



THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION (CSC) AND SOUND EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS IN ZIMBABWE'S MINISTRY OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION, MUTARE DISTRICT FROM 2012 TO 2016

Alouis Chilunjika¹, Mildred Mahapa², Thabang G. Mofana³, Moliehi Mokhothu⁴

¹ Department of Political and Administrative Studies, National University of Lesotho, Lesotho/

² School of Public Management, Governance and Public Policy, University of Johannesburg, South Africa.

³ Department of Business Administration, National University of Lesotho.

⁴ Department of Political and Administrative Studies, National University of Lesotho.

Corresponding Email: chilunjika@gmail.com¹, mupandarem@gmail.com², tg.mofana@nul.ls³,
moliehimokhothu@ymail.com⁴.

ABSTRACT

The study evaluates the role played by the Civil Service Commission in promoting sound employment relations in Zimbabwe's public sector specifically at the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in the Mutare District from 2012 to 2016. The article delves on the nature of the Civil Service Commission, employment relations, the role of the CSC in promoting sound employment relations among a multiplicity of issues. The research explored the functions of the CSC and the challenges it is facing in the promotion of sound employment relations in Zimbabwe's educational sector. The study relied on the mixed methods approach hence it incorporated qualitative and quantitative methods in the selection of the participants, data collection and data analysis. The findings of the research study indicated that Zimbabwe has not fully managed to promote sound employment relations in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education as it faces a myriad of challenges which include: political instability and economic decay, delays in service delivery, mismanagement of public funds and abuse of office. To address the identified challenges the study recommended the comprehensive adoption of noble corporate governance practices in the public sector and the privatization of the CSC in order to cease the government's intervention in its processes.

Keywords: *Civil Service Commission (CSC), Sound employment relations, public sector; Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education; Zimbabwe.*

1. INTRODUCTION

A Civil Service Commission (CSC) is an organisation that is backed by the legislature to regulate the employment and working conditions of civil servants. In Zimbabwe, it was formally named the Public Service Commission (PSC) under the Lancaster House Constitution of 1979. In Zimbabwe, the Parliamentary Act i.e. the Public Service Act 21 of 1995, Chapter 16:4 will proffer regulations on the overall running of public entities to ensure the upholding of ethical values. Thus, CSC has the mandate to appoint persons with regard to merit. As highlighted by Zigora and Chigwamba (2000), the functions of CSC is to recruit and select employees to the PSC, allocate, promote them and place their operational atmosphere as well as *select individuals from approved services to office, position and grades in the Public Service*. It can be noticed in brief that the CSC is the organ that the government of Zimbabwe cannot go without. The CSC shall be to provide direction and carry out other stuff in line with Public Service as presented by Statute or under an Act of Parliament (Public Service Act 21 of 1995, Chapter 16:4). The functions of CSC are important as they promote sound employment relations if they are to be adhered to. It can be noted that, the roles and functions of the CSC vary from country to country depending on their constitutions. This goes together with the structure of the Commissions.

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For example, according to the Zimbabwean Public Service Act 21 of 1995, the Commission will be comprised of presidential appointed chairman with at least two and not more than seven individuals, as stipulated in the requirements of subsection (2). The research is an evaluation of the role of Civil Service Commission in promoting sound employment relations in Zimbabwe's Public Sector using the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in Mutare District from the year 2012 to 2016, where Civil Service is referred to as an agent that is established by legal and regulatory frameworks to govern the employment and working conditions of civil servants. Although it was initially well perceived, the CSC has over the last years held a disreputable position due to unethical practices in the Mutare district. These include corruption, nepotism and patronage politics which inhibit the effective fulfilment of the CSC's functions (Nzuwah, 2015). Overtly, this has necessitated the reform of government's central human resource management agency, the Civil Service Commission, aimed at promoting corporate governance and protecting the administrative principles within management circles of the state parastatals.

The Civil Service Commission has been a hub of unethical practices which include corruption, nepotism and patronage politics therefore it has failed to deliver its functions. Thus, this research draws its motivation from the gap between CSC and effective employment relations in Zimbabwe's public enterprises (Nzuwah, 2015). This research will provide valuable information to all stakeholders in government human resource management functions. The research is there to fill the gap in literature and practices within the government public sector and the elements of sound employment relations particularly in Mutare district. The study presents a political and socio-economic evaluation of the significance of sound employment relations framework to sustainable national economic development. With an intent of gauging the role of CSC in promoting sound employment relations in Mutare district, the study is guided by the following research questions, which this research seeks to answer: What factors necessitated the adoption of employment relations in Zimbabwe? What are the legal frameworks promoting sound employment relations at the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MPSE) in Zimbabwe? What are the challenges faced in implementing the employment relations frameworks in the MPSE in Zimbabwe? Lastly, what recommendations can be put forward in strengthening the role of the Civil Service Commission in promoting sound employment relations in Zimbabwe?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

2.1 Civil Service Commission

Marshall and Murtala (2015), the public service is viewed as an organ fashioned to guarantee that projects and programs of an organization are carried out at any time. They further argue that, this section of the Government will never die due to the issue of change and continuity in constitutional politics or leanings of that government (Marshall and Murtala, 2015). CSC is formally regarded as Public Service Commission (PSC). Nzuwah (2015) commented that, the CSC is the ultimate overall human resource department of the government who appoints, promotes and assigns persons to the civil service.

