

THE IMPACT OF POLITICAL INTERFERENCE IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN KIBAHA TOWN COUNCIL

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ABSTRACT: *This paper aimed at assessing the Impacts of Political Interference in Public Administration. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used which involved the use of various data collection methods such as questionnaires, interviews and document review. Data were collected from the sample of twelve public administration officers (PAOs) and eighteen ward executive officers (WEOs) from Kibaha town council. Thematic analysis was used in analysis of qualitative data while correlation, regression and arithmetic mean were used in quantitative data analysis with the help of SPSS soft ware. The key findings included challenges facing public administrators in executing their responsibilities due to political interference. These lead to maladministration, abuse of power, improper conduct, inexcusable delay, poor service delivery and lack of commitment among public staff. This paper concluded that political interference was due to the inadequate power and responsibility separation between politics (policy) and public administration (execution). It is thus; recommended that there should be proper periodic observation of power separation between the two actors. Also it was suggested for periodic performance observation of public officers' activities which will make easy to ascertain if the public administrator has performed in accordance with his or her expectation, and if he or she has performed, then surely this would serve as an effective leverage against political muscle.*

KEYWORDS: Political Influence, Political Interference, Administration, Public Institutions

INTRODUCTION

A concept of public administration originated in the United States of America as an attempt to separate politic and administration. The opinion was that politic should be concerned with policy while administration should be concerned with the execution of policy (Hanekom and Thornhill 1983). Since then, public administration became centered on executive governmental institutions and this happens to be the place where politicians are performed.

Political interference occurs when political leader(s) interfere with decision making in public administrative matters such as planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting as well as allocation and use of public funds. As stated by Dixit, and Pindyck, (1994) in the supply of roads, schools, hospitals in the developing countries, politics plays a role. Among various leadership challenges facing low developing democratic countries especial African countries is the political interference in administrations (Wangwe, 2012).

In many African countries, the public becomes a platform and the politicians want to maintain their faction in it and try to extend their domain in every other section of the public administration. Thus because of the political activities in the administration and the undue

influence of the politicians the public and administration institution gets politicised (Bendor, *et al* 2003). According to Duch *et al* (2000) politicisation of the public administration institution involves the appropriation of administrative structures and resources and the displacement of administrative goals by organised political and community interests.

The typical division of government in Tanzania is into a legislature, an executive, and a judiciary. Tanzania constitution of 1977 requires the powers of one branch/pillar not to conflict with the powers associated with the other branches (Ntliziywana, 2009). Despite the above, power separation remains a big challenge confronting public institutions be it at the national or local government levels, where the political leaders have failed to adopt a healthy and positive attitude towards performance of public administration officers (Wangwe, 2012). In short they do not allow an autonomous public administration movement to grow.

Tanzania politicians interfere unnecessarily in public administration matters, exploit the public officers and present an exaggerated picture of public administration officers' works. They are encouraging societies to engage in demonstrations and agitations for narrow political gains (Mbilinyi, 2002; Wangwe, 2012). As a result there is the growing intrusion of the politics into the public administration (Lodge, *et. al.*, 1995). It has to be noted that when the administrative institution is politicised chances for corruption increase and the appointments to key posts are made not on the basis of merit but extraneous considerations (Bendor, *et. al.* 2003). Precisely, the public administration smells foul-play and all these provide occasions for communities to engage in riots and agitations in demanding for enquiry or dismissal of the concerned official. These protests adversely affect every section in the country.

Although constitution of Tanzania has obviously indicated responsibility of politicians separately to that of public administrators, together with greatly emphasize of civil societies on the freedom of administrative organs but politicians have been seen to get in the jurisdictions of public administrators. By this reason it was decided to conduct a study on the impact of political interference in public administration in Tanzania by focusing on Kibaha town council as the case study.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

The study deployed both quantitative and qualitative methods used to collect all the empirical facts. Rather the study adopted exploratory and descriptive designs in order to make in-depth investigation on the impact of Political Interference in Public Administration. Also, the study endeavors to describe the roles of political leaders and public administrators, the extent to which politicians have interfered with activities of public administrators, factors that influence politician to interfere with public administration and the practical actions to be taken in order to mitigate political interference in public administration activities.

