

Improving service delivery in the South African Public Sector

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Abstract: Purpose

The South African public sector has been performing poorly on service delivery, threatening the nation's social and economic well-being. This article aims to answer the question of how the South African public sector can improve service delivery performance.

Design/methodology/approach

This study employed a framework by Bao *et al.* (2013) that integrates contextual settings, core values, structures and processes, and leadership to address public service delivery challenges. Furthermore, it employed a leadership model for enhancing service delivery in the public sector by Pretorius and Schurink (2007). This was done to develop a comprehensive model that addresses contemporary public service delivery challenges in South Africa.

Findings

This study presents a model for improving service delivery in the South African public sector. Findings suggest that the proposed Model can be utilized as a management instrument to improve service delivery in the public sector.

Originality

Findings suggest that the Model can be utilized as a public entities management instrument as it enables the entities to simplify their public service vision and strategy and transform it into goals and actions.

Research limitations/implications

Although the study used an existing framework and Model, the outcome is an instrument that can be applied to the South African context to address contemporary public service delivery issues.

Practical Implications

South African public entities have been performing poorly in public service delivery. This article offers an instrument that can improve public service performance.

Keywords: Public service delivery, Public Sector, Service delivery performance, Model for improved service delivery

1. Introduction

The public sector in South Africa has been facing significant challenges in executing its constitutional mandates of delivering public services and infrastructure to all the people (Munzhedzi, 2021, pp.145-162; Fourie and Poggenpoel, 2017, pp. 169-180; Reddy 2016, pp. 1-8). The challenges and shortcomings have affected almost all the

spheres of government, stretching from the national and provincial governments to the local governments. Public entities and local municipalities, in particular, have been performing poorly for some time, and the recent 2021 local government election turnout may indicate that people have little faith that government leaders can turn the situation around. Most public entities and local municipalities have faced challenges ranging from lack of leadership, financial mismanagement, governance issues and accountability problems (Masiya, *et al.*, 2019; Ngoepe, 2016, pp.338-353). All these developments have negatively affected the effective and efficient provisioning of essential services to the people (Kanyane, Mutema, and Zikhali, 2020, pp. 2581; Masuku, 2019, pp. 118-134). The importance of the public sector can never be overemphasized, given the fact that it is the part of government that is closest to the people and responsible for interacting with the people and promoting the general welfare. It has a social function and obligation to provide basic essential amenities to all citizens (Ndevu and Muller, 2017). This makes the public sector vital to the general welfare of the whole nation. The public sector's poor performance can potentially drive the whole nation into a crisis. From a public entities point of view, it can cause significant economic problems; for instance, the problems at ESKOM, a public electricity generation utility, have resulted in negative impacts on the South African economy, where the country has been losing approximately between 20 to 80 billion Rands per month during load shedding (Mybroadband, 2015). Energy security is a fundamental pivot for attracting direct foreign investment into the country's economy (CSIR: Load-shedding report for 2020). From a local government or municipalities point of view, poor performance can cause serious social and welfare problems, for example, a lack of basic services such as clean water and sanitation, which is categorized as human rights violations according to the South African constitution, which states that 'everyone has the right to have access to sufficient food and water'. It is, therefore, imperative that this study looks at how the public sector can improve on its constitutional mandates of delivering services and infrastructure to all the people.

This study looks at some of the main challenges and obstacles to public service delivery in South Africa and discusses possible solutions through the use of a model and a framework that have the potential to address the main public service delivery challenges. The study will assess the Value-based Integrated Conceptual Framework for Improved Service Delivery by Bao *et al.* (2013) and explore how it can be applied to the South African public sector to address service delivery challenges that have been threatening both the social and economic well-being of the nation. Based on the notion that efficient public service delivery requires effective leadership, this study will also evaluate the Retro Advanced Leadership Model by Pretorius and Schurink (2007) to explore the role of leadership in the public sector and its implications on improved public service delivery.

