

Political and Administrative Actors' Interactions: Evaluating the Influence of Good Governance Principles in Project Implementation and Management in Tanzania

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Abstract

The interactions between political and administrative actors are crucial in determining the success or failure of development projects, as they directly influence implementation and management processes. This study investigated the interactions between political and administrative actors in Tanzania and their influence on the implementation and management of development projects, specifically focusing on adherence to governance principles. The study objectives are: (1) to examine the nature of interactions between political and administrative actors; (2) to assess the extent of adherence to good governance principles; and (3) to identify challenges hindering compliance. This study utilised a mixed-methods approach. A purposeful and convenient sampling technique selected 51 participants from various political and administrative roles. Data was gathered through interviews, surveys, and document analysis to assess how compliance or non-compliance with good governance principles impacts project outcomes. The findings indicate that whilst political and administrative actors know good governance principles, full compliance has not been achieved. Political actors often prioritise control and influence over administrative decisions, while administrative actors struggle with transparency and accountability. Challenges such as political pressures and bureaucratic constraints were also identified, leading to financial mismanagement, corruption, and public dissatisfaction. The study highlights the need to strengthen formal accountability mechanisms and bridge the gap between political control, awareness, and adherence to good governance principles. Governance principles will foster more effective and equitable project implementation and management, improving project implementation and management outcomes.

Keywords

governance, good governance principles, political-administrative actors, project implementation and management

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Introduction

In contemporary governance discourse, the interactions between political and administrative actors have emerged as a focal point for understanding the effectiveness and efficiency of public policy implementation and project management. The relationship between these actors is often characterised by differing motivations, priorities, and decision-making processes, which shape the trajectory of governance outcomes, particularly in project implementation and management (Torfing 2011).

Good governance encapsulates transparency, accountability, participation, equity, and the rule of law. These principles serve as normative guidelines to ensure that public policies and projects are utilised in a manner that is responsive to citizens' needs, promote sustainable development, and uphold democratic values. Applying governance principles within project implementation and management becomes particularly pertinent as it mitigates risks associated with corruption, unethical conduct, inefficiency, and lack of stakeholder engagement (Grindle, 2004). These principles were operationalised into observable dimensions in this study: transparency through access to project financial and contractual information; accountability through the presence and enforcement of oversight mechanisms; rule of law through adherence to procurement and legal frameworks; participation through opportunities for citizen and stakeholder involvement; and responsiveness through the timeliness and quality of service delivery. These operational indicators provide a systematic framework for assessing compliance levels during the implementation and management of the Dar es Salaam Rapid Transit (DART) Agency project.

Political-administrative interactions are defined as dynamic exchanges between elected officials, who determine policy priorities, and appointed administrators, who carry them out (Kasanga & Massoi, 2025). These interactions, which might take the form of collaboration, negotiation, or confrontation, have a considerable impact on project outcomes. In Tanzania's DART system, such exchanges involved elected politicians influencing budget objectives, administrative personnel turning policy directions into operational plans, and both groups vying for control over procurement and resource distribution. Interactions occur at various stages of the project cycle and play a vital role in forming governance outcomes. Political actors, including elected officials and policymakers, frequently outline overarching policy objectives and priorities, allocate resources, and offer strategic direction for projects.

On the other hand, administrative actors such as appointed or administrative officials are responsible for operationalising policies, resource allocation, and day-to-day management of projects. Nonetheless, the relationship between political and administrative actors when communicating and reacting in decision-making is not always harmonious. Conflicting interests,

power struggles, poor governance, unethical conduct, and divergent interpretations of policy objectives lead to tensions and challenges in project implementation and management.

Moreover, the degree of adherence or non-adherence to governance principles by both sets of actors significantly influences the effectiveness and legitimacy of governance processes. Political and administrative actors jointly assume the responsibility of formulating, approving, funding, executing, and overseeing projects. These roles intersect at the intersections of public projects, where the efficient and effective delivery of services, infrastructure, and programs hinges on the synergy of their actions. This sophisticated web of interactions and decision-making processes necessitates careful evaluation, as it inherently shapes the direction and impact of projects. The potential for adherence and violation of good governance principles becomes apparent within these interactions.

Like many other nations, Tanzania faces many development challenges that impede efficient, effective, and transparent project implementation and management (Garcia, 2019). A notable example is the construction of phase I of the DART Agency project, which was established to operate and manage the BRT infrastructure in Dar es Salaam. Reports from former Minister for Lands, Housing, and Human Settlements Development (2006-2014), Professor Anna Tibaijuka, indicate that she did not authorise the construction of the BRT depot and warehouse in Jangwani, a prone flood area (Mwananchi, 2022). She advised against building in the area due to the high risk of flooding, emphasising that as an urban planning expert, it was clear that constructing a bus station in such an area was impractical. However, the decision to proceed was influenced by higher political authority, specifically by then-Minister of Works, Transport, and Communication John Magufuli, highlighting a case where political considerations overruled technical expertise and urban planning recommendations (The Citizen, 2022). Good governance principles are assumed to be the solution to those development challenges. These principles ensure that public projects are designed, executed, and managed with integrity, effectiveness, and efficiency. This research paper reports on a journey to explore interactions between political and administrative actors, seeking to unveil the extent to which adhering to governance principles influences their decisions, behaviour, and collaborations throughout the lifecycle of public projects. The study focused on Phase I (2012-2016) and Phase II (2016-2024), which covered the construction and commencement of operations on one hand and the actual management of operations and performance, respectively. This approach allowed for exploring the interactions across the project's initiation and implementation decisions, focusing on adherence to good governance principles.

The study was guided by three central objectives: (1) to examine the nature of interactions between political and administrative actors, (2) to assess the extent of adherence to good governance principles; and (3) to identify challenges hindering compliance. The study questions were developed from three central objectives: (i) How do political and administrative

actors interact during project implementation and management? (ii) To what extent do these interactions adhere to good governance principles? Moreover, (iii) What challenges constrain effective compliance with these principles?

Review of Literature

In the contemporary global landscape, pursuing good governance principles in project implementation and management has become a pivotal concern for developed and developing nations (Grindle, 2004). This concern is driven by the recognition that effective governance is essential for promoting economic development, social equity, and sustainable development. Within the framework of good governance, political and administrative officials play a central role, as they are responsible for the formulation, execution, and oversight of policies and projects that impact the lives of all citizens in their locality. The global community strives to achieve sustainable development goals and improve the quality of life for all (Grindle, 2004). Governments worldwide face growing public demand for transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct in governance. Good governance is a globally recognised framework critical for public project implementation and management success. The effectiveness of politics-administration interactions, guided by good governance principles, plays a pivotal role in achieving positive outcomes. Core values such as participation, accountability, transparency, and adherence to the rule of law are fundamental to building public trust, reducing corruption, and advancing sustainable development goals (Hope, 2018). These principles are essential for efficient resource allocation, proper resource utilisation, timely project delivery, and improving socio-economic conditions through effective project management.

