

Service Delivery, Governance and Citizen Satisfaction: Reflections from South Africa

Mfundo Mandla Masuku* · Victor H Mlambo** · Confidence Ndlovu***

Abstract This paper examines how satisfied households in South Africa (SA) are with the provision of public services by the South African government. The paper uses a secondary research approach where it uses data from a report published by Statistics South Africa (StatsSA) titled the “Governance, Public Safety, and Justice Survey,” which is meant to highlight the government’s shortcomings and understand the perceptions of citizens concerning service provision. As a theoretical lens, the new public service approach is adopted to explain the conditions of governance in SA and to determine how and what needs to be done to achieve effective governance. The paper analyses key variables that affect the fundamental indicators of good public safety and justice governance.

The findings indicate that while efforts to enhance service delivery have been initiated and supported by policy, they have not changed the citizens’ perceptions of the state, e.g., there is still considerable mistrust in state institutions. Inequitable development and poverty continue to impede efficient public service delivery by limiting households’ capacity to access adequate public services, as well as by placing restrictions on the ability of local governments to extend services to high-cost informal settlements. This paper argues for promoting a holistic and integrated development plan that will guarantee inclusive public service delivery to all people, thus assisting in consolidating an environment where citizens trust the state and support it in its quest for inclusive and effective service delivery.

Keywords: Governance, Public sector, Service delivery, South African.

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1. Introduction

Poor governance and service delivery are major challenges in South Africa. The ongoing narratives, debates, and arguments concerning poor service delivery in South Africa have reflected how poor governance has exposed inequality, entrenched corruption, and increased poverty and how the government has failed to address socio-economic destruction. The quest for South Africa to achieve inclusive socio-economic development becomes futile in the absence of transparent, accountable, efficient, and effective governance. Twenty-seven years into democracy, South Africa is still struggling to lift millions of people out of poverty, consolidate transparent governance, reduce inequality, and cement itself as a continental power (Bond, 2006; Sarkodie and Adams, 2020). While politically the country is stable, socio-economically South Africans are yet to see the fruit of their struggle to emancipate themselves from the apartheid regime. Reinforcing this assertion, Goodman (2017) notes that the political and, by extension, socio-economic freedom of 1994 has not come with the liberation that black South Africans hoped for; instead, it has given rise to a plethora of socio-economic problems which have since morphed into severe governance challenges.

It is essential, however, to note that governance challenges are not peculiar to South Africa alone; rather, post-colonial states in Africa have failed to make use of the abundant resources in the continent and the infrastructure left behind by former colonisers, and importantly, they have failed to establish African governance systems that speak to African issues. Instead, we have seen the opposite; African states have become repressive, do not tolerate dissenting voices, and have curtailed freedoms and liberties (Wa Muiu, 2010). All these actions have constrained the development of post-colonial African states. In South Africa, corruption remains a major governance challenge: Insufficient coordination of anti-corruption work within the South African public service (SAPS) and among the various sectors of society; poor information about corruption and the impact of anti-corruption measures and agencies; and the impact of corruption on governance are pressing issues which need urgent attention (Pillay, 2004; Masuku, 2019; Safara and Odeku, 2021).

This paper ponders how South Africa can address these issues when the ruling party (African National Congress) is engulfed in numerous corruption-related scandals. This paper takes into consideration that development and service delivery have to go hand-in-hand with transparency and accountability. There is bound to be a plethora of developmental and governance challenges in countries with a leadership vacuum. Ever since the global financial meltdown of 2008, South Africa's economy has failed to maintain consistent economic growth rates. As a result, this means less money for the provision of essential services, and this, coupled with corruption and the deficiency of local government, compounds the country's developmental aspects (Rena and Msoni, 2014). Scholars (Serfontein and De Waal, 2015; Rangongo et al., 2016; Munzhedzi, 2016; Mlambo and Masuku, 2020) agree that while corruption, negligence, and a

lack of education and resources are some of our country's most prolific challenges, the underlying threat lies in leadership. Leadership challenges are prevalent throughout South Africa, ranging from corruption and maladministration at state-owned enterprises, an increasing yet unsustainable public sector wage bill, ministers being implicated in tender corruption scandals, and dysfunctional municipalities. Together, these issues and the inability to address them are crippling South Africa's developmental potential, and this is evident by the country's subsequent downgrading by rating agencies (Mlambo and Masuku, 2020).

For South Africa, the importance of having an effective governance structure is informed by the need to ensure that the government can lift the poor out of poverty, provide basic services and contribute toward inclusive socio-economic development. However, for these to become realisable, stable, transparent, accountable, and responsive governance structures are key. This paper seeks to examine the state of governance in South Africa in terms of its associated challenges, successes, and prospects. The paper rests on the following important questions. What is the current state of governance in South Africa? What challenges are hindering effective governance, how can these be addressed, and how do governance-related issues affect South Africa's socio-economic development?