2. Service delivery in South Africa

Service delivery can be understood as a phrase that describes the distribution of basic amenities that the general public depends on, such as water, electricity, and housing (Osborne, 2018; Conoley and Gutkin, 2017, pp. 393-424). Service delivery encompasses the government's commitment to providing reliable, predictable, quality services to communities (Howlett, 2020; Voorberget *et al.*, 2017, pp. 365-372; Reddy, 2016, pp.1-8). The idea of service delivery can be understood from a governance perspective to encompass mandates and rules that ensure that public sector entities, including local municipalities and their staff, are held accountable so that they can fulfil their duties of efficiently providing quality sustainable services to the people (Molina 2017, pp. 462-499; Mathebula *et al.* 2016, pp. 70-85). As stipulated by the South African government, service delivery is a constitutional obligation directed to be provisioned in a manner that underscores equality and fairness among other values (Ndebele, & Lavhelani, 2017, pp. 340-356).

According to the South African constitution, 1996, equitable delivery of basic amenities to the people is a social mandate of the South African public sector (Constitution, S.A., 1996). This implies that the public sector has a duty to fulfil its legal, political and socioeconomic obligations (Mamokhere, 2020; Ndevu, & Muller, 2017, pp.13-24). Based on this backdrop, public service delivery must be viewed as a mechanism or way for the public sector to fulfil its constitutional mandates to the general public as directed by the law (Maloba, 2015, pp. 50-61).

The birth of autonomous privileges in 1994 saw the South African government pledge to provide free basic amenities to previously disadvantaged, predominantly black populace (Reddy 2016, pp. 1-8; Sithole, & Mathonsi, 2015, pp. 5-30). This move made significant strides towards improved equality in service delivery to previously marginalized communities. However, it is important to mention that serious service delivery challenges still exist and are arguably increasing despite these efforts. This has been evidenced by the significant increase in protests

emanating from poor or unreliable service delivery across South Africa (Chikulo 2016, pp. 51-60; Reddy 2016, pp. 1-8; Sithole & Mathonsi, 2015:5-30).

3. The state of service delivery in South Africa

The South African government took over a public sector with service delivery backlogs, particularly in marginalized, predominantly black communities (Reddy, 2016, pp.1-8; Twala, 2014, pp.159-167). This presented significant challenges to the transformation goals of the new dispensation, which sort to undo discriminatory service delivery-related policies (Mpehle 2012, pp. 213-227; Naidoo, and Kuye, 2005, pp.619-632). Other challenges, such as lack of capacity in terms of human resources, lack of experience and financial limitations, also played their role in constraining the ambitions of the new government. The serious shortage of technically qualified managers and professionals in all three spheres of government is of great concern. It appears that the weakness in government structures is the lack of knowledge on identifying projects and how to effectively spend the allocated money [Marleny A, 2019, "Saice bemoans the exodus of engineers from South Africa]. Currently, the service delivery situation is not improving, and there is a lack of confidence in the public sector system, as evidenced by unending service delivery protests (Mamokhere, 2020; Ndevu and Muller, 2017). More than two decades into democracy, a significant part of the populace suffer from unreliable or no access to basic service delivery and no access to clean water and basic health care. Provinces such as the Eastern Cape are estimated to have the majority of their people living without tap water access (Jili 2019, pp. 790-801; Mpehle 2012, pp. 213-227; Sulla, and Zikhali, 2018; World Bank Group, 2018). Residents in Ward 6 in Maxesibeni Village, under the Umzimvubu Local Municipality, have resorted to using a shaking temporary wooden bridge called "Tebetebe" after more than 30 residents drowned while trying to cross an overflowing Umzimvubu river (News 24: 22 Jan 2022, "Shaking Bridge A Danger to Maxesibeni Villagers). This is one example of how municipalities fail to meet the obvious needs of the communities they are supposed to serve.

Some scholars, such as Reddy (2016, pp. 1-8) and Fourie and Poggenpoel (2017, pp. 169-180), believe that the South African government is failing the people as far as service delivery is concerned. This is supported, for instance, by a recent survey that revealed that more than half of all the municipalities are failing to timely collect refuse from the majority of their households. More than half of them cannot provide water to their populace (Masuku and Jili, 2019). This paints a very troubling picture of the state of service delivery in South Africa.

