

Managerial Leadership, Governance and Service Delivery: A Critical Review of Literature

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Abstract

Service delivery is the most widely used measure of performance in the public sector. This paper is a critical review of the literature with a focus on how service delivery is linked to leadership, management and governance practices. The four concepts explaining the variables under study in this paper are introduced through a brief presentation. The study discusses theoretical perspectives deemed most appropriate for this work. These are the path-goal theory, resource-based view and principal-agent theory. There are numerous studies which have taken different methodology approaches and are conducted in diverse contexts. There, however, exist conceptual, theoretical, methodological and contextual gaps which need to be addressed in future studies. The key emerging knowledge gap is the fact that the available studies have not investigated the link between leadership, management and governance on one hand and service delivery on the other. Given the importance of improving service delivery, it is therefore imperative for scholars and practitioners to understand the nature of this link and to explore it to improve, especially with regard to the public sector entities. The review has developed a clearer understanding of the concepts and how they relate to the theoretical perspectives. The review underscores the need for practitioners to work towards ensuring organisations are aligned with best practices for leadership, management and governance to ensure better service delivery. The review further highlights the need for policymakers to put in place a regulatory framework to nurture inspired leadership, sound management systems and transparent governance for better service delivery.

Keywords: Leadership, management, governance and service delivery

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1. Introduction

There is no denying the civil service's importance as a tool for a nation's political and economic development (Helen, 2010). A well-functioning civil service is a tool that facilitates the formulation and implementation of government policies and strategies (IMF, 2000). It appears that in certain regions of the world, the advances in management and the prevailing ideological, political, and economic shifts are too much for the public service to handle. The structural and capability weaknesses of the public service are regarded in other areas of the world, particularly in Africa, as one of the main causes of inadequate service delivery, which leads to social and political disorders and economic crises (Williams, 2019; Djamen, 2020; Kauzya, 2020). Public service delivery is closely linked to the growth of the civil service and its administrative framework.

Throughout the past forty years, numerous nations have implemented significant modifications to the composition and functions of their civil services in recognition of the aforementioned facts. In the latter half of the 20th century, public administration systems and practices had to adapt due to the swift changes in the global environment and the increasing awareness of the intricate and ever-changing nature of social needs (Djamen, 2020; Kauzya, 2020). The belief that the public administration system was unable to deliver quality services to the people was the primary driver behind involvement with these public service changes. Wescott (1999) reiterates that improving the quality of public services provided to citizens and strengthening the ability to perform essential government responsibilities are the ultimate goals of public service reform.

Public services, notwithstanding their complexity, are those that governments offer to the people within their control through various delivery channels (Engdaw, 2020; Fox & Meyers, 2007). Providing public service is simple; yet, when quality is included to define the term "public service," it becomes challenging, highly complex, and subjective. Since providing high-quality services in the public sector is one of the hardest jobs there is, governments all over the world have developed a variety of legislative tools to raise the standard and volume of public services. The pursuit of a better quality of life for the public and an unparalleled concern for high-performing civil service has led to a paradigm shift away from traditional public administration and toward public management and new public management. Although there have always been changes in the civil service, a new age of higher-quality service delivery has been made possible by the global restructuring of the civil service that began in the 1980s (Mohammad, 2003; Abu, 2006). Numerous public managers have started initiatives to boost output, focused on high performance and customer responsibility, reorganized bureaucratic agencies, redefined organizational missions, streamlined agency procedures, and decentralized decision-making (Denhardt, 2007).

Given the importance of achieving tangible improvements in the quality of services delivered by public sector organizations and agencies to citizens, there is a need to continuously strive to understand factors that can contribute to improved service delivery. Among those issues the paper identifies and reviews are management, leadership and governance practices in the public service. These factors influence the nature of services provided through various aspects of the service delivery structures, processes and components.

For every kind of organization to succeed and endure, managerial leadership is essential. According to Hughes, Ginnett, and Curphey (2012), a leader's job in an organization is to establish structure and order. To improve service delivery, organizational leadership must manage and oversee group members' tasks and cultivate positive interpersonal ties. It is crucial to exert influence by demonstrating to your followers your desire to see outcomes. In fact, a company led by a visionary can achieve remarkable success. The caliber of services rendered to citizens in the public sector is a good indicator of leadership effectiveness. Building cohesive and goal-oriented teams is the essence of a strong leader, and coordinating the human element in achieving specified goals and objectives is vital (Ulrich et al., 2013). Therefore, in order to attain the intended outcomes, leaders need to have specific competencies and implement appropriate management and governance strategies.

