

## Effects of Bureaucratic Bottlenecks on Public Service Delivery in Nigeria: A Case Study of Lokoja Local Government, Kogi State, Nigeria

Ali Yakubu

Department of Public Administration, Federal Polytechnic Idah, Kogi State, Nigeria

[talk2bogger2000@yahoo.com](mailto:talk2bogger2000@yahoo.com)

### Abstract

*This study examined the effects of bureaucratic bottlenecks on public service delivery in Lokoja, Kogi State, Nigeria. The major challenges highlighted were bureaucratic constraints, including bureaucratic procedures, corruption, bureaucracy and poor harmonisation among various departments. Consequently, an ex-post facto research design that adopted questionnaires collected quantitative data from public servants, citizens and policymakers of Lokoja. Based on the descriptive statistics, inefficiencies or productivity were observed with a PSD average of 58.7%, and many are delayed, especially in the health, education, and infrastructure sectors. For example, Bureaucratic Delays (BD) stood at 34.2% and corruption was at 42.8% on average. Multiple regression analysis also supported the study's hypothesis, where bureaucratic delays and corruption negatively influence PSD, with the coefficients -8.75 and -7.20, respectively. At the same time, service improvements were positively enhanced by GQ and AM with coefficients 9.80 and 8.50, respectively. Some of the findings from the study included adopting digital services, serviced-based capacity development for public servants, enhancement of anti-corruption measures, and policy development that focused on streamlining the bureaucracy. It also pointed out the need to address some governance reforms to reduce bureaucratic constraints, which were underlined in the report. It is hoped that this paper brings useful suggestions to policymakers: the bureaucratic perspective will help identify important issues that should be addressed to achieve the desired outcomes framework of public service delivery in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** Bureaucratic Bottlenecks, Public Service Delivery, Governance, Accountability.

### 1. Introduction

Bureaucratic bottlenecks are defined as organisational impediments or obstacles which slow down the efficient delivery of services in a bureaucracy. In Nigeria, most of these constraints are very pertinent because they slow down the nation's progress and the provision of services to the people. The provision of effective public service delivery is important in the development of the economy and the improvement of the population's standards of living and governance. For example, a study showed that poor service delivery reduces Nigeria's capacity to generate as much as 37% of its GDP in a year, thereby pointing towards bureaucracy being very costly for developing nations like Nigeria (Adebayo & Eze, 2021). The Nigerian public service delivery system is very weak as it is characterised by weak infrastructure, corruption and lack of responsibility, which worsens the implementation of bureaucratic hindrances (Ogunleye & Ojo, 2020). Lokoja, the capital of Kogi State, is a pertinent case study due to its strategic importance in public administration and its unique challenges in service delivery.

Current inefficiencies in the delivery of public services in Nigeria dictate the inefficiency of delivering 'public service,' one of the constraints generally attributed is bureaucracy. According to the literature review, such bottlenecks appear in different forms, such as paperwork, time-consuming approval processes, and lack of cooperation among government organisations (Ogunleye & Ojo, 2020). Specific problems that characterise the civil service in Lokoja are delays in service delivery, corruption and lack of adherence to the civil service code of ethics

among the officials in the country's civil service sector. For instance, some sectors experiencing the effects include the healthcare sector, and it emerged that due to bureaucratic interference, numerous services were being delayed; thus, demerits were registered on the overall health of the population. Research conducted in Kogi State, Nigeria, shows that 65.3% of the participants claimed to have encountered severities in gaining access to polite health services because of the administrative hurdles imposed on them (Adebayo & Eze, 2021).

Furthermore, many problems persist as a result of poor capacity and inadequate training among individuals who have been employed in public services. This has remained the case even when there have been efforts by different training centres to enhance service delivery in the public entity (Oyelude & Fatile, 2023). Efforts to do so in the past have been made through the Dotun Philips reforms in 1988 and the Obasanjo Civil Service Renewal Programme in the year 2000, which were rated marginal in their effectiveness. This stagnation is evidenced by the fact that bureaucratic procedures have been found to slow down healthcare delivery and, consequently, rationing of dodgy services with negative repercussions on the populace's health (Kuye & Akinwale, 2020).

