



Synergy or Conflict? Political-Administrative Interactions in Local Governance at Kibaha Town Council, Tanzania

Philomena Kasanga¹

Lucy Willy Massoi²

¹kasangaphilomena@gmail.com

²lucy.massoi@mzumbe.ac.tz

^{1,2}Mzumbe University, Tanzania

<https://doi.org/10.51867/ajernet.6.1.71>

Submitted: 16th October 2024 Accepted: 3rd March 2025 Published: 27th March 2025

ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of political-administrative interactions on local governance in Tanzania, using Kibaha Town Council as a case study. Drawing on the Political-Administrative Dichotomy (PAD) and the Classical Model of Public Administration, the study explores how these interactions influence decision-making, policy implementation, and service delivery at the local level. Using a case study design and a mixed-methods approach, data were collected from 52 respondents, including elected officials (Members of Parliament, Councilors, and Town Chairpersons) and appointed officials (District Commissioner and Town Director). A total of 52 respondents were selected using purposive and simple random sampling techniques from a population size of 91 employee of Kibaha Town Council. Qualitative data from interviews were analyzed thematically, while quantitative data were processed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Findings reveal that 91.2% of respondents perceive political-administrative interactions as positively impacting governance, particularly in policy formulation, law-making, and development administration. However, challenges such as role ambiguity and conflicts between politicians and administrators remain significant obstacles to effective governance. This study concludes that addressing these challenges through clearer role definitions, improved communication channels, and enhanced monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanisms can strengthen governance structures. While the study focuses on Kibaha Town Council, its findings contribute to the broader understanding of political-administrative interactions in Tanzania's local governance system. This research recommends the establishment of a well-defined legislative framework to streamline governance operations, ensuring that political and administrative roles complement rather than conflict with each other. Furthermore, standardized guidelines across local government authorities (LGAs) would promote consistency, collaboration and institutional efficiency.

Keywords: Collaborative Governance, Capacity Building, Local Governance, Local Government Administration, Political-Administrative Interaction, Political-Administrative Dichotomy, Tanzania

I. INTRODUCTION

Political-administrative interactions are increasingly gaining attention globally as a mechanism for ensuring that local authorities achieve their mission, vision, and objectives (Njunwa, 2020; Lameck, 2023). However, in many countries, particularly in developing regions, the overlap of political and administrative authority often leads to tensions that hinder effective governance. This is especially evident in employee management and the allocation of duties, where some local government responsibilities are still controlled by the central government.

The debate on political-administrative relations revolves around two perspectives: one argues that politics and administration are distinct—politicians formulate policies, and administrators implement them. The other asserts that these functions are inherently intertwined, requiring collaboration for effective governance (Vilakazi & Adetiba, 2020). Local governance plays a crucial role in delivering public services and facilitating development initiatives (Olowu & Wunsch, 2004), making the relationship between political leaders and administrators vital.

In many African countries, political-administrative interactions significantly influence the quality of governance. Decentralization has granted local authorities more autonomy in managing resources and addressing community needs. However, challenges such as overlapping responsibilities, political interference, and administrative inefficiencies persist. For example, in countries like Nigeria and Ghana, local government effectiveness is often undermined by dual authority structures, where central government interventions contradict local decisions (Cheema & Rondinelli, 2007). These challenges highlight the importance of understanding how political and administrative actors interact to enhance governance and service delivery.

In East Africa, political-administrative interactions play a central role in shaping governance structures. Countries like Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda have adopted decentralization to empower local governments in resource management and service provision. However, despite this autonomy, tensions remain due to conflicting interests and overlapping authority between political leaders and administrators (Lameck, 2023). These conflicts can disrupt policy implementation and delay key development projects, undermining the objectives of decentralization.

In Tanzania, local government authorities (LGAs) serve as a crucial link between the central government and communities (Vilakazi & Adetiba, 2020; Rugeiyamu et al., 2021). Their effectiveness depends on how well elected and appointed officials collaborate in policy formulation, decision-making, and development project implementation (Svara, 2006). While decentralization has granted LGAs the ability to manage local affairs (Cheema & Rondinelli, 2007), conflicts between politicians and administrators often hinder governance efficiency (World Bank, 2001). This study examines political-administrative interactions in Kibaha Town Council, analyzing how these relationships impact local governance. The study seeks to understand the roles of politicians and administrators, the challenges they face, and potential strategies for fostering collaboration. The findings will contribute to the broader discourse on local government administration in Tanzania and provide practical recommendations for improving governance.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Effective collaboration between bureaucrats (administrators) and politicians is essential for the smooth functioning of local government. A strong political-administrative relationship facilitates effective service delivery, enhances governance efficiency, and improves the overall performance of local government authorities (Chamusca, 2025; Iwuzor & Akintunde, 2025). However, in Kibaha Town Council (KTC) as in many other local councils in Tanzania, significant challenges hinder this relationship.

