

EXPLORING FACTORS AFFECTING GOVERNMENT DELIVERY OF SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES USING A MULTI-METHOD APPROACH

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Abstract

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The reality is that social welfare services in Nigeria exclude more people than they cover, resulting in the deprivation of basic human needs such as water, sanitation, shelter, healthcare, and education that have hindered the betterment of the living conditions of the citizens (Nkpoyen et al., 2021; Okpa, 2022). This study explored factors affecting the government delivery of social welfare services in Nigeria. Five hundred and seventy (570) respondents' opinions were purposively sampled using the 36-item Social Welfare Service Delivery Questionnaire (SWSDQ) and an in-depth interview guide. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Chi-square statistical technique, and Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software, version 20. As a supplement to the quantitative data, the qualitative data were analysed in themes. Findings from this study revealed that although all the respondents reported knowing about available social welfare services, 44.3% reported not accessing the existing social services because of such factors as political expediency, transparency, accountability, corruption, and perception of social service providers. A key policy issue, therefore, is the need to look into the eradication or mitigation of these factors ascribed to be hindering the delivery of social welfare services. This will expedite the blanket spread of the delivery, accessibility, and utilisation of social welfare services for residents, not just in the study area but across the country.

Keywords: Exploring, Government, Delivery, Social Welfare Services, Socio-Economic, Development, Multi-Method Approach, Nigeria

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1. INTRODUCTION

Almost every nation has established a system of social welfare services to help enhance the living standard of their citizens. In many countries, there has been an increase in the availability of social welfare services tailored toward meeting the specific needs of people. According to Olabanji et al. (2021), the delivery of social welfare services has become a contentious issue that has elicited various comments from different stakeholders, governments, NGOs, and researchers. Governments at all levels around the globe, whether federal, regional, state or municipal, are responsible for funding and providing social welfare services to their citizens (United Cities and Local Governments [UCLG], 2010; Oladoyin & Onabanjo, 2021). The services cover every range of welfare services, including personal and social services, educational services, housing and community development efforts, environmental and general health matters, and general infrastructural provisions, among others (Oleribe et al., 2019). For instance, in Denmark, government authorities provide social welfare services to the people ranging from construction and maintenance of roads and streets, public utilities, public libraries, water supply, and many others (UCLG, 2010). The situation is not different in Iran, where the government provides social welfare services except healthcare services that private contractors handle.

The Iranian government is responsible for providing water supply, power supply, street lighting, drainage system, construction and maintenance of roads, and others (Ajibola et al., 2018; Omang et al., 2022). From Ghana to Congo, South Africa to Morocco, Uganda to Togo, Tanzania to Nigeria, and across many African countries, the government provides and delivers social welfare services ranging from electricity, sanitation, healthcare, education, potable water supply, construction and maintenance of roads, and many other such basic social amenities (Ireje, 2017; Ogonna, 2017). Fundamentally, the provision of social welfare services to people is usually backed up with social welfare policies and programmes, which are developed to address social problems and inequality in social institutions. The development and provision of social welfare services to citizens was considered to be part of state and nation-building in the Western World (Gwala & Mashau, 2022). It is also seen as a political process manifested in ideological and policy positions by all political players (Feyisa et al., 2022).

The social welfare services provided and delivered across Nigeria by the government range from construction and rehabilitation of roads, education, infrastructural, community development, manpower skill and youth development, healthcare, gerontological, housing, and family welfare services (Ebingha et al., 2019; Peter et al., 2020). However, the impact of these services on the overall welfare of the people leaves much to be desired (Uzuegbu, 2016). Abegunde and Akinyemi (2014) posit that the existence of adequate infrastructure is crucial to the provision and sustenance of public welfare, as well as the enhancement of growth and development in any part of Nigeria today, and this has been proven evidently well in some states like Lagos, Akwa-Ibom, Ebonyi, etc., in the provision of infrastructure. Although this responsibility has in recent times become a diffused one with

the increasing involvement of the private sector, the overall delivery capacity of public-oriented infrastructure constitutes one of the major criteria for the assessment of governments' performance across the globe (Anam et al., 2022).

These scholars aver that in Nigeria, this capacity has been a major challenge, remaining at a declining state since the 70s, and complicating the nation's many crises: from infrastructural decay to insecurity, economic instability, mounting ethnic tension, pervasive and institution-suppressing corruption. Other crises include threatening religious upheavals and violence, environmental threats and disasters, political violence and resource struggle militancy, armed violence, and kidnapping (Batalli & Pepaj, 2022). The effect of this on public welfare is pervasive. Abegunde and Akinyemi (2014) aver that the prevailing socio-economic condition in Nigeria in terms of social service delivery and welfare impacts adversely the legitimacy of government policies and reforms. There is nothing more fundamentally important than the ability of the government to meet her peoples' demands for services in terms of what they see as important, and how and whether they access those services (Misini & Mustafa, 2022). However, Odiwo et al. (2022) reiterate that while Nigeria bows to the competition of international development guides, its societies are replete with unique and peculiar social ills such as decadent infrastructure, rising youth unemployment and poverty, expanding portfolio of crime, a collapse of the human security system and a dangerous trend in social inequality.

