

A CASE STUDY OF EFFECT OF POLITICAL ACCOUNTABILITY ON SERVICE DELIVERY IN CENTRAL EQUATORIAL STATE, SOUTH SUDAN. A DESCRIPTIVE CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY.

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Page | 1

ABSTRACT.

Background.

This study aims to document the effect of political accountability on service delivery in the Central Equatorial state, of South Sudan. Accountability plays a very significant role in ensuring that a high level of service delivery is realized in local governments. In South Sudan, the government enacted the Public Finance and Accountability Act to strengthen states' local government accountability in the utilization of public resources for better service delivery. Under political accountability, it was assumed that the councilors of the state fulfill their electoral promises in terms of school, health, and water facility constructions. Schools, Health, and water facility constructions are very paramount and visible activities for politicians to account to their community they serve as evidence of what they are doing. Therefore, this study seeks to assess the effect of political accountability on service delivery in the Central Equatorial state, of South Sudan.

Methodology:

The study used a case study design and adopted a cross-sectional survey to find out the opinions, attitudes, preferences, and practices of a cross-section of the population about the subject under investigation.

Results:

This study documented the effect of political accountability on service delivery in the Central Equatorial state, South Sudan at 34%. This study reveals that the level of service delivery is significantly dependent on political accountability.

Conclusion:

There is a positive significant relationship between political accountability and service delivery. Political accountability has a positive significant effect on the service delivery where it accounts for 34% variation in the service delivery.

Recommendation:

Central Equatorial State Council should strengthen civil society organizations by holding regular meetings with them. This is to enable civil society organizations to have information about government programs to create awareness for the people to demand more accountability from the local politicians.

Keywords: Political Accountability, Service Delivery, Equatorial, South Sudan
Submitted: 2024-01-31 *Accepted:* 2024-02-05

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BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY.

In ancient Athens, Roberts (1982) found out that, the line of political accountability ran directly from the Assembly to those with delegated authority to carry out the civic function. Accountability plays a very significant role in ensuring that a high level of service delivery is realized in local governments (World Bank, 2020). The researcher reviewed literature related to school, health, and Water facilities established by elected leaders to deliver services to the electorate to fulfill their promises (Derick, 2003).

The National average for the number of teachers' houses per school during the years 2001-2005 increased from 18% to 20% in the rural schools (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020). On the same note, the number of classrooms increased to 78.403 in 2020 compared to only 25.676 classrooms in 2019 (Namirembe, 2021), but the pupils- classroom ratio (PCR) was still high at 84:1. However, the three authors never brought out the accountability status of school infrastructure in each district. Therefore, the lack of specific details for each district in these three studies made it difficult to determine the level of political accountability in the provision of school infrastructure to the electorate.

Meanwhile, some studies revealed improvement in school infrastructure development; Gbadamosi and Adeyeni (2010) found out that there were standard classrooms spacious for a pupil population of 40 pupils per class in Nigeria. In Oguni State, the situation was even better in public primary schools, for example, with less than 40 pupils per class. Equally, GoSS (2021) revealed that in South Sudan pupil classroom ratio continued to improve, for example, the primary pupil-classroom ratio reduced from 94 per class in 2003 to 79 per class in 2005. Improvement in pupil-classroom ratio resulted in quality service delivery. Furthermore, MoES (2010) revealed that under the School Facilities Grant, several public primary schools benefited from classroom construction leading to a reduced pupil-classroom ratio. These studies revealed that the number of primary schools and classroom constructions increased in South Sudan and Nigeria. However, the three studies were not adequate in explaining the relationship between political accountability and service delivery.

The role of political accountability in the health sector was to ensure that the government delivered on electoral promises by allocating resources for infrastructure development (Derick, 2003). According to the Ministry of Health (MoH) (2010), the number of health facilities in the public sector grew from 1.979 to 2.30. The findings of the three studies showed only an average national increase in the number of health facilities, but not clear on the percentage increase of health facilities per district. It thus becomes difficult to assess whether or not the local elected leaders are accountable to their constituents for meeting their demands in central equatorial.

