

## BENCHMARKING AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IN LOCAL ADMINISTRATION: A CASE STUDY OF OLD TAFO MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY

Isaac Ampong <sup>1</sup> (MBA in Human Resource Management)

<sup>1</sup> Christian Service University

### ABSTRACT

Public sector organisations face increasing pressure to demonstrate accountability and performance effectiveness while serving the collective public good rather than pursuing profit. Unlike private entities, public institutions must balance social goals, fiscal responsibility, and the expectations of multiple stakeholder groups under resource constraints (Kearney, 2018). Despite this, limited empirical evidence exists on how benchmarking practices particularly their diversity and intensity contribute to performance improvement in local government administration in Ghana. This study examines the relationship between benchmarking diversity, benchmarking intensity, and local administration performance within a municipal assembly context. Using a stratified sampling technique, 273 employees were selected from a population of 930, representing core processes, immediate support, and support functions. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), following the two-stage approach proposed by Anderson and Gerbing (1988), was used to test the hypothesised relationships. Findings reveal a significant positive association between benchmarking diversity, benchmarking intensity, and local administration performance. The study contributes to public sector performance literature by providing empirical evidence on how varied benchmarking practices enhance operational effectiveness within Ghanaian local governance. While the results are context-specific, they highlight the need for broader multi-district and multi-regional studies to deepen understanding of benchmarking's role in improving administrative performance across the public sector.

**Keywords:** *Benchmarking, Performance Management, Local Administration Performance*

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### Correspondence

Isaac Ampong  
[iampong@csuc.edu.gh](mailto:iampong@csuc.edu.gh)

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Public sector organizations operate under unique pressures compared to their private sector counterparts. They are mandated to serve the *collective public good* while managing limited resources and responding to diverse stakeholder needs (Kearney, 2018). Unlike private firms, where profitability defines success, public institutions funded by taxpayers are evaluated by their ability to achieve social goals and deliver public value. Thus, performance assessments in the public sector must balance financial management with broader social expectations (Valotti et al., 2017).

Over the years, many private sector concepts such as outputs, client satisfaction, assets and liabilities, and budget performance have been applied in public sector reporting. However, these frameworks often fail to capture the full complexity of public sector performance (Manes-Rossi & Orelli, 2020). Two major reasons account for this: first, public sector organizations are not profit-oriented but aim to remain within budget limits; and second, they are subject to multifaceted social and political pressures (Jung, 2018). As a result, measuring success and ensuring accountability remain persistent challenges.

In this context, benchmarking has emerged as a vital tool for improving performance reporting and accountability. Benchmarking helps public institutions provide meaningful and comparable information to funders, service providers, service users, and other stakeholders (Ouma et al., 2018). Over the past two decades, it has gained global recognition as a systematic approach for assessing and improving organizational performance.

Across the world, growing calls for transparency, better disclosure, and stronger accounting standards have intensified, particularly as global capital markets become more interconnected (Luoma-Aho & Canel, 2020). Developing economies, including Ghana, face increasing pressure to strengthen institutional accountability and reporting frameworks to attract both local and foreign investment (Azevedo et al., 2019; Vishnu, 2022). Weak accountability and limited understanding of resource utilization have often hindered investor confidence. Nevertheless, improved financial reporting standards have been shown to enhance trust and encourage funding (Weygandt & Kimmel, 2022). In the public sector, accountability goes beyond financial performance. It also involves meeting ethical and social obligations by ensuring that services provided meet the expectations of citizens and funding bodies (Alberti et al., 2014). This broader accountability framework underscores the need for tools such as benchmarking, which can assess both efficiency and social value creation.

At the local level, government institutions such as Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs) in Ghana play an important role in governance. They are responsible for tax collection, service delivery, infrastructure development, and community engagement (Wraith, 2023). The Ashanti Region, one of Ghana's sixteen regions, had forty-three MMDAs in 2023, including the Tafo Municipal Assembly with twenty-five electoral areas. Given their extensive mandates, it is vital that MMDAs maintain good governance, promote sustainable development, and ensure effective monitoring and evaluation of their operations (Musah-Surugu et al., 2018; Chambers, 2018).