Statistics from the National Demographic and Health Survey (NPC & ICF, 2014) show an improvement, though still not enough, in access to drinking water across Nigeria. About 56% of households have access to electricity (about 84% in urban areas and about 34% in rural areas). About 25% of households (about 40% in urban areas and 13% in rural areas) use shared toilet facilities. About 45% use non-improved toilet facilities (about 62% in rural areas and 23% in urban areas). While about 64% of households (about 38% of urban and about 83% of rural) use wood as cooking fuel. Like most states in Nigeria, Bayelsa state has about 10% female children in 613 households out of school and about 4.5% male children of 627 homes out of school in the state (NDHS, 2014; World Bank, 2020). Apart from solving societal challenges, social welfare services are associated with having an impact on the citizen-government relationship and state institutions, showing government commitment to its citizens (Okpa, 2022; Okpa et al., 2020). This can be vital in maintaining peace and tranquility in a country as citizens enjoy enhanced living standards. While the need for welfare services in Nigeria has become highly imperative with the growing needs of the populace in appalling social condition studies on social welfare services especially, as it relates to factors inhibiting government agencies from the delivery of social welfare services is limited in scholarly literature. The purpose of this study is to explore factors affecting the government delivery of social welfare services in Nigeria.

This study will add to the already existing body of knowledge, thereby serving as reference material for future researchers. The findings of the study it is hoped will improve upon the understanding of social welfare service providers of the challenges

that affect service delivery in Nigeria. Furthermore, the study will contribute to the growing field of social welfare service delivery in Nigeria, by providing data on the prevailing factors affecting social welfare service delivery in the country.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. The second section covers the literature review. The third section deals with the methods. Section 4 covers the results, Section 5 — a discussion of findings, and Section 6 — the conclusions, and policy implications, respectively.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Global overview of social welfare services

Every society develops its own specific pattern and programmes of social welfare services, which are meant for the general good of the people. In most countries, the government engages in formulating and implementing a series of social welfare programmes. Social welfare services across the countries of the world are provided for and delivered to the people by their governments at all levels, at the federal, regional, state, or local government level (World Bank, 2019). The services delivered to the people by the government cover every range of welfare services including personal and social services, educational services, housing and community development efforts, environmental and general health matters, and general infrastructural provisions, among others (Alao et al., 2015; Vitus, 2019). In Denmark, government authorities provide social welfare services to the people ranging from construction and maintenance of roads and streets, public utilities, public libraries, water supply and many others. In New Zealand, the responsibility of putting up physical infrastructure, building local roads and transport, traffic management, public housing, business promotion, pre-school education, community facilities, among others, rests on the shoulders of the government. In Switzerland, the agencies of government take care of the maintenance of law and order, civil defense, public utilities, management of primary and secondary schools, construction of local road, and many others (UCLG, 2010).

In India, the government's involvement varies from state to state as in America and Australia, with regard to the provision and delivery of social welfare services. The Iranian government makes the provision of welfare services an affair of the central government, though, it contracts most of its healthcare services. They deliver such services as water supply, power supply, street lighting, drainage system, construction and maintenance of roads, and others (Alao et al., 2015). The provision and delivery of social welfare services to the people in most African countries is through the local government system. From Ghana to Congo, South Africa to Morocco, Uganda to Togo, Tanzania to Nigeria, and across many African countries, the governments provide and deliver social welfare services ranging from electricity, sanitation, healthcare, education, portable water supply, construction and maintenance of roads, and many other such basic social amenities (Seekings, 2017). For example, in Morocco, efforts by the government to improve the availability of

infrastructure, educational services, healthcare, and other welfare needs of the people are taken seriously, with the provision of welfare services for the people (Mosadeghrad, 2014). While, social welfare in South Africa takes a triple-pronged approach; infrastructural development, economic and educational improvement, and the provision of improved healthcare for the people (Lee et al., 2019).

Besides the Social Development Decree No. 12 of 1974, the Nigerian government has formulated other policies to aid the provision and delivery of social welfare services in the country. Some of such policies include the Child Rights Act of 2003, Pension Reform Act of 2004, National Policy on Education of 2007, National Health Policy, National Housing Policy, and the latest being the Petroleum Industry Governance Act-through yet to be assented to by the President. The social welfare services provided and delivered across the country range from rehabilitation, education, infrastructural, community development, manpower skill and youth development, healthcare, gerontological, housing, and family welfare services, among others. However, the impact of these services on the overall welfare of the people leaves much to be desired, especially, due to the ravaging menace of corruption (Uzuegbu, 2016).