Access to clean and safe water leads to improved health and is an essential investment in human capital. However, the World Bank (2020) report showed that developing countries were facing a water crisis which undermined their effort in the fight against poverty, hunger, and diseases. This study revealed that developing countries were facing a water crisis due to inadequate water facilities to provide better service delivery. Additionally, there was still low access to safe water facilities, only piped water was accessed by the population of Juba town. There was only a slight improvement in access to rural water supplies from 54.9% in 2020 to 61.3% in 2021. The three studies were conducted in global and national environmental settings which could not reveal the true findings. Therefore, the objective of this study is to assess the effect of political accountability on service delivery in the Central Equatorial state, of South Sudan.

METHODOLOGY.

Research Design.

The study used a case study design and adopted a cross-sectional survey to find out the opinions, attitudes, preferences, and practices of a cross-section of the population about the subject under investigation (Amin,

2005). The triangulation approach was used because both methods supplemented each other in that qualitative methods provided in-depth explanations while quantitative methods provided the hard data needed to meet required objectives and test hypotheses. Further still, both methods were used to avoid such bias in that each method used to check the other during the study under investigation. For example, the subjectivity associated with qualitative research was minimized by the objectivity of quantitative research. The findings derived from one approach validated the other. Primary sources of data included: civil servants, councilors, community members, and civil society (CSO) members. Elements of correlation were measured. The research was conducted in a normal organizational setting at the district headquarters, sub-counties, and community facilities like primary schools, health units, and water points.

Study Population.

The study population was drawn from central equatorial and civil society organizations (CSOs) where three different types of people were enlisted. The technical officers are people who understand and deal with the implementation of government programs daily; and from whom accountability is sought, by the delegated authority and public resources they hold. The elected representatives (councilors) are the people's representatives in the community. This group carried the direct mandate from the people through the vote and assumed the final burden of giving a satisfactory explanation to the public (people) on the performance of local governments. Civil society is not part of the government machinery but provides an important and rather independent interface with local government institutions. They spearheaded the demand for accountability and its enforcement in the district. Importantly, they formed part of the community's voice and oftentimes rose against poor administration and bargained for improved services. The respondents were selected purposively since the researcher had the desire to include specific sections of the study population who had potential in-depth information and understood the basic themes of the study. In total, 65 respondents were interviewed using interview guides for councilors and civil servants and focus group discussion questions for the community and board members. Owing to the difficulty in accessing all the public institutions in the district, the researcher chose four sub-counties out of ten plus district headquarters for the study.

Sample Size and Selection.

The researcher sampled 20 counselors, 40 technical officers, 20 board members, 40 community members, 10 private sector, and 12 CSO representatives. The sample sizes were arrived at by the use of the table for determining sample size for research activities. The respondents were selected by purposive and convenience

sample techniques because of their in-depth information and understanding of the basic themes of the study.

Table 1: Sample Size and Sampling Technique.

Category	Access Population	Sample Size	Sample technique
State Councilors	20	16	Simple random sampling.
Technical officers	40	30	Simple random sampling
CSO Officials	12	06	Judgmental sampling
Private Sector	10	05	Convenience sampling
Boards & Commission Members	20	11	Judgmental sampling
Beneficiary members	40	35	Systematic sampling
TOTAL	142	103	

Source: Adjumani District Records Office

Sampling Technique and Procedure.

Six categories were involved in the targeted population of this study. The sample size for the councilors was 16 subjects. These respondents were purposively selected because they had in-depth information about local government accountability and service delivery. A simple random sampling technique was used to select each member of the population independently of the others. The technique was used because of its high generalisability of findings. All members of the targeted population were given numbers that were written on small pieces of paper. The pieces of paper were then folded, put in a bag, carefully shuffled, and then drawn one at a time until the required number of participants (16) was obtained. This sampling technique was used because it gave each member of the targeted population an equal opportunity to be picked at any selection point. The information collected from the councillors included; the effect of political, managerial, and financial accountabilities on service delivery in central Equatorial and how government policies/regulations influenced it.

