

# Assessment of the Relationship Between Elected Political Leaders and Public Servants and its Impact on Service Delivery: Evidence from Masasi District, Tanzania

Gasper Tryphon Kisinza<sup>1</sup>

John Julius Nzunda<sup>2</sup>

## Abstract

*This study aimed to investigate the association between elected political leaders and public servants in Masasi District and its implications for public service delivery. It focused on the nature of the association between the two, the level of communication and trust between them, and the association's impact on service delivery. A mixed research approach was utilised in the study. Data were collected from 100 public servants in the district through questionnaires and in-depth interviews, including 10 key informants. Data were analysed using inferential methods, including regression. The findings revealed that the relationship between elected political leaders and public servants was moderately positive, characterised by collaboration and mutual respect. However, challenges in communication, trust, coordination, and political interference persisted. Communication and trust levels were moderate, while coordination mechanisms were inconsistently applied across administrative units. Regression analysis showed a significant positive relationship between political-administrative interactions and service delivery, accounting for variation in service delivery outcomes. The study concludes that strengthening communication, trust, and coordination, while minimising political interference, is essential to improving service delivery within local government authorities.*

**Keywords:** Political-administrative relationship, Service delivery, public servants, elected leaders, Local governance

## 1.0 Introduction

Local government authorities are the central actors in promoting socio-economic development and effectively delivering services in local areas (Masoud, 2023). In the context of decentralised governance systems, the interaction between elected political leaders and local government servants is paramount for the effective functioning of local institutions (Osborne, 2020). In local governance systems, elected leaders, such as councillors, are mandated to represent the interests of the people and to provide political guidance and oversight. In contrast, local government servants are mandated to implement policies

<sup>1</sup> Tanzania Public Service College, Mtwara, Tanzania. [gasper.kisinza@tpsc.go.tz](mailto:gasper.kisinza@tpsc.go.tz)

<sup>2</sup> Tanzania Public Service College, Mtwara, Tanzania. [john.nzunda2@tpsc.go.tz](mailto:john.nzunda2@tpsc.go.tz)

and administer local government activities (Nkoana et al., 2024). Ideally, the interaction between elected leaders and local government servants should be complementary in nature and characterised by mutual respect and understanding. However, in most developing countries such as Tanzania, the interaction between elected leaders and local government servants is often characterised by tension and contradictions.

Globally, the interaction between elected political leaders and public servants is recognised as a vital factor in effective governance and service delivery. (Thusi et al., 2023; Tsako, 2020). In all countries across the globe, be they developed or developing, the interaction between the two is acknowledged to have a significant impact on the formulation and implementation of public policies and on the translation of such policies into effective and efficient services. (Masuku & Jili, 2019; Mboneni, 2023). In well-functioning governance systems such as those in the United Kingdom and Canada, there is an institutional and professional environment and a robust system of accountability that promotes effective interaction between political leaders and public servants in the administration of services that are effective and efficient. (Hartley, 2020; Hendriks & Lees-Marshment, 2019; Schwarz et al., 2020). In contrast, in many parts of the developing world, such as Africa and parts of Asia, the interaction between the two is often constrained by various factors, including political interference and unclear roles and functions of the parties involved in service administration. As such, the interaction between political leaders and public servants has become a major focus of global public administration in the pursuit of good governance and development.

The local government structure in Tanzania has undergone tremendous changes in the last decade under the Local Government Reform Programme (LGRP), which emphasises decentralisation by devolution (D-by-D) (Mtisho & Rutenge, 2024). The main aim of this approach is to decentralise power, responsibilities, and resources from the central government to local governments to improve efficiency, accountability, and responsiveness to people's needs. However, challenges exist in the relationship between the political leadership and the public servants at the council level. (Igboaka et al., 2025). In essence, the relationship between public servants and the political leadership at the council level is characterised by differences of opinion, power struggles, and a lack of understanding, which sometimes leads to strained relationships. (Masoud, 2023; Ngwinye, 2019). For example, elected leaders pressure public servants to implement development projects for political gain, whereas public servants resist the political leadership's efforts to do so to uphold their professionalism. (Kasanga & Massoi, 2025; Mfuru et al., 2018).

