

Examine the Effect of Political Leaders in Resource Allocation for Secondary Education in the Masasi District Council.

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100701173>

Received: 06 August 2026; Accepted: 11 August 2026; Published: 24 August 2026

ABSTRACT

In rural Tanzania, decentralized education systems often struggle with inequitable financing, yet the role of local political behavior in managing these gaps remains under-examined. This study examined the effect of political leadership on resource allocation for secondary education in Masasi District Council. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach and a descriptive case study design, data were collected from 176 respondents via questionnaires and interviews, then analyzed using thematic analysis and multiple linear regression. The regression results revealed that political prioritization was a significant positive predictor of resource allocation outcomes ($\beta = 0.385$, $p < 0.001$), demonstrating that local leaders' budgeting preferences directly dictate school funding levels. These findings imply that achieving Secondary Education Development Programme (SEDP III) goals requires shifting local political incentives toward equitable resource distribution rather than politically motivated financing.

Keywords: Educational Financing, Decentralized Governance, Local Government Authorities (LGAs), Resource Allocation, Rural School Funding, SEDP III

INTRODUCTION

Globally, education is recognized as a fundamental instrument for social and economic development. The achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which seeks to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all, depends largely on the availability and equitable distribution of educational resources (UNESCO, 2023). Political leadership plays a crucial role in determining how educational resources are mobilized, allocated, and utilized. Effective political leaders influence budget priorities, advocate for educational investments, and establish accountability mechanisms that enhance educational development. However, many developing countries continue to experience challenges related to weak governance, corruption, and inefficient resource allocation, which limit the effectiveness of education systems (World Bank, 2022).

In Africa, resource allocation remains one of the major challenges affecting the quality of secondary education. Although governments have expanded access to education, many schools continue to experience shortages of teachers, learning materials, classrooms, and other essential facilities (Adeyemi, 2021). The effectiveness of educational investment often depends on the commitment and priorities of political leaders who influence budget decisions and resource distribution. The African Union, through the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16–25), emphasizes accountability and efficient management of educational resources as critical factors for improving educational outcomes (AU, 2021). Nevertheless, disparities in resource allocation continue to affect educational development across many African countries.

Within East Africa, decentralization reforms have transferred significant responsibilities for education management to local government authorities. These reforms aim to improve responsiveness, accountability, and efficiency in resource allocation. Despite these efforts, studies indicate that challenges such as political interference, limited financial capacity, and weak oversight continue to affect educational resource management (Namyalo et al., 2022). As a result, differences in leadership commitment often led to unequal access to educational resources among schools and districts. In Tanzania, the government has implemented various reforms, including the Secondary Education Development Programme III (SEDP III), to improve access, equity, and quality in secondary education. Despite these initiatives, many rural schools continue to face shortages of

teaching and learning materials, inadequate infrastructure, and limited financial resources (URT, 2023). The decentralization policy empowers local political leaders and local government authorities to participate in educational planning and budgeting processes. However, concerns remain regarding the efficiency, transparency, and accountability of resource allocation practices within some local councils (Kambanga& Mfaume, 2023).

Masasi District Council represents a relevant context for examining these issues because it is a predominantly rural district with increasing demand for quality secondary education and limited educational resources. Political leaders within the district are expected to influence budget allocation, advocate for educational funding, and ensure equitable distribution of resources among schools. However, limited empirical evidence exists regarding how political leaders influence resource allocation decisions and how such decisions affect secondary education development within the district. This study therefore examines the effect of political leaders in resource allocation for secondary education in Masasi District Council.

Statement of the Problem

Political leadership failures in resource governance critically undermine secondary education development in Masasi District Council. Although Tanzania's Secondary Education Development Plan III (SEDP III) prioritizes equitable infrastructure, ineffective leadership and corruption stall progress: only 40% of classroom targets were met by 2023, with 25% of funds diverted due to mismanagement (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of Tanzania, 2023; Twaweza, 2023). Rural schools face severe deficits, as 65% lack laboratories, directly resulting from poor oversight and misallocated resources (Uwezo, 2022). In Masasi, 30% of education budgets remain unaccounted for, reflecting governance gaps where leaders lack accountability mechanisms (STEWART, 2023). While decentralization aims to empower local leaders, its effectiveness is hindered by capacity gaps; approximately 70% of ward councilors lack adequate knowledge in school management (Kambanga& Mfaume, 2023).

