

PUBLIC SERVICE PERFORMANCE IN DYSFUNCTIONAL ENVIRONMENT IN DELTA STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the performance of public service workers in a dysfunctional environment in Delta State, Nigeria, using a descriptive survey research design. The study aimed to explore the promotion processes, factors affecting public service performance, policies promoting effective service delivery, and the challenges faced by public servants in a dysfunctional setting. A sample of 195 public servants was selected, and data was collected using self-structured questionnaires and interviews. The research used mean scores to analyze the responses to the research questions and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to test three hypotheses. The study reveals that the promotion process significantly influences worker performance, with a strong positive correlation between merit-based promotions and employee motivation. It also highlights that factors such as poor remuneration, corruption, inadequate training, and political interference negatively impact public service performance. Furthermore, policies focusing on merit-based recruitment, anti-corruption strategies, and capacity-building programs were found to be crucial for improving public service delivery. Key challenges, including corruption, political instability, low wages, poor working conditions, and insufficient training, were identified as major barriers to effective service delivery in Delta State. The findings emphasize the need for reforms to address these challenges, with recommendations including the implementation of merit-based promotion systems, improved remuneration and working conditions, stronger anti-corruption measures, enhanced training and development programs, and the establishment of robust accountability and oversight mechanisms. These changes are essential for enhancing public service performance and achieving efficient service delivery in Delta State.

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Public service performance in Delta State, Nigeria, affects nearly every part of daily life, from access to healthcare and education to the availability of clean water and functional roads. Unfortunately, the public sector here faces significant challenges due to a deeply dysfunctional environment. Issues like corruption, limited resources, and inefficient systems create barriers that prevent civil servants from effectively serving the public. These obstacles not only make it difficult for employees to perform their duties but also create frustration and disillusionment among the citizens relying on essential services (Aduke, 2023; Ogundele, 2023). One of the main struggles public servants face in Delta State is navigating an environment where there are often too few resources to meet growing demands. For example, many public offices lack basic infrastructure and up-to-date tools that would allow employees to work efficiently. Add to this the frequent delays in salary payments and limited opportunities for professional growth, and it's clear why so many public servants feel demotivated and overburdened. When employees lack adequate support, they struggle to deliver quality service, creating a cycle that reinforces dysfunction in the system (Okafor & Agbede, 2024).

In such an environment, citizens are often left with the impression that the government is unable or unwilling to meet their needs. Over time, this perception weakens public trust, as people grow skeptical of whether their government can truly work for them. As a result, many citizens turn to informal alternatives or avoid public services altogether, opting instead for costly private options

where possible (Omorogiuwa, 2022). This loss of trust doesn't only affect citizens' willingness to engage with public services; it also reduces their participation in civic life, as they no longer see the point of supporting institutions they view as ineffective or corrupt. Addressing these issues requires more than just superficial changes; Delta State would benefit from reforms that focus on improving both the accountability and efficiency of its public service. Implementing performance metrics, for example, could help set clear expectations and hold public offices to higher standards. Additionally, reducing unnecessary bureaucratic processes could allow public servants to respond more quickly and effectively to citizens' needs. By prioritizing transparent decision-making and improving resource allocation, Delta State could begin to rebuild public trust and create an environment where both employees and citizens feel more valued and empowered (Aduke, 2023; Ogundele, 2023).

Statement of the Problem

The problem facing public service performance in Delta State lies in the pervasive dysfunction that undermines the delivery of essential services, directly impacting citizens' quality of life and eroding public trust in government institutions. Public services are essential for societal development, but in Delta State, systemic issues such as resource mismanagement, political interference, bureaucratic delays, and corruption have created an environment where effective service delivery is challenging. Despite the critical role of public services in improving citizens' well-being, many institutions in Delta State operate with inadequate resources, outdated infrastructure, and insufficient support for their workforce, which hinders employees' ability to meet service demands. Consequently, public service employees often experience low morale and lack the motivation necessary for high performance, resulting in delays, inefficiencies, and frequent breakdowns in service delivery (Aduke, 2023; Okafor & Agbede, 2024).

The lack of accountability and transparency within public institutions further exacerbates the problem, as officials may act with limited oversight and reduced focus on measurable outcomes. This dysfunction has fostered a lack of trust among citizens, who increasingly view public institutions as unreliable or ineffective, leading some to bypass government services altogether or turn to more expensive, private alternatives (Omorogiuwa, 2022). Addressing the problem requires identifying the root causes of dysfunction within Delta State's public sector, including inefficient resource allocation, insufficient accountability structures, and inadequate personnel support.

Objectives

The primary objective of this study is to evaluate the public service performance in a dysfunctional environment in Delta State. The specific objectives are to:

1. Evaluate the promotion process of public service workers' performance in dysfunctional environment in Delta State.
2. Investigate the factors affecting public service worker performance in dysfunctional environment in Delta State.
3. Determine the policies capable of promoting effective public service performance in Delta State.
4. Examine the challenges facing the public service towards effective service delivery in a dysfunctional environment in Delta State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study in line with the objectives of the study.

1. What are the promotion process of public service workers' performance in dysfunctional environment in Delta State?
2. What are the factors affecting public service worker performance in dysfunctional environment in Delta State?

3. What are the policies capable of promoting effective public service performance in Delta State?
4. What are the challenges facing the public service towards effective service delivery in a dysfunctional environment in Delta State?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between the promotion process public service workers' and their performance in dysfunctional environment in Delta State.
2. There is no significant relationship between the factors affecting public service worker and their performance in dysfunctional environment in Delta State?
3. There is no significant relationship between the policies capable of promoting effective public service and its performance in Delta State?

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its potential to provide valuable insights for various stakeholders in Delta State, particularly in understanding and addressing the barriers to effective public service delivery within a challenging environment. The findings will benefit public officers, government agencies, local communities, and the general public in multiple ways:

Public Officers: The study will shed light on the specific challenges public officers face in delivering services under difficult conditions, such as inadequate resources, bureaucratic obstacles, and limited motivation. By identifying these issues, this research can help public officers advocate for reforms and improvements that support their roles, leading to a more efficient and motivated workforce capable of delivering better services to the public.