Poor governance and performance of the public sector institutions on national, provincial, and local levels have been a cause for concern in South Africa. Poor governance has unbearable consequences for poor citizens and economically underprivileged communities who survive and depend on the daily economy. Governance in the public sector is described as corporate arrangements applied to government institutions through public policy that is shaped, made, and implemented (Moore and Hartley, 2008). In the South African context, in all spheres of government, the governance system enables the government to initiate and enforce rules and deliver basic services in a democratic process to meet the needs of the society, irrespective of limited resources. However, there are growing concerns about how effective the state has been in providing quality services to the people.

2. Theoretical approach

Governments, especially in Africa, agree that in the quest to ensure an effective and efficient public sector, there is a need to reduce bureaucracy and introduce systems that allow for transparency and accountable leadership. Effective governance should be grounded on the need for citizen participation, as it needs to ensure that people are at the centre of the governance and decision-making processes. This paper employs the new public service approach to explore the state of governance in SA, and how and what needs to be done to promote effective governance. The new public service approach is rooted in the democratic theory and emphasises the accountability of officials to citizens, where officials serve and respond to citizens rather than steering society (Rivera and Uttaro, 2021).

The approach contends that those who are public servants need to ensure that the focus of public management is on citizens, the community, and civil society. This paper argues that citizens should be given the avenue to have a voice in governance processes and the new public service approach asserts that the primary role of public servants is to help citizens articulate and meet their shared interests rather than to control or steer society (Pestoff, 2011). This approach differs significantly from the new public management approach, where citizens are viewed as “customers” and public servants are viewed as public managers. Furthermore, the new public service approach is premised on the notion that active and involved citizens look beyond narrow self-interests to the broader public interest. The role of public officials is to facilitate opportunities for strengthening citizen engagement in finding solutions to societal problems. Governance can only work if the people are involved and allowed to contribute meaningfully.

In South Africa, Gumede (2020) asserts that South Africa is likely to plunge into economic chaos, social breakdown, and rolling violent unrest without a new governance model. A new governance model is urgently needed to save South Africa from such a dreadful fate. The government is expected to govern with transparency, as without transparency, there cannot be trust. Trust and transparency are the glue for effective partnerships, citizen compliance, and willingness to behave in a public-spirited manner. Therefore, this paper argues that the new public service approach is more realistic in addressing governance-related issues. It takes into consideration the importance of citizens as role players in the governance process. It seeks to ensure that public servants are not only accountable to the people but also involve them in the governance process, thus increasing the potential for continuity, growth, ethical governance, and inclusive development (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2000).

The new public service approach contends that public servants must help citizens articulate and meet their shared interests, rather than attempt to control or steer society in new directions. It narrates that public administrators must contribute to building a collective, shared notion of the public interest. It argues that public servants should be attentive to more than the market (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2000). They should focus on building relationships of trust and collaboration with and among citizens. Hence, from a South African perspective, there is a great need to revitalise the governance processes to incorporate the citizens’ role in enhancing service delivery and consolidating the relationship between the government and its people.

3. Methodology

A qualitative approach was employed to appraise and critically evaluate the literature, specifically on understanding and identification of the significant factors that determine the fundamental indicators of governance in the public sector in South Africa. The approach analysed a survey report by StatsSA (2020) on governance, public safety,

and justice. The paper purposively selected this StatsSA report and peered at academic articles to ensure an in-depth examination of the trends and limitations on governance and government services in the democratic era. The articles were drawn from research databases, including Google Scholar and Sabinet.

Thematic content analysis was used to identify, classify, and interpret the governance dynamics in the South African context. The statistical evidence was based on the desktop research that StatsSA collected from 2019 to 2020 from private households in all nine provinces of South Africa. According to the StatsSA (2020) report, 40,270 712 respondents, including men and women aged 16 and older, were randomly selected in households. However, the survey did not include collective living residences such as nursing homes and correctional centres and was, therefore, representative of non-institutionalised respondents.

4. Results and discussions

4.1 *The level of satisfaction with government services by citizens*

Measuring citizens’ satisfaction with public services is one of the most significant instruments for determining the results and impact of the government’s service delivery initiatives.

