



Good Governance as An Economic Driver for Service Delivery: Lessons for South African Government

Ndimphiwe Mlamli Marawu¹, Reward Utete^{2*}, Sheunesu Zhou³
¹ Durban University of Technology, South Africa
^{2,3} University of Zululand, South Africa

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Abstract

Good governance is an essential practice which brings sustainable good living standards and remains a pipedream to various countries. As such, the quest for service delivery has prompted the need for leaders at different levels, from the apex national government level to the lowest local government level, to exercise good governance. In the year 2021, over 5 464 complaints of poor service delivery were recorded in South Africa and of 257 South African municipalities, only 16 were in stable condition. However, there are limited previous studies on the relationship between good governance and service delivery. In pursuit of economic development, the purpose of this paper is to investigate good governance and show its spectre of relevance to service delivery with a view to providing lessons to South Africa. The paper dovetails with good governance and service delivery exercised in various developed countries. The study utilised a literature research approach in which the researcher gathered textbooks, seminar and workshop papers, journal articles, and both local and international newspapers and websites. The paper gives the key findings of this study which are useful to the South African Government. The Government of South Africa should develop useful initiatives to support the improvement of service quality along with the existing tools and systems that promote smooth and effective public service delivery.

Keywords: *Good Governance; Service Delivery; South African Government; Benchmark Framework; Public Services.*

INTRODUCTION

Communities have raised concerns about the need to look closely at service delivery which has been seen as the greatest social ill. Poor governance has borne unprecedented deleterious consequences on service delivery which led to the rise conundrum of unbearable mistrust and exclusively amplified suspicions of citizens towards the Government. The argument on good governance and its necessities give momentum for new methodologies to public sector administration improvements. Public services should be based on the needs and want of the customers instead of what the supplier of service delivery is willing and prepared to give (Zainun, Johari & Adnan, 2020). The debate date back to the late 1980s. Owing to the fact that good governance improves public trust and involvement, service standards improvement is likely to be attained. Bad governance promotes low morale and confrontational relations that can result in poor performance leading to dysfunctional associations. SAPS Incident Registration Information System (2021) reports that between 1 August 2020 to 31 January 2021, the sum of 909 service delivery protests happened in South Africa. Significant backlogs are observed in the City of Tshwane (18.7%), Mangaung (21.1%) and eThekweni (22.7%). In the year 2016, the total count of households lacking access to improved sanitation was 4.1 million (Statistics South Africa, 2016). Around 38.3% of people living in Buffalo City and 26.1% of people living in Johannesburg rated the solid removal service as 'poor'.

Good governance is an efficient public service, a sovereign judicial system and legal framework created to make sure that contracts are enforced, accountability is applied in the use of public funds, an autonomous civic auditor is answerable to a representative legislature, respect for

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Corresponding author's email: uteter@unizulu.ac.za

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the law and human rights at all levels of Government, a diverse organisation structure, and a free media. The concept of good governance is crucial in gaining the socio-economic development of a nation (Addink, 2019). Public service delivery is effective when it acts as a yardstick which can be used to uplift the system of governance. Public servants have not been performing as servants of people but act as masters who are not accountable and transparent (Rasul & Rogger, 2018; Musa, Magaji & Salisu, 2023). On the other hand, there is a lack of knowledge among the public on how they can acquire public service and the location where the service is delivered, which results in them falling prey to middlemen and corruption. An awkward process reduces the pace of decision-making and service delivery resulting in sorrow to people and a waste of their money and time. The paper also seeks to confirm or dismiss the claim that the ongoing poor service delivery in South Africa primarily stems from poor governance.

The Government of South Africa has the duty of promoting the values and ideologies of democracy that are preserved in section 195 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, which exist to encourage sound and efficient service delivery that facilitate the prevalence of good governance (Mamokhere, Musitha, & Netshidzivhani, 2021). This entails that all the workers in the public sector have to perform their duties in a professional and accountable way, following ethics and performing their duties with due diligence. All workers in the public sector should behave professionally and ethically so that they can perform their duties with accountability. The code of conduct and ethics are very important in shaping the operations of public sector organisations (Thusi & Chauke, 2023). Disclosing the details and information of the partakers of the funds relating to the choices of investment selections is crucial in the United States of America; this creates a good system of management of pension funds. Where a fiduciary provides incorrect details with no intention of a good cause will create an infringement of the fiduciary duty (Nyoni, 2018). Presently, the idea of good governance is mainly linked to the establishment of management of public practices and procedures that affect locals as well as foreigners (Davis & Rhodes, 2020). On the other hand, it expands further than the idea of the capacity of the state and the efficiency of administration. The good practices of governance are relaying the societal involvement in the public management and authentication of decisions passed by the relevant authorities, which include public administration (Drobiazgiewicz, 2018). Incidentally, the idea and exercise of good governance are linked to the legitimisation of public institutions. According to Lopes and Dhaou (2018), Jacobsen and Jakobsen (2018), and Drobiazgiewicz (2018), the idea of good governance is noble, which makes it difficult to achieve its fullness in developing countries. This governance system is effective in developed countries which include the USA, Japan, the UK, Australia and Ireland. In rural areas, the situation is very distressing. The poor are disadvantaged from acquiring the basic needs and services from the local government offices and service providers.

The good governance literature presently lacks a theoretical frame that accounts for the linkage between benchmark framework and public service delivery. Hence, the purpose of this study is to give a theoretically grounded benchmark framework that sustains and improves sound public service delivery. The research questions as follows: (1) What are changes in governance that were implemented in developed countries to improve service delivery?, (2) What are the good governance practices that South Africa can adopt to ensure service delivery? (3) What is the benchmark framework adaptable to the South African environment that can support service delivery? This study sought to achieve the following objectives: (1) To explore changes in governance that were implemented in developed countries to improve service delivery. (2) To examine good governance practices that South Africa can adopt to ensure service delivery. (3) To explore a benchmark framework adaptable to the South African environment that can support service delivery.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Public Value Theory

The theory of public value supports public managers in assessing the optimal benefits and value of the services they oversee, as well as determining how effective management can enhance the service (Benington & Moore, 2010). The provision of reliable and efficient services is a crucial challenge faced by South Africa. The public value theory provides knowledge to comprehend what constitutes a service delivery failure. The local, provincial and national governments have an obligation to deliver indispensable services required to citizens. However, the provision of services by the Government in South Africa remains a formidable challenge. According to Hartley, Alford, Knies and Douglas (2017), the inability of public organisations to expeditiously deliver the requisite level of service to communities can be attributed to poor governance, which is usually linked to maintenance malpractices, resource misallocation and poor structural framework. Poor governance leads to dilapidated infrastructure, which hinders the advancement of service delivery in various South African places. The misallocation of resources retards social and economic advancement, thereby creating an impoverished community with little to no prospects of improvement and growth (Smith & Larimer, 2018). Infrastructure plays a crucial role in facilitating the execution of quality service delivery plans, thereby supporting the provision of critical services required by society. Poor service delivery has ripple effects which include poor living standards, escalating joblessness, lack of employment prospects and critical scarcity of resources.