2.2 Employment Relations

Broadly speaking, Employment Relations (ER) refers to the nature of employment relationships in an industrial society. Employment relations are synonymous to industrial relations. Rose (2008) pointed out that, industrial relations is defined as study of the directive to employment ship involving employer and member of staff, both cooperatively and independently as well as determination of substantive and development matters at workplaces. According to Kaufman (2010), industrial relationships are seen as fashion of constructing regulations at the administrative centre. According to Gennard and Judge (2002), industrial relations is an understanding of the rules,



regulations and agreements which are administered both at individual level and at group level, the priority given to the individual as opposed to the cooperative relationship diverging from company to company depending upon the type of management. Thus, all people who are employed are a part of the ER system.

2.3 Sound Employment Relations

According to De Silva (2008), every service relations scheme should participate as well as demonstrate cultural values and norms. Accordingly, Diamond (2013) noted that sound industrial relations system is one in which relationships involving executive, workers and their representatives on one side, also between them and State on the other, are more in agreement as well as supportive than in dispute plus creates an atmosphere favourable for economic efficiency and the inspiration, productivity and development of staff member moreover create employee loyalty and shared reliance. De Silva (2008) notes that, good employment relations atmosphere in an entity is vital due to numerous matters critical to employers, workers and the society.

2.4 Elements of sound employment relations

The institutionalisation of a harmonious industrial relations system is a central matter for governments, employers, labour force and their representatives, in their endeavours to attain economic and social improvement (Saundry and Wibberley, 2014; Jones and Saundry, 2012). Sound employment relations structure is unqualified of an exact definition. As such, every work relations system should take into consideration, and imitate cultural factors. Accordingly, one can only describe some of the elements of good employment relations which have commonly appeared to be known as adding to the sound work relations scheme. De Silva (2008) also noted that, a sound work relations system is one in which relationships among management, workforce and the State are harmonious. Thus, industrial relations seek to balance the economic efficiency and effectiveness of organizations with equity, justice and individual development.

These assist in finding alternative routes to avoid, minimize, settle disputes or conflicting interests thus promote healthy relations amongst the actors directly involved, and the society as a whole. Moreover, sound employment relations system requires a sound labour relations management policy. Other elements of effective employment relations include employment and job security and increased employment opportunities. It also includes, raising living standards through improved terms and conditions of employment as well as productivity improvement which enables employers to be more competitive while achieving harmonious relations. According Dobbins and Dundon (2014) the primary premise of a good employment relations scheme is the acknowledgment as well as existence of liberties of union given evenly to employers and the work force. These freedoms comprise of recognition of organizations, workers as well as employers as sovereign bodies, subjected neither to dominance by each other or by the government (Chilunjika, Uwizeyimana and Chilunjika, 2023; Ackers, 2014). In addition to that, De Silva (2008) noted that, employment relations systems are founded on the outline of labour law which apply influence on the nature of the work relations system.

However, it is of paramount importance to resort to the law and its ability to control the resulting industrial affairs system. Hence, there are a number of elements of progressive employment relations. The value of relations between employers and workers in the public sector organisations depends on policies, practices and procedures which exist at the public sector rank to deal with individual and collective issues as well to uphold labour-management cooperation. According to Ackers (2014), the basics of a good industrial relations structure are intimately correlated to a progressive HR management policy transformed into exercise. Similarly, Chilunjika, Intauno and Chilunjika (2022) pleasant-sounding work relations are more likely to survive in an entity where HR management policies and operations are channelled towards correct enrolment and training, supportive scheme, two-way communication, professional expansion, a people-oriented leadership and management style. Furthermore, some characteristics of sound employment relations are that, there should be worker participation and employee involvement. The starting point for any effective employment relations is to install procedures and mechanisms to promote assertive communication within the structure. Finally, issues such as, wages and performance contract have to be flexible.

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2.5 Experiences from selected countries

The research has also reviewed other countries as a lens to assess the background of CSC, its structure, its roles and functions and lastly, the major challenges faced. The three countries that were reviewed include Malaysia, United Kingdom and South Africa.