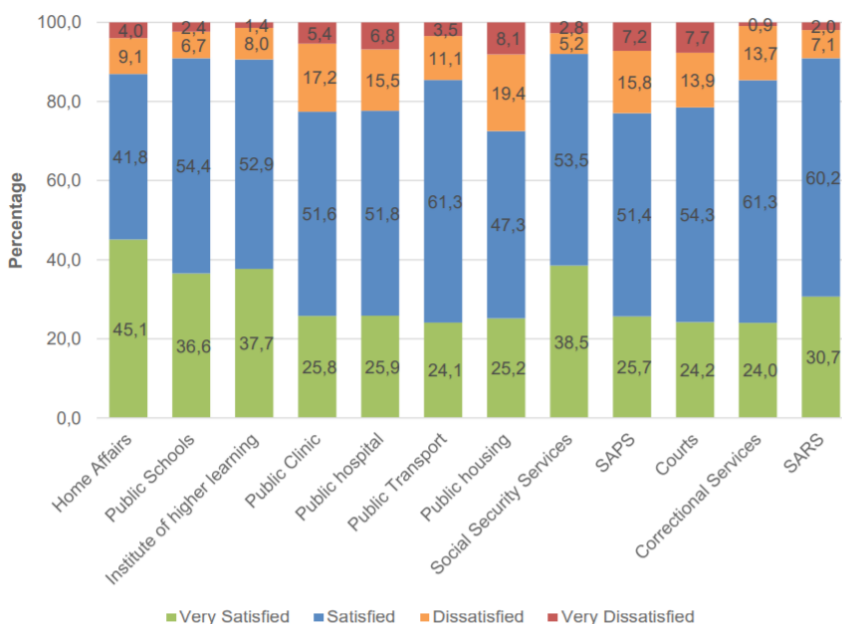


Figure 1. Level of satisfaction with government services, 2019/20

Source: Adapted from StatsSA (2020)

Figure 1 illustrates that the proportion of respondents aged 16 and older who reported that government services were satisfactory exceeded those who rated government services unsatisfactory due to inadequate public service delivery.

4.1.1 Public transport

These findings revealed low levels of satisfaction with the provision of public services such as public transportation. Economically, road traffic accidents cost the majority of countries 3% of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which directly affects the availability of public resources (WHO, 2021). State financial resources are extended as far as covering road accident funds and damaged road infrastructure is concerned. This is because the majority of people are exposed to public transportation accidents as a result of irresponsible driving by taxi drivers and others, hence the low levels of satisfaction with public transport services.

Findings showed that the primary objective of the Department of Transportation was to modernise South Africa's public transportation system, which is frequently characterised by a high number of traffic accidents and the deaths of loved ones with them strewn across our roadways (Arrive Alive, 2021). There was an 18% increase in road deaths per 100,000 people in South Africa between 2000 and 2018, with 22.4% of fatalities in 2018 compared to 19.9% in 1990 (Road Safety Report, 2019). This severely affected the status of public service provision in South Africa; the efficiency and effectiveness of public transport are now driven by a complex set of factors that are sometimes counterintuitive to the aim of public service delivery.

Furthermore, results pointed out that government services at the courts and prisons in South Africa were inadequate to meet the levels of criminal activity. Correctional services were not transparent while dealing with criminal circumstances such as reckless driving within the public sector. The Department of Correctional Services annual report (2016/2017) confirmed that conditions of imprisonment in South Africa are horrible, with holding cells overcrowded with detainees and inhumane conditions. There is poor ventilation, insufficient sanitary services, privacy, a scarcity of linens and bedding, insufficient supervision and oversight, and poor health care provision. As a result, many criminals and irresponsible taxi drivers, particularly those involved in traffic accidents, get away with speeding, drunk driving, and other illegal activities on the road. This research paper confirmed that government provisions for service delivery for public transportation and correctional services failed to fulfill citizens' expectations of strengthening public transport measures for road safety.

4.1.2 Social security grants

Findings revealed that most participants were either very satisfied (38.5%) or satisfied (53.5%) with the provision of social security grants. The South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) is a social security grant entity that was established in South Africa as a post-apartheid organisation to combat poverty and inequality. Many years after the programme's commencement, the statistical data indicated that some citizens were not satisfied with its provision of grants. The objectives of the social security grants have not been reached fully owing to obstacles such as low social security budget

allocations, which have resulted in lengthy delays and difficulty in getting funds into the hands of beneficiaries. Buhler-Muller et al. (2016) indicated that the highest level (75%) of widespread approval of social security support was received in 2015, while the average approval level was 72% from 2005 to 2015. However, while the majority was satisfied with the provision of social grant services, Munshedzi (2016) contends that it is difficult to manage social security grants due to limited administrative capabilities and a lack of standardisation in implementation, thus raising concerns about SASSA's role. Particular emphasis was placed on the lack of access to public services for individuals who cannot afford to pay bribes for the services.

4.1.3 Public schooling

The findings revealed that citizens were delighted with the competence of and access to the services provided by public schools. Results showed that almost nine out of ten citizens who participated in the study were extremely satisfied with the public service in schools. This pointed to the community's involvement as role players on school governing boards, which serve to plan and monitor educational provision and ensure that schools provide the most enabling environment for students with special needs and those with poor socio-economic status.

