

Assessment of Leaders' Adherence to Public Leadership Code of Ethics in Promoting Good Governance in the Local Government Authorities: Case Study of Kinondoni Municipality – Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

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Abstract— The Public Leadership Code of Ethics Act No. 13 of 1995 was established in Tanzania's public sector, including local government authorities (LGAs), to promote ethical conduct among public leaders. However, leadership scandals, such as corruption and fraud, remain frequently reported in media, literature, and government reports concerning LGAs. This study sought to assess leaders' adherence to the public leadership code of ethics in promoting good governance within the Kinondoni Municipality. The study was guided by an interpretivist epistemology and employed a qualitative design. A total of 85 participants, including leaders and ordinary citizens, were selected using convenience and purposive sampling techniques. Data were collected through interviews, focus group discussions, and document reviews, and were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings indicate that adherence to the code of ethics among local government leaders was low, as many were found to be unethical and pursued personal interests. The study recommends that the government collaborate with relevant stakeholders to implement necessary reforms. Furthermore, ethics education should be integrated from the family level through university education to address the inadequacy of social and administrative ethics.

Keywords: Public Leadership; Code of Ethics; Good Governance; Local Government.

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INTRODUCTION

The issue of ethics is a historical and global concern that permeates various spheres of governance. Ethical problems date back to ancient philosophy, which aimed to shape human behavior in the context of communal life. Ethics establishes obligatory rules for social conduct. Aristotle et al. (2014) contend that rational human beings can learn and acquire ethics from society to ensure its harmony and well-being.

Globally, Choi (2023), in a study of over forty countries, found that reports of unethical conduct have risen in public sectors. Governance literature identifies ethical failure as a significant obstacle to good governance. A study by Mbaku (2008), cited by Ikeke (2024:34), opines that “many African countries lack ethical leadership committed to good governance; rather, they are opportunistic and kleptomaniac.” Other studies (Enreweonye et al., 2015; BTI, 2024; Masenya, 2024) regard unethical leadership as a cancer, an impediment, and a major problem for achieving good governance. Their studies call for a critical need for ethical leadership to promote good governance.

Studies on governance, particularly within local government authorities (LGAs), identify ethical problems as a barrier to realizing good governance and quality public service delivery. For this reason, Rawat (2024) established that “the call for ethical and accountable leadership in local government is stronger than ever.” In Tanzania, specifically in LGAs, studies by Lameck (2022), BTI (2024), and Mtasigazyza (2024) identified unethical conduct as a pervasive problem among public leaders that needs to be addressed. Several studies (e.g., Doung et al., 2020; Makayasa et al., 2020; Roque et al., 2020; Lameck, 2022) identify and stress the importance and effectiveness of a code of ethics in promoting good governance.

Recognizing its importance, Tanzania introduced a code of ethics to promote good governance in public leadership, establishing legal parameters to control public leaders' ethical behavior. The Public Leadership Code of Ethics Act No. 13 of 1995 was instituted for this purpose across the public sector, including LGAs. However, leadership scandals, such as corruption and fraud, continue to dominate media reports, literature, and government publications concerning LGAs. This study, therefore, sought to assess the role of the public leadership code of ethics in promoting good governance within the local government authorities of Kinondoni Municipality, with a particular focus on the aspect of adherence.

BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review indicates two mainstream scholarly perspectives regarding the effectiveness of leadership codes of ethics. The first stream of scholars advocates an “Opportunism Constraining” view; such scholars include Doung et al. (2020), Makayasa et al. (2020), Roque et al. (2020), Sudrajat (2023), and Rawat (2024). These scholars argue that a code of ethics is an effective instrument for fostering ethical leadership, reducing

managerial opportunism, fraud, and corruption, and promoting effective organizational performance. Their research attests that a leadership code of ethics positively affects leaders' organizational commitment and moral empowerment, thereby promoting good governance.

Contrary to this, the second stream of scholars subscribes to a "Window Dressing" theory; these include Pappa et al. (2023) and Ambrozy (2023). They argue that a code of ethics has no positive impact on organizations, positing no relationship between such a code and commitment, effective performance, or good governance. Furthermore, they contend that a code of ethics can endanger an organization and stifle employees' moral intuition.