These challenges include unclear role boundaries, frequent misunderstandings, and a lack of mutual respect, which disrupt the execution of duties and negatively impact service delivery (Lyatonga & Tefurukwa, 2012). Despite the presence of a well-established legal framework and strategic plans designed to guide local government operations (Njunwa, 2006), persistent conflicts between public servants (administrators) and politicians undermine the administration of local government functions (Njunwa, 2020; 2021; Lameck & Kinemo, 2022).

One of the major obstacles is the dual authority structure, where many responsibilities assigned to local governments are simultaneously overseen by the central government (Misafi, 2014; Muchaku & Magaiza, 2024). This often results in contradictions, inefficiencies, and conflicts, which hinder service delivery and the implementation of development projects. Given these challenges, this study seeks to investigate the effects of political-administrative interactions on local government administration in Kibaha Town Council.

1.2 Research Objectives

Specifically, the study aims to:

- i. To assess the impact of political-administrative interactions on decision-making processes in Kibaha Town Council.
- ii. To examine the roles and responsibilities of politicians in promoting effective governance and community engagement.
- iii. To analyze the role of administrators in implementing policies and laws formulated by politicians and ensuring service delivery.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 The Politics Administration Dichotomy (1900-1926)

The Politics-Administration Dichotomy is a foundational concept in public administration that seeks to establish a clear distinction between political and administrative functions within government. The core argument of this theory is that administration should function independently of political influence, with public administrators focusing solely on the technical and managerial aspects of governance while elected officials formulate policies. This division is intended to enhance efficiency, professionalism, and accountability in public service.

Woodrow Wilson, widely recognized as the pioneer of this paradigm, articulated this distinction in his 1897 article, emphasizing the need to separate politics from administration to ensure a more effective government (Bochel & Bochel, 2010). Wilson outlined four key principles for achieving this: First, separation of politics and administration; ensuring that political leaders focus on policymaking while administrators implement these policies. *Second*, comparative analysis of political and private organizations; studying administrative structures to improve public service efficiency. Third, application of business principles; implementing management techniques from the private sector to

enhance government operations. *Forth*, professionalism in public service; promoting merit-based hiring and performance-based assessments of administrators.

The politics-administration dichotomy was further reinforced by classical management theories, particularly those proposed by Henri Fayol (1841–1925). Fayol's principles of planning, organizing, forecasting, coordinating, commanding, and controlling were applied in public administration to enhance service delivery, particularly in sectors such as education, healthcare, water supply, and electricity distribution.

Despite its theoretical appeal, critics argue that politics and administration cannot be entirely separated since policymaking and implementation often overlap. Public administrators inevitably influence policy decisions, while politicians often intervene in administrative matters, blurring the theoretical distinction between the two.

2.1.2 Classical Model

The Classical Model of Public Administration, developed by Woodrow Wilson in 1887, advocates for a strict separation between administration and politics (Wilson, 2003). Wilson asserted that governance should operate in two distinct domains: one, politicians, responsible for policymaking, decision-making, and setting strategic priorities. Two, administrators; tasked with implementing policies based on technical expertise, ensuring efficiency, and maintaining bureaucratic neutrality.

This model assumes that politicians wield more power than administrators since they create laws, set agendas, and oversee government functions. However, administrators hold substantial authority in executing government responsibilities by leveraging their expertise and experience. Wilson emphasized that merit-based recruitment, strict adherence to procedures, and specialized training were necessary for effective administration (Rutgers, 1997; Wilson 2003).

In the Tanzanian local government system, the classical model is partially applicable. Politicians, particularly councilors and members of parliament, often dominate policy formulation and decision-making, while administrators (such as town directors and district commissioners) oversee policy execution (Lameck, 2023). However, challenges such as political interference in administrative matters, conflicts over resource allocation, and the absence of clear role definitions continue to undermine governance efficiency. In Kibaha Town Council, these challenges manifest in power struggles between politicians and administrators, leading to conflicts and governance inefficiencies.