Global Perspective on Good Governance Principles

Good governance principles have garnered significant attention on the global stage as essential elements for the effective functioning of governments, organisations, and institutions. These principles have transcended national boundaries and are embraced as fundamental to fostering development, reducing corruption, ensuring accountability, and promoting equity. Several key factors and frameworks underpin the global perspective on governance. For example, through its 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the United Nations has emphasised the role of good governance in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Goal 16, in particular, explicitly calls for promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing a global impetus for adhering to these principles (UN, 2015). In addition, the World Bank has developed governance indicators that measure various dimensions of governance, including voice and accountability, political stability, government effectiveness, and regulatory quality. These indicators are used to assess the quality of governance in countries worldwide and inform development policies (Kaufmann et al., 2010).

Furthermore, Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) is a widely recognised tool that ranks countries based on perceived levels of corruption. The CPI highlights the global concern for transparency and accountability and the negative impact of corruption on development (Transparency International, 2022). The essence of Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index lies in its capacity to provide a credible, widely recognised, and influential assessment of perceived corruption levels globally. This information is used for diverse purposes, including advocacy, resource allocation, policy evaluation, and fostering greater accountability and transparency in both the public and private sectors.

On the other hand, international organisations like the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and regional bodies like the African Union (AU) have adopted good governance and integrity principles. These organisations promote the adoption of anti-corruption measures and good governance practices globally (OECD, 2017; African Union, 2003). Civil society organisations, for example, are believed to play a crucial role in advocating for good governance and monitoring the performance of governments and institutions worldwide. They pressure governments to adhere to these principles and demand transparency, accountability, and citizen participation (Hope, 2018). Furthermore, Multinational corporations increasingly recognise the importance of good governance principles, both internally and in their interactions with host countries. These organisations support projects by providing financial assistance and aid, accompanied by some conditionalities such as compliance with good governance principles and human rights issues. Adherence to these principles is often seen as a competitive advantage, and international standards, such as the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), guide ethical business conduct (United Nations Global Compact, 2021). Their recognition marks the global perspective on good governance principles as a cornerstone of sustainable development and ethical conduct on a worldwide scale. They are integrated into international frameworks, monitoring mechanisms, and institutional practices, indicating a broad consensus on their significance in promoting accountable, transparent, and equitable governance. As the United Nations and various scholars outlined, good governance principles encompass fundamental elements such as transparency, accountability, participation, rule of law, equity, and effectiveness (UNDP, 1997). These principles are considered essential for achieving efficiency and equity in public administration. When applied to project implementation and management, they enhance the quality and impact of projects meant to serve the populace's interests.

Previous research has highlighted the significance of good governance principles in shaping project implementation and management practices. For instance, stakeholders gain access to project information through transparency, fostering trust and public confidence (Stoker, 2006). Accountability mechanisms ensure that political and administrative actors are answerable for their decisions and actions, thus reducing the likelihood of corruption,

embezzlement of public funds, and mismanagement of resources (Peters, 2015). Bovens (2007) argued that accountability involves answering for one's actions, decisions, and performance. Political actors are held accountable to their constituents as elected representatives or policymakers, while administrative actors are accountable for effectively executing policies and projects (Romzek & Dubnick, 1987). The literature emphasises that adherence to good governance principles, particularly in transparency and information sharing, enhances accountability among political and administrative actors. For example, Argyris (1998) posited that transparency enables decision-makers to see and evaluate the actions of others, thereby increasing the likelihood of accountability. Transparency and public participation are key elements of governance that directly affect the interactions between political and administrative actors. Meijer and Curtin (2005) noted that transparency in decision-making processes is crucial in building trust between these actors. When transparency is prioritised, it allows political actors to scrutinise administrative decisions, promoting accountability and reducing the potential for abuse of power (Meijer & Curtin, 2005). Arnstein's (1969) seminal work on the ladder of citizen participation emphasised that the level of involvement of citizens in decision-making processes varies. In projects, the degree of public participation, along with its influence on project design and implementation, depends on the commitment of political actors to involving the public (Davies, 2000).

The interactions between elected and administrative officials are a defining factor when communicating and reacting in the decision-making process within DARTS Agency projects. These interactions encompass negotiation, conflict resolution, accountability, transparency, and adaptability, ultimately shaping decisions that reflect the diverse perspectives and priorities of the project's stakeholders and the broader public interest. A self-motivated interplay of interests often characterises politics-administration interactions and responsibilities that affect how decisions are formulated, discussed, and implemented.

In this conceptual framework, good governance principles are the fundamental concepts influenced by political and administrative actors' interactions, which include communicating, reacting, and influencing decision-making. Political and administrative actors represent the key project implementation and management players. Interactions between these actors represent these two groups' collaborative efforts and decision-making processes. Finally, the outcomes of these interactions are reflected in project implementation and management outcomes, which encompass the overall success or failure of project execution based on the integration of good governance principles.

Institutional Theory

This study was guided primarily by Institutional Theory, which emphasises that organisational behaviour is shaped not only by formal rules and regulations but also by informal

norms, cultural values, and political pressures (Scott, 2014). Institutional theory highlights how political and administrative actors are embedded within institutional environments that constrain or enable their actions. For instance, while procurement laws in Tanzania mandate competitive bidding, political interference often shapes contract allocation, demonstrating how informal political norms sometimes dilute formal institutional requirements (CAG, 2018).

Institutional theory highlights how institutions promote transparency, accountability, and the rule of law, as well as their influence on decision-making and power distribution (North, 1990). DiMaggio and Powell's concept of institutional isomorphism (1983) explains how organisations conform to institutional norms through coercive pressures (e.g., legal requirements), normative standards (e.g., professional practices), and mimetic processes (e.g., imitation). Historical legacies and past decisions significantly shape governance structures (Pierson, 2000).

Informal institutions, such as norms and social practices, often complement or override formal rules (Helmke & Levitsky, 2004). Effective governance depends on institutions well-suited to a region's cultural, social, and economic context. Institutional fit allows for innovative governance structures, leading to improved outcomes.