This paper suggests that the government has established a service that fulfils most citizens' requirements for public schooling; however, there is a need for improvement. Mkhongi and Musakwa (2020) state that to further improve the satisfaction of citizens with public schools, the government must improve teaching and learning systems such as geographical information systems because they can provide progressive imperative technology for use in local government by enhancing spatial thinking and cognitive skills that are superior to those gained using traditional teaching systems such as textbooks.

4.1.4 Public clinics and hospitals

Findings indicated that approximately 5.4% and 6.8%, respectively of the people who participated in the study to determine satisfaction levels with public hospitals and clinics were dissatisfied, compared to 17.2% and 15.5%, respectively of those who were simply unsatisfied. South Africa's health care quality has been affected by several issues that have degraded it. There is proof that the state of public facilities, such as clinics, is a vital component in people's contentment because the condition of these facilities is related to the provision of quality services.

According to Maphumulo and Bhengu (2019), the challenges to South Africa's health care system include unequal resource distribution, poor management, leadership crises, an increased disease burden, pull-and-push dynamics, and delayed progress in health care restructuring. Government policies must improve health care quality and ensure that public hospitals and clinics in rural areas have the resources they require to meet people's needs. Government agencies should ensure that health care facilities are

in good working order and meet public safety and health standards.

4.1.5 Public housing

Results indicated that the system for delivering public services was critical to poverty reduction through public housing initiatives. The findings revealed a low level of satisfaction with government services in government housing, with around 19.4% unsatisfied and 8.1% very dissatisfied with housing provision. South Africa is confronting an unprecedented housing crisis as it is becoming increasingly difficult to provide everyone with adequate or acceptable housing. About 12.1% (1789 million households) of the people living in the 14.75 million dwellings in South Africa in 2011 lived in informal housing, with Gauteng accounting for 20.4% of this total, the Northeast accounting for 18.5%, the Western Cape accounting for 15.1%, Limpopo accounting for the lowest percentage of 4.5%, and the Eastern Cape accounting for 6.5% of this total (South Africa Yearbook, 2017/2018).

However, since 1994, the South African government has been developing public housing to assist poor individuals living in dire poverty and experiencing homelessness (Mkhwanazi et al., 2019). Findings pointed out that these efforts have been ineffectual due to the racial and economic discrimination of members of society, particularly those in remote locations. The paper indicates that comprehensive local housing strategies are critical and urgent in South Africa for coordinating and implementing public housing policy to create a unified, coordinated strategy to meet local housing difficulties through a combination of many sources of financing and policy aspects (Local Housing Solutions, 2021). The expectations and performance in the provision of public housing differ between service providers and beneficiaries, implying that quality service delivery does not satisfy citizens' requirements and expectations due to racial and economic inequities.

5. The level of satisfaction with government services by metro status

The findings showed that rural communities often had substantially less access to public services than urban municipalities. According to BusinessTech (2019), all metros have seen a fall in total ratings of public service delivery and a decrease in citizens' satisfaction. The lack of basic service provision includes the provision and management of water, energy supply, garbage disposal, road maintenance, and clean roads. Poor satisfaction is caused by unequal development and poverty, which limit households' ability to access services, as well as practical constraints on the local governments' ability to extend services to high-cost informal settlements.

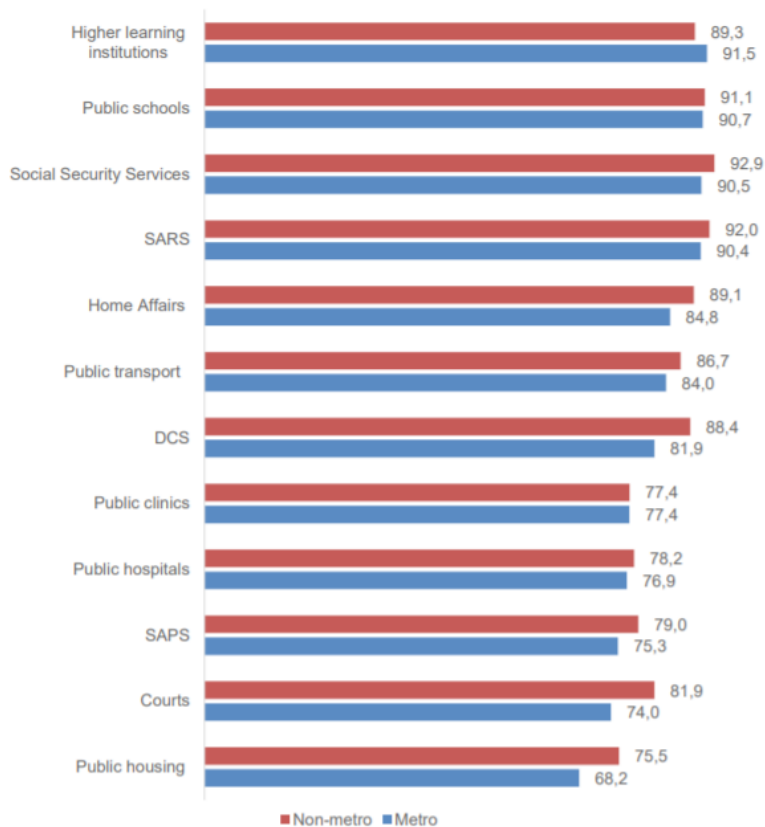


Figure 2. Levels of satisfaction with government services by metro status, 2019/20
Source: Adapted from StatsSA (2020)