2.2 Empirical Review

Empirical studies have explored political-administrative relationships in various governance contexts. To align with this study's objectives, this section is structured around three key themes: (1) the impact of political-administrative interactions on decision-making, (2) the roles and responsibilities of politicians, and (3) the role of administrators in implementing policies.

2.2.1 Political-Administrative Interactions and Decision-Making

Effective decision-making in local government depends on the interactions between political and administrative actors. Ntwenya (2020) examined political-administrative relations and staff performance in Morogoro District Council, Tanzania. Using interviews, questionnaires, and focus group discussions, the study found that political-administrative relations are critical for maintaining peace, security, and development project implementation by ensuring coordinated decision making process. However, challenges such as conflicts, corruption, and misuse of government resources, were found to weaken existing collaboration and hinder local government performance, underscoring the need for a structured working relationship.

Chamusca (2025) examined the politicization of public services in South Africa, more in particular the impact of New Public Management (NPM) reforms. The study found that while political-administrative interactions can improve policy responsiveness, but noted that excessive politicization undermines public service delivery. Merit-based recruitment and performance-driven governance were recommended in order to maintain administrative efficiency while ensuring political oversight.

These studies demonstrate that strong collaboration enhances decision-making efficiency, while excessive politicization and role ambiguity can disrupt governance. This aligns with the case of Kibaha Town Council, where political-administrative interactions influence decision-making in local governance.

2.2.2 Role of Politicians in Local Governance

Politicians play a crucial role in shaping policies, mobilizing resources, and engaging with the community to ensure effective governance. Njunwa (2020) analysed the relationship between appointed and elected officials in the construction of education and health infrastructure in Morogoro District Council. Findings revealed a moderate level of interaction (65.6%), with appointed officials adhering to legal frameworks while elected officials were often influenced

by political affiliations. The study underscored the need for harmonizing political and administrative roles in order to ensure for effective service delivery.

Vilakazi & Adetiba (2020) explored the political-administrative dichotomy in South Africa, highlighting the challenges posed by political interference. Their findings revealed that the lack of clear role differentiation leads to inefficiencies in governance. The study suggested that reducing political interference and enhancing professionalism among political leaders would improve governance outcomes.

These findings suggest that politicians' roles in local governance must be well-defined to prevent unnecessary interference in administrative functions. In Kibaha Town Council, political actors are involved in decision-making and community engagement, but their influence must be structured to avoid governance disruptions.

2.2.3 Role of Administrators in Policy Implementation

Administrators are responsible for translating political decisions into actionable policies and ensuring that governance structures function effectively. Mafuru et al. (2015) explored political-administrative relations in Tanzanian Local Government Authorities (LGAs), focusing on Mvomero District Council and Kinondoni Municipal Council. The study revealed that: Mvomero District Council exhibited an adversarial relationship, with frequent conflicts between politicians and administrators. In contrast, Kinondoni Municipal Council demonstrated a more collaborative approach, where political and administrative roles were better synchronized, leading to better policy implementation. This contrast underscores the importance of fostering cooperative political-administrative interactions.

Lameck and Kinemo (2022) studied the role of administrators in Tanzanian local government authorities, highlighting their responsibility for ensuring legal compliance and efficient resource management. The study emphasized that clearly defined administrative functions and regular training are critical for improving governance efficiency. These studies reinforce the importance of administrators in maintaining governance stability and ensuring that policies are effectively implemented. In Kibaha Town Council, similar challenges exist, where role ambiguity and political interference impact policy execution. Strengthening role clarity and professional development among administrators can enhance governance outcomes.

Generally, the discussed empirical studies indicate that political-administrative interactions significantly impact decision-making, governance efficiency, and policy implementation. The effectiveness of local government largely depends on how well politicians and administrators collaborate. To enhance governance in Kibaha Town Council, there is a need for clear role differentiation, reduced political interference, and continuous capacity-building initiatives for both politicians and administrators.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

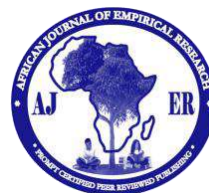
We adopted a case study design (Yin, 2018) to provide an in-depth understanding of political – administrative interactions in Kibaha Town Council. A mixed research approach (Creswell, 2014) was employed to enable effective integrate quantitative data from surveys and qualitative insights from interviews, ensuring a holistic analysis.