2.2. Challenges of social welfare service delivery in Nigeria

There exist numerous challenges facing social welfare service delivery in Nigeria (Alao et al., 2015; Omang et al., 2020). There seems to be a dearth of skilled, professionally-minded, and well-trained manpower across the social welfare services provision and delivery spectrum. Besides the dearth of professionally-trained and minded social welfare service providers across the spectrum in every agency, there is also the lack of experience in the field to discharge and deliver effective, efficient quality social welfare services in an honest, transparent, fair and satisfactory manner to the people (Oleribe et al., 2019). This has been linked to patronage, where those who know "people at the top" get to recruit just about anybody into offices that they are not qualified to function in (Nkpoyen et al., 2021). The staff of various social welfare service delivery agencies has been described as exhibiting a negative attitude toward work and clients, which is detrimental to effective quality service delivery and productivity. Such negative attitudes take the form of a lack of commitment to work, indiscipline, lateness to work, absenteeism, laziness, and lies, among others (Künzler, 2018; Okoi et al., 2022). These poor attitudes of service delivery staff to work are linked to poor salaries and wages which are worsened by a high rate of inflation in the country.

Oladoyin and Onabanjo (2021) argued that corruption is another strong factor affecting the delivery of social welfare services in Nigeria. They maintained their study that though the funds available to the governments to deliver social welfare services were inadequate, however, there was a general impression that the little funds made available was diverted into private pockets after salary payments to staff. Their study shows that due to corruption and diversion of funds, there is

inadequate provision and delivery of social welfare services to residents. A sequel to corruption and non-utilisation of funds is the issue of transparency and accountability. Ndema (2022) revealed in his study that social welfare service delivery and development were ineffective, majorly as a result of corruption in the use of resources made available to deliver those services to improve the lives of the residents. The study indicates that there is a need to put mechanisms in place to curtail corrupt practices, ensuring transparency and accountability in the delivery of social welfare services to residents. Onah (2017) noted that if the perception of the residents is bias or misconstrued about a particular service, the residents will not use such service and this will adversely affect the delivery of social welfare services to the residents by service providers. Ogbonna (2017) and Ubi and Ndem (2019) argue that government agencies charged with the responsibility of welfare service have been found to be poor in areas of delivering social amenities/infrastructure, efficient waste management, and social development, creating opportunities for non-participation of citizens in the development process. This brings about poor transportation systems, poor roads, poor education, food insecurity, high prevalence of diseases, and criminal indulgences, among others; as observed across the sub-nationals in Nigeria.

2.3. Theoretical framework

The efficiency services theory (EST) was propounded by Mackenzie (1954). Mackenzie (1954), who was the leading proponent of the EST, noted that service delivery to local residents is expected to preoccupy the resources, power, and time of the formal social welfare service providers. While Sharpe (1970), in expounding on this theory, opined that the effective performance of the services delivered to residents is compelling that, if the formal social welfare service providers did not exist, something also would be created in their place. His view thus shows the indispensable role that the service providers of formal social welfare services are meant to play at all levels of society. The core argument of the EST is that formal social welfare service providers exist to ensure efficient service delivery (Urama et al., 2019). This theory justifies the existence of formal social welfare service providers on the grounds that they are effective agents for the provision of services that are local in character. Such services are construction and maintenance of roads, primary and adult education, maintenance of law and order, healthcare delivery, sanitation and other social welfare services (Chukwuemeka et al., 2014).

Generally, the argument on the EST is that the closer the service provider is to the residents, the more efficient such services being offered will be. This is because the services provided will be in response to the residents' immediate needs; it will address their diversity, taste, preferences, and complexities (Ubi & Ndem, 2019; Omang et al., 2022). Applying this theory to the study, EST shows that formal social welfare service providers being closer to the people will be more informed about the historical complexities of the residents, the factors that affect the delivery of formal social welfare services, how to deal with such and for

efficient service delivery to the residents in the study area. The efficiency services theory has been used in studies in social development studies.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Design and study area

The study employed a cross-sectional survey to explore factors affecting the government delivery of social welfare services in Yenagoa Local government area of Bayelsa state, Nigeria. A cross-sectional survey enables a researcher to examine or investigate a phenomenon of a large section of people at a particular point in time.

3.2. Study population

Yenagoa local government area has a population of 352,285, comprising 182,240 males and 170,045 females (National Population Commission [NPC], 2006), and by projection, using the U.N. projection formula ($Census\ population + (3.5\% \text{ growth of C.P.}) \times No.\ of\ years$) (11), was put at 4,010,764 (as of 2017). The target population was the eligible male and female adult residents above 18 years, as they are deemed capable to assess the social welfare services (put at 222,728, NPC, 2006) and by projection is 2,535,753 adult residents (Abdulraheem et al., 2018). The area was of interest to the researcher as it has rural and urban residents and metropolitan nature of the area.

3.3. Sample and sampling technique

The study was conducted in two phases. The first phase was the pilot study in order to revalidate the instrument, while the second phase was the main study; while probability and non-probability sampling technique was adopted in recruiting the participants. With an R-value of 0.86, the reliability coefficient indicates that the instrument can be used for the study. In addition to that, the instrument was validated with regard to both its content and face validity. The study used a quantitative method to glean data from 560 research participants, using probability and non-probability sampling techniques to select community clusters, streets, villages, housing units, and respondents through purposive and simple random sampling techniques. The study was descriptive and described the relationship of variables to the inadequate supply of social welfare services, especially as it relates to infrastructural facilities. In addition, qualitative data were collected from ten willing and voluntary participants, purposively selected from different ministries and agencies for in-depth interviews (IDI). A total of 570 respondents were used for the study. For the IDI, four directors, each of the Ministries of Women Affairs, Power, Works and Education were purposively selected, together with four chief executive officers of Kindling Hope Alive, Nigeria (KHAN) Foundation, I-Care-Save-A-Soul, Water and Sanitation Hygiene (WASH), and Child Protection Network (CPN), and two community leaders from a rural and an urban community in the study area. The selected participants were considered privy to issues of welfare services in the study area. The use of mixed methods helps improve the evaluation of

this study by ensuring that the strengths of another balance the limitations of one type of data. This will ensure that understanding is enhanced by integrating different ways of knowing.

