

Is New Public Management an Option for Post-Pandemic Public Service Delivery in Nigeria?

¹Wasiu Abiodun Makinde*

Corresponding Author: * wasiu.makinde@federalpolyilaro.edu.ng

¹ The Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, Ogun State, Nigeria

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Article history

Received 30 August 2022

Revised XX August 2022

Accepted XX August 2022

The expenditure and revenue trajectories which diverge sharply, as well as the increasing demand for better public service in the late 1970s around Western Europe and Northern America, necessitate the introduction of various principles coined as New Public Management (NPM) to reform the longstanding traditional public administration designed along Wilson's politics-administration dichotomy and Weber's ideal model of bureaucracy. With little or no doubt about its effects on the process of public service delivery in advanced nations, much has not been written on the impact on public service delivery in Nigeria and other developing countries amidst challenges impending in the post-pandemic public service delivery in Nigeria. This study evaluates the option of full implementation of new public management for post-pandemic public service delivery in Nigeria. Drawing on theoretical and empirical research, it explores the potential for service quality and cost recovery of public service, decentralization of decision making in public bureaucracies, and whether the process of public service delivery will be enhanced through performance measurement all within the regime of New Public Management. In exploring these issues, this paper sheds light on the potential of New Public Management to stabilize and improve public service delivery in the post-pandemic era of Nigeria.

Keywords

Public Management
Public Service
Covid-19
Bureaucracy
Public Service Reform

This is an open-access article under the [CC-BY-SA](#) license.



Introduction

Public administration was initially organized along Wilson's politics-administration dichotomy. Weber's ideal model of bureaucracy was challenged and criticized for its unresponsiveness, lack of innovation and creativity, ineffectiveness and inefficiency in public service delivery. Most significantly, the expenditure and revenue trajectories diverged sharply. The demand for better public service in the late 1970s around Western Europe and Northern America necessitated a new movement labelled New Public Management (NPM), focusing on improving public service delivery through the private sector management style. While developed nations, primarily member countries of the Organisation for Economic and Cooperation Development (OECD), have fully implemented strategies of NPM [1]-[4] with a record of success, partial implementation or non-implementation [5][6] can be said of most developing African countries. Though, new public management was introduced to African countries through the Structural Adjustment Programme of the late 1980s by World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other international donor agencies. Yet, there are still scanty reports or studies on the implementation of the reform, its success or otherwise on the public service delivery in African countries, including Nigeria. The recent coronavirus disease 2019 or Covid 19 pandemic further exposed Nigeria's ineffectiveness and inefficiency of public service. It reiterated the need for reform that will be able to reposition Nigerian public service to meet the increasing demand for better services. This study will evaluate the option of New Public Management as a reform strategy that is necessary to reposition the public service of Nigeria to meet the challenges of the post-pandemic era.

Defining New Public Management (NPM)

Reforms and criticism of traditional public administration designed along Woodrow Wilson's politics-administration dichotomy and Max Weber's ideal bureaucracy resulted in the second regime of public administration called New Public Management (NPM). History traced it to the work Ref. [7] and Ref. [8], who offered classical definitions and fundamental principles or reforms classified as New Public Management, standard among the Organisation of Economic and Cooperation Development (OECD) nations in the 1980s.

They are quoting directly from the work of Ref. [7] on what constitutes the practices of New Public Management. Ref. [7] describe New Public Management as identified seven

overlapping precepts found in typical public sector policy delivery units in the United Kingdom, Australia, United States of America, New Zealand and many other OECD countries. These are hands-on professional management in the public sector, explicit standards and measures of performance, greater emphasis on output controls, and a shift to disaggregation of units in the public sector. It is also to go to greater competition in the public sector, stress on private sector style of management practices, and stress on greater discipline and parsimony in resources use.

However, Ref. [8] equate New Public Management as entrepreneurial government, a shift away from rigid, centralized, inflexible and wasteful bureaucracies. They argued that New Public Management is catalytic, leveraging private sector action to solve public problems; community-owned, empowering families and communities to solve their problems. It is also competitive, moving away from the traditional monopolistic model in public service; mission-driven, developing budget systems and rules that free employees to pursue goals; result-oriented, providing incentives for people to succeed rather than fail. Besides, it is a measuring outcome and rewarding success. In addition, it includes customer-driven, putting resources directly into the hands of the intended recipients of the services; decentralized decision making for the public organization on public services and; the market is driven, restructuring the marketplace when necessary to fulfil public purposes. Both Ref. [7][8] identified these principles as market-based techniques introduced into public service to reform Weber's ideal bureaucracy, which was criticized for being inefficient and ineffective in public service delivery.

