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Examining perceived effectiveness of budgetary allocation and resource management in public institutions: A case study of the Zambia corrections services headquarters

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Abstract

This study investigates the perceived effectiveness of budgetary allocation and resource management at the Zambia Correctional Services (ZCS) Headquarters, with a focus on its impact on administrative performance. The primary objectives were to (1) assess the extent to which the budgetary processes is transparency at ZCS HQ, (2) analyse the effectiveness of resource management, and (3) evaluate how resource management contributes to enhancing administrative performance. The study was supported by Agency Theory as the theoretical framework, which highlights the relationships between principals (superiors) and agents (subordinates), emphasizing the role of budget participation, control, and accountability. The research employed a descriptive research design, using structured questionnaires as the primary data collection method. The sample size consisted of 50 respondents, selected from various roles at ZCS HQ to provide a representative understanding of the processes and outcomes. Data analysis revealed that 82% of respondents perceived the budgetary process as transparent. Despite this, challenges such as delays in resource allocation, hierarchical inefficiencies, and occasional shortages of resources were prevalent. Involvement in the budget allocation process was moderate, with 62% of respondents engaged, while resource management decision-making saw lower engagement (14%). Key findings indicated that resource management contributes significantly to administrative performance, with 74% of respondents indicating a high degree of contribution. However, areas requiring improvement include financial resource management (48% of respondents identified this as a concern) and human resource management (34%). Additionally, 96% of respondents noted that resource shortages occur occasionally, impacting operational efficiency. The study concludes that while ZCS HQ has established generally effective budgetary and resource management systems, there are notable gaps that need addressing, particularly in improving the timeliness of resource allocation and increasing staff involvement in decision-making processes. Key recommendations include improving the efficiency of resource allocation, enhancing transparency through regular audits, investing in financial and human resource management, and fostering greater employee participation in budgeting and resource management decisions. These steps will contribute to improved operational efficiency and administrative performance at ZCS HQ.

Keywords: Perceived effectiveness, budgetary allocation, resource management, public institutions, ZCS headquarters

Introduction

The Zambia Correctional Service is governed by chapter 97 of the laws of Zambia (Prisons Act), which was under review in 2016 following the Service's name change from Zambia Prisons Service to Zambia Correctional Service on 5th January 2016. According to article 193 of the Republican Constitution, the Service is mandated to manage all prisons and correctional centers across the country.

The budget is increasingly recognized as the key tool for economic management (Kiringai, 2022) ^[34]. It is nevertheless also recognized that a country can have a sound budget and financial system and still fail to achieve its intended targets. This suggests that the rules of the game by which the budget is formulated and implemented are equally important and that they do influence outcomes (Schick, 2019) ^[35]. According to Bartle (2018) ^[18] budgets today provide a focus for the organization, aid in the coordination of activities and facilitates control.

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Through budgeting, at both management level and operation level looks at the future and lays down what has to be achieved. Budgetary controls check whether the plans are being realized and put into effect corrective measures, where deviation or short-fall is occurring (Bartle, 2018) ^[18]. Bartle emphasized that without effective controls, an enterprise was at the mercy of internal and external forces which can disrupt its efficiency, and be unaware; such enterprise will not be able to combat such forces.

When budgeting and control system is in use, budgets are established which set out in financial terms, the responsibility of managers in relation to the requirement of the overall policy of the company. Continuous comparison is made between the actual and budgeted results, which are intended to either secure, thorough action of managers, the objectives of policy or to even provide a basis for policy revision (Lucey, 2014) ^[37]. Business budgeting is a basic and essential process that allows businesses to attain many goals in one course of action. There are several goals that many businesses seek to achieve when they create and implement a budget. These goals include control and evaluation, planning, communication, and motivation (Lucey, 2014) ^[37]. According to Kariuki (2020) ^[38], budgeting is a process of planning the financial operations of a business. Budgeting as a management tool helps to organize and formalize management's planning of activities. Budgeting as a financial tool is useful for both evaluation and control of organizations for the planning of future activities.

A budget is a very important tool for management in all organizations. It serves as a tool for planning and controlling the use of scarce financial resources with the aim of achieving organizational goals (Schick, 2019) ^[35]. Budgets often establish performance goals for the unit in terms of costs, revenues, and/or production (Little *et al.*, 2017) ^[40]. Other benefits of budget include providing managers with realistic performance targets, coordinate the various segments hence achieving goal congruence, serves as a communication tool for managers to exchange ideas and it is a motivator to all staff (Helmkamp *et al.*, 2013) ^[41].

(Horngren *et al.*, (2015) ^[42] asserted that a budget is a quantitative expression of a proposed plan of action by management for a future time period and is an aid to the coordination and implementation of the plan. He further indicates that budgets can cover both financial and nonfinancial aspects of these plans and acts as blue print for the company in the forthcoming period (Horngren *et al.*, 2015) ^[42]. Even though the focus is so much on for profit organizations, the same principle applies to county.

Governments in Kenya where budgets serve the same purpose of providing future direction of the organization. The budgeting process is an integral part of both planning and control. Key (2020) noted that too often budgets are associated with negative, penny-pinching control activities whereas the full process is much broader and more positive than that. Budgeting is about making plans for the future, implementing those plans and monitoring activities to see whether they conform to the plan (Thomas, 2016) ^[44]. To do this successfully requires top management support, cooperative middle managers and well-organized reporting systems (Lucey, 2014) ^[37]. A good budgeting process incorporates a long-term perspective, establishes linkages to organizational goals, focuses budget decision on results and outcomes and promotes effective communication with stakeholders. Budgeting is strategic in nature and not a

matter of balancing International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management, United Kingdom Licensed under Creative Common revenues and expenditure every year (Muleri, 2017) ^[45]. The annual budget is often subdivided by months or quarters. The budgeted amounts for a year are frequently revised as the year unfolds. For example, at the end of the first quarter, the budgets of the next three quarters are changed in light of new information (Muleri, 2017) ^[45]. However, according to Mawathe (2008) ^[46], budget execution is difficult to control when budget is continually being revised.