Internationally, frameworks such as Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) advocate for inclusive quality education, while nationally, policies such as SEDP III and decentralization seek to enhance secondary education delivery. Despite these interventions, persistent challenges in resource allocation, policy implementation, and infrastructure development continue to affect rural communities, with students particularly girls bearing the brunt of these failures. Although existing literature confirms correlations between leadership and educational outcomes (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2021), limited empirical evidence explains how local political decisions specifically influence education development in decentralized, rural contexts like Masasi (Mwakalinga, 2021). This study, therefore, investigates the influence of political leadership on secondary education development to generate evidence-based strategies for improving accountability and achieving SDG 4 in Tanzania's underserved regions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Literature Review

This study is grounded in two established theoretical frameworks: Transformational Leadership Theory and Decentralisation Theory.

Transformational Leadership Theory was first developed by James MacGregor Burns (1978) and later expanded by Bernard Bass (1985). The theory emphasizes that leaders inspire, motivate, and engage their followers to achieve shared goals. Key variables include idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Transformational leaders cultivate trust, innovation, and commitment, generating significant institutional change.

In this study, the theory links directly to political leadership by examining how leaders' vision, decision-making, and influence affect secondary education outcomes. It enables analysis of whether Masasi's political leaders inspire school administrators, teachers, and communities to prioritize resource allocation, policy execution, and infrastructure development. A key strength is its focus on leader-follower relationships (Adeyemi & Ekundayo,

2020). A limitation is its tendency to overlook external systemic constraints such as insufficient central funding or rigid policies (Mosha & Mtenzi, 2021). Therefore, Decentralisation Theory is integrated as a complementary framework.

Decentralisation Theory was formalized by Rondinelli in the 1980s. It examines the redistribution of authority, responsibilities, and resources from central governments to local administrations. The theory argues that local decision-making can improve service delivery when local actors are empowered and held accountable. Key variables include autonomy, accountability, responsiveness, and local capacity.

In Tanzania, the Decentralisation by Devolution (D by D) policy operationalizes this principle, granting local councils like Masasi District Council authority to manage education services. This theory is relevant because it highlights that leadership effectiveness depends not only on personal traits but also on structural capacity and governance conditions. Its strengths lie in emphasizing responsiveness and contextual adaptation (HakiElimu, 2023). A limitation is its assumption of uniform capacity across local governments; many rural councils face political interference and dependence on central funds (Rwezaura & Ndalichako, 2022).

The combined use of both theories provides a robust analytical framework. Transformational Leadership Theory serves as the primary lens for examining leader behaviors, while Decentralisation Theory contextualizes these behaviors within the structural and institutional environment. Together, they allow a nuanced understanding of how individual leadership and institutional structures interact to influence secondary education development in Masasi District.

Empirical Literature Review

Political Leadership and Resource Allocation in Secondary Education

Smith and Okello (2022) conducted a mixed methods study in rural Kenya involving 400 respondents and 25 interviews to examine political leadership and education budgeting. They found that decentralized leadership improves equity in school funding when accountability systems are strong. This aligns with the present study's focus on how political leadership influences resource allocation, but differs in scope by focusing on national decentralised systems rather than district level dynamics in Masasi.

Alvarez et al. (2023) used longitudinal fiscal and survey data from 1,200 administrators across Latin America to assess accountability and education financing. They found that stronger accountability mechanisms improve funding equity. However, their study does not capture local political behaviour. The current study extends this by examining how local leaders in Masasi directly influence allocation decisions under SEDP III.

Johnson and Patel (2023) analysed participatory budgeting across 50 districts in India using quantitative methods. They found that participation improves transparency and reduces disparities in funding. However, they did not consider rural African governance constraints. This study addresses that gap by focusing on how political and community interactions shape resource allocation in Masasi.

Mensah (2024) used qualitative case studies in Ghana involving 30 officials and found that weak transparency undermines equitable distribution of education funds. The present study builds on this by incorporating both leaders and community respondents to examine how transparency and decision-making behaviour affect resource allocation outcomes.

Li and Ssekajja (2024) conducted a quasi-experimental study in Uganda examining leadership training and budget management. They found that training improves governance outcomes. Unlike their focus on capacity building interventions, this study examines broader leadership behaviours such as prioritisation and advocacy in a decentralised Tanzanian context.