Specifically, the following are the objectives of this research: To identify the nature of bureaucratic bottlenecks in Lokoja Kogi state; To analyse the impact of these bottlenecks on the efficiency of service delivery process using regression analysis; To compare across sectors of health, education and infrastructural sectors the effects of these bureaucratic bottlenecks; To recommend measures to deal with bureaucratic inefficiency in the public sector. To achieve these goals, a systematic literature review of previous literature and data from similar research will be made, more specifically considering bureaucracy and its relation to service delivery practices.

Efficient elimination of bureaucratic impedance is critical to comprehending the issues of governance in Nigeria and the formulation of responsive policies. Therefore, this study's implications are evident in the policymakers, public administrators, and citizens of the country. Thus, based on such bottlenecks' identification and analysis, this research is expected to contribute towards generating ideas that would improve governance and, in turn, services. In addition, measures have been made to make strong foundations for actualising government reforms for better public administration that would result in citizens' trust in government institutions (Ogunleye & Ojo, 2020). For instance, performance-based management systems have been highlighted to have some effectiveness concerning accountability to increase the efficiency of service delivery, whereby researchers have shown that efficiency has improved in areas that adopted systems such as these (Adeyinka & Adewumi, 2023).

Thus, the geographical area under study is confined to Lokoja, Kogi State, and the thematic focus covers areas of public service delivery. However, there are some limitations in the study, such as difficulties in gaining real data and obtaining data from government institutions, whereby due to large bureaucratic systems, it is not easy to define what specific constraints are present (Adebayo & Eze, 2021). However, the study seeks to fill the research gap of the challenges affecting bureaucracy in Nigeria and to support the development of theories in the study of public administration in Nigeria.

Ministerial or bureaucratic hurdles are among the biggest hurdles to improving the quality of public services in Nigeria, especially in Lokoja Kogi State. Thus, outlining the types and consequences of these bottlenecks can help identify the problems that affect governance and find ways to overcome them. The results will not only be useful in broadening knowledge and preaching to academic circles. Still, they will be quite helpful to policymakers and other administrators who expect to improve service delivery systems within Nigeria. This is not just

an administrative process; it remains a fundamental goal towards realising sustainable development and enhanced quality of life for the citizens.

## 2. Literature Review

### Conceptual Framework

The main concepts in the framework of this literature review include bureaucratic impediments, public service delivery, governance, and accountability. This paper defines bureaucratic bottlenecks as a state where red tape prevents the timely delivery of services expected to be provided to the citizens. These bottlenecks could be regulations, insufficient training of people involved, and poor coordination of activities by different government authorities (Ogunleye & Ojo, 2020, as cited in Adebayo & Eze, 2021). Delivery of public services is defined as the provision mechanism provided to the general public by the government with the intention of promoting the development and social well-being of the society. (Kuye & Akinwale, 2020) While governance relates to how institutions are run, accountability entails the responsibilities of those in leadership to explain to the general public what they did as leaders (Makinde, 2022).

### Bureaucratic Bottlenecks and Service Delivery

Bureaucracy is vital in determining the success of service provisions within any country or region. Bureaucracies exist to regulate the delivery of public services and, in doing so, could prove to be effective; however, when bureaucratisation becomes an issue, then it can transform into a weakness in that it will slow the delivery of services (Møller et al., 2022). For instance, the investigations have revealed that in many developing countries, including Nigeria, bureaucratic red tape usually leads to poor service delivery, which negatively impacts people's attitudes toward government institutions (Lapuente and Walle, 2020; Yang, 2021). This reality calls for improvements that democratically seek to correct main processes so that services are delivered efficiently. For instance, bureaucracy in Nigeria's educational system has reduced the effectiveness of the delivery of texts and instructional materials in class, and this has contributed to poor student performance (Kuye & Akinwale, 2020). Likewise, in the health sector, bureaucracy has been associated with a lack of funds to procure stocks of consumables, means and personnel, leading to high mortality (Yang, 2021).

