



World Scientific News

An International Scientific Journal

WSN 156 (2021) 102-118

EISSN 2392-2192

Professionalism and Public Service Delivery Efficiency in Nigeria: An Empirical Analysis

Aghogho Victory Ighorhiohwunu

Department of Arts and Humanities, Delta State Polytechnic, Ogwashi – Uku, Nigeria

E-mail address: victory4joy2005@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between professionalism and public service delivery efficiency in Oredo Local Government Secretariat, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. A descriptive research method was adopted and data was collected via a survey of six hundred and seventy one (671) respondents using simple sampling technique. Data collected were analyzed using correlation and linear regression analysis with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 21. The results of the study revealed that there is significant relationship between professionalism and public service delivery efficiency. As predicted, the study also showed that professionalism exerts a positive and statistically significant impact on public service delivery efficiency in Oredo Local Government Secretariat, Benin City, Edo state, Nigeria. On the basis of these findings, the study recommends among others that civil servants should be professional to the core, this is attainable when training and seminars, retraining and reorganization of the system is enforced, by ensuring that the right persons are placed on the right job to yield expected outcome.

Keywords: Professionalism, Public Service Delivery, Efficiency, Benin City

1. INTRODUCTION

Inefficiency in service delivery system is alarming due to several factors enumerated. Efforts to ameliorate these challenges had taken adequate finances, time and energy from the

government, public and private sectors. In spite of the introduction of several techniques as tactics to proffer remedy to the inefficiency in service delivery system, there is no meaningful change and when few changes occurred, workforce attitude to changes and innovation hampered such growth thereby reversion to status quo has been the case. To ensure this challenge is resolved once and for all, employees' display of professionalism in rendering services became imperative. When employees are professional, then it is suffice to remark that the right peg has been put into the right hole to yield expected outcome.

To meet and go beyond this modern globalised standard of service delivery system in a modern and normalized society, it becomes imperative to play out professionalism by the public servants. Frequency of a displaced professional skill by practitioners had yielded positive, effective, efficient and innovative services when it is rendered to the public. Again, meeting up with the globalised standards of service delivery require adequate, updated and improved skills, knowledge and competency on the part of the service executors, and in ensuring that services are rendered professionally, the implementers need to act professionally. Anything contrary to this will hamper efficiency in service delivery, thereby availing inefficiency and stagnancy if not retrogression in service delivery system, which is detrimental to the public. To avert this persistent challenge, there is an urgent need to promote the course of professional practices in service delivery particularly in the public sector.

2. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

2. 1. Professionalism

Professionalism simply means competence, skills, rectitude, expertise, civility, acumen and the concept had been viewed by various scholars in the work place. The concept of professionalism has been ascribed with divergent definitions by scholars who are professional to the core and those who are not. However, in these entire ascriptions, there cut across noticeable elements in the definitions – the acceptable behavior that employees exhibit in the workplace. An individual's conduct at work ... which is not restricted ... that required high level of education and trait (Mckay, 2019), Brint (1993) discussing the work of Eliot Friedson, asserted categorically that professions arose as a handful of “learned occupations” and other positions for the upper class. Brint pointed out that many analysts concentrated on the combination of expertise, collective organization and collegial control, ethical standards, and work in public service. All occupations can be placed on the notion of profession, depending on the placements, and the constructions of such placements, whichever placements (Stan & Matthew, 2007), the occupation required a high degree of specialized knowledge and skills, based primarily upon a service motivation, should concern a crucial societal tasks (s) and require an extended preparation, among other things (Carpenter, 2003). Carpenter suggested that the existence and designation of what is termed “professional” needs those who are members of a profession to substantially share goals, to support members and stakes out boundaries.

Professionalism is the demeanor, conduct and standard that guides professionals in their job performance. Freidson (2001) conceptualized professionalism as “... an organized occupation gains, with the power to determine who is qualifies to perform a defined set of tasks, to prevent all others from performing that task and to control the criteria by which to evaluate performance ... the organized occupation creates the circumstances under which its members

are free of control by those who employ them...” the challenges of professionals are complex especially where employee skills are not appropriate for the nature of services rendered, there will be need to develop and build more value on the job. Thus Furlong (2000:18-19) stated that “it is because professionals face complex and unpredictable situations that they need a specialized body of knowledge; if they are to apply that knowledge, it is argued that they need the autonomy to make their own judgments; and given that they have that autonomy, it is essential that they act with responsibility-collectively they need to develop appropriate professional values”. This implies that professionals need no control by their employee subject to trust, competence and knowledge inherent in them to discharge their responsibilities efficiently. This position was agreed on by Skrtic (1991:87) when he postulated that “the essence of which that professionals are given greater autonomy than other groups, is that they set their own standards, regulate entry into their own ranks, discipline their members, and operate with fewer restraints than the arts, trades or businesses. In return they are expected to serve the public good and enforce high standards of conduct and discipline”.

