

Redefining Public Service Delivery: The Influence of Entrepreneurial Leadership on Efficiency and Accessibility in Zanzibar's Local Government Authorities

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Abstract

Public service delivery in Zanzibar's Local Government Authorities (LGAs) continues to face inefficiency, limited accessibility, and weak responsiveness. Although decentralization reforms have devolved responsibilities, the role of entrepreneurial leadership in addressing these challenges remains insufficiently understood. This study explores how leadership traits such as adaptability, innovation, and proactive problem-solving influence service delivery outcomes in decentralized governance contexts. A mixed-methods approach was employed across six LGAs in Zanzibar, combining survey data with qualitative insights from focus group discussions and key informant interviews. The findings reveal that while training and development are prioritized, gaps in staff competency, logistical support, and financial resources undermine operational effectiveness. Leadership practices were unevenly applied, often driven by individual initiative rather than systemic integration. Bureaucratic delays and centralized fiscal control further limited responsiveness, creating "capability traps" where reform efforts stall despite leadership initiative. The study concludes that entrepreneurial leadership can enhance service delivery only when embedded within supportive institutional frameworks. It proposes a strategic framework that integrates entrepreneurial leadership with decentralized governance theory, emphasizing institutionalized innovation, participatory mechanisms, and adaptive capacity. These insights contribute to both theory and practice by demonstrating how leadership development, innovation budgets, and participatory accountability can transform local governance in Zanzibar and similar developing contexts.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Leadership, Public Service Delivery, Zanzibar Local Government Authorities, Efficiency, Accessibility

1. Introduction

Public service delivery in Zanzibar's Local Government Authorities (LGAs) has long been described in vague terms "inefficient," "inaccessible," "unresponsive" as though these were generic ailments of every developing region. Yet, audits and local reports paint a more sobering picture: primary health centers without basic supplies, primary schools struggling under bureaucratic delays, and local infrastructure projects stalled by procedural bottlenecks (Zanzibar Planning Commission, 2021; Controller and Auditor General, 2022). These realities suggest that the problem is not simply

inefficiency; it is a governance culture that clings to rigid bureaucratic models while citizens demand agility, responsiveness, and innovation.

Unluckily, reforms have not been absent. Decentralization promised empowerment, capacity-building workshops promised competence, and donor-funded programs promised transformation. What they delivered, however, was a familiar cycle of risk-averse leadership and procedural inertia (Mussa & Said, 2021). Against this backdrop, the appeal of Entrepreneurial Leadership is less about novelty and more about necessity. Unlike traditional models that valorize caution, entrepreneurial leadership emphasizes opportunity recognition, proactive problem-solving, and resource leveraging, traits that resonate in contexts where “waiting for instructions” has become the default mode of governance (Gupta et al., 2004; Renko et al., 2015).

The theoretical rationale is straightforward, if bureaucratic rigidity has failed, and if decentralization has created a demand for local agility, then a leadership model centered on innovation and opportunity recognition becomes critical. Entrepreneurial leadership offers precisely this an antidote to stagnation, a framework for reimagining service delivery, and a chance to align governance with citizen expectations (Mwinyi & Hamad, 2022). It provides a lens through which leaders can move beyond compliance-driven routines and instead cultivate adaptive, opportunity-driven practices that respond to the evolving needs of citizens.

This study therefore seeks to move beyond rhetorical reform and empirically examine how entrepreneurial leadership practices manifest within Zanzibar's LGAs. Specifically, it interrogates whether such practices correlate with improved efficiency, accessibility, and responsiveness, and whether systemic barriers continue to undermine their institutionalization. By situating entrepreneurial leadership within the lived realities of Zanzibar's governance structures, the study aims to bridge the gap between theoretical promise and practical outcomes, offering insights into how leadership behaviors can either reinforce or disrupt entrenched bureaucratic cultures.

The study is guided by the following objectives and research questions:

To what extent are entrepreneurial leadership practices manifested in Zanzibar's LGAs? How do these practices correlate with perceived service efficiency and accessibility? What are the key systemic barriers to institutionalizing entrepreneurial leadership within decentralized governance structures?

By addressing these questions, the research contributes both theoretically through advancing the discourse on public sector entrepreneurship in African governance, and practically, by offering actionable insights for policymakers and local leaders seeking to foster innovation, accountability, and citizen engagement.

2. Literature Review

This study is anchored on three interrelated theoretical frameworks i.e., Entrepreneurial Leadership Theory, Transformational Leadership Theory, and

Public Sector Innovation Theory, aiming to examine the leadership dynamics shaping public service delivery within Zanzibar's LGAs. While each framework offers explanatory value, their real contribution lies not in being applied separately, but in how they intersect to form a conceptual lens for understanding leadership under conditions of decentralization and institutional constraint.