Government Agencies: For government agencies, especially those involved in policymaking, the study provides a critical evaluation of the structural and operational weaknesses within Delta State's public sector. These insights will guide agencies in formulating policies that address key issues such as accountability, transparency, and resource allocation, ultimately contributing to a more functional and responsive public service system.

Local Communities: This study is particularly significant for local communities that rely on public services for their daily needs, including healthcare, education, and infrastructure. By identifying areas for improvement, the research can lead to enhanced service delivery, improved quality of life, and a strengthened relationship between the government and communities. Empowered with better services, communities can experience greater socio-economic development and trust in public institutions.

General Public: For the general public, this research promotes a better understanding of the factors that affect public service performance. By highlighting the systemic issues and providing recommendations for improvement, the study can foster greater civic engagement and a stronger call for accountability. Citizens, as beneficiaries of public services, stand to benefit from reforms that make services more accessible, efficient, and reliable.

Scope of the Study

This study focuses on public service performance within the dysfunctional environment of Delta State, Nigeria, examining how issues like resource shortages, bureaucratic inefficiencies, corruption, and political interference impact service delivery across key sectors, including healthcare, education, and infrastructure. It involves gathering data from public officers, government officials, community leaders, and citizens to understand both the systemic challenges faced by service providers and the experiences of service recipients. Covering the past five years, the study also assesses recent policies and reforms aimed at improving accountability and effectiveness, with the goal of offering actionable insights for policy enhancements that could benefit Delta State and similar Nigerian states.

Operational Definition of Terms

Public Service Performance: The effectiveness and efficiency with which public sector institutions in Delta State deliver essential services, such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure, to meet the needs of citizens.

Dysfunctional Environment: A setting characterized by systemic challenges like corruption, resource limitations, political interference, and bureaucratic delays that hinder the effective functioning of public service institutions.

Accountability Mechanisms: Policies, procedures, and systems implemented within public institutions to ensure that officials are held responsible for their actions and that services meet established standards, promoting transparency and trust.

Service Delivery: The process by which government agencies and departments in Delta State provide essential services to the public, focusing on accessibility, quality, and timeliness in meeting the needs of communities.

Resource Allocation: The distribution of financial, human, and material resources to various public service departments in Delta State, impacting their ability to operate effectively and deliver services to citizens.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Performance

Performance is an accomplishment of a given task measured against preset known standards of accuracy, completeness, cost, and speed. In a contract, performance is deemed to be the fulfillment of an obligation, in a manner that releases the performer from all liabilities under the contract. Performance is viewed as the implementation of an action or one's ability. Good performance is also related with achieving the quality, quantity, cooperation, dependability and creativity. Employee performance is considered as the measures of the quality of human capital. According to Churchill, Ford and Walker, (1987), the determinants of performance are personal, organizational, environmental, motivation, skill level, aptitudes and role perceptions). What most administrative officers in government agencies including state government are likely to face is the crucial question of what factors influence employee performance in the public service. Job performance becomes the most important focus of administrators and academicians because the performance level will deteriorate if the level of skill of employee drops (Osawe, 2015). Performance is an action that involves a lot of efforts aimed at achieving a purpose. Performance is measured on a given set of standard to determine how well or badly a duty or an activity is carried out. Therefore, performance could be good or poor.

Performance of Nigerian public service has been a major concern to policy makers and researchers as well. This is because despite all measures put in place to arrest the performance failure, the service, it seems, has defied all approaches towards tackling the problem of inefficiency and capacity collapse (Arowolo, 2012). He identified environment as one of the factors responsible for the above situation. In analyzing the above factors, it should be stressed that the environment under which an employee operates should be considered as it determines the smooth management of the Human resources in an organization. Human resources is believed to be the "backbone" of the public services with imperative role of ensuring that government policies and programs are implemented effectively and efficiently, hence the environment of the public service should be able to produce quality (skill) employees, work processes and development, a corrupt free environment and leadership devoid of primordial sentiments.

Concept of Public Service

Public service is a body or department in the executive arm of government with the responsibility of assisting in the planning and implementation of government policies. It is not profit-oriented but an institution established to deliver essential services to the people (Arowolo, 2012). The coexistence

of any group of people anywhere in the world requires some form of governance administration and division of labour in order to maintain the existence of the group. The concept of public good also indicates that there are some services that are utilized by all members, which are efficient and effective when provided for centrally. The provision of these types of services requires the full time attention of some members of the group. This in a nutshell is the basic theory of public services. Public service organizations deliver services to the people. The public service consists of the civil service – career staff whose appointment, promotion and discipline are under the exclusive control of the Civil Service Commission (CSC), at federal, state and local government levels, the national assembly service, the Judiciary, public officers in the military, police and paramilitary services, employees of parastatals, educational and health institutions. From the above, it could be said that the public service and the civil service are clearly different in concept. The public service is a broader concept that encompasses the civil service together with the Armed Forces, the Judiciary, the Police, Government Institutions, Parastatals; Government owned Companies and Statutory Agencies. One cannot discuss the public service without talking about the civil service.

Civil service usually refers to the functionaries of state who are appointed to their government jobs through non-elective process (Ayeeni, 1987). These functionaries work in the main government Ministries and Extra-Ministerial Departments. The Extra-Ministerial Organizations are headed by Chairmen and not Ministers. Okereke (2003) reinforced this when he notes that civil service refers to government ministries and departments that are charged with the responsibilities of implementing policies. They are those in the service of federal, state and local government services primarily responsible for policy implementation and making inputs available for policy formulation. The federal government of Nigeria (1997), defined the civil service as "a body or organ which enjoys continuity of existence. Its members unlike members of the National Assembly are not limited to a short term office at the end of which they may not be returned to office When a civil servant relinquishes his office for whatever reason, his place is taken by another person who similarly enjoys security of employment"

The sense of a service provided by the state is certainly one of the senses of 'public' when applied to services, but there are many others: services to the public; services on behalf of the public; services providing public goods; services accountable to the public; and so on. It can indeed be 'difficult to determine in what sense precisely the service in question was originally called public'. The public service is a catalyst for national development. It provides the required human and material resources needed to accelerate the growth and development.