Despite the recognized importance of benchmarking, public sector organizations continue to face significant implementation challenges. Identifying appropriate indicators and "best-in-class" comparators remains difficult, especially when financial data are limited or non-comparable (Morris, 2017; Pastor et al., 2022). In Ghana, limited empirical research has explored how benchmarking can be effectively applied within local government to enhance performance management.

As far as the researcher is aware, no study has systematically examined the role of benchmarking as a performance management tool at the local administration level in Ghana. This gap leaves unanswered questions about how benchmarking diversity and intensity influence administrative performance. To address this, the present study seeks to assess the significance of benchmarking as a practical tool for improving performance management within local government institutions in Ghana.

This study's goal was to evaluate benchmarking's value as a practical performance management tool at the local government level. The study specifically aimed to evaluate the link between benchmarking diversity and local administration performance management as well as the relationship

between benchmarking intensity and local administration performance management. The study is justified because it offers insightful information on the several ways that benchmarking affects organizational procedures and, eventually, local administrations' performance. Because it demonstrates how benchmarking may improve productivity, accountability, and service delivery, it is especially helpful to management at the local administration level. Furthermore, the results could help the government create efficient tax and legal obligation laws. The study highlights the importance of active stakeholder participation because the financial sector has a significant influence on national policy texts. The knowledge gathered can also be used by policymakers to identify the most effective ways to guarantee the industry's complete participation in the creation and execution of policies.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Concept of Benchmarking**

The term "benchmarking" is widely used nowadays and refers to a variety of human endeavors. When a current situation is thought to be temporary until it is replaced by a more desirable situation, it is increasingly discovered to be a crucial contributor to any serious organizational improvement process based on some evidence or expectation that such a state is attainable, either in full or in part. The point of comparison is between the situation as it is and what might be better. It supports the transformational processes that result in these advancements (Oecd, 2018).

Benchmarking is defined as a procedure that aims to align different points of reference in a positive way in addition to identifying them. This benchmarking study will be undertaken in the setting of an organization (Holzwanger et al., 2020). Benchmarking, to put it more succinctly, is an ongoing, systematic procedure for comparing the work processes of two organizations by placing an external focus on internal activities, functions, or operations (John et al, 2018). The purpose of benchmarking is to give key employees who oversee processes an external benchmark for evaluating the value and cost of internal activities, as well as to help pinpoint potential areas for improvement.

### **2.2 Models of Benchmarking**

Empirical studies have increasingly positioned benchmarking as a dynamic process for driving organizational improvement and competitiveness. Ertek (2018) describes benchmarking as a continuous process of identifying, learning, and implementing best practices to achieve sustainable advantages, whether internal or external. This perspective highlights benchmarking as more than a performance evaluation tool; it is a learning-oriented strategy that encourages adaptation and innovation within organizations.

Koenders et al. (2022) further emphasize that the benchmarking process should serve as a flexible yet structured framework that supports organizational action. Their findings suggest that benchmarking models need to be tailored to suit institutional needs, allowing for logical planning, goal alignment, and measurable outcomes. While many benchmarking methodologies share common principles, researchers have noted that organizations often modify these models based on their operational experiences and contextual realities

Collectively, these studies reveal that benchmarking contributes to improved organizational efficiency and accountability when applied systematically. However, much of this evidence is derived from private sector and international contexts, with limited empirical exploration of how benchmarking functions within local government systems in developing countries such as Ghana. This gap underscores the need for context-specific research such as the present study to assess how benchmarking diversity and intensity influence performance management and administrative effectiveness in Ghanaian local governance.

### **2.3 Benchmarking as Used in Local Administration Level**

Empirical studies have highlighted the growing emphasis on innovative management practices as organizations respond to increasing global competition and the demand for improved efficiency. In

this evolving landscape, benchmarking has emerged as a powerful tool for enhancing quality and organizational performance, particularly within the public sector. According to Pittaway et al. (2020), benchmarking has transformed how organizations in Africa are structured, managed, and evaluated. This transformation is reflected in the growing number of professional forums, conferences, and publications devoted to benchmarking practices across both private and public institutions.

Historically, public sector organizations have been criticised for inefficiency, waste, and limited responsiveness to the needs of citizens. However, research suggests that adopting quality improvement techniques such as benchmarking can help address these concerns. Baafi et al. (2021) found that applying quality management principles in public administration can improve service delivery without increasing public expenditure. Such practices enable institutions to identify inefficiencies, learn from leading organizations, and enhance accountability in the use of public resources.

