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# **The Impact of Client Service Charter on Corruption Reduction in Tanzania Public Sector: A Case of Kigamboni Municipal Council**

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## **Abstract**

Despite the noble intentions behind the client service charter in public sector service delivery, there have been cases of power abuse and corruption by certain service providers. Favouritism, privileges, and biases have become the norm, and citizens no longer have equal access to social services. This research intended to find out the impact of client service charters on corruption reduction in Tanzania's public sector. It was guided by specific objectives including, assessing the level of implementation of the client service charter at Kigamboni Municipal Council, determining the extent to which client service charter is linked with anti-corruption movements in Kigamboni Municipal Council and examining the stakeholder's perspectives on the strategies to combat corruption in public sector. The study employed a mixed methods research approach and case study research design, whereby, a total number of 64 respondents as a study sample were involved. Data was collected through interview and questionnaire methods. The study revealed that client service charter was implemented at a satisfactory rate since, both, service providers and clients were aware of the charters being implemented in the study area. Also, the study found that the client service charter provided an opportunity for equality in service accessibility in the study area, promoted responsiveness, transparency, and accountability, and assisted citizens in recognizing their rights. Finally, the study advocated public officials' motivation, PCCB development and supply of shadow officials in public organizations and direct customer visits as means to combat corruption concerning client service charters. The study recommended the need for a policy framework that will guide standard setting and put in place systems for performance measures, tracking and evaluation.

**Keywords:** Clients, service charter, clients service charter, corruption

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Background Information**

Governments and businesses across the globe have started to acknowledge the importance of meeting customer needs. Organizations began implementing mechanisms that centre on the quality of services to be provided to clients. The concept of the client service charter developed as a result of this consideration. As per Parrado *et al.* (2007), a client service charter comprises a publicly available document that outlines fundamental details about the services offered, the quality standards that clients can anticipate from a company, and the procedures for filing grievances or proposing enhancements.

The client service charter was first developed in the early 1990s in the United Kingdom (Kanunu, 2016). The United Kingdom mandated that all government agencies implement client service charters in their respective service areas as part of their implementation of the need to provide excellent client care. Other nations adopted the concept, naming it the "Client's Charter" in Malaysia and the "Service Charter" in Italy. Following that, a large number of organizations worldwide pledged to provide services following the Client Service Charter, and efforts were made to improve customer service (Australian Communications Consumer Action Network, 2009). The Client Charter Concept was first presented in Indonesia in 1995, and by 1997 every ministry in the nation was required to have a client charter of their own (ACCSM, 2007). In a similar vein, several European and American nations, including Canada (2000), Jamaica (1994), Belgium, Ireland, and Spain (1994), succeeded in enacting Client Service Charters in the 1990s to enhance the quality of public services rendered by public agencies. The programs included central coordination and a unit for promoting best practices, along with approved principles, standards, and procedures on public service delivery (Drewry, 2005; Milakovich, 2003).

The client service charter was developed in Africa as a result of discussions held on February 5, 2001, during the 3rd Pan African Conference of Ministries of Civil Services in Windhoek, Namibia, regarding new challenges, roles, and perspectives on African public administration (Simitaa, 2004). The Charter of Public Services in Africa, which outlines a framework for the public service in Africa going forward, was approved by this conference.

In Tanzania, the Public Sector Reform Program's first phase led to the establishment of the Client Service Charter in 1998 (URT, 2002). Through the

program's organized performance management system, organizational strategies are integrated with the activities. Improvements to the performance management systems, strategic planning, change management, and reform coordination—ensuring that the reform's outcomes are implemented effectively and efficiently—as well as the introduction of the Client Service Charter were among the main outcomes areas anticipated (Bana, 2009).