Statement of the problem

Public institutions which undertook budgeting on a hierarchical basis faced a situation at each level in the hierarchy, there was a possibility that the original request would be changed in one way or another as the various budget were processed further and aggregated. One of the major challenges therefore that affected these budgets with regard to implementation was that since those that made the initial budgets, which were later amended during aggregation would resist the proposed budgets (Heller & Aghvelli, 2015) ^[47]. Over the years, public institutions have operated on a deficit budget. This has forced the institution to reduce the allocation to the user department and thus the implementation of the budget has been a challenge to the public institution. The funding level from the government is grossly understated over the years. Public institution had to use fund generated internally to complete some of the government-initiated projects at the expense of other critical activities. The policy of releasing recurrent and development fund to public institution has been a hindrance to efficient administration of institution operation.

Research objectives

Main objective

To examine the perceived effectiveness of budgetary allocation and resources management in public institution.

Specific objectives

1. To assess the extent to which the budgetary processes is transparent at the Zambia Correctional Services HQ.
2. To analyse the effectiveness of resource management of the Zambia Correctional Services HQ.
3. To evaluate the impact of effective resource management on enhancing administrative performance at the Zambia Correctional Services HQ.

Theoretical framework

Agency theory explains the relationship between principals and agents, where one party (the agent) acts on behalf of another (the principal). In the context of public institutions such as the Zambia Correctional Services (ZCS) Headquarters, agency theory is useful in examining how budgetary allocation and resource management processes are influenced by the dynamics between government authorities (principals) and institutional managers (agents). These dynamics can lead to inefficiencies, particularly when the interests of the agents (managers) deviate from those of the principals (government or stakeholders), resulting in challenges such as budgetary slack or resource misallocation.

Agency theory asserts that agents may act in their self-interest rather than in the best interest of the principal. In the

case of budgetary allocation, managers may misrepresent financial needs by intentionally inflating costs or underestimating revenues to create budgetary slack an extra margin that allows flexibility in spending or reduced performance pressure. Horngren (1982) ^[48] identifies budgetary slack as one of the critical unsolved problems in budget control, where managers can exploit their position to overstate costs, leading to inefficient resource utilization. In the context of ZCS HQ, the existence of budgetary slack can impede the institution's ability to efficiently allocate resources, which may result in operational inefficiencies and poor service delivery.

Budgetary slack is defined as the difference between the appropriated budget and the actual minimum costs required to operate the institution (Moene, 1986) ^[49]. This slack can occur when institutional managers deliberately misstate their capabilities or costs to create flexibility within the budget. Young (1985) ^[50] suggests that slack represents the extent to which managers understate their productive capabilities when setting work standards against which their performance will be evaluated. In the case of ZCS HQ, this behaviour may manifest in exaggerated cost projections for correctional services, infrastructure development, or staff training, which can lead to resource wastage and suboptimal outcomes. Agency theory predicts that participation in the budgeting process may either exacerbate or mitigate the creation of slack, depending on how the system is structured. When managers participate in budgeting, they may be more inclined to introduce slack to protect their interests or reduce performance pressure. Murray (1990) ^[51], however, argues that participation may also encourage managers to propose more challenging tasks, leading to more accurate budget estimates and reduced slack. In the context of ZCS HQ, the study aims to determine whether the budget processes in place provide opportunities for managers to insert slack or whether they encourage transparency and accountability, leading to more effective resource allocation.

Moreover, agency theory highlights the importance of aligning the interests of the agents (managers) with those of the principals (government and stakeholders) to minimize inefficiencies. Merchant (1985) ^[52] argues that the design and implementation of budgetary systems play a critical role in determining the extent of slack that managers incorporate. A well-structured budgetary system can reduce the tendency to insert slack by promoting accountability, transparency, and performance-based evaluations. In the case of ZCS HQ, the effectiveness of the budgetary system in place will be analysed to determine how it influences resource allocation and whether it promotes the efficient use of resources to achieve institutional goals. The study will also explore how resource management practices at ZCS HQ are influenced by agency dynamics. Resource management involves the allocation and utilization of financial, human, and material resources to achieve institutional objectives. In the context of public institutions like ZCS HQ, effective resource management is crucial for delivering essential services such as correctional programs, staff development, and infrastructure maintenance. Agency theory suggests that if managers are not held accountable for how resources are allocated, they may prioritize their interests over the institution's needs, leading to inefficiencies.

Literature Review

Budget processes and transparency the Zambia Correctional Services.

Financial management practices" are defined and demarcated as the practices performed by the accounting officer, the chief financial officer and other managers in the areas of budgeting, supply chain management, movable asset management and control. This definition excludes asset management, because asset management is the joint responsibility of the Department of Public Works as custodian of fixed assets and Correctional Services as user and the responsibilities are directed by the Government.

The selection of budgeting, supply chain management, movable asset management and control as the four areas of financial management practices is in agreement with the view of Abedian and Biggs (as cited in McThomas, 2018) ^[53] that sound financial management, be it in the public or private sector, is vested in the timely, efficient, effective and economical attainment of objectives by managers. These objectives (as derived from strategic and tactical planning) cannot be achieved without budget planning, implementation, monitoring and adjustment as a cycle whereby resources are assigned to objectives. The introduction of the concept of an integrated supply chain management (SCM) system for Government is considered by the National Treasury as contributing significantly towards the improvement of financial management in the broader public sector (National Treasury, 2013) ^[54].

According to the Policy Strategy to Guide Uniformity in Procurement Reform Processes in Government (2011), supply chain management is an integral part of financial management that seeks to introduce internationally accepted best practice principles, while it addresses Government's budgetary planning processes, with a strong focus on the outcome of actual expenditure in respect of sourcing of goods, services and assets. According to Gildenhuys (2019) ^[12], assets (for the purpose of this thesis the focus is on movable assets) are characterised by A items, which are those inventory items with a minimum annual turnover of less than six for the three preceding years and which are regarded in terms of a certain formula as relatively expensive; B items, which are those inventory items with a minimum annual turnover of six for three years and which are regarded in terms of a certain formula as relatively cheap; C items, namely those items with no specific annual turnover or which have had a minimum annual turnover of less than six for the preceding three years. D items are those items which need to be available on demand, but which are not easily obtainable, for instance items to be ordered from abroad.