In Africa, a code of ethics as a leadership requirement is not a foreign concept. African ethics shapes and guides individuals to be concerned with improving the quality of societal well-being. As Mertz (2013b, 2017) notes, the African sense of communion is a product of ethics, which underpins the sense of togetherness and cooperation among Africans. Undeniably, good character and the common good are essential elements of African ethics for promoting societal welfare. The sense of communion is central to African ethics. Adewale (2020:751) points out that African society operates under the Ubuntu philosophy, which implies "humanity" and is often translated as "I am because we are." Like ancient ethics, African ethics guides a person to be concerned with improving the quality of societal well-being.

In Tanzania, the need for a public code of ethics in leadership has been an important aspect of its development agenda since the articulation of the country's development vision in the 1967 Arusha Declaration (Nyerere, 1967). In the declaration, Nyerere insisted on the need for leaders to behave in a manner that would set an example for the people to emulate.

A study by Mpambije (2016) shows that in the early post-independence period, adherence to the leadership code of ethics was higher at both the central and local government levels in Tanzania. However, as Mpambije opines, from the 1990s onward, violations of the leadership code of ethics became serious, manifesting primarily as corruption. Mpambije (2016) attributes this to the effects of neoliberalism ushered in by the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) reforms of the 1990s.

To address this ethical deficit in public leadership, the Government of Tanzania instituted several measures, including the Public Leadership Code of Ethics Act No. 13 of 1995 [Cap 398 R.E. 2020]. This code sets out standards of behavior and ethical principles for public leaders to adhere to, including honesty, responsibility, and accountability. Leaders are also required to observe the rule of law and exercise impartiality, compassion, sobriety, and continence in carrying out their responsibilities to promote good governance. Similarly, Article 132 of the Constitution of the United

Republic of Tanzania established an Ethics Secretariat as a supervisory body to oversee the implementation of the code.

Additionally, in 2016, Tanzania established the Economic, Corruption and Organized Crime Department at the High Court to curb corruption and fraud. The purpose was to guarantee stronger adherence to the leadership code of ethics, fight embezzlement, and promote good governance (Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index, 2022).

Despite these government initiatives, various reports and studies from within and outside the country indicate that the leadership code of ethics has yet to be effectively adhered to. For instance, BTI (2022; 2024), Ikeke (2024), Masenya (2024), and Rawat (2024) highlight the persistence of corruption and a lack of good governance at all administrative levels. Unethical tendencies in Tanzania are also cited by Mbashiru (2022), Kamangi (2022), Muchunguzi (2023), and Mtasigazya (2024). Against this background, this study sought to assess leaders' adherence to the public leadership code of ethics in promoting good governance in Kinondoni Municipality, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

METHODOLOGY

This study's main *assesses the public leadership code of ethics in promoting good governance in the local government authorities in Kinondoni Municipality, with a particular focus on the aspect of adherence.* The subsections that follow detail the methodology aspects which were focused on from data collection to data analysis.

Profile of participants

The study used 85 participants; thirty-three (33) local government leaders serving in different capacities as indicated in (Table 1) were purposefully selected, three (3) retirees from public administration who were conveniently selected, six (6) religious leaders from Moslem and Christian communities who were purposefully selected, and forty-three (43) citizens were purposefully selected from Kinondoni Municipality. This gave a total of eighty-five (85) key informant interviewees as presented in Table 3:1.

Table 3.1: Participants of the Study

S/N	Participants	Sample	Methods
1	Local government leaders	33	Interview
2	Public Administration retirees	3	Interview
3	Religious leaders	6	Interview
4	Ordinary citizens	13	Interview
	Other citizens	30	FGDs
	Total	85	

As indicated in Table 3: 1, the study used a sample of eighty-five (85) participants, specifically thirty-three (33) (38.8%) local government leaders serving in different capacities, three (3) (3.5%) retirees from public administration, six (6) (7.1%) religious leaders, and Forty-three (43) (50.6%) ordinary citizens making a total of 85 participants.

Research design

This study applied a case study design. The choice of this design was motivated by the need to meet advantages of this design whereby the researcher intended to an in-depth analysis on the assessment of LG leaders' adherence to code of ethics in Kinondoni Municipal Council. Second, Yin (2014), as cited in Creswell and Creswell (2018), holds that a case study is bound by time and activity and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures.

