

A cross-sectional study on the relationship between political and administrative conflicts and service delivery in Kyenjonjo District Local Government.

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Abstract

Background

Despite the government establishing Boards and Commissions to improve the management process of the Local Government under the decentralization system in Uganda, service delivery remains weak. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between political conflicts and service delivery in Kyenjonjo District Local Government.

Methodology

The study undertook a cross-sectional survey design characterized by both qualitative and quantitative methods. The target population of the study was 75 individuals, of whom 62 were selected. The respondents were selected using simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques. Data was collected from the selected respondents using a structured questionnaire and the interview guide. (SPSS) was used for data processing and analysis.

Results

65% of the study participants were males, and 43.3% of the respondents had a bachelor's degree. A strong negative relationship was observed between political conflicts and service delivery, with a correlation coefficient of -0.714 and a significance level of $p = 0.001$. The study also found a significant negative correlation between administrative conflicts and service delivery, with a correlation coefficient of -0.694 and a significance value of $p = 0.002$. The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) said, "Service delivery in the district faces numerous challenges, primarily due to limited financial resources and delays in funding from the central government. Even when funds are released, bureaucratic bottlenecks affect implementation timelines."

Conclusion

The findings clearly demonstrate that political and administrative conflicts significantly and negatively impact service delivery in Kyenjonjo District Local Government.

Recommendation

The local government should strengthen political-administrative collaboration by establishing clear boundaries between political and technical roles to reduce interference in administrative decisions and foster cooperation in service delivery.

Keywords: Political conflicts, Administrative conflicts, Service delivery, Local government, Kyenjonjo District

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Background

Despite the government establishing Boards and Commissions to improve the management process of the Local Government under the decentralization system in Uganda, service delivery remains weak (Henry Stanley & Siraje, 2024). The system has created clashes and struggles, leading to conflicts in Local Government among local council leaders as well as appointed civil servants (Sakina, 2024). Although authority to deliver services is often

mandated at the local government level, the Power to raise local revenue is limited due to political pronouncements between RDCs, CAOs, and LCs. II, III, V, among others. This has resulted in decentralized functions, powers, responsibilities, and services to all levels of local governments, to promote democratic governance, and also to bring services closer to the people (Kiwanuka, 2012). In Kyenjonjo District local government, there are both political and elected leaders who are responsible for delivering quality services to the citizens (Isaac & Bolatito,

2024). However, on several occasions, district council meetings have ended prematurely due to conflicts (Kyenjonjo District Local Government Report, 2024). Further, there were conflicts in Kyenjonjo Taxi Park as a result of the Chief Administrative Officer and the Contract Committee awarding the revenue collection contract to relatives (Soma, 2020). Johnmary (2014) also noted declining quality of services, especially education in government-founded primary schools in Kyenjonjo District. Further, he adds that despite the existence of laws specifying the roles and responsibilities of each party in local government, disagreement is common among staff and departments regarding the procurement works, resulting in inefficiency, delays in awarding of contracts to deliver services in the district (Kyenjonjo District Performance Report, 2020).

Also, the Kyenjonjo District Local Government Performance Assessment Report (2024) indicated an overall score of 42% in service delivery, with health scoring 55%, water and environment scoring 47%. The report further showed a less than 10% decline in service delivery from the previous assessment. The works department report also indicated delays in the completion of construction of classrooms at Secondary schools and Kyamwilu Secondary School. If such conflicts are not resolved, they will cause delays in implementing new projects or programs, inefficiencies in service delivery, and a decrease in the quality of services provided. This can ultimately lead to a lack of trust and confidence in the local government, which can, in turn, result in decreased participation in local affairs and a decrease in public funds. Additionally, conflicts can lead to negative public opinion,

decreased support for local initiatives, and an overall decrease in morale among public officials. It is against this background that this study seeks to examine the relationship between political and administrative conflicts and service delivery in Kyenjonjo District Local Government.

Methodology

Research design

The study employed a correlational cross-sectional study survey design characterized by both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Study Population

The participants of the study were basically living within Kyenjonjo District, above 18 years, and of a sober mind. According to the Human Resource office, Kyenjonjo District (2022), there were 45 administrative staff at the district headquarters and 24 district councilors, and the chairperson LCV. Further, the study included the RDC, 3 opinion leaders, and the DPC. Therefore, the population of the study was 75 participants.

Sample size

The researcher used Krejcie & Morgan's (1970) table for determining the sample size. Therefore, 62 respondents were selected as respondents for the study.