In the public sector, financial management focuses on the prioritisation and use of scarce resources, on ensuring effective stewardship over public money and assets, and on achieving value for money in meeting the objectives of Government (Burger, 2018) ^[4]. Financial management forms part of the total operation of an organisation. As such, it relates to the other functional disciplines in the organisation, as well as across various managerial levels. It is clear that financial planning and control are an essential part of the overall management process.

In terms of The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, the National Government is identified as one of the three spheres of government that encompass different national departments. National departments are responsible for the delivery of the mandate of Government. The PFMA (South Africa, 2016) ^[20] gives effect to sections 213, 215, 216, 217, 218 and 219 of the

Constitution, for the national and provincial spheres of government. This Act focuses on the basics of financial management, such as the introduction of proper financial management systems, appropriations control and the accountability arrangements for the management of budgets. According to Abedian and Biggs, sound financial management, be it in the public or private sector, is vested in timely, efficient, effective and economical attainment of objectives by managers. The introduction of the concept of an integrated supply chain management (SCM) system for Government is considered by the National Treasury as contributing significantly towards the improvement of financial management in the broader public sector. According to the Policy Strategy to Guide Uniformity in Procurement Reform Processes in Government (2016), supply chain management is an integral part of financial management which seeks to introduce internationally accepted best practice principles while it addresses Government's budgetary planning processes, with a strong focus on the outcome of actual expenditure in respect of sourcing of goods and services.

Financial management practices" are defined and demarcated as the practices performed by the accounting officer in the areas of budgeting, supply chain management, movable asset management, and control. The heads of national and provincial departments are the accounting.

Effectiveness of Resource Management

Strategic management is one of the modern management tools that introduces a rational technical perspective into highly politicized and bureaucratic government processes. It is a management process with elements such as strategic planning, strategy implementation and performance evaluation and incorporates strategic thinking and learning. Further, strategic management is a process that integrates all other management processes to facilitate a logical approach to establishing, achieving and monitoring and updating the strategic agenda in both public and private sector agencies. It is a management discipline that can aid any organization to produce fundamental decisions and actions when shaping the nature and direction of activities within the legal bounds. Considering that organisation, both in public and private sector operate in a complex and dynamic environment, strategic adaptation to environmental changes is required for organizations to remain afloat. As such, strategic management also provides a framework to enable any organisation to align aspirations and capabilities in order to achieve anticipated organisational goal effectively through strategic planning, efficiently through resource management and in an accountable way through control and evaluation. Organisations optimize their performance and effectiveness by adapting their strengths and externalities to the changing circumstance of the external environment. Therefore, success of any organization is dependent on how it exploits emerging opportunities and deals with associated threats and this crucially depends on leadership's ability to cultivate a community, national and global mindset among managers and their followers.

Strategic management has become prominent on the agenda of several public organisations. Hence, it is important that more is learnt considering that little is known about how elements of strategic management can be applied to effectively implement organisational change and achieve strategic intent, especially in developing countries like

Zambia. In recent times, the Norwegian public sector has undergone a number of changes and renewals. This has resulted in more competition, the need for adaptations to the market, and new organizational forms (Hillestad, 2003) ^[55]. The development that the Norwegian public sector has undergone has been designated "New Public Management" or NPM. The basic idea within NPM is that the public sector can be made more efficient through adopting organizational structures from the public business sector and the private business sector (Busch, Johnson, & Vanebo, 2002) ^[14]. The Norwegian public sector has steadily grown during the postwar period, and this has led to an increasing demand that resources must be utilized better. In other words, the overall objectives of the ongoing restructuring process in the public organization are to modernize, to streamline and to simplify, and thus to control resource usage in such a way that added value becomes optimal.

This added value is the result of a value creation process where one has added "value" in the form of special characteristics (Forsvarsdepartementet/Forsvarets Overkommando, 2016). The goal then becomes a better and more efficient utilization of the public sector's total resources. Factors such as economy regulations, organizational and decision-making structures, responsibilities and follow-ups will affect to which extent government entities will manage to achieve a better utilization of the allocated resources.

Effectiveness of Resource Management in enhancing administrative performance.

Al-Awadhi (2014) ^[5] conducted a study aimed at revealing the level of effectiveness of international human resources in foreign universities branches in the United Arab Emirates and highlighted the main challenges facing HR managers and staff (academic and administrative) in those branches. The results of the study revealed that the level of effectiveness of the global human resources management in the branches of foreign universities in the UAE was medium on the tool as a whole and on the fields, and there are statistically significant differences due to the effect of university nationality's variable in Favor of Australian or British universities. The study also revealed that the challenges faced by employees were at an average level and that there were statistically significant differences due to the impact of gender variables and job title. The level of challenges faced by managers of human resources departments was moderate. Mashagbah, the study aims to identify the degree of correlation between the effectiveness of human resources management and its relation with job performance among administrative staff, and is there a significant correlation between the effectiveness of resource management and the degree of job performance?

It is through actions that firms disrupt the status quo in markets and engage in an incessant race to outperform each other (Kirzner, 2018) ^[16]. The quest of the competitive dynamics streams to understand the relationship between a firm's actions and performance is thus highly relevant for managers who are responsible for the firm's financial health. Yet little is known about the precise ways firm actions affect performance over time because all of the competitive dynamic's studies have examined the performance outcomes of actions in a given time period (usually the performance impact in the year the actions are taken). Moreover, competitive dynamics research has

primarily focused on the performance effect of external market-based actions such as advertising and pricing moves and has largely ignored the performance impact of more internal resource-related actions. This article addresses both gaps by developing and testing theory regarding how different types of firm actions affect performance over time. To explain how alternative types of resource-related actions affect performance over time, we integrate the competitive dynamics literature with the literature on resource management. In line with the competitive dynamic's literature, actions are defined as specific and observable moves or behaviours initiated by firms to enhance their performance. This stream of literature has considered (a) firm actions that leverage resources in product markets and (b) actions leveraging resources in the regulatory arena. On the basis of the recent literature on resource management we identify and study the performance impact over time of two additional types of actions that relate to resources, namely, (c) actions structuring the resource portfolio and (d) actions bundling resources. While the resource-based view (RBV) has long recognized that resources are a main driver of firm performance the resource management research stream has recently stressed that beyond acquiring or developing valuable, rare, costly to imitate, and no substitutable resources, firms must structure, bundle, and leverage these resources to achieve high performance. Designing actions to manipulate resources is among the most important decisions for managers. Resources themselves are not necessarily the key to effective operations as "exactly the same resource when used for different purposes or in different ways and in combination with different types or amounts of other resources provides a different service or set of services. Hence, the actions that managers take to exploit and manage resources can make an important difference for firm performance.