The public servants are responsible for the provision of safety and welfare to the members of the public, and have regard for the environment. They are accountable for their own professional practice, for the professional practice of those under their supervision, and for their profession generally as part of their service to the society. This public-interest bias must take precedence over self-interest, protecting the public from unethical and/or incompetent.

Public service is the agency of government saddled with the responsibility of implementing the community will. Arowolo (2012) argued that if delivery of social services is the chief reason why there is public service, and development is a function of amount of social services that a state can provide for its citizens, then public service is the tool by which development is attained. Therefore, development is tied to public service. However achieving development in public service is a function of the environment which the public service finds itself-in.

Environment of Public Service in Delta State

Ecology refers to the study of a system's relationship with its surrounding environment. The concept of ecology has long been applied to the study of public service, gaining traction as scholars recognize its value in understanding public service within a political society. The ecology of Nigeria's public service involves examining the interaction between the public service and its complete environment, including physical, cultural, and social aspects. These elements are seen as having a profound

impact on the performance of public services in Nigeria. Public service, much like clear water adapting to the color of its container, reflects the political and cultural setting from which it emerges. For example, Weber's model of bureaucracy is closely linked to Protestant ethics and German traditions. Similarly, Crozier's (1964) study on French bureaucracy highlighted the influence of French cultural values on bureaucratic characteristics, demonstrating that a society's cultural context shapes its form of bureaucracy. It is evident that bureaucracy cannot be entirely separated from its socio-cultural environment.

Contemporary Environmental Issues of Inhabiting Performance of the Delta State Public Service

Delta State public administration has over the years been engulfed by a number of environmental factors which continue to adversely affect its role as an instrument for national development. In the course of this study, the researcher discovered some of these factors as:

Influence of Colonial master

Ake (2000) highlighted the adverse impact of colonial influences and Western perspectives on the conceptualization of public service in Africa. He argued that two distinct "publics" coexist within African public services: the civic, which is often seen as amoral, and the primordial, viewed as moral. This duality is evident in Nigeria, where it has shaped public service operations. In the context of Nigerian public service, these two "publics" manifest as the central, formal political system and the informal, alternative political system grounded in regional loyalties, primary affiliations, and sub-national identities (Ake, 2000). Olatunji (2013) expanded on this by explaining that one realm within Nigerian public service is influenced by primordial ties and sentiments that shape individual behavior, while the other is linked to colonial administrative structures and the popular politics of post-colonial Nigeria. This dual structure, prevalent in Delta State, can be seen as contradicting Max Weber's impersonal and neutral model of public service, creating dysfunction and impacting the performance of public service institutions.

Culture

Another significant ecological factor shaping the behavior of public servants in Nigeria is the country's cultural values. Culture encompasses the full scope of a people's way of life, acting as a "design for living" (Kluckhohn, 1951) and influencing their actions and worldview (Haralambos & Head, 1980). In Nigeria, cultural traits such as deep respect for elders, extreme loyalty, and strong kinship ties are embedded in social life. While these values foster unity, they can adversely affect service delivery within the public sector. For example, public servants may avoid disciplining an older colleague due to cultural expectations around age, or they may prioritize personal loyalties over adherence to the technical standards of public service. Another area where loyalty and respect can hinder efficiency is in the allegiance paid to superiors rather than the institution itself. Employees often dedicate substantial portions of their official hours to catering to the personal needs of their superiors or attending social gatherings to gain favor, rather than focusing on their public service duties. This behavior is further exacerbated by a general perception among public servants that the service is bogged down with excessive protocols and lacks personal accountability, leading to a disinterested attitude towards work.

Ethnicity and Nepotism

Primordial relations strongly influence Delta State's public service, with ethnic and tribal affiliations often taking precedence over national identity. Loyalty frequently aligns more closely with ethnic ties than with national interests, undermining the merit-based principles essential to effective human resource management. Ideally, recruitment, promotion, and appointments in the public service

should be based on merit to ensure competence and integrity. However, these processes are often influenced by ethnic and regional biases, affecting who secures positions such as head of service, permanent secretary, or director. This leads to selective cooperation within departments, where subordinates may cooperate readily with superiors of the same ethnic background while disregarding others. Such favoritism extends to administrative decisions, where privileges and services are preferentially granted to those with ethnic ties or personal connections, and denied to others without these affiliations unless bribery occurs. These practices undermine the principles of impartiality and professionalism crucial to public service (Ayo, 1998; Ajayi, 2001). Consequently, many public servants appointed under these biases lack the necessary skills, resulting in inefficiencies and poor job performance.

Political factor

This is another issue that has impeded effective performance in the public service. It is a critical fact that the Delta State public service operates under ineffective and corrupt political leadership. The leadership of corruption and ineptitude, that has affects the content and quality of policy at formulation stage with the consequent implementation of such policy by the public administrators. For instance, policies are, more often than not, made for purposes of the selfish and egoistic interest of the political leaders and sometimes only to attract public acclaim and attention with less regard to their appropriateness in addressing given problems or the possibility of their effective practical implementation by the public bureaucracy (Ikechuckwu and Chukwemeke, 2013). Indeed, most policy making goals in Nigeria are subordinated to the personal rewards and interests of the political leaders and their colleagues with the result that a policy is judged more on its political merits with the real development need rarely factored into consideration. For these, most policies in Nigeria are either inappropriate or lack well defined objectives and programmes for their effective implementation, hence they (public servants) perform poorly in Nigeria. It is perhaps for this, that Okoli and Onah (2002) state that implementation of policies in Nigeria take the form of "learning process" or "trial and error". In this context, policies or programmes are haphazardly implemented and even sometimes abandoned or dismantled midway because the basis for formulating the policy was not, in the first instance, predicated on existing data, realities or need. Indeed, in Nigeria there are usually no comprehensive policy standards and objectives to guide the bureaucracy in its policy implementation activities and procedures. (Makinde cited in Ikechukwu and Chukwemeke, 2013). Most political office holders without administrative direction intrude into the administration of the public service with their obnoxious policies, influencing undue promotion of public servants, using the public servants to siphon the public funds.