The use of the design was guided by the three study objectives: First, assessing the impact of political-administrative interactions on decision-making. This was examined through surveys with elected and appointed officials and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics (Field, 2018). Second, examining the roles and responsibilities of politicians in local governance. Data on political actors' decision-making roles were gathered using semi-structured interviews and analyzed thematically (Patton, 2015). Third, analysing the role of administrators in policy implementation. Administrators' involvement in governance processes was examined using document review and interviews (Oranga, 2025). The case study approach allowed for context-specific analysis, ensuring that the findings were relevant to local governance structures in Tanzania (Stake, 1995; Mott & Haddad, 2025).

3.2 Sampling and Data Collection

A total of 52 respondents were selected using purposive and simple random sampling techniques from a population size of 91 employee of Kibaha Town Council. The study grouped respondents into two main categories: elected officials (politicians) and appointed officials (administrators) to capture political-administrative interactions.

Data collection involved surveys (structured questionnaires) to capture quantitative data on the roles and interactions of politicians and administrators (decision making and governance structures). The semi-structured interviews, with councillors, town administrator, and other officials to capture qualitative insights (Yin, 2018). Document review of policy documents, council reports, and administrative guidelines to triangulate findings (Fowler, 2014). The sampling strategy ensured balanced representation between political and administrative perspectives.



3.3 Data Analysis

A mixed – method analytical approach (Creswell, 2014) was employed. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics (Field, 2018). The analysis focused on assessing how political-administrative interactions affect local governance outcomes. Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis (Patton, 2015), identifying key themes related to politicians (Objective 2) and administrators' roles (objective 3). Triangulation was used to compare survey findings with interviews and document analysis, ensuring reliability. (Stake, 1995). The combined quantitative-qualitative approach facilitated a comprehensive assessment of governance dynamics in Kibaha Town Council.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Findings

This study examined the impact of political-administrative interactions on decision-making, governance, and policy implementation in Kibaha Town Council, aligning with its research objectives. Findings demonstrate that these interactions influence decision-making processes, governance roles of politicians, and policy implementation by administrators.

4.1.1 Political-Administrative Interactions and Decision-Making

The study investigated the influence of political-administrative interactions on local government administration in Kibaha Town Council (KTC). Findings demonstrate that these interactions are vital for effective governance, influencing key processes such as decision-making, policy implementation, and community engagement. 91.2% of respondents acknowledged the positive impact of these interactions on governance, particularly in areas like policy formulation, law-making, and development administration. However, 7.8% of respondents expressed concerns about potential conflicts arising from ambiguity and overlapping responsibilities. The findings support Svava's (2006) model, which emphasizes collaboration rather than strict role separation in governance.

4.1.2 The Role of Politicians

A close link exists between political interactions, policy making and governance at the local level. Literature suggests that, political-administrative relationships are central for the formulating and implementation of public policies (Svava, 2006, Njunwa, 2020). Politicians hold key responsibilities in the development, coordination, and implementation of policies designed to meet the needs and objectives of the community. They play a critical role in ensuring that policies are aligned with local priorities, while also collaborating with administrators to facilitate effective policy implementation (Vilakazi & Adetiba, 2020). Bochel and Bochel (2010) underscore the significance of robust and visible leadership in local governance structures, arguing that politicians must actively collaborate with administrators to facilitate change and progress.

In this context, we asked respondents specific questions which aim at evaluating the effect of political interactions within the local government administration by assigning them various roles assumed to be played by the politicians at council level. The objective was to establish how these interactions, through specific roles played by the politicians' shapes functioning of the local government. Findings revealed that, 91.2% of the respondents agreed that political interaction with local government administration is manifested through various responsibilities performed by politicians such as formulating, coordinating and deciding upon policies, coordinating and deciding upon policies while 7.8% disagreed. In relation to law making function, 89.9% agreed that politicians were responsible for making laws while 9.9% of the respondents disagreed that politicians were not responsible making laws. In administering development activities, 78.9% of the respondents agreed that politicians were responsible for administering development activities while 21.1% of the respondents disagreed that politicians were responsible for managing development activities.

In addition, about 85.7% of the respondents agreed that politicians were responsible for promoting peace and security while 14.3% of the respondents disagreed that politicians were not responsible for promoting peace and security, 72.9% of the respondents agreed that politicians were responsible for motivating citizens in campaigns to work hard to eliminate poverty, hunger and increase wealth production while 27.1% of the elected officials were not responsible for motivating citizens in the campaigns of work hard to eliminate poverty and hunger, 86.4% of the respondents agreed that elected officials were responsible for motivating citizens to pay taxes while 13.6% of the respondents disagreed that politicians were not responsible for motivating citizens to pay for taxes. Table 1 provide a summary of these roles.