Tanzania's client service charter was designed to encourage civil servant accountability and raise public awareness of service providers' rights, which should reduce corruption in the public sector. A Client Service Charter had to be adopted by Local Government Authorities and submitted to the Permanent Secretary Public Service Commission following the 2007 PRSP values. Under directives from the government, the Kigamboni Municipal Council, a member of Tanzania's public sector, drafted a client service charter in 2018. The primary objectives of the charter were to raise client awareness of the excellent services offered by the Kigamboni Municipal Council office and to assist staff in disclosing the services that customers expect to deter corruption, favouritism, and discrimination of any kind (KMC Client Service Charter, 2018).

Low accountability has played a major role in the long-term "cancer" of corruption in Tanzania's public sector. Tanzanian subjects have long suffered from corruption brought on by bureaucratic barriers in social services (Andreoni, 2017). According to a 2011 research by McDonnell, people are confused about whether the services they receive are their rights or privileges because they are unsure of their entitlements.

Despite the best of intentions, there have been instances of power abuse and corruption by certain service providers in the public sector, despite the client service charter. More often than not, biases, privileges, and nepotism have taken the place of equal opportunities for citizens to access social services. Some academics have criticized the client service charter, claiming that it serves as a tool for service providers to determine the proper or inappropriate level of customer care (Paternoster, 2010).

Other than that, many organizations' CSCs have very helpful provisions like waiting times, anti-corruption policies, putting the needs of the elderly first, the right to know the names of service providers and other crucial elements. However, there are no clear guidelines regarding when or how the public should hold public servants accountable when they violate the client's service charter.

However, apart from various studies on the impact of client service charters, less is known about the level of implementation of client service charters at public organizations. Also, the extent to which client service charter is linked with the anticorruption movement at public organizations is less examined. Little has also been revealed on the strategies to combat corruption in the public sector. This study therefore intended to address that knowledge gap specifically to:

- i. Assess the level of implementation of the client service charter at Kigamboni Municipal Council.
- ii. Determine the extent to which client service charter is linked with anti-corruption movements in Kigamboni Municipal Council.
- iii. Examine the stakeholder's perspectives on the strategies to combat corruption in the public sector.

### ***Theoretical Underpinning***

This study was guided by Dissonance Theory which was founded by Leon Festinger in 1957. Psychology uses the term "dissonance" to describe the mental strain that results from holding two or more opposing ideas, values, or beliefs at the same time. Stated differently, particular persons find themselves in conflict. According to the theory, if someone received a low-value product when they were expecting a high-value one, they would notice the difference and feel cognitively disoriented. A psychologically uncomfortable state known as dissonance results from unfulfilled expectations. According to Festinger's (1957) study, cognitive dissonance occurs when a customer encounters the tangible representation of a company's brand promise but does not receive the anticipated level of customer service.

Dissonance theory was adopted in this study since, client service charter as a strategy to inform clients of the expected services and time of its delivery, ends with customers' stress when not well implemented. Similar to the argument of dissonance theory, poor implementation of the client service charter in public organizations can lead to tension, pressure, and frustration, which in turn can result in attempts at corruption. However, as McDonnell (2011) points out, a well-implemented client service charter can contribute to a decrease in corruption cases.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1 Study Area**

The study area for this research was Kigamboni Municipal Council in the coastal zone of the United Republic of Tanzania. The reasoning for the choice of Kigamboni Municipal Council is based on the fact that it is the local authorities in

Tanzania providing public services which adopted the client service charter as per government direction. Besides, Kigamboni Municipal Council, among other councils that form Dar es Salaam, is a lately formulated municipal council, hence, has recently established departments, units and employed officers responsible for offering various services to the people, hence, examining the extent to which clients service charter is implemented, as far as corruption reduction was concerned, marked the outermost study's desire.

## **2.2 Research Approach**

This study employed a mixed methods research approach. The mixed methods approach is a method of gathering and analysing data to provide integrated conclusions using both qualitative and quantitative methods in a single study or investigation (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009; Creswell, 2013). In this study, a mixed approach was suitable to examine the impact of client service charters on corruption reduction in Tanzania's public sector. The rationale for choosing this approach was that the present study was built with the need to collect both qualitative and quantitative data that gave comprehensive knowledge on the topic and to obtain a wider range of contrary opinions on the problem under consideration, and made the data gathered richer in the study.