Table 1: Population size, sample size

Population Category	Population	Sample Size
LCV Chairperson	01	01
Councilors	24	20
CAO	01	01
RDC	01	01
District administrators	45	36
Religious and opinion leaders	03	03
Total	75	62

Source: Kyenjonjo District Local Government (2024)

Sampling techniques

The respondents were selected using simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques. Purposive sampling was used to collect more detailed information from the CAO, RDC, Religious and opinion leaders, and

the chairperson local council five. Simple random sampling was used to avoid bias. This was used to allow all the administrators and councilors to have a chance of being included in the sample size of the study.

Data collection instruments

Data was collected from the selected respondents using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire contained both closed and open-ended questions drawn from the objectives of the study. The questionnaires were used because they collect a lot of data in a short time. In addition, a wide range of information was obtained, hence minimizing the bias of individual respondents. The questionnaires were of two sections, A and B. Section A covered the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, such as gender, age, marital status, level of education, and occupation. Section B contained questions relating to the objectives of the study.

Data collection procedure

The study followed specific steps to enable successful access or compile the necessary data from the right respondents, and this was done through first acquiring an introduction letter from the Team University Research Office, which was taken to the CAO Kyenjonjo District seeking permission to be allowed to carry out this research. The researcher then administered the questionnaire to the respective respondents, developed with the guidance of the supervisor, and pre-tested it to ensure that it was objective enough. He further made an appointment with the respondents on when, where, and at what venue they would meet to carry out data collection at an agreed-upon time. The researcher also made use of secondary data by reviewing available relevant textbooks, journal articles, periodicals, manuals, dissertations, publications, and visiting Newspapers, both international and local ones.

Validity of Instruments

The research employed the expert judgment method. After constructing the questionnaire, the researcher contacted an expert (supervisor) in the study area to go through it to ensure that it measured what it was designed to measure. And necessary adjustments were made after consultation, and this ensured that the instrument was clear, relevant, specific, and logically arranged. A content validity index (CVI) was used to measure the accuracy of the research instrument using the formula:

$$CVI = \frac{\text{The number of relevant questions}}{\text{The total number of questions}}$$

$$CVI = \frac{10}{12}$$

CVI= 0.83

Based on the expert judgment (Supervisor), 10 questions were relevant for the study, and 2 questions were not valid; the two questions were moderated to fit the study, thus a content validity index of 0.83 was obtained. According to Amin (2005), if the content validity index is greater than

0.7, then it's a good measure of validity; hence, the research instrument is valid to collect data relevant to the study, and thus was accepted.

Reliability of instruments

The study used the test-retest method to ensure reliability. Reliability of the instrument was tested using the Cronbach coefficient alpha (a), and the results indicated a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.8 was obtained and compared with 0.70 as suggested by Amin 2005). This indicated that the instruments were consistent and reliable in collecting the intended data.

Data analysis

Primary data was collected from the field through the questionnaires, which respondents returned to the researcher before analysis. Data was coded, edited, categorized, and entered into a computer program (Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) for data processing and analysis.

Univariate analysis was carried out for individual variables using mean, n, frequency tables, graphs, and standard deviation. Correlation analysis was carried out using the Pearson correlation coefficient to establish the relationship between political, staff, procurement conflicts, and service delivery. Regression analysis was done using a linear regression model to establish the effect of local government conflicts on service delivery in Kyenjonjo District.

Ethical considerations

After the approval of the research topic by the research supervisor, an introductory letter was obtained from the University, which introduced the researcher to the district, division, and village authorities. Permission to collect data was sought from the Chief Administrative Officer of Kyenjonjo District. After getting permission, 152 respondents who were above 18 years were randomly selected, and meetings were held in the study area in which the objectives of the study were clearly explained to the study participants in the language they understood very well. Written informed consent forms were supplied to them, and confidentiality of all the information about the respondents was communicated and maintained.

Informed consent

A consent form was filled out by the respondents after explaining the purpose of the study to them. Anonymity and confidentiality were strictly observed during data collection, description, and reporting of findings. Written

informed consent forms were supplied to them, and the confidentiality of all the information about the respondents was communicated and maintained.

Response rate

The sample size of the study was 62 selected technical and political staff of Kyenjonjo District local government.

