Thus, pause and reflect practice had a small direct negative influence on Rural District Councils' projects performance. The results refute the null hypothesis offered that implementing pause and reflect practice does not influence the performance of Rural District Council project performance. The null hypothesis

therefore rejected and the alternative hypothesis adopted. The results indicate that the lack of pause and reflect practice has a small negative influence on project performance in Rural District Councils. The possible reasons for the negative relationship could be that respondents acknowledged the importance of the practice yet the practice not implemented.

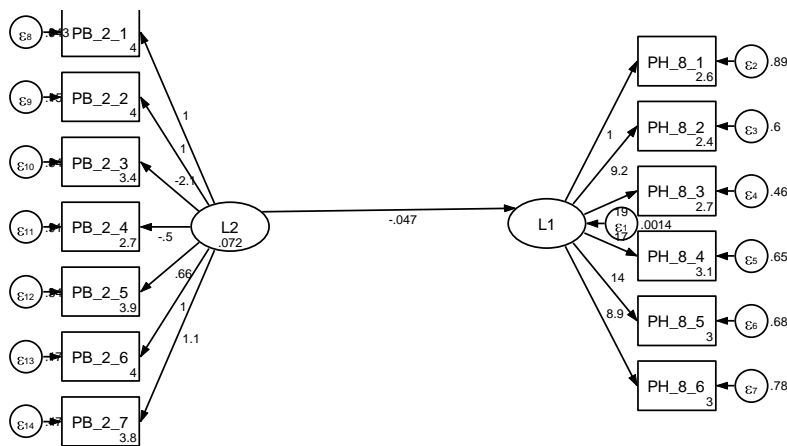


Figure 4.1 Influence of pause and reflect practice coefficient

Source: Author (2021)

The qualitative data from the key informants and focus group discussions concurred with the quantitative survey findings. The key informant participants acknowledged value of pause and reflect practice in project implementation. The focus group discussion participants mentioned that pause and reflect provide a great opportunity for council staff and residents to meet and deliberate on various pertaining to project design, implementation, management and performance. One of the key informants stated that performance issues confronting the Rural District Council minimized if the council was tapping on the feedback from the residents.

When asked whether the views of diverse stakeholders are key in decision making for council projects, one of the the participants responded by saying:

*“To fullfil the social accountability agenda, Rural District Councils are required to provide space for residents to demand quality service through the provision of social amenities meeting the satisfaction of the residents. This can be done through collection of stakeholders’ views and involving them in decision making”*

#### **4.3.2 Accountability Practice on Rural District Councils’ Projects Performance in Zimbabwe**

Accountability practices entails giving space to the stakeholders to scrutinize council operations including how projects implemented and managed. This research sought to establish whether M&E accountability practices influence council project performance based on the perspectives of the respondents through a series of indicator statements. The findings tabulated in Table 4.5.

The results indicate that the survey respondents agreed that accountability practices enable community members to be involved in the management of council projects with a mean score of 4.1. The standard deviation of 0.2 indicated a high concurrence level among the respondents. Respondents agreed that without accountability practices, community members and other stakeholders do not have any mechanisms for questioning council operations (with a mean score of 4.1 and standard deviation of 0.4). The respondents disagreed that Bubi district council has a budget and staff for implementing and managing accountability practices with a mean score of 2.5 and a standard deviation of 0.9 as shown in table 4.5. In total 8 items

were used to measure the influence of accountability practice on the performance of Rural District Council.

*Table 4.5: Likert scale items rating on the influence of accountability*

Variables	Description	N				
			Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>L4</b>	<b>Part D: Influence of Accountability practices on council projects</b>					
PD_4_1	Having an accountability framework for the district is critical in promoting participation of all stakeholders in the district on council projects	61	2	5	3.9	0.6
PD_4_2	Accountability practices are the means by which the community members can be involved in the management of council projects	61	4	5	4.1	0.2
PD_4_3	Without accountability practices, community members and other stakeholders do not have any mechanisms for questioning council operations.	61	2	5	4.1	0.4
PD_4_4	Accountability practices transfers power to stakeholders to meaningfully participate on council projects	61	1	5	4.0	0.5
PD_4_5	Accountability practices enables determination of quality of council projects based on stakeholders' lens	61	0	5	4.0	0.6
PD_4_6	Through accountability practices council's resources are efficiently used to deliver quality council projects	61	2	5	4.0	0.4
PD_4_7	Bubi district council has a budget and staff for implementing and managing accountability practices	61	1	5	2.5	0.9
PD_4_8	Mainstreaming accountability practices is one of the best practices on promoting of servant leadership within council	61	1	5	3.1	1.1

