

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL COLLABORATION AND PUBLIC
SERVICE DELIVERY: EVIDENCE FROM TECHIMAN
MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY AND TECHIMAN NORTH DISTRICT
ASSEMBLY**



MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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DELIVERY: EVIDENCE FROM TECHIMAN MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY
AND TECHIMAN NORTH DISTRICT ASSEMBLY**



**A Thesis in the Department of Political Science Education
Faculty of social science submitted to the School of
Graduate Studies, in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the award of degree of
Master of Philosophy
(Political Science)
in the University of Education, Winneba**

NOVEMBER, 2023

DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, SETH OWUSU, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

Signature:

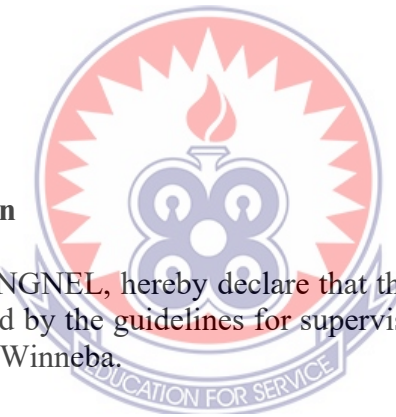
Date

Supervisor's Declaration

I, DR ZECHARIAH LANGNEL, hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work were supervised by the guidelines for supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Signature:

Date.....



DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my family and street children across the globe.



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My appreciation goes to the Almighty God for His wisdom, knowledge, mercies, and direction in the writing of this thesis. This study would have been incomplete without the guidance and encouragement of those who contributed to successful completion. I would like to express my profound appreciation and heartfelt gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Zechariah Langnel, for the continual and tireless support, expert advice and guidance that he offered to me through interactions, corrections, discussions and constructive criticisms and suggestions during the entire period of the research. I am also grateful to the Department of Political Science Education, University of Education, Winneba, particularly Dr. Desmond Tweneboah-Kodua, Prof. Gabriel Botchwey and Dr. Maliha Abubakari. I sincerely thank you for providing the needed academic support and excellent to supplement the work of the supervisory team.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BRT	Bus Rapid Transit
COVID-19	Coronavirus Diseases
DCE	District Chief Executive
EFA	Education For All
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GSGDA	Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda
IGF	Internally Generated Fund
IMC	Inter-Municipal Cooperation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOC	Inter-Organizational Collaboration
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
LI	Legislative Instrument
MCE	Municipal Chief Executive
MTDP	Medium Term Development Plan
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NHIS	National Health Insurance Scheme
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development
PPPs	Public-Private-Partnership
RDT	Resource Dependency Theory
ROC	Regional Organization Council
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SHS	Senior High School
SMEs	Small Medium Enterprises
TMA	Techiman Municipal Assembly
TNDA	Techiman North District Assembly
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
US	United States
WHO	World Health Organization



ABSTRACT

Budgetary constraints combined with the public's growing expectations have compelled local governments to look for answers to the many problems with service delivery. This study examines how inter-organizational collaboration can serve as an effective means of delivering public service. Inter-organizational collaboration has been identified as a more affordable and alternative method of offering services to the general public. The research used a qualitative methodology to gather information from officials from the Ministry of Local Government, Decentralization and Rural Development, Bono-East Regional Coordinating Council, EPA, Techiman Municipal Assembly and Techiman North District Assembly. Employing resource-dependency theory as a framework for theory, the study reveals that the two assemblies collaborate on areas such as revenue generation, security, health, land management, waste management and planning. The study also reveals that the collaboration between the two assemblies is driven by limited information, the small size of an assembly, experience and proximity. The study also found that cost savings, access to technical skills and promotion of accountability are benefits associated with inter-organizational collaboration between the two assemblies. The revealed challenges affecting successful inter-organizational collaboration include; political interference, bureaucracy and unhealthy competition. The policy recommendations of these findings are offered.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The fast growth of the world's population, rapid industrialization and urbanization has put more pressure on policy makers and implementers to provide an avenue to deal with the challenges that come with service delivery (Elnaiem et al., 2023; Allam, 2020). Over the years, public institutions in most countries have been reshaped by reforms and have looked for new ways to deliver services to the people to maintain their commitment (Lapuenta & Van de Walle, 2020; Shipan & Volden, 2012). Also, the unavailability and challenges that come with other methods of service delivery such as outsourcing and privatization have forced government institutions to adopt inter-organizational collaboration as a new way of service delivery.

Aunger et al. (2021) defined inter-organizational collaboration as a partnership between multiple organizations to achieve a common goal, including government departments, NGOs, civil society groups, and international organizations. Inter-organizational collaboration has been identified as an alternative way to cut costs in providing services when organizations are small in size, have limited resources and less managerial capabilities (Ko & Kim, 2023; Ko & Kim 2021; Zafra-Gomez et al., 2020; Bel et al., 2012). Scholars have argued that inter-organizational collaboration has made organizations responsible while decreasing their cost of delivery services (Ferreira et al., 2022; Kreye, 2022; Aunger et al., 2022; Bel & Sebő, 2021). Others also argue that the complex

challenges organizations struggle to tackle independently can be addressed through inter-organizational collaboration (Mosley, 2021; Sørensen & Torfing, 2021).

The phrase "inter-organizational collaboration" is thus used broadly and in different forms. Some scholars refer to it as inter-municipal cooperation (Domaracká, 2022; Ferreira, et al., 2022; Muraoka & Avellaneda, 2021; Silvestre et al., 2020; Casula, 2020), inter-governmental cooperation (Zambrano-Gutiérrez & Avellaneda, 2023; Du Boys et al., 2022; Li & Lu, 2022; Ciesielska & Janowski, 2019) and inter-assemblies' collaboration (Tenakwah & Otchere-Ankrah, 2020). This refers to all agreement's organizations have with one another (Zambrano-Gutiérrez & Avellaneda, 2023; Méndez Juez, 2022; Muraoka & Avellaneda, 2021).

Developed countries such as Spain, England and Switzerland have used inter-organizational collaboration (IOC) in delivering services to the people. In the USA inter-organizational collaboration has been used to address issues such as waste management, water management, revenue and expenditure effects, etc (Robb et al., 2023; Park et al., 2022; Lan et al., 2022; Muraoka & Avellaneda, 2021; Youm & Feiock, 2019). Similarly, in the Netherlands, there are over 60 inter-municipal collaboration initiatives which focus on ICT, urbanization, climate change, labour market participation, mobility, digitalization, and sustainability. For example, in Eindhoven, municipalities collaborate on smart city projects such as smart lighting and smart-grid technology. In Zeist and Amersfoort, municipalities collaborate on the "Living Lab Smart Emission" project, which measures air quality in real-time (Voorn & Van Genugten, 2023; Veenendaal, 2023; Legendijk et al., 2020; Voorberg et al., 2017).

Inter-organizational collaboration is one of the major tools in Australia to deliver services such as waste management, information technology services, library and museum services and land management services (Morgan et al., 2023; Tobin & Zaman, 2022; Sansom, 2019). Canada also uses IOC to deliver services such as public health, economic development, transportation, social housing, waste management, emergency services, land use planning (Spicer, 2022; Hachard, 2022; Taylor, 2022; Adebayo, 2022) and other European Countries have also adopted inter-organizational collaboration as an alternative means to deliver services such as environment protection, housing project, waste management, transportation etc (Elston & Bel, 2023; Camões et al., 2021; Casula, 2020; Dixon & Elston, 2020; Kim, 2020). The case in developing countries is quite different as some developing countries are striving to aid public service delivery through inter-organization collaboration (Tenakwah & Otchere-Ankrah, 2020). In public service delivery, inter-organizational collaboration comprises the sharing of resources, expertise and knowledge to improve service quality and innovations (Castro-Arce & Vanclay, 2020). Organizations all over the world especially local governments have decided to merge to provide services due to a rise in administrative and competitive constraints (Hood et al., 2020). One of the underlying motivations of most local governments that enter into collaboration is to cut the cost of providing services (Goriet al., 2023; Banaszewska et al., 2022). Other local governments have created inter-organizational collaboration for delivering public services as a result of the fiscal and economic limitations governments confront (Wouterset al., 2023; Læg Reid & Rykkja, 2022). Another advantage is to boost their economic competitiveness and manage externalities (Paty & Ubeda, 2022). Building stability against adversity also serves as another reason why organizations collaborate

(Elston & BeL, 2023). When organizations collaborate, they turn to have access to limited information and resources (Barasa et al., 2018; Scholten & Schilder 2015).

Draai, (2010) highlighted that collaboration is key to improve African public service delivery. The African context presents unique challenges to inter-organizational collaboration. Despite the importance of collaboration, West Africa, including Ghana, has its own set of challenges and opportunities concerning inter-organizational collaboration. Challenges to inter-organizational collaboration include a lack of trust among partners, inadequate resources, and poor communication (Aunger, 2021). In Ghana, inter-organizational collaboration has gained prominence to enhance public service delivery. Several studies have examined collaborative initiatives, their effectiveness, and their challenges (Tenakwah & Otchere-Ankrah, 2020; Abihiro et al., 2016). Abihiro et al. (2016) identified inadequate communication and coordination mechanisms, limited resources, and a lack of commitment to collaborative efforts as barriers to inter-organizational collaboration. Abihiro et al. (2016) revealed that there is a need for policymakers and organizational leaders to recognize and address the challenges of inter-agency collaboration in the health sector. Therefore, fostering a collaborative culture, improving communication and coordination mechanisms, and allocating adequate resources can enhance the effectiveness of public service delivery in Ghana (Abihiro et al., 2016).

The Ghanaian government has recognized the importance of inter-organizational collaboration and has implemented various initiatives to foster collaboration across sectors. Establishing the Office of the Head of Civil Service, the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, and the Local Government Act 2016 (Act 936) permits organizations to form partnerships in delivering services (World Bank Group, 2019). Also,

Ghana presents opportunities for collaboration, including a growing recognition of the need for multi-sectoral collaboration, supportive policy frameworks, and the presence of active civil society organizations (World Bank Group, 2019). Inter-organizational collaboration plays a vital role in enhancing public service delivery in Ghana. While challenges exist, such as cultural differences and coordination issues, the country has shown progress in fostering collaboration through supportive policies and government initiatives.

Understanding the current state of inter-organizational collaboration and its impact on public service delivery is crucial for developing effective strategies and policies to address the challenges and maximize the benefits of collaborative efforts in Ghana. Studies emphasize the significance of collaboration in public service delivery, focusing on sharing resources, expertise, and knowledge to improve service quality and responsiveness. However, more specific research is needed to examine the drivers, areas, benefits and challenges of inter-organizational collaboration among local governments in Ghana. Understanding the specific outcomes and benefits of collaboration can inform strategies to enhance public service delivery. This study aims to address research gaps and provide valuable insights for enhancing collaboration and public service delivery in Ghana.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Over the last few decades, scholars have focused on how to improve the delivery of public services. While a large body of the literature has focused on e-governance (Nirmalkumar et al., 2023; Ash & Chattopadhyay, 2023; Umbach & Tkalec, 2022; Egberi, 2022; Nnaji & Nri, 2022; Giri, 2019), others tend to look at new public management reforms (Ferlie & Ongaro, 2022; Lapuente & Van de Walle, 2020; Osborne, 2020; Mafa & Govender, 2019;

Wang et al., 2018; Laegreid, 2017) and co-production of public services (Osborne, 2018; Nabatchi et al., 2017; Osborne et al., 2016; Bovaird et al., 2015) with less emphasis on inter-organizational collaboration (Costumato, 2021; Tenakwah & Otchere-Ankrah, 2020; Kekez et al., 2018; Casalino et al., 2014). It should be emphasized that e-governance, new public management reforms, and co-production focus on public organizations as separate entities leading to a silos approach to public service delivery.

However, inter-organizational collaboration is emerging in the public administration literature as a new way of improving the quality of public service delivery (de Kam, 2022; Ozdemir & Gupta, 2021; Tambouris & Tarabanis, 2021). The underlying assumption is that when organizations collaborate, they maintain stability during disruptions caused by powerful internal and external events such as technical or coordination failures, natural disasters, economic recessions, political instability, and public health emergencies (DesJardine et al., 2019; Kahn et al. 2018).

Current challenges facing local governments have caused many of them to shift their attention to providing services by engaging in inter-organizational collaboration (Bel & Gradus, 2018; Bel & Warner, 2016). Local governments face several challenges, especially during the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of policies. It is important to mention that the few studies on inter-organizational collaboration in delivering public service have extensively focused on the central level of government (Sun et al., 2023; Klüser, 2022; Keuning et al., 2022; Wu et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2020; Guoxing et al., 2019) and pay less attention on sub-national level (Elston & Bel, 2023; Ferreira et al., 2022; Muraoka & Avellaneda, 2021; Tenakwah & Otchere-Ankrah, 2020). The few studies on

inter-organizational collaboration in local governance point to the fact that an effective inter-organizational collaboration at the sub-national level has a series of implications on service delivery to the local people. For example, the study by Elston and BeL (2023) reveals that inter-organizational collaboration at the municipal level fosters resilience against adversity. Soukopová and Vaceková (2017) also indicate that local assemblies with inter-organizational collaboration tend to have lower expenses per capita than assemblies without such collaboration. This implies that if organizations such as district assemblies put into practice effective inter-organizational collaboration, there is the possibility that their performance in service delivery will improve.

Despite the numerous benefits derived from inter-organizational collaboration and the permission granted by the Local Government Act 2016 (Act 936) which permits district assemblies to collaborate to deliver public services, a large number of local government organizations have not given much thought to its execution. Therefore, this study seeks to fill the gaps in the literature by examining inter-organizational collaboration for public service delivery between Techiman Municipal Assembly and Techiman North District Assembly in the Bono-East Region of Ghana. Moreover, it aims to find out how district assemblies in Ghana can improve service delivery through inter-organizational collaboration.

1.3 Main Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to examine inter-organizational collaboration and public service delivery in Techiman Municipality and Techiman North District.

1.3.1 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are;

1. To analyze areas of collaborations between Techiman Municipal Assembly and Techiman North District Assembly.
2. To examine the drivers of inter-organizational collaboration between Techiman Municipal Assembly and Techiman North District Assembly.
3. To examine the benefits of inter-organizational collaboration between Techiman Municipal Assembly and Techiman North District Assembly.
4. To analyze the challenges facing inter-organizational collaboration among Techiman Municipal Assembly and Techiman North District Assembly.

1.4. Specific Research Questions

1. What are the areas of collaborations between Techiman Municipal Assembly and Techiman North District Assembly?
2. What are the drivers of inter-organizational collaboration between Techiman Municipal Assembly and Techiman North District Assembly?
3. How beneficial is inter-organizational collaboration between Techiman Municipal Assembly and Techiman North District Assembly?
4. What are the challenges of inter-organizational collaboration among Techiman Municipal Assembly and Techiman North District Assembly?

1.5 Significance of the Study

Knowledge of assessing inter-organizational collaboration and service delivery in Techiman Municipal Assembly and Techiman North District Assembly has several

importance. Firstly, the study will contribute to the body of knowledge already available on inter-organizational collaborations, specifically for local governments and more generally for other public organizations. This is preferable because it is still unclear whether such a relationship fosters economies of scale, leading to a decrease in spending (Blesse & Baskaran, 2014). Given that these benefits often serve as the primary motivator for public entities to collaborate, more empirical research is required to establish whether this approach achieves what it sets out to do. It will also serve as literature for further studies on inter-organizational collaboration.

Secondly, the research will contribute to practice greatly by providing organizations with a framework for creating productive partnerships and networks. The study will lead to the development of practical tools and approaches for developing successful partnerships, such as partnership agreements, collaborative planning processes, and dispute-resolution strategies. These tools will allow organizations to set clear objectives, roles, and duties, and to handle disagreements and disputes that may develop throughout the cooperation process. Moreover, the research will propose measures that will promote the sharing of resources and knowledge across institutions, enabling them to accomplish shared objectives more efficiently and effectively. This will result in enhanced service delivery, more creativity, and a greater impact in solving complex societal challenges. Lastly, it will contribute to practice by offering organizations practical direction and tools for developing successful partnerships and networks, allowing them to accomplish shared objectives more efficiently and effectively.

To theory, the study on Inter-organizational collaboration will add greatly to organizational theory by underlining the relevance of partnerships and networks in attaining shared

objectives. Collaboration theories stress the necessity for organizations to work together to accomplish common goals, rather than competing against one other. This will lead to the creation of frameworks and models that will help organizations in creating productive collaboration. Moreover, the research will help to develop dependency theory, which investigates the structure and dynamics of inter-organizational links. Dependency theory has helped to explain how organizations might exploit external networks to obtain resources, information, and opportunities. Also, the research on inter-organizational collaboration will expand organizational theory by stressing the significance of partnerships and networks in accomplishing shared objectives and offering insights into the elements that enable or impede effective collaborations.

Finally, the study of inter-organizational collaboration will assist in attaining Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The study on inter-organizational collaboration may help organizations most especially public institutions exchange knowledge and resources, maximize their strengths, and handle difficult challenges that need a multidisciplinary approach. For example, fulfilling SDG 6, which focuses on clean water and sanitation, needs collaboration between government agencies, non-profit groups, and private firms to build sustainable water management systems that emphasize access to safe and affordable water for everyone. Similarly, reaching SDG 12, which focuses on responsible consumption and production, needs collaboration between institutions to build integrated waste management systems that promote waste reduction, reuse, and recycling. Collaboration may assist in guaranteeing waste management techniques are socially, economically, and ecologically sustainable. Working together, organizations may create

comprehensive solutions that address these concerns and contribute to the overall attainment of the SDGs.

1.6 Organization of the Study

This study is divided into five chapters. Chapter One covers the introduction which focuses on the following: introduction, background to the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, the significance of the study, delimitation, and organization of the study. Chapter Two focuses on the review of related literature, conceptual framework, and theoretical framework. The third chapter describes the methodology used for the study. This covers the research paradigm, research approach, research design, the profile of the study area, sample and sampling procedures, research instruments and data collection procedures, data analysis, ethical considerations, and validity and reliability. Chapter Four includes data analysis and a discussion of major findings. Finally, Chapter Five also includes the summary, conclusions, and recommendations of the study based on the findings and suggestions for further studies.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

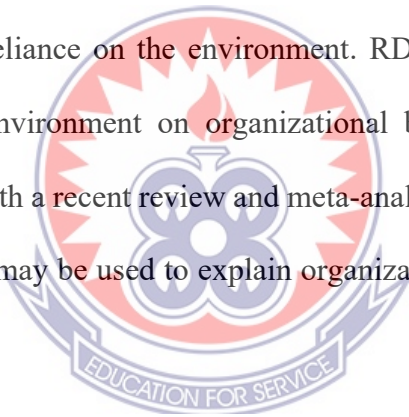
This chapter focuses on reviewing scholarly works that have been conducted on inter-organizational collaboration and public service delivery. The literature review focused on areas such as inter-organizational collaboration and public service delivery, drivers of collaboration and public service delivery, areas of collaboration and public service delivery, benefits of collaboration, and challenges of collaboration. This chapter also comprises the theoretical framework that informed the study and the conceptual framework of the study. Reviews of the literature are required to get an overview of the field in which prior research has been done and to identify any gaps in the body of knowledge that will be covered in this study.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

There are several theories of organizational collaboration but the one that best fits the study of inter-organizational collaboration and service delivery in the Techiman Municipal Assembly and Techiman North Assembly is the resource dependency theory. A theoretical framework is the "blueprint" or direction for research, according to Grant and Osanloo (2014). It is a framework that is based on a well-established theory in an area of study and is related to or reflects the premise of the investigation. A qualitative study typically generates theory at the end or employs theory to serve as the lens for such inquiry (Creswell, 2014). A theory provides a distinct lens through which a researcher analyses the data gathered (Reeve et al., 2008). Similarly, the theoretical framework according to Mensah et al. (2020) is the particular theory or ideas that apply to a particular field of

human endeavour and are useful for event analysis. In other words, the theoretical framework serves as the foundation upon which research is constructed. A qualitative research method can be supported by a theoretical framework (Collins & Stockton, 2018). According to Collins and Stockton (2018), a strong theoretical framework helps with data coding and interpretation and allows the researcher to reveal previous assumptions about the study. This study employed the Resource Dependency Theory (RDT).

Resource Dependency Theory was introduced by Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) who assert that an organization's ability to acquire and manage resources is essential to its existence. Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) state that organizations make decisions to secure resources to lessen uncertainty and reliance on the environment. RDT has been used to analyze the effect of the external environment on organizational behaviours since its conception (Hillman et al., 2009), with a recent review and meta-analysis of the RDT literature giving evidence that the theory may be used to explain organizational action (Drees & Heugens, 2013).



According to resource dependency theory (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978), Resources in their external contexts are essential to the survival of organizations. These dependencies pose threats to businesses in the sector. Businesses may develop links to the external bodies that govern such resources to reduce dependencies and associated risks. Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) identified three advantages associated with corporate board links: communication channels, legitimacy, and advice and counsel.

According to the Resource Dependency Theory, the ability of an organization to get essential resources from external sources is a prerequisite for its existence (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978). The theory aims to describe an organization's behaviour in terms of its

context. This is governed by two factors: (1) the resources, which are defined as everything useful to an organization, and (2) the dependence of one organization on another for access to valuable resources (Emerson 1962; Pfeffer & Salancik 1978). "Dependence" confers power to the organization that controls the resources needed by another (Ulrich & Barney 1984). Thus, one of the primary goals of RDT is to define the strategies that organizations use to reduce resource dependence and increase control over their resources (Hillman et al. 2009).

The resource-dependency hypothesis has been used to examine cooperative agreements between organizations. The foundation of the resource-dependency hypothesis is the open systems paradigm. The open systems framework highlights the need for organizations to make the most of their interactions with the external environment to provide the vital resources necessary for their operations (Barringer & Harrison, 2000). The foundation of the resource-dependency theory is the idea that organizations are compelled to make logical decisions because they are unable to provide all the resources required to accomplish their goals. It is as a result of this that organizations actively engage the external environment. Aldrich and Pfeffer (1976) pointed out that organizations are unable to provide all the resources or functions necessary for self-maintenance internally, and as a result, organizations need to interact and establish relationships with environmental components that can provide the necessary resources and services. Thus, the argument goes that cooperation and cooperative agreements across organizations enable them to expand their resource base, thus lessening the rivalry amongst public organizations for limited resources.

Organizations' capacity to generate the funds required to survive has a significant impact on their ability to continue existence. This implies that organizations will only be interested in a partnership or collaboration once it is clear that the involved organizations will benefit from it both ways. According to Buzzoli et al. (1997), two main factors influence collaboration within organizations the perceived need and the organization's desire. Perceived needs can significantly be used in any organization to cooperate with others willingly. For example, organizations may need human and financial resources, which are not always readily accessible, but others may (Alter & Hage, 1993). Again, The kind of service to be provided is another factor that motivates people to participate into collaborative arrangements. For example, some services such as waste management, security and revenue mobilization are best addressed collaboratively and therefore organizations seeking to find answers to their sanitation, security and revenue problems may collaborate with others who have the experience and capacity to deliver this service. It is quite clear from the above that organizations will intentionally form collaborative partnerships when they recognize that their needs can be effectively met through joint efforts and that the desired outcomes can be optimally achieved through collective action. In short, the resource dependency theory examines how organizations form relationships and partnerships with other entities in their environment to acquire and utilize resources that are essential for their operations and survival (Sherer & Lee, 2002; Pfeffer & Salanick, 1978). Consequently, the resource dependency theory provides a foundational theoretical framework, as it underscores the pivotal role of resource acquisition and control in driving collaborative arrangements between organizations. The absence of control over critical resources, including information and communication, financial, and human resources,

creates a power vacuum that motivates assemblies to continually explore alternative strategies to mitigate these limitations and enhance their capacity. The theoretical foundations of this concept offer a useful lens through which to investigate the complexities of inter-assembly collaboration in Ghana, facilitating a deeper understanding of the underlying factors that influence their interactions.

