

NEW PUBLIC SERVICE APPROACH TO PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND SERVICE DELIVERY IN NIGERIA: ISSUES & PROSPECTS

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Abstract

This study is titled “New Public Service Approach to Public Administration and Service Delivery in Nigeria: Issues & Prospects. The study sought to: determine the extent to which public service delivery in Nigeria is based on the articulated and shared interests of the citizens as emphasized by the New Public Service approach; ascertain the extent to which public officials respond to the citizens need in Nigeria, and investigate the effect of corruption on the attainment of goals of the New Public Service in Nigeria. Secondary sources of data were utilized to review relevant literature. Robert Dahl's (1971) Procedural Democracy Theory was used as the theoretical framework of analysis. It was found among other things that the quality of public service delivery in Nigeria is still very poor. Public service delivery in Nigeria does not significantly conform to the articulated and shared interests of the citizens; public officials are not highly responsive to the needs of the citizens; and citizens' participation which has been emphasized by the New Public Service has not been accorded its right place in the public service of the federation. The implication of inadequate citizens' participation in the policy choices, programme design and implementation of the public service is the continuous decline in the quality of public service delivery and lack of confidence on constituted public service institutions in Nigeria. The researcher among other things recommends that public service delivery in all sectors of the economy in Nigeria should be based on the articulated, collective and shared interests of the citizenry in order to accord people sense of belonging and make them co-partners and stakeholders in government service delivery.

Key Words: Public Administration, Public Service, Service Delivery, & New Public Service Approach

Background of the Study

The basis upon which public administration derives its importance is the well-being of the people. Hence over the ages, different reform approaches have been initiated and deployed in the field of public administration tailored towards improving the quality of public service delivery. It is important to state from the onset that the public service is a critical instrument of public administration. For instance, Ezeani (2005) defined public service as service within government departments and ministries, parastatals, police force and the armed forces. To Onah (2017) public services are all organizations that exist as part of government machinery for implementing policy decisions and delivery of services that are of value to citizens. According to him, it is a mandatory institution of the state under the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as outlined in Chapter vi of the constitution under the title: the Executive Part I (2) and part II (D) which provides for a public service at the federal and state levels of government. The service in Nigeria comprises the following: the civil service often referred to as the core service consisting of line ministries and extra-ministerial agencies; the public bureaucracy, or the enlarged public service made up of the following: services of the state and national assemblies; the judiciary; the armed forces; the police and other security agencies; paramilitary services (immigration, customs, correction service, etc); parastatals and agencies-including social services. Commercially-oriented agencies, educational institutions, research institutes, etc. From all indications, the public service is the whole gamut of services

and activities that are organized under government which serve the purpose of ensuring effective and efficient public administration in a given state.

Certainly, as Macogonor and Okodudu (2007) in Ita & David (2018) opined, “in every nation or state, the legitimate organ for the valid public interest of the state are the bureaucracies and public service institutions”. This function is performed through the implementation of government policies and programmes effectively and professionally. Whether the citizens of a state can live happily and orderly devoid of much conflicts and confusion may be determined to a large extent by good governance exemplified by the public service to the people (Ita & David, 2018). The early systems of administration were personal, that is based on loyalty to the organization and the state. Early practices often resulted in corruption or misuse of office for personal gain, although the very idea that these are undesirable features of administration itself only derives from the traditional model (Hughes, 1998).

The short comings of early public administration necessitated a paradigm shift to the traditional public administration. Traditional public administration often referred to as old public administration was influenced by the ideas of Marx Weber, the prevailing approach to public administration for much of the 20th century drew on a model of hierarchy and meritocracy. The watchwords were efficiency and effectiveness in the management of budgetary and human resources (Robinson, 2015). The question of accountability-the question of how administrators know that their work is consistent with the wishes of the people is answered by the accountability of administrators to democratically elected political leaders (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2000).

In the later part of the nineteenth century, the traditional model was greatly influenced by Woodrow Wilson, who played an active role in the United States reform movement and Marx Weber in Europe. Hughes (1998) cited in Ezeani (2015:8-9) documents that:

From Weber came the theory of bureaucracy the idea of a distinct, professional public service, recruited and appointed by merit, politically neutral, which would remain in office throughout changes in government. From Wilson came the view that politicians should be responsible for policy making, while the administrators would be responsible for carrying it out. From both derived the notion that administration could be instrumental and technical, removed from the political sphere.

Despite the gains associated with the emergence of traditional public administration globally including in Nigeria, it was criticized for being too rigid and bureaucratic, based on process instead of outcomes, and on setting procedures to follow instead of focusing on results (Hughes 1998 & Ezeani, 2005). Ezeali & Edeh (2007) added that the model promotes red-tapism and bureaucratic bottleneck; fails to take account of different environment and administrative ecology; lays emphasis on means rather than ends and discourages personal initiative and creativity due to strict adherence to rules, etc.

The above development led to the introduction of the New Public Management (NPM). New Public Management has its roots in the set of ideas generally referred to as re-inventing government, and in a conceptual link to public choice perspective in political theory. The NPM represents the culmination of a revolution in public management that emerged in the 1980s. Rather than focusing on controlling bureaucracies and delivering services, public managers are now responding to the desires of ordinary citizens and politicians to be “the entrepreneurs of a new era, and increasingly privatized government” (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2000, 2003). As such the NPM is clearly linked to the notion of trust on economic rationalism through the creation of public value for public money. The NPM concept is centered on the proposition that a distinct activity-management-can be applied to the public sector, as it has been applied

in the private sector (Kempe, 2001).