Research Methods

Research design

This study employed a quantitative research design to gather measurable data related to budgetary allocation and resource management at ZCS HQ. The study adopted a descriptive approach, which allowed for a detailed analysis of the current budgetary and resource management processes within the institution. Through this design, the study sought to establish relationships between effective resource management and administrative performance.

Data collection

To determine the participants of this research, a random sampling method was used. The use of this method ensured that each individual in the target population had being given an equal opportunity or chance of selection and preventing biasness and favouritism. This method ensured that a diverse group of each respondents representing different departments with the ZCS HQ were included and therefore, a total sample of 50 respondents were selected. Data was collected with the use of questionnaires to extract data relating to the specific objectives.

Findings

Demographic Results

What is your age?

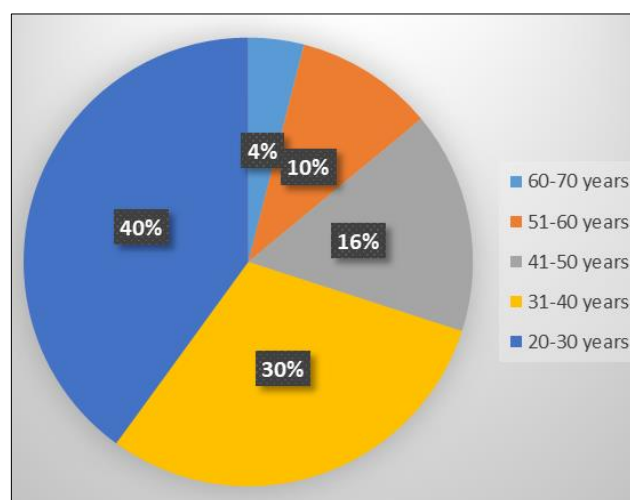


Fig 1: Distribution of Respondents by Age Group

The graph above presents different ages for all the respondents that took part in the study, the respondents were all officers from the Zambia Correctional Services ZCS. According to the results presented in the table, the youngest respondent officer was 23 Years of old were as the oldest was 62 Years old. In addition, the figure also highlights total frequencies of 50 which is the representation of the total number of respondents that managed to attempt to the question. 4% is given to the age range of 60 -70 with the frequency of 2, 10% to the age range between 51-60 with the frequency of 5, 16% to the range between 41-50 with the frequency of 8, 30% to the range between 31-40 with the frequency of 15 and lastly 40% to the range 20- 30 which had the biggest frequency of 20.

What is your gender?

Table 1: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentages
Male	28	56%
Female	22	44%

The table above present a well distribution of sex of respondents. According to the results given above, 56% of the officer respondents were males and were covering a slightly higher difference in percentage in terms participation whereas 44% of the respondents were females. However, the research results show a highly and almost equal participation between males and females. This entails that there was full cooperation between both the females and males despite them coming from different ranks and departments they showed full understanding of the process and provided the required standard of data.

In which province do you currently reside?

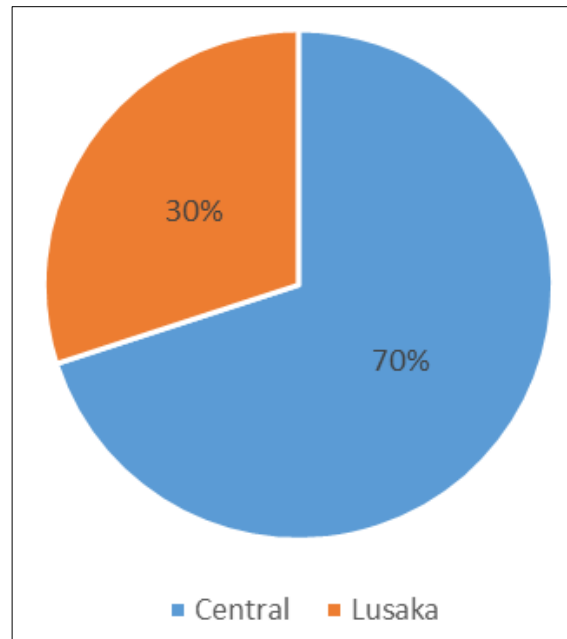


Fig 2: Geographic Distribution of Respondents by Province

According to the results in the figure, a representation of different provinces has been provided in line with the question. The question was aimed at understanding the respondent's area or province of stay. However, 70% of the respondents were from the central province of Zambia, serving as the highest frequency score with a 35 as backing, whereas 30% of the respondents lived in Lusaka province which is the current capital city of the republic of Zambia and this 30% was backed with a frequency of 15 from the total of 50.

In which district do you currently work in?

The main purpose of the question was to understand the area

of work by specifying the district they work in apart from providing the province where respondents lived. According to the results that have been provided in the figure below, 82% of the respondents worked in Kabwe districts in the central province of the republic and this was supported by a frequency of 41 whereas 18% of the respondents worked in Lusaka district which is under the province of Lusaka, which is the capital city of the republic of Zambia. The results are presented in a figure below to authenticate the findings.