Methods for data collection

This study used mixed methods approach. According to Creswell (2014) the common methods for data collection in this kind of studies include, interview, examination of existing documents, and participant observations. This study was qualitative in nature and collected data through interview and focus group discussion (FGD). Yin (2014) recommends for the use of multiple methods for data collection to achieve dependability and credibility of the study findings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The general objective of this study was to assess leaders' adherence to the public leadership code of ethics in promoting good governance in the LGAs in Kinondoni Municipality – Dar es Salaam Tanzania. To achieve this objective, the study had to focus on eight (8) basic principles from Public Leadership Code of Ethics Act No 13 of 1995 [CAP. 398 R.E. 2020] to determine if local government leaders observe them when discharging their duties. These principles are honesty, accountability, and responsiveness, respect of the rule of law, impartiality, compassion, sobriety, and continence as discussed in the subsection that follow.

Adherence to Honesty

Through interview, LG leaders were asked to demonstrate if they were aware on the importance of being honest in leadership as the means for promoting good governance. It was revealed during the interviews with LG leaders that LG leaders were aware that honesty is needed for a leader to deliver justice, administer and interpret the law fairly, and build trust among those he/she leads. Respondents from LG leaders' category

responded that public leaders should be honest. Further, it was revealed that honesty is very important for the provision of better public service without corruption. It was further revealed that honest leaders are transparent and therefore likely to bring about good governance. It was argued that honest leaders can avoid embezzlement of public funds and other corrupt conduct. It was furthermore revealed that a person who is not honest does not deserve to be a leader since such a leader cannot even be as one of the interviewed respondents from LG leaders' category said that:

On the basis of honesty [transparency], we believe that what the government does or intends to do, if it has a significant [positive] impact on the running of the nation, then it should also be understood by the people. For example, a municipality, district or city council must inform us about how much revenue they collect but [also] what they do with it once collected. So, whatever the government is doing, it must also be shared with the public so that the people have enough information on what the government is determined to do or what the government is doing, in a timely manner [LG, leader].

These views were also supported by another respondent from the same category of LG leaders who said that: *If a leader is not honest, then he or she does not fit in his or her position because he or she will corrupt the system of governance in achieving good governance for good public service to the citizens". [MEO, Kinondoni Municipality].*

It was also revealed through interview that some local government leaders were dishonest. All the interviewed respondents (33) from LG leader's category admitted that some of them were not honest because they were selfish and that had evil tendencies. Many of the LG respondents (36) admitted that the level of honest was low, while few (2) had the opinion that it was of average, while one (1) opined that it was high. The issues of corruption, cheating and embezzlements of government funds among LG leaders were also mentioned as factors that reduced the level of honesty in LGAs. The findings from LG leaders on LG leaders being dishonest through interview were collaborated by facts from documents. For example, according to URT (2022:159) the CAG report states that:

I found that Kinondoni MC had paid a total of TZS 196.65 million for waste collection and disposal agents during a period of three financial years (2018/19 to 2020/21). I discovered that among the vehicles purported to have been used in garbage collection were saloon cars, which in essence could not be used to collect cabbage.

Also, it was important to solicit views from PA retirees and religious leaders on their understanding of honesty by local government leaders as a way of promoting good governance. During interview, they revealed that honesty is a very important attribute for good leadership. However, when asked if LG leaders were honest, they responded

indicating that the level of honest among LG leaders was low as it is revealed by one of the respondents from PA retiree's category that;

Just to be fair, give them [LG leaders] thirty five percent (35%) for the following reasons: Those who understand the code of ethics are those of higher level [in LGAs] because they know if they do not practice it, they will be fired. For the current Government of Tanzania, honesty is hearsay. Honesty should come from the heart. Honesty in LGAs is more external than internal [PA retiree, Kinondoni Municipality].

The views by PA retirees were also supported by religious leaders who also responded through interview showing a problem of dishonest in the local government leadership as one of the interviewed religious leaders commented that:

Internal leadership ethics, to be very fair, is negative in LG authorities. Many leaders save their face. When they are openly seen, they pretend to be ethical [honest] but in hiding, they do unethical things like corruption and nepotism. External leadership ethics might be seen to be practised, but it is sheer hypocrisy - it is only skin-deep, people fear of losing their job. [A religious Leader, Kigogo ward].

The admission by LG leaders that are dishonest, the evidence of such cases from documents and the findings from religious leaders as well as PA is supported by Hoseah (2014) who discovered that moral standards in the public service are mainly affected by selfish desires of public servants who abuse their office or position at the expense of the community.

