

Ethics Management in Public Service Delivery in Tanzania: Insights from Muheza District Council

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Abstract

This study intended to examine ethical issues in public service delivery in Tanzania. Specifically, it examined how civil servants perform their responsibility under the guidance of Code of Ethics and Conduct for Public Service. The specific objectives include, to assess the factors which hinder ethical practices in public services, to scrutinize the mechanisms put forward to ensure public servants' compliance on code of ethics, and to recommend the measures to be taken to increase ethical practices in public service. The research methodology adopted primarily was qualitative and sampling techniques such as random sampling and purposive sampling were used in selecting different categories of respondents from their respective departments and ordinary citizens from Muheza District council. The target population were Muheza district council Staff and the citizens who are receiving services from the council. The sample size was composed of 70 respondents obtained through simple random and purposive sampling techniques. The primary and secondary data were collected through interviews and documentary review. Data analysis was done through thematic, descriptive statistics were used to establish frequencies and percentages. The major findings revealed that insufficient motivation, conflict of interest and mal-administration contributed to unethical practices in Muheza District council. The mechanisms initiated by Tanzania central and local authority not working properly to enforce quality public services delivery. The study recommends increase incentives, improving working facilities, strengthening public institutions entrusted with powers to monitor the conduct of public servants as well as strong punishment for those who were proved to breach the code of ethics and minimizing political interference from politicians to the public service delivery.

Key words: Ethics, Public Ethics, Management, Public Service, Civil Servant

1. Introduction

Ethics management has been defined as the systematic implementation of principles, standards, and practices to ensure professionalism, honesty, integrity, responsibility, transparency, and accountability in both the public and private sectors, it is a deliberate effort to create an ethical culture behavior within an organization. Globally the governments have established various mechanisms and instruments intended to oversee unethical practices such as ethics codes, ethics training, whistle-blowing laws, disciplinary procedures or ethics review mechanisms and institutions (Maeschalck, 2024). It also offers necessary mechanisms to enforce ethics management in local and international organizations. In this paper, ethics management refers to the framework for guiding an organization's behavior and decisions by integrating moral principles such as justice, respect and integrity in organization operations.

Modern globalized years seen a remarkable increase in attention in public ethics management, partly in reaction various public sector reforms in general, more specifically to New Public Management (NPM) and the pressure from citizens calling their government to be accountable (Gaventa, Joshi, & Anderson, 2023). These reforms include the introduction of competition in services provisions both within government and between governmental agencies and private sector organizations, the use of performance management

systems as well as compliance on codes of ethics (Khaltar & Moon, 2020).). At the global context, these reforms are assumed to have changed public sector values while ethics management is seen as an appropriate reaction to complement these reforms and compensate for their possible negative impact on the ethics of public servants (Rosenbloom, Kravchuk, & Clerkin, 2022).

Public ethics management has also been linked to wider changes in society as it has been argued as a device to reestablish trust of government in a time when concern about public trust to the government is increasing all over the Western world, it was also a reaction to society's changing values as they are no longer satisfied with the traditional hierarchical accountability of public servants to their superiors and ultimately to elected officials and as a way to deal with these and other demands for changes in the spirit of public servants (Lawton, Rayner & Lasthuizen, 2013).

Worldwide ethics management is a rapidly evolving with many countries placing considerable emphasis on anti-corruption initiatives. The study of Fox (2021) revealed that, twenty-six member countries of the European Union notes that *'the focus in national public administrations and the media is on corruption, fraud and conflicts of interest, but much less on unethical behavior in general'*. Broader worldwide efforts have been to put into place to implement ethics management strategies that encourage ethical behavior and combat corruption (OECD, 2020). For example, in Europe particularly Central and Eastern a study by Fox (2021), tracked the approaches taken in ten countries which are Albania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Macedonia, Romania, Slovak Republic. She observed in public ethics management some countries focus on the behavior of public servants through laws and codes while other countries rely on statutory regulation only'. He added that:

'The implementation of ethics codes and/or laws follows one of two paths. The first path is the use of an impartial council or board much like that found in the United States and the United Kingdom. The second path is left up to the individuals themselves 'to interpret and apply the code of ethic''.

During the colonial rule in Tanganyika, a Code of Ethics and Conduct was inherent in different laws and regulations and formally was issued for the first time in 1961 after independence (Mtasigazya, 2024). The existing literature such as (Mtasigazya, 2021, Ngilangwa, 2023 and Lameck, 2018) revealed that, these laws and regulations were not easily available to all public employees 'and people were generally unaware of expected ethical conduct. To address these inadequacy, the post-colonial government in Tanzania made available these code so that public service employees will clearly understand what is required to them in terms of ethical conduct and standards of performance acceptable in the Public Service, enhancing their ethical performance and to regain public confidence and enable the Public Servants to participate fully in fulfilling the mission of the Public Service, that is to deliver quality service to the people of Tanzania efficiently, effectively and with the highest standard of courtesy and integrity (Kapinga & Gores, 2020).