The theory is useful for the study since it explains the need for local governments to collaborate to deliver public service effectively. The application of the theory proved instrumental in addressing the research questions, yielding valuable insights and contributing to a deeper understanding of the study's central inquiry. Drees and Heugens (2013) argue that Resource Dependency Theory may be used to explain organizational action. This theory will help examine what drives collaboration and its importance to the delivery of public services. This is based on the argument of Drees and Heugens (2013) – RDT helps to understand why organizations decide to collaborate. Another element of Resource Dependency Theory is the development of links to the external bodies. Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) argue that ties with corporate boards confer three significant benefits: access to valuable advice and mentorship, increased legitimacy and social validation, and facilitated communication and information flow. This element of the theory will help to identify and analyze the benefits and challenges of collaborative arrangements among local governments. Also, it is evident from the studies of Hillman et al., (2009) that RDT has been utilized as a theoretical lens to investigate the impact of environmental pressures on organizational behaviour and strategic responses, providing valuable insights into the complex interplay between organizations and their external context. This will help to identify the challenges of collaboration.

In conclusion, this study will draw on Resource Dependency Theory (RDT), a widely-used framework among scholars to examine inter-organizational relationships, to provide a theoretical understanding of the collaborative dynamics under investigation. Even though it has shortfalls, the theory demonstrates its ability to explain inter-organizational collaboration and effective service delivery in Ghana. Hence the study considers resource dependency theory to be most appropriate and relevant for analyzing the findings. This study intends not to disprove the veracity of resource dependency theory but to highlight the role it plays in organizational collaboration, especially in public service delivery. It is posited that the application of this theoretical framework will facilitate the attainment of the research objectives, enabling the investigator to generate findings that align with the predetermined goals and expectations of the study.

2.2 Inter-Organisational Collaboration

In response to increasing scepticism from local governments regarding the involvement of private entities in public service delivery, as well as the fiscal and economic challenges they encounter in achieving efficient and effective service provision, many local authorities are developing innovative models for delivering public services (Elston et al., 2023; Sebő, 2022; Elston & Bel, 2023). In recent years, inter-municipal collaboration (IMC) has emerged as a prevalent strategic response, situated within a broader landscape of intensifying collaborative governance among governmental entities, local councils, agencies, and political parties, aimed at fostering cooperative relationships and leveraging collective capacities (Bouckaert et al., 2022; Camões et al., 2021). Inter-organizational collaboration is perceived as a strategic mechanism that enables organizations to harness the benefits of economies of scale, thereby reducing costs, while simultaneously retaining

greater autonomy and control over production processes, an advantage that is often compromised through privatization arrangements (Bel & Sebő, 2021; Holum, 2020).

Inter-organizational collaboration refers to the cooperative efforts between different organizations to achieve mutual goals (Suchek & Franco, 2023; Shi & Collinge, 2021).

According to Tenakwa and Otchere-Ankrah (2020), inter-organizational collaboration has gained prominence as a strategic option for public service delivery, providing a feasible alternative to privatization and enabling public sector entities to retain oversight and responsibility while leveraging collaborative advantages. Unlike privatization, collaboration as a form of service delivery helps enhance efficiency by bringing together surrounding public institutions (Bustinza et al., 2019; Alsamhi et al., 2019). In response to the difficulties and drawbacks of outsourcing and privatization, local governments are seeking collaborative approaches, recognizing the benefits of inter-municipal cooperation in addressing complex service delivery needs (Hansen et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2020). Schrujijer (2020) defined inter-organizational collaboration as cooperative efforts between two or more organizations to achieve shared goals or outcomes. Such collaboration can take various forms, including partnerships, alliances, networks, and joint ventures. Inter-organizational collaboration encompasses a range of types, including strategic alliances (Dzhengiz, 2020), joint ventures (Khouja et al., 2021), networks (Agostini et al., 2019), and public-private partnerships (Costumato, 2021; Hofman, 2020).

Collaborations are typically initiated to achieve common goals (Kuttan, 2023; Milward & Provan, 2023; Castañer & Oliveira, 2020). These objectives can include market expansion, cost reduction, innovation, knowledge sharing, and addressing complex societal challenges (Wan et al., 2022; Wang & Hu, 2020). Collaborating organizations often share resources,

such as financial capital (Azadegan & Dooley, 2021; Zahoor, et al., 2020; Jianget al., 2019), technology (Marion & Fixson, 2021; Dubey et al., 2020; Castaneda & Cuellar, 2020), or expertise (Doz, 2020; Wang & Hu, 2020; Mehdikhani & Valmohammadi, 2019). This sharing can lead to cost savings, improved capabilities, and enhanced competitiveness. Adomako and Nguyen (2023) explained that inter-organizational collaboration allows organizations to distribute and manage risks collectively. Partners can share financial, operational, and market risks, reducing exposure to individual organizations (Ueda et al., 2020). Collaborators often bring complementary capabilities and resources to the table (O'Dwyer et al., 2023; Brown et al., 2021). For example, one organization may excel in research and development, while another has a strong distribution network. Combining these strengths can lead to synergistic outcomes (Jones & Barry, 2011). Collaboration fosters innovation by facilitating the exchange of ideas and knowledge (Mahardhani, 2023; Cummings & Kiesler, 2007). Organizations can leverage each other's expertise to develop new products, services, or processes (Dahan et al., 2010).

The choice of governance structure is a critical aspect of inter-organizational collaboration (Kozuch & Sienkiewicz-Małyjurek, 2016). Partners may opt for hierarchical control, contractual arrangements, or shared governance mechanisms, depending on trust levels and the nature of the collaboration. Trust is fundamental to successful collaboration (Svare et al., 2020). Building and maintaining trust between collaborating organizations is essential for effective cooperation and conflict resolution (Eriksson et al., 2020). One of the vital aspects of effective collaboration is effective communication and information sharing (Deghedi, 2014). Collaborative efforts require performance metrics to assess progress and outcomes (Edwards, et al., 2014). As a means of evaluating effectiveness and informing

data-driven decision-making, organizations commonly establish key performance indicators (KPIs), providing a framework for monitoring achievements and identifying areas ripe for enhancement and optimization (Fuertes et al., 2020).

Inter-organizational collaboration is not without challenges. Conflicting interests, power imbalances, cultural differences, and coordination difficulties are some of the common barriers to inter-organizational collaboration (Turner et al., 2022; Siemieniako et al., 2022; Tootell et al., 2021). Effective collaboration requires addressing these challenges. Collaborations should consider long-term sustainability and exit strategies (Sharma et al., 2021). Partners may need mechanisms for renegotiation, adaptation, or termination if the collaboration no longer serves their interests. Legal agreements, intellectual property rights, and ethical considerations play a crucial role in inter-organizational collaboration (Lægreid & Rykkja, 2022). Collaborators must navigate legal frameworks and ethical standards to ensure fairness and compliance.

2.3 Public Services and Service Delivery

Public service delivery plays a crucial role in meeting the needs and expectations of citizens and promoting socio-economic development (Sønderskov & Rønning, 2021; Kuziemski & Misuraca, 2020). Public services and service delivery are basic aspects of government operations that impact the well-being of citizens. Scholars have conducted comprehensive studies on public service delivery practices worldwide, emphasizing the importance of efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability (Osborne, 2020; Ahmad et al., 2020; Alahakoon et al., 2020, Voorn et al., 2019). Scholars have come out with many definitions for the study of public service and service delivery. However, the central concepts are the same. Public services refer to a wide range of essential services provided by governments

to meet the needs of their citizens (Henman, 2020; Ostrom & Ostrom, 2019). These services can include healthcare, education, transportation, sanitation, social welfare, and more (Kettl, 2002). Lapuente and Van de Walle (2020) conceptualize public services as those that are primarily or entirely financed through general taxation, means-tested payments, or direct user fees, highlighting the role of public funding in supporting the provision of these essential services. As noted by Abou Assi et al. (2019), the public services sector diverges from the private sector in that it rarely involves voluntary individual payments driven by personal choice or profit-oriented motivations, instead relying on alternative funding mechanisms. They further explain public services operate within a legal and financial framework. Public services span a spectrum from commercial to non-commercial, with many being provided by semi-state organizations that operate outside the realm of a profit motive, instead focusing on serving public interests and meeting societal needs (Hammon et al., 2022; de Geus et al., 2020; Caillier, 2020).

Mamokhere et al. (2022) conceptualize public service as a delivery mechanism that ensures impartiality, equity, and transparency, striving to expand service access and meet established goals, all while upholding a zero-tolerance stance against corruption. Mamokhere et al. (2022) added that the objective of public service delivery is realized when services are provided in a manner that optimizes efficiency, effectiveness, and economy, aligning with the needs and interests of the public, thereby ensuring a responsive and responsible delivery of services. Consequently, public institutions have a responsibility to deliver services that meet the needs and expectations of the community, adopting a customer-centric approach that prioritizes the demands and requirements of the public they serve. Osborne (2020) defines service delivery as the commitment by a government or

government agency to provide a particular product or service to a community, highlighting the importance of fulfilling this promise and ensuring that the community receives the expected benefits. Mehmood (2021) argues that efficient service delivery occurs when service delivery targets are fulfilled in a resource-efficient manner, striking a balance between achieving goals and optimizing resource utilization to minimize waste and maximize value. According to the OECD (2010), public services encompass a broad range of services, including those directly provided by the government and those where the government exercises substantial control or influence, highlighting the scope of public sector involvement in service delivery. Furthermore, the OECD clarifies that public services can be delivered through two primary modes: direct provision by the government, or indirect provision, where the government assumes a facilitative role through regulatory oversight or financial support, even if it is not the immediate service provider. Shams et al. (2020) conceptualize service delivery as a multifaceted process that involves delivering services in a manner that is efficient, rapid, and customer-centric, prioritizing relationship-building and timely issue resolution to ensure a positive customer experience.

In promoting the socio-economic development of a nation, public services play a crucial role (Ojogiwa, 2021; Kuziemski & Misuraca, 2020). The overall well-being and productivity of citizens are enhanced through access to quality public services (Li et al., 2023; van Ooijen et al., 2019; World Bank, 2004). Public service delivery has several principles guiding it. Universal access is one of the key principles in public service delivery. Regardless of income, location, or other demographic factors, public services should be accessible to all citizens (Tzenios, 2019; UN, 2015). Quality is a critical aspect of service delivery. Osborne (2020) argues that to meet the needs of citizens, they expect

efficient, effective, and responsive public services from the government. To maximize the impact of public resources, governments strive for efficiency and cost-effectiveness in service delivery (Negi, 2020). This involves minimizing waste and optimizing resource allocation (Hannan et al., 2020). A citizen-centric approach to service delivery places citizens at the center of decision-making and service design (OECD, 2009). This approach aims to ensure services meet citizens' needs and preferences.

Effective service delivery requires accountability mechanisms and transparency (World Bank, 2017). They help prevent corruption and ensure public resources are used efficiently. According to Faguet (2012) in areas like education, healthcare, and sanitation, local governments often play a critical role in service delivery. Decentralization can empower local authorities to tailor services to community needs. To ensure the quality and safety of public services, especially in sectors like healthcare and transportation effective regulation and oversight are necessary (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017). Focusing on issues like healthcare, education, and clean water, international agreements like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a framework for global efforts to improve public service delivery (United Nations, 2015). Challenges in public service delivery include budget constraints, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and disparities in access and quality (World Bank, 2021). These challenges can result in inequalities in service provision (UNDP, 2020). Public services play a critical role in responding to crises, such as natural disasters or pandemics (World Health Organization, 2021). Building resilience in service delivery systems is essential to handle unexpected challenges.

2.4 Public Service Delivery in Developing Countries

In developing countries, public service delivery faces unique challenges due to resource constraints, inadequate infrastructure, and governance issues (Dick-Sagoe, 2020; Danielle & Masilela, 2020). Public service delivery in developing countries is a complex and multifaceted issue, shaped by a range of factors including limited resources, governance challenges, and socio-economic disparities. Healthcare delivery in developing countries is frequently compromised by various challenges, such as suboptimal infrastructure, a shortage of trained healthcare workers, and limited availability of quality healthcare services, resulting in significant barriers to accessing essential medical care (Shil & Chowdhury, 2023; Lowe et al., 2021; World Bank, 2019). Initiatives such as community health worker programs (Perry et al., 2014), inter-organizational collaboration (Hussein et al., 2023) and public-private partnerships (Ferreira & Marques, 2021) aim to improve healthcare. Education in developing countries grapples with issues like overcrowded classrooms, insufficient qualified teachers, and limited resources (UNESCO, 2019). Education for All (EFA) initiatives (UNESCO, 2020) and international aid for education (World Bank, 2021) seek to enhance educational opportunities.

Inadequate transportation, energy, and sanitation facilities hinder economic growth and development (World Economic Forum, 2019). According to the World Bank (2018) report, in funding infrastructure projects in developing countries, multilateral development banks like IMF and foreign aid play a crucial role (World Bank, 2018). In many developing countries, a critical challenge persists in the form of limited access to basic necessities like clean water and sanitation, hindering efforts to improve living standards and protect public health. This is having an impact on public health (UNICEF/WHO, 2019).

The adoption of international programs like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) emphasizes improved water and sanitation access (United Nations, 2015). Agriculture is an important aspect of many developing country's economy. Public service delivery includes agricultural extension programs (Steinke et al., 2021) and initiatives to promote sustainable farming practices (FAO, 2020).

Many developing countries are decentralizing governance to empower local authorities and to aid service delivery to the local people (Dick-Sagoe, 2020; Guha & Chakrabarti, 2019). Faguet (2021) posited that decentralization efforts vary widely and can affect public service delivery. Anti-corruption measures and transparency initiatives are important for improving accountability and service delivery (Vian, 2020). Corruption remains a challenge in public service delivery in developing countries (Méon & Weill, 2010). Developing countries face resource constraints, political instability, and weak institutions that impact public service delivery (World Bank, 2021). Addressing these challenges requires a multi-dimensional approach. Engaging communities in public service delivery decisions is crucial for success (Masuku & Jili, 2019).

Hussain and Arif (2018) conducted a systematic review of public service delivery in developing countries, identifying common barriers such as corruption, lack of accountability, and limited citizen participation. They suggested that strategic partnerships and capacity-building initiatives can enhance service quality and efficiency. The study by Hussain and Arif (2018) on inter-organizational collaboration in Ghana provides a comprehensive understanding of its impact on service delivery. They identify factors influencing collaboration, such as trust, communication, coordination, and resource-sharing, which can be used to design effective collaboration strategies. The study also

evaluates the benefits and challenges of collaboration, such as improved efficiency, resource optimization, and increased citizen satisfaction. The findings can be used to inform policy and practice in the Techiman Municipality and Techiman North District Assembly, guiding the development of strategies to enhance collaboration and improve public service delivery outcomes.

Furthermore, Okyne et al. (2019) examined the role of e-Government in improving service delivery in developing countries. Their study demonstrated that digital technologies can enhance transparency, accessibility, and responsiveness of public services, leading to increased citizen satisfaction. Furthermore, the study emphasized the crucial need to address the digital divide, ensuring that all individuals have fair and equal access to technology, thereby promoting digital inclusivity and reducing the risk of exacerbating existing social and economic inequalities.

The study by Okyne et al. (2019) examined explicitly the Ghanaian context, focusing on local government authorities. This aligns with the current study's objective of understanding public service delivery in the Techiman Municipality and Techiman North District Assembly. They use empirical evidence and case studies to investigate the relationship between inter-organizational collaboration and public service delivery. The study examines factors affecting collaboration and service delivery, such as leadership, resource availability, capacity building, and stakeholder engagement. The findings offer policy and practice implications for improving inter-organizational collaboration and enhancing public service delivery in Ghana. These recommendations can guide policymakers and practitioners in managing and promoting collaboration within the

Techiman Municipality and Techiman North District Assembly, promoting effective service delivery outcomes.

2.5 Collaboration in Public Services Delivery

Public service delivery can involve a wide range of collaborative approaches, encompassing various forms of partnership, cooperation, and coordination among different stakeholders, agencies, and levels of government. At its core, collaboration involves joint effort and mutual support to accomplish a shared objective. The use of collaborative arrangements in public service delivery has a well-established tradition, and their dynamics and effects have been thoroughly examined in the public administration literature, underscoring their importance in enhancing service delivery (Feiock, 2013; McGuire & Agranoff, 2011; McGuire, Agranoff, & Silvia, 2011; Feiock & Scholz, 2010; Agranoff & McGuire, 2003). According to McGuire and Agranoff (2011), collaborative arrangements are characterized by two essential dimensions: the level of intensity or depth of collaborative effort, and the extent to which the collaboration is focused on strategic or high-priority activities. Additionally, the flexibility of collaborative arrangements, including the ease of entry and exit for participating entities (Feiock & Scholz, 2010), as well as the number of stakeholders involved, are also important considerations (Feiock, 2009).

Collaboration between municipalities in Europe often takes the form of joint ownership and co-production, a prevalent partnership model in several countries. Research has consistently shown that this collaborative approach is particularly common in Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, and Spain, as demonstrated by studies such as Haveri and Airaksinen (2007), Garrone et al. (2013), Bel et al. (2010), Sørensen (2007), and Warner

and Bel (2008). The widespread adoption of this model underscores the importance of collaborative governance in meeting local challenges and providing effective public services across these European nations. Public organizations in these nations commonly deliver a range of services to the general public, spanning both profit-driven and philanthropic approaches. Within these arrangements, organizations have the flexibility to either self-deliver services, outsource to a partner entity, or engage an external third-party provider, depending on the terms of the agreement (Zafra-Gómez et al., 2013; Bel et al., 2010). Warner and Hebdon (2001) argue that in the USA contracting a local party (inter-local contracting) is prevalent whereas Bel and Warner (2015) posited that inter-local contracting is not popular in Europe. For example, approximately 15% of municipalities utilize inter-municipal collaboration as a way of providing public services jointly (Gradus et al., 2014; Bel et al., 2010). The USA, Spain and France are examples of countries with high public institutions or local governments that adopt this type of collaborative agreement. Local governments may opt out at any point in time without any substantially related expense and this is due to the simplicity of admission and leave options (Bel & Warner, 2015). Several governments have formed coordinating agencies to ease the process to deepen and simplify collaborative agreements. Illustrative examples of institutionalized collaborative mechanisms include the Regional Organization Council (ROC) established by the Australian government to provide technical support and brokering collaborative agreements, and the establishment of boards of cooperative educational services in New York, which demonstrate a comparable model for coordinating joint service provision (Bel & Warner, 2015; Holzer & Fry, 2011; Sancton, 2005).

In addition to the foregoing criteria, major contrasts may also be identified about the degree of institutionalization. A collaborative agreement may either be official (formal) or unofficial (informal) under the degree of institutionalization (Tenakwah & Otchere-Ankrah, 2020). Contractual responsibilities frequently come from formal arrangements where the sort of service to be supplied, the number of roles and the governing bodies are specifically established and recorded (Bel & Warner, 2015). On the other hand, informal arrangements are less rigorous compared to the official ones. Informal agreements are frequent in the USA as opposed to Europe (Warner, 2011; Hulst & van Montfort, 2007). Collaborative agreements in nations vary mostly owing to the legal structures regulating these partnerships. In certain countries, these rules restrict the degree to which services may be offered collaboratively and the level of political engagement. The talks above speak to the fact that collaborative agreements may take many forms depending on the nation in issue, the municipality, the extent of the service and the legislative environment.

Collaboration in public service delivery is a multifaceted approach that involves various stakeholders working together to provide efficient and effective services to the public. This collaborative effort can take place among government agencies, non-profit organizations, private sector partners, and even the community. Collaboration often involves multiple government agencies partnering to address complex societal issues such as waste management, security and property management (Thompson, 2019). Infrastructure development is one of the common areas that sees public and private sector collaboration (Davis, 2018). Public-Private-Partnerships (PPP) provide a collaborative framework for governments to harness the expertise, innovation, and capital of private sector entities, facilitating the successful execution of complex projects like toll roads and public utilities,

and ultimately improving the quality of public services (Jones, 2017). Collaboration extends beyond government and private sectors to include non-profit organizations and community groups (Adams, 2019).

Collaboration enables the sharing of resources, reducing duplication and cost (Harris, 2016). This can include sharing databases, technology, or personnel across agencies to streamline operations (Lee, 2018). Miller (2021) posited that collaborative efforts allow agencies to pool their expertise and knowledge, leading to better decision-making and problem-solving. Sharing best practices can lead to improved service delivery (Smith, 2017). Agencies can offer more comprehensive and holistic services when they collaborate (Clark, 2019). Collaboration often results in improved efficiency through streamlined processes and reduced administrative overhead (Roberts, 2018).

According to Thompson (2018), collaborative efforts often come with shared accountability mechanisms. Partners hold each other accountable for achieving common goals and delivering quality services (Smith, 2021). In some cases, according to Jackson (2021), collaboration involves community engagement and input. Public service design may incorporate the perspectives and needs of the communities being served (Harrison, 2019). Collaborative approaches are often more flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances (Smith, 2018). Agencies can adjust their services quickly in response to emerging challenges (Adams, 2021). Collaboration can help align policies and regulations across agencies (Davis, 2021). This can reduce conflicts and ensure consistency in service delivery (Jones, 2019). Collaborations can enable the delivery of services at a larger scale or scope than individual agencies can manage (Lee, 2020). For instance, disaster relief efforts often involve multiple agencies at the local, state, and federal levels (Clark, 2020).

From the global perspective, collaboration in public service as evidenced by Foster et al. (2001) highlighted the growing importance of collaboration among public sector organizations on a global scale. They emphasized the essential role of collaboration in achieving integrated and effective service delivery, fostering partnerships, and enhancing resource sharing across boundaries. The study by Foster et al. (2001) can be highly relevant to support the study on inter-organizational collaboration and effective public service delivery as it offers valuable insights into the context. Similar studies by Dukia et al. (2017) explore collaboration in Public Service Delivery from an African perspective. The findings highlighted the challenges and opportunities of collaboration in African countries, emphasizing the need to build trust, enhance stakeholder participation, and address structural and institutional barriers. The study by Dukia et al. (2017) sheds light on the vital role of inter-organizational collaboration in improving public service delivery in Ghana, providing key takeaways for policy makers, practitioners, capacity builders, and accountability stakeholders, ultimately informing strategies for effective public service provision. These findings can contribute to the ongoing efforts to improve public administration and governance in the country.

In the Ghanaian Context, Ghana has tried to promote collaboration in public service delivery, as evidenced by the study conducted by Tenakwah and Otchere-Ankrah (2020) and Appiah-Otoo and Amoah (2013). Tenakwah and Otchere-Ankrah (2020) conducted a study on the imbalance between public expectations and resource provision in developing countries: can inter-assemblies cooperation reduce the gap? The research findings indicate that inter-district cooperation in Ghana remains in a nascent state, notwithstanding the acknowledged potential of this collaborative approach to mitigate the myriad challenges

confronting District Assemblies in the country, thereby underscoring the need for further development and strengthening of such cooperative mechanisms (Tenakwah and Otchere-Ankrah, 2020). Appiah-Otoo and Amoah (2013) explored collaborative governance in Ghana and identified factors contributing to successful collaboration, including shared goals, trust, and effective communication. These studies enhance the theoretical understanding of inter-organizational collaboration in Ghana's public service delivery by exploring factors that promote or hinder collaboration. They inform policy and practice, offering practical implications for policymakers and practitioners seeking to enhance collaboration. Also, the Local Government Act 2016 permit local governments to collaborate to deliver public services. This is evident in sections 31 and 32 of the Local Government Act 936 of Ghana. “A District Assembly may appoint a joint committee with another District Assembly for a project of their mutual interest and may delegate a function of the District Assembly related to their project to the committee” (Local Government Act 2016, Section 31(1)). Also, Section 32 of the same Act allows for joint commercial activities from local assemblies. “A District Assembly may join another District Assembly to carry out any commercial activity that falls within the scope of their respective function and may determine the allocation of the cost and benefits in the respect of that activity” (Local Government Act 2016, Section 32).