The concept of professionalism from the foregoing implies that it encompasses a number of attributes which are identified collectively to form what professionalism entails.

These features include:

- i. Specialized knowledge
- ii. Competency
- iii. Honesty and integrity
- iv. Respect
- v. Accountability
- vi. Self-regulation
- vii. Image

2. 2. Specialized Knowledge

Those who are called professionals have a specific skills and knowledge that makes them inflexible but adhered to developing and improving such skills/Knowledge. Every facet of work required a stable core knowledge and skills which gives effective and efficient service delivery in that field. These skills or knowledge could be academic qualifications, acquired skills, continuous practices and abilities, to do something right in an acceptable manner. Those who have specialized knowledge do not rely on excuses even when challenges arises; but are focused and diligent to proffer solutions to such difficulties. Whenever things that make one sustain and succeed in their field is knowledge specialty.

In the view of Rwland, Martyn, Barber & Heal (2000), to have a specialized knowledge is to have a solid knowledge which of the subject matter, can be understood. It entails knowing the content in depth (Ma, 1999), a knowledge that is gain through an act (Ball, et al, 2008). Employee’s knowledge influences the quality of job performance in the workplace and it is a key factor to keep the job alive. Specialized knowledge is not a one way thing, but it also entails knowing different meanings and approaches of operations of the job and different representation and content (Domoney, 2002), this is the ability to recognize formulated problems and proffer solutions in order to explore a specific one (Ribeiron & Amaral, 2015) entails specialized knowledge. According to Li, Huang, and Yang (2011), an expert will possess deeper knowledge of the characteristics of his job performance. Flowing from the divergent views, in my view, specialized knowledge is knowledge in action.

2. 3. Competency

Professionalism entails be able to get things done at the right time for the right people and at the right place. The craves for reliability and entrustment of the public servants on a constant basis makes service delivery effective and efficient to recipient of such services. Employees' inherent ability to satisfied clients and the public promptly is an aspect of professionalism. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (2002), defined competence as knowledge, skills and specifications which can cause one person to act better, not considering his special proficiency in that job.

This implies that competency is a developmental process which is a lifelong series of actions and reflections. In view of Salmiaty & Ahmad (2017) to achieve organizational goals that have been set, the system competences is required to play a significant role, where competence requires much sharper pictures about the strength and weaknesses of the depth understanding of competences. Furthermore, competences required to achieve excellent performance of an organization needs to understand the firm's purpose, vision, strategies and result evaluations. Expert emphasizes knowledge to see general performance that may be important in the work. Salmiaty & Ahmad (Supra) reiterated that the most difficult thing is to identify the most important tasks and competences associated with success; this is required in service delivery system.

2. 4. Honesty and Integrity

Professionals have the attribute never to compromise their values, ethics and integrity, which serve as the basis of keeping the job alive. Trusted employees exhibits qualities of honesty, sincerity and high standard of morality at all times and places. Where work or actions that required their services is outside their scope of expertise professionals will boldly admit it and solicit for a competent hands in that field. The notion of integrity as a professional concept has impact on the ethics of human resources practitioners which can assist professional in developing leaders, managers and other organizational members to behave ethically (Parry & Procto-Thomas, 2002; Prottas, 2008).

The use of the concept "honesty" and or "integrity" often varies in scope and perspective across professional disciplines and even among scholars within the same academic field of study (De Bakker, 2007), this position was sanctioned by the Academy of Human Resource Development (1999) when it held the view that integrity is the standard or values that should inform Human Resource Development research, teaching and practice; it further list the following characteristics to explain the word integrity: honesty, fairness; respect of others; awareness of personal values, belief systems, needs and limitations, values, clarifications; and avoidance of potential conflicting relationship, thus, it is a highlight of an ambiguous conceptualization construe in the Human Resource Development field.

Honesty and integrity of professional employees is a multileveled framework that incorporates personal integrity, moral integrity, and organizational integrity. These convey a sense of wholeness, completeness, and purity (Becker, 2009; Carter, 1996; De Bakker, 2007; Kaptein & Wempe, 2002; Pritchard, 2006), because integrity denotes three distinct but integrated dimensions (Dudzinski, 2004, P.300) for every professional. De Bakker (2007) noted that moral integrity implies that one has a moral core defined as a set of recognizable moral principles that shape one's character or identify, this needs to be testified by beneficiaries of services rendered by employees, or better still public justification. Moral integrity is manifested

in organizational behavior through a list of moral duties that must be fulfilled by members of the organization in different fields to ensure that norms and values are respected (Bergin, 2009). Barnard et al (2008) in their qualitative research confirmed, the scholars view the concept of moral integrity as moral absolutism that individuals (employees) possess.

