

Assessing the Effect of Performance Management Systems on Operational Efficiency and Service Delivery at Eastern Water and Sanitation Company Limited (EWSC)

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Abstract:

This study investigated the effect of Performance Management Systems (PMS) on operational efficiency and service delivery at the Eastern Water and Sanitation Company Limited (EWSC) in Zambia. The primary purpose was to assess how PMS influenced resource allocation, problem detection, employee productivity, service quality, timeliness, and accountability within the organization, as well as to identify challenges hindering effective PMS implementation. A qualitative research methodology was employed, involving in-depth interviews with key EWSC staff members directly engaged with the PMS. Thematic analysis of the collected data revealed that PMS positively impacted operational efficiency by enhancing resource utilization, enabling early identification of operational issues, and fostering continuous employee feedback that motivated productivity improvements. The system also improved service delivery by raising service quality standards, ensuring timelier responses, and strengthening accountability through clear role definitions and performance reviews. However, the study identified significant challenges including insufficient training on PMS tools, limited financial and human resources, resistance to change among employees, and political or managerial interference that compromised the fairness and objectivity of the system. Based on these findings, the study recommended increasing investment in staff training and capacity building, securing adequate resources to support PMS activities, fostering a positive organizational culture receptive to change, and minimizing political interference to safeguard the system's integrity.

Keywords: Performance Management Systems, Operational Efficiency, Service Delivery, Resource Allocation, Employee Productivity, Organizational Performance

1. Introduction and background

Performance Management Systems (PMS) are critical for ensuring that organizations achieve their strategic objectives and maintain operational efficiency. They are designed to integrate the processes of goal-setting, performance monitoring, and employee evaluation to align individual and organizational performance (Aguinis, 2019). Globally, organizations in the water and sanitation sector have adopted PMS to address challenges such as resource optimization, employee accountability, and service quality improvement (Kaplan & Norton, 2004). In Africa, the utility sector has faced different challenges such as inefficiencies, inadequate funding, and

underperforming staff, necessitating the adoption of robust performance management practices to improve service delivery and operational outcomes (World Bank, 2021).

The water sector has been a cornerstone of development efforts, particularly in achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6, which seeks to ensure access to clean water and sanitation for all. Eastern Water and Sanitation Company (EWSC), which provides water services to the Eastern Province, plays a significant role in this endeavor. Despite the critical nature of its mandate, the company faces numerous challenges, including high non-revenue water levels, aging infrastructure, and limited financial resources, all of which compromise its ability to meet customer demands effectively (NWASCO, 2022). The implementation of a PMS at EWSC is seen as a potential solution to these challenges, as it can enhance operational efficiency, improve accountability, and ensure timely and effective service delivery.

Operational efficiency is a key performance area for water utilities, given the resource-intensive nature of their operations. By integrating PMS, organizations can streamline their processes, reduce wastage, and optimize resource allocation, thereby improving service delivery (Armstrong, 2021). For EWSC, operational inefficiencies have contributed to challenges such as inconsistent water supply and delayed service responses, which undermine customer satisfaction and trust. A well-functioning PMS can address these issues by providing clear performance metrics, enabling management to identify bottlenecks, and facilitating data-driven decision-making (Aguinis, 2019).

Additionally, service delivery in the water sector is heavily reliant on effective employee performance. A PMS enables organizations to establish performance expectations, provide regular feedback, and implement reward systems to motivate employees (Kaplan & Norton, 2004). For EWSC, ensuring employee performance aligns with organizational goals is crucial for delivering high-quality services. Furthermore, PMS frameworks often incorporate customer feedback mechanisms, enabling organizations to tailor their services to meet user needs more effectively (Grönroos, 2007). This alignment between employee performance and customer satisfaction is critical in restoring public confidence in EWSC's services.