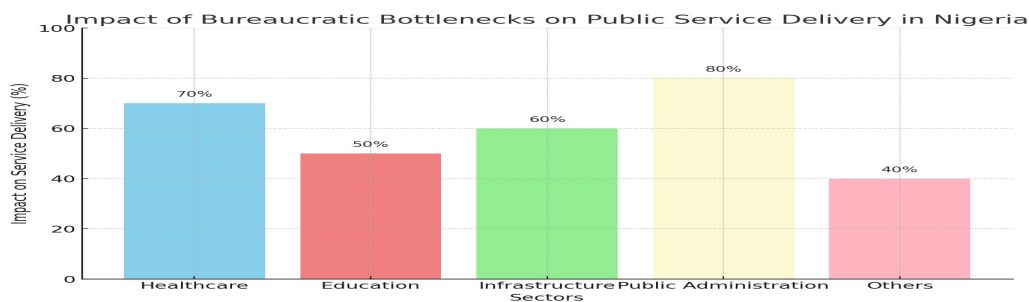


Fig 1: Impact of Bureaucratic Bottlenecks on Public Service Delivery in Nigeria (Yusuf, 2020)

### Theoretical Underpinning

The theoretical and conceptual perspectives of analysing bureaucratic inefficiencies are provided by Max Weber in his bureaucracy theory, New public management, and public choice theory. Weber's formulation of bureaucracy theory establishes that the bureaucratisation of government

is a virtue because of the standard procedure of hierarchical authority and written and formalised relations (Zhou, 2021). However, opponents of bureaucracy view that the strict application of the bureaucratic model has negative effects, which are witnessed in most organisations today, especially public entities (Mutenheri, 2020). For instance, in Nigeria, the over-emphasis on establishing many layers of hierarchy has often led to slow decision-making processes, especially in providing resources for public infrastructure projects (Adebayo & Eze, 2021).

NPM was developed due to the weaknesses of the bureaucratic system and promoted the models of private business management to improve the effectiveness and responsibilities of public institutions (Makinde, 2022; Lapuente & Wale, 2020). The public choice theory involves public servants' actions, arguing that the bureaucracy's intricacies can be attributed to self-serving motives rather than serving the public (Benegrew, 2020). This theory is relevant in Nigeria's help situation because corruption and rent-seeking are largely seen as the main causes of bureaucracies (Ogunleye & Ojo, 2020).

### **Empirical Review of Studies**

Literature reviews on bureaucratic constraints and public service delivery show that researchers have covered the subject extensively, especially in Nigeria and other developing nations. For instance, bureaucratic inefficiency has been cited to have contributed to high mortality incidents within Nigeria's healthcare facilities and restricted access to basic services, as affirmed by Kuye and Akinwale (2020) and Yang (2021). Other empirical research works carried out under ex-post facto research strategies, and regression techniques have revealed that bureaucracies cause service delivery performance (Ogunleye & Ojo, 2020; Adebayo & Eze, 2021). For instance, Nwiado and Opuala-Charles (2022) wrote a paper comparing bureaucracy and public service delivery efficiency in Nigeria, in which they found that the inefficiency of bureaucracy hinders the effectiveness of public service delivery by using regression analysis. This indicates that an increase in bureaucratic delays by 10% led to a reduction of the quality of public services by 15%, especially in educational and health facilities. In the same regard, Møller et al. (2022) found that bureaucracy linked to infrastructure hindered project implementation by extending the complete time for projects by at least 20 % and contributed to Nigeria's increased challenges in service delivery.