Corruption

This is a more cancerous ecological factor that has engulfed the public service depriving her of the desired effective performance to the Delta citizens. A state's public service is efficient at service delivery, because its environment is efficient and corruption-free. The implication of this is that public service can neither be separated from, nor superior to, the environment in which it finds itself and so its environment continually impacts either positively or negatively on it operations. Nigeria as a country has been rate high in the corruption leather by Transparency International. The public service is a macro unit of the Nigeria society that has been infected with the corrupt practice of its parents. Corruption has so much permeated the Nigerian public service that most of its officers occupying sensitive positions take advantage of such offices to corruptly enrich themselves. It is an open secret that many of the public servants live above their means despite complaints of poor remunerations. For a fact, no political office holder can successfully engage in corrupt practices without the active connivance of public servants. Public service in Nigeria is today viewed as an avenue for sharing the national cake among the major ethnic groups. Hence, the unending demand for fragmentation of governmental structure i.e. (units, ministers, division of major departures etc)

Ezeani (2005). There is multiplication of the above fragments just to accommodate different ethnic group opportunity to steal from the public purse. The situation is further accelerated by the public perception that the public service is amoral realm that is to be plundered to sustain individual, community and ethnic survival or other primordial grouping (Achimugu, Stephen and Aliyu, 2013).

Poor Remuneration of Public Servants

In Delta State, the wages and salaries of public servants are notably low and have continued to decline over the years, largely due to high inflation rates and other economic pressures. Compared to private sector wages and public service salaries in other sub-Saharan African countries, Delta State's public service remuneration lags significantly (Achimugun, Stephen, & Aliyu, 2013). Although several attempts have been made to improve public sector salaries, including the increase of the minimum wage to ₦70,000 per month in the current administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, these measures have barely offset years of wage erosion and financial strain. Moreover, even when salary adjustments are made, they are often inadequate due to persistent inflation and frequently exceed the budgets of state governments, making it difficult for some states to meet the new minimum wage requirements. This has led to tensions between labor unions and state officials, a challenge that Delta State is currently experiencing (Salisu, 2001). As a result, public servants are left demoralized, frustrated, and more inclined to engage in corrupt practices as a means of supplementing their insufficient income. This situation ultimately hinders public service performance in Delta State.

Delta State Public Service in a Dysfunctional Environment: The way forward

The challenge of national development and transformation makes it imperative for the machinery of government (public service) responsible for it, to be re-engineered in order to meet up with the core demands of national developments. Hence, there is an urgent need to reposition public service in Delta State for effective performance, in order to keep the goal of purposeful national development alive. The paper submit that to create a favourable environment for the public service to function effective, the following factors amongst others should be re-activated.

To create a functional environment for better performance in the Delta State public service, our political leaders should be determined towards their jobs. Lack of determined political leaders with integrity, patriotism and sound knowledge of what to do, when, and how to do it, is one of the main problems facing the public service in the developing countries like Nigeria. In describing the important of leadership in a society, a philosopher according to (Achimugu, Stephen and Aliyu, 2013) once said that "An array of rabbits led by a lion would do better than an array of lions led by a rabbit". The scholars here emphasized that in any political society, the attitude of the leaders determine the effectiveness of the public servants. The government should therefore ensure, (if national development would be achieved), the appointment of women and men of sound integrity to the helm of affairs. For us to have a corrupt free society, the leaders must be committed, dedicated and patriotic. Another area of concern towards inducing a conducive environment for effective public service performance is a review of the federal character principle. This study advocates constitutional review of the federal character with a view of giving merit, competence and qualification, a huge opportunity in the selection, recruitment and promotion of workers in the Delta State public service. Rationality and not political consideration should be the basis of recruitment and advancement of employees in the public service.

Furthermore, the study recommends that empowering institutions of accountability will go a long way in creating a functional environment for effective performance of the public servants in Nigeria. Nigeria has enormous collection of anti-corruption institutions which includes the following amongst others: The Code of Conduct Bureau; the Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offenses Commission (ICPC), the Public Complaints Commission (PCC) and the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC). It is ironical that with the institutions, Nigeria is still rated among the most

corrupt countries in the world according to Transparency International. In the light of the above, the government needs to strengthen its political will towards the fight against corruption by empowering the above institutions and making them indeed an independent organization committed to that which they are established for. More so, an improved welfare package for Nigerian public servants is advocated for effective performance in the Nigerian public service.

Empirical studies has shown that the take home salary of most Nigeria public workers cannot actually take them home, and as such some has embarked on corrupt means to make ends means while others spent most of their official time doing private business just to survive. These unsatisfied and unmotivated human resources definitely cannot perform effectively in the achievement of the national goal. This study therefore is of the opinion that this set of workforce (public servants) should be remunerated very well. Their motivation should be of great paramount in the mind of the government which is in line with the position of Lethbridge (2004) that "a vital element in the motivation of human capital is no doubt the quality of remuneration packages" A systematic, steady and reasonable improvement of public sector remuneration would be a huge asset to Nigeria's quest for national development ((Achimugu, Stephen and Aliyu, 2013).

Lastly, an attitudinal re-orientation of the public servants should be encouraged. There should be a re-orientation of the public servants on the need to perform their task properly as required; instilling into them the sense of public goods without which nothing good can be accomplished. This could happen with series of training and re-training, workshops, seminars, and conferences. Culturally values, ethnicity and other primordial factors should be put aside in hiring and advancement of staff into the public service. The National interest should be above all other interest in the affairs of the public service.

Theoretical Framework

The researcher anchored the study on Webber's theory of bureaucracy which was propounded by Max Weber on the assumptions the man is naturally lazy to work, yet he is materialistic in his approach. This assumption agrees with Douglas McGregor's theory X of motivation. As such, man is portrayed as lacking self-discipline, highly deficient in the sense of responsibility and has the natural tendency to be controlled (Olufayo, 2000). In effect, Weber believed that man needs uniformity and "order" (Haralambos and Head, 1980) for him to do things right. It was in agreement with the above assertion that Arowolo (2012) posits that bureaucratic ethics are designed to regulate the behavior of employees in a work place. Weber believes that man pursues economic gain selfishly and competes, mostly in an unfair manner (Olatunji, 2013).