The technical officers are charged with the implementation of the government programs in the state. They were 40 in number purposively selected because they held positions of responsibility in the state administrative structure. A simple random sampling technique was used to select respondents. This technique was used because of its high generalisability of findings. All members of the targeted population (40) were systematically assigned numbers that were written at equal intervals on the circumference of a wheel. The wheel was then spun and allowed to stop by itself. The member whose number the pointer pointed to when the wheel stopped was picked. This process was repeated until the required number of participants (30) was realized. The *roulette wheel method* was chosen to select the sample size of the respondents in this category to avoid bias. The data collected from them was about information on the effect of political, managerial, and financial accountabilities on service delivery in Central Equatorial and how government policies/regulations influenced it. The civil society members were 12 numbers. This

category of respondents was included as part of the respondents to get the perception of the independent people about accountability and service delivery in the local government. The respondents here were selected by use of judgmental sampling because it was the only meaningful way to investigate. Two subjects were randomly selected from each civil society organization to get a sample size (6). The researcher used his assessment to see if civil society members could be of use to this study. The data collected also included information on the effect of political, managerial, and financial accountabilities on service delivery and how government policies/regulations influenced it. The private sectors are the service providers of state programs. This category of respondents was included in the study population due to the role they played in undertaking contractual services in the district. Convenience sampling was used because it was quick, convenient, and less expensive to select respondents. In this regard, two subjects were randomly selected from the nearest business firm of 10 to get a sample size of 5. The data collected was on the effect of political, managerial, and financial accountabilities on service delivery and how government policies/regulations influenced it. The boards and commission members are entrusted with special council functions to facilitate the process of accountability and service delivery in the state. The judgmental sampling technique was used because it was the only meaningful way to investigate where a sample of the participants was based on knowledge that they knew the information sought. 11 respondents were randomly selected from the boards and commission members (20). The researcher used his assessment to see if boards and commission members could be of use to this study. The data was collected on the effect of political, managerial, and financial accountabilities on service delivery and how government policies/regulations influenced it. The beneficiary members are the people who receive services offered by the state. This category of respondents was chosen because as beneficiaries they were in a better position to measure the level of accountability against service delivery in central equatorial. The researcher used a systematic sampling technique for the selection of respondents from the

targeted population. The technique was easy to use due to the availability of the population frame in this category of respondents. A sampling interval was found based on the sample size and the population size. The researcher picked one participant from every member of the population ($40/35=1$). From the first group of one participant, the researcher randomly selected one participant whose number was the starting point. Thereafter, every participant was selected from the listed members of the population. This sampling technique was used to ensure every element of the sampling population had an equal chance of being included in the sample. The data collected was on the effect of political, managerial, and financial accountabilities on service delivery and how government policies/regulations influenced it.

Data Collection Methods.

The researcher used four data collection methods to achieve the study's objectives as described below.

Questionnaire.

Closed-ended questionnaires were administered by the researcher and two research assistants to respondents: councillors and technical officers to collect primary data on the effect of political, managerial, and financial accountabilities on service delivery and how government policies/regulations influenced it. The researcher used this method because the respondents knew how to read and write.

Interviews.

During the fieldwork, councilors, civil servants, board members, and CSO officials (30) were interviewed on political, managerial, and financial accountabilities, government policies/regulations, and service delivery. This method was used because the researcher wanted to get a complete and detailed understanding of the issues from the respondents through probing and clarifications (Odiya, 2009).

Focus Group Discussion.

There were 10 community members for each of the three focus group discussions held. The three groups were; health management committee members, primary school management committee members, and water user committee members. In the discussion, the researcher introduced the topic of political accountability of primary school structure, health unit structure, and water facility, service delivery and asked open-ended questions to participants to obtain all the relevant information. This method was used because it captured real-life data in a social environment (Odiya, 2009).

Document Review.

In this study, the researcher reviewed the following documents; government publications, reports, legal and regulatory instruments, published books on accountability and public sector management, published articles in journals, and newspapers. This method was used because it contains credible evidence to justify the researcher's findings (Amin, 2005).

Data Collection Instruments.

The researcher used four instruments to achieve the objectives of this study. These instruments included; a questionnaire form, interview guide, focus group discussion guide, and documentary review checklist as discussed below.

Questionnaire Form.

