

AN INNOVATIVE LEADERSHIP MODEL OF SERVICE DELIVERY IN URBAN LOCAL AUTHORITIES

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Abstract

The study sought to develop and validate an innovative leadership model for improving service delivery in urban local authorities. The prevalence of poor service delivery in urban local authorities motivated this study. The selected constructs of innovative leadership are innovative and creative thinking behaviour, risk taking and change oriented leadership, stakeholder participation, public administration core values, and service leadership. Data was collected using a survey approach from residents of Harare City Council, Zimbabwe. A structured questionnaire was used to collect 415 validated responses which were analysed using AMOS structural equation modelling (SEM) application. The innovative leadership model was confirmed and the study concluded that innovative and creative thinking behaviour, risk taking and change oriented leadership stakeholder participation, service leadership, and public administration core values, as constructs of innovative leadership, can go a long way on improving service delivery challenges in urban local authorities. As a result, the study validated and concluded the role of the constructs on service delivery challenges in urban local authorities. The study therefore recommends the adoption of the tested model as a plausible solution to service delivery challenges being faced by urban local authorities.

Keywords: Service Delivery, Innovative and Creative Thinking Behaviour, Risk Taking and Change Oriented Leadership, Stakeholder Participation, Service Leadership

1. INTRODUCTION

Service delivery in urban local authorities is a subject which has received a lot of attention from various researchers globally (Marumahoko, 2020; Popperwi, 2018; Mudyadzo & Nzwatu, 2018; Sibanda, 2017; Kinyua, 2015; Makanyeza, 2015; Nyikadzino & Nhema, 2015). Most urban councils in both developed and developing countries are facing serious challenges in delivering services according to the

expectations of the residents (Mangai, 2017). Failure by urban councils to provide good service delivery has resulted in protests and lack of trust from residents (Alexander et al., 2018; Morudu, 2017). Service delivery, however, is very broad possessing a number of definitions from different authors and from the various definitions posed, generally it can be deduced that the customer or consumer expects satisfactory service delivery always from the service provider irrespective of the sector being public or private.

In many developing countries, service delivery is constrained by challenges of coordination, governance, finance and capacity, which are worsened by the rate and scale of urbanisation (Avis, 2016). Governments at all levels play important roles in service delivery, regulating, facilitating and collaborating with other stakeholders and institutions (Vilfan et al., 2018). National governments, however, set the policy framework, transferring resources to local government for implementation (Masuku & Jili, 2019). The primary responsibility for the provision of basic services usually rests with city or municipal government, even if the delivery of services is outsourced to the private sector or NGOs (Avis, 2016). Urban governance for basic services covers the full range of arrangements through which governments and other stakeholders work together to install, deliver, and manage services (Avis, 2016).

In light of the background on service delivery challenges in urban local authorities, this study develops an innovative leadership framework as one of the possible solutions to service delivery challenges. The selected constructs of innovative leadership are innovative and creative thinking behaviour, risk-taking and change-oriented leadership, stakeholder participation, public administration core values, and service leadership. The selected theoretical constructs or factors are more consistent with the innovative leadership theory and they also appear more frequently in a number of contemporary studies (Zwane & Matsiliza, 2022; Raza et al; 2021; Manqele, 2021; Marumahoko, 2021; Koziol-Nadolna, 2020; Tidd & Bessant, 2019; Kahn, 2018; Borgmann et al., 2016). The study has a unique contribution of being output-based due to the development of an Innovative Leadership Model unlike the other studies done in service delivery. The concept of innovative leadership has not been explored by previous researchers as a possible solution to poor service delivery at a global level. The study also informs local government policymakers and practitioners as they develop policies, guidelines, systems and interventions pertaining to service delivery enhancement in urban local authorities.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. *Municipal Service Delivery*