The post structural adjustment administration in Tanzania has implemented a number of reforms in order to promote ethical practices in an attempt to serve the citizenry, among of such reforms includes, public sector reforms include Civil Service Reform Programme (CSRP) implemented between 1991-1999, the reforms redefined the role of the Government, Public Service Reform Programme Phase (PSRP)-I implemented between 2000-2007 focusing on management systems (Mwaijande, 2022). The (PSRP)- II implementation between 2008-2012, the reform aim to improve public service delivery in terms of performance efficiency, quality, timeliness, and ethics and conduct in the public service (Mwaijande, 2022). Promoting integrity in the public service is one of the components to improve governance. In view of PSRP-II, public servants ought to provide services with integrity; measured by the core values of public service, including; professionalism, honesty, objectivity, impartiality, and accountability. Integrity in public service is observed when public servants do not seek or accept bribery or corruption as inducement offered in exchange of discharging their primary duties (United Republic Tanzania (URT), 2012). Again

when public servants use public offices, properties or official time for public gain not their own private gains. The meaning of the principles of ethics in the Tanzanian Public Service are prescribed in the Code of Ethics and Conduct for the Public Service as the displaying excellence in services, diligence, integrity,

accountability, respect of Law, and proper use of official information. Basically is described the ways that public servants treat their clients and colleagues with politeness and understanding the need of the vulnerable members of the public, such as the elderly, the poor, the sick and people with disabilities” (Transparency International, (TI), 2017).

In accordance to the established principles in Tanzania public service, public servants are expected to deliver services honesty, reliability, accountability and sincerity, safeguarding public funds and properties in discharging public services, also they were not soliciting or accepting bribes or not indulging in all forms of corruption” and readiness to declare property within specified procedures (Transparency International, (TI), 2017).

Furthermore, an integral part of the public sector reform there has been an institutionalization of codes of ethics and conduct in the public service to enhance its practice and compliance. The Code of Ethics and Conduct for Public Service has been made by The Ministry of State, Presidents’ Office Public Service Management under the authority of section 34 of the Public Service Act of 2002 and regulation 65 (i) of the Public Service Regulations of 2003. The primary responsibility for ethics in public service lies with the Ethics Division of the Presidents’ Office Public Service Management. The Public Service Act No. 8 of 2002 gives Presidents’ Office Public Service Management the mandate to oversee public service ethics in Ministry, Government Department and Agencies (MDAs) also in Local Government Authority (LGA) by coordinating and monitoring ethical practices in workplaces. The main objective of the Ethics Division is to enhance integrity, discipline, transparency and accountability in the public service and bring about an attitudinal change among public servants in order to restore and sustain public service ethics and conduct.

Among other things the Code of Ethics and Conduct of Public Service of 2005 states that *“in order for public service to be efficient and respected, public servants shall behave, conduct and observe the code of ethics and conduct such as punctuality, confidentiality, respect of law, discharge duty with integrity, team work, maintenance of political neutrality, impartiality, as well as loyalty”*.

This effort of putting code of ethics and conduct in the Public Service Management and Employment Policy of 1999 intends to enhance compliance of public servants on the practice of the code of ethics and conduct as the policy states, *“Public servants shall be bound by a core shared value, these core shared values shall be the basis of code of ethics that shall lay down standards of conduct and behaviors that employees in public service should observe”*.

Through these establishment, the assumption here is that, the more the establishment code of ethics and conduct to public servants as well as the transformation from public administration to new public management reforms in Tanzania which came with a new organizational culture and the development of ethical leadership training programs, the more the ethical behavior among public civil servant, however, recent studies such as (United Republic of Tanzania (URT) (2005) , Lameck, 2017 and Mtasigzya, 2021) indicated the existence of unethical practices and integrity violations in the Tanzania public service is self-evident.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Tanzania government through the Ministry of Public Service management and good governance has under taken various efforts to enhance compliance of public servants and leaders on ethics and conduct for public service as part of ethics management. These efforts include the enactment of Public Leadership Code of Ethics Cap 398, Code of Ethics and Conduct 2005, providing government leadership commitments to ethics and conducting ethics training. Moreover, the Government implemented National Anti-corruption Strategy and Action Plan phase III 2017-2022 and establishment of e-Government in the public service delivery including the e-feedback (Kimwiko, 2019). The President’s Office, Public Service Management and Good Governance (PO-PSMGG) has been investing on and promoting integrity public service. Despite these

efforts, the compliance on code of ethics and conduct for public service is still miserable in Tanzania, this fact is demonstrated in the study conducted by (Mtasigazya, 2021) which indicates that in 2022, 80% of Police Officers were involved in corrupt practices. This view is corroborated by Bourguignon & Wangwe (2023) which found that Police officers were rated as the most corrupt institutions in six out of eight participating African Countries.

Again Gray (2015) concluded that there is no doubt that corruption is rampant in all sectors of the economy, public services and politics in Tanzania. There is evidence that even some officers of government organs vested with the responsibility of administration of Justice namely the Department of National Security services such as Migration, the Police, the Judiciary and the Anticorruption Bureau are themselves immersed in corruption. Furthermore, unethical practices are underscored by Transparency International (2024) which recorded that Tanzania has seen a slight improvement as ranked position 82 out of the 180 countries and territories assessed.

Similarly, Petty corruption is part of everyday life for Tanzanians (Lamerck, 2024). In the view of the main reasons for prevalence of corruption are the mindset in the East Africa region that people are prepared to pay bribes (a form of corruption) as bribes being expected by service providers; and to hasten up services (Mutahaba, 2005). When dealing with government officers in various departments, especially healthcare, education, traffic, customs and immigration, citizens often find themselves paying bribes or making facilitation payments.

