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The Impact of New Public Management on Public Service Delivery in Nigeria: Emergence and Importance

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Abstract

The main objective of this paper is to examine the impact of the New Public Management (NPM) on public service delivery in Nigeria which connotes a new paradigm of public administration. New Public Management (NPM) points to the failures and inadequacies of public sector performance over time and the hiccups lying on the nature and processes of public sector activity and traditional administration. NPM was therefore developed as a direct response, a handy shorthand and summary description and explanation of the way public sectors should be reorganized to bring their management approaches closer to business methods. The paper relies heavily on secondary source of data, the paper however observed that a reformed and well-focused public service anchored on the tenets of NPM offer a ready tool for efficient and effective public service delivery in Nigeria. The paper recommends that criticism of the doctrine of NPM from the political perspective should be tackled on a sustainable basis.

Keywords: public management, public service, service delivery, emergence, importance

Introduction

The New Public Management (NPM) was conceived due to the trajectory and vagaries that characterized post-colonial states in Africa, Nigeria not being an exception. This conception was necessitated by development and welfarist paradigm of public administration rationalized on the premise of heavy state intervention to correct market failures, thus providing social or public goods that benefit the generality of the people (Musgrave and

Musgrave, 1989, Ibietan, 2013). The new focus of NPM is a strong promotion of competition in the effective delivery of public services, looking at power supply for example in Nigeria, healthy competition breaks down monopoly, encourages adequate and prompt delivery of public goods.

New Public Management (NPM) is totally different in many ways from traditional public administration. Traditional public administration all over the world failed to take cognizance of some vital environmental forces in spite of its tremendous appeal. Accordingly, NPM emerged in response to a number of environmental forces which governments everywhere have faced in the last twenty years (Sarker and Pathak 2000: 57). First, large and expensive public sectors put pressures to cut programs and/or increase efficiency. Second, there have been massive technological innovations over the years, particularly, the development of information technology. Third, the globalization of economy with increasing competition has become order of the day. Fourth, it has become inevitable to liberalize the economic sector following heavy burden being imposed upon the national exchequer as a result of mismanagement, corruption, inefficiency in resource management, bureaucratic bungling etc. More importantly, increasing efficiency in resource management is also expected as economic recession and competition simply demand it. Fifth, in the competitive world, the people are demanding quality goods and services. They are now keen to compare services of all organizations (Borins, 1995; Minogue et al. 1998; Hughes, 2003).

Emergence of New Public Management

New Public Management is a vision, an ideology or a bundle of particular management approaches and techniques. In the 1980s, the drivers of change, particularly financial pressures, pushed most Western countries towards a focus on making the public sector more competitive and public administrators more responsive to citizens by offering value for money, flexibility of choice and transparency. This movement was referred to later as New Public Management by academics. Some practitioners and academics created the science of public administration in the 1920s on the fundamentals of the progressive reform successes, particularly the presupposition of loyal bureaucrats, honest politicians, and the politics-administration dichotomy. These reformers, the new scientists of public administration, built a theory of organization that they supplemented with the concept of management. These principles were: the principle of division of work and specialization, the principle of homogeneity, the principle of unity of command, the principle of hierarchy with respect to the delegation of authority, the principle of accountability, the principle of span of control and the staff principle (Minogue et al. 1998). The reformers expected public managers, working within organizational structures built on these principles, to perform the following functions: Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Directing, Coordinating, Reporting and

Budgeting-or, in Luther Gulick's shorthand: POSDCORB (Gulick, 1937). The reformers also advocated reorganization to streamline and consolidate organizations and to standardize administrative procedures (Lee, 1995; Henry, 1975; Arnold, 1995). After World War II, academics began to reassess and question the principles of classical public administration. One of the most rigorous critics was Herbert Simon, whose work set the tone and direction for neoclassic public administration. His dissertation, with the title Administrative Behavior: A Study of Decision-Making in Administrative Organization, contained the buzzwords of the era: behavior, decisions, and organization. Simon said that the principles of administration are not scientific, but inconsistent proverbs that were drawn from common sense (Simon, 1983). He suggested founding public administration on rigorous and scientific observation and on (inductively) derived laws of human behavior. He advocated separating facts from value judgments and dividing science into pure and applied branches (Simon, 1983). Objective scientific knowledge serves to control the social environment from this perspective. A lot of scholars followed Herbert Simon's lead-but not all. Some felt unqualified to use the new scientific standards and thus continued doing what they did before; so the classical approach not only survived in the progressive structures of practical government but in public-administration theory, too. Other scholars refused to accept the separation of facts and values, because they thought this would cut off public administration from its foundations-from political philosophy and the search for the public interest (Sarker, 2006). The adoption of new forms of public management means the emergence of a new paradigm in the public sector and traditional public administration discredited theoretically and practically. Public management poses a direct challenge to several of what had previously been regarded as fundamental principles of traditional public administration.

(1) Government should organize themselves according to the hierarchical, bureaucratic principles most clearly enunciated in the classic analysis of bureaucracy by the German sociologist Max Weber (Gruening, 2001). Although adopted by business and other institutions, these precepts were carried out far more diligently and for longer in the public sector.
(2) One-Best-Way of working and procedures were set out in comprehensive manuals for administrators to follow. Strict adherence to these scientific management principles would provide the single best way of operating an organization.
(3) Once government involved itself in a policy area, it also became the direct provider of goods and services through the bureaucracy.
(4) The administration would be an instrument merely to carry out instructions, while any matters of policy or strategy were the preserve of the political leadership (Hughes, 2003).