Results

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Table 2: Response rate

Respondents	Questionnaires issued	Questionnaires received	Percent
LCV Chairperson	01	01	1.6%
Councilors	20	20	32.5%
CAO	01	01	1.6%
RDC	01	01	1.6%
District staff/ administrators	36	34	54.8%
Religious and opinion leaders	03	03	4.8%
Total	62	60	96.7%

Source: Primary data (2024).

Table 2 shows that 62 questionnaires were issued to the selected respondents within the Kyenjonjo District local government. However, 2 respondents (district staff) did not return the questionnaires and were absent on the day of collecting the questionnaires, hence reducing the response rate by 3.3%. Therefore, the response rate for the study was

96.7%. This was too small to change the findings of the study.

Demographic characteristics of respondents

Gender

Table 3: Gender of the respondents

Category	Frequency	Percent
Male	39	65%
Female	21	35%
Total	60	100%

Source: Primary data (2024)

Table 3 shows that 65% are males and 35% of the respondents are females. Therefore, the majority of the

stakeholders at Kyenjonjo District local government were males. Therefore, there is a gender imbalance.

Table 4: Level of education

Education level	Frequency	Percent
Secondary	11	18.3%
Diploma	20	33.3%
Bachelors	26	43.3%
Masters	3	5%
Total	60	100%

Source: Primary(2024)

Table 4 shows that 43.3% of the respondents had a bachelor's, 33.3% had a diploma, 18.3% had a secondary level of education, and 5% of the respondents had a

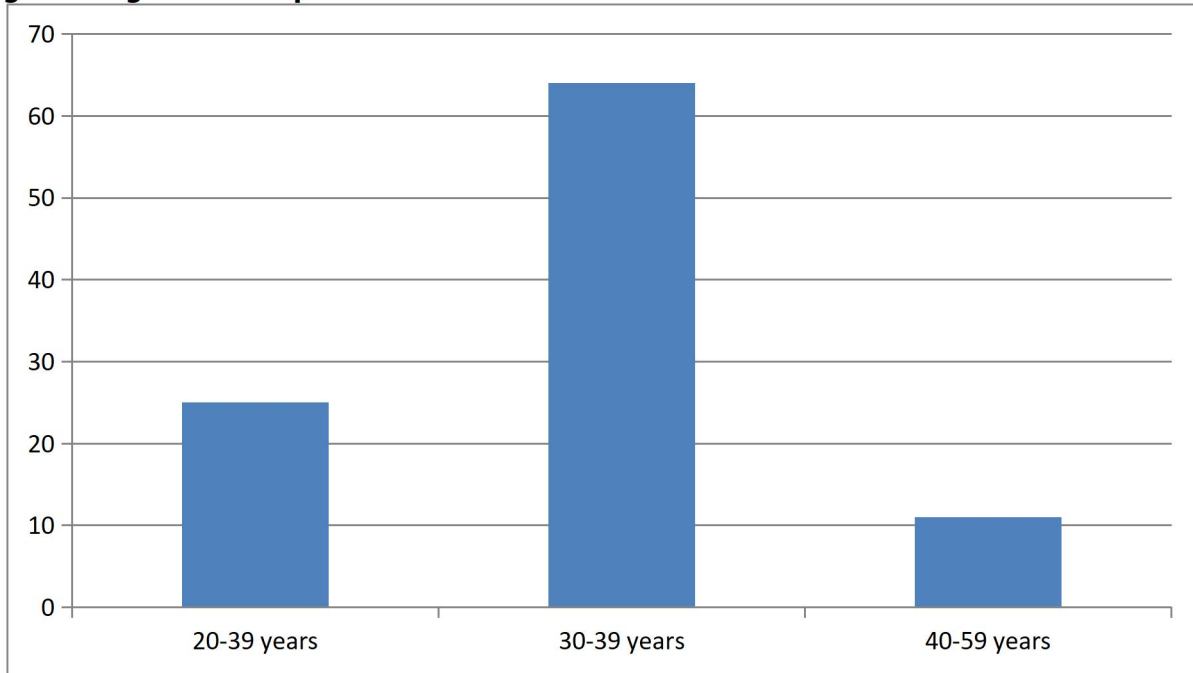
master's level of education. Therefore, the majority of the respondents were educated, hence could respond to questions easily.

Age

The respondents selected for this study were 20 years and above. This is because the Kyenjonjo District local

government employment policy doesn't allow minors. Further, no person above 59 years was selected for this study since they are considered retirees.

Figure 1: Age of the respondents



Source: Primary data (2024).