3.4. Ethical considerations and administration of instruments

Institutional consent and ethical approval were obtained from the ethical board of the University of Nigeria. Information concerning the objectives and the relevance of the study were made clear and the respondents' informed consent was obtained from each of the respondents. Prior to administering the questionnaires, participants were briefed on the purpose of the study, and participants were also made to understand that participation in the study was optional and voluntary. Participants were made to know that there are no right or wrong answers; they were also made to know that their responses will be kept confidential, and will only be used for academic purposes. Three research assistants, who were undergraduate students of Niger Delta University, Amassoma, were employed. The number of questionnaires that were distributed and retrieved, and the logistics involved, necessitated the need for the researcher to solicit the services of the research assistants who were indigenes of the communities involved. The research assistants were duly educated and trained to help in the fieldwork. The in-depth interview was carried out by the researcher after the appointment was fixed with the officials concerned as they deem convenient. The officials allowed the use of the recorder which was used to record the interview process, from which responses were transcribed.

3.5. Method of data analysis

Inferential descriptive statistics were used for statistical analysis. First, the study data was coded and displayed by employing descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and frequencies). Thereafter, Chi-square (χ^2) statistical analysis was employed for data analysis using Statistical Package

for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. The qualitative information that was gathered was evaluated, transcribed, arranged, coded, and then analysed to uncover recurring themes. In order to employ the points that were created to link to the themes that were established, careful interpretation of the replies that were acquired was assured. In order to provide support for the quantitative data, direct quotations from the transcription were utilised.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Respondents' socio-demographic variable

There were a total of 560 survey instruments dispersed among the chosen neighbourhoods and communities. Only 549 were properly filled out and returned, while the remaining 11 were either incomplete or damaged. Data obtained shows that the majority of the respondents (25.3%) reside in the Biseni community. The gender composition of the respondents shows that the majority of the respondents (53.4%) were males. The age group with the highest number of respondents falls between the age intervals of 18-24 years, with 28.6% of the sample size; 54.3% of study respondents stay in urban centres. The majority of the sample (53.4%) is made up of singles. The result further demonstrated that 35.5% of the respondents have completed their university education. Also, the findings indicate a greater percentage of the respondents (35.5%) were civil or public servants.

4.2. Awareness of government provision of social welfare services

Data in Table 1 reveals that a great majority of the research participants (100%) reported knowing the available social welfare services in Yenagoa. This suggests that respondents are overwhelmingly aware of the available social welfare services in the study area.

Table 1. Percentage distribution of respondents on their awareness of government provision social welfare services

<i>Knowledge of available social welfare services</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Yes	549	100
No	0	0
Total	549	100.0

Source: Fieldwork.

Responses to the follow-up question in Table 2 show that the most mentioned social welfare programmes provided by the government are educational services (32.6%). They are followed by medical services at 22.0%, roads (18.4%), electricity

supply (6.7%), and portable drinking water (1.3%). Of those respondents who mentioned other services, such as scholarship and empowerment training, is 1.8%.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents on available social welfare services

<i>Available social welfare services</i>	<i>Mentioned</i>	<i>Not mentioned</i>	<i>Total</i>
Road	101 (18.4%)	448 (81.6%)	549 (100%)
Medical services	121 (22.0%)	428 (78.0%)	549 (100%)
Electricity supply	37 (6.7%)	512 (93.3%)	549 (100%)
Portable	7 (1.3%)	542 (98.7%)	549 (100%)
Educational services	179 (32.6%)	370 (67.4%)	549 (100%)
Others specify	10 (1.8%)	539 (98.2%)	549 (100%)

Source: Fieldwork.

A permanent secretary at the Ministry of Education spoke with us during an interview session about the extraordinary investments the government and multinational oil firms have made in the delivery of educational services and other social programmes to promote the well-being of the people. The following are an excerpt from the interview session:

"The government has made education a top priority so that everyone may get a good education at a reasonable price. New classroom blocks are erected, existing classroom blocks are refurbished, and incentives are offered to students and instructors to get the most out of the educational endeavour in the state. The government has also intervened in the road building, healthcare, disability aid, and energy sectors" (IDI/Male/Permanent secretary/Ministry of education)".