Kabwe frequency 41 of the total 50

Lusaka frequency 9 of the total 50

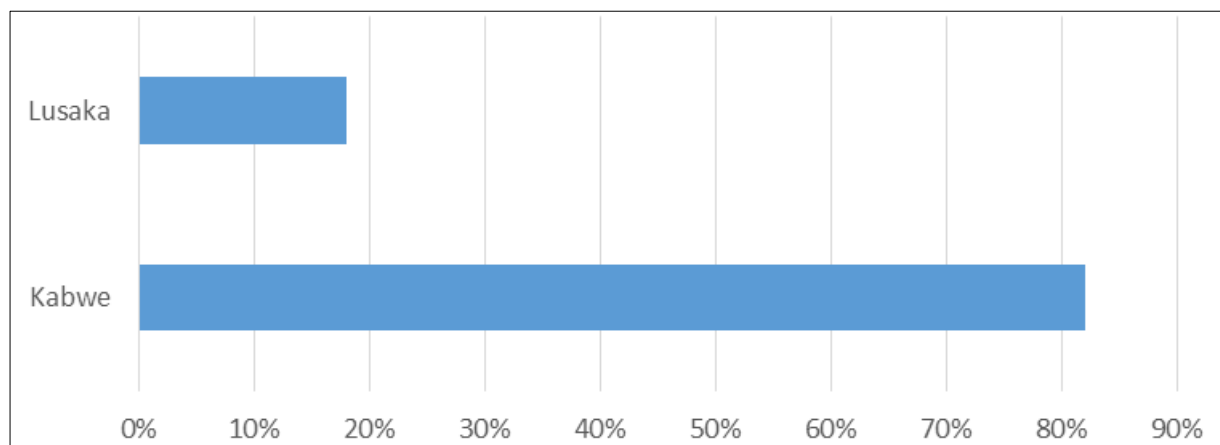


Fig 3: Work Location of Respondents by District

Objective 1: To assess the extent to which the budgetary process is transparent.

How would you rate the transparency of the budgetary process at ZCS HQ?

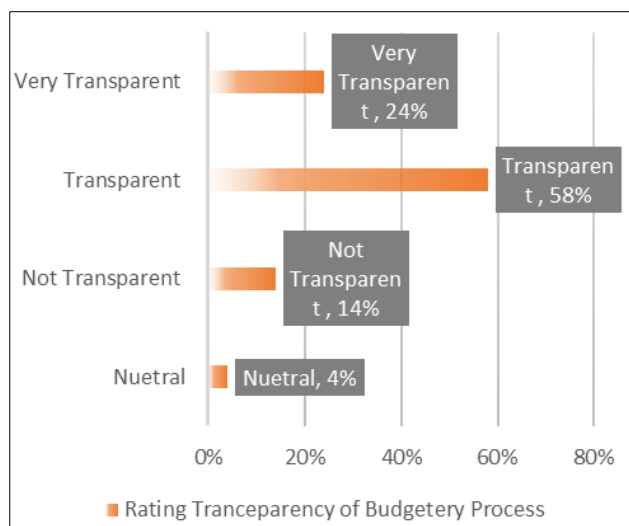


Fig 4: Perceived Transparency of the Budgetary Process at ZCS HQ

In line with the answers provided by the respondents, 58% of the respondents confirmed with yes and rated the budgetary process at the ZCS HQ to be “Transparent” with a frequency of 29 marking it to be the highest school from the total, in addition to this, 24% of the respondent marked the system to be “Very Transparent” with a frequency of 12. Conversely, 14% of the respondents rated the transparency of the budgetary process at ZCS HQ to be “Not Transparent” as this was backed with a frequency of 7 hence leaving 2% of the respondent rating the system to be

“Neutral” with a frequency of 2 from the total. Nevertheless, the results show that the budget process at the ZCS HQ is fairly perfect as this can be confirmed an addition Very Transparent and Transparent which provides a good wave as compared to Not transparent and Neutral, the gaps may provide room for perfection but overly the results show the system to be transparent.

Are you involved in budgetary allocation process?

Table 2: Involvement in Budgetary Allocation Process

Results	Frequency	Percentages
Yes, I am	31	62%
No, I am not	19	38%

According to the results presented in the above Table, 62% of the respondents were involved in the budgetary allocation process with a frequency of 31 whereas 38% of the respondents were not involved in the budgetary allocation process, as this was supported by a frequency of 19, with this regard, the study has full and utmost source of first-hand information in relation to the study.

Objective2: To analyze the effectiveness of resource management of the Z.C.S HQ

How effectively do you think is the budget allocated to meet the needs of the ZCS at HQ?

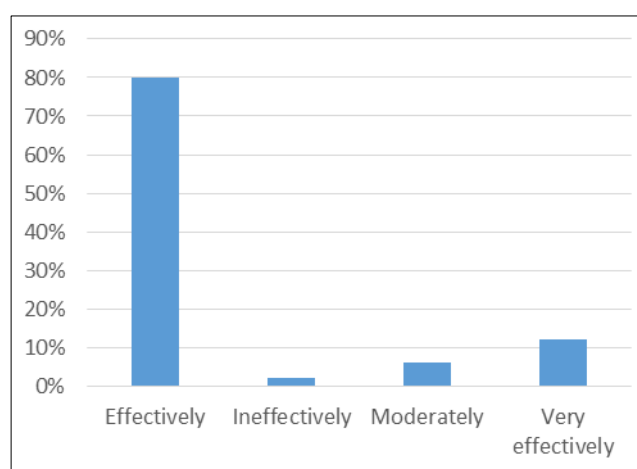


Fig 5: Effectiveness of Budget allocation in Meeting ZCS HQ Needs

The graph above presents answers that were given after the question “how effective effectively do you think is the budget allocated to meet the needs of the ZCS at HQ?” In line with the results presented, the budget allocated to meet the needs of the ZCS at the HQ is sufficiently effective, as this is proven by statistics given. 80% of the respondents described the budget allocated to meet the needs of the ZCS at the HQ is “Effective” with a frequency of 40 from the total. In addition to this, 12% of the respondents described the budget allocated to meet the needs of the ZCS at the HQ is “Very Effective” with the frequency of 6. However, 2% of the respondents described the budget allocated amount to meet the needs of the ZCS at the HQ is “Ineffective” as this was supported with a frequency of 1, whereas 6% of the respondents described the budget allocated to meet the

needs of the ZCS at the HQ is “Moderately effective” and this was supported with a frequency of 3 from the total 50.

How well are the resources allocated managed at the ZCS?

Table 3: Management of Allocated Resources at ZCS HQ

Results	Frequency	Percentages
Well managed	37	74%
Very well managed	3	6%
Poorly managed	7	14%
Moderately managed	3	6%

The above figure presents answers given by the respondent after the question “How well are the resources allocated

managed at the ZCS?” According to the results presented, 74% of the respondents described the resources allocated managed at the ZCS to be “Well managed” with the frequency of 37. Were as 14% of the respondents confirmed by describing the resources allocated managed at the ZCS to be “Poorly managed.” With the frequency 7. In addition to this, 6% of the respondents confirmed that the resources allocated managed at the ZCS are “Very well managed” with the frequency 3 same as some of the respondents that described the process to be “Moderately managed. Nevertheless, the management of allocated resources at the ZCS are well managed.