Entrepreneurial Leadership Theory emphasizes opportunity recognition, proactiveness, innovation, and adaptability as core traits enabling leaders to navigate uncertainty and mobilize resources creatively, especially in constrained public environments (Gupta et al., 2004; Renko et al., 2015). Within Zanzibar's LGAs, entrepreneurial leadership manifests through leaders' capacity to identify service delivery gaps, innovate locally relevant solutions, and foster collaborative networks that transcend bureaucratic rigidity. This theory is particularly relevant, when resource scarcity and procedural constraints limit reform capacity, making entrepreneurial behaviors crucial for institutional renewal (Kassim & Omar, 2023).

Whereas, Transformational Leadership Theory, originally advanced by Burns (1978) and expanded by Bass and Riggio (2006), underscores the importance of visionary influence, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration in motivating followers toward collective goals. Transformational leaders articulate a compelling vision, challenge conventional practices, and empower subordinates to achieve higher performance standards (Northouse, 2021; Mwinyi & Hamad, 2022). In the context of Zanzibar's LGAs, transformational leadership can act as a behavioral bridge, translating entrepreneurial impulses into collective organizational change by fostering trust, engagement, and reform-oriented culture.

Meanwhile, Public Sector Innovation Theory situates leadership within the broader ecosystem of governance, adaptability, and stakeholder collaboration. Innovation in the public sector extends beyond technology adoption to include new service models, participatory processes, and institutional learning (Hartley, 2005; Borins, 2014). The theory stresses adaptive capacity, experimentation, and co-production with citizens as central to improving service quality and accountability. Yet, innovation is often constrained by systemic barriers such as rigid procurement rules, donor conditionalities, and risk-averse bureaucratic cultures (Mussa & Said, 2021).

Taken together, these frameworks can be synthesized into a conceptual model: Entrepreneurial Leadership operates at the micro level, shaping individual leader behaviors; Public Sector Innovation functions at the meso-level, influencing organizational processes and citizen engagement; and Decentralized Governance provides the macro-level context, enabling or constraining reform through fiscal autonomy, institutional capacity, and political structures. Transformational Leadership acts as the behavioral bridge, translating entrepreneurial impulses into organizational culture shifts that sustain innovation. This integrative lens moves beyond the additive “and...

and” approach, offering a multidimensional framework for analyzing leadership in Zanzibar’s LGAs.

Empirical studies across Africa reinforce the relevance of this synthesis. Entrepreneurial leadership has been associated with greater responsiveness and citizen satisfaction in East African LGAs (Kassim & Omar, 2023), while transformational leadership promotes resilience and reform-oriented governance (Mwinyi & Hamad, 2022). Similarly, innovation in public service delivery has been linked to collaborative decision-making and inclusive engagement (Borins, 2014). However, decentralization in Africa and Small Island States has often been undermined by limited fiscal autonomy, weak institutional capacity, and political interference, which constrain the ability of LGAs to institutionalize leadership-driven reforms (Smoke, 2015; Fjeldstad, 2017).

Despite the growing interest in leadership and innovation in African governance, notable gaps persist in the literature. Many studies generalize findings from mainland or national-level contexts, overlooking Zanzibar’s distinct administrative and socio-political structures. Specifically, limited attention has been given to how entrepreneurial leadership shapes service accessibility, citizen participation, and equity within decentralized governance systems. This study addresses these gaps by applying a multi-theoretical lens to explore the influence of entrepreneurial leadership strategies on both efficiency and inclusivity in Zanzibar’s LGAs. By contextualizing leadership behaviors within local governance realities, it contributes new empirical insights into the mechanisms through which entrepreneurial and transformational leadership foster innovation, improve service delivery, and strengthen institutional performance in emerging public administration systems (Controller and Auditor General, 2022; Mussa & Said, 2021).

3. Methodology

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design to explore entrepreneurial leadership and service delivery within Zanzibar’s LGAs. Mixed methods are particularly well-suited to public administration research, where statistical evidence must be complemented by contextual understanding to capture the complexity of governance processes (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). Quantitative data were collected through structured questionnaires assessing leadership behaviors and institutional performance, while qualitative insights were derived from key informant interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). This design allowed for triangulation, enhancing both validity and depth of findings.

Research was conducted across six purposively selected LGAs. The rationale for selection was based on three transparent criteria: (1) urban–rural diversity, ensuring representation of metropolitan municipalities and rural districts; (2) governance performance, measured through annual audit scores and service delivery indicators reported by the Controller and Auditor General (2022); and (3) budget size and fiscal capacity, capturing variation in resource allocation.