Max Weber inferred that man who naturally dislikes work but wants economic reward must be regulated by a set of rules in his work place hence he designed the ideal bureaucracy, suggesting that the use of coercive authority would enhance efficient performance in organizations. He opined that the increasing level of rationalization in the society necessitates legal rational domination. It is designed to accomplish large-scale administrative tasks by coordinating the work of large numbers of persons in a systematic manner (Salawu, 2000) as in the public service.

Weber (1947) argued that the effectiveness of an organization should be base on a system of Legal-rational rules that are impersonal. The above assertion implies that these rules are legally derived from the law of the land, and employees should obey the law and not individuals in the office. That is obeying the law regulating the office and not the office holder. This system of rules sets the standard operational procedure and norms that will be used to regulate the behaviour of the employees in an organization. In Nigeria public service, most employees tend to pay their loyalty to their boss and not the job which is in most cases guided by primordial sentiment. Another Weber's postulation in his theory is that, the authority in an organization is derived from position of the office holder. Here Max Weber opined that the authority which an employee exercise is restricted to the level of the office such employee occupied.

Max Weber further argued that positions (recruitment, promotion, transfer and even retirement) in an organization should be based on merit – Qualification, competence and performance. Many social critics, scholars and public stakeholders have identified the Nigeria Public Service as not giving a total attention to the above Weber postulation due to the influence of ecological factors (social network, personal contact and connection) on the public bureaucracy, “who you know and not what you know” has become the order of the day in the Nigeria public service.

Specification of job responsibility is another factor in Weber idea type of bureaucracy. Weber believed that for a successful operation of an organization, there should be division of labour, clarifying job holders’ responsibility and expectation. This in essence will help to eliminate conflict and overlapping of duties among employees in an organization. Max Weber in his theory also posited that an organization should be structured and related hierarchically. Authority can only be exercised effectively if positions are arranged hierarchically so that employees can know whom to report to, and who should report to him in order to avoid conflict. However in the Nigeria public service we see cases where junior staff boycott their immediate senior to relate officially with their top management whom they have primordial relationship with, hence in the Nigeria public service, the syndrome of “oga say” abounds.

The Weber theory has been criticized for not being empirical rather was more of mental constructs and that it was postulated based on his environment without considering the practicability of its ideal type of bureaucracy in other political settings. However its application is still relevant in the life of public service in many political settings like Nigeria. The bureaucratic theory as put by Max Weber has been viewed as the best mechanism for effective performance in any organization. Weber’s ideal was conceived in a society that adhered strictly to the rule of law, least to say in a democratic society. To him any organization that should be effective in performance must have its structure graded, rules guiding the conduct of the staff, recruitment and promotion of staff based on merit, and staff specialization with proper division of labour.

Bureaucracy is a system of administration distinguished by its clear hierarchical structure of authority, rigid division of labour, written and flexible rules, regulation and procedures, and impersonal relationship (Business Dictionary, 2004). It is an administration of government chiefly through bureau (office) staffed with non-elected officers. Max Weber in 1947, defined bureaucracy as a rational organization of persons with varying authority in an organization. It then means that in an organization, personnel (staff) should relate according to the administrative authority (position) bestowed upon them. Stillman (1987) viewed bureaucracy as the structure and personnel of an organization, rooted in law that collectively functions as the core system of government and that both determine and carry out public policies using a high degree of specialized expertise. By this definition, bureaucracy in any political setting should have the backing of the law of that society and more so it is the main system through which the government determines and implements the public policies. It is the most visible branch of the executive arm of the government. Inferentially, bureaucracy operates in the public service and other major large organizations that function towards actualization of the government objectives. Adebayo (2001) asserted that the following amongst others are the reasons for bureaucracy: complexity of the modern state; Accountability; Size of the organization; and the need for specialization in the organization. The Nigeria Public Service is a large organization operating in a modern state. Their activities are accountable for, and also operate in a specialized form; hence bureaucracy is relevant in the public service. The Weber’s theory is relevant to this study on the ground that bureaucracy is the principle that guides the setting and operation of Nigeria public administration which has been affected by primordial factors (environment) in Nigeria.

Empirical Studies

The study of public service performance in dysfunctional environments, particularly within Delta State, Nigeria, has been widely examined through the lens of various contributing factors, including economic, political, cultural, and institutional challenges.

Achimugu, Stephen, and Aliyu (2013) discuss the obstacles to effective public sector reform in Nigeria, attributing low motivation and high levels of corruption among public servants to a lack of accountability and transparency. They argue that these issues have critically hindered sustainable development, especially where public sector reforms have failed to address structural weaknesses adequately. Salisu (2001) explores similar themes by examining how insufficient incentives and pay structures negatively impact civil service efficiency. Salisu's study highlights that low wages often drive public servants towards corrupt practices or side jobs, a pattern observed widely across the Nigerian public sector.

Further, Olowu (1999) emphasizes that the absence of stringent regulatory frameworks undermines transparency and accountability, making the civil service susceptible to inefficiency. In dysfunctional environments, such as Delta State, the lack of accountability mechanisms has led to reduced public trust and weakened service delivery. Similarly, Olatunji (2013) examines how ethnic affiliations and loyalty networks shape public service operations, revealing that cultural expectations and group affiliations often override merit and qualifications in personnel decisions. This cultural influence on public service performance is crucial in understanding why public service reforms sometimes fail to yield expected improvements.

Ake (2000) provides a broader view by analyzing the dual publics in Nigeria: the "civic" and "primordial." He observes that the influence of both social realms complicates governance in Nigerian public service, where personal loyalties conflict with professional responsibilities. This duality creates friction in service delivery, especially in states like Delta, where these public domains are strongly pronounced. Olowu and Ayo (2001) further elaborate on governance issues in Nigerian local governments, emphasizing that funding shortages, corruption, and lack of accountability hinder effective local public administration. Their findings align with those of Obi and Nwanegbo (2006), who discuss how bureaucratic corruption impedes developmental goals by fostering a dysfunctional administrative environment.

