

Exploring Factors Delaying Public Service Delivery in South African Local Government

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Abstract

In South Africa, local governments are primarily responsible for service delivery. The purpose of this research was to look into the factors that contribute to poor service delivery in South African local government, with the City of Johannesburg (CoJ) serving as the unit of analysis. Fundamentally, two critical questions had to be addressed: what are the major factors contributing to the CoJ metropolitan municipality's poor public service delivery? Second, what strategies can be implemented in the CoJ metropolitan municipality to improve public service delivery? The study used quantitative research methods with the support of the survey research strategy. Online questionnaires were distributed to 100 participants via the Google forms platform, yielding a useful response rate of 56%. Poor public office ethics, a lack of adequate resource capacity, a lack of strategic awareness by key personnel, a lack of staff training and development, undue political interference, a lack of digital transformation, and a lack of accountability and transparency were among the top-ranked contributing factors to poor public service delivery, according to the findings of this study. Finally, the study's findings and recommendations are hoped to assist the CoJ metropolitan municipality and provide a paradigm shift in the South African local government sphere in terms of improving public service delivery.

Keywords

City of Johannesburg, Exploring Factors, Local Government, Service Delivery, South Africa,

1. Introduction

Local governments have taken the lead in implementing sociopolitical and economic transformations (Van De Waldt 2021). The state extends basic public service delivery functions to local communities via local government structures. Local government services and functions include electricity and gas supply, municipal health services, water and sanitation, refuse removal, municipal public transportation, municipal roads and stormwater systems, street trading, libraries, and other public facilities, firefighting services, abattoirs and fresh food markets, land use decisions, parks and recreational areas, and local tourism. However, society suffers numerous consequences as a result of municipalities' poor public service delivery on the basic functions outlined for development or provision, operations and maintenance. Studies suggest that local governments in low- and middle-income countries persist in offering poor public service delivery (The World Bank 2021; Zon et al. 2017). Globally, contaminated drinking water due to a lack of safe water sources and sanitation is estimated to cause 829 000 death annually (WHO 2019). According to a comparative survey conducted by Rothstein and Nicholas (2017), poor service delivery by local governments is a global issue, including in South Africa.

In South Africa, the local government faces numerous service delivery functional challenges related to efficient supply, operation, and maintenance to meet citizens' basic needs and demands (Kanyane, 2016). Between 2002 and 2019, the percentage of households whose solid waste was collected weekly or less frequently decreased from 66,4 per cent in 2018 to 61,5 per cent in 2019, and access to water decreased in five provinces, with observations in Mpumalanga (5,3%), Limpopo (3,8 %), and Free State (3,7 %)(Statistics South Africa 2019). Furthermore, the South African auditor general reported that 46 and 55 per cent of municipalities in South Africa had no approved road maintenance plan or priority list for the 2016 and 2017 fiscal years, respectively(Makwetu 2018).

Poor service delivery by local governments has long-term socioeconomic and environmental consequences for the communities and ecosystems under their jurisdiction. Protests against the South African local government were

common from 2005 to 2015. Such fulmination frequently resulted in violence, xenophobic attacks, fatalities, public and private property vandalism, and infrastructure destruction in townships and informal settlements (Mamokhere 2019; Chikulo 2016). Illegally connecting to public infrastructures such as the power grid, water, and sanitation systems, as well as installing illegal speedbumps and establishing illegal dumping sites, is common. Economic losses, ecosystem extinction, electrical shock and injuries, various pollutions resulting in air and waterborne diseases, and a high risk of fatalities may occur as a result of such community illegal connections.

1.1 Objectives

The growing number of service delivery protests in South Africa, as depicted in media reports and supported by academic studies and observations, piques the interest of researchers in determining the factors that contribute to poor service delivery. The primary objectives of this research study were as follows: a) to identify the factors contributing to poor public service delivery within the CoJ municipality, and b) to recommend strategies that the COJ could implement to improve its public service delivery.