Another participant shares this view, arguing that great effort is being made to improve the lives of residents in the Yenagoa local government region by the government and key players. This person mentioned how the capital of the state had changed from a little town to a new megacity in Nigeria. His submission is summarised thus:

"The people of the state, regardless of their LGA, have benefited from better roads, more funding for healthcare, and better educational opportunities since the beginning of the current democratic regime. The social welfare ministry has made certain that

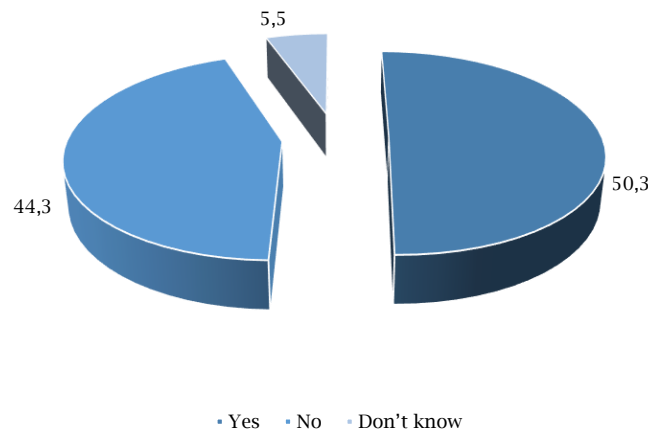
the elderly, orphans, and the handicapped have access to necessary services" (IDI/Male/Community leader/Biseni community).

One IDI participant disagreed, saying that those entrusted with our commonwealth are taking advantage of people's vulnerabilities to enrich themselves at their expense rather than investing in solutions to problems that matter to them. The extract of her views is reported below:

"I disagree with the people saying that government is trying. Sincerity on the part of those in positions of leadership is essential for the swift progress that is necessary to improve the lives of the people who put them there. Take a look at our infrastructure, including our transportation systems, medical facilities, educational institutions, and more. The leadership in Nigeria owes us better than they are giving us at the moment. Nowadays, corporations use CSR as a political tool. They've made a lot of promises but haven't delivered anything. In order for the people of this nation to reap the benefits of democracy, we must alter the current state of affairs" (IDI/Female/Community leader/Epie/Atissa community)".

Figure 1 shows that most respondents (50.3%) asserted that they have access to the available social welfare services provided by the government, 44.3% stated that they had not accessed the services, while 5.5% said that they do not know if they have benefitted from the services.

Figure 1. Percentage distribution of respondents concerning their accessibility to government social welfare services



Source: Fieldwork.

In an IDI session with one of the participants in the Agudama-Epie community, he expressed himself thus:

"Various government agencies, non-profits, and oil firms are responsible for the provision welfare services in my community. Some of the social services we've benefited from these institutions over the years include roads, hospitals, boreholes, and the schools my children attend. It's possible they're not in the greatest shape, but that's how we're handling it" (IDI/Male/Youth leader/Epie/Atissa community).

During the IDI interactive session, participants voiced concerns that some people were being unfairly excluded from benefiting from social welfare services. Nonetheless, they got to know about

the existing social welfare services via the media or through personal connections with beneficiaries of social welfare services. One of the interview participants has this to say:

"How can we access projects that are not available? There is an uneven distribution of social services like roads, hospitals and schools. Why some communities enjoy the opportunity of seeing these projects cited in their communities, others, through the media houses, get the reports of the execution of these projects. This group of individuals only know that the projects are available but do not have access to them because they are far from reach" (IDI/Deputy director/Ministry of Women Affairs).

Table 3. Distribution of respondents on information concerning the service providers of social welfare services by residents

<i>Service providers</i>	<i>Mentioned</i>	<i>Not mentioned</i>	<i>Total</i>
Governmental agencies	181 (33.0%)	368 (67.0%)	549 (100%)
Non-governmental organisation	14 (2.6%)	535 (97.4%)	549 (100%)
Community self-help	28 (5.1%)	521 (94.9%)	549 (100%)
Other specify	23 (4.2%)	526 (95.8%)	549 (100%)

Source: Fieldwork.

Data from the in-depth interview with a Director at the Ministry of Education explained this better. During the IDI, she said:

“The government is the primary stakeholder in delivering social welfare services to the residents in the local government area. They provide the most social welfare services, ranging from educational to

healthcare, infrastructural and other services. Although other stakeholders make efforts to provide and deliver some social welfare services to the residents, the government creates an enabling environment. It supports the communities with some resources to enable social welfare services delivery”.

Table 4. Distribution of respondents on information concerning factors that affect government delivery of social welfare services

<i>Information on factors affecting service delivery</i>	<i>To a large extent</i>	<i>To a very large extent</i>	<i>To a small extent</i>	<i>To a very small extent</i>
Corruption	254 (46.3%)	265 (48.3%)	23 (4.2%)	7 (1.3%)
Political expediency	221 (40.3%)	291 (53.0%)	29 (5.3%)	8 (1.5%)
Lack of qualified personnel	181 (33.0%)	172 (31.3%)	161 (29.3%)	35 (6.4%)
Distance from the services	179 (32.6%)	116 (21.1%)	202 (36.8%)	52 (9.5%)
Transparency/accountability	160 (29.1%)	127 (23.1%)	205 (37.3%)	57 (10.4%)
Lack of awareness of the need of the citizens	145 (26.4%)	118 (21.5%)	196 (35.7%)	90 (16.4%)
Perception of residents about the services	128 (23.3%)	99 (18.0%)	216 (39.3%)	106 (19.3%)
Perception of social service providers	149 (27.1%)	130 (23.7%)	202 (36.8%)	68 (12.4%)
Location of residents	139 (25.3%)	93 (16.9%)	215 (39.2%)	102 (18.6%)

Source: Fieldwork.