2.6 Factors Promoting Inter-Organizational Collaboration

Complex challenges facing local governments have required multi-agency collaboration and collective problem-solving. Research (Martinez-Cosio et al., 2019; Brown & Jones, 2017) suggests that interdependencies among local governments can drive collaboration, as addressing common regional issues necessitates joint efforts. Collaborative initiatives

foster knowledge exchange, skill development, and the pooling of expertise, enabling more effective solutions to shared problems. Brown and Jones (2017) argue that organizational structure, leadership, trust, communication, and resource availability are drivers of collaborative agreements among organizations. The study by Martinez-Cosio et al. (2019) identified multiple factors that promote successful collaboration, such as shared goals and objectives, effective communication, leadership commitment, and resource availability.

Collaborative efforts are also driven by the need for policy alignment and the integration of services. Studies (Biggs & Lyneis, 2018; Cooke & Mueller, 2016) demonstrate that aligning policies and coordinating services across organizations improve service quality and increase accessibility. The drive for seamless service provision often emerges from overlapping jurisdictions and a shared desire to enhance community well-being. The study by Cooke and Mueller (2016) highlights several essential factors that contribute to successful collaboration, such as shared vision and goals, trust, clear roles and responsibilities, effective communication, and stakeholder engagement. Biggs and Lyneis (2018) also posited that shared mental models, effective communication channels, collaborative leadership, and supportive organizational culture promote inter-organizational collaboration. The study emphasizes the significance of adaptive management and continuous learning in fostering collaboration.

Political and institutional support is a crucial factor for collaboration among organizations. According to Vangen and Huxham (2016) leadership, commitment, and shared vision from high-ranking officials and policymakers are essential for fostering a conducive environment for collaboration. Strong political buy-in is crucial for overcoming bureaucratic barriers, securing funding, and ensuring sustained collaboration efforts.

Alford and Keast (2017) identified shared values, trust, and clear roles and responsibilities as essential factors for successful collaboration. Bryson and Crosby (2019) and Taylor et al. (2020) argue that the ability of local governments to learn from successful collaboration experiences and share practices and valuable insights serves as a foundation for collaboration. Engaging in collaborative initiatives, local governments can gain insights and learn from each other's successes and challenges, ultimately improving their own government practices and service delivery.

2.7 Areas of Collaboration for Effective Service Delivery

Inter-organizational collaboration (IOC) has emerged as a critical component in improving public service delivery globally and has gained significant attention in the literature as a means to improve public service delivery. In the context of Ghana, where effective service delivery remains a persistent challenge, understanding the areas of collaboration that contribute to better outcomes can help inform policy and practice. This literature review aims to provide insights into the areas of collaboration that have been proven to enhance service delivery in the public sector.

Inter-organizational collaboration plays a vital role in addressing various challenges faced by organizations and local governments. Inter-organizational collaboration is frequently employed to enhance the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of service delivery. For example, organizations may join forces to provide emergency services (Smith, 2018), waste management (Jones, 2020), public transportation (Brown, 2019; Anderson, 2019), water supply (Brown, 2022; Green, 2020; Davis, 2020; Smith, 2018) and climate action plans (Roberts, 2021). By sharing resources, expertise, and infrastructure, they can improve the quality of services while reducing the financial burden on each organization. Protecting

the environment is a shared responsibility, and inter-organizational collaboration is instrumental in addressing environmental challenges.

Collaboration in economic development initiatives stimulates local economies. Organizations often work together to attract businesses, promote tourism (Adams, 2017), or invest in infrastructure projects (Jackson, 2019), land management (Green, 2020), and economic development (Jones, 2016). These joint efforts create a more favourable environment for job creation and economic growth. This can involve joint marketing campaigns, sharing of economic data, and collaboration on infrastructure projects that support economic growth. Collaborative efforts enable the pooling of resources and expertise for sustainable development.

Organizations collaborate in areas of public safety and law enforcement (Thompson, 2017) to enhance efficiency and effectiveness, including sharing resources and intelligence, coordinating emergency response, and implementing crime prevention strategies (Johnson, 2019). Collaborative efforts in fire protection (Johnson, 2019), and disaster response (Miller, 2020) enable the sharing of resources and expertise, enhancing the overall capacity to handle emergencies. Organizations enter into inter-organizational agreements to address common issues, such as joint purchasing, shared administration and governance, and service sharing (Miller, 2020).

In the digital age, data-driven decision-making is vital, organizations collaborate on data-sharing platforms (Baker, 2018) and smart city initiatives (Lee, 2019). This cooperation enables the collection and analysis of data for improved governance and service delivery. Collaborative efforts extend to advocating for common interests at higher levels of government. Organizations may form associations (Smith, 2021) to jointly address

legislative or regulatory issues, secure funding, or influence policy decisions. Natural resource management, such as parks and recreation areas (Clark, 2018), often requires cross-jurisdictional cooperation. This ensures sustainable use and conservation of resources for the benefit of all communities involved.

2.8 Drivers of Collaboration Among District Assemblies

The literature highlights the various drivers and motivations for collaboration among organizations. The drivers identified include cost saving (Silvestreet al., 2020; Allaoui et al., 2019), small size (Tenakwah & Otchere-Ankrah, 2020) resource sharing (Smith, 2015; Jenkins et al., 2018), risk sharing (Petr et al., 2022), institutional and government structures (Biggs & Lyneis, 2018; Cooke & Mueller, 2016), leadership (Alford & Keast, 2017; Huxham & Vangen, 2016), geographical proximity (Ansell & Gash, 2019; Ospina & Landau, 2018), complex and multifaceted problems (Taylor et al., 2020; Bryson & Crosby, 2019), quality and scope of services (Nabatchi et al., 2020; Bovaird & Löffler, 2019). Understanding these drivers is essential to foster effective collaboration and maximize the benefits that inter-organizational collaboration can bring to development and governance.

There is an increase in local governments collaborating due to the problems and demands of alternative kinds of service delivery such as outsourcing, privatization and others (Bel et al., 2016). A range of influential factors have contributed to the growing trend of local governments seeking to collaborate with one another in recent times. For example, the small size of local governments made them unable to attract suppliers for the services which they sought to privatize (Warner, 2006; Warner & Hefetz, 2003) and instead preferred to work with others. Smaller municipalities may lack the capacity to address certain issues independently. Collaboration allows them to access the expertise and

resources of larger neighbours (Huxham & Vangen, 2013) and bridge capacity gaps. Literature suggests that smaller organizations can leverage collaborative management arrangements to capitalize on economies of scale, thereby mitigating the constraints associated with limited resources and enhancing their economic viability (Zullo, 2009; Warner, 2006; Warner & Hefetz, 2003; Dijkgraaf et al., 2003). Zafra-Gómez et al (2014) argue that the small size of towns under local governments and other factors drive local governments all over the globe to opt to collaborate to supply services which may be otherwise costly and impossible to perform all alone.

Municipalities often face tight budget constraints (Jimenez, 2020), and one of the primary drivers for collaboration is the pursuit of cost savings and efficiency gains (Elston et al., 2018). By sharing resources, infrastructure, and expertise, organizations can reduce operational expenses and jointly fund costly projects (Bertello et al., 2022). According to Bel and Fageda (2006), the monitoring of privatized services can give rise to ancillary financial consequences that may be more pronounced than anticipated, highlighting the need for comprehensive cost-benefit analyses and robust regulatory frameworks. Collaborative partnerships between organizations are expected to minimize the cost-of-service delivery when collaborative agreements are properly implemented which also will enable them to keep control over the service delivered. Alternatively, achieving this can be particularly challenging in the context of service delivery models such as privatization or outsourcing, where the lines of accountability and control may be more complex or obscured (Bel & Fageda, 2011; Warner, 2006). It can be posited that inter-organizational collaboration in service delivery can yield numerous benefits, including alleviating financial constraints, augmenting access to specialized expertise, and fostering enhanced

coordination among participating entities, ultimately leading to improved service outcomes and organizational sustainability (Tenakwah & Otchere-Ankrah, 2020).

Organizations are allowed to pool their resources together through collaboration (Johnson, 2018). This includes not only financial resources but also human capital and physical assets. For instance, organizations can share specialized equipment, personnel, or facilities to provide better services (Adams, 2016). Challenges such as environmental issues (Brown, 2021) or regional transportation planning (Anderson, 2018), often transcend municipal boundaries. Collaboration provides a means to address complex problems collectively by leveraging the combined knowledge and skills of multiple municipalities (Baker, 2019). Davis (2017) posited that the commitment of local leaders and elected officials plays a crucial role in driving collaboration. Leaders who recognize the benefits of working together can initiate and champion collaborative efforts (Smith, 2018).

Improving the quality and scope of services provided to residents is a motivating factor (Roberts, 2019). Collaboration enables organizations to offer a broader range of services, leading to an enhanced quality of life for residents (Lee, 2020). In some cases, regulatory mandates or changes in legislation can compel organizations to collaborate (Thompson, 2019). For example, new environmental regulations may necessitate joint efforts for compliance (Green, 2018).

According to Wilson (2021) sharing risks associated with large projects or services is a significant driver of collaboration. By collaborating, municipalities can spread the financial and operational risks, making ambitious endeavours more feasible (Miller, 2020). Collaboration can open doors to external funding sources (Harrison, 2017). Regional projects often attract grants and subsidies that may not be available to individual

organizations, making collaboration financially attractive (Smith, 2021). Community demands for improved services and sustainable development can pressure organizations to collaborate (Jackson, 2019). Stakeholder groups, including businesses and nonprofits, may advocate for collaborative initiatives (Harris, 2020). The recognition of interdependence among organizations in a region is a significant driver (Williams, 2018). Organizations rely on each other for various services and resources, fostering a sense of shared responsibility. Collaboration provides opportunities for knowledge exchange and learning from best practices (Jones, 2018).

Tackling complex and multifaceted problems that cannot be solved by individual organizations alone is one of the key drivers of collaboration (Schillemans & Van de Walle, 2021). The nature of a problem confronts a section of a population and serves as a driver for collaboration between local governments (Gerber & Robinson, 2009). As highlighted by Schillemans and Van de Walle (2021), the complexity of modern-day challenges, such as climate change, requires a collaborative approach that brings together different perspectives, expertise, and resources. Collaboration can enable the creation of integrated service delivery that meets the needs of diverse stakeholders and produces better policy outcomes.

Also, another driver of collaboration is the recognition that partnership working can result in cost savings and improved efficiency. Inter-organizational collaboration is seen as a tool to create cost savings (Bel & Warner, 2016). Local governments have been subject to escalating fiscal pressures over time, stemming from the imposition of austerity measures and tax and expenditure limitations enacted by central governments, as noted by Clifton (2014), which have cumulatively constrained their financial autonomy and capacity to

deliver public services. Collaboration among organizations often emerges as a response to limited resources and financial constraints. Studies by Smith (2015) and Jenkins et al. (2018) indicate that sharing resources, such as equipment, infrastructure, and personnel, can lead to cost savings and improved efficiency. This driver is particularly relevant for small and financially constrained organizations looking to maximize their limited resources. Smith (2015) examined the drivers of collaboration in various contexts and sectors. The research identifies key factors that influence collaboration, such as shared goals, trust, communication, leadership, and resource sharing. These drivers play a crucial role in fostering effective collaboration among organizations. By incorporating the findings from Smith (2015), this study can investigate how these drivers manifest within the local context and their impact on inter-organizational collaboration in public service delivery.

Many local governments in Europe collaborate to deliver services such as water and sanitation due to the institutional and government structures. Lago Peña and Martinez (2013) argue that the provision of essential local services such as solid waste management and water supply is a mandatory responsibility for all municipal governments in the majority of European countries, emphasizing the universal importance of these services for public health, safety, and well-being. Political institutions and the structure of policy networks play an important role in the structure of management of local services among local governments in the region where collaboration takes place (Hefetz & Warner 2012).

Geographical proximity motivates local governments to collaborate. Bel and Warner (2016) see inter-local collaboration frequently involving geographic proximity of the collaborating municipalities. They argue that cities and suburbs close to each other collaborate more than those that do not share borders (Bel & Warner, 2016). Local

governments that share borders are seen as homogeneous culturally and administratively. Blaeschke (2014) argued that there is a positive association between homogeneity states and therefore collaborate effectively.

2.9 Benefits of Inter-Organisational Collaboration and Effective Public Service

Delivery.

Collaboration among organizations enhances the effectiveness and efficiency of public service delivery, leading to improved outcomes for citizens (Costumato, 2021). Collaboration among different organizations can lead to better utilization of resources, including financial, human, and technical resources (Wang et al., 2019). Lemaire and Provan (2018) argue that inter-organizational collaboration facilitates resource sharing among organizations, leading to reduced duplication of efforts and wastage of resources. Similarly, collaboration among organizations leads to enhanced innovation through the exchange of ideas, experience and knowledge (Zacharia et al., 2011).

Moreover, inter-organizational collaboration enhances the quality and effectiveness of public service delivery by enabling the sharing of best practices among different organizations (Riege & Lindsay, 2006). According to McQuaid (2010), fostering inter-organizational collaboration is viewed as a strategic approach to enhance the efficiency of public service delivery, augment political influence, and bolster economic resilience by synchronizing local investments and initiatives, thereby leveraging collective resources and capacities. The efficient and effective provision of public services is essential for fostering sustainable social and economic growth, as it underpins the well-being of citizens, supports business development, and contributes to the overall prosperity of communities.

Effective public service delivery involves the provision of services that meet the needs and expectations of citizens, while utilizing resources efficiently (Osborne, 2020)

Inter-organizational collaboration (IOC) promotes the exchange of ideas, experiences, and best practices, leading to improved service quality and innovation (Zahoor & Al-Tabbaa, 2020). Information-sharing platforms, workshops, and joint training programs are effective mechanisms to foster knowledge exchange among stakeholders. Collaboration among organizations facilitates knowledge exchange between organizations, enabling them to learn from each other's experiences and expertise (Castañer & Oliveira, 2020). This can lead to improved service delivery through the adoption of best practices, innovation, and increased capacity for problem-solving (Del Valle et al., 2014). Knowledge exchange can occur through various mechanisms, such as workshops, forums, or joint research projects (Jandhyala & Phene, 2015).

Inter-organizational collaboration facilitates policy alignment and harmonization among various organizations involved in service delivery (Santistevan, 2022). By aligning their policies, strategies, and objectives, organizations can work together towards common goals, thereby improving service delivery outcomes. Collaboration allows organizations to align their policies and practices, ensuring coherence and synergy across different entities (Kinnaman & Bleich, 2004). This helps avoid duplication, conflicting regulations, and fragmented service provision. Policy alignment can be achieved through shared goals, joint planning, and the development of common guidelines or protocols (Edwards et al., 2019).

Collaboration enables the pooling of resources, both financial and human, which can be beneficial in addressing budgetary constraints and leveraging expertise across different organizations (Zulu-Chisanga et al., 2021). In the context of local governance, this can

contribute to the effective delivery of essential services to the residents (Lapuenta & Van de Walle, 2020). Collaboration allows for the sharing of resources, including financial, human, and physical resources. By pooling together resources, organizations can leverage their collective strengths and address resource constraints. For example, in the healthcare sector, collaboration between hospitals can ensure that resources such as medical equipment or specialist expertise are shared, leading to more efficient and cost-effective service delivery (Najjar-Debbiny et al., 2019).

Karam et al. (2021) assert that effective Inter Organizational Collaboration (IOC) facilitates shared decision-making, encourages information exchange, and breaks down institutional barriers. This collaborative approach has the potential to enhance service coordination and streamline processes within the Techiman Municipality and Techiman North District Assembly. Collaborative efforts can help overcome the problem of organizational silos, where different departments or organizations function in isolation and fail to communicate or share resources effectively (Edwards, 2020). Collaboration encourages cross-functional collaboration and breaks down barriers, enabling organizations to work together towards a common goal (Raivio, 2022).

Effective collaboration requires active engagement and participation from all relevant stakeholders, including government agencies, local authorities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations, and citizens. Engaging stakeholders throughout the decision-making process ensures inclusivity, accountability, and responsiveness to the needs and preferences of the community. Collaboration encourages the active engagement and participation of stakeholders, including community members, service users, and partner organizations. By involving these stakeholders in the

decision-making process, organizations can ensure that the services provided align with the needs and preferences of the target population. This fosters a sense of ownership, increases accountability, and enhances the overall effectiveness and sustainability of service delivery (Slocombe et al., 2018).

Collaboration among organizations helps coordinate service provision among different organizations, ensuring that services are delivered in a seamless and integrated manner (Schmied et al., 2010). This can enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery, reduce duplication of efforts, and optimize resource allocation. Collaborative efforts enable coordinated service provision, where organizations work together to deliver comprehensive and seamless services to clients (King & Meyer, 2006). This ensures that individuals receive the support they need without experiencing gaps or duplication of services. For example, in education, collaboration between schools, social services, and community organizations can result in holistic support for students and their families, addressing both academic and social needs (Bryson et al., 2016).

Inter-organizational collaboration is a vital tool for delivering effective public services that meet the diverse needs of citizens. Collaboration requires different actors, such as government agencies, private sector organizations, and community groups, to work together towards common goals. One essential area of collaboration is in crisis management. As highlighted by Arslan et al. (2021), collaboration can enhance the resilience of emergency management systems and improve the response to large-scale crises. Collaboration within and across government agencies and with the private sector, community groups, and citizens can enable a coordinated and effective response to natural disasters, pandemics, and other significant crises.

In the same vein, another critical area of collaboration is in service delivery to vulnerable populations, such as refugees, homeless people, and persons with disabilities. As noted by Fitzpatrick et al (2017), collaboration can enable coordinated and integrated services that meet the complex and diverse needs of vulnerable populations. Collaboration can enable the pooling of resources, expertise, and knowledge from different actors to ensure that vulnerable populations receive the required services and support.

Moreover, inter-organizational collaboration can enhance innovation and creativity in public service delivery. Torfing et al. (2021) posited that inter-organizational collaboration can enable the creation of new solutions to complex problems by bringing together different perspectives, resources, and expertise. Collaboration can enable experimentation and testing of new policies and initiatives, leading to more effective and efficient public service delivery (Carstensen & Bason, 2012).

2.10 Challenges of Inter-Organisational Collaboration and Effective Public Service Delivery.

Notwithstanding the myriad benefits of inter-organizational collaboration, a range of complex challenges persist, hindering the effective implementation and sustainability of such partnerships. Challenges identified in literature include lack of trust and coordination (Castelein et al., 2019), legal and administrative obstacles (Colvin et al., 2021), cultural differences and lack of responsiveness (Ahsan & Panday, 2023), lack of political will and leadership (Saukko et al., 2020), resource disparities between organizations (Lægneidb & Rykkja, 2022), lack of communication and information sharing (Hoceva et al., 2011) and resistance from the public and citizens (Wouters et al., 2023).

One of the most significant challenges of inter-organizational collaboration is the lack of trust and coordination among organizations. This challenge is particularly evident in organizations that have distinct political, social, or economic differences. For instance, organizations (local assemblies) with different political ideologies may have different approaches to service provision, making it challenging to collaborate on common goals (Austin, 2010). Furthermore, a lack of trust among municipalities can hinder the sharing of information, resources, and expertise necessary for effective collaboration (Reed et al., 2019).

Legal and administrative obstacles hinder effective collaboration (Colvin et al., 2021). Some of the obstacles include jurisdictional and legal barriers that inhibit the provision of a common service or implementation of a joint project across organizations. Each organization operates under its own set of laws, regulations, and governance structures which can differ significantly from one another (Wang, et al., 2019). This can create hurdles when trying to establish cooperation and coordination mechanisms between organizations (Brown & Potoski, 2003). Conflicting legislation or regulations can impede the ability of organizations to work together effectively and hinder the development of a shared vision or strategy (Leoni, 2019). These legal complexities can also make it difficult to align resources, policies, and processes among participating municipalities. Additionally, administrative challenges such as a lack of compatible data systems, and different procurement, and funding procedures can delay or even hinder successful inter-organizational collaboration (Wang et al., 2019).

Furthermore, inter-organizational collaboration is often hindered by cultural differences and lack of responsiveness to local community needs. Organizations may have different

working cultures, making it challenging to align working processes and expectations for effective collaboration. Differences in the needs and priorities of local communities also pose a significant challenge, as organizations may not prioritize the same policies or development plans (Sarin & Peiser 2017).

Another critical challenge is the lack of political will and leadership to engage in inter-municipal collaboration. This can arise from factors such as competing interests, power struggles, or a lack of understanding of the potential benefits that collaboration can bring (Hefetz & Warner, 2015). Organizational leaders may be focused on localized goals and priorities, making it challenging to find common ground or shared objectives for collaboration (Hefetz & Warner, 2015). Without strong political will and leadership, inter-municipal collaboration efforts may struggle to gain traction and sustain momentum.

Resource disparities between organizations can also present challenges to inter-municipal collaboration. Organizations have varying capacities, including financial resources, technical expertise, and human resources, which can impact their ability to contribute equally to collaboration initiatives (Burt & Van Der Zwet, 2014). Disparities in resources can create power imbalances and lead to unequal participation, making it difficult to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes (Burt & Van Der Zwet, 2014). It may require additional efforts to address these disparities through mechanisms such as resource-sharing agreements, capacity-building initiatives, or grant programs. Financing and funding are significant constraints that hinder effective inter-organizational collaboration (Saukko et al., 2020). Collaborative projects typically require substantial funding, which can be challenging to secure from different sources. Moreover, revenue sharing and cost allocation

can be challenging, leading to conflicts and a lack of cooperation between organizations (Arbuckle et al., 2019).

In addition, communication and information sharing can be significant barriers to effective inter-municipal collaboration. Organizations often have independent organizational structures and information systems, which can hinder the flow of information and hinder effective decision-making (Pardo et al., 2012). Without clear communication channels and standardized information-sharing processes, it becomes challenging to coordinate efforts, share best practices, or achieve synergy (Pardo et al., 2012). Inter-organizational collaboration requires efficient and transparent communication mechanisms, along with the use of appropriate technologies and tools to facilitate information exchange (Cepa & Schildt, 2019). One of the key challenges in inter-organizational collaboration is the lack of communication and coordination between different public sector organizations. This often leads to duplication of effort, wasted resources, and suboptimal outcomes. For instance, the study by Nguyen et al. (2018) found that the lack of communication and coordination between different government agencies in the delivery of disaster relief services led to delays, inefficiencies, and inadequate support for affected communities.

Inter-municipal collaboration may face resistance from the public and citizens. Residents may perceive collaboration efforts as a threat to their community's identity, autonomy, or local decision-making powers (Hefetz & Warner, 2015). There can be concerns about sharing resources, unequal distribution of benefits, or loss of local control (Hefetz & Warner, 2015). Resistance from the public can create political pressure and scepticism, making it difficult for organizational leaders to garner public support for collaboration initiatives. Furthermore, inter-organizational collaboration can also be affected by factors

such as political interference and organizational culture. In a study by Cheung and Chan (2019), it was found that political interference in the Hong Kong public sector led to a lack of accountability and transparency, which in turn affected the quality of public service delivery.

Lastly, Warner's (2011) research identified a range of significant constraints that impede local governments' willingness to engage in collaborative public service delivery, including the relinquishment of control over service provision, monitoring difficulties, employee and citizen resistance, inadequate market competition, and other pertinent challenges that collectively hinder the effectiveness of inter-organizational partnerships. Notwithstanding these obstacles, certain research (Bel & Fageda, 2011; Warner & Hefetz, 2003) revealed that collaboration is mainly favoured over alternative kinds of services delivered by municipalities because of their incapacity to engage private sector participation in the delivery of services. Collaboration may also exclude local governments with inferior ability or are financially constrained. From the foregoing, collaboration provides various advantages to participating local governments yet there are some hurdles.