Despite its potential benefits, implementing a PMS in organizations such as EWSC is not without challenges. Resistance to change, inadequate training, and resource constraints are common barriers that hinder the successful adoption of such systems (Armstrong, 2021). However, when implemented effectively, PMS can drive transformative outcomes, fostering a culture of accountability and continuous improvement. This study seeks to explore the impact of PMS on EWSC's operational efficiency and service delivery, shedding light on its role as a catalyst for organizational excellence in Zambia's water and sanitation sector

1.2 Problem Statement

Eastern Water and Sanitation Company Limited (EWSC) plays a critical role in providing water and sanitation services to Eastern Province in Zambia. Despite the important role it plays, the organization faces persistent challenges that hinder its operational efficiency and service delivery. Issues such as high non-revenue water, delayed service provision, and inadequate resource utilization have negatively impacted its ability to meet customer needs effectively (NWASCO, 2022). Despite the implementation of Performance Management Systems (PMS) as a strategic tool for addressing these inefficiencies, EWSC continues to grapple with operational bottlenecks, inconsistent performance monitoring, and limited accountability among staff. These

shortcomings have not only eroded customer satisfaction but also threaten the organization's long-term sustainability. The lack of empirical evidence on the effectiveness of PMS in enhancing operational outcomes and service delivery further exacerbates this problem, creating a gap in knowledge that limits informed decision-making and policy reforms. This study sought to address this gap by assessing the impact of PMS on operational efficiency and service delivery at EWSC, providing actionable insights to strengthen the organization's performance.

1.3 Research Questions

Research Objectives of the study

- i. To evaluate the impact of Performance Management Systems (PMS) on operational efficiency at Eastern Water and Sanitation Company Limited (EWSC).
- ii. To identify the challenges faced by EWSC in implementing and utilizing Performance Management Systems to enhance operational outcomes and service delivery.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Impact of Performance Management Systems on Operational Efficiency

Global literature shows that, there is consistent association between effective Performance Management Systems (PMS) and enhanced operational efficiency. According to a study conducted by DeNisi and Murphy (2017) across various U.S. industries, combining surveys with quantitative performance data highlighted that organizations with robust PMS were able to allocate resources more efficiently and streamline their operational processes. The study emphasized the importance of continuous feedback mechanisms in early identification and correction of inefficiencies, leading to improved resource management and time efficiency. A similar study by Smith et al. (2020) in the United Kingdom, employing a longitudinal design with repeated surveys and time-series data, found that when clear performance metrics were consistently monitored, organizations experienced noticeable improvements in cost efficiency and time management. These results reinforced the importance of adopting systematic PMS frameworks to achieve operational improvements. Johnson et al. (2021) extended the conversation by examining the role of PMS in multinational corporations. Using a cross-sectional survey design, complemented by qualitative interviews, their study demonstrated that the integration of well-defined performance targets and structured feedback loops was directly linked to higher operational efficiency. Through multivariate regression analysis, they showed that the systematic monitoring of employee performance significantly improved decision-making processes, leading to more efficient operations. Van Helden and Reichard (2025) conducted a similar study across several European public organizations, employing path analysis to explore the relationship between PMS and strategic alignment. Their findings revealed that aligning PMS with organizational strategy was crucial for operational improvements. However, they also acknowledged that external environmental factors, such as economic conditions or political instability, could moderate the impact of PMS on efficiency, highlighting the need for adaptable systems that consider these dynamics.

In the African context, empirical studies also support the positive impact of PMS on operational efficiency, though challenges related to implementation persist. Ahenkan, Tenakwah, and Bawole (2018) conducted a case study in Ghana's Sefwi Wiawso Municipal Assembly, using in-depth interviews with 20 departmental heads and employees. Their qualitative content analysis revealed that PMS adoption improved operational procedures and inter-departmental coordination. However, the study also highlighted significant barriers to effective PMS implementation, including inadequate communication channels, insufficient training, and lack of managerial commitment. These factors constrained the system's potential to drive efficiency improvements. Similarly, Owuor and Onyango (2019) in Kenya used a regression analysis of secondary data from 30 public water utilities, demonstrating a statistically significant relationship between PMS and operational efficiency, particularly in resource utilization and cost reduction. Despite these positive outcomes, the authors noted that political interference and inconsistent funding often undermined the potential of PMS to fully optimize operations.