Malaysia

According to the Custodian of Good Governance Report (2015), Malaysia has made tremendous progress in national development from early 1970s when the state became the main actor. Currently, Malaysia has the least unemployment rate, currently sitting on 2.1% which is almost close to full employment (Edigheji, 2012). Poocharoen and Brillantes (2013) postulated that, before the Asian economic decline of 1997, Malaysia had zero unemployment rates with over 2 million external workers owing to labour crunch. Since the 1970s, Malaysia has remodelled from a low income to a high-middle income country and by 2020, it aspired to become a high-income country (Poocharoen and Brillantes, 2013; Ismail, 2011). The CSC is grouped to form two major divisions. These encompass sub-divisions entrusted with seven roles and other eight sub-groups whose roles include that of a secretariat, public relations and legal functions (Poocharoen and Brillantes, 2013). In the words of Diamond (2013), in an attempt to remodel directive ideas that brought about wasteful and less competitive civic service, the CSC of Malaysia improved processes and incorporated standards of performance in the client charters. According to Ismail (2011), Malaysia has mobilized a number of changes towards a higher level of smooth production since independence.

Therefore, it can be noted that, the introduction of public service commission in the Malaysian government has brought many changes and development at large. Additionally, Edigheji (2012) noted that, the success story of Malaysia cannot be shared excluding civil service at the prime place. Accordingly, Malaysia witnessed more benefits than challenges in their introduction of the civil service commission in the public sector. These benefits necessitated by their professionalism in civil servants recruitment and promotions. According to Edigheji (2012), "More than 50% of public servants in Malaysia have four years degrees and above. The entrance qualification for Administrative and Diplomatic corps is a four years degree, starting at Grade 41." Thus, due to their effective recruitment and promotions by their civil service commission, they have harvested elements of sound employment relations in their public sector. The Malaysian case is of significant interest to cite as a reference because the CSC in Malaysia has successfully managed to promote comprehensive employment relations by sticking to elements of sound employment relations which include; meritocratic recruitment, transferability of public servants, predictability of career path and promotion, administrative- political interface and competent administrative leadership (Gennard and Judge, 2002; Haque, 2001).

United Kingdom (UK)

Roles and responsibilities of the UK civil service are listed in the Constitutional Reform and Governance (CRG) Act 25 of 2010 section 10. The same section provides information regarding the selection for appointment that is, selection and recruitment to the civil service should be based on merit and it has to be on the basis of fairness and openness. Section 11 of the CRG Act requires that the Commission should publish recruitment and selection principles which are to be applied. According to the CSC Report on Recruitment Principles (2012), "the role of the Commission in recruitment is to maintain the requirement that appointments to the Civil Service are on merit on the basis of fair and open competition. The Commission will decide whether and how it will participate in the selection processes for such posts. Usually this will take the form of a Civil Service Commissioner overseeing the appointments process and chairing the selection panel. The Commission accepts certain appointments from the requirement of appointment on merit on the basis of fair and open competition



(Mayo, 2017; Rose, 2008; Gennard and Judge, 2002; Haque, 2001). Departments and agencies must comply with the requirement of appointment on merit on the basis of fair and open competition and set Recruitment Principles.”

The CSC Annual Report (2004-2005) stated that, the role of the CSC is to provide the guidelines which state the public service enrolment values. Recruitment into public Service is regulated by the Civil Service Order in Council of 1995 and Diplomatic Service Order in Council of 1991. Both of these Orders have been amended. The above-mentioned functions and responsibility of the UK CSC formed the base of the operations of the UK civil service commission. The UK CSC has yielded a number of benefits because of the independence of the commissioner. Meanwhile, they are facing some difficulties of delivering more for less in their near future of their civil service. According to Chinn, Dimson, Goodman and Gleeson (2015), the UK government will face some daunting difficulties over the next five years on the subject of how to provide provisions that convene people’s actual prospects in a period of significant economic growth as well as drastic consolidation which is required for refurbishment of fiscal stability.

South Africa

In South Africa, the Commission comprises of fourteen Commissioners who are all appointed by the President Five Pretoria-based Commissioners are approved by the National Assembly and one Commissioner represents each of the nine provinces and is appointed after being nominated by the relevant Premier and approved by the appropriate provincial legislature (Public Service Commission, 1997). Like all other CSCs of other countries, the South African PSC is a sovereign and neutral body constitutionally formed to uphold, preserve effective and efficient public administration as well as high standard of professional ethics in public facilities. According to the PSC Strategic Plan of 2013/14, different from its independent nature as declared in the 1996 Constitution, the Public Service Act 103 of 1994 label the PSC as forming part of the public service put in the same class with national departments. Equally, to the Zimbabwean CSC, its workforce is classified as public servants. According to Franks (2014), democratic South Africa inherited a racially skewed public service in which 95.5% of the top 3,239 civil servants were white, and only 0.6% were black Africans. The latter made up the vast majority of public servants in the lower ranks, with a few middle and senior level public servants in the homeland governments. This inequality flagged the problems that were going to be witnessed in the near future. Muthien (2013) suggested that, the PSC of South Africa challenge emanates not only from a lack of competence, but inconsistency in framing the plan and key accomplishment elements of a capable expansion state.