## **2.3 Research Design**

This study used a case study research design which entailed extensive exploration of a single unity in depth, context, and in a comprehensive way. This unit can vary from individual people, families, communities, social groups, organizations, and institutions (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). Case study research design was selected because of the desire to examine the current study's problem in depth on why, as revealed by studies (Kanunu, 2016; Mwamunyange, 2019), client service charters do exist in organizations, and corruption persists. Besides, this design was appropriate to examine in detail the level of implementation of client service charter, the extent to which client service charter is linked with anti-corruption movements and the stakeholder's perspectives on the strategies to combat corruption in the public sector.

## **2.4 Population of the Study**

The study's target population consisted of all Kigamboni Municipal Council residents who reside within the same geographic boundaries of the municipality. According to the 2022 census, the total population of Kigamboni Municipal Council was 317,902 (URT, 2012).

## **2.5 Sample size**

The sample size for this study was 64 respondents equivalent to 20% of the whole 320 accessible sample frame. According to Krishnaswami (2003), a sample size of about 10% to 30% of the total accessible population is sufficient for data collection. The distribution of sample size included one municipal mayor, one municipal director, six heads of departments, three councillors, and three ward executive officers. Others were 16 Mtaa executive officers, 16 street chairpersons and 18 street committee members.

## **2.6 Sampling Technique**

Purposive sampling was used in the study to obtain the heads of departments, the municipal director, and the mayor. Since the named respondents were involved in the day-to-day activities associated with service delivery and were instrumental in the creation and execution of the Council Client Service Charter, a purposeful sampling technique was employed to obtain their responses. On the other hand, a simple random sampling technique was used to get the rest respondents including the councillors, ward executive officers, 'Mtaa' executive officers, street chairpersons, and members of the Mtaa development committee. The technique was employed to give an equal chance for each member to participate in the study.

## **2.7 Data Collection and Analysis**

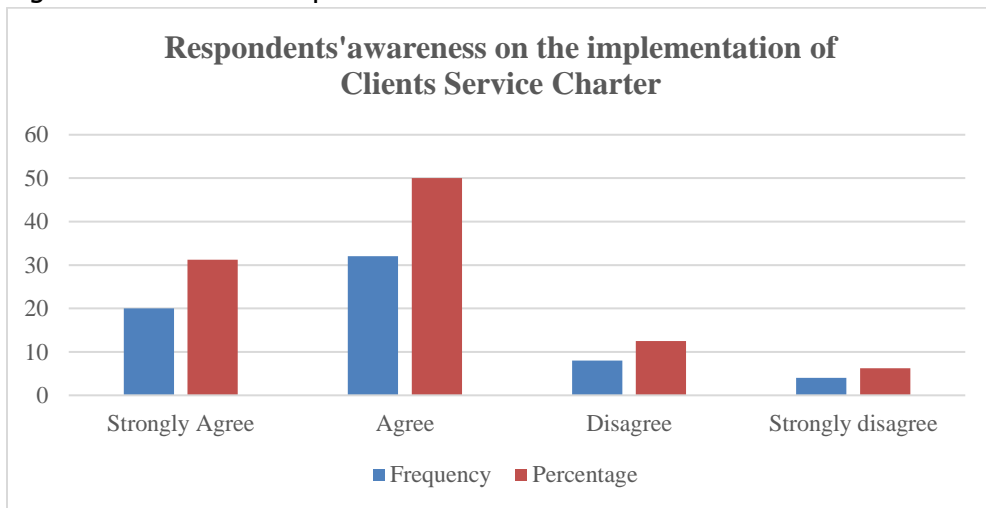
The study used interview and questionnaire methods to collect data. The interview method was used to collect data from key informants of the study namely the municipal mayor, municipal director and heads of departments. On the other hand, the questionnaire method was used to gather data from councillors, ward executive officers, 'mtaa' executive officers, street chairpersons, and members of the street development committee. The study employed descriptive data analysis to analyse quantitative data, while thematic data analysis was used to analyse qualitative data.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

