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Analyzing Business Financial Accounting and Management Systems of Indigenous Businesses: A Case Study of Lusaka

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Abstract

This study focuses on analyzing business financial accounting and management systems of indigenous businesses in Lusaka. The main objective was to assess the importance and implementation of financial accounting and management practices in these businesses. Data was collected through a questionnaire from a sample of 60 firms in Lusaka, Zambia. The findings revealed that a significant majority (approximately 95%) of the respondents maintained financial records for their businesses, highlighting the importance of this aspect in their operations and showcasing their commitment to financial diligence and responsibility. Businesses with higher financial literacy levels were more likely to adopt technology, implement better accounting practices, and achieve improved financial performance. However, attention must be given to the minority (approximately 5%) of businesses that reported not keeping financial records, as this may affect their financial stability and credibility. Encouraging them to adopt better financial practices through educational programs is crucial. Regarding budgeting practices, businesses tended to conduct less frequent budget reviews, with a smaller percentage opting for monthly reviews. Encouraging businesses to diversify their expense tracking methods, including using accounting software, can improve financial monitoring. The study highlights the significance of maintaining proper

financial records for informed decision-making, compliance with legal requirements, and overall financial transparency. Additionally, it emphasizes the positive impact of financial literacy on various aspects of business performance and practices. The findings on business management systems indicate a wide range of opinions among respondents. While satisfaction levels were generally high, some expressed poor satisfaction, indicating room for improvement. Ongoing monitoring and enhancements to these systems can foster better operational efficiency. Furthermore, correlation analyses emphasize the importance of financial literacy in achieving positive outcomes in technology adoption, accounting practices, financial performance, and management strategies. To improve financial accounting and management practices among businesses in Lusaka, recommendations include promoting financial literacy, encouraging financial record-keeping, supporting technology adoption, implementing regular budget reviews, diversifying expense tracking methods, addressing challenges through training and support, continuously improving business management systems, fostering collaboration, supporting access to financial capital, and considering policy frameworks to incentivize best financial practices.

Keywords: Financial Accounting, Management Accounting, Indigenous businesses, Lusaka Financial Statements, Budgeting, Internal Controls, Cash Management, Taxation and Financial Analysis

1. Introduction

1.1 The back ground of the study

Indigenous communities worldwide have a rich history of trade and economic activities that predate colonization. However, the impacts of colonization, including forced assimilation, land dispossession, and discriminatory policies, have significantly hampered their ability to engage in business (Anderson, 2011) ^[1]. Despite these challenges, Indigenous businesses often integrate cultural values and practices into their operations, shaping financial accounting and management approaches with concepts like reciprocity, land stewardship, and intergenerational decision-making (Borrows, 2010) ^[2]. These businesses serve as agents for community development and empowerment, offering avenues for job creation, skill development, and poverty

reduction within Indigenous communities. They are instrumental in fostering economic independence and enhancing the well-being of their communities (Cornell *et al.*, 2018) ^[3]. However, Indigenous businesses encounter various challenges in financial accounting and management, including limited access to capital, financial literacy gaps, navigating complex regulatory environments, and aligning mainstream accounting practices with Indigenous values and goals (Taylor *et al.*, 2021) ^[4]. To address these issues, Indigenous communities are exploring alternative accounting and reporting systems that integrate cultural values, land-based accounting, and non-financial indicators of well-being alongside conventional accounting practices (Ntara *et al.*, 2019) ^[5]. To meet the specific needs of Indigenous entrepreneurs, these communities have established their own financial institutions, providing tailored access to capital, financial services, and business support (Morrison *et al.*, 2015) ^[6].