2.6 Challenges faced by the Civil Service Commissions (CSC)

According to Nyameh and James (1998), since the founding of public administration in the nineteenth century as a profession and as an academic study, the function of government has been on eradication of corruption, development of efficiency as well as enrichment of service provision in pursuit of public interest. Therefore, when the public service commission is experiencing problems, the country’s journey to sustainable development is at jeopardy. Moreover, public sector analysts have observed that South Africa still lacks a coherent model of public sector reform and public management (Chipkin and Lipietz, 2012). According Muthien (2013), it is important to emphasise that South Africa is not a ‘failed state’. It is also imperative to recognise that the apartheid state was partially failing in terms of policy coherence and consistency, delivery and fragmentation of administration, as well as a waning commitment to upholding apartheid in its dying years. However, the state that Nelson Mandela inherited was not efficient, effective or capable to serve the needs of the population. This nature has seen the South African CSC failing to deliver sound employment relations. Thus, the main challenges faced by the Public Service Commission are resultant to the colonial systems of employment. Additionally, the civil service commission is facing challenges because, ever since the global depression, condensed public revenue and increased levels of national arrears have become a fraction of broader environment. Therefore, the New Zealand Annual Report (2011), suggested that:

at the same time, the recovery and rebuilding of Christchurch, our second-largest city, will require an extraordinary amount of human endeavour and financial support as the implications

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of the disaster work their way through the lives of individuals, and through New Zealand's business and financial institutions.

On top of problems being faced by the New Zealand public sector, the public service commission remains an important element of the economy. Hence, any development in public sector performance would have consequences on economic expansion and diminish pressure on fiscal policy. In addition, every independent country designs the kind of civil service system that complements its statute and achieve its national operation. In the words of Nwanolue and Chadubem (2012), one of the clearest symptoms of Nigeria's dire condition is the unavailability of mission in the character, direction or perhaps the lack of it, in the Nigerian public service. They further postulated that, the civil service is normally the thinking arm of the sovereign nations, and often draws from a country's most unique talent pool; from its established centres of knowledge production - the universities, the research centres and the entire school's system.

Thus, in the case of Nigeria, reflecting the collapse of almost all its strategic national institutions - the bureaucracy, the judiciary, the police, the school's system, etc. what we now have is a paradoxical service: ignorant, unimaginative, over bloated and careerist. According to Nwanolue and Chadubem (2012), this collapse of the strategic institutions can lead to a potential misreading that might end up misdirecting the necessary changes required to transform the Nigerian service for greater efficacy. Thus, it is reflected that, there is still a long way to go for Civil Service Commissions to promote sound employment relations as they are facing a number of challenges worldwide. Even though the CSC effectively applied the key improvements, the challenges are still prevailing due to cultural attributes and bureaucratic structures (Marshall and Murtala, 2015). According to Kim (2004), some of the challenges that the Korean government is facing include the stagnation in development, lack of autonomy amongst ministry's personnel, lack of competitiveness, poor and complex remuneration procedures. In other words, CSC is suitable for developed countries since in developing it is heavily affected by low standard services in the public sector.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study made use of mixed methods as its research design. Participants were purposively selected to participate in in-depth interviews. Additionally, respondents for the survey were selected using simple random sampling. On data collection, the study utilized written documents, in-depth interviews and questionnaires. Data analysis was done qualitatively and quantitatively since the study utilized a mixed method research design. The study employed content analysis and thematic analysis to analyse the data that was collected from in-depth interviews and qualitative written documents, whilst quantitative data from the structured questionnaires were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

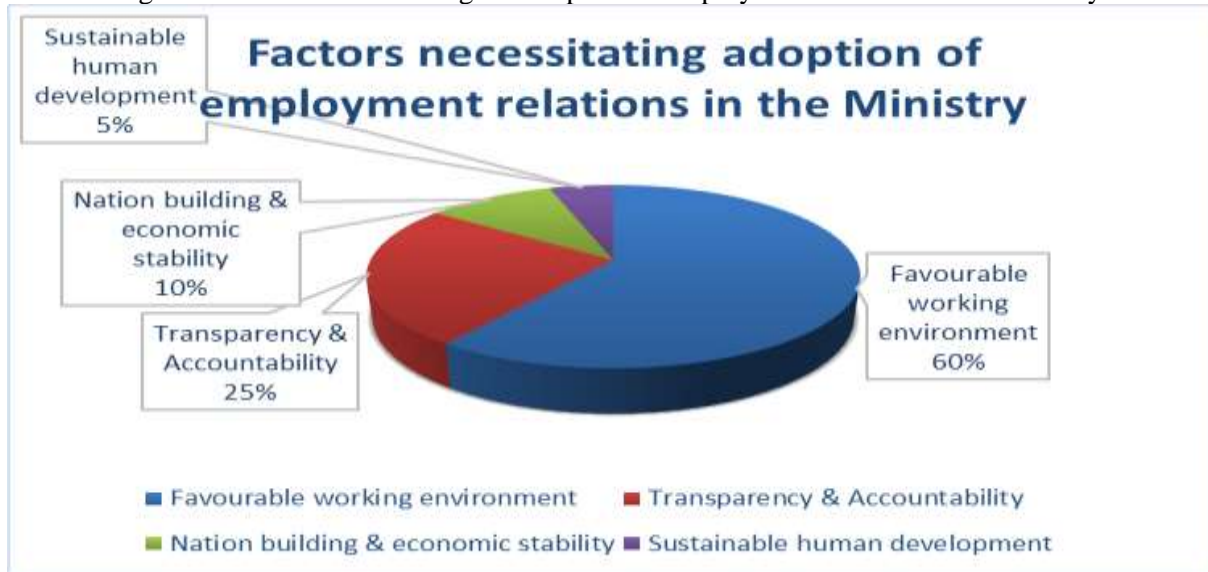
4. DISCUSSION OF KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Factors necessitating the adoption of sound employment relations

