

THE ROLE OF NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT IN ENHANCING PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY: A CASE STUDY OF EDO SPECIALIST HOSPITAL, BENIN CITY, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigates the role of New Public Management (NPM) in enhancing public service delivery in Nigeria, using Edo Specialist Hospital, Benin City, Edo State, as a case study. Employing a descriptive survey approach, data were collected from 288 respondents through questionnaires. The research explores the relationship between accountability and quality of health service, the impact of technology on mortality rates, and the link between management efficiency and health worker productivity. Grounded in public choice theory, the study identifies a positive correlation between public accountability and quality of service and demonstrates that technology significantly improves service delivery and reduces mortality rates. Furthermore, improved management efficiency is linked to increased health worker productivity. The study recommends intensive training and capacity building for management and staff on NPM principles to enhance service delivery.

Keywords: *Accountability, Health workers, New Public Management, Public servants, Service quality,*

Introduction

The increasing challenges facing Nigeria's public sector necessitate organizational restructuring to improve service delivery (Olaopa, 2014). New Public Management (NPM) has emerged as a significant paradigm shift, advocating for the adoption of private sector and business approaches within the public sector (Ibietan & Oni, 2013). NPM emphasizes market mechanisms, customer-focused service, and performance-based management (Umaru, 2013). Its core tenets include management orientation, efficiency, performance appraisal, leaner bureaucracies, market principles, competition, cost reduction, and managerial discretion (Sharma, Sadana, & Kaur, 2012). Essentially, NPM aims to achieve better results with fewer resources by streamlining bureaucracy and applying business principles to governmental activities. Effective public service delivery is crucial for nation-building (Adejuwon, 2014). It encompasses the activities of the public sector in meeting citizens' needs through the provision of essential services (Onwe & Nwakamma, 2015). Healthcare, a critical component of public service, has undergone significant changes due to NPM implementation. While NPM in healthcare aims to ensure equitable medical treatment, its implementation has generated debate, particularly regarding the balance between service quality and financial objectives (Jidwin & Mail, 2015; Ibietan, 2013). This study examines the impact of NPM on public service delivery in Nigeria, focusing on Edo Specialist Hospital, Benin

City. This research work specifically evaluated the nature of relationship between accountability in the public service and service quality of health workers in Edo specialist hospital Benin City Edo State Nigeria. The study also ascertain the nature of relationship between the use of technology and reduction in mortality rate in Edo Specialist Hospital, Benin City, Edo State Nigeria and establish the nexus between improved management efficiency and productivity of health workers in Edo Specialist Hospital.

Problem Statement

Public service delivery in Nigeria is often characterized by inefficiency, ineffectiveness, and a lack of responsiveness to citizen needs (World Bank, 2012). These challenges stem from issues such as lack of accountability, transparency, high administrative costs, and lack of commitment. Given these challenges, this study investigated the impact of NPM on public service delivery at Edo Specialist Hospital, Benin City, addressing the following research questions:

- i. What is the relationship between accountability and service quality among health workers at Edo Specialist Hospital?
- ii. How does the use of technology influence mortality rates at Edo Specialist Hospital?
- iii. What is the relationship between management efficiency and the productivity of health workers at Edo Specialist Hospital?

Literature Review

Existing literature illustrates the complex link between NPM and public service delivery. Igbokwe-Ibeto, Osakede, & Nwobi (2020) underline the significance of bureaucratic responsibility for effective public sector administration. The study "Public Service Recruitment Practices and Implications for Sustainable Development in Ebonyi State, Nigeria" was conducted by Ukeje et al. in 2019. The study looked at the relationship between hiring practices and ensuring the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The design of the survey was descriptive. Structured questionnaires were used to gather primary data, and the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 software was used to analyze the data and calculate means, frequencies, and percentages. According to the results gathered from three distinct ministries within the Ebonyi State Civil Service (EBSCS), the hiring procedures are marked by professionalism, nepotism, and political meddling that lacks merit. This suggests that Ebonyi State's promised sustainable growth may not materialize. Based on the results, the researchers suggested that in order for the nation to meet the SDG targets, a new public sector reform should be implemented. The study "The Role of Market Orientation in Public Housing Companies" was conducted by Amadi (2018). An analysis of how Missouri affects construction strategies. The goal of the study was to examine how Swedish public housing enterprises handle market orientation conceptions and how this affects their decisions about construction strategies. To investigate 289 public housing units, a descriptive survey research design was used. A systematic questionnaire was used to gather study data, and a statistical software for social sciences was used for analysis. Among other things, the results showed that the public housing firms under study were focused on the market. They produced data on the wants, needs, and values of their customers, examined the tactics used by their rivals, and responded suitably. Better housing services were subsequently made available to the general population in Sweden as a result. Therefore, in order to deliver high-quality services to the public, the researcher suggested that more public sector companies in the study area adopt a market-oriented approach.