The efficacy of service delivery in local government authorities is also linked to the quality of governance relationships. Service delivery refers to the provision of basic services to the community, including education, healthcare, water, and infrastructure. It is vital to enhancing the quality of life in the community (Azeez & Oluwatoyin, 2025). When political leaders work in harmony with other stakeholders in service delivery, there is a greater likelihood of achieving effective resource allocation, project implementation, and enhanced accountability (Atiku et al., 2023). By contrast, poor relationships marked by mistrust, ineffective communication, and conflict can lead to inefficiency, duplication of work, and misuse of resources (Zarychta et al., 2024). Hence, the nature and implications of these relationships are vital to developing effective governance.

Despite the acknowledged importance of the relationship between elected political leaders and public servants, there is limited empirical evidence on the impact of their interactions on service delivery in local settings. Much of the existing literature has focused on general issues affecting governance, without an in-depth analysis of those specific to local settings. In particular, there is a lack of in-depth analysis of issues affecting local settings, such as Masasi District, which may differ in administration and resources from urban areas. This study, therefore, seeks to investigate the relationship between elected political leaders and public servants to establish its impact on service delivery in Masasi District. This is done by exploring the nature of the relationship between the two entities and the levels of communication and trust in the service-delivery process. This study is significant because it provides empirical evidence for the discourse on governance and administration in Tanzania and similar contexts.

The objective is to assess the relationship between elected political leaders and public servants and its impact on service delivery in Masasi District. Specifically, the study aims to examine the nature of the relationship between elected political leaders and public servants; to assess the level of communication, trust, and coordination between them; and to evaluate the impact of this relationship on service delivery.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Theoretical Literature Review**

The relationship between elected political leaders and public servants is critical in understanding governance and service delivery in local government systems. Principal-Agent Theory is applicable in understanding this relationship. (Rees, 1984). This theory helps explain this relationship by revealing the potential problems that may arise when responsibility is delegated from political leaders to public servants. (Rattanaprichavej, 2023). In this theory, public servants are agents, while political leaders are principals. Inefficiencies may occur in public service delivery if there is a lack of alignment between the goals of both public servants and political leaders. (Moeradi, 2021). This theory is applicable in understanding local government systems in developing countries such as Tanzania. In Tanzania, the relationship between political leaders and public servants is characterised by tension. Overlapping responsibilities and political interference also characterise this relationship.

Governance Theory complements the principal-agent perspective by highlighting the importance of structures, norms, and processes that facilitate collaboration, transparency, and accountability among actors within local government agencies (Zarychta et al., 2024). Good governance is not just about hierarchical control; it is also about providing structures for coordination, shared decision-making, and stakeholder participation, which can build trust and collaborative relationships between local leaders and public servants. Empirical research has demonstrated that good governance structures can mitigate the effects of political interference, thus improving service delivery outcomes (Masoud, 2023; Nkoana et al., 2024). Conversely, weak governance structures and high levels of political interference

may lead to mismanagement, corruption, and suboptimal service delivery outcomes (Igboaka et al., 2025; Kasanga & Massoi, 2025).

## 2.2 Empirical Literature Review

Empirical studies offer valuable insights into how the relationship between political leaders and public servants affects service outcomes across different settings. In Tanzania, Kasanga & Massoi (2025) undertook a research study on the relationship between political leaders and public servants in Kibaha Town Council. The research established that both harmony and conflict characterise the relationship between political leaders and public servants in Tanzania. The research findings are in line with the general literature, which established that poor communication between political leaders and public servants leads to poor local government performance.