The desire to create a favourable working environment, non-discriminatory, and upholding of values of integrity, impartiality and fairness in the Ministry seem to be the primary factor that necessitated the adoption of sound employment relations in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. 60% of the respondents favoured factors inclined to healthy working environment, non-discrimination, and upholding of values of integrity, impartiality and fairness. (25%) preferred the promotion of transparency and accountability in the educational sector. (10%) were in support of ensuring effective nation building and economic stability within the Ministry of Education and lastly, (5%) preferred the promotion of sustainable human development in the Ministry.



Figure 1: Factors necessitating the adoption of employment relations in the Ministry.



Source: Authors own construction.

Participants who participated in interviews echoed that there was no official assumption of employment relations in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education because of certain factors but employment relations were always there prior to the colonisation of Zimbabwe by the white minority rule. According to Participant E:

“The elements of employment relations are the same as that of which were there in the past. We did not adopt employment relations in the ministry of education but we just maintained the elements of good relations in the workplace. Just like the functional exploitative working relations which were there, we just carried them to our generation.”

However, the official adoption of employment relations in the ministry of primary and secondary education has brought some positives in the educational sector as it has created the favourable and non-hostile environment for educational processes at early stages. In accord to this, Participant C asserted that:

“The educational ministry adopted industrial relations with the desire of creating a working environment that is clean, favourable with less or no discrimination which might be based on tribe, race, language, class, or human state. This environment should also uphold civil service values of integrity, impartiality and fairness within the Ministry.”

The research findings complement well with the literature already existing in the industrial sociological discourse. In the words of Nwanolue and Chidubem (2012), the Civil Service of any country enjoys efficiency and effectiveness to an extent. The government of the day objectively yields to its procedural capacity objectives and bureaucratic stability, geared towards the promotion of sustainable human development. This complement with the factor of the promotion of sustainable human development in the Ministry as stated in the research findings. Thus, the research findings suit into the literature already existing in the discourse.

Contrarily, Dundon and Rollinson (2004), believe that, employment relations were adopted in order to enable the ministry to maintain high levels of employment and to pave a way for flexibility within the hierarchy of the Ministry. Whereas other literature, asserted that employment relations were adopted to maintain high levels of employment. However, the essence of upholding sound employment relations through maintaining high employment rates in the education sector has been practically curtailed by the continual economic decline in Zimbabwe. Hence, downplaying the practicality of some of the cumulated research findings as factors that necessitated the adoption of employment relations in the educational sector vis-à-vis the declining state of economy.