4. Sources of the service delivery challenge facing the public sector

Many factors hinder reliable, effective and sustainable service delivery by the public sector. Such factors include lack of capacity, political appointments, corruption, insufficient oversight, lack of accountability and financial constraints (Ndevu and Miller, 2017, pp.13-24; Auditor-General 2014/15, p. 4; Mpehle, 2015, pp. 67-83; Mpehle, 2012, pp. 213-227). Therefore, this article will briefly examine some of these challenges and how they have undermined sustainable service delivery by the public sector.

Political appointments

In South Africa, separating politics and political parties from public service has proven difficult (Masuku and Jili, 2019). When the African National Congress party (ANC) gained power in 1994, it deployed its members to key public sector positions intending to promote loyalty and to improve service delivery in previously marginalized communities (Twala, 2014, pp.159-167; Tshishonga, 2014, pp.891-908). Even though the move had noble intentions and theoretical merits at face value, it opened doors to political interference and poor performance due to a lack of political will to hold those deployed accountable (Masuku, and Jili, 2019; Ndevu, and Muller, 2017; Koma, 2016). On top of that, in some instances, people without requisite skills were appointed to key strategic positions such as Chief Financial Officers, Heads of Infrastructure Development and many key positions in the service-delivery value chain. Some will argue that this eventually culminated in serious corruption, gross negligence and state capture, where corrupt individuals controlled key public sector institutions. Party political appointments or cadre deployments have largely undermined the very notion that was used to justify its necessity, which is service delivery to previously marginalized communities. As a result, political appointments have in some way contributed to poor and declining quality of service delivery to the people. It may have led to poor performance of public sector institutions and municipalities in service delivery. [Can we quote from the Zondo Report on State Capture?]

Lack of accountability

The primary purpose of public sector organizations is to deliver services to the general public to promote the general welfare of the country (Arnaboldi *et al.*, 2015, pp. 1-22). In order to ensure that the public sector fulfils its constitutional mandate of delivering services to the people, there is a need for accountability (Alonso *et al.*, 2015, pp.643-660.). For the public sector to achieve excellence in service delivery, it is necessary to ensure that public institutions and their employees are accountable to the government and the public. The South African public sector faces significant accountability challenges that have resulted in poor service delivery due to irregular expenditure and disregard for proper procurement processes (Mazibuko & Fourie 2017, pp.110-115; Smoke, 2015, pp.97-112.) as well as poor performance in financial management. The South African auditor general (AG) spotlighted the lack of consequences as one of the main reasons why irregular expenditure, disregard of stipulate procurement processes and poor performance, are allowed to continue unabated in the public sector (Ndevu and Muller 2017). The AG has found that in consecutive years (2013/14, 2014/15, 2015/16), lack of accountability has resulted in poor implementation of internal controls and a complete disregard of procurement procedures costing the taxpayer billions of Rands (The auditor general South African, 2016).

Due to a lack of accountability, the AG's report also found inadequate audit evidence to show that punitive actions were implemented against those who accrued irregular expenditures or failed to follow necessary protocols in procurement procedures. All this highlights the importance of accountability in ensuring that public sector organizations deliver on their obligations of providing quality, reliable and sustainable service delivery. These experiences suggest that sustainable service delivery depends on cultivating institutional arrangements in the public sector that promote accountability and performance monitoring (Munzhedzi, 2021, pp.145-162; Jili, and Mthethwa, 2016; Clementine, 2016, pp.119-123; Nzewi and Musokeru, 2014, pp. 36-55).

Fragile institutional capacity

Lack of capacity, particularly human resources in the public sector, significantly affects how public institutions are run and, by extension, their capacity to deliver services as mandated. Human resources skills inadequacy in the public sector is one of the biggest contributors to poor service delivery (Munzhedzi, 2016, pp.1-8; Moyo, 2016, pp. 7-44). The AG found that there are too many open vacancies in vital positions in key public sector organizations, and the ones filled are occupied by unqualified officials who lack basic skills to carry out their duties such performance audits which hamper efficient and reliable service delivery (The auditor general South African, 2016). Moyo (2016, pp. 7-44) postulates that officials in charge of important public sector institutions such as municipalities must possess appropriate skills and capabilities to ensure sustainable service delivery.