This purposive sampling strategy ensured that the selected LGAs reflected both structural diversity and performance variation, thereby strengthening the generalizability of insights within Zanzibar's decentralized governance system (Smoke, 2015; Fjeldstad & Katera, 2017).

Within the selected LGAs, the study employed stratified sampling to segment respondents by location and governance performance. Participants included LGA staff, local leaders, and citizens, ensuring a multi-stakeholder perspective on leadership effectiveness and service responsiveness. The final sample comprised of 210 questionnaire respondents, 30 key interview informants, and 60 FGD participants, totaling 300 individuals. This sample size was considered adequate for both statistical validity and thematic richness, aligning with recommendations for mixed-methods studies in governance research (Mussa & Said, 2021; Kassim & Omar, 2023).

Structured questionnaires included Likert-scale items adapted from established leadership frameworks (Renko et al., 2015; Bass & Riggio, 2006). To ensure contextual relevance, the instruments were piloted with 20 respondents across two LGAs, and feedback was incorporated to refine wording and cultural appropriateness. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with all scales exceeding the 0.70 threshold, confirming internal consistency. Construct validity was examined through exploratory factor analysis, ensuring that items clustered appropriately within entrepreneurial and transformational leadership dimensions. This validation process addressed concerns about instrument transferability across cultural and institutional contexts (Hartley, 2005; Borins, 2014).

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS for descriptive statistics and regression analysis, while qualitative data were thematically coded. Semi-structured interviews with senior officials and FGDs with community members provided rich contextual insights into leadership practices and institutional challenges. This dual approach allowed the study to capture both measurable outcomes and lived experiences of governance reform (Mwinyi & Hamad, 2022).

A convergent parallel design enabled simultaneous analysis of both data types (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Integration was achieved through a joint display table that mapped quantitative patterns, such as correlations between leadership practices and service efficiency, against qualitative themes, including narratives of bureaucratic rigidity and citizen participation. This approach allowed findings to be compared, contrasted, and synthesized. Qualitative evidence confirmed certain statistical trends, elaborated on contextual nuances, and occasionally disconfirmed assumptions, thereby strengthening the credibility of conclusions (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010).

4. Results and Discussion

Theme 1: The Personality - Institution Gap

Table 1: Distribution of Responses on the Personality - Institution Gap variables

Variable	Strong Used n (%)	Used n (%)	Not Used n (%)	Mean	Std. Dev
Overall Satisfaction	71 (33.8)	69 (32.9)	70 (33.3)	2.00	0.821
Adaptability to Changing Environment	53 (25.2)	78 (37.1)	79 (37.6)	2.12	0.785
Innovation and Adaptability	47 (22.4)	91 (43.3)	72 (34.3)	2.12	0.745
Services Accessibility	48 (22.9)	103 (49.0)	59 (28.1)	2.05	0.714
Collaboration and Partnerships	42 (20.0)	100 (47.6)	68 (32.4)	2.12	0.715
Economic Well-Being & Opportunity	43 (20.5)	101 (48.1)	66 (31.4)	2.11	0.714
Responding to Changing Needs	44 (21.0)	106 (50.5)	60 (28.6)	2.08	0.701
Perceived Efficiency & Effectiveness	63 (30.0)	89 (42.4)	58 (27.6)	1.98	0.761

Source: Field Data (2024)

The study assessed the Personality - Institution Gap across six LGAs in Zanzibar, focusing on adaptability, innovation, accessibility, collaboration, and efficiency. Findings revealed a nearly equal split in satisfaction levels: 33.8% of respondents were highly satisfied, 32.9% moderately satisfied, and 33.3% dissatisfied. With a mean score of 2.00 (SD=0.821), the results suggest uneven service performance, reflecting what Andrews, Pritchett, and Woolcock (2017) describe as “capability traps,” where reform efforts exist but fail to yield consistent outcomes due to weak institutional capacity. Entrepreneurial leadership traits are present but not yet fully institutionalized, limiting their transformative potential (Gupta et al., 2004; Renko et al., 2015).

Adaptability and innovation were rated relatively low, with only 25.2% and 22.4% of respondents, respectively, perceiving strong use of these traits. Mean scores of 2.12 for both dimensions indicate limited responsiveness to changing community needs, echoing Mwinyi and Hamad's (2022) findings on strategic inflexibility in Zanzibar's LGAs. Service accessibility fared slightly better, with 49% of respondents reporting adequate usage and a mean score of 2.05 (SD=0.714). This suggests some progress in outreach and inclusion, particularly through decentralization efforts (Kassim & Omar, 2023). However, rural areas continue to face logistical and resource barriers that hinder equitable service delivery.