It is usual for metro areas to have poor satisfaction levels, and BusinessTech (2019) states that citizens' expectations in the metro are not fulfilled as there are significant gaps between expectations and the citizens' perceptions of service delivery quality. Public officials must act and make decisions so that government efforts can satisfy community needs while also contributing to better governance and poverty eradication.

The paper suggests that increased civic involvement makes citizens more likely to be satisfied with their government's performance in public service provision; thus, it must be encouraged. In contrast, Chu and Shen (2017) maintain that civic engagement increases citizens' awareness of the government's service delivery shortcomings, such as poor civic education and the lack of participation and transparency in policy formulation. The trends in public satisfaction patterns with various aspects of government performance serve as a sharp reminder of the progress made in improving the quality of life over the last two decades. South Africa has a complicated set of development objectives to which the public sector must respond, demanding continuing public

sector reform while keeping a close eye on global reform trends.

According to Abrahams, Fitzgerald, and Cameron (2009), while efforts to create a unified public service aimed to incorporate some of these developments, they appeared to have fallen short in developing a public service delivery strategy in metropolitan areas. Thus, metropolitan cities were less likely to be satisfied with public service delivery than non-metro cities. The findings showed that satisfaction with public services in metro areas was low at 68.2%. Further findings proved that metro municipalities such as the Ekurhuleni and Cape Town municipalities were not providing quality delivery of basic services such as water and trash management, power, and waste collection to citizens.

Kanyane (2014) stated that financial viability is important because it limits a complicated political process, corruption, poor planning, and monitoring and evaluation issues, which all contribute to the construction of a local government with adequate service delivery. Moreover, water supply, sewage collection, electricity distribution, municipal health services, road and stormwater drainage, street lighting, and municipal parks and recreation are all services required by local governments to meet the basic requirements and expectations of metropolitan and non-metropolitan inhabitants.

Although the City of Cape Town and other metro municipalities perform extra jobs and provide housing funds at the municipal level, service delivery challenges still exist. Attempts to improve service delivery have not been sufficient to reduce the impoverished South African people's poor satisfaction and rage. As a result, the paper suggests that private and public sectors are important for monitoring and evaluating service delivery initiatives. Coordinated action between the two is required to stimulate local integrated decision-making designed to improve the overall service delivery standards.

6. Trust in the government and public institutions

This paper evidenced that South African municipalities did not operate fully with dynamic and engaged civil society organisations and local citizens. As a result, there was a negative trend suggesting a high level of distrust of the local government (32.2%), the provincial government (29.3%), and the national government (27.7%) spheres, and thus indicating a significant need for intervention. The Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (2014) indicated in the 20-year evaluation of the local government sphere that political involvement, inadequate monitoring, insufficient compliance, and the government's incapacity to respond to the complexity of demands and expectations all contribute to inefficient and ineffective service delivery.

Only 37.7% of South Africans aged 16 and up trusted the local government, and the quality of the municipal service delivery was typically poor. Eskridge and Key (2016) state that if municipal officials intend to establish more trust in their local communities, they must improve their level of service to their people. Beshi and Kaur (2020) assert that local governments are the closest to the people and stakeholders.