Moreover, staff acquisition should be based on merit rather than political affiliations. Masuku and Jili (2019) add that public sector administrators, particularly those occupying key posts, are usually cadre deployments hired mainly for political reasons rather than their experience or expertise. According to Twala (2014, pp.159-167) and Tshishonga (2014, pp.891-908), this is the root of inefficiencies that lead to poor service delivery. This is highly likely to cause problems, given that most service delivery challenges, such as providing clean water and reliable electricity, present significant technical challenges that demand skills and competence (Weaver *et al.*, 2017, pp. 398-408). The lack of capacity to manage key public entities due to lack of expertise cripples such entities and causes them to fail to fulfil their service delivery mandates.

Lack of leadership

Perhaps the most significant challenge facing the public sector in fulfilling its service delivery mandates is leadership (Fourie, and Poggenpoel, 2017, pp.169-180). Most of the main service delivery challenges can be distilled to leadership (Shimengah, 2018, pp.1-13). The deep-rooted challenges in public service delivery are entrenched at the profound levels of the South African public sector and require prudent leadership. Some of the public sector's main service delivery challenges emanate from senior officials' lack of leadership (Maphumulo and Bhengu, 2019, pp.1-9). This is due to several reasons, including a lack of expertise from senior officials or willingness to act decisively as

leaders to take necessary corrective measures to ensure the optimal operations of public entities. For instance, a lack of accountability in the public sector is a manifestation of a lack of leadership. Leadership qualities of the officials in key public sector positions directly affect the capacity of public institutions to deliver on their service delivery obligations. Therefore, it is vital to underscore that good leadership qualities are a prerequisite to enhancing service delivery. After all, according to Batho Pele's principles, good leadership qualities are some of the most vital elements of successful organizations (Mojapelo *et al.*, 2021; Masegare and Ngoepe, 2018).

Governance Failures at Boards of State-owned Entities

Appointments of board members to the various state entities is another area of concern, as highlighted in the Zondo Commission on State Capture. The boards of South African Airways (SAA), Passenger Rail Services (PRASA), and South African Broadcasting Services are constituted by people aligned with the ruling party (ANC). Most appointments to Boards lack the requisite skills and training as board members and do not understand their role. They think they are appointed to manage these institutions' day-to-day operations rather than playing an oversight role. In other state entities, Ministers appoint their previous Director-Generals as leaders of these boards or recycle ex-Departmental officials to keep tabs on their public entities and, in the process, stifle the independence of such public entities. Despite having their organic founding legislation as autonomous institutions created to enhance service delivery, many public entities are micro-managed as extensions of state Departments. The basic principles of corporate governance and independence are flouted with disastrous consequences of non-performance or failure in executing the mandates for which they were created.

Running Business of Public Entities through the PFMA and the MFMA

The Public Finance Management Act was enacted to regulate the management and accounting of state finances for state departments and municipalities. While it is understandable that controls are paramount to ensure prudent financial accountability on public funds in all state departments, extending the PFMA and MFMA to public entities running state businesses on commercial terms is tantamount to throwing a world champion boxer in the ring with his eyes blindfolded and hands tied in the back. Success state businesses in rail, aviation, eco-tourism, energy, and water require quick turnarounds, agility and speed in executing business tasks. There is no room for a 6-12 months tender process to procure essential goods and services to run their businesses. A leaking toilet or burst pipeline in a state-owned rest camp in a game reserve will negatively impact the overall customer experience and service delivery.

5. Service delivery and legislative frameworks in South Africa

The South African government is committed to service delivery by enacting legislative frameworks to guide and enhance service delivery in the country. Some of the legislative frameworks include the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996, the Public Service Act 103 of 1994, the White Paper on Batho Pele, 1998, Municipal System Act 32 of 2000, the White Paper on the transformation of Public Service, 1995, and the Municipal Structure act of 1998, among others (Reddy 2018, pp. 710-725).

The White Paper on the transformation of Public Service, ratified in 1995, aimed to transform public services to be 'representative, coherent, transparent, efficient, effective accountable and responsive to the needs of all' (The White Paper on the transformation of Public Service, 1995). Batho Pele, translated as 'people first', mainly aimed at putting citizens at the centre of public service. The White Paper on Batho Pele framework presented service delivery ideologies to enhance service delivery and address the main challenges in public sector service delivery (Qobo, and Nyathi, 2016, pp.421-436). Such ideologies include consistent engagement with citizens, ensuring value for money in service delivery, and communicating service delivery targets with key stakeholders, particularly the citizens (Mojapelo *et al.*, 2021; Amusan and Mchunu, 2017, pp.1-18; Mawela *et al.*, 2017).