2. Literature Review

The terms council, municipality, local authority, and local government are synonymously used to describe the basic democratically elected government unit that delivers local services (Drew and Dollery, 2014). In South Africa, Picard and Mogale (2015) state that the local government constitutes eight (8) metropolitans, forty-four (44) district municipalities, and two hundred and twenty-six (226) local municipalities. These municipalities are wholly state-owned entities governed by the central government's decisions. The impact of poor service delivery in Africa has stifled development (Tem 2018). The local government service deliverables are products placed at the perigee of the most critical needs of the ecosystem, which include physiological needs (Air, Water, Food, and Shelter) and, secondly, safety needs (Employment, Resources, Health) (Rajan, 2019). Municipalities' poor performance forces people to live in areas with insufficient housing, water supplies, a lack of safety due to unemployment, and high crime rates.

In redesigning the service delivery phenomena, Dalal and Shama (2019) work explores and recommends e-service delivery, which is more cost-efficient, and transparent and reduces social division and corruption factors. The majority of e-Government management systems are implemented in well-managed countries. E-Government encourages better administration, public services, social values, and overall well-being. Furthermore, it fosters ethical behaviour, professionalism, trust, and confidence in government, as well as open government capabilities (Twizeyimana and Andersson 2019). Local governance management and policymakers should pay attention to such management systems and redesign the service delivery aspect. The idea of local government and partnerships with non-profit organisations may benefit local service delivery by reducing corruption and building capacity. The argument held by Dahlström and Lapuente (2017) expresses the idea that if two or more groups of different motivations and values work together, it will encourage monitoring amongst themselves and pull the groups away from self-interest or corruption and push them toward the common good. Local governments in China have launched partnership programs with non-profit organizations. This practice broadens the scope of government and provides social service deliverables to local communities. This strategy is known as "service activism," and it improves service delivery through advocacy (Yuen 2018). Shakil Ahmad and Abu Talib (2015) evaluated the community empowerment and sustainability of implementing community-driven projects through citizen community boards (CCBs). Such initiatives aim to increase local capacity for improving quality of life, poverty reduction, development, and changes (Ahmad et al. 2015).

2.1 Factors influencing local municipality service delivery

According to Managa (2012), the key challenges weakening local government performance are institutional capacity, mismanagement of funds, high levels of corruption, and a lack of public participation. Makanyeza, Kwandayi, and Ikobe (2013) identified the following as significant contributing factors to public poor service delivery by local government: councillor's interference and political manipulation; corruption, lack of accountability, and transparency; inadequate citizen participation; poor human resource policy; failure to manage change; lack of employee capacity; poor planning; inadequate performance monitoring and evaluation; and lack of strategic awareness. Beyers (2016) identified several contributing factors to public poor service delivery in the case study of Feta Kgomo local municipality, including political interference in municipal administration, a lack of public participation, and insufficient human capacity to deliver services. Kanyane (2016) discovered municipal capacity constraints, financial viability issues, service delivery protests, convoluted political processes, corruption, and poor planning, as well as monitoring and evaluation difficulties as some of the factors hindering service delivery from local government. Koma (2018) presented a case study of two South African municipalities in the Mpumalanga Province, namely, Thaba

Chweu local municipality and Steve Tshwete local municipality, with the findings of factors leading to poor service delivery outlined as: insufficient institutional and administrative capacity, poor financial performance, poor political leadership, and gross inefficiencies. According to Sambo (2019), municipal sources of income, financial management, governance, accountability, and human resources are some of the factors contributing to poor service delivery in local government. The literature provided a variety of factors affecting local government service delivery, as well as strategies for dealing with each factor, and a summary is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. A summary of factors and strategies