For improved service delivery, managerial leadership needs to be supported by a transparent, responsible, and participatory governance framework in addition to having recognized attributes (Du Toit et al., 2002). According to Weese (1995), managerial leaders have the potential to be essential in public service reform because they may foster settings that are conducive to change. By fostering an environment that is conducive to change adoption, managerial leaders and managerial leadership are also critical to the development and management of organizational change. It is within the power of top management to create plans that connect employees and organizational procedures. Weese further argued that one of the key factors influencing organizational success and high-quality service provision is competent managerial leadership. Successful public service requires senior leadership teams to coordinate around a shared strategy and set of deliverables. Therefore, to serve in the public interest, one must be a highly skilled managerial leader with the ability to plan, organize, lead, and regulate government strategies as well as deliver just and equitable services to residents (Du Toit et al., 2002).

Successful managerial leadership is believed to be the cornerstone of government institutions implementing public policies that can directly impact a nation's development performance. Schacter (2000) defines civil service reform, also known as public sector reform, as strengthening how the public sector is managed. The drivers for such reforms are that things are not properly managed, unnecessary waste crept into how the public sector is being run, and the public sector may be overextended— attempting to do too much with too few resources. It may be poorly organized, its decision-making processes may be irrational, staff may be mismanaged, accountability may be weak, public programs may be poorly designed, and public services may be poorly delivered (Schacter, 2000; Omoyefa, 2008). Thus, to avert these challenges, public service institutions require effective leadership, sound management and accountable governance systems (USAID, 2017).

Van Wart (2003) also pointed out that regardless of the situation, competent managerial leadership and responsible governance are crucial to the public sector. As the public sector environment changes, it becomes even more difficult to ensure effective managerial leadership and accountable governance (Van Wart, 2003; Ingraham & Van Slyke, 2006; Morse & Buss, 2007; Raffel et al., 2009; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011). Many studies have been conducted to comprehend the role of public sector leadership and governance in light of the intricate and dynamic nature of the public sector environment (e.g., Van Wart, 2012, 2013; Fairholm, 2007; Ingraham et al., 2004; Fernandez et al., 2010; Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Brown & Gioia, 2002; Kouzes & Posner, 2003; Newman et al., 2007; Quinn et al., 2011). Moreover, Afegbua and Adejuwon (2012) contended that management, leadership, and organization-wide governance are necessary to guarantee the provision of high-quality services in the public sector. Work is the right emphasis for management, people are the center of attention for leadership, and the processes used to exert power and authority inside an organization are the focus of governance (USAID, 2017; Afegbua & Adejuwon, 2012; Sina & Thomas, 2008; Lawal, 2007). Service delivery is the cornerstone of public sector organizations and is currently at the core of a public sector reform effort, as mentioned by Halinen (USAID, 2017). As businesses work to find the best delivery methodologies, processes, and procedures, service delivery is having an impact on their structure and design (Van Wart, 2003).

To this end, the paper is structured into nine main components, each detailing a specific area of interest and the relationship between study variables. The paper begins by discussing the theoretical framework upon which the paper is grounded and the concept of service delivery. The paper then discusses the independent variables – management, leadership and governance practices. It then delves into the linkage between the variables and identifies the knowledge gap before making a conclusion.

2. Theoretical Framework

The theories the study is founded on are covered in this part. Three theoretical stances are thought to provide appropriate foundations for discussing the concerns in the study. These are path-goal theory, resource-based

view, and principal-agent theory.

According to House's path-goal theory, which was first presented in 1971 and then refined over several years, leaders are able to modify their behaviour in response to changing circumstances and, as a result, choose which style is best for each given circumstance. The path-goal theory's propositions are useful in directing the study of leadership and its relationship to service delivery. It states that the primary goal of a leader is to assist subordinates in effectively achieving their goals and to provide them with the necessary direction and support to achieve their goals and the organization's goals (Silverthorne, 2001). The statements emphasize how crucial it is for leaders to have the proper behaviours in order to direct and inspire followers to complete tasks successfully and provide the necessary services (Dixon & Hart, 2010).

Using core competencies and resources, the Resource-Based View (RBV) postulates that an organization's unique blend of assets, talents, and capabilities forms the basis of its strategic advantage (Andersén, 2012). The RBV theoretical viewpoint confirms that, in some situations, some of these resources can be taken advantage of and provide sources of competitive advantage. This perspective holds that the ability to recognize and make use of particular resources determines whether an organization succeeds or fails (Kristandl & Bontis, 2007). Eisenhardt and Martin (2000) state that the resource-based view is in favour of looking at the creation and presence of capabilities in order to investigate how capabilities—including leadership, management and governance—affect resources in ways that are distinctive to organizations and guide them toward improved performance. This article argues that among the essential skills and resources required for high-quality service delivery in the public sector are competent leadership, solid management, and accountable governance mechanisms.