In this study, institutional theory frames the interactions between political and administrative actors within institutional contexts. Institutions shape their behaviour and decision-making by legitimising, constraining, or modifying actions (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Adherence to good governance principles depends on institutional rules, societal norms, and legal frameworks. Strong institutions foster accountability and transparency, while weak ones enable inefficiency and corruption.

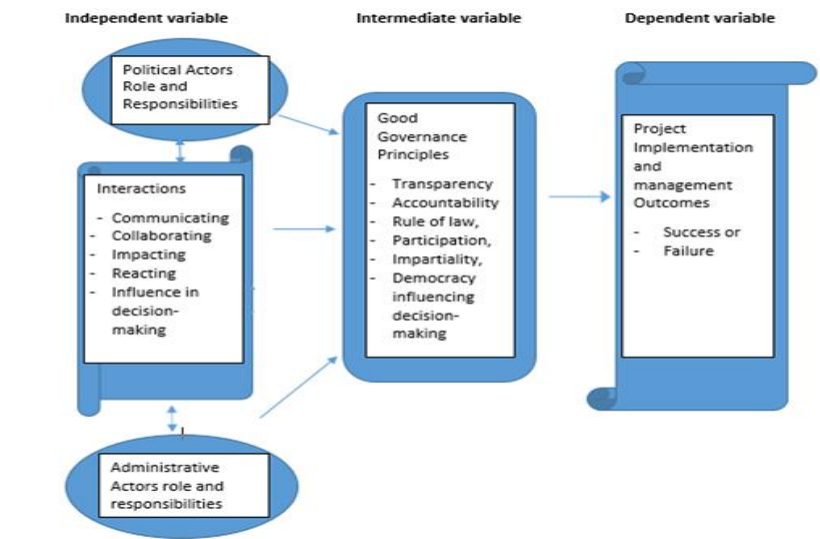


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework Illustrating the Relationships Among the Study Variables

Source: Compiled by the author based on data for the year 2023

Methodology

A mixed-methods approach rooted in the pragmatism paradigm was employed to achieve the study objectives, emphasising qualitative data through a sequential exploratory design supported by quantitative data. Pragmatism was chosen to balance positivist and constructivist perspectives, integrating historical, cultural, and political contexts to comprehensively understand the interactions. This approach was facilitated using surveys, interviews, and questionnaires to explore objective and subjective dimensions of political and administrative actors' interactions, explicitly focusing on compliance with good governance principles. The study focused on the DARTS Agency operating the BRT system in Dar es Salaam, a key transportation project under the President's Office-Region Administration and Local Government (PO-RALG). The agency aims to establish and operate the BRT system, improve urban traffic flow, and ensure effective agency management. Data analysis involved thematic analysis for qualitative data, using inductive and deductive methods, with transcripts coded in NVivo 12. Quantitative data were analysed via SPSS Version 20, generating descriptive statistics. Trustworthiness was ensured through triangulation of data collection methods.

Table 1. Summary of Study Respondents Selected Using Purposive and Convenience Sampling

S/N	Respondents Administrative officials	No	Respondents Elected officials	No
1.	Municipal Directors	4	Ilala, Temeke, Kinondoni, Ubungo Chairpersons/Mayors	4
2.	District Executive directors	4	Ward counsellors, one from each city council	5
3.	Regional Engineer	1	Member of Parliament, one from each city council	4
4	Regional Administrative Secretary (RAS)	1	PO-RALG Minister	1
5.	District Administrative Secretary (DAS)	4		
6.	PO-RALG General Secretary	1		
7	DART Project managers	5		
8	TANROAD officials	6		
9.	DARTS executive director	1		
10.	DARTS Operational Manager	5		
11	DARTS project consultant	5		
	Subtotal	37		14
Total				51

Source: Compiled by the author based on data for the year (2023)

Study Participants

The study purposefully and conveniently sampled 51 respondents based on their institutional roles and direct involvement with the Dar es Salaam Rapid Transit (DART) system. Purposive sampling was used to gather insights from actors with specialised knowledge of politics-administration interactions (Patton, 2002), whereas convenience sampling improved access to high-level elites (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2017). Administrative officials (n=37), including municipal directors, district executive directors, regional secretaries, TANROAD Officials, PO-RALG officials, and DARTS executives, contributed expertise and practical experience in putting political directives into action. Elected officials (n=14), including mayors, ward councillors, Members of Parliament, and the PO-RALG minister, represented the political arm in charge of legitimacy, oversight, and policy direction. These respondents represented the two dimensions of governance-political actors and administrative expertise-whose interactions that adhere to good governance principles are the primary focus of this study.

Trustworthiness and Validity

The study employed triangulation across different data collection methods (interviews, surveys, questionnaires, and documents) to enhance trustworthiness. Member checking and cross-validation of sources further strengthened the credibility of the results. Reliability was ensured through consistency checks for quantitative data, while qualitative rigour was maintained through clear audit trails in the coding process. Elected and appointed officials were anonymised using EO and AO codes to ensure confidentiality and protect participants' identities.

Limitations of the Study

Although this study employed a mixed-methods design with a sample size of 51 respondents, several limitations are acknowledged. First, the relatively small sample size limits the extent to which quantitative findings can be generalised beyond the specific case of the DART project. While purposive and convenience sampling ensured respondents had relevant institutional roles, it also introduced potential selection bias, as perspectives from broader citizen groups or excluded stakeholders were not systematically captured (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017).

Second, the study's quantitative dimension was descriptive, relying on mean scores and frequency distributions rather than advanced statistical modelling. This limited the ability to test causal relationships or uncover deeper patterns across governance variables. The quantitative component primarily illustrated trends, while the qualitative data provided richer explanations.

Third, the integration of qualitative and quantitative strands, while enhancing triangulation, also posed challenges. The reliance on key informant interviews and focus group discussions may have introduced anecdotal dominance, where individual voices shaped

interpretations more than broader thematic consolidation. This reflects the common challenge in mixed-method designs of balancing depth with representativeness (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010).

Results and Discussion

The Nature of Interactions between Political and Administrative Actors

The study examined how political and administrative actors interact in implementing and managing public projects. Out of the 51 respondents, the majority, 62% (n = 32), acknowledged that interaction between the two groups was inevitable and occurred frequently in decision-making processes at various stages of the project life cycle. However, the nature of these interactions varied in tone and effect. Administrative officials, 28% (n = 14), reported that while collaboration sometimes facilitated joint problem-solving and resource allocation, political actors often interfered with technical decisions, particularly in areas related to procurement, staffing, and contract awards. Elected officials, 10% (n = 5), argued that such interventions were necessary to ensure accountability to their constituencies.