Municipal service delivery refers to the actual provision of basic services which citizens rely on (Avis, 2016). Such services include clean water, sanitation facilities, municipal roads and transport infrastructure, housing infrastructure, refuse removal, street lighting, municipal health care, and education (Shittu, 2020). This echoes the definitions of service delivery suggested by various authors

including Vilfan et al. (2018) and Avis (2016). Service delivery cannot be discussed in isolation from service quality and according to Zeithaml (1988) service quality is defined as the process whereby the customer carries out a comparative analysis of the entire service being provided. This definition of service quality is similar to the definition of service delivery given by Shittu (2020). Service delivery refers to the extent to which the services provided by the listed sectors meet or exceed the expectation of the beneficiaries who are the general public (Shittu, 2020). Consequently, the concepts of service delivery and service quality have similar meanings except that in some cycles the former is more associated with the public sector and the latter with the private sector respectively yet they can be applied to both sectors (Dangaiso & Makudza, 2022). Service marketing experts agree that service quality is a proxy variable of customer satisfaction (Zeithaml, Bitner & Gremler, 2018). For customers to be satisfied with services, service delivery and/or quality management must take into account a number of factors including employees and managerial decisions (Zeithaml et al., 2018). A good administration that focuses on well-trained staff, valuable programme offerings and its brand influence on customers, are also components of quality dimensions (Naidoo, 2011; Tasara et al., 2021). Top management deems it necessary to invest time, energy, required training and resources to keep their staff sensitive and customer-centric (Khan & Fash, 2014). To gain a fair understanding of service delivery, there is a need to have an appreciation of the service concept.

2.1.1 Service concept

The service concept defines the “how” and the “what” of service design, and helps mediate between customer needs and an organisation’s strategic intent (Goldstein et al., 2002). Rao (2005) defines services as intangible activities which are carried out by either machines or persons or both in order to create value perceptions among customers. Stauss (2005) posits that services are specialised skills and knowledge which are exchanged for money in economic transactions. It should, however, be noted that in the case of public services, service delivery is not driven by the motive of making profit. Nonetheless, this does not mean that local authorities should make losses in their operations. They can make surplus funds but their main function is to supply services to the citizens largely on a cost recovery basis (Poperwi, 2018). Even in times when a non-profit organisation makes a surplus or profit from its operations, it does not distribute any dividends to anyone because it does not have any shareholder(s) and it is not allowed to do so at law. Thus, whatever profit is realised by a non-profit has to be reinvested into the activities of the organisation. Poperwi (2018) emphasises that the quality of services results in perception and assessment of value by the customer since services are intangible. Edvardsson and Olsson (1996) define the service concept as the comprehensive description of what should be done for the customer and how this is to be achieved.

Goldstein et al. (2002) define the service concept as an organisation's business proposal. Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) categorises services as private, public and collective or joint services (OECD, 2010). However, this study focuses on public services which Humphreys (1998), defines as those services which are largely or completely paid through taxes. According to Wollmann (2016), the term public service is used to refer to water supply, sewage treatment, waste management, public transport and energy provision. In the case of local authorities, taxes include rates, also called property taxes for commercial and industrial properties and medium and low density residential properties as well as supplementary charges in the case of high density residential houses (Poperwi, 2018). OECD (2010) alluded that municipal services can be outsourced from private organisations and also from voluntary participation by the community, thereby highlighting the importance of community involvement in municipal service provision. According to Poperwi (2018), where public services are provided by private firms, the role of local government is to provide funds and or regulate the behaviour and conduct of the service provider.

2.2. Innovative leadership

Innovation and leadership strongly resemble each other and leadership has always focused on bringing about a better future (Koyuncuoglu, 2021). With such a background, therefore, leaders are necessarily innovators (Koyuncuoglu, 2021). To be an innovator or leader demands a certain state or a way of being and relating to the world, a higher level of conscious awareness, especially in the context of change, challenge and uncertainty (Jada et al., 2019; Villaluz & Hechanova, 2019). Innovative leadership concept considers problems as challenges and as result innovative leaders seek problems rather than waiting for problems to occur (Othman and Rahman, 2013). A response to the growing demands of today's managers may be the concept of innovative leadership, which comes down to seeking an innovative approach in other adopted leadership concepts, such as transformational leadership, transactional leadership, strategic leadership (Glód, 2018).