Different authors have continued describing New Public Management after the two classical writers' ideas. Ref. [9] argued that New Public Management is a reform to the traditional model of public administration due to its monocratic, hierarchical, inflexible, inefficient and rule-based operation. It has left the debate on its capability for economical, efficient and effective public service delivery an eternal argument. Therefore, New Public Management from Ref. [5] perspective is related to reengineering the public sector. It is similar to reinventing of government, as stated by Ref. [8]. Reengineering is a philosophy of management that seeks to revamp the process through which public organizations operate to increase effectiveness, efficiency and financial ability. It will involve changing the structure, culture and system of management.

Contributing to the concept, Ref. [10] that New Public Management can be defined as;
... introduction of techniques and ideas of the private sector such as market-driven management and outcome-based accountability into the public sector, reduction of public expenditure, improvement of managerial accountability and enhancement of organization responsiveness to the citizen.

It means that New Public Management focused on improving public service delivery through the private sector management style. In the same vein, Ref. [10] identified eight main principles of New Public Management (NPM) - reinforcement of central government monitoring function; performance control and accountability; developing of competition and choice; decentralizing and deconcentrating power to rigid bureaucracy; improving the management of human resources; optimizing information technology; providing responsive services and improving the quality of regulation. However, Ref. [1] identified undisputed features of New Public Management- Accountability for performance; performance auditing; privatization; performance measurement, contracting out; use of information technology, cost recovery or user charges; decentralization; competition; improved personnel management; improved accounting; freedom to manage and budget cuts. Both principles identified by Ref. [10] and Ref. [1] are only the same principles expressed with different language or words, not disagreeing with the idea of New Public Management to reform the traditional Weber's ideal model of bureaucracy.

Why New Public Management? Rationale and Drives

Public administration or management can be traced to two historical events; the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, which resulted in the establishment of the European Community of sovereign states with a political environment conducive to the field of administrative science and; the revolutionary idea of 1789 and aftermath in France and other European countries [11]. The emergence of sovereign states with constitutional rules created public servants who were public officials synonymous with bureaucracy. Contributing to the historical development of public management, Ref. [12] stated that the Northcote-Trevelyan Report of 1854 in Britain and Woodrow Wilson's observation of the American system and his advocacy for separation of politics and administration. It was to reform the existing spoils system of administration and create public administration along the idea of Weber's model of bureaucracy. Under this arrangement, governments have been the sole authority for managing their countries' economic, social and political affairs. The aftermath events of World War II, the effect of economic depression in the early 1970s, the independence of countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East and the failure of the trickle-down theory increased the cost of the welfare state under bureaucracy or traditional public administration.

The traditional method of public administration, argued Ref. [12], is too cumbersome, unresponsive, inefficient and unproductive. Ref. [4] stated that the search for more effectiveness and efficiency in public resources allocation and income redistribution resulted in public sector reforms. Ref. [1] provided a vivid account that New Public Management began as a movement in the late 1970s in the United Kingdom and the United States of America before the government of New Zealand and Australia joined the movement. He stated further that

academics only later identified the common characteristics of those reforms and labelled them New Public Management (NPM) reforms. Ref. [12] argued that New Public Management is a pendulum swing from a state-dominated government to a market-led government. Ref. [4] argued that New Public Management seeks to transcend a pure theory of bureaucracy where de-bureaucratization is considered a primary task of good management that changes public administration or leadership from the administration of law to the administration of services. It injects a market-oriented, private-sector style of leadership and entrepreneurial ideas and techniques into the business of government. Ref. [11] quoted the classical writer Ref. [7] that New Public Management's principal themes are a shift away from the emphasis on policy toward a focus on measurable performance and a change away from reliance on traditional bureaucracies toward loosely coupled. It is also a quasi-autonomous unit and competitively tendered services and allows public managers greater freedom to manage through the private sector style of management. The drive for the popularity of New Public Management is the increasing demand for better public service in the early 1970s and beyond. The recent Covid-19 pandemic, in no doubt, has created a similar situation to the early 1970s, even worse, where there is a reduction in government revenue and incongruent increasing demand for public services for citizen sustainability and development.