The degree to which various variables impact the government delivery of social welfare services is shown in Table 4. The result showed that 46.3% of the respondents aver that corruption affects the government delivery of welfare services to a large extent, 48.3% said it affects it to a very large extent, while 4.2% said that to a small extent and 1.3% of the respondents said to a very small extent. Also, 40.3% are of the view that political expediency affects government delivery of social welfare services to a large extent, the majority (53.0%) of the respondents hold that it affects it to a very large extent, 5.3% said to a small extent, while 1.5% of the respondents said to a very small extent. Again, 33.0% of the respondents indicated that lack of qualified personnel affects government delivery of social welfare services to a large extent; 31.3% also indicated to a very large extent, while 29.3% said to a small extent and 6.4% said to a very small extent. Furthermore, 32.6% of the respondents hold that distance from the services affects government delivery of the services to a large extent, 21.1% said it affects it to a very large extent, while 36.8% and 9.5% said to a small extent, and to a very small extent respectively. Also, 29.1% of the respondents are of the view that transparency/accountability affects government delivery of social welfare services to a large extent, 23.1% said that to a very large extent, while 37.3% of the respondents said to a small extent, 10.4% said to a very small extent.

Moreover, 26.4% of the respondents aver that lack of awareness of the needs of the citizens affects government delivery of the services to a large extent, 21.5% said it affects it to a very large extent, while the majority of the respondents (35.7%) said to a small extent and 16.4% said to a very small extent. 23.3% of the respondents are of the view that the perception of residents about the services

affects government delivery of social welfare services to a large extent, 18.0% said it affects it to a very large extent, while majority of the respondents (39.3%) and 19.3%, said to a small extent and to a very small extent respectively. Also, 27.1% of the respondents indicated that perception of social service providers affects government delivery of social welfare services to a large extent; 23.7% also indicated to a very large extent, while 36.8% said to a small extent and 12.4% said to a very small extent. Moreover, 25.3% of the respondents hold that location of residents affects government delivery of the services to a large extent, 16.9% said it affects it to a very large extent, while the majority of the respondents (39.2%) said to a small extent and 18.6% said to a very small extent.

4.3. Cross-tabulation of data

The following independent variables, namely occupation, education, and sex, were cross-tabulated with the dependent variable delivery of social welfare services. The Chi-square test was used to determine whether there is any significant relationship between the variables under consideration. In other to achieve this, some data were re-coded for easier understanding of the variables.

4.3.1. Occupation

Throughout the literature, nothing was said about the relationship between occupation and accessibility of delivered social welfare services. However, the researcher thought it necessary to investigate the influence of occupation on the delivery, accessibility, and utilization of social welfare services. This is shown in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5. Distribution of respondents by occupation and delivery of social welfare services

Delivery of social welfare services	Occupation		Total
	Student	Other occupation	
Delivered	172 (32.6%)	356 (67.4%)	528 (100.0%)
Not delivered	4 (19.0%)	17 (81.0%)	21 (100.0%)
Total	176 (32.1%)	373 (67.9%)	549 (100.0%)

Note: $\chi^2 = 1.697$; $df = 1$, $p < 0.193$.

Source: Fieldwork.

Response in Table 5 reveals that out of all the respondents that said social welfare services were delivered, 32.6% were students and 67.4% were in other occupations (civil, servants, farmers, entrepreneurs, and fishermen). Among all those that said social welfare services were not delivered, 19.0% were students, while 81.0% were in other occupations. The result, however, revealed that more respondents that were in other occupations had the highest proportion of respondents who said that social welfare services were delivered, and at

the same time, had the highest percentage of those that said social welfare services were not delivered. The reason for this may be attributed to the high numerical strength of respondents with other occupations. However, the Chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 1.697$; $df = 1$, $p < 0.193$) shows that there is no statistically significant relationship between occupation and the delivery of social welfare services. Hence, one's occupation may not be a determinant in the government's delivery of social welfare services.

Table 6. Distribution of respondents by occupation and access to delivered social welfare services

Accessibility of social welfare services	Occupation		Total
	Student	Other occupation	
Have accessed	58 (29.7%)	137 (70.3%)	195 (100.0%)
Have not accessed	118 (33.3%)	236 (66.7%)	354 (100.0%)
Total	176 (32.1%)	373 (67.9%)	549 (100.0%)

Note: $\chi^2 = 0.744$; $df = 1$, $p < 0.388$.

Source: Fieldwork.