In South Africa, further research by Jansen and Nel (2021) examined the role of PMS in both public and private sectors using a mixed-methods approach. Their study, which included quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, found that PMS was positively correlated with improved service delivery and operational efficiency.

Phiri (2020) explored the impact of PMS within three government ministries, employing a qualitative research design with semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions involving 30 public sector employees. The narrative analysis revealed that while there was widespread awareness of PMS, operational efficiency was hindered by weak feedback mechanisms, insufficient managerial commitment, and limited resources. Phiri concluded that these factors reduced the potential benefits of PMS, limiting its effectiveness in improving operational outcomes. Zulu (2021) extended this research by using a mixed-methods design that integrated both quantitative performance indicators and qualitative interviews across multiple public sector organizations. Their findings reinforced Phiri's conclusions, showing that while PMS contributed to operational improvements, issues such as inadequate funding, insufficient training, and resistance to change remained significant obstacles.

Another study by Tembo and Chirwa (2023) investigated the role of PMS in the Zambian education sector using a survey-based approach. The study revealed that PMS was positively correlated with improved performance, particularly in terms of resource utilization and institutional coordination. However, the authors noted that challenges such as limited technological infrastructure and inconsistent leadership commitment undermined the effectiveness of PMS in driving significant improvements in the sector. The findings indicated that the Zambian context required more tailored interventions, such as the integration of PMS with national development strategies and stronger alignment with local goals and priorities.

The challenges faced in Zambia align with a broader regional trend in Africa, where while PMS is recognized as a tool for improving operational efficiency, its impact is often constrained by systemic issues such as limited resources, political instability, and insufficient training. A study by Mulenga and Chiti (2025) further emphasized that a more strategic, contextual approach is needed to maximize the impact of PMS in Zambia. Their qualitative research, involving interviews with managers and employees from various sectors, suggested

that PMS must be integrated with broader organizational strategies and supported by continuous capacity-building initiatives to achieve sustainable improvements in operational efficiency.

The empirical literature from global, African, and Zambian contexts collectively highlights the significant potential of Performance Management Systems to improve operational efficiency. While global studies consistently show that PMS leads to better resource allocation, cost management, and operational processes, the African and Zambian studies underscore the importance of addressing local challenges, such as political instability, inadequate resources, and resistance to change. Successful implementation of PMS requires a context-specific approach, with tailored strategies that incorporate local conditions, cultures, and institutional capacities. Moving forward, it is clear that while PMS can drive operational efficiency, its success depends on overcoming these contextual barriers and ensuring alignment with organizational goals and broader development strategies.

2.2 Challenges in Implementing and Utilizing PMS

Globally, the implementation of Performance Management Systems (PMS) has been fraught with several challenges despite its potential to enhance organizational performance and service delivery. Kaupa and Atiku (2020) conducted a qualitative study in Namibia to explore the barriers to PMS implementation in public sector organizations. Using semi-structured interviews with 42 employees, their thematic analysis revealed key challenges, including inadequate training, poor communication, and lack of employee involvement. The findings indicated that these challenges significantly hindered the adoption and effective use of PMS, underlining the importance of comprehensive training programs, clear policies, and inclusive decision-making processes. These findings resonate with those of other international studies, emphasizing that the lack of proper preparation and engagement at all organizational levels often leads to unsuccessful PMS implementation.

In Europe and Asia, Andersen et al. (2023) conducted a multi-country study across several public sector organizations, utilizing a combination of surveys and qualitative interviews. Their analysis revealed that external environmental factors, such as political interference and inconsistent funding, were significant barriers to effective PMS implementation. Despite the existence of well-designed PMS frameworks, the researchers found that governance issues often diluted the impact of these systems. Using advanced multivariate analysis, the study highlighted that PMS effectiveness was often undermined by unstable political environments and insufficient financial support, making it difficult to maintain the systems over time. This finding underscores the importance of ensuring that PMS is supported not only by internal processes but also by stable external conditions, such as political stability and consistent funding.