Jensen and Meckling (1976) claim that agency theory uses the contract metaphor to explain the interaction. The principal-agent theory, often known as the agency theory, focuses on agency relationships in which the principal assigns a task to the agent, who carries it out (Eisenhardt, 1989). The agency theory specifically addresses two major issues that arise in the agency relationship. Contradictory or partially contradictory desires or goals between the principal and the agent give rise to the first issue. This occurs because it is expensive or difficult for the principal to confirm what the agent is truly doing and, if so, whether the agent is acting appropriately (Farrell, 2003). According to Leruth and Paul (2006), the second issue is risk sharing, which happens when the principal or agent has varying attitudes toward risk and may favour different courses of action as a result of their risk preferences. Because it describes the interactions between many players in the processes of public service delivery, this theory is therefore pertinent to this article. The actors include politicians, leaders/managers, employees, suppliers and customers/citizens, among others, whose interactions lead to agency problems that must be resolved. Bold et al. (2011) noted that effective service delivery requires managing a variety of stakeholders with varying interests.

3. Concepts of Public Service Delivery and Service Quality

As mentioned in the background, the study's dependent variable is service delivery. The definition of the service delivery concept is explained at the outset of this section, followed by a discussion of service quality.

3.1 Public Service Delivery

Kickert (2002, p. 90) stated that “public service delivery is concerned with the provision of a product or service, by a government or government body to a community that it was promised to or which is expected by that community.” The Oxford Universal Dictionary (1961) defines service as the carrying out of an official's function or duty, an act of aiding others, the authority to govern or utilize resources, or the provision of something required or helpful to the public by an organization or system. Delivering anything to its intended receiver, producing or performing, turning over, or delivering outcomes as promised or anticipated are all examples of the act of delivery (Ibid).

According to Du Toit et al. (2002), although functions and services are sometimes used interchangeably, they are not the same thing. The distinction is that before a service can be provided, a number of tasks or processes must be completed. For example, before running water can be made available in a house or an area, the department responsible would have to budget and plan for the service, draw up a programme of execution, and supply a pipeline to the area. From this, it can be deduced that services refer to the results emanating from the execution of policy and entail a variety of functions or processes.

In this view, the public service's protection of citizens is considered a form of service delivery (Du Toit & Van Der Waldt, 1999). Citizens expect the public sector to maintain an ordered community by delivering essential goods and services in exchange for being governed and protected. Their partnership demonstrates the public service's obligation to represent and safeguard the interests of the residents of these kinds of communities. This duty also suggests that the public sector is in charge of providing its services to the general population.

One may argue that providing the best possible services at the lowest possible cost in order to achieve the ultimate aim of giving every citizen a high quality of life is the fundamental tenet of governance in a true

democracy. Every government's primary goal should be to make all of its citizens' lives better. It accomplishes this by offering the community high-quality services (Agus et al., 2007).

3.2 Quality of Services

The quality of services rendered is one of the main issues in service delivery. Agus, Baker, and Kandampully (2007) distinguish between two viewpoints regarding the continuous endeavour to provide high-quality services. The service organization's primary goal is to thrive and remain competitive in a global marketplace. Second, there is a desire for higher-quality services from the standpoint of the client. Researchers studying service quality (Clemes et al., 2008; Hu & Jen, 2006) concurred that the customer's viewpoint should be used to assess service quality. This is because services are intangible, production and consumption are inseparable, services are heterogeneous, and services are perishable (Moeller, 2010; Kotler & Keller, 2012).

The commercial sector has seen a significant increase in the acceptance of service quality, while the public sector has adopted the idea more slowly. This essay points out that the performance ideas in the commercial sector and the service delivery concept in the public sector are comparable. The study makes the case that although several metrics of for-profit businesses have been employed in studies, a definitive performance metric for public sector organizations with unique characteristics has not yet been developed.

4. Concepts of Management and Leadership

While there are numerous historical and contemporary definitions of leadership, the situation for management is considerably different and more constrained. According to Zaleznic (1977), a manager is a person who leads the members of a community in which he or she is based on legal authority toward the proper aims and objectives. The manager directs, coordinates, plans, and exercises control. To understand the key distinction between management and leadership and to provide an explanation of managerial leadership, it is necessary to first differentiate between the two.

The majority of writers begin their examination by outlining the definition of leadership and how it relates to management. Diverse perspectives exist concerning the interplay between leadership and management. According to one method, the two ideas overlap. The academics who back this viewpoint do not clearly distinguish between the two notions; rather, they employ them interchangeably depending on the situation. According to the second method, managers and leaders should be considered independently since they are entirely different concepts (Zaleznic, 1977).

Other writers (Watson, 1983) take into account how managers' and leaders' orientations toward certain dimensions differ from one another. Therefore, managers are more interested in strategy, structure, and system—the three Ss—while leaders are more concerned with style, staff, skills, and share—the four Ss. Mintzberg (1994) argues that managers and management are connected to reality. On the other hand, leadership is a theoretical concept that is difficult to apply in real life and is a subject of disagreement among academics. According to him, a manager performs a variety of tasks, including acting as a leader. The manager's job as a leader is to balance the requirements of the people under their supervision with those of the organization (Pugh, 1994). This method typically associates the manager with day-to-day practical action and the leader with knowledge, vision, and forecasting. In order to improve service delivery, this study intends to determine how public sector executives integrate these two concepts.