The Concept of Good Governance

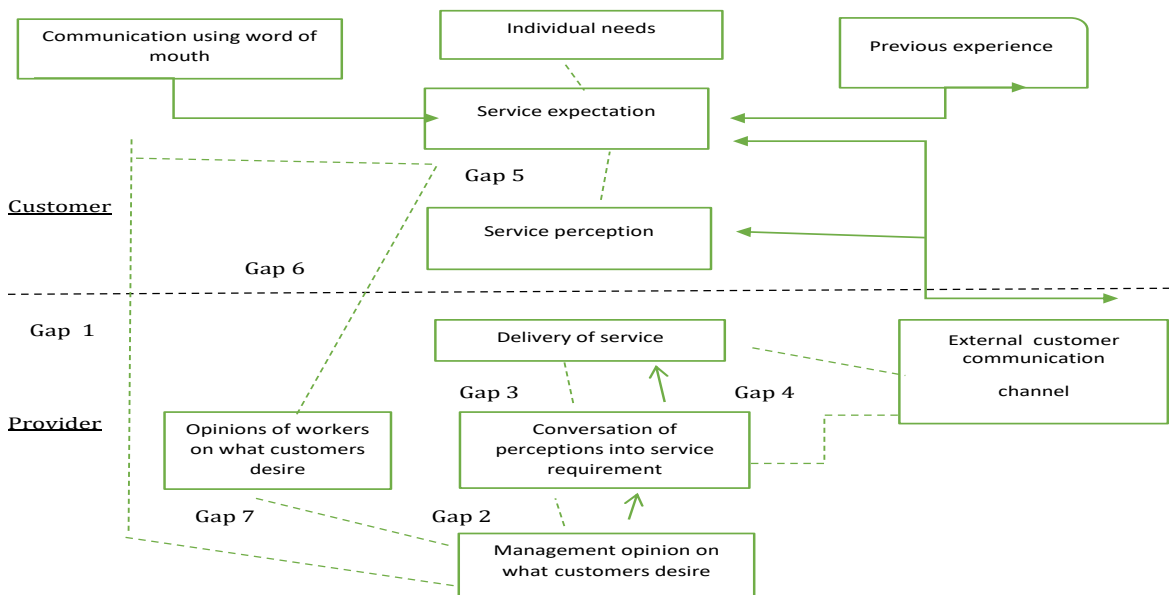
Public organisations are crucial for the realisation and implementation of policies that support the delivery of public goods, which signify the significance of good governance (Bridges, Plancher & Toledo, 2019). Effective governance encompasses not only the qualities of policies implemented by governmental organisations but also the manner in which governments engage with diverse segments of the private sector. Furthermore, while governance can be instigated solely by the Government, it usually necessitates cooperation with both non-profit entities and commercial organisations. However, good governance is rooted in a norm that provides guidance on what constitutes desirable outcomes. The determination of good governance lacks objective standards and may encompass various factors such as adherence to the rule of law, effective management of accountability and corruption (Albaity, Noman & Mallek, 2021). The connection between poor governance and elevated poverty rates presents a worrisome situation in society. The success of reforms in governance relies on the presence of commitment, ownership and domestic support, as well as the background of the recipient. The notion of good governance is not restricted to policy development. The concept of good governance was developed with the comparison of applying benchmarks (See Figure 1).



Source: Addink (2019)

Figure 1. Principles of Good Governance Model

There is no fixed code for public service domination that control the public services in a complicated and diverse world. However, the administration can come up with standards that can be applied to guide civil service management. According to the Report of the Independent Commission on Good Governance in Public Services, UK (2005), the principle of good governance standards and principles. It is further concluded that it is the efficiency and the effectiveness of the administrative organ of the Government in the facilitation of the delivery of services that provided a huge variance between good and bad governance. This means that guaranteeing efficient service delivery in the public sector will uplift the practices of good governance, which makes up the main purpose of this paper. The public services philosophy and its explanation are analysed in this section. Two research approaches are reviewed to come up with different perceptions of service and service quality. Figure 2 shows the model of the service quality gap.



Source: Parvin & Maryam (2021)