(5) The motivation of the individual public servant was assumed to be that of the public interest; in that service to the public was provided selflessly.
(6) Public administration was considered a special kind of activity and, therefore, required a professional bureaucracy, neutral, anonymous, employed for life, with the ability to serve any political master equally.
(7) The tasks involved in public service were indeed administrative in the dictionary sense that is, following the instructions provided by others without personal responsibility for results. These seven seeming verities have been challenged.

First, bureaucracy is indeed powerful but does not work well in all circumstances and has some negative consequences.
Secondly, trying to find the one-best-way is elusive and can lead to rigidity in operation. Flexible management systems pioneered by the private sector are being adopted by governments.
Thirdly, delivery by bureaucracy is not the only way to provide public goods and services; governments can operate indirectly through subsidies, regulation or contracts, instead of always being the direct provider.
Fourthly, political and administrative matters have in reality been intertwined for a long time, but the implications of this for management structures are only now being worked through. The public demands better mechanisms of accountability where once the bureaucracy operated separately from the society.
Fifthly, while there may be public servants motivated by the public interest, it now seems incontrovertible that they are political players in their own right. They may also be assumed to work for their own advancement and that of their agency, instead of being pure and selfless.
Sixthly, the case for unusual employment conditions in the public services is now much weaker, especially given the changes that have taken place in the private sector where jobs for life are rare.
Finally, the tasks involved in the public sector are now considered more managerial, that is, requiring someone to take responsibility for the achievement of results, instead of being regarded as administrative and with public servants merely following instructions (Hughes, 2003). The traditional model of public administration, which predominated for most of the twentieth century, has changed since the mid-1980s to a flexible, market-based form of public management. This is not simply a matter of reform or a minor change in management style, but a change in the role of government in society and the relationship between government and citizenry. In the early 1980s, Garson and Overman defined it as "an interdisciplinary study of the generic aspects of administration - a blend of the planning, organizing, and controlling functions of

management with the management of human, financial, physical, information and political resources." Later on in mid 1990s, S. Borins defines NPM as "a normative conceptualization of public administration consisting of several inter-related components; providing high quality services that citizens value; increasing the autonomy of public managers; rewarding organization and individuals on the basis of whether they meet demanding performance targets; making available the human and technological resources that managers need to perform well; and appreciative of the virtues of competition, and maintaining an open minded attitude about which public purposes should be performed by the private sector, rather than a public sector." In spite of divergent and contradictory views, opinions and definitions about the meaning and implications of this doctrine, there is, however, no doubt that it has become extremely influential in public administration theory and practice since the 1980s. By the beginning of the 1990s, a new model of public sector management had emerged in most advanced countries and many developing ones. Initially, the new model had several names, including: 'managerialism' (Pollitt, 1993); 'new public management' (Hood, 1991); 'market-based public administration'; the 'post-bureaucratic paradigm' (Barzelay, 2001) or 'entrepreneurial government' (Osborne and Gaebler, 1993). Despite the differing names, they all essentially describe the same phenomenon. New Public Management is thus seen as a body of managerial or ideological thought which is based on ideas generated in the private sector and imported into the public sector (Hood, 1991). It is a framework for reorganizing management procedures in the public sector with the aim of greater effectiveness and efficiency. Public Choice Theory and Principle/ Agency Theory: Major Imperatives of Change Public choice provided alternatives, the most obvious being to allow competition and choice and to return as many activities as possible to the private sector. A more subtle use of public choice arises from the point that behaviour could be assumed and modelled. This was a powerful tool in the design of programmes ranging from welfare to traffic control. After thirty years of public choice theory and attempts to apply it to governmental settings, results have been mixed. Public choice theorists generally argue that the best outcome will involve a maximum role for market forces and a minimal role for government. They argue there is a substantial body of evidence that private markets are better than government or political markets, even if this view is often ideological, and not an axiom of the theory itself. If the role of government in supplying goods and services could be reduced, the economy as a whole would benefit. Markets are also argued to have better mechanisms for accountability as opposed to a bureaucracy accountable to no one by the public choice theorists. These views found a governmental response (Hughes, 2003. Markets do not work better than bureaucracy under all circumstances. It could be argued that the assumption of individual rationality is too sweeping and ignores any selfless or public-spirited behaviour by

public servants. The most important effect of public choice theory is the implicit questioning of the motives of public servants in some situations. An assumption of utility maximizing behaviour is more able to account for behaviours, such as office politics, agency politics and the ever-present drive for promotion, than can be explained by regarding public servants as selfless and only motivated by the public interest (Hughes, 2003: 11-12). The economic theory of principal and agent has also been applied to the public sector, especially concerning its accountability. The theory was developed for the private sector to explain the divergence often found between the goals of managers (agents) in private firms and shareholders (principals). How the interests of agents and principals diverge and are to be dealt with has given rise to an extensive literature dealing with issues of accountability and their effects on organizations.