A third approach argues that the bond that exists between leadership and management is comparable to that which exists between a whole and its constituent components. The majority of scholars (Kerr, 1977; Clement, 1991; Nicolescu & Verboncu, 1999) contend that management cannot exist without leadership, which is a component of management. Other authors (De Woot, 1992) consider that leadership is primordial while management is a tool for its implementation.

A fourth, more recent approach was developed by M. Zlate, who summed up the approaches previously mentioned. According to Zlate (2004, pp. 176–181), both management and leadership, as well as managers and leaders have particular characteristics that guarantee their specificity and relative autonomy in addition to a number of shared elements that promote mutual reinforcement and interaction. According to the author, there are connections between the two ideas that are akin to partial coincidences.

The author of this study adopts the methodology of Zlate (2004) and Zaleznic (1977). As Zaleznic said, the researcher thinks that leadership and management are distinct, but we also think that these differences do not indicate that they are entirely different; rather, we think that they share some characteristics. Thus, the researcher concurs with Zlate's contention that each notion has distinctive qualities and unifying traits. Similarly, the aforementioned assertion is supported by the USAID (2017) Leadership, Management, and Governance (LMG) research compendium framework.

As to Soucie (1994), managerial leadership is the kind of leadership used by managers who consciously try to persuade other members of the organization to achieve certain goals. Aykan (2004) asserts that administrative leaders have an impersonal, non-creative leadership style that values convention over creativity. It is common to

see this kind of leadership in bureaucratic institutions. Managerial leaders attempt to inspire their staff in accordance with predetermined objectives. However, what sets managerial leaders apart from others is their capacity to motivate and guide staff members while occupying managerial roles in establishments and organizations (Bakan & Bulut, 2004). The managerial leader demonstrates the behaviours, traits, and situations that represent a visionary authority, competence, a good problem solver, and a collaborator (Aykan, 2004).

It is challenging to claim that every manager possesses leadership qualities, but to be a good and effective manager who can meet management needs; it is vital to possess leadership qualities at the same time (Bakan & Bulut, 2004). As they develop capability, managers are people who not only serve as a tag but also support this with insightful interpretations that connect the past, present, and future (Hunt et al., 2009). Maintaining the status quo is a necessary component of managerial leadership, which also involves stability and order. Managerial leaders excel at overseeing daily operations and short-term objectives (Uğurluoğlu & Çelik, 2009). One does not need to be a leader to be a manager. On the other hand, a person lacking official authority and status can still demonstrate leadership. A person who demonstrates both managerial and leadership qualities while working as a manager is referred to as a managerial leader (Peterson & Peterson, 2012). According to Blom and Alvesson (2014), managerial leadership is the term used to define the type of leadership (as previously stated) that is directed towards formal subordinates by those in a managerial position—one that is appointed or elected but formally superior. When it comes to allocating resources in ways that meet the interests of employers and employees, the managerial leader is frequently in charge, more so than any other organizational authority (Tepper & Simon, 2015).

Leadership is the ability to inspire people to work together as a team to achieve common objectives. The study conceptualizes four management functions – planning, organizing, implementing and monitoring/evaluating, and four other leadership functions – scan, focus, align/mobilize and inspire.

The art and science of creating, building, running, and enhancing the work and work control systems that carry out the tasks assigned to the company is referred to as management. It focuses on an organization's activities. It is concerned with how individuals perform, how bigger processes that incorporate individual work are performed, and how organizational units and the organization as a whole perform as a result of individual and process performance. It is focused on both financial and operational performance. Above all, management is focused on the following: designing work and work control systems; putting those designs into practice or developing work and work control systems; and, lastly, managing the organization's work and work control systems through maintenance, improvement, and operation. Planning, organization, coordinating/implementation, and control are the public management functions that are the subject of this study (Van de Walde & Du Toit, 1997).

On the other hand, leadership is the capacity of a leader to influence a group of people to collaborate in order to accomplish a goal through their operational and emotional engagement (Nicolescu, Verboncu, 1999). It establishes the future, unites people around that vision, and motivates them to overcome challenges in order to achieve that future. It has been claimed that people take action, not groups. While people should be the center of leadership, work should be the primary focus of management. People need to be led, whether that means giving them firm instructions or tender guidance. This is due to the fact that people look to their leaders for leadership and, above all, for a vision and direction that are clear. Consequently, it is the capacity to shape the objectives, aspirations, and endeavours of others via strategies that extend beyond the mere use of force (Otieno, 2013). The next sub-section links management and leadership concepts to service delivery.

5. Leadership, Management and Service Delivery

Numerous relationships between leadership behaviours and organizational service delivery metrics have been proposed in the literature. The attitude of a leader toward finishing tasks, inspiring others, and attaining results has been the focus of research on leadership (Bolman & Deal, 2008). For instance, Burke and Collins (2005) discover that effective leadership affects task performance, which in turn affects the provision of services. According to Bennis (2003), leaders create value by thinking strategically and abstractly, communicating a goal and vision to followers, and giving employees a reason to hope. Sarver and Miller (2014) discovered that among Texas's law enforcement officials, transformative leaders were the most successful. The traits of transformational leaders include self-assurance, vigour, and openness. However, each organization's ability to execute successfully and sustainably depends on its management techniques, effective leadership styles, and team and individual member capacities (Dorasamy, 2010). According to Freedman and Tregoe (2003), in order to improve service delivery, managerial leadership places a strong emphasis on ethics and responsibility.