Figure 2. Model of Service Quality Gap

Expectation-Perception Approach to Quality Public Service

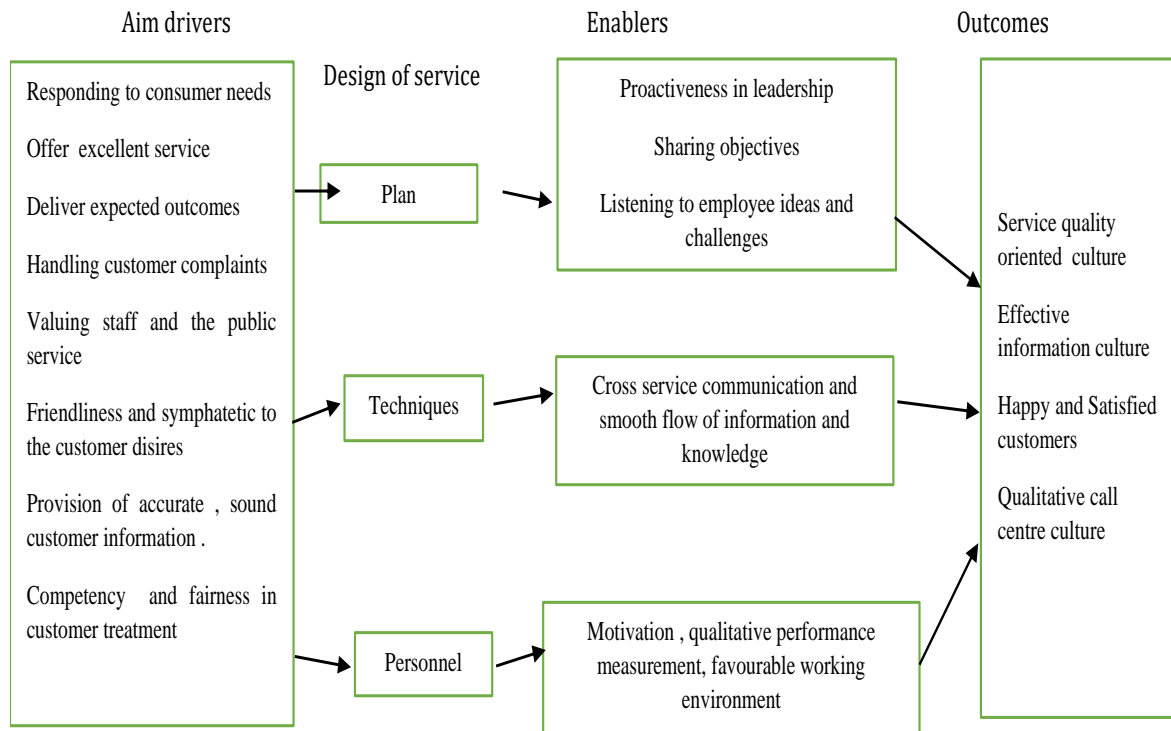
Based on the expectation-perception approach, a public institution can detect the variance between the expectations and perception of the guest as a tool for improving the quality of public service. Parvin and Maryam (2021) reconstructed and developed a service quality in Figure 2 based on the gap analysis. The model identifies seven important gaps that are associated with the perception of managerial aspects of service quality and responsibilities related to service delivery to customers. The main six gaps (Gap 1, Gap 2, Gap 3, Gap 4, Gap 6, and Gap 7) are classified as elements in which service can be delivered, although Gap 5 relates to customers and in that regard, it can be referred to as the correct measure of service quality. Some countries introduced this mechanism of consulting with the clients and all the stakeholders as a way of improving the service standards and detecting the complaints and feedback procedures to deal with the expectations of customers that can be satisfied by enhancing the values as a standard. These countries include the USA, the UK, Australia, Ireland, Malaysia, and Japan, just to mention a few (Scupola & Mergel, 2022.).

Core Value (Guiding Principles) Approach to Quality Public Service

Public organisations are compelled to improve their core values in service delivery to enhance customer satisfaction. The major functions of effective service delivery to customers

include reliability (service dependability); responsiveness (preparedness to assist customers); assurance (courteousness, confidence, and belief); empathy (the ability to recognise and understand the customer of the need); and tangibles (the physical evidence). The government offices in Ireland effectively issued a two-year customer service plan in 1997/98 based on the on-core value approach to make sure that the public services quality delivery system is enhanced.

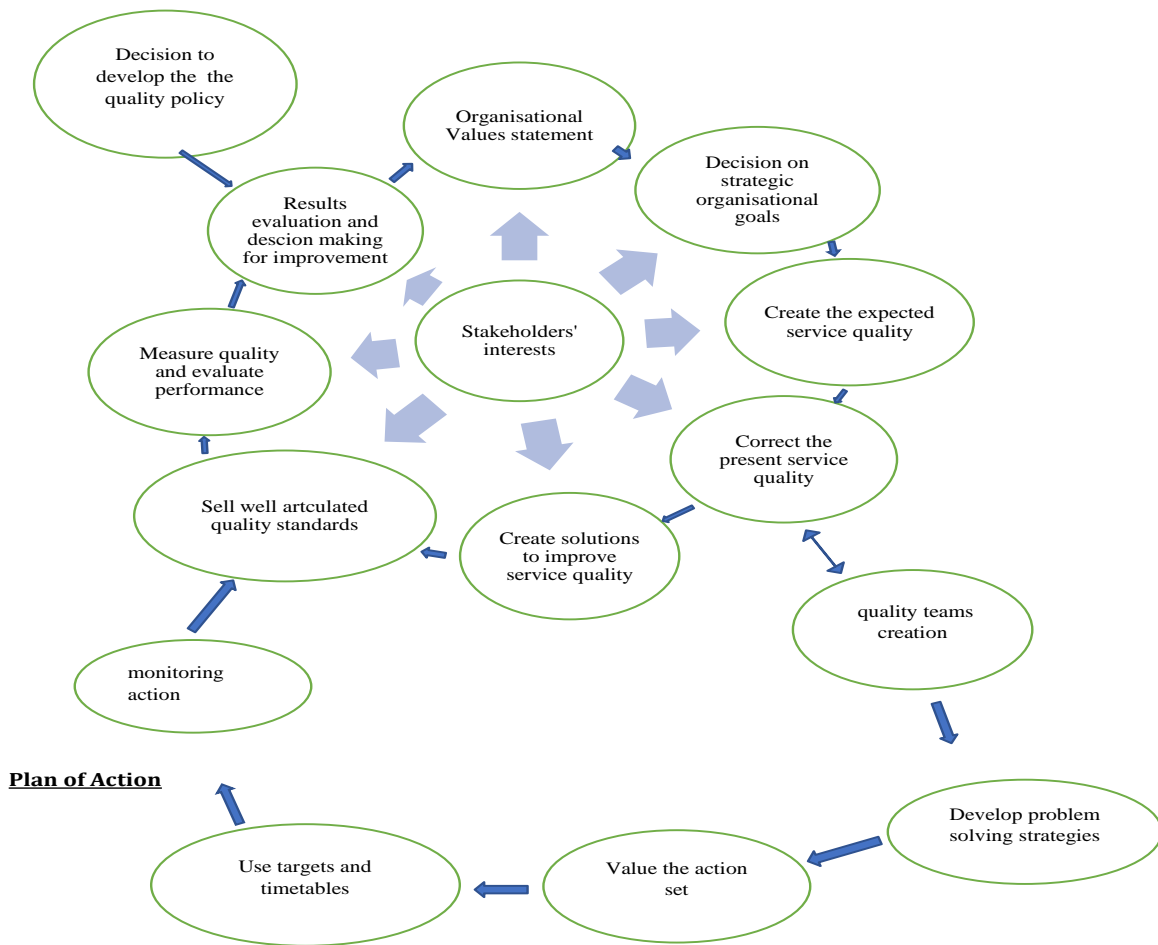
A model was proposed and developed by Germà, Trevor & Mildred (2014), as shown in Figure 3, to ensure that there is a generalisation in use by all the sectors in the economy, which include both the public and private sectors. The development of the model was done and utilised by Starling Council Call Centre, UK.