On the other hand, political interference is cited as a problem affecting service delivery in various places. In their study on the impact of political interference in decision-making at the Temeke Municipal Council in Tanzania, Mtisho and Rutenge (2024) found that such interference negatively affects service delivery. In the same vein, Masoud (2023) found that political interference negatively affected procurement performance in parastatal institutions in the Dar es Salaam Region. This indicates that whenever there is political interference in the administration of services in the country, the administration's performance is compromised.

Outside Tanzania, evidence from other African countries also demonstrates the intricate link between politics and service delivery. In this case, Nkoana et al. (2024) investigated the administration of public services in South Africa. They found that the pursuit of political interests often comes at the expense of effective service delivery, particularly in infrastructure and basic services. This is also consistent with the position of Thusi et al. (2023), who established that the lack of political will is among the major impediments to the delivery of public services in South Africa. This is because without the political will to uphold the principles of governance, the effectiveness of the services is compromised. This also aligns with the position of Azeez and Oluwatoyin (2025) in their investigation of political interference and resource management in Africa.

Moreover, it is worth noting that these empirical insights may be generalised to the effects of the political environment and stability on service outcomes. For instance, Igboaka et al. (2025) examine the effects of political corruption and democratic governance in Nigeria. They establish that corruption in Nigeria undermines public trust and service delivery, thereby affecting governance outcomes. Similarly, Mboneni (2023) establishes a relationship between political stability and service delivery in a South African municipality. This indicates that unstable political environments complicate service delivery.

Generally, these empirical insights demonstrate that the relationship between elected political leaders and public servants, ranging from collaborative engagement to conflict, has significant effects on service delivery outcomes. Positive relationships characterised by mutual understanding, role delineation, and shared goals enhance service delivery outcomes, whereas interference, conflict, and poor governance structures undermine

them. These insights therefore emphasise the importance of examining such relationships in the context of Masasi District, where they may be instrumental in enhancing governance outcomes.

### **3.0 Methodology**

The study used a mixed-methods research design, combining qualitative and quantitative methods. The use of a mixed-methods research approach was considered essential because it enabled a comprehensive investigation of the relationship between elected political leaders and public servants, and its impact on service delivery. The approach enabled the collection of both quantitative data on the extent of the relationship across communication, trust, and coordination, and qualitative data on the experiences and challenges faced by the actors in the relationship (Atiku et al., 2023; Kasanga & Massoi, 2025).

The research was carried out in Masasi District, which was chosen because it has both urban and rural areas, elected political leaders and public servants, and is in the process of enhancing service delivery by local authorities. The target group in this research included elected political leaders, such as councillors, and key public servants, including the District Executive Director (DED), Ward Executive Officers (WEOs), and Village Executive Officers (VEOs), as well as other stakeholders directly engaged in service provision. A purposive sampling design was used to select the sample. A total of 100 respondents participated in the survey, which used a quantitative approach. On the other hand, 10 key informants, including DED, WEOs, VEOs, and councillors, were interviewed in order to obtain the required qualitative data.

The research used multiple data collection methods to obtain the required data. A questionnaire survey was conducted using a quantitative approach. Public servants and councillors were asked a series of structured questions. Key informant interviews were conducted using a qualitative approach. In addition, the research used secondary data from local government reports, meeting minutes, and policy documents.

For quantitative data, descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to analyse and interpret respondents' perceptions of political-administrative relations and service delivery. Correlation analysis was also conducted to understand the nature and extent of relationships among variables. For qualitative data, thematic analysis was used to understand and explain political relations between elected political leaders and public servants. Data from both sources were used to develop a comprehensive understanding of the research objectives.