Principal/agent theory attempts to find incentive schemes for agents to act in the interests of principals. The activities of agents (managers) need to be monitored by shareholders, by the possibility of takeovers or bankruptcy while the presence of a non-executive board may help in 'attenuating the discretion of management'. Agents should have contracts that specify their obligations and rights, in addition to ensure their behaviour complies with the wishes of the principals. Shareholders, in the private sector, seek maximum profits, while managers, their agents, might want long-term growth and higher salaries for themselves. Firms may not necessarily maximize profits for the benefit of the shareholders because the separation of ownership from control reduces shareholder power. There must be some profit, although perhaps not to the extent of profit and dividend maximization. The agency problem in the public sector could be reduced. The theory gives some backing to those arguing for contracting-out as much of the public sector as possible. In this way, the agency relationships would become those of the private sector, which are assumed to work better. Contracts could be used for employees and for organizations and those arrangements would have incentives, both positive and negative, although even if theoretically desirable, the notions of performance contracts and incentive pay have problems of their own. If public activities are contracted out, there are problems ensuring compliance. Performance pay can attract resentment from other staff (Hughes, 2003: 12-13). The theories of the 'new institutional economics', particularly public choice theory and principal/ agent theory, combined with an ideological predilection among many economists for market solutions, have provided some intellectual coherence to cutting the public service, as well as restructuring its management. In addition, several public administration precepts - lifetime employment, promotion by seniority, the terms and conditions of public employment, traditional accountability, even the theory of bureaucracy - have been challenged for being based on poor theory and providing inadequate incentives for good performance (Hughes, 2003).

Principles of New Public Management (NPM)

New Public Management (NPM) is the most dominant paradigm in the discipline of public administration (Arora 2003). It conjures up an image enmeshed with a minimal government, debureaucratization, decentralization, market orientation of public service, contracting out, privatization, performance management, etc. These features signify a marked contrast with the traditional model of administration, which embodies a dominant role of the government in the provision of services, hierarchical structure of organization, centralization and so forth. Grounded in rational choice and public choice and containing elements of total quality management (TQM), the New Public Management (NPM) seeks to offer more efficient mechanism for delivering goods and services and for raising governmental performance levels (Kelly 1998).

The delivery of the above-mentioned goods/services implies that there must be strong state bureaucracies and institutions to play crucial roles. The developmental state anchored on the old paradigm of public administration has been criticized for restricting people's freedom to manage their individual affairs, thus creating dependency instead of self-reliance, it had too many responsibilities which it failed to discharge effectively; it created the dominance of elites/privileged groups that are exploitative and furthered selfish interests (Olaopa, 2008:57). The New Public Management (NPM) as a global reform initiative or movement started around the 1980s and had extended to countries like Sweden, New Zealand and the United States of America (Olaopa, 2008:54). It seeks to apply market principles to public management and governance with the aim of achieving efficiency in the provision of public goods and service delivery. This arose from the notion that public bureaucracy had become unnecessarily bloated in size, unproductive and ineffective as an instrument of national development. It is this search for public service efficiency that explains the essence of one Civil Service reform after the other, and we have had several starting from the 1934 Hunt Committee, through Tudor Davies Commission (1945); Walter Harragin (1947); Hugh Foot (1948); Gorsuch (1954); Mbanefo (1959); Morgan (1964); Adebo (1971); Udoji (1974); Onosode (1982); Dotun Philips (1988); Ayida Panel (1994); and Obasanjo Service Delivery Reforms (2003) (Obi, 2007:23; Nnamani, 2009:27). These reforms did not only affect the Civil Service in isolation; but public enterprises as well. For instance, it is through the intervention of these commissions of enquiry that public enterprises experienced rapid growth in Nigeria between 1970 and 1980. Similarly, it is through their intervention that government began to think of divestment of public enterprises, and this (privatization and commercialization) reached its crescendo during the Obasanjo civilian administration between 1999 and 2007. Details of these are contained in Obikeze and Obi, 2004: 248 – 275). All these are efforts or attempts at organizational development which constitute one level of administrative development. Another platform of reform which is the

second area that characterize the process of administrative development is attempts at developing managerial capacity (skills) within the public sector. It is however not very easy separating activities related to organizational and structural development from activities aimed at improving managerial capacity. This is so because all panels/commissions that have investigated the performance of the civil service and public enterprises have always included recommendations for improving managerial effectiveness. Looking at the reports of various commissions, it is possible to identify certain broad areas of action which they recommended for improving efficiency in the civil/public Service. From Udoji (1974) to Ani Panel of 1975/76; Onosode (1982); Philips (1988) and Ayida (1994), the common threads are result-oriented management; unified structure; merit and skills as guides for recruitment and promotion; invigorated and modernized personnel and financial management practices; adoption of Management by Objectives (MBO). Planning, Programming and Budgeting System (PPBS), increased salary awards and a host of other performance/efficiency enhancing criteria in public sector management. The Obasanjo Service Delivery Initiative (SDI) or reforms, otherwise christened "Civil Service Renewal" (Olaopa, 2008) were broader in outlook and better focused. The main features of the reforms are: monetization policy; Service charter; due process in public procurement; Pension Reform and National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS). The strategic objectives of the Obasanjo SDI according to Nnamani (2009:209) are: right-sizing the Civil/Public Service; introducing new technology; redefining its mission; retraining officers in line with modern administrative procedures and integrating the public service into the larger objective of national growth and stability. The foregoing serves as a prelude to the discourse. The paper is segmented as follows: Abstract; Introduction; Conceptual Clarification in which New Public Management (NPM), Public Service and Effectiveness are explained; the relationship between NPM and Public Service effectiveness, the expected role of NPM in achieving Public Service effectiveness are explained; the relationship between NPM and Public Service effectiveness, the expected role of NPM in achieving Public Service effectiveness in Nigeria are highlighted.