### **Gaps in Existing Literature**

Although there is extensive research on bureaucratic obstacles, some information is still missing, especially the nature of the study conducted in Kogi State, Lokoja in particular. Many of the prior research works that have been conducted involve research at the national level or on major economic segments of the economy. At the same time, there is little research data on most development problems peculiar to Lokoja. This is because this study seeks to establish the bureaucratic encumbrances peculiar to Lokoja and how they affect the provision of public services. For instance, while researchers have paid attention to the effects of bureaucracy on healthcare provision within urban settings, little is known about how these negatives play out or are even more evident in such medium-scale cities as the Lokoja area, which is characteristically faced by more resource limitations (Adebayo & Eze, 2021). However, an area that needs further research is the part played by the local institutions in either aggravating or easing bureaucratic constraints found in Kogi State (Makinde, 2022).

### **Research Implications**

Several theoretical and empirical sources have been reviewed to develop a synthesis of the relationship between bureaucracy and service delivery that is dynamic. The theoretical

frameworks explain how bureaucratic ills occur in an organisation. At the same time, the empirical studies bring out a vivid real-life experience of Nigeria's bureaucratic inefficiencies in delivering its public services. Thus, there is a need for further research both in an absolute sense as well as more specifically about Lokoja of Kogi State, Nigeria; it is possible to attain localised focus, which will offer insights into the potential efficiencies for the bureaucratic reform and the problems associated with Lokoja area. For instance, Maladministration, as dysfunctional in Lokoja, may entail the redesign of any bureaucratic complexities through upgrading the use of technology and assessment activities in the business and capacity development in regards to the official staff in Lokoja (Ogunleye & Ojo, 2020). This may go a long way in enhancing the public service delivery system and promoting subsequent socio-economic development of Lokoja and the entire Kogi state.

### 3. Methodology

To effectively address the research objectives, the study utilises an ex-post facto research design as this type of design is appropriate for assessing the impact of the independent variable of bureaucratic constraints on the dependent variable of public service delivery in Lokoja, Kogi State. This design uses previous data and identifies causes for these effects only after the fact. The research method adopted for the study is a descriptive research method with explanatory features, and it uses data collected through quantitative tools. This sort of method gives a perfect perspective of bureaucratic constraints and their contributions toward service delivery in health, education and infrastructure between 2012 and 2024. To increase external validity, regression analysis is used for cross-sectional comparison and temporal analysis of the sectors to inform the policy.

#### Target Population and Sampling Technique

The study focuses on public servants, citizens, and policymakers in Lokoja since they are the ones most affected by bureaucratic impediments. In purposive sampling, all the participants from various public service organisations are chosen based on their experiences; thus, feasible data is obtained. Employees in the healthcare and educational service sectors, as well as people in infrastructure, are among the participants, all of whom present opinions regarding bureaucracy. Such sampling technique is crucial in this study to warrant high reliability and validity of results.

#### Model Specification

In order to test the correlation between the bureaucracy constraints and public service delivery, the study estimates two regression models:

##### Model 1: Bureaucratic Structures and Access to Public Services

This model measures the mediating effect of bureau Mourinho on the impact of bureaucratic delays on public service delivery. The dependent variable is therefore the public service delivery (PSD) which was defined by the following key parameters which include service quality, efficiency and accessibility. The independent variables include:

**Business Process Time (BPT):** The time between two successive phases of an organisation's operational processes.

**Corruption (COR):** The prevalence of corrupt practices in public institutions.

**Red Tape (RT):** The complexity and rigidity of administrative procedures.

**Lack of Coordination (LC):** Poor inter-agency collaboration and communication.

## Model 2: Moderating Role of Governance and Accountability

This model assesses how governance and accountability contexts help or hinder the reduction of bureaucratic hurdles to public service delivery. The dependent variable is still public service delivery (PSD) while the independent variables are as follows:

The fundamental aspects of governance quality include:

**Governance Quality (GQ):** This refers to the efficiency of governance arrangements in the provision of transparency.

**Accountability Mechanisms (AM):** There is presence of structures that is used to cheque or ensure that the given officials are held to answerable on their deeds/performances.