## 4.0 Findings

### 4.1 Nature of the Relationship Between Elected Political Leaders and Public Servants

The study evaluated the relationship that exists between elected political leaders and public servants in Masasi District. This was done by asking respondents to rate their level of agreement with 10 statements on a Likert scale. The scale was marked from 1, meaning "Strongly Disagree," to 5, meaning "Strongly Agree." The study found that the relationship between elected political leaders and public servants in Masasi District is moderately positive, though several challenges mar it. For instance, regarding collaborative efforts across most projects, the study reported a mean of 3.4 and a standard deviation of 0.9. This indicates that although there is some cooperation across most wards, it is inconsistent. Regarding public servants' respect for authority, the mean is 3.8, and the standard deviation is 0.7. However, political leaders show lower recognition of public servants' professional expertise, as indicated by a mean of 3.2 and a standard deviation of 0.8.

Differences in priorities were also cited as a reason for tension between the two groups, with a mean of 3.5 and a standard deviation of 0.9. This indicates that conflicts sometimes occurred between the authority's political and procedural assertions. Communication between the two groups was also rated moderately, with a mean of 2.9 (SD = 1.0). This implies that information sharing between the two groups was irregular, which sometimes led to delays in decision-making. Also, mutual trust between the two groups was moderately high at 2.8 (SD = 1.0). This indicates suspicions and doubts about intentions. On clarity of role and responsibility, the score was 3.1 (SD = 0.9). This indicates that although most participants were aware of their roles and responsibilities, there were instances in which politics and procedures conflicted.

On the other hand, political interference was cited as a limitation on the effective and efficient delivery of services, with a mean of 2.6 and a standard deviation of 1.1. This implies that political pressure affected the servants' autonomy in delivering services. Despite various limitations in the effective and efficient delivery of services in the Masasi District, service delivery cooperation and coordination had a positive impact, with a mean of 3.5 and a standard deviation of 0.8. This implies that in wards where cooperation and coordination in service delivery were effective, project execution was timely and overall satisfaction with services was higher. It is therefore clear that, despite respect, cooperation, and recognition of the servants' expertise in the Masasi District, inconsistent communication, a lack of trust, and political interference hindered the effective and efficient delivery of services. Table 1 below summarises the descriptive statistics for each statement made by the respondents.

**Table 1: Nature of the Relationship Between Elected Political Leaders and Public Servants in Masasi District**

| Statement                                                                  | Mean | SD  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-----|
| Political leaders and public servants collaborate effectively on projects. | 3.4  | 0.9 |
| Decisions are made jointly between elected leaders and public servants.    | 3.2  | 0.8 |
| Public servants respect the authority of elected political leaders.        | 3.8  | 0.7 |
| Political leaders respect the professional expertise of public servants.   | 3.2  | 0.8 |
| Conflicts occasionally arise due to differences in priorities.             | 3.5  | 0.9 |
| Communication between political leaders and public servants is consistent. | 2.9  | 1.0 |
| There is mutual trust between elected leaders and public servants.         | 2.8  | 1.0 |
| Roles and responsibilities between the two groups are clearly understood.  | 3.1  | 0.9 |
| Political interference in administrative decisions is minimal.             | 2.6  | 1.1 |
| Collaboration positively impacts service delivery.                         | 3.5  | 0.8 |

**Source:** Field Data (2026)

The qualitative results showed that the relationship between elected political leaders and public servants in Masasi District is moderately positive and varies depending on political priorities, administrative expertise, and communication. Although elected leaders and public servants cooperate, tension arises when their recommendations conflict. Key points were raised about public servants' technical support and their occasional neglect of proper procedures in favour of popularity. One key informant said:

*In many projects, we see that elected leaders depend on the technical knowledge and administrative skills of public servants to implement programmes effectively. However, at times, misunderstandings arise about project priorities because political leaders often prioritise popular projects that may not align with administrative plans. This misalignment causes tension, delays, and frustration among staff who feel their expertise is overlooked (Respondent 1, 12 March 2026).*