### **3.1 Implementation Level of Client Service Charter**

In this part, the study examined aspects including awareness of the existence of client service charter and clarity of objectives of client service charter to stakeholders. The findings revealed that the majority of respondents were aware of the client service charter in the study area. More detailed, 50 per cent and 31.25 per cent of respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively on the existence and execution of client service charters in the study area. On the other hand, 12.5 percent and 6.25 percent of respondents disagreed and strongly

disagreed respectively on the existence of client service charter in the study area. Figure 1 reveals the respondents' awareness of clients' service charter.



**Figure 1:** Respondents' Awareness of the Implementation of Client Service Charter

**Source:** Field Data, 2023

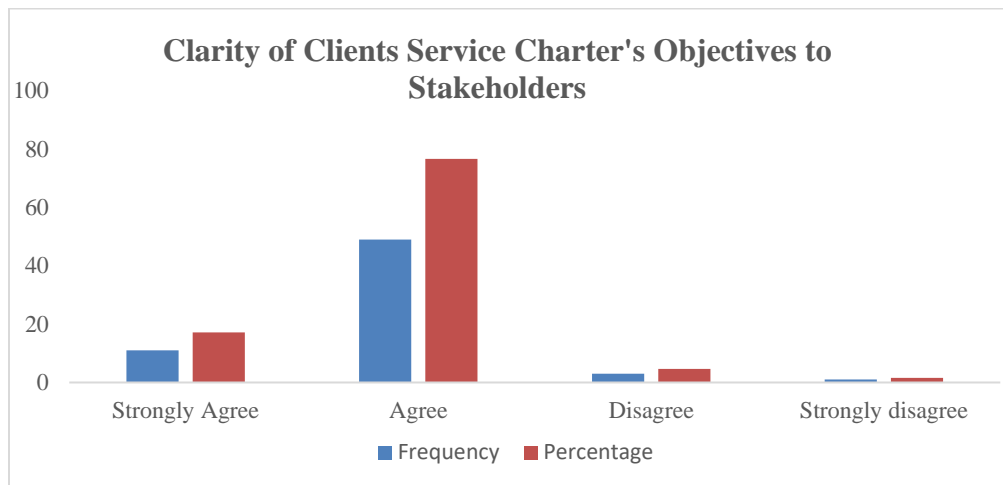
In backing of the findings, one of the key respondents argued "... *both politicians and officials are encouraged to educate themselves on client service charter documents at our municipal level and those applicable national wise. We also insist heads of departments and sectors publish client service charters to the general public so that they may be aware of their rights...*". Another respondent said, "...*With citizens being informed of their rights and responsibilities, we have managed to reduce the incidents of corruption especially sexual corruption in our public service organizations...*"

These findings are in line with the study by Haule (2013) who commented that running an organization without clear goals to be known to the clients, is similar to going out on a road trip with no idea where one is going or how to get there, which may result to wastage of time, gas and effort. Likewise, the organization will suffer when tries to implement a goal without clarity and forethought. The current findings and that from Haule are doubtlessly facilitated by government effort and desire to enforce a countrywide mechanism in all public service organs to offer a tireless and better client service.

The findings of the study reveal that the majority of the respondents (76.59% agreed, 17.19% strongly agreed) accepted the fact that the objectives of the clients' service charter were clear and non-ambiguous to all stakeholders, while



few (4.69% disagreed, 1.57% strongly disagreed) claimed vice vase. Figure 2 shows the clarity of the clients' service charter's objectives to stakeholders.



