

Relationship between accountability and public service delivery quality in Somalia: A case study of the Banadir region

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ABSTRACT

Public sector efficiency in Somalia is critically low due to weak governance and poor administration, leading to inadequate public services and citizen dissatisfaction. This study examines how accountability influences public service delivery in the Banadir region, focusing on two key factors: responsiveness and transparency. A correlational research design was used, with data collected from 315 respondents. The analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The results show a positive moderate relationship between responsiveness and service quality ($r = 0.52, p < 0.01$) and between transparency and service quality ($r = 0.471, p < 0.01$). These findings emphasize the importance of both responsiveness and transparency in improving public service efficiency. The study recommends improving responsiveness by making public services more accessible and adaptable and ensuring timely delivery. It also suggests increasing transparency by providing clear, reliable, and accessible information about procedures and costs to build citizen trust and improve service outcomes.

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1. Introduction

The quality of public services is paramount to a well-functioning society and is shaped by factors such as governance, funding, human resources, technology, and citizen engagement; therefore, effective governance fosters high-quality services, while adequate funding ensures necessary resources; however, the biggest issues affecting the public sector, especially in developing nations, are inefficient bureaucracy, corruption, unequal access, and a lack of accountability. To enhance public service quality, governments must prioritize good governance, adequate funding, human resource development, technological advancements, and meaningful citizen involvement. Public service delivery plays a crucial role in facilitating the connection between the government and its citizens (Onyoni and Kavale, 2018). It is the government's responsibility to meet the needs of its citizens by

providing high-quality services. Effective service delivery also serves as a significant indicator of a country's overall quality of life (Jeptepkeny, 2021). Stakeholders and civil society organizations are increasingly pressuring governments to enhance the accessibility and availability of public service delivery (Mohamed and Kulmie, 2023). Improving public service delivery is a major global concern and one of the most effective ways to alleviate poverty through poverty reduction programs (Masuku and Jili, 2019). Since the quality of life cannot be solely measured by per capita income, community participation in the delivery of public services has become a fundamental concept in global governance. Governments and international organizations consistently prioritize improving public service delivery to ensure the provision of efficient and effective services that promote equality for all (Masue and Mollel, 2015). In developed countries, public services not only aim to provide essential services but also contribute to social and economic advancement, as well as the well-being of disadvantaged communities.

Public institutions acknowledge that accountability is a critical element in enhancing the provision of public services (Kulmie, 2023a). Accountability facilitates communication and cooperation among the different stakeholders

involved in service delivery (Maulid, 2017). Citizens' participation in the decision-making process is facilitated through transparency, which also underscores the authority, effectiveness, and accountability of the service delivery institutions (Androniceanu, 2021). Moreover, accountability is widely recognized as a fundamental principle for public institutions to fulfill their intended objectives, while scholars have extensively studied it as an institutional mechanism that influences the outcomes of public service institutions (Abdi ANM and Abdul Rahman, 2025; Awale et al., 2025). Furthermore, accountability reduces corruption risks by holding authorities accountable for their performance in service delivery (Alotaibi, 2024; Awale and Kulmie, 2024; Vian, 2020; Kulmie et al., 2023). Transparency in government institutions is crucial for both developed and developing nations. It guarantees that citizens have the fundamental right to freely and timely access information (Androniceanu, 2021).

Nations are currently dealing with complex challenges that impede their capacity to effectively implement public services, thus hindering transparency and accountability. In addition to that, Somalia has been facing civil war, political instability, and international terrorist groups. After the collapse of the central government in Somalia, there has been a significant breakdown of public service institutions, such as the central bank, and other essential service providers. Two decades later, Somalia adopted a federal system and created a provisional constitution, enabling the establishment of federal member states aimed at enhancing the efficiency of public services provided to the community (Aman, 2019). The federal system allows a country to decentralize its resources and responsibilities, provided it is properly established through an act of governance (Khalil and Adelabu, 2012). Thus, the purpose of this research is to assess the role of accountability in public service delivery with specific objectives: To assess the role of responsiveness in public service delivery and to explore the effect of transparency on public service delivery.

2. Conceptual review

2.1. Quality of public service delivery

Public services are services provided by a nation through its central administration or local governments (Kulmie et al., 2024; Mohamed and Abdi, 2024). The quality of public service determines the attitude and response of public officials to the needs of citizens, ultimately leading to the highest level of community satisfaction. These services are funded by taxes collected from citizens. It is a mandatory obligation officially mandated by government officials or authorized legal entities. They are guided by principles that include resource allocation and equal treatment. However, the quality of public service is determined by its attributes,

which ensure the effective fulfillment of community requirements. Public services aim to support citizens in meeting their needs, in accordance with the nation's constitution and civil rights.