The researcher collected data from the respondents by the use of questionnaire forms on the effect of political, managerial, and financial accountabilities on service delivery and government policies/regulations. The researcher selected this instrument because of its confidentiality nature, saving time, and above all information was collected from a large sample. The researcher developed the questionnaire on a Likert scale with a five-response continuum: Strongly agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, and Strongly disagree. There were 61 questionnaire forms administered to councilors and civil servants to enable the researcher to describe respondents' attitudes to the statements. The responses were weighed on a scale of 1 to 5. According to Amin (2005), Likert scales are very flexible to be constructed for attitude scales.

Interview Guide.

The researcher used an interview guide because it is flexible to measure certain characteristics that are not possible by developing scales. The 35 respondents interviewed included; councillors, civil servants, board members, CSOs, and the private sector because they understood the operation of the state administration as being stakeholders. The data collected from these respondents was on the effect of political, managerial, and financial accountabilities on service delivery and how government policies/regulations influenced it.

Focus Group Discussion Guide.

The researcher developed a topic guide that focused on specific issues of the effect of political, managerial, and financial accountabilities on service delivery and the influence of government policies/regulations. The respondents were 30 respondents primary school, health, and water user committee members because they were in a better position to evaluate these services offered to them. This instrument was used because it allows flexibility for

the members to discuss freely on an issue freely and provide many possible answers (Odiya, 2009). The researcher was able to use a voice recorder device to capture the details of the discussions.

Documentary Checklist.

In this study, the researcher reviewed; the District Development Plan (DDP), staff meeting minutes, departmental performance reports, government publications, and legal documents. This instrument was chosen because relevant documents are reviewed to obtain data that cannot easily be obtained through the other instruments.

Pretesting (Validity and reliability).

The researcher used face and content validity. Research instruments were drafted and sent to the supervisors for comments on sentence construction and wording, the relevance of questions, and the ease with which questions

were answered to ensure face validity. The instruments were pretested by the Internal Auditor for content validity. The responses from two officers were subjected to a content validity test.

Therefore, the Validity test was based on the above formula and the results showed a validity figure of 0.8 which was above 0.7. This implied that the tools were valid for data collection.

Reliability.

The reliability of the instrument is tested to measure the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent data after repeated times. To ensure reliability the researcher pretested the questionnaire instrument once on 10 people in the study population. This was intended to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. The scores obtained from the pretest were then correlated using Cronbach’s Coefficient Alpha since multiple response items were involved. The results are as follows.

Table 2: Reliability Index for Study Variables.

Variables	Reliability Index
Political accountability	0.872
Managerial accountability	0.784
Financial accountability	0.712
Government policies/regulations	0.652
Service delivery	0.672
Overall Reliability	0.7384

Source: Primary data

The overall reliability of the instrument showed Cronbach’s Alpha value of 0.7384. According to Hattie et al (1997), Cronbach’s Alpha value greater than 0.60 is acceptable. Therefore, the researcher proceeded to collect data using the instrument.

Data Collection Procedure.

The researcher identified two staff in the management department and trained them in techniques of administering questionnaires and conducting interviews. The trained research assistants were needed to meet the large number of respondents and collect data of high quality with efficiency and effectiveness.

Preliminary visits to the field enabled the researcher to identify contact people, participants and seek their consent, and draw programs for data collection.

The questionnaires were administered by the researcher and research assistants to the respondents personally. All the items of the questionnaire were checked for completion before collecting them. They were given general instructions before completing the questionnaires individually. The completed questionnaires were

collected after two weeks upon confirmation that all the questions were answered.

Unlike the interview guides, the respondents were personally interviewed by the researcher to avoid errors in the course of the interview exercise. After the required explanations were given by the researcher, the respondents were requested to complete the interview instruments for collection there and then. In most cases, the interview took 45 minutes for each respondent. The researcher built rapport with the interviewer and asked the interviewee how best the interview could be handled before the interview exercise. The proceedings of the interviews were voice recorded, but the researcher sought the consent and acceptance of the interviewees first.

Data Analysis.

The raw primary data collected from the primary sources by use of questionnaires was cleaned and the responses (variables) were grouped according to their categories. The data was encoded and entered in the SPSS 16 version for analysis. The dependent variables (responses) were entered against the independent variables for analysis. The results were summarized using descriptive statistics and presented using percentages for comparisons. Spearman

Rank Correlation was used to test if variations in the opinions of the respondents were significant. For the cases where the $P < 0.05$ then the variations in the views of the respondents were said to be statistically significant and an explanation was given for such variations while for the cases where $P > 0.05$, the differences in the opinions of the respondents were said to be statistically insignificant and conclusion was based on the view of the respondents with the highest percentage.