Financial accounting involves the recording, summarizing, and communicating of financial information to external stakeholders, adhering to standards like GAAP or IFRS (Warren C. *et al.*, 2021) ^[7]. Management accounting, on the other hand, provides financial information to internal stakeholders, supporting planning, control, and decision-making (Atkinson *et al.*, 2021) ^[8]. Financial management systems encompass processes, procedures, and software applications managing an organization's financial resources, integrating accounting functions such as budgeting, reporting, and cash flow management (Van Helden and Vonderembse, 2021) ^[9]. Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems are comprehensive software platforms integrating various business functions into a single system, facilitating the flow of information and enhancing operational efficiency (Hopwood *et al.*, 2020) ^[10]. Accounting Information Systems (AIS) refer to computer-based systems used to collect, process, and report financial data, combining principles and technologies to automate financial processes and improve information accessibility (Wichern, R., Hausner, U., & Chiwele, D. K. (1999) ^[31].

1.2 Statement of the problem.

Even with the increasing awareness of the key role portrayed by indigenous businesses in the local economy, making substantial contribution to employment, entrepreneurship, and cultural preservation in the Lusaka District, there is still a huge gap in comprehending the effectiveness of their financial accounting and management systems. A survey conducted by the Simataa Simataa (2010) ^[30] highlighted the challenges faced by many indigenous businesses in Lusaka when it comes to adopting modern financial management and accounting systems. Approximately 65% of the surveyed businesses cited limited access to financial resources, hindering their investment in advanced accounting technologies and training (Sebatta, C. *et al.* (2014) ^[29] However, the studies also revealed that only a mere 25% of indigenous businesses in Lusaka actively integrate traditional wisdom into their financial management practices. The Ministry of Environment of Zambia reported in their 2023 Green Business Report that over 80% of these businesses actively participate in eco-friendly practices. However, the effectiveness of their financial accounting and management practices in the context of sustainability remains relatively unexplored. Operating within the context of Lusaka city, indigenous businesses are influenced by a

complex interplay of factors, including local economic conditions, regulatory frameworks, and deep-rooted cultural traditions. Not only in this research paper, others have studied on the same, but they have left out the significant part of the impact of the effectiveness of business financial accounting and management systems of indigenous businesses in the Lusaka District. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of more effective and culturally sensitive financial management strategies, fostering sustainable growth and preserving the unique identity of indigenous businesses in the region.

1.3 General objective of the study

The purpose of this study is to analyze the business financial accounting and management systems of indigenous businesses in Lusaka.

1.3.1 Specific objectives

1. To evaluate financial accounting and management systems in indigenous businesses in Lusaka.
2. To assess the effectiveness of business financial accounting systems utilized by SMEs.
3. To examine the effectiveness of business management systems.

1.4 Research questions

1. What are the financial accounting and management systems in indigenous businesses in Lusaka?
2. In what ways are the business financial accounting systems utilized by the SMEs effective?
3. How effective are business management systems in Lusaka?

1.5 Theoretical/Conceptual Framework:

The inspiration for this project draws from indigenous knowledge systems, which play a pivotal role in analyzing financial accounting and management practices within indigenous businesses (Graham Furniss and Peter Probst, 2009) ^[12]. Rooted in a profound understanding of interconnectedness and interdependence, these knowledge systems recognize the intricate relationships between humans, nature, and the spiritual realm. Core principles include the pursuit of balance, harmony, and respect for all living beings and the environment. Transmitted orally across generations, indigenous knowledge is perpetuated through storytelling, songs, ceremonies, and other cultural practices, underscoring the significance of collective memory and intergenerational knowledge transfer. The profound connection between people and the natural world holds immense importance within indigenous knowledge systems. Land and nature are revered as teachers and founts of wisdom, with indigenous communities possessing intricate knowledge of ecosystems, traditional ecological practices, and sustainable resource management.

Central to these systems is the value placed on communal decision-making processes and the well-being of the entire community. Cooperation, consensus-building, and resource-sharing are prioritized. Moreover, spiritual beliefs and practices are deeply integrated, acknowledging the interconnectedness of the physical and spiritual realms. Rituals, ceremonies, and spiritual teachings are integral to many indigenous cultures, offering guidance, healing, and a sense of identity. Ancestral reverence is also emphasized, with elders assuming a pivotal role in preserving and transmitting indigenous knowledge.