2.2. Accountability in governance

Accountability refers to the responsibility of an organization to provide an explanation for its actions and to answer to those who have the right or authority to request such information (Agyemang, 2024). Moreover, accountability has been extensively studied, and it is a topic that is frequently discussed by academics and policymakers. The vertical accountability and horizontal accountability are two important concepts in governance. Vertical accountability requires administrators to report to their superiors about their performance or the results of their activities within a specified timeframe or as requested. Horizontal accountability refers to holding institutions or individuals at the same level accountable to one another. This can be achieved through inter-agency collaboration or peer review boards.

Transparency is the sharing of information that allows citizens to understand the decision-making process and the criteria used by government officials, as well as the outcomes of those decisions (Vian, 2020). It is associated with providing access to information and ensuring that decisions are made and enforced according to rules and regulations. In a democratic society, transparency is considered a fundamental value, as it promotes accountability, trust, and the fight against corruption (Kulmie, 2023b). It also allows for the engagement of citizens and other stakeholders who prioritize transparency and accountability. Fairness is a key aspect of transparency and accountability, which means that the government should be accountable to all citizens, not just a select group of stakeholders. According to Ibrahim et al. (2021) and Mohamed and Kulmie (2023), good governance involves systems that are effective, responsive, comprehensive, and transparent.

In democratic systems, public engagement is important as it empowers people to influence government policy, while Public participation is the involvement of citizens in government decision-making processes to improve transparency and accountability. However, there is disagreement over the degree and means of participation (Berner et al., 2011). According to Waddington et al. (2019), The participation of citizens can lead to positive impacts on various aspects of user engagement, including attendance at meetings and increased access to higher-quality public services. The goal of citizen engagement is to incorporate them into decision-making which can lead to a more informed and engaged citizenry, while Engagement also enhances administrative ability, including service capability and management competence. Governments at different levels have encouraged increased public

participation in decision-making processes (Burton, 2009).

2.3. Theoretical review

Public services are initiatives undertaken by the government to effectively address the needs of citizens and ensure their satisfaction. As noted by Núñez-Barriopedro et al. (2024), public service management is a comprehensive approach that integrates both science and art to strategize, execute, and oversee activities aimed at achieving objectives. Public management theory emphasizes the responsibility of public sector organizations and officials in achieving outcomes, as well as the individual accountability of managers. Effective public service management meets public needs and expectations through well-designed processes. New Public Management (NPM) is a multifaceted concept that aims to improve government efficiency, prioritize service outputs, and emphasize the government's role (Lapuente and Van de Walle, 2020). While influential, NPM has faced criticism. It originated in the 1970s, led by scholars like Janet V. Denhardt and Robert B. Denhardt. This theory emphasizes the government's vital role in meeting citizens' needs and interests while prioritizing community welfare and basic necessities. NPM advocates for adopting private sector principles to improve public organizations' effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability.

Accountability is a central topic in policy and development discussions, as experts examine its potential to enhance service delivery, public trust, and confidence. A well-known framework that explains how accountability influences public services is the Principal-Agent Theory. The Principal-Agent Theory offers a valuable framework for analyzing public sector accountability. By examining the relationship between public servants (agents) and citizens (principals), the theory explores how responsive agents are to citizens' goals and how their interactions, along with citizens' ability to evaluate agent performance, influence public accountability.

2.4. Empirical studies

Since the government has the greatest influence on social life and development and is the most powerful organization in the modern world, it is expected to have a good effect on societies and on other organizations. The quality of the public sector is, of course, associated with its governance, which affects all of the services and programs it provides to the public. Therefore, the public has their own judgment on the level of governance and quality of service delivery. In this regard, Kiambati (2020) conducted a study on the level of transparency in county service delivery and argued that a lack of transparency in governance negatively impacts the quality of service delivery, and the counties need to improve community involvement in every aspect of

government decisions. The author suggested that improving participation and information sharing could enhance the quality of public service in Kenya. Another study by Mishra (2020) explored how perceptions of good governance influence trust in government. The study revealed that enhancing public services and engaging citizens in state governance is positively associated with confidence in governance institutions. Jeptepkeny (2021) underscored the significance of public participation in his research on strategic initiatives and service delivery within the Kericho County government, Kenya. The author contended that strategic leadership and public engagement yield a statistically positive influence on the quality of public service delivery. Moreover, Kolisang (2019) examined the impact of oversight mechanisms on service delivery in the Midvaal Local Municipality. The study showed that local governments can enhance the delivery of public services by involving the community in the arrangement of the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) of the local government. Engaging the community in this process helps ensure that the services provided meet the specific needs and priorities of the local community.