According to Robinson (2015), the NPM model arose as a reaction to the limitations of the old public administration in adjusting to the demands of a competitive market economy. While cost curtailment in his words was a key drive in the adoption of NPM approaches, injecting principles of competition and private sector management lay at the heart of the NPM approach. The key elements of the NPM have been summarized by scholars to include:

1. The adoption of private sector management practices in the public sector.
2. An emphasis on efficiency;
3. A movement away from input controls, rules and procedures toward output measurement and performance targets;
4. A preference for private ownership, contestable provision, and contracting out of public services;
5. The devolution of management control with improved reporting and monitoring mechanisms;
6. A focus on entrepreneurial leadership within public service organizations; and
7. The disaggregation of public services to their most basic units and a focus on their cost management, etc. (Osborne, 2006; Aucoin, 1990, & Bale & Dele, 1998). The NPM resulted in significant changes in the public sector ethos and approach, especially the cultivation of new management practices, marketization and contracting out of core services to private companies and non-profit organizations, and the creation of “arms-length” executive agencies responsible and accountable for implementation.

In Nigeria, the above prompted a lot of innovations, reforms and structural adjustments which were geared towards keying the Nigerian public service into the global trends in public service delivery. These initiatives include the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) introduced in 1986, aimed among other things at restructuring and diversifying the Nigeria economy's productive base in order to reduce the country's dependency on the imports and oil sector. This was followed with some notable public service reforms such as the privatization and commercialization policies. Public Private Partnership (PPP), Decentralized Management (DM), Subsidiary Management, Performance Measurement (PM), Public Reporting Management (PRM), Total Quality Management (TQM); Downsizing and Right Sizing of the public bureaucracy. There was also the Monetization Policy which was introduced in 2003, following the realization of the enormity of the cost and burden of running the public service and in compliance with the recommendations of the Committee on Monetization of Fringe Benefits in the public service of the federation and rationalization of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) of government. Other management tools that followed suit include the Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA), the Cost Effectiveness Analysis, Management by Objectives (MBO), the Planning Programming and Budgeting System (PPBS) and the Zero-Based Budgeting (ZBB). The latest move that is in line with NPM's tenets of cutting the cost of governance and at the same making the public service result oriented in Nigeria was the introduction of the Treasury Single Account (TSA).

Although the gain associated with the NPM and the practical innovations that followed in Nigeria by results replaced a public sector orientation governed by inputs and outputs, not much results have been achieved in Nigeria. However, the failure of public institutions to foster service delivery given the reality of globalization pressure and unprecedented increase in public demand and expectations for social, economic, political and technological developmental needs has become apparent particularly in a

developing country like Nigeria. This situation thus posed serious challenges to the ability of the public services to properly direct its aspirations towards improving the general welfare of the citizens (Oyedele, 2015 & Badmus, 2017). Although Nigeria plays a crucial role in Africa's economic relations, the continued underdevelopment and devaluation of Nigeria's public service is a huge concern (Offu, Ukeje & Offu, 2018) as public sector governance has remained ineffective, unpopular, and counterproductive in many respect (Ijewereme, 2018; Ukeje, Ndukwe, Chukwemeka, Ogbulu & Onele, 2019). Social economic indicators seem to suggest that the nation's public service has not played substantial role in the life of the citizens. For instance, human development index shows that Nigeria ranked 152 out of 157 countries in the World Bank's 2018 Human capital index. More than 82 million Nigerians live on less than \$1 a day and 23.1 percent were unemployed, while 16.6 percent were under employed (National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). The current life expectancy for males in Nigeria is 53 years while their female counter-part is 56 years. On the average, the life expectancy in the country is 54.5 years. According to Ekitan, Babatope, Meliz & Savas (2019) this ranking fell below most African countries that are not in the same caliber with the country in terms of resourcefulness and national wealth.

Arising from the above, it became obvious especially in developing countries such as Nigeria that a public service driven by the private sector management principles as introduced by the NPM has not achieved much in its pursuit to reduce the cost of governance and at the same provides quality services. It has been argued that management focus in the public sector environment under the NPM is narrow in nature because it uses only a select set of private sector management principles (Harrow & Willocks, 1990; Wilenski; 1988; Adjuwon, 2017). NPM emphasizes market and customer orientation. However, most importantly in the private sector, those customers with the most money and most influence are accorded special treatment by the market. Such an approach would be ludicrous as public policy. Mintzberg (1996), the Canadian management theorist, has pointed out the variety of relationships that citizens have to their governments-customers, clients, citizens, and subjects-and suggests that the label customers is particularly confining. Citizens therefore, cannot be reduced to customers without grave consequences for the notion of democratic citizenship. So, those associated with the New Public Service (NPS) have raised objections to government adopting the values of business (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2003).

The NPS is a mutually reinforcing and normative model of managing and service delivery in the public sector where values such as efficiency and productivity should not be lost, but should be placed in the larger context of democracy, community and the public interest (Kempe, 2001). The tenets of NPS as developed by Denhardt & Denhardt, (2000:553-557) are as follows:

1. Serve, rather than steer: Public servants should help citizens articulate and meet their shared interest, rather than attempt to control or steer society in new directions;
2. The public interest is the aim, not the by product: public managers should contribute to building a collective, shared notion, of the public interest which should result in the creation of shared interests and shared responsibility;
3. Think strategically, act democratically: policies and programmes meeting public needs can be effectively and responsibly achieved through collective efforts and collaborative processes;
4. Serve citizens, and not customers: public servants should not merely respond to the demands of customers” but focus on building relationships of trust and collaboration with and among citizens;
5. Accountability isn't simple: Public servants should be attentive not only to the market but also to statutory and constitutional law, community values, political norms, professional standards, and citizens interests;

6. Value people, not just productivity: Public organizations and the networks in which they participate are more likely to succeed in the long run if they are operated through processes of collaboration and shared leadership based on respect for all people; and
7. Value citizenship and public service and entrepreneurship: The interest is better advanced by public servants and citizens committed to involving meaningful contributions to society rather than entrepreneurship managers acting as if public money were their own.

The questions to ask are how has Nigerian public service fared in the era of New public Service towards provision of quality service delivery to her citizens? Has public service delivery improved substantially? What are the possible challenges in realizing the goals and inherent benefits of NPS approach in Nigeria public administration? It is based on the above backdrop that this study became imperative.