On the financial side, the government introduced frameworks such as The Medium-term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) to guide public institutions on judicious ways of preparing their medium-term budgets. The MTEF connected budgets and policies to enable the efficient and effective delivery of services (National Treasury, 2021, p.1). The Public Financial Management Act of 2000 (PFMA) was also introduced to transform financial administration in the public sector to contemporary financial management practices that are less procedural and more focused on accountability (Agyepong, and Nhamo, 2017, pp.2457-2474; Hofisi, and Pooe, 2017, pp. 126-148;

Ajam, & Fourie, 2016, pp. 263-282). It is interesting to note that despite all these well-crafted legislative frameworks that aim to facilitate better service delivery, there still exist significant challenges in service delivery.

6. Proposed framework for improved service delivery

This section presents and discusses possible solutions to service delivery challenges in the public sector through the use of a model and framework that can help public sector institutions improve service delivery.

The Model and framework that will be discussed are the value-based Integrated Conceptual Framework for Improved Service Delivery by Bao *et al.* (2013) and the Retro Advanced Leadership Model by Pretorius and Schurink (2007). Based on the challenges currently facing the public sector, as articulated in previous sections of this article, the aforementioned Model and framework are used by the researcher and co-author to develop a model that can be used in the South African public sector to improve service delivery. Firstly, the researcher and co-author will look at the value-based Integrated Conceptual Framework for Improved Service Delivery by Bao *et al.* (2013) and how it can be applied to the South African public sector to improve service delivery. Afterwards, the focus will be on the Retro Advanced Leadership Model by Pretorius and Schurink (2007), and the study will explore its implication in addressing service delivery challenges in the public sector.

The value-based Integrated Conceptual Framework for Improved Service Delivery consists of the following main components: contextual setting, core values, structures and processes, and leadership and management (Bao *et al.*, 2013).

Contextual setting

Public sector institutions in South Africa have faced significant challenges in executing their constitutional mandates of delivering services to all people (Fourie and Poggenpoel, 2017, pp.169-180). One of the first steps in addressing service delivery challenges understands the importance of contextual settings within which public sector institutions operate. In South Africa, there are several aspects and dynamics that determine and shape service delivery that has to be taken into consideration. Such aspects include the socioeconomic background of the nation, political interferences in public entities administration, political appointments, service delivery discrimination from the previous government, power struggles in local governments, corruption, and coalitions in local governments that hamper service delivery, among others.

These factors and many others are vital because they influence the environments within which public sector institutions operate. For instance, socioeconomic aspects emanating from South Africa's past that made the nation one of the most unequal in the world (Cooper, 2019) need to be considered in building effective responses to address service delivery challenges. Guided by the legislative and policy frameworks, public institutions must develop strategies and procedures to address service delivery challenges, considering the importance of the underlying context-specific dynamics.

Core values

Core values and principles are unequivocally important in service delivery; they guide public sector institutions on their purpose and form the basis for standards and performance measurement (Bao *et al.*, 2013). Core values encompass principles, beliefs, and philosophies underpinning operations and guide general decision-making processes in public sector administration. In South Africa, some of the values that guide the public sector are derived from the nation's constitution, particularly the Bill of Rights. Such value includes human dignity, justice, racial impartiality, and Ubuntu (Ndevu and Muller, 2017; Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996).

Accountability and transparency are some of the key core values in public service. This is pronounced in The White Paper on the Transformation of Public Services (Act) enacted in 1995, which emphasizes transforming the public service to be transparent, accountable and efficient, among other principles. Some of the main targets of The White Paper were to address service delivery challenges by promoting accountability and transparency (The White Paper on the Transformation of Public Services 1995). Bao *et al.* (2013) suggest that on top of the core values from the

legislations and laws, it is important to realize that political parties' ideological values translate these core values and reshape them into policy initiatives.