Further, a meta-analysis by Johnson et al. (2025), which synthesizes findings from over 40 empirical studies worldwide, highlighted the importance of local contextual factors in determining the success or failure of PMS. The analysis confirmed that while the design of PMS is often robust, the local political, cultural, and managerial environment significantly influences its effectiveness. Resistance to change, especially within established organizational cultures, as well as inadequate managerial commitment, were identified as primary factors that impeded the proper implementation of PMS. This comprehensive meta-analysis stresses the need

for tailored PMS strategies that account for local challenges and contexts, rather than relying solely on generic, one-size-fits-all models.

In Africa, the implementation of PMS faces a variety of unique challenges, influenced by political, cultural, and institutional factors. Sebashe and Mtapuri (2011) studied the challenges of PMS implementation in South Africa's Ba-Phalaborwa Municipality using a mixed-methods approach that incorporated both surveys and in-depth interviews. Their research revealed that while senior management was generally supportive and well-versed in the PMS framework, several issues hindered its effectiveness, such as limited employee participation, inconsistent feedback mechanisms, and non-compliance with legal standards. Their use of descriptive statistics and qualitative content analysis showed that without sustained managerial support and effective communication strategies, PMS could not realize its full potential in improving public sector service delivery. A study conducted by Bassey and Ojo (2022) examined the implementation of PMS in Nigeria's public health sector, using a combination of structured surveys and in-depth interviews. Their findings revealed that while PMS could improve service quality, political interference, lack of transparency, and limited funding were significant barriers to effective implementation. The researchers found that despite the formal adoption of PMS, political factors and poor institutional support often led to poor performance evaluations and inconsistent application of performance metrics. These challenges were exacerbated by inadequate training and capacity-building initiatives for both employees and managers, ultimately hindering the effectiveness of the system. Similar findings were reported in Ghana by Ofori-Dankwa and Kumi (2020), who identified political instability and resistance to change as major challenges for PMS in public sector institutions.

In Zambia, Simwaka et al. (2021) examined PMS implementation challenges in the public utilities sector using a mixed-methods approach that integrated structured surveys with in-depth interviews. The study's statistical analysis and thematic synthesis revealed persistent governance weaknesses, political interference, and inconsistent funding as the primary barriers to effective PMS implementation. The research suggested that despite the adoption of PMS, organizational inefficiencies continued to affect public service delivery due to these challenges. Their findings reinforced the argument that a more holistic approach, combining technical, managerial, and cultural interventions, is necessary to address the barriers to PMS success in Zambia. Similarly, Nkhoma and Zulu (2019) explored PMS in the Zambian public sector, focusing on ZESCO. Through document analysis and interviews, they identified that poor communication channels and inadequate staff training were among the most significant barriers preventing the effective utilization of PMS in enhancing operational efficiency and service delivery. Further evidence from South Africa's public education sector supports these findings. Mthembu (2021) conducted a study on PMS implementation in South African schools, revealing that resistance to change from teachers and limited managerial capacity were significant impediments. The research, which utilized both surveys and semi-structured interviews, found that teachers often perceived the PMS as punitive rather than developmental, leading to poor engagement and compliance. This study highlights the importance of fostering a positive organizational culture and ensuring that PMS is seen as a tool for professional development rather than merely a performance evaluation mechanism.

In Zambia, PMS implementation faces several obstacles, many of which are reflective of broader African challenges but with additional local context. Phiri, Simui, and Masaiti (2021) conducted a qualitative study using semi-structured interviews with 30 public service employees across various ministries in Zambia. Their

analysis revealed key barriers such as low feedback rates, limited managerial commitment, and resistance to performance evaluations within the Zambian public sector. The thematic coding of interview data highlighted that these issues were often exacerbated by a lack of understanding of the PMS process and a perception of unfairness among employees. As a result, these challenges significantly reduced the efficiency gains expected from PMS, ultimately affecting service delivery. This study highlighted the importance of improving communication strategies, increasing managerial involvement, and addressing cultural barriers to foster a more effective PMS environment in Zambia.