Table 6 revealed that out of all the respondents that were perceived to have accessed the delivered social welfare services, 29.7% were students, while, 70.3% belonged to other occupations. Among all those that were perceived to have no access to the delivered social welfare services, 33.3% were students, while 66.7% belong to other occupations. The result, however, revealed that more of the respondents that belonged to other occupations had a higher proportion of respondents who have accessed the delivered social welfare services, and at the same time, had a higher percentage of those that have no access to the delivered social welfare services. The reason for this may be attributed to the high numerical strength of the respondents that belonged to other occupations. The Chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 0.744$; $df = 1$, $p < 0.388$) shows that there is no statistically significant relationship between respondents' occupation and their views on the accessibility of delivered social welfare services. Hence, one's occupation does not determine the government's delivery of social welfare services.

4.3.2. Education

Responses in Table 7 reveal that out of all the respondents that said social welfare services were delivered, 33.7% had lower education and 66.3% had higher education. Among all those that said social welfare services were not delivered, 33.3% had lower education, while, 66.7% had higher education. The result, however, revealed that more respondents that had higher education had a higher proportion of respondents who said that social welfare services were delivered, and at the same time, had a higher percentage of those that said social welfare services were not delivered. The reason for this may be attributed to the high numerical strength of respondents with a higher level of education. However, the Chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 0.001$; $df = 1$, $p < 0.971$) shows that there is no statistically significant relationship between the level of education and the delivery of social welfare services. Hence, one's level of education may not be a determinant of the government's delivery of social welfare services.

Table 7. Distribution of respondents by the level of education and delivery of social welfare services

Delivery of social welfare services	Level of education		Total
	Lower	Higher	
Delivered	178 (33.7%)	350 (66.3%)	528 (100.0%)
Not delivered	7 (33.3%)	14 (66.7%)	21 (100.0%)
Total	185 (33.7%)	364 (66.3%)	549 (100.0%)

Note: $\chi^2 = 0.001$; $df = 1$, $p < 0.971$.

Source: Fieldwork.

4.3.3. Sex

The researchers investigated the sex of respondents as the determinant of government delivery of social

welfare services to the residents. This is presented in Tables 8 and 9.

Table 8. Distribution of respondents by sex and delivery of social welfare services

Delivery of social welfare services	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Delivered	280 (53.0%)	248 (47.0%)	528 (100.0%)
Not delivered	13 (61.9%)	8 (38.1%)	21 (100.0%)
Total	293 (53.4%)	256 (46.6%)	549 (100.0%)

Note: $\chi^2 = 0.639$; $df = 1$, $p < 0.424$.

Source: Fieldwork.

Table 8 provides information on the sex of respondents and the delivery of social welfare services. The result indicated that out of all the respondents that responded that social welfare services were delivered, 53.0% were males, while 47.0% were females. Also, of all those that did not have social welfare services delivered, 61.9% were males, while 38.1% were females. The result, however, revealed that a greater proportion of respondents that are males responded that the social welfare services were delivered. The reason for this may be

because, in this part of the country, males move around more than females and this gives them an opportunity to get information more than females and also to have more chances of assessing these services than their female counterparts. The Chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 0.639$; $df = 1$, $p < 0.424$) showed that there is no statistically significant relationship between sex of respondents and the delivery of social welfare services. Thus, one's sex does not determine government delivery of social welfare services to residents.

Table 9. Distribution of respondents by sex and access to delivered social welfare services

Accessibility of social welfare services	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Have accessed	104 (53.3%)	91 (46.7%)	195 (100.0%)
Have not accessed	189 (53.4%)	165 (46.6%)	354 (100.0%)
Total	293 (53.4%)	256 (46.6%)	549 (100.0%)

Note: $\chi^2 = 0.000$; $df = 1$, $p < 0.990$.

Source: Fieldwork.

Table 9 provides information on the sex of respondents and the accessibility of delivered social welfare services. The result indicated that out of all the respondents that have access to the delivered social welfare services, 53.3% were males while 46.7% were females. Also, of all those that did not have access to the delivered social welfare services, 53.4% were males while 46.6% were females. The result however revealed a slight difference between the respondents that have access to the delivered social welfare services, with the males being higher than the females. The reason for this may be that in this part of the country, access to education is not restricted but accessible to all, and this gives both males and females the opportunity to get information and also to have more chances of accessing these services. The Chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 0.000$; $df = 1$, $p < 0.990$) showed that there is no statistically significant relationship between the sex of respondents and access to delivered social welfare services. Thus, one's sex might not determine their access to the delivered social welfare services.

5. DISCUSSION

The need for the delivery of social welfare services across Nigeria has over the years engaged the attention of the international community, governmental and non-governmental agencies, including scholars. The study explored factors affecting the government delivery of social welfare services to residents of Yenagoa LGA of Bayelsa State. The research findings show that all of the respondents are aware of the social welfare services such as roads, medical services, and schools provided by the government to the citizens of the Yenagoa local government area in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. This implies that awareness of the available

social welfare services delivered to the residents of Yenagoa LGA is high. Data on the available social welfare services show that most respondents affirm that education and healthcare services are readily available for the resident to access. The finding is consistent with the works of Alao et al. (2015), Mwenzwa and Waweru (2016). They maintained that social welfare services such as education and healthcare are high in their respective studies. The study partly agrees with the findings of Manga (2012) on the increased provision of educational and healthcare services among the people of South Africa. Findings from this study revealed that 48.3% of the respondents indicated that corruption affects the delivery of social welfare services to a very large extent, while 53.0% of the respondents are also of the view that political expediency affects the delivery of social welfare services to a very large extent. This finding is in agreement with that of Olley (2011) carried out in Delta State, Nigeria held that due to corruption and inappropriate utilization of funds, there is inadequate provision and delivery of social welfare services to residents. Otoghile and Edigin (2011) also in their study in Edo State, Nigeria show that due to corruption and diversion of funds, there is inadequate provision and delivery of social welfare services to residents.