It is a fascinating puzzle, leadership in the public sector. Even though the necessity of leadership is frequently mentioned, the idea is still elusive. It is, nevertheless, unfeasible without investigating the effectiveness and productivity of the public sector. However, economics as a discipline and the family of economic theories (public choice, agency theory, and the new institutional economics) that have had the biggest influence on the development of public management reforms in many nations have largely ignored the

relationship between leadership and service delivery in the public sector (Lane & Wallis, 2009). According to Dermot (2010), who studied public leadership in the UK, leadership discourse may support three crucial components of the reforms that are encouraged there. First of all, the discourse surrounding leadership is inherently linked to facilitating systemic and transformative change. In other words, it views leaders as agents of change and, consequently, as change agents for policies that will fundamentally alter the character and scope of public services as well as how they are delivered and utilized. In connection with this, the practice of leadership is marketed as an organizational and social technology that is seen to enable and facilitate reforms in public services. Second, by bringing legislators, managers, experts, and the public together in a unifying discourse of a guiding vision for their services in which they all play a prominent role, it may lessen and absorb the endemic tensions between them that are inherent to New Public Management systems. Thirdly, the central figure in the discourse on leadership—leaders—is portrayed as a necessary component of the new public service governance, which includes public service managers as well as, in different forms, frontline professional staff, members of the public, and members of private and voluntary organizations.

Lane and Wallis (2009) contend that although the huge firm in the private sector is where the concept of management first emerged, public sector governance more closely aligns with it. Still, some doubters contend that public administration provides the best framework for analyzing how government decisions and policies are carried out. Public administration would emphasize how decisions made in the public sector are rule-based and how powerful the "owners," or politicians, are when it comes to choosing goals and strategies. However, strategic management assumes that senior managers possess sufficient autonomy to participate in long-term decision-making. Suppose the ever-increasing need for efficiency is to be satisfied. In that case, management tools are necessary for the control of the public sector's resources, including people, budgets, and regulations, towards the delivery of public services (Ibid). Overall, the massive changes to the public sector over the past 20 years have led to a so-called post-Weberian structure of public agencies, which has given leaders more management discretion (Bouckaert & Pollitt, 2004). When organizing for public service delivery, leadership in the new public organization must make strategic decisions about in-house versus outsourced production, long-term versus short-term contracting, and hierarchy versus flatness of the internal organization. These problems can all be resolved through the use of strategic management (Lane & Wallis, 2009). According to Peters and Savoie (2000), public sector reforms have thereby forced the public sector in the direction of management.

Reforms in the public sector have also raised awareness of the value of management concepts in delivering improved public services. The goal of management theories and practices in the public sector is to increase service delivery's efficacy and efficiency (Lane & Wallis, 2009). In order to improve service delivery, managerialism in the public sector justifies the importance of managers and management in organizations and society by incorporating not only private business systems and techniques but also a set of ideas and values (Hughes, 1994). However, it is widely acknowledged that managerialism has produced high-quality service delivery and altered the organizational cultures of all public services in essentially the same ways (Reed, 2007; Farnham & Horton, 1996).

Atiku, Kurana, and Ganiyu's (2023) study looked into how leadership affected the provision of services in a Namibian town council. They discovered that poor leadership techniques and political meddling in nominations have been blamed for the problems impeding the Town Council's ability to provide services. They said that the outcomes show how important it is for managers and supervisors to encourage, coach, mentor, and inspire their staff members to improve service delivery through transformational leadership.

Additionally, the perceived influence of public sector leadership on the provision of road infrastructure services in South Africa was investigated by Gqaji, Proches, and Green (2016). According to their study, the development of road infrastructure is not effectively pushed by leadership in the public sector. The findings also imply that the provision of infrastructure services is hampered by corruption and a lack of accountability.

In his research, Dorasamy (2010) demonstrated how unethical behaviour in the public sector has affected the standard of service delivery in numerous South African government departments. He added that an examination of reports by the Public Service Commission and the media indicates that a lack of an ethical culture in leadership practices has impacted the provision of high-quality public services. He went on to say that the public service mission statement is not only understood and communicated to all parties involved but it is also made clear and becomes the driving force behind achieving goals without sacrificing the quality of public services when it is led by morally and purposefully.

In their study "Management of bureaucrats and public service delivery," Rasul and Daniel (2016) discovered that effective management techniques are important for providing high-quality services in the Nigerian civil service. According to the study, completion rates are positively correlated with growing bureaucrat autonomy, but completion rates are inversely correlated with practices pertaining to rewards and oversight of bureaucrats. The authors contended that the data from their analysis offers fresh perspectives on the significance of management in public agencies in emerging nations.