Therefore, this paper examined the factors affecting compliance of public servants on code of ethics and conduct for Public Service. This paper departs from the fore mentioned studies such as OECD (2017), Global Integrity, (2016), Bangser, & Mamdani, (2004) and Mamdani, (2004) These studies focused on examining unethical practices and corruption to public officials while others such as Gocen (2024) focused on the effects of unethical practices on primary education. Therefore, this paper examining the factors affecting compliance of public servants on code of ethics and conducts in public service specifically at Muheza district council as they were not involved in studies by fore mentioned scholars and there is no study that has been conducted at Muheza district council on the factors of affecting compliance on codes of ethics. Similarly, the study intends to assess the mechanisms put in place to ensure compliance of public servants particularly Muheza district council staff and citizens on code of ethics and conduct for public service as well as examining the effects of unethical practices on public service.

The specific objectives were as follow:

- i. To explore the factors affecting ethical practices among civil servants in Muheza district council.
- ii. To assess the mechanisms in place to ensure compliance of public servants on code of ethics and conduct in Muheza district council.
- iii. To examine the effectiveness of the measures to be taken to increase ethical practice in public service.

The research questions were as follow:

- i. What are the factors affecting ethical practices among public servants in Muheza district?
- ii. What are the mechanisms in place to ensure compliance of servants on Code of Ethics and Conduct in Muheza district council?
- iii. How are the measures are effective in increasing ethical practices to public civil servants in Muheza district council?

2. Literature Review

This chapter presents literature review based on the theory and practice of ethics in public service. It includes definition of key terms, theoretical and empirical literature. Policies, regulations and practices by the civil servants are seen as components of an integrity system meant to elevate the integrity in the public service (OECD, 2017). Ethics in public service in Tanzania therefore is about the standards of right and wrong that should guide public servants as they conduct and carry out their duties.

2.1 Conceptual overview of Code of Ethics and Conduct for Public Service

Code of ethics objectively encourage groups and individual employees to display a particular characteristic such as loyalty, honest, objectivity, integrity, transparency and accountability.

Similarly, Gilman (2005) contends that ethical codes of conduct for public servants can articulate an acceptable behavior as well as providing a vision for which the government official is striving.

Additionally, the Public Service Management and Employment Policy of 1999 stipulates that “*the ethical codes of conducts such as pursuit of excellence in service, loyalty to the government, diligence to duty, impartiality in service, integrity, respect for the law and proper use of the official information just to mention few are essential aspects to be adhered by public servants*”. Therefore, in this research paper, code of ethics and conduct of public service means set of standards such as respect of human rights, perform diligently, promote transparency and accountability, integrity and objectivity which will enable public servants to participate fully in fulfilling the mission of public service to deliver quality services to Tanzanians efficiently, effectively and with the highest standards of courtesy and integrity. On the other hand, civil servant is construed to mean Muheza district council staff who are remunerated by government and working in local government departments. Compliance of public servants on code of ethics and conduct of public service, entails assessing whether public servants adhere to the standards and rules of code of ethics and conduct for public service in Tanzania.

2.2 Theoretical Overview

There are various theories which explain about ethics in public service, such as the right theory, the fairness and justice theory, common good theory, utilitarian theory and deontological theory of ethics. However, Perlman, Reddick & Demir, (2023) discussed out two relevant approaches to understanding and managing ethics conduct to civil servants namely compliance approach and integrity approach.

The integrity approach focuses on internal control i.e. self-control exercised by each individual with organization (Huberts, 2018). The internal control mechanism consists of two components (Ayagre, & Aidoo-Buameh, 2017). One component is the public servant’s moral judgment capacity, which can be strengthened in two ways: by learning and understanding the necessary values and norms and by developing the skills in ethical decision making, needed to apply those values particularly when they conflict with one another in daily practice. The other component of internal control is moral character: the intrinsic will to act upon judgments reached through ethical decision-making (Bawole, & Sakyi, 2009). Integrity management focus on stimulating moral character and improve ethical decision- making skills through interactive training sessions, workshops, ambitious codes of values, individual coaching, and similar means.

On the other side, compliance approach to ethics management emphasizes the importance of external controls on the behavior of public servants. It prefers formal and detailed rules and procedures, and ultimately aims at a situation in which “the individual ethical choice is limited to choosing to follow the rules (the ethical thing to do) or to violate them by commission or omission (unethical acts)”. The focus of this approach are legislation, strict behavioral ethics codes and other rules, extensive control mechanisms, and control institutions with extensive powers which are not stated by the fore mentioned theories. Thus, for the purpose of this study compliance approach examined the existing code of ethics for public service and how other mechanisms put by Tanzania government to ensure compliance of public servants on code of ethics are followed to enhance ethical practices among Muheza district council Staff.