**Figure 2:** Clarity of Clients Service Charter's Objectives to Stakeholders

The findings in Figure 2 indicate investment done by the Kigamboni Municipal Council to educate the stakeholders on the key objectives, intentions and aims of the client service charter. These findings conform to the findings by Haule (2013) in his paper "Client Service Charter, A Strategy to Combat Corruption in Public Sector" who argued that making it clear to all beneficiaries is an inevitable step towards any relevant client service charter. Likewise, it is significant to enlighten people on the goals of the client service charter so they may claim them when its execution goes contrary. However, enlightening people on the presence of client service charter and its objectives in not necessarily give assurance to its proper execution. This was in line with Mwamunyange (2019) who revealed presence of client service charts failed to reduce customers' claims of poor service delivery and suggested alternative ways the same.

### 3.2 Client Service Charter and Anti-Corruption Movements

The study sought to investigate the contribution of client service charters to anti-corruption movements in the study area. Specifically, the study examines the extent to which a client's service charter contributed to equality in service accessibility, promotion of responsiveness, transparency and accountability, and customers' knowledge of their rights. These are presented in parts onward.

The study examined whether client service charter offered an opportunity for equality in service accessibility in the study area. The results as shown in Figure 3 indicate that the majority of respondents (70% strongly agreed, 10% agreed)

admitted that the presence of clients service charter accelerated accessibility of services, while few argued against (15 % strongly disagreed, 5% disagreed). The same observation was given by Kanunu (2016) who propounded that promoting equal opportunity in social service accessibility was an important weapon in the reduction of corruption. He further showed that citizens are most likely to enjoy education services, health, legal and justice if friendly environments are established. Mwamunyange (2019) too, advocated the need for fairgrounds in accessing public services, and he further mentioned the presence and execution of clients' charters as a road towards corruption eviction in the public sector. The findings of the current study and that of Kanunu (2016) and Mwamunyange (2019) are because corruption to a larger extent has been seen in areas where public services are offered, and therefore, affects the rights of the majority of clients or customers.

Again, the study enquired to the respondents on whether client service charter promoted responsiveness among service providers in delivering services to the clients in the study area. The results, as in Figure 3, indicate that the majority of respondents (73% and 15%) agreed and strongly agreed respectively on the fact that client service charter raised responsiveness among service providers, while, a smaller number of the respondents (6% disagree, 6% strongly disagree) went against the named argument. These findings were also enriched by clarification from one respondent, who revealed that,

*".....In my point of view, client service charter is very valuable in combating corruption because it acts as a mirror to both customers and service providers to ensure the availability of good and quality service among the stakeholders....."*

The other respondent said,

*"...in fact, the introduction of client service charter came as a solution to some of the challenges in our public organizations particularly in the area of service delivery. Previously, some public workers were not fair in treating their clients; they used to judge someone by his/her appearance. But nowadays, with the presence of client service charter, at least, things have changed....."*

The study by Bwemelo (2016) had the same findings that responsiveness facilitates the prevention of corruption by promoting the quick and positive provision of quality service in public organizations; hence, recommended the

adoption and promotion of client service charters which hold a role to stimulating responsiveness.

Furthermore, the study sought to examine whether the execution of the client service charter promoted transparency and accountability. The results showed that 49 per cent and 34 per cent, which are as majority of respondents, agreed and strongly agreed, respectively that the presence of the client charter contributed to the rising rates of transparency and accountability among service providers in the public sector. On the other side, 10 per cent of respondents disagreed, and 7 per cent of them strongly disagreed on the said issue. In other words, since transparency and accountability are significant indicators to evaluate the presence or absence of corruption, it is unquestionably that once the client service charter is effectually implemented, it may help with corruption reduction in the public sector. These findings were appraised by one of the key respondents with the following;