Convenience and purposive sampling techniques were used to obtain twelve public administration officers (PAOs) and eighteen ward executive officers (WEOs) from Kibaha town council in Coastal region of Tanzania. The study was conducted in this area base on the ground that the area is still developing and many government developmental projects have been started and other proposed to be established in this area. However, these projects have been highly subjected to political issues.

Primary data which were collected via questionnaire and interview methods were highly used in the study. Questionnaire had closed ended questions with response mode of 5 Likert points. Interview was semi-structured and used to solicit supplementary information from some few respondents. Qualitative data was thematically analysed while quantitative data was analysed with the help of SPSS Version 16, wherein, correlation and regression analysis were performed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data from all respondents were compared to give better understanding of the situation. Then, this comparison was used to achieve the objectives of the study by evaluating them on the basis of published information.

Demographic description of the respondents

Cross tabulations were used for presentation of demographic characteristic of respondents which include gender, age, level of education, and experience in terms of years of employment in the public administration.

Table 1: Crosstabulation of Demographic of Respondents

		Category of Respondents		
		PAO	WEO	
Gender of respondents	Male	8 (66.7%)	10 (55.6%)	18(60.0%)
	Female	4(33.3%)	8(44.4%)	12(40.0%)
	TOTAL	12(100%)	18(100%)	30(100%)
Age of Respondents	21-30 years	3 (25.0%)	7(38.9%)	10(33.3%)
	31-40 years	4(33.3%)	7(38.9%)	11(36.7%)
	41-50 years	1(8.3%)	1(5.6%)	2(6.7%)
	51-60 years	3(25.0%)	3(16.7%)	6(20.0%)
	Above 60 years	1(8.3%)	0(0%)	1(3.3%)
	TOTAL	12(100%)	18(100%)	30(100%)
Education Qualification of Respondents	Secondary	1(8.3%)	2(11.1%)	3(10.0%)
	Diploma	8(66.7%)	11(61.1%)	19(63.3%)
	1st Degree	3(25%)	5(27.8%)	8(26.7%)
	TOTAL	12(100%)	18(100%)	30(100%)
Experience in public work	1-5 years	4(33.3%)	8(44.4%)	12(40%)
	6-10 years	3(25%)	5(27.8%)	8(26.7%)
	11-15 years	2 (16.7%)	2(11.1%)	4(13.1%)
	16-20 years	2(16.7%)	3(16.7%)	5(16.7%)
	Above 20 years	1(8.3%)	0(0%)	1(3.3%)
	TOTAL	12(100%)	18(100%)	30(100%)

The results in table 4.1 show that in general total number of male respondents was 60% of all respondents while the remaining 40% was presented by female respondents. The reason for many male than female is that data were taken from managerial levels where women are less

involved. However, majority of these officers were at age group between 31 and 40 years old (36.7%), followed by those who were at age of 21-30 (33.3%). With this result it can be said that majority of public administrators in the studies area were youth who are hardworking group. The results continue to show that 10% of respondent had secondary education qualification, more than half (63.3%) had diploma qualification and all most one-third (26.7%) of respondents had first degree qualification. This indicates that most of the respondents were well educated.

Impact of Political interference in Public Administration

Respondents were given questions with some variables with the aim of finding out the impacts of political interference with activities of public administration in Kibaha town council. There were six variables analyzed and these were maladministration, abuse of power, improper conduct, inexcusable delay, improper enrichment, and improper benefit.

Table 2: Impact of Political interference in Public Administration

Constructs	Frequency	Means score	Sig. (p-value)	Interpretation
Maladministration	30	2.83	0.118	Interference
Abuse of power	28	3.14	0.212	Interference
Improper conduct	29	3.03	0.005	Interference
Inexcusable delay	30	2.97	0.210	Interference
Improper enrichment	30	3.10	0.187	Interference
Improper benefit	30	3.20	0.119	Interference
Average Mean		3.05		Interference
Interpretation of the Mean				
3.26-4.00	High interference			
2.51-3.25	Interference			
1.76-2.50	Low interference			
1.00-1.75	Not interference			

The results of the table (table 2) above show that all variables were rated highly which was interpreted as 'interference'. The mean score for maladministration was 2.83, abuse of power was 3.14, improper conduct was 3.03, inexcusable delay of activities was 2.97, improper enrichment was 3.1 and improper benefit was 3.2. Additionally average mean was 3.05 which imply that there was political 'interference' in the public administration and was accountable for many administrative problems in Kibaha town council.