One of the essential features of good governance is ethics and morality as noted by Egugbo (2022) who examined ethics and accountability in governance in Nigeria. The paper discovered that the decline in service delivery in Nigeria is attributed to the lack of adherence to ethical accountability by individuals responsible for public service delivery in the country and emphasized that accountability in governance plays a vital role in ensuring sustained and enhanced services for the community. Similarly, Rana et al. (2019) explored the impact of accountability on the effectiveness of public service delivery in Punjab, India. Their findings highlighted that accountability significantly and positively influences the provision of public services. This means delivering quality service to citizens, public institutions must implement accountability mechanisms, ensure transparency, and encourage community engagement. A study by Salifu and Ibeogu (2022) emphasized the significance of various factors contributing to good governance and public accountability within public institutions. A key insight is that governance accountability goes beyond monitoring fund usage; it also entails implementing accountability mechanisms effectively to safeguard citizens' well-being. Accountability and transparency are pivotal for establishing good governance fundamentals and enhancing public service delivery. Eregae et al. (2019) examined service delivery in well-developed government systems in Kenya, suggesting that accountability and transparency can incentivize service providers to be responsive in delivering high-quality services and enhancing public service accessibility.

Transparency is widely acknowledged as a fundamental mechanism that enhances the quality of public service delivery (Bauhr and Carlitz, 2019). However, implementing transparency mechanisms

comes with various challenges that demand institutional commitment and the establishment of robust policies and regulations. In a study conducted by [Androniceanu \(2021\)](#) on the levels of transparency in the ministries of the Romanian government, the findings indicate that these ministries still encounter administrative challenges. Nevertheless, there is evidence of progress being made in enhancing transparency in administration. Transparency is essential for fostering public trust and ensuring accountability within the governance system. In their study, [Kulmie et al. \(2024\)](#) examined good governance practices within the Banadir Regional Administration, emphasizing the critical role of transparency in enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of public service delivery. The study presents that the good governance practices in Banadir Region are not enough according to transparency and accountability which in time dominates the quality of public service delivery. Therefore, these studies recommended that the Banadir Regional Administration enhance its governance mechanisms by adhering to governance rules and regulations, combating corruption, and establishing monitoring and evaluation systems. Furthermore, the development of institutional capacity and the establishment of effective anti-corruption mechanisms are crucial for achieving sustainable development and good governance. These mechanisms can significantly improve transparency and accountability in public governance.

3. Methodology of study

3.1. Study design and participants

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between accountability and good governance in the Banadir region of Somalia, with a specific emphasis on responsiveness and transparency. To explore these relationships, a correlational research design was employed, to evaluate the predictive power of accountability concerning governance. Correlational research investigates the relationship between variables without manipulating them. It identifies positive or negative associations, ranging from weak to strong. Common applications include predicting outcomes, uncovering relationships, and generating hypotheses for future research ([Seeram, 2019](#)). The study utilized a purposive sampling technique to collect data from 315 individuals. Purposive sampling is a non-probability method that selects participants based on specific research objectives, offering advantages like targeted selection, efficiency, group access, and flexibility ([Campbell et al., 2020](#)). Due to these advantages, this sampling technique was appropriate for this study. These respondents were selected from a diverse group of individuals, including those working in both the private and public sectors, as well as self-employed and unemployed individuals. This wide-ranging

respondent pool ensured a comprehensive perspective on issues of accountability and public service delivery.

3.2. Research instrument and data collection

This study used a structured questionnaire as the primary data collection tool, as it is a widely used and cost-effective method in research, market surveys, and evaluations ([Fife-Schaw, 2020](#)). The questionnaire was chosen for its ability to ensure anonymity, flexibility, and ease of analysis while maintaining consistency and comparability of data. However, it has some limitations, such as low response rates, limited depth, and the potential for misinterpretation, which may affect sample representativeness and result accuracy. Despite these challenges, questionnaires can provide valuable insights when designed effectively. This study's questionnaire was divided into two sections: the first collected demographic information, while the second consisted of closed-ended questions assessing respondents' perceptions of accountability and public service quality. A five-point Likert scale was used to measure their views on responsiveness and transparency. The questionnaire items were carefully selected to align with the research objectives, ensuring accurate representation and measurement of these key concepts.