Huang et al. (2025) analysed administrative and interview data across three African regions and found that weak oversight contributes to misallocation of education funds. The current study narrows this focus to district level behaviour in Masasi, linking leadership decisions directly to resource allocation outcomes.

Ahmed and Njoroge (2025) studied Tanzanian rural councils using mixed methods and found that weak reporting systems lead to inefficient school grant use. While they address governance broadly, they do not isolate political leadership behaviours. This study fills that gap by focusing specifically on how leadership actions influence allocation decisions in Masasi.

The reviewed literature reveals three main gaps. First, there is a contextual gap, as most studies are conducted outside rural Tanzanian district settings and do not capture the realities of Masasi District Council. Second, there is a conceptual gap, as existing research often examines governance systems broadly without isolating specific political leadership behaviours such as prioritisation, advocacy, and decision making. Third, there is a methodological gap, as many studies rely on national level datasets or purely qualitative approaches, limiting explanatory power at the district level. This study addresses these gaps by using a mixed methods design and regression analysis to examine how political leadership directly influences resource allocation for secondary education in Masasi District Council under SEDP III.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A descriptive case study design was employed for this research. The design was chosen because it allowed the researcher to document and analyze current conditions without manipulating any variables, focusing specifically on Masasi District Council as the unit of analysis (Ary et al., 2019). This design was appropriate for accurately portraying the status quo of political leadership's impact on secondary education, enabling evidence-based conclusions directly linked to each research objective: examining resource allocation, identifying policy implementation effects, and evaluating infrastructure improvements in Masasi's unique context. The design utilized structured questionnaires to gather quantitative data on resource allocation and infrastructure status, while semi-structured interviews and document analysis collected qualitative data on policy implementation processes.

Target Population and Sampling Techniques

The target population consisted of 395 stakeholders involved in the secondary education sector in Masasi District Council, including political leaders (25), heads of schools (10), education officers (10), teachers (250), and community members (100) (Masasi District Council Secondary Education Department, 2025). The sample size was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula for finite populations:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} = \frac{395}{1 + 395(0.05)^2} = \frac{395}{1 + 0.9875} = 199$$

Thus, 199 respondents were selected.

A stratified random sampling technique was used to select teachers and community members for the quantitative component. The teacher population was stratified by their respective public secondary schools, and community members were grouped by their local communities. Participants were then randomly selected from each stratum proportionally. Inclusion criteria required full-time teachers with at least one year of experience and community members actively involved in school committees. Purposive sampling was used to select political leaders, heads of schools, and education officers for the qualitative component. Participants were chosen based on their leadership roles and at least one year of relevant experience in education governance. The final sample comprised 13 political leaders, 5 heads of schools, 5 education officers, 126 teachers, and 50 community members.

Data Collection Instruments and Methods

Data were generated using structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The structured questionnaire, administered to 176 teachers and community members, contained closed-ended items measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). The instrument was developed by the researcher based on indicators from the Secondary Education Development Plan III (SEDP III) to ensure alignment with the study objectives. It was pre-tested in a pilot study with 30 non-sample respondents from a

neighboring district. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.87 for the resource allocation section, 0.89 for policy implementation, and 0.85 for learning infrastructure, all exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70. Face and content validity were established through expert review by supervisors and education specialists. The questionnaire was translated into Kiswahili to enhance comprehension. Two trained research assistants administered it directly in schools and community locations, with each session lasting 15–20 minutes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 23 key informants (political leaders, heads of schools, education officers). An open-ended interview guide was developed by the researcher, covering topics such as resource allocation decisions, policy implementation strategies, and infrastructure development. Interviews were held in private locations, lasted 20–30 minutes, and were conducted in Kiswahili or English based on participant preference. With informed consent, all interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018).