The introduction of quality-driven approaches within local government structures is particularly significant because local authorities are directly responsible for essential services that affect citizens' daily lives, including protection, welfare, and community development (Acharya & Zafarullah, 2018). By integrating benchmarking into their management systems, local governments can foster continuous improvement, strengthen governance processes, and enhance public trust. Despite these advances, there remains limited empirical evidence on how benchmarking practices specifically influence local government performance in Ghana, a gap that the present study seeks to address.

## **2.4 Benchmarking as a Performance Management Tool**

Public officials can accomplish two objectives by contrasting their own performance goals and outcomes with reliable performance benchmarks, performance norms, or the goals or outcomes attained by esteemed competitors. They can first evaluate the performance of their organization in the context of an external benchmark to determine its general suitability (Harrington & Benraouane, 2022). By looking at what other businesses have been able to accomplish, they can secondly validate that their performance expectations are fair.

Numerous local governments have tried to compare specific performance metrics with those of other counties or cities. Even those in charge of such efforts are forced to admit that these investigations tend to be of the "quick and dirty" sort, even though such efforts are occasionally systematic and rigorous. Instead, they are more frequently ad hoc and carried out under the stress of extremely tight deadlines. Such studies frequently make compromises in the sake of expediency and frequently fall short of achieving uniformity in cost-accounting procedures or consistency in service (Teles, 2023).

## **2.5 Performance Management**

Empirical evidence underscores performance management as an essential and continuous process that integrates institutional goals, employee competencies, and organizational values. Hoque (2023) describes performance management as a structured and ongoing approach through which institutions develop, communicate, and reinforce their strategic direction while aligning individual performance with organizational objectives. Similarly, Review (2023) conceptualises performance management as a systematic process aimed at enhancing both individual and group performance through continuous goal setting, monitoring, and evaluation. This approach enables organisations to track progress, assess outcomes, and foster accountability across operational levels.

Helmold (2022) further argues that performance management is at the heart of modern organizational strategy, serving as a guide for allocating resources and aligning activities toward predetermined goals. The process is not confined to evaluating past performance; rather, it focuses on continuous improvement and strategic alignment. Armstrong (2022) complements this view by emphasizing the participatory and developmental nature of performance management. He highlights

that effective performance management relies on collaboration between managers and employees within a flexible framework that supports self-directed learning, shared accountability, and future-oriented goal setting.

Concertedly, these studies indicate that performance management extends beyond mere evaluation to encompass strategic planning, communication, and employee engagement. However, while much of the empirical literature has explored performance management within corporate and developed-country contexts, relatively little is known about how these practices are operationalized within public sector organizations in developing economies. This study, therefore, contributes to filling this gap by examining how performance management particularly through benchmarking enhances organizational effectiveness and accountability in Ghana’s local government context.

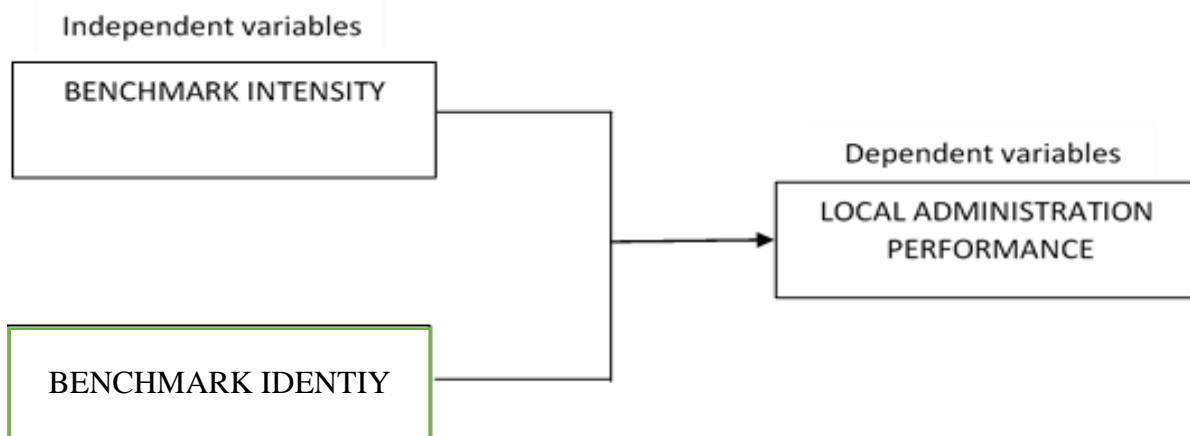
## **2.6 Benchmarking and Local Administration Performance**