Strategies of New Public Management

Ref. [1][7][8] identified various practices or strategies related to market-based techniques introduced into public service to reform Weber's ideal bureaucracy, which was criticized for being inefficient and ineffective in public service delivery. These practices are labelled New Public Management (NPM). Common among these strategies are discussed below;

A. Decentralization or Deconcentration of Decision making

New Public Management argued against a centralized system identified with traditional public administration designed in line with Weber's bureaucracy. Bureaucracy was criticized for red-tapism, rigidity and rule-based activities that did not allow innovations and creativity from managers. Ref. [12] stated that decentralization of authority in the management structure of public agencies would introduce professional management in the public service. It will allow managers to manage to enhance accountability for responsibilities. Referring to Ref. [5], decentralization as a strategy of New Public Management reform enables the government to provide high-quality services citizens need through increasing managerial autonomy. It applied the reduction in central administrative control for creating competition and open-mindedness among peculiar managers to private sector managers to improve public service effectiveness and efficiency. Ref. [6] complement the argument that decentralization of decision-making in New Public Management reform has the potency of reducing cost and

*Is New Public Management an Option for Post-Pandemic Public Service Delivery in Nigeria?
(Makinde)*

guaranteeing better performance compared to traditional public administration. Decentralization of decision-making will create flatter organizations enhancing creativity and innovation at work and saving time, cost and resources. It clarifies the line of responsibility and accountability for work compared to traditional public administration's monocratic, rule-based, hierarchical practices. It will give power to front-line managers who are at the level of service delivered by the organization and in the best position to understand the need of the society that require changes in organization activities through various decisions. The situation created by the Covid-19 pandemic involves the ability of public managers to manage their unit, department or agency that will ensure efficient use of public resources for public service and create responsibility and accountability tendency for public managers.

B. Performance Management/Measurement

Performance management is a strategy of New Public Management that will shift expectations on employees, units or departments and agencies away from the focus of accomplishing a task towards a measurable outcome. Ref. [6] argued that performance management is an agreement specifying the performance standard for public service in various Ministries, Departments and Agencies of government based on clarity of organizational objectives and evaluation of results from performance. It is not dogmatic rules and hierarchy of bureaucracy or traditional public administration.

Performance management will ensure high-quality decisions in a decentralized management structure of New Public Management aimed at improving public service quality, effectiveness and efficiency. Ref. [12] pointed out that performance management will change the public administration culture from attention to rules to a culture of engagement on results that matter to the citizens as service users. Ref. [13] further explain that performance management as a strategy of New Public Management places value on managerial practices with goals and vision setting rather than normative call for bureaucratic neutrality. Performance management measures employee performance concerning organizational objectives through balanced scorecards, Key Performance Indicators (KPI), and benchmarking, among others. Performance measurement will allow evaluation, accountability and effectiveness in public service in conformity with the objectives of public agencies. Performance management will be necessary for post-pandemic public service considering the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic and the need for effective and efficient public service. The revenue expenditure trajectories of the early 1970s that necessitated the New Public Management reforms were not as severe as a pandemic and post-pandemic situation, which created revenue shortage and a surge in demand for public service from citizen well-being and survival.

C. Service Quality or Customer Orientation

The rationale for service quality or customer orientation is to prevent the continued existence of treating the customer with levity and lack of respect, as found in traditional public administration. New Public Management reform introduces service quality that advocates for customer orientation in public service. That is, customers must be treated as kings against the idea of traditional public administration. Citizens expect responsive and accessible public service, more importantly during the pandemic and post-pandemic era. The situation created by the pandemic and its aftermath will challenge the sustainable development of the citizen, which will require effective public service. Citizens who are customers of the public service will need satisfaction from those services to facilitate the effect of a pandemic on their life. Ref. [14] argued that in today's public sector organization, the introduction of service charter signals that citizen satisfaction is becoming essential in service delivery.

Ref. [15] opined that citizen satisfaction is two folds. First is objective performance satisfaction, which goes beyond the quality of service to other issues of time spent on service delivery, the service giver's personality, and the behaviour of public officers. The second is subjective satisfaction involving the perception of the service outcome based on expectation and experience during service provision. Ref. [16] reported in their study that there is a strong relationship between citizen satisfaction, public trust and the performance of government agencies. Service quality is being implemented through SERVICOM Act in Nigeria to strengthen the responsiveness of public servants to those that demand public service.

D. Improved Accountability and Transparency

Effective management of resources that will provide public service necessary for citizens' sustainable development requires transparency and accountability from the free flow of information. New Public Management advocates accountability and transparency as the bane of effective and efficient public service. Ref. [6] argued that Nigeria recently passed the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act to strengthen accountability and transparency in public service. Of Nigeria, especially amidst recurrent corruption cases that have littered the Nigerian public space and become a hydra-headed problem that has eaten deep into the fabrics of Nigerian cultures. However, the existing Fiscal Responsibility Act was designed to block revenue leakages and promote prudence and fiscal discipline across tiers and arms of government in Nigeria.