2.2.1 Innovative leadership concept or theory

Gliddon (2006) defined the concept of innovative leadership as a philosophy and approach that blend different leadership styles to cause employees to produce creative ideas, products, and services. Innovation and leadership strongly resemble each other and leadership has always focused on bringing about a better future (Koyuncuoglu, 2021). With such a background, therefore, leaders are necessarily innovators (Koyuncuoglu, 2021). To be an innovator or leader demands a certain state or a way of being and relating to the world, a higher level of conscious awareness, especially in the context of change, challenge and uncertainty (Jada et al., 2019; Villaluz & Hechanova, 2019). Innovative leadership concept considers problems as challenges and as result innovative leaders seek problems rather than waiting for problems to occur (Othman & Rahman, 2013). A response to the growing

demands of today's managers may be the concept of innovative leadership, which comes down to seeking an innovative approach in other adopted leadership concepts, such as transformational leadership, transactional leadership, strategic leadership (Glód, 2018). Transformational leadership is a type of leadership which is participatory in nature. Thus, a transformational leader, characterised as participative, flexible, versatile, close to the team, renewing vision and strategies, is necessary to achieve goals and survive in the competitive environment (Juhro & Aulia, 2019; Juhro et al., 2020).

2.3. Conceptualising innovative leadership in urban local authorities

Today, organisations that adapt to change need leaders who are innovative. Researchers stress that leadership can enhance innovation within organisations, as well as highlight characteristics that can be created or improved by leaders to develop an innovative environment (Khalili, 2016; Juhro & Aulia, 2018; Hughes et al., 2018; Melo & Silva, 2019; Zuraik & Kelly, 2019; Juhro et al., 2020). However, Mumford, and Licuanan, (2004) propound that the need for innovation in organisations has resulted in a new focus on the role of leaders in shaping the nature and success of creative efforts. Therefore, the success of organisations requires innovation at every stage of organisation evolution. Since the 20th century, the area of innovation started to be of great interest in a number of fields such science, sociology, engineering, economics, and business (Dunga et al., 2020). In the public sector too, a distinction can be made between innovations that concern products and services (Torfing, 2016), and those that affect processes and organisations (de Vries et al., 2016). Additionally, innovations in the public sector can relate to the governance and policymaking (Dunga et al., 2020). Innovative leadership behaviour is different from traditional leadership behaviour. There is a difference in the behaviour of innovative leadership as compared to traditional leadership behaviour (Alsolami et al., 2016). Innovative leadership is still an area which requires some more research (Amanchukwu et al., 2015; Alharbi, 2021). The selected innovative leadership constructs, innovative and creative thinking behaviour, risk taking and change oriented leadership, stakeholder participation, service leadership, and public administration core values are conceptualised in Figure 1.