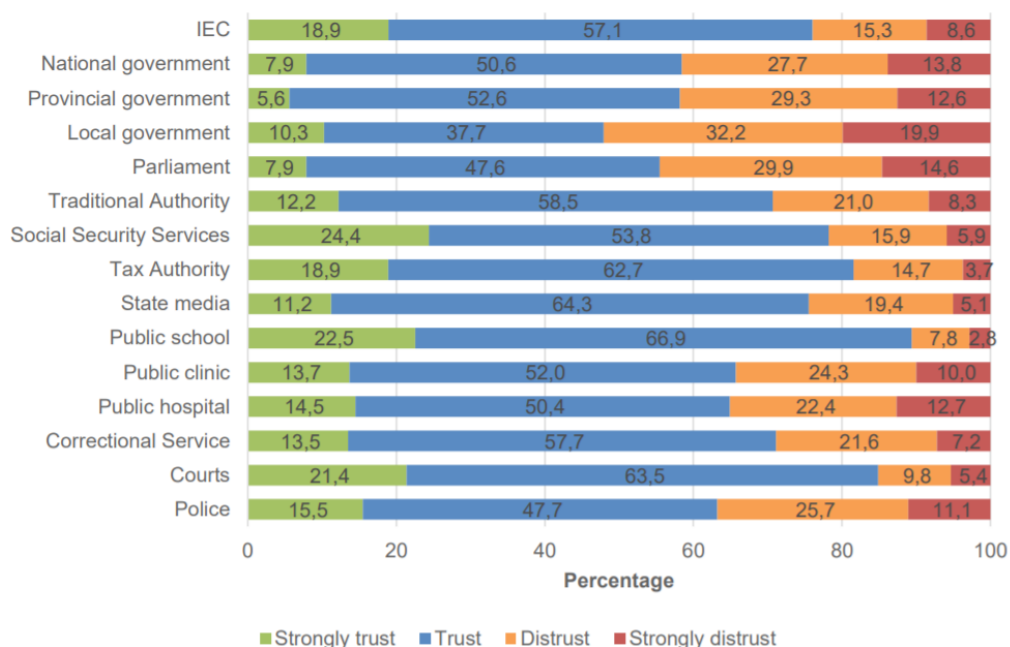


Figure 3. Percentage of people aged 16 years and older by the level of trust in the government and public institutions

Source: Adapted from StatsSA (2020)

Findings indicated that two-thirds of the population aged 16 and up had a high level of trust in public clinics (52.0% and 13.7%), public hospitals (50.4% and 14.5%), and SAPS (47.7% and 15.5%). However, the high level of distrust of other government services raised doubt about the validity of these findings. Maphumulo and Bhengu (2019) attested that there is substantial evidence that the quality of the South African healthcare system has been degraded by a variety of challenges that have harmed the health care quality.

Fewer errors, fewer delays in service delivery, increased efficiency, more market share, and reduced prices are all indicators of an improved health care system's quality, but these were not evident in South Africa. Due to the deterioration in the quality of the services, South African people had lost a significant level of trust in the health care system. Findings pointed out that high levels of honesty, justice, and institutional transparency were the key determinants of public trust. Trust in the government is regarded as a critical component of the democratic system and strong policy implementation and initiatives are critical in boosting citizens' confidence in the government at all levels. The findings thus share the same sentiment as the new public service approach that emphasises building relationships of trust and collaboration with and among citizens. This paper showed that if public interest and public service delivery could be met, then confidence in all spheres of government, from the national

to the local level, would improve. A democratic system that ensures a bottom-up approach should be applied in the provision of public services as this enables good policy implementation, which in turn fosters public trust in the government. The new public service approach emphasises that good and effective governance is essential in all government areas to promote inclusivity, participation, and engagement in an increasingly complex, diverse, and dynamic national and international setting (Farazmand, 2017).

Thus, the promotion of holistic development is vital for providing public services that are inclusive of all members of society regardless of their social, economic, cultural, or political standing. Holistic development can be achieved with equal participation and help to establish trust in the government. A small percentage of the population lacked trust in the government and public institutions. This was roughly 10.0% in terms of public clinics, 12.7% in public hospitals, and 11.1% in the SAPS as a whole. Jakoet-Salie et al. (2020) maintain that lack of trust in the government has contributed to the rise in protests in South Africa, and this lack of trust is tied to the substandard service delivery caused by the limited public engagement methods that impede service co-production. Some of the challenges confronting South Africa's health care system include unequal resource distribution, management and leadership crises, an increased disease burden, pull-and-push factors, and slow progress in restructuring the health care system and the government's strategies to improve the quality of the health care delivery (Maphumulo and Bhengu, 2019). Therefore, this paper proposes that the government strengthen public participation, particularly in need assessments undertaken within communities, before implementing public programmes aimed at improving the health care system.

7. Trust in the national government and public institutions provincially

The statistical report showed that the level of trust in the national government and public institutions in 2019/20 was 58.2% per province, which was greater than the level of trust in local governments (47.9%). This low level of trust in local government may occur when there is a mismatch between the public's expectations and the actual performance of the government institutions, forcing the public to view government officials as incompetent, wasteful, dishonest, and untrustworthy (Beshi and Kaur, 2020). Public trust in the government at all levels is regarded as a fundamental component of the democratic system, and it is necessary to implement policies and objectives aimed at achieving good public service delivery properly.

The findings showed that trust in the national government was vital because it was the primary agent for policy formulation and implementation; the local government adopted a blueprint for service delivery based on the decisions made at the national level for the improvement of the country. Provincial findings revealed a lack of trust due to the lack of a client-service strategy (the national government continued to regard

itself as primarily controlling rather than enabling). Consumers such as taxpayers and voters have the right to demand high-quality service standards to improve service delivery through accountability and responsiveness on the part of officials.