2.4 Empirical Studies

Langseth, Stapenhurst & Pope, (1997), noted that when Transparent international (TI) was established in the early 1990s the guiding philosophy was to fight corruption by building a country’s ‘national integrity system.’ More than a decade later, he concluded that no matter how hard we work trying to strengthen public institutions and implement international standards, little seems to change. This little change was manifested because globally the effectiveness of institutions, whether formal organizations or established

practices, relies heavily on the integrity and competence of the people within them at the same time a strong institution with corrupt or incompetent leaders can fail to function properly, leading to negative outcomes like corruption, a decline in public trust, and a failure to provide essential services. This is common as most of policies, laws and regulations enacted globally are very strong as far as unethical practice is concern but corruptions and other forms of unethical practices still prevails in public institutions. Pope, 2008 added that: *‘it does not really matter how strong one’s institutions are if the wrong people are inside them’*.

The Global Business Ethics Survey (GBES) a large-scale survey conducted by the ethics and compliance initiative that gathers data from thousands of employees worldwide about their experiences with workplace ethics. It tracks key metrics like pressure to compromise standards, observed misconduct, reporting of misconduct, and retaliation to assess the overall ethical climate within organizations. Recent reports in 2023 observed that 65% of global respondents observed misconduct, a concerning indicator of ethical lapses. 28% of respondents felt pressure to compromise ethical standards, which is strongly correlated with observing misconduct, 72% of those who observed misconduct reported it, 46% of those reporters faced retaliation, which erodes trust and discourages future reporting. The survey focus at global level and have argued that there appear not to have any in-depth examination of the conduct of the codes of ethics and related organizational ethics in public sector organizations (Sikika,2010). Therefore, the findings limiting code of conduct and employees’ behavior and compliance is not very strong.

The Transparency International (2023) study was able to identify only a weak link between the existence of ethical codes and employee’s behavior where concluded that when there is code of conduct in place it is not necessarily or does not guarantee the compliance of employees on ethical codes of conduct. Therefore, this scholar did not explore the factors for noncompliance of codes of conduct at Muheza district council, which this paper intends to untangle.

In East Africa with reference to the ethical conduct among Ugandan public officials, the findings are mixed; while a formal code of ethics exists, systemic issues like corruption, political interference, and inadequate monitoring hinder its full implementation (Kpundeh, 2017). In Kenya, petty bribery, embezzlement, and extortion, particularly in public services like healthcare, education, and business registration are common forms of unethical practices among public servants. While the government has made anti-corruption efforts, including new legislation and enforcement campaigns, the implementation and results are often seen as insufficient to curb the problem effectively.

According to Transparency International, since 2020, Kenya has remained among the top ten most corrupt countries in the world. During the period, the transparency index of the county has generally declined. Whereas in 2020 Kenya's transparency rating was 31 with a change of -1 since last year and it ranks 126 out of 180 countries, in 2023. Kirwa (2018) added that, the adoption of multiparty has not contributed to good governance as the country continued to deterioration on the level of accountability among public officials. This study confined itself on examining the effectiveness of multiparty politics in restoration of ethical practices among the public officials, thus this study will examine the causes of unethical practices among public servants in Muheza district council, and mechanisms put in place to ensure ethical practices in public services.

For the case of Tanzania various studies conducted concerning ethical practices among public servants, for example, Mtahaba (2005) on corruption in Local Authorities in Tanzania revealed that as long as working conditions are not improved especially for primary school teachers, health workers, ward executive officers, police officers and village executive officers, corruption will always persist. Therefore, this study has not stated explicitly other factors on non-compliance on Code of Ethics for public servants as the study confined itself on working condition.

In the same line Mazana, (2022), on petty corruption in health services in Dar es Salaam revealed that bribery for services, theft and sale of medicines, diverting patients to private facilities, and the acceptance of "gifts" to secure better treatment. This practice leads to reduced service quality, increased patient distrust, and forces the poor to abandon treatment, as seen in studies at hospitals like Mwananyamala Hospital. Mndolwa, (2018) added that bureaucratic procedure in provision of health services if will not be addressed corruption will persist as health services provider use that procedure to solicit and take bribe. But (Mazana,

2022 and Mndolwa, 2018) have not stated clearly other causes of non-compliance of health workers on code of ethics and conduct for public service. However, these studies did not state explicitly factors affecting compliance of public servants on code of ethics and conduct for public services as it confined itself to corruption as manifestation of unethical behavior that necessitate further study to explore other causes constituting to unethical practices in public sector at different setting.

Therefore, this paper intends to examine the factors affecting compliance of public servants on code of ethics and conduct for Public Service. This study departs from the fore mentioned studies such as Masana (2022), and Mndolwa, (2018), their study mainly focused on examining unethical practices and corruption on health sector while Transparency International (2023) focused on existing corruption practices such as impunity for corrupt officials, restricted civic space, and limited access to justice and Menzel (2007) focus on ethics management internationally. Therefore, this paper examined the factors affecting compliance of public servants on codes of ethics and conducts in public service specifically at Muheza district council as they were not involved in studies by fore mentioned scholars.

3. Methodology

This section presents methods and procedures that were used in gathering information relevant to the study. It covers research design, target population, sample size and sampling procedure, data collection, data gathering instruments, validation of instruments and data processing and analysis procedures.

The study was conducted at Muheza district council in Tanga Region. Muheza district council was selected in this study because is one of the district council in which studies on compliance of public servants on code of ethics has not been conducted while complaints from public on poor service delivery are prevailing. For that matter, the area is very advantageous for the study because the public service sector including local governments carry high corruption risks in Tanzania, for example bureaucratic procedures for licenses and building permits are burdensome, time consuming and prone to corruption. District officials suffer from a lack of resources and weak institutional capacities, poorly staff trained and political interference. Civil servants are furthermore, unsatisfactory paid making them even more susceptible to corruption (Desta, 2019). Indeed, gifts and other bribes are perceived to be widespread when applying for public utilities and permits.