2. Literature Review

The financial accounting and management practices in indigenous businesses across various regions, including Canada, Argentina, Sub-Saharan Africa (specifically Zambia and Nigeria), have been the subject of extensive study. Indigenous businesses encounter a myriad of challenges that impact their financial operations, largely attributed to limited resources, cultural values, inadequate infrastructure, and lack of expertise in financial practices. These challenges hinder their access to financial services, accounting systems, and the ability to interpret financial statements effectively. Studies such as those by Stevenson *et al.* (2017)^[13] and Phillips *et al.* (2018)^[14] on Canadian Indigenous businesses highlighted the importance of financial accounting for securing external funding and the influence of cultural values on financial management. These studies emphasized challenges in accessing financial accounting services due to geographic isolation, limited resources, and lack of financial literacy.

In Argentina, Carvajal *et al.* (2019)^[33] and Chaves *et al.* (2018)^[34] demonstrated that tailored financial management training programs and culturally appropriate accounting software significantly improved financial literacy and the accuracy of financial records in indigenous businesses. However, in Sub-Saharan Africa, indigenous businesses face unique challenges. Wamalwa and Ochieng (2017)^[43] and Turyahikayo (2019)^[42] highlighted the constraints of undercapitalization and inadequate infrastructure, such as unreliable electricity and internet connectivity, which hinder the implementation of financial management systems. In Zambia, the literature reveals a lack of formal financial accounting practices among indigenous businesses. Studies by Nuwagaba, A. (2015)^[15] noted the prevalence of informal record-keeping methods, limited access to financial information, and inadequate skills to interpret financial statements. While some businesses have adopted computerized accounting systems, challenges persist in accessing finance from institutions, as observed in studies by Deressa, C. E. (2014)^[17].

Similar challenges are evident in Nigeria, where indigenous businesses face limited access to finance and a shortage of skilled personnel. As noted by further Deressa, C. E. (2014)^[17] the absence of modern accounting and management systems in rural areas contributes to this challenge. Specifically focusing on SMEs in Zambia, Gondwe, M. (2012)^[16] emphasized the importance of effective financial accounting systems for monitoring finances, decision-making, and legal compliance. However, the adoption of financial accounting systems among SMEs remains low, with many still relying on manual bookkeeping practices, as identified by Mwanamambo B *et al.* (2007). On the other hand, studies like that of Evans and Lindsay (2019)^[35] showcased the positive impact of business management systems on employee morale and engagement, leading to increased productivity and reduced turnover rates. However, their successful implementation depends on factors such as leadership commitment, as highlighted in studies by MCIT (2007)^[37] demonstrated that implementing business management systems in Zambia led to improved efficiency, productivity, and quality of products and services. However, challenges such as lack of awareness and skilled personnel hinder the full utilization of these systems, as identified in studies by Mataa (2012)^[27].

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research design

Research design serves as the foundational framework binding all research elements together. Orodho (2013) defines it as the structured plan guiding investigations towards addressing core research questions. This blueprint ensures control over factors influencing result validity. The study adopted a descriptive design aimed at depicting existing situations, potentially yielding vital knowledge and solutions. This method involves data measurement, classification, and interpretation, primarily through surveys. Such surveys, per Orodho and Kombo (2012)^[40], gather data on attitudes, opinions, and social issues. Designing research in this manner aids in obtaining targeted outcomes, enhancing the acquisition of real-world insights.

3.2 Target population

The study population was a well-defined set of people or groups of things, households, communities, firms, or services that were being investigated (Noholas, 2013)^[39]. This researcher targeted 60 indigenous businesses in Lusaka province.