In being dishonest, thus unethical LG leaders are abusing their offices and as they go against the Constitution of Tanzania whereby Article 132 (1) of The Constitution of Tanzania, 1977, provides for ethical integrity as a qualification for public leadership. By being dishonest, local government leaders also contravene the Public Leadership Code of Ethics Act Cap 398 particularly section 6 (a) which directs public leaders to observe ethics by upholding the highest ethical standards and act with honesty when discharging their duties to gain public confidence for good governance.

From FGD, respondents from the citizens' category, it was revealed that honest is the essential element of good leadership. They indicated that dishonest compromises public interest at the expenses of selfish interests. Responding to whether LG leaders were honest, forty-one (41) out of all sampled citizen (43) said that LG leaders were not honesty, while two (2) respondents said that LG leaders were honest. Based on the responses by respondents from the citizen category, it was generally agreed that LG leaders were not honest. They cited lack of honest as the setback in getting good services from their leaders as one of the respondents indicated that:

Leaders are not honest because they do not live up to their promises after elections. For example, one councillor promised to end the church land dispute in

front of the altar and was given TZS 30,000 for fuel, to make a follow-up with the Ministry of Land, but he did not. Later, he suffered a certain scandal until he was removed from the council [Citizen, Bunju Ward].

As the responses above show, dishonest among leaders at whatever level erodes public confidence in their leaders. It affects provision of better social services and as the consequences; it retards development because of poor governance.

Generally, the findings from the respondents and documents demonstrate the importance of honest as the ingredient of good governance by LG leaders. However, it was revealed that LG leaders are not honest to a great extent as they serve their interest rather than that of the public. Dishonest, according to the finding by this study, is a serious setback as it promotes corruption and embezzlement of public fund as revealed by CAG report. The findings by this study are in line with other studies such as Lamerck (2022) who noted that LG leaders were dishonesty. The following subsection deals with assessing LG leaders' accountability and responsibility as a way of promoting good governance.

ADHERENCE TO ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

Through interview, the study sought to determine the importance of accountability and responsibility as applied to leadership in LGAs. It was important to solicit the views of LG leaders first. During the interviews with LG leaders, it was revealed that accountability and responsibility are very crucial elements in promoting good governance. It was argued that accountability and responsibility bring effectiveness in providing social service to citizens. One respondent explained on responsibility that:

Responsiveness means that when you are a leader you are not going to serve your interests, you are not going to solve your problems, nor your priorities but to solve citizens' problems. Responsiveness is leadership that is focused on the real needs of the community you serve and not the needs that you as a leader think about, without involving the people [Land and Planning officer, Kinondoni Municipality].

Further, it was suggested that accountability and responsibility could be measured by looking at how LG leaders are being accountable to the people by ensuring that the community has access to basic services: water, health, roads, education, and other social services. When the researcher probed the issue, in order to find out if accountability and responsibility were in place, it was revealed that the level of responsibility and accountability was low as one of respondents from LG leaders' category pointed out that: *"The issue of responsibility still is low according to citizens' complaints. Waste accumulates unattended for a long time, while citizens pay for the collection"* [LG Leader, Kinondoni Municipality].

Moreover, LG officials were interviewed on how accountability and responsibility were observed in their offices. It was observed that leaders were accountable and responsible to the public. The findings also revealed that accountability was in hierarchy involving officials at the low level (*Mtaa*) of local government to the higher level. For instance, *Mtaa* chairpersons and MEOs were accountable to the WEOs, while WEOs were accountable to the Municipal Director. Respondents revealed that observing responsibility and accountability by leaders enhance good governance in LGAs. However, it was revealed that accountability involved leaders at the low level but not at the high level of local government administration as one of the interviewed respondents from the LG leaders' category stated that: *"Accountability immediately plays a role for lower leaders but when top leaders breach the code of ethics, it takes very long to be accountable. This is due to favouritism among top leaders"* [WEO, Kinondoni Municipality].

It was also learnt that sometimes leaders at the top influence those at the bottom not to be accountable as one of the respondents from the LG leaders' category lamented that: *"If you want to take legal action against the person who dumps sewage, [in the streets] then you get a call from the top [Municipal level] to stop it. Then you stop it"* [MEO, Kigogo Ward]. In this scenario, it is clear that top LG officials (Municipal level or Council) interfere with LG officials at the low level when the latter are discharging their mandate. This interference, perhaps for personal interest, retards the promotion of good governance in LGAs in the long run.