Figure 1 shows that, majority of the respondents were aged 30 to 39 years, followed by those aged 20-39 years and 40-59 years. This shows that the majority of the stakeholders in the procurement process are youthful, hence more energetic to perform procurement tasks efficiently.

Conflicts in Kyenjonjo district local government

Political Conflicts in Kyenjonjo District Local Government

This section presents findings on the nature and dynamics of political conflicts within Kyenjonjo District Local Government, as derived from responses on a five-point Likert scale. The items assessed various dimensions of political interactions and governance, including transparency, decision-making processes, conflict resolution, media influence, and leadership accountability. The results are summarized using mean scores and standard deviations, and interpretations are based on the central tendencies of the responses.

Table 5: Political conflicts in Kyenjonjo district local government

Statement	Mean	Standard deviation
Local government decision-making processes are transparent	1.248	0.235
Decisions are autocratically made by the technical wing	2.173	0.321
There are effective mechanisms in place for resolving conflicts among local government officials	2.438	0.053
Social media drives friction between political leaders within local government	4.211	0.271
Political leaders are given opportunities to participate in local government decisions	2.643	0.276
Political polarization among local government officials has increased in recent years	4.343	0.321
Disputes over resource allocation are common among local government leaders	4.054	0.327
Political party affiliations significantly influence local government decisions and conflicts	2.654	0.543
Trust in local leaders has diminished due to ongoing political conflicts	4.218	0.437
Local government officials are held accountable for their decisions and actions in the face of conflict	4.249	0.215
Local government officials frequently collaborate effectively, despite political differences	2.875	0.533
The leadership style of local government leaders contributes to the escalation of political conflicts	2.456	0.328

Source: Primary data (2024)

Table 5, the findings reveal significant concerns regarding transparency in local government decision-making, with a mean score of 1.248 (SD = 0.235), indicating that the majority of respondents strongly disagreed that decision-making processes are transparent. Similarly, the assertion that decisions are autocratically made by the technical wing yielded a relatively low mean of 2.173 (SD = 0.321), suggesting that while there is some agreement with this view, it is not strongly held across the sample.

With regard to conflict resolution mechanisms, respondents expressed skepticism, as reflected in a mean of 2.438 (SD = 0.053). This suggests that most respondents disagreed or remained neutral about the effectiveness of conflict resolution strategies among officials. Meanwhile, social media was identified as a major contributor to friction between political leaders, with a high mean of 4.211 (SD = 0.271), indicating general agreement to strong agreement.

The participation of political leaders in decision-making processes was perceived to be limited, as the statement addressing this concern received a moderate mean of 2.643 (SD = 0.276), leaning toward disagreement. Furthermore, political polarization was recognized as a growing issue, evidenced by a high mean of 4.343 (SD = 0.321), signifying a widespread perception that divisions among officials have intensified in recent years.

Respondents also acknowledged frequent disputes over resource allocation (Mean = 4.054, SD = 0.327), and

agreed that political party affiliations influence decisions and conflicts (Mean = 2.654, SD = 0.543), though this latter figure suggests a more ambivalent stance. The issue of diminishing trust in leaders due to political conflict was strongly supported (Mean = 4.218, SD = 0.437), underscoring widespread disillusionment among constituents.

On the issue of accountability, respondents generally agreed that officials are held responsible for their actions amid conflict (Mean = 4.249, SD = 0.215). However, the perception of effective collaboration despite political differences was moderate (Mean = 2.875, SD = 0.533), suggesting a division of opinion. Finally, the view that leadership styles contribute to escalating conflicts was also moderately supported (Mean = 2.456, SD = 0.328).

In summary, the data indicate a local governance environment characterized by low transparency, rising political polarization, and frequent conflict, often influenced by party affiliations and exacerbated by media dynamics. Although there is some accountability, effective collaboration and conflict resolution mechanisms appear to be weak or inconsistent.

During the interview with Respondents on Political Conflicts in Kyenjonjo District Local Government, the Chairperson, LV said, *"One of the biggest challenges we face is the power struggle between elected leaders and*

appointed technical staff. Sometimes, our decisions as political leaders are undermined or delayed by the technocrats, which creates unnecessary tension. There's also a lot of mistrust, especially when it comes to resource allocation and project implementation. Everyone is protective of their turf, and instead of working together, it becomes a blame game."