Innovative leadership constructs

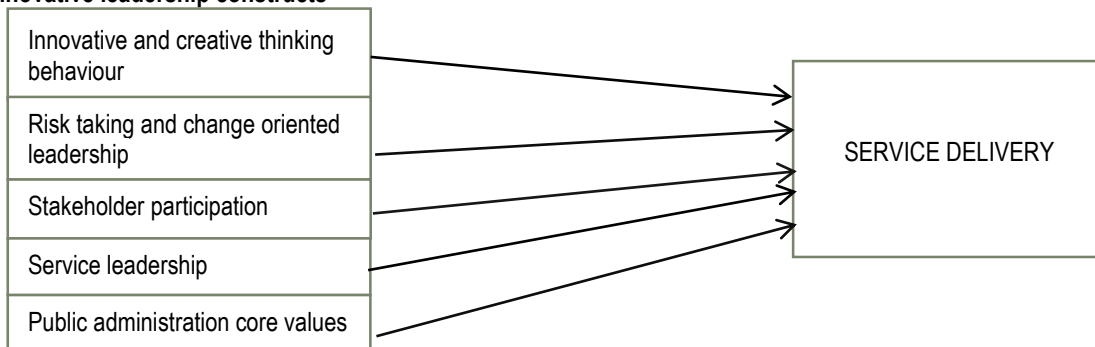


FIGURE 1 - THE CONCEPTUAL MODEL

2.3.1 Innovative and creative thinking behaviour

The innovative and creative thinking construct of this conceptual framework is underpinned by the innovative leadership concept as explained by several experts (Alharbi, 2021, Khalili, 2017, Zhu et al., 2016). Innovative and creative thinking have been selected as guiding factors of the study because a number of authors present it as a key construct of innovative leadership (Koziol-Nadolna, 2020; Tidd & Bessant, 2019; Kahn, 2018; Gault, 2018; Tien & Cheng, 2017; Bishop, 2016; Gault, 2015; Windrum, 2008). According to Khalili, (2016), the creative and innovative leadership behaviour construct is defined as the behaviours of leaders that foster and enhance followers' creativity and innovative behaviour. Innovation has been widely analysed as a major and one of the most important conditions that influence organisational performance (Tien & Cheng, 2017). In view of the theoretical arguments above in respect of this construct this study theorises that:

H₁: Innovative and creative thinking behaviour on the part of local authority leadership is positively related to service delivery.

2.3.2 Risk taking and change oriented leadership

To encourage innovation in organisations, risk taking is considered as one of the most important roles of managers (Seidiaghibadi, et al., 2018). Risk taking behaviour is characterised by adopting the degree of risks involved in making decisions (Nkundabanyanga, et al., 2015). On the other hand, risk management is emerging as an essential contributor to most fields of decision making and firm's control in any business given the complexity and uncertainty in the business environment (Eckles, et al., 2014). Researchers established that the wide use of explicit risk management if well implemented will be enable organisations to achieve the set innovative plans (Stosic, et al., 2017). Change- oriented leadership is described as the process of persuading individuals to recognise and agree on what needs to be done accompanied with hard work to accomplish the set goals (Yukl, 2013; Khalid, et al; 2021). Leadership, according to this definition, therefore is not simply connected with senior administrative positions, but it may be performed by anyone with the ability to shape others (Khalid, et al; 2021). Change-oriented leadership theory is considered similar to and compatible with transformational leadership theory (Gil, et al., 2005). Change-oriented leadership explains the impact of people in managerial positions (Khalid, et al; 2021). Taking into account the literature supporting this construct as cited above, it is hypothesised that:

H₂: Risk taking and change oriented behaviour on the part of urban local authority leadership is positively related to service delivery.

2.3.3 Stakeholder participation construct

In this theoretical model, community participation in local governance and service delivery is taken as synonymous with stakeholder participation. The whole idea of engendering stakeholder or community participation in local governance and service delivery is premised on Freeman et al.'s (2010) stakeholder theory. According to Madzivhandila and Maloka (2017), community participation gives a platform for the community to express their opinions so to influence municipal decisions. In a similar vein, Dangaiso, et al. (2022), argue that the concept of participation seeks to include democracy and transform social cohesion between government and its citizens, particularly as it pertains to the provision of quality and sustainable services and goods. The belief being that the aspect of participation moves citizens beyond interactive processes and into the realm of decision-makers (Msenge & Nzewi, 2021). A broad stakeholder involvement approach which ensures that all residents have a say in the management and development of municipal governance and service provision should be encouraged (Murimoga & Musingafi, 2014). According to Bel and Warner, (2016), the involvement of communities in service delivery is essential for the efficient provision of services. In spite of the remarkable benefits of public involvement in service delivery, public participation is still lagging behind in most developing countries (Manqele, 2021). Stakeholder participation is therefore an essential element of service delivery in local authorities (Bel & Warner, 2016). In view of the literature underpinning this construct as cited above, it is theorised that:

H₃: The facilitation of stakeholder participation in the governance of urban local authorities is positively related to service delivery.