Factor	Strategy(s)	Author (s)
Bureaucracy (the term refers to the complex systems that local governments use to control and approve service delivery).	Different layers of administration (the Mayor and Municipal Manager) within local government should establish processes to ensure effective decision making, recognized quality work, and continuous improvement.	(Beyers, 2016)
Public office ethics (the term refers to the principles used to determine whether a behaviour is right or wrong, good or bad in relation to the established set of rules or good governance).	Reinforce ethical leadership as it relates to high performance through training, rewards, and recognition, as well as established processes to enforce ethical behaviour.	(Sambo, 2019)
Human resource management is the process of hiring, developing, and retaining competent employees within organizations.	Drive the process of filling critical vacancies within municipalities and developing employees capable of rising through the ranks to fill critical positions.	(Koma 2018)
Stakeholder engagement (the processes used by local government to understand the needs of the society they are serving through community engagement and other forms of engagement).	Meaningful stakeholder engagement following stages: inform, consult, involve, and empower.	(Advancing States 2013)
Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (this is an ongoing managerial function that assesses whether or not predicted results are being met, identifies constraints in deployment, and highlights any unforeseen consequences).	Locating the monitoring and evaluation function correctly, providing training and support, and improving information management systems.	(Naidoo 2011)
Planning (this refers to the process of collecting requirements, developing the scopes and budgets, identifying resources needed for service delivery, and development of procurement strategies and quality management plans to ensure that the local government meets its objectives).	The local government administration should develop processes to ensure that all projects and other works have well-defined procurement strategies that are all linked to the overall strategy of the local government.	(Makanyeza et al. 2013)
Management of Change (refers to the processes used by the organisations to prepare the employees, processes and policies to accommodate changes within the organisation).	The local government should hire change agents who can assess the impact of each change within the local government structures and prepare the organization to go through the various stages of the changes.	(Makanyeza et al. 2013)
Financial Management (the term refers to the management of financial activities of the organisation and ensuring compliance with the regulations applicable to a specific sector like the Public Financial management act and other National Treasury requirements when it comes to public finance management).	Local governments should provide training, processes, and systems to manage public finances, as well as ensure that decision-makers understand the regulatory requirements.	(Koma 2018)
Accountability is defined as the act of accepting responsibilities that are within one's capability, being open to audits, and being transparent in carrying out those responsibilities with honesty toward others.	Local government should improve government procurement procedures, policies, and accountability mechanisms, and implement audit recommendations.	(Managa 2012)
Governance (refers to the processes designed to manage risk, ensure compliance, ethical behaviour and mechanisms designed to ensure that people are held accountable for their actions which is all designed to ensure that the businesses meet their objectives and visions).	Good governance should pervade decision-making processes as well as organizational culture. Executive and senior management should advocate for good governance at all organizational levels.	(Kanyane 2016)
Strategic awareness (the term refers to the understanding of the mission, visions and objectives of the organisation)	Introduce and maintain awareness of national and local initiatives to ensure compliance, comprehension, and long-term sustainable service improvement.	(Kanyane 2016)

3. Methods

The study used quantitative research methods with the support of the survey research strategy (Melnikovas, 2018). The study further used a questionnaire with close-ended questions as a data collection tool. The first process to conduct this study was to conduct the preliminary literature review to better understand the problem and develop the problem statement and study objectives. The next step was to conduct an in-depth literature review to define key concepts and understand what other authors had done to research the topic of interest. The final process entails developing procedures for data collection, validation, and reporting study results. It is worth noting that the overall process for

this study was governed by the University of Johannesburg's code of ethics, and this study received ethical clearance, which is required for all research involving people, organizations, or animals. The following ethical issues were considered in this research study at each stage of the research process (Table 2):

Table 2. Ethical consideration

Ethical consideration	Use in this study
Autonomy	The consent form stated that potential participants had the right to participate, not participate, or withdraw from the survey at any time without giving reasons.
Beneficence	The introductory letter informed the CoJ municipality and participating employees of the study's direct and indirect benefits to the city. The respondents were informed that if they so desired, they could request the study results and use them to improve their environment.
Non-maleficence	The unit of analysis (Organisation) and unit of observation (selected participants) were reassured that participating in the study was safe. Second, there were no risks associated with taking the survey in terms of job security, disrepute or reputation, or future harm. We designed the questionnaires so that it would be difficult to see who participated in the study and link the responses to a specific individual.
Justice	The study targeted management staff from the City of Johannesburg municipality and the target group was not selected on the basis of race, colour, gender, and disability or any form of unethical discrimination