A Councilor also said, *"In council meetings, you often feel that political affiliations influence debates more than the needs of the people. There are times when some councilors oppose good proposals simply because they come from a rival faction. This kind of division weakens our ability to speak with one voice and delays key decisions. Even within committees, some members feel excluded or sidelined."*

The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) also said, *"The political environment in Kyenjojo is quite sensitive. As technical staff, we are supposed to remain neutral, but often we are accused of being partisan, especially when we enforce policies that are unpopular with certain leaders. The conflict arises when political leaders try to interfere with administrative processes. It compromises professionalism and affects staff morale."*

The Resident District Commissioner (RDC) said, *"My role is to ensure that government programs are implemented*

effectively, but sometimes political disagreements within the district council interfere with progress. Political conflicts create parallel centers of power, where leaders pull in different directions instead of working as a team. These divisions slow down service delivery and confuse the community."

The Opinion Leader (Community Elder) also noted, *"From what we see as community members, there is a lot of political fighting up there. Leaders argue in public, accuse each other on the radio, and sometimes projects stall because leaders are not cooperating. The people are tired of these conflicts; they want clean water, roads, and better health services, not endless political wrangles."*

Administrative conflicts in Kyenjojo district local government

This section presents the findings related to administrative conflicts within Kyenjojo District Local Government, as assessed through a Likert scale questionnaire. Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with various statements on a scale from 1 (Strongly Agree) to 5 (Strongly Disagree). The analysis focused on the mean, standard deviation, frequencies, and percentages for each item.

Table 6: Administrative conflicts in Kyenjojo district local government

Statement	Mean	Standard deviation
There are tensions between elected political and appointed technical staff	4.328	0.219
There are ambiguities in the job descriptions of different offices	4.561	0.329
Disputes frequently arise over the allocation and control of resources between departments	4.473	0.443
There is inadequate communication between departments	4.248	0.328
Efforts to introduce administrative reforms face resistance from staff	4.194	0.261
There are non-functional mechanisms for addressing internal disputes between staff	4.192	0.327
Staff who attempt to enforce accountability face backlash from others	4.376	0.130
Conflicts arise in the promotion of staff	4.271	0.371
Technical staff view politicians as overstepping their mandates in carrying out their administrative functions	4.219	0.328

Source: Primary (2024)

From Table 6, the findings indicate that administrative conflicts are prevalent across various aspects of governance in Kyenjojo District. The highest level of agreement among respondents was observed in the statement regarding ambiguities in job descriptions of different offices, with a mean score of 4.561 and a standard deviation of 0.329. This suggests a strong perception of unclear delineation of roles and responsibilities, which likely contributes to administrative inefficiencies and overlaps in duties.

Similarly, significant agreement was reported regarding the frequent emergence of disputes over the allocation and control of resources between departments, which had a mean of 4.473 and a standard deviation of 0.443. This implies a substantial level of interdepartmental conflict, potentially arising from competition over limited resources or a lack of transparency in resource distribution.

Another critical issue identified was the presence of tensions between elected political leaders and appointed technical staff. This item recorded a mean of 4.328 (SD =

0.219), reflecting a perceived disconnect and strained relationships between the political and technical arms of the district administration.

The findings also reveal a perceived lack of adequate communication between departments (mean = 4.248, SD = 0.328), as well as frequent conflicts arising during staff promotions (mean = 4.271, SD = 0.371). These issues are indicative of systemic weaknesses in internal communication and human resource management processes.

Resistance to administrative reforms was also noted, with a mean of 4.194 (SD = 0.261), suggesting that efforts to improve administrative performance are often met with internal resistance. In addition, the mechanisms in place to address internal disputes appear to be largely ineffective, as evidenced by a mean score of 4.192 (SD = 0.327).

Furthermore, the study found that staff who attempt to enforce accountability measures often face backlash from colleagues. This item had a relatively high level of agreement (mean = 4.376, SD = 0.130), implying that fostering a culture of accountability may be met with hostility in some instances.

Lastly, the perception that technical staff view politicians as overstepping their administrative mandates was also significant, with a mean score of 4.219 (SD = 0.328). This highlights the broader governance challenge of role interference and mistrust between different arms of local government.

During the interview, the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) said, *"One of the key issues we face is the overlapping roles between departments, which often leads to misunderstandings and duplication of work. Job descriptions are not always clearly defined or respected, and this causes friction, especially between senior officers. Communication channels also need strengthening important information sometimes doesn't flow efficiently, which fuels suspicion and delays in implementation. Additionally, when staff push for accountability, they may*

face resistance or isolation from colleagues, which undermines our efforts to enforce discipline and performance standards."