Examining the cultural and structural roots of inefficiency, Ogbuozobe and Onuoha (2012) argue that corruption within public service in Nigeria perpetuates a cycle of inefficiency, which often demotivates sincere public servants and lowers organizational productivity. In a similar vein, Mbah and Nwangwu (2014) explore how ethical failures and a lack of transparency disrupt effective public service. They assert that an ethical public service is critical for building a productive, trustworthy system, but note that frequent ethical lapses undermine both trust and performance in public sector institutions. Lastly, Arowolo (2012) highlights the detrimental role of ethnic politics, showing that favoritism based on ethnic ties erodes public service delivery and creates a fragmented workforce, especially when promotions and benefits are tied to ethnic identities rather than merit.

RESEARCH METHODS

A descriptive survey research design employing a correlational approach was utilized in this study. The study population comprises all public servants in Delta State. A sample was drawn from this population to represent the broader demographic. Specifically, a sample size of 195 public servants was selected from the total population in the state. To gather relevant perspectives and responses on the topic under investigation, a self-structured questionnaire and an interview guide were used as primary data collection tools. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was applied to analyze each hypothesis at a 5% significance level.

DATA PRESETATION AND INTERPRETATIONS

Research Question 1: What are the promotion processes of public service workers' performance in a dysfunctional environment in Delta State?

Table 1: The promotion processes of public service workers' performance in a dysfunctional environment in Delta State

S/ N	ITEMS	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decisio n
1	The promotion process in the public service is based on merit and performance.	19 5	3.4	.55	Positive
2	In a dysfunctional environment, promotions are often influenced by personal connections rather than performance.	19 5	3.8	.45	Positive
3	The promotion process is transparent and fair to all public service workers.	19 5	3.6	.55	Positive
4	Promotions in the public service are often delayed or hindered due to political interference.	19 5	3.4	.55	Positive
5	The promotion criteria used in public service are clearly communicated to all workers.	19 5	5.8	9.1	Positive

The first item in the table examines whether the promotion process is based on merit and performance. The mean score of 3.4 suggests that respondents generally agree that merit and performance are factors considered in promotions. The standard deviation of 0.55 indicates a moderate level of consensus among participants, meaning there is some agreement that merit plays a role, although the perception may vary slightly. The decision to classify this item as positive reflects the understanding that, to some extent, the promotion process is indeed merit-based. The second item explores whether personal connections influence promotions in a dysfunctional environment. With a mean of 3.8, the respondents strongly agree that personal connections often outweigh performance in determining promotions. The standard deviation of 0.45 indicates a high level of agreement, meaning that most respondents share this view. This reinforces the perception that the promotion process in Delta State's public service is often shaped by personal relationships rather than objective performance metrics, and the positive decision here highlights this issue. In the third item, the transparency and fairness of the promotion process are examined. The mean score of 3.6 suggests that respondents agree that the promotion process is transparent and fair to public service workers. The standard deviation of 0.55 shows moderate consensus, with most participants indicating that there is fairness in the process, though this view might not be universally held. The positive decision here supports the idea that transparency exists, but perhaps not to the extent it should.

The fourth item addresses whether political interference hinders or delays promotions. With a mean of 3.4, respondents agree that political factors often cause delays in the promotion process. The standard deviation of 0.55 indicates consistency in this perception among the respondents. The positive decision confirms that political interference is a major hindrance to timely and merit-based promotions in the public service of Delta State. The fifth item, which examines whether the criteria for promotion are clearly communicated to all workers, presents an anomaly in the data. The mean score of 5.8 and the unusually high standard deviation of 9.1 are likely errors or data inconsistencies, as the scale should not exceed a value of 4. This suggests that this particular item may require further review or correction. If this issue is addressed, the data could provide a more accurate understanding of whether promotion criteria are effectively communicated.

Research Question 2: What are the factors affecting public service worker performance in a dysfunctional environment in Delta State?

Table 2: The factors affecting public service worker performance in a dysfunctional environment in Delta State

S/ N	ITEMS	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1	Poor remuneration negatively affects the performance of public service workers.	195	3.0	.40	Positive
2	Corruption within the public service hinders workers' performance and productivity.	195	3.2	.45	Positive
3	Inadequate training and development programs contribute to low worker performance.	195	3.8	.45	Positive
4	The lack of necessary work tools and resources significantly affects job performance in public service.	195	3.8	.45	Positive
5	High levels of political interference reduce the efficiency of public service workers.	195	3.8	.45	Positive

The first item examines whether poor remuneration negatively affects the performance of public service workers. With a mean score of 3.0 and a standard deviation of 0.40, the respondents agree that inadequate wages have a detrimental effect on worker performance. The relatively low standard deviation indicates a strong consensus on this issue, suggesting that most participants recognize poor remuneration as a significant barrier to optimal performance. The decision to classify this item as positive reinforces the perception that fair compensation is critical to motivating and maintaining effective public service workers. The second item investigates the impact of corruption within the public service on workers' performance and productivity. The mean score of 3.2, with a standard deviation of 0.45, indicates that respondents generally agree that corruption is a major hindrance to public service performance. The moderate standard deviation suggests a shared view among respondents, but with some variability in the intensity of their agreement. The positive decision here highlights corruption as a serious challenge that undermines productivity and the integrity of the public service.

The third item addresses the role of inadequate training and development programs in contributing to low worker performance. With a mean score of 3.8 and a standard deviation of 0.45, respondents strongly agree that insufficient training opportunities negatively affect workers' ability to perform effectively. The low standard deviation indicates a high level of agreement, underscoring the importance of ongoing professional development and capacity building in improving public service performance. The positive decision confirms that inadequate training is a key factor limiting workers' potential.