3.3. Data analysis

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), a widely used software for statistical analysis. SPSS provides a user-friendly interface, comprehensive data management, visualization tools, and integration with other software. It is commonly applied in various fields, including social sciences, market research, healthcare, education, and business ([Roni and Djajadikerta, 2021](#)). To examine relationships between variables, correlation analyses were conducted. The validity of the research instrument was assessed using the Content Validity Index (CVI), which yielded a score of 0.85, confirming its reliability. Additionally, Cronbach's Alpha was used to test the internal consistency of the questionnaire, ensuring that the collected data were both reliable and valid for the study. [Table 1](#) presents the reliability test results, which indicate a high level of internal consistency. The survey instrument was used to assess various aspects of accountability and service quality in public service delivery. The Cronbach's Alpha values for responsiveness (0.788), quality of public service delivery (0.772), and transparency (0.787) confirm that the questionnaire items were reliable for measuring these dimensions.

4. Result and discussions

This section presents participant demographics (gender, age, education, and experience) in tabular

form, along with frequencies and percentages. It then provides a correlational analysis examining the relationship between accountability and the quality

of public service delivery in Somalia. The section concludes with a thoughtful discussion that links the study's findings to those of previous research.

Table 1: Reliability test of the study

No.	Accountability and quality of public service delivery	Cronbach's alpha
1	Responsiveness	0.788
2	Transparency	0.772
3	Quality of public service delivery	0.787

4.1. Demographic profile

In Table 2, the demographic profile indicates that the male gender is the major group of respondents in our survey, accounting for 64.4% of the total. This contrasts with females, who comprise 35.6% of the respondents. Furthermore, the age of the respondents is mainly between the 31-40 age range, accounting for 43.5% of the total. The second largest group of respondents, accounting for 38.7% of the total, falls within the 18-30 age range. The age group between 41-50 is a small portion of the respondents, at 15.2%, and those above 50 years old make up 2.5%. The respondents' educational background mainly consists of individuals with a bachelor's degree (39.1%), followed by master's degree holders (30.6%). Those with a diploma make up 16.4% of the respondents, while secondary holders account for 7.9%. Lastly, 5.9% of the respondents hold a Ph.D. It is worth noting that there are no respondents in the "other" field of education. Self-employed individuals were the largest group of respondents in our survey, at 29.9%, followed by private sector employees (25.2%), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (13.4%), and public sector employees (9.2%). Additionally, 13.4% of the respondents were unemployed, and 8.9% worked in international non-governmental organizations (INGOs). The survey presents a diverse set of perspectives on occupational employment backgrounds. Overall, the demographic profile of the survey shows a significant male majority of respondents, a wide age range centered around 31-40 years, a high level of education, with a concentration on bachelor's and

master's degrees, and a sizable percentage of self-employed individuals and private sector employees. With their diverse experiences and opinions, these demographics offer a thorough knowledge of the survey.

4.2. Role of responsiveness on the quality of public service delivery

The primary purpose of this research is to assess the role of accountability in public service delivery with specific objectives: To assess the role of responsiveness in public service delivery and to explore the effect of transparency on public service delivery. The result of the empirical analysis shows that the correlation analysis between responsiveness and the quality of public service delivery, demonstrates a statistically significant positive relationship (Table 3). The correlation coefficient (r=0.52, p<0.01) indicates a moderate association, suggesting that an increase in responsiveness is likely to coincide with improvements in the quality of public service delivery. This relationship is significant, as evidenced by a P-value of less than 0.01, confirming that the probability of this result occurring by chance is very low. These findings emphasize the creator's role of responsiveness in influencing public service quality. With a sample size of 315, this analysis provides robust evidence of the relationship between these two dimensions of public service, highlighting the importance of enhancing responsiveness to improve overall service quality.

Table 2: Demographic profile of respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	203
	Female	112
Age	18 - 30	122
	31 - 40	137
	41 - 50	48
	Above 50	8
	Secondary	24
Education	Diploma	50
	bachelordegree	119
	Master degree	93
	Phd	18
	Others	0
Occupation	Public sector	29
	Private sector	79
	Self employed	94
	NGOs	42
	INGO	28
	Unemployed	42

Table 3: Correlations between responsiveness and quality of public service delivery

		Responsiveness	Quality of public service delivery
Responsiveness	Pearson correlation	1	.520**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	315	315
Quality of public service delivery	Pearson correlation	.520**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	315	315

** : Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Furthermore, as presented in Table 4, responsiveness has a significant positive effect on the quality of public service delivery (B=0.518, p<0.01). For every one-unit increase in responsiveness, the quality of public service delivery improves by 51.8%. This is supported by a strong standardized coefficient (Beta=0.520) and a highly significant t-value (10.772), indicating that increased responsiveness is associated with enhanced public service quality.