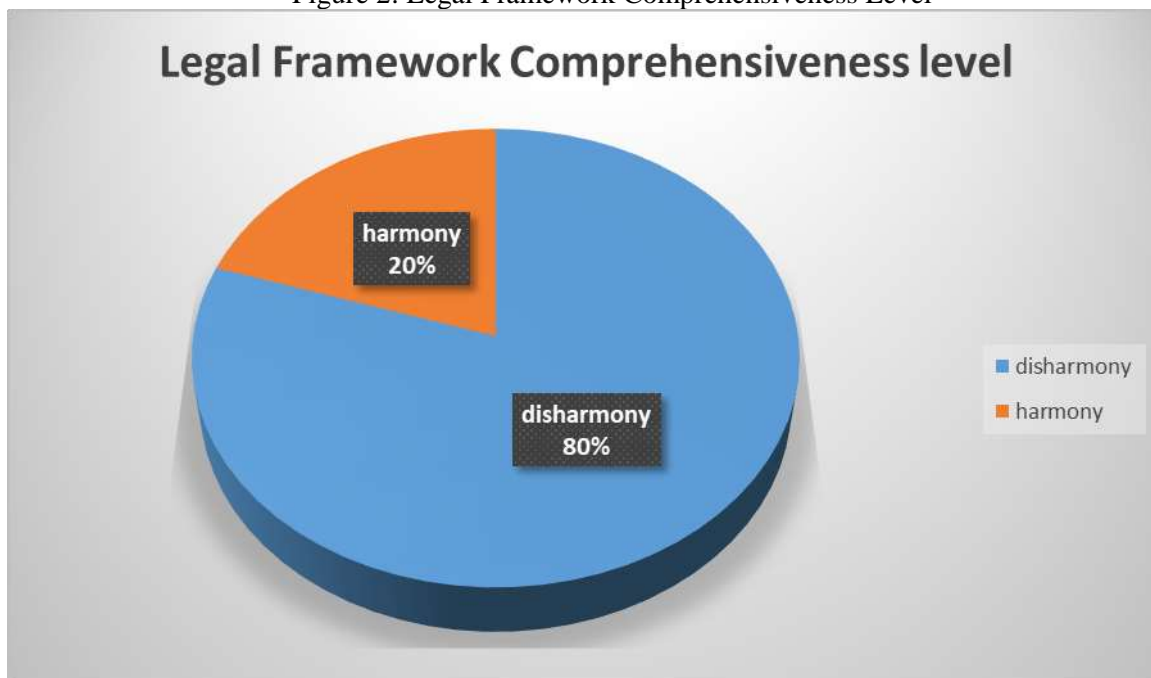
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4.2 Legal and regulatory frameworks for promoting sound employment relations at the Ministry

Although the legal and regulatory frameworks of civil service commission are detailed in the 2013 Constitution of Zimbabwe as well as Zimbabwe Public Service Act No. 21 of 1995, most respondents (80%) asserted that, the CSC is no longer connected or in harmony with these legal and regulatory frameworks., Supportively, 20% of the respondents stated that, the constitution is still the supreme and they are still guided by it in harmony with other acts.

Figure 2: Legal Framework Comprehensiveness Level



Source: Authors construction.

In discussion, legal and regulatory frameworks of Civil service commission are there to ensure that there is upholding of sound corporate governance values such as transparency and accountability within the civil service. According to the Global Educational Monitoring (2017), a robust legal and regulatory framework is very fundamental to ensure accountability by the actors. In Zimbabwe, right from the constitution, the government is viewed as the duty bearer of education hence primarily accountable to the provision of quality education. A number of schools of thoughts have a view that, in Africa there is a tendency of having a constitution on paper but with no one to pay heed to its practical terms. This perspective is supported by the current study as its findings reflect that the CSC is no longer in line with the legal and regulatory frameworks stipulated by the Constitution of Zimbabwe 20th Amendment of 2013 and the Zimbabwe Public Service Act 21 of 1995. This denotes that although the guidelines are there, they are seldom taken heed of on the ground.

Generally, it is believed that the historical establishment of CSC is associated with the doing away with spoils system, patronage and any form of recruitment and appointment of public servants that is non-meritocratic in favour of merit-based and open competition for public service. Depending on this assumption, the appointment of civil servants in MPSE is no longer based on merit but there are a number of patronage and spoils systems that are involved. Just like the Zimbabwean CSC, all Civil Service Commissions are established in terms of the constitution and parliamentary acts. The South African Public Service Commission (PSC) was also established in terms of the Public Service and Pensions Act 21 of 1995. Therefore, this research regards the Civil Service Commissions in