enchmarking has emerged as a central concept in performance improvement research. According to Teles (2023b), the purpose of benchmarking is to provide key personnel who oversee organizational processes with an external standard against which to evaluate the value and cost of internal activities. By doing so, organizations are able to identify gaps and areas that require improvement. Similarly, Ticha et al. (2023) view benchmarking as a practical and structured tool that facilitates planned organizational change, enabling institutions to enhance process efficiency and strengthen their responsiveness to external demands. Together, these studies suggest that benchmarking not only supports internal process optimization but also reinforces an organization’s capacity to adapt and remain competitive within dynamic environments.

However, while these studies highlight the strategic relevance of benchmarking, variations in their methodologies such as context, data collection approaches, and sample characteristics have led to differing results across organizational settings. This divergence provides a foundation for the present study, which seeks to examine how benchmarking practices influence performance and quality improvement within the Ghanaian public sector context.

The conceptual framework below shows how benchmarking and business performance are related.

Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework linking benchmarking and performance.



Source: Author (2023)

By examining whether benchmarking diversity (the number of primary benchmarking types adopted) and benchmarking intensity (the degree to which benchmarking practices are implemented), the current study advances our understanding of the relationship between benchmarking and performance. Benchmarking had previously been thought of as a univariate concept, however the current work splits it into two parts.

Data from an empirical survey and data envelopment analysis are used by Afonso et al. (2023) to illustrate how management can find businesses to benchmark on quality instruments where they

might already be inefficient. Benchmarking can result in significant growth in one's ability for change and strategic thinking. Through alignment and linkage, benchmarks help turn plans into tactics and ultimately into action (Christopher & Thor, 2023). According to respondents in research by Baker et al. (2023b), the primary benefit of benchmarking is to determine how the company is performing in relation to other businesses of a similar size. This suggests that climbing the league table is a worthwhile goal in and of itself.

The current study's fundamental premise is that the motivating factors or driving forces play a significant role in determining whether a benchmarking exercise is successful or not. The strong competition that results in a quest for perfection, especially among rival companies, to establish or maintain market competitiveness, is one of the fundamental drivers behind benchmarking. Benchmarking frequently begins as an expansion of an already-running quality management program. Benchmarking and comparisons with the competition are unavoidable results of the pursuit of continual development (Auriol et al., 2021).

## **3.0 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Research Design**

The researcher adopted both descriptive and explanatory research designs to guide this study. While the descriptive design enabled a detailed understanding of the existing conditions and relationships among variables, the explanatory design provided a deeper insight into the underlying causes and effects of these relationships (Mikalef, Boura, Lekakos & Krogstie, 2019). According to Toyon (2021), an explanatory research design is particularly useful when the objective is to clarify how and why certain phenomena occur. In this study, it helped the researcher go beyond mere description to explore the causal link between benchmarking practices and organisational performance. This approach allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of how benchmarking influences key performance outcomes, thereby offering meaningful explanations rather than surface-level observations.

### **3.2 Population**

The target population consists of 930 members of the Government of Ghana (GOG) employees. Interviews with Directors who work for the Municipality now would be required. This group of persons was chosen because they are directly involved in the Municipality's daily operations and are therefore aware of the impact of performance benchmarking variables. To generalize the study's findings to a larger group, according to Dubey and Kothari (2022), the target population must possess a few visible traits.

### **3.3 Sample size and Sampling Techniques**

All the components from which data is obtained to address a specific study issue are referred to as a sample. It is crucial for the researcher to choose participants who accurately reflect the population when conducting a study (Lohr, 2021). Because of the limitations on resources (time, money, and energy), sampling is crucial. According to Cole's (2009) hypothesis, the dependability increases as the sample size increases. A stratified sampling technique is used to choose sample of 273 from the current workforce, with strata representing the core processes, immediate support, and support process. They therefore have vital insight into the organizational culture.