The fourth item explores whether the lack of necessary work tools and resources significantly affects job performance in the public service. The mean score of 3.8, with a standard deviation of 0.45, suggests that respondents strongly agree that the unavailability of essential tools and resources hampers the effectiveness of public service workers. The consistent response across participants, indicated by the low standard deviation, suggests a clear understanding of the negative impact that resource constraints have on job performance. The positive decision further emphasizes the importance of adequate resources in enabling workers to fulfill their roles. The fifth item focuses on whether high levels of political interference reduce the efficiency of public service workers. The mean score of 3.8 and the standard deviation of 0.45 indicate strong agreement among respondents

that political interference significantly hampers the efficiency of public service workers. The low variability in responses suggests widespread agreement that political factors disrupt the smooth operation of public services. The positive decision indicates that political interference is a major factor hindering effective service delivery.

Research Question 3: What are the policies capable of promoting effective public service performance in Delta State?

Table 3: The policies capable of promoting effective public service performance in Delta State

S/ N	ITEMS	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decisio n
1	Transparent and merit-based recruitment policies can improve public service performance.	195	3.4	.55	Positive
2	Strong anti-corruption policies will enhance the performance of public service workers.	195	3.8	.45	Positive
3	Regular training and capacity-building programs can help improve the effectiveness of public service workers.	195	3.8	.45	Positive
4	Policies promoting equitable distribution of resources will improve public service delivery.	195	3.8	.45	Positive
5	Clear performance management policies can help monitor and improve the productivity of public service workers.	195	3.4	.55	Positive

Item 1 examines whether transparent and merit-based recruitment policies can improve public service performance. With a mean score of 3.4 and a standard deviation of 0.55, the respondents generally agree that merit-based recruitment is crucial to enhancing public service performance. The moderate standard deviation suggests a consistent view on this issue, though there is slight variation in how strongly participants feel about the need for transparency and fairness in recruitment processes. The positive decision emphasizes that a merit-based approach is considered a significant factor in improving public service.

Item 2 investigates the potential impact of strong anti-corruption policies on public service performance. The mean score of 3.8 and the standard deviation of 0.45 indicate a strong agreement among the respondents that combating corruption through effective policies would positively influence public service performance. The low standard deviation highlights a clear consensus that corruption is a major barrier to improving service delivery. The positive decision suggests that anti-corruption measures are widely viewed as essential for enhancing worker performance and fostering a more efficient public service.

Item 3 explores the role of regular training and capacity-building programs in improving the effectiveness of public service workers. The mean score of 3.8, accompanied by a standard deviation of 0.45, shows strong agreement with the idea that continuous professional development is crucial for improving the skills and competence of public servants. The consistency of responses, indicated by the low standard deviation, supports the idea that training programs are key to boosting worker effectiveness. The positive decision reaffirms that capacity-building initiatives are necessary for fostering better performance.

Item 4 looks at the impact of policies promoting the equitable distribution of resources on public service delivery. With a mean score of 3.8 and a standard deviation of 0.45, the respondents agree that equitable resource distribution can improve public service performance. The consistent responses indicate that fairness in resource allocation is seen as an important factor in ensuring

effective public service delivery. The positive decision suggests that equitable distribution is crucial for ensuring that public services meet the needs of all citizens, regardless of their background or location.

Item 5 focuses on whether clear performance management policies can help monitor and improve the productivity of public service workers. The mean score of 3.4, along with a standard deviation of 0.55, indicates agreement that clear performance management policies are necessary for improving worker productivity. While there is slightly more variability in responses compared to the other items, the overall positive decision suggests that respondents still view performance management policies as an essential component in improving public service performance.

Research Question 4: What are the challenges facing the public service towards effective service delivery in a dysfunctional environment in Delta State?

Table 4: challenges facing the public service towards effective service delivery in a dysfunctional environment in Delta State

S/ N	ITEMS	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1	Corruption within the public service is a major barrier to effective service delivery.	195	3.7	1.3	Positive
2	Political instability in Delta State hampers efficient public service delivery.	195	3.5	1.4	Positive
3	Low wages and poor working conditions contribute to low service delivery in the public sector.	195	3.8	.69	Positive
4	There is inadequate accountability and oversight in the public service, which affects performance.	195	3.8	1.0	Positive
5	Public service workers lack the necessary skills and training to meet the demands of their roles effectively.	195	3.4	1.2	Positive

The table identifies key challenges faced by the public service in Delta State that hinder effective service delivery in a dysfunctional environment. Respondents generally agree that corruption is a major barrier to efficient service delivery, with a mean score of 3.7. However, there is considerable variability in how strongly individuals perceive its impact, as indicated by the high standard deviation of 1.3. Political instability in Delta State is also seen as an impediment to public service efficiency, with a mean score of 3.5. Although respondents acknowledge the problem, there is a wider range of opinions about its severity, as reflected by the standard deviation of 1.4. The issue of low wages and poor working conditions is strongly linked to low service delivery, with a mean score of 3.8 and a lower standard deviation of 0.69, suggesting that respondents are largely in agreement that inadequate compensation and poor working conditions negatively affect performance. Inadequate accountability and oversight are recognized as challenges, with a mean score of 3.8. While respondents are generally aligned in their views, the standard deviation of 1.0 reveals some differences in how strongly they believe this issue affects service delivery. Lastly, the lack of necessary skills and training among public service workers is noted as a significant challenge. With a mean score of 3.4 and a standard deviation of 1.2, respondents agree that insufficient training contributes to ineffective service, though opinions on the extent of the problem vary.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between the promotion process public service workers' and their performance in dysfunctional environment in Delta State.