3.3 Sampling design

Sampling referred to the process of selecting a sample, such as participants, from the population of interest so that the results gained by these participants could be fairly generalized to the population from which they were chosen. In this research, purposive random sampling was used in some cases. As the name suggested, purposive sampling was used to select a sample for a particular purpose. Furthermore, since the precise quantitative figures of the target population were not known, non-probability purposive sampling was considered more ideal as it did not require rigorous rules and rigidity in terms of the figurative target population, as strictly required in probability sampling techniques. Probability sampling aimed at achieving a homogenous sample, i.e., a sample whose units shared the same or very similar traits, therefore making it a very appropriate sampling technique for this research.

3.4 Sample size determination

A sample size of 60 firms was conducted in Lusaka, Zambia.

3.5 Data collection methods

Data was collected using a structured interview schedule and questionnaire specifically designed for this study. Other data about the respondents was obtained from the selected sources. Both primary and secondary data collection techniques were utilized. Primary data was gathered mainly through structured questionnaires and interviews. The researcher also used a combination of structured questionnaires and interviews. The main instrument of data collection was the questionnaire. On the other hand, secondary data was gathered through a review of available relevant materials such as print and electronic media, other dissertations, books, articles, and related reports

3.6 Data analysis

Thematic analysis and descriptive statistical analysis were used to analyze the data. Thematic analysis involved

classifying words and phrases that emerged from interviews and were related to the same content into major themes (Bryman, 2018) [32]. The idea behind this was to allow the actual prevailing patterns, themes, and phrases of the research findings to emerge from the data. Additionally, data was obtained from questionnaires and manually coded, synthesized, and quantified into percentages using Excel data analysis software. The results were presented in the form of frequency tables and percentages as descriptive statistics in Microsoft Word. Furthermore, data was analyzed using regression analysis, and hypothesis testing was performed. Correlation determination was also conducted using SPSS software.

3.7 Triangulation

Triangulation referred to the use of multiple methods or data sources in qualitative research to develop a comprehensive understanding of phenomena (Patton, 2019) [41]. Triangulation has also been viewed as a qualitative research strategy to test validity through the convergence of information from different sources. identified four types of triangulation: (a) method triangulation, (b) investigator triangulation, (c) theory triangulation, and (d) data source triangulation. This research presented the four types of triangulations and discussed the use of focus groups (FGs) and in-depth individual (IDI) interviews as an example of data source triangulation in qualitative inquiry.

3.8 Limitations of the study

1. Collection of precise and exhaustive data on financial accounting and management systems may prove to be relatively difficult because the respondents had challenges to disclose confidential and delicate information willingly concerning consistency or inconsistency of their record-keeping system.
2. Cultural diversity and irritations in grasping business financial accounting and management practices might result in biasness of data interpretation which has a potential to distort the validity of the research findings and conclusions.

3.9 Ethical considerations

ethical considerations are paramount for participant safety and integrity. Anonymity, consent forms, and confidentiality were ensured. Information collected was solely for academic use, respecting participants' privacy. An introductory letter emphasized research significance, offering the choice to participate or opt-out, prioritizing individuals' protection and ethical research conduct.

4. Presentation and Interpretation of Findings

4.1 Presentations of results on background analysis of the respondent

Table 1: Age

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	18-24 years	1	1.7%
	25 -34 years	18	30.0%
	25-34 years	10	16.7%
	35-44 years	13	21.7%
	45-54 years	11	18.3%
	55 and above years	7	11.7%
	Total	60	100.0%

The study requested respondent to indicate age. 30% of the majority respondent were age between 25 to 34 years, 21.7% of the respondent indicated age between 35 to 44 years, 18.3% of the respondent indicated age between 45 to 54 years, 16.7% of the respondent indicated age between 25 to 34 years, 11.7% of the respondent indicated 55 and above years and 1.7% of the respondent indicated age between 18 to 24 years.