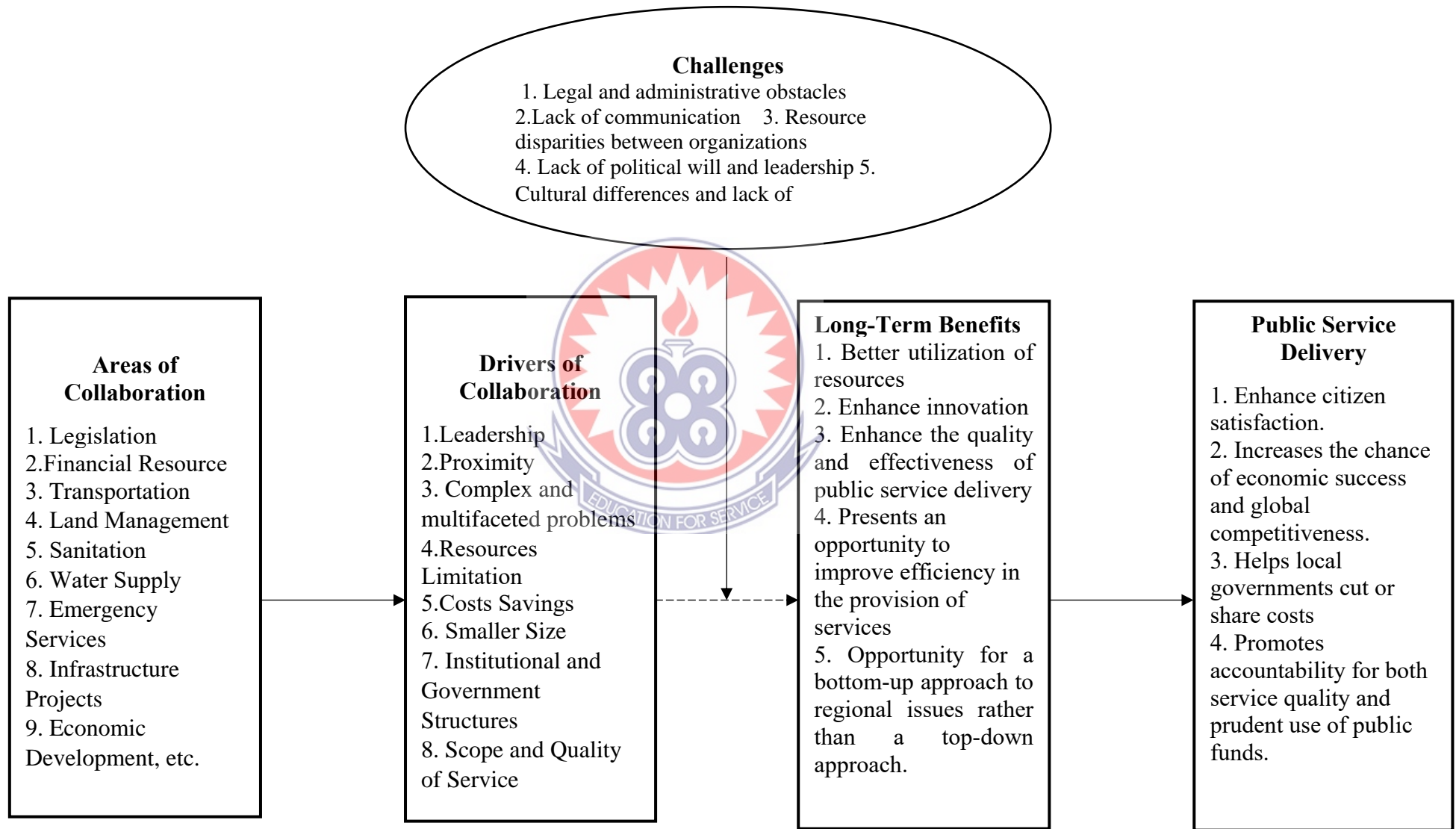
2.12 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework delineates the research trajectory, providing a theoretically grounded foundation that contextualizes the investigation within a robust framework of established concepts and principles (Hughes et al., 2019). Mensah et al. (2020) posit that the primary objective of conceptual frameworks is to enhance the validity and relevance of research outcomes by aligning them with established theoretical paradigms, thereby rendering the findings more interpretable, meaningful, and congruent with the existing body of knowledge in the field.

Lynch et al. (2020) argue that a conceptual framework is a theoretical blueprint that outlines the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon's natural progression and inherent relationships. Just as blood and water are indispensable for human survival, theoretical and conceptual frameworks are equally crucial for a research study to possess substance, relevance, and credibility (Mensah et al., 2020). A conceptual framework is a diagrammatic tool that visually represents the conceptual structure of the study, highlighting the relationships and interactions between key concepts, variables, and theories (Mensah et al., 2020). Grant and Osanloo (2014) noted that a conceptual framework is arranged in a logical and coherent structure to provide a visual snapshot of how ideas in a study intersect and relate to one another.



Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework



The conceptual framework best explains the natural progression of inter-organizational collaboration and service delivery (Varpio et al., 2020). From the framework, the first diagram contains the areas of collaboration. The first diagram contains possible areas organizations collaborate. This includes legislation, financial resources, transportation, land management, sanitation, water supply, emergency services, infrastructure projects, economic development, etc. These areas emerged as a result of reviewing various literatures. The framework shows a direct link from the areas of collaboration to the drivers of collaboration. The researcher conceptualizes that, once the areas in which collaboration will be needed are identified, it will determine what will drive these organizations to collaborate (profit and loss analysis). According to Thomson and Perry (2006), the realization that individuals and organizations cannot achieve a goal alone, and must rely on each other, is a crucial factor that drives the need for collaborative action. This driver can be seen as the most critical and impactful incentive, prompting collective action. It is referred to as 'sector failure' by Bryson et al. (2006), and 'constraints on participation' by Ansell and Gash (2008), highlighting the limitations and constraints that necessitate collaboration and cooperation. From the areas of collaboration, the next diagram contains the drivers of inter-organizational collaboration. Literature reveals that leadership, proximity, complex and multifaceted problems, resource limitation, cost savings, small size, institutional and government structures, scope and quality of service and others serve as drivers of inter-organizational collaboration. This shows that organizations do not just collaborate but there is a motive or a driver that brings them to the collaboration table.

The next diagram contains the immediate benefits of inter-organizational collaboration. The frameworks show that there is no direct link between drivers of collaboration and

immediate benefits. This means that not all collaborative initiatives will help achieve their intended aims or objectives. Some collaborative initiatives face rigorous challenges before achieving their intended goal. This was shown with broken lines (---). It stipulates challenges organizational collaboration goes through before it becomes successful. From immediate benefits, there is a direct link between immediate benefits and public service delivery. This means that, once inter-organizational collaboration among local governments begins to enjoy some immediate benefits, there is a possibility of delivering public service.

The oval diagram contains challenges affecting inter-organizational collaboration. These challenges have the potency of cutting short the life span of a collaborative agreement. For a collaborative agreement to achieve its intended purpose, these challenges need to be addressed. These challenges include; legal and administrative obstacles, lack of communication, resource disparities between organizations, lack of political will and leadership cultural differences and lack of responsiveness.

The last diagram shows the end product of when organizations identify an area to collaborate, the drivers, the ability to deal with challenges of inter-organizational collaboration and the result is the intended goals. Here, the intended goal is to have effective public service delivery. This comes with benefits to organizations. This may include, enhancing citizen satisfaction by promoting social and economic development, increasing the chance of economic success and global competitiveness, helping local governments cut or share costs and promoting accountability for both service quality and prudent use of public funds.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter of the study presents the general approach and specific techniques adopted to address the objectives of the study. The study began with a discussion of the philosophical assumptions underpinning the study followed by the research approach and design, study area, population of the study, sample size and sampling technique, research instrumentation, sources of data, data collection procedure as well and method of data analysis. It concluded with ethical consideration.

3.1 Philosophical Underpinning

A paradigm represents a cohesive set of ideas, beliefs, and values that form a fundamental worldview, shaping one's interpretation of experiences, events, and knowledge, and informing their perspective on the nature of reality (Flanagan, 2020). A paradigm can be seen as a mental template, a preconceived pattern of thought and belief that organizes and gives meaning to an individual's experiences, perceptions, and understanding of reality. Singh (2019) posits that a paradigm reflects the researcher's underlying philosophical stance, which in turn determines their assumptions about the nature of reality (ontology), the theory of knowledge (epistemology), and the research methods and approaches they employ. As Creswell (2014) notes, worldviews encompass the basic philosophical stances or orientations that researchers bring to a study, shaping their perceptions of reality and their research approaches.

There are different paradigms a study could follow such as pragmatism, positivism, postmodernism, etc. but this study adopts an interpretive perspective or social constructivist paradigm. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) argue that interpretivism is frequently used to define social constructivism. Ormston et al. (2014) suggest that the interpretive paradigm seeks to understand individuals' thoughts, feelings, and meanings by exploring the cultural contexts that influence their worldviews and shape their experiences. Hammersley (2013) emphasizes that the methods used in human and social sciences cannot be directly compared to those in physical sciences, due to the inherent subjectivity and interpretive nature of human experience and behaviour. The interpretive paradigm seeks to comprehend the world through the lens of individual subjective experiences, recognizing that people's unique perspectives, beliefs, and values influence their understanding of reality. The interpretive paradigm is the best philosophical assumption to be used to explain social realities since it allows people to interpret phenomena from their diverse contexts and experiences (Hammersley, 2015).

The study aims to collect information from participants about their experiences of the phenomena and this is in line with the interpretive research paradigm. Hammersley (2015) argues that interpretivism is essential in social science research, as it seeks to understand the meanings and interpretations that individuals assign to their experiences and actions, thereby providing a deeper understanding of social phenomena. Hammersley stressed that interpretive researchers must consider the possibility of diverse interpretations of their data, and they must explore and understand the varied ways in which people experience and interpret the research phenomenon within different cultural settings. However, social constructivists, as described by Creswell (2014), seek to explore and understand the

dynamic and ever-changing social contexts in which individuals live, work, and make sense of their world. Through their experiences, individuals construct unique and subjective meanings, associating specific interpretations with certain objects, concepts, or aspects of their environment that resonate with them. Creswell (2014) emphasized that these subjective meanings are diverse and multifaceted, encouraging researchers to explore and uncover the intricacies and nuances of individuals' perspectives, rather than simplifying or reducing them to a limited set of categories or concepts.

The researcher adopted this worldview to gather detailed explanations from key informants. The research questions are intentionally broad and open-ended, allowing participants to share their interpretations and understandings of a situation, which are often shaped through conversations and interactions with others, enabling them to co-construct meaning and provide rich, contextual insights. Kumatongo and Muzata (2021) posited that interpretivism allows the researcher to create a subjective interpretation of their findings, one that is focused on certain objects or things. This paradigm is based on the assumption that reality is dynamic and constantly changing, and that knowledge is not objective or absolute but rather is constructed and shaped by social interactions and the perspectives of individuals. The complexity of human experience ensures that any event or scenario can be viewed from numerous angles, as diverse cultural groups construct their distinct realities based on their values, beliefs, and worldviews, resulting in a rich tapestry of perspectives and interpretations. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the event through the eyes of those who are directly impacted, to gain a detailed and insightful understanding of the situation and its complexities.

The interpretive paradigm is considered the best philosophical assumption to underpin the study due to the following. It will help the researcher to seek an understanding of the world in which the informants live and work. It will also help to understand the subjective meaning of participants' experiences. The varied and multiple meanings will encourage the researcher to embrace the complexity and nuance of the data, avoiding the temptation to force it into narrow or oversimplified frameworks, and instead exploring the depth and breadth of the perspectives presented. This approach enables the researcher to capture the richness and complexity of the experience, examining it in its totality rather than selectively focusing on specific elements or aspects. Also, it will allow the researcher to engage in meaningful and in-depth dialogue with participants, uncovering the complexities and subtleties of their experiences through formal discussions and interviews. Moreover, it will harness the power of personal experience as a vital component and valuable contributor to the scientific research process, recognizing its significance in informing and enriching empirical findings. Lastly, by adopting an interpretive approach, the researcher can conduct a more nuanced and detailed examination of individual experiences, moving beyond the limitations of generalized metrics or predetermined expectations that are characteristic of the positivist paradigm, and instead, delve into the unique complexities and contextualized meanings that underlie each experience.

Tuli (2010) suggests that the interpretive paradigm can leverage the strengths of narrative study, case study, and ethnography, which offers a detailed and contextualized understanding of the lives and experiences of individuals, and how they contribute to the richness and diversity of cultural meaning. Additionally, interactive interviews provide researchers with a powerful tool to explore an interviewee's mental and emotional

landscape, revealing their thoughts, values, prejudices, perceptions, emotions, and perspectives. This approach enables researchers to dig deeper and uncover hidden aspects that may not be observable through other methods, offering a richer understanding of the research topic (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022).

Critics have argued that the interpretivist paradigm is vulnerable to the subjective influences of participants' beliefs, values, and assumptions, which can compromise the validity and reliability of research findings (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022; Potrac et al., 2014; Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). Interpretivism has been criticized on the grounds of bias on the side of the researcher. Gillani (2021) argued that interpretivists' focus on the self can result in neglecting the role of power in shaping people's perceptions, which in turn, affects their subjective interpretations and understanding of their experiences. Also, it has been argued that interpretivists cannot generalize their findings as compared to positivists.

3.2 Research Approach

Research approaches represent the holistic strategies and tactics employed in research, spanning from fundamental philosophical assumptions to concrete methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Creswell, 2014). Patel and Patel (2019) outline research approaches as the systematic procedures for addressing a research problem, spanning from problem formulation, the definition of terms, analysis, interpretation, and the drawing of conclusions and generalizations.

For this study, a qualitative approach was employed to find answers to the questions on inter-organizational collaboration among district assemblies in Ghana. The rationale for the choice of qualitative approach is that the researcher wants to enter the informants' world through continual interaction, seeking the informants' subjective meaning and opinions

from its natural setting. Eakin and Gladstone (2020) established that the qualitative approach aimed at discovering the voice of interest from the respondent's perspective and not merely from the researcher. The researcher believes that entering the informant's world will provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon and will also provide multiple methods through which the phenomenon could be studied such as observation, interview, and documents rather than relying on a single data source.

Crossman (2021) characterizes qualitative research as a social science approach that explores non-quantifiable data to uncover the meanings, themes, and patterns that reveal the complexities of social life within a targeted population or environment. In a qualitative study, distinct knowledge claims, inquiry techniques, data-gathering methods and analysis are applied (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Flick (2022) explains that qualitative research tries to study, describe, and explain social phenomena in several ways, including people's experiences, interactions, communications, and records, all to understand how people construct and make sense of their surroundings. This is in support of Tomaszewski et al. (2020) assertion that qualitative research is a form of investigation that focuses on the way individuals understand and make sense of their experience of the environment in which they live. They further underlined that researchers employ qualitative techniques to investigate the behaviour, viewpoints, experiences and emotions of individuals and emphasize the knowledge of these factors. Creswell (2014) asserts that the qualitative approach to data collection allows the investigators to obtain reliable information about the values, opinions, behaviours, and social contexts of a particular population.

There have been various objections against the employment of qualitative techniques. A key weakness is that it gives conclusions that cannot be extrapolated beyond the circumstances analyzed. Stephen-Ezennia and Hoskara (2019) assert that while qualitative research is inductive, the technique inevitably moulds or transforms current theory. This is because the evidence is studied and interpreted in light of the notion of a specific theoretical viewpoint.

3.3 Research Design

Research design is the particular methods involved in the research process; data collecting, data analysis, and report writing (Creswell, 2012). Kothari (2004) defined research design as a method of study that is thought out to answer certain research questions. He went on to argue that research design helps the smooth operation of multiple research methods, enhancing research efficiency and preventing false conclusions.

The study adopts the case study research design. Hancock et al. (2021) described case study design as an in-depth thorough study of a person or a small group of people resulting in a narrative description of conduct or experience. Rashid et al. (2019) underlined that a case study focuses on a person or small group in the performance of a complete investigation. A case study is commonly characterized as a comprehensive and multi-faceted research approach that considers the intricate relationships between the phenomenon being studied and its surrounding context. It is grounded in empirical evidence, informed by the researcher's interpretive insights, and seeks to understand the perspectives and experiences of participants through an empathetic and emic lens. This approach values the diverse viewpoints and interpretations of both the researcher and participants, integrating them to form a rich and nuanced understanding (Yazan, 2015). There is variation in the case study

design (Creswell, 2013). They are single-instrument case studies, collective or multiple case studies and intrinsic case studies. The study adopts the collective or multiple case study design.

A qualitative multiple case study approach helped in an attempt to understand how local governments collaborate to effectively deliver public service in Ghana through a theoretical lens. A multiple case study design allows the researcher to focus, understand and interpret the nature of the phenomenon (Schoch, 2020). Rashid et al. (2019) recommend case studies as a valuable research tool for understanding the nuances of business-to-business relationships and networks, enabling researchers to delve into the specific contexts and interactions that shape these connections. Under a case study design, “the researcher develops an in-depth analysis of a case or cases, often a program, event, activity, process or one or more individuals” (Creswell, 2014, p. 43). Yin (2012) suggests that case studies are often bounded by time and scope, concentrating on a particular phenomenon or activity, which enables researchers to gather in-depth insights and detailed information on the issue within a specified period. The cases used for this study were theoretically selected because they have in one way or the other entered into collaborative arrangements with other Assemblies (Yin, 2003) across several areas which makes them ideal for such a study.

The design allows the researcher to perform a deep, complex assessment of a specific social phenomenon using qualitative research methodologies (Rashid et al., 2019). In the social sciences, case study design is often used to explore and describe social phenomena and to develop theories that can explain them (Yin, 2003). The design offers a significant advantage by enabling researchers to work closely with participants, creating a platform for individuals to articulate their experiences, perspectives, and stories in a meaningful and

empathetic way (Alase, 2017). On the other hand, George (2019) argues that the case study design is not replicable, and may not be representative, 'typical or generalizable'. According to Goodrick (2020), case studies are often characterized by a lack of control over variables, with limited ability to systematically control for external factors, which can impact the validity and reliability of the findings.

3.4 Description of the Study Areas

Located in the Bono East region, Techiman municipality and Techiman North District are among the 11 districts in the region. Techiman Municipal Assembly was established under Legislative Instrument (L.I.1472) of 1989 as a District Assembly and gained the status of a Municipality in 2004 under the Legislative Instrument (L.I. 1799). Techiman North District was carved out of Techiman municipality by the Legislative Instrument (LI 2095) and was duly inaugurated on 28th June 2012 with Tuobodom as the District Capital. The Techiman municipality covers 669.7 square kilometers of a total land area and sits between longitudes 10 49' East and 20 30' West and latitudes 8 00' North and 7 35' South. (Ghana Statistical Service, 2021). It shares common boundaries with four districts namely, Techiman North, Wenchi, and Nkoranza Municipalities in the Bono-East Region and Offinso-North District in the Ashanti Region. The population of the Techiman municipality is 243,335 (Ghana Statistical Service, 2021). It also has a population density of 375.8/km². Techiman serves as a crucial economic centre, facilitating the exchange of goods and services while also having a far-reaching impact on the economic vitality of nearby communities. As one of Ghana's premier agricultural markets, Techiman market has gained international recognition, attracting a sizable clientele from various West African

countries, such as Mali, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, and Niger, in addition to its local customer base, solidifying its status as a transnational marketplace.

Techiman North District also covers 420 square kilometers between longitudes 1°49' East and 2°30' West and latitudes 8°00' North and 7°35' South (Ghana Statistical Service, 2021). The district shares political and administrative boundaries with the Techiman Municipality in the South, Wenchi Municipality in the North-west, Kintampo South District in the North, and Nkoranza North District in the North-east. The population of the Techiman North District, according to the 2010 Population and Housing Census was 59,068 and the 2021 Population and Housing Census put the population of the Techiman North District at 102,529 comprising 50,248 (49.0%) males and 52,281 (51.0%) females. In terms of density, the district is approximately 244.1 persons per square kilometer. This figure indicates that the district has a high population density. The high population density has its attendant effects on the district. This leads to pressure on the few social infrastructures such as schools, water, health facilities and sanitation.

The Techiman North District is celebrated for its rich agricultural potential, boasting expansive fertile lands that have drawn migrant farmers from across the country, particularly from the north. The district is a leading producer of staple crops like yams, maize, cassava, cocoyams, and plantains. Vegetables like tomatoes, garden eggs, onions and okro, as well as cash crops like cocoa, cashew and mango, are also grown. It is worth noting that the district is one of the largest producers of tomatoes and cassava in Ghana with many gari processing factories dotted all over the district (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010).

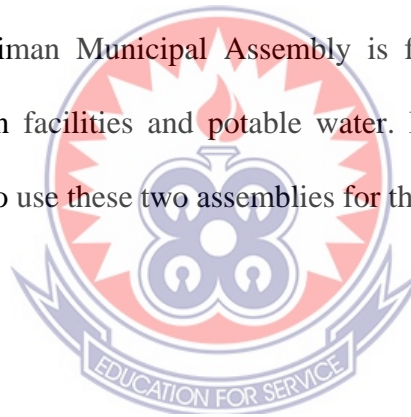
The selection of Techiman Municipality and Techiman North District as the study area was influenced by several factors. Techiman Municipality and Techiman North are considered to be emerging and fast developing. Due to this, migrants from all walks of life in Ghana as well as nationals of the neighbouring countries choose these areas as their second home. Ghana Statistical Service (2021) report claims that the high population density has led to pressure on a few social infrastructures such as schools, water, health facilities and sanitation. According to Rajashekar et al. (2019), as the population increases and consumption patterns change, the quantity of waste generated in the municipal area increases with a commensurate increase in the non-biodegradable component. This can be addressed through inter-organizational collaboration.

Also, the Techiman North District Assembly was carved out of Techiman Municipal Assembly on 28th June, 2012 to ensure and strengthen decentralization and effective grassroots participation in governance at the local level and bring development to the doorsteps of the people. Techiman Municipal Assembly provide some nurturing in some areas of their operations. Institutional collaboration is evident in the composite budget of Techiman North District 2023-2026. The assembly is termed to deliver social services through collaboration with other institutions. Similarly, according to the 2023-2026 composite budget of Techiman Municipal Assembly, the municipality is set to collaborate with allied institutions like the EPA, Ghana Health Service (GHS), Ghana Education Services (GES) in ensuring safe environmental practice.

From the Techiman North District Assembly Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP) report of 2018-2021 (2021), the assembly listed key problems/ challenges encountered during the implementation of the GSGDA (Ghana Shared Growth and Development

Agenda). This includes the inability of the assembly to raise substantial amounts from its Internally Generated Funds (IGF) to finance some of its development projects. Also, it was reported that the district has inadequate knowledge of the policy direction of MTDP/GSGDA by sectors and some stakeholders leading to poor linkage of sector Annual Plan to MTDP. These challenges could be addressed through inter-organizational collaboration between Techiman North and Techiman Municipality.