Table 5: Pearson correlation result for the relationship between the promotion process public service workers' and their performance in dysfunctional environment in Delta State

		Promotion process	Public service workers' performance
Promotion process	Pearson Correlation	1	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	195	195
Public service workers' performance	Pearson Correlation	1.000	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	195	195

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The Pearson correlation result of 1.0 and the probability score of .000 indicates a significant relationship. This means that the null hypothesis that says there is no significant relationship between the promotion process public service workers' and their performance in dysfunctional environment in Delta State is rejected. It can be concluded therefore that there is a significant relationship between the promotion process public service workers' and their performance in dysfunctional environment in Delta State

Hypothesis 2

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between the factors affecting public service worker and their performance in dysfunctional environment in Delta State

Table 6: Pearson correlation result for the relationship between the factors affecting public service worker and their performance in dysfunctional environment in Delta State

		Factors affecting public service	Public service worker's performance
Factors affecting public service	Pearson Correlation	1	.495
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	195	195
Public service workers performance	Pearson Correlation	.495	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	195	195

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The Pearson correlation coefficient score of .495 and the probability value of .000 shows a positive correlation between the factors affecting public service worker and their performance in dysfunctional environment in Delta State. This shows that the null hypothesis is rejected and in conclusion, the hypothesis indicates that there is a significant relationship between the factors affecting public service worker and their performance in dysfunctional environment in Delta State.

Hypothesis three

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between policies capable of promoting effective public service and its performance in Delta State.

Table 7: Pearson correlation result for the relationship between policies capable of promoting effective public service and its performance in Delta State

		Policies capable of promoting effective public service	Public service workers performance
policies capable of promoting effective public service	Pearson Correlation	1	1.000**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	195	195
Public service workers performance	Pearson Correlation	1.000**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	195	195

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The Pearson correlation coefficient score 1.0 and the P-value of .000 shows that there is a statistical relationship between the policies capable of promoting effective public service and its performance in Delta State. This implies that the null hypothesis null which stated that there is no significant relationship between policies capable of promoting effective public service and its performance in Delta State is rejected.

Discussion of Results

Promotion Process and Worker Performance: The perfect positive correlation (1.0) between the promotion process and public service workers' performance, accompanied by a probability value of .000, indicates a direct and significant relationship between the two variables. This suggests that the promotion system in the public service plays a crucial role in determining the motivation and performance levels of workers. When promotions are based on merit, transparency, and performance, employees tend to be more engaged, motivated, and productive. The rejection of the null hypothesis confirms that a fair promotion process fosters improved performance. This finding is consistent with Vandenabeele (2009), who argued that merit-based promotions are a key factor in enhancing employee motivation and organizational performance. A well-structured and transparent promotion system leads to greater job satisfaction, which in turn positively impacts workers' output and overall public service delivery.

Factors Affecting Worker Performance: The moderate positive correlation of .495 and a p-value of .000 suggest that factors such as poor remuneration, corruption, inadequate training, and political interference significantly affect public service worker performance in Delta State. This finding supports the work of Akinwale and Ojo (2014), who found that low pay, lack of training, and political instability are major barriers to effective public service performance. When public servants face issues like inadequate compensation or a lack of essential resources, their job satisfaction and performance tend to decline. Additionally, corruption within the public service further exacerbates this issue, as it fosters an environment of inefficiency and demotivation. These results emphasize

the need for addressing these factors to improve worker morale and productivity, which are critical to the achievement of effective public service delivery.

Policies and Public Service Performance: The Pearson correlation result of 1.0, coupled with a p-value of .000, also indicates a significant relationship between policies capable of promoting effective public service performance and the actual performance of workers. This finding underscores the crucial role that well-designed policies play in shaping the productivity of public service workers. The rejection of the null hypothesis indicates that policies focused on merit-based recruitment, anti-corruption measures, and regular capacity-building programs contribute significantly to improved service delivery. This is supported by Mbah and Nwankwo (2012), who suggested that clear, meritocratic policies and efforts to combat corruption are essential for improving public sector performance. Effective policies ensure that workers are well-equipped to perform their roles efficiently, thus driving better outcomes in public service.

the findings from this study reveal that corruption, political instability, low wages, poor working conditions, inadequate accountability, and insufficient skills and training are significant challenges facing the public service in Delta State. These challenges, if not adequately addressed, are likely to hinder the effectiveness of public service delivery. This aligns with global research on governance and public administration, which highlights the importance of strong institutions, fair compensation, and adequate training in improving public service performance.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The findings of this study underscore the critical factors influencing public service performance in Delta State, particularly in a dysfunctional environment. The results reveal that the promotion process, worker performance, policies, and key challenges such as corruption, political instability, low wages, and insufficient training are intertwined and significantly impact public service delivery. A well-structured and merit-based promotion system is directly correlated with improved worker performance, highlighting the importance of fairness and transparency in motivating employees. Furthermore, the study indicates that factors like inadequate remuneration, corruption, and political interference negatively affect public servants' job satisfaction and productivity, while the presence of clear and effective policies can enhance service delivery. The challenges identified, such as low wages, poor working conditions, and lack of necessary skills and training, require urgent attention to ensure a functional and effective public service. Addressing these factors will not only improve public servants' morale but also lead to more efficient service delivery, ultimately benefiting the citizens of Delta State.

Recommendations

Merit-Based Promotion System: It is crucial for the government to implement a merit-based promotion system that is transparent and free from political interference. This system should ensure that promotions are awarded based on performance, qualifications, and competencies. Such a policy will increase motivation, job satisfaction, and performance among public servants.

Improve Remuneration and Working Conditions: The government should review and adjust the wages and benefits of public service workers to make them more competitive. Improving the working conditions, including providing necessary tools and resources, will contribute to better performance and service delivery. Public servants must be adequately compensated for their contributions to ensure their commitment and productivity.

Combat Corruption and Political Interference: Strong anti-corruption policies should be put in place, and political interference in the public service must be minimized. Ensuring that appointments,

promotions, and assignments are based on merit and qualifications, rather than political patronage, will create a more efficient and professional workforce. Regular audits, transparency, and the enforcement of strict penalties for corrupt practices are essential.

Enhance Training and Capacity Building: Regular training and capacity-building programs should be introduced to ensure that public service workers are equipped with the necessary skills to perform their roles effectively. These programs should address both technical skills and soft skills such as leadership, communication, and problem-solving, enabling public servants to meet the challenges of their roles in a dynamic and complex environment.

Strengthen Accountability and Oversight Mechanisms: Effective accountability and oversight mechanisms should be established to monitor the performance of public servants and ensure that they are meeting their targets. Independent bodies or watchdog organizations could be created or strengthened to conduct regular evaluations of public service performance and ensure compliance with established policies and procedures.

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