2.3.4 Service leadership construct

Gronfeldt and Strother (2006) define service leadership as the culture that empowers the organisations to align promises, processes, and involve people in a proactive journey for competitive edge. Edvinsson (1992) define service leadership as a collective leadership mindset that includes thought leaders, process leaders, and commercial leaders. Hoshmand (2021) argues that to be a service leader, one must improve one's competencies, abilities, and willingness to help satisfy the needs of self and others in an ethical manner. This means both an active and proactive attitude to meet the needs of society (Hoshmand, 2021). Hence, service leadership's unique characteristic is to provide service with competence, character, and care to everyone that the service provider encounters (Chapman et al., 2016). Furthermore, service leadership is about satisfying needs by consistently providing quality personal service to everyone (Shek & Lin, 2015). What distinguishes a service leader from the other types of leaders is how they have combined competence, character, and care in their approach to leading (Shek & Lin, 2015). To examine the relationship between service leadership and service delivery, it is hypothesised that:

H₄: Service leadership in urban local authorities is positively related to service delivery.

2.3.5 Public administration core values construct

In implementing service delivery, it is important that local government is guided by a set of core values (Marumahoko, 2021). Basically, core values are the principles, beliefs or philosophy of values adopted and practised in public administration (Marumahoko, 2021). They assist in the decision making processes and are the standards by which public sector organisations may be characterised (Shannon & O'leary, 2020). The concept of core values has been adopted from the Bao et al. (2013) integrated conceptual framework to improve service delivery. In consideration of the literature cited in the foregoing sentences it is posited that:

H₅: Public administration core values in urban local authorities are positively related to service delivery.

3. METHODOLOGY

A quantitative orientation was adopted in this study through the adoption of an explanatory research design. The explanatory research design was adopted because it enables the researchers to measure causality between service delivery and innovative leadership in urban local authorities. A deductive research approach was adopted and the approach facilitates an extensive appreciation of the concepts of service delivery and innovative leadership. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to residents of Harare, Zimbabwe. Given that the target population was infinite, a validated sample size of 415 was justified by Morgan (1970) which states that to be 95% confident that the true value of the estimate will be within 5 percentage points of 0.5; the required sample size is 385. Data was analysed using SPSS and IBM-AMOS good research ethical practices were upheld throughout the study.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Demographic profiling

Out of a total of 460 distributed questionnaires, 415 questionnaires were received and validated. The distribution of respondents by demographics is shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1 - SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

Gender	%	Age	%	Qualification	%
Male	43	18-25	5	'O' level	5.1
Female	57	26-35	37	'A' level	1.9
		36-45	22	Certificate	1.2
		46-55	24	Diploma	6.0
		56-65	7	First degree	56.6
		66+	5	Postgraduate degree	29.2

From the study, although there were relatively more female than male respondents, the information gathered from this sample may be considered relatively balanced from a gender perspective. Most of the respondents were above 18 years of age, and below 55 years. Hence based on age, the respondents were considered mature enough to be able to make reasonable decisions and assessments about the concepts of innovative leadership and service delivery. 56.6 per cent of the respondents had attained at least a first degree and 29.2 per cent being holders of postgraduate degrees. It can, therefore, be argued that most of the respondents were able to clearly comprehend innovative leadership and service delivery issues which are the key concepts of the study.