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria is facing daunting security challenges ranging from insecurity exacerbated by the Boko Haram insurgency especially in the North East Nigeria which has led to the loss of thousands of lives and destruction of properties worth billions of naira including resulting to displacements of hundreds of thousands of people; Fulani Herdsmen-Farmers conflicts, banditry and senseless killings which have continued unabated recently in the southern Kaduna, Zamfara, Kastina and other parts of the country. This is coupled with the hardship which results from the on-going corona virus pandemic. In the face of these socio-economic challenges, public sector managers in Nigeria are supposed to toe the line of new public service by helping the citizens articulate and meet their shared interest, rather than attempt to control or steer society in new directions and contribute to building a collective, shared notion of the public interest which should result in the creation of shared interest and shared responsibility.

This however, has not been achieved. Adejoro (2006) in Ukeje, et al, (2019) laments that despite several reforms especially the NPM instituted by successive governments to improve the overall performance of public sector in Nigeria in terms of productivity, efficiency and effectiveness the public service is still tradition-bound, operating within a centralized structure and inadequate staff development practices because of the nature of administrative and political leadership ideology. Public service delivery in Nigeria is hardly based on articulated and shared interests of the citizens. This perhaps is the outcome of inability of successive administrations in Nigeria to genuinely involve the citizens in the design and implementation of policies and programmes aimed at improving their socio-economic wellbeing. In the face of this problem, government seems to face legitimacy crisis and condemnations from the people leading to lack of public confidence on the constituted authorities. In support of the foregoing, Lawal and Hassan (2012) note that the relationship between the Nigerian government and the citizenry is that of limited interaction with members of the public. By limited interaction, we mean that members of the public, and indeed the poor population are not given opportunity to participate in the decision making process with regards to how they could be assisted. This is what Okoli (1995) in Onwe & Nwakamma (2015) called blue print approach. A situation whereby a motley group of experts and professionals (planners, administrators and researchers) sit together, deliberate on the critical needs of the rural people, evaluates the resources available, decides on the projects, tasks and programmes needed for solution to problems and proceeds to site and execute the programmes, with or without the target beneficiaries. This approach appears to hinder effective and efficient public service delivery. Frederickson (1997) in Solong (2017) explicitly states that the public services provided by the government or public administration should be oriented to the citizens. In this case public officials should be responsive to citizens need.

Unfortunately, the Nigeria public service has been characterized by negative attitudes and traits such as insensitivity towards citizens and their complaints, lateness; palpable negligence, inexcusable incompetence, unbridled corruption, favouritism, lack lustre performance and a general lackadaisical attitude to work (Okon, 2008; Oyedele, 2015). No other place has poor service delivery manifested most in Nigeria than Nigeria's human development index. Obasanjo (2003) notes that Nigerians have for too long left shortchanged by the quality of public services which are not delivered without “undue influence” or inducement. Other important social economic indicators such as poverty level unemployment and under employment rates, maternal mortality ratio among others are far below the acceptable standards. This seemingly suggests that the impact of the nation's public service has not been substantially felt in the areas mentioned. Rather than provide services what seems to be the order of the day is the issue of corruption and mismanagement of available financial resources. The public service inability to orient services to improve the wellbeing of the people seems to relate to corruption.

It is also worrisome that despite Nigerian's anti-corruption campaign, the country has dropped from 144 in 2018 to 146 in 2019 on the Annual Corruption Perception Index published by Transparency International (TI). Sagay (2016) in Okpata, Edeh, Udu & Nwakamma (2019) neatly captures the consequences of corruption in the following words:

The consequences of looting the common wealth of the country could be such level of deprivation in our social and economic services that peoples' lives could be affected like women who may not get ante-natal care, hospitals that are not well staffed and not well funded; roads that are not constructed, people could have accident and die. I am wary that an accused person may not have thought of the final consequences it have on people.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to investigate the effect of New Public Service approach to public administration on service delivery in Nigeria. Specific objectives include to:

1. Determine the extent to which public service delivery in Nigeria is based on articulated and shared interests of the citizens as emphasized by the New Public Service.
2. Ascertain the degree to which public officials are responsive to the citizens need in Nigeria.
3. Investigate the effect of corruption, on the attainment of goals of the New Public Service in Nigeria.

Implications of the Study

The public service is the heart of public administration as it ensures that policies are formulated and programmes are designed and implemented towards the overall welfare of the citizens. On this note, Manume (2016) in Okpata, Ezika & Ukeje, (2019) described the public service as the pulsating heart-beat of democratic governance, which keeps the governmental machine running via impactful policies and programmes articulation and attainment.

Most approaches to public sector reform have tended to focus on structural and organizational reforms located within the old public administration paradigm with a more effective hierarchical and meritocratic model as the desired outcome (Robinson, 2015). This often results to excessive ambition, political obstacles, and lack of capacity for implementation.

Problems encountered in the implementation of New Public Management reforms in Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries were also experienced by developing countries that experimented with this approach, often resulting in fragmentation and diminished coherence across government agencies. In practice, many developing countries have ended up adopting a hybrid approach that combines elements of different models of public administration in response to shifting international fashions and reforms shaped by aid donors and selective application of lessons (Christensen & Laegreid, 2011).

Elsewhere organizational reforms and efforts to improve pay and conditions through successive civil service reforms did not substantially improve efficiency or reduce corruption, which continues to plague many public administration systems in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia (Mc Court, 2013).

Critics maintain that this failure to address fundamental structural problems in public bureaucracies reflects the underlying political economy in many countries, where the bureaucracy serves to maintain the power and interests of political elites rather than being oriented towards economic development and societal improvement (Ferguson, 1990, Booth, 2011).

Nevertheless, placing citizens at the centre of public sector reforms efforts and focusing on the public sector ethos which is the hallmarks of New Public Service approach has important implications. This applies significantly on two levels.

Theoretically, the present study shall add to the existing body of literature in the field of public administration and public policy in particular. Scholars and research students shall make use of the work for future research endeavour.