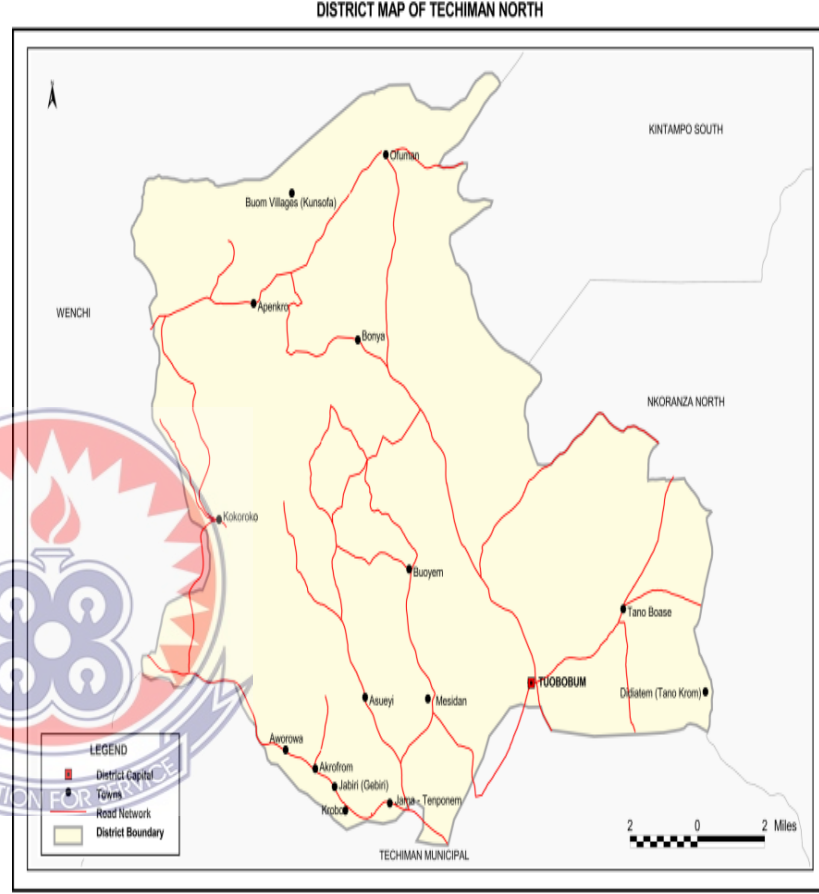
From the same report, it is indicated that the district is facing a sanitation crisis. The district is characterized by several refuse heaps scattered all over the district and haphazard development. Similarly, the annual report of the Techiman Municipal Assembly (2022) admitted that the Techiman Municipal Assembly is faced with inadequate and poor environmental sanitation facilities and potable water. It is from these reports that the researcher has decided to use these two assemblies for the study.





Source: Ghana Statistical Service, GIS

Figure 3.1: Map of Techiman Municipality
 Source: Ghana Statistical Service (2010)



Source: Ghana Statistical Service, GIS

Figure 3.2: Map of Techiman North District
 Source: Ghana Statistical Service (2010)

3.5 Population and Target Population of the Study

Stratton (2021) defines a population as the sampling frame; the totality of persons; events; organization units; case records or other sampling units with which the research problem is concerned. For this study, the population comprised all civil servants and public institutions within the Techiman Municipal Assembly and Techiman North District Assembly. The target population of the study are officials from the Techiman Municipal Assembly and Techiman North District Assembly such as planning officers, Budget officers, Revenue Officers, Physical Planning, and Coordinating Directors. Also, Health Directors, Environment Protection Agency, Regional Coordinating Council, Ministry of Local Governments and governance experts. The researcher ensured that the participants met the following inclusion criteria: availability and willingness to participate, the understanding and experience of the participants about the phenomenon.

3.6 Sampling and Sampling Technique

A sample is a deliberate selection of a smaller number of individuals or cases from a larger population, made by the researcher with knowledge of the population's composition and their research purpose, to provide a reliable representation of the population (Casteel & Bridier, 2021). Sampling involves selecting a subset of individuals from a larger population, to collect data and make statistical inferences, with the aim of understanding and describing the characteristics of the entire population (Sharma, 2017). Sampling permits researchers to extrapolate findings from a subset of the population to the entire population, saving time and resources by eliminating the need to study every individual (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). Reducing the number of individuals in a study helps reduce the cost and workload, making it easier to obtain high-quality information.

The sampling technique adopted for the study is purposive sampling. Purposive sampling involves intentionally selecting a sample from a population, based on the researcher's understanding of the population's traits and the study's objectives, to maximize the relevance and usefulness of the data collected (Crossman, 2021). Fraenkel et al. (2018) also explained that the purposive sampling technique is a technique in which researchers use their judgement to select a sample that they believe, based on prior information, will provide the data they need. To create purposive sampling, a researcher first decides which viewpoints he or she wants to investigate, then seeks study participants who represent the whole spectrum of those perspectives.

Purposive sampling involves deliberately choosing specific contexts, people, or occurrences to gather critical information that would be hard to obtain through other means, capitalizing on their distinct features to provide rich and relevant data (Andrade, 2021). This approach is the deliberate choice of an informant due to the qualities the informant possesses. That is to say that, the researcher may implicitly choose a “representative” sample to suit their needs, or specific approach individuals with certain characteristics.

The purposive sampling technique was adopted for the study because it enabled the researcher to select the most suitable candidates for the study. Also, it is time and cost-effective to perform and this help researchers to carry out a study greatly. Renjith et al. (2021) state that purposive sampling is predicated on the notion that one wishes to discover, comprehend, and gain insight. Therefore, one has to choose a sample from which one may learn the most. According to Stratton (2019), the purposive sampling method entails choosing participants based on a specified aim rather than randomly. This provides the

researcher with the option to identify participants or responders who have an appreciable understanding of the issue the researcher is examining.

Purposive sampling is commonly used in qualitative research studies due to its ability to derive rich information from selected participants (Ames, 2019). ampbell et al. (2019) recommend purposive sampling as the best strategy for recruiting participants with the most pertinent information, as it allows for the targeted selection of individuals with the most relevant knowledge and skills. This study purposefully selected 15 interviewees who the researcher believed they have the required knowledge and are in the best position to contribute to the study.

3.7 Research Instrument

Research instruments relate to the numerous pieces of equipment used for acquiring or collecting data for a given research (McClure, 2020) Sukmawati (2023) defines a research instrument as a device used to collect data. He went on to say that an instrument is a tool designed to test knowledge, attitude, and skills. In dealing with any real-world problem, it is frequently discovered that the data at hand is insufficient, requiring the collection of appropriate data.

An interview guide was used for the study. According to Frechette (2020), the root of in-depth interviewing is the desire to understand the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience. Interviewing provides a method for collecting rich and detailed information about how individuals experience, understand and explain events in their lives. This approach was chosen for the study because it is very concerned with the meaning people assign to phenomena. The interview gives access to the context of people's behaviour and hence provides a way to understand the meaning of people's

behaviour (Ahmad et al., 2019). The interview helps respondents to produce a prospective account of their past, an event, experiences, feelings and thoughts.

The study adopted a semi-structured interview guide to collect data from participants. This assisted the researcher in answering the research aims, objectives and research questions. The semi-structured interview consists of an open-ended question. Open-ended questions give the respondent the ability to elaborate on their thoughts on the research study. With interview guides research instrument, more information which is in greater depth can be obtained. Again, there is more flexibility under this method since the opportunity to restructure questions is always there. Moreover, it allows the researcher to probe for more detailed responses where it is desirable, for a respondent to clarify or expand on what they have said (Ahmad et al., 2019). Despite the challenges involved in the interview, a well-conducted interview is a powerful tool for extracting rich data on people's views, attitudes and meaning that underpin their lives and behavior (Ahmad et al., 2019).

3.7.1 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

3.7.1.1 Validity

Validity is the extent to which a measure adequately represents the underlying construct that it is supposed to measure (Clark & Watson, 2019). Hayashi et al. (2019) explain validity as trying to explain the truth of research findings. Validity explains how well the collected data covers the actual area of investigation (Sürücü & Maslakci, 2020). Validity means “measure what is intended to be measured” (Taherdoost 2016). To ensure face validity, interviews were given to my supervisor for scrutiny before pilot testing.

3.7.1.2 Reliability

According to Ahmed and Ishtiaq (2021), reliability is “the extent to which measurements are repeatable when different people measure on a different occasion, under different conditions, supposedly with alternative instruments which measure the construct or skill”. Reliability is the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study. A study is reliable if the results can be reproduced under a similar methodology (Rose & Johnson, 2020). Testing for reliability is important as it refers to the consistency across the parts of a measuring instrument (Taherdoost 2016). It is important to note that it is not possible to give an exact calculation of reliability but the estimation of reliability can be achieved. There are two ways that reliability is usually estimated: test-retest and internal consistency. The researcher used the internal consistency method which involves the consistency of people’s responses across the items on a multiple-item measure. I ensured that the items in the interview guide presented reflected the underlying construct so that people’s scores on the items correlated with each other. Although reliability is important for the study it is not sufficient unless it is combined with validity (Taherdoost, 2016). In other words, for a test to be reliable, it also needs to be valid (Hayashi et al., 2019).

3.8 Sample Size

A sample is a subset of the target population that the researcher aims to analyze to generalize to the target population (Creswell, 2014). Taherdoost (2016) posits that sampling is the process of choosing a small portion of a study population. This is because the whole target population for research may not always be freely accessible, we can only analyze a subset of it—the study population or sample. Kalu (2019) supports the argument

that the major role of a sample in research is to let the researcher perform a study on people from the population to drive conclusions relevant to the whole population.

For the interviews to provide sufficient and detailed information, the research sample size is crucial (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). However, sample selection should accurately reflect the wider population being evaluated (Lakens, 2022). In this study, the researcher sampled 15 fifteen (15) interviewees from the target population. The researcher's assessments about addressing the research questions were used to choose the participants (Saunders et al., 2018). The interviews, in the researcher's opinion, are most suited to provide a thorough, in-depth insight into public service delivery while collaborating with other assemblies. This is mainly because involving these respondents directly would provide key information about the topic under study.

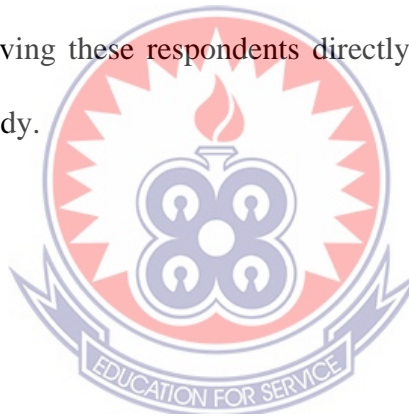


Table 3.1: Summary of Research Informants, Numbers, Type of Data Collected and Methods 73.

Source of Data	Location/Office/Assembly	Kind of Data	Method of Data Gathering	Number of Participants
<i>NATIONAL AND REGIONAL OFFICERS</i>				
Ministry of Local Government, Decentralization and Rural Development	National Office (Accra)	Primary	Interview	1
Environmental Protection Agency	Regional Office (Bono East)	Primary and Secondary	Interview	1
Regional Coordinating Council	Bono-East Regional Office (Techiman)	Primary and Secondary	Interview	1
<i>SUB-TOTAL</i>				3
<i>OFFICERS FROM THE TECHIMAN MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY</i>				
Coordinating Director	TMA	Primary and Secondary	Interview	1
Finance Officer	TMA	Primary	Interview	1
Internal Audit Officer	TMA	Primary	Interview	1
Health Directorate	TMA	Primary	Interview	1
Works Engineer	TMA	Primary	Interview	1
Internal Audit Officer	TMA	Primary	Interview	1

SUB-TOTAL				6
<i>OFFICERS FROM THE TECHIMAN NORTH DISTRICT ASSEMBLY</i>				
Coordinating Director	TNDA	Primary and Secondary	Interview	1
Planning Officer	TNDA	Primary	Interview	1
Physical Planning Officer	TNDA	Primary	Interview	1
Budget Officer	TNDA	Primary	Interview	1
Revenue Officer	TNDA	Primary	Interview	1
Sanitation Officer	TNDA	Primary	Interview	1
<i>SUB-TOTAL</i>				6
<i>TOTAL</i>				15
Source: Author's construction				



The table above summarizes the category of informants, their location, the data collected from them, the method used and the number of the informants. The fifteen (15) interviewees comprise a representative from the Ministry of Local Government, Decentralization and Rural Development, a representative from Bono-East Regional Coordinating Council, the Environmental Protection Agency, Coordinating directors, Planning officers, Finance officers, Physical Planning officers, Works engineers, Budget officers, and Internal Audit officers. Due to their positions and prior involvement in collaborative arrangements within the Assembly, these participants or responders were purposefully selected for the study. The reviews, which address the important facets of the study, served as the basis for the questions that were developed.

3.9 Data Collection Procedure/Method

Tomaszewski et al (2020) claim that there is diversify ways of data gathering in a qualitative study. These include; focused group discussions (FGDs), observations, interviews and textual or visual analyses from books or movies. For the aim of fulfilling the goals of the study, face-to-face interview and participant observation was employed by the researcher. This was supported by the argument of Einola and Alvesson (2021) that in many cases the use of a research interview rather than a questionnaire might be a sign of the higher priority attributed to the study issue.

The researcher used data source triangulation and data saturation to ensure validity, trustworthiness, reliability, and objectivity. The qualitative design aims to obtain rich and thick data saturation (Alam, 2021). To achieve saturation data, the researcher used observation and also conducted semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions.

3.9.1 Observation

In order to gather data methodically in the form of field notes—which go beyond simple questioning—observation is defined as a protracted period of intense social interaction between the researcher and the subject (Lofland et al., 2022). To them, observation as a tool offers researchers the possibility of looking at what is occurring. Observation may be done in two types namely; non-participatory and participation observation. The research used non-participant observation during data collection to observe how the two assemblies collaborate to deliver services.

According to Creswell (2014), a qualitative observation involves a researcher taking field notes on the conduct and activities of individuals at the study site. In these field notes, the researcher records the activities at the study site in an unstructured or semi-organized manner (using some previous questions that the inquirer desires to know). Qualitative observers are also capable of taking on positions that vary from complete participant to nonparticipant. Typically, these observations are open-ended in that the researchers ask generic questions of the participants enabling the individuals to freely give their thoughts.

3.9.2 Interview

Interviews as defined by Bayeck (2021) include a collection of presumptions and comprehensions of the circumstances that are often connected to a casual discussion as used by researchers to obtain detailed information about a subject or topic with more insight into the meaning and significance of what is happening. He mentioned further that an interview is not an easy alternative but has been long utilized in research as a technique for acquiring extensive information about a topic or issue.

An interview is characterized as a controlled setting where a single individual, the interviewer, poses a sequence of questions to a second individual, the responder (Jiménez & Orozco, 2021). According to Jamshed (2014), it is a dialogue between two or more persons when the researcher asks questions to extract facts or claims from the interviewee. He further classed interviews into three (3) categories; structured, semi-structured, and non-structured interview. Out of these, a semi-structured interview was employed. Jain (2021) noted that one of the primary methods for gathering data in qualitative research is the interview. Interviewing people offers a way to get rich, in-depth knowledge on how people perceive, interpret, and justify life experiences. Additionally, it allows the ability to ask extra questions providing space for clarification and better comprehension of concerns. These interviews were done with the help of an interview guide.

The study adopted semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews are conversational in nature, which makes participants feel at ease and relaxed and encourages more thoughtful and perceptive responses. In a semi-structured interview, the interviewer can gain a more focused understanding of the subject matter (Ruslinet al., 2022). Belina (2023) states that semi-structured interview offers flexibility and make it feasible for the researcher to follow the interests and views of informants. Semi-structured interviews are neither restricted like close-ended questions nor are they so open to error like unstructured interviews. It permitted the researcher to ask further into the phenomena and investigate fresh dimensions which were not taken into consideration originally. The semi-structured interview involves open-ended themes and questions that may be customized with prompts and probes to suit the interviewee's answers (Henriksen, 2022).

Creswell (2017) emphasized that semi-structured interviews are meaningful and in-depth discussions that are facilitated by asking questions that pique the participant's interest. The audio recordings of the interviews gave participants a range of viewpoints on the phenomena. To concentrate on the interviews rather than taking notes that may be subsequently transcribed, researchers used a gadget to audio-record the interviews. Smartphones, which were utilized in this research, have become more commonplace recently (Roulston & Choi, 2018). On the smartphone, audio recordings were secure and private. The researcher was the only one with access to the password-protected smartphone. An electronic copy of any recording is kept on a protected network and can only be accessed with a password.

Face-to-face interviews might be justified because they take a greater number of resources due to the researcher's need to speak with each respondent individually and get information. Besides, participants are more ready to discuss in an interview than to write or fill out a questionnaire (Roberts, 2020). Respondents felt comfortable to seek clarification of questions in an interview when they didn't comprehend the question.

3.10 Source of Data

The research used data from two sources. These were primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data refers to the original data obtained for a specific study purpose (Sileyew, 2019). Taherdoost (2021) defined primary data as original sources of information that the researcher gathers directly from sources for a particular study. Given the nature of the research, there was the necessity to identify select persons having in-depth expertise in the topic under examination. The major sources of data are essentially qualitative, gathered in

the form of interview recordings and observation of occurrences during fieldwork. The researcher conducted interviews with important informants.

Secondary data is the information initially acquired for a different purpose and utilised for another research topic (Pandey & Pandey, 2021). This data was acquired through books, press briefings, Ministerial addresses, journals, magazines, newspapers and other research works both published and unpublished, hardcopy and online were accessed and evaluated in conjunction with the aims of the study. Creswell (2014) contends that the researcher may collect qualitative materials while conducting the investigation. These may consist of either private or public documents, such as letters, emails, and personal notebooks and diaries as well as government reports, newspapers, and meeting minutes.

3.11 Data Management and Analysis

Marshall and Rossman (2016) considered data analysis to be the process of giving the large amount of collected data structures, order, and meaning. To them, qualitative data analysis is a search in broad assertions regarding correlations among categories of data. Similarly, Mezmir (2020) believes that, the purpose of qualitative analysis is to analytically reduce data by creating summaries, abstracts, coding, and memoranda; developing methods to present data (matrices, frequency count among others) and lastly deriving conclusions and evaluating validity. Islam (2020) describes data analysis as the process of analyzing data by looking at each part of the given data using logical and analytical reasoning. Banerjee and Chaudhury (2010) argued that the objective of examining data is to acquire useful and helpful information. Whether the data are quantitative or qualitative, the analysis may still identify and summarize the information obtained, compare and define variables, and predict outcomes.

The gathering and analysis of data improves a study's validity and rigour (Johnson et al., 2020). The first phases in the data collection process include interviewing people and obtaining documents for analysis. Factors such as credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability were taken into account while crafting each interview question. As previously stated, open-ended questions were used in interviews to elicit clarification from participants to increase the confirmability and trustworthiness of their answers (Weller et al., 2020).

The interviews for this study consisted of three sections: (a) an introduction (b) questions and recording answers (c) a conclusion. The questions were categorized. Interviews lasted on average between 30 and 45 minutes per interview. Next, the researcher recorded and transcribed which was carefully extracted and categorized into various themes based on the objective of the study. The data was analyzed through an inductive approach based on issues that emerged from the study context. The fundamental concept was labelled and defined and the key pattern relationships regarding the phenomenon of inter-organizational collaboration and effective public service delivery in the Techiman municipality and Techiman north district were explored, analyzed and discussed.

The main step in the analysis of qualitative data is data coding or categorization. It entails paring down vast volumes of raw data to make sense of it, then looking for noteworthy patterns, deriving conclusions from the data, and creating a logical chain of evidence (Patton, 2002). The process of analyzing qualitative data involves reading a lot of transcripts, comparing and contrasting them, then identifying themes and creating categories (Cassell & Bishop, 2019).

The study followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) 6-step framework of thematic analysis which involves collecting data, becoming familiar with the data by reading and re-reading transcript, listening to audio recordings, generating labels to represent important features, identifying ideas and concepts, and search for themes as a coherent and meaningful pattern the data and define the nature of each theme and weaving together the analytic narrative and vivid data extracts to inform the findings. Data was generated by digital recording and were then given serial numbers to permit easy identification for scoring. The inductive technique was then utilized to organize data into various themes and categories based on the questions of the study such that each section provides answers for each of the research questions and will use the bottom-up method of data analysis with open coding strategies. The inductive technique tends to guarantee that the themes are successfully related to the data acquired (O'Kane et al., 2021). The researcher classified the raw data into purposeful and usable categories.

A method for finding, examining, and summarizing patterns (themes) in data is called thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Thematic analysis is regarded as the most suited for any research that tries to find employing interpretations. It offered a systematic aspect to data analysis and hence, allowed for studies of the full lifecycle. The researcher adopted this strategy because it gives a more systematic and clear way of data analysis as highlighted by (Herzog et al., 2019).

3.12 Trustworthiness

The study was conducted with consideration for the criteria of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability to assure the reliability of the research. Kyngäs et al. (2020) assert that the level of plausibility, reliability, or authenticity of data and data

analysis is what is meant by the credibility criterion in research. Validity is the degree to which the instruments used throughout the research measure the problems they are intended to assess (Clark & Watson, 2019). Lincoln et al. (2011), provided four factors that should be addressed by qualitative researchers in quest of a trustworthy study. These were credibility, transferability, conformability and reliability. In addressing credibility, investigators strive to establish that a true image of the phenomenon under inquiry is being given (Shenton, 2004). Credibility also relates to the goal of the study and confidence in how effectively data and techniques of analysis meet the desired topic. The researcher adopted the following procedures to ensure the study's credibility; firstly, research participants were guided through the same major question in keeping with the aims of the research. Secondly, the respondents were interviewed till the point at which data saturation was attained. Also, interviews were audio-recorded and transcriptions were created of each interview subsequently.

According to Shenton (2004), positivists use techniques to demonstrate that comparable results would be obtained if the research were conducted again with the same subjects, in the same setting, and with the same protocols. According to Lincoln et al. (2011), dependability answers the question 'Could we reproduce our results in the same situation with the same subjects? Shenton (2004), observed that to address the dependability problem more directly, the processes within the study should be reported in detail, so allowing a future researcher to repeat the work, albeit not necessarily to get the same findings. Dependability in this research was attained by an in-depth explanation of the methodology and strategy employed in conducting the study. The data was also grouped into themes. For the aim of conducting an audit trial, all important materials such as the

research instruments, transcriptions, interpretations, documents and findings were kept safely for verification by the research supervisor.

Another criterion which is conformability deals with the procedures required to establish that the conclusions arose from the data and not the researcher's predispositions (Shenton, 2004). It also refers to the impartiality of the data rather than the neutrality of the researcher. In other words, if the study is confirmable, it should be able to discover conclusions anchored in the evidence. Abd Kadir and Abu Hasan, (2014) suggest that a fundamental criterion for conformability is the degree to which the researcher accepts his or her predispositions. Conformability was verified through an audit trail of descriptive surveys as well as impressions and decisions taken along the study route.

The final criteria of Lincoln et al. (2011) idea of transferability, concerns the degree to which the results may be transmitted to different settings/groups. To facilitate transferability, the researcher gave an adequate and detailed background of the fieldwork for the reader. This is to allow a reader to judge if the prevailing environment is comparable to another circumstance with which he or she is aware and whether the results may fairly be extended to the other settings (Shenton, 2004). For the goal of transferability, the researcher provided a comprehensive explanation of the study area, respondents' background and the methodology employed.

The researcher carried an introductory letter which introduced him and the importance of the research being conducted. Informed consent of all participants was sought before engaging them in one-on-one interviews. Hammersley and Traianou (2012) emphasize the importance of informed consent, which involves access to individuals, records, places, organizations, and information. Care must be taken in obtaining consent, including who

needs it, for what purposes, for whom, for how long, in what format, and with what level of formality. Informed consent thus, protects and respects the rights of self-determination and places some of the responsibility on the participant should anything go wrong in the research. “Self-determination” requires participants to have the right to weigh up the risks and benefits of being involved in a piece of research, and deciding for themselves whether to take part (Kynge et al., 2020; Howe and Moses, 1999). Participants who opted to voluntarily partake in the study were included. The researcher consults the code of ethics for professional associations in the area of study. Local approvals from officials were consulted. The gatekeepers or key personnel to the research topic were also consulted.

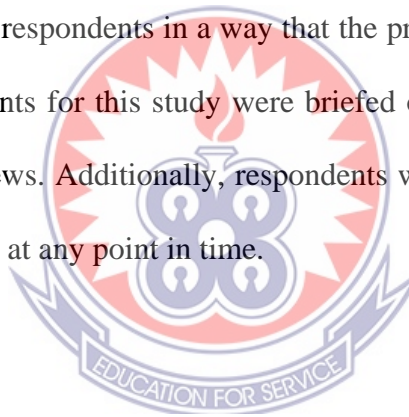
3.13 Ethical Consideration

The ethics of research concern the appropriateness of the researcher’s behaviour concerning the subjects of the research or those who are affected by it. Research in the real world inevitably deals with people and the things that affect them and because of that, ethical issues can arise at the planning, implementation and reporting stages of research. Ethics is a philosophical term derived from the Greek word *ethos*, which means character or custom (Samitharathana, 2020).