It is a plain fact that the public administration is primarily an institution of public concern and it is only natural when no hands from other organs involve. But as reported by some of respondents in this study it is ironical that sometimes these public administrators, because of attachment towards political parties, the leaders of these political parties connive with them in the maladministration in the public activities and/or projects. Concern with how to prevent foreseen impacts of political interference in Kibaha town council and in the whole Tanzania at large, this study also tried to analyse respondents' opinions on what should be taken at institution level to fight political interference. The results of such analysis have been given in the last section of this study.

The Roles of Politicians and Public Administrators

The study identified distinctive roles of both politicians and public administration in the society. Researcher made a great effort to visit and to consult different people who had idea on what were the roles of political leaders and public officer in the society. However different books, journals and Acts were reviewed to comment on what had been obtained from interviews. Among all the roles were shortlisted it was summarised that public administrators were responsible for managing planning, organization, directing activities in the community and controlling them while politician were responsible of ensuring people are satisfied with the service delivered to them from government.

The real function of administration is according to Chang and Wong (2013, pp 31) not merely ministerial, but adaptive, guiding, discretionary and the like. It was identified that managing plans was mentioned to be primary role of the public administrators. Under managing plans public administrators were concerned with setting out the following variables i.e clear objectives, issuing instructions, plan specific procedures and establishing training programmes etc. One civics teacher who interested in this topic tried to explain the division of function of government as follows “public administration is detailed and systematic execution of public law but the general laws are obviously outside of and above administration. The broad plans of governmental action are not administrative; the detailed execution of such plans is administrative.”

According to what civics teacher say, it can be interpreted that politics and administration have dichotomy relation, which assumed that politics and administration interact to improve the country. Now been dichotomy there should be clear framework separating political and administration’s functions. Also Lijphart (1999; 6) contended that in its classical conceptualizations the dichotomy between politics and administration implied a deep concern about the political neutrality of administrators. Rosenbloom, (2008: 27-28) noted that the role of politicians in power is to make policies and monitor the result of such polices and provide further guidelines. They are not supposed to enter into implementation or operational part of the policies which is considered to be the domain of bureaucrats/ administration. However, it should be known that social and political goals rest upon the relationship of all players without overlapping of autonomies which intern providing effective human efforts for development and growth of economic of the country. Therefore, this discussion insisted that it is essential that there should be clearer differentiation of politics and administration.

Interference of Politician in Activities of Public Administration

The study examined the extent to which politicians have interfered with activities of public administrators. Under this objective correlation and regression analysis were applied. Eight variable were studied which include planning, organization, staffing, directing, co-ordinating, reporting, budgeting and allocation and use of public funds

Correlations Results

The results in table 3 were generated using the SPSS software to explore the Pearson’s correlations to establish the relationships between the identified variables for measuring interference of politicians in public activities.

Table 3: Correlation of Interference of Politician in Activities of Public Administration

			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Planning	Pearson Correlation	1							
		Sig. (2-tailed)								
2	Organization	Pearson Correlation	.597*	1						
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001							
3	Staffing	Pearson Correlation	.612*	.521*	1					
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.004						
4	Directing	Pearson Correlation	.516*	.533*	.613*	1				
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.003	.001					
5	Coordinating	Pearson Correlation	.594*	.683*	.374	.624**	1			
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000	.055	.001				
6	Reporting	Pearson Correlation	.427*	.747*	.461*	.410*	.731*	1		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.023	.000	.014	.030	.000			
7	Budgeting	Pearson Correlation	.564*	.614*	.502*	.539**	.602*	.718*	1	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.001	.006	.003	.001	.000		
8	Allocation and use of public funds	Pearson Correlation	.614*	.510*	.515*	.709**	.520*	.379*	.553*	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.006	.005	.000	.005	.039	.002	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The findings in table (table 3) above show that there was strongly positive significant correlation between planning and organization ($p=0.001$), staffing ($p=0.001$), directing ($p=0.005$), coordinating ($p=0.001$), reporting ($p=0.023$), budgeting ($p=0.002$), as well as allocation and use of public funds ($p=0.001$). Also there was strongly positive significant correlation between organization and staffing ($p=0.004$), directing ($p=0.003$), coordinating ($p=0.000$), reporting ($p=0.000$), budgeting ($p=0.001$), as well as allocation and use of public funds ($p=0.006$). Moreover directing had significant correlation with coordinating ($p=0.001$), reporting ($p=0.030$), budgeting ($p=0.003$), and allocation and use of public funds ($p=0.000$). Additionally, coordinating had strongly positive significant correlation with reporting ($p=0.000$), budgeting ($p=0.001$), as well as allocation and use of public funds ($p=0.005$). From the above results it can be shown that almost all variables were significant correlated, therefore the variables are moving together-interference in one variable can lead to the interference in other variables.