Professional integrity is a philosophical reflection on professional responsibilities, Pritchard (2006) traced professional integrity to its root, practice ethics, and he observed that moral norms are enshrined in the codes of ethics of all professional integrity. Even the psychosocial contract between employees and employers demands basic compliance with certain moral principles (Mirlenda, 2013). As a way of example, Velasquez (1982) postulation that individuals are moral agents and thus employees assume some measure of moral responsibility by vowing to abide by the regulations of the organizations. Similarly, Rozuel (2011) specifically articulated that professional integrity and honesty is the moral responsibility ascribed to a professional role. In agreement with Rozuel assertion, Alexandra & Miller (2009) concluded from their investigations that professional integrity and honesty are principle, that govern the behavior and attitude of professionals which are the moral virtues needed to undertake the tasks competently. The challenge that goes with integrity and honesty is insincerity, usually motivated by greed, selfishness. Tang, Chen, & Sutarso (2008) further assert that the love of money may correlate with unethical and illegal activities of the corporate world. This is a causal factor to inefficiency in service delivery.

Personal integrity of an employee is often used interchangeably with words like honesty, consciousness, trustworthiness, and credibility (Mirlenda, 2013). Simons (2002) view personal integrity as the degree of congruence between managers' or leaders' or employees espoused values and their enacted values. Kouzes & Posner (1993) argued that honesty or personal integrity is needed to foster employee loyalty, commitment and efficiency. Thus, employees who exhibit personal integrity experience positive outcome, increase organizational culture and commitment, lower turnover (Kouzes & Posner, 1993; 1995; Lewicki & Bunker, 1996; Senge, 1990). In agreement, Becker (1998) found out that honesty and personal integrity is positively correlated with job performance, organizational effectiveness and commitment.

Flowing from the above, it is paramount to conclude that honesty and integrity are essential attributes of professionalism, which centred on morality, values and ethics, as Barnard et al (2008) postulated in their empirical research that integrity is based on moral values and principles. An opinion which scholars like Lennick and Kiel (2005), Becker (2009), Craig & Gusstafson (1998) among others have concurred with.

2. 5. Respect

Doing the right thing demands respect for the job and recipient of the services being rendered. Professionals' shows dignity and respect for the profession by keep soaring higher. To this end, it is unprofessional for an employee to disrespect his job and its end product as well as the beneficiaries of such action. Humility and understanding the nature of work done, with the mindset that respect is reciprocal. Employee, who understands the nature of the job performs, will actively be engaged. Neeti & Leekha (2011) reported that engagement is one of the pivotal and powerful strategies to attract, nurture, retain, respect and manage the organization. An employee who value the job, will be committed and engaged, this will not only make employee happy in their job, but also translate that satisfaction into higher productivity and profitability of the organization (Larkin, 2009; Lee, 2012). These are the unhidden elements of professionalism that spur organizational effectiveness and employee

efficiency. Significantly, to Sundaray (2011) "employee retention, productivity and loyalty... customer satisfaction, company reputation and overall stakeholder value".

2. 6. Accountability

In service delivery system globally, every words, thoughts and actions of professionals are awarded accountability and this is keenly tied to honesty and integrity. Lack of self-regulation, integrity and competency create room for unaccountability which could be termed unprofessional and are elements of corruption. Thus, those entrusted with public property are expected to account for them, their utilities and otherwise, being prudent in every action taken in service delivery system. Thus, Brooks (1995: pg 12) opined that "accountability is a mechanism to ensure that individuals can be called to account for their actions, and that sanctions are incurred if the account is unsatisfactory". This gives guideline on employees' daily lifestyle especially in dealing with customer service relationship. Lawrence & Maitlis (2005) suggestion was that accountability is a justification of employees' actions and inactions as it pertains to daily activities. One would ask, how can accountability be a professional tactics to ameliorate inefficiency in service delivery? Boyatzis, Stubbs & Taylor (2002) were of affirmative that "beyond knowledge and competences, the additional ingredient necessary to outstanding performance appears to be the desire ...where individuals (employees) are clear about themselves and being accountable to themselves and not bothered about the punitive outcomes of accountability as traditionally defined..." this implies that employees can be efficient once they can personally earn the trust of employers, co-workers, subordinates and customers. In our modern organizations, concept of individual accountability has great relevance in influencing organizational performance, thus there is the need to "hold oneself accountable" (Redding, 2004). Spitzer (2002) view accountability as "taking personal responsibility for one's own choices and for the results of those choices to oneself and to others".