It was of necessity to get views from both PA retirees and religious leaders because of their experience and moral integrity. In an interview session with PA retirees and religious leaders, it was found that accountability and being responsible were very crucial for LG officials in order to bring about effectiveness and efficiency as principles of good governance in service delivery, so that citizen problems could be effectively attended to. Further, they were of the opinion that accountability and being responsible in LGAs seemed to be one-sided. They argued that the accountability of appointed leaders focused on the appointing authority than to the public. One of the respondents from the PA retirees' category had this to say:

"All public leaders should become accountable and responsible to the public; they should face disciplinary measures or legal action for their actions or inactions since it is the public which is affected" [PA, Retiree].

It was also important to solicit information from citizens because they are the ones affected positively or negatively by the LG leaders' conduct. During FGDs with citizens, the researcher also found that there was limited accountability and responsibility from the municipal level to *Mtaa* level. For instance, the researcher observed that the agricultural officers at ward level did not go to visit gardeners and give them agricultural guidelines. This experience was also shared by one of the respondents from the citizens' category that:

“Even if you go to the offices, they are not available you find them locked. And even the WEOs do not do any monitoring to ensure that smallholder farmers get agricultural advice. We only cultivate by intuition. We have no expertise and so our vegetable and fruit farming is not very productive”. [Citizen, Bunju Ward].

The researcher was interested to find out why accountability and being responsible were at a very low level in local government authorities. One of the respondents among LG official had this to say in relation to limited accountability and responsibility in local government authorities:

In 1998, the government came up with a local government reform policy (LGRP) based on the 1996 reform agenda. The aim of the reform was to address four issues: fiscal decentralization, administrative decentralization, political decentralization and central local interface. The aim was for councils to be given the opportunity to find and recruit their own staff from the highest level, who is the executive of the council [Director] to the most basic levels where we find executives at the village and ward levels. The aim was to hold these executives accountable to the people. In 2003, the government came up with Public Service Regulations by which, in one way or another, all employment issues were returned to the central government, especially the highest-level officials in the local government authorities. The response or accountability has shifted to the central government rather than to the people because 80% of their budget depends on the central government. The highest-level officials are employed or appointed by the central government. Elected leaders may say they are responding but their response is hampered by financial dependence. After the elections, the possibility of citizens holding a leader accountable even if one does not act properly becomes slim. They may keep accusing one another, but in reality, they may have to wait until another election is held, then hold the leader accountable at the ballot box [LG officer, Mikoocheni ward].

Generally, the findings from all categories of respondents; LG leaders, PA retirees, religious leaders through interview; and citizens through FGDs indicate that the degree of responsibility and accountability in local government authorities is very low. Most particularly, leaders are not responsible and accountable to citizen except to their appointing authority. In the worst scenario, even those local government leaders at the lower level get interfered with by their superior when they try to be responsible to the people they lead. This goes against Article 8 of the Constitution of Tanzania 1977, the Policy Paper of 1998 on LGRP, and Section 6 (c) of the Public Leadership Code of Ethics Act (2020) in which public leaders are required to be accountable to the people.

When the researcher sought for the motivation for lack or limited accountability and responsibility among LG leaders, it was noted that personal interest, budget dependence on the central government and weaknesses of the Public Service

Regulations of 2003 as the reasons that accelerate those anti-good governance tendencies. The weakness of regulations in fighting non-good governance tendencies were once noted by Lamerck (2022) had noted from the study done in Morogoro and Hai districts in Tanzania that formal rules are essential but not adequate in addressing the crisis of unethical behaviour of public leadership for effective public service delivery. Local government leaders' adherence to the rule of law assessed in the following subsection.

Adherence to Rule of Law

The third question wanted respondents to describe how local government officials in their area observed the rule of law. During the interviews with LG leaders, it was stated that the rule of law was very important as it guides the actions of local government officials to act in the manner which is accordance to the dictates of good governance. The respondents through interview were of the opinion that adherence to the rule of law was important in fulfilling responsibilities, although such rule of law was not being observed closely. Among the reasons given were bureaucracy from top leaders to lower leaders, political interests, lack of financial capacity for conducting meetings, e.g. the cost of hiring chairs, tents, public address system, or drinking water. There was also citizens' reluctance to attend meetings, the COVID 19 problem, and reluctance by some LG leaders to convene meetings as per the law. One of the respondents of LG officials had this to say on this matter:

"Mtaa meetings ought to be held four times a year but these do not take place as required. The meetings are scheduled but order from above sometimes stop such meetings from being held, especially when elections are approaching" [WEO, Kinondoni Municipality].