### **3.4 Data Collection**

According to Bavdaz et al. (2022), primary data is information that is directly obtained from respondents, and in this study, the researcher employed questionnaires. Collecting and analyzing secondary data includes gathering information from other published sources, such as yearly reports, and published data. Consequently, the researcher used a survey questionnaire to collect data for this study.

**3.5 Research Instruments**

Each person in the sample population received a survey questionnaire from the researcher. Both open-ended and closed-ended questions were included in the survey. The answers to the closed-ended questions were more well-structured, allowing for more specific recommendations.

For this study, **secondary data analysis** was also employed to complement the primary findings. This involved examining existing reports, documented records, and relevant publications to derive additional insights for the research. As Van den Akker, Weston, Campbell, Chopik, Damian, Davis-Kean & Bakker (2021), explain, secondary data analysis is a valuable quantitative approach that allows researchers to evaluate and interpret existing data sources such as government documents, organizational reports, and prior studies to generate new understanding and context for the current investigation.

**4.0 DATA INTERPRETATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

This section focuses on turning raw data into actionable results. This was performed by analyzing the data received from respondents using statistical tools regarding “assessing the importance of benchmarking as a useful tool in performance management at the local administration level”. The section is divided into phases. The demographic features of the respondents are the focus of the first phase.

**4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents**

Table 1.2 shows the demographic profile of the respondents who were needed for the study. Gender, age, marital status, position in the business, type of business, years in business, and employee strength of the business have all been used to profile respondents.

**Table 1.2 Demographic characteristics of respondents.**

| Variables                       | Categories            | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|---------|
| <b>Gender</b>                   | Male                  | 172       | 63      |
|                                 | Female                | 101       | 37      |
|                                 | Total                 | 273       | 100.0   |
| <b>Marital Status</b>           | Single                | 88        | 32      |
|                                 | Married               | 156       | 57      |
|                                 | Divorced              | 29        | 11      |
|                                 | Total                 | 273       | 100.0   |
| <b>Age</b>                      | Up to 30yrs           | 28        | 10      |
|                                 | 31 to 40yrs           | 87        | 32      |
|                                 | 41 to 50yrs           | 101       | 37      |
|                                 | 51 and above          | 57        | 21      |
|                                 | Total                 | 273       | 100.0   |
| <b>Position in the business</b> | Director              | 4         |         |
|                                 | Departmental Director | 54        | 20      |

|                                        |                 |     |       |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------|-----|-------|
|                                        | Head of Units   | 34  | 14    |
|                                        | Others Specify  | 108 | 65    |
|                                        | Total           | 273 | 100.0 |
| <b>Years of experience in business</b> | Less than 5yr   | 104 | 38    |
|                                        | 6 to 10yrs      | 109 | 40    |
|                                        | 11 to 15yrs     | 40  | 15    |
|                                        | More than 15yrs | 20  | 7     |
|                                        | Total           | 273 | 100.0 |

The above table contains the demographic profile of respondents that were engaged for the study. The results showed that out of 273 (100%) respondents, 172(63%) were males and 101 (37%) were females. This shows that majority of the respondents were males, as compared to females. Again, the results showed that 88 (32%) of the respondents were not married (single), 156 (57%) of the respondents were married and 29 (11%) of the respondents were divorced. Furthermore, the results showed that 28 (10%) of the respondents were up to 30 years, 87 (32%) of the respondents were between 31 to 40years, 101 (37%) of the respondents were between 41 to 50 years and 57 (21%) of the respondents were 51 and above. Thus, majority of the respondents were between 41 to 50years, while the least were respondents who were up to 30 years. Additionally, the results showed that 4 (1%) of the respondents were the directors of the firm, 54 (20%) of the respondents were the managers of the firm, 37 (14%) of the respondents were the head of operations of the firm and 178 (65%) were specified as others in the firm. This shows that majority of the respondents were the others specified in the firm. Moreover, 104 (38%) of the respondents indicated that they have been with the business for less than 5 years, 109 (40%) of the respondents indicated that they have been with the business for 6 to 10 years, 40 (15%) of the respondents indicated that they have been with the business for 11 to 15 years and 20 (7%) of the respondents indicated that they have been with the business for over 15 years.