Structures and processes

Developing necessary structures and processes that provide a platform for efficient decision-making, transparency, and accountability in service delivery can go a long way in addressing public sector service delivery challenges (Bao *et al.*, 2013). Some of the public sector entities in South Africa lack appropriate structures and processes to deal with ever-increasing service delivery challenges effectively. According to Ndevu and Muller (2017), innovative initiatives are needed to maintain service delivery standards through developing structures and processes that cultivate a participatory approach where key stakeholders are meaningfully engaged in service delivery matters. Developing appropriate structures and processes can also facilitate the monitoring and evaluation of public sector performance in service delivery (Jili and Mthethwa, 2016).

Leadership

To achieve good governance, transparency and accountability in the administration of public entities, good leadership are of paramount importance (Masegare and Ngoepe, 2018; Fourie and Poggenpoel, 2017, pp.169-180). Good leadership qualities are needed to address the continuous decline in service delivery in South Africa. It is important to point out that many factors contribute to service delivery challenges in the South African public sector, but most of these challenges are a mere reflection of poor or non-existing leadership. If the public is to arrest rampant service delivery challenges, leadership will be needed at the administrative level to ensure the efficient operation of public entities and at the political level to ensure effective oversight, transparency and accountability. Ndevu and Muller (2017) suggest that there is a need for a new paradigm in the leadership and management culture of public entities that are inspired by the constitutional values of accountability, transparency, honesty, and ethical integrity.

This section focuses on the Retro Advanced Leadership Model by Pretorius and Schurink (2007) and explores its implications in addressing service delivery challenges in the South African public sector. The Model aims to assist public entities, specifically local government entities such as local municipalities, to achieve their goals and fulfil their constitutional mandates. In this study, the Model is applied to the public sector to explore how it can be utilized to attain goals such as good governance, promoting accountability, developing human resource capacity, promoting good leadership and improving service delivery in general. The Retro Advanced Leadership Model comprises the following key components for enhancing service delivery: management and leadership performance, legislative imperatives, achieving realistic goals and continuous maintenance and monitoring (Pretorius and Schurink 2007).

The Model was constructed from insights from experienced individuals in the South African public sector who shared their perspectives and practical experience of service delivery in the public sector. The rich insights were then condensed into a model that can enhance service delivery in the public sector. The Model highlights the following aspects of service delivery:

- Cultivating a conducive environment for performance excellence among public sector employees;
- The promotion of required leadership qualities to achieve service delivery excellence in the public sector;
- The role of internal systems such as performance management systems, budget controls, and integrated planning;
- Legislation that pronounces public sector mandates and accountability in service delivery;
- The importance of good governance and human resources in attaining service delivery obligations;
- The need for continuous monitoring and evaluation to uphold and improve service delivery standards.

7. Model for improving service delivery in the public sector

The Model combines the value-based Integrated Conceptual Framework for Improved Service Delivery (Bao *et al.*, 2013). The framework integrates contextual setting, values, structures and processes, and leadership into a framework that addresses service delivery challenges in the public sector. The Retro Advanced Leadership Model by Pretorius and Schurink (2007) was constructed based on rich insights from experienced individuals in the South African public sector and condensed into a model that addresses how service delivery in the public sector can be enhanced. The outcome is an adapted model that can be applied to the public sector to address contemporary service delivery challenges.