In this study, the target population comprises government staff in Muheza district council. This study involved 70 respondents selected by using random sampling and purposive sampling techniques from different department at the council. Their choice is based on the fact that each category of respondent has different insights, information and experiences related to unethical practice among the public servants. Thus, in each ward 35 respondents were selected at the council staff and other 35 respondents from citizens. This is because the researcher on her own judgment selected them accordingly as they pose some particularly and appropriate characteristics required for the study objective.

Table 1: Sample Size and Composition

Categories of respondents	Projected		Actual	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Council officials	40	50	35	44
Ordinary Citizens	40	50	33	41
Total	80	100	68	85

Source: Field data, October, 2025

4.1 Data Collections Methods

In this study where the main interest is to examine factor affecting compliance of public servants on ethical code of conducts in-depth interviews were well suited, these methods was complemented by documentary review. The use of multiple methods was done intentionally because no single method is adequate in itself in collecting valid and reliable data on a particular problem.

In this paper semi structured interview was used. The advantage of using this method is that it conforms to the qualitative approach and facilitates the required level of interaction between the researcher and respondents. Secondary sources provide interpretation and analysis of primary sources. This paper used the necessary books, journals, relevant official reports, statistics, and records of relevant information concerning compliance of public servants on code of ethics.

Data collected from the field were analyzed thematically. This is the method used to analyze data from qualitative researches. With the outcomes of understanding deeply the problems under investigation. Therefore, findings of the paper were subjected primarily to qualitative and statistical analysis with the application of Statistical Package for Social Sciences.

5. Presentation of the Findings and Discussions

This sub-section presents the demographic characteristics of respondents and their influence on the findings of the paper.

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondent

The characteristics of respondents are identified based on demographic and social, where by demographic characteristics are based on age and social characteristics are based on gender and level of education respectively. The study involved 80 respondents who were representing two categories namely; Muheza district council staff 35 (44percent), and Citizens from Muheza district council from three wards namely Magila, Mbaramo and Masuguru , their total was 33 (41percent).

5.1 Age of Respondents

The age group shows that 20 (25percent) of respondents' age is between 35 and 44 years. The next age group forming 40(50 percent) is made up of respondents whose age is 45 and above years. The third age group forming 20 (25 percent) is made up of respondents whose age is between 25 and 34 years. The findings suggest that respondents aged from 35 and above were aware of public service code of ethics than younger respondents because most of aged respondents had undergone various capacity building training that have facilitated them to be aware with public service code of ethics. The study revealed that Muheza district council staff with the age of 18 and 24 years as well as 25 and 34 years of age had not attended even induction training on adhering to public ethics when they were employed at Muheza district council, thus they are performing their duties using their own experience and by leaning organization culture only. All respondents were adults and were all able to provide down exactly the causes which hinder ethical practices by public servants at Muheza district council level.

5.2 Gender of Respondents

The study considered the gender of the respondents in order to establish between men and women who were aware on the existing of public service code of ethics and the causes which hinder ethical practices by public servants. These respondents differed in gender. In order to analyze the population involved in the study, respondents were categorized by their gender as 35 (44percent) were male and 33(41percent) were female. From these findings the sample were obtained from both male and female respondents. The implication that one drawn from data is that a good number of men were generally equal in numbers to women who were public servants at Muheza district council. The study revealed that men and women were aware of causes of dismal compliance of public servants on code of ethics and conduct for public service as it is indicated in the further pages.

5.3 Education of Respondents

It is believed that the level of education contributes a lot in making people aware of their profession ethics which are more related with code of ethics for public services. The more the one educated is the higher the possibility of being competent in performing duties which is one aspect of code of ethics for public service that is diligence. Education is crucial to improve performance, reducing poverty, improving general health, and enabling people to play their full part in their communities and nation by delivering services with integrity, accountability, loyalty, and respect of law and with proper use of official information. Table 2: shows various levels of education for respondents involved in the study.

Table 2: Education of Respondents

Education Category	Frequency	Percentage
Primary education	4	6
Secondary education	20	29
Diploma education	12	18
Bachelor Degree	29	43
Master's Degree/ Post Graduate Diploma	3	4
Total	68	100

Source: Field data, October, 2025

Table 2 revealed that respondents who were involved in this study are educated enough, only 6 percent did not have post primary education. This gave a research an opportunity to find a reliable and validity data from respondents as their level education influence their understanding of the complex questions asked, ability to articulate their opinions, their ability to provide accurate responses, and their potential socioeconomic status, which were all important variables in this study. On this base for civil servants at Muheza district council are aware of their profession code of ethics as well as the causes of disappointing code of ethics and conduct for public service. However, yet still compliance of these public servants is miserable due to number of reasons such as low salaries in relation to cost of life, shortage working facilities, poor working environment, lack of nationality and moral decay of public servant as it is discussed below.