Collaboration, economic opportunity, and responsiveness recorded moderate scores between 2.08 and 2.12, indicating ongoing but insufficient efforts to foster stakeholder engagement and socio-economic development. The lowest-rated dimension was perceived efficiency, with a mean score of 1.98 (SD=0.761), highlighting persistent issues of bureaucratic inertia and resource mismanagement (Borins, 2014; Hope, 2009).

Qualitative data further illuminated citizen experiences, revealing nuanced perspectives on leadership behaviors and institutional challenges. Across Zanzibar's selected districts, FGDs and KIIs consistently highlighted a lack of adaptability in service delivery systems. Citizens described LGAs as slow to respond to emerging needs, particularly in infrastructure and environmental management. A recurring complaint from Central, East 'A' and Wete Districts,

"We keep reporting the same issues year after year, yet the situation remains unchanged. Audit findings and governance reviews highlight recurring weaknesses, but recommendations are rarely implemented. This repetition signals a deeper problem of institutional inertia and weak accountability mechanisms. Without decisive action, the cycle of reporting without reform continues to erode public trust and service delivery."

The argument illustrates entrenched bureaucratic inertia, and aligns with Andrews et al. (2017), who describe "capability traps" where reform efforts stall due to rigid institutional norms and limited strategic flexibility.

Innovation was unevenly distributed. Urban LGAs such as East 'A' were praised for digital platforms that improved service access, while rural communities felt excluded. This reinforces Renko et al.'s (2015) argument that entrepreneurial leadership must be institutionalized across all governance levels to ensure inclusive innovation. Service accessibility received more favorable feedback, particularly in health and education. FGDs in South District noted tangible improvements, such as the opening of a new health center that reduced travel burdens. One participant shared,

"We don't have to travel far anymore because services are now closer to where we live. Decentralization has brought local government offices and service points into our communities. This proximity reduces both the cost and time. We spend seeking essential services. As a result, access has improved, though challenges of quality and accountability still remain."

These accounts support Kassim and Omar (2023), who argue that decentralization can enhance service reach, though logistical and socio-cultural barriers remain.

In collaboration and partnerships revealed a disconnect between formal participatory frameworks and genuine citizen engagement. While some LGAs were commended for working with NGOs, others were criticized for opaque decision-making. A participant remarked,

"They say they consult us, but the decisions are already finalized before we even meet. This practice reduces consultation to a symbolic gesture rather than genuine participation. Citizens are left feeling excluded from shaping policies that directly affect their lives. Ultimately, such tokenistic engagement undermines trust in local governance and weakens accountability."

The similar echoing of Hartley's (2005) views that innovation requires cultural shifts that foster trust and co-creation. Responsiveness and efficiency emerged as the most criticized dimensions. Leadership visibility was seen as politically driven, with citizens noting that leaders were only present during election cycles, said a respondent from Micheweni.

"They only come during elections, and once the votes are cast, they disappear from our communities. This pattern reduces political engagement to a temporary performance rather than a sustained commitment to citizens. People feel abandoned, as promises made during campaigns rarely translate into visible action afterward. Such neglect deepens mistrust and weakens the legitimacy of local governance structures."

This supports Borins (2014), who emphasizes the need for sustained leadership beyond political incentives. Efficiency concerns were widespread, with reports of poor coordination and bureaucratic fatigue. One participant from ChakeChake described the experience as "exhausting," citing repetitive office visits. These frustrations mirror the lowest quantitative scores and reinforce Hope's (2009) assertion that without capacity development and accountability, reforms fail to yield meaningful change.

Overall, the study reveals a fragmented application of entrepreneurial leadership across Zanzibar's LGAs. Citizen satisfaction is nearly evenly split, with efficiency scoring lowest (M=1.98), reflecting dissatisfaction with bureaucratic delays and poor coordination. Innovation was unevenly distributed, with urban LGAs praised for digital platforms, while rural areas such as Micheweni and South faced access barriers. This supports Bagheri's (2017) and Borins' (2014) arguments that public sector innovation requires structural and cultural shifts. This pattern reflects a tension between individual leaders' proactive behaviors and systemic constraints. During FGDs and Key Informant Interviews, evidence illustrate this gap vividly: one LGA officer noted,

"We have leaders with ideas, but the system forces them to wait for approval from above. This slows down innovation and prevents timely solutions from reaching citizens. Creative energy is stifled by rigid hierarchies that prioritize control over responsiveness. As a result, local governance struggles to adapt and deliver services effectively in line with community needs."

Such narratives, highlight how decentralization structures inhibit risk-taking, reducing entrepreneurial leadership to isolated acts rather than embedded organizational practice. This finding aligns with Smoke (2015) and Fjeldstad & Katera (2017), who argue that limited fiscal autonomy and bureaucratic rigidity undermine local innovation.