2. 7. Self-Regulation

The ability to maintain calmness, business-like demeanour, and respectfully correcting irate customers at any point in time is a requirement of as professional. Professional practitioners exhibit high level of emotional balance and intolerance by accommodating the needs of others, especially beneficiaries of service delivery. Not only customers but others-colleagues, superiors, subordinate and outside work environment. Self-regulation is inseparable from true professionalism exhibitions at all times. Self-regulation does not necessary means discipline in this context or strict and technically adherence to rules and regulations of the organization or of employers. But it implies the view of Ajumogobia (2007) that workers are expected to cooperate and behave orderly and normally, to enhance job satisfaction and high productivity and profitability. Cole (2002) termed self-regulation as formal managerial control device.

In other words, organization is expected to stipulate the standard of performance attainable and the rules employees are expected to conform to (Muhammad, 2013). This invariably relates to the organizational/ work environment, which Armstrong (2010) draw attention to that it is expedient for organization to give adequate concern to its workforce by advancing them with the right environment to operate. The exegesis of his position is geared towards employee's professional proficiency.

2. 8. Image

Every organization image is inherent on the workforce, therefore, it is crucial that the personnel exhibit appropriately require etiquette in their professionals, to earn respect and resilience perpetually, to keep the organization firm and patronized. Image of a professional cut across physical, appearance, actions, emotional intelligence and competence exhibition at all times. In our modern society, every organization tends to project good images to customers and so, professionals are expected to take the lead while others follow keenly.

Scholars has expressed divert opinions on organizational image but what is common in their views is that corporate image is the “net result of the interaction of all the experiences, impressions, beliefs, feelings and knowledge that people have about a company” (Karaosmanoglu & Melewar, 2006; Charttanannon & Lawley, 2007). The personality trait of an employee focus on perceptions of a company’s identity and brand, these traits has greater influence on the stakeholders and customers. To Davies & Dunn (2002) and Davies et al (2003), “the concept of corporate personality has been used in recent years to study the gaps between the perceptions of internal and external stakeholders” and the influence of corporate reputation (image) on stakeholders’ preference (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004; Davies et al, 2003)

2. 9. Theory of professionalism

Various scholars had propounded different and distinct theories on the concept of professionalism, the relevant theory to this study is the “third logic of professionalism” by Elliot Freidson in 2001. The Freidson theory of third logic of professionalism states that “workers with specialized knowledge have the power to organize their own work. They are privileged and exclusive, customers or managers cannot employ anyone else. This privilege implies a system of self-control between professionals which prevents abuse of those exclusive rights, so customers and managers can count on work of high quality at reasonable costs” (p.2)

This theory states the fact that certain works are so specialized that only qualified or professionals are required to perform such jobs like accountancy, legal practice, health services, el cetera, this means that their quality is inaccessible for these lacking the required training and experience that renders it cumbersome for customers to select the best services on a free market system. The influence of expertise of professions is highly relied upon the contexts of progressive judgments, adaptations and needs for professional services, with these bureaucratic and inefficiency becomes unsuited. This theory had gained the support of Furlong (2000) when postulated his view that “... professionals... need a specialized body of knowledge; if they are to apply that knowledge, it is argued that they need the autonomy to make their own judgments: and ... act with responsibility ...”. Moreover, “... professional practitioners are trusted by both clients and employers, controls operationalized by practitioners and professional ethics monitored by institutions and associations” (Evetts, 2009:23)

Conclusively, both Freidson, Furlong and Evetts argue that professionals need to control their own work given the ideal typical character of their competence, skills, knowledge and trust which they possessed and utilized which gives their right of direction leading to efficiency in service delivery (Atkinson & Claxton, 2000).

2. 10. The Public Service Delivery

The concept of “Public Service Delivery” is a combination of three distinct words – “Public”, “Service” and “delivery”. The former according to Longman Dictionary of

contemporary relates to generality or to all people in a particular community, Society or state. The second in this context relates to official system for providing something especially that everyone in a country or community needs; it is the action of helping or doing work for someone. The concept of service is uncomplicated even when various scholars conceptualized it from divergent viewpoints, there seems to be a nexus in their definitions and to wit: it is the method in which an institution wants to have its services supposed through its consumers, staffs, partners and leaders which is the institution's business plan (Makanyeza, Kwandayi, & Ikobe, 2013).