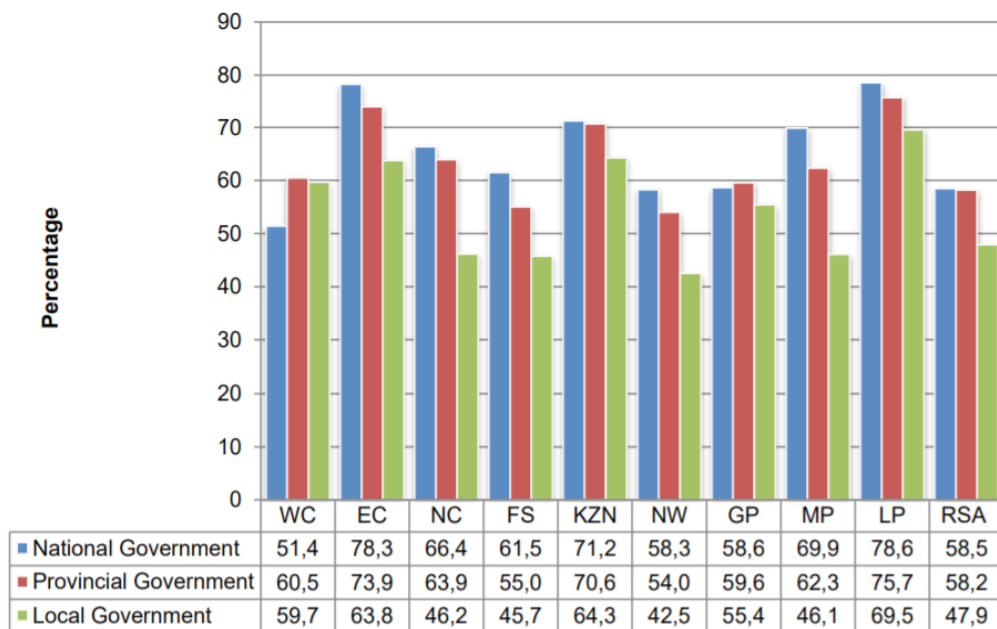


Figure 4. Percentage of persons aged 16 and above who trusted national, provincial, and local governments by province 2019/20

Source: Adapted from StatsSA (2020)

Findings revealed that low levels of trust in the government were also connected to poor public participation in decision-making, such as public participation in the preparation of the various Integrated Development Plans for all levels of government. Motala (2019) recorded that trust was especially low in developing countries, with two of the BRICS countries, namely South Africa and Brazil, faring the worst. Only 21% of Brazilians trusted their government and only 16% of South Africans trusted their government.

The findings demonstrated that public participation was generally limited to the expectations of corrupt government officials, implying that progress did not occur at the grassroots level and this reduced public trust in the government. The findings suggest that the South African governance system must be backed by an integrated strategy, one that promotes civic engagement and decision-making in the provision of public services. Masuku and Jili (2019) attest that an integrated approach to public service delivery is significant in local governments because it integrates processes and services in collaboration with relevant stakeholders to ensure effective and efficient service delivery. This will restore public trust in the government's ability to deliver

services while also promoting the growth of numerous communities.

8. Individual experiences of corruption

Results recorded showed that roughly 2.1% typically received bribes among the high-ranking government institutions, with 1.4% of police officers receiving bribes and 1.0% of the officials from traffic centres accepting bribes. This proved that bribery was one of the most severe forms of corruption, exposing people to high crime levels, increasing suspicion of the police, and allowing crime to grow. The high poverty rates in South Africa are linked to the country's rapid population expansion. However, corruption also has a significant impact in rural areas: The greater the population, the fewer resources available to provide the fundamental needs of all the citizens; therefore, the struggle for access to scarce public resources encourages corruption (StatsSA, 2017). The findings demonstrated that officials solicited public money in exchange for government services ranging from national to local services. Corruption reduces the poor's ability to earn money and is likely to increase poverty. As a result, eliminating corruption is a crucial issue in the fight against poverty, and poverty is defined by low income, poor education and health, susceptibility, and helplessness, all of which attract corruption (Rahayu and Widodo, 2013).

Furthermore, Motala (2019) asserts that such corruption (bribery) is more than just a corrupting influence. In exchange for illicit monetary rewards, it has allowed hazardous or irresponsible driving, implying that enforcement officials fail to carry out their obligations for road safety. Corruption has jeopardised South Africa's economic progress and impedes effective governance. Hence, Madinda (2014) states that government institutions with the highest degrees of corruption tend to deliver low-quality public services. Political institutions facilitate the emergence of corruption, which impacts stability and trust, as well as the ethos of democratic norms and ideals.