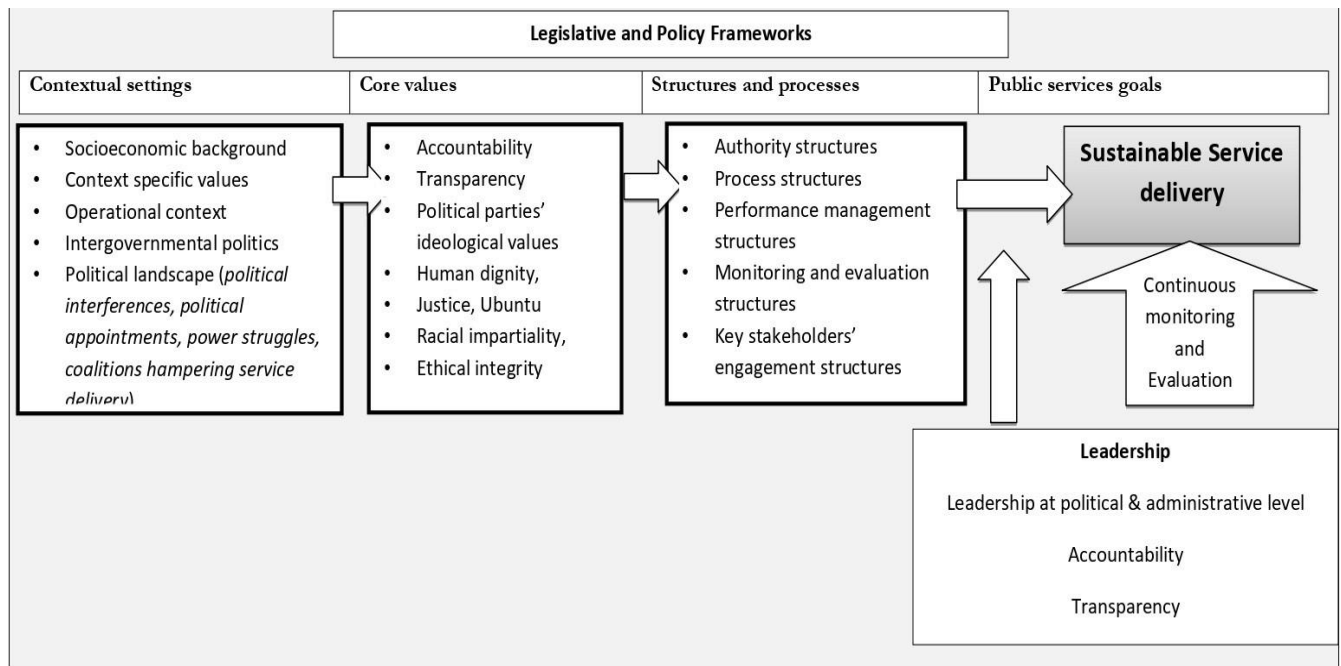


Figure 1 Model for improving service delivery in the public sector: adapted from Bao et al. (2013) and Pretorius and Schurink (2007).

This Model should enable the public sector to:

- Meet legislative mandates that aim to enhance service delivery;
- Adhere to values that guide service delivery in the public sector;
- Set achievable targets to meet service delivery needs;
- A better understanding of contextual settings that influence service delivery;
- Aligning public policy goals with context-specific values;
- Align human resources capacity with key service delivery goals;
- Develop a conducive environment for performance excellence among public sector employees;
- Implement continuous monitoring and evaluation to maintain quality service delivery;
- Implement performance management systems and measurable performance targets in service delivery;
- Incorporate socioeconomic context in service delivery strategies;
- Come up with authority and process structures for improved service delivery;
- Improve leadership at both the political and administrative levels;
- Come up with strategies to engage key stakeholders in service delivery;

8. Conclusions

The public sector plays a crucial role in the provisioning of public goods and services that are a necessity for the general welfare of the people. The South African public sector has been facing significant challenges in executing its constitutional mandates of delivering services and infrastructure to the general public. This has resulted in serious social, economic and welfare problems that have the potential to drag the whole nation into a crisis. The researchers

propose that service delivery challenges facing the public sector can be addressed by applying The Value-based Integrated Conceptual Framework for Improved Service Delivery by Bao *et al.* (2013) and the Retro Advanced Leadership Model by Pretorius and Schurink (2007).

This study combined a theoretical framework by Bao *et al.* (2013) that integrates contextual setting, values, structures and processes, and leadership into a framework that addresses service delivery challenges in the public sector. Furthermore, a model by Pretorius and Schurink (2007) was constructed based on insights from experienced individuals in the South African public sector and condensed into a model that addresses how service delivery in the public sector can be enhanced. The outcome is an adapted model that can be applied to address contemporary service delivery challenges in the South African public sector.

Findings from this study suggest that the adapted Model can be utilized as a management instrument in helping the public sector improve service delivery. Its usefulness emanates from the fact that its application emphasizes contextual settings in service delivery, adherence to core values that guide service delivery in the public sector, leadership qualities that promote service delivery excellence and implementing continuous monitoring to maintain quality service delivery standards, among other factors.

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