The service concept explains the accuracy of what consumers necessities entails and to Davies & Heineke, (2009), it has four elements of service process which is the precise style of the service delivery; the service experience which is the consumers' direct understanding about the service; service outcome which is the benefits and consequences in favour of the customers getting service; and value of the service which is the advantages that customers distinguished as of service in contrast to the price of the service. In the view of Ponsignon, Smart & Maull (2011), service indication is towards the outcome that customer receive and also is composed of a collection of main and assisting elements that are substantial and insubstantial. The latter from the view Oxford Dictionary relates to action of bringing to reality, what is expected. Public service delivery is any taken action with the intention to serve members of a community. In a modernized society, public service delivery are services and actions of general interest which is performed by employees called public or civil servants, hired by legitimate authority with conditions and terms of service delivery system. The output is attributed to specific individual's efforts to the gains of others.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary definition of Public Service is that it is "the business of supplying something ...to the members of a community; something that is done to help people rather than to make a profit; work that someone does as part of a government: the work done by public servants. To Humphrey (1998) public service delivery is "service which is mainly, or completely, funded by taxation. In other words, it's the activities that one must do as a citizen, to add values to the society".

Public service delivery in a modern society is rendered professionally and this is hanged on national development using four key dimensions as postulated by Humphrey (1998) to entails strategy, capacity, innovation and evaluation. The strategy dimension entails policy, direction, priorities, guideline, principles and programmes formulated to operate and improve quality of life for citizens. To attain public service delivery strategic dimensions, the public / civil servant capacity needs enhancement, empowerment, integration, digitalized using then innovative and inclusive experience thereafter evaluation of the methodology and procedural sphere utilized in achieve efficiency in service delivery system (Luca, 2015; Pratchett, 1999 & Bates, 1989). In the view of Ponsignon, Smart & Maull (2011) service delivery system consists of several mutually dependent service processes, which engages the essentials of the responsibility of customers, technology, services, tools, outcome and activities that produce the service outcome.

2. 11. Inefficiency

Due to inefficiency in service delivery system, people suffer a lot in getting their desired services (Siddiqui: 2006). Public service delivery is a fundamental tool for boasting good governance which affirmatively contributes to the socio-economic development of a country.

The quality of service delivery in Nigeria has dwindled due to several factors which are routine challenges; complex file disposal, non-friendly work station system, incompetence of receipts and dispatch section, non-efficiency in handling electric machineries by employees, unethical practice in performance appraisal system, outdated rules and regulations, corruptions, centralized administration, lack of prescribed form to apply for service, nepotism, interferences of intermediaries and political pressure from politicians and authorities, lack of accountability disrespect and distrusts, bad image representation, lack of transparency, motivation and ethical practices (Mohammad:2015), favouritism, inadequate knowledge and sinister attitudes, discrimination on ethnicity bases, laziness..



Source: Author Work: 2020

All these factors induce citizens not to be satisfied with the services received (Mohammad: 2015). To remedy these challenges, some initiatives like e-governance, e-administration, transparency and accountability of public servants, office inspection and monitoring, SERVICOM, integration of work system, remita system were introduced, yet it is not sufficient to ensure effective public service delivery. It is paramount that all mechanism of public service delivery should be adequately and strictly monitored and reviewed regularly, efforts to enhance development in the service delivery system regularly, the gap between customers expected services and observed services should be identified through a systematic survey, auditing and handling of customers complaints separately, strict adherence to the code of conduct, periodic training and developmental programme should be encourage, employee personal appraisal system should be introduced to test employee competences and performance evaluation without bias. Quick data base for employee should be put in place to get information

fast regarding any service delivery, public servant should embrace digital system to the core and professional services, to enhance effective and efficiency in service delivery system, four (4) elements are required:

i. Quality Service

The performance and processes service delivery should entail should be quality and not quantity. Employees should be strategic, helpful and proactive with customers' desired services.

ii. Service Skills

Employees need have the requisite skills, knowledge and understand the customers' perceived services; this will create a continuous collaboration with customers for delivery of the desired service proficiently.

iii. Service Culture

Employees are expected to understand and uphold the job norms, work habits, organizational vision, mission and values, to impact valuable services to customers, thus, establishing a long term relationship between customers, employees and the organization.

iv. Excellent Service

To get the best workforce needs to uphold good organizational images, integrity and attitude, with every sense of humour, leadership and engagement in delivery the desire but excellent services to customers

2. 12. Professionalism, Efficiency and Service Delivery System: The Nexus

The World Development Report (World Bank, 2004) has highlighted those public services delivery varies in both quality and quantity across a wide range of advancing countries, pointing to challenges confronting their system, these challenges produces inefficiency in the service delivery which Acemoglu, Johnson, & Robinson (2001), and Nunn (2009) perceived as strong persistence of the existing institutions indicating stagnation in their system. Their perception base is subject to developing countries that have poorer governance system. This position was however jettison by Djankov et al (2002) when they opined that in consideration of improvement, relying on such perception based assessments will be out of place instead, on assessment of the quality of service render and outcome obtained should be used as parameters for measurement.