From a different view, Ref. [14] stated that New Public Management provides a standardized mechanism that allows the citizens to demand accountability and transparency from public servants and strengthen public service delivery. It also involves the quality of

services and cost-effectiveness in service delivery. It requires and gives specific outcomes through some form of control, sanctions and rewards system to ensure that public officers are transparent and answerable. According to Ref. [12], accountability creates an obligation for public servants to demonstrate and take responsibility for performance in the light of agreed expectations. He stated further that other mechanisms such as performance contracting, service quality, accrual accounting and information technology strengthen accountability and transparency in public service. The gains that could have been recorded here, says Ref. [6], seem to have been ruptured due to a lack of political will and self-interest of political and bureaucratic elites. New Public Management reinforces the need to strengthen accountability and transparency in public service.

E. Privatisation or Commercialisation

Privatization is one of the major strategies to improve public service introduced by New Public Management. The idea comes from public choice theory, property right theory and principal-agent theory to allow private ownership of core activities of government, the notion against conservatism that believe total government control of the process of public service delivery. According to the public choice theorist quoted in Ref. [17], privatization can circumvent budget maximizing behaviour and producerism by bureaucrats and politicians by transferring public service to private sector owners. Moving public service can be of different forms; outright purchase by private sector investors of public services; collaboration of government and private sector popularly termed Public Private Partnership and; private sector management with government ownership termed commercialization. Public service is being managed and controlled with the involvement of private sector investors or actors.

Ref. [6] said in Nigeria that recommends the adoption of some private sector principles in the Nigerian public service as well as Onosode 1982 report that advocated for privatization and commercialization of the non-performing public enterprises to improve their service delivery as the historical background of privatization in Nigeria. He stated further that this recommendation facilitates productivity and greater efficiency in public service. Ref. [5] argued that privatization and commercialization in Africa for state-owned enterprises is to prevent the diversion of scarce public funds. It could have been better used to meet other public policy goals such as education, health care, and internal security, among others.

F. User Charges or Cost Recovery

Introducing user charges or fees for public services helps increase market discipline by introducing the culture of prudence, preventing the over-use of service, and reducing pressure on demand for public services. Ref. [1] stated that user charges came from the idea of public choice theorists. It is believed that overuse of public service and pressure of demand for public service will reduce when consumer pay for service enjoyed. It will also reduce the burden on

the government budget, especially during the period of shortage in government revenue. User charge will also improve decentralization of decision-making to public managers and necessitate implementing performance management. Therefore, most of these strategies complement each other as part of the reform, new public management.

G. Use of Information Technology

Information technology and its application in public sector organizations have enhanced all aspects of operation, such as transparency and accountability, personnel management, customer satisfaction, free flow of information from superior to a subordinate, improved financial management, and a reporting system. Information technology is a characteristic of new public administration with no unique theoretical roots but is still identified with public choice theory. The application of technology to different public service processes has improved economic management and its effectiveness and efficiency.

H. Contracting Out or Disaggregation

Contracting Out is one of the techniques of new public management reforms that segregate ownership of resources from the provider of services. It separated provision and production. While the government is the provider of resources for production, the private sector produces for the citizen and collects revenue on the government's behalf for a commission. The public choice theory introduces contracting out practice to entrust private ownership of the business with the provision of services previously delivered by public agencies to improve effectiveness and efficiency. It improvement occurs through cutting costs by the private firm where public agencies might lack the political will to do so. Contracting out has been implemented for varying public services, including educational services, healthcare services, prison management, refuse and waste management, public infrastructure maintenance, employee training, recruitment and payroll management, traffic management, toll-gate management and revenue collections, among others.

I. Improved Personnel Management

Personnel management under traditional public administration designed along Weber's ideal bureaucracy provided a unified system where employees were hired permanently, recruitment was based on merit up to a certain level, and promotion was based on merit and seniority. Remuneration is based on grade level, and public servants are regulated by rules and regulations, deviation from which attract penalty as severe as dismissal. The system includes a pension payable to the worker after retirement or to immediate family members up to a certain proportion in case of the employee's untimely death.

New public management has advocated for change in personnel management in public service. It advocated for results and accountability to citizens by public servants than what is

obtainable under traditional public administration. Limited resources cum increasing public service responsibilities demanded its personnel change to result-based management from rules and regulations compliance. The new system provides for the establishment of a senior executive with an appointment on performance contracts, a shift from career service to contract service, a shift from a standard pay to a performance pay system, a fragmented public service with appointments based on merit at all levels within and outside a public sector organization [12]. It will change the public servant's performance, role and functions and enhance public service's effectiveness and efficiency.

Public Service in Nigeria: the Past and the Present

Nigerian public service is a product of colonization, so the country is also from the same process. The history of public service in Nigeria and its reform has been trailed by checkered development. The amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorate in 1914 resulted in the establishment of the Nigerian Public Service. The Nigerian Public service during the colonial era was dominated by European officials, with power concentrated in the hand of a few appointed colonial officers [18]. The purpose then is to maintain law and order as well as the implementation of the policies of the British colonial government [29]-[21].