To protect the welfare and rights of research participants, ethical considerations are essential when conducting any type of research with humans (Suri, 2020). To ensure confidentiality, the researcher informed participants of the general purpose of the study. Appropriate consent was obtained. All participants were told that they had the liberty of not responding to the question that could cause emotional dissatisfaction. Access to the data obtained or collected was restricted to only the researcher. Before starting the interviews, the researcher double-checked that the participants understood the goal of the

study and that their rights were respected. Also, permission was sought from the participants to use my smartphone to record the interview session to capture detailed data while focusing on listening and prompting. The participants were assured that they would have access to the study's findings if interested and that they could contact the researcher further if they had any questions about the study.

The safety of respondents was assured as the study considered their rights to self-determination, anonymity and confidentiality. Their names and identities were not disclosed to any third party. They were also informed that recordings would be available and accessible only to the researcher and the supervisor for academic purposes. Moreover, questions were posed to respondents in a way that the privacy of the respondents was not invaded. Also, respondents for this study were briefed on the nature and purpose of the study before the interviews. Additionally, respondents were made aware of their right to withdraw from the study at any point in time.



CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

The chapter presents the analysis of the data gathered from the fieldwork. Data was analyzed based on the research objectives stated in chapter one of the work. This study was undertaken to explore inter-organizational collaboration and effective public service delivery in Techiman Municipality and Techiman North District. In this chapter, the study presents and discusses the findings of the study, indicating how they interact with the literature and Resource Dependency Theory.

4.1 Areas of Inter-Organizational Collaboration Among Assemblies

The researcher began the study by assessing whether there is a collaboration between Techiman Municipality and Techiman North District Assembly for effective service delivery. It emerged from the data that, the two assemblies collaborate among themselves and other institutions. An informant disclosed that:

Yes, TNDA collaborates with other assemblies and several national agencies such as Ghana Police Service NGOs, Education Service, Health Service, EPA and other agencies who can contribute to the development of the area (TNDA Official, Tuobodom, 9 August, 2023).

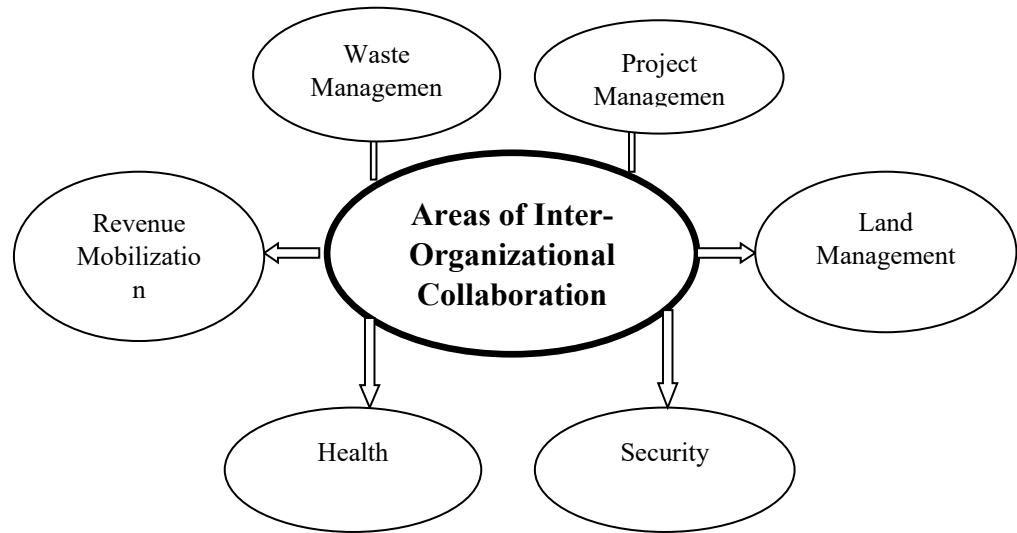
In addition, an interviewee from the EPA also indicated that

.....yes, we do collaborate. Collaboration is even embedded in our mission statement. The mission statement of EPA states that the EPA of Ghana is to co-manage, protect and enhance the country's environment in particular as well as seek common solutions to global environmental problems. We collaborate with TMA and TNDA because the local government act tells us that, the assemblies are the custodians of the environment at that level and EPA also per our mandate which is derived

from the EPA Act, 490 (1994) will tell you that we are supposed to regulate, oversee and as well as coordinate all issues relating to the environment. So, we certainly collaborate (EPA Official, Techiman, 28 June, 2023).

The respondents above agree that there is a form of collaboration between the two local assemblies. It is important to mention that the collaboration is not only among the two assemblies but with other assemblies and other institutions including public and private entities. Having established that there is collaboration, the study went on to analyze the area of such collaboration. The discussions focused on the areas in which assemblies collaborate in delivering public service. This objective seeks to answer why a particular area needs collaboration more than others. It emerged from the interviewees that, the assemblies collaborate on areas such as revenue generation, land management, security, sanitation, health and project management. Shockingly, most of these collaborations are informal. For example, at TNDA, revenue generation has been a major problem facing the assembly since its inauguration. In this regard, the Assembly has been exploring all avenues possible and believes that collaborative effort from key stakeholders could help deal with the problem.

Figure 4.1: Areas of Collaboration Among Assemblies in Ghana



Source: Author's construction, 2023

4.1.1 Land Management

The study unearthed that TMA and TNDA collaborate on areas such as land management. Assemblies collaborate on land management with those they share boundaries with. This is mostly done when there are land management disputes between assemblies and traditional leaders about land registration and documentation. One of the interviewees explained:

TNDA collaborate with TMA on land management since we share borders. When I came to the assembly first, there was a land dispute with TMA which demanded a collaborative effort to resolve it. People buy land and go to TMA for registration but since these lands do not fall within their boundaries, the officer in charge there will document and transfer them to us. This helps in our revenue (TNDA Official, Tuobodom, 10 August, 2023).

An informant also agreed that:

Yes...yes, land management is one of the areas we collaborate on. We were in charge of all land within the municipality before the establishment of TNDA and we helped transfer documents of lands within their territory to them and even direct land registrations to them because they are within their territory (TMA Official, Techiman, 16 August, 2023).

From the responses, it is quite remarkable to note that the two assemblies collaborate on land management since they share borders and even with other assemblies as well. Land management is one of the areas that require collaborative efforts since it has the potential to breed conflict among neighbours and the assemblies at large. The two assemblies are trying to address boundary issues through inter-organizational collaboration.

4.1.2 Revenue Mobilization

The interviews also revealed that revenue mobilization is one of the areas TMA and TNDA collaborate on. Revenue is the backbone of every assembly and assemblies in Ghana look for good and efficient methods to help mobilize revenue. Inter-organizational collaboration is one of the methods employed by assemblies in Ghana to mobilize revenue. A Revenue Officer concurred that:

Yes, TNDA collaborates with others on revenue mobilization. As a newborn assembly, revenue generation is one of the major problems faced here. Although the assembly is autonomous, there are certain things we cannot collaborate on but the assembly receive a helping hand from other assemblies, especially on their revenue generation. Issues like fee fixing on revenue items like property rates are commonly discussed through our interactions. We do consult them on reviews of fees and how much should be charged since they have much experience. Most of these activities are largely unofficial but some are also official (TNDA Official, Tubodom, 8 August, 2023).

Another officer commented on his experience as follows:

TNDA Sometimes receive support from us on revenue mobilization such as fee fixing and we too solicit support from other district assemblies on revenue generation (TMA Official, Techiman, 18 August, 2023).

Significantly, therefore, there is an indication that revenue mobilization is one of the areas the two local governments collaborate on. The collaboration varies from one district to another. In this regard, some collaborations are termed official and others are unofficial. The official involves the assembly as a whole entering collaborative arrangement with other assemblies. The unofficial involves the inter-personal relationships among individuals within the assemblies.

4.1.3 Waste Management

Data gathered from the interviewees led to the discovery that assemblies also collaborate on areas such as waste management. Evidence gathered from the informants reveals that forming partnerships with other assemblies and institutions would help reduce poor sanitation. On waste management, an officer intimated as follows:

As a priority to address sanitation issues in the district, we have entered into some formal arrangements with other assemblies and waste management bodies such as Zoomlion to aid waste management within the district. There was a time when the district relied on waste trucks from TMA to convey waste from collection points (TNDA Official, Techiman, 9 August, 2023).

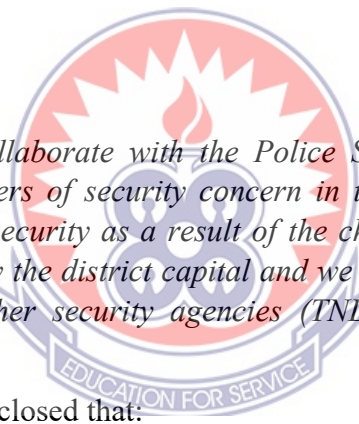
Similarly, an officer agreed with the statement about waste management above:

TMA is in partnership with Zoomlion company to collect portions of waste from various collection points. This agreement is official or formal with the company. Although waste management is still a problem to deal with, this collaborative agreement is helping since the municipal assembly alone cannot cover the entire municipality (TMA Official, Techiman, 17 August, 2023).

Judging from the excerpts above, it can be argued that local governments form partnerships with other assemblies as well as private entities such as Zoomlion to deal with poor waste management within assemblies. Assemblies see sanitation as a big issue which requires collaborative efforts. This shows that waste management can be tackled when assemblies make a conscious effort to collaborate with institutions that can help handle waste.

4.1.4 Security

Another theme which emerged was security. The security of an assembly is seen as crucial and demands great effort. Data from the field shows that assemblies collaborate on matters of security concerns with security institutions. This is how a coordinating director describes it:



The Assembly collaborate with the Police Service and other security agencies on matters of security concern in the district. Our district is suffering from insecurity as a result of the chieftaincy issues within the district, especially the district capital and we mostly rely on the services of police and other security agencies (TNDAs Official, Tubodom, 10 August, 2023).

Similarly, an informant disclosed that:

For security, all of us engage security bodies for the peace of our assemblies. We collaborate with national agencies on security issues. For example, you all heard about the 2020 election brouhaha within our assembly. We engaged the national security on how we can control the situation. So, for collaboration on security, I think every assembly needs it and has to promote internal peace and security (TMA Official, Techiman, 18 August, 2023).

Interviews with the officials indicate that security matters of their respective assemblies are held in esteem since each has experienced either chieftaincy or political turmoil within their assembly over the years. These assemblies collaborate with security agencies and institutions to provide security and promote peace. It is evident from the data that the local

assemblies collaborate with institutions such as the Ghana Police Service and other security agencies on security matters. Also, it emerged that one assembly sometimes call upon the security agency of another assembly for reinforcement during crises.

4.1.5 Health

One very important area of collaboration identified between Techiman Municipality and Techiman North District was Health. This was how a Health Director has this to say:

For us, both health directorates have a friendly relationship since we seek to deliver one of the most important services in the country. We mostly collaborate on information, cost reduction, resources and sometimes personnel. We do use one vehicle to pick out things from Sunyani to reduce cost and even use the same car for meetings far from our area. During the COVID-19 period, TNDA relied on our facilities for quarantine and even treatment. We sometimes send personnel to facilities in that area. Issues such as disease control require the exchange of information to track and respond to the spread of diseases. We don't see ourselves as competitors because we seek the welfare of the people (TMA Official, Techiman, 21 August, 2023).

Following from the above, a conclusion can be drawn that health is one of the areas the two assemblies collaborate on to deliver effective service to the people. It is evident from the data that, they collaborate on personnel, resources and information. Since healthcare is one of the sensitive areas for the people, it allows them to do anything that seeks to promote the well-being of the citizens. The two-directorate share information among themselves and another district to track and control the spread of diseases.

4.1.6 Project management

In addition to the areas of inter-organizational collaboration, project management is one of the themes that emerged during the interview. A planning officers' response:

An NGO has helped NKND to largely produce ginger and since most of the industries in the Techiman enclave are located in our district, they have contacted us to form a partnership to feed our industries here like the Obapack company which mostly deals in vegetables and we look forward to more of these to boost the local economy here (TNDA Official, Tubodom, 11 August, 2023).

Another official added:

TNDA collaborate with other assemblies in the implementation of some of our programs. There are certain projects coming from the top hierarchy (central government) that require us to do with other assemblies such as TMA (TNDA Official, Tubodom, 11 August, 2023).

The foregoing suggests the two assemblies collaborate and other assemblies on project management. The assemblies rely on the support of other assemblies to manage a project. The data as presented mirrors the fact that the assemblies collaborate with other assemblies in the implementation of some programs. This draws strength from other bodies for the successful implementation of programs and policies.

The comments suggest that these assemblies somehow engage in collaboration to deliver some services to the public. The most common areas of collaboration are sanitation, revenue generation, security, health, land management and project management. According to some of the participants, these areas are important components of the local economy as far as citizens' satisfaction is concerned. They collaborate on these areas rather than areas like refugees, homeless people, and persons with disabilities and the construction of projects such as schools and health facilities since most of these are funded by the central government or private entities and not the local assemblies. The informants

also stated that most of these collaborations are informal or unofficial since they require bureaucratic processes to engage in official agreements. Civil servants prefer informal partnerships because they help in delivering services faster and easier. However, in the interviews, the participants acknowledged the Local Government Act 2016 (Act 936) allows for these collaborations but more can be done to aid service delivery in Ghana.

4.2 Drivers of Collaboration Among Assemblies in Ghana.

This section explores the drivers of collaboration between Techiman Municipality and Techiman North District. Thus, what motivates these assemblies in Ghana to collaborate to deliver public service? From the data, it emerged that cost, limited resources, experience, history, size and information are some of the drivers of collaboration between these assemblies. The interviewees explained that the Local Government Act (Act 936 of 2016) permits assemblies in Ghana to form partnerships and collaborate in the process of discharging their duties. Some participants shared their views or understanding of the drivers of collaboration.

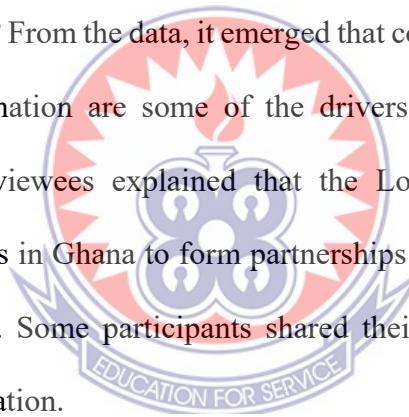
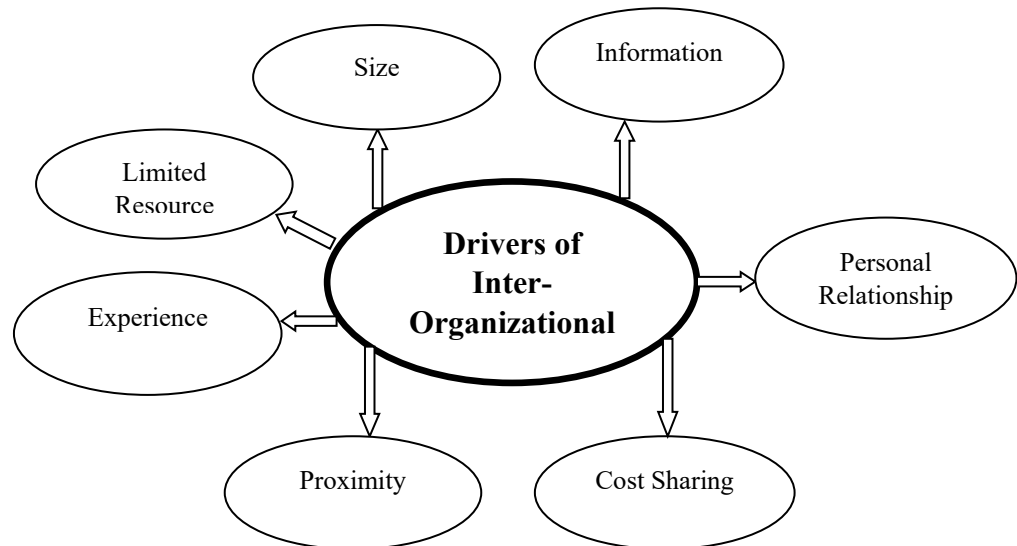


Figure 4.2: Drivers of Collaboration Among Assemblies in Ghana



Source: Author's construction, 2023

4.2.1 Experience

One of the drivers or motivations for local government collaboration in Ghana is experience. It was evident that new assemblies rely on the experiences of old assemblies and therefore form some partnerships with them to learn and avoid some mistakes when delivering public service. An informant disclosed that:

TNDA was carved out of TMA so doing away with them is impossible. We mostly consult them on matters when we fall short (TNDA Official, Tubodom, 10 August, 2023).

An officer stated that:

Although we are an autonomous assembly, we sometimes rely on their experience to deliver some service since we both seek to satisfy the people and not the civil servants of these assemblies (TNDA Official, Tubodom, 7 August, 2023).

From the above responses, it can be seen that one of the drivers of inter-organizational collaboration is the experiences of an old assembly. This shows that assemblies are

motivated to collaborate with other institutions if they have some experience to learn from. They believe that with their experiences, when they collaborate with them there are going to be some benefits in the long run. From the study, it is evident that Techiman North assembly sometimes rely on the experience of Techiman municipality for service delivery.

4.2.2 Personal Relationships

The individuals working under local governments also serve as driver for inter-organizational collaboration. The personnel play an important role by motivating other institutions to collaborate. From the responses, previous working places of civil servants, cordial relationships, meetings and conferences have permitted them to ask for help from colleagues from other assemblies. It is also important to mention that at the personal relationship level, most of these collaborations are unofficial. An interviewee had this to say:



Meetings and conferences have allowed us to meet severally and we are now friends. I can pick up my phone and call a friend from TNDA whenever I face difficulties since we work at the same department of our various assemblies (TMA Official, Techiman, 15 August, 2023).

Reiterating the point made above about personal relationships, an interviewee had this to say:

When the director of TMA assumed office, he asked the corresponding department of my office to contact me whenever they faced any challenges. We are now friends and we call or WhatsApp ourselves for solutions in performing our daily tasks (TNDA Official, Tubodom, 7 August, 2023).

Another respondent also agreed that:

.....and some of the officers were our schoolmates (TNDA Official, Tubodom, 9 August, 2023).

The response above shows that the individuals (civil servants) also serve as driver for collaboration. The data shows that assemblies mostly collaborate with other assemblies where the civil servants have one way or another relationship with workers. This means that civil servants also play important roles in collaborative agreements. Some respondents revealed that they contact other colleagues they have worked with in other assemblies in times of difficulty.

4.2.3 Proximity

The researcher probed further to ascertain whether cost, limited information, size and limited resources also serve as drivers for collaboration between these assemblies. The majority of informants stated that these drivers are major contributors to most of their collaborations. From a respondent, the nearness of an assembly also serves as a driver for inter-organizational collaboration in the delivery of services to the public. An interviewee stated that:

TNDA is always in touch with assemblies that we share boundaries with. I can confirm that we are in collaboration with KSDA, NKNDA and assemblies whom we do not even share borders with because management believes both assemblies have common problems we can come together and seek a common solution. We collaborate mostly with TMA due to the geographical similarities between TNDA and TMAN. We normally exchange ideas (TNDA Official, Tubodom, 10 August, 2023).

Another informant added to the above statement that:

On the issue of proximity, it is not only TNDA. We extend our partnerships to assemblies that are not in our region Offinso North sometimes consult us because we share boundary (TMA Official, Techiman, 15 August, 2023).

The responses above imply that the geographical location of assemblies serves as a driver for assemblies to collaborate. Assemblies collaborate with other assemblies that they share borders with. They believe that they may face similar problems that require collaboration.

4.2.4 Cost Sharing

Resource dependency theory asserts that no institution can be self-reliant and therefore must look for external support. Cost sharing as a theme is one of the motives of inter-organizational collaboration. Most assemblies form partnerships with others to share the cost of delivering services and these two assemblies are no exception. A response from an interviewee confirms the hypothesis of the theory. From the study, it revealed that one of the main reasons for collaboration is to share the cost of delivering services. An informant disclosed that:

Collaborating with others helps to reduce the cost of production. We are already suffering from limited resources and forming partnership with other institutions helps us share the cost involved in that particular service or project (TMA Official, Techiman, 16 August, 2023).

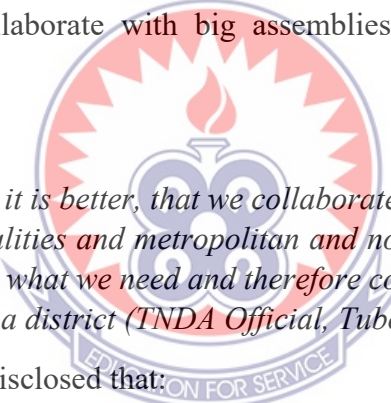
Another informant further mentioned, in addition to the earlier submissions that:

I can say that one of the main reasons why we collaborate is to share costs. We do use one vehicle to pick out things from Sunyani to reduce cost and even use the same car for meetings far from our area. During the COVID-19 period, TNDA relied on our facilities for quarantine and even treatment. If we can't afford the cost of delivering a particular service, we collaborate with others to reduce the cost burden on us (TMA Official, Techiman, 16 August, 2023).

From these views, it can be seen that one of the motivations of inter-organizational collaboration is to reduce costs. Assemblies may not have enough funds to embark on a particular service delivery but could collaborate with others to deliver the same service at a shared cost. Therefore, inter-organizational collaboration serves as the alternate way of delivering public service at a reduced cost. From the data presented above, it can be argued that collaborative partnerships minimize the cost-of-service delivery.

4.2.5 Size

Informants were asked why assemblies collaborate with a certain assembly and not others. It was evident that the size of an assembly serves as a driver for collaboration. Local governments mostly collaborate with big assemblies more than small ones. This is evidenced below:



As an assembly, it is better, that we collaborate with the ones bigger than us like municipalities and metropolitan and not districts like us. The big assemblies have what we need and therefore collaborating with them will help us grow as a district (TNDA Official, Tubodom, 11 August, 2023).

Another informant also disclosed that:

Apart from our district carved from TMA, it is also a big assembly we can learn from. They have more than us in terms of population, businesses, revenue, opportunities, and others and if there is going to be any collaboration, we will consider TMA first before another district (TNDA Official, Tubodom, 11 August, 2023).

The views expressed by informants show that assemblies consider the size of an assembly before they collaborate with them. Size also determines which assemblies collaborate with others. They believe that municipalities and metropolitans attract investors and partners and this could help when they collaborate to also enjoy some benefits. From the study areas, Techiman Municipality is a bigger assembly that attracts others to collaborate with.

Also, Techiman North District sees Techiman Municipality as a big assembly and attractive for partnerships.

4.2.6 Limited Resources

The study revealed that limited resources are among the drivers of inter-organizational collaboration. Assemblies collaborate due to inadequate resources. Assemblies that do not have enough resources to deliver services to the public see collaboration as a reliable means of delivering the service. An informant in the interview recounted:

Our district is suffering from chieftaincy conflict and issues such as security require more hands. We do collaborate with the security services to maintain peace since the district alone does not have enough means of maintaining security (TNDA Official, Tubodom, 12 August, 2023).

Another interviewee also said:

We sometimes count on the human resources of TNDA in some of our activities especially when there is a major exercise or program organized by the assembly (TMA Official, Techiman, 16 August, 2023).

From the responses, it is clear that the Techiman municipal assembly and Techiman north district are motivated to collaborate due to insufficient resources available to them. The resource can be financial, human, or natural. Collaboration is seen as mitigation strategy to the insufficient resources available to district assemblies. This as a theme confirms the hypothesis of Resource Dependency Theory which states that, organizations are required to engage in transaction with other actors and organizations in their environment in order to obtain resources. The theory also argues that resources organization needs may be scarce, not always readily obtainable, or under the control of uncooperative actors.