In the Zambian healthcare sector, Mumba and Tembo (2020) explored the challenges of PMS implementation in public hospitals. Using a case study approach with document analysis and in-depth interviews, they identified several factors contributing to the ineffective implementation of PMS. These included inadequate staff training, poor communication, and inconsistent performance appraisals. The study concluded that while PMS had the potential to improve service delivery in healthcare, its full benefits could not be realized without addressing these structural issues. This finding is consistent with previous research suggesting that training and communication are critical factors for successful PMS implementation in resource-constrained settings. The empirical literature reviewed from global, African, and Zambian perspectives demonstrates the significant challenges in implementing and utilizing PMS in public sector organizations. Across different regions, studies consistently identify barriers such as inadequate training, poor communication, political interference, resistance to change, and inconsistent funding. The Zambian experience, in particular, reveals the importance of addressing these issues through tailored interventions that combine technical, managerial, and cultural approaches. For PMS to be effective in improving public service delivery, it is crucial to address these challenges at all levels of the organization and ensure that all stakeholders are engaged and well-supported in the process.

2.3 Theoretical framework

Goal Setting Theory

The study on assessing the effect of Performance Management Systems (PMS) on operational efficiency and service delivery at Eastern Water and Sanitation Company (EWSC) draws upon Locke and Latham's (1990) Goal Setting Theory, which asserts that setting specific, challenging, and clear goals enhances individual and organizational performance. According to the theory, when individuals are provided with clear goals that are both specific and attainable, they are more motivated to exert effort, show persistence, and remain focused on achieving those goals. In the context of PMS, this theory is particularly relevant as it underscores the importance of setting measurable performance targets that guide employees' efforts and performance. At EWSC, PMS systems typically involve the establishment of specific goals, regular progress reviews, and feedback on performance. This aligns with the premise of Goal Setting Theory, which emphasizes that regular feedback on goal attainment fosters motivation, helps maintain high performance, and contributes to improved service delivery. Therefore, the theory is highly relevant to this study, as it provides a framework for understanding how well-defined goals and feedback within the PMS can lead to enhanced operational efficiency and service delivery at EWSC. Studies have consistently shown that goal clarity and feedback

contribute significantly to improving employee performance (Locke & Latham, 2002), making the theory central to the study's analysis of PMS effectiveness.

Expectancy Theory

Another theoretical lens for this study is Vroom's (1964) Expectancy Theory, which proposes that individuals are motivated to perform based on the expected outcomes of their efforts. The theory posits that motivation is a function of three factors: expectancy (belief that effort will lead to performance), instrumentality (belief that performance will lead to a specific outcome), and valence (the value an individual places on the outcome). In the context of PMS, the theory is highly relevant because it suggests that employees' motivation to achieve performance targets is influenced by their perception of the likelihood that their efforts will result in rewards or recognition. At EWSC, if employees believe that meeting performance targets will lead to tangible rewards, such as promotions, bonuses, or recognition, they are likely to be more engaged with the PMS. Moreover, expectancy theory underscores the importance of ensuring that employees' performance expectations align with their ability to achieve the desired outcomes, thus fostering greater effort and commitment to the organization's goals. Expectancy Theory offers valuable insight into how PMS can be structured to maximize motivation by ensuring that performance is both achievable and linked to valued rewards. According to research, PMS that aligns with expectancy factors has been shown to positively impact employee motivation and organizational performance (Vroom, 1964; Porter & Lawler, 1968).

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Approach

The research approach for this study was qualitative, which was ideal for gaining a deeper understanding of the attitudes, perceptions, and experiences of individuals involved in the performance management processes at EWSC. Qualitative research allowed the researcher to explore the meaning behind human behaviours and the underlying reasons for actions, making it appropriate for investigating the effects of PMS on organizational performance (Bryman, 2016). This approach was particularly useful in studying the complex dynamics between PMS, employee performance, and service delivery, as it enabled the researcher to gather detailed and context-specific data.