In qualitative data analysis, the researcher transcribed interviews and focus group discussions. The field notes were typed and reread by the researcher. A general sense of the information on the effect of accountability on service delivery was obtained by the researcher and reflected on its overall meaning. The researcher used direct quotations to present the findings. The researcher interpreted the meaning of the data which involved lessons learned.

Measurement of Variables.

Table 3: Response Rate.

Category	Target sample size	Actual Sample Size	Response rate
state Councillors	16	8	50%
Technical officers	30	16	53 %
CSO Officials	06	03	50%
Private Sector	05	03	60%
Boards & Commission Members	11	05	45%
Beneficiary members	35	30	86%
TOTAL	103	65	63%

Source: Primary data

Out of 68 questionnaires sent out, 61 were returned representing a 90% response rate. On the other hand, for the interview guides, 35 (51%) of respondents answered out of 68, while the other 33 were not accessed because they were either busy or seemed to evade the researcher. Meanwhile, 3 focus groups were interviewed constituting 30 (86%) of respondents of the beneficiaries of service delivery. Therefore, a total of 126 respondents out of 171

Measurement of data is very important in quantitative studies. In this study, three levels of measurement were used; nominal, ordinal, and interval scales. In a nominal scale, the researcher grouped subjects into categories especially the background variables to indicate the frequencies in each category. Meanwhile, in the ordinal scale, the researcher used the Likert scale to measure the extent to which a respondent agrees or disagrees with a statement of an attitude on accountability and service delivery in central equatorial. The interval scale was used to compute the mean and the standard deviation of the responses.

RESULTS.

Response Rate.

The researcher targeted 103 respondents. However, the actual number of respondents who participated in this study was less than the target number.

who participated in the three methods used for data collection in this study represented a response rate of 74%.

Background information of respondents.

In this study, the researcher considered; gender, age, level of education, designation, and years of service as background information for respondents.

Table 4: Summary of findings from background information.

Characteristics of background	Attributes	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Frequency
Sex	Male	51	84	84
	Female	10	16	100
Age	25-35	18	30	30
	35-45	30	49	79
	46+	13	21	100
Education	Certificate (UCE, UACE)	3	5	5
	Diploma	22	36	41
	Degree	25	41	82
	Post Graduate	7	12	93
	Others	4	7	100
Designation	Administrative officers	11	18	18
	Technical officers	42	69	87
	Support staffs	1	2	89
	Councillors	7	12	100
Years of service	Less than 4 years	15	25	25
	4-10 years	21	34	59
	11-15 years	18	30	89
	16 + years	7	12	100

Source: Primary data

In Table 4, gender is important because men and women have a disparity to exercise full responsibility of accountability in the utilization of public resources for service delivery. Men are generally in senior managerial positions with authority to enforce accountability in service delivery than women who are mostly in middle positions with less authority to make decisions to ensure accountability in the service delivery. In addition, men have more access to district resources than women in implementing government programs according to the MPS (2005), the Circular Standing Instruction No.2 on guidelines for gender mainstreaming human resource management. The researcher also considered the age of respondents because different age groups have different contributions to better service delivery. According to the MPS (2011), young people below 25 years are less committed to implementing government programs due to their private social affairs. The older persons between 26 to 60 years exhibit a lot of commitment to accountability and service delivery since the majority of them are married and have children to look after. Therefore, they work hard to protect their jobs to earn a living by ensuring high levels of accountability and service delivery. Those aged above 60 years on the other hand tend to protect their reputation built for long periods by ensuring that a high level of accountability and service delivery is achieved. The educational background was important because education is a prerequisite for better service delivery. Officials with basic education do not offer good accountability for improved service delivery because of limited knowledge of government programs. Those officials with diplomas and degrees are relatively good at offering accountability for government programs because