Source: Author (2021)

The results of the significance test in Fig 4.2 show a standardized path coefficient with an absolute value of 0.96 that is more than 0.50 indicating that accountability practice has a large influence on Rural District Councils' projects performance. The results refute the null hypothesis offered that implementing M&E accounting practice does not influence the performance of Rural District Council project performance. The null hypothesis rejected and the alternative hypothesis adopted. Thus, implementing M&E accountability practice influences the performance of Rural District Council projects as measured by the eight items on the Likert scale with a positive direct effect coefficient of 0.96 as shown in figure 4.2.

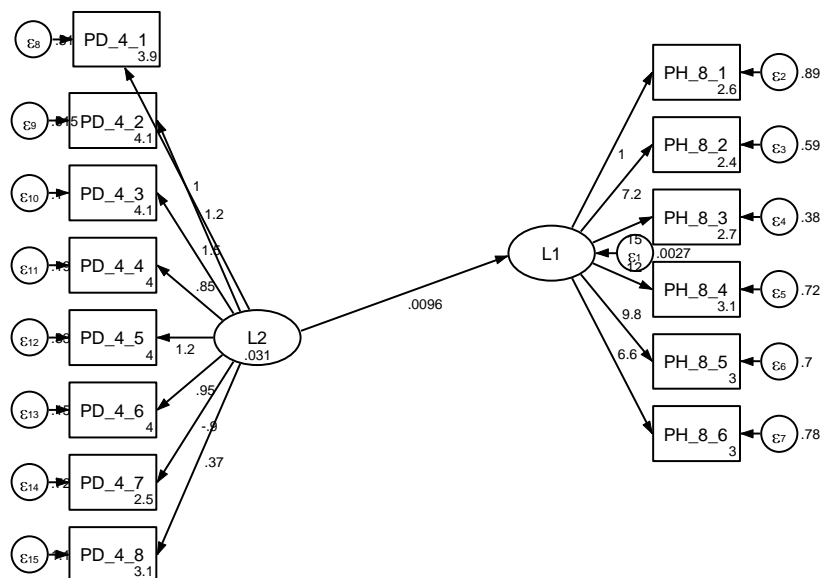


Figure 4.2: Influence of M&E accountability on project performance coefficient

Source: Author (2021)



### **4.3.3 Results Measurement Practice on Rural District Councils' projects Performance in Zimbabwe**

Results measurements involves designing a system for data collection, analysis and reporting to inform evidence based decision making. Following up on this narrative, the study sought to understand the perspectives of respondents on how results measurement influences project performance through a series of indicator statements. Table 4.6 presents the results.

The respondents were generally neutral on the influence of results measurement on project performance for example the results measurement practices ensured that council resources are used for the council projects which would lead to the desired impact was scored 3.5 with a standard deviation of 0.9. Results measurement practices are prioritised by the council through budget allocation and deployment of the right expertise had a mean score of 3.4 with a standard deviation of 0.9. Five items on this measurement had mean scores below 3 meaning the respondents disagreed with the statements as shown in table 4.6. This indicated that results measurement as a practice was not mainstreamed in Bubi Rural District Council.

Table 4.6: Likert scale items rating on influence of results measurement practices

Variables	Description	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>L6</b>	<b>Part F: Results measurement practices</b>					
PF_6_1	A culture of measuring results and communicating these is embedded on council projects management	61	1	5	2.9	1.0
PF_6_2	A robust framework specifying results chain is available for all council projects	61	1	5	2.6	0.9
PF_6_3	There is a system for measuring council project implementation at different levels and communicating the findings to management and stakeholders	61	1	4	2.2	0.7
PF_6_4	The expected outcomes of all council projects are determined at the beginning and communicated to all staff	61	1	5	2.8	1.1
PF_6_5	The result measurement practice fosters a culture of focussing on the council project outcomes (not outputs which may not result in expected changes attributed to the council projects)	61	2	4	3.0	0.9
PF_6_6	Results measurement practices ensure that council resources are used for the council projects which would lead to the desired impact	61	2	5	3.5	0.9
PF_6_7	Results measurement practices are prioritised by the council through budget allocation and deployment of the right expertise	61	2	4	3.4	0.9
PF_6_8	A system exist for reviewing results from the measuring practices to celebrate success, determine challenges and development of action points for corrective purposes	61	1	4	2.5	0.9

Source: Author (2021)

Structural Equation Model (Fig 4.2), show a standardized path direct effect coefficient of 0.012 which is less than .10 indicating that on the whole, M&E measurement practice has a relatively small positive direct influence on Rural District Councils' projects performance. The results disprove the null hypothesis offered that implementing M&E measurement practice does not influence the performance of Rural District Council project performance. The null hypothesis rejected and the alternative hypothesis adopted. Thus, implementing M&E result measurement practice influences the performance of Rural District Council projects as measured by the eight items on the Likert scale with a positive direct effect coefficient of 0.012 as shown in figure 4.3.