The LCV Chairperson said, *"We've seen recurring conflicts between the political and technical arms of the district. Some of these stem from poor coordination and unclear boundaries of authority. For example, technical officers may proceed with activities without proper consultation with the elected leadership, which creates tension. There are also internal rivalries within the administration itself departments compete instead of collaborating. This affects the overall functionality of the local government and slows down service delivery."*

The Resident District Commissioner (RDC) said, *"Administrative conflicts in Kyenjonjo are a serious concern. From my oversight perspective, the lack of coordination among technical staff and between the technical and political teams weakens the district's performance. Some officers seem to work in silos, and when disputes arise, there are no effective internal mechanisms to address them. There is also a culture of fear around whistleblowing staff who try to expose inefficiencies or misconduct are often victimized. This creates a toxic work environment where problems are swept under the rug instead of being resolved constructively."*

Service delivery in Kyenjonjo district local government

This section presents the findings related to service delivery in Kyenjonjo District Local Government. Data were gathered using a five-point Likert scale, where 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Disagree, and 5 = Strongly Disagree. The analysis was conducted using mean scores and standard deviations to assess the overall perceptions of service delivery performance by the local government.

Table 7: Service delivery in Kyenjonjo district local government

Statement	Mean	Standard deviation
The local government provides services promptly	2.421	0.258
Public services offered by the local government meet the needs of the community	2.091	0.151
Roads and infrastructure are well-maintained by the local government.	4.093	0.101
Health services provided by the local government are of acceptable quality	2.215	0.214
Water and sanitation services are consistently available and reliable.	1.225	0.123
Education services provided by the local government are accessible and effective	2.365	0.324
Citizens are adequately informed about the services offered by the local government	3.252	0.325
The quality of local government services has improved over the past two years	1.064	0.127
Services are delivered fairly and equitably to all community members.	1.734	0.186

Source: Primary data (2024)

From Table 7, the results indicate mixed perceptions of service delivery across various sectors. One of the most positively rated aspects was water and sanitation services, which received a mean score of 1.225 (SD = 0.123), suggesting a strong level of agreement among respondents that these services are consistently available and reliable. Similarly, the statement that "the quality of local government services has improved over the past two years" was also positively viewed, with the lowest mean score of 1.064 (SD = 0.127), indicating a notable perception of recent improvements in service delivery.

Further positive sentiment was expressed regarding equity in service delivery, as reflected in the statement "services are delivered fairly and equitably to all community members," which had a mean of 1.734 (SD = 0.186). This suggests that respondents feel services are distributed fairly among residents, without bias or discrimination.

On the other hand, certain areas reflected less satisfaction. The statement "education services provided by the local government are accessible and effective" had a mean score of 2.365 (SD = 0.324), and "health services provided by the local government are of acceptable quality" had a mean of 2.215 (SD = 0.214). While still within the "agree" range, these scores indicate moderate satisfaction, with room for improvement in both sectors.

The provision of services promptly was also moderately rated, with a mean of 2.421 (SD = 0.258), reflecting that although some services are delivered on time, delays are still perceived in certain cases.

Notably, the maintenance of roads and infrastructure was rated poorly, with a relatively high mean score of 4.093 (SD = 0.101), indicating general disagreement that roads and infrastructure are well-maintained. This suggests a significant service delivery gap in the area of physical infrastructure development and maintenance.

Additionally, the statement "citizens are adequately informed about the services offered by the local government" recorded a neutral mean score of 3.252 (SD = 0.325), indicating uncertainty or inconsistency in public communication and awareness efforts by the local government.

Overall, while certain sectors, such as water and sanitation, and equitable service provision, were positively rated, other areas, including road infrastructure, communication, and some social services, reflect moderate to low satisfaction. These findings suggest a need for targeted improvements in specific service sectors, enhanced transparency, and improved citizen engagement to ensure more comprehensive and responsive service delivery in Kyenjonjo District.