4.2.7 Information

The study found that information is a motivation for inter-organizational collaboration.

Institutions share information among themselves. Some informants shared this:

We collaborate with institutions with important information such as health information. Issues such as disease control require an exchange of information to track and respond to the spread of diseases. We don't see ourselves as competitors because we seek the welfare of the people (TMA Official, Techiman, 25 August, 2023).

An officer accedes with his experience as follows:

We mostly call them for information. For example, the physical planning department still has some of their documents with them (TMA) and people still go there to register their land and sometimes they have to refer them to us (TNDA Official, Tubodom, 11 August, 2023).

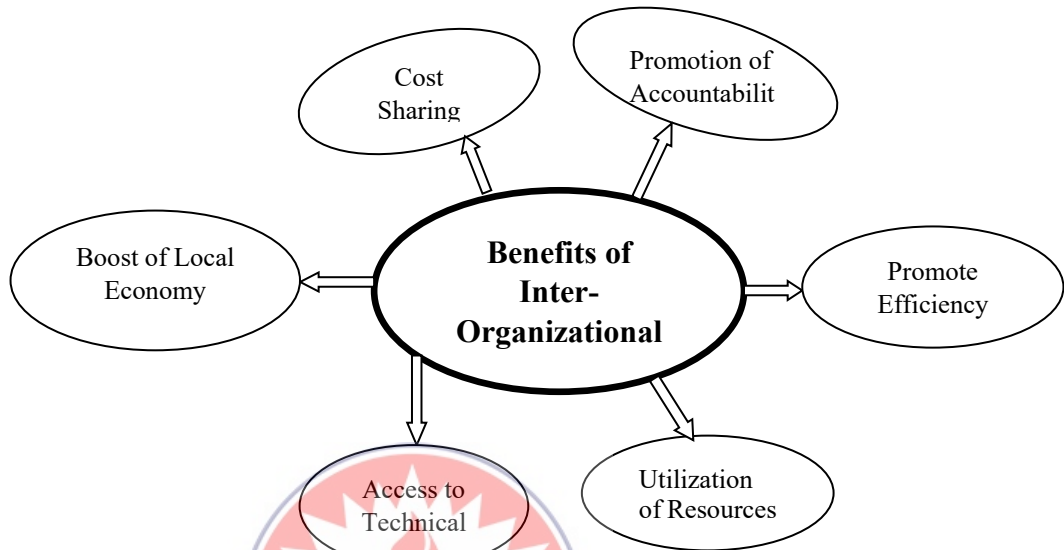
Generally, it is interesting to note that most of the collaborative arrangements existing in these assemblies are externally driven which raises questions as to the readiness of the assemblies to take advantage of such arrangements considering their resource constraints. Considering all of this evidence, it shows that district assemblies in Ghana are driven by experience, proximity, cost, size, limited information, limited resources, and the personnel in collaborating. It is important to mention that some institutions are yet to see the importance of inter-organizational collaboration which accounts for numerous informal and personal arrangements among departments and individuals.

4.3 Benefits of Inter-Organization Collaboration among Assemblies

This section presents another theme that emerged during the interviews with informants of the selected local assemblies when exploring the benefits of engaging in collaboration with other institutions. The sub-themes that emerged under this theme included: utilization of

resources: cost sharing: innovation: access to technical skills: promotion of accountability and boosting local economies. These are analyzed and discussed below.

Figure 4.3 Benefit of inter-organizational collaboration



Source: Author's construction, 2023

4.3.1 Utilization of resources

The interviewees revealed that inter-organizational collaboration helps to utilize available

Figure 4.3: Benefits of Inter-Organization Collaboration among Assemblies. resources efficiently to aid service delivery. According to some informants, inter-organizational collaboration has helped in utilizing the available resources for public service delivery within these local assemblies. For instance, an officer indicated as follows:

Collaboration has and will help make good use of the small resources available. The assembly is already suffering from inadequate resources and for that matter, we need to make good use of the ones available. For example, TNDA needs the cooperation of TMA on revenue mobilization if not most of the people will invade tolls and taxes if we see ourselves as autonomous and do not collaborate (TNDA Official, Tubodom, 12 August, 2023).

Commenting on this issue, an informant explained:

Collaboration helps to bring our small resources together to produce a greater output. This helps to optimize resources and prevent waste (TNDA Official, Tubodom, 11 August, 2023).

The comment suggests that inter-organizational collaboration helps to utilize resources. When local governments enter into collaboration, the resources of these assemblies are utilized effectively than engaging in service delivery individually. The interviews revealed that assemblies rely on external support to deliver services such as revenue mobilization since they share a border. If these agreements are not in place, it will be easy for the citizens to invade tolls and taxes which is a loss to the assemblies. Another informant corroborates this:

Collaboration will go a long way to assist the assemblies with small resources. TNDA and TMA have some industries in the region and therefore formation of collaborative agreements with other assemblies on raw materials will make good use of the industries. Even TNDA depends on the Techiman market to sell most of the farm produce from the district (RCC Official, Bono-East, Techiman, 27 August, 2023).

The findings support the theory underpinning the study (resource dependency theory). The theory argues that it is practically impossible for organizations to generate all the resources needed to achieve their objectives and therefore they are always forced to make rational choices. It is as a result of this that organizations actively engage the external environment. Organizations may not be able to generate all the resources required to maintain themselves internally, and therefore they enter into transactions and relations with the environment that can supply the required resources and services.

4.3.2 Cost Sharing

It emerged that cost sharing is one of the benefits of inter-organizational collaboration. As revealed earlier, cost is one of the main drivers of organizational collaboration. Local governments seek to reduce costs when delivering public service and therefore they see organizational collaboration to be the best option to help reduce costs. It is not a surprise to see cost sharing as one of the benefits organizational collaborations come with. According to some of the participants apart from citizens' satisfaction, the local government mostly collaborates to reduce costs. Some informants shared as follows:

.....we mostly collaborate to reduce costs. We do use one vehicle to pick out things from Sunyani to reduce cost and even use the same car for meetings far from our area. There are some services the district directorate cannot deliver alone due to the cost involved and therefore we partner with others to share the cost (TMA Official, Techiman, 17 August, 2023).

A District Officer concurred that:

Due to the small size of the district, most of the services cannot be delivered due to the cost involved. We then collaborate with other assemblies to help deliver the service. This reduces the cost and the district does not bear the cost alone but rather shares with the partner involved. This has been our way of delivering some services to the people (TNDA Official, Tubodom, 11 August, 2023).

From the above, it is evident from the participant that cost sharing is one of the main benefits derived from inter-organizational collaboration. Organizations have been able to reduce the cost of delivery of services through organizational collaboration. The unavailability of resources needed by organizations may force them to collaborate with others to provide services. And this as evident from the study shows that local assemblies collaborate to reduce the costs of the assembly.

4.3.3 Access to Technical Skills

One of the benefits that emerged from the study is access to technical skills. Most of the informants assert that inter-organizational collaboration does not only reduce cost but also enhances technical skills. Technical know-how is an important aspect of service delivery. Inter-organizational collaboration helps bring all technical hands to the desk to help with the delivery of public service. This is reflected in an extract below:

When institutions come to the collaboration table, it helps to share human and technical resources. As I speak to you today, tomorrow a representative from this place is going to attend a meeting at TNDA. The body there is the technical sub-committee and we are a member because of the projects that are there, the rep will interrogate and criticize them properly and make sure that whatever thing they're doing, they're putting in environmental issues (EPA Official, Techiman, 28 June, 2023).

According to another interviewee:

We have had the opportunity to meet and learn from the best in areas key to our services to the people. Collaboration requires us to meet regularly and this helps us to learn from the experts (TNDA Official, Tubodom, 8 August, 2023).

The above quotes highlight the fact that local governments need technical experts to help in delivering public services. The data shows that collaboration helps bring technical skills to support service delivery within these assemblies. However, since public service delivery is multifaceted, and tends to contribute significantly, organizations must consider inter-organizational collaboration as an alternative way of delivering public services.

4.3.4 Promotion of Accountability

Local governments are expected to effectively deliver services to the people. The Local Government Act (Act 936 of 2016) was enacted to ensure government is closer to the people. Local governments are faced with many challenges such as low revenue, human

resources, and others. Interviewees of the study agree that when organizations collaborate, it promotes accountability. Interview with informants reveals that local governments will be more accountable in their service delivery when they collaborate with other organizations. They argued that the accountability that is missing from local government is a result of the numerous challenges these assemblies face and one of the alternatives to help reduce these challenges is inter-organizational collaboration. An interviewee lamented that:

Some services could be impossible to deliver if not for collaborating with other assemblies. This has made us more accountable to the people in our district (TMA Official, Techiman, 18 August, 2023).

Recounting how inter-organizational collaboration promotes accountability, an interviewee fumed:

The people demand a lot of things from us and we have to try our best to provide if not all the most important ones. For example, collaboration with TMA in our quest to address sanitation issues in the district helped us to move waste bins from some communities within the district using their waste vehicles. The people see waste management as the duty of the assemblies and always demand it from us. Most of the waste in the district is now given to Zoomlion company in a formal agreement to manage. This helps us to be accountable to the people (TNDA Official, Tubodom, 11 August, 2023).

An analysis of the above interviews is indicative of the fact that organizational collaboration is beneficial to local governments. The above quote sheds light on the benefits of inter-organizational collaboration. The comment shows that inter-organizational collaboration helps local governments to be more accountable to the populace due to their high demand for accountability. The comment suggests that sensitive issues like waste management require collaboration to be able to be accountable.

4.3.5 Promote Efficiency

Another benefit that emerged from the interviewees is the promotion of efficiency. Interviews with local government officials suggested that when organizations collaborate, it is possible to achieve efficiency when organizations decide to collaborate. Commenting on this issue, an informant explained:

.....if we collaborate, we can use the little resources we have efficiently (TMA Official, Techiman, 18 August, 2023).

The above responses were confirmed by interviews with civil servants from Techiman Municipal Assembly and Techiman North District Assembly. One of the informants revealed this:

Efficiency is not something that is far from being achieved if we can bring our small resources together. It is not always about the natural resources or the equipment but technical know-how, expertise, and motivation help to move closer to efficiency. Collaboration should be made compulsory to help us deliver service to our people efficiently (TNDA Official, Tubodom, 9 August, 2023).

From the comments above, it is clear that efficiency is one of the advantages of inter-organizational collaboration. Thus, it can be argued that based on their views or understanding of inter-organizational collaboration, they see it as a way of promoting efficiency in service delivery. Inter-organization collaboration as a means of service delivery helps promote efficiency by bringing together neighbouring public organizations.

4.3.6 Boost of Local Economy

During the exploration of informants' views on the benefits of inter-organizational collaboration, one of the important themes that emerged from the discussions was boosting the local economy. Interviewees agreed that inter-organizational collaboration helps

strengthen the local economy. Some of the interviewees in the interviews indicated as follows:

Collaboration among assemblies will help us grow our local economy. It will help us get raw materials to feed our industries here. This will bring employment opportunities, and revenue generation and attract investors to our region (RCC Official, Bono-East, Techiman, 27 August, 2023).

According to another interviewee:

These partnerships will reduce unemployment and for that matter reduce social vices in our area. It will raise the living standard of the people which in a way boosts our local economy (TMA Official, Techiman, 18 August, 2023).

Another interviewee who was thinking in the same direction also added that:

The safety of our district will attract investors which will eventually help our economy here. So, it is necessary to collaborate with the security service to ensure peaceful co-existence among the people (TNDA Official, Tubodom, 9 August, 2023).

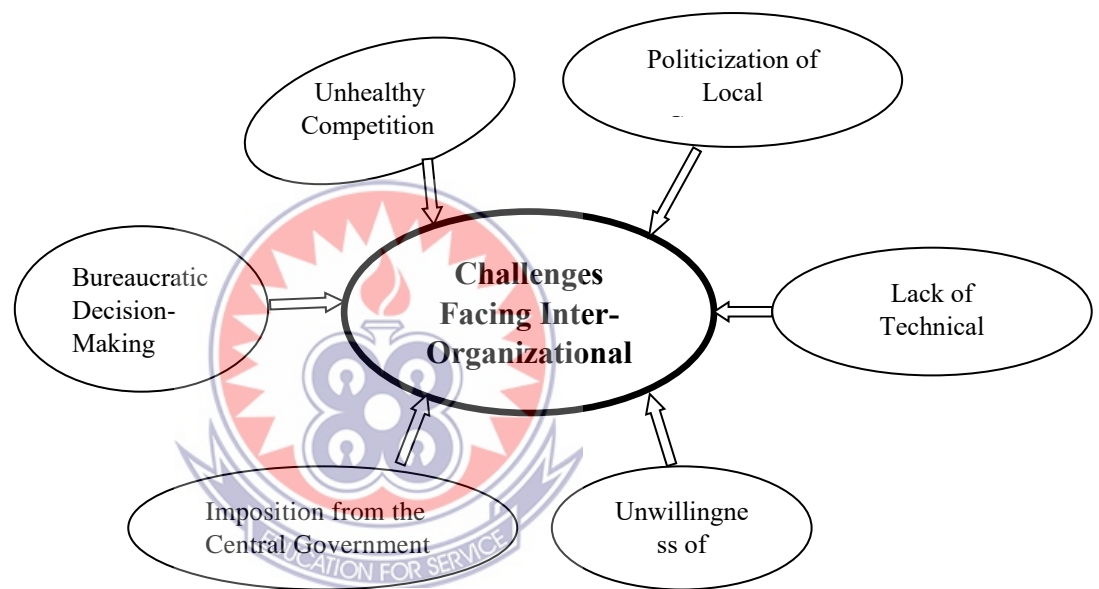
The comments of the participants suggest that inter-organizational collaboration goes a long way to boost local economies. It can, therefore, be stated that local governments that seek to grow their local economies should see inter-organizational collaboration as an alternative to consider.

The study shows that there are several benefits associated with inter-organizational collaboration. This includes; utilization of resources, cost sharing, innovation, access to technical skills, promotion of accountability, and boosting local economies. These benefits emerged from interviews with participants of the study. This serves as a blueprint for organizations to collaborate with other institutions and organizations when they seek to deliver public services.

4.4 Challenges facing Inter-Organizational Collaboration among Assemblies

This section explores the key challenges affecting inter-organizational collaboration. This section of the study assessed the knowledge of informants on challenges that hinder effective organizational collaboration in delivering services. The dominant challenges include the politicization of local governments, decision-making structure, competition, bureaucratic processes, and lack of technical support.

Figure 4.4: Challenges facing Inter-Organizational Collaboration among Assemblies.



Source: Author's construction, 2023

4.4.1 Politicization of Local Governments

From the interviews, it was realized that politics at the local assemblies serve as a challenge to inter-organizational collaboration. According to some of the informants, the politicization of local government activities is causing more harm to development. Some participants' statements illustrating their point of view included that;

politicization of our institutions is one of the challenges facing collaboration. You want to implement a policy and they will say take your time. Sometimes you want to demolish a building along the waterway and

they will tell you just two years we are going into elections; can you delay or stop? (EPA Official, Techiman, 28 June, 2023).

An interviewee also lamented that:

Some of the institutions within the district are political and they sabotage our work. For example, we wanted to put a revenue checkpoint on the highway where the police barrier is but our people were told to move because they have not received instructions from their boss. We have tried officially more than 10 times, meanwhile, the commander is a key member of the assembly. They look for today and what will be good for them and not the entire district (TNDA Official, Tubodom, 11 August, 2023).

Another interviewee explained:

When we talk about this political thing people take it as a joke. It is destroying everything around us from formulation to implementation of policies. When you come, I hope you heard my colleagues talking about what others are doing that they think is not the best. This is what is going on here, we are supposed to serve the people but we are serving ourselves (TNDA Official, Tubodom, 11 August, 2023).

These views by most of the interviewees clearly show the challenge facing inter-organizational collaboration among assemblies is the politicization of service delivery. The data shows that some civil servants are not in favour of inter-organizational collaboration. Officials turn to play politics with techniques that can promote effective service delivery.

4.4.2 Imposition from the Central Government

The data suggests that the central government still interferes in the affairs of local governments. This has made local governments serve the interest of the central government instead of the local people. This affects inter-organizational collaboration since decisions are from the central government. This was reflected in an interview below:

The top-down approach still exists in our local governments. District assemblies still take instruction from the central government on how we serve our people. We are in the long run serving the government instead of the people. This sometimes does not permit us to collaborate with others (TMA Official, Techiman, 17 August, 2023).

In support of their argument this is what an interviewee retorted:

There is something most of us fear to talk about due to sanctions. One of the challenges or problems is the central government. Local governments still depend on the central government to be able to carry out policies. The autonomous status is worthless since we cannot do anything on our own. We should be more practical than what we have now (TNDA Official, Tubodom, 11 August, 2023).

It is evident from the data that local government operations are largely imposed by the central government. The majority of the interviewees lament that although Ghana is practicing a decentralized governance system most decisions are largely top-down and driven by the central government. It is important to mention that when these challenges set in, inter-organizational collaboration may not achieve its intended goals.

4.4.3 Unhealthy Competition

In addition to the challenges facing inter-organizational collaboration in delivering public service, it emerged from the interview that unhealthy competition among local governments serves as a challenge to inter-organizational collaboration. Some of the responses included the following:

One of the challenges is competition. Some see others as competitors and are not willing to share what they have. For example, an assembly receiving support from an NGO is preventing other assemblies from forming partnerships with the NGO. The assemblies always want to come out with something that others are not doing. This has made it difficult to come together to achieve one goal (TNDA Official, Tubodom, 8 August, 2023).

However, the data further revealed that some district assemblies prefer not to share what they know with others due to the performance ranking of districts every year. This was what an informant had to say:

Some assemblies are not ready to share with us what they have because of the yearly ranking of assemblies. They want to have a good position and will try their best not to share their secret with other assemblies (TMA Official, Techiman, 18 August, 2023).

The responses above imply that unhealthy competition is a major challenge to inter-organizational collaboration in the delivery of public service by local governments. Challenges such as unhealthy competition do not allow collaboration to achieve its intended purpose. Therefore, for an organization to have a successful collaboration with others, challenges such as unhealthy competition should be eradicated.

4.4.4 Unwillingness of Partners

The unwillingness of partners is seen as part of the challenges that affect inter-organizational collaboration in service delivery among local assemblies in Ghana.

According to a respondent:

Some of the assemblies do not see themselves benefiting directly or much and therefore are not willing to collaborate with us. This has led to more informal collaborations. It is now between individuals and not the institution at large. Assemblies now look at what they can get first. They will only collaborate when it is beneficial to them (TMA Official, Techiman, 18 August, 2023).

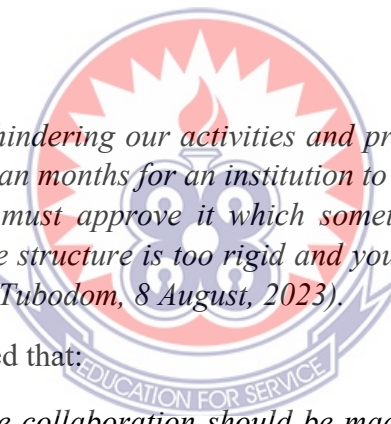
Another respondent also shares similar thoughts:

.....now assemblies don't see the importance of engaging in collaboration with other assemblies since there is no package attached to it. They are not ready and reluctant to collaborate when it brings less or no benefit directly to them (TMA Official, Techiman, 15 August, 2023).

Responses from informants show that the unwillingness of the partner in the collaborative agreement matters. It is also evident that local assemblies are willing to collaborate when it will benefit them more. This has led to more informal collaborations than formal agreements.

4.4.5 Bureaucratic Decision-Making Structure

Another discovered challenge to inter-organizational collaboration is the decision-making structure of local governments in Ghana. It was recorded that these decision-making structures are not flexible enough to allow frequent collaborations and therefore individuals engage in informal collaboration instead of the whole institution. Some respondents shared with me this:



Bureaucracy is hindering our activities and progress as an assembly. It can take more than months for an institution to reply to your letter due to the people that must approve it which sometimes makes it uneasy in emergencies. The structure is too rigid and you get frustrated sometimes (TNA Official, Tubodom, 8 August, 2023).

Another interviewee hinted that:

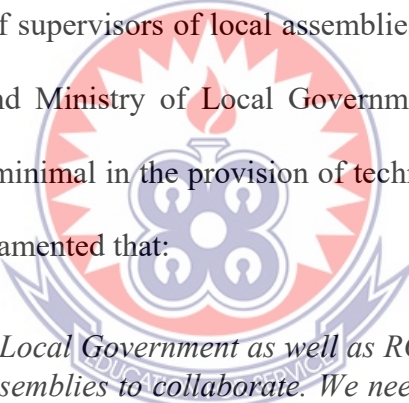
For me, I believe collaboration should be made official and must come with an easy process to help us work at ease. The reason why I'm saying this is because assemblies are afraid to collaborate due to fear of sanctions from top officials. We have more informal agreements that are mostly unseen because if it doesn't go as planned the individual will be sanctioned (TMA Official, Techiman, 15 August, 2023).

Although individuals at the local assemblies can act as a medium through which collaborative arrangements can occur, there are questions as to how long the agreement could be. Though these informal arrangements are easy and cheap to execute without any substantial costs, a formal arrangement has the potential to exploit economies of scale associated with the bulk provision of such services. Unlike the developed countries where formal collaboration is common, it appears informal collaboration is the most common

form of collaborative arrangement between Assemblies in Ghana. This can be attributed to the bureaucratic decision-making structure of the local assemblies. This makes it difficult for these Assemblies to go into formal (official) agreements since the informal (unofficial) is easier to enter and exit without any significant transaction costs. It is worrying to mention that most of these collaborative arrangements are primarily limited to some individuals within the organization. This implies that when an employee is absent from work or transferred to a different place, collaborative agreements may be terminated.

4.4.6 Lack of Technical Support

Lack of technical support is one of the less-mentioned challenges to inter-organizational collaboration. The role of supervisors of local assemblies in Ghana such as the Regional Coordinating Council and Ministry of Local Government, Decentralization and Rural Development is seen as minimal in the provision of technical support to local assemblies in Ghana. A respondent lamented that:



The Ministry of Local Government as well as RCC are not doing enough to encourage assemblies to collaborate. We need technical support from them as to how to do it to bring maximum benefits to both partners. This requires expertise to guide assemblies in their collaborative agreements. This is because some are losing when they collaborate because they do not have the technical ability to see the potential of such an agreement (TMA Official, Techiman, 16 August, 2023).

On this comment, an informant from the Regional Coordinating Council has this to say

The assemblies are autonomous and we serve as a guide and cannot ask them to do anything. We can't interfere in their activities. But we indeed need to support them with expertise to guide them in their dealings. And our problem is, are they ready? Won't they say we are imposing people on them? (RCC Official, Bono-East, Techiman, 27 August, 2023).

From the data available, it is evident that the life span of some collaborative agreements is cut short due to some challenges it may encounter. Inter-organizational collaboration faces

several challenges that can negatively derail the genuine efforts of these assemblies to find solutions to the demands of the public. Most of the assemblies' face difficulties associated with political interference, bureaucratic decision-making structures, competition, lack of technical support, and capacity.

4.5 Discussions

To remain committed to the people, public organizations have long sought innovations in service delivery (Osborne, 2020; Lewis et al., 2020). Inter-organizational collaboration is one of the new strategies local governments have adopted to deliver service to the people.

This study examines inter-organizational collaboration and effective public service delivery in Ghana: Evidence from Techiman Municipal Assembly and Techiman North District Assembly. It was evident from the study that local governments in Ghana do collaborate among themselves and with other institutions to deliver public services. These collaborations are a result of the challenges and demands of the general public.