The findings of this study resonate with existing secondary evidence documenting the complexities of political–administrative interactions in Tanzania's public projects. For instance, the Controller and Auditor General (CAG) reports (2019–2023) consistently highlight cases where political directives influenced procurement and contract management in infrastructure projects, often undermining the technical decisions of administrative officials. Similarly, a World Bank (2017) evaluation of the Dar es Salaam Rapid Transit (DART) system observed that political influence over procurement and staffing slowed implementation timelines and created conflicts between elected officials and technocrats. These observations mirror the views of administrative respondents in this study who reported frequent political interference in technical domains. Conversely, evidence from Parliamentary Hansard debates shows that elected representatives often justified such interventions as necessary for ensuring accountability to citizens, aligning with the claims of elected officials in this study. Broader governance analyses, such as those by Tidemand and Msami (2010) and REPOA (2018), further reinforce that the Tanzanian governance is characterised by a persistent struggle to balance political oversight with bureaucratic autonomy. This convergence between primary and secondary evidence emphasises that the tension observed in DART reflects a systemic feature of Tanzania's governance structure rather than an isolated occurrence.

Qualitative data reinforced these findings. Administrative officials frequently reported that elected officials interfered in technical decisions, particularly in procurement, route planning, and project prioritisation. One respondent noted (AO-8):

“Political leaders often push for decisions that align with party or electoral interests, even when such choices go against technical recommendations.”

Conversely, some elected officials argued that their interventions were necessary to ensure responsiveness to public concerns and to legitimise the project. The mixed evidence suggests that politics–administration interactions in the DART project fall along a continuum between cooperation and domination. The interference patterns reflect the principal–agent problem, where political actors (principals) exert control over administrative actors (agents), sometimes undermining efficiency. At the same time, collaborative instances point to the network governance model, where interdependence between political legitimacy and administrative expertise enhances project outcomes.

These findings resonate with earlier works by Guo (2019) and Njunwa (2020), who observed similar tensions in African governance systems. In the DART case, while politics provides legitimacy and resources, excessive intrusion disrupts administrative professionalism. Thus, the nature of interactions is ambivalent, capable of enabling or constraining effective project management.

These findings also align with Gulick and Urwick's POSDCORB model, which emphasises the need for specialisation in administrative tasks, but also reflects political-administrative dichotomy theory, which posits tension when political oversight extends into administrative autonomy. The results suggest that although interactions are necessary, unclear boundaries compromise efficiency and undermine the principle of neutrality in public administration.

Awareness and Compliance with Good Governance Principles

Awareness and adherence to good governance principles are critical factors influencing the effective implementation and management of projects. The Dar es Salaam Rapid Transit (DART) system, initiated under the President's Office–Regional Administration and Local Government (PO-RALG), aims to improve urban mobility and service delivery. Interviews and focus group discussions conducted between November 2022 and March 2023 revealed that political and administrative actors in Ilala, Temeke, Ubungo, and Kinondoni municipalities demonstrated high awareness of principles such as transparency, accountability, participation, rule of law, responsiveness, due diligence, and impartiality.

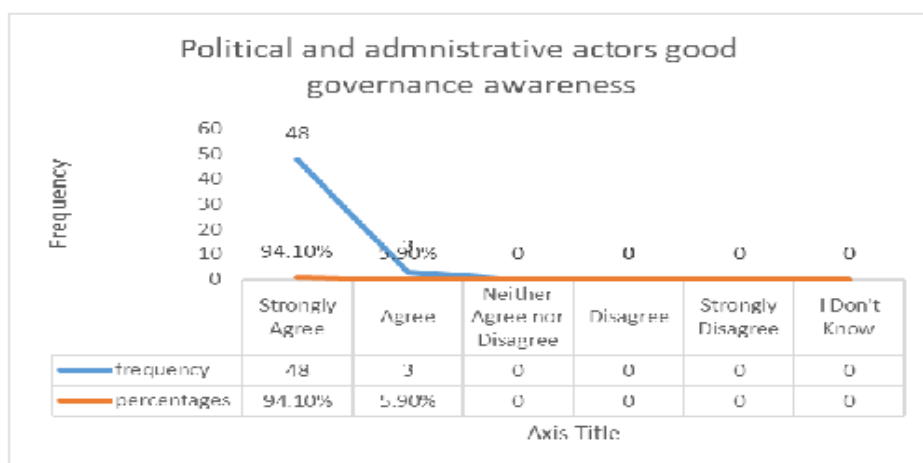


Figure 2. Awareness of Good Governance Principles Among Political and Administrative Actors

Source: Compiled by the author based on data for the year 2023

The study revealed that participants demonstrated a high level of awareness regarding good governance principles, with 94.1% strongly agreeing on their importance. This awareness reflects the influence of educational initiatives, training programs, media coverage, and advocacy efforts, highlighting a growing recognition of governance principles as critical for accountability, transparency, and effectiveness in public administration. Only 5.9% of respondents agreed rather than strongly agreed, suggesting minor variations in perception due to differing interpretations of governance concepts or scepticism about their practical implementation. Notably, no respondents indicated neutrality, disagreement, or lack of knowledge, reflecting a strong consensus on the relevance of good governance principles.

Key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) provided deeper insights into how these principles are applied in practice. Respondents from the DART Agency and TANIROAD operation department reported that while technocrats systematically adhered to technical expertise, political interests occasionally undermined this adherence. For instance, a feasibility study for the BRT bus terminal and depot at Jangwani recommended relocation due to flooding risks; however, political negotiations and contractor agreements led to decisions that disregarded these technical recommendations, resulting in flooding and damage to facilities. Instances of unethical practices, such as corruption and forgery, were also reported, indicating partial non-compliance with governance principles (AO-02 Regional administration official, March 2023).

FGD participants in Kinondoni, Ubungu, and Ilala highlighted further challenges, arguing that project mismanagement was exacerbated by officials' negligence and lack of transparency, as demonstrated during flood events when buses and facilities were left

unattended. Respondents criticised management for prioritising personal allowances over project responsibilities and noted irregular financial practices, such as issuing illegal electronic fiscal device (EFD) receipts (EO-22, March 2023). These observations were corroborated by a Mwananchi Newspaper report, which documented the suspension of DART's finance director and the agency's chief executive director due to failure to oversee services and ensure accountability (Mwananchi Newspaper, 2022).