How frequently do resource shortages occur at the Zambia correctional services HQ

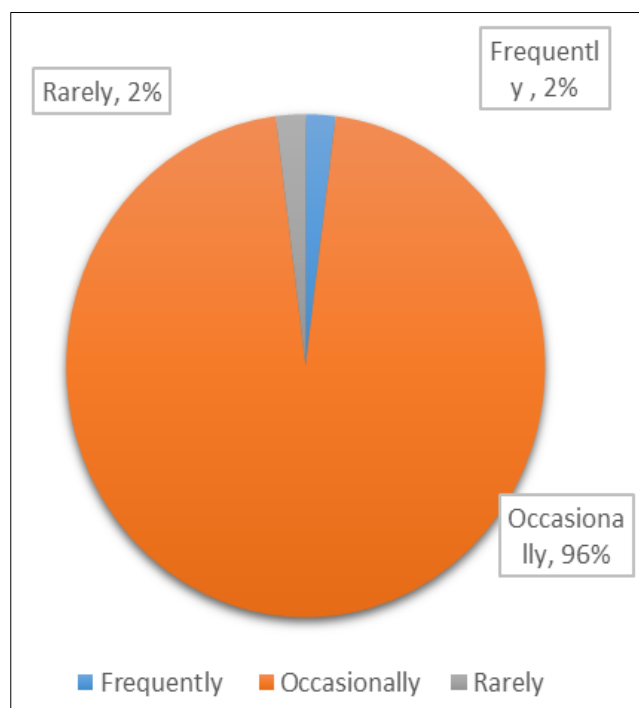


Fig 6: Frequency of Resource Shortages at ZCS HQ

The graph above presents results of the answers that were given by respondents after the question “How frequently do resource shortages occur at the Zambia correctional services HQ?” In line with the results provided, 96% of the respondents confirmed with “Occasionally” and this was the highest from the total, meaning shortages are not constant in the operations from the HQ, however they are sometimes pronounced. In addition to this, 2% of the respondents believed that the shortages at the ZCS HQ are “Frequently” observed, as this marks a small percentage saving as middle and Lowest score just like the 2% of the respondents believed that the shortages at the ZCS HQ in their operations are “Rarely” observed.

How involved are you in resource management decision at the ZCS HQ?

The above question was set to determine the level at which each respondent was exposed to decision making at the ZCS HQ especially with resource management decisions. With this background, the results presented in the figure are visually presented in a graph below to set a higher level of understanding.

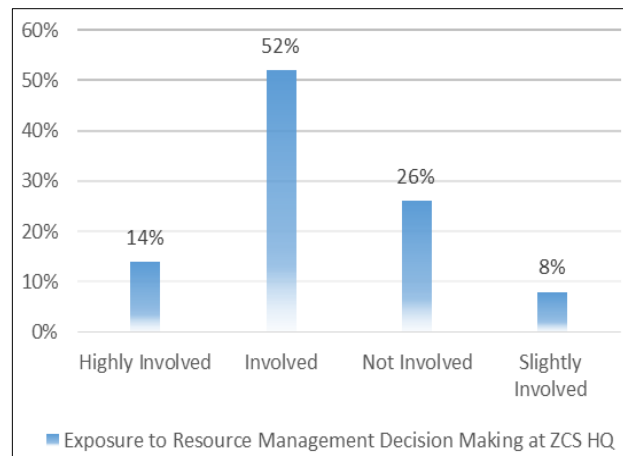


Fig 7: Involvement in Resource Management Decision-Making

In line with the results presented in the graph above, 52% of the respondents were “Involved” in the resource management decision at the ZCS HQ and this served as the highest frequency score from the total. In addition to this, 26% of the respondents were “Not Involved” in the resource management decision at the ZCS HQ. However, 14% of respondents were “Highly Involved” in the resource management decision at the ZCS HQ and lastly 8% of the respondents were “Slightly Involved” as this also served as the lowest score from the total. Nevertheless, a huge number of the respondents were highly informed of the decision that were made due positions they served as well a good exposure to the resource management decision at the ZCS HQ.4.7.2 To what extent does effective resource management contribute to enhancing administrative performance at the Zambia correctional services HQ.

What areas requires the most improvements in resource management?

Table 4: Areas Requiring Improvement in Resource Management

Areas	Frequency	Percentages
Administration	2	4%
Financial Resources	25	50%
Human Resources	18	36%
Time Management	5	10%

The question requested the respondents to provide areas they viewed required the most improvement in resource management. According to the results presented in the graph above, 50% of the respondents designated financial resources to be the most area that required more attention and improvement for the betterment of the resource management process and this is represented by the frequency of 25. However, 4% for the respondents thought administration needed more attention and improvement for transparency with the frequency of 2 of 50. In addition to this, 36% of the respondents thought human resources required the most improvement in resource management with the frequency of 18, were as 10% of the respondent’s alleged attention and improvement to be provided more with time management in the resource management process with the frequency of 5 of 50.

Objective 3: To evaluate the impact of effective resource management on enhancing administrative performance at the Zambia Correctional Service Headquarters.

To what extent does effective resource management contribute to enhancing administrative performance at the Zambia correctional services HQ?