4. Data Collection

The study targeted 100 management staff from the City of Johannesburg municipality. The goal was to collect data from the entire population, and the global e-mail address of the City of Johannesburg was used as a sample frame. To distribute the questions to the target group, the data collectors were fed a list of e-mail addresses, which were then used to generate invitations to participate in the study. The invitation included a letter explaining the purpose of the study, the right to withdraw from the study, the agreement to participate in the study, and the study questions. The questions were broken down into two categories: demographic (education and experience), factors influencing service delivery and strategies which could be used to improve the service delivery. The data was collected from the 3rd of August 2021 to the 1st of March 2022, and the study collected 56 usable responses, translating to a 56% response rate.

Figure 1 illustrates the processes used to control data, analyze it, and report the results. The process of assessing and treating missing values was followed by the process of creating the database for this research to ensure that the information was protected. The preliminary analysis included plotting the data in the bar charts with the goal of visualizing the variability of the data, and finally summarizing the data using descriptive statistics to make reporting the results easier.

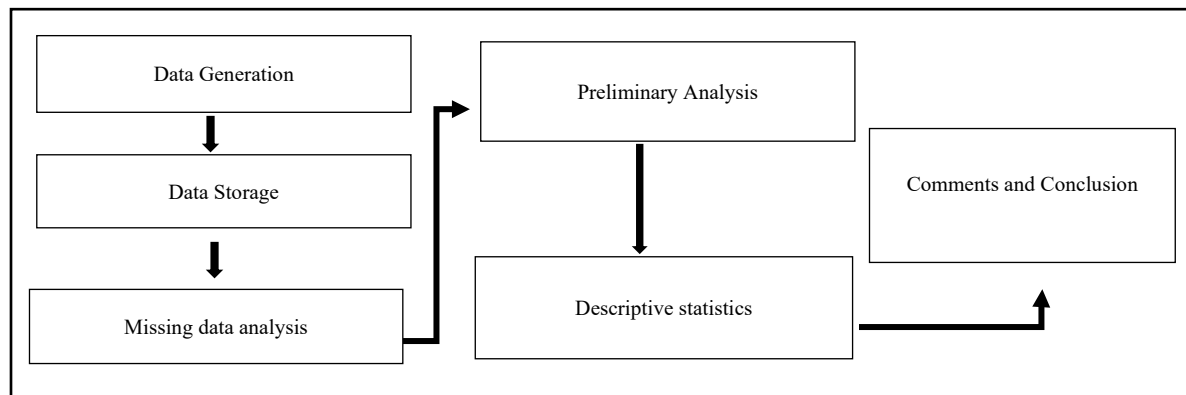


Figure 1. Data analysis stages

5. Results and Discussion

The majority of respondents in this study (50%) had bachelor's degrees as their highest qualification, followed by 23 per cent who had diplomas as their highest qualification (Table 3). Only 9% had master's degrees as their highest qualification. These findings indicate that the CoJ management team was made up of individuals who had received training from higher education institutions. When asked to indicate their level of experience with local government, 41 per cent said they had less than 5 years, 34 per cent said they had 5 to 10 years, and 25 per cent said they had more

than 10 years. According to the demographic information, the people who participated in this research have a good understanding of the study area and have received education from institutions of higher learning which all contribute to the validity of the study results.

Table 3. Demographic information (N = 56)

Variables	Frequency	Per cent (%)	Cumulative (%)
Highest qualification			
Diploma	13	23	23
Bachelor's Degree	28	50	73
Bachelor's Degree with Honors	10	18	91
Master's degree	5	9	100
Total	56	100	
Local government work experience			
<5 Years	23	41	41
5-10 Years	19	34	75
>10 Years	14	25	100
Total	56	100	

5.1 Factors affecting service delivery in the CoJ municipality

We asked respondents to indicate which factors, in their opinion, were contributing to poor service delivery in CoJ municipality, and they had to choose from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The results in Table 4 show the weighted mean, which represents the centre of the responses, and the standard deviation, which represents the spread of opinions around the weighted mean, as well as the mean rank from highest to lowest importance. We assessed the factors influencing poor service delivery using 15 items, and the factors had an internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha) value of 0.752, which was greater than the 0.7 cutoff point Taber (2018).