The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) said, *"Service delivery in the district faces numerous challenges, primarily due to limited financial resources and delays in funding from the central government. Even when funds are released, bureaucratic bottlenecks affect implementation timelines. In some sectors, such as road maintenance and health, the demand for services far exceeds our current capacity. Additionally, internal conflicts and coordination gaps between departments sometimes result in duplicated efforts or neglected areas. This weakens our ability to deliver services efficiently and consistently."*

The LCV Chairperson also said, *"The public continues to raise concerns about the state of service delivery, and rightly so. Many of the roads are in poor condition, access to clean water is still a challenge in some sub-counties, and health facilities often suffer from stock-outs of essential drugs. Part of the problem lies in weak supervision and follow-up. Some technical staff are not as accountable as they should be, and when political leaders try to intervene, it's sometimes seen as interference. We need better coordination, joint planning, and stronger political will to ensure services reach the people as intended."*

One Councilor also said, *"People in my constituency are frustrated. They see very little progress, yet budgets are read every year. In some cases, projects are poorly implemented or incomplete, and there's no clear explanation. Health centers lack medicine, roads are impassable during rainy seasons, and some schools are operating in terrible conditions. We, as councilors, try to raise these issues, but sometimes we are sidelined. There's also poor communication between the departments and the communities, as citizens feel disconnected from what the local government is doing."*

Correlation between political, administrative, and procurement conflicts and service delivery in Kyenjonjo district local government

This presents the findings on the relationship between various forms of conflict, namely, political and administrative, and service delivery in Kyenjonjo District Local Government. The analysis was conducted using Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) to examine the strength and direction of the association between the independent variables (types of conflict) and the dependent variable (service delivery).

Table 8: Correlation between political, administrative, procurement conflicts, and service delivery in Kyenjonjo district local government.

		Political conflicts	Administrative conflicts
Service delivery	Correlation Coefficient	-0.714	-0.694
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	0.002
	N	60	60

Source: Primary data (2024)

From Table 8, the findings reveal strong negative correlations between both types of conflict and service delivery. A strong negative correlation was found between political conflicts and service delivery, with a correlation coefficient of -0.714 and a significance level of $p = 0.001$. This relationship suggests that political interference, power struggles, and tensions between elected officials and technical staff significantly hamper the delivery of services to the community.

The study also found a significant negative correlation between administrative conflicts and service delivery, with a correlation coefficient of -0.694 and a significance value of $p = 0.002$. This implies that internal administrative issues such as poor communication, role ambiguity, and interdepartmental disputes also negatively affect the efficiency and responsiveness of service delivery systems. Both correlation results are statistically significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), affirming that the observed relationships are unlikely to have occurred by chance. The consistent negative correlations across the two conflict dimensions confirm that conflict within the local government system is a major barrier to effective service delivery.

In conclusion, the findings clearly demonstrate that political, administrative, and procurement conflicts significantly and negatively impact service delivery in Kyenjonjo District Local Government. This suggests an urgent need for institutional reforms aimed at minimizing conflict and fostering greater coordination, transparency, and accountability in local governance operations.

Discussion of results

Political conflicts and service delivery in local government

The literature highlights that political differences, ideological clashes, and power struggles are central to conflicts in local government (Shanshima, 2022; Isaac & Bolatito, 2024). These conflicts often arise from competition over control of resources, status advancement, and political dominance, which aligns with the study's finding that political interference disrupts service delivery.

Sakina (2024) and Ngabirano (2022) emphasize how nepotism, favoritism, and tribalism fuel such conflicts, leading to segregation and mistrust within government hierarchies. This fragmentation weakens organizational unity and compromises the efficiency of service delivery structures.

Claudio and Mango (2022) identify management styles as contributing to conflict, especially between aggressive and consensus-seeking individuals. Aggressive individuals often provoke confrontation, which can erode the team cohesion necessary for effective service delivery.

Kiwanuka (2012) and Henry Stanley & Siraje (2024) underline that teamwork and consensus are vital in the delivery process, but political divisions obstruct such collaboration, particularly when council members prioritize personal or political interests over institutional goals.

Mwesigwa et al. (2024) attribute conflicts to historical legacies, colonial divisions, and ethnic stereotypes, showing how deep-rooted cultural prejudices lead to exclusion and discrimination. These dynamics often translate into ethnic-political affiliations that override meritocratic practices, breeding inefficiency and underperformance.

Kapera (2020) and Kalu (2024) further note that individuals alienated from political or economic participation often resort to ethnic identity as a coping mechanism. This fosters identity politics and intensifies conflict, undermining service delivery by diverting focus from community needs to group-based patronage.

The study's statistical findings showing a strong inverse relationship corroborated by literature asserting that political interference, favoritism, and staff-politician alignment compromise objectivity and prioritize loyalty over competence (Ngabirano, 2022; Mwesigwa et al., 2024). This results in project delays, resource misallocation, and policy paralysis, all of which are key indicators of poor service delivery.