During the interview session with PA retirees and religious leaders, it was revealed that rules were not being followed by LG leaders, as it was expected of them. They indicated that the rule of law leads to treating all people equally. However, they revealed that rules were being twisted to suit personal interests. They lamented that their leaders were biased. One of the respondents among the retirees explained that: *"[There is] No rule of law; for example, I was in Morogoro, and citizens started to allege that the village chairperson had not called a meeting from the time he was elected, and the year was ending"* [PA retiree, Kinondoni Municipality].

During the FGDs with citizens, the respondents had similar views to that of LG leaders and PA retirees that there was no observance of the rule of law. One of the respondents among citizens complained by saying that: *"Some LG government leaders do not closely observe the rule of law. For example, Mtaa meetings are supposed to be held four times a year, but last year [2021] there was only one meeting"* [Citizen, Kinondoni Ward].

Generally, the findings of study indicate that the rule of law as one of the principles of public leadership code of ethics and good governance was not being observed as required by LG statutes. This, consequently, limited citizens' participation in matters of planning, decision making and implementation of their ideas for their development in their localities. Also, citizens could not get income and expenditure reports. This is the setback to achieving good governance in LGAs. The findings by this study are in line with that of Nkyabonaki (2019) who noted through his study in Toangoma ward - Dar es Salaam that corruption was persistent in the public sector and that it deteriorates the quality of public services. This is the indication of lack of good governance in local government authorities due to unethical behaviour. After discussing the importance of adherence to the rule of law in promoting good governance, the following subsection focuses at compassion.

Adherence to Compassion

One of the questions sought to determine if the element of compassion was indeed present in the question of governance among local government leaders particularly during service delivery. Through interviews with LG leaders, it was revealed that compassion was an important element of the leadership code of ethics. It was clarified that compassion was very important in the delivery of services, with special care, to vulnerable citizens especially the deaf, elderly, disabled, and illiterate. Furthermore, it was explained that compassion was being practised through guidance, advise, and helping citizens according to their specific problems.

When seeking to determine the level of compassion by interviewing the PA retirees, it was revealed that there was no compassion at Municipal level and that it sometimes depended on the personal whims of the local leader as one of the respondents ascertained that: *"Compassion towards the disabled at the lower level [of LG] depends on the local leader but at the Municipal level, they do not even care about disability"*. [PA retiree, Kinodoni Ward].

Another respondent from the PA retirees' category further clarified that:

"The issue of small businessmen relocation has not involved planners who would prepare new sites to resettle the displaced or to check if there were facilities that would help people continue to do their business; we as planners we say "eyes on hands off" [PA retiree, Tandale Ward].

The respondents explained that planners of towns and cities simply implement orders even when those orders seem to contradict their professions. They would compromise their professionalism than disobey their appointing authority even where the latter may be wrong. This means such planners cannot properly use their professionalism to advice, challenge, or even criticise the government for unqualified actions.

Through FGDs the study also sought the views of respondents from the citizen category on the issue of compassion regarding local government leadership. Generally, they explained that it was a very important element of the leadership code of ethics in promoting good governance. They were of the opinion that there was no real compassion among LG officials in running the business of LGAs. A good number of respondents disclosed that there was no compassion for the weak, and that LG officials valued the noble and the rich. One of the interviewed respondents had this to say:

They fail to look at us, the disabled, and care about us. I got this wheelchair from an individual; and we pay for our own medicine and hospitalization. Moreover, we are not able to get health insurance. If you do not pay you do not get the service. We do ask the government to give priority to services and our dignity rather than give priority to money. We ask the government to have mercy on us disabled people. [Citizen, Makumbusho Ward].

Apart from the disabled, even small business dealers complained that they were not treated with compassion by local government officials as one of the respondents explained bitterly that:

There is no compassion among some public leaders. For example, we are not allowed to do our businesses freely in Dar es Salaam. One day, the Police arrested me, and my bicycle, and took me to police station. To be released I had to pay TZS 20,000 and TZS 30,000 for the bicycle [Citizen, Kinondoni Ward].

It was also pointed out that even the guidelines/rules that enable people of low income to operate business are designed without taking into consideration of their limited access to financial power. In other words, those regulations were set by leaders who were not compassionate as one of the respondents from the citizen category lamented during FGDs that:

No compassion for small entrepreneurs. For example, if you want a loan from the government, you must be a group of 5 persons. Also interest rates are higher (10%). It becomes debt repayment only. We do not move forward. My suggestion is that we should ask for an extension of time to repay and at reduced interest rates. [Citizen, Tandale Ward].