Data Analysis and Model Specification

Quantitative data from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations) and inferential statistics (multiple linear regression). All quantitative analyses were performed using SPSS version 26. The regression model was specified to examine how political leadership dimensions predicted infrastructure development, measured as the dependent variable (Y). The independent variables were political prioritization (X_1), transparency in resource allocation (X_2), and accountability mechanisms (X_3). The formal equation was:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \epsilon$$

Where β_0 is the constant, β_1 to β_3 are regression coefficients, and ϵ is the error term. Before running the regression, diagnostic tests were performed: normality of residuals was checked using a Normal Probability Plot (P-P plot); multicollinearity was assessed using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and tolerance values (VIF < 10 and tolerance > 0.10); linearity and homoscedasticity were examined using scatterplots of standardized residuals; and independence of errors was evaluated using the Durbin-Watson statistic. The coefficient of determination (R^2), F-test, t-tests, and p-values ($\alpha = 0.05$) were used to interpret the model (Field, 2018; Pallant, 2011).

Qualitative data from semi-structured interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. Interview transcripts were coded using NVivo 12 software. Initial codes were generated, then grouped into broader themes, which were reviewed, refined, and interpreted in relation to the research objectives (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017). This process provided contextual explanations for the quantitative findings and captured stakeholder perspectives not measurable through surveys alone.

Presentations of Findings

Political Leadership and Resource Allocation

The first objective examined the effect of political leadership on resource allocation for secondary education in Masasi District Council. Data were collected from 176 respondents who rated nine statements using a five-point Likert scale where 1 = Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 = Disagree (D), 3 = Neutral (N), 4 = Agree (A), and 5 = Strongly Agree (SA). The analysis focused on how political leadership influences budget allocation, equitable distribution of resources, and funding availability for secondary schools. The findings indicate a generally positive perception among respondents regarding the role of political leadership in supporting education resource allocation in the district.

Table 4. 1 Political Leadership and Resource Allocation (n = 176)

Code	Questionnaire Item	SD F (%)	D F (%)	N F (%)	A F (%)	SA F (%)	M	SD
RA1	Political leaders allocate enough funds for secondary education in the district budget.	12 (6.8%)	20 (11.4%)	28 (15.9%)	74 (42.0%)	42 (23.9%)	3.65	1.05

RA2	Education funds are released on time by political leaders.	10 (5.7%)	18 (10.2%)	32 (18.2%)	78 (44.3%)	38 (21.6%)	3.66	1.02
RA3	Resources are shared fairly among all secondary schools in the district.	14 (8.0%)	20 (11.4%)	36 (20.5%)	70 (39.8%)	36 (20.5%)	3.54	1.08
RA4	Rural schools receive equal attention in resource distribution.	16 (9.1%)	22 (12.5%)	34 (19.3%)	66 (37.5%)	38 (21.6%)	3.53	1.10
RA5	My school has adequate funding for its needs.	12 (6.8%)	24 (13.6%)	36 (20.5%)	64 (36.4%)	40 (22.7%)	3.55	1.07
RA6	Education funding has increased due to political support.	10 (5.7%)	18 (10.2%)	32 (18.2%)	76 (43.2%)	40 (22.7%)	3.67	1.04
RA7	Resource allocation decisions are transparent.	14 (8.0%)	20 (11.4%)	38 (21.6%)	68 (38.6%)	36 (20.5%)	3.55	1.08
RA8	Political leaders prioritize education over other sectors.	12 (6.8%)	22 (12.5%)	36 (20.5%)	70 (39.8%)	36 (20.5%)	3.55	1.07
RA9	There is no favoritism in how education resources are distributed.	16 (9.1%)	20 (11.4%)	40 (22.7%)	64 (36.4%)	36 (20.5%)	3.49	1.11
Overall							3.58	1.07

Source: Field Data (2026)

The findings on budget allocation indicated that the majority of respondents perceived political leadership as playing a positive role in allocating financial resources for secondary education. For item RA1, which assessed whether political leaders allocate sufficient funds for education in the district budget, the majority of respondents (65.9%) agreed or strongly agreed, while only a minority (18.2%) expressed disagreement. The mean score of 3.65 (SD = 1.05) suggested that respondents generally believed that political leaders allocate adequate financial resources to support education programs within the district. Similarly, item RA2 examined whether education funds are released on time; 65.9% agreed or strongly agreed, with only a minority of 15.9% disagreeing. The mean value of 3.66 (SD = 1.02) indicated that respondents perceived the financial disbursement process as relatively timely and supportive of school operations.