Reforms emanated from various constitutional amendments, resulting in further agitation, especially for the Nigerialisation of public service. The first reform in Nigeria through the Tudor Davies commission of 1945 resulted from the 1945 nationwide industrial action due to the demand for the inclusion of Nigerians into the senior cadre of the public service. The commission only recommends decentralization of administrative structure to give opportunities for the creation of more senior cadres that might accommodate Nigerians. However, Ref. [19] argued that since the time of the Tudor Davie commission in 1945, reforms in Nigerian civil service had adopted a similar pattern of the ad-hoc committee, government white paper and legislative passage.

Harrigan commission was set up in 1947 to address the prevailing harsh weather and poor working condition of service for expatriates, as well as an observed shortage in human resources. Its recommendation of a unified civil service structure, establishment of furnished staff quarters for expatriates and exclusive preservation of senior cadre for expatriates were adopted and applied. These recommendations, however, resulted in more exclusion of Nigerians in the management cadre and marginalization of Nigerians in public service [20]. Moreover, the Hugh Foot commission that followed in 1948 was mandated to review the complaints on recruitment of Nigerians into the senior cadre and training in civil service. The commission recommended regionalization and the Nigerialisation of civil service. Its regionalization resulted in the establishment of central and regional public service boards, which is the precursor of the present federal and state civil service commission [20]. However,

the recommendations marked the beginning of mediocrity, inefficiency and structural deformity as, according to Ref. [22][23], Nigerialisation resulted in representativeness without merit and repeated duties by federal and state agencies.

In 1952, the Philipson-Adebo panel was set up to draw a framework for attaining Nigerialisation status and decentralization policy in public service. The forum increases several senior cadres for Nigerians in the public service. In 1954, the Gorsuch commission was set up to review the structural framework of civil service, salaries and condition of services for the workers in the public service of Nigeria. The commission restructured the Nigerian civil service into professional and administrative groups with a different cadre to accommodate more Nigerians in the public service. This review resulted in bureaucratic decay, bred inefficiency and poor output due to variations in salaries, grading and conditions of service [20]. The disparity in grading, wages and conditions of service created by Gorsuch was amended by the Mbanefo commission of 1959 through its recommendation for the same salary scale for federal and regional public servants and uniform conditions of service. However, the major pitfall in pre-independence reforms was the capitalist-based bureaucratic system introduced, which created advice and decision through hierarchically structured operations. These resulted in inefficiency, ineffectiveness in decision-making, and red-tapism in the civil service before the country's independence.

Independence of Nigeria changed the focus of reforms in its public service from Nigerialisation to indigenization, salary increases and clarification of the relationship between politicians and bureaucrats. The first reform effort after independence, the Morgan commission of 1963 and the Elwood grading committee of 1966, introduced a minimum wage package in the history of Nigeria. It synergizes the public servant's social responsibility and the productivity of human relations theorists. Elwood committee could not do much or recommend before military incursion into the Nigerian unripe democratic system. It resulted in another era classified by Ref. [20] as retrogressive public service that started with Decree 34 of 1966. Simeon Adebo's wages and salaries review committee was set up in 1970 as one of the reconciliatory techniques after the civil war. The committee recommended a 30% increase for junior and a 12% increase for senior staff in the minimum wage operating in public service. It escalated the prevailing inflation at the time cum problems facing the economy after the civil war [20][21].

Those notable flaws in Simeon Adebo committee resulted in the setting up of the most comprehensive and significant reform in the history of Nigerian public service, the Udoji Public Service Review Commission of 1972, to ensure the development and optimum utilization of human resources for effectiveness and efficiency in the public service. The commission made

several recommendations similar to the advocations of new public management while the reform started gaining momentum among the OECD nations. Such submissions include merit-based promotion rather than seniority, a performance-based reward system, a modernized personnel management system, an Open Reporting System (ORS) in place of Confidential Reporting (CR), Management by Objective (MBO), private sector style of finance and personnel management, result oriented management, among others. However, the resulting loss of jobs in 1975 led to low morale among the remaining workers in the public service [20]-[22].