It was further revealed during FGDs that even during operations by LG authorities, victims of those operations are not cared for. What matters to local government officials is to execute their programmes successful without considering the damages to other parties particularly during operations by city planners which require eviction of people from targeted areas. One of the victims of those operations lamented bitterly that:

We are evicted and deported every now and then as if we are not citizens of Tanzania. We are usually evicted from areas with enough customers, and arrested by auxiliary police, led by WEOs. Tomatoes and carrots are loaded into trucks and taken to the police station. If you go to claim these things, you have to pay

TZS 30,000 or 50,000 to get them back. You find the tomatoes already spoiled. Also, we are not given a receipt for the fines we pay. [Citizen, Kunduchi Ward].

The responses from the citizens serve as testimonies that marginalised groups such as the disabled and low-income earners are sometimes treated without compassion. They experience difficulties in the accessing public service in LGAs. Also, it denotes the existence of corruption; notably, many citizens complained about auxiliary Police harassing them unnecessarily. Further, it signifies the presence of discrimination between the rich and the poor. The researcher was also interested to find out what citizens had to say as suggestions to improve the situation. Citizens suggested that the government should involve the entrepreneurs to identify friendly business places.

Generally, the findings from the sampled respondents indicate that local government officials, to a great extent lack compassion when dealing with citizen especially the marginalised members of the society. This goes contrary to principles of good governance, Public Leadership Code of Ethics in Tanzania (2020) and Article 132 (5a) of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania (URT 1977). Lack of compassion, by leaders or government officials at any level, impacts negatively on good governance.

Adherence to Impartiality

Another question required respondents to give their views on the practice of impartiality in the provision of public service by LG government leaders. All the respondents agreed on the importance of impartiality in promoting good governance. It became apparent that public leaders should serve all customers justly. Further, respondents explained that impartiality brings peace and stability in the society. On the other hand, respondents explained that lack of impartiality promotes favouritism which violates ethical principles of public leadership which brings hatred, anger, and mistrust between people and their leaders. When LG leaders were interviewed as regards to adherence to impartiality, many admitted that there was favouritism and nepotism in the LGAs as one of the respondents explained that: *"We try our level best to be impartial but some of us prefer the haves in providing service, which is against the Public Leadership Code of Ethics"*, [WEO, Kinondoni Municipality].

The views by LG leaders on the lack of impartiality in extending services by local government leaders to the people they serve were supported by PA retirees and religious leaders who responded through interview. For example, one of the respondents from the religious leaders' category had this to say: *"There is nepotism in the appointment and employment of LG officials"* [A religious leader, Kinondoni]. During FGDs a good number of citizens concurred with what was revealed by leaders who had been interviewed.

Further, citizens complained that there was no true impartiality in social service delivery at LGAs. They revealed that there was no impartiality because they had witnessed favouritism and nepotism during appointments and employment in the LGAs. They also indicated that the rich were favoured over the poor during service delivery. This is contrary to Article 132 (5a) of the *Constitution of United Republic of Tanzania*, (URT 1977:75) which “prohibits conduct and behaviour which tend to portray that a leader is dishonest, practices favouritism or lacks integrity, or which tends to promote or encourage corrupt practices in public affairs or jeopardizes public interest or welfare”. On lack of impartiality, one of the respondents from the citizens’ category had this to say:

“Injustice in society is the ethical challenge today. We are not treated fairly to do business freely. We have become like refugees who have to stay in one camp only. And, this is because of bad governance” [Citizen, Kigogo ward].

Generally, the findings on the state of impartiality in local government authority particularly Kinondoni municipality, show that local government leaders were not impartial as they tended to favour some sections/people as per their personal; interest contrary to public service guidelines or the constitution of Tanzania which direct how public leaders should behave. The study findings show that lack of impartiality seriously affects quality and timely provision of services to the people. It causes disharmony and lead to complaints by the people over the government. Good governance can hardly come in local governance if leaders are not impartial. Where there is no impartiality in provision of service by leaders, people are likely not to act as one towards development. The following subsection looks at sobriety and continence as principles of the public leadership code of ethics in promoting good governance.