Empirically, the study shall benefit policy makers and public service reform efforts in Nigeria. The general public shall benefit from the gains of the New Public Service approach. The implication of non adherence to the tenets of the NPS approach results in continuous poor service delivery by the Nigeria public service to the citizens.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Conceptual Review

Public Administration

The concept of Public Administration has come of age both in terms of the academic and professional attention it commands, and its usefulness to the society at large. Woodrow Wilson, a onetime president of the United States of America and one of the foundation scholars of the subject defined Public Administration as the detailed and systematic execution of public law. Every particular application of law to him is an act of administration. Willoughby (1927) in Ezeani (2005), who wrote at the time public administration was still at infancy, defined it narrowly as the functions of effectively administering the law as declared by the legislature and interpreted by the judicial organ of government. Simon (1947) defined public administration as the activities of the executive branches of National, State and local governments. For White (1966), public administration consists of “all those operations having for their purpose the fulfillment or enforcement of public policy”. To Nnoli (1986), public administration is the machinery as well as the integral processes, through which the government performs its functions. Similarly, Ademolekun (1983) is of the view that the term public administration is commonly used to refer to both the activities concerned with the management of the government business and the study of these activities. In other words, it is used in two distinct senses, as practice and as knowledge. One salient

point raised here is the idea of management. Lending support to the foregoing, Nwizu (2002), defines public administration as the “management of affairs by the government or its agencies to serve the people at local, national and international levels”. Denhardt and Denhardt (2009) in their contribution, see public administration as the management of public programmes. Public administration is government in action. It is the most visible aspect of governance. Administrators in public organizations are seen on daily basis minutes on files, messenger make sure that files get to their right destination; managers of public institution supervise and coordinate activities, direct actions towards the attainment of goals. All these activities take place to ensure that both men and material resources are efficiently managed for the accomplishment of public goals and objectives.

Public Service

The public service reflects the state of the nation and no nation has been able to advance beyond its public service (Goke, 2005). Nasir (2006) in Okechukwu, Ukeje & Ekwunife (2016) refers to the public service as an agglomeration of all organization that exist as part of government machinery, the civil service, the National Assembly, the Judiciary, the Police and other security agencies as Immigration, Custom, Prisons (now correction service), etc including social service, regulatory agencies, educational institutions and research institutes at Federal and State levels.

Ebiziem, Eziagu & Okafor (2018) defined public service as the entire organization of employees of various ranks, talents and training who are in the services of government on regular permanent basis who do not engage in any form of politics while in the service of government. Nwizu (2012) sees it as the collectivity of public bureaucracy set up by modern governments to administer and execute their policies and programmes.

The public service of any country stands out as the major machinery of government for the formulation and implementation of public policies. It does this by translating the plans and programmes of government into concrete public goods and services for the use of the citizenry. Since public bureaucracy is primarily concerned with public administration, the management of public affairs therefore rests heavily on it. Whatever the system of government in a country, the public service is designed to be prime mover of the social and economic development of a nation (Oyedele, 2015).

Public Service Delivery

In the context of governance, public service delivery is the result of the intentions, decision of government and government institutions, and the actions undertaken and decision made by people employed in government institutions (Martins and Ledimo, 2015). Analyzing the above view, public service delivery entails the process of meeting the needs of citizens through prompt and efficient procedures. It presupposes that the interaction between citizens and government results in value creation. Since public service delivery is the relationship between policy makers, service providers and the people, it encompasses social services (primary education and basic health services), infrastructure (water, sanitation, roads and bridges) and services that promote personal security (justice, police, etc). Public service delivery is also commonly understood to mean the provision of public goods or social (education, health), economic (grants) or infrastructural (water, electricity) services to those who need (or demand) them.

In a similar perspective, Adeyinka & Ema (2015) wrote that public service delivery is the mechanism

through which public services are delivered to the public by local, state, or federal governments. They demonstrated that sewage and trash disposal, street cleaning, public education, and health services are some of the examples of public services. Judging by their view, it is glaring that the state has a vital role in the delivery of a wide array of public services from justice and security to other services for individual citizens and private enterprises. Besides traditional public services, such as health care or education, there are administrative services, such as delivery of licenses and permissions, which are subject to regulation of administrative proceedings. Public service delivery can further be seen as activities within public administration during which customers – citizens, residents or enterprises – seek or provide data, handle their affairs or fulfill their duties. These services are supposed to be delivered in an effective, predictable, reliable and customer-friendly manner. In corroborating the argument above, Agboola (2016) argued that the public sector in developing countries, over the years, has been in the fore-front of economic development. Service delivery in the public sector is the responsibility of the public service embracing the civil service. The public sector reflects the state of the nation and no nation has been able to advance beyond its public service.

Contextual Review

The ills of the Nigerian public service have been identified at various times. According to Goke (2005) a few years ago, the Ayida Panel, which was instituted to review post public service reforms in Nigeria with a view to proffering measures of further reinvigorating the service, identified the major ills of the service, which needed to be corrected to improve the dynamism and effectiveness of the civil service as follows:

- (i) Politicization of the top hierarchy of the civil service;
- (ii) Lack of financial accountability and probity;
- (iii) Perpetual breakdown of discipline;
- (iv) Virtual institutionalization of corruption at all levels and segments of the service;
- (v) Disregard for rules and regulations;
- (vi) Loss of direction; and
- (vii) General decline of efficiency and effectiveness.

In order to address these ills, President Olusegun Obasanjo, GCFR, after his inauguration as President of a Democratic Republic of Nigeria on May 29, 1999, unfolded his vision of an ideal public service with the following elements:

- (i) A competent, professional, development-oriented, public-spirited and customer-friendly public service capable of responding speedily to the needs of the society;
- (ii) A civil service with the core values of political neutrality, impartiality, integrity, loyalty, transparency, professionalism and accountability;
- (iii) A civil service that is guided by equity, where things are done in the right way based on extant rules and regulations but with room for discretion, which should be exercised in the public interest;
- (iv) Creation of suitable environment where public servants are assured of protection and job security in the faithful discharge of their duties and responsibilities; and a completely, well remunerated and innovative civil service.