Source: Germà, Trevor & Mildred (2014)

Figure 3: Service Quality Model

The design of the service excellence responsiveness to customers and the application of other principles related to service quality is a necessity and are required before coming up with a strategy and system that can be used in Human Resources Management (HRM) planning (Sibug, 2023). The outcomes of staff and customer satisfaction can be attained with the application of HRM planning and strategic planning systems. Countries such as the USA, the UK, Ireland, Malaysia, Japan, and Bangladesh are some of the countries that effectively execute several methods of this model. Gaster's (1995) model for service quality:



Source: Lars & Tummars (2015).

Figure 4: Quality Improvement Model -Development of the Policy and Procedures

Referring to Figure 4, the model for service quality has a vital influence on the development of public service quality. The model is a method of developing customer service quality. In Australia, Centrelink was launched in the government system in 1997, and in Yamaguchi City Hall, in Japan, the launch of a reform management board for independent community building was effected through the integration of many stakeholders to increase their participation in ensuring the improvement of service quality process during the preparation, execution and assessment stages. There is no standard formula for quality, but each organisation must create their technique.

International Context to Public Service Delivery

An examination of a global framework underlines a wide range of various systems that are implemented by numerous governments that were successful in attaining a sound service delivery system. Consequences of the content and procedures issues of guaranteeing effective public service delivery have been momentarily investigated in the assessment of the USA, Australia, Ireland, and Malaysia.

The Changes Made in The United States of America (USA)

The reform of service delivery in the USA is a continuous process that is influenced by the change of management that was well thought out by the contribution (Desmarchelier, Djellal &

Gallouj, 2019). The main reform program which took place in the USA included: Firstly, the most important reform initiatives adopted by the Federal Government of the USA in 1993-94 were classified to receive service, measuring their level of gratification; establishing the after-service standards setting post-service standards and comparing them to the set benchmarks of customer service performance; the improvement of the front line services; participating in decision making as a customer experiencing a service, and making sure that the information is available and facilitate the improvement in service through identifying and making a choice as well as addressing the customer complaints (Jin & Rainey, 2020). Secondly, the year 1995 saw the senior Executives of various departments and government agencies being demanded to research the use of employee participation in motivation and recognition activities (Executive Order 13571, 2011). The federal government agencies successfully implemented the performance-based payment scheme to replace the tenure-based pay systems (Jin & Rainey, 2020). Thirdly, in 1998 all the agencies were told to engage the stakeholders and citizens at large to find out what was special to customers about the service they deliver and to evaluate measures that can be put in place to satisfy the needs and expectations of the customers to improve service delivery (Executive order 13571, 2011). Fourthly, in 2011, the government managers embarked on a mission to study the operations of the private sector to enhance their knowledge and skills in the application of best practices that would bring better, faster, and more efficient service delivery. (Executive Order 13571, 2011). Fifthly, the agency was asked to create a Customer Service Plan to report on how the agency can offer services (Executive Order 13571, 2011). Sixthly, the creation of a signature initiative using technology to enhance the customer experience, create a customer feedback mechanism, customer service expectations, improvement of the customer experience through the adoption of proven customer-oriented practices and coordinative service channels, which include online phone, in-person, and mail services; rationalisation agency procedures to decrease costs and quicken delivery; vi) In each executive department and USA agency, the position of Chief Performance Officer was created to monitor service delivery and ensure that it developed guidelines for the enactment of the activities of the customer service plan.

The Changes Made in The United Kingdom (UK)

In the United Kingdom, the increase in pressure on the spending of public funds led to a change in the budget structure which resulted in the cuts of less important sectors of the economy and the need to shift attention to the improvement of efficiency to produce better outcomes incurring fewer expenses. (Taylor-Gooby, 2012). Due to this reason, service delivery quality was highlighted as a priority. Crucial reforms which were implemented to ensure public service delivery quality in the UK include: i) The privatisation of public institutions in 1980 was the pioneering initiative in the UK that was aimed at improving the delivery system of the public by minimising the duty of the Government as the primary service provider in a lot of areas which include, gas, water, and electricity (Douglas et al. 2021); ii) In the year 1991, the Government of the UK s created proposals for Citizen Charter in a white paper. The focal point was on choice, standard, and value. The charter was presented with a set of guidelines (Andrews, Skelcher, & Wegorowski, 2020). Routines for increasing the standard and receptiveness are evaluated and reported to the Parliament. The Citizen Charter complaints task force was established in 1993 to handle public service complaints. The UK Commission for Employment and Skills was launched under the banner IIP (The Investor in People). This was aimed at improving business using the tools of improving organisational performance through active management and upliftment of their people. In total, 2000 UK organisations established the IIP standard by 1995(Douglas et al. 2021). iii)The Public Private Partnership is the other reform that was implemented to improve the superiority of public service delivery quality in the UK (OECD, 2010). iv) The Government of the UK is dedicated to

building a huge society to provide more authority and empowerment to its citizens, societies, and local authorities; contributions are needed to unite people to gather and solve community problems. v) A lot of local authorities and their public service associates combine their services to reduce repetition and waste of expenditure and to promote integrated services for the stakeholders who consume these services in the UK (Taylor-Gooby, 2012). The other example of a pilot project that was introduced in the UK is the Local Integrated Services (LIS); vi) The aim to improve efficiency and provide better services and reinforce the public service transformation, the Government of the UK launched both online deliveries of public services that were authorised by the Cabinet Office Efficiency and Reform Group (Taylor-Gooby, 2012).; viii) during the 1980s, many government departments in the UK were restructured to create independent executive interventions responsible for the improvement of service delivery to create separate policies and service delivery; ix) The practice of transparency is very important in promoting efficiency campaigns in the UK. A board responsible for public sector transparency was created. The Transparency Board is supervised by the Cabinet Office, which was created to superintend the enactment of the transparency pledges of the UK government. The responsibilities of the board are to set standards throughout the public sector and the development of the legal right to information.