The level of inefficiency in service delivery system in Nigeria is now alarming and unbearable, things seems not to be working out and even governmental efforts to remedy this anomaly has been abortive, in spite huge capital and human resources geared towards alleviation of inefficiency in Nigeria public service. The expected remedies proffered so far has not delved to the root causes of inefficiency in service delivery system in Nigeria, rather those purportedly proffered solutions had been made ineffective and bases for low job performance by some public servants in Nigeria. Despite all odd attributable to this menace, they are peculiarity to each local government in Nigeria. However, there are some elements that are noticeably responsible which included non challant attitudes, corruptions, inadequate facilities, laziness, nepotism and unprofessionalism of the public servants amongst others. This study

focused on unprofessionalism which is a major causative factor of inefficiency in service delivery (Mohammed, 2015). This inefficiency affects service delivery system in Nigeria and as a result, unprofessional services are rendered. To remedy this, the study revealed that professionalism is the panacea to inefficiency problem in service delivery system in Nigeria.

Flowing from the arguments, suffice to say that factors accountable for inefficiency as noted by (Mohammad, 2015) has impact on service delivery system in Nigeria, which can take more nuanced forms (Banerjee, Hanna, & Mullainathan, 2012). Whichever pattern it represents, service delivery system can be unprofessional and poor or inefficient in its entirety. To ensure service delivery system is efficiently carried out, the principles of professionalism are imbibed and exhibited by employee. Thus, employees will be efficient in service delivery when there is a high degree of specialized knowledge, skills (Sten & Matthew, 2007).

In line with the literature review, the following objectives and null hypotheses were formulated for the study.

2. 13. Objectives of the Study

Specially, the study sought to:

- 1) Examine the relationship between professionalism and service delivery efficiency in Oredo Local Government Secretariat, Edo State, Nigeria
- 2) Ascertain the extent to which professionalism impact on service delivery efficiency in Oredo Local Government Secretariat, Edo State, Nigeria.

2. 14. Hypotheses of the Study

- 1) H₁: There is no significant relationship between professionalism and service delivery efficiency in Oredo Local Government Secretariat, Edo State, Nigeria.
- 2) H₂: professionalism does not have a significant impact on service delivery efficiency in Oredo Local Government Secretariat, Edo State, Nigeria.

3. METHODOLOGY

A descriptive method was adopted and data was collected via a survey of 6,710 respondents in Oredo Local Government Secretariat, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria using non-probabilistic sampling techniques comprising of purposeful and convenience techniques. The research instrument for the study was a structured questionnaire. 10% (ten percent) of 6,710 was taken as sample which was worked out to 671 using proportionate sampling technique. The sampled population was drawn from the ministries, social government board, and pension scheme services in Oredo Local Government, Edo State. Out of the 671 copies of questionnaire administered, 433 were retrieved and analyzed, giving us a response rate of 64.5%. Out of the 433 respondents, 198 were female and 235 were male employees. The data collected were analyzed using correlation and linear regression analysis with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 21).

The validity of the research instrument was ascertained by subjecting its initial draft to face validation by two experts in the department of political science/public administration, Delta State University, Abraka. The opinions and suggestions of these experts were used to modify and reproduced the final draft of the instrument. The research instrument also underwent

reliability test conducted on 50 respondents in Oredo Local Government Secretariat, Edo State, Nigeria who also took part in the study. Cronbach Alpha method was used to establish the internal consistency of the items as shown in the table below.

Table 1. Reliability statistics of variables.

Scale	No. of item	Cronbach's Alpha
Professionalism	6	0.728
Service delivery efficiency	10	0.753

Source: Researcher's Computation, 2020

The results in Table 1 yielded a coefficient of 0.728 and 0.753, which satisfied the general recommended level of 0.70 for the research indicators (Cronbach, 1951). Hence, the researcher satisfied both the validity and reliability of the scale.

4. RESULTS

Table 2. Correlation Matrix.

Variables		Professionalism	Service delivery efficiency
Professionalism	Pearson correlation	1	.872**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	433	433
Service delivery efficiency	Pearson correlation	.872**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	433	433

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2-tailed)

Source: Researcher's computation, 2020

Table 2 shows the correlation between professionalism and service delivery efficiency in Oredo Local Government Secretariat, Edo State, Nigeria. There exists a significant positive high correlation between professionalism and service delivery efficiency ($r = .872$, $n = 433$ and $p < 0.01$). This implies that professionalism has a strong and positive relationship with service delivery efficiency in Oredo Local Government Secretariat. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

4. 1. Linear Regression Analysis

Table 3. Model Summary^b

Model	R	R ²	Adj-R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
	0.447	0.381	0.000 ^a	0.200