The Concept of New Public Management

The inadequacies of the traditional or old paradigm of public administration gave it up for numerous assaults and intellectual discourse, especially against the backdrop of rising expectations of the citizenry from national and sub-national governments. This thinking produced a reform initiative titled the New Public Management (NPM) which is expected to guarantee not only efficiency and effectiveness in Public Service delivery, but dispersed or decentralized decision-making among others. Rhodes in Ezeani (2006:10) posits thus: The new public management has the following central

doctrines: a focus on management, not policy, and on performance appraisal and efficiency; the disaggregation of Public bureaucracies into agencies which deal with each other on a user-pay basis, the use of quasi-markets and contracting out to foster competition; cost-cutting, and a style of management which emphasizes, amongst other things, output targets, limited-term contracts, monetary incentives and freedom to manage. Implied in the above exposition are the central tenets of NPM, namely: management orientation, efficiency and performance enhancing measures based on objective and timely appraisal, leaner public bureaucracies assuming the form of agencies that are driven by market principles such as contracting out (out-sourcing), competition, cost-reduction measures, setting benchmarks and targets, short-term contracts, financial inducement and guaranteeing wider latitudes of discretion for Managers. It is therefore not surprising that Ezeani (2006) building on the works of several scholars documented the synonyms of NPM as follows: Managerialism, marketbased public administration; the post-bureaucratic paradigm, entrepreneurial government. He submitted conclusively that the model seeks to implement economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the public sector. Obi and Nwanegbo (2006:253) opine as follows: NPM is a label used to describe a management culture that emphasizes the centrality of the citizen or customers, as well as accountability for result. It captures most of the structural, organization and management changes taking place in the public services of most OECD countries and a bundle of management approaches and techniques borrowed from the private- for-profit sectors. The desirability of a reform initiative such as NPM in a country like Nigeria where the quality of public service delivery is perceived as abysmally low cannot be overemphasized. Its introduction would offer a recipe for treating citizens as "Kings" in the delivery of public or social goods/services. Additionally, the enthronement and enforcement of public accountability will in no small measure provide remedy to the cancerous phenomenon of corruption in the Nigerian public affairs. The tenets of the NPM policy framework as documented by Hood in Obi and Nwanegbo (2006: 256 – 257) are:

a. Direct public sector costs should be cut and labour discipline raised so as to improve resource use;
b. Private-sector-style management practices applied to increase flexibility in decision-making.
c. Competition in the public sector (through term contracts and tendering) increased, as rivalry is the key to lower costs and better standards;
d. The public sector disaggregated and decentralized to make units more manageable and to increase competition among them;
e. Controls shifted from inputs to outputs, to stress results rather than procedure;

f. Explicit standards and performance measures established, because accountability requires clearly stated aims and efficiency required attention to goals; and
g. Managers given powers to conduct hands-on professional management, because accountability requires clear assignment of responsibility, not diffusion of power.

Some of the aforementioned doctrines or tenets were noticeably observed in the Civil/Public Service reform reports of Udoji (1974), Onosode (1982) and to a greater extent motivated the Obasanjo Service Delivery Initiative. The extent to which they have impacted/improved efficiency and effectiveness in the Nigerian Public Sector is a matter of focus for another section of this paper. The above-mentioned tenets also underline the core elements of NPM as a reform package. These elements are decentralized decision-making; cost recovery; alternative service delivery; performance contracting; commercialization; citizens charter; and public reporting. Adamolekun (2002:14) recorded that: ... NPM seeks to apply market principles to governmental administration, with an emphasis on competition, contracting and customer orientation. It also emphasizes merit-based recruitment and promotion…. increased autonomy for managers ("letting managers manage") with corresponding responsibility, performances related pay, … continuous skills development and upgrading. There is also an emphasis on performance measurement, with particular attention to the delivery of services to the public. There is a convergence between the above conceptualization and that of Rhodes in Ezeani (2006). It is also a validation of Economic Commission for Africa (2003) position on same. The aforementioned commentaries and analyses are quite apposite here too. Lynn (2007: 17) corroborated the foregoing expositions on NPM thus" … letting managers manage, that is holding public managers accountable for their performance rather than for their compliance with formal rules and procedures rather than for their compliance with formal rules and procedures". This is a marked departure from rigid adherence to the Weberian bureaucratic principles which has been castigated for promoting tardiness, perfunctoriness, retapism and discouraging the use of initiative and personal discretion. The contributions of Olaopa (2008:55) to this discourse hinges on contrasting the features of the old or traditional public administration with NPM. Whereas in the old model, emphasis is placed on organizational need, under NPM, efficient service delivery to citizens or clients is the primary focus. Hierarchy and emphasis on control and compliance are features of the traditional model while participatory leadership driven by shared values is the goal of NPM. The old paradigm stresses centralized authority and control, NPM emphasizes decentralization. Continuity and stability are the objectives of the Weberian ideal construct, while

innovation and continuous improvement via change are of paramount interest to NPM. The traditional public administration finances programmes through appropriation and encourages government monopoly on service delivery. Under NPM, programmes are revenue driven (on cost-recovery basis) and are built on competition with the private sector on service delivery.