The Changes Made in Australia

In Australia, the public sector reforms were mainly aimed at attaining more effective and efficient public services that are more responsive instead of a re-examination of the basic role of Government (Finn, 2020). Some of the reforms that took place are: In the year 1997, the Australian Government facilitated the creation of 'Centrelink (one-stop-shop) (Note 1), which was aimed at improving customer service, to promoting faster decision-making processes that influence the value for money through service connections. The creation of Centrelink resulted in the separation of policies from the service delivery system. The service quality techniques encompassed under Centrelink, as explained by Davis and Rhodes (2020), include The development of the 'Centrelink Charter', which focuses on the commitment of the organisations, the creation of value workshop between the workers and customers through the discovery of customer expectations; performance evaluation using the balanced scorecard approach; creation of an effective customer feedback and complaints system, the promotion of staff training to link the staff to the strategic empowerment plans that enhance customer service culture. The Australian government scenario is one of the best examples of creating an internationally recognised ethical public service that embraces good governance (Douglas et al., 2021). Rhodes (2020) describes 'APS as firmly based on ethical performance. The definitive value and a code of conduct for APS employees promote improved services for the citizens of Australia. A lot of rules were combined under the APS in 1999 in Australia. The Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) continually works to promote ethics in the economy. In May 2009 APSC Commission introduced an Ethics Advisory Service (Andrews, Ferry, Skelcher & Wegorowski, 2020).

The Changes Made in Ireland

In Ireland, the changes in the public delivery system started in the 1980s. The major shifts which took place are: i) The launch of QCSI (Quality Customer Service Initiative) (Note 2) in May 1997 was conducted by the Irish Government to promote the improved standard of service quality by public institutions. The guidelines of the QCSI, as described by Scupola and Mergel (2022), including the specification of service, service standards; the way of service communication; consultation of customers; monitoring and review of the standards chivied in the service delivery system; ii) The recommendations of the 'Delivering Better Government (1996)' report was published by the Government of Ireland and each department /Office of Ireland created a two-year

Customer Service Action Plan in 1997/98 intending to concentrate on the key areas of service improvement. The important areas of attaining improved service delivery standards in Ireland include information, timeliness and courtesy, consultation, choice, better coordination, complaints, redress, and access, as stated by Reeves (2013a); iii) In Ireland, there was also the introduction of the Charter of Rights which was covered under the project of public management reform in all the government offices in 1989.

Ireland's Government passed the Public Service Management Act of 1997, demanding every department to publish their stated strategy for attaining the improved service standards as outlined by the Government and submit it to the House of the Oireachtas for evaluation and supervising its development by an all-party committee (Reeves, 2013b). With a vision to create an institutional framework for the development of quality services, the Ombudsman Act was created in 1980 to manage public complaints (Reeves, 2013b). To add on that, the implementation of the Freedom of Information Act of 1997 improved the quality of the public service delivery system to a greater extent, and this resulted in a massive reduction in complaints to Ombudsman in Ireland by customers.

The Changes Made in Malaysia

In Malaysia, a lot of reforms were put in place the public services through the Five years plan, the Eight Malaysia Plan from 2001-2005, and Ninth Malaysia Plan from 2006-2010. The vital changes which happened in Malaysia include: i) The creation of the Development Administrative Unit (DAU) in the Minister's office, National Training Institute (1972), Public Service Department (PSD), and Malaysian Administrative Modernization and Management Planning Unit (1977); re-organisation of establishment office (1970); amendment of recent employment, advancement, discipline, and personnel management evaluation strategies and guidelines are some of the examples of the restructuring process that took place in Malaysia government system (Soffian, Ahmad & Rahman, 2018); ii) Through the privatisation policy in 1980, a group of enterprises that can add up to more than 150 enterprises were privatised to reduce the burden of public service delivery by the Government by 65,000 people which is a cost cut of up to M\$ 4.2 million per year in Malaysia (Soffian, Ahmad & Rahman, 2018); iii) With an idea to be more customer-oriented and create a business-friendly environment, various departments and agencies in Malaysia authorised the introduction of one-stop services promoted by multi-service, emergency service, and special service counters. To upgrade the front-line services, the government departments introduced prolonged service hours, an electronic queue management system, a general information telephone system, a customer feedback system, a floor managerial system, counters, a GIRO system, an online computer system, Customer Service Office (CSO), one-stop bill payment, training, and guidebook system.

iv) To promote the increase in service efficiency, the Government of Malaysia introduced different circulars and letters linked with office guidelines and procedures, matching desk files, conference management, and an open office system; v) The Government of Malaysia introduced the client charter in the year 1993. The charter was adopted by all departments and agencies to facilitate improved service and goods delivery to its customers following the set standard; vi) The agencies in Malaysia improved the service delivery procedures by reducing the number of copies and information required to submit to acquire different goods and services which include the application for licenses; vii) To curb bureaucratic red tape the departments of the Malaysian Government created a ministerial task force in 2003. The main duties of the task forces were to enhance the existence of working systems and guidelines that ensure efficient service delivery and to ensure efficient prevention of abuse and corrupt practices; viii) There was a continuation in the promotion and recognition of organisations by the Government of Malaysia for their excellence by

introducing the Prime Minister's quality award program, Premier ICT Award, innovation award, quality control circle award, premier local authority award, and the Premier land and district administration award.

ix) This was the introduction of the standardisation codes by the Malaysian Government that is linked to the International Standards organisation. The introduction of MS ISO 9000: 1994 standard of appreciation the organisational excellence in being centred on customer-orientation services. The organisations that were awarded the ISO 9000:1994 standard in providing customer-oriented services also benefitted by gaining MS ISO 9000: 1994 certificates with rewards (Soffian, Ahmad & Rahman, 2018); v) As part of the changes aimed at improving office automation and information systems in public offices of Malaysia, the introduction of the electronic data interchange system, Public Service Network (PSN), and the Civil Service Link (CSL) were some of the key improvements that are worthy of mentioning; xi) The Malaysian Government also introduced performance measurement systems throughout all individual entities in 1993. This was an effort to promote quality service and was strengthened further through the introduction of performance measurement and KPIs to support a higher level of service by agencies (Soffian, Ahmad & Rahman, 2018); xii) Total Quality Management (TQM) was also introduced in Malaysia to complement all the other techniques that were introduced by the Government to promote quality service delivery. The TQM also maintained customer interest with zero defects, high performance, and customer demands fulfilment and process work (Othman, Khatab, Esmaeel, Mustafa & Sadq, 2020). The Government also introduced different programmes to provide support in the implementation of the TQM.