From the data presented, it is evident that the two assemblies collaborate on areas such as sanitation, land management, revenue mobilization, health, and security. This is supported by (Ferreira et al., 2022; Dasgupta & Agarwal, 2022; Kimura, 2020; Hiratsuka-Sasaki & Kojima, 2020) on waste management, (Bocchino & Padovani, 2021; Kübler & Rochat, 2019; Silvestre et al., 2020) on revenue generation, (Morgan et al., 2023; Grin et al., 2021; Nascimento et al., 2022; Arntsen et al., 2021) on health (van Veenendaal, 2023) on security and (Gavkalova et al., 2023; Santasusagna Riu, et al., 2020; Eom et al., 2022) on land and border management. The assemblies mostly collaborate in these areas because of the enormity of the problem. According to some of the participants, these areas are important components of the local economy as far as citizens' satisfaction is concerned. They

collaborate on these areas than issues on like refugees, homeless people, and persons with disabilities and the construction of projects such as schools and health facilities since most of these are funded by the central government or private entities and not the local assemblies. Again, these services are deemed too expensive for a single assembly to embark on. This makes it difficult for the smaller assemblies as they sometimes struggle to attract providers for such services. Warner and Aldag (2021) argue that the small size of municipalities denies them the opportunity to attract service providers. However, Galli et al. (2020) also argue that when small municipalities collaborate, they produce greater output. With this, Zafra-Gómez et al. (2014) posited that governments all over the world have decided to enter into collaboration with other institutions to deliver public services that may be otherwise expensive and difficult to execute all alone. It is also important to mention that, these areas of collaboration are similar to most of the collaborations in developed countries (Warner & Bel, 2008).

The informants indicated that the two assemblies are driven by experience, proximity, cost, size, limited information, limited resources, and the personnel in collaborating. These drivers are supported by studies done by (Bel & Fageda, 2007; Warner, 2006; Warner & Hefetz, 2003). For example, studies by Warner and Aldag (2021) posit that because some municipalities are small in size, they are unable to attract providers for the services they intend to provide. The responses suggest that the assemblies do not have a full grasp of the benefits of cooperative inter-organizational collaboration. The personal relationships built by civil servants as a driver for collaboration raise questions about the sustainability of such arrangements. The absence of personnel makes it difficult for collaborative agreements to continue. One of the reasons for the more unofficial collaborative process is

the easiness and economics of execution without any substantial costs. The bureaucratic nature of Ghana's local government system makes it unattractive for local assemblies to engage in official collaborations.

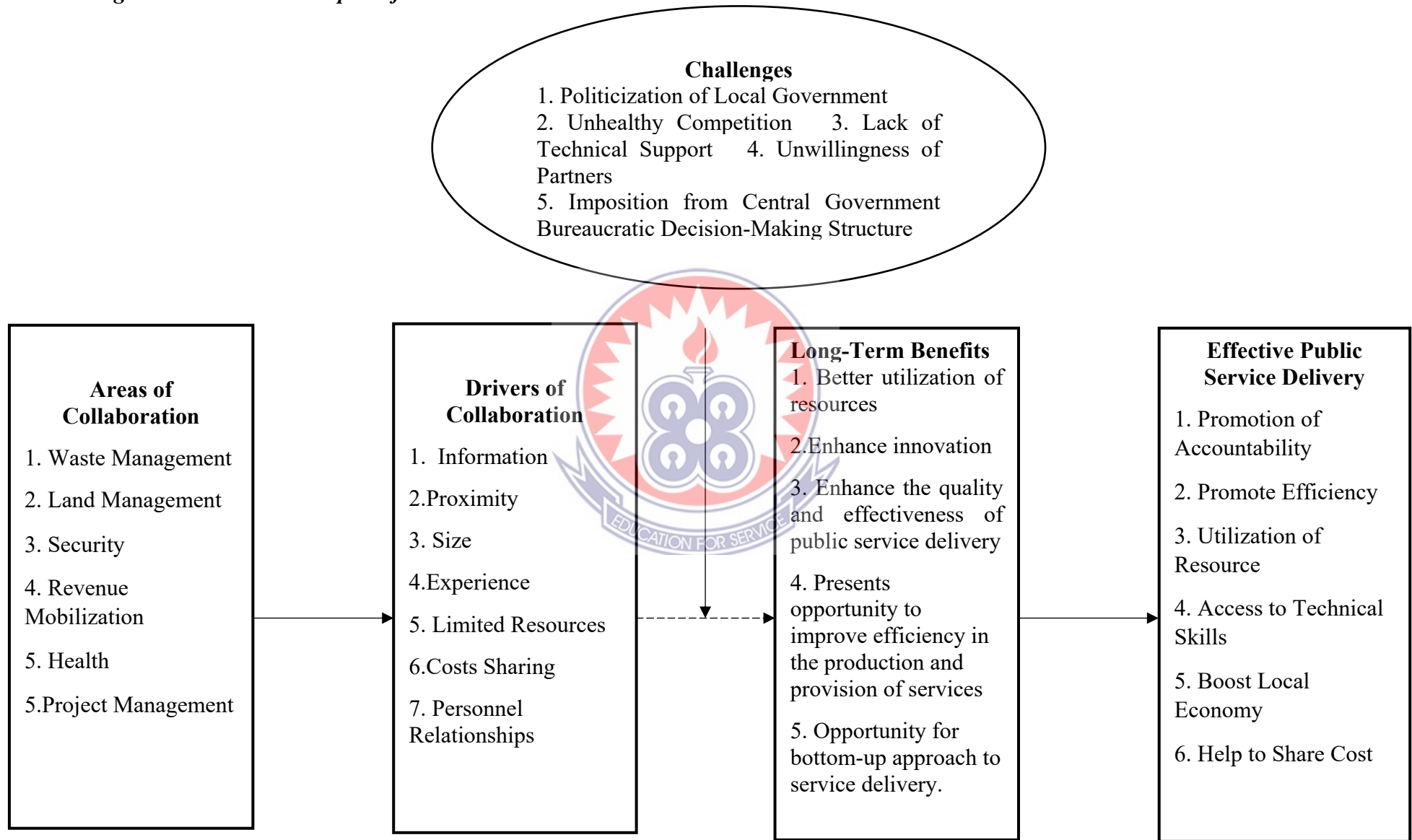
Another key aspect of the study was the benefit that comes with inter-organizational collaboration. The study shows that inter-organizational collaboration helps in utilizing available resources, reducing the cost-of-service delivery, helping access technical skills, promoting accountability, promoting efficiency, and boosting the local economy of assemblies. Tenakwah and Otchere-Ankrah (2020) argued that collaboration and cooperative arrangements between organizations make it possible for them to increase their resource base thereby reducing the competition for scarce resources for public organizations. Austin (2010) also argued that organizations may need financial and human resources which may not be readily available. This makes it important for organizations to collaborate to deliver services. Also, the studies of Bel and Fageda (2011) assert that collaborative partnerships are expected to minimize the cost-of-service delivery. Tenakwah and Otchere-Ankrah (2020) also posited that the adoption of collaborative arrangements between local government and institutions is likely to lower the cost-of-service delivery which also allows them to retain control over the service provided. The study has shown how important inter-organizational collaboration is to service delivery.

Aside from the benefits that come with inter-organizational collaboration, the interviewees indicated that the assemblies have not been able to successfully implement inter-organizational collaboration due to several challenges. These challenges affect inter-organizational collaboration for it to achieve its intended objectives. These challenges include the politicization of local governments, unhealthy competition, unwillingness of

partners, bureaucratic decision-making structure, and lack of technical support. Warner (2011) argues that loss of control over the services delivered, difficulties associated with monitoring, resistance on the part of employees, and the citizenry, and lack of market competition constitute significant challenges drawing back the efforts of local governments to collaborate in the delivery of public services. One of the challenges facing inter-organizational collaboration is the impositions from the central government and this situation does not inspire creativity and hard work among employees. These revelations are supported by Bel et al. (2023) argument that centralization prevents the provision of services to local preferences and often leads to inefficient and undesirable outcomes.



Figure 4.6. Revised conceptual framework



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.0 Introduction

The previous chapter presented and discussed the results of the study. This chapter presents the summary of the findings of the study. Also, the chapter presents the conclusions of the study. Further recommendations were made based on the findings of the study. The chapter ends by presenting what served as limitations to the study.

5.1 Areas of collaboration among the assemblies

This objective sought to identify the areas or policy domains that are conducive among the two assemblies. It emerged from the findings that sanitation, land management, revenue mobilization, health, and security are areas where collaboration can take place between the two assemblies. These areas are critical for collaboration because they seek to improve economic development, reduce conflict and environmental degradation, and raise the living standards of the people.

5.2 Drivers of collaboration among the two assemblies

The drivers of inter-organizational collaboration were explored. The study reveals that varied reasons drive Techiman Municipality and Techiman North District to collaborate to deliver public services, including proximity, cost, size, experience, and personnel at various assemblies. Based on the findings, it can, therefore, be argued that assemblies do not just collaborate but there is always a trigger or motivation behind collaborations among local governments.

5.3 Benefits of Collaboration

This part of the study assessed the importance of inter-organizational collaboration between Techiman Municipality and Techiman North District. Inter-organizational collaboration helps in utilizing available resources, reducing the cost-of-service delivery, helping access technical skills, promoting accountability, promoting efficiency, and boosting the local economy of assemblies.

5.4 Challenges of Collaboration

The study discovered challenges that fight against inter-organizational collaboration with Techiman Municipality and Techiman North District. This includes; politicization of local governments, unhealthy competition, unwillingness of partners, bureaucratic decision-making structure, and lack of technical support.

5.5 Contribution of the Study

The section discusses the contribution of the study to theory, research, and practice.

5.5.1 Contribution to Theory

The study contributes to the resource dependency theory through the provision of a more comprehensive understanding of predicting inter-organizational collaboration in developing countries. It does so by describing how public organizations in developing countries engage in collaborative activities with sister organizations and other actors to shore up their resources to achieve their objectives. Given that resources available to district assemblies are finite with growing public demands, these assemblies invariably compete among themselves for the same resources. It also describes how resource scarcity can force organizations to seek innovative solutions through sustainable alternatives. The study also highlights the contextual realities such as proximity, the experience of the

prospective partners, and others that make it possible for assemblies to collaborate with other agencies. The results of the study demonstrate that the dependency on the resources of partners largely determines the nature of the collaborative arrangement that will be undertaken. In sum, the study emphasizes that the resource dependency theory has greater predictive power in explaining the drivers, areas, benefits, and constraints of inter-organizational collaboration by drawing the connection between the need to address public demands while eliminating the duplication of functions to ensure that efficiency is achieved in their day-to-day operations of assemblies.

The study also contributes to the burgeoning literature on inter-organizational collaboration, particularly from an under-researched context. Most of the studies on the topic have focused largely on developed countries ignoring resource-constrained environments such as Africa.

5.5.2 Contribution to Research

This thesis makes several contributions to the study of inter-organizational collaboration and public service delivery. The thesis also brings up how assemblies can use collaboration to deliver public services. The study of inter-organizational collaboration between Techiman Municipality and Techiman North District has filled some research gaps. Previous research on inter-organizational collaboration focused on developed countries and national governance with the neglect of sub-national governments. This fills the locational gap in the study of inter-organizational collaboration in Ghana. This study contributes significantly to the literature on inter-organizational collaboration at the sub-national government and in developing countries. This study also contributes to the literature by providing specific implementation challenges faced by local authorities

regarding inter-organizational collaboration, especially from a developing country perspective.

5.5.3 Contribution to Practice

Empirically, the study demonstrates the increasing pressure on local government institutions in Ghana to deliver standard public services irrespective of their size, scope, or location. While many of these assemblies are facing shrinking budgets, they are still expected to provide services that meet the expectations of the public. It is gradually becoming impossible for Ghana's local governments to provide these enormous tasks with the meagre budgets, lack of capacity, institutional inefficiencies, and external influences. With this, inter-organizational collaboration is seen as one of the alternative ways to deliver public services although it is fraught with challenges as confirmed by interviewees of the study. From the analysis, it is argued that inter-district collaboration should be viewed from a broader perspective to capture factors that go beyond the individuals in these assemblies. Such a perspective will help appreciate the efficiency and effectiveness concerns associated with service delivery at the local level. It is also essential for policymakers to recognize the fact that these assemblies are facing fiscal stress and will, therefore, require more room to explore avenues that can help them address the challenges facing them.

5.6 Study Limitations and Avenues of Future Research

It is important to point out some limitations of this study.

Because of resources and time constraints, the research was based on the views of 15 participants who were purposively selected from Techiman Municipality and Techiman North District. Because the study was not able to cover all the institutions and districts under the region, generalization of the result is limited to the study area. There is a need

for further study across the other districts excluded from this study to check the veracity of the outcome of the study.

Using qualitative study and purposive sampling technique, the study limited the chance of others who would have been equally good to take part in the study. The conclusions drawn were based on the views expressed by selected respondents, it also limits the generalization of the outcome of the study to another environment. To reduce the extent to which my own biases influenced the results of this study, I made sure that questions meant for all the respondents were asked in the same way and further ensured that the outcomes of the interviews were recorded objectively and accurately.

The following recommendations are made for further studies:

The study was approached qualitatively. As such, the views of the few participants of the selected local governments in the Bono East of Ghana were sought. I focused mainly on the participants of the selected local governments in the Bono East of Ghana. Therefore, further research could approach inter-organizational collaboration and effective service delivery in Ghana both qualitatively and quantitatively so that the views of a larger population of local governments could be sought. Further studies could also be undertaken to explore the views of all stakeholders of local governments in the Bono East region of Ghana on inter-organizational collaboration.

The study also focused only on inter-organizational collaboration in public institutions such as local governments without including private institutions. Therefore, further research could approach inter-organizational collaboration in both public and private institutions.

The study was conducted using only two districts in the Bono East region. Thus, the findings of the study are only based on the data or information obtained from the two

selected districts and therefore the findings cannot be generalized. Future studies can expand the scope of this study to cover assemblies in other parts of the region and the country at large to have a holistic picture of the issues as contextual issues play a crucial role in the drive to collaborate.

5.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, local governments are looking for innovative ways to deliver public service. The study examined inter-organizational collaboration and effective service delivery in Ghana qualitatively. Data was gathered from officials of the Techiman Municipal Assembly, Techiman North District Assembly, Ministry of Local Regional, Decentralization and Rural Development, Coordinating Council, and EPA.

Generally, several findings were observed. First, the study found that proximity, experience, size, and limited resources are drivers of collaboration between the two assemblies. Secondly, the study reveals that the two assemblies collaborate on areas such as sanitation, land management, revenue mobilization, health, and security. Thirdly, some of the benefits enjoyed by the two assemblies as a result of Inter-organizational collaboration include; utilizing the available resources, reduction in cost-of-service delivery, access to technical skills, promotion of accountability and efficiency, and help boost the local economy. Fourthly, they found that politicization of local governments, unhealthy competition, absence of the will of partners, inadequate technical support, and bureaucratic decision-making structure serve as a challenge to inter-organizational collaboration.

5.8 Policy Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the research findings:

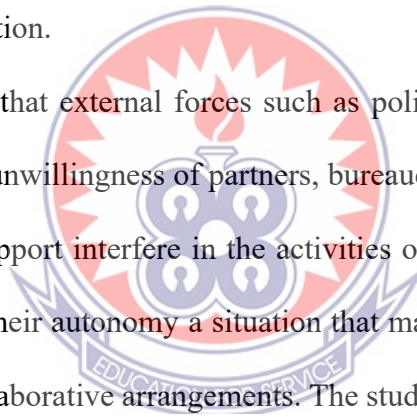
Firstly, the study identified sanitation, land management, revenue mobilization, health, and security as areas the two assemblies collaborate on. Therefore, the study recommends that the Ministry of Local Government should create an enabling environment that will begin with a thorough assessment of resources in specific areas to enable key stakeholders to communicate and develop a roadmap for inter-organizational collaboration. Also, there is a need to further widen the scope to cover other areas such as education, agriculture, emergency medical services, and law enforcement. Co-operate purchasing can be another opportunity for district assemblies to collaborate. Assemblies can purchase in bulk to enjoy bulk discounts and greater bargaining power on purchase terms. Another potential area for collaboration is human resources. Considering the cost involved in hiring experts for particular projects, two or three assemblies can come together to hire one person to work on projects across these assemblies.

Secondly, the study revealed that the two assemblies are driven to collaborate based on proximity, cost, size, experience, and personnel. Looking at these drivers they look selfish and individualistic. The study recommends that inter-organizational collaboration between local governments should be broadened beyond the individuals within the assemblies to the institution as a whole. Furthermore, the governments should institute grants or funding sources that will motivate district assemblies to collaborate. Such funding sources can require at least two different assemblies to jointly apply.

Thirdly, utilizing available resources, reducing the cost-of-service delivery, helping access technical skills, promoting accountability, promoting efficiency, and boosting the local

economy of assemblies are benefits identified by the study. The study recommends that the government should establish legal frameworks purposely for collaboration in delivering public service and ensure proper execution by all stakeholders. The government should enact laws that will create an avenue for assemblies to collaborate. The developed States in the United States of America have enacted laws that facilitate collaboration between organizations. An example is the Wisconsin statute 66.0317 which enjoins all local governments in metropolitan statistical areas to sign at least two compacts with neighbouring municipalities or counties for the provision of joint services. This can serve as best practices for governments in developing countries that are yet to benefit from inter-organizational collaboration.

Lastly, the study found that external forces such as politicization of local governments, unhealthy competition, unwillingness of partners, bureaucratic decision-making structure, and lack of technical support interfere in the activities of these assemblies placing some form of restrictions on their autonomy a situation that makes it difficult for them to enter into any meaningful collaborative arrangements. The study recommends that Civil Society Organizations and other bodies pressure state institutions to refrain from interfering in the affairs of local assemblies.



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APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE EDUCATION
INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR RESPONDENTS

**INFORMATION FOR
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

You are invited to participate in an interview for a research project entitled: *Inter-Organisational Collaboration and Public Service Delivery: Evidence from Techiman Municipal Assembly and Techiman North District Assembly.*

Please take note of the below to ensure informed consent for your participation.

Background

I am Seth Owusu, a Master of Philosophy student at the Department of Political Science Education, University of Education Winneba. This research is being undertaken as part of the requirement for a Master of Philosophy in Political Science Education at the University of Education Winneba. The study explores **Inter-organizational collaboration and Public Service Delivery. Evidence from Techiman Municipal Assembly and Techiman North District Assembly.** Your extensive understanding of the study's topic led to your selection as a potential participant. Before committing to participate in the research, please read this form and ask any questions you may have.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things: Be present for an interview and willing to discuss how Techiman Municipal Assembly and Techiman North District Assembly collaborate to deliver a public service. Be willing to allow audio recording within this interview which may last 40 minutes, and to allow information that was gained from this interview to be placed within a research project. Throughout this procedure, your identity and distinguishing characteristics will remain private.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation is voluntary, and you are free to decide not to participate. You may withdraw your participation at any time without any negative consequence.

Confidentiality & Data Protection

Your anonymity and protection of identity is guaranteed throughout the research. Your name is not going to be known to anyone other than myself as the researcher. You may choose a pseudonym (fictional name) for the study. Should the study be published in an academic journal or blog, the name of the participating organization can be mentioned. The interview/group discussion will be audio-recorded, and the recording transcribed for analysis. This data will be stored safely in a password-protected cloud and used exclusively by myself for the purpose of the research project.

Potential Risks

The risks for participating in this research are considered low. Should you have experienced psychological hardship or trauma, the interview could resurface these emotions if you choose to share them. The interview will not directly ask for any negative

experiences. Should you sense a risk of resurfacing trauma, please reconsider your participation. Should you feel uncomfortable or experience emotional distress during the interview, it can be interrupted at any point.

Benefits

Expected benefits associated with your participation include a learning experience with a qualitative research project and a personal reflection on inter-organizational collaboration between Techiman Municipal Assembly and Techiman North District Assembly which is expected to stimulate an improvement in public service delivery. *No financial compensation can be provided.* You will have access to the research findings through your organization.

Communication

You may ask any questions about the study and your participation before, during or after the interview/group discussion and can reach me at owususeth2016@gmail.com +233545446323 (Call/WhatsApp).

Your informed consent will be reconfirmed orally at the start of the interview.

Thank you very much for your participation.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

I consent to participate in the study and to be audio-taped.

Participant's Number

Date

Signature of Study Participant

Signature of Researcher

Date

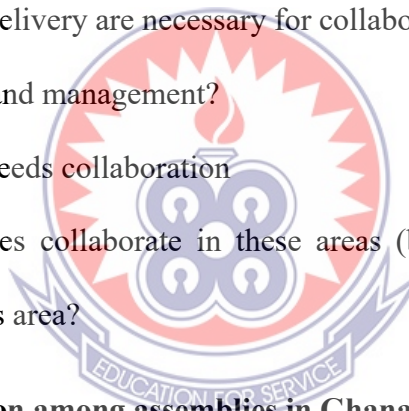


**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR REGIONAL COORDINATING COUNCIL
OFFICIALS, ASSEMBLY OFFICERS (BUDGET, REVENUE, ICT, ETC),
HEALTH DIRECTORATE, ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AGENCY
OFFICIALS AND GOVERNANCE EXPERTS**

Inter-Organizational Collaboration and Public Service Delivery in Ghana. Evidence from Techiman Municipal Assembly and Techiman North District Assembly.

Areas of collaboration among assemblies for effective solid waste management

1. Which areas of service delivery are necessary for collaboration (probe, sanitation, revenue mobilization, security, land management?)
2. Why is it that this area needs collaboration?
3. Why do these assemblies collaborate in these areas (based on the response from the respondents) and not this area?



Drivers for collaboration among assemblies in Ghana

1. Is there any form of collaboration that exists among this assembly and others?
2. What do you think are the factors that drive collaboration among assemblies?
3. Probe for the following (Cost, proximity, leadership)
4. Why do you want to collaborate with and not

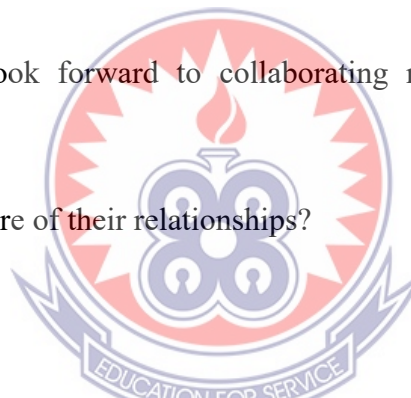
Benefits assemblies drive collaboration

1. Are there any immediate benefits of assemblies collaborating?
2. Why is it important for local government to collaborate to deliver a public service

3. Has collaboration in any form helped in delivering a public service?
4. What are the benefits these assemblies have enjoyed as a result of collaboration in delivering public service?

Challenges assemblies drive collaboration

1. What are the challenges faced by any or both assemblies in collaborating toward waste management?
2. Which areas become difficult to collaborate on?
3. What is the biggest threat to collaboration between Techiman Municipality and Techiman North District?
4. Do these assemblies look forward to collaborating more concerning public service delivery?
5. How do you see the future of their relationships?



THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

APPENDIX B

INTRODUCTORY LETTER



UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE EDUCATION

P. O. Box 25, Winneba, Ghana
+233 (050) 1434035

psed@uew.edu.gh

16th June, 2023

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam.

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION: MR. SETH OWUSU

This is to introduce to you **Mr. Seth Owusu** from the Department of Political Science Education, University of Education, Winneba. He is undertaking a study on the topic: **Inter-Organizational Collaboration and Effective Public Service Delivery in Ghana: Evidence from Tachiman Municipality and Techiman North District.**

This researcher needs your help by way of volunteering information on this subject to enable him to complete his research. Please, the research is purely for academic purposes and all information is treated as confidential.

Kindly give him the necessary assistance he may need.

Yours faithfully,


DEPT. OF POLITICAL SCIENCE EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION
P. O. BOX 25
WINNEBA
Ms. Magdalene Nyarko
For: Ag. HOD, Political Science.