Table 1*The Role of Politicians in Administration of the Council*

Role of Politicians	Agree (Frequency/Percentage)	Disagree (Frequency/Percentage)
Formulating, coordinating, and deciding upon policies	48 (91.2%)	4 (7.8%)
Making laws	47 (89.9%)	5 (9.9%)
Administering development activities	41 (78.9%)	11 (21.1%)
Promoting peace and security	45 (85.7%)	7 (14.3%)
Motivating citizens in campaigns against poverty	38 (72.9%)	14 (27.1%)
Encouraging tax compliance	45 (86.4%)	7 (13.6%)

To substantiate these responses, key stakeholders like elected officials (politicians) and administrators were interviewed, and these are some of the remarkable responses. On policy formulation and implementation, one politician narrated: “Our central role is to ensure that we formulate policies that reflect the needs of our people. We closely work with our administrators to ensure effective implementation of the policies”. This exhibits the shared nature of the role of politicians with that of administrators to guarantee the effective implementation of policies, which aligns with needs of the community.

In promotion of peace and security, another politician underscored:

“It is our responsibility to promote peace and security in our locality, and we do this by directly engaging with our people”.

This is consistent with what was found that 85.7% of participants acknowledged the responsibility of politicians in advocating for peace and security, indicating the active engagement of elected officials in upholding stability and safety in the community.

Regarding motivating citizens in campaigns to work hard to eliminate hunger, poverty and increase wealth production, a respondent emphasised the significance of involving citizens, asserting that endeavours to eradicate poverty and hunger necessitate the active engagement of the community. As legislators, we spearhead these projects and promote citizen participation. This statement aligns with the discovery that 72.9% of participants concurred that politicians bear the responsibility of inspiring citizens in campaigns aimed at enhancing socio-economic conditions. The insights from these interviews support the quantitative findings, suggesting that political relationships have a substantial influence on the administration of local government. Politicians have essential responsibilities in policy formulation, law making, as well as motivating community to take part in community efforts, roles which are significant for ensuring efficiency in local governance.

4.1.3 The Role of Administrators in Policy Implementation

Administrators are essential to the effective functioning of local government, as they are responsible for translating political decisions into actionable strategies and ensuring their successful implementation. This requires a deep understanding of both technical and regulatory frameworks, as well as the ability to coordinate with politicians and other stakeholders to achieve local governance objectives. Their interactions with other government officials are crucial for maintaining operational efficiency and ensuring that public policies are executed as intended. The findings indicated that 85.9% of the respondents agreed that the administrators’ interaction in local government was found through various roles played such as public servants were responsible for executing policies and laws formulated by politicians, while 14.1% of the respondents disagreed with this view. 69.8% agreed that appointed officials were responsible for coordinating training for public servants while 30.2% of the respondents disagreed that administrators were not responsible coordinating training for public servants.

94.3% of the respondents agreed that appointed officials were responsible for overseeing development activities while 5.7% of the respondents disagreed that administrators were not responsible for supervising development activities, 88.5% of the respondents agreed that public servants were responsible for providing administrative support to professional and elected council representatives while 11.5% of the respondents disagreed that public servants were not responsible for providing support to technical and elected council representatives, 78.5% of the respondents agreed that public servants were responsible for serving on committees and preparing reports while 21.5% of the respondents were not responsible for preparing reports and serving on committees, 86.4% of the respondents agreed that public servants were responsible for organizing and managing staffs while 15.5% of the respondents disagreed that public servants were not responsible for managing and organizing employees as summarizes in the Table 2.

Table 2*The role of Administrators in Administration of the Council*

Role of Administrators	Agree (Frequency/Percentage)	Disagree (Frequency/Percentage)
Implementing policies and laws formulated by politicians	45 (85.9%)	7 (14.1%)
Coordinating training for public servants	36 (69.8%)	16 (30.2%)
Administering development activities	49 (94.3%)	3 (5.7%)
Providing administrative support to elected officials	46 (88.5%)	6 (11.5%)
Serving on committees and preparing reports	41 (78.5%)	11 (21.5%)
Organizing and managing staff	44 (84.5%)	8 (15.5%)

Interviews with key administrative officials provided a more understanding into these roles and the manner in which interacts with the politicians within the institutional framework of local government. In order to provide more evidence for these results, interviews were carried out with key administrative personnel. The responses yielded profound insights into the specific duties and obligations of administrators functioning within the context of the local government structure. Regarding the implementation of policies and laws, one administrator emphasised the significance of their job, noting,

“Our primary responsibility is to ensure the efficient execution of the policies and laws formulated by politicians.”