they possess wide knowledge and skills (MPS, 2011). Meanwhile, those who possess postgraduate qualifications are very good at offering accountability for the implementation of various government programs because they have all the necessary knowledge and skills required to execute their duties properly. The researcher also considered years of service in a central equatorial state very important because the more years officers serve, the more experienced and well-conversed they get to know the district programs unlike those with fewer years of service. He/she can be able to overcome the challenges of work without much problem leading to good accountability and service delivery, unlike an officer with fewer years of service in the state environment. The designation was also considered necessary in this study because it indicated the categories of officials with different roles and responsibilities, they play in ensuring accountability for the implementation of government programs in the district. Councilors monitor government programs to ensure accountability for the utilization of district council resources to deliver services to their communities. Administrative officers at various levels of district structure play the role of coordination and supervision of government programs while technical officers implement them to ensure accountability and service delivery. Meanwhile, support staff facilitate the activities of other officers for smooth accountability and service delivery. Therefore, data on the distribution of respondents by their frequency characteristics are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 also shows that there are 84% male participants and 16% females. This is in agreement with the circular

standing Instruction No. 2 of the Ministry of Public Service (2011) on guidelines for gender mainstreaming in human resource management which states that the staffing level indicates that men are at 67% and women are 33% as of March 2011.

Table 4 further indicates that out of the respondents who provided information, the majority (49%) are in the age bracket of 36-45 followed by 25-35 years (30%) and 46 years above (21%). There is no respondent in the age bracket of below 25 years. This could mean that most employees are in middle age; prime for good performance in providing better service delivery. This above finding is in line with the new job description and person specifications for local governments (2011) which present most of the staff jobs from 20 years to 45 years of age requirement. In Table 4, out of 61 respondents, 41% had degrees, 36% diplomas, 11.5% postgraduates, 7% others, and 5% certificates of 'O' and 'A' levels. This could imply that the majority of employees in the study have the required knowledge and skills for the provision of better services in the Adjumani district. This finding is in line with the staff establishment norm (2005) for local governments which has more traditional posts for degree and diploma holders.

Table 4 shows that the majority (69%) of the respondents in the study are technical officers followed by the administrative officers (18%), the councilors (12%), and the support staff (2%). This could imply that the majority of employees in the district have the technical expertise to provide better service delivery. This finding is in line with the staff establishment norm (2005) for local governments which has more technical posts than others and the number of councillors according to the positions in the Gazette of the Electoral Commission (2011).

Also, Table 4 shows that out of the respondents who provided information, the majority (34%) served the district between 4-10 years followed by those (30%) who served between 11-15 years. These are followed by respondents (25%) who served the district between less than 4 years and the least are respondents (12%) who served the district between 16 years and above. This could mean that the majority of employees in the study are experienced and knowledgeable about Adjumani district's peculiar problem. Empirical Research findings

In this part of the chapter, the researcher presents the descriptive statistics regarding respondents' opinions on accountability and service delivery as obtained from the self-administered questionnaire and interviews of key informants and the researcher also tests hypotheses to determine the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variables. Findings were then analyzed, presented, and interpreted according to the objectives of the study.

What is the effect of political accountability on service delivery in central equatorial?

Descriptive statistics on political accountability.

The researcher asked several questions on political accountability for the respondents to express their opinions whether they were either in agreement or disagreement with these statements. The scores obtained in classroom construction, health unit construction, and water facility statements were later computed. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Summary of descriptive statistics on political accountability.

Question	SA		A		N		D		SD		X	SD
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Classroom pupil ratio in primary schools met	2	3	16	26	9	15	29	48	5	8	3	1
Health center III per Sub-county constructed	21	34	27	44	4	7	5	8	4	7	4	1
Equitable distribution of water facility per village provided	8	13	27	44	10	16	9	15	7	12	3	1

Source: Primary data

From Table 5, when respondents (61) were asked whether the state met the standard classroom-pupil ratio of 1:50 in its primary schools, the majority 34 (56%) of respondents disagreed that the state met the standard classroom-pupil ratio of 1:50 in its primary schools while minority 18 (30%) agreed.

Meanwhile, 9 (15%) were non-committal. The disagreement of the majority (56) of central equatorial state officials in the study could imply that there is poor service delivery. Table 5 also shows that the majority 48 (79%) of respondents agreed that the constructed health center 111 per sub-county and 9 (15%) disagreed with the statement while 4(7%) were non-committal. This could

suggest that there is better service delivery in the state district since the majority (79%) agreed with the statement that there is a health centre111 in every sub-county.