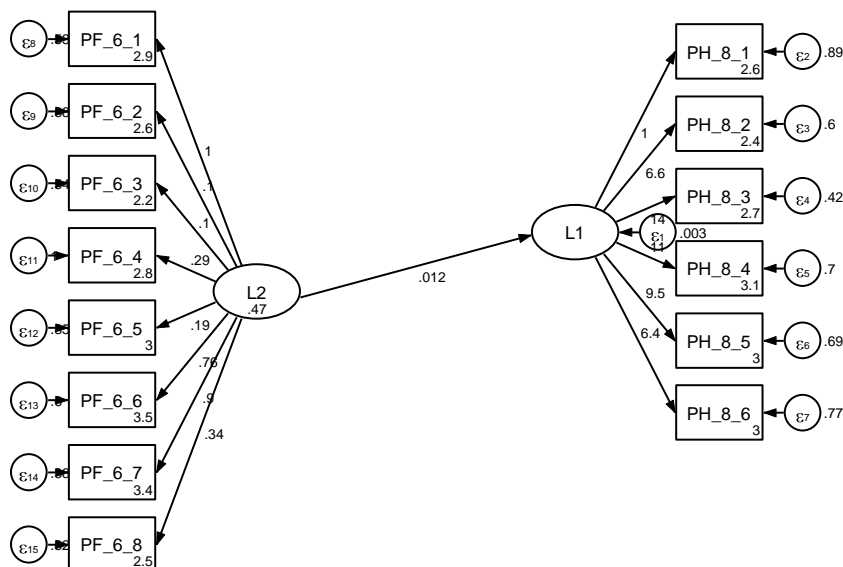


Figure 4.3: Influence of results measurement on project performance coefficient

Source: Author (2021)

#### **4.3.4 Rating on Council Project Performance in Bubi RDC**

The respondents asked to rate whether the project performance indicators of time, budget and quality using six items on the Likert scale tool. Out of the six items measured, the respondents scored half of the items below a mean of three meaning they disagreed with the statements while the other three statements scored a mean of three meaning half of the respondents were neutral. The respondents disagreed that there is time adherence in project implementation within Bubi district council (Mean score 2.6 and Standard Deviation of 1). On the project budgets, being strictly adhered to leading to completion of projects within allocated time the respondents mean rating was 2.4 and a standard deviation of 0.9 indicating that the respondents did not agree that the project budgets not strictly adhered to and completed on time. The respondents also disagreed that the quality of council projects is determined through a robust measuring system (Mean score 2.7 and Standard Deviation 1). The respondents' disagreement with these items on Likert scale tool could be an indication that the council projects could be performing below expectation. Table 4.7 shows the scoring of project performance indicator statements.

Table 4.7. Likert Scale Item rating on Council project performance

Variables	Description	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>L1</b>	<b>Part H: Council projects Performance</b>					
PH_8_1	There is time adherence in project implementation within Bubi district council	61	1	5	2.6	1.0
PH_8_2	The project budgets are strictly adhered to leading to completion of projects within allocated time	61	1	4	2.4	0.9
PH_8_3	The quality of council projects is determined through a robust measuring system	61	1	4	2.7	1.0
PH_8_4	Communities are part of the decision making process leading to greater impact of council projects	61	1	4	3.1	1.1
PH_8_5	Through monitoring and evaluation practices a sense of ownership by communities on council projects is achieved	61	1	4	3.0	1.0
PH_8_6	The inclusive approach promoted through M&E practices creates harmony with communities and stakeholders on council projects	61	1	4	3.0	1.0

Source: Author (2021)

The figure 4.4 below shows the results of Structural Equation Model when run simultaneously for all likert items in the tool. The conclusions reached above still stand that pause and reflect practice, accountability practice and results measurement influence Council project performance. What changed is the magnitude of the influence when the items were simultaneously analysed..

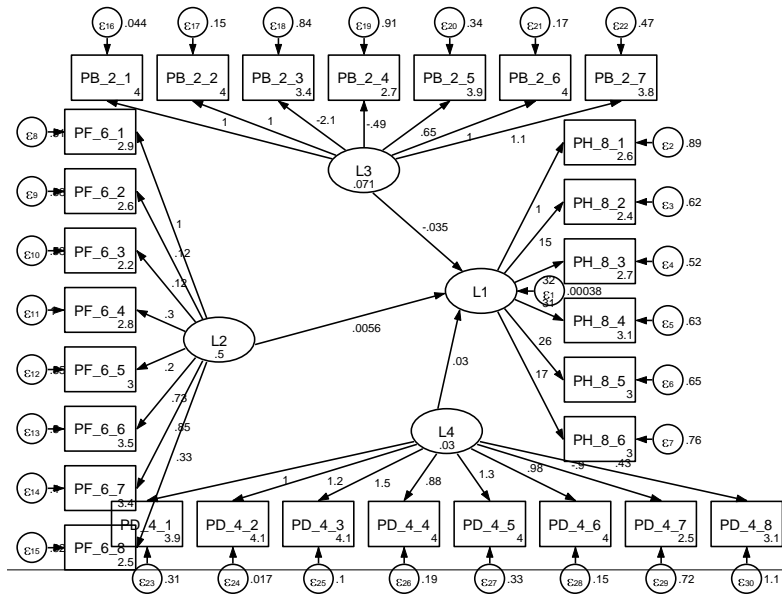


Figure 4.4: Indicator Statements on Council Project Performance coefficient

Source: Author (2021)

#### 4.4 Summary

The chapter analysed the findings of the responses given by the respondents and summarised the important statistics relevant to the study. The influence of Monitoring and Evaluation practices of pause and reflect, accountability and results measurement were dealt with in the chapter and the findings indicated that they are crucial in councils` project management as evidenced by the views of the respondents and supporting literature.. Overall, the data demonstrated that the three independent variable of pause and reflect, accountability, results measurement practices have an influence on the dependent variable of project performance though with varying magnitudes. The following chapter will look at the summary of the findings, discussions on these findings, conclusion and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1. Introduction**

This chapter presents the summary of major findings, the discussion, conclusion and recommendations from the research done on the influence of monitoring and evaluation practices on rural district councils' project performance.

#### **5.2.1. Pause and reflect practice on Rural District Councils' projects performance in Zimbabwe**

The research study showed that pause and reflect practice have an influence on council project performance. It leads to the generation of innovative ideas that are important in influencing project performance. The respondents in the study indicated that pause and reflect improves project performance. This is consistent with findings of Cashman (2012) who concluded that to thrive and to innovate in today's complex, globally connected world, leaders need sophisticated ways to step back to understand what they are facing within and outside themselves. A study by USAID in Tanzania in 2015 in collaboration with RTI International where pause and reflection practice examined changes in local wildlife conservation and the priorities of USAID and the Tanzanian Government and managed to come up with ways to synchronise the priorities of all stakeholders involved. As a result, they were able to come up with activities that achieved the desired project outcomes.

According to Change Management Coach (2016) concluded that pause and reflect practices bring about a culture of self-retrospection and identification of lessons learned and promising practices imperative in designing, redesigning and



management of projects. This is consistent with the change theory of Kurt Lewis where organisations expected to set time for reflection that is referred to as the unfreezing, change and refreezing. The results of these findings resonate well with studies carried out by Groene and Branda, (2006) that indicated that the pause and reflect practice although valuable in Monitoring and evaluation, is not fully implemented by organizations. A process of pausing and setting time to reflect allows stakeholders to engage each other on all aspects of the project life cycle and collectively agree on what needs done to address identified grey areas. The overall conclusion that are drawn from this study is that the Bubi Rural District Council employees have an appreciation of the value of pause and reflect practices in influencing project performance. However, the study indicates that application of pause and reflect was not prioritised in project management in Bubi District Council regardless of the fact that there is evidence that pause and reflect could play a crucial role in ensuring quality project performance. Overall, the study revealed that pause and effect, If not implemented, has a negative influence on the performance of the council projects disproving the study hypothesis that implementing accountability practice does not influence the performance of Rural District Council projects.

### **5.2.2 Accountability practice on Rural District Councils' projects performance in Zimbabwe**

Accountability is the obligation to demonstrate that work conducted in accordance with agreed rules, standards, and report fairly and accurately on performance results, vis-à-vis mandated roles and or plans (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], n.d). The study revealed the importance of accountability practices and the respondents recognised its influence but the practices not mainstreamed within the Bubi District Council projects. Respondents

acknowledged the influence and benefit of accountability such as transfer of power to the communities to voice their concerns on the quality of the project delivery despite the limited resources available for community involvement activities. The study by Naidoo, (2009) observed the importance of accountability in project delivery in many organisations. Furthermore, the above findings are consonant with the requirements of the Management for Development Results (MfDR) approach which embodies generally accepted tenets of good governance such as accountability mainstreaming through setting clear objectives, evidence-based decision-making, transparency, and continuous adaptation and improvement (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development – Development Assistance Committee [OECD-DAC], 2008). These findings were also consistent with those of a research study conducted by the International Journal of Governance (2014) that analysed levels of accountability in Municipalities of Zimbabwe. The results from the study revealed that most of the municipalities were using a limited number of information provision tools to deliver information to residents resulting in citizens having little or no knowledge on what was going on in service delivery and why the municipalities were making certain decisions. The overall conclusion from this study is that the Bubi Rural district do not uphold accountability practices making it difficult for communities hold Bubi District Council accountable.

### **5.2.3 Result measurement practice on Rural District Councils' projects performance in Zimbabwe**

The findings of this study revealed that there is no results measurement system, no framework, indicators, target setting and setting of baselines values in the Bubi Rural Council. Overall, no system for measuring results that can inform project implementation and influence critical project decisions. The results of this study are

consistent with those of a study carried out in 2015 in Bangladesh by Enterprise Development (2015) for the Jamuna, Padma and Teesta Chars (M4C) project that found out that the only measurement practice carried out was long after the completion of the project. An interesting revelation in this study that observed by Hardlife and Zhou (2013) was that the respondents indicated that there was funding specifically allocated to Council employees for implementing measurement practices yet no measurement activities carried out. These findings point to the fact that the actual implementation of the results measurement not fully prioritised yet there is a budget allocated and staff to support the implementation of practice. In the case of Bubi Rural District Council, the importance of results measurement was evident from the responses received but the actual implementation compromised.

### **5.3 Summary of Main Findings**

The purpose of the study was to find out the influence of M&E practices on project performance. The research study found out that Bubi Rural Council does not promote accountability practices such as allowing communities to voice their concerns on the quality of the projects. This is regardless of the fact that employees are aware of these practices and they know the value these practices could bring to project performance. The overall conclusion that can be drawn from this research study is that the Bubi Rural District Council employees are aware of the importance and influence of pause and reflect practices in monitoring and evaluation and that if put into effect these can improve project performance. They generally agreed that if and when pause and reflect was planned, systematically conducted and stakeholders' perspectives included in decision making, the projects were likely to succeed and perform as well as expected, if not better. Bubi Rural District Council has no system

in place for developing and implementing measurement practices. There is no mechanism for measuring the progress and success of the Council projects. In essence, no system for measuring results that can inform project implementation and influence critical project decisions

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

The study concludes that M&E pause and reflect practices are critical for the performance of council projects. The study acknowledged that there is a need to institutionalize pause and reflect practices by establishing a robust system for collaborative learning and adaptation. Appropriate guidelines, budget, competent staff and organisational culture should support activities that can operationalise pause and reflect activities. Collaborative learning and adaption can influence performance as confirmed by respondents of the study. In conclusion, the study results confirms the held hypothesis that implementing pause and reflect influences project performance.

Regarding accountability practices, the study concluded that it is imperative to mainstream these practices to imbed inclusiveness and transparency in project management that subsequently leads to improved ownership and sustainability of the council projects. Adequate information provision, regular stakeholders' consultations and establishment of complains handling mechanisms is paramount in promoting inclusivity in management of council projects. The study results confirms the hypothesis that implementing accountability practice influences project performance.

Regarding results measurement practices, the study acknowledged results measurement as a critical practice for demonstration of the impact of the project,

ascertaining the views of the stakeholders and determination of actual progress of project implementation and this is a crucial source for evidence-based decision making. The study results also confirmed the hypothesis that mainstreaming results measurement influences project performance.

Overall, accountability, pause and reflect, and results measurement practices should form an integral part of any Rural District Council's project management in Zimbabwe to enhance quality project performance.

### **5.5 Recommendations**

The following key recommendations made were:

The study recommended that Rural District Councils in Zimbabwe should design an M&E system focusing on mainstreaming pause and reflect, accountability and results measurement practices supported by adequate budgets and staffing. The Local Government Ministry of Zimbabwe should develop policies that ensure that all councils in Zimbabwe design a well-constructed M&E framework to ensure that there are measurable performance indicators, baseline values and performance targets clearly set.

### **5.6 Areas of Further Research**

This project was only limited to the council employees of one of the many RDCs in Zimbabwe. An understanding of the status quo of the entirety of the RDCs in Zimbabwe through a randomised sample of the RDCs will give a clearer picture in terms of mainstreaming of the M&E practices. The study recommended that further research carried out on the adoption of M&E practices including pause and reflect, accountability and measurement practices in other Rural District Councils in Zimbabwe to build a clear and comprehensive picture of M&E practices in the whole of Zimbabwe.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX I: LETTER TO THE RESPONDENT

Dear Respondent,

#### RE: RESEARCH PROJECT

I am a postgraduate student of Africa Nazarene University pursuing Masters of Arts in Monitoring and Evaluation. As a requirement of my study, I am carrying out a survey on the influence of Monitoring and Evaluation practices on Rural Districts' projects in Zimbabwe: A case of Bubi District Council. The success of this study will significantly depend on your willingness and co-operation to provide the information required. All responses entered into the data collection software using mobile phones will be treated in absolute confidence and anonymity. I am therefore kindly requesting for your consent for me to interview you and take notes.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours Faithfully,



Luphathe Nyathi

## APPENDIX II: QUESTIONNAIRES

### Part A: Introduction and Background

This data collection tool is intended to collect information on the influence of Monitoring and Evaluation practices on Rural Districts Councils' projects performance in Zimbabwe: A case of Bubi District Council. You have been selected by chance through a random sampling process to participate in this survey. This survey is voluntary and you are free not to participate. All the information given will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality and ethical considerations, as it will only be used for the purpose of this study. Please respond by filling in the blank spaces or ticking (✓) where appropriate.

1.1 Gender of respondent:

1. Male:

2. Female:

1.2 Age of respondent [ ]

1.3 How long have you worked for Bubi district council? [ ]

1.4 Highest Level of Education

- 1) Certificate/Diploma [ ]  
 2) Degree [ ]  
 3) Postgraduate [ ]  
 4) PhD [ ]  
 5) Others (specify) [ ]

### Part B: Influence of Pause and Reflect Practice on council project performance

The following statements are related to the influence of pause and reflect practice on council project performance. Kindly tick as appropriate in your opinion for each statement

**Key: 5= Strongly Agree; 4= Agree; 3=Neutral; 2= Disagree; 1=Strongly Disagree**

#	Statement	5	4	3	2	1
B1	Learning with partners is an innovative way of influencing					

	council project performance					
B2	The views of diverse stakeholders are key in decision making on council projects					
B3	Planned learning with partners practice influence council project performance					
B4	In Bubi district council, lessons learned are acted upon timely to enhance council project performance					
B5	Learning with partners leads to adoption of innovative ideas which are important on influencing council project performance					
B6	Learning with partners influence council project to meet intended outcomes					
B7	Collaborative learning promotes sharing of ideas which influence council project performance					

### Part C: Collaborative Learning and Adaptation

The following statements are related to the influence of collaborative learning and adaptation practices on influencing council project performance. Kindly tick as appropriate on your opinion on each statement

**Key: 5= Strongly Agree; 4= Agree; 3=Neutral; 2= Disagree; 1=Strongly Disagree**

#	Statement	5	4	3	2	1
C1	In Bubi district, time and resources are invested in learning with stakeholders to influence council project performance					
C2	Participation of community members add value to the lessons learned which influence council project performance					
C3	The views and ideas of stakeholders are welcome and included in strategic plans to influence council project performance					
C4	Learning together lead to richness of decisions made which					



	influence council project performance					
C5	Identified ideas are adopted to influence council project performance					
C6	Learning leads to new ways of implementing and managing council project performance					
C7	Innovativeness is considered as imperative on influencing council project performance					
C8	Project modifications are backed by lessons learned to influence council project performance					
C9	Bubi district council has a strong team for adaptation management which influence council project performance					

**Part D: Influence of Accountability Practice on council project performance**

Below are statements on influence of Accountability practice on council project performance. Kindly tick the statement as appropriate on your opinion on each statement.

**Key: 5= Strongly Agree; 4= Agree; 3=Neutral; 2= Disagree; 1=Strongly Disagree**

#	Statement	5	4	3	2	1
D1	Having an accountability framework for the district is critical in promoting participation of all stakeholders in the district on council project performance					
D2	Accountability practice are the means by which the community members can be involved in the management of council project performance					
D3	Without accountability practice, community members and other stakeholders do not have any mechanisms for questioning council operations.					
D4	Accountability practices transfers power to stakeholders to meaningfully participate on council project performance					
D5	Accountability practice enables determination of quality of council projects based on stakeholders' lens					
D6	Through accountability practice council's resources are					

	efficiently used to deliver quality council project performance					
D7	Bubi district council has a budget and staff for implementing and managing accountability practice performance					
D8	Mainstreaming accountability practices is one of the best practices on promotion of servant leadership within council					

**Part E: Information provision, Consultation and Feedback and Complaints**

The following statements are related to the influence of information provision, consultation and feedback and complaints practices on council project performance.

Kindly tick as appropriate on your opinion on each statement

**Key: 5= Strongly Agree; 4= Agree; 3=Neutral; 2= Disagree; 1=Strongly Disagree**

#	Statement	5	4	3	2	1
E1	Giving information to all stakeholders promotes their participation on council project performance					
E2	Information provision empowers all stakeholders especially the community members to question certain decision on council project performance					
E3	Providing information empowers the stakeholders to complain when council project performance fail to meet expectations					
E4	Providing information enables stakeholders to review council project performance against set targets					
E5	Providing information enables stakeholders to keep track on council project schedules					
E6	Information provision provides a platform for sharing ideas with stakeholders					
E7	Information provision is a critical component of council project management					
E8	Consulting stakeholders enables council to implement success projects with clearly defined targets					

E9	A system for consulting stakeholders exist and its regularly utilised					
E10	Projects are designed based on consultations with the stakeholders					
E11	Consultation reports are compiled and used for decision making on council projects					
E12	Designing feedback and complaints systems allows stakeholders to demand quality projects from council					
E13	Bubi district welcomes feedback and complaints from stakeholders and there is a system for collection in place					
E14	All Bubi district council staff are aware of the feedback and complaints system in place					
E15	Allowing stakeholders to complaints enables council to implement successful projects					
E16	Feedback and complaints from stakeholders enables council projects to be kept on track					
E17	Feedback and complaints ensures council projects do not cause harm to the communities					
E18	Feedback and complaints system ensures stakeholders are not short-changed by the council					
E19	Feedback and complaints are collated, analysed and reported timely to influence council projects					

#### Part F: Results Measurement Practices

The following statements are related to the influence of results measurement practice on council project performance. Kindly tick as appropriate on your opinion on each statement

**Key: 5= Strongly Agree; 4= Agree; 3=Neutral; 2= Disagree; 1=Strongly Disagree**

#	Statement	5	4	3	2	1
F1	A culture of measuring results and communicating these is embedded on council projects management system					

F2	A robust framework specifying results chain is available for all council project performance					
F3	There is a system for measuring council project implementation at different levels and communicating the findings to management and stakeholders					
F4	The expected outcomes of all council projects are determined at the beginning and communicated to all staff					
F5	The result measurement practice fosters a culture of focussing on the council project outcomes (not outputs which may not result in expected changes attributed to the council projects)					
F6	Results measurement practices ensure that council resources are used for the council projects which would lead to the desired impact					
F7	Results measurement practices are prioritised by the council through budget allocation and deployment of the right expertise					
F8	A system exist for reviewing results from the measuring practice to celebrate success, determine challenges and development of action points for corrective purposes					

### Part G: Target Setting, Indicator Framework and Data Processing

The following statements are related to the influence of Target setting, Indicator framework and Data processing practices on council project performance. Kindly tick as appropriate on your opinion on each statement

**Key: 5= Strongly Agree; 4= Agree; 3=Neutral; 2= Disagree; 1=Strongly Disagree**

#	Statement	5	4	3	2	1
G1	Determining the baseline and target values for council projects is done for all projects					

G2	The project targets are determined based on available resources and expertise					
G3	Targets are set to enable effective follow up and supervision of council project performance					
G4	The project targets are used to develop a monitoring system for checking achievement					
G5	The council has an indicator framework for all council projects and staff are trained on this framework <i>The indicators in the framework are defined to ensure consistency in measurement and calculation</i>					
G6	Data sources for all the indicators in the framework are specified and the measurement time lines are defined					
G7	All source documents and reporting forms relevant for measuring the indicator(s) are available for auditing purposes).					
G8	The indicator framework is known by all council staff and its regularly reviewed to keep it currunt					
G9	Data collection tools are available for monitoring council projects					
G10	The council has a dedicated unit responsible for data collection, analysis and reporting on council projects					
G11	The data collection tools used to monitor council project are digitalised to speed up data collection, reduce errors and reduce costs					
G12	The council has a running budget for implementing monitoring practice					
G13	Continuous training is conducted to ensure quality data collection and reporting					
G14	The data collected has sufficient precision to measure the indicator(s) (i.e., relevant data are collected by sex, age, etc. if the indicator specifies disaggregation by these characteristics).					

G15	There is a back-up procedure for data storage to avoid data loss and improve availability of data for future use/reference.					
G16	Data is analysed and reports compiled according to the timelines specified in indicator framework					
G17	Data analysis results are discussed by all staff to keep them aware of the council projects status					
G18	Projects modifications are done based on the results of the data analysis findings					
G19	Continuous training is conducted to ensure good data management and processing					

#### Part H: Council project performance

The following statements are related to the achievement of council project performance in terms of quality, timeliness and budget. Kindly tick as appropriate your opinion on each statement

**Key: 5= Strongly Agree; 4= Agree; 3=Neutral; 2= Disagree; 1=Strongly Disagree**

#	Statement	5	4	3	2	1
H1	In Bubi District, project are implemented within the allocated time lines					
H2	The project budgets are strictly adhered leading to completion of projects within allocated budgets					
H3	The performance of council projects is determined through a robust measuring system					
H4	Communities are part of the decision making processes leading to improved collaboration and subsequent improved project performance					
H5	Through monitoring and evaluation practices a sense of ownership by communities on council project is achieved					
H6	The inclusive approach promoted through M&E practices creates harmony with communities and					

stakeholders on council projects						
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### Part B. Introduction and background

This data collection tool is intended to collect information on the influence of Monitoring and Evaluation practices on Rural Districts Councils' projects in Zimbabwe: A case of Bubi District Council. You have been selected by chance through a random sampling process to participate in this survey. This survey is voluntary and you are free not to participate. All the information given will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality and ethical considerations, as it will only be used for the purpose of this study

#### Key Informant Interviews guide

#	Key themes	Guiding questions
1	Accountability Practices	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Information provision</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What information do you provide to the residents or community members about Bubi Rural District Council projects?</li> <li>2. Why do you think this information is important?</li> <li>3. How is this information provided? Do you think this information gets to all the different groups in the district?</li> </ol> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Consultation</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What and how do you ensure the views of the rate payers are included in council project design and implementation?</li> <li>2. Do you think consulting rate payers on Rural District Council projects is important and why?</li> <li>3. Who should lead consultations with the rate payers?</li> </ol> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Complaints and Feedback handling</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sometimes there will be problems. How would</li> </ol>

		<p>you prefer the rate payers to tell the Rural District Council if they have a suggestion or complaint?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Do you it is important to enable rate payers to file complaints to the council if there are deviations on commitments?</li> <li>3. Do you think the rate payers have a right to complain?</li> <li>4. Are there mechanisms for filing complaints to the Rural District Council?</li> <li>5. If it's there, how is the system used? If not available, do you think it's important for council to establish this system?</li> <li>6. If not available, do you think this have a negative bearing on how the council projects are designed and implemented?</li> </ol>
2	Pause and Reflect practices	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Collaborative learning</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. As council, how frequent do you conduct learning reviews with the participation of rate payers and other stakeholders?</li> <li>2. If this is not part of the council culture, do you think collaborative learning is important in council projects?</li> <li>3. In your opinion, how could collaborative learning influence council projects?</li> </ol> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Adaptation</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How do you use the learnings derived from the learning reviews?</li> <li>2. How do collaborative learning influence council projects design and implementation?</li> <li>3. As part of council, have you ever made project modifications as a result of stakeholders' views?</li> </ol>



3	Results measurement practices	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Targets settings, Indicator framework and reporting</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. As council, do you have a measuring framework with clear targets and indicators for all the council projects?</li> <li>2. How are these indicators measured? Do you a dedicated unit within council for managing M&amp;E practices?</li> <li>3. What systems or tools are used for measuring project performance?</li> <li>4. How is the data from council project measurement processed, reported and disseminated?</li> <li>5. How is or could target setting, indicator framework and data analysis and reporting influencing council projects?</li> <li>6. In your opinion, do you think it is important to establish results measurement for council projects?</li> </ol>
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