#### 4.2 Analysis and Results of Structural Equation Modelling

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was used in testing the hypothesis arising from the theoretical model. The two-stage approach endorsed by Anderson & Gerbing (1988) was adopted in this study, given that the accurate representation of the reliability of each construct is best conducted in two stages to avoid any interaction between the measurement and structural models (Hair et al., 2010).

#### 4.3 Validity and Reliability results

Reliability test was conducted to ensure the level of consistency in measuring the intended latent construct. Cronbach’s alpha was used to assess the reliability and the results exceeded the satisfactory level  $>.70$ , which shows a high reliability for the instruments adopted (Nunnally, 1978).

**Table 1.2: Validity and Reliability results**

| Research constructs             | Cronbach’s alpha | Rho _A | CR    | AVE   | Loadings |
|---------------------------------|------------------|--------|-------|-------|----------|
| <b>Benchmark Intensity (BI)</b> | 0.933            | 0.941  | 0.957 | 0.882 |          |
| <b>BI1</b>                      |                  |        |       |       | 0.955    |

|                                               |       |       |       |       |       |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>BI2</b>                                    |       |       |       |       | 0.943 |
| <b>BI3</b>                                    |       |       |       |       | 0.919 |
| <b>Benchmark Diversity (BD)</b>               | 0.881 | 0.896 | 0.926 | 0.808 |       |
| <b>BD1</b>                                    |       |       |       |       | 0.944 |
| <b>BD2</b>                                    |       |       |       |       | 0.885 |
| <b>BD3</b>                                    |       |       |       |       | 0.865 |
| <b>Local Administrative Performance (LAP)</b> | 0.961 | 0.961 | 0.975 | 0.928 |       |
| <b>LAP1</b>                                   |       |       |       |       | 0.952 |
| <b>LAP2</b>                                   |       |       |       |       | 0.976 |
| <b>LAP3</b>                                   |       |       |       |       | 0.962 |

Source: Field data (2023)

The Composite Reliability (CR) values were also greater than 0.80, and the Average Variance Extracted > .50, demonstrating convergent validity where the multiple items measuring a single concept agree, and indicating adequate internal consistency of the constructs (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2012; Babin and Zikmund, 2016). The table above shows the details of the reliability, factor loadings, and average variance extracted of the constructs.

**Table 1.3: Discriminant validity**

|                                         | <b>Benchmark Intensity</b> | <b>Benchmark Diversity</b> | <b>Local Administrative Performance</b> |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <b>Benchmark Intensity</b>              | 0.939                      | 0.807                      |                                         |
| <b>Benchmark Diversity</b>              |                            | 0.899                      |                                         |
| <b>Local Administrative Performance</b> | 0.680                      | 0.537                      | 0.963                                   |