It is our responsibility to implement these policies through our everyday activities. This response highlights the significant consensus among respondents (85.9%) on the importance of administrators in implementing the policies and laws created by lawmakers.

With respect to the coordination of training for public servants, an appointed official emphasized the importance of training for public servants, stating that *“it ensures staff are updated on the latest protocols and regulations, which directly impacts service quality”*. 69.8% of participants acknowledged the responsibility of administrators in organizing training for government employees. Such a response offers qualitative evidence that complements the quantitative findings, demonstrating the crucial responsibilities that administrators have in guaranteeing the efficient functioning of local government administration. The interview responses provide qualitative support to the quantitative findings, illustrating the critical roles that administrators play in ensuring the smooth operation of local government administration.

4.2 Synergy and Conflict in Political-Administrative Relations

Teamwork between administrators and politicians is a cornerstone of effective local governance. This study aimed to assess how their interactions contribute to the overall performance of Kibaha Town Council. Respondents were asked to reflect on whether the collaborative efforts between these two groups have had a positive impact on local government administration. Findings revealed that 25 respondents (48%) firmly agreed that the interactions between the politicians and administrators substantially improve council's operations. Their partnership endeavours in strategic implementation, policy formulation, and community engagement were responsible for these advantageous outcomes. Likewise, 17 respondents (32.6%) rated the impact as moderate, demonstrating the collaboration as advantageous, however, there is still room for improvement. On the contrary, 6 respondents (11.5%) rated that the impact of their collaboration was minimal, although 4 respondents (7.6%) reported that their interactions had little to no positive effect, thus suggesting a presence of some dissatisfaction with the current level of teamwork.

Administrators are instrumental in the translation of policies into actionable plans, the effective implementation of these plans, and the preservation of operational efficiency, as indicated by the survey results. In the interim, politicians make a contribution by developing policies that align with the community's requirements and mobilising public support for these initiatives. Smoother local governance, improved service delivery, and stronger civic engagement are facilitated by the harmonious collaboration between these two groups. Table 3 details these impacts.

Table 3*Respondents' Perception of the Positive Impact of Political-Administrative Interactions on Local Government Administration*

Extent of Positive Effect	Frequency (n=52)	Percentage (%)
To a great extent	25	48%
Mostly average	17	32.6%
To a lesser extent	6	11.5%
To a very small extent	4	7.6%
Total	52	100%

The significance of these interactions was further elucidated by qualitative data obtained from interviews with key stakeholders. One administrator emphasised the significance of collaborating closely with politicians, asserting, *“Our partnership guarantees that policies are not only well-designed but also effectively executed, thereby significantly improving the quality of life for our citizens.”*

A politician reiterated this sentiment, emphasising,

“Our policies are more practical and effective when we engage directly with administrators, as they address the genuine challenges that our community faces.”

Strong collaboration between administrators and legislators is crucial for achieving favourable results in local governance, as indicated by these interviews. Nevertheless, the feedback also underscores the necessity of ongoing enhancements in communication and clarity of role in order to optimise the advantages of these interactions. In summary, the local governance of Kibaha Town Council is significantly improved by the presence of collaborative endeavours of administrators and politicians. Although the majority of respondents recognise the beneficial effects of these interactions, there is a continuing need to enhance communication, delineate responsibilities, and cultivate a culture of continuous learning and collaboration. By doing so, the Council can enhance its governance and service delivery, thereby guaranteeing that it effectively addresses the requirements of its citizens.

4.3 Discussion

The findings from this study underscore the critical role of political-administrative interactions in local governance. This section interprets these findings, discussing their broader implications for governance in Kibaha Town Council.

4.3.1 Political-Administrative Interactions and Decision-Making

The study confirms that political-administrative interactions significantly shape decision-making processes in Kibaha Town Council. 91.2% of respondents affirmed their role in policy formulation, law-making, and development administration, supporting Svava's (2006) complementary model. This indicates that while the distinction between politics and administration exists, effective governance in Kibaha requires cooperation between both groups. However, role ambiguity and occasional power struggles necessitate better coordination and clearer responsibilities (Mafuru et al., 2015).