Multiple Linear Regression Results

Researcher used multiple linear regression to calculate how much the dependent variable (impacts of political interference in public administration) change when independent variables

(extent of interference) change, while other factors are controlled. The summary of this regression analysis is as shown on table 4.

Table 4: Regression Analysis of Interference of Politician in Public Administration

R Square = 0.351		F = 1.219				
Adj R Square = 0.63		Sig = 0.034				
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.228	.761		2.928	.009
	Planning	-.487	.501	-.340	-.972	.344
	Organization	.369	.461	.275	.799	.434
	Staffing	.186	.363	.156	.513	.614
	Directing	-1.255	.487	-1.032	-2.576	.019
	Coordinating	.698	.492	.579	1.419	.173
	Reporting	-.802	.577	-.656	-1.390	.182
	Budgeting	.364	.342	.364	1.064	.301
	Allocation and use of public funds	.953	.378	.850	2.521	.021

a. Dependent Variable: Impacts of Political Interference in Public Administration

The regression results show that 63.0% (Adj R Square =0.63) of the variance in impact of political interference in public administration was attributed to politicians interfere with planning, organization, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, budgeting, as well as allocation and use of public (p= 0.034). The remaining percentage (37%) was due to the interference with other things/variables which were not studied in present research.

However, it has been shown that among studied factors for analysing the extent to politicians have interfered with activities of public administrators the statistically significant predictors of the impact of political interference were directing activities in public administration (p=0.019) together with allocation and use of public funds (p=0.021). Therefore it can be said that engagement of politician in directing activities of public administration as well as allocation and use of public funds were enough factors to cause problems in public administration.

Factors Influencing Political Interference

The study also analysed factors influencing political interference in public administration. The variables for analysing factors causing politician to interfere with activities of public administration were poor service delivery, seek for popularity faith, nature of authority/regime, time toward political election and order from their political parties. Researcher applied regression analysis to find out the root cause of political interference as shown in the table 5.

Table 5: Regression Results of Factors Influencing Political Interference

R Square = 0.721		F = 12.410				
Adj R Square = 0.663		Sig = 0.000				
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.885	0.647		1.368	0.184
	Poor service delivery	0.169	0.139	0.159	1.216	0.236
	Seek for popularity faith	0.005	0.163	0.005	.034	0.974
	Nature of authority/regime	0.649	0.239	0.396	2.720	0.012
	Time toward political election	0.899	0.151	0.794	5.959	0.000
	Order from their political parties	0.426	0.159	0.409	2.674	0.013
a. Dependent Variable: Impacts of Political Interference in Public Administration						

Regression results in table 5 show that 66.3% (Adj R Square = 0.663) of the political interference in public administration was influenced or powered by poor service delivery in public, seek for popularity faith, nature of authority, time toward political election, and order from the political parties ($p=0.000$). The remaining 33.7% was influenced by other variables/factors which were not covered by this study. However, regression result revealed that the root causes or predictors of political interference in public administration were time towards political elections ($p=0.000$), nature of authority in Tanzania ($p=0.012$) and order from the political parties ($p= 0.013$).

During the interview with WEO from Tumbi ward it was noted that there was force behind political interference by political parties as she commented that *“.....the political parties have failed to adopt a healthy and positive attitude towards autonomy of public officers especial at local level. They do not allow an autonomous public administration movement to grow.”* On the other hand, it was strongly commented that the focus of interest to politician is to win parliamentary elections. Almost every respondent showed to have accepted political interference in public administration to be very high when time for political election is approaching. It was further mentioned at the time toward political election, politician increase interference with public administration in the ground that they have to face voters, therefore, they should have a say in every affair that affects public service delivery.