Despite the above reforms and subsequent initiatives that came later, the Nigerian public service has not optimally performed in terms of being a potent instrument for delivery of quality services to the citizens. As a corollary to the foregoing, Olukemi & Babatunde (2013) in Okechukwu, et al, (2016) in their evaluation of the nature of public service in terms of service delivery, posit that Nigeria public service was oversized and poorly remunerated, resulting in inefficient service delivery. Rapid public sector recruitment under military regimes has resulted in an oversized under-skilled workforce in which employees often did not have the appropriate technical skills needed for their assignments and that about 70% of Federal civil servants had high school diplomas or lower, with less than 5 percent possessing modern computer skills (Okonjo & Osogo, 2002). Relatedly, Badmus (2017) documents that since the return of democracy in May 1999, the bureaucratic situation in Nigeria in terms of delivery of people oriented services, attitudes to work, operational modality and accountability level were all unimpressive and at dismal. In the same vein, public services were in bad shapes and the available civil servants were deficient and not adequately equipped for democratic service demand due to prolonged military rule in Nigeria.

Former President, Olusegun Obasanjo (2007) in Badmus (2017) contributing to the discourse summarizes the problems facing delivery of public service in Nigeria during June 1993 members of the Nigeria Federal Cabinet and Permanent Secretaries retreat as follows words:

....pursuance of government contracts has become the priority of public officers. Unfortunately, Nigerians have always been at receiving end of poor quality of public service delivery: in most cases without payment of bribe processing files do not move and when it moved it easily get lost in transit. The public officers have demonstrated high level of inefficiency and corruption to the detriment of prompt and efficient implementation of governmental policies in Nigeria (Badmus,2017).

The need to migrate to the tenets of the NPS is understood from the context of plethora of problems bedeviling the Nigeria public service. NPS starts with the premise that the focus of public management should be citizens, community and civil society. In this conception the primary role of public servants is to help citizens articulate and meet their shared interests rather than to control or steer society (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2000). This is in sharp contrast to the philosophical premise of the NPM approaches in which transactions between public managers and customers reflect individual's self-interest and are framed by market principles. It is also distinct from old public administration approach where citizens relate to the bureaucracy as clients or constituents and were treated as passive recipients of top-down policy making and service delivery mechanisms (Bourgon, 2007). According to Robinson (2015), the new public service model approaches public management from the vintage point of democratic theory, premised on the notion of an active and involved citizenship. Citizens look beyond narrow self-interest to the wider public interest and the role of public officials is to facilitate opportunities for strengthening citizen engagement in finding solutions to societal problems. Similarly, Bourgeon (2007) uses the concept of democratic citizenship to open up fresh perspectives where the role of public administration is not confined to responding to the demands of users or carrying out orders. Her proposed approach to new public administration contains four elements.

- i. Building collaborative relationship with citizens and groups of citizens; and group of citizens;
- ii. Encouraging shared responsibilities;
- iii. Disseminating information to elevate public discourse and to foster a shared understanding of public issues;

iv. Seeking opportunities to involve citizens in government activities.

In placing a fresh emphasis on the public interest and citizens as the focus of public service, the NPS model provides a useful corrective to prevailing notions of control and steering associated with earlier models of public administration and management.

Denhardt & Denhardt (2003:9) outlines the principles of the NPS as follows:

1. The primary role of the public servant is to help citizens articulate and meet their shared interests rather than attempting to control or steer society in new directions.
2. Public administrators must make creating a collective, shared notion of the public interest programme a commitment towards accomplishing public goals. The goal is not to find quick solutions driven by individual choices. Rather, it is the creation of shared interests and shared responsibility.
3. Policies and programmes meeting public needs can be most effectively and responsibly achieved through collective efforts and collaborative processes.
4. The public interest is the result of dialogue about shared values rather than the aggregation of self-interest. Therefore, public servants should not merely respond to the demands of “customers” but rather focus on building relationships of trust and collaboration with and among citizens.
5. Public servants must be attentive to more than the market; they must also attend to statutory and constitutional law, professional standards, and citizen interest.
6. Public organizations and the networks in which they participate are more likely to be useful in the long run if they are operated through processes of collaboration and shared leadership based on respect for all people.
7. The Public interest is better advanced by public servants and citizens committed to making meaningful contributions to society rather than by entrepreneurial managers acting as if public money were their own.

Empirical Review

Igbokwe-Ibeto, Osakede & Nwobi (2020) examined “Bureaucratic Accountability and Public Sector Management in Nigeria: Issues, Challenges and the Forward. The study sought to ascertain the nexus between bureaucratic accountability and public sector management in Nigeria. Social Exchange theory was adopted to examine and analyze the dynamics of public accountability in the Nigeria public service. Available literature was reviewed and analyzed contextually. The researchers among other things revealed that lack of accountability undermines public sector management and public service delivery in Nigeria. The paper recommends that there is need for effective, efficient, patriotic and committed public servants, who should be accountable for their stewardship.

Ukeje, et al, (2019) researched on “Public Service Recruitment Practices and Implications for Sustainable Development in Ebonyi State, Nigeria”. The study examined the aspect of recruitment processes and how guaranteed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) attainment is affected. Descriptive survey design was adopted. Primary data were sourced using structured questionnaire while the data generated were

analyzed using software Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 for calculation of mean, frequencies, and percentages. The findings drawn from three different ministries in Ebonyi State Civil Service (EBSCS) revealed that the processes of recruitment are characterized by nepotism, political interference devoid of merit, and professionalism. This implies that guaranteed sustainable development in Ebonyi State is at risk of attainment. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended that a new public service reform should be instituted if the country is to achieve the targets set in the SDGs.