4.3.2 Roles and Responsibilities of Politicians in Governance

Politicians influence governance by mobilizing resources, formulating policies, and engaging with communities. However, 65.6% of respondents observed that political affiliations sometimes influence elected officials' decisions, as found in Njunwa (2020). The study underscores the importance of well-defined political roles to prevent excessive interference in administrative functions (Vilakazi & Adetiba, 2020). This finding is consistent with the literature, particularly the work of Mafuru et al. (2015), which emphasizes the need for clear role definitions to prevent misunderstandings and improve governance efficiency.

4.3.3 Role of Administrators in Policy Implementation

Administrators play a vital role in executing policies and ensuring service delivery. 85.9% of respondents confirmed their responsibility for legal compliance and overseeing development projects, aligning with Lameck & Kinemo (2022). However, training gaps and political interference limit their efficiency. This supports the need for strengthening capacity-building initiatives (Akhtar & Sushil, 2018) to improve administrative competence and policy implementation.

In the context of Kibaha Town Council, such training could help bridge the gap between political intentions and administrative actions, thereby improving service delivery.

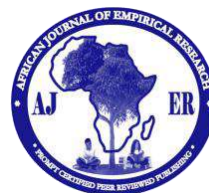
4.3.4 Strengthening Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms

To sustain effective governance, the study highlights the necessity of robust Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems. Regular M&E practices enhance transparency, accountability, and efficiency (World Bank, 2013). Implementing structured M&E frameworks in Kibaha Town Council can help resolve role ambiguity and strengthen conflict resolution, leading to improved governance outcomes.

V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

Political-administrative collaboration plays a pivotal role in fostering effective governance within Kibaha Town Council. While the Political-Administrative Dichotomy (PAD) and Collaborative Governance (CG) theories provide a



conceptual distinction between politics and administration, this study highlights that productive governance is best achieved through a synergistic relationship between elected officials and administrators. The findings indicate that 91.2% of respondents recognize the positive impact of these interactions, particularly in policy formulation and development initiatives. However, persistent challenges such as role ambiguity, communication gaps, and conflicts continue to hinder governance efficiency. Addressing these challenges requires a clear delineation of responsibilities, improved communication channels, and continuous training to enhance collaboration.

Establishing robust Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) mechanisms is essential for ensuring accountability and responsive governance. By strengthening these governance structures, local government decisions can better align with community needs, improve service delivery, and foster sustainable development. The study underscores the necessity of institutional reforms and policy interventions to enhance political-administrative interactions and promote efficient local governance in Tanzania.

5.2 Recommendations

To improve political-administrative collaboration and governance outcomes, the following strategic interventions are recommended. *First, clarifying roles and responsibilities:* the government should establish clear policy guidelines that define the responsibilities and authority of both elected officials and administrators. Role ambiguity often leads to conflicts and inefficiencies in decision-making processes. A well-defined legislative framework can help streamline governance operations, ensuring that political and administrative roles complement rather than conflict with each other. Standardized guidelines across local government authorities (LGAs) would promote consistency and strengthen governance structures.

Second, enhancing training and capacity development: Continuous capacity-building programs should be prioritized to equip both politicians and administrators with the necessary skills for effective collaboration. Training programs should focus on collaborative governance principles, conflict resolution strategies, and communication skills. By implementing structured orientation programs for newly elected officials and appointed administrators, LGAs can enhance coordination and policy implementation. Encouraging ongoing professional development will ensure that both parties operate within legal and ethical frameworks while fostering a culture of mutual respect and cooperation.

Third, strengthening Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Systems. The effectiveness of political-administrative interactions should be regularly assessed through robust M&E frameworks. Policies should mandate the establishment of structured M&E systems within LGAs to track governance performance, identify areas of improvement, and promote transparency. Regular assessments will provide data-driven insights that can inform policy adjustments and optimize governance efficiency. Strengthening accountability mechanisms will also enhance public trust and ensure that governance decisions align with community priorities.

By implementing these recommendations, Kibaha Town Council and other LGAs in Tanzania—can enhance political-administrative collaboration, improve service delivery, and strengthen governance structures. These interventions will ultimately contribute to a more responsive, transparent, and effective local government system that meets the evolving needs of its communities.