3.2 Research Strategy

The research strategy employed a case study design, which involved a detailed examination of a single organization to gain a thorough understanding of how PMS affected operational efficiency and service delivery. Case studies allowed for an in-depth exploration of organizational practices, providing detailed insights into the factors that influenced performance and outcomes (Yin, 2014). The case study approach was particularly appropriate for this research as it provided a focused lens to understand the specific context of EWSC, allowing the researcher to explore the nuances of PMS implementation in a water utility company.

3.3 Sampling Frame

The sampling frame for this study consisted of employees and managers at EWSC who were directly involved

in the implementation and monitoring of PMS. The population included individuals from various departments, including human resources, operations, customer service, and finance, as these areas were typically affected by performance management practices. The sampling frame was drawn from a list of EWSC employees and managers, provided by the company's human resources department. According to the company's employee directory, there were approximately 160 employees at EWSC, and a subset of this population was selected for the study.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The sample size for this qualitative study was 20 individuals, comprising 10 managers and 10 employees. This sample size was adequate for qualitative research, as it allowed for rich, in-depth data collection while ensuring manageable analysis (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, which involved selecting participants based on specific characteristics relevant to the research topic. Participants were chosen based on their direct involvement with PMS, either as managers responsible for its implementation or employees who were affected by the system. This sampling technique ensured that the data collected was relevant and directly addressed the research objectives.

3.5 Data Collection Techniques

The data for this study was collected using semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were suitable for qualitative research as they allowed flexibility in exploring key themes while ensuring consistency across interviews (Kvale, 2007). The interviews were conducted with the 20 selected participants.

3.6 Data Analysis

Data collected from the semi-structured interviews was analyzed using thematic analysis, a widely used technique in qualitative research for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis involved transcribing the interviews, coding the data to identify recurring themes related to PMS implementation, operational efficiency, and service delivery. The codes were then grouped into categories, and patterns were identified to draw conclusions about the relationship between PMS and operational outcomes at EWSC. Document analysis was used to triangulate the interview data and validate findings.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were a fundamental aspect of this study. Participants were informed about the purpose of the research, their role in the study, and the voluntary nature of their participation. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection, ensuring that they were fully aware of their rights, including the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Impact of Performance Management Systems (PMS) on Operational Efficiency at EWSC

The findings from the study indicate that the Performance Management System (PMS) at Eastern Water and Sanitation Company (EWSC) has positive impact on operational efficiency. One of the key benefits highlighted by participants is the improved allocation of resources. As noted by Participant 2, *PMS enables better management of critical resources such as water and manpower, reducing waste and optimizing utilization*. This suggests that the system plays a significant role in aligning resource deployment with organizational priorities, which is essential for enhancing operational efficiency in a utility company.

Additionally, the PMS facilitates early problem detection, which is crucial for maintaining smooth operations. Participant 7 emphasized that *the system flags issues before they escalate, allowing timely interventions to address operational bottlenecks*. This early identification mechanism helps prevent disruptions that could lead to inefficiencies or service delays, thereby contributing to overall improved performance. The ability to detect and resolve problems promptly is a critical strength of the PMS, reflecting its proactive approach to operational management.

The continuous feedback loop provided by the PMS is another important factor driving operational efficiency. According to Participant 11, *regular feedback motivates employees to enhance their productivity and work quality*. This ongoing engagement ensures that employees remain focused on performance improvement, which supports sustained gains in efficiency. Continuous feedback is widely recognized in performance management literature as a best practice for fostering a culture of accountability and continuous improvement within organizations.

However, despite these positive effects, some limitations of the PMS were noted by participants. Participant 14 pointed out that *certain key performance indicators (KPIs) do not fully capture all operational challenges, suggesting that the system's data might sometimes be incomplete or insufficient for making informed decisions*. This highlights a gap in the PMS framework, where the measurement tools need refinement to better reflect the complex realities of operational processes at EWSC. Addressing these limitations could further enhance the effectiveness of the PMS and lead to more accurate performance assessments and targeted improvements.