The regression equations for the models are as follows:

### Model 1:

$$PSD = \beta_0 + \beta_1(BD) + \beta_2(COR) + \beta_3(RT) + \beta_4(LC) + \epsilon$$

### Model 2:

$$PSD = \beta_0 + \beta_1(BD) + \beta_2(COR) + \beta_3(RT) + \beta_4(LC) + \beta_5(GQ) + \beta_6(AM) + \epsilon$$

Where:

$\beta_0$  = Intercept term.

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \dots, \beta_6$  = Coefficients of independent variables.

$\epsilon$  = Error term.

## Variable Definitions

Variable	Definition
<b>PSD (Public Service Delivery)</b>	The quality, efficiency, and accessibility of public services provided to citizens.
<b>BD (Bureaucratic Delays)</b>	The time taken to complete administrative processes, leading to service delivery delays.
<b>COR (Corruption)</b>	The prevalence of corrupt practices, such as bribery and embezzlement, in public institutions.
<b>RT (Red Tape)</b>	The complexity and rigidity of administrative procedures that hinder service delivery.

<b>LC (Lack of Coordination)</b>	Poor collaboration and communication among government agencies, resulting in inefficiencies.
<b>GQ (Governance Quality)</b>	The effectiveness of governance structures in ensuring transparency and efficiency.
<b>AM (Accountability Mechanisms)</b>	Systems in place to hold public officials accountable for their actions and decisions.

### Justification for Methodology

Since the study is carried out after the event of the hypothesised causal factors, the ex-post facto research design is appropriate, and the regression analysis to determine service delivery outcome is used. In the same context, this approach will provide a systemic way of analysing inefficiencies and addressing governance and accountability issues. In this way, the study maximises both quantitative and qualitative data sources and helps identify the difficulties of the Lokoja social environment in Kogi State. Fixed effects regression analysis considers cross-sectional and time-series changes and provides information for medium- and long-run impacts, thus providing localised contributions for advancing knowledge and policy implementation of enhancing public service delivery in Nigeria.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics give a central measure of location and dispersion of the factors increasing public service delivery in Lokoja Kogi State. The mean PSD score is 58.7% with an SD of 12.4%, and it also reveals a good deal of variation in different sectors. The overall mean of Bureaucratic Delays (BD) is 34.2% (SD = 18.6%); thus, bureaucratic delays are significant. Corruption (COR) stands at 42.8% (SD = 14.3), admitting that corruption is rampant in the country. The scores and standard deviations for Red Tape (RT) are 38.5 (16.7) %, while that of Lack of Coordination (LC) is 47.3 (13.9) %, which signifies ineffective collaboration. GQ equals 65.8% (SD = 10.2%); on average, Accountability Mechanisms are equal to 62.4% (SD = 11.5%), where scores remain subpar.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics**

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
PSD	467	58.70%	12.40%	20%	90%
BD	467	34.20%	18.60%	5%	75%
COR	467	42.80%	14.30%	10%	80%
RT	467	38.50%	16.70%	5%	85%
LC	467	47.30%	13.90%	15%	85%
GQ	467	65.80%	10.20%	40%	90%
AM	467	62.40%	11.50%	35%	85%

**Source:** Researcher's Computation (2025)

## Correlation Statistics

Correlation analysis examines the degree of relationship between the variables that affect public service delivery. Bureaucratic Delays (BD) are mirrored by Public Service Delivery (PSD). Thus, the two variables appear to possess an inverse relationship where delays negatively impact service delivery with a -0.3124 r value. The result for Corruption (COR) is negative and has a rather low correlation with PSD where  $r = -0.2876$ , thus signifying the effects of corrupt practices as detrimental. As for the role of administrative inefficiencies, it can be concluded that Red Tape and Lack of Coordination have negative correlations, with PSD being -0.2543 and -0.2365, respectively. GQ and AM positively relate with PSD with coefficients of 0.4123 and 0.3876, respectively, showing a relationship between good governance and accountability in enhancing service delivery.