TABLE 2 - RELIABILITY STATISTICS

Factor	Item	SFL	CA (α)	CR	AVE
Service Delivery	Water	0.862	0.981	0.980	0.802
	Refuse collection	0.842			
	Sewage services	0.779			
	Street lighting	0.876			
	Health	0.860			
	Education	0.859			
	Community facilities (e.g halls, sports grounds)	0.942			
	Road maintenance	0.950			
	Planning services (e.g housing designs, etc.)	0.950			
	Libraries	0.940			
	Leisure facilities (e.g swimming pools, gym)	0.941			
Social services	0.926				
Innovative and Creative Thinking Behaviour	Can think of innovative business solutions	0.945	0.981	0.981	0.896
	Can think of innovative ways of communicating with residents	0.929			
	Can think of ways to delegate tasks and/or authority to subordinates	0.928			
	Can think in anticipation of future problems, needs or changes	0.958			
	Can think of multiple ideas and solutions to problems	0.962			
	Can think of innovative ways to train employees on good judgment	0.957			
Risk Taking and Change Oriented Leadership	Can implement change effectively	0.851	0.885	0.887	0.613
	Are confident to take work related risks	0.837			
	Can inspire employees to support change	0.788			
	Can inspire employees to take risks	0.689			
	Can take necessary risks	0.737			
Stakeholder Participation	Work together with stakeholders	0.939	0.971	0.971	0.849
	Meet expectations of stakeholders	0.954			
	Provide various ways for stakeholders to share input	0.965			
	Involve stakeholders in municipal affairs	0.927			
	Connect stakeholders' interests to their goals	0.897			
	Keep stakeholders updated	0.841			
Public Administration Core Values	Are honesty	0.606	0.891	0.891	0.580
	Are responsible	0.765			
	Are humble	0.731			
	Are ready to learn new things	0.814			
	Apply moral principles in a given situation	0.812			
	Are honesty	0.82			
Service Leadership	Are active and involved in the provision of services	0.89	0.963	0.963	0.815
	Understand and share the service needs of people	0.911			
	Accept responsibility for service provision	0.893			
	Are committed in providing good services	0.911			
	Make fair decisions or judgments on service provision	0.933			
	Have ability in service administration	0.877			

4.2. Measurement model

Using confirmatory analysis, the model fit for the measurement model was within acceptable ranges. Table 2 shows the results;

Using statistics in Table 2, convergent validity was proved because indicators were closely related, with factor loadings in excess of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2014). That proves that indicators were measuring the underlying factors. The instrument was also reliable with Cronbach alpha and composite reliability scores above 0.7 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). The average variance extracted for the latent variables of the study’s latent variables had a range of 0.580 to 0.896. According to Hair et al. (2010), an acceptable AVE should be 0.5 or better. Table 3 below indicates the discriminant validity statistics.

TABLE 3 - DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY

	ServDel	InnovCreThin	RskTakChng	StakhPart	PubAdmin	ServLnD
ServDel	0.895					
InnovCreThin	0.756	0.947				
RskTakChng	0.638	0.412	0.783			
StakhPart	0.652	0.683	0.461	0.921		
PubAdmin	0.469	0.291	0.559	0.319	0.762	
ServLnD	0.692	0.781	0.444	0.82	0.361	0.903

Key to Table 3 variables

- ServDel = Service Delivery
- InnovCreThin = Innovative and Creative Thinking
- RskTakChng = Risk Taking and Change Oriented
- StakhPart = Stakeholder Participation
- PubAdmin = Public Administration Core Values
- ServLnD = Service Leadership

Results in Table 3 above indicate evidence of discriminant validity. The square root of the average variance extracted, (AVE), was higher than the correlations between the latent factors. Guided by Hair et al. (2010), the study concluded that each latent variable was measuring its own unique attributes.

4.3. The structural model

The structural model for the study is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2 shows that all the model-fit statistics considered in this study were within the acceptable fit indices (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). This means that observed data matches the relationships specified in the hypothesised model. The model fit statistics confirm that the structural model was a good model for analysis (Hair et al. 2014). In Table 4 statistical output was used to make conclusions on the stated hypotheses.