5.4 The Factors Which Hinder Ethical Practices in Public Services

The first objective of this study was to explore the factors which hinder ethical practices in public service with reference to public servants in Muheza district Council. The study had a total number of sixty-eight respondents who were interviewed and various causes were highlighted which have accelerated to dismal compliance of public servants on Code of Ethics. In order to know the causes which, hinder ethical practices in public service at Muheza district Council, the researcher started by asking respondents about the causes of unethical practices among public servants. A total of 68 respondents were interviewed in order to get their responses with regard to the causes of un- ethical practices among public civil servants in Muheza district council.

The findings revealed that thirty-four respondents (50percent) respondents had the view that low incentives for supporting staff and officers in public service is a critical factor for unethical practices among public officials in Muheza district council, as when one assesses the salary in relation to the increasing cost of life it encouraged one to demand the bribe from citizens who seek services. Respondents cite some cases like low salary of some of Muheza district Council staff whereby the low cadre with certificate, their basic salary ranged from Tsh. 380,000/= to 500,000/= while diploma holder to bachelor degree basic salary ranged from Tsh 500,000/= to ,1200,000/= where as the top cadre's basic salary ranged from Tsh.1,500,000/= to 3,000,000/= and above. From the findings above, it shows that low cadre's salary is approximately six times to the salary of top cadre which to large extent hinder accountability of low cadre of the council.

Additionally, twenty respondents (29.4 percent) of all respondents (N=68) said that other form of motivation such as promotion, attending training, workshop, carrier development and allowances were not provided to employees based on merit system rather on favoritism, nepotism, religious discrimination, selfishness, and tribalism, this fact discourage staff to perform their duties diligently. Moreover, these respondents revealed that apart from lack of motivation (poor working condition and lack of working facilities) were cited the causes which affect compliance on Code of Ethics as pursuit of excellence in service was not achieved as a result public servants were misusing official information for private gain. The existing literature such as (Karakose, 2014, Saxena, 2017 and Ombanda,2018) revealed that, nepotism and favoritism and discrimination negatively affect civil servant performance by lowering morale, reducing productivity, and

eroding trust and fairness as they create a toxic work environment where employees feel their hard work is overlooked in favor of personal connections, leading to dissatisfaction, higher turnover, and a perception that those favored are less competent regardless of their actual skills. Ultimately, this influence unethical practices as mentioned above.

On the other hand, responses from of all respondents (N=68) said that incompetent management which was associated with lack of accountability, lack of training related to code of ethics, lack of patriotism of public servants. According to Peter Principle theory, employees are promoted to their level of incompetence because promotions are based on success in a previous role, not on management potential to perform new one. . This can lead to competent individuals becoming incompetent managers when they move to a role that requires different skills, this observed as management lacks skills on enforcement of code of ethics and conduct to their employees unfortunately increased unethical practices, as one of the respondents argued that: *‘there is no strong punishment for those who breach code of ethics and the assumption that everyone at Muheza district council was unethical had deteriorated public servants’ ethics’*.

In the same vein, fourteen respondents (20.5 percent) of all respondents (N=68) said that other causes which lead to dismal compliance on code of ethics are corruption and political interference that is to say every department in Muheza district council is corrupt, as one of the respondent had this to say: *‘when you are seeking services, you must provide a bribe. For example, when you go to a certain department to seek services, you need to provide things like lunch food so as to get such services’*. This, view reflect the studies conducted by (Ngwale, 2005, Ponsian, 2017, Kiviyiro & Mokaya,2018 and Kessy, 2020) on corruption in Local Authorities in Tanzania revealed that as long as working conditions are not improved especially for primary school teachers, health workers, ward executive officers, police officers and village executive officers, corruption will always persist. With respect to political interference, councilors and Member of Parliament in Muheza district council are performing their duties without the limit of their jurisdiction as they interfere the workings of council employees without regarding their code of conducts the following table three summarizing the findings.

Table 3: Factors Hindering Ethical Practices in Public Services Delivery

S/N	Motive	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low salary	34	50
2	Lack of motivation (poor working condition)	20	29.4
3	Political interferences and corruption	14	20.5
	Total	68	99.9

Source: Field data, October, 2025

From the above responses, the researcher noted that the respondents had different understanding of various factors affecting ethical conducts of civil servants at Muheza district council. For example, while some respondents mentioned low incentives (low salary), others said that lack of motivation, incompetent management, political interference and corruption. However, as it is shown in the table 3 above, many respondents (50percent) viewed low incentives in relation to the increasing cost of life as the major cause affecting compliance on code of ethics, while 29.4 percent of respondents considered lack of motivation attending training, promotion as well as carrier development facilities as the cause affecting l compliance on code of ethics. Whereas 20.5 percent of respondents confined themselves on political interference and corruption as a cause miserable unethical practices undermines ethical behavior in public service.

These findings in objective one clearly conformed by compliance approach to ethics management that emphasizes the importance of external controls on the behavior of public servants. That is formal and detailed rules and procedures guiding individual ethical choice (the ethical thing to do) or to violate them by commission or omission (unethical acts). The preferred instruments of this approach include legislation, strict behavioral ethics codes and other rules, extensive control mechanisms, and control institutions with extensive powers which are not stated by the fore mentioned theories.

Hence, this study indicates that incentive increase and improving motivation to staff as well as good administration, minimization and prevention of corruption should be given first priority by Muheza district council management and the Government at large. This view was supported by (Busheka and 2010, Mupandanyama & Mahlangu, 2023, Augustine, 2025) who contends that revenue collected in Local Government Councils was not used to provide services as they were misused by unethical public officials for private gain resulting into low quality of service to the public.