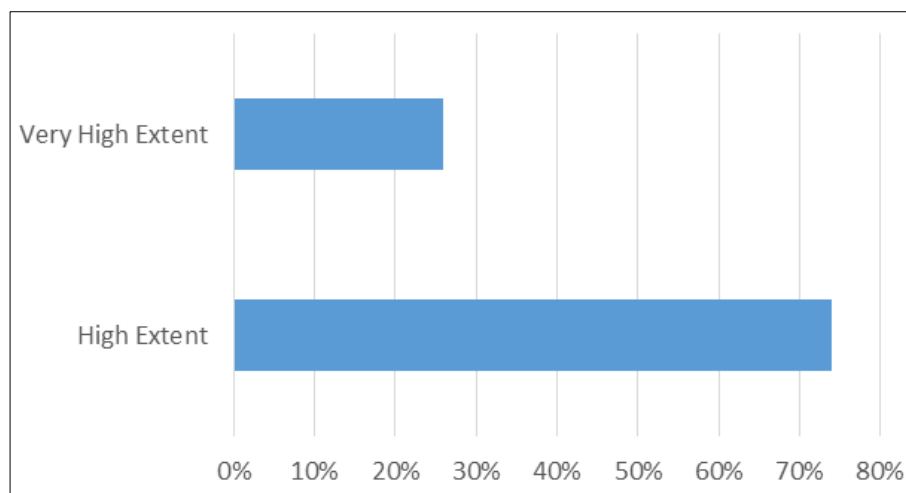


Fig 8: Contribution of Effective Resource Management to Administrative Performance

The above graph presents answers that were given after the question “To what extent does effective resource management contribute to enhancing administrative performance at the Zambia correctional services HQ?” the main purpose of the question was to determine the extent to which the respondents thought the effectiveness of resource management contribute to enhancing administrative performance at the Zambia correctional services HQ.

In addition to this, 74% of the respondents that attempted to answer the question believed that the effectiveness of the resource management contributed to the enhancement of the administrative performance of the Zambia Correctional Service HQ with “High Extent” and this was supported with

a frequency of 37. Whereas 26% of the respondents believed that the effectiveness of the resource management contributed to the enhancement of the administrative performance of the Zambia Correctional Service HQ with “Very High Extent” as this was supported with a frequency of 13. Therefore, the effectiveness of the resource management contribute to the enhancement of the administrative performance of the Zambia Correctional Service HQ as this has shown to have a huge impact on the performance and growth of the ZCS.

How do you measure the impact of resource management on administrative performance?

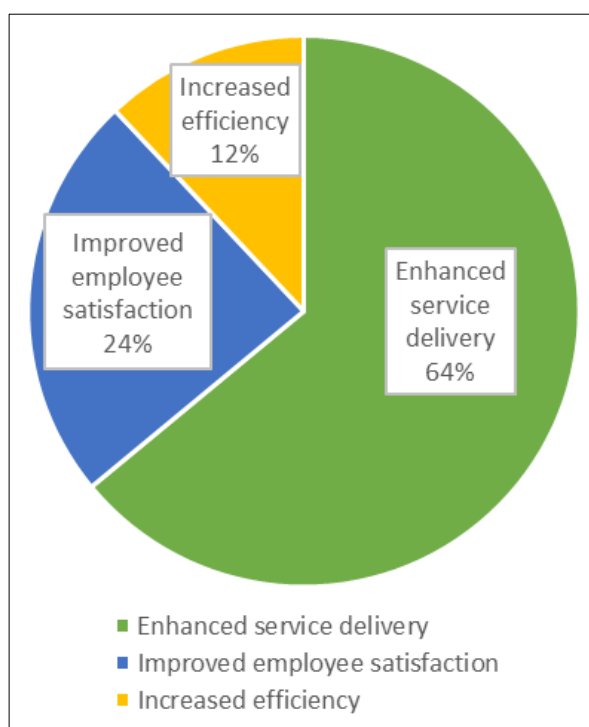


Fig 9: Methods Used to Measure Resource Management Impact

The above graph presents three different methods that were given by the respondents as the methods that are used to measure the impact of resource management or

administrative performance. Therefore 64% of the respondents described “Enhanced service delivery” with the frequency of 32 of 50 as the method that is used to measure

the impact of resource management or administrative performance. Whereas 24% of the respondents described the method as “improved employee satisfaction” with a frequency of 12 and lastly 12% of the respondents described the method as “increased efficiency” with a frequency of 6 from the total 50.

What are the key indicators of successful administrative performance at the Zambia correctional services HQ?

Table 5: Key Indicators of Successful Administrative Performance

Key indicators	Frequency	Percentages
Efficiency in operations	10	20%
Effective service performance	13	26%
Employee morale	5	10%
Increased efficiency	13	26%
Low levels of absenteeism	6	12%
Low levels of indiscipline	3	6%

The above table provides different key indicators of successful administrative performance at the Zambia correctional services HQ that were provided by all the respondents after the question “What are the key indicators of successful administrative performance at the Zambia correctional services HQ?” The graph provides a map presenting different indicators in line with what they thought to be key indicators of successful administrative performance at the Zambia correctional services HQ.

What challenges do you face in the budget allocation process?

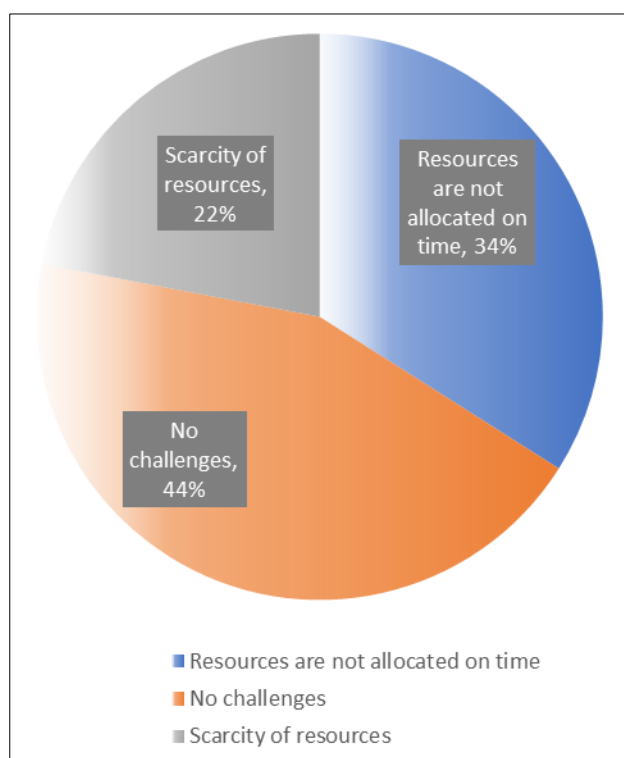


Fig 10: Challenges in Budget allocation Process

The graph above provides different challenges that respondents face in the budget allocation process. The highest score was 44% representing respondents that confirmed with Funds provided being okay and expressed that they had no challenges for all operations and budget

allocation carrying the frequency of 22 from 50. However, 34% of the respondents confirmed with “Resources are not allocated on time” as this may delay important aspects of the budget with the frequency of 17, in addition to this, 22% of the respondents thought there is an ultimate “scarcity of resources” with the frequency of 11, The answers provided were provide by respondents after the question what challenges do you face in the budget allocation process?