Table 5 further indicates that the majority 35(57%) of respondents agreed with the statement that the state provided equitable distribution of water facilities per village and 16(26%) disagreed while 10(16%) were non-committal. This could suggest that there is good service delivery in central equatorial.

The interview results further revealed that classroom constructions were equitably distributed in primary schools with pupil classrooms of 1:20 in rural areas. In contrast, urban schools still have a high pupil-classroom ratio. One respondent from Juba town council was quoted to have said that: “there are enough classrooms in rural schools but in urban areas like Juba town classrooms constructed are not enough. “It is therefore easy to believe that the majority (56%) of respondents who disagreed with the statement in the questionnaire could have been subjective in their opinions considering findings under the documentary review and interview techniques.

In the health sector, interview findings were in agreement with the questionnaire results. Many respondents reported that health center IIIs were constructed in all sub-counties except Juba town council which has a Hospital. One respondent in Juba town council was quoted to have said: “In Central Equatorial, each sub-county has at least one health centre111. Juba town council has even a big hospital.” However, some respondents expressed mixed feelings about health centers in the provision of services. One respondent from the Hospital made the following comment:

“It is true; each sub county has one health centre111. However, some of the health centers are not put to use. For instance, health centre111s which were formerly run by UNHCR are no longer functional.

This has created problems of accommodation in the hospital for patients. To make matters worse, both male and female patients are admitted to the same ward. Morally, this is not good.

Meanwhile, a few respondents reported that health centre111s are not constructed in all sub-counties. The researcher quoted one respondent from Konyo Konyo who had this to express:

You know, we still share our health centre111 in Konyo Konyo with people from Gumbo because they do not have one.

Meanwhile, in the water sector, the majority of the respondents interviewed reported that safe water coverage in the district is good which corroborated with the questionnaire result. In this regard, a respondent from

Jebel Sub County had this to say: “Sincerely, we have both piped water and boreholes in Jebel Sub County. Every village in the Sub

The county has at least one borehole.” However, some respondents said that the water supply is not evenly distributed in the district. A respondent from the district water department had this to say: “In central equatorial, water supply is not evenly distributed for, some places”.

The documentary review of the Central Equatorial Development Plan (2020), agreed with the finding of a questionnaire that Central Equatorial has not met the classroom-pupil ratio of 1:50. Therefore, in Central Equatorial, between 2019 and 2022, the classroom-pupil ratio was only 1:63. This finding could suggest that the state has few classrooms in primary schools to provide better educational services.

The documentary review on Health centre111 construction supported the findings of both the questionnaire and interview results.

According to the state development plan (2020), the district has 9 health centers and 111s. The state average distance to health centers is 3 km while at the national level is 4 km. 75% of the population in the central equatorial live within 5km distance of the first health facility and 40% live within a kilometer radius of the health facility. These findings could mean that there are enough health center 111s constructed to provide better health services in the state.

In the water sector, the documentary review findings are in agreement with the questionnaire results. The review revealed that safe water coverage in the district stands at 75% compared to the national target of 69%. Similarly, the state groundwater report (2021) indicates that water coverage stands above 75%, but in the western and eastern parts of the state, water coverage per payam is as low as 25% coverage. This could suggest that many water points have been constructed to provide better water services and accountability in the state.

There was no significant relationship between political accountability and service delivery.

The first hypothesis of this study was political accountability and service delivery. A null hypothesis was derived as follows: there was no significant relationship between political accountability and service delivery. The variables of political accountability and service delivery were measured using the Likert scale to see whether there was agreement or disagreement with their statements. The results obtained were computed to establish the relationship between the two variables using Spearman Rank Correlation. The results are presented in Table 10.

Table 6: Summary of correlations between political accountability and service delivery.

			Political Accountability	Service Delivery
Spearman's rho	Political Accountability	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.585**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	61	61
	Service Delivery	Correlation Coefficient	.585**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	61	61

Table 6 shows that there is a positive significant relationship between political accountability and service delivery. $P=0.000 < P=0.05$ therefore, political accountability has a positive significant effect on service delivery. To determine the effect of political accountability on service delivery, the Coefficient of Determination (r^2) was derived. In this case, the row squared was (.342). This means that, political accountability accounts for 34% variation in the service delivery. Therefore, the null hypothesis that political accountability does not affect service delivery was rejected and the research hypothesis that political accountability has a significant effect on service delivery was upheld.