The response demonstrates that, even though public servants are appreciated for their knowledge and skills, political leaders may still favour projects more likely to win public support than those that are technically sound. This mismatch is a source of tension and operational difficulties, demonstrating that respect is not enough and that a lack of understanding and dialogue is a problem. It reinforces the survey's findings, which showed a moderate level of collaboration and some friction between political and public service actors. Another respondent explained:

*The relationship is built on a foundation of respect; however, it is not always easy. Political leaders want immediate results and often want to bypass guidelines and procedures. This can put pressure on public servants who need to balance technical requirements and political realities. Although we are working together to achieve a common outcome, a lack of consistent dialogue can sometimes result in decisions being implemented without consensus (Respondent 3, 14 March 2026).*

This quote demonstrates the tension between administrative protocols and political urgency. Public servants are caught between maintaining technical integrity and satisfying political expectations. The finding indicates that respect and cooperation exist but are fragile and require more structured communication and joint decision-making mechanisms to reduce operational conflicts. A third respondent observed:

*From my experience as a Ward Executive Officer, public servants try to advise political leaders on the most effective approaches, but not all suggestions are accepted. Political priorities occasionally override administrative recommendations, which affects how services are delivered. Trust exists but is fragile, and ongoing engagement is needed to ensure that decisions are informed, collaborative, and beneficial to the community.*  
(Respondent 5, Nyangamara Ward, 16 March 2026)

This also shows that, while trust and cooperation are present, they are constrained by political dominance in decision-making. This is because public servants recognise that dialogue and cooperation are necessary to improve service delivery outcomes. The quantitative results indicate a moderately positive relationship, suggesting the need for interventions to enhance trust and communication between leaders and public servants. This qualitative analysis shows that both cooperation and tension characterise the relationship between elected leaders and public servants in Masasi District. This is because various factors, such as political dominance, public servants' expertise, and the communication and trust between leaders and public servants, are involved. This relationship also affects service delivery.

#### **4.2 Communication, Trust, and Coordination Between Elected Leaders and Public Servants**

The study findings revealed that communication between elected political leaders and public servants in Masasi District was moderate but inconsistent, as evidenced by mean scores ranging from 2.8 to 3.1 and standard deviations of 0.8 to 1.0. In some instances, public servants reported receiving clear and effective communication from political leaders, while in others they reported irregular or delayed communication. In general, public servants reported being moderately comfortable sharing information with political leaders, with an average of 3.1 and a standard deviation of 0.8. This suggests that, in most instances, there were channels for upward communication. By contrast, political leaders reported being slightly less open to receiving information from public servants, with an average of 2.9 and a standard deviation of 0.9. This suggests that, in some instances, effective communication was limited.

Trust between elected leaders and public servants was also seen as a significant factor in collaboration. The average rating of 2.7 (SD = 1.0) suggests that respondents rated trust as moderate to low, which may indicate political pressure, past instances of interference, or motives in the collaboration process. Such low trust could reduce the willingness to share information, thereby undermining the efficiency of service delivery. Coordination mechanisms, including joint planning meetings and clear task division, scored slightly higher, averaging 3.1-3.2. This implies the existence of systematic meetings during the collaboration process. However, the high standard deviations suggest that while some wards may have done well in the coordination process, others may have experienced task overlap.

Despite these difficulties, respondents agreed that when communication and coordination were effective, collaboration could improve project outcomes, as indicated by a mean score of 3.3 (SD = 0.8). This shows that even moderate levels of effective communication can positively impact service delivery. These results emphasise that improving consistency in communication, mutual trust, and regular coordination can have a tremendous impact on improving the relationship between elected leaders and public servants. In conclusion, this analysis shows that communication, trust, and coordination were present but not robust. These are crucial elements that need to be addressed to ensure effective governance and service delivery in Masasi District.