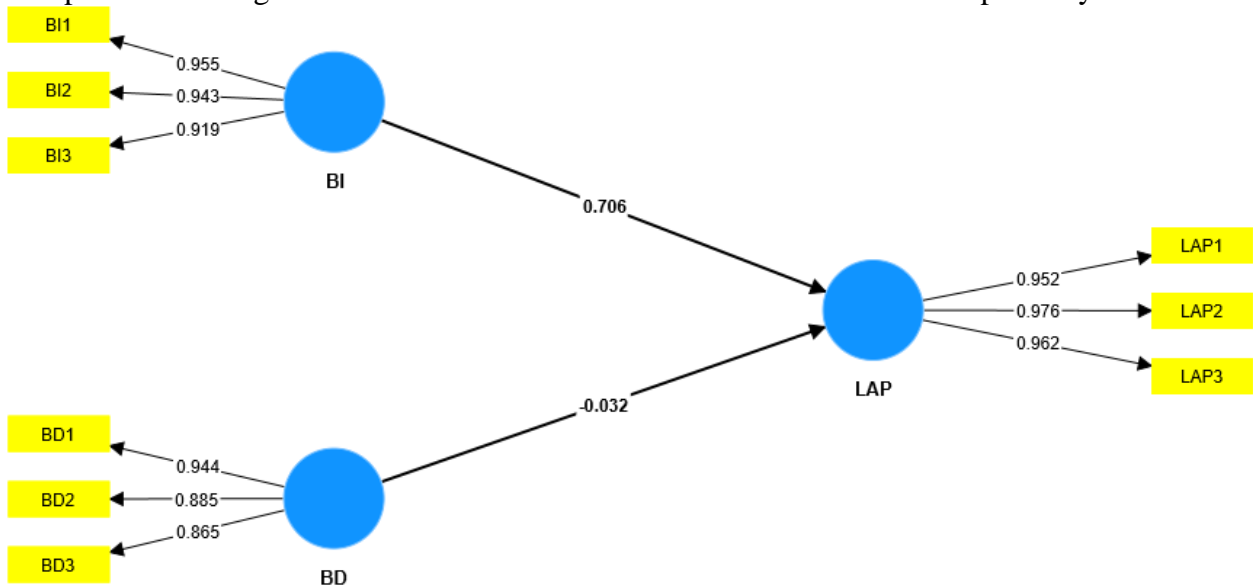
Discriminant validity was also used to measure the extent to which the constructs differed and to ascertain the freedom of measurement model of a construct from redundant items. Specifically, if the items in a construct were more strongly associated with each other than with items measuring other constructs, the measure was regarded as having discriminant validity. In this light, a scale should not be highly correlated with the measure of a different construct (Babin and Zikmund, 2016). Scholars like Fornell and Lacker (1981) postulate that the square root of the AVE should be greater than the correlation between the construct and the other constructs and this study is in line with this argument because all the constructs met the discriminant validity with the AVE for each construct greater than the squared correlation with the other constructs as illustrated in the table above. This is the inter-construct correlation matrix.

**Table 1.4: Total effects**

|                            | <b>Benchmark Intensity</b> | <b>Benchmark Diversity</b> | <b>Local Administrative Performance</b> |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <b>Benchmark Intensity</b> |                            |                            | 0.706                                   |

|                                         |  |  |        |
|-----------------------------------------|--|--|--------|
| <b>Benchmark Diversity</b>              |  |  | -0.032 |
| <b>Local Administrative Performance</b> |  |  |        |

The positive reading of all the variables confirm that the model fits the data perfectly.



**Figure 1.2: Structural model of the path coefficient**

Figure 1.2 presents the structural model illustrating the relationships among the constructs—Benchmarking Intensity (BI), Benchmarking Diversity (BD), and Local Administration Performance (LAP). Each latent variable is represented by three observable indicators with high standardized loadings, demonstrating good construct reliability.

Specifically, the indicators for BI (BI1–BI3) show loadings ranging from 0.919 to 0.955, indicating that the items strongly represent the construct. Similarly, BD (BD1–BD3) has loadings between 0.865 and 0.944, suggesting acceptable internal consistency. The dependent variable, LAP, is measured by three items (LAP1–LAP3) with loadings between 0.952 and 0.976, reflecting a very strong representation of the construct.

In terms of the structural paths, Benchmarking Intensity (BI) exhibits a positive and substantial effect on Local Administration Performance ( $\beta = 0.706$ ), whereas Benchmarking Diversity (BD) shows a negative but insignificant relationship ( $\beta = -0.032$ ). This implies that while the intensity with which benchmarking is conducted enhances administrative performance, the diversity of benchmarking sources does not have a statistically meaningful influence in this context.

Overall, the model demonstrates good convergent validity through high item loadings and provides empirical support for the hypothesized influence of benchmarking intensity on public sector performance.

**4.4 Discussion**

The research was prompted by the continuing ignorance of the process oriented approach in understanding the functioning of benchmarking as a strategic management tool within the local administrative framework in Ghana. While previous concepts proposed by John et al. (2018) recognise theoretical relationships between benchmarking intensity and diversity in relation to the performance of the local administration, the lack of evidence on the relationships and associations between the proposed constructs on the actual performances is still limited. Additionally, according to Chambers

(2018), benchmarking intensity and diversity are recognized within processes of the local administration, either as facilitators or hindrances in the performances, requiring, therefore, an overall theoretical and processual framework.