South African Context to Public Service Delivery

In South Africa, public sectors were mainly developed in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the public service. Some of the reforms that took place are explained. In the year 1994, the South African Government gave priority to local government reforms to promote direct service delivery to local communities. As a result, numerous transformations have been experienced in local Government. In 1998 the South African Government enacted the white paper on local Government. It affirms that local Government interacts closely with communities. Furthermore, the institutions of local Government are responsible for their service delivery and infrastructure, which is a critical part of the well-being of the citizens (Lars & Tummers, 2015). The institutions of local Government are tasked to ensure that growth and development in the community take place. Local Government has a duty to discuss the type of basic service the community requires through public participation in the development process of the integrated development plan (IDP). Barber (2021) states that public participation is necessary to meet the needs of society. However, adherence to government guidelines and regulations is essential for service delivery (Anderson, Buntaine, Liu and Zhang, 2019). Therefore, the Government should use public resources more wisely and effectively by involving society in decision-making and service delivery. Municipal Structures Act (Act No. 117 of 1998), The Municipal Systems Act (2000), and Municipal Finance Management (2003) were also promulgated. The Municipal Systems Act (2000) prioritise the responsibilities and requirements of the municipalities, which involves: 1) prioritising the basic needs of the local community, 2) promoting the development of the local community, and 3) ensuring that all members of the local community have access to at least the minimum level of basic municipal services. The Municipal Systems Act (2000) also requires that municipal services need to be equitable and accessible. It also needs to be presented in a way that is conducive, economical, efficient and effective use of the resources available and improving the quality over time. Services need to be financially and environmentally sustainable. Municipal Systems Act (2000) and Municipal Structures Act (1998) provide for both formal and informal

consultation means, including public meetings with residents and state departments (Masiya, 2012). The Municipal Finance Management Act (2003) offers a framework in which municipalities compile budgets with specific timelines for preparation.

However, the lack of electricity, water scarcity, housing and the general decline of health services have collectively intensified pre-existing inequalities and impeded individuals from practising necessary hygienic measures. In the year 2021, over 5 464 complaints of poor service delivery were recorded in South Africa and of 257 South African municipalities, only 16 were in stable condition (South African Human Rights Commission, 2022; Baloyi, 2022.). The deterioration of resources, absence of employment prospects, unemployment, and sub-standard living conditions can be attributed to inadequate government services and deficient service delivery (Ndebele, Ndlovu, Mlambo & Thusi, 2022). The challenges pertaining to service delivery in South Africa are rooted in the lack of infrastructure. The inadequate provision of services by municipalities can be attributed to a variety of factors associated with bad governance, including financial constraints and a dearth of infrastructure and resources necessary to fulfil their obligations to the broad population.

RESEARCH METHOD

A desktop research methodology was used in this paper. To dissect the problem at hand, the background of the research has been reviewed. A conceptual framework has been developed based on the content gathered from the theoretical analysis to reinforce the review of research findings. To gather the background knowledge, five countries, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Australia, Ireland and Malaysia, were selected to acquire knowledge about international experience. The countries have been chosen based on success in improving strategies they practised to enhance public service delivery. The chosen countries instituted strategies which make sure that the customers are satisfied and good governance is attained. Secondary sources were used in collecting data. These sources include textbooks, seminar and workshop papers, journal articles, and both local and international newspapers and websites of the relevant countries' understudy. To make an effective investigation that provides a balanced view of the phenomenon of the research problem within its real-life context, a synthesis of literature review as a method and a case study as an approach. A methodological framework and model have been used in the context of this study.

Study Eligibility and Research Question

We adopted the population-concept-context (PCC). The study design framework was aligned to establish the research questions' eligibility.

Table 1. PCC Framework for checking the research questions' eligibility

Criteria	Determinants
Population	South African Government
Concept	Good governance, service delivery
Context	Developed countries (United States of America, United Kingdom, Australia, Ireland and Malaysia)
Study design	Observational studies

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Eligibility Criteria for Considering Studies for Inclusion in This Review

For this review, the eligibility criteria were developed in line with pertinent elements of the PCC framework. The framework ensures clear demarcation of the proposed review questions' boundaries. An electronic database search that presents a replicable and comprehensive systematic keywords will be used to check prior studies carried out on good governance and service delivery in the past 20 years to retrieve appropriate articles which can answer the review questions directed by the study exclusion and inclusion criteria. The SCOPUS was the database used.

Study Eligibility and Selection

In accordance with the PRISMA guidelines illustrated in PRISMA 2020 flow chart, the procedure for screening eligible articles was carried out. Utilising a pre-established search strategy, a database search was conducted by RU. Thereafter, all retrieved articles were exported to the EndNote X9 reference management software, and duplicates were removed utilising the 'find duplicates' function. Two reviewers were engaged in a multi-stage process of selecting the eligible studies (RU and SZ). PRISMA 2020 flow chart (Figure 5) provides the summary of the screening procedure followed.