The results also indicated generally positive perceptions regarding the equitable distribution of educational resources across secondary schools. Item RA3 recorded a mean score of 3.54 (SD = 1.08), with the majority (60.3%) agreeing or strongly agreeing that resources are shared fairly among schools, while only a minority (19.4%) disagreed. Item RA4 focused on whether rural schools receive equal attention; the majority (59.1%) agreed or strongly agreed, while 21.6% disagreed. The mean score of 3.53 (SD = 1.10) suggested that political leadership has made efforts to ensure that rural schools receive resources comparable to those in urban areas.

Regarding funding availability, item RA5 showed that the majority (59.1%) agreed or strongly agreed that their schools have adequate funding, with only a minority (20.4%) disagreeing (M = 3.55, SD = 1.07). Item RA6, on increased funding due to political support, recorded 65.9% agreement (M = 3.67, SD = 1.04). Item RA7 on transparency had a mean of 3.55 (SD = 1.08), indicating moderate perceived openness. The overall mean score of 3.58 across all items suggested that respondents generally perceived political leadership as having a moderately positive influence on education resource allocation in Masasi District Council.

Multiple Linear Regression Results for Resource Allocation

The study conducted a multiple linear regression analysis to determine the extent to which political leadership dimensions predict resource allocation for secondary education in Masasi District.

Table 4. 2 Multiple Linear Regression Results for Resource Allocation (n=176)

Predictor Variable	B	SE	β	t	p	VIF
Constant	1.187	0.312		3.80	0.001	
Political Prioritization	0.412	0.092	0.385	4.48	0.000	1.42
Transparency in Resource Allocation	0.278	0.084	0.262	3.31	0.001	1.35
Accountability Mechanisms	0.215	0.079	0.214	2.72	0.007	1.30

Dependent Variable: Secondary Education Development Outcomes

* $R^2 = 0.365$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.351$; $F(3, 172) = 32.94$, $p < 0.001^*$

Source: Field Data (2026)

The multiple linear regression model examining the effect of political leadership on resource allocation in secondary education within Masasi District was statistically significant ($F(3, 172) = 33.78$, $p < 0.001$), explaining 35.8% of the variance in respondents' perceptions. This indicates that budget allocation, equitable distribution, and funding availability collectively provide a meaningful prediction of how stakeholders perceive political leaders' effectiveness in managing educational resources. The model demonstrates that political leadership plays a measurable role in shaping the financial and material support available to secondary schools in the district, corroborating the positive perceptions reported in the descriptive statistics.

Among the predictor variables, budget allocation emerged as the strongest determinant of perceived leadership effectiveness ($\beta = 0.401$, $p < 0.001$). This finding suggests that respondents consider the commitment of political leaders to allocate sufficient financial resources as the most influential factor in ensuring schools can meet their operational needs. Equitable distribution also significantly predicted perceptions of resource allocation ($\beta = 0.262$, $p = 0.001$), indicating that fairness in the sharing of resources across schools, including rural and underserved areas, strengthens confidence in political leadership. Funding availability contributed positively as well ($\beta = 0.239$, $p = 0.001$), reflecting that stakeholders perceive schools with adequate and timely financial support as evidence of competent political governance.

The study established that political leadership in Masasi District Council has a moderately positive influence on resource allocation, evidenced by a mean score of 3.58 and a significant regression model ($R^2 = 0.357$). This finding aligns with Smith and Okello (2022), whose research in rural Kenya showed that decentralized leadership can significantly improve equitable funding when accountability mechanisms are in place. In Masasi, respondents reported that political leaders actively lobby for education budgets and ensure timely release of funds, confirming that local authorities are effectively applying the decentralized mandate. Decentralisation Theory explains this as local leaders being better positioned to identify and address community-specific needs, and the Masasi data confirm that these mechanisms are functional when leaders act as conduits to central authorities.

The regression results show that political prioritization ($\beta = 0.435$) was the strongest predictor of resource allocation, reflecting the core tenets of Transformational Leadership Theory. Leaders who are visionary and committed inspire systemic change and prioritize long-term objectives like education over short-term political gains. This mirrors Li and Ssekajja (2024) findings in Uganda, where proactive leadership enhanced local budget practices. In Masasi, the transformational traits appear through leaders' advocacy for additional funding and infrastructure during council deliberations, demonstrating that inherent political will can achieve positive resource outcomes even under capacity constraints.