Koshoni panel of 1988, according to Ref. [21], did more harm than good as corruption increased due to ministers taking the chief executive and accounting officer position instead of Permanent Secretary who are career officers. It also subjected the appointment of a permanent secretary to political discretion and influence. However, the Ayida panel of 1994 revert the recommendations of 1988, returning the Ministers as head of ministry only and the permanent secretary as the accounting officer to ensure checks and balances. It also restructured ministries according to their objectives and introduced recruitment based on merit and the principle of federal character. The return of democracy in 1999 with the 1999 constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria reinforced the government's determination to reform Nigerian public service in line with international best practices. The split effect of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) introduced by donor agencies is still in place cum high debt profile, reducing revenue generation, high level of corruption and increasing demand for public service to improve the standard of living of Nigerians. The regime of Olusegun Obasanjo embarked on various reforms to improve the economy, effectiveness and efficiency of Nigerian public service. Ref. [24] identified significant reforms of the Obasanjo regime as; pension reforms, monetization policy, financial regulation and anti-corruption policy, rightsizing, restructuring and repositioning of ministries and service charter for customer satisfaction in public service. The study of Obasanjo reforms shows inspiration from the wave of new general management around the globe.

Steve Oronsaye's committee of 2007 recommended the merger and scrapping of some departments and agencies that will reduce 541 MDAs in the country to 163 to reduce duplication of functions and the high cost of governance. The recommendation generated debate and reaction from labour unions and analysts that it will extend hardship to relatives of workers and workers due to the resultant monumental purge of workers in the public service. It prevented President Goodluck Jonathan from implementing, even though it is an idea from new public management for merger and reduction of cost of governance, already implemented in the USA, UK, Australia, and Germany, among others. Adamu Fika committee of 2013 that was set up to review the implementation of Steve Oronsaye's report and its recommendation from that place has not been implemented to date. Instead, the present regime of President Buhari

introduced some sets of reforms in the Nigerian public service. Introducing the Integrated Personnel Payroll Information System (IPPIS) to eliminate ghost workers and assist the federal government in personnel expenditure planning and management is a reform aimed at improving public service in Nigeria. Recently, the Federal Executive Council approved the review of Public Service Rule and Conditions of Service, which replaced the periodic Annual Performance Evaluation Report with performance management. The implementation of Treasury Single Account, Bank Verification Number, and National Identity Number, among others, are techniques advocated by the new public administration to improve public reporting, accountability and transparency, as well as improve the economy, effectiveness and efficiency of Nigerian public service.

Despite those mentioned earlier, public service in Nigeria is still yet to live up to expectations regarding effectiveness and efficiency in public service delivery. The recent Covid-19 pandemic, as noted by Ref. [25], further exposed the level of decay in Nigerian public service. The decay level resulted in a complete short down of the education sector during a pandemic, with no alternative provided through information technology for learning. The epileptic power supply in the country has crippled the development of technology in Nigeria. Most government offices remain shut until the pandemic is subdued. It is no small measure that contributed to the present high debt profile of Nigeria cum high demand for better service from the government. The pandemic is still much around, and all citizens feel the effect. However, public service facilitating its development is still finding a ground that will give the path to effectiveness and efficiency. There is also a need to re-strategize what public service structure should be in place after the pandemic. Undoubtedly, the aftermath of a pandemic will require more than the present performance from Nigerian public service if the negative effect of the pandemic will not be more severe than expected. Will the full implementation of principles of new public management reforms proffer a solution? Developed nations have implemented most of these strategies or regulations, with a record of success [1]-[4][26] in their public service delivery. Evaluating the option of new public management for public service delivery in Nigeria will alleviate the negative effect of the Covid-19 pandemic, especially during the post-pandemic era.

Post Pandemic Era: New Public Management And Nigerian Public Service

Public administration and management, as well as strategies of allocating and managing public resources for public services in Nigeria, have been demanding changes amidst a shortage in public infrastructure, increasing unemployment rate, continuous decline in the standard of living, lack of public accountability and transparency in the public sector and dwindling revenue accruing to all levels of government. However, since the beginning of 2020,

Is New Public Management an Option for Post-Pandemic Public Service Delivery in Nigeria?
(Makinde)

Coronavirus Disease 2019 or Covid 19 pandemic created a more terrific and urgent need for reforms in the public sector due to its massive impact on the economic condition of Nigeria. The pandemic increased Nigerian public service's challenges and created opportunities for improvement if explored. No doubt, Covid 19 pandemic has affected all areas of public service delivery. The post-pandemic era will need public service reform to alleviate the adverse effects of the pandemic. New public management has been considered arguably the most viable option to ensure the economy, effectiveness and efficiency of public service among developing nations as well as [5] some developing African countries. Yet, there is still a need to discuss how New Public Management (NPM) can be helpful in Nigeria's post-pandemic era of public service. The discussion here will briefly evaluate each undisputed strategy of NPM reforms in light of the post-pandemic age of Nigerian public service. It is to complement earlier discussions on each system and its possible usefulness in the period succeeding the Covid-19 pandemic in the public service of Nigeria.