- a. Predictors: (Constant), professionalism
- b. Dependent variable: service delivery efficiency

Table 4. ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of square	Df	Mean	F.	Sig.	Remark	
1	Regression	3.968	3	2.767	17.454	0.000 ^b	Sig.
	Residual	2.642	427	0.834			
	Total	6.610	430				

- a. Dependent variable: service delivery efficiency
 - b. Predictors: (constant), professionalism
- Source: Researcher’s computation, 2020

The linear regression shows (R²) value of 0.381 which revealed that professionalism independently account for 38.1% of the variation in service delivery efficiency in Oredo Local Government Secretariat, Edo State, Nigeria.. The F. statistics of 17.454 revealed that the model is statically significant at 0.05 significant levels. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results amongst others showed that there is positive and strong relationship between professionalism and service delivery efficiency in Oredo Local Government Secretariat, Edo State, Nigeria. The finding is in agreement with Banerjee, Hanna and Mullainathan (2012) study that revealed the relationship between professionalism and service delivery efficiency.

As predicted, the study also revealed that professionalism exerts a positive and statistically significant impact on service delivery efficiency in Oredo Local Government Secretariat, Edo State, Nigeria. The finding is in agreement with Banerjee, Hanna and Mullainathan (2012); Mohammed (2015) and Salmiaty and Ahmad (2017) views that professionalism plays a very important role in service delivery efficiency.

The implication of the above assertion is that a major essence of organization's service delivery efficiency is professionalism.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study has revealed through its perceived findings that professionalism has a positive and strong impact on service delivery efficiency in Oredo Local Government Secretariat, Edo State, Nigeria. Also, the relationship between professionalism and service delivery efficiency in Oredo Local Government Secretariat, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria was confirmed. In conclusion, the research adequately revealed related literature on the concept of professionalism, inefficiency, public service delivery and there is prevailing evidence that public employees need to be professionals to the core to foster speedy efficiency and effectiveness in public service delivery, which is a global trend. When employees are professional, then it is suffice to remark that the right peg has been put into the right hole to yield expected outcome. Based on the empirical and theoretical findings of this study, the following policy recommendations were made:

- i. Redesigning and repositioning service delivery system to accommodate solutions to observed problems confronting the system of service delivery.
- ii. Introduction of professional services at all times as a way to revolutionizing the delivery system in public sector as well as private sector by extension.
- iii. Placement of the right employee into the right job at the right time and to deliver the right services to the right persons at the right value.
- iv. Organizing training and retraining of the job performance techniques and equipping employees effectively to be able to carry out assigned responsibilities efficiently.
- v. Adequately remunerate employees to enhance foster effective job performance and incentive with reward to good and hardworking staff as a motivational mechanism for service delivery values and functionality.

References

- [1] Acemoglu, D., Johnson S. & Robinson J., The colonial origins of Comparative Development: an Empirical Investigation. *American Economic Review Journal*, 91(1) (2001) 369-1401
- [2] Ball, D.L., Thomas, M.H., & Phelps, G., Content Knowledge for teaching: What makes it special? *Journal of Teacher Education*, 59 (5) (2008) 389-407
- [3] Barnard, A., Schurink, W. & De Beer, M., A Conceptual framework of integrity. *South Africa Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 34 (2008) 40-49
- [4] Bates, M.J., The design of browsing and berrypicking techniques for online search interface. *Online Review Journal*, 13 (5) (1989) 407-424
- [5] Becker, G.K., Integrity as moral ideal and business benchmark. *Journal of International Business Ethics*, 2(2) (2009) 70-88