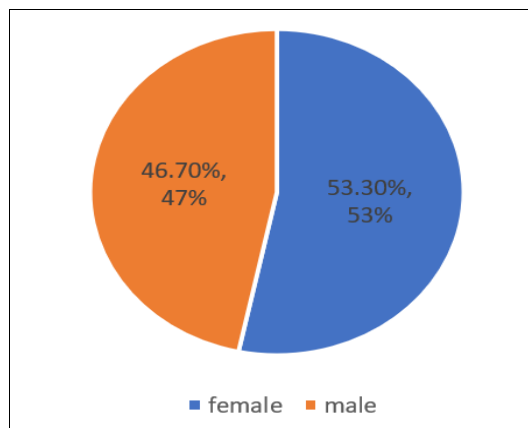


Fig 1: Gender

The study requested respondents to indicate their gender. Among the participants, the majority of respondents, comprising 53.30% of the total, identified as female. On the other hand, 46.70% of the participants indicated their gender as male.

4.2 Presentation of research results on financial accounting and management systems in indigenous businesses in Lusaka

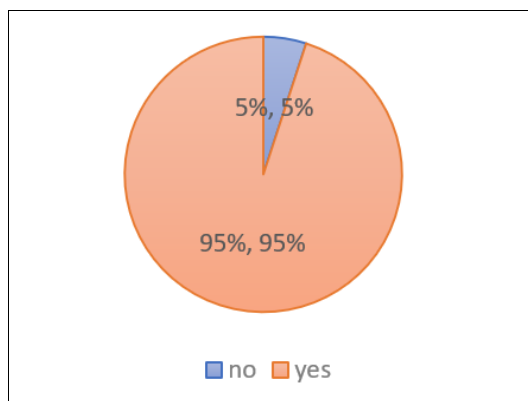


Fig 2: Do you keep financial records for your business?

The study requested respondents to indicate whether they keep financial records for their businesses. The results showed that a substantial majority of the respondents, approximately 95%, indicated that they do indeed maintain financial records for their businesses. In contrast, a minority of the respondents, comprising about 5%, stated that they do not keep financial records for their businesses.

Table 2: How often do you update your financial records?

	Frequency	Percent
Valid	Daily	16 26.7%
	daily and monthly	1 1.7%
	daily and weekly	2 3.3%
	daily, weekly and monthly	1 1.7%
	Monthly	26 43.3%
	Weekly	12 20.0%
	weekly and monthly	2 3.3%
	Total	60 100.0%

The study requested respondents to indicate how frequently they update their financial records. The results revealed diverse updating patterns among the participants. Among the respondents, 43.3% indicated that they update their financial records on a monthly basis. A substantial portion, 26.7%, reported updating their records on a daily basis, reflecting a high level of financial vigilance and regular monitoring. Additionally, 20% of the respondents stated that they update their financial records weekly, indicating a consistent effort to keep track of their financial activities on a regular basis. Interestingly, there were some individuals (3.3%) who preferred both daily and weekly updates, showing an even higher degree of attentiveness to their financial matters. Furthermore, a small percentage (3.3%) of respondents mentioned that they update their records both weekly and monthly, striking a balance between frequent and less frequent updates. Similarly, 1.7% of respondents stated that they update their financial records both on a daily and monthly basis, suggesting a compromise between daily vigilance and less frequent monitoring. Lastly, there were some respondents (1.7%) who expressed a preference for the most comprehensive approach, updating their financial records on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis.