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of Factors affecting service delivery in the CoJ municipality

Description	Mean	Std. Deviation	Ranking
Poor public office ethics	4.96	0.267	1
Adequate resource capacity	4.93	0.375	2
Strategic awareness by key personnel	4.89	0.454	3
Staff training & development	4.86	0.645	4
Political interference	4.79	0.909	5
Digital transformation	4.79	0.909	5
Accountability & transparency	4.75	0.939	7
Performance monitoring and evaluation	4.75	0.769	7
Personnel competence	4.75	0.769	7
Planning and implementation	4.71	0.967	8
Effective debtors' management model	4.43	1.126	9
Effective revenue models	4.25	1.179	10
Competitive bidding	4.18	1.416	11
Public participation and stakeholder engagement	4.14	1.368	12
Outsourcing of municipal services	3.79	1.734	13

Poor public office ethics (M= 4.96, SD=0.267) and a lack of adequate resource capacity (M= 4.93, SD = 0.375) were rated as very high by respondents. Lack of strategic awareness among key personnel (M=4.89, SD=0.454); lack of staff training and development (M=4.86, SD=0.645); and undue political interference (M=4.79, SD=0.909) were also high on the list. The top ten items were rated very high (M>4.7, SD<1), indicating that there was strong agreement with the statements and there was consensus among the respondents. Interestingly, although the items lack of effective debtors' management model (M=4.43, SD=1.126), lack of effective revenue models (M= 4.25, SD=1.179), competitive bidding (M= 4.18, SD=1.416), lack of public participation and stakeholder engagement (M= 4.14,

SD=1.368) were rated highly, the standard deviations were greater than one, indicating that respondents had mixed feelings about these items.

It is worth noting that outsourcing of municipal services (M= 3.79, SD=1.734) was the only one with a weighted average less than 4 and a standard deviation less than one, indicating that while this was one of the factors affecting service delivery, it was not as significant as other factors. The findings of this study are similar to those presented in (Makanyeza et al., 2013), a study conducted at the Kajiado local authority in Kenya that identified worker capacity, inadequate citizen participation, a lack of skilled workers, and councillors' interference as some of the factors contributing to poor service delivery.

5.2. Service delivery improvement strategies in the municipality of CoJ

The respondents were asked to indicate which strategy they believe would help to improve service delivery in the CoJ municipality, and they have given the options of strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neither agree nor disagree (3), agree (4) and strongly agree (5). The respondents believed that meaningful stakeholder engagement and public participation (M= 4.93, SD=0.375), employee skill development and appointing adequate and qualified candidates (M= 4.93, SD=0.375) were the top strategies which could improve service delivery in the CoJ municipality. Municipal Systems Act (MSA) transformation to allow for easy adaptation to modern facilities and governance systems such as e-governance (M= 4.82, SD=0.575); strengthening the Anti-Corruption Bureau and the MPAC oversight in local government to stop the rot (M= 4.68, SD=0.834); and the municipality's focus on developing effective debt management, revenue collection, and SCM bidding models (M= 4.68, SD=0.834) also rank high. The complete depoliticization and professionalization of local government were at the bottom of the list (M= 4.64, SD=1.017). The findings indicate that all of these strategies could be used to improve service delivery in the CoJ municipality, but their importance varies as indicated in Table 5.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of service delivery improvement strategies in the municipality of CoJ