These findings indicate that the Performance Management System (PMS) has positively influenced operational efficiency at Eastern Water and Sanitation Company (EWSC). Key benefits such as improved resource allocation, early problem detection, and enhanced employee productivity emerged prominently. Participants indicated that PMS facilitated better use of critical resources like water and manpower, minimizing wastage and optimizing operational processes. This aligns with global studies by Armstrong (2014) and Bititci et al. (2012), who emphasize that effective PMS enhances resource utilization and operational control in utility organizations.

4.2 Challenges Faced by EWSC in Implementing and Utilizing PMS

The findings reveal several significant challenges that Eastern Water and Sanitation Company (EWSC) faces in implementing and utilizing its Performance Management System (PMS). One major issue is the lack of adequate training. Participant 3 pointed out that *many staff members do not receive sufficient training to*

effectively use PMS tools. This challenge limits employees' ability to fully engage with and benefit from the system, thereby reducing its overall effectiveness. Proper training is essential for building staff confidence and competence in using PMS processes, and its absence can lead to misuse or underuse of the system.

Resource constraints also pose a serious challenge. As noted by Participant 10, *limited staffing and budgetary restrictions hinder the full implementation of PMS activities.* Resource shortages can result in insufficient monitoring, delayed feedback, and incomplete data collection, which are critical components for a functional PMS. Without adequate resources, it becomes difficult to sustain continuous performance evaluation and improvement initiatives, affecting both operational efficiency and service delivery.

Resistance to change within the organizational culture further complicates PMS adoption. Participant 6 highlighted that *some employees prefer traditional methods and resist the new system, which slows progress.* Resistance to change is a common barrier in organizational reforms and often stems from fear of the unknown or discomfort with new practices. This cultural barrier can reduce employee engagement and lower the system's impact on improving performance outcomes.

According to Participant 13, *Political and managerial interference undermines the fairness and objectivity of the PMS.* Participant 13 further stated that *management interference can affect the system's impartiality, leading to biased assessments and unfair treatment.* Such interference erodes trust in the PMS and diminishes its credibility, which is critical for motivating employees and fostering accountability.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

The study concludes that the Performance Management System (PMS) positively influences operational efficiency at EWSC by enabling better resource allocation, facilitating early detection of operational problems, and motivating employee productivity through continuous feedback. However, the effectiveness of the system is somewhat limited by incomplete or insufficient key performance indicators (KPIs) that do not fully capture all operational challenges. Therefore, while PMS contributes significantly to operational improvements, refining its measurement tools is essential for optimizing its impact. The study further concluded that the implementation and effective use of PMS at EWSC are hindered by several challenges, including inadequate staff training, resource constraints, resistance to change within the organizational culture, and political or managerial interference. These challenges limit the PMS's potential to fully improve performance and service delivery. Addressing these barriers is vital to strengthen PMS adoption and maximize its benefits for operational and service excellence at EWSC. The study identified several key challenges undermining the effective implementation and utilization of PMS at EWSC. Insufficient training emerged as a significant barrier, echoing the findings of Kabiru (2014) and Muthoni (2016), who documented that lack of adequate staff capacity limits engagement with PMS tools. Proper training is essential for empowering employees and ensuring accurate data management and system utilization

5.2 Recommendations

- i. Enhance KPI Development: EWSC should review and refine its key performance indicators to ensure they comprehensively capture all critical aspects of operational performance. This will provide more accurate and actionable data to inform decision-making.
- ii. Invest in Data Quality and System Integration: Improve the PMS infrastructure to ensure complete, timely, and reliable data collection, enabling better early problem detection and resource management.
- iii. Provide Comprehensive Training Programs: Implement regular, in-depth training for all staff on PMS tools and processes to build capacity and improve system utilization.
- iv. Address Resource Limitations: Secure adequate funding and staffing dedicated to PMS activities to ensure sustained and effective implementation.
- v. Manage Change Effectively: Develop change management initiatives that address resistance by communicating PMS benefits clearly and involving employees in the transition process.

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