Theoretical Framework: The Concept of Public Service

Attempts at defining or conceptualizing public service have not been particularly easy due to semantic distortions or synonymous use of the term with civil service. Okoli and Onah (2002: 76) for instance posited that "the English used the term public service in a broader concept to include the personnel of the central government agencies". They affirmed further that "in our use of the term "public service", we exclude the Armed Forces, the quasi-government corporations and statutory Bodies". The above position taken by Okoli and Onah (2002) seem very naive and contradicts the provisions of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Section 318 of the 1999 Nigerian constitution defines the public service as "the service of the Federation in any capacity in respect of the Government of the Federation" and includes Service as:

(a) Clerk or other Staff of the National Assembly or of each House of the National Assembly;
(b) Member of Staff of the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal, the Federal High Court, the High Court of the Federal Capital Territory Abuja, the Sharia Court of Appeal of FCT, the Customary Court of Appeal of FCT or other courts established for the Federation by this Constitution and by Act of the National Assembly;
(c) Member or Staff of any Commission or authority established for the Federation by this Constitution or by an Act of the National Assembly;
(d) Staff of any area Council;
(e) Staff of any Statutory Corporation established by an Act of the National Assembly;
(f) Staff of any educational institution established or financed principally by the Government of the Federation;
(g) Staff of any company or enterprises in which the Government of the Federation or it's agency owns controlling shares or interest; and
(h) Members or officers of the armed forces of the Federation or the Nigeria Police Force or other government security agencies established by law.

The Constitutional definition of public service is broader and more meaningful than the one given by Okoli and Onah (2002). In a bold move to differentiate public service

from Civil Service, the same constitution defines civil service of the federation thus: Service of the federation in a civil capacity as staff of the office of the President, the Vice-President, a Ministry or department of the Government of the Federation assigned with the responsibility for any business of the Government of the Federation. The constitution similarly defines the public service and civil service of a state to cover people in the service of state governments in same capacities as those of the federation. The distinction between civil service and public service as documented hereunder by Nwosu (1977) in Obi (2007:14) is also suspect and questionable: Those public servants who are direct employees of the federal and state governments, other than the police, the armed forces personnel, the judiciary personnel and teachers. Its usage excludes also employees of statutory corporation and boards. The 1999 constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria as the supreme law did not exclude employees of statutory corporations and boards as public servants. Adamolekun (2002:17 – 18) came to the rescue in giving the meaning of these confused terms and provided cogent explanations on the difference. According to him, Civil Service is often used synonymously with government and "it refers to the body of permanent officials appointed to assist the political executive in formulating and implementing government policies". It also refers to ministries and departments within which specific aspects of government work are carried out. Public service "usually indicates a wider scope than the civil service (and)… means the totality of services that are organized under public (i.e., government) authority". It covers ministries, departments, agencies of the central government, its field administration, local government, the military, other security forces and the judiciary. This is a broader conceptualization and it approximates the constitutional definition of the terms and the distinction between them. In his contribution to this discourse, Olaopa (2008: 35-42) was careful in observing that these constitutional provisions did not recognize the term "the Nigerian Public Service", instead, its provisions contained the Public Service of the Federation, at the federal and state levels; the public service of the states of the federation including Local Government Council services. He defined public service of the Federation as consisting of all officials of "government at the federal state and local government levels in the ministries, parastatals, extraministerial departments and the paramilitary organizations". The civil and public services taken together to mean the Nigeria public bureaucracy constitute an indispensable tool of governance from the colonial era as manifested in the discharge of these functions: - Formulation of government policies and programmes; - Planning and implementation of government policies and programmes on social services provision; - Preparation of annual budgets and development plans; - Revenue collection such as taxes, fines and duties; - Making bye-laws, regulations an orders under powers granted by the Parliament and other quasijudicial functions; - Keeping government records and properties; - Information

dissemination and public enlightenment (Oladipo, 2007: 363). The Nigerian public bureaucracy is a product of the British Colonial public service, and the arrangement of ministries, departments and agencies of government derived largely from the British system of administration. At inception, the bureaucracy under the British sought to maintain law and order, utilization of the public service and its personnel to exploit and expropriate indigenous natural resources to develop the metropole. Despite the phenomenal growth in size from 1960, the structure remains essentially the same, and has been finding it difficult to rise to the dictates of developmental paradigm, notwithstanding several reform attempts. The next section of this paper is devoted to discussion on public service effectiveness.