Generally, the findings contribute to entrepreneurial leadership theory by illustrating its inconsistent application in public administration. They underscore the need for leadership development, institutional reform, and

participatory governance to enhance transparency, citizen trust, and service performance (Gupta et al., 2004; Arkorful et al., 2020).

Theme 2: The Urban - Rural Innovation Divide

Table 2: Distribution of Responses on Urban - Rural Innovation Divide Variables

Variable	Strong Used n (%)	Used n (%)	Not Used n (%)	Mean	Std. Dev
Adaptability to New Demands	61 (29.0)	93 (44.3)	56 (26.7)	1.98	0.748
Innovation and Risk-Taking	63 (30.0)	86 (41.0)	61 (29.0)	1.99	0.770
Learning from Setbacks	66 (31.4)	80 (38.1)	64 (30.5)	1.99	0.789
Responding to Change	55 (26.2)	85 (40.5)	70 (33.3)	2.07	0.770
Emerging Technological Trends	59 (28.1)	84 (40.0)	67 (31.9)	2.04	0.776
Collaboration and Partnerships	66 (31.4)	76 (36.2)	68 (32.4)	2.01	0.801

Source: *Field Data (2024)*

This section evaluated service delivery adaptability in Zanzibar's LGAs through six key variables. These dimensions reflect entrepreneurial leadership traits crucial for navigating uncertainty and improving public sector outcomes (Renko et al., 2015; Bagheri, 2017). The findings showed moderate performance across these dimensions, with mean scores ranging from 1.98 to 2.07. "Responding to Change" was the highest-rated trait (M=2.07), yet only 26.2% of respondents considered it "strongly used," indicating limited institutional responsiveness and supporting Andrews, Pritchett, and Woolcock's (2017) notion of capability traps, where reform efforts falter due to weak organizational learning and rigid structures. Similarly, "Innovation and Risk-Taking" and "Learning from Setbacks" both scored 1.99, suggesting that while some entrepreneurial behaviors exist, they are not deeply embedded in LGAs' operational culture. Munyoro et al. (2021) emphasize that rural authorities often lack the leadership capacity and resources to institutionalize innovation within rigid administrative systems.

Moderate ratings for "Emerging Technological Trends" (M=2.04) and "Collaboration and Partnerships" (M=2.01) further highlight uneven digital adoption and inconsistent stakeholder engagement, echoing Onyalo's (2024) findings on the challenges of integrating technology and fostering cross-sector collaboration in East Africa's decentralized governance. "Adaptability to New Demands" was measured twice for consistency, yielding scores of 1.98 and 2.00, with responses evenly split across usage levels. This underscores a lack of strategic foresight and anticipatory planning, reinforcing Mwinyi and Hamad's (2022) argument that LGAs remain largely reactive rather than proactive.

The data from FGDs and KIIs provided critical context to these moderate adaptability scores. Citizens consistently described service delivery as reactive and slow, particularly in rural districts. One participant from South District explained,

“We report problems to the authorities, but responses often take months to arrive. In many cases, the delays mean that urgent issues remain unresolved and continue to affect communities. Sometimes, nothing happens at all, leaving us frustrated and disillusioned. This lack of timely action undermines confidence in local governance and weakens accountability structures.”

These perceptions align with Andrews et al. (2017), who highlight how rigid bureaucratic structures and centralized decision-making hinder adaptive capacity. The lack of strategic foresight was a recurring theme, with participants noting that LGAs often plan for outdated challenges rather than anticipating future needs (Bagheri, 2017).

Innovation and risk-taking were acknowledged but limited in application. While some LGAs piloted mobile clinics and digital tax systems, officials cited fear of failure and budget constraints as major barriers. The senior officials from Micheweni, and Central remarked,

“We try new things, but fear of failure holds back bold experimentation. Leaders hesitate to take risks because mistakes are often punished rather than treated as learning opportunities. At the same time, limited budget flexibility restricts the ability to support innovative initiatives. Together, these constraints discourage creativity and slow down meaningful reform in local governance.”

The echoing and reinforcing from Renko et al.'s (2015) and Hope's (2009) findings on institutional risk aversion. FGDs also, revealed frustration over repeated service failures, such as broken water systems and delayed school repairs, with little evidence of learning. One participant observed,

“They make the same mistakes every year, repeating patterns that should have been corrected long ago. Reports and audits highlight the issues, but lessons are rarely absorbed into practice. This lack of institutional learning keeps governance stuck in a cycle of inefficiency and frustration. Over time, we lose confidence, feeling as though progress is impossible when errors simply recur.”