The findings obtained from the analysis of the measurement model, namely the reliability and validity tests, strongly support the robustness of the constructs. The three constructs, namely Benchmark Intensity (BI), Benchmark Diversity (BD), and Local Administrative Performance (LAP), were found to possess high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.881 to 0.961, and Composite Reliability well above 0.90. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was well above the cut-off point of 0.50, thereby ascertaining convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The high values of the factors (0.865-0.976) also ascertained that the constructs are well represented by their respective indicators. Discriminant validity was obtained, and the square roots of the AVE of all constructs were well above the correlations among the constructs, thereby ascertaining discriminant validity.

Results obtained from the structural model are very informative. There is evidence of high and significant positive association between Benchmark Intensity and Local Administrative Performance, as shown by  $\beta = 0.706$ , and this is consistent with the views of Akinshin (2019) on high intensity benchmarking, which improves the overall capacity of organizations to innovate, revitalize, and respond to opportunities.

On the other hand, the Benchmark Diversity revealed a negative, yet non-significant, effect on Local Administrative Performance ( $\beta = -0.032$ ). The theoretical literature on this topic (Jaafari, 2023) indicates the positive influence of benchmarking source diversity on competencies and problem-solving activities, while the findings of this research show that this source of diversity, regardless of benchmarking source intensity and focus, is not directly linked to positive results within the current context.

The model also shows that both BI and BD account for the explanation of 24.3% of variance in LAP, which indicates other factors affecting this domain as well. On the whole, this research enhances the body of knowledge on benchmarking as well as the paramount role of benchmarking intensity than diversity within the local administrative system in Ghana.

## **5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT AND PRACTICE**

The findings reveal some significant insights that are applicable to management and practice in Ghana. As a result, benchmarking intensity supports a cycle of opportunity recognition and strategic mobilisation of resources to act on opportunities to transform them into new or enhanced goods, processes, and services that result in performance improvements. Benchmarking intensity enable organisations to continuously seek opportunities and, as a result, act on such opportunities to generate value. This suggests that businesses should not only be able to identify or create new opportunities, but also be able to successfully deploy strategic resources such as financial capital, human resources, and technological know-how to start or expand their business. Firms are successful according to the study, when they can consistently innovate/exploit new chances that open new markets or change existing markets for managers. It suggests that organizations should not solely rely on opportunity to generate value. This is because focusing solely on potential may drive an organization to forego short-term revenue or gains in exchange for long-term opportunities for innovation.

Overreliance on opportunity may produce rapid results, but the organization runs the danger of becoming outmoded and missing out on new opportunities. As a result, benchmarking intensity is a process-oriented concept that captures the dynamics of the organization process and explains how innovative opportunities are identified or created, as well as how innovation-supporting behaviours underpin effective management activity and, as a result, superior organization local administrative performance. In conclusion, our findings show that management-level can be an asset in certain strategic circumstances. Other contextual elements must be considered in addition to the strategic stance of benchmarking diversity that we discovered to influence the relationship.

## **6.0 CONCLUSION**

The research aimed to close the gap between benchmarking and local administrative performance. It was investigated that benchmarking intensity as antecedents to benchmark diversity. To achieve the performance advantage enabled by benchmark intensity in organisations, such level of capabilities must be a role by organisation-wide target according to the significant direct effects of benchmark intensity and the significant of benchmark diversity. Firms with appropriate benchmarking intensity can capitalise on perceived opportunities faster than their. To improve firm performance, organisation managers are advised to focus on benchmark intensity for quality work done and the success of the organisation. Organisations managers, on the other hand, must be dexterous enough to face these practical problems, as prior research has demonstrated that benchmark diversity is a perfect resource for improving business performance and enhancing competitive advantage

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## **About the Author**

**Isaac Ampong** is a Lecturer in Human Resource Management at Christian Service University, Kumasi, Ghana. He also serves as the Staff Representative on the University Council of CSU, contributing actively to academic and institutional development. Currently, he is a PhD Candidate in Management Science (Human Capital Management) at the Central University of Technology (CUT), South Africa. Mr. Ampong holds an MBA in Human Resource Management from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi, and a Bachelor of Management Studies (BMS) degree from the University of Cape Coast (UCC), Ghana. Since September 2013, Ampong has been lecturing in Human Resource Management at Christian Service University, has authored a number of peer-reviewed articles in local and international journals where he also engages in research focusing on areas such as psychological contract breach, performance management, employee welfare, performance appraisal, training and development, and organizational performance.