6. Concepts of Governance

For improved service delivery, leadership in the public sector needs to be supported by a transparent, responsible, and participatory governance structure in addition to having recognized abilities.

The intellectual tradition contributing to the etymology of the term governance in public administration relates to the study of governance within the public service. It has emphasized the multi-layered structural, normative and context of public service delivery (Ayee, 1998). In this sense, governance is an arrangement of distinct but interrelated elements, including statutes and policy mandates. It focuses on institutional components such as systems, processes and procedures for service delivery (Albrow, 2001). Furthermore, programmatic structures and institutionalized rules and norms enable the implementation of the tasks, priorities, and values incorporated into the policy implementation process (Ibid).

Administrative governance is one area of governance that deals with how decisions are carried out, how the institutional framework is established, what knowledge, expertise, and experience the public servants involved have, and what resources are required to guarantee effective and efficient service delivery (Mohiddin, 2002). The public service can evaluate itself using a variety of general criteria in administrative governance (Taylor, 2000). According to Soobrayan (2004), a public service that is effectively managed has a well-defined objective that guides its operations and offers metrics for assessing performance and pinpointing areas for development. This suggests that a well-functioning public service also has a quantifiable and time-bound strategic plan, as well as a well-defined vision and set of goals and objectives. According to Taylor (2000), a properly run public service also has procedures in place for transparent, responsible, and participative operations in the provision of services. An effective public service may really pinpoint the precise moment at which it has fulfilled its objectives, and it is evident that the administrative leadership of the public service bears primary responsibility for this accomplishment.

In addition, Streeten (1999, referenced in Sing, 1999) defined governance as the exercise of power and authority in the public sector. This covers the guidelines and restrictions on the use of power and authority as well as the consequences of disobeying or abusing them. He also maintained that there must be an authoritative structure that generates one type of power, regardless of how an organization's governance procedures appear—in a traditional bureaucratic or autocratic hierarchy or in a more self-governing democratic form. The organization, the most political animal of all, cannot be administered without authority and a clear definition of its bounds, together with the regulations governing its exercise and the sanctions for disregarding or misusing it. As a result, governance is defined as the procedures and guidelines that direct group decision-making for improved service delivery. The fact that the emphasis is on group decision-making suggests that governance is not about a single person making decisions but rather about groups of people, organizations, or systems of organizations (Stoker, 2004). By addressing the way rules influence decision-making, it offers a means of integrating leadership and management. It is about how various decision-making processes or regulations will affect the production of those events that are thought of as public goods and services (Ibid).

Another way to look at governance as a process is as a way to encourage public service participation from citizens. Together with citizen contact and engagement, which allows people to discuss their interests and work out conflicts while exercising their rights, it also involves the process of empowering communities to express their demands (UNDP, 1997, cited in Nzimakwe, 2005).

Lastly, a synthesis of current definitions provided by donor organizations such as the World Bank, the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), international development agencies and multilateral donors yield a more complex concept of governance. “Governance is a complex system of interactions among structures, traditions, functions (responsibilities), and processes (practices) for better service delivery characterized by three key values of accountability, transparency and participation” (USAID, 2002, p. 2). “Good governance” has also been described elsewhere as the striving for “rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, participation, equity, effectiveness and efficiency, accountability, and strategic vision in the exercise of political, economic, and administrative authority (UNDP, 2002, p. 2). Governance is conceived broadly as “the exercise of authority and control in a society in relation to the management of its resources for social and economic development” (Schneider, 1999, p. 7). The concept of governance used in this study is taken from Schneider and USAID (2002), who defined it as the exercise of power and control in the public sector for the purpose of managing institutional resources and providing citizens with high-quality services.

7. Governance and Service Delivery

One measure of good governance is accountability, which is also correlated with responsible leadership and an organization's capacity to provide the intended outcomes. Accountable leadership demonstrates the capacity and willingness to defend one's opinions, emotions, and behaviours to others in accordance with stated or implied expectations. In contexts where results are the primary focus, leadership accountability is taking ownership of one's actions, voluntarily being transparent, and being answerable (Wood & Winston, 2005).

The recent past has witnessed a renewed and growing interest in improving the quality of governance and government elsewhere in the world (Rosenbaum, 2002). The reasons for this development are diverse. First, significant economic, social and institutional changes have bedevilled the past two decades. Second, there has been a deterioration in the quality of services delivered to citizens (Ibid).

The socioeconomic challenges that have plagued African nations over the past 20 years have motivated their administrations to look for fresh approaches. Consequently, governments and citizens throughout the African continent are currently involved in several forms of public sector transformation (AU, 2010). These changes necessitate a wide range of adjustments to management and governance structures, as well as leadership competencies and capacities within the public sector (Ibid). The stated shift has, for the most part, been primarily motivated by the need to lower costs and provide services with more efficiency (Rakate, 2006). Numerous reform attempts have been put into place worldwide in this endeavour.