Adherence to Sobriety and Continence

Respondents were asked to give their views regarding the practice of sobriety and continence among local leaders. During the interviews, LG leaders explained that sobriety and continence were crucial elements for efficiency in dispensing rights to the public. They revealed that there were some cases of alcohol abuse and sexual corruption at work places and during working hours in public offices. It was further explained that breaking the code of ethics cause people to lose their rights to irresponsibility and inefficiency as the consequence. Many of the LG respondents admitted that alcohol consumption and sexual corruption existed. Such findings echo what Kamangi (2022:1) reported regarding what Vice President of Tanzania had said regarding the unacceptable behaviour of ministers that: “It is shameful for a minister to be involved in sextortion; this is also among the taboos of the party, Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM)”.

Some of the reasons given by respondents regarding why such behaviour exists in local government authorities, included; poverty, poor understanding of human rights, taking shortcuts to success for example passing exams, getting employment or promotion, and also due to unethical leadership. One of the interviewed respondents among LG Officials had this to say:

Consuming alcohol and sexual corruption exist. Sexual corruption is done undercover. The secret is only revealed when the promise has not been fulfilled, such as getting employment, and passing exams well. The causes of sexual corruption are poverty or the desire to get what one does not deserve or through shortcuts to success [WEO, Kinondoni Municipality].

The responses from public retirees and religious leaders' respondents indicated that sexual corruption existed in almost all levels of governance whether in the local or central government as well as in the private sectors. This was ascertained by one of PA retiree respondents who reported that: *"Sexual corruption in employment and promotion exists. It is used as an instrument for promotion and employment"* [PA retiree, Kinondoni Municipality].

During the FGDs with citizens, the consensus, also by many, was that consumption of alcohol and sexual corruption among LG leaders during working hours existed in local government authorities. They further indicated that the problem had worsened since bars had been allowed to open since morning and beers were sold cheap (TZS 1500). It was suggested by respondents through FGDs that bars should be open after working for the development of the country. It was for very few respondents who claimed to have not heard of alcohol abuse and sexual corruption among LG leaders.

In general, many respondents from all sampled categories; LG leaders, PA retirees, religious leaders and citizens agreed that sexual corruption and alcohol abuse existed among LG leaders, while very few respondents said they had never heard of alcohol abuse and sexual corruption among LG leaders. For local government leaders to engage in alcohol abuse and sexual corruption is going against section 6(a) of the Public Leadership Code of Ethics Act (2020); which call for public leaders to promote good governance.

CONCLUSION

This study assessed leaders' adherence to the public leadership code of ethics in promoting good governance within the Local Government Authorities (LGAs) of Kinondoni Municipality, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The findings demonstrate that adherence to the principles of the public leadership code of ethics—namely, honesty, accountability, responsiveness, the rule of law, impartiality, compassion, sobriety, and continence—constitutes a critical foundation for ethical leadership. These principles are essential for promoting good governance characterized by accountability,

responsibility, effectiveness, and efficiency, ultimately contributing to the well-being of the people.

The study revealed that awareness of and adherence to the public leadership code of ethics is fundamental to fostering good governance in any governmental system. However, its effectiveness is contingent upon public leaders' compliance with the code. This aligns with the Kantian Rational Choice Theory, which posits that ethical judgment is grounded in rational principle, wherein right action is that which is permitted by the rule, and wrong action is that which the rule disapproves.

Presently, as this study has shown, awareness of the code of ethics among both leaders and citizens in the LGAs is high; however, adherence by local government leaders remains low. Within the context of this study, local government leaders have generally failed to comply with the code of ethics. Triangulated data confirm that Kinondoni Municipality suffers from unethical conduct, including corruption, favouritism, lack of accountability and responsiveness, and fraud. These practices undermine the full achievement of good governance. Factors impairing adherence to the code of ethics primarily stem from family weaknesses, institutional deficiencies, and, above all, a lack of will to prioritize the common interest.

Reflecting on the findings, the limited adherence to the code of ethics among local government leaders can be attributed to a dichotomy between two forms of rationality: rationality driven by rational self-interest (ethical egoism)—prioritizing subjective, narrow interests regardless of the common good—and rationality aligned with rational common interest (ethical objectivism)—upholding an objective, broader sense of communal welfare. For clarity, the findings indicate that while local government leaders were aware of the code of ethics (theoretical rationality), they failed to adhere to it as expected due to a deficit in practical rationality (the will factor). This study, therefore, calls for a reconceptualization that moves beyond merely prescribing principles. It advocates for a shift from theoretical rationality to practical rationality and from ethical subjectivism to ethical objectivism, thereby fostering leadership dedicated to the common good.

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