Elected officials, mandated by the public, play a critical role in ensuring transparency and accountability, yet political motivations can influence their actions (Kjaer, 2004). Appointed officials, tasked with technical project management, may fail to implement governance principles, resulting in decisions that are disconnected from public needs (Mulgan, 2000). Enhancing awareness among both groups of actors is essential to foster public trust, citizen participation, and project effectiveness (Fukuyama, 2013; Bovaird & Loeffler, 2012).

Compliance was inconsistent, often shaped by political influence, party interests, and individual agendas. For example, an official from Kinondoni noted that while decisions generally followed laws and regulations, directives from higher authorities sometimes required actions favouring party interests over organisational or public welfare (EO-05, October 14, 2022). Similarly, a TANROAD official (AO-11, November 2022) cited the construction of a bus terminal in Jangwani, which proceeded despite technical advice from urban planning experts due to political intervention by higher authorities, demonstrating how political considerations compromise good governance practices.

Some respondents argued that strict adherence to governance principles could slow down urgent projects, suggesting that a pragmatic balance between efficiency and compliance may be necessary. Nonetheless, high-level oversight, exemplified by Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa's visit to the DART Agency on April 19, 2021, emphasised the need for accountability and responsiveness in addressing public complaints about poor service quality. This intervention highlighted the role of government oversight in promoting adherence to governance principles and restoring public trust. Adherence to good governance principles was found to be partial and inconsistent.

Extent of Adherence to Good Governance Principles

Quantitative data on adherence to good governance principles (Table 2.0) indicated that respondents reported moderate compliance with transparency (mean = 3.8) and responsiveness (mean = 3.4). In contrast, accountability (mean = 2.9) and participation (mean = 2.6) were rated lower, reflecting partial adherence. 61% of the 51 respondents perceived good governance principles as partially adhered to, 25% considered compliance satisfactory, and 14% reported outright violations. Administrative officials highlighted challenges in transparency, particularly concerning budget allocations and contract awarding, where political actors

occasionally exerted influence. Similarly, 71% of elected officials acknowledged that community participation was often symbolic rather than substantive, with decisions being made at higher levels and subsequently presented as consultations.

Table 2. Perceived Adherence to Good Governance Principles (n = 51)

Principle	Mean Score	Level of Compliance
Transparency	3.8	Moderate–High
Accountability	2.9	Low–Moderate
Rule of Law	3.1	Moderate
Participation	2.6	Low
Responsiveness	3.4	Moderate

Source: Data collected from 51 respondents using surveys and interviews for the year 2023

The findings in Table 2.0 reveal mixed levels of adherence to good governance principles, carrying important implications for project implementation and management. Transparency scored highest (Mean = 3.8), suggesting a relatively strong culture of information disclosure. However, this strength may be more procedural than substantive, as earlier studies show that transparency in Tanzania often lacks depth when citizens cannot effectively utilise disclosed information for accountability purposes (Fukuyama, 2013; World Bank, 2017), without institutionalised mechanisms for access and utilisation, transparency risks being superficial.

Quantitative data on perceived compliance with good governance principles among the 51 respondents revealed that accountability (Mean = 2.9) and participation (Mean = 2.6) scored the lowest, indicating persistent governance challenges within the DART project. Weak accountability reflects a context in which political and administrative actors face limited sanctions for misconduct, creating opportunities for rent-seeking, inefficiency, and mismanagement (Kelsall, 2002; Hyden, 2013). Similarly, low participation underscores a predominantly top-down decision-making process, where community involvement is largely symbolic. This finding aligns with Ribot (2004) and Cornwall (2008), who argue that citizen participation in African governance is often orchestrated to confer legitimacy rather than to empower communities meaningfully. The lack of downward accountability erodes public trust and undermines the perceived legitimacy of development projects.

Moderate adherence to the rule of law (Mean = 3.1) suggests that legal and regulatory frameworks exist but are inconsistently enforced, often leaving room for selective application influenced by political considerations. Such selective enforcement has been documented in Tanzanian public administration, where institutional rules are applied unevenly across different actors (Mutahaba, 2012). Likewise, moderate responsiveness (Mean = 3.4) reflects some efforts by officials to address public concerns; however, these efforts often fall short in terms of timeliness and reliability. Studies on service delivery in sub-Saharan Africa indicate that

responsiveness without robust accountability mechanisms tends to result in short-term, politically motivated solutions rather than sustainable improvements (Grindle, 2004).

The results imply that transparency and responsiveness show relative strength, persistent weaknesses in accountability, participation, and rule of law represent serious governance deficits. These deficiencies limit the sustainability of DART Agency projects and threaten broader institutional legitimacy. Therefore, strengthening citizen oversight, institutional checks, and consistent enforcement of governance norms is imperative to bridge the gap between policy design and effective implementation (Bovaird & Löffler, 2012; OECD, 2019).

Focus group discussions and key informant interviews further contextualised these results. Officials noted that deviations from governance principles often occurred due to political or personal interests, which could override technical advice or established procedures (FGD, Ilala EO-46, February 23, 2023; EO-40, Kinondoni, February 23, 2023; EO-42, Temeke, March 25, 2023). For example, although technical recommendations, such as those concerning infrastructure risks at Jangwani Depot, were made based on feasibility studies, political negotiations and contractor agreements sometimes led to decisions that disregarded these recommendations, resulting in adverse project outcomes.

Collectively, these findings imply that while there is awareness and partial adherence to transparency, accountability, and the rule of law, political influence and personal interest remain significant barriers. Adherence to these principles fosters public trust, improves project efficiency, and ensures responsible management of resources, whereas lapses compromise project outcomes and citizen confidence. The evidence highlights the need for strengthened institutional frameworks, regular audits, ethical training, and robust enforcement mechanisms to ensure that governance principles are recognised and consistently practised in project implementation and management.

Secondary data corroborate the study's findings on the perceived adherence to good governance principles in the Dar es Salaam Rapid Transit (DART) project. Audits by the Controller and Auditor General (CAG) between 2017 and 2019 highlighted weaknesses in DART Agency's financial management, including contracts awarded without competitive bidding and incomplete financial records, which undermined transparency and accountability (CAG, 2018). Investigations by the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB) revealed attempts by officials to manipulate tender processes for personal advantage. However, corrective measures were later implemented to improve oversight (PCCB Report, 2018). During Phase 1 of the BRT system, transparency and accountability mechanisms, including public reporting and performance audits, enhanced compliance, demonstrating that proper governance controls can mitigate risks (World Bank, 2020).