The above underscoring the need for structured feedback loops and adaptive learning mechanisms (Hartley, 2005). Whereas, technological adoption and collaboration were viewed as uneven and often symbolic. Urban citizens praised digital platforms, while rural participants felt excluded due to poor infrastructure and low digital literacy. The Central and Micheweni Districts resident explained,

“We hear about online services, but many of us don't have internet access to use them. Even when connections exist, digital literacy is low, leaving us unsure how to navigate these platforms. As a result, promised innovations in service delivery remain out of reach for large segments of our population. This

digital divide reinforces inequality and limits the effectiveness of governance reforms.”

As, Onyalo’s (2024) argument supporting that inclusive digital innovation is essential in decentralized systems.

Collaboration was similarly criticized; although some LGAs partnered with NGOs, many citizens felt excluded from decision-making. A local leader shared,

“We’re invited to meetings, but the decisions have already been made before we arrive. This turns participation into a formality rather than a genuine opportunity to influence outcomes. Citizens feel sidelined, as their voices are heard but not acted upon. Such practices weaken trust in governance and reinforce perceptions of exclusion.”

It reflects the Arkorful et al.’s (2020) calls for genuine co-creation and shared accountability. The findings contribute to entrepreneurial leadership literature by highlighting its partial institutionalization and uneven application across urban and rural LGAs. They emphasize the need for leadership development, investment in digital infrastructure, and stronger accountability and participatory planning frameworks to bridge the urban-rural innovation divide and enhance citizen satisfaction.

Theme 3: The Decentralization Paradox

Table 3: Distribution of Responses on the Decentralization Paradox Variables

Variable	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Not Agreed	Mean	StdV
Training and Development	84 (40.0)	84 (40.0)	42 (20.0)	1.80	.750
Resource Allocation	53 (25.2)	105 (50.0)	52 (24.8)	2.00	.709
Leadership Mindset	57 (27.1)	87 (41.4)	66 (31.4)	2.04	.766
Measurement and Evaluation	58 (27.6)	93 (44.3)	59 (28.1)	2.00	.766
Innovation of Leaders	67 (31.9)	73 (34.8)	70 (33.3)	2.01	.810
Employee Engagement	57 (27.1)	100 (47.6)	53 (25.2)	1.98	.725
Staff Competency	39 (18.6)	94 (44.8)	77 (36.7)	2.18	.723
Operational Capacity	57 (27.1)	71 (33.8)	82 (39.0)	2.12	.807
Financial Resources	63 (30.0)	76 (36.2)	71 (33.8)	2.04	.800

Source: *Field Data, (2024)*

This section examined the decentralization paradox within Zanzibar’s LGAs, while responsibilities are devolved to LGAs, their autonomy and resources remain constrained. Survey results revealed a varied landscape of leadership effectiveness. Training and development emerged as a relative strength, with 80% of respondents affirming its importance (M=1.80, SD=0.750). This

reinforces Arkorful et al.'s (2020) assertion that capacity-building is essential for improved service delivery. Resource allocation received moderate support (M=2.00), with 75.2% agreement, though lingering dissatisfaction suggests challenges in equitable distribution and strategic deployment (Kuenzi & Lambright, 2018; Hope, 2009). Leadership mindset and innovation were more divisive, with 68.5% agreeing that leadership attitudes support adaptability (M=2.04, SD=0.766), and innovation scoring similarly (M=2.01, SD=0.810). These findings reflect Renko et al.'s (2015) and Bagheri's (2017) view that entrepreneurial leadership requires institutional support and risk tolerance. Measurement and evaluation practices (M=2.00) were viewed more favorably, suggesting some performance tracking mechanisms are in place, though trust in their effectiveness varied (Hartley, 2005).

Concerns were more pronounced in staff competency and operational capacity. Only 18.6% strongly agreed on staff competence (M=2.18), and 39% expressed dissatisfaction with operational readiness (M=2.12). These findings highlight gaps in human resource development and institutional agility (Hope, 2009). Financial resources also scored moderately (M=2.04), with 33.8% of respondents expressing disagreement, pointing to ongoing budgetary constraints (Mwinyi & Hamad, 2022). While training and employee engagement (M=1.98) show potential, the overall picture underscores the need for strategic planning, inclusive leadership, and targeted capacity-building to enhance governance effectiveness across Zanzibar's LGAs (Gupta, MacMillan, & Surie, 2004).

Qualitative data provided deeper insights into these quantitative patterns. Training and development were widely acknowledged as essential, yet participants expressed frustration with externally driven, generic programs that lacked contextual relevance. As one LGAs Director noted,

"We attend training, yes, but most of it feels generic and disconnected from our realities. The sessions often emphasize theory without equipping us with tools to solve everyday governance challenges. What we truly need are practical skills that match the problems we face in our communities. Without this alignment, training risks becoming a routine exercise rather than a driver of meaningful change."