4.3. Exploring the effect of transparency on public service delivery

Table 5 shows the Pearson correlation analysis between transparency and the quality of public service delivery and indicates a positive moderate correlation (r=0.471, p<0.01). This suggests that higher levels of transparency are associated with improvements in public service quality. The

statistically significant results, derived from sample sizes of 315 for transparency and public service quality, provide strong evidence that enhancing transparency can lead to better outcomes in service delivery.

Table 6 shows that the regression analysis specifies that transparency significantly affects the quality of public service delivery. The unstandardized coefficient (B=0.476) shows that each one-unit increase in transparency improves service quality by 0.476 units. A strong standardized Beta coefficient of 0.471 indicates that a one standard deviation increase in transparency results in a 0.471 standard deviation increase in service quality. The high t-value (9.420) and significant p-value (p<0.01) affirm the robustness of this relationship, demonstrating that enhanced transparency contributes to improvements in public service quality.

Table 4: Coefficients (responsiveness and quality of public service delivery)

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Standard error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	6.193	.868		7.135	.000
	Responsiveness	.518	.048	.520	10.772	.000

Dependent variable: Quality of public service delivery; B: Unstandardized coefficient; Beta: Standardized coefficient

Table 5: Correlations between transparency and quality of public service delivery

		Transparency	Quality of public service delivery
Transparency	Pearson correlation	1	.471**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	314	314
Quality of public service delivery	Pearson correlation	.471**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	314	315

** : Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 6: Coefficients (transparency and quality of public service delivery)

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Standard error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	6.973	.908		7.682	.000
	Transparency	.476	.051	.471	9.420	.000

Dependent variable: Quality of public service delivery; B: Unstandardized coefficient; Beta: Standardized coefficient

The findings of this study align with previously published works including Ungaye and Obuba (2023), and Kulmie et al. (2024). Ungaye and Obuba (2023) conducted research on Accountability and Quality of Service Delivery in the Marsabit County Government, surveying 303 Marsabit County employees at various ministries. The results showed that accountability significantly improves service delivery quality, accounting for 72.2% of variation. The study suggests top leadership should enforce accountability practices and adopt codes of conduct to improve service delivery quality. A comprehensive survey is recommended. Kulmie et

al. (2024) examined good governance practices in the Benadir Regional Administration (BRA) of Somalia, revealing poor transparency, accountability, and high corruption rates. The public is dissatisfied with BRA leadership and governance due to inefficient service and lack of transparency in public funds utilization. The results of this study also align with findings from Mishra (2020) who concluded that increased responsiveness and transparency directly contribute to improved citizen engagement and enhanced service quality. Similarly, Bauhr and Carlitz (2019) explored the relationship between transparency and public service delivery,

demonstrating that transparency plays a crucial role in elevating service quality. Their research further emphasized that even in non-democratic contexts, transparency remains a significant factor in driving positive service outcomes. Despite the challenges often associated with limited political freedoms, Bauhr and Carlitz (2019) found that greater transparency in governance can still lead to more efficient and effective public services, reinforcing its universal importance in improving service delivery across various political systems.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

The main objective of this study was to examine the relationship between accountability and the quality of public service delivery, focusing on two key aspects: responsiveness and transparency. A correlational research design was used to explore how these factors influence service quality. The findings highlight the significant role of both responsiveness and transparency in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of public services. The correlation analysis showed a moderate positive relationship between responsiveness and service quality ($r = 0.52$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that when public institutions respond promptly and effectively to citizens' needs, overall service quality improves. Similarly, transparency also demonstrated a moderate positive correlation with service quality ($r = 0.471$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that clear communication, well-defined processes, and accountable decision-making contribute to better service outcomes. The analysis further confirms that increased transparency directly enhances service quality. To improve public service delivery, policymakers and institutions should prioritize both responsiveness and transparency by implementing effective feedback mechanisms, ensuring timely responses to citizens' concerns, and fostering open communication to build trust. Additionally, adopting transparent governance practices, such as regular public reporting, clear procedural guidelines, active stakeholder engagement, and e-governance, can further strengthen public trust and service efficiency. This study underscores the interconnectedness of these factors, emphasizing that by enhancing accountability through responsiveness and transparency, the Banadir Regional Administration can establish a more efficient, citizen-centered governance framework, ultimately leading to higher public satisfaction and improved service delivery.

Compliance with ethical standards

Ethical considerations

This study adhered to ethical research principles. Participation was voluntary, with informed consent obtained from all respondents. Data were collected anonymously, ensuring confidentiality and secure

storage. Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant ethics committee where required.

Conflict of interest

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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