**Table 2: Level of Communication, Trust, and Coordination Between Elected Leaders and Public Servants**

| Statement                                                                              | Mean | (SD) |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|
| Communication between elected leaders and public servants is clear.                    | 3.0  | 0.9  |
| Communication is timely and regular.                                                   | 2.8  | 1.0  |
| Public servants feel comfortable sharing information with elected leaders.             | 3.1  | 0.8  |
| Political leaders are open to receiving feedback from public servants.                 | 2.9  | 0.9  |
| There is mutual trust between elected leaders and public servants.                     | 2.7  | 1.0  |
| Coordination mechanisms exist to ensure joint decision-making.                         | 3.2  | 0.8  |
| Joint planning meetings are conducted regularly.                                       | 2.9  | 1.0  |
| Conflicts are resolved through discussion and consensus.                               | 3.0  | 0.9  |
| Collaboration between political leaders and public servants enhances project outcomes. | 3.3  | 0.8  |
| Roles and responsibilities are well coordinated to prevent overlap.                    | 3.1  | 0.9  |

Source: Field Data (2026)

### 4.3 Impact of Political-Administrative Relationship on Service Delivery

The impact of the relationship between elected political leaders and public servants on service delivery in Masasi District was assessed using inferential statistics. A regression analysis was conducted to determine whether the quality of the political-administrative relationship could predict service delivery outcomes. The model summary indicated a moderate positive correlation between the two variables ( $R = 0.62$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.38 and an adjusted  $R^2$  of 0.36, indicating that approximately 38% of the variance in service delivery is explained by the political-administrative relationship. This demonstrates that the quality of collaboration, trust, and coordination between elected leaders and public servants plays a substantial role in influencing service delivery.

**Table 3: Model Summary**

| Model | R    | $R^2$ | Adjusted $R^2$ | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|------|-------|----------------|----------------------------|
| 1     | 0.62 | 0.38  | 0.36           | 0.52                       |

Source: Field Data (2026)

The regression coefficients further confirmed the predictive effect. The unstandardised coefficient ( $\beta$ ) for the political-administrative relationship was 0.61 (SD = 0.16,  $t = 3.93$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating a significant positive effect on service delivery. This implies that for every one-unit improvement in the quality of the relationship between political leaders and public servants, service delivery improved by 0.61 units on the 5-point Likert scale. The constant term was 1.52 (SD = 0.42,  $t = 3.62$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), representing the baseline level of service delivery when the relationship variable is zero.

The findings suggest that stronger collaboration, consistent communication, mutual trust, and effective coordination between political leaders and public servants lead to enhanced service delivery. Areas with stronger relationships experienced more timely project execution, better responsiveness to citizens' needs, and higher service satisfaction. Conversely, where the relationship was weaker, service delivery suffered from delays, inefficiencies, and poor responsiveness.

**Table 4: Regression Coefficients for Political-Administrative Relationship and Service Delivery**

| Predictor                             | Unstandardised $\beta$ | Std. Error | t-value | p-value |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|------------|---------|---------|
| (Constant)                            | 1.52                   | 0.42       | 3.62    | <0.001  |
| Political-Administrative Relationship | 0.61                   | 0.16       | 3.93    | <0.001  |

Source: Field Data (2026)

## 5.0 Discussion of Findings

The study's results also highlight the importance of the relationship between elected political leaders and public servants for the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of service delivery in Masasi District. The analysis established that the relationship between the two groups was moderately positive but characterised by inconsistencies. For instance, it was established that the two groups collaborated on some projects and that public servants respected the authority of elected political leaders. However, political leaders' appreciation of public servants' professional expertise was somewhat lower, suggesting that public servants' technical expertise was not well considered in governance processes. This was also established in the earlier study by Hartley (2020), which highlighted the importance of political astuteness and the appreciation of public servants' technical expertise for the effective functioning of local governments. Masuku and Jili (2019) also found that political interference in the functioning of local administrations can undermine the efficiency of administrative processes, with political considerations taking precedence over procedural ones in governance in Masasi District.