This supports Hope's (2009) argument that capacity-building must be tailored to local realities and aligns with Andrews, Pritchett, and Woolcock's (2017) emphasis on adaptive learning. Resource allocation was another area of concern, with delayed disbursements and misaligned budgeting processes undermining implementation. A finance officer explained,

"Funds often arrive late or are redirected, making it difficult to plan effectively. Projects stall because resources are not available when they are most needed. This unpredictability undermines the ability of local authorities to deliver services on time. In the end, we suffer delays and frustration as governance fails to match its commitments with timely action."

As, echoing Kuenzi and Lambright's (2018) critique of centralized financial control in decentralized systems. Also, in leadership mindset and innovation were perceived as inconsistent and personality-driven. Several KIIs described a gap between strategic vision and operational execution, with one participant stating,

"Our leaders are good at talking, but not at doing. Promises are made in speeches and meetings, yet little action follows to address the real challenges we face. This gap between words and deeds erodes trust and leaves citizens feeling neglected. Over time, governance becomes associated more with rhetoric than with tangible results."

This reflects Renko et al.'s (2015) view that leadership cognition influences organizational responsiveness. Innovation was similarly uneven, with some leaders praised for community-driven initiatives and others criticized for rigid routines. An FGD participant remarked,

"Innovation depends on who is in charge, making progress uneven across different leadership contexts. When leaders embrace creativity and risk-taking, new ideas can flourish and improve service delivery. But under more rigid or cautious leadership, innovation is stifled, leaving us with the same old approaches. This inconsistency highlights how leadership style directly shapes the pace and success of governance reforms."

This reinforcing Bagheri's (2017) argument that entrepreneurial leadership must be institutionalized to thrive in resource-constrained environments. Measurement and evaluation practices were described as superficial, with limited feedback and accountability. A planning officer shared,

"We submit reports, but there's no feedback to guide us. Without responses, communities are left uncertain about whether their concerns are even acknowledged. This silence creates frustration and weakens the link between citizens and (us) local authorities. Over time, the absence of dialogue erodes trust and discourages people from reporting issues at all."

As, supporting Hartley's (2005) critique of evaluation systems that lack functional impact. Another concern about employee engagement, staff competency, and operational capacity were widespread. Staff were often excluded from strategic decision-making, as noted by a community development officer:

"We're not part of the thinking process, even though decisions directly affect our lives. Leaders often design policies behind closed doors, leaving citizens out of the early stages of planning. By the time we are invited, the space for genuine input has already disappeared. This exclusion weakens ownership and makes governance feel distant from the realities of the community."

This contrasting with Gupta, MacMillan, and Surie's (2004) findings on inclusive leadership. Participants cited outdated skills and poor ICT literacy as barriers to effective service delivery, supporting Hope's (2009) call for strategic human resource planning. Operational constraints, such as lack of transport, tools, and infrastructure, were frequently mentioned, with a district engineer stating,

"We're stuck, unable to move forward despite repeated efforts. The same barriers keep resurfacing, blocking progress and draining motivation. Promises of reform and innovation rarely translate into real change on the ground. This sense of stagnation leaves communities frustrated and governance trapped in cycles of inertia."

These limitations reflect Andrews et al.'s (2017) analysis of implementation gaps in weak systems. Finally, financial governance was criticized for opacity and political interference, with one participant noting,

"Funds come and go without explanation, leaving us uncertain and projects disrupted. When financial flows are opaque, citizens cannot track whether resources are used as intended. This lack of transparency undermines trust and makes accountability nearly impossible. Over time, it creates frustration, as we see promises of development but rarely the results."

As, Mwinyi and Hamad's (2022) resounding on their findings, declaratory the need for transparent and participatory budgeting. Taken together, these findings demonstrate that institutional effectiveness in Zanzibar's LGAs is fundamentally shaped by leadership practices and the extent of contextual capacity-building, yet remains constrained by a persistent decentralization paradox. Although LGAs are formally mandated to deliver public services, they operate with limited fiscal autonomy and restricted operational discretion, reflecting the broader African governance dilemma of responsibility without authority. This structural imbalance weakens the institutionalization of entrepreneurial and adaptive leadership, thereby limiting accountability, innovation, and responsiveness. Consequently, despite ongoing reform rhetoric, citizen satisfaction remains moderate because LGAs lack the financial, managerial, and infrastructural capacity necessary to translate decentralized mandates into effective service outcomes. These realities underscore the urgent need for adaptive governance frameworks and targeted reforms in leadership development, training systems, financial management, and institutional strengthening to align responsibility with genuine autonomy in local governance.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined how entrepreneurial leadership interacts with institutional structures in Zanzibar's LGAs. The evidence shows that entrepreneurial leadership is a necessary but insufficient condition for