Table 1. Individual experiences with bribes, 2019/20

| Government officials | Persons aged 16 years and older who were asked to give money to a government official in exchange for a favour | | Persons aged 16 years and older who reported that they had to give money to a government official in exchange for a favour | |
|---|--|----------|--|----------|
| | Number ('000) | Per cent | Number ('000) | Per cent |
| Traffic officials (e.g. Metro Police, Traffic Police) | 845 | 2.1 | 412 | 1.0 |
| Police officials (SAPS) | 560 | 1.4 | 263 | 0.7 |

| | Number (‘000) | Per cent | Number (‘000) | Per cent |
|--|------------------|----------|---------------|----------|
| Traffic centre officials (driving licence and vehicle testing) | 395 | 1.0 | 172 | 0.4 |
| Local municipality officials | 150 | 0.5 | * | * |
| Home Affairs officials | * | * | * | * |
| Social Services officials (SASSA) | * | * | * | * |
| Court officials | * | * | * | * |
| Health services officials | * | * | * | * |
| Education officials | * | * | * | * |
| Tax or revenue officials (SARS) | * | * | * | * |
| Housing officials | * | * | * | * |
| Correctional Services officials | * | * | * | * |

* Values based on three or less unweighted cases were considered too small to provide accurate estimates, and values were therefore replaced with asterisks.

Source: Adapted from StatsSA (2020)

The findings revealed that only 0.4% of people aged 16 and up were obliged to pay bribes in exchange for government services when it came to local municipal services. Corruption is a national crisis regardless of whether it is relatively high or not. Important public services such as social and health services are threatened and may even be disrupted, resulting in dissatisfaction and protests. These protests are in response to municipal service delivery challenges such as unemployment, poverty, corruption, and ineffective government. Municipal service delivery protests harm socio-economic development plans (Department of Corporate Governance, Human Settlement and Traditional Affairs, 2021).

This paper emphasises the need to inform the community about the resources available and how they will be used to improve public service delivery. Manyaka and Nkuna (2014) argue that the following are said to be prominent in the South African public sector: a lack of vigilance in the implementation of legislation and oversight systems; a lack of political will; low-level political deployments’ wages; and the absence of meritocratic procedures. Thus, the findings indicated in Table 1 proved that 172 respondents paid bribes to traffic officials and 263 respondents paid bribes to police officers to avoid the consequences of their offences. The officials deployed by governing parties, for example, those directly involved in the delivery of public

services, tend to misuse public resources by accepting bribes and favours from the public to provide their citizenship rights.

The findings affirmed that resources rotated exponentially among connected individuals, preventing the rest of the public from receiving these public services. Mamokhere (2019) supports this by stating that corruption in local government and the public sector, in general, is still a major concern for good and effective governance, with substantial quantities of state money missing and state resources being used for personal gain. Prices are inflated during public goods and services procurement, contracts are awarded to friends or family, tenders are not advertised, bid committees are not properly constituted, and panel members do not declare their interests before the adjudication committee meetings (Munzhedzi, 2016).

Public responsibility for combating bribery in South Africa must be strengthened. Inadequate pay, a lack of links between merit and progress, and otherwise unpredictable career advancement opportunities that encourage corruption among public officials necessitate the public sector to step up its efforts to ensure that certain pieces of legislation are enforced appropriately. Manyaka (2014) advises that South Africa requires a transparent and responsible administration that will strengthen internal governance structures and generate positive incentives for behavioural change. Furthermore, the new public service approach puts great emphasis on the accountability and transparency of officials to citizens, where officials serve and respond to citizens rather than steering society (Rivera and Uttaro, 2021).

9. Conclusion and recommendations

The paper confirms that effective governance and service delivery in South Africa needs urgent, serious attention to formulating and implementing an effective governance system that will yield positive results for South African citizens. The paper confirms that different spheres of government and different types of municipalities are perceived differently and have unique development priorities, needs, and constraints. They are therefore affected differently by development interventions. The unavailability of essential services is no longer seen simply as a public sector failure. The limited services and relatively poor governance coupled with persistent corruption have denied South African citizens access to the provision of essential services.

The availability and accessibility of essential services in terms of quality and quantity provision remains crucial for the living and survival of citizens. These services are a fundamental human right and the government must ensure that they are provided and accessible by all. Effective governance and service delivery remain the main source of trust for citizens in all government spheres and reworking the public sector's governance system is imperative to ensure sustainable service delivery for all. A detailed understanding and incorporation of new public service approach principles by the South African government should be considered as a tool to address the

inefficacies in the public sector to alleviate poor socio-economic conditions and ensure equal access to basic services.

The paper confirms that the new public service approach is the key to ensuring balanced service delivery that advocates for accountability and public participation to promote equal access to basic services. The paper maintains that the new public service approach sensitises decision-making structures to the service delivery barriers encountered by the various institutions so that they can address the imbalances in rendering basic services. The paper recommends that the public sector be more transparent and improve access to information as this will enhance equal and meaningful participation by citizens in the decision-making structures and enforce accountability by public servants.

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