Discussion of Findings

According to this study, analysis of data is a process that involves inspecting, cleaning, transforming, and modelling data with the goal of discovering useful information, suggesting conclusions, and supporting decision -making. The findings of this study highlight critical aspects of budgetary allocation and resource management at Zambia Correctional Services (ZCS) Headquarters and their influence on administrative performance. Several key themes emerge from the analysis, which are discussed below.

Budgetary Process and Transparency

The study found that 82% of respondents rated the budgetary process at ZCS as either "transparent" or "very transparent." This suggests a relatively high level of trust in the process among staff, indicating that ZCS HQ has taken steps to ensure that budgetary information is accessible and clear to those involved in the process. However, 14% of respondents found the process lacking in transparency. This minority, while not representative of the overall sentiment, suggests that communication about the budget process could be improved, particularly for those employees who feel they are not fully informed about how financial decisions are made.

The Agency Theory, which underpins this study, emphasizes the need for transparency and accountability in relationships between agents (employees) and principals (managers). In this context, greater transparency in budgetary decisions can mitigate potential "budgetary slack," where employees might understate or overstate budget needs due to lack of clarity.

Employee Involvement in Budget allocation

Approximately 62% of respondents indicated that they were involved in the budget allocation process. This level of involvement suggests that ZCS HQ has created opportunities for middle and senior management to contribute to financial decision-making, which is crucial for ensuring that the budget reflects the operational needs of the institution. However, the 38% who were not involved highlights a gap in inclusion, particularly for junior staff or those in less central roles.

Greater involvement in budgetary processes aligns with participatory budgeting principles, which foster a sense of ownership among employees. Agency Theory suggests that participation helps reduce budget slack, as employees feel more accountable for the financial decisions, they help shape. Enhancing involvement across all levels of the organization could lead to more efficient use of resources and improved outcomes.

Effectiveness of Resource Management

The effectiveness of resource management was a key focus of this study, and the findings revealed that 74% of

respondents believed that effective resource management contributes significantly to enhancing administrative performance. This is a strong indication that when resources are well-managed, ZCS HQ operates more efficiently. However, 96% of respondents noted that resource shortages occur "occasionally," which suggests that despite the perceived effectiveness of resource management, shortages disrupt the consistent application of resources.

This finding points to a mismatch between resource allocation and actual needs, a common issue in public sector institutions where resources are often constrained by external budgetary limitations. Moreover, the occasional nature of shortages indicates that while ZCS HQ is generally able to meet its operational needs, unforeseen circumstances or delays in funding can lead to temporary gaps.

Challenges in Resource Allocation

Several respondents identified delays in resource allocation as a key challenge. These delays can stem from bureaucratic inefficiencies, as well as from external factors such as government funding schedules. The hierarchical nature of ZCS, where decisions must pass through multiple layers of approval, was also highlighted as a hindrance to efficient resource management. This aligns with the findings of other studies on public sector institutions, where delays and hierarchical bottlenecks are common issues.

Moreover, 48% of respondents pointed to financial resource management as an area needing improvement, while 34% highlighted human resource management. These findings indicate that while financial resources are available, there is room for improvement in how these resources are managed and allocated across the institution. Similarly, human resource management challenges, such as understaffing and limited professional development opportunities, were noted as areas that affect the institution's ability to meet its operational goals.

Impact on Administrative Performance

The link between resource management and administrative performance was confirmed by the finding that 74% of respondents believed that effective resource management significantly contributes to administrative success. Indicators of improved performance included better service delivery, increased employee satisfaction, and enhanced operational efficiency. These results align with the theoretical framework of this study, where effective resource management is seen as a key driver of performance in public institutions.

Moreover, 76% of respondents noted that they had observed some improvements in administrative performance since changes were made to resource management practices. This is an encouraging finding, as it suggests that recent reforms or adjustments in the allocation and management of resources have had a positive impact.

Areas Needing Improvement

Despite the generally positive findings, there are several areas where improvements are needed. The 48% of respondents who called for improvements in financial management highlighted issues such as inefficient allocation processes and a lack of real-time financial monitoring. These gaps can lead to delays in decision-making, particularly when financial data is not up-to-date or easily accessible.

Similarly, 34% of respondents noted that human resource management needed to be improved. The main challenges in this area include insufficient staffing and inadequate training opportunities for existing staff. These issues are common in public sector institutions, where budget constraints often prevent the hiring of additional staff or the implementation of comprehensive training programs. Enhancing human resource management through targeted recruitment, professional development, and better staff retention strategies could significantly improve the institution's performance.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings of this study suggest several implications for policy and practice. First, there is a need for more inclusive budgetary processes that involve a wider range of staff, particularly those at junior levels. Second, improving the timeliness and transparency of resource allocation can help reduce operational delays and improve service delivery. Finally, addressing the human resource challenges identified by respondents will require a targeted approach, focusing on recruitment, training, and retention.

Overall, the study highlights the importance of effective resource management in enhancing administrative performance at ZCS HQ. By addressing the identified gaps, ZCS can further improve its operational efficiency and ability to meet its institutional goals.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, several recommendations emerge to improve resource management and administrative performance at ZCS HQ. These suggestions aim to address the identified challenges while leveraging existing strengths to foster greater organizational effectiveness.

Timely and Transparent Resource Allocation: Untimely resource allocation was a major challenge. ZCS HQ should adopt an agile system with strict timelines for budget approvals and disbursements. Real-time financial tracking and regular updates can enhance transparency and efficiency.

Increase Employee Involvement in Budgetary Processes: ZCS HQ should create platforms for more staff involvement in budgeting. Monthly budget reviews open to a wider group can foster inclusion and innovation in resource allocation, increasing employee ownership of financial management.

Invest in Financial and Human Resources Management: 48% of respondents cited financial management as critical. ZCS HQ should adopt stricter audits, regular financial reviews, and engage external consultants to address inefficiencies and improve budget control.

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