- [6] Becker, T.E., Integrity in organisations: Beyond honesty and Conscientiousness. *Academy of Management Review*, 23 (1) (1998) 154-161
- [7] Bergin, E. (2009). On becoming a manager and attaining managerial integrity. *Leadership in Health Services*, 22(1) (2009) 58-75.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/17511870910928029>
- [8] Bhattacharya, C.B., & Sen, S., Doing better at doing good: when, why, and how consumers to corporate social initiatives. *California management Review*, 47 (1) (2004) 9-24
- [9] Boyatzis, R.E, Stubbs, E. & Taylor, S.N., Learning cognitive and emotional intelligence competence through graduate management education. *Academy of Management Learning and Education Journal*, 1 (1) (2002) 150-152
- [10] Brint, S. Eliot Friedson's Contribution to the sociology of professions. *Work and Occupations*, 20(3) (1993) 259-279
- [11] Carter, S., Integrity. New York, NY: Basic books in Mirlenda, N. (2013). Integrity: An intrapersonal perspective. *Human Resource Development Review Journal*, 12 (4) (1996) 474-499
- [12] Chattananon, A. & Lawley, M., Developing a model of the impact of social marketing on corporate image. *Society and Business Review*, 3 (2007) 230-253
- [13] Craig, S. B. & Gustafson, S.B., Perceived Leader Integrity Scale: An Instrument for assessing employee perceptions of leader integrity. *The Leadership Quarterly Journal*, 9 (2) (1998) 170-177
- [14] De Bakker, E., Integrity and Cynicism: possibilities and constraints of moral communication. *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics*, 20 (1) (2007) 119-136
- [15] Djankov, S, La Porta, R., Lopez de Silanes F., & Andrei Sheifer. The regulation of entry. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*. 117(1) 2002) 1-37.
<https://doi.org/10.1162/003355302753399436>
- [16] Domoney, B., Student teachers' understanding of rational number: part-whole and numerical constructs. *Research in Mathematics Education* 4 (1) (2002) 52-67
- [17] Dudzinski, D.M. Integrity: Principled coherence, virtue or both? *Journal of Value Inquiry*, 38 (2004) 300-312
- [18] Karaosmanoglu, E. & Melewa, T.C., Corporate communications, identity and image: A research agenda. *Journal of Brand Management*, 14 (2006) 196-206
- [19] Li-Ping Tang, T., Chen, Y. and Sutarso, T. (2008). Bad apples in bad (business) barrels: The love of money, machiavellianism, risk tolerance, and unethical behavior. *Management Decision*, Vol. 46 No. 2, pp. 243-263.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/00251740810854140>
- [20] Lucas, H., New Technology and illness self management: potential relevance for resource – poor populations in Asia. *Social Science and Medical Journal* 14 (5) (2015) 145-153

- [21] Mirlenda, N., Integrity: An intrapersonal perspective. *Human Resource Development Review Journal* 12 (4) (2013) 484-488
- [22] Mohammad, S.H., Ensuring Effective Public Service Delivery in the Field Administration of Bangladesh to boast up Good Governance: The Perspective of Deputy Commissioner Office. *International Journal of Business and Management* 10 (4) (2015) 110-120
- [23] Muhammad, A., Ethics and Accountability in Nigeria Public service: its collapse and the way forward. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* 2(5) (2013) 117-120
- [24] Neeti, R. & Leekha, C.N., Employee Engagement: A prime for strategic Human Resource Management. *Asian Journal of Research in Business Economics and Management*, 1(2) (2011) 16-27
- [25] Noelliste M. Integrity: An Intrapersonal Perspective. *Human Resource Development Review* 12(4) (2013) 474-499. doi:10.1177/1534484313492333
- [26] Nunn, N. The Importance of History for Economic Development. *Annual Recital of Economics. Annual Review*, 1(1) (2009) 65-92
- [27] Parry, K.W, & Proctor-Thomson, S.B., Percieved Integrity of transformational Leaders in organizational settings. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 35 (2) (2002) 75-96
- [28] Pratchelt, L. New Technologies and the Modernization of Local Government: an Analysis of Biases and Constraints. *Public Administration Journal* 77 (4) (1999) 731-751. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9299.00177>
- [29] Prottas, D.J., Perceived behavioural integrity: Relationships with employee attitudes, well beings and absentssism. *Journal of Busines Ethics*, 81 (2008) 313-322
- [30] Redding, C.J., Increasing Accountability. *Organisational Development Journal*, 22 (1) (2004) 56-66
- [31] Ribeiro, C.M., & Amaral, R., Early years prospective teachers specialized knowledge on problem posing in Beswick, K., Muir, T., & Wells, j.(Eds), *Proceeding of PME* 39, Vol. 4, Pp 81-88
- [32] Rowland, T., Martyn, S., Barber, P. & Heal, C., Primary teacher trainees; mathematics subject knowledge and classroom performance. *Research in Mathematics Education*, 2(1) (2000) 3-18
- [33] Rozuel, C., The Moral Threat of compartmentalization: Self, roles and responsibilities. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 102 (2011) 685-697
- [34] Salmiaty, T. & Ahmad, M., Competency Model Development: A study of conceptual framework. *International Journal of Business and Management Intervention*, 6(5) (2017) 1-5
- [35] Simons, T.L. (2002). Behavioural integrity. *Organisation Science*, 13 (2), 18-35
- [36] Stan C. and Matthew T.S. Professionalism, scholarly Practice, and professional Development in Student Affairs. *NASPA Journal*, 44 (2) (2007) 4-12

- [37] Sundaray, B.K. Employee engagement a driver of organizational effectiveness. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 3 (8), (2011) 53-59
- [38] Velasquez, M. Business ethics, the social sciences, and moral philosophy. *Soc Just Res* 9 (1996) 97-107. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02197658>