Amadi, (2018) studied “The Role of Market Orientation in Public Housing Companies. A study of MO's Effects on Construction Strategies”. The study sought to analyze how the public housing companies' deal with market orientation constructs and their impact on construction strategy choices in Sweden. Descriptive survey research design was adopted to study 289 public housing. Data for the study were collected through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using statistical package for social sciences. Findings among others revealed that public housing companies studied were market oriented. They generated information on customer needs, expectations and values and they analyzed the strategies of their competitors and reacted appropriately. This led to provision of better housing services to customers (public) in Sweden. The researcher therefore recommended that more public sector organizations in the study area should adopt market orientation approach in order to provide quality services to the people.

In their contribution, Ita & David (2018) studied “The Role of Bureaucracy in Democratic Governance in Nigeria: Relevance and Evidence from Akwa Ibom State (1999-2017)”. The researchers analyzed the interplay between the political concept of democracy and bureaucratic practice in the state. The paper was based on documentary analysis with a tinge of survey (interview) method. It was observed that bureaucracy in Akwa Ibom state has shown reasonable evidence of involvement in the implementation of government policies and programmes towards the welfare of the citizenry in demonstration of good governance. Moreover, the paper noted that the state bureaucracy needed to be repositioned to tackle some negative tendencies such as poor attitude to work, improper postings and placement of employees on positions of responsibilities and corrupt practices among public officials.

Given these findings, it was recommended, among others, that the principles of transparency, probity and accountability should be made paramount as a norm and in praxis within and without the state bureaucracy as this would enhance effectiveness and efficiency of the bureaucracy towards democratic governance.

In a related study, Badmus (2017) investigated “The Travail of Service Delivery and Developmental Failure in post-independence Nigeria”. The study sought to establish the link between poor service delivery and developmental failure in the post-independence Nigeria. Content analytical technique was adopted to review relevant related studies. The paper argues that poor service delivery attitudes have impacted negatively on development programmes in Nigeria. Thus, for Nigeria to achieve speedy development, the paper recommends that, there must be a positive change in the attitudes of government and its officials towards service delivery particularly, to ensure fairness, responsiveness, equity, accountability and justifiable profit maximization which are necessary ingredients for boosting people's confidence in the government and its institutions, which would help the government to garner people support required for developmental programmes and discourage or minimize other anti-developmental pathologies in Nigeria.

In a similar vein, Wempy & Rola (2016) studied “Factors Affecting the capacity of Bureaucratic Apparatus in providing public service in Southeast Sulawesi”. The study analyzed the factors influencing bureaucratic apparatus capacity of knowledge, skill, work ethic and motivation and their separate impact on public service in the province of Southeast Sulawesi. Descriptive survey design was adopted. The

population of the study was all civil servants working at some offices and institutions which provide public services in four municipalities (excluding the heads of the office) and the service recipients. The samples were determined using a cluster random sampling techniques which applied Machin and Campbell formula, resulting in a total of 266 respondents. To statistically analyze the data, a method of path analysis was applied. The results of the study showed that the simultaneous effect of bureaucratic apparatus capacity, which includes knowledge, work ethic, and motivation on public services in the province of Southeast Sulawesi of the four variables examined quantitatively, knowledge appeared to be the most dominant one. Political factor, which was analyzed qualitatively, turned out to be inhibiting the capacity and professionalism of bureaucratic apparatus in the province of Southeast Sulawesi, owing to the fact that assignment of high echelon officers and placement of staff are not staffed based on their competence; rather, the positions and placement become political gifts given to those who have helped current heads of municipality or city mayor to win election. The paper therefore, recommended that reformation is needed in the government bureaucracy to ensure that the bureaucracy does not involve itself in politics, so that it can be politically-sterile and adopt a neutral position, and then focus to serve its main function as public servants.

Theoretical Framework

NPS draws from the tenets of democratic and participatory governance where citizens' participation is at the centre of government business. It is based on this notion that this study adopted procedural democracy as the theoretical framework of analysis. The conception of procedural democracy is associated with Robert Dahl's idea of Polyarchy. This refers to how different racial and ethnic groups should participate in a democratic system. Dahl's central argument was that minority groups need to take part in deepening democracy. (Dahl, 1971). The procedural framework finds most of its support in American Political Science Scholarship (Mangu, 2005). Procedural democracy makes it easy to measure the local participation. This theoretical perspective adopts a specific view which suggests that democracy can be effectively assessed by considering technocratic and institutional arrangements of a society.

Proponents of procedural democracy argue that true democracy means liberty, effective citizen control over government policies by citizens, good governance, honesty, transparency and openness in politics, informed and robust debates, maximum participation and various other civic virtues. They claim that democracy implies that the people have the opportunity of accepting or refusing the people who are to govern them. This is in consonance with the view expressed by the America's former president, Abraham Lincoln (1807-1865) who defines democracy as government of the people, by the people and for the people.

Creighton (2005) summarizes the elements of procedural democracy to include the following:

1. Public participation applies to administrative decisions.
2. Public participation is not just providing the public interaction, it is an important component.
3. There is an organized process for involving the public.
4. Participants have some level of impact or influence on the decisions being made.

The provision of procedural democracy is in tandem with the New Public Service approach. According to Denhardt & Denhardt (2003), the NPS is ultimately more deeply rooted in democratic ideals and deserves greater attention and public interest is the result of dialogue about mutual or overlapping interest. NPS

sees the role of government as brokering interests among citizens and other groups so as to create shared values. This might mean, for example, building coalitions of public, private non-profit agencies to meet mutually agreed upon needs. To Robinson (2015), NPS model approaches public management from the vintage point of democratic theory, premised on the notion of an active and involved citizenship. The whole idea is making the public service practically pro people. This it does by integrating the citizens in the policy process. In this case, development programmes are not designed without involving the citizens at all levels of the government. This by extension is given the people in the real sense of the word a sense of belonging. The essence is to deliver quality services and serve the people better. The citizens are no longer seen as the recipients of government services but stake holders of good governance. In this case they take responsibility where necessary rather than continuously blame government where they have been involved.