Apart from identifying causes of unethical practice, the study intended to know the extent of unethical practice prevailing at the council in public service provision, the findings revealed that out of 33 ordinary citizens 17 (52 percent) said that they experiences unethical practices in receiving public service at Muheza district council which included providing bribe, abusive language, delay in service delivery and While 10 respondents (30 percent) had not experience of unethical practices in receiving services at Muheza district council, where as 6 respondents (18 percent) respondents did know anything on unethical practices in public service delivery at Muheza district council. In the same line this view has been supported by (Nkyabonaki, 2019 and Pratchett, 2019) their argument based on the fact that unethical practices in public service at the council level is significant and widespread, although it can vary by location and specific department. It is a persistent issue fueled by systemic vulnerabilities and the opportunity for individuals to exploit their position for personal gain. They added that: “*corruption, nepotism, mismanagement, and abuse of power are common, leading to poor service delivery and a breakdown of public trust*”.

5.5 Mechanisms to Ensure Effective Management of Public Service Institutions

The study intended to assess the effectiveness of the mechanisms put in place to ensure compliance on code of ethics and conduct for public services at Muheza district council.

Etymologically compliance with the public service code of ethics and conduct involves adhering to a set of principles like honesty, integrity, and professionalism in all duties, with specific guidance on avoiding conflicts of interest, accepting gifts, and using public resources appropriately. Compliance is ensured through education, clear guidelines, oversight mechanisms like asset declarations, and penalties for violation.

Among of 68 civil servants who were interviewed, 35 (51 percent) of respondents revealed that the mechanisms put in place at municipal level were signing attendance register in the morning aiming to enhance punctuality and minimize absenteeism at work place, having weekly and monthly meeting at the department level, filling PEPMIS as part of performance evaluation management and establishment of integrity committees while at national level the mechanisms established were establishment of President's Office-Ethics Secretariat which is independent government department entrusted with powers to monitor the conduct of public leaders stipulated in the public leadership code of ethics Act No13 of 1995. Establishment of Prevention and Combating Corruption Bureau (PCCB) so as to prevent corruption in the public sector and private sector, establishment of the Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance with aim of protecting and promoting good governance and human rights and Ethics promotion department under the President's Office-Public Service Management in which the department has responsibility of monitoring the conduct of public servants in all MDAs and LGAs while 33 (49 percent) did not know whether there is any mechanism put in place to ensure compliance on code of ethic at both council and national levels.

In assessing the effectiveness of the mechanisms put in place to ensure ethical practices, out of a total of 68 respondents, 51, (75percent) of respondents had the view that mechanism put in place at national and Muheza district council were not effective due to conflict of interest whereby the public interest was overridden by their personal interests, inadequate financial resources, ineffective law, and lack of independence due to interference from politicians and other government departments. For instance, one

interviewee had this to say “*some of the integrity institutions are not independent as they receive directives from the politicians*” (Interview, September, 2025). In the same vein this view was supported by (Onyango, 2019 and Awodele-Fayomi 2015), arguing that little or no action in part of disciplinary authorities has always been fueling unethical activities among immoral public servants. These findings give impression that laxity in taking legal action to those who violate ethical codes of conduct hinder compliance on ethical codes of conduct.

On the other hand, 17(25 percent) of respondents said that the mechanisms put in place were effective because various public servants were strongly punished due to the breach of code of ethics, the punishment included termination of job, demotion, and others were taken to the court of law. From the findings above, it is noted that majority of respondents had the view that mechanisms put in place to ensure compliances on ethical codes were not effective. The findings are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4 Assessment of Effectiveness of Mechanisms to Enhance Ethical Practices

Effectiveness of mechanism put in place	Frequency	Percentage
Not effective	51	75
Effective	17	25
Total	68	100

Source: Field data, October, 2025

In that regard, there is an evident need to strengthen the institutions entrusted with powers to monitor the ethical conducts of public servants at municipal and national levels.

5.6 State of Ethics and Service Delivery at Kinondoni Municipal Council

The existing literature such as (Omotoso, 2014, Jordan, 2017 and Matyana & Sibiya, 2025) review the state of ethics and service delivery as a complex phenomenon with a significant gap between the recognized importance of ethical principles like integrity, accountability, and fairness, and their consistent application in practice. While ethical frameworks exist to guide service delivery in both the public and private sectors, challenges remain in ensuring these principles are consistently implemented, especially in areas like public services which involve integrating processes, people, and materials. The study intended to know the effect of unethical practices in public services delivery. The findings revealed that out of 68 respondents, 34(50 percent) had the view that to a large extent noncompliance on code of ethics has resulted to low revenue collection due to corruption. This fact is further supported by (Obicci, 2023 and Desta, 2019) who argued that there is no doubt that corruption is widespread in all sectors of the economy, public services and politics in the country. He added that: “*there is evidence that even some officers of government organs vested with the responsibility of administration of Justice namely the Department of National Security, the Police, the Judiciary and the Anti-Corruption Bureau are themselves immersed in corruption*”.