The World Bank's Implementation Status & Results Report (2024) indicates moderate fiduciary performance, with procurement and financial management rated as "Moderate" and

Substantial," respectively, highlighting concerns over transparency and accountability in project implementation (World Bank, 2024). Similarly, the National Audit Office's Audit Report for DART (2024) underlines financial oversight and procurement process financial oversight and procurement process issues, aligning with respondents' perceptions of low accountability (National Audit Office, 2024). Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (2024) ranks Tanzania 82nd out of 180 countries, scoring 41 out of 100, reflecting persistent challenges in public sector corruption that may influence governance practices in projects like DART (Transparency International, 2024). Moreover, the World Bank (2024) notes that 71% of elected officials admitted that community participation was often symbolic rather than substantive, with decisions being made at higher levels and later presented as consultations, corroborating the study's findings on low participation. These secondary sources provide a broader context for the study's primary data, reinforcing the identified gaps in governance within the DART project.

This resonates with UNDP's (1997) framework of good governance, which emphasises the integration of transparency and accountability. The findings also echo insights from Agency Theory, which highlights the potential for misalignment of interests between "principals" (citizens represented by politicians) and "agents" (administrators)—weak institutional safeguards limited adherence to governance standards, indicating the need for reforms to strengthen compliance.

Qualitative evidence revealed that transparency was enhanced through procurement reports and public announcements, but accountability mechanisms were often weakened due to political shielding of administrative decisions. Participation of stakeholders was limited, with one administrator stating:

“Community consultations are conducted formally, but decisions often reflect political priorities rather than citizens' inputs.”

These results suggest that compliance is selective and often ceremonial while governance frameworks exist. Transparency and responsiveness show moderate achievement, but accountability and participation remain weak. This reflects Institutional Theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), where organisations adopt formal structures to appear legitimate but fail to operationalise them fully.

The inconsistent adherence also echoes critiques of the good governance agenda (Grindle, 2004), showing a gap between normative ideals and contextual realities in developing countries. In the DART project, political dominance and weak enforcement structures dilute adherence, leading to governance practices that are more symbolic than substantive.

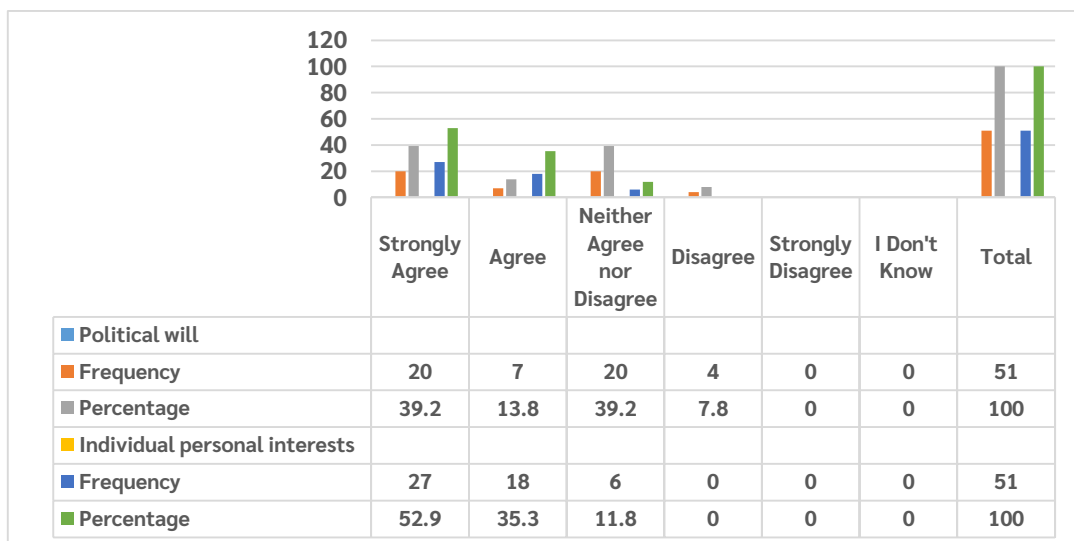


Figure 3. Non-Compliance with Good Governance Principles

Source: Compiled by author based on data for the year 2023

Figure 3.0 shows that a significant portion of respondents (39.2%) strongly agree that political will is a barrier to compliance with good governance principles, while 13.8% agree. The high percentage of respondents indicating political will as a barrier to compliance suggests political leaders' perceived lack of commitment or prioritisation to uphold good governance principles. This stems from competing political priorities, vested interests, or a reluctance to relinquish power and control over decision-making processes. On the other hand, a majority of respondents (52.9%) strongly agree, and an additional 35.3% agree that individual personal interests are a barrier to compliance with good governance principles. The high level of agreement with the statement suggests that personal interests, such as self-interest, nepotism, or corruption, significantly hinder compliance with governance principles. This reflects concerns about rent-seeking behaviour, patronage networks, and vested interests within the political and administrative elite, undermining efforts to promote transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct. The data shows no responses in the Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, or I Do Not Know " categories, indicating that none of the respondents expressed these sentiments. The absence of responses in these categories suggests a strong consensus among respondents regarding the perceived barriers to compliance with good governance principles. It indicates a shared understanding of the challenges posed by political will and individual personal interests in promoting good governance practices, with slight variation in opinion or uncertainty among participants.

Secondary data from reports and news articles reinforce these findings. For example, the construction of the Jangwani bus terminal proceeded despite expert warnings about flooding risks, illustrating the influence of political authority over technical recommendations

(TANROAD, 2022). Moreover, official reports on DART operations highlight recurring service quality issues, reinforcing the importance of accountability and responsiveness in ensuring efficient service delivery (Majaliwa, 2021). Collectively, these secondary sources corroborate the primary data, emphasising the complex interplay between political directives and administrative compliance in governance and project management.

The findings reveal that adherence to good governance principles in the DART project was uneven, with notable gaps in accountability and participation. Administrative officials (n=22) consistently emphasised that political influence in procurement and budget allocation weakened accountability mechanisms, a pattern also reported in earlier audits (CAG, 2018). As one district executive director explained, “Sometimes contracts are awarded not for merit, but because of political pressure.”

While this highlights the lived experience of officials, it also reflects a broader systemic challenge in aligning institutional procedures with governance ideals. In contrast, elected officials (n=14) acknowledged the importance of community participation but admitted that consultation often remained symbolic rather than substantive. One councillor candidly noted, “We are told to consult communities, but decisions are already made from above.”