NPS makes governance people oriented. In this instance, the policy and programme choices become a joint effort of the government and the people. The outcome therefore reflects the aspirations and needs of the citizens when they are filling involved in taking decisions that relate to their socio-economic well being. It is based on the above that the theory is considered relevant for the study.

ISSUES, GAP & OUTCOME

Issues

Despite the gain or benefits associated with its application, there are a number of issues of concern which seem to undermine the suitability of New Public Service approach in Nigeria and some other developing countries. For instance, in placing emphasis on the public interest and citizens as the focus of public service, the NPS model provides a useful corrective measure to prevailing notions of control and steering associated with earlier models of public administration and management; it is still far from providing an all encompassing paradigm that offers the comprehensive solutions which public sector reforms grounded in earlier approaches have failed to deliver (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2011, Christensen & Laegreid, 2011). With its emphasis on engaging citizens as the primary focus of public management, the NPS framework is highly normative and value-driven. Most approaches to public sector reform have tended to focus on structural and organization reforms located within the old public administration paradigm with a more effective hierarchical and meritocratic model as the desired outcome. Problems encountered in the implementation of New Public Management reforms in OECD, countries were also experienced by developing countries including Nigeria that experimented with this approach, often resulting in fragmentation and diminished coherence across governmental agencies (Robinson, 2015).

In practice many developing countries have ended up adopting a hybrid approach that combines elements of different models of public administration in response to shifting international fashions and reforms shaped by aid donors and the selective application of lessons from OECD experience. Organizational hybridity in the public sector has several distinct features, signifying a mix of organizations at the interface of the public and private sector, located in the market or civil society, a mix of market and hierarchy, or a mixture of different organizational forms inside ministries that encompasses specialized agencies, state enterprises and different levels of government (Christensen & Laegreid, 2011). Buorgon(2007) in Ukeje, et al, (2019) argued that although the New Public Service approach as proposed by Denhardt & Denhardt (2000) focuses on citizen-centered service delivery, it has failed to control the process of its applicability, institutionalization, adaptability, accountability, and the politics of interest sharing arising from the internal ethos of the policy drivers or human resources in determining the extent

of sustainable development mechanisms in developing countries.

However, New Public Service thrives on the tenets of democracy which focuses on public interest and citizens' participation. Some of the tenets that facilitate NPS include separation of powers, respect for the rule of law, constitutionalism, and respect of the fundamental human rights (Freedom of Speech; Freedom of association, etc). Others include sense of belonging recruitment based on the principle or merit, adherence to the public service rules, equity in human resource mobilization and development among others. A critical study of the Nigeria public service reveals that the foregoing pertinent issues have not been addressed. What one sees is ethnic imbalance in the composition of public service of the federation, marginalization and discrimination. This is coupled with constant abuse of public service rules as appointment of persons into sensitive positions of authority is skewed to favour a part of the country without due recourse to the federal character principle in Nigeria. Optimum performance and profitability of public institutions can be impaired when staff recruitment is heavily influenced by politics and lack of political will to do the right thing.

Gap

Available literature was reviewed from where the gap of the study was identified. Some of the works reviewed include Ukeje, et al, (2019) titled “Public Service Recruitment Practices and Implications for sustainable Development in Ebonyi State, Nigeria”, Amadi, (2018) studied “The Role of Market Orientation in Public Housing Companies: A study of MO's Effects on construction strategies.”; Ita & David (2018) investigated “The Role of Bureaucracy in Democratic Governance in Nigeria: Relevance from Akwa Ibom State (1999-2017); Badmus (2017) researched on “The Travail of Services Delivery and Development failure in Post-Independence “Factors Affecting the Capacity Bureaucratic Apparatus in providing public service in Southeast Sulawesi.

Other works consulted include Okpata, et al, (2019) titled “Democratic Governance and the under development of public service system in Nigeria States: The Ebonyi State Experiment”, Oyedele (2015) did a work titled “The Nigerian Public Service and Service Delivery under Civil Rule; Osawe (2015) on its own part, researched on “Nigerian Public Service performance in dysfunctional Ecology: Issues, challenges and the way forward”. Ibietan & Segun (2015) relatedly investigated “New Public Management and Developmental State: Revisiting the institutional imperatives, however, Robinson (2015) in his contribution explored “From Old Public Administration to the New Public Service: Implications for Public Sector Reform in Developing Countries”, Gundu (2011) focused on “Nigeria's experience in dealing with public service ethical dilemmas; and Denhardt & Denhardt (2003) among others carried out a study titled “The New Public Service: An Approach to Reform.

Undeniably, these scholarly works made substantial contributions in the area of Public bureaucracy especially as it affects public sector reforms. However, none of the studies focused on the applicability of the New Public Service approach in the Nigeria context, this gap in knowledge is what this study has filled.

Outcome

Given the underdeveloped nature of most African States, thus, the existence of robust public services particularly, in Nigeria has been identified as an important strategy in formulating and implementing public choices by the government: it does this by translating the plans and programmes of government

into concrete public goods and services for the use of the citizenry (Badmus, 2017). Arguably, it is very pertinent for government to promote active accountable, transparent and responsive service delivery system that would boost the people's confidence in the government and its institutions, therefore, garner peoples support for developmental programmes and reduce tendency for nepotism, patron-clientelism, corruption, bad governance, poor productivity and other anti-development pathologies.

It is based on the above that we canvas the utility of the NPS approach as capable of addressing the encumbrances bedeviling the Nigeria public services. Hence, to reestablish the objectives of the study for purpose of emphasis, this study set out to determine the extent to which public service delivery is based on articulated and shared interest of the citizens as emphasized by the NPS; ascertain the degree to which public officials are responsive to the citizens needs in Nigeria; and investigate the effect of corruption on the attainment of goals of the new public service in Nigeria.