REFERENCES

- Akhtar, M., & Sushil, A. (2018). Managing strategic performance in a dynamic business environment: A study of two Indian oil companies. *Global Business and Organizational Excellence*, 37(4), 47–62.
- Bochel, C., & Bochel, H. (2010). Local political leadership and the modernisation of local government. *Local Government Studies*, 36(6), 723–737.
- Chamusca, P. (2025). Governance, participation, and development: Local power's perspective in Portugal. *International Planning Studies*, 1–27.
- Cheema, G. S., & Rondinelli, D. A. (2007). *Decentralizing governance: Emerging concepts and practices*. Brookings Institution Press.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Field, A. (2018). *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS statistics* (5th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Fowler, F. J. (2014). *Survey research methods* (5th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Iwuozor, O., & Akintunde, S. (2025). Local government autonomy: A deep analysis of management and community leadership in grassroots development in the local government area of Lagos, Nigeria. *Journal of Institutional Research, Big Data Analytics and Innovation*, 1(2), 40–54.
- Lameck, W. U. (2023). Political decentralisation and political-administrative relations in the local councils in Tanzania. *Public Administration and Policy*, 26(3), 335–344.



- Lameck, W. U., & Kinemo, S. (2022). In search of a link between fiscal decentralization and fiscal autonomy in service delivery in urban local government authorities in Tanzania. *Journal of Governance and Development*, 17(2), 22–40.
- Lyatonga, I., & Tefurukwa, O. (2012). Tensions in political-administrative relations in Tanzanian local governments. *African Public Administration and Management Series*, 3, 134–143.
- Mafuru, W., Mpenzi, D., Lyatonga, I., Tefurukwa, O., Masue, O., Ngowi, R., & Wilfred, L. (2015). Political-administrative relations in Tanzanian local government authorities. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2561813>
- Misafi, H. P. (2014). Women's participation in decentralized local governance: The case of pastoral and non-pastoral women in Kondoa local authority, Tanzania. *Afrika Focus*, 27(2), 87–97.
- Mott, R., & Haddad, B. (2025). A call to better Qual: A philosophical and methodological examination to advance case study research. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 66(1), Article 41.
- Muchaku, S., & Magaiza, G. (2024). The struggle within dual systems of government: Dealing with conflict between traditional leaders and ward councillors in the Greater Giyani Municipality in South Africa. *Frontiers in Political Science*, 6, 1311178.
- Njunwa, K. (2021). Elected and appointed officials' attitudes and the interaction in construction of health and education infrastructures in Morogoro District Council. *African Journal of Accounting and Social Sciences*, 3(2), 34–38.
- Njunwa, M. K. (2020). *Political-administrative interactions towards effective implementation of the construction of health and education infrastructures in Morogoro District Council, Tanzania*. (Doctoral dissertation, Sokoine University of Agriculture).
- Ntwenya, G. M. (2020). *Political-administrative relations and employees' performance in local government authorities in Tanzania: A case study of Morogoro District Council, Morogoro*. (Master's dissertation, Mzumbe University).
- Olowu, D., & Wunsch, J. S. (2004). *Local governance in Africa: The challenges of democratic decentralization*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Oranga, J. (2025). Mixed methods research: Application, advantages and challenges. *Journal of Accounting Research, Utility Finance and Digital Assets*, 3(4), 370–375.
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Rugeiyamu, R., Kashonda, E., Shayi, A., & Mohamed, B. (2021). Role of local government authorities in promoting local economic development and service delivery to local communities in Tanzania. *Local Administration Journal*, 14(2), 123–144.
- Rutgers, M. R. (1997). Beyond Woodrow Wilson: The identity of the study of public administration in historical perspective. *Administration & Society*, 29(3), 276–300.
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Sage Publications.
- Svara, J. H. (2006). Complementary of politics and administration to the dichotomy model. *Journal of Administrative Theory*, 20(5), 676–705.
- Vilakazi, A. S., & Adetiba, C. T. (2020). Political-administrative dichotomy in South Africa: The principle of separation of powers at local government level. *African Union Development Agency (AUDA)*, 12(1), 48–64.
- Wilson, W. (2003). The study of public administration. *Communication Researchers and Policy-Making*, 61.
- World Bank. (2001). *Decentralization and governance: Does decentralization improve public service delivery?* World Bank Institute.
- World Bank. (2013). *World development report 2013: Making services work for poor people*. World Bank.
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). Sage Publications.