The Concept of Effectiveness

An age-old argument which has also underlined the divergence between public administration and business administration is that public services or output is not measureable. Support for this argument hinges on the notion that public (sector) administration embarks on provision of social services (law and order, security, flood protection, foreign policy, currency and coinage, naturalization and citizenship etc.), its output/activities are unquantifiable. Ekong (1980:19) stretched this argument further thus "since bureaucracies intrinsically lack objective criteria for measuring efficiency or a feedback mechanism in the sense of immediate profit or loss from daily operations, they tend to become rigid and to cling to their ineffectiveness until there is a crisis". It has however been discovered that public service effectiveness can be measured using administrative/management, policy and service criteria. What is effectiveness? Effectiveness can be defined "as the extent to which an organization realizes its goals or objectives" Ekong (1980:20). This means that it relates directly to organizational goals objectives or ends. In operationalising this definition, we can ask the question: what are the goals and objectives of public sector organizations? The goals/objectives of public organizations are as varied and diverse, encompassing those stated at the beginning of this section of the paper as well as delivery of social/public goods and in sustaining enabling environment for development efforts. The measures or determinants of effectiveness of organizations include productivity, stability, morale, integration of formal and informal aspects of the organization, maximization of employees' potentials and values contributed to the society. Administrative or public service effectiveness can in a way be measured by the extent to which it satisfies the yearnings, aspirations of the society it exists and functions in. It does appear that public service values must approximate societal values and must be pursued as such in order to be seen as effective. The goals/objectives of public organizations must be subject to routine renewal in order to continuously justify their existence and relevance. This realization seems to underline the various attempts at reforming the

civil service in Nigeria from the 1934 Hunt Committee to the recent Oronsaye panel. These reform initiatives were targeted at improving managerial capacity as well as institutional development geared towards achieving administrative effectiveness and ultimately national development. Soyode (1980:33) posited that effectiveness refers "… to the capacity to provide or accomplish the correct end … emphasizes the efforts to secure the relevant outcome." Effectiveness in administration translates not just to the quantity and quality of service/output, but also, its correspondence to felt needs. Organizational ineffectiveness can result from managerial inefficiency or weakness and it is pertinent to note that effectiveness subsumes efficiency because the latter is the means to achieving the former. Heinrich (2007:27) exemplified administrative effectiveness via performance management which translates to "working to infuse quality management principles and moving toward a focus on results or value for money…" This assertion does not seem to approximate or explain the Nigerian situation, in view of the waste, rapacious tendencies and crass incompetence on the part of some civil/public servants and public office holders who are soldiering through the instrumentality of the federal character principle. Tampieri (2005:62) posited that "effectiveness refers to the extent to which the objectives have been achieved and the relationship between the intended and actual effect of outputs in objectives achievement". This definition captures administrative effectiveness from the point of goals/objectives attainment and converges with the views expressed by Ekong (1980). The central issue here is on how administrative process contributes to organizational goals and objectives. It must be noted that with reference to public organizations in Nigeria, the focus ought to be on the "true public" and their interests taken care of through qualitative service delivery. Quality, cost and service delivery should be part of the irreducible criteria underlining administrative effectiveness. The public sector requires mechanisms to know if qualitative services are provided, the impact of public policy on citizens, and if results or outputs translate to real value for expenditure/costs. Public Service effectiveness seems to be finding expression under President Jonathan's transformation agenda through Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). It is an initiative of the National Planning Commission. This performance system initiative is premised on three basic principles namely: "what gets measured gets done; if you cannot measure success, you cannot reward it; if you cannot measure failure, you cannot correct it" (Obia, 2012: 91). Predicted on the above criteria, Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) of government at the federal level are required to develop detailed documents to guide implementation of KPIs up to 2015, and on each of the KPIs, there would be half-yearly reports to the president and public, the scorecards will be correspondingly published. This looks like an attempt to make (federal) public sector organizations accountable and ultimately effective; time will

tell if the initiative will not be bedeviled by the usual implementation deficit that characterizes the Nigeria public policy and programmes course.

Nexus between NPM and Public Service Effectiveness

The discussion of this segment is tied to public choice theory as framework of analysis as well as the following factors which underpin NPM namely: decentralized decision-making; cost recovery; alternative service delivery; performance contracting; commercialization, citizens charter and public reporting. The public choice theory has benefitted tremendously from the contributions of scholars like Self (1972); Dunleavy (1991); Stover (1991); Pirie (1992); Krueger (1993); Chandler (1994); Das (1998); Adamolekun (2002); Ezeani (2004); and Olaopa (2008). The central argument of this theory is that market considerations offer the optimal mechanism for service delivery and decision making. The contention of the theorists is that public bureaucracies and representative democracy have in-built tendency to over-supply due to numerous factors such as: the tendency of political office holders to conceal the true economic and fiscal positions of the country from the electorates and attempting to keep electioneering promises through deficit financing. Organized interest groups and bureaucrats constantly push for more and advance selfish narrow interests to the detriment of the silent and disorganized majority that fund state expenditure (Stoker, 1991:239). The theory argues that the existing democratic arrangements are poor predictors of citizens preferences and demands (Ezeani, 2004: 49). The failure of representative democracy and public bureaucracies create in-built tendencies for profligacy and inefficiency on the part of government. This theory contends that government can be too big, disconnected from the people, unnecessarily politicized and hijacked by vested interest. As a result, it ignores citizens preferences and leads to oversupply of low quality and irrelevant services. Appropriate remedial measures to the above dysfunctional state of affairs have been found in institutional reforms based on the factors enumerated in the opening paragraph of this section, and which shall be emphasized in the remaining part of this section. Notwithstanding the contributions of public choice theory to the discourse on public sector reforms, it has received some criticisms as follows: The assumption of the theory about selfinterest and human disposition/inadequacies of bureaucrats and politicians has been pointed out to be a narrow one and offers little relevance in the understanding of activities in public bureaucracies which are essentially non-economic, in comparison to the private sector which is economic and profit driven (Beetham in Olaopa, 2008:47). It has also been argued that the theory fails to take into cognizance the existence of public service ethos which specify some beliefs and norms guiding the conduct of public office holders such as concerns for public interest; belief in the collective provision of essential services; due regard for law and legally established rights among others (Das, 1998:5).