Description	Mean	Std. Deviation	Ranking
Meaningful stakeholder engagement and public participation	4.93	0.375	1
Employee skill Development and appointing adequate and qualified candidates	4.93	0.375	1
Municipal Systems Act (MSA) transformation to enable easy adaptation to modern facilities and governance systems such as e-governance	4.82	0.575	3
Intensifying the Anti-Corruption Bureau and the MPAC oversight in the local government to stop the rot	4.68	0.834	4
The municipality focus on developing effective debt management, revenue collection, and SCM bidding models	4.68	0.834	4
Completely depoliticizing and professionalizing the local government sphere	4.64	1.017	6

5.3 Summary of findings

The top factors influencing poor service delivery were poor public office ethics, a lack of adequate resource capacity, a lack of strategic awareness among key personnel, a lack of staff training and development, undue political interference, and a lack of digital transformation. Lack of an effective debtor management model, a lack of effective revenue models, competitive bidding, a lack of public participation and stakeholder engagement, and outsourcing of municipal services were all rated highly, but respondents had mixed feelings about them. Meaningful stakeholder engagement and public participation, employee skill development, and hiring adequate and qualified candidates were rated as the top strategies that could help to improve service delivery in the CoJ municipality. Depoliticizing and professionalizing local government was ranked last among all strategies.

5.3 Proposed Improvements

5.3.1 Poor public ethics

To address the issue of poor public office ethics, the study makes two recommendations that are consistent with the EMBoK domain on professional codes of Conduct and Ethics. To begin, the Anti-Corruption Bureau and MPAC oversight in local government should be strengthened to stop the rot (barring, delisting, and prosecuting unethical municipal officials and service providers). Second, municipal management personnel should be encouraged to join relevant professional organizations in order to enforce professional codes of conduct, ethics, and regulated practice.

5.3.2 Adequate resource capacity

This recommendation primarily applies to the EMBoK domains of financial resource management, project management, operations, and supply chain management. Unfilled positions, budget deficits, and lapsed strategic assets contracts such as materials, fleet, and plant frequently occur at the CoJ, resulting in the cessation of service delivery. This study recommended that adequate and qualified candidates be appointed to ensure improved service delivery operations. Every manager in the municipality must have project management skills. Furthermore, a sufficient supply of financial resources is an enabler. It would aid in the effective coordination of capacity-building initiatives within the CoJ metropolitan municipality.

5.3.3 Public participation and stakeholder engagement

Citizens frequently feel excluded from critical decision-making processes related to service delivery. As a result, this recommendation is intended to address the lack of public participation and stakeholder engagement. To accelerate and improve service delivery, the study recommended the following stages of meaningful stakeholder engagement: inform, consult, involve, and empower. Beyers (2016) echoes this recommendation, stating that municipalities should strengthen and capacitate ward committees to connect them with the communities they serve, ensuring that communities participate actively in service delivery projects. The recommendations of the two studies are consistent.

5.3.4 Skill development, acquisition, and retention

Today's businesses are focused on providing customers with quality, speed, efficiency, and value. Continuous improvement is required for resilience. Engineers and other technical personnel are frequently promoted to management positions despite having no formal management training or experience. As a result, management principles suffer, it is recommended that the CoJ metropolitan municipality invest in developing the skills of its current employees, implement policies that encourage the hiring of qualified candidates, and develop effective skill retention strategies. This is for the CoJ metropolitan municipality's leadership and organizational management to improve and accelerate service delivery.

5.3.5 Planning and Implementation

Policies and strategic plans such as the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and the Service Delivery & Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP) are frequently well documented and approved in municipalities. However, there is frequently a significant failure in fully implementing such high-impact service delivery plans. To facilitate accelerated and improved public service delivery, the study recommended that the municipality foster action-oriented reports that break down actionable items, indicate clear timelines, and track progress on items with a clear recourse plan.

5.3.6 Digital transformation

It is believed that digital transformation will be the necessary paradigm shift in South Africa's local government sector. To improve service delivery, the study recommended that the Municipal Systems Act (MSA) be transformed to allow for easy adaptation to modern facilities and governance systems such as e-governance. The recommendation will address the issue of the local government's lack of digital transformation. Digital transformation is required to improve ethical behaviour, professionalism, open government capabilities, and public trust in government.