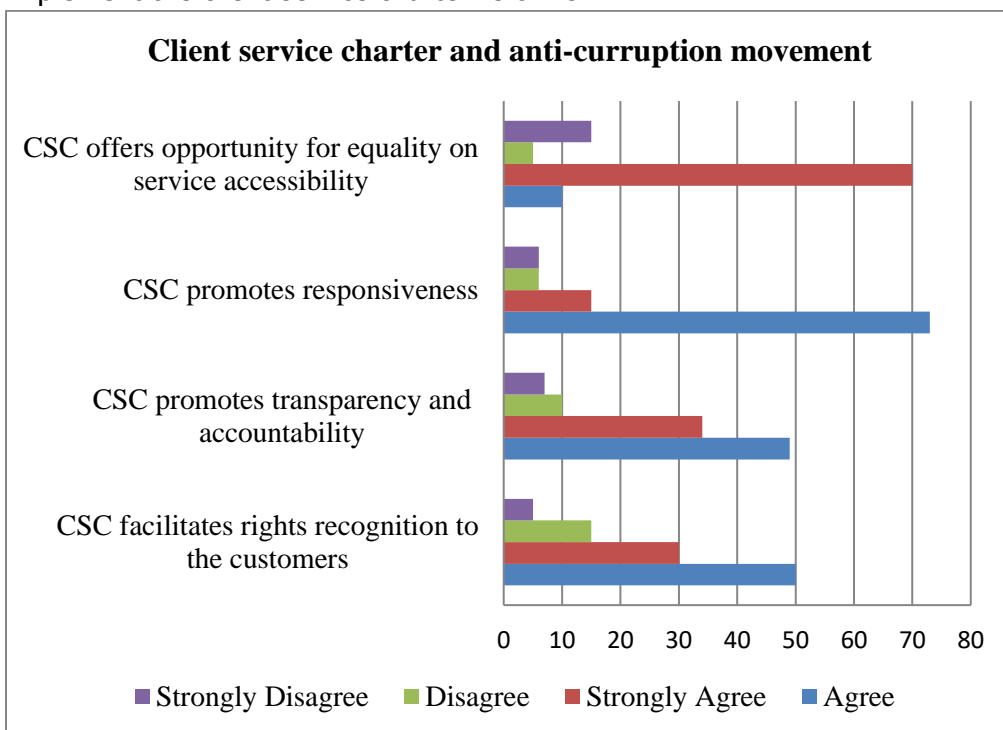
*".....through the client service charter, the municipal has established an opinions box, performance appraisal and review system, and the right to know the name of an officer providing social service. These serve as effective remedies through which citizens can enforce their rights and claim equal treatment on service delivered....."*

Another respondent argued that;

*"....We have been insisting to all employees to consider delivering services appropriately and transparently. We also insist they read frequently the work rules and directives including the client service charter to enable them to be aware and master well what they are supposed to do especially being transparent accountable and fair and avoid corruption, for example, in recruitment, transfer, training and promotion opportunities...."*

The findings of this study correlate with the one done by Lufunyo (2013) who argued that corruption cases declined to a higher extent in the public sector, where, among other factors, the introduction and execution of client service charters contributed to a larger extent. Also, the study by Mahoo (2016) was too, in line with this study, whereby it revealed the presence of a client service charter to be a catalyst towards good deeds in delivering services to the clients among workers. He added that through the opinion box, clients gave better recommendations towards the level of performance of their service deliverers.

Besides, the research sought to ask respondent's perceptions about whether client service charter helped with the recognition of rights among customers. The findings as shown in Figure 3 revealed that half of the respondents plus nearly a third of the respondents, (50% agreed, 30% strongly agreed) which together forms a majority of the respondents accepted the fact that client service charter facilitated rights recognition among the customers. On the other side, a few respondents (15% disagreed, 5% strongly disagreed) opposed the matter. The findings correspond to the study by Kanunu (2016) who found that the majority of respondents knew that the client service charter was present at Tabora Municipal Council. This awareness, as revealed by the current study and the study by Kanunu (2016), was likely sparked by government advertisements in the media urging all Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to implement the client service charter reforms.



**Figure 3:** Client Service Charter and anti-corrupction movements

### 3.3 Strategies to Combat Corruption in Public Sector

The study sought to explore respondents' views on how corruption should be combated concerning client service charters. The study examined public officials' motivation, PCCB development and supply of shadow officials in public organizations and direct customer visits as presented below.