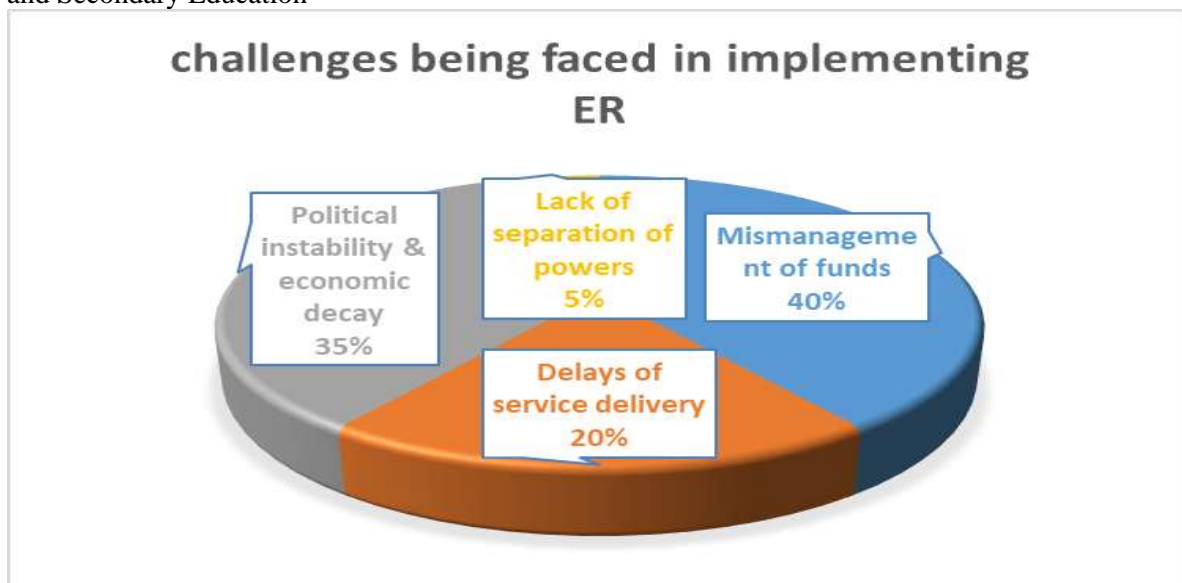


Zimbabwe as acting in deviation from the guiding legal and regulatory frameworks established in the constitution and parliamentary acts.

4.3 Challenges being faced in implementing employment relations frameworks in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education

According to the research findings presented on the below plotted pie chart, 35% of the respondents indicated that political instability and economic decay is among the major challenges faced in implementing employment relations in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. Only 5% indicated lack of separation of powers as the challenge. 40% cited mismanagement of funds and 20% went for delays in service delivery.

Figure 3: Challenges being faced in implementing employment relations in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education



Source: Authors own construction

4.4 Lack of separation of powers in the government which result in violation of Civil Service Commission independence

Respondents have shown that, lack of separation of powers within the government structures have stolen away the freedom of the civil service commission of exercising their roles and functions. 5% of the respondents supported that lack of separation of powers in the structures of the government is resulting in the violation of CSC's independence as stipulated by the constitution of Zimbabwe. One interviewee (Participant O) asserted that:

"The fact that the civil service commission is appointed by the President and monitored by the Executive means that they do not have the freedom to exercise their functions successfully. This hinders their role of promoting effective employment relations."

Participants show that the political system of Zimbabwe is not favourable for organizations and departments to perform their roles well. Therefore, due to that effect, organizations such as CSC are continuing to encounter challenges as a result of political wounds. Comparatively in Africa, public service organization are coupled with failures in delivering their services because of the political greediness and selfishness of African leaders. For instance, the Nigerian Civil Service has suffered a tremendous set back from the hands of various military and civilian governments that have ruled the country for the past fifty years (Nwanolue and Chadubem, 2012). Thus, this research asserted the continual effects that are lowering the effectiveness of Civil Service Commission in promoting good employment relations in MPSE in the Mutare district.

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4.5 Political instability and economic decay

Political instability and economic decay seem to be the most significant factor that is creating difficulties to the Civil Service Commission in their quest to promote decent employment relations in the educational sector in Mutare district. About 35% asserted that, political instability and economic decay has affected the civil service. Participant E affirmed that:

“Since 2000, the working conditions in the public service have never been favourable to civil servants as a result of political instability and economic dysfunction. This spiralled the rate of unemployment in the civil service and the country at large.”

The research findings complement well with the texts already existing in the discourse. According to Zigora and Chigwamba (2000), the Public Service experienced tremendous growth at independence in 1980 as a result of the need to respond to the aspirations and expectations of a young and independent state. This increase coincided with the exodus of many whites who had previously held a monopoly of power and experience in the public service. The new government therefore had no alternative but to recruit a young and inexperienced cadre into the service.” Thus, this is how the civil service collapse in the hands of greedy politicians and inexperienced political economists. Nwanolue and Chadubem (2012) propounded that, “for the Federal Civil Service Commission, the major problem is how to confront the increasing and persistent pressure for employment into the Federal Civil Service. In year 2000 alone, over 100,000 well qualified graduates applied for employment into the Federal Civil Service. This has serious implications on the logistics of the Commission, and the selection of candidates for appointment into the Service.” Thus, the research findings show that the failures of CSC had been impacted by large numbers of unemployment in the public sector as well as the country at large. Therefore, the research qualifies to be reliable in the fact that, the findings tally very well with the information from a number of case studies.

4.6 Mismanagement of funds and abuse of office

The roles and functions of Civil Service Commission are jeopardised with mismanagement of funds and abuse of office as well as government resources. It was not surprising that, 40% asserted that; the civil service commission is coupled with mismanagement of funds and abuse of office hence, hindering their pursuit for good industrial relations. In the interviews, one respondent (Participant I) stated that;

“The Civil Service Commission is no longer basing their decisions on the constitution as they used to in terms of recruiting as well as handling their activities. For example, those occupying high offices are recruiting their relatives and friends plus they recruit based on the political party affiliations, it is no longer based on merit as the constitution postulates.”