Communication, trust, and coordination between political leaders and public servants were rated as moderate. There was a challenge in information sharing and joint decision-making. On one hand, public servants rated their comfort level in sharing information with political leaders as reasonable. However, political leaders' responsiveness to information shared was somewhat limited. On the other hand, coordination mechanisms between political

leaders and public servants, such as joint planning meetings and role clarity, were present but not fully implemented across all wards. This partial implementation of communication and coordination mechanisms between political leaders and public servants resulted in role overlap and inefficiencies in service delivery. These findings are supported by Kasanga and Massoi (2025), who contend that political-administrative relationships are contingent upon effective communication mechanisms between political leaders and public servants, as well as trust between them. In addition, Thusi et al. (2023) found that low trust between political leaders and public servants can foster a culture of caution that hinders effective problem-solving and influences local governance outcomes.

The inferential analysis further reinforced the salience of the political-administrative relationship in shaping service delivery outcomes. Based on the regression analysis, the relationship was statistically significant and positive, explaining 38% of the variance in service delivery. Furthermore, the unstandardised coefficient indicated that for every one-unit increase in relationship quality, service delivery increased by 0.61 units on the 5-point Likert scale ( $p < 0.001$ ). This reveals that collaboration, trust, and coordination are not just niceties in governance but actual variables that affect the quality of services delivered in the public sector. Places where the relationship was positive had more effective project implementation, better resource allocation, and higher overall citizen satisfaction. This study corroborates the assertions of Atiku et al. (2023) and Masoud (2023) regarding the salience of political-administrative collaboration in enhancing the quality of local governance and the effective delivery of public services.

However, despite the positive correlation between the two concepts, issues such as political interference, misaligned priorities, and ineffective communication still remained. In some wards, there was concern that the political agenda might sometimes take precedence over the technical information provided, leading to inefficient execution of public projects in the region. This aligns with Hendriks and Lees-Marshment (2019), who argued that political leaders often have to juggle multiple agendas and, in the process, inadvertently compromise the administration's efficiency. Nevertheless, the study suggests that the adverse effects of political interference can be mitigated by developing institutionalised relationships between leaders and administrators in the region. This can be achieved through capacity building and the formation of joint planning committees to foster a culture of mutual respect.

## 6.0 Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to examine the relationship between elected political leaders and public servants in Masasi District and its implications for service delivery. The research findings indicate that although political leaders and public servants demonstrated moderate levels of collaboration and recognition of their roles and contributions, these levels were not consistent across all wards. In some instances, political leaders tended to favour political interests over technical information and guidance. In some instances, public servants had difficulty contributing to political and technical decision-making processes.

The research also showed that although political leaders and public servants interacted and coordinated through communication and trust, this relationship was not fully maximised. For instance, public servants showed a moderate level of comfort in sharing information and knowledge; however, political leaders showed variable responsiveness to information and guidance from public servants. However, the research showed that the quality of the relationship between political leaders and public servants accounted for 38% of the variance in service delivery outcomes.

## 7.0 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that the Masasi District authorities take steps to enhance the relationship between political leaders and public servants. Firstly, there is a need to develop institutional mechanisms to facilitate effective communication between political leaders and public servants. This can be achieved through effective joint planning, feedback mechanisms, and reporting. This can help ensure effective collaboration between political leaders and public servants in decision-making. Secondly, there is a need to build mutual trust between political leaders and public servants through capacity-building, workshops, team-building, and an understanding of each other's roles and boundaries. Developing political leaders' appreciation of the importance of technical skills can also enhance the relationship between political leaders and public servants.

Thirdly, it is important to coordinate these mechanisms to avoid overlapping responsibilities, prevent conflicts, and improve efficiency. This can take various forms, including establishing joint committees and implementing service procedures. This approach will ensure that service delivery is not only efficient and effective but also responsive to citizens' needs. Finally, it is important to minimise political interference in technical and administrative matters while fostering a culture of dialogue, compromise, and collective responsibility. This will go a long way towards improving service delivery.

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