Africans' complex quality of life makes it necessary to continuously look for innovative approaches to providing services. Thus, responsible governance structures, effective leadership, and efficient management are essential and inevitable. In order to provide effective, efficient, and responsive public services, they are essentially necessary (AU, 2010).

In circumstances where only changes within the bureaucracy are significant, a decentralized governance structure has been implemented. Academics have noted that administrative decentralization makes sense when it comes to providing high-quality public services (Robinson, 2007). According to Yin et al. (1974), in order to enhance the public service's ability to provide services, authority and power must be transferred from upper to lower-level personnel.

Naidoo and Xollie (2011) state that the South African public sector's service delivery outcomes are still unsatisfactory even after implementing several leadership and management training and development initiatives as well as a managerial leadership style. The authors suggested that in South Africa, an integrated leadership and governance strategy, as well as consideration of local narratives and challenges, are necessary for the successful and sustainable delivery of public services. The impact of administrative decentralization on the provision of high-quality public services in Ethiopia was also examined by Engidaw (2022). He concluded that the exercise of legislative and human resource management discretion has a statistically significant favourable impact on the provision of high-quality public services. Thus, effective and efficient administrative decentralization results in the provision of high-quality public services.

8. The Linkage between Managerial Leadership, Governance and Service Delivery

The primary goal of the study was to critically evaluate the body of literature in an effort to comprehend the relationship between service delivery and leadership, management, and governance practices.

Because there are so few studies available, the interaction between the study's variables has not been thoroughly examined. In one such study conducted in 2017, USAID examined the effects of leadership, management, and governance on the provision of health services. The literature on leadership, management, and governance practices (L+M+G) and how they relate to service delivery was reviewed for this study. The study discovered that one major obstacle to understanding L+M+G and how they interact with service delivery is the absence of agreed-upon terminology. Research efforts are further complicated by the proliferation of conceptual models and frameworks resulting from this inadequate consensus on essential concepts. The study found that, in spite of conceptual ambiguity among the variables, the leadership and governance functions guarantee the establishment and enforcement of the legal and policy frameworks, as well as the structures and systems for financing, organizing, and regulating the system and promoting coordination, participation, and accountability (USAID, 2017). The study also discovered that in order to improve service delivery, all health system functions require strong leadership, sound management, and effective governance. The study also showed that effective resource stewardship and accountability systems, when combined with rigorous monitoring and assessment, can enhance the efficiency of the pharmaceutical distribution system. Lima Dellamora et al. (2014) conducted a pertinent study that highlights the significance of management and governance practices in fostering accountability in Brazil's health service delivery system. Particular emphasis is placed on these practices' ability to establish clear authority boundaries. Kaplan et al. (2012) also discovered in their study that effective health service delivery is positively correlated with political will, developing accountability, fostering a shared vision, and stewarding resources. The studies reviewed provide important insights, but they also have certain flaws. As a result, the knowledge gaps are examined in the next section.

9. Knowledge Gaps

A number of gaps in knowledge are evident from the examined studies. Firstly, a conceptual limitation has been identified, whereby the four factors of relevance in this paper have not been examined collectively in the available studies. The majority of research that is currently accessible has concentrated on two or three factors and has not offered theoretical foundations for investigating how leadership, management, and governance

practices affect public sector service delivery. For example, the USAID (2017) study showed that L+M+G can impact service delivery based on peer-reviewed and grey literature. The relationship between the study factors is unclear, and there is a dearth of research and information on the subject.

These studies all had methodological flaws despite the fact that they were all able to get positive results. The majority of the research referred to the drawbacks of depending solely on reviews of the literature as well as the studies' constrained focus, which is health service delivery. Based on the analyzed papers, the next section finishes by summarizing the most important lessons discovered and providing the suggested conceptual framework for the study.

10. Conclusion

This section contains the paper's final submissions; it begins by highlighting key emerging and lessons learnt from the review. The section then discusses the theoretical, practical and policy implications. It ends by outlining the conceptual framework.

10.1 Key Emerging Issues and Lessons Learnt from the Review

The thesis of the essay is that in order to effectively transform a variety of resources and other inputs into services and products, it is necessary to comprehend leadership, management, and governance practices. Having a thorough grasp of these variables will help stakeholders seize new possibilities and put plans in place to deal with issues that the public sector and society are currently facing. Comprehending the intricacies of service delivery will empower stakeholders to accept alterations. This will make it easier to seize the opportunities presented by improved financial management, performance management, and information technology systems, enhancing client and customer satisfaction while making the most use of limited resources in the public service.