This sentiment aligns with survey findings showing low participation scores (mean = 2.6), reinforcing the perception that bottom-up involvement was largely procedural.

By synthesising these perspectives, a clear divergence emerges: administrative actors primarily viewed political interference as undermining technical processes, whereas elected officials justified their role in safeguarding political legitimacy, even if it compromised participatory governance. These findings suggest that the tension between political oversight and administrative autonomy continues to shape project implementation, revealing both institutional constraints and governance weaknesses (Scott, 2014; Hyden, 2017).

Table 3. Political and Administrative Actors’ Adherence to Transparency, Accountability, and the Rule of Law

Adherence to Transparency, Accountability, and the Rule of Law	Always	Most of the Time	Frequently	Rarely	Never	I Don't Know	Total
Frequency	16	22	12	1	0	0	51
Percentage	31.4	43.1	23.5	2.0	0	0	100

Source: Compiled by author based on data for the year 2023

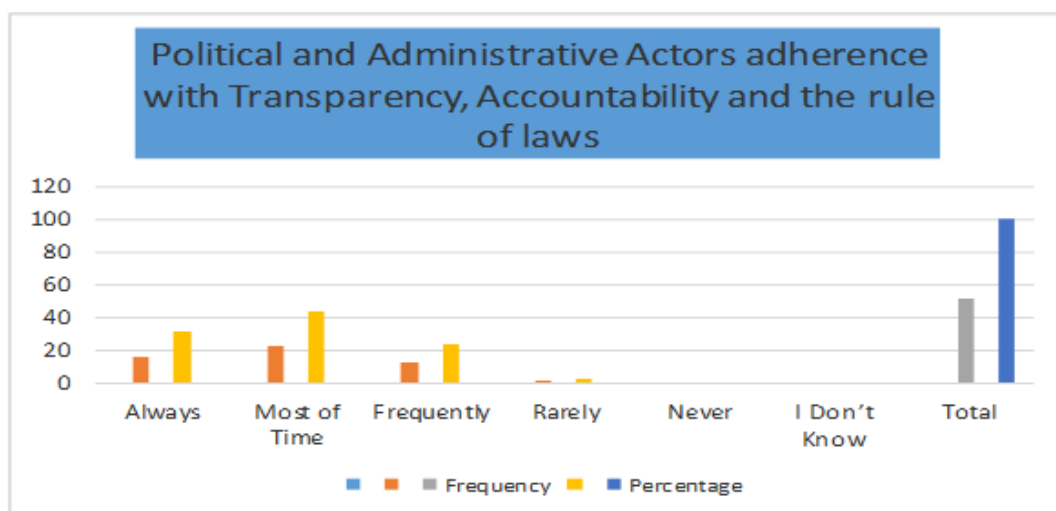


Figure 4. Political and Administrative Actors Adhering to Transparency, Accountability, and the Rule of Law

Source: Compiled by author based on data for the year 2023

The results indicate that most respondents (74.5%) reported adherence to transparency, accountability, and the rule of law either always (31.4%) or most of the time (43.1%). This reflects a generally positive trend and demonstrates a strong commitment among political and administrative actors to good governance principles. However, about one-quarter of respondents (25.5%) admitted only occasional adherence, highlighting persistent gaps undermining consistent compliance.

High levels of transparency and accountability were crucial for building public trust, improving decision-making, and reducing corruption and mismanagement. Respondents emphasised the value of transparent decision-making processes, which allow for fairness, diverse perspectives, and greater public participation. Accountability mechanisms, such as audits and oversight, were also noted as vital deterrents against corruption. Institutional barriers, resource constraints, and bureaucratic inefficiencies hinder full compliance.

The findings further reveal that poor adherence to these principles often led to governance failures. The Jangwani bus terminal project case illustrates this point: political influence and weak accountability led to poor site selection in flood-prone areas, mismanagement of funds, and corruption through forged receipts. These outcomes highlight the consequences of prioritising political mileage and personal administrative interests over sound governance practices.

Interactions between elected and appointed officials were also marked by mistrust and self-interest, limiting transparency and accountability. Instead of fostering cooperation and

interdependence, as emphasised in politicised interaction models, their engagement was often antagonistic, leading to poor decision-making outcomes.

Challenges Hindering Compliance with Good Governance Principles

The third research objective sought to identify the challenges hindering compliance with good governance principles by political and administrative actors in the DART system. Based on the responses from 51 participants, the findings revealed that while the majority of actors recognised the importance of good governance, actual compliance was hindered by a combination of structural, political, and institutional barriers.

Quantitative data show that accountability (mean = 2.9) and participation (mean = 2.6) scored lowest, reflecting weak enforcement mechanisms and limited citizen engagement in decision-making. These findings suggest that while policies exist to promote accountability and inclusion, in practice, sanctions for misconduct are rarely enforced, and public involvement remains tokenistic. Transparency (mean = 3.8) scored relatively higher, pointing to some progress in promoting openness in resource allocation and reporting. Meanwhile, responsiveness (mean = 3.4) and rule of law (mean = 3.1) were moderate, highlighting inconsistencies in service delivery and selective application of legal frameworks.

When asked about overall adherence, 61% of respondents stated that governance principles were only partially observed, 25% considered them satisfactory, and 14% reported outright violations. This highlights a gap between formal governance ideals and the reality of practice.

From a qualitative perspective, interviews revealed that political interference in procurement decisions, limited institutional capacity, and self-interest among officials were recurring challenges. For example, respondents cited instances where contracts were awarded based on political patronage rather than merit, echoing findings from the CAG reports (2018, 2020). Similarly, weak monitoring systems allowed administrative officials to bypass accountability mechanisms, while community participation was often orchestrated for legitimacy rather than genuine empowerment.

These findings align with Institutional Theory (Scott, 2014), which argues that organisational behaviour is shaped not only by formal rules but also by informal norms, political pressures, and cultural expectations. While Tanzanian governance frameworks mandate competitive procurement and public participation, the institutional environment enables informal practices undermining compliance, such as patronage politics and selective rule enforcement. Thus, despite strong institutional frameworks on paper, political will and entrenched bureaucratic culture determine how governance principles are applied in practice.