DISCUSSION.

This study documented the effect of political accountability on service delivery in the Central Equatorial state, South Sudan at 34%. This study reveals that the level of service delivery is significantly dependent on political accountability. This finding is in agreement with the World Bank (2020) report on South Sudan's decentralization policies which revealed that local political leaders fulfill their electoral needs through the construction of primary schools, health centers, and water facilities for better service delivery. The latter study though did not consider the levels of service delivery. This is because service delivery scores can suggest levels of service delivery.

More closely related to this result are increase in school infrastructure development in local governments for service delivery; MoES (2010) finding indicates that the total number of government-aided primary schools increased by 0.1% from 2021/2022 to 2023.

MOH's (2010) finding also shows that the total number of health facilities increased from 1979 in 2020 to 2301 in 2021, and MWE (2005) finding indicates improved access to rural water supplies from 54.9% in 2002 to 61.3% in 2021. However, the difference in the strengths of association can emphasize the importance the elected politicians put on implementing government programs to ensure service delivery for their electorate. Whereas this study was conducted in an area with a low level of

political accountability, the other studies took place mostly in urban areas where there is a high level of political accountability to fulfill electoral needs.

CONCLUSION.

There is a positive significant relationship between political accountability and service delivery. Political accountability has a positive significant effect on the service delivery where it accounts for 34% variation in the service delivery. However, there is the challenge of the functionality of schools and health units left by the Sudanese refugees. Areas along the Nile belt are not suitable for drilling boreholes. These two issues undermine the relationship between political accountability and service delivery in central equatorial states.

RECOMMENDATION.

Central Equatorial State Council should strengthen civil society organizations by holding regular meetings with them. This is to enable civil society organizations to have information about government programs to create awareness for the people to demand more accountability from the local politicians.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

I'm deeply grateful to my supervisor, Mr. Richard Semanda for his guidance, patience, and support. I consider myself very fortunate to be able to work with a very keen, considerate, and encouraging person like him. Without his offering to accomplish this research, I would not be able to finish my studies at Team University. I'm much obliged to my colleagues Santino, Garang Bol, and Emmanuel Apio. Their enlightening suggestions and encouragement made me feel I was not isolated in my research. I owe them many thanks and all my friends who always supported and helped when exchanging new ideas. They made my life at Team University a truly memorable experience and their friendships are invaluable to me. I am most grateful to my immediate family; they have always stood by me, encouraged and supported my every choice. As I know, they are the happiest and the proudest when seeing their own receive this award. I dedicate this project

to my father David Major Mamur, my wife Mary Ayuol, and my children Ajak, Yom, Nyankwee, Achol, and Jurel. I'm also thankful for the great joy and happiness brought by my parents and brothers. Thank you all.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAH:	Action Afrika Helf
ACODE:	Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment
CSO:	Civil Society Organisation
DDP:	District Development Plan
GoSS:	Government of South Sudan
JARD:	Joint Annual Review of Decentralisation
KFW:	Entwicklungsbank
LPO:	Local Purchase Order
MoES:	Ministry of Education and Sports
MoFPED:	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development
MoH:	Ministry of Health
MoLG:	Ministry of Local Government
MPS:	Ministry of Public Service
MWE:	Ministry of Water and Environment
NALG:	National Assessment of Local Governments
NARO:	National Agriculture Research Organization
OAG:	Office of Auditor General
SSBOS:	South Sudan Bureau of Statistics
SSCLG:	South Sudan Commission of Local Governments
UNDP:	United Nations Development Plan
UNECA:	United Nations Economics for Africa
DED:	German Development Services
DRC:	Danish Refugees Council
LWF:	Lutheran World Federation
NUSAF:	Northern Uganda Social Action Fund
PCR:	Pupil Classroom Ratio
PRDP:	Peace Recovery Development Plan
TPC:	Technical Planning Committee
UNHCR:	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

SOURCE OF FUNDING.

This study was not funded.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST.

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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