Delay of social service provision unnecessarily had made citizens to lose confidence over the government, also incorrect reports on financial utilization were provided to the citizens, whereas 18(26 percent) said that unethical practices have increased poor health services, increase of citizens’ dissatisfaction toward the general performance of the council and poor performance in education while 16(24 percent) respondents said that there was increase of land disputes due to double allocation of plots and performance of various activities were below standards like road construction. The findings are summarized in Table 5.

Table: 5. Effects of Unethical Practices on Service Delivery

S/N	Effects of Unethical Practices on Services Delivery	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low revenue collection	34	50
2	Poor performance in health, education, and other services	18	26

3	Increase land disputes	16	24
4	Total	68	100

Source: Field data, October, 2025

From the findings above, it is noted that unethical practices have resulted into low revenue collection due to corruption, delay in the provision social service such as medical which lead increase of deaths of the people as well as lose of the citizens' confidence over their government. Therefore, it is imperative to enhance and promote ethical practices in all government sectors in order to improve the wellbeing of the people and in long run to attain social economic development and restore confidence of citizens over the government.

5.7 Measures to Be Taken to Increase Ethical Practices in Public Service

In this objective, the study intended to recommend the measures to be taken to increase ethical practices in public service, the finding revealed that 20 (29 percent) respondents out of all respondents (N=68) reported that in order to promote ethical practice, incentives of employees should be increased because public servants were forced to take bribe due to financial constraints to fulfil their needs, provision of working facilities such as papers, printer, cartilage and car to facilitate officers like land officers and engineers who need to go to the field, and availability of electrical power can facilitates public servants to perform their duties diligently, additionally this group of respondents argued that improving working condition is an important aspects of encouraging staff to work effectively, as currently the offices are not conducive at Muheza District council the offices have poor ventilation.

On the other hand, 34 (50 percent) respondents out of all respondents (N=68) had these to say, strengthening public institutions entrusted with powers to monitor the conduct of public servants (Watch dog institutions) such as Ethics promotion department under Presidents' Office Public Service Management, Presidents' Office Ethics Secretariat, as well as Presidents' Office, Prevention and Combating Corruption Bureau is among measures to promote ethical practices and compliance of public servants on code of ethics, and to be accountable public servants who were proved to breach code of ethics is an important attribute in order to enhance ethical practice in public services. This has been corroborated by Choi (2023) who argues that: *“strong ethics institutions have to be supported at the highest levels of government if any ethics management strategies are to succeed”*. These findings corroborate with Transparency International (2017) who rightly found that more than 8,000 private-sector employees across 14 countries found that firms with a strong ethical culture outperformed in customer satisfaction, employee loyalty, innovation, adaptability, and growth compared with those operating in a weak ethical culture.

On top of that 8 (12 percent) respondents of all 68 respondents viewed that minimizing political interference from some of Members of Parliament and Councilors is among the measures to promote ethical practices in public service, Seminars and workshops concerning code of ethics should be provided to public servant and politicians so as to reduce unethical practices among public servants. Additionally, 6 respondents (9 percent) viewed provision of motivation and other incentives such as breakfast, lunch allowance and having computerized system of record keeping is among measures to be taken to enhance ethical practices.

Again, containing ethics subject in education curriculum so as ethics to be imparted to children from kindergarten school to university level is valuable thing in building future generation for socio- economic development. As formal training of ethics in educational institutions is essential in fostering ethical conduct in public sector and in the entire community.

Based on the findings the researcher gets the picture that improving salary and working condition strengthening watch dog institutions, minimizing political interference and provision of motivation and incentives like promotion when they deserve, lunch allowances and moral incentives like recognition were important in effective and efficient service delivery to the public.

Based on a review of the available literature and assessment of selected area of this study it is seen that compliance of public servants on code of ethics would be a better tool for efficient and effective service

delivery in Tanzania public sectors as code of ethics instill discipline in the profession, ensure professionalism and integrity of its members, maintain public trust, and remind the public servants on what to do and what not to do.

5.8 Conclusion and Recommendations

The general objective of this study was to examine the compliance of public servants on code of ethics at Muheza district council. The study has four specific objectives namely, to explore the causes which hinder ethical practices in public service with reference to Muheza district council, to examine the mechanisms put in place to ensure compliance on code of ethics at Muheza district council, to examine the extent in which dismal compliance on code of ethics by public servants affects public service delivery at Muheza district council and to recommend the measures to be taken to increase ethical practice in public service.

For the case of the factors which hinder ethical practices it is revealed that low incentives compared to the increase cost of life is one aspect which lower ethical practices as according to findings, 50% viewed low salary as hindrance of ethical practices, followed by lack of motivation (poor working conditions), corruption as well as political interference. On the other hand, mechanisms put in place to ensure compliance on code of ethics were found ineffective as 70% of respondents stated that there is little enforcement of code of ethics. The impact of unethical practices among council officials includes low revenue collection as 52% of respondents stated that most of revenue collected were used for private gain other effects were citizens' disappointed by their government institutions, increase of death, poor performance in education and health services.

The study recommends, to increase incentives, provision of working facilities and improve working facilities, strengthening public institutions entrusted with powers to monitor the conduct of public servants as well as strong punishment for those proved to breach the code of ethics, minimizing political interference from politicians to the provisions of public services. The researcher, recommend further study on the usefulness of ethics governing institutions in combating unethical practices in Tanzania.

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