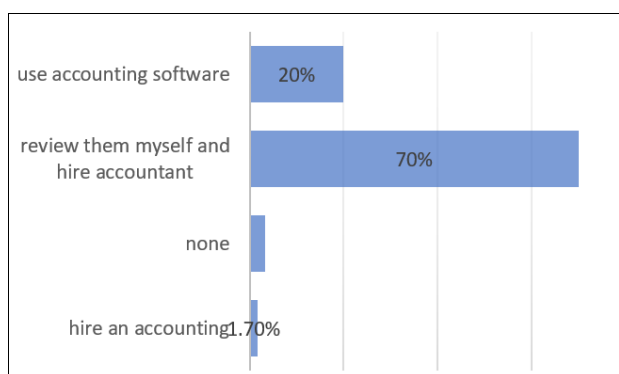


Fig 3: How do you ensure the accuracy of your financial records

The study aimed to investigate the methods employed by respondents to ensure the accuracy of their financial records. majority of respondents, constituting 70%, personally reviewed their financial records and additionally hired an accountant. Furthermore, 20% of the respondents reported relying on accounting software to maintain the precision of their financial records. On the other hand, a small percentage of respondents, specifically 3.3%, mentioned that they did not employ any specific method to ensure the accuracy of their financial records. Interestingly, 1.7% of the respondents indicated that they exclusively hired an accountant to oversee and verify the accuracy of their financial records.

4.3 Presentation of results on the effectiveness of business financial accounting systems utilized by SMES

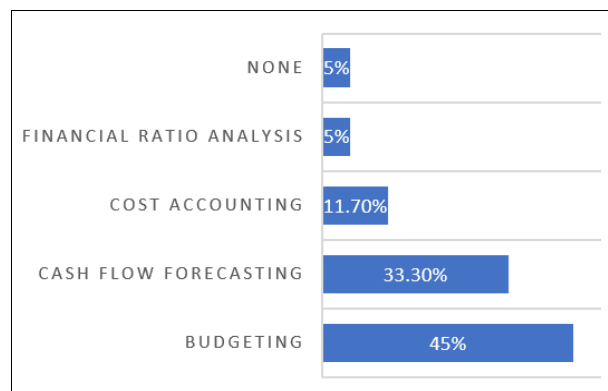


Fig 4: What financial management practices do you use to monitor your business performance?

The study aimed to collect data on financial management practices utilized by respondents to monitor business performance. The results revealed diverse preferences among the respondents: 45% of the majority respondents reported using budgeting as their primary financial management practice to monitor business performance. Approximately 33.3% of the respondents indicated that they relied on cash flow forecasting to track their business performance. About 11.7% of the respondents reported using cost accounting as their chosen method for monitoring business performance. 5% of the respondents stated that they employed financial ratio analysis as their preferred approach to assess business performance. Another 5% of the respondents mentioned that they did not use any specific financial management practices to monitor their business performance.

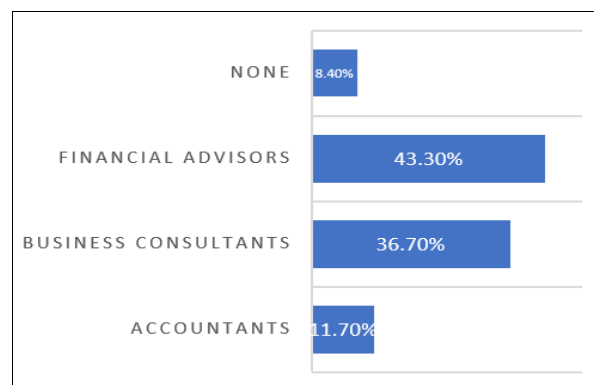


Fig 5: What kind of financial experts do you seek assistance from?

The study aimed to gather information about the type of financial experts that respondents sought assistance from. According to the results, 43.3% of the respondents indicated that they seek assistance from financial advisors. Additionally, 36.7% of the respondents stated that they rely on business consultants for financial advice. Furthermore, 11.7% of the respondents mentioned that they seek assistance from accountants. On the other hand, 8.40% of the respondents reported that they do not seek assistance from any financial experts, preferring to handle their financial matters independently.

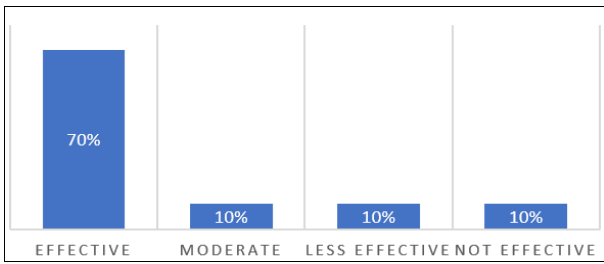


Fig 6: in your opinion, effective of financial management in the success of an indigenous business?