Also, the level of education has always been regarded as an important determinant of knowledge and utilization of social welfare services. Toyin and Oluwaleye (2014) in their study in the Ekiti State of Nigeria stated that the level of education of citizens significantly determined their participation in the delivery of social welfare services. Hence, it shows that the level of education does have an effect on the accessibility and utilization of social welfare services in the area. However, the above study is in disagreement with the findings of this survey which

reveals that there is no significant relationship between education and the delivery of social welfare services in the study area. Some of the reasons advanced for this are that both the literate population and the illiterate population need social welfare services to enjoy better living conditions. Also, the fear of not being voted for during an election for non-performance explains why some of these social welfare services, like roads, education services, and water, are provided for both educated and uneducated citizens. Those that hold this view argue that the delivery of social welfare services by the government is based on political interest. Although the quality of service varies between these two groups, the result of the study has shown that education is not a determinant in government delivery of social welfare services in the study area.

Furthermore, in the literature, several scholars found out that gender is one of the important factors influencing government delivery of the available social welfare services. In the view of Zaidman-Zait et al. (2016), gender is very important in determining people's accessibility and utilization of social welfare services. Also, studies by Toyin and Oluwaleye (2014), Apanga and Adam (2015), and Uzuegbu (2016) stated that gender has an influence on the accessibility and utilization of available social welfare services. However, the findings in Table 9, showed no statistically significant relationship between gender and accessibility of social welfare services, which is in disagreement with Uzuegbu's (2016) study in Nigeria, which reported the likelihood of accessibility of social welfare services strongly associated with gender.

6. CONCLUSION

The study explored factors affecting the government delivery of social welfare services to residents of Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State, Nigeria. From the study, it can be seen that the variables did not indicate a positive stand, several factors were pointed out by the respondents for the epileptic delivery, limited accessibility, and near non-utilization of social welfare services. These include corruption, political expediency, lack of qualified personnel, Lack of awareness of the need of the citizens, etc. The observations of the respondents are congruent with the views of Agba et al. (2013), who highlighted a number of these factors that militate against the ability of local governments in Nigeria to deliver social welfare services in a timely, fair, satisfactory, honest and transparent manner required of them, being the closest level of government to the people. The factors include; corruption, lack of transparency and accountability, poor work attitude, and undue political interference. These factors must need be tackled head-on to be able to get the delivery of social welfare services to the residents accessible and utilizable. However, the findings revealed that

a good number of respondents indicated that certain social welfare services were available and they have accessed and utilized some of these services in their areas of residence, both in the urban and rural areas. But they are still calling out to those at the helm of affairs across the spectrum of the Nigerian State, to be proactive and sincere in the discharge of their duties; as well as, the delivery of social welfare services.

The findings of the study have important implications for social policy in Nigeria. Firstly, it was found that residents in rural areas have not had much of the delivery of social welfare services, much more, accessing and utilizing such. This has a policy implication, as the United Nations Human Poverty Index classified Nigeria as the world capital of poverty where a great majority of the populace lives below the poverty, with limited access to basic amenities. A key policy issue from the research findings is for the government and policymakers to make the delivery of social welfare services available to the residents, particularly to those in rural areas. In doing this, there should be deliberate efforts and actions to provide the needed social welfare services, and they should be close to the residents as this makes for easy accessibility and utilization. Another key finding in this study is that majority of the respondents indicated that they have not utilized social welfare services. Although, the variables did not indicate a positive stand, several crucial factors have been pointed out by the respondents for the epileptic delivery of social welfare services. These include corruption, accountability/transparency, lack of qualified personnel, etc. A key policy issue, therefore, is needed to look into the eradication or mitigation of these factors ascribed to be hindering the delivery of social welfare services. This will expedite the blanket spread of the delivery, accessibility, and utilization of social welfare services for residents, not just in the study area, but across the country.

The major strength of this study lies in the triangulation of the quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. This approach facilitates the authentication of research findings from two distinct sources, thus providing more valid and reliable research findings.

However, the major limitation of this study is that the study focuses only on the local government area (Yenagoa local government area) in Nigeria, consequently, data gathered only relies on information from residents in this local government area and is supported by secondary sources such as internet-based materials, textbooks, and journal articles. All the approaches used in data collection belong to the obtrusive measures which have inherent flaws. Again, since respondents are selected from four development centers in one local government area, caution should be applied in generalizing the findings of this study to other places in Nigeria and beyond.

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