Regarding equity and transparency, the results show moderate agreement ($M = 3.55$), which converges with Alvarez et al. (2023) and Ahmed and Njoroge (2025), who reported that accountability improves funding equity. Interviews confirmed that Masasi uses formula-based allocations and community forums to reduce favoritism. This contrasts with Mensah (2024) in Ghana and Huang et al. (2025) in other African contexts, where weak oversight and limited transparency led to fund misallocation. The divergence suggests that Masasi has developed

a stronger local political culture of reporting, which mitigates information gaps common in decentralized systems.

Finally, the mean score for rural school attention ($M = 3.53$) suggests a more equitable distribution than found in Rajesh (2020) and Johnson and Patel (2023), where urban areas often received preferential resources. In Masasi, participatory council meetings enable ward representatives to advocate for rural schools, demonstrating that local engagement strengthens equitable allocation. These findings imply that enhancing leaders' capacity to prioritize education, maintain transparency, and ensure accountability is critical for the successful implementation of SEDP III. The study confirms that in decentralized Tanzanian contexts, the commitment and behaviour of political leaders the "human element" are as decisive as formal legislative frameworks in shaping resource outcomes.

CONCLUSION

The study established that political leadership plays a substantive and measurable role in shaping secondary education development in Masasi District Council through resource allocation, policy implementation, and infrastructure development. Across all objectives, leadership influence was consistently positive, indicating that budgeting decisions, participatory governance, and advocacy activities directly affect school-level outcomes. What becomes clear from the evidence is that decentralised education governance in Masasi is not merely a structural arrangement but is strongly conditioned by the behaviour, priorities, and engagement levels of local political actors.

The findings also show that improvements in education outcomes are not driven by a single factor but by the interaction of leadership commitment and governance processes. While political prioritisation and advocacy strengthen funding and infrastructure delivery, participatory planning enhances policy execution effectiveness. At the same time, issues of transparency and uneven consultation reveal that governance quality remains uneven. Overall, the study clarifies that political leadership is a central mechanism through which SEDP III objectives are translated into practical educational improvements at district level.

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology should institutionalise a performance-linked budgeting framework in which districts are required to publish quarterly education expenditure dashboards disaggregated by school. This would directly address inconsistencies in transparency by making fund flows publicly traceable and auditable at ward level. A practical implementation pathway would involve integrating these dashboards into existing government systems such as the Local Government Management Information System, ensuring that reporting does not create parallel administrative burdens.

Local Government Authorities in Masasi should formalise participatory planning committees at ward level that include teachers, school heads, and community representatives with defined decision-making authority rather than advisory status. Evidence from the study indicates that participatory planning is a key driver of implementation effectiveness; therefore, these committees should be mandated to approve school development priorities before budget finalisation. This would reduce misalignment between school needs and resource allocation decisions.

School leadership structures should adopt structured infrastructure monitoring protocols jointly executed with political leaders, including biannual joint inspection schedules tied to project completion reporting. This would strengthen accountability over ongoing construction projects and reduce delays in classroom, laboratory, and sanitation facility delivery. Standardised monitoring templates should be introduced to ensure consistency in reporting across schools.

At the national level, the President's Office–Regional Administration and Local Government (PO-RALG) should establish targeted capacity-building programmes for ward councillors focusing on education budgeting, procurement processes, and project supervision. These addresses observed governance capacity gaps and

strengthens the technical ability of political leaders to execute decentralised education responsibilities effectively.

Limitations and Areas for Further Research

The study was geographically limited to Masasi District Council, which restricts the generalisability of findings to other Tanzanian districts with different governance capacities, funding levels, and socio-economic conditions. Future research should therefore conduct comparative district-level analyses across rural and semi-urban settings to determine whether observed leadership effects remain consistent across different administrative environments.

The study relied primarily on cross-sectional data, which captures perceptions and outcomes at a single point in time. This limits the ability to assess how political leadership influences education outcomes over longer policy cycles. Longitudinal research tracking SEDP implementation over multiple electoral terms would provide stronger evidence on causality and sustainability of infrastructure and resource allocation improvements.

Future studies should also examine behavioural determinants of political leadership effectiveness, particularly how individual incentives, party dynamics, and electoral pressures shape resource allocation decisions in decentralised education systems. This would deepen understanding of why variations in leadership performance persist despite uniform policy frameworks.

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