Table 2. Level of Priority and Execution

Key aspects	Level of Priority and Execution				
	United States of America	United Kingdom	Ireland	Australia	Malaysia
Purpose and outcomes for citizens and service users	High	High	Moderate	High	Moderate
Clearly defined functions, roles, and responsibilities	High	High	High	High	High
Public service value or standard	High	High	Moderate	High	Moderate
Customer Service Action Plan (CSAP) to achieve the service standard	High	High	Moderate	High	Moderate
Capacity and capability of people, designing the service strategy	High	High	Moderate	High	Moderate
Partnership, contracting, and engagement	High	High	Moderate	High	Moderate
Feedback system for handling customer complaints	High	High	High	High	High
Measurement of key performance outcomes	High	High	High	High	Moderate
Monitoring mechanism for performance review	High	High	High	High	High
Continuous improvement	High	High	Moderate	High	Moderate

Source: Compiled by authors

Focusing On the Organisation's Purpose and Outcomes for Citizens and Service Users

There is an argument that effective public service delivery will not be successful if it is not linked to the strategic objectives and value of the organisation. In line with Table 1 above, the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Australia provide a high level of priority to strategic

objectives and their execution, while Ireland and Malaysia do so moderately to improve public service delivery. Although South African government organisations are centred on the long historical background of ensuring quality service delivery to citizens, currently, they are considered institutions that are aimed at fulfilling political will. Furthermore, there are no clear statements on the organisations' purposes and results for citizens and service customers.

Setting Clearly Defined Functions, Roles and Responsibilities

There is enough evidence from the literature review that justifies the fact that effective public service delivery necessitates the creation of clearly defined functions and services to attain organisational goals and be transparent about duties and responsibilities. In line with Table 1 above, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Australia, Ireland and Malaysia show high priority levels for well-defined functions, roles and responsibilities (Sangeeta & Chamoli, 2020). In the case of South Africa, red tape caused the encroachment of functions from one another; hence there should be clearly set functions, roles and responsibilities for all the personnel in public service departments.

Setting Public Service Value or Standard

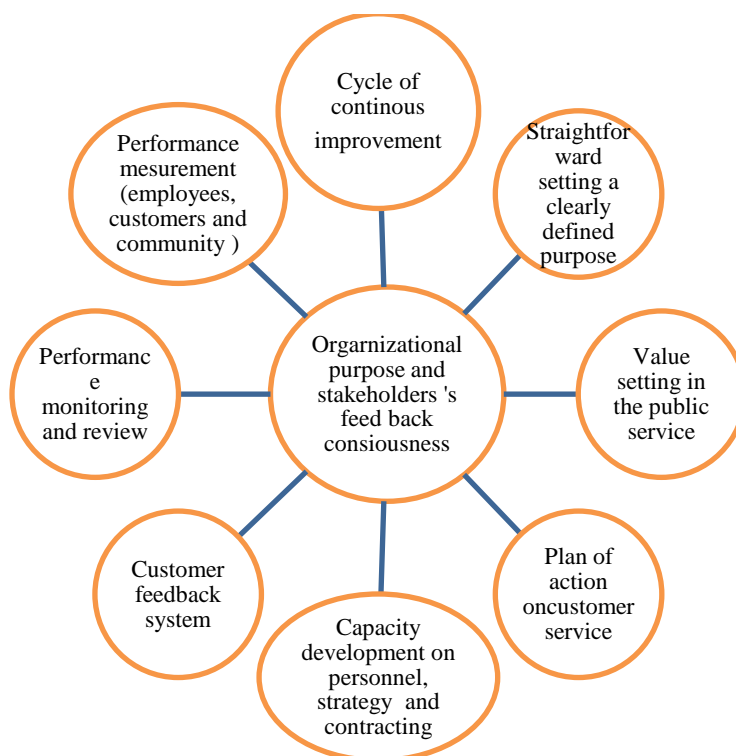
The evidence gathered in the literature review proposes that the standards facilitate the development of a consistent nationwide level of public service delivery improvement and public service efficiency. The introduction of the charter of duties helps the Government to promise a corruption-less public service. Although it may not be inclusive and real, as in the case of the USA and the UK, South Africa requires a corruption-less public service.

Preparing A Customer Service Action Plan (CSAP) To Achieve the Service Standard

There is evidence that the literature review and the analysis of international experiences allow each public office to prepare and issue a Customer Service Action Plan (CSAP) to attain and advance service standards more and more. Nevertheless, there is no proper plan for resourcefulness for customer service to improve in the field of public administration in South Africa.

Developing The Capacity and Capability of People, Designing the Service Strategy and Contracting

The fundamental principle of service delivery is important in creating public service delivery. This process can be created and based on three areas: people, strategy, and contracting.



Source: Authors compilation

Figure 5. The Benchmark Framework of Effective Public Service Delivery

People

It is known that workers play a pivotal role in attaining customer service. The management of public organisations should train the staff members, motivate, recognise, and create a conducive working environment. Employee capacity management plans and appraisal systems will be the benchmark tools for measuring the ability and competence of people guaranteeing community service delivery (Yoonpyo & Jisu, 2023). Although public organisations in South Africa take considerable opportunities to progress the ability and competence of people, there are few skilled employees (Thusi & Chauke, 2023).

Strategy

The research evidence attained in the literature review on international experience and the analysis of the case study shows that there are a lot of approaches that can be used as benchmarks and are vital in coming up with a well-designed strategy for making sure that the public services such as; Total Quality Management, decentralisation of procedures and guidelines on service delivery, e-governance, one-stop-shop, information sharing, counter service system, re-engineering, separate administration, flexibility in decision making, separate managerial unit for virtuous ascendancy, office management manual, citizen database, the delegation of decision making and foundations and resources of service delivery. In South Africa, only a few initiatives include enacting the Right to Information Act.

Partnership, contracting, and engagement.

The literature review also delivered an analysis that revealed the instruments of constricting cooperation and synergy approaches and engagement, which involves privatisation, citizens, and involvement of the private sector in service delivery. The involvement of local Government in the local delivery system provides a benchmark that will be used to do a proper code of conduct when

it comes to service delivery (Germà, Trevor & Mildred, 2014). Although there are some engagements and contracting in South Africa, there is inadequate evidence that any important step was involved in delegating the responsibility of public service to the private sector or engagement of citizens or voluntary groups.

The Creation of a Feedback System for Handling Customer Complaints and Improving the Experience

The information that was discussed in the literature review and international experiences revealed that the use of customer feedback and surveys, panels, and the complaints system could be exercised to make sure that service delivery is perfectly attained by the public and private sector institutions. Customer fulfilment, constructive feedback, and complaints mechanisms in Malaysia, the USA, and Australia, the citizen charter complaints task force Ombudsman Act are some of the examples which can be best applied for this important purpose (Andreas, 2023). Regardless of such initiatives taken by the Government, there is no situation in South Africa related to the development of a customer feedback system to improve the experience of customers.