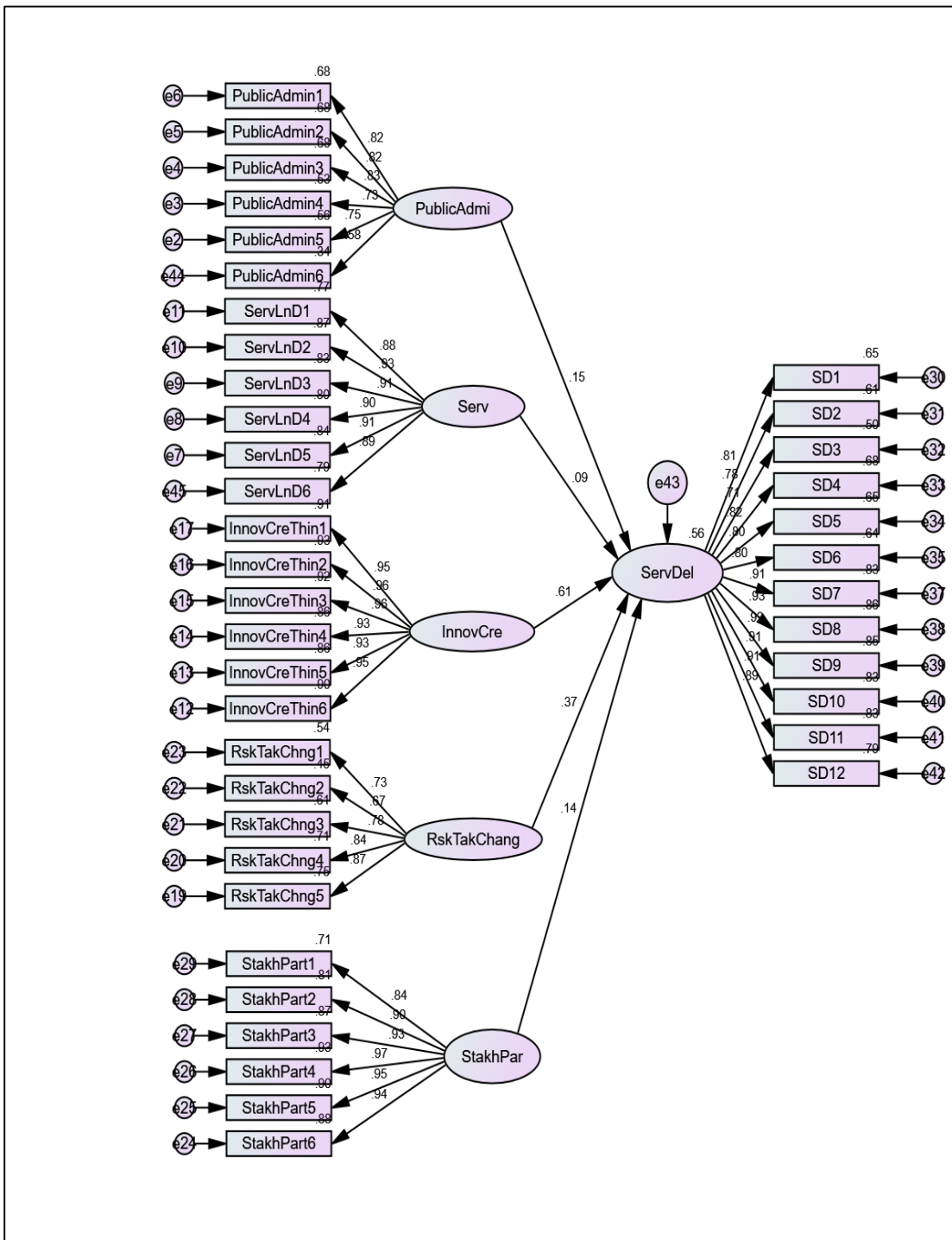


FIGURE 2 – THE STRUCTURAL MODEL

TABLE 4 - THE MODEL RESULTS

			Standardised Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
ServDel	<---	PublicAdmi	.154	.041	4.121	***	SUPPORTED
ServDel	<---	Serv	.092	.031	2.600	.009	SUPPORTED
ServDel	<---	InnovCre	.605	.033	14.397	***	SUPPORTED
ServDel	<---	RskTakChng	.371	.033	9.257	***	SUPPORTED
ServDel	<---	StakhPar	.139	.020	3.930	***	SUPPORTED

4.4. Discussion of findings

Table 4 shows that all hypothesised associations were confirmed using an alpha value of 0.05. The first hypothesis, (H1), is accepted in this study since there is a positive and significant relationship between innovative and creative thinking behaviour and service delivery ($\beta = 0.605$; $P = 0.00$). This means that the more urban local authorities' leadership is innovative and creative, the more service delivery to improves. Empirical evidence also supports the results from the hypothesis testing. Innovative and creative thinking are necessary ingredients to service delivery (Poznanska, 2018; Swiadek & Szajt, 2018; Khalili, 2016), regardless of whether the service firm concerned is privately owned or publicly owned.