This essay points out that the performance ideas in the commercial sector and the service delivery concept in the public sector are comparable. According to the report, the public sector can benefit from using the service delivery concept as a performance indicator. The important topics of this investigation were covered by the literature review and, in particular, by the empirical research that is highlighted in this review. Unquestionably, a research effort must include a review of pertinent empirical studies. Important takeaways from the literature review were identified. First, it was recognized that some theories and theoretical frameworks might be used to support research relating to leadership, management, governance practices, and their connection to service delivery if they were properly justified. It also became apparent that the background of earlier research affected the conclusions that were obtained. It is clear that research on elements related to service delivery, like leadership, management, and governance, is still in its early stages and that the results are not very conclusive.

10.2 Theoretical Implication

Significant theoretical discoveries were achieved by the study, which can help us comprehend leadership, management and governance practices and how they affect the provision of services. The study clarified the assessment of the factors and improved comprehension of the notions of leadership, management and governance, and service delivery. The application of path-goal, resource-based, and agency theories to the study of leadership, management governance practices and service delivery has also been emphasized in the review. The foundation for improved conceptualization and theoretical examination of L+M+G and service delivery is laid by this study.

Future research in this field is motivated by the current state of affairs, which is emphasized in the knowledge gap section. Research in this field has to be advanced because Sub-Saharan African countries like Kenya are still having difficulty enhancing public sector services to foster inclusive growth and development. Future research must use and adapt the assessment instruments that are already available to assess service delivery, ethics, leadership, and accountability in a variety of settings across nations with distinctive features, like Kenya.

10.3 Implication for Practice

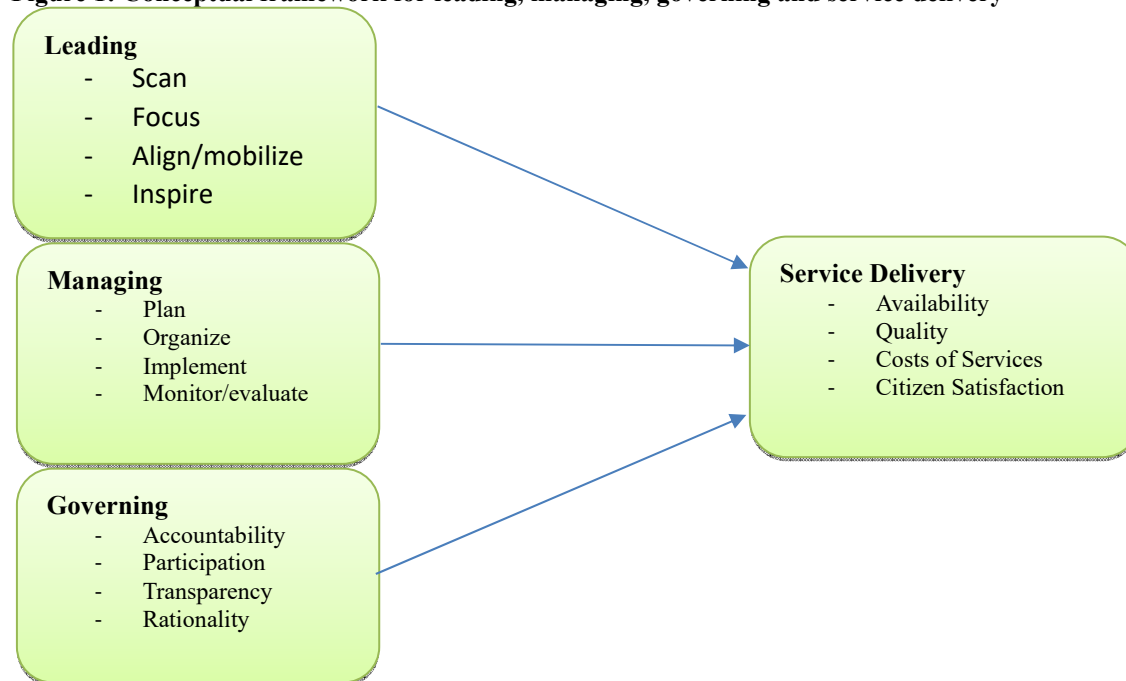
Practitioners, particularly those working in public sector agencies, must investigate and implement potential organizational designs in order to meet the growing need for more responsive, efficient, and effective services. The service delivery architecture should be in line with best practices for leadership, management, and governance in order to guarantee maximum output.

In order to help practitioners better segment their consumer/citizen needs, communicate with them, develop more effective distribution and pricing strategies, and customize service elements to meet the needs of their target consumers, this paper aims to provide a clearer understanding of service delivery and the factors that influence it. The research highlights how important it is for practitioners to understand challenges related to L+M+G and services as interrelated components that require a comprehensive strategy.

10.4 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework explains relationships between interlinked concepts and connections between the variables (Smyth, 2004). The paper conceptualises the linkage between leadership, management and governance on one hand and service delivery on the other. Leading, managing and governing practices constitute the independent variables. Service delivery is the dependent variable. The independent variables influence the dependent variable, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework for leading, managing, governing and service delivery



The study assumes that leadership, management and governance practices influence organisational service delivery. Based on the discussions and the conceptual framework, the review ends by outlining the paper's implications on theory and practice in the above section.

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