It is to this extent that public service ethos becomes an autonomous determinant of action. Essentially, public choice theory sharpens our understanding on how national choices can produce economically irrational outcomes.

Tenets and Application of NPM to Public Service in Nigeria

Decentralized Decision Making

One major argument of NPM is that centralization is costly due to loss of flexibility. It promotes redtapes, rigidity and hampers effectiveness due to emphasis on procedures instead of efficient service delivery. Decentralization offers a recipe in this regard because it reduces the bureaucratic hurdles through managerialism which gives officials as managers of public resources, the wide latitudes to manage their units for better performance. This can be achieved by having leaner bureaucracies; devolution of budgetary and financial controls; institutionalization of corporate governance initiatives and private sector model for a restructured public service. The introduction of market criterion as a cardinal plank upon which the NPM reform initiative rests guarantee allocative efficiency (goods and services are efficiently allocated to suit consumer's demand) and technical efficiency (input-output correlation). In the very wieldy and centralized Nigerian federal system and practice, decentralization would translate to granting sub-national governments greater discretion in decision making and service provision through administrative and constitutional reforms that decongests the sixty-six items on the Exclusive Federal list in favour of the concurrent, residual lists and fourth schedule (functions of Local Government Councils) with a revision of the current vertical allocation of revenue skewed in favour of the Federal Government to the tune of 53%. This is in tandem with the principle of subsidiarity of devolving political decisions to the lowest practical level based on sharing authority, responsibility and provisions for improved efficiency in service delivery and resource management as a feature of decentralized decision making (Obi and Nwanegbo, 2006: 259). It has the potency of guaranteeing better performance and cost-reduction compared to the traditional rigid public administration system.

Cost Recovery

As a reform element, cost recovery helps to increase market discipline by preventing over-use of services by consumers and introduces the culture of prudence in the use of public services, thereby reducing pressure on demand which could be leveraged upon to meet consumers demand through improved quality and availability. These are achieved by introducing user-fees or charge for public services. The situation in Nigeria before the attempt at privatizing Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) and unbundling it to pave way for successor companies was that of waste, massive irregularities and unaccountability. The pre-paid metering and other reform packages

are targeted at halting the numerous maladies that pervaded the activities of this previous wholly-controlled and owned government agency in Nigeria. This initiative which had in 2001 been extended to telecommunication with measured progress can also be applied to redress the ugly state of road networks in Nigeria, possibly through Public-Private Partnership (PPP) as a cardinal plank of NPM anchored on Build, Operate and Maintain (BOM) that reintroduces toll collection in order to recoup cost and keep the roads in a constant state of maintenance which is currently lacking in the Nigerian public sector. This position was reinforced by BGL Research (2013:29-30) in their analysis on infrastructure bonds and the public investment deficit in Nigeria. The foregoing discourse lends credence to the argument of public choice theorists that existing democratic arrangements and public bureaucracy can be a very poor predictors of citizens preferences and demands, otherwise social services like motorable roads, potable drinking water, affordable housing and reliable electricity supply ought to be democratic dividends that citizens enjoy after fourteen years of seeming civil democratic practice in the country. A major argument against cost recovery as a reform platform for improving public service effectiveness is that it would alienate the poor from having access to social services. The solution can be found in subsidizing these services for the poor or practicing, progressive user- charges rate that makes the rich to pay for the consumption/user charges of the poor.

Alternative Service Delivery

As a public sector reform platform, the NPM advocates a redefinition of the role of the state in such a way that government focuses on its core areas of competence in service provision. According to Olowu (2002:161) “there are some basic government tasks that even weak states should strive to get right (such as) a foundation of law, a benign policy environment including macroeconomic stability, investing in people and infrastructure, protection of the vulnerable and protection of the national environment”. Nigeria has in the last few years been struggling to grapple with most of the above-mentioned irreducible responsibilities of government which further explains its consistent 14th position on failed states ranking and abysmal performance on Human Development Indices (Soludo, 2012). There have been massive and consistent outcry from public analysts and commentators that costs of governance (mostly personnel costs of political and bureaucratic elites) in Nigeria is very high and that this is a drag on public sector effectiveness. This calls for a reform initiative that makes for leaner efficient and effective government with emphasis on qualitative service delivery. This can be better realized through PPP cardinals like contracting, franchising, effective market provision of some service.

The argument of public choice theorists that government can be too big, disconnected from people and hijacked by vested interests is very germane here.