The study requested respondent to indicate how effective financial management in the success of an indigenous business is. 70% of the majority respondent indicated effective, 10% of the respondent indicated moderate, 10% of the respondent indicated less effective and 10% of the respondent indicated not effective.

4.4 Presentation of results on the effectiveness of business management systems

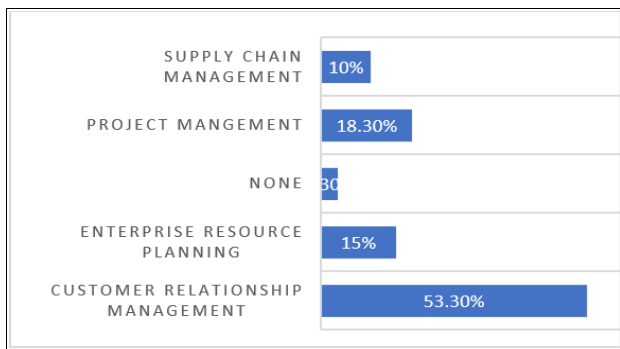


Fig 7: Which specific business management systems are currently in place in your organization?

The study aimed to gather information from respondents regarding the specific business management systems currently implemented in their organizations. According to the results, 53.3% of the majority respondents reported having a customer relationship management system in place. Additionally, 18.3% of the respondents indicated utilizing a project management system, while 15% of the respondents mentioned employing enterprise resource planning and supply chain management systems. It's worth noting that a small proportion of the respondents, 3.3%, reported having none of the mentioned management systems implemented in their organization.

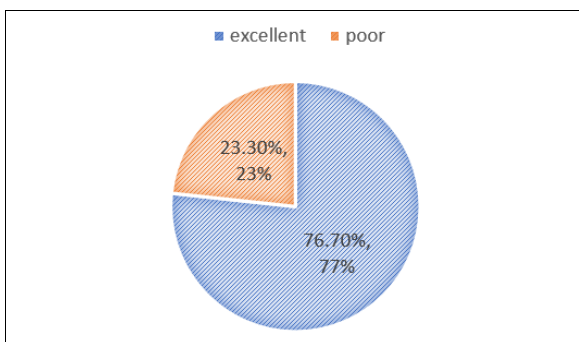


Fig 8: How effectively do the business management systems streamline processes and improve operational efficiency in your organization?

The study aimed to assess the effectiveness of business management systems in streamlining processes and enhancing operational efficiency within respondents' organizations. Participants were requested to indicate their perceptions of this effectiveness on a rating scale. Out of the majority of respondents, 76.7% expressed that the business management systems performed excellently in achieving these goals. On the other hand, 23.3% of the respondents reported a perception of poor performance in streamlining processes and improving operational efficiency within their respective organizations.

4.5 correlation analysis

The table provided displays the results of correlation analyses between different variables related to financial literacy, technology adoption, accounting practices, financial performance, and management practice

Table 4.5.1 Correlations

	financial literacy	technology adoption	accounting practices	financial performance	management practices
Pearson Correlation	1.000	.500	.556	.556	.310
technology adoption	.500	1.000	.364	.364	.124
accounting practices	.556	.364	1.000	.075	.075
financial performance	.556	.364	.075	1.000	.075
management practices	.310	.124	.075	.075	1.000
financial literacy	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
technology adoption	.000	.000	.000	.000	.008
accounting practices	.000	.000	.002	.002	.172
financial performance	.000	.000	.002	.002	.283
management practices	.000	.008	.172	.283	.000
financial literacy	.60	.60	.60	.60	.60
technology adoption	.60	.60	.60	.60	.60
accounting practices	.60	.60	.60	.60	.60
financial performance	.60	.60	.60	.60	.60
management practices	.60	.60	.60	.60	.60

This section shows the correlation coefficients between the variables. Correlation coefficients range from -1 to 1, where 1 indicates a perfect positive correlation, -1 indicates a perfect negative correlation, and 0 indicates no correlation. The values on the diagonal (top-left to bottom-right) are all 1.000 because they represent the correlation of each variable with itself, which is always perfect (i.e., correlation with itself is always 1).

Financial Literacy and Technology Adoption: There is a statistically significant positive correlation ($r = 0.500$, $p < 0.001$) between financial literacy and technology adoption. This suggests that individuals or businesses with higher financial literacy are more likely to adopt technology in their financial and management practices.

Financial Literacy and Accounting Practices: There is a statistically significant positive correlation ($r = 0.556$, $p < 0.001$) between financial literacy and accounting practices. This indicates that higher financial literacy is associated with better accounting practices in the businesses studied.

Financial Literacy and Financial Performance: There is a statistically significant positive correlation ($r = 0.556$, $p < 0.001$) between financial literacy and financial performance. This means that higher financial literacy is linked to better financial performance in the indigenous businesses in Lusaka.

Financial Literacy and Management Practices: There is a statistically significant positive correlation ($r = 0.310$, $p < 0.01$) between financial literacy and management practices. This implies that higher financial literacy is associated with better management practices in these businesses.

4.6 Discussion of research findings

The study in focus examined various aspects of financial practices, budgetary approaches, challenges, and the impact of financial management systems on businesses in Lusaka. It uncovered several significant findings. To begin, approximately 95% of respondents prioritize keeping financial records for their businesses, underscoring the acknowledgment of the significance of accurate and updated financial records. This practice aids in tracking financial health, expenses, profitability assessment, and informed decision-making (Financial Sector Deepening Zambia (2009, 2015). Budgetary practices were universally adopted, with 23.3% conducting weekly reviews. These frequent reviews allow for timely adjustments and reflect a proactive approach to financial Management. However, diverse review frequencies lacked detailed reasoning in the study.

Regarding expense tracking, 60% rely on physical receipts, emphasizing traditional methods to record and integrate expenses into their budgets. A major challenge reported was the lack of financial knowledge or skills among 40% of respondents, highlighting the need for training and support to enhance financial literacy among business owners. The study indicated that 91.7% observed positive changes in business performance post implementing financial management systems. This reaffirms the systems' crucial role in enhancing financial control and overall performance. Additionally, 6.7% identified poor cash flow management as a significant challenge, emphasizing the importance of effective cash flow management for business health.

The effectiveness of business management systems was assessed, with half of respondents viewing them as effective and 30% rating them as "moderate," suggesting room for improvement. The satisfaction scores for these systems varied widely, but the mean satisfaction score of 4.18 indicated an overall relatively high satisfaction level among respondents.

Correlation analyses revealed several noteworthy connections: a positive correlation between financial literacy and technology adoption, accounting practices, financial performance, and management practices (GRZ. Government of the Republic of Zambia, (2014). Higher financial literacy levels were associated with more significant inclinations toward technology adoption, better accounting systems, improved financial performance, and more effective management practices within these businesses. These correlations highlight the role of financial knowledge in shaping business practices and outcomes.

4.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, the study sheds light on the essential role of maintaining financial records, budgetary practices, and the challenges faced by businesses in Lusaka. It underscores the need for better financial literacy and the positive impact of financial management systems on business performance. Additionally, it emphasizes the significance of traditional methods like physical receipt keeping alongside the potential benefits of technological adoption in financial management practices. The correlations found between financial literacy and various business aspects further stress the pivotal role of financial knowledge in shaping effective business strategies and outcomes. The study suggests areas for improvement in financial practices and highlights the value of ongoing research in understanding and enhancing financial management practices in the region.

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