Development of a Monitoring Mechanism for Performance Review

There is a need for the creation of a monitoring mechanism for a performance review in public sector organisations to enhance service delivery, as emphasised by Gaster's (1995) model. In relation to the USA, the Appointment of a chief Performance Officer, the existence of an independent review by the independent Commission in Ireland, and the set-up of individual and group measurable objectives analysis through regular inspection and meetings to review performance in Malaysia, the creation of Citizen Charter task force are some of the good practices that may be used as benchmarking tools to achieve improved service delivery quality. In South Africa, the inspection of the offices and monthly meetings for the district are the most important tools that are used to review and analyse the participation, as well as to encourage the existence of transparency and accountability. However, in terms of the findings of this paper, there is no innovation that was designed to inspect service delivery.

The Measurement of Key Performance Outcomes of All the Stakeholders in Society

The results of the key performance areas are attained by evaluating people, customers and society's work. The quantitative and qualitative competency performance evaluation of the employees in Japan, the introduction of the Key Performance Indicators in Malaysia, and the Balanced Scorecard approach used in Australia may be perfect benchmarks to utilise. Customer outcomes may be measured using a customer satisfaction survey. The society results can also be measured by evaluating work in society. Although the performance of employees in public organisations in South Africa is evaluated, there are no important steps that were taken into consideration to evaluate the competence of employees, as well as the key expectations of customers and society.

A Cyclic Process of Continuous Improvement

The promotion of an efficient public service delivery system is a relentless process. It is vital to evaluate the attained results through a comparison of the key performance results with the standards set for service delivery. The gap in performance requires necessary measures can be implemented to make sure that there is a continuous improvement (Laurie & Zuhlke, 2019). In South Africa, there was no explicit evidence that shows the seriousness of coming up with initiatives that help to identify loopholes between citizens' expectations and perceptions in service delivery.

Strategic and Tactical Systems Level Framework and Model of Effective Public Service Delivery

Comparing the benchmark framework and South Africa's experience with a tactical and premeditated systems-level framework and model of public service delivery is essential. Well-defined functions, roles and responsibilities should be identified to achieve the desired organisational goals. What level of standards a public organisation should uphold in performing public services should create by a single government office? Pointing out the variance between customers' expected service and perceived service through the use of a series of surveys, customer panels, complaint procedures, and MIS is also important in the development of values and standards of services.

Concerning the plan, a design mechanism should be developed aiming to increase the capacity and capability of people, strategy, and contractors. The apparatus used to process the service design must be measured using a strong customer feedback system and a real observing system. The response from customers through a feedback mechanism will guide the South African public organisations to make improvements in the customer experience and handling of complaints. The next step will be the attainment of key performance results, which are obtained by measuring the employees' results, customers' results, and society's results. Evaluation of the achievement is conducted through a comparison of the key performance results and service standards, which assists in conducting necessary scrutiny to identify the lacking area in the process (Joris, 2019).

CONCLUSIONS

Since the changes in governance implemented in developed countries to improve service delivery were established, the primary objective of the study was accomplished. The results from reviewed literature indicate that there has been an improvement in the communities in relation to service delivery in developed countries. The rise in service delivery protests in South Africa is attributed to an organisational failure to provide satisfactory basic services. The lessons through the use of failure modes resolution in comparison to the benchmark set can be useful in formulating the South African strategic and tactical systems-level framework. The study also identifies its consequences for forthcoming practices to guarantee successful public service in South African national and local administration. This study revealed public service as a vital tool that can be used to strengthen good governance, which contributes to the development of a country socially and economically. Nevertheless, the proposed benchmark framework has proven that the public service system in South Africa needs some improvements. The use of the benchmark may bring positive changes in South Africa's public administration. Customer dissatisfaction is highly evident due to poor service delivery received from. Coordinators should play a crucial role in improving the quality of public service. The framework was developed through a thorough analysis of the international experiences and case studies of countries such as the UK, USA, Ireland, and Malaysia. The formulation of a benchmark framework and its application to South Africa may result in improved reform initiatives that facilitate a sound service delivery system. The findings from the literature review, case studies, and experience from abroad have been utilised to create the foundation of the benchmark framework.

Implications of the Study

The framework has vital practical implications that can be used to achieve the goals of the Government. A comparison of the current mechanism used in all developed countries with the strategic and tactical systems-level framework and model of effective public service delivery

promotes actual public service delivery in the administration and service delivery system of South Africa. Firstly, there should be the formulation of a statement of goals for citizens and service users in South Africa to create a link between the service delivery plan and making sure that the set service standard is functional. There should also be the publishing of a customer service action plan that will help in the improvement of the service delivery process and maintain the set standards. Secondly, the Government of South Africa should launch useful initiatives to support the improvement of service quality along with the existing tools and systems that promote smooth and effective public service delivery.

Thirdly, South Africa needs to create a powerful mechanism that can be used to gather feedback from customers through direct communication with them over the phone. The difference between customer expectations and perceptions should be facilitated using customer surveys, management information systems and audits. An independent board should also be available to strictly handle customer complaints. The experience of customers should be combined to measure and update the public service delivery. Fourthly, the systems that are used to deliver services to the public should be strictly analysed and scrutinised. Independent personnel such as the Chief Performance Officer, as in the case of the USA. The inspections of the quality-of-service delivery and meeting should be promoted through the upgrading of the traditional system. Fifthly, the result of the key performance areas should be calculated through the evaluation of the output results of customers and all other stakeholders. This should be maintained through continuous improvement of the service delivery system at all the South African government levels.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

The proposed benchmark framework was constructed based on a comprehensive review of existing literature; hence there is a need for its robustness to be empirically measured. For this reason, an empirical study is required to test the proposed framework in different cultural and geographic milieus. In measuring the changes that were implemented in developed countries to improve service delivery, the study focused on the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Australia, Ireland and Malaysia. As such, the study could have left other developed countries, which might have huge lessons for South Africa to learn. Therefore, future studies should scrutinise public service delivery in other developed countries, which could be valuable for policy-makers.

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