Performance Contracting

These are agreements specifying standards of performance or easily quantifiable targets which public office holders and managers of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) of government must meet over a stipulated period. The main objective here is to clarify the objectives of service organizations and their relationship with government, facilitating performance evaluation based on results instead of blind and unproductive conformity with bureaucratic rules and instructions. Targets are carefully set and operational autonomy are given. This way, performance can be evaluated, accountability and public service effectiveness are measured. The key performance Indicators (KPIs), an initiative of the National Planning Commission under President Jonathan's Transformation Agenda (Obia, 2012) seem to approximate this particular tenet of NPM. Only time will tell the extent to which the KPIs can lead to public service effectiveness in Nigeria. Performance contracting through various indices discussed above seem to validate the contention of public choice theorists that market considerations provide optimal mechanism for service delivery and decision making as antidotes for the ineffectiveness of traditional public administration in developing countries especially Nigeria.

Commercialization

The objective of commercialization as an element of NPM is to facilitate productivity and greater efficiency in public service. It is the sale or reorganization of public enterprises wholly or partially owned by government and ensuring that such enterprises operate without subvention and they make profits. The Jerome Udoji Civil Service reform of 1974 recommended the adoption of some private sector principles in the Nigerian public service and Onosode report of 1982 suggested the privatization and commercialization of the non-performing public enterprises. Government responded by setting up the Bureau for Public Enterprises (BPE) and National Council on Privatization (NCP) to drive the process. The process has not been particularly transparent, even as the Nigerian National Assembly had to institute a panel to investigate the process. Going by the growth, employment opportunities and inter-sectoral linkages which the telecommunication reforms engendered, thereby making Nigeria the fastest growing market in that sector in Africa, the public choice theorists are very apt in their submission that market considerations afford optimal mechanism in effective public service delivery.

Citizens Charter

A fundamental dichotomy between the traditional public administration and NPM is in their perception of individuals that patronize them, while NPM views individuals as

customers who must be treated as "Kings" and satisfied in service delivery, the old model construes them as citizens – treated with levity in some developing countries. The African Public Service Charter in projecting the NPM reform mandate anchors on principles of equality (treating citizens as equals before the law irrespective of differences). Neutrality (public service serves public interest and shall not discriminate against employees, shall also uphold political neutrality); Legality (public service shall be provided in strict compliance with the law); principle of continuity (conducting public service on ongoing basis and in all its component parts in accordance with the rules governing its operations) Obi and Nwanegbo, 2006: 267. This citizen's service charter underscored SERVICOM as basis for measuring effectiveness based on timeliness and quality service delivery as a component of Obasanjo Service Delivery Initiative between 2003 and 2007 (Oladipo, 2007: 369 and Nnamani, 2009:209). However, more efforts are still required to consolidate these attempts in order to galvanize service delivery in the Nigerian public sector. The efficacy of market principles and private sector practices in boosting public service effectiveness cannot be overemphasized as canvassed by public choice theory.

Public Reporting

NPM emphasizes accountability and transparency as pivot of good governance. This is strengthened by access to reliable and accurate information on activities in the public domain especially on fiscal and financial matters and macroeconomic framework. Although the recently endorsed Freedom of Information (FOI) Act in Nigeria ought to be a lubricant in this regard, its juxtaposition with the official Secrets Act seem to vitiate the anticipated impact of the former in enthroning transparency and accountability in the Nigerian public services, especially in the light of recurrent corruption cases that litter the Nigeria public space and has become quite buffeting and befuddling. Even the Fiscal Responsibility Act designed to plug revenue leakages, promote fiscal discipline and prudence across tiers, arms and units of government have not been able to do much (Nzeshi, 2011: 92-93). Lack of political will and the narrow self-interests of the political and bureaucratic elites seem to have ruptured the gains that could have been recorded here, and this reinforces one of the main submissions of public choice theory as presented by Stoker (1991:239).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The role of public service in nation building and governance cannot be overemphasized, especially in policy formulation and implementation. A reformed and well-focused public service offers a ready tool for effective service delivery. Through an exposition on the Nigerian public bureaucracy (civil and public services) and highlight on some reform initiatives, the paper observed that there is a continuous

need for coordinated efforts and sustained drive to improve the effectiveness of public service in Nigeria, through the application of the various elements and tenets of the New Public Management (NPM) as a reform model. Using the public choice theory as a framework of analysis, the paper recommends the following:

- Renewed productivity paradigm which attempts to overhaul public sector institutions in Nigeria. This would create an atmosphere of constant improvement in the Public Service.
- The structural barriers to public service effectiveness and other encumbrances to public sector reforms via bureaucratic traditions and attitudinal dysfunctions of public service personnel should be redressed on a sustainable basis through a framework that keeps public service reform recommendations in perpetual focus backed by a durable plan for human capital/capacity development.
- The conception-reality gap that seeks to clog attempts at implementing or operationalizing public service reforms recommendations can be tackled by being more practical, sensitizing public servants in an adequate/timely manner, and taking into cognizance the environmental realities of the Nigerian public service.
- Deliberate attempts should be made to cultivate a culture of Research and Development in the Nigerian public service and public affairs through purposeful research to policy linkage that taps into feeding policy process from research output in the nations tertiary education sector and research institutes.
- The paper also advocates that the necessary political will to drive public service reform initiatives and output anchored on committed and purpose-driven leadership should be cultivated and sustained.

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