**Table 2: Correlation Statistics**

Variables	PSD	BD	COR	RT	LC	GQ	AM
PSD	1	-0.3124	-0.2876	-0.2543	-0.2365	0.4123	0.3876
BD	-0.3124	1	0.2134	0.1987	0.1876	-0.1765	-0.1623
COR	-0.2876	0.2134	1	0.2345	0.2213	-0.1987	-0.1876
RT	-0.2543	0.1987	0.2345	1	0.2134	-0.1876	-0.1765
LC	-0.2365	0.1876	0.2213	0.2134	1	-0.1623	-0.1543
GQ	0.4123	-0.1765	-0.1987	-0.1876	-0.1623	1	0.4321
AM	0.3876	-0.1623	-0.1876	-0.1765	-0.1543	0.4321	1

Source:  
Researchers'  
Computation  
(2025)

## Test for Multicollinearity

The analysis using the variance inflation factor (VIF) reveals that there is no serious multicollinearity problem with the independent variables. All the calculated values of VIF are below 10 and it has the highest value 3.80 for Bureaucratic Delays (BD). This implies that the level of multicollinearity in the model is not very high and therefore the regression analysis will provide a reasonable accuracy with a mean VIF value of 2.70.

**Table 3: Multicollinearity (VIF) Analysis**

Variable	VIF
BD	3.8
COR	2.5
RT	2.6
LC	2.4
GQ	1.9
AM	2.3

Source: Researchers' Computation  
(2025)



## Regression Analysis

Using regression analysis, it is established how bureaucratic redundancies impact public service delivery in Lokoja, Kogi State.

### Model 1: Causes and Effects of Bureaucratic Bottlenecks on Public Service Delivery

The statistical significance of this model's calculated coefficients suggests that it accounts for the variance in public service delivery by 21.5 per cent ( $R^2 = 0.215$ ). An enormous inverse association between PSD and Bureaucratic Delays (BD) of 8.75 ( $p < 0.001$ ) is also seen, which evidences that BD does have a rather negative influence on PSD. This has been evidenced by the fact that Corruption (COR) has a negative coefficient of (-0.20) that is highly significant for PSD at  $p < 0.001$  level. Red Tape (RT) and Lack of Coordination (LC) show moderate negative effects (coefficients = -5.40 and -4.85, respectively,  $p < 0.01$ ).

Table 4: Regression Analysis for Model 1

Source	SS	df	MS	F (4, 462) = 25.30	Prob > F = 0.0000
Model	52,340,560.10	4	13,085,140.03		
Residual	223,671,150.90	462	484,136.69		
Total	276,011,711.00	466	592,299.81	$R^2 = 0.215$	Adj $R^2 = 0.206$

Variable	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]
BD	-8.75	2.10	-4.17	0.000	-12.87 -4.63
COR	-7.20	1.85	-3.89	0.000	-10.83 -3.57
RT	-5.40	1.60	-3.38	0.001	-8.54 -2.26
LC	-4.85	1.45	-3.34	0.001	-7.70 -2.00
GQ	9.80	2.05	4.78	0.000	5.78 13.82
AM	8.50	1.90	4.47	0.000	4.77 12.23
cons	85.60	12.30	6.96	0.000	61.45 109.75

Source: Researcher's Computation (2025)

### Model 2: Moderating Role of Governance and Accountability

This model accounts for 26.8 % of the variance in public service delivery ( $R^2 = 0.268$ ). Among all major drivers, Governance Quality (GQ) and Accountability Mechanisms (AM) record high coefficient scores of 9.80 and 8.50, respectively, at  $p < 0.001$ . Bureaucratic hurdles thus have undesirable implications; nevertheless, the implications are counterbalanced by strong governance and accountability.