In particular, when council members fail to act decisively, such as not closing ineffective projects due to political disagreements, it sets negative precedents that erode administrative effectiveness (Henry Stanley & Siraje, 2024).

Administrative Conflicts and Service Delivery in Local Governments.

Thomas (2020) provides a key explanation for the origin of administrative conflicts: the misuse of statutory boards by elected officials to reward political loyalty. This politicization of public administration creates a toxic work environment where merit is devalued, and politically neutral or non-aligned officials face persecution, marginalization, or even dismissal, as also noted by Kiwanuka (2012). These administrative disruptions compromise team stability and institutional memory—two vital components for effective service delivery.

Furthermore, external interference by institutions like the Inspectorate of Government or police to discipline or eliminate uncooperative technical officers adds to administrative tension, leading to low morale, fear, and a breakdown of professional collaboration.

The study's findings are echoed by the chronic shortage of skilled staff in local governments, attributed to limited financial resources and uncompetitive salaries (Sirili & Simba, 2024). These financial constraints not only hinder the recruitment of competent personnel but also make staff retention extremely difficult.

Isaac & Bolatito (2024) and Kolawole et al. (2020) further observe that demotivated staff, often juggling second jobs or engaging in corrupt practices, are unable or unwilling to focus effectively on their primary responsibilities. This undermines the efficiency and responsiveness of local government service delivery systems, validating the strong negative correlation identified in the study.

The literature also emphasizes role ambiguity, poor communication, and interdepartmental rivalries, all of which are characteristic of administrative conflict (Sikka et al., 2019). These organizational dysfunctions result in a lack of clear accountability, overlapping responsibilities, and confusion over decision-making authority, all of which slow down service delivery processes.

While local postings do provide some level of autonomy, the lack of upward mobility and isolation from central government opportunities create frustration among staff, further worsening the work climate and productivity.

Frequent political interference, especially in recruitment and promotion decisions, leads to irregular appointments. As noted in the literature, the Public Service Commission has had to rescind some of these politically influenced appointments—an indication of systemic instability. Such reversals can cause delays in staffing, further strain existing personnel, and reduce institutional trust and performance.

Conclusions

The study established a strong and statistically significant negative relationship between political conflicts and

service delivery, with a correlation coefficient of -0.714 and a p-value of 0.001. This finding confirms that political interference, power struggles, and misalignment between elected officials and technical staff seriously hinder the delivery of public services. Political conflicts foster an environment of mistrust, disrupt decision-making processes, and delay project implementation, all of which diminish the quality, timeliness, and consistency of service delivery in local governments.

The research revealed a significant negative correlation of -0.694 ($p = 0.002$) between administrative conflicts and service delivery. This suggests that internal management issues, including poor communication, unclear roles, demotivation, and interdepartmental disputes, undermine staff performance and organizational efficiency. The findings indicate that when administrative systems lack cohesion, professionalism, and transparency, the effectiveness of service delivery is seriously compromised.

Recommendations

The local government should promote inclusive decision-making by encouraging participatory governance by involving multiple stakeholders, including community members, opposition leaders, and technical staff, in planning and project selection to minimize political exclusion and favoritism.

The local government should implement political ethics training by providing regular training for elected leaders on ethical leadership, conflict resolution, and the importance of professionalism in local governance.

The local government should clarify roles and responsibilities by developing and disseminating clear job descriptions and organizational structures to reduce role ambiguity and avoid overlapping duties.

The local government should improve internal communication by **setting** up formal communication channels and feedback mechanisms to encourage transparency, reduce misunderstandings, and promote teamwork.

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List of acronyms

CAO	-	Chief Administrative Officer
IDLG	-	Kyenjonjo District Local Government
LC.III	-	Local Council Three
LC.V	-	Local Council Five
LCs	-	Local Councils
LG	-	Local Government
LGA	-	Local Government Act
LGDP	-	Local Government Development Program
LGSP	-	Local Government Supporting Program
MLOG	-	Ministry of Local Government
NGOs	-	Non-Governmental Organizations
NRM	-	National Resistance Movement
RDC	-	Resident District Commissioner
SPSS	-	Special Package for Social Scientists

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Conflict of interest

There is no conflict of interest.

Availability of data

Data used in this study are available upon request from the corresponding author.

The author's contributions

AM designed the study, conducted data collection, cleaned and analyzed data, and drafted the manuscript, and MS supervised all stages of the study from conceptualization of the topic to manuscript writing and submission.

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