5.3.7 Strategic awareness among key personnel

The municipality's strategic planning process is intended to establish, implement, correct, and continuously improve its corporate strategic plans. Many municipal supervisory and practitioner-level employees were unaware of the issues raised in the critical national plan strategic directives and process documents. This awareness should have an impact on the employees' day-to-day operations. As a result, the study recommended that key personnel such as the municipal manager, MoEs executive management, and key managerial personnel be inducted and thoroughly familiarized with the municipality's strategic thrusts in order to improve public service delivery.

5.3.8 Debt management and effective revenue collection

The study recommended that the CoJ municipality invests in developing models that effectively execute this function in order to address the problem of debt management and revenue collection. Although the local government business model is cost/benefit-oriented, this function is important because it allows the city to generate some revenue in order to maintain public service delivery. A multidisciplinary system engineering approach may be beneficial in ensuring system development, life cycle considerations, and reliability of local government systems.

5.3.9 Unwanted political interference

It is recommended that an effort be made in the CoJ administration to clear the blurred lines between political interference and intervention in order to improve and accelerate public service delivery. The relationship between the two parallel streams of local government, oversight (governance) and administrative departments (MoEs) must be harmonized.

5.4 Validation

Saunders et al. (2019) define reliability in research studies as the instrument's consistency in producing a stable and error-free result, including the quality of the processes and the details of the procedures to replicate the study result. Cronbach's Alpha is used to assess internal consistency. In this study, Cronbach's alpha was used to assess internal consistency using IBM Statistics Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) Version 27 and a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet (Makanyeza, et al., 2013). Cronbach's Alpha values of 0.7 and higher assessed how well the Likert scale items complement one another, and the factors influencing the scale's reliability were justified. In this study, we used content validity through a literature review and pilot study as suggested by Qu and Dumay (2011). In addition, we used the face validation method to improve the questionnaire structure and language. Three COJ municipal employees and one master's candidate colleague were asked to participate in the pilot study, and all recommended miscommunications, ambiguities, and malfunctions were resolved.

6. Conclusion

The problem of poor service delivery in South Africa is primarily the responsibility of local governments. The goal of this study was to investigate the current factors contributing to slowed service delivery in South African local government, using the City of Johannesburg (CoJ) as the unit of analysis. Fundamentally, two critical questions were to be asked: what are the major contributing factors to poor public service delivery in the CoJ metropolitan municipality? Second, which strategies can best accelerate the CoJ metropolitan municipality's poor public service delivery? Several contributing factors were identified in the study's literature review. The study used quantitative research methods with the support of the survey research strategy. The study further used a questionnaire with close-ended questions as a data collection tool.

The findings revealed that, amongst others, poor public office ethics, lack of adequate resource capacity, lack of strategic awareness by key personnel, lack of staff training & development, undue political interference, lack of digital transformation, the lack of accountability & transparency were the top-ranked contributing factors towards decelerated public service delivery raised within the CoJ. Meaningful stakeholder engagement and public participation, employee skill development, and hiring adequate and qualified candidates were rated as the top strategies that could help to improve service delivery in the CoJ municipality. Depoliticizing and professionalizing local government was ranked last among all strategies. It is expected that this study would contribute to and inspire a constructive argument to debate possible management strategies for the identified problems confronting the local government. Finally, it is further hoped that the findings and recommendations of this study would assist the CoJ metropolitan municipality and offer a paradigm shift in the local government sphere in South Africa as far as accelerated public service delivery is concerned.

The study's limitations include the fact that it was only conducted in one local municipality (the CoJ metropolitan municipality) in South Africa. It would be ideal to study and compare results from various municipalities in South Africa and around the world. Some service delivery factors within the CoJ metropolitan municipality are dynamic. As a result, this study was unable to address all of the factors associated with poor service delivery within the municipality. The opinions expressed in the results were limited to the Likert scale items created by the researcher. It would be more beneficial to allow respondents to express their individual perspectives on the subject using their words in future research.

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