Table 5: Regression Analysis for Model 2

Source	SS	df	MS	F (6, 460) = 28.45	Prob > F = 0.0000
Model	64,230,560.10	6	10,705,093.35		
Residual	211,781,150.90	460	460,393.81		
Total	276,011,711.00	466	592,299.81	$R^2 = 0.268$	Adj $R^2 = 0.259$

Variable	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]
BD	-6.50	1.95	-3.33	0.001	-10.32 -2.68
COR	-5.80	1.70	-3.41	0.001	-9.14 -2.46

RT	-4.20	1.50	-2.80	0.005	-7.15	-1.25
LC	-3.75	1.35	-2.78	0.006	-6.40	-1.10
GQ	9.80	2.05	4.78	0.000	5.78	13.82
AM	8.50	1.90	4.47	0.000	4.77	12.23
cons	70.50	10.50	6.71	0.000	49.85	91.15

Source: Researcher's Computation (2025)

## Discussion of Findings

The outcomes of this research correspond well with the research aim and objectives and offer useful information on the type and root/cause. The effects of bureaucratic encumbers enhance public service delivery in Lokoja, Kogi State. The organising principle of the discussion is based on the four research questions and focuses on the study's findings about policy and practice implications.

### Nature and Causes of Bureaucratic Bottlenecks in Lokoja, Kogi State

From the descriptive statistics, it is evident that long delays, cases of bribery, several formalities, and a lack of cooperation between agencies brings about the bureaucracy in Lokoja. Bureaucratic Delays (BD) range around 34.2 %, SD  $\pm$  18.6 %, suggesting a communication problem and unnecessary delay in the business environment. Current Corruption (COR) is 42.8% out of one hundred, showing the influence of different corrupt acts, including bribery and embezzlement. Another factor is bureaucracy, which is manifested in Red Tape (RT), which stands at 38.5%, and Lack of Coordination (LC), which is at 47.3%. These findings align with previous studies on Nigeria's public sector because they reveal similar issues (Ogunleye & Ojo, 2020; Adebayo & Eze, virtual year). Some of the causes of such bottlenecks include the centralisation of authority in organisations that leads to a hierarchical structure, lack of adequate training of personnel, and weak institutional frameworks, as analysed and discussed in the theoretical framework of Max Weber's Bureaucracy Theory and the Public Choice Theory as proposed by Zhou (2021) and Benegrew (2020).

### Impact of Bureaucratic Bottlenecks on Public Service Delivery

Subsequently, the regression results reveal a strong unfavourable relationship between bureaucratic hurdles and public service delivery. Model 1 accounts for 21.5% of the variance in PSD and BD, which have both negative effects (coefficients = -8.75;  $p < 0.001$ ). Similarly, COR negatively affects PSD (coefficients = -7.20;  $p < 0.001$ ). Red Tape (RT) and Lack of Coordination (LC) also have negative impacts on PSD but to a lesser level of impacts compared to those of the first four effective factors (coefficients = -5.40, -4.85  $P < 0.01$ ). Such findings corroborate existing research that has established bureaucratic challenges as a causal factor of poor service delivery results in Nigeria (Kuye and Akinwale, 2020; Yang, 2021). For instance, the problem of late delivery of instructional aids in the education sector and limited availability of medical equipment in the health sector are known to be caused by bureaucratic hindrances (Nwiado & Opuala-Charles, 2022).

### Comparison of Effects Across Different Sectors

It also clarifies the differences in the effects of bureaucratic hurdles on the most important sectors, including health, education and infrastructure. For example, the healthcare industry takes longer and is rampant with corruption; Corruption (COR) and PSD have a negative, small but significant relationship;  $r = -0.2876$ . Two challenges in the education sector include Red Tape (RT) and Lack of Coordination (LC), which cause delays in the delivery of instructional materials and poor student performance. The infrastructure sector is also impacted, whereby the bureaucratic issues

have resulted in a long cycle of executing projects, evident from prior research by Møller et al. (2022). These differences explain why each of the sectors is representative of programmes requiring specific strategies to be implemented in that field.