In respect to the first objective, it is observed that service delivery in Nigeria is not optimally based on the articulated and shared interests of the citizens in Nigeria. By implication, the tenets of the new public service are yet to be instituted and internalized in policy formulation and programme implementation. Policies and developmental programmes are still designed without involving the people. In this case, members of the public, and indeed the poor population are not given opportunities to participate in the decision making process with regards to how they could be assisted. Corroborating the foregoing, Okpata, et al, (2019) observed that it is however, disheartening and worrisome that rather than development, there has been absolute underdevelopment of the public service system in Nigeria. This finding is also supported by Ajibade & Ibietan (2016) who found that one of the problems confronting public services is that there are too many policies that lack political will for its implementation. But the most worrisome part is the fact that many of these reforms did not achieve their purpose and intention as the country still battles with very high rates of poverty, poor power supply, unemployment, bad rail system, poor road connections and insecurity to mention just few.

The public service in Nigeria by its very character is not responsive to the citizens' aspirations and needs. In support of this submission Maduabum, (2014) in Ajibade & Ibietan (2018) revealed that the dysfunctional characteristic of bureaucracy manifests in the Nigeria factor. As a result, the public service is characterized by spirit of animosity and jealousy, rather than of cooperation and team work. This spirit of animosity exists between peers, superiors and subordinates. Hence, the goal of NPS which includes public trust and accountability will hardly be achieved in this circumstance.

Furthermore, the NPS can hardly be operational in an environment with high rate of corruption as we have in Nigeria. As highlighted in the background of the study Nigeria is among the most corrupt nation according to the Transparency International 2019 ranking. This may have worsened going by the high profile corrupt incidents witnessed in 2020 in Nigeria. Some of them include the alleged corrupt practices by the suspended EFCF Chairman Ibrahim Magu and the Minister of Niger Delta Affairs, Senator Godswill Akpabio among others which run into billions of Naira. Nwosu & Nweko (2018) observed that Nigeria bureaucracy is associated with high level of corruption. They submitted that Nigeria public sector lacks transparency and accountability. This further confirmed the recent publication of the Transparency International. There are cases where bureaucrats frustrate development policies and programmes that would have assisted in reducing poverty, unemployment and inequality. Hall (2012) observed that corruption undermine public services and democracies. According to him, when citizens have to pay bribes to get health care or fair policing or contracts are awarded to those who pay bribes it threatens society as a whole. Corruption waste public money by diverting it into the hands of corrupt politicians, business and their agents. It perverts public policy decisions by making decisions which suit

the interests of the rich and powerful elite. It steals wealth from countries and places it in tax havens for the benefits of corrupt individuals. Nwaze (2012) in Nwosu & Nwoko (2018) further revealed that:

The bureaucrats are the major culprits of corruption because they are mostly responsible for aiding and abetting corruption for the political class. The bureaucrats he argued, engaged in fast-tracking of payment with juicy kick-backs, over invoicing, commercialization of official duties, engaging in dummy academic programmes, evading tax, fictitious allocation of land with intents to convert same for personal gains, gratification, sorting, use of personal companies for public contracts, receiving payments for tracing of files, embarking on pilgrimage and other religious activities with government funds, ghost workers, syndrome, etc.

In support of the above, Ajbade & Ibieta (2016:11) affirms that the Udoji Report of 1974 accused the Nigeria public service:

...of nepotism, ethnic loyalties, corruption, inability of superiors to delegate responsibilities, unreliability of junior staff in executing delegated tasks, failure to apply specialized knowledge and training skills in the management of the public service, and lack of compliance with timeliness or efficiency in the performance of tasks. In pursuit of private goals, several officials in the Nigeria Public bureaucracy form cliques and informal groups in order to maximize this benefits; at the expense of the attainment of institutional goals.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The Nigeria Public administration and public service in particular, has come of age in terms of its existence, but has not optimally contributed to high quality service delivery to the citizens. The public service is a product of several reforms and innovations in the field of public administration at large. From pre-modern bureaucracies which were personal, traditional, diffuse, astrictive, and particularistic to the new public management which emphasizes private sector approach to public administration and to the new public service which provides that public interest and citizens involvement are keys to achievement of the goal of public administration. The NPS offers an opportunity of delivering people centered services drawn on its submission that public managers should contribute to building on collective, shared notion of public interest which should result in the creation of shared interests and shared responsibility. The new public service approach arose in response to the lack of coherence and the coordination problems associated with NPM.

However, the NPS approach offers useful corrective measure to the problems of earlier models of public administration and management by focusing on inter organizational relationships and citizen engagement, but this does not offer a comprehensive approach because of the question of different environment in the theory and practice of public administration. Nevertheless, as Robinson (2015) submits, placing citizens at the centre of public sector reform efforts and focusing on the public sector ethos has important implications for the design and sustainability of reforms. The researcher therefore concludes that adoption of new public service approach with recourse to the peculiarities of Nigeria public administration will go a long way to improve the quality of service delivery to the citizens.

Recommendations

Based on the outcome of the study, the researcher recommends as follows:

1. In order to improve the quality of public service delivery in Nigeria, government service provision in all sectors of the economy should be based on collective as well as articulated and shared interests of the citizens. This can be achieved by deliberate and concerted efforts in involving the citizens in policy and programmes designed for socio-economic development. This will give them a sense of belonging and make them co-partners and stakeholders in service provision. By extension, they will see the need to cooperate and support governments' initiatives in respect to policy and decisions taken to provide efficient services.
2. In order to be responsive to the needs of the citizens there is need for the public servants to focus on collaborative processes; build relationship of trust with and among citizens. In this case they will be able to determine the felt needs of the public and provide efficient services.
3. Policy choices, programme design and implementation of the Nigeria public service have been hampered by corrupt practices among public officials. This must be tackled as NPS emphasizes transparency and accountability. The Nigerian government should shun selective judgment and double standard treatment in the fight against corrupt practices in the public sector. Experience has shown in Nigeria that there are sacred cows who must not be touched despite allegations of corruption against them. This unconventional practice must be stopped. Those found to be culpable of corrupt acts should be seriously dealt with according to the law as this is the only way government can show commitment in sanitizing or cleansing the public service of corrupt practices.

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