Table 4. Perceived Challenges to Good Governance Compliance (n = 51)

Governance Principle	Mean Score	Level of Compliance	Key Challenge Identified (Qualitative)
Accountability	2.9	Weak	Limited sanctions for misconduct; rent-seeking
Participation	2.6	Weak	Tokenistic involvement; elite dominance
Transparency	3.8	Relatively strong	Partial disclosure; selective openness
Responsiveness	3.4	Moderate	Delays; politically motivated responses
Rule of Law	3.1	Moderate	Selective enforcement; political influence

Source: Data generated from 51 respondents based on the challenge with adherence to good governance principles, 2023

The evidence suggests that compliance with good governance principles is hindered by formal weaknesses (weak enforcement, limited capacity) and informal practices (political patronage, self-interest). Institutional theory helps explain these dynamics: formal rules exist but are often overridden by entrenched political and administrative practices. The gap between policy and practice reflects how institutional pressures, both formal and informal, shape actors' behaviour, sometimes diluting the intended outcomes of governance reforms.

Qualitative evidence provided deeper insights into the challenges hindering compliance with good governance principles. Focus group discussions in Ubungo and Ilala revealed widespread concerns over symbolic participation, where communities were invited to meetings but denied meaningful influence over decisions (EO-22, March 2023). This tokenism undermined inclusivity and reinforced citizen disillusionment with governance processes. Administrative officials further highlighted political interference in technical decisions, notably the siting of the Jangwani terminal and depot despite feasibility studies warning of recurrent flooding risks (AO-02, March 2023). Such cases exemplify how political dominance over technical expertise weakens adherence to the rule of law and limits responsiveness to long-term community needs.

Corruption and weak accountability mechanisms also emerged as central challenges. FGD participants alleged that some officials prioritised personal benefits, such as allowances, over project supervision, while others were implicated in the illegal issuance of EFD receipts. These practices diverted resources, weakened public trust, and reduced the legitimacy of governance structures. Secondary sources corroborated these concerns: Mwananchi Newspaper (2022) reported the suspension of DART's finance director and the referral of its chief executive over financial mismanagement and lack of accountability. These findings reflect Mulgan's (2000) observation that accountability remains an *"ever-expanding yet fragile"* principle in bureaucratic systems, often undermined by informal practices.

A further challenge was limited institutional capacity. Despite governance frameworks, enforcement remained inconsistent due to weak monitoring systems, overlapping mandates, and resource constraints. As Fukuyama (2013) notes, institutional weakness reduces the ability

of states to enforce compliance, especially in transitional democracies. Additionally, donor-funded projects such as DART often include governance conditionalities, yet inadequate domestic enforcement risks non-compliance and threatens future funding (Bovaird & Loeffler, 2012).

The interplay between political and administrative actors reflects Kjaer's (2004) argument that governance outcomes are shaped by negotiating power among actors. In the DART case, elected officials pursued political visibility through rapid implementation, while administrative officials sought to uphold technical standards. This tension often resulted in compromises that sidelined governance principles, contributing to inefficiencies, corruption, and project delays. These findings are consistent with Hope (2009), who highlights how political interference and weak accountability undermine public project performance across sub-Saharan Africa.

In sum, the challenges hindering compliance with good governance principles in the DART project included political interference, symbolic participation, corruption, weak accountability, and limited institutional capacity. Institutional Theory (Scott, 2014) helps explain these patterns by showing how formal governance frameworks coexist with informal political norms constraining enforcement. Therefore, strengthening governance requires legal and structural reforms, such as clearer accountability frameworks, stronger monitoring, and behavioural shifts among political and administrative actors to reconcile technical expertise with transparency, participation, and accountability principles.

Implications

The findings of this study can be applied in actionable practice by informing policy reforms, institutional strengthening, and capacity-building initiatives aimed at improving project implementation and management in Tanzania. For example, the evidence that political will and personal interests often undermine compliance with good governance principles suggests stricter enforcement mechanisms, such as independent oversight bodies and regular audits, to ensure accountability. Additionally, the demonstrated awareness of governance principles among elected and appointed officials indicates that targeted training programs, scenario-based workshops, and ethical leadership development can translate this awareness into consistent compliance. Furthermore, practical application requires embedding governance principles into project design and implementation frameworks, ensuring that transparency, accountability, and adherence to the rule of law are understood and systematically monitored throughout the project cycle. Finally, the findings highlight the importance of balancing governance compliance with efficiency by developing practical guidelines that safeguard against bureaucratic hurdles while promoting ethical conduct and effective resource use. These

actionable strategies provide a pathway for translating the study's insights into measurable governance and project outcomes improvements.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the authors conclude that, while both elected and appointed officials in Tanzania demonstrate significant awareness of good governance principles (e.g., transparency, accountability, the rule of law, etc.), political will, personal interests, and weak institutional frameworks often undermine compliance. Although awareness has been strengthened through training, policy advocacy, and increasing public scrutiny, inconsistent adherence has resulted in inefficiencies, corruption, and poor project outcomes, as evidenced by the DART Agency System designed to operate the BRT system project experiences in Dar es Salaam. Political interference has sometimes overridden technical expertise, while administrative officials have occasionally engaged in unethical practices, weakening accountability and public trust. This gap between awareness and practice demonstrates that good governance in project implementation is not merely a matter of knowledge but also of political commitment, institutional enforcement, and ethical conduct.

The authors recommend further research into the dynamics of political-administrative interactions in Tanzania, particularly comparative studies across different sectors beyond transport. Expanding the scope to include rural-based projects and other strategic institutions could enrich academic understanding of governance practices in diverse contexts.

Practically, the study calls for strengthening institutional frameworks that uphold accountability, transparency, and impartiality in project management. Oversight systems should be reinforced, and auditing and regulatory institutions must be empowered to operate independently of political influence. Regular training and capacity-building programs for elected and appointed officials should focus on aligning governance principles with operational efficiency. Establishing mechanisms for public reporting, citizen engagement in monitoring, and strict enforcement of sanctions against malpractice will enhance compliance. Furthermore, fostering a culture of integrity through ethical leadership and a zero-tolerance stance on corruption is critical for restoring public trust and ensuring sustainable project delivery.

This study contributes uniquely to the body of knowledge on governance and public administration in Tanzania by examining the interactions between political and administrative actors in implementing and managing development projects through the lens of good governance principles. While previous studies have largely analysed political-administrative relations in general, this research focuses on project-level dynamics, where conflicts, collaboration, and compliance with governance principles have tangible effects on project implementation and management. The originality of this research also lies in its integration of governance theories with empirical evidence from Tanzania's project management context,

thereby extending theoretical debates on accountability, transparency, participation, and rule of law into practical applications. Furthermore, by highlighting the lived experiences of elected and appointed officials, this study generated context-specific insights relevant for strengthening governance frameworks in developing countries.

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