In a study by Ita and David (2018). The researchers examined the relationship between the state's bureaucratic practices and the political idea of democracy. Documentary analysis served as the

paper's foundation, with an indication of survey (interview) technique. It was noted that Akwa Ibom State's bureaucracy has demonstrated excellent governance by demonstrating a reasonable level of involvement in the execution of government policies and programs aimed at the welfare of the populace. The study also pointed out that the state bureaucracy needed to be reorganized to address various undesirable trends, including a bad attitude toward work, incorrect postings and placement of staff in positions of responsibility, and corrupt behavior by public officials. In light of these conclusions, it was suggested, among other things, that the values of accountability, transparency, and probity be given top priority both inside and outside of the state bureaucracy as a rule and in practice. This would increase the bureaucracy's efficacy and efficiency in the direction of democratic governance.

In order to establish the connection between poor service delivery and developmental failure in post-independence Nigeria, Badmus (2017) conducted an investigation titled "The Travail of Service Delivery and Developmental Failure in post-independence Nigeria." The study used a content analytical technique to review pertinent related studies and makes the case that attitudes toward poor service delivery have had a negative impact on Nigeria's development programs.

Therefore, the paper suggests that in order for Nigeria to develop quickly, the government and its officials' attitudes toward service delivery should change for the better. This is especially important in order to ensure fairness, responsiveness, equity, accountability, and justifiable profit maximization—all of which are essential components for increasing public trust in the government and its institutions. This will help the government secure the support needed for developmental programs and discourage or lessen other anti-developmental pathologies in Nigeria. The NPM paradigm aims to restructure public sector organizations, especially by substituting dynamic systems for inflexible hierarchical structures. Raising the degree of accountability and autonomy among public managers and fostering an entrepreneurial culture about the use of public resources to boost productivity are two ways to eliminate inflexible institutions. The other component of changing public sector organizations is a conscious attempt to swap out the top-down, authoritarian decision-making process with one that encourages a consensus-based, bottom-up approach. The essence of this reformation is to ensure sufficient engagement of users of public sector services and bringing together all stakeholders. Additionally, a consensus-based, bottom-up strategy encourages decentralization of authority and offers a variety of service delivery options to citizens. The adoption of quasi-marketization of services by public institutions is more significant. In this sense, public organizations are more productive and efficient when market ideas are applied. Additionally, it encourages transparency and a results-driven culture, both of which are uncommon in the majority of public sector firms (Manzoor, 2014). The NPM concept is based on the idea that a unique activity of management can be applied to the public sector in the same way that it has been applied in the private sector. It consists of several components, such as the devolution of management control with better reporting and monitoring mechanisms, the adoption of private sector management practices in the public sector, a focus on efficiency, a shift away from input controls, rules, and procedures toward output measurement and performance targets, and a preference for private ownership, contestable provision, and contracting out of public services. Hood (1991) highlighted the key components of NPM in Edwin and Gbargaye (2011), from which a large number of the concepts of agencification can be identified.

Hands on professional management in the public sector is one of the main components of NPM reform. Letting the managers handle things is what NPM entails. The usual defense for Hands on professional management is that responsibility for action must be clearly assigned in order to be

considered accountable. Clear performance metrics and criteria, setting performance targets and defining goals are necessary for the New public Management practice. This set forth the criteria for performance evaluation in the public sector. An increased focus on output controls which illustrates the necessity of emphasizing outcomes over formalities. The public sector is moving toward unit disaggregation. Large organizations are being divided into "corporatized units that are productive." The public sector is becoming more competitive, which includes "the move to term contracts and public tendering procedures. This study provided an empirical analysis on the role of new public management approach in enhancing public service delivery. From the analysis accountability in the public service has a positive correlation with quality of service. The study identify that lack of technological advancement have a negative effect on the culture of service render in the public sector.