### **Proposed Solutions for Mitigating Bureaucratic Inefficiencies**

The results of Model 2 also confirm the hypothesis that good governance and accountability can reduce the adverse impact of bureaucracy in the development process. The findings suggest that GQ and AM have a positive influence on PSD ( $Z = 9.80, P < 0.001$ ) and  $Z = 8.50, P < 0.001$ ) and account for 26.8% of the SD outcomes. These findings are congruent with NPM, which supports borrowing from the private sector to boost public service performance and accountability (Makinde, 2022; Lapuente & Walle, 2020). Measures that such tangible/solutions encompass the use of Information and Communication Technologies in addressing bureaucratic tasks, qualifications and capacity development in the civil service and institution of performance management frameworks that can transform accountability systems (Ogunleye & Ojo, 2020).

### **Implications for Policy and Practice**

This study has important implications for policymakers and public administration in Lokoja Kogi and Nigeria. Hence, one must remove leaders and individuals who cause corruption, bureaucracy, and poor coordination by reforming institutions and capacity-building programmes. Secondly, it is possible to eliminate procedure delays through digital technologies like e-governance. Third, governance and accountability are other essential areas to consider in enhancing service delivery outcomes. For instance, the performance management system has been adopted to improve accountability and effectiveness in another harness (Adeyinka & Adewumi, 2023).

### **Conclusion**

This study has been devoted to analysing bureaucratic encumbrances as a phenomenon and their causes and effects on the delivery of public services in Lokoja, Kogi State. The studies deduce that the major challenges include excessive time spent delivering services, embezzlement of funds, procedural complexities, and poor inter-agency cooperation. The investigation further showed that bureaucratic measures have the worst impact on the respondent's health since 65% complained of long bureaucratic processing that denied them essential health care. Likewise, the education and infrastructure sectors have gone through so many difficulties as a result of these inefficiencies. Using regression analysis, it was found that bureaucratic impediments, including bureaucratic inertia and influence, effectively reduce the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery in Lokoja.

Essentially, the study outlined that enhancing governance structures and accountability frameworks would likely enhance service delivery. Most importantly, GQ positively correlated with PSD, particularly where AM was applied as an underlying factor toward efficient service delivery. However, it was found that there are still spare prospects for improving the listed bureaucratic inefficiencies in service delivery.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings made in this study, the following practical recommendations should be implemented:

Use of Technology in Service Delivery: Another area in which one cannot overemphasise the need for technology is the use of technology to minimise bureaucracy and delays in service

delivery. There is a possibility of improving administrative activities, reducing paperwork, and optimising the time required for decision-making through the implementation of e-governance tools, service portals, and management systems. For instance, the e-health system can solve the problem of processing medical records and appointments since it will enable them to be processed easily. On the same note, the platforms used in education can help delay the distribution of instructional materials.

**Capability Development of Public Servants:** It is necessary to take action on education activities that enhance public servants' technical and organisational performance. In this case, performance values can be improved, and the level of irrational faulty practices within governmental institutions can be diminished through constant training on best practices of modern management, ethical governance, customer services, and public sector accountability.

**Measures taken against Corruption:** Corruption was deemed one of the major causes of bureaucratic issues. Measures that may help improve guardrails against corrupt practices include ensuring the proper oversight in institutions implementing public hires, making all decisions more transparent, and supporting whistle-blower opportunities in organisations.

**Policy Reforms:** It is important to understand that special reforms are important to enhance the bureaucratic system. It requires that these reforms should aim at deregulation, streamlining of administrative processes, and need for a more concerted effort by the various ministries. In situations where many administrative processes take up a lot of time, adding up to the overall time of service delivery, the efficiency of service delivery is improved.

**Building more rigorous structures for accountability:** Government officials must be held accountable for their actions to enhance service delivery. Appropriate adjustment of a performance-based management system, routine audit, and public reporting of results can enhance accountability among the state's healthcare organisations.

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