Motivation of public officials was one of the strategies suggested by the majority of the respondents on combating corruption in the public sector as far as client

service charter is concerned. It was believed that the rate of corruption might decline if public officials, who play a significant role in providing services to the public, were given the proper encouragement, support, and working conditions, along with their due compensation and other rights like timely promotions. In addition, the study discovered that social service facilities had inadequate staffing, which delayed social services and hampered the practical application of the client service charter. It was claimed that for public officials to favour them over other customers when providing services, citizens themselves had to persuade them to take bribes. Respondents recommended that the government start filling the manpower gap to improve the efficiency and standard of social service delivery. Additionally, a recommendation for salary increases was made to persuade public officials to follow and apply CSC, thus reducing corruption. One official claimed that occasionally they accepted bribes while having deep regrets in their hearts because they knew it was wrong to do so but couldn't help it because of the inadequate compensation plans. These findings are in line with Lufunyo (2013) who found that poor working conditions among employees were one of many difficulties in implementing public service reforms like the client service charter reform.

It was suggested that the Preventing and Combating Corruption Bureau (PCCB) be given the authority to create and supply shadow officials in government agencies to oversee compliance with the client service charter's requirements for reducing corruption to promote impartiality in handling corruption incidents. In addition to this finding, one respondent stated *"We have faith in PCCB, but it employs fewer people in its offices. I suggest that the government grant it complete intelligence authority so that it can place agents in other government agencies to foster impartiality when handling corruption incidents. Only PCCB can safeguard the public from corruption."* The findings are similar to that of Xinhua (2017) which reported that the country's efforts to eradicate poverty and promote inclusive growth depend heavily on Tanzania's efforts to combat corruption, which include the use of shadow officials in government agencies to track adherence to the client service charter's requirements. The results of this study, along with those from Xinhua (2017), are comparable because they highlight the need for mechanisms to reduce the rate of corruption. After all, it is still a practical and relevant issue in all public sectors.

The study suggested the need for direct customer visits to secure feedback from customers based on the effectiveness, efficiency and fairness of service delivery in the public sector as one of the strategies to combat corruption. Direct customer visits, as suggested by the study, may range from respective areas of

the workplace to homestead to collect information that will be used as feedback from customers (citizens) on the issue and services provided by the public organization. The findings are in line with Mshanga *et al.* (2021) who recommended that visiting customers helps with making services closer to customers particularly those with special needs such as elders, and people with disabilities who cannot afford to visit office areas easily.

Despite the current study's findings and that from Mshanga *et al.* (2021) on the fact that directly visiting customers is the best way of receiving feedback from the customers, nevertheless, the method is biased because, normally, top management (HDs, Municipal Director, MHRO) were being given the budget to visit customers whenever necessary, while leaving middle and low cadres employees responsible to attend all customers (citizens) who need service from the organization with no budget to enable them. This situation leaves low and middle cadres employees to be lugged behind during direct visits to customers hence reducing their morale in receiving feedback because targeted officers and office attendants are left during customer visiting days.

## **4. Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **4.1 Conclusion**

In light of the specified objectives' findings, it is concluded that the level of implementation of the Client Service Charter in public sectors was higher since there was much awareness of the existence of the Client Service Charter, as well as, higher clarity of objectives of client service charter to stakeholders. Similarly, clients' service charter had a higher contribution to both; equality to service accessibility, promotion of responsiveness, transparency and accountability, and customers' knowledge of their rights, as far anti-corruption movement is concerned. Finally, Strategies to combat corruption in the public sector regarding CSC, involve the motivation of public officials, and PCCB authority to create and supply shadow officials in government agencies to oversee compliance with the client service charter's requirements and direct customer visits to secure feedback.

### **4.2 Recommendations**

- (i) The public sector should deliberately sensitize their customers on their rights to be served and the timeframes within which a service should be rendered.
- (ii) Organizations should mainstream their complaints handling mechanism by the way of sensitizing their service seekers on the need to lodge complaints on the non-delivery of services.

- (iii) Further studies to be conducted on the impact of client service charters on organizational growth

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