Theoretical Framework

The Public Choice Theory, which holds that market systems are best for decision-making and service delivery, serves as the foundation for this investigation. The idea criticizes representative democracies and public bureaucracies for their innate propensities toward inefficiency, oversupply, and disdain for the wishes of the populace (Walther, 2015; Eziani, 2005). In line with NPM's tenets, Public Choice Theory promotes institutional reforms and techno-managerial skills. In order to enhance service delivery, hospitals and other public sector organizations have embraced the New Public Management (NPM) paradigm. However, there is contention over how well NPM works to improve service delivery at Edo Specialist Hospital. The Public Choice Theory (PCT) is used in this study to investigate how NPM affects Edo Specialist Hospital's service delivery. The PCT framework makes the assumption that everyone acts in their own best interests, including public sector employees. Public Choice Theory is a branch of economics that studies the behavior of individuals and organizations in the public sector. It provides a framework for analyzing the incentives, motivations, and decision-making processes of public sector actors, including bureaucrats, politicians, and citizens. Public Choice Theory provides valuable insights into the factors that influence service delivery in the public sector. Applying Public Choice Theory to NPM at Edo Specialist Hospital, NPM reforms frequently incorporate decentralization, competition, performance-based compensation, and market-based processes into the provision of public services. This paper argues that scholars might better comprehend the intricate dynamics that occur in Edo Specialist Hospital by applying public choice theory.

Methodology

The study adopts cross sectional and descriptive research design, staff and managements of Edo State Specialist Hospital, Benin City, Nigeria constitute the population of study. A simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample of 288 respondents the data collected through questionnaire were analyzed using frequencies and simple percentages.

Data Analysis

Table1: Research Question 1: What is the nature of relationship between accountability in the public service and health service quality of health workers service in Edo specialist hospital Benin City Edo State Nigeria?

Statement	Agree	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Neutral	Total Percentage
There is an active dedicated complaint hotlines and complaint management systems in Edo Specialist Hospital.	89 30.9%	51 17.7%	58 20.2%	45 15.6%	45 15.6%	288 100%
Our doctors and other personnel are easily accessible by patients and other people that come to the Hospital.	58 20.2%	87 30.2%	60 20.8%	50 17.4%	33 11.4%	288 100%
There is an effective welfare scheme for all staff in the hospital to make them more committed and accountable.	73 25.3%	40 13.9%	50 17.4%	56 19.4%	69 24.0%	288 100%

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 1; shows that there is a relationship between accountability and health service quality, in Edo specialist hospital." we can observe more that 50 percent of respondent agree that there exists a mechanism for accountability in the hospital and significant number of the respondent agree that the mechanism for accountability in the hospital is a motivation for effectiveness and performance.

Table 2:

Research Question 2: What is the nature of relationship between use of technology and reduction in mortality rate in Edo Specialist hospital Benin City Edo State Nigeria?

Statement	Agree	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Neutral	Total percentage
The mortality and fatality rate has reduced drastically since the application of ICT.	89 30.9%	73 25.3%	35 12.1%	65 22.6%	26 9.1%	288 100%
The use of technology has increased performance in the hospital.	60 20.8%	90 31.2%	58 20.3 %	51 17.7%	29 10.0%	288 100%
The use of ICT has made our work less stressful.	69 24.0%	73 25.3%	56 19.4%	50 17.4	40 13.9%	288 100%

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 2; shows “the nature of relationship between use of technology and reduction in mortality rate in Edo Specialist hospital Benin City Edo State Nigeria. From the analysis it can be deduce that there is a positive relationship between the use of technology and reduction in mortality rate. From the table it is crystal clear that majority of the respondents are of the opinion that technological advancement and application in the study environment led to better/quality service delivery.

Table 3:

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between improved management efficiency and productivity of public health workers in the Edo specialist hospital Benin City Edo State Nigeria?

Statement	Agree	Strongly agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Neutral	Total percentage
In Edo Specialist hospital, patients are promptly and patiently attended to.	89 30.9%	51 17.7%	58 20.2%	45 15.6%	45 15.6%	288 100%
There is an active quality assurance unit in Edo Specialist hospital.	60 20.8%	90 31.2%	58 20.3 %	51 17.7%	29 10.0%	288 100%
There is improved service delivery in the hospital since this set of management were employed.	87 30.2%	60 20.8%	58 20.2	50 17.4%	33 11.4%	288 100%

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 3; shows the relationship between improve management efficiency and productivity of public health workers in the Edo specialist hospital Benin City Edo State Nigeria. From the data above there is significant relationship between management efficiency and the productivity of health workers in Edo specialist hospital. From the first statement to the last statement majority of respondents in the study environment are of the opinion that there a positive impact of management efficiency and productivity of health workers in Edo specialist hospital Benin City, Edo State Nigeria.

Discussion Of Findings

Accountