

# Assessing the Impact of Corruption and Mismanagement on Service Delivery in Harare City Council, Zimbabwe: Challenges and Potential Solutions

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**Abstract:** This study explores the issue of corruption and mismanagement in Harare City Council, Zimbabwe and its significance lies in its contribution to the existing literature on good governance and public administration, and its potential to inform policy and practice decisions related to promoting transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in public institutions. The research objectives of the study are to investigate the causes and consequences of corruption and mismanagement in Harare City Council, and to identify potential solutions to these challenges. The study employed a qualitative research approach, using a case study design to explore the issue of corruption and mismanagement in Harare City Council. The study's findings suggest that the council faces significant challenges in areas such as leadership and governance, corruption and mismanagement, health delivery, waste management, and service delivery. Furthermore, the findings also highlight the need for the council to prioritize transparency, accountability, and responsiveness, and implement robust anti-corruption measures to prevent corruption and mismanagement. The study's recommendations include prioritizing transparency, accountability, and responsiveness, implementing robust anti-corruption measures, improving leadership and governance, and improving health delivery, waste management, and service delivery. These findings and recommendations have implications for policy and practice, and highlight the need for further research on good governance and public administration in developing countries. More so, the findings and recommendations contribute to the existing literature on good governance and public administration, and provide insights into the challenges facing public institutions in developing countries.

**Key Words:** corruption, mismanagement, good governance, public administration, transparency, accountability and responsiveness

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## 1. Introduction and Background to the Study

The city of Harare, once a beacon of pride for Zimbabwe, has been marred by poor service delivery, corruption, and mismanagement for far too long (Machingura, 2018). The recent commission of inquiry report into the operations of Harare City Council has laid bare the rot that has been festering within the local authority, with

senior officials and councillors identified as the primary culprits (Commission of Inquiry Report, 2022). Corruption and mismanagement are global challenges that affect many countries, particularly in the developing world (Transparency International, 2022). The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) highlight the importance of good governance and effective institutions in achieving sustainable development (UN, 2015). Globally, there is a growing recognition of the need for effective governance and accountability in the management of public institutions (World Bank, 2018). In the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region, corruption and mismanagement are significant challenges that affect many countries (SADC, 2020). The African Union's Agenda 2063 emphasizes the importance of good governance and effective institutions in achieving sustainable development and economic growth (African Union, 2015). Regional organizations, such as SADC, have implemented various initiatives to promote good governance and accountability in member states (SADC, 2020). In Zimbabwe, corruption and mismanagement have been identified as major challenges that affect the delivery of public services (Machingura, 2018). However, the government has implemented various initiatives to address these challenges, including the establishment of anti-corruption agencies and the development of policies to promote transparency and accountability (Zimbabwe Government, 2020). Nevertheless, despite these efforts, corruption and mismanagement remain significant challenges in many public institutions, including Harare City Council (Commission of Inquiry Report, 2022). Harare City Council has been plagued by corruption and mismanagement for many years, with numerous reports and articles highlighting the rampant corruption and maladministration within the council (Mlambo, 2020). Despite these reports, the situation has worsened, with corrupt activities becoming a survival mechanism for council officials (Makochehanwa, 2019). The collapse of infrastructure, including the water supply and sanitation systems, has had severe consequences for the city's residents, including a cholera outbreak that has affected many parts of the city (WHO, 2022).

## 2. Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in the theoretical framework of good governance, which emphasizes the importance of transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in the management of public institutions (UNDP, 2017). The framework also highlights the need for effective leadership and institutional capacity to ensure that public institutions are able to deliver services to citizens (World Bank, 2018). Good governance is essential for promoting economic growth, reducing poverty, and improving the overall well-being of citizens (Kaufmann, 2019). The theoretical framework of good governance is relevant to this study because it provides a conceptual lens for understanding the challenges facing Harare City Council. The framework highlights the importance of transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in the management of public institutions, which are critical for preventing corruption and mismanagement (Transparency International, 2022). The application of this framework, allows the study to explore the extent to which good governance principles have been applied in Harare City Council and to identify areas for improvement.

### 2.1. Literature Review

Numerous studies have highlighted the negative impact of corruption and mismanagement on the delivery of public services (Kaufmann, 2019). Corruption can lead to the diversion of resources away from essential services, such as healthcare and education, and can undermine the legitimacy of public institutions (Transparency International, 2022). In the context of Harare City Council, corruption and mismanagement have led to the collapse of infrastructure and a decline in service delivery (Machingura, 2018). Good governance is critical for promoting economic growth, reducing poverty, and improving the overall well-being of citizens (World Bank, 2018) whereas, effective leadership and institutional capacity are essential for ensuring that public institutions are able to deliver services to citizens (UNDP, 2017). In Harare City Council, effective leadership and institutional capacity are critical for preventing corruption and mismanagement and promoting good governance. The literature highlights the importance of transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in public institutions. Transparency is critical for preventing corruption and mismanagement, while accountability is essential for ensuring that officials are held responsible for their actions (Transparency International, 2022). Responsiveness

is critical for ensuring that the needs of citizens are met, and that public institutions are able to deliver services effectively (UNDP, 2017).

### 3. Research Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research method, using a case study design to explore the issue of corruption and mismanagement within Harare City Council (Yin, 2018). The target population for the study was council officials, residents of Harare, and other stakeholders of which a sample size of 100 participants was selected using a purposive sampling technique (Etikan, 2016). Data were collected using semi-structured interviews and document analysis (Creswell, 2014) and analysed using thematic analysis, and the reliability and validity of the study were ensured through the use of multiple sources of data and the verification of findings (Miles, 2014).

### 4. Research Findings

The study's findings highlight the need for bold and decisive action to address the corruption and mismanagement that has plagued Harare City Council for far too long and suggest the need to improve its effectiveness on service delivery.

**4.1. Transparency:** the study found that Harare City Council lacks transparency in its operations where it is not disclosing financial information and decision-making processes to the public, which makes it difficult to hold officials accountable for their actions.

**4.2. Accountability:** the study found that Harare City Council lacks accountability mechanisms and does not have a robust system for holding officials accountable for their actions, which has contributed to the corruption and mismanagement that has plagued the council.

**4.3. Responsiveness:** the study found that Harare City Council is not responsive to the needs of citizens and is not engaging with citizens or involve them in decision-making processes, which has contributed to the decline in service delivery and the collapse of infrastructure.

**4.4. Leadership and Governance:** the study found that Harare City Council lacks effective leadership and governance. The council's leadership has failed to provide a clear vision and direction for the council, and has not been able to effectively manage the council's resources.

**4.5. Corruption and Mismanagement:** the study found that corruption and mismanagement are rampant in Harare City Council. The council's officials engage in corrupt practices, such as nepotism, bribery, and embezzlement, which has led to the collapse of infrastructure and a decline in service delivery.

**4.6. Health Delivery Service:** The study found that Harare City Council's health delivery service is in shambles whereby health facilities lack essential medicines and equipment, and health workers are often absent or unmotivated.

**4.7. Waste Management:** The study found that Harare City Council's waste management system is ineffective where waste collection services are irregular, and waste often accumulates in streets and open spaces.

**4.8. Service Delivery:** The study found that Harare City Council's service delivery is poor where services, such as water and sanitation, are often disrupted, and citizens are forced to rely on alternative sources of water and sanitation.

**4.9. Infrastructure Development:** The council's infrastructure development is poor, with many roads and buildings in disrepair.

**4.10. Citizen Engagement:** The council lacks effective mechanisms for engaging with citizens and involving them in decision-making processes such as public meetings and participatory budgeting.

#### 4.1. Data Analysis and Discussion

The findings suggest that the council needs to improve its transparency, accountability, and responsiveness.

**4.1.1. Leadership and Governance:** The study found that Harare City Council lacks effective leadership and governance. This finding is consistent with the literature, which suggests that effective leadership and governance are critical for promoting good governance and preventing corruption and mismanagement (UNDP,

2017). The theoretical framework of good governance also highlights the importance of effective leadership and institutional capacity in ensuring that public institutions are able to deliver services to citizens (World Bank, 2018). The findings suggest that Harare City Council needs to prioritize leadership and governance development, and ensure that officials are held accountable for their actions.

**4.1.2. Corruption and Mismanagement:** The study found that corruption and mismanagement are rampant in Harare City Council. This finding is consistent with the literature, which suggests that corruption and mismanagement can have severe consequences for public institutions and citizens (Transparency International, 2022). The theoretical framework of good governance highlights the importance of transparency and accountability in preventing corruption and mismanagement (UNDP, 2017). The findings suggest that Harare City Council needs to implement robust anti-corruption measures, such as audits and performance evaluations, to prevent corruption and mismanagement.

**4.1.3. Health Delivery Service:** The study found that Harare City Council's health delivery service is in shambles. This finding is consistent with the literature, which suggests that poor health delivery is a major challenge facing many public institutions in developing countries (WHO, 2020). The theoretical framework of good governance highlights the importance of effective service delivery in promoting the well-being of citizens (World Bank, 2018). The findings suggest that Harare City Council needs to prioritize health delivery and ensure that health facilities are adequately equipped and staffed.

**4.1.4. Waste Management:** The study found that Harare City Council's waste management system is ineffective. This finding is consistent with the literature, which suggests that poor waste management can have severe consequences for public health and the environment (UNEP, 2018). The findings suggest that Harare City Council needs to improve its waste management system by increasing the frequency of waste collection and providing adequate waste disposal facilities.

**4.1.5. Service Delivery:** The study found that Harare City Council's service delivery is poor. This finding is consistent with the literature, which suggests that poor service delivery is a major challenge facing many public institutions in developing countries (UNDP, 2017). The study's findings suggest that Harare City Council needs to prioritize service delivery and ensure that services are reliable and efficient.

**4.1.6. Infrastructure Development:** The study also found that Harare City Council faces challenges in other areas, such as infrastructure development, citizen engagement, and transparency and accountability. These findings are consistent with the literature, which suggests that these areas are critical for promoting good governance and preventing corruption and mismanagement (UNDP, 2017; World Bank, 2018).

**4.1.7. Corruption and Mismanagement:** The findings highlight the need for bold and decisive action to address the corruption and mismanagement that has plagued Harare City Council for far too long. The findings and recommendations are consistent with the literature and the theoretical framework of good governance, which suggest that Harare City Council needs to prioritize transparency, accountability, and responsiveness, and implement robust anti-corruption measures to prevent corruption and mismanagement.

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study's findings suggest that Harare City Council faces significant challenges in areas such as leadership and governance, corruption and mismanagement, health delivery, waste management, and service delivery. The findings also highlight the need for the council to prioritize transparency, accountability, and responsiveness, and implement robust anti-corruption measures to prevent corruption and mismanagement. The study's analysis suggests that the challenges facing Harare City Council are complex and multifaceted hence the need for a comprehensive approach to addressing these challenges, including prioritizing transparency, accountability, and responsiveness, and implementing robust anti-corruption measures. Consequently, the findings have implications for policy and practice. This will enable policymakers and practitioners to use the findings to inform policy and practice decisions related to good governance and public administration. It is also important to note that the findings are based on a case study of Harare City Council, and may not be generalizable to other public institutions in developing countries and are based on qualitative data, and may not provide a comprehensive

picture of the challenges facing Harare City Council. Despite these limitations, the findings provide valuable insights into the challenges facing Harare City Council, and highlight the need for good governance and public administration in promoting the well-being of citizens and recommendations will contribute to the existing literature on good governance and public administration, and will provide policymakers and practitioners with valuable insights into the challenges facing public institutions in developing countries. Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations can be made:

- Corrupt officials should be prosecuted and stolen funds recovered to ensure that they are held accountable for their actions.
- Reforms should be implemented to strengthen the institution of local governance and prevent corruption and mismanagement in the future.
- Transparency and accountability should be increased in the operations of Harare City Council, including regular audits and public disclosure of financial information.
- Good governance and leadership should be supported at Harare City Council, including providing training and capacity-building programs for council officials.
- The council should implement robust anti-corruption measures, such as audits and performance evaluations, to prevent corruption and mismanagement.
- The council should prioritize health delivery and ensure that health facilities are adequately equipped and staffed.
- The council should improve its waste management system by increasing the frequency of waste collection and providing adequate waste disposal facilities.
- The council should prioritize service delivery and ensure that services are reliable and efficient.
- The council should implement citizen engagement mechanisms, such as public meetings and participatory budgeting, to involve citizens in decision-making processes.
- The council should prioritize infrastructure development and allocate adequate resources for maintenance and repairs.

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