improving service delivery. While traits such as adaptability, innovation, and responsiveness are present, their impact is constrained by deeper structural pathologies of decentralization. Bureaucratic inertia, resource constraints, and centralized fiscal control create a “capability trap” in which individual initiative is absorbed by systemic inertia. The central thesis, therefore, is that leadership behaviors alone cannot transform service delivery unless embedded within supportive institutional frameworks that address the paradox of decentralization. The theoretical contribution of this research lies in demonstrating that Entrepreneurial Leadership Theory, when applied to the public sector in developing economies, must be explicitly integrated with theories of decentralized governance. Entrepreneurial leadership in LGAs cannot be understood in isolation or standing alone phenomenal; it is constrained by institutional logics that limit fiscal autonomy, accountability, and innovation diffusion. This integration advances existing models by situating leadership behaviors within the enabling and constraining context of decentralized governance, offering a more nuanced framework for analyzing reform outcomes in resource-constrained environments

To move beyond generic prescriptions, the study proposes targeted, actionable mechanisms derived directly from the findings:

1. For PO-RALG (Policy Level): Revise the Local Government Performance Assessment System to include and weight metrics on innovation pilot projects and community co-design of services. This would incentivize LGAs to embed entrepreneurial practices into routine governance rather than treating them as isolated initiatives.
2. For LGA Directors (Operational Level): Implement protected “innovation budgets” (e.g., 2% of discretionary funds) for mid-level managers to pilot small-scale solutions without fear of punitive audit for failure. This would institutionalize risk-taking and adaptive learning, addressing the current culture of risk aversion.
3. For Donors and Development Partners (Support Level): Shift capacity-building funding from generic leadership training to supporting “action-learning coalitions,” where LGA teams work on real service delivery problems with embedded coaches. This approach would ensure that training is context-specific, problem-driven, and directly linked to institutional reform.
4. For Staff Development (Human Resource Level): Establish structured mentorship and ICT literacy programs tailored to local realities, ensuring that staff competency gaps are addressed in ways that directly support service delivery priorities.
5. For Financial Governance (Accountability Level): Introduce transparent participatory budgeting mechanisms that allow communities to monitor allocations and disbursements, reducing opacity and political interference in resource utilization.

By synthesizing quantitative and qualitative findings, this study demonstrates that entrepreneurial leadership in Zanzibar's LGAs is aspirational but

structurally inhibited. The paradox of decentralization, responsibility without autonomy, explains why citizen satisfaction remains moderate despite reform rhetoric. Addressing this paradox requires not only leadership development but also systemic reforms in fiscal management, accountability, and participatory governance. Ultimately, the study contributes to both theory and practice by showing that entrepreneurial leadership must be institutionalized within supportive governance structures if it is to deliver meaningful improvements in citizen satisfaction and service performance.

6. Limitations of the Study

Although this study provides meaningful insights into entrepreneurial leadership and service delivery within Zanzibar's LGAs, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the research focused exclusively on selected LGAs in Zanzibar, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions or national contexts. The cross-sectional design and relatively modest sample size further constrain the ability to establish long-term causal relationships between variables. While the mixed-methods approach strengthened analytical robustness, reliance on self-reported data introduces the possibility of subjective bias. Additionally, Zanzibar's unique political, cultural, and institutional environment may have influenced leadership behaviors and service delivery outcomes, suggesting that future research should explore these dynamics through ethnographic or comparative approaches. Despite these limitations, the study provides a strong foundation for understanding how entrepreneurial leadership contributes to innovation and efficiency in the public sector of developing contexts.

7. Areas for Future Research

Building upon these findings, future research should pursue several directions. Comparative studies across East African countries could help identify similarities and differences in how entrepreneurial leadership influences local governance and public service delivery. Longitudinal designs would allow scholars to examine how leadership behaviors evolve over time and the extent to which they affect institutional performance and citizen trust. Further inquiry into the role of gender in shaping entrepreneurial leadership practices would add depth to the analysis, while studies on digital transformation and e-governance could reveal how technological initiatives interact with leadership to enhance efficiency and transparency. Another promising area involves examining citizen co-production and participatory mechanisms as key enablers of innovation and accountability in entrepreneurial public management.

Authors' Contribution

The authors acknowledge distinct contributions to this study. Abdallah Juma Ramadhan, as the lead author, was responsible for conceptualizing the study, designing the research, collecting and analyzing data, drafting the manuscript, and overseeing the final revision. Collaborating contributors provided

methodological advice, supported the literature review, and participated in data interpretation and manuscript editing. The lead author played a central role in integrating theoretical frameworks and deriving policy implications that reflect the realities of Zanzibar's LGAs. This collective effort highlights the originality of the study and its relevance to the discourse on entrepreneurial leadership, innovation, and governance reform in African public administration.

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