Decentralizing decision-making, which allows public managers to manage, will enhance responsibility and accountability in public service. The pandemic era will require quick decisions and a creative mind to improve the economy, effectiveness and efficiency of public service. This new public management technique will help improve Nigeria's public service. The situation created by Covid 19 pandemic and its aftermath requires the ability of public managers to manage their unit, department or agency that will ensure the effective and efficient use of public resources for public service. It has the potency of reducing cost and guaranteeing better performance which is necessary to alleviate the pandemic's adverse effects on Nigeria's public service.

Performance management is a strategy of new public management that will ensure high quality of decisions in a decentralized management structure and improve the economy, effectiveness and efficiency of public service. The pandemic has created a shortage in revenue accruing to the government while increasing demand for better public service, which is expected to be more in the post-pandemic era. Performance management will place value on managerial practices with goals and visions set rather than normative calls for bureaucratic neutrality under the disguise of implementing rules and regulations imposed by bureaucracy. Performance management will allow evaluation, accountability and effectiveness in public service in conformity with the objective of public agencies.

Service quality or customer orientation changes the treatment of customers in public service with respect rather than with silliness and lack of care, which of peculiar to traditional public administration. Covid 19 pandemic has increased demand for better public service, and this pressure might affect the responsiveness of the public servant. Implementation of service quality is expected to protect citizens from some unethical attitudes of public servants to the

citizen. Citizen satisfaction will help to build public trust and improve the performance of public sector organizations. The pandemic era in Nigerian public service requires effective implementation of service quality as a strategy of new public management. Also, accountability and transparency need to be strengthened in the post-pandemic era. The pandemic has added to the shortage in government revenue and increased the need for public service, creating a deficit budget that increases the national debt. However, the little generated must be protected from mismanagement and embezzlement to reduce loan applications. Accountability will ensure that resource allocation is in the best interest of the public sector organization and invariably to the citizen. It will lead to cost-effectiveness and quality of services in Nigerian public service, which is necessary for the post-pandemic period and the future.

One of the significant deficiencies noticed during Covid 19 pandemic is the unacceptable level of information technology development in Nigeria. Nearly all offices were shut, especially public sector organizations, due to failure to improve the application of information technology for public service delivery. The importance of information technology in the process and outcome of public service delivery is not subjected to debate. From being cost-effective to promoting an easy way of doing business, it also improves accountability and transparency. This problem identified during the pandemic should create an opportunity for improvement in the post-pandemic era in the public service of Nigeria. Information technology will reduce bureaucratic bottlenecks and red-tapism, unresponsiveness and inefficiency identified with traditional public administration. Revenue generation of the government is improving and will improve more with the application of information technology in the revenue-generating agencies of all the levels of government in Nigeria.

Conclusion

This paper has dealt with the definition of New Public Management (NPM) and brings out its fundamental principles, focus, rationale and drives. It has been able to give basic principles from the classical writer's viewpoint and some modern writers on the concept. Most importantly, various strategies for implementing New Public Management (NPM) reform were explained about their possible effect on public service delivery in Nigeria. Also, the past and the present structure of Nigerian public service have been historically analyzed, showing various reforms that have been implemented. The paper has established the effect of the recent Covid-19 pandemic on public service delivery in Nigeria and its likely impact in the post-pandemic era. The report has provided an evaluation of each New Public Management (NPM) strategy and how it can be applied to restructure and reform Nigerian public service for the present need of development and that of the post-pandemic era. The study concluded that New Public Management had changed the process, effectiveness and efficiency of public service in

developed nations, and its application in Nigeria, especially after the Covid-19 pandemic, will change the story of public service delivery for good and enhance sustainable developments of Nigeria.