The second hypothesis, (H2), is accepted in this study since there is a positive and significant relationship between risk taking and change oriented leadership and service delivery ($\beta = 0.371$; $P = 0.00$). This means that urban local authorities' leadership should be prepared to take the necessary risk and to be change oriented in order for service delivery to improve. These results are also supported in extant literature. Several researchers confirmed that creating values which support risk taking in the organisation increase the acceptance of the leader by the employees and lead to shaping the organisation's level of innovativeness (Mehmood, et al., 2022; Khalid, et al; 2021; Yukl, et al., 2019; Borgmann, et al., 2016; Raza, et al; 2021).

The third hypothesis, (H3), was supported in this study following a significant P value of 0.00 which was lower than the value of 0.05. The impact of stakeholder participation on service delivery was found to be positive with a beta coefficient of 0.139. This means that the more the leadership of urban local authorities involve stakeholders in governance issues, the more service delivery will improve. Empirical studies also support that stakeholder participation is essential in improving service delivery in urban local authorities. According to Madzivhandila and Maloka, (2017), community participation gives a platform for the community to express their opinions so to influence municipal decisions.

Hypothesis, (H4), was supported with a statistically significant P value of 0.00 and a beta coefficient of 0.154. This means that the more urban local authorities' leadership value and are confined within the stipulated public administration core values, the more service delivery improves. According to Marumahoko, (2021), a code of ethics is important for the proper functioning of urban local government and the execution of service delivery. Marumahoko, (2021), further argues that in implementing service delivery, it is important that local government is guided by a set of core values.

The fifth hypothesis, (H5), was supported in this study following a significant P value of 0.009 which was lower than the alpha value of 0.05. The impact of service leadership on service delivery was found to be positive with a beta coefficient of 0.092. This means that service leadership has a significant impact on service delivery in urban local authorities. Therefore, this implies that the more urban local authorities'

leadership adopts service leadership, the more service delivery improves. Empirical evidence support the results of the hypothesis testing and the comments from the interviews with Chapman et al. (2016), arguing that service leadership's unique characteristic is to provide service with competence, character, and care to everyone that the service provider encounters.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that innovative leadership can significantly contribute in addressing service delivery challenges that are encountered in most urban local authorities. The innovative leadership model was developed through a deductive approach as a result leading to theory extension. The innovative leadership model was confirmed and the study concluded that innovative and creative thinking behaviour, risk taking and change oriented leadership stakeholder participation, service leadership, and public administration core values, as constructs of innovative leadership, can go a long way on improving service delivery challenges in urban local authorities. As a result, the study validated and concluded the role of the constructs on service delivery challenges in urban local authorities. The study recommends that urban local authorities should promote an increasing number of participatory processes, both online and offline, that effectively engage residents and that pay special attention to specific needs of stakeholders. The participatory processes should be based on transparent and shared rules, enabling stakeholders to have real decision-making power. Urban local authorities should also uphold public core values and have some mechanisms for plugging corruption which was established as one of the major causes of poor service delivery. The study further recommends the adoption of service leadership in urban local authorities as a way of improving service delivery. Urban local authorities' leadership should also be committed and visionary in order to promote the social and economic well-being of residents. The study therefore recommends the adoption of the tested model as a plausible solution to service delivery challenges being faced by urban local authorities. Since the study focused on urban local authorities, future research may try to extend the Innovative Leadership Model to other sectors and also test the applicability and validity of the model outside urban local authorities.

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