Practically, corruption includes mismanagement of funds, the abuse of office and government resources for personal gains. According to the research findings, corruption is one of the challenges that is hindering the successful promotion of effective employment relations in the Ministry of primary and secondary education in the Mutare district. Thus, the research findings hold water in terms of bringing out the real challenges that are backpedalling the efforts made by Civil Service Commission in promoting good employment relations in the Ministry of primary and secondary education in the Mutare district. As established by the research findings, there is high rates of mismanagement of funds and the abuse of office through nepotism, as well as looting government resources for personal gains within the structures of civil service. These aspects negatively impact the CSC's efforts of promoting sound employment relations in the educational sector.



4.7 Delays in service delivery and lack of responsiveness

As shown on the pie chart, 20% of the respondents pointed out that, the public service is coupled with delays in service delivery and lack of responsiveness which is the block hindering the successful promotion of employment relations. In the interviews conducted, there was less arguments regarding this setback. Participant N asserted that:

“The Zimbabwean Government wants a fundamental shift in the way the public sector goes about its business. This include the focus on effectiveness, efficiency, and innovation as a priority, and developing an expectation that achieves value for money in the public sector. Unfortunately, due to the cancer that was inflicted by the Mugabe government, service delivery in Zimbabwe has become politically concentrated and corruption based. Civil servants are no longer responsible and this is what we are expecting this new government to sort out.”

Thus, the research findings shows that, there is a lot that needs to be done in an effort to counter the challenges that the CSC is facing in their quest to indorse good employment relations. 20% responded that delays in service delivery and lack of responsiveness to satisfy the general public has hindered the progress of CSC in their work in the educational sector. This tally with what other scholars have suggested. These include, Zigora and Chigwamba (2000), who posited that in 1987, the Public Service Review Commission was tasked to do an in-depth study of the Zimbabwe Public Service. Their findings asserted that, a number of characteristics led to delays in service delivery and lack of responsiveness to the needs of the general public.

5. CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Promotion of sound employment relations in the MPSE has always been a big challenge for CSC considering the nature of Zimbabwean politics and economy. With the proliferation and continuity in issues such as corruption, political instability and economic decay, it has been so hard for the CSC to play a successful role in promoting good employment relations in the educational sector. As established by the cumulated research findings, it was the nature of the working environment that saw the adoption of employment relations into the educational sector by the CSC of Zimbabwe. Precisely, it was its desire to create a favourable working environment, non-discriminatory, and upholding of the values inclusive of integrity, impartiality and fairness in the Ministry that pushed the CSC to be fervent in the promotion of good employment relations. The study indicated that the concept of employment relations was adopted in order to assist the Ministry to maintain high levels of employment and to create a way for flexibility within the hierarchy of the educational sector of Zimbabwe. Succinctly, good employment relations have been on the realm of the CSC agenda in the public sector. Conversely, the fact that, the CSC is facing a myriad of challenges in their pursuit for the promotion of sound employment relations in MPSE means their work is jeopardised. Having all these in mind, it will be vindicated for one to conclude that, the CSC’s aim of promoting sound employment relations still has a long way to its accomplishment.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Adopting good corporate governance:** Remuneration should be based on job content as well as performance and merit ought to be the stipulation for promotion. In support, it can be noted that, execution of recommendations from the report led to increasing reassessment of employee salaries and wages, enhanced staff development programmes and strengthened training of professional public servants in universities (Muswaka-Zinatsa and Chilunjika, 2020; Nwanolue and Chaduben, 2012). This implies that, having professional civil servants is good as it enhances proper implementation of good corporate governance in the civil service. In addition to that, Zigora and Chigwamba (2000) suggested that, a survey should be conducted to verify the information and data on the status of public entities since this will enable reign of sound corporate governance in public services. Generally, adoption of sound corporate governance ensures that, there is transparency, accountability, effectiveness, efficiency, probity and responsiveness in their contact with the MPSE thereby, enabling promotion of positive employment relations in the educational sector.

THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION (CSC) AND SOUND EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS IN ZIMBABWE'S MINISTRY OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION, MUTARE DISTRICT FROM 2012 TO 2016

Alouis Chilunjika¹, Mildred Mahapa¹, Thabang G. Mofana¹, Moliehi Mokhothu¹

- **Commercialise and privatise the Civil Service Commission:** Promotion of good employment relations in the educational sector has been affected by the country's political instability and economic decay that has romped the public sector and the nation at large. To articulate this challenge, there is a need to commercialise and privatise the civil service commission so that whatever happens in the political economy of our country shall not affect the day to day running of the commission. In support, Zigora and Chigwamba (2000), identified commercialization and cost revival methods for several departments as a way to address the problems being faced by the Commission in their daily businesses. Political instability and economic decay are the national diseases that the government is failing to cure, making commercialisation and privatisation of CSC the only way to go. Henceforth, if we can have such innovations, it will improve or increase the promotion of effective employment relations in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in Zimbabwe.

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