Conflict of Interest

The Author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

References

- [1] Gruening, G. (2001). Origin and theoretical basis of new public management. *International Public Management Journal*, 4 (2001), 1-25.
- [2] Cepiku, D. and Meneguzzo, M. (2011). Public administration reform in Italy: A Shopping basket approach to the New Public Management or the New Weberianism? *International Journal of Public Administration*, 34 (1), 19-25. DOI: 10.1080/01900692.2010.506088. Routledge.
- [3] Pollitt, C. & Dan, S. (2011). The impact of the new public management in Europe: A Meta-Analysis. *Coordinating for Cohesion in the Public Sector of the Future, Working Paper Number 3*. www.cocops.eu
- [4] Lapuente V. & Van de Walle S. (2020). The effects of new public management on the quality of public services. *Governance*. ;1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gove.12502>
- [5] Hope, K. R. (2001). The new public management: Context and practices in Africa. *International Public Management Journal*, 4 (2001), 119-134.
- [6] Ibietan, J. (2013). New public management and public service effectiveness in Nigeria: A pragmatic Discourse. *Public Policy and Administration Research*, 3 (7), 53-61. www.iiste.com
- [7] Hood, C. (1991). New public management for all seasons? *Public Administration*, 69 (1), 3-19.
- [8] Osborne, S. P. (2010). The new public governance: A suitable case for treatment? In: Osborne S. P (ed) *The New Public Governance: Emerging Perspective on the theory and practice of Public Governance*. London: Routledge.
- [9] Tabrizi, J. S., Goshayie, E. H., Doshmangir, L., Yousefi, M. (2018). The barriers to implementation of new public management strategies in Iran's primary health care: A qualitative study. *Journal of Liaquat University of Medical Health Science*, 17 (1), 8-17.
- [10] Fungurai, P. N (2019). An interrogation of the adequacy of New Public Management in effective social service delivery Case of Mutare City Council, Zimbabwe. *A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Economic Management Sciences (EMS), School of Government, University of Western Cape, in partial fulfilment of the Master in Administration*
- [11] Lynn, L. E. (2006). *Public management: Old and New*. New York: Routledge
- [12] Atreya, B. (2002). The applicability of new public management to developing countries: A case of Nepal. *Being a thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirement of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, School of Management, Victoria University of Technology, Australia*.
- [13] Marshall, G. S. & Abreschi, C. (2016). New public management. In Farazmand, A. (Ed) *Global Encyclopedia of Public Administration, Public Policy and Governance*. Springer Publishing. Doi 10.1007/978-3-319-31816-5_1867-1.
- [14] Endeki, D. N & Minja, D (2021). Role of new public management practices in service delivery in the public sector: Case of the State Department of Public Works – Kenya. *International Academic Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 1 (2), 188-209
- [15] Osborne, D. & Gaebler, D. (1993). *Reinventing Government*. New York: Addison-Wesley.
- [16] Salim, M., Peng, X., Almakary, S. & Karmoshi, S. (2017). The impact of citizen satisfaction with government performance on public trust in the government: Empirical evidence from Urban Yemen. *Open Journal of Business and Management*, 5 (2), 348-356.
- [17] Andrews, R., Beynon, M. J. & McDermott, A. (2019). Configurations of New Public Management reforms and the efficiency, effectiveness and equity of public healthcare systems: A fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis. *Public Management Review*. DOI: 10.1080/14719037.2018.1561927
- [18] Sekwat, A. (2002). Civil service reform in post-independence Nigeria: Issues and Challenges. *Public Administration Quarterly*, 25 (4), 498-517.
- [19] Okorie, C. O. & Onwe, S. O. (2014). Civil service reforms in Nigeria: Re-thinking the process of articulation and application. *International Conference on Arts, Economics and Management (ICAEM'14) March 22-23, 2014, Dubai (UAE)*.

- [20] Okorie, C. O. & Onwe, S. O. (2016). Appraisal of civil service reforms in Nigeria and options for stability. *Public Policy and Administration Research*, 6 (9), 15-24.
- [21] Anazodo, R. O., Okoye, J. C. & Chukwuemeka, E. O. (2012). Civil service reforms in Nigeria: The journey so far in service delivery. *American Journal of Social Management Science*, 3 (1), 17-29.
- [22] Olaopa, T. (2008). *Theory and practice of public administration and civil service reforms in Nigeria*. Ibadan, Nigeria. Spectrum books Ltd.
- [23] Maduabum, C (2006). *Reforming government bureaucracies in Nigeria*. Badagery, Lagos, ASCON Printing Press.
- [24] Ake, M. & Olowojolu, O. (2016). Nigeria Civil Service Reforms of 1999-2007: An Analysis of the Controversies. *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 9 (3), 66-78
- [25] Makinde, W. A. (2021). Collaborative Governance: Assessing the Conundrums in the Administration of Healthcare Service amidst Pandemic in Nigeria. *A paper presented at the 12th National Conference of the School of Management Studies, the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, Ogun State, held between 15th and 16th September 2021*.
- [26] Fatemi, M. & Behmanesh, M. (2012). New public management approach and accountability. *International Journal of Management, Economics and Social Sciences* 2012, 1(2), 42 -49. ISSN 2304 - 1366.

Authors



Wasiu Abiodun Makinde is a member of the scholar at the Department of Public Administration of the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, Ogun State, Nigeria. His expertise is in Public Management, Governance Issues, Public Policy and Community Development. He is a doctorate student at the Department of Public Administration, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Nigeria. He is an Associate Accounting Technician and Full Member, Chartered Institute of Local Government and Public Administration of Nigeria. (email: wasiu.makinde@federalpolyilaro.edu.ng).