Although poor service delivery to the community was mentioned to be one of the factors stimulating politician to interfere with activities of public administration, but in an interview it was strongly claimed that political interference in public administration were the cause of poor service delivery to the community. Services were argued to be poor due to malpractices, lack of confidence among public administrators as highlighted by town council director of Kibaha that *“it is true community members (especial youth) indiscipline has occurred in this area due to the lack of adequate social facilities such as poor road condition and lack of enough water but all these are the result of political interference in allocation of public funds.”*

Practical Actions to be Taken

Lastly, the study suggested practical action to be taken at institutional level to prevent political interference in public administration activities. The variables were amendment of constitution, Creation of awareness on the distinct roles of politicians and administrators, enforcement of public administration autonomy, observation of division of government power and application of legal decision and review. Mean and standard deviation was applied in analysis concerned while the results were arranged according to the order of their priorities as presented in table 6.

Table 6: Practical Actions to be taken

Variables	N	Mean	Std	Rank
Proper division of government power	30	4.41	.927	1
Enforcement of public administrator autonomy	30	4.04	4.885	2
Creation of awareness on the distinct roles of politicians and administrators	30	3.80	.920	3
Amendment of constitution	30	3.76	1.076	4
Application of legal decision and review	30	3.74	.959	5

The results of the table 6 show the practical action to be taken to prevent political interference in public administration according to the order of priority. The first mentioned action was proper division of government power that was rated highly at the mean of 4.41, followed by enforcement of public administrator autonomy with the mean of 4.04, creation of awareness on the distinct roles of politicians and administrators rated at the mean of 3.80, amendment of constitution-mean 3.76 and the last one was Application of legal decision and review with the lowest mean of 3.74.

In the discussion it was obtained that the solution for political interference lies in drafting out a new paradigm in which the roles and responsibilities of political and administration leadership need to be redefined in the rules of governance and other relevant rules in which every role should also bear accountability. Therefore, no politicians should be allowed to interfere with the public administration because public staff fails to carry any statutory responsibility.

Through interviews with different participants the following was suggested to public administration institutions so as to put off political interference in the public institutions: to be independent and perform their functions in an impartial and professional manner; make administrative decisions based on merit; provide a workplace that is free from discrimination and recognises the diverse background of public administrators; be responsive to the government in providing timely advice and implementing government's policies and programs; deliver services fairly, effectively, impartially and courteously/ politely to the public; should have the highest ethical standards; be accountable for their actions; provide leadership of the highest quality; establish co-operative workplace relations based on consultation and communication; observe the law; focus on achieving results and managing performance; and ensure transparency in the performance of their functions.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This paper intended to assess impact of political interference in public administration in Kibaha town council. It was revealed that public administrators were facing very many administrative problems because of political interference. Some of the problems registered in this paper were maladministration, abuse of power, improper conduct, inexcusable delay, poor service delivery and lack of commitment among public staff. Among the reasons for political interference pointed out during the interview were poor service delivery by public institutions, seeking for popularity and order from political parties.

Concerning the roles of politicians and administrators this paper revealed that public administrators were responsible for managing planning, organization, directing activities in the community and controlling them. While the role of politicians is to make policies and monitor the results of such policies but they are not supposed to enter into implementation or operational part of the policies which is considered to be the duty of administration. In summary it was concluded that function of politics is to express the state's will and the function of administration is to execute the state's will. The practical actions suggested to prevent political interference were proper division of government power, enforcement of public administrator autonomy, creation of awareness on the distinct roles of politicians and administrators, amendment of constitution, application of legal decision and review

Recommendations

This paper presents the recommendations as follows: public institutions should ensure that their duty under the Public Service Act are upheld and are not subject to political interference on decision of public activities. It should be made it clear that the politician is by no means allowed to be a part of project processes; it is often the case that the politician simply instructs the public managers on how projects should be dealt with. Therefore, there should be no interference with the establishment of public projects.

The paper also suggests that the possibility of a focus on periodic performance activities for public administrators should be explored. Should this practice be instituted, then in the event that the job of the public administrators are threatened by politicians, it would be easy to ascertain if the public administrator has performed in accordance with his or her expectation, and if he or she has performed, then surely this would serve as an effective leverage against political muscle

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