

The Role of Information Technology in Enhancing Property Tax Administration in Decentralised Local Government: A Case Study of Zimbabwe

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Abstract

The study aims to examine the current state of property tax administration in Zimbabwean local authorities under the conditions of digitalization. Property taxes within the Zimbabwean local tax system are significantly under-collected, necessitating an urgent enhancement of their contribution to local authority budgets. A quantitative research approach was adopted, collecting data through questionnaires from a target population of 60 staff members within an urban local authority. Purposive sampling was employed to select Chief Executive Officers, Heads of Departments, and staff directly involved with Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Property Tax Administration, including ICT departments, accounting and finance staff, and engineering departments. Additionally, residential and commercial property owners were conveniently sampled based on availability and willingness to participate, resulting in a total sample size of 46 respondents. The findings reveal a significant positive relationship between Information Technology and property tax administration, suggesting that policymakers should prioritize digitization to enhance effective tax administration. Furthermore, control variables such as population, trade, and GDP were found to have significant relationships with tax administration in Zimbabwe. The introduction of ICTs has been shown to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of property tax administration, underscoring its critical role in the fiscal decentralization of local governments.

Keywords: Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Property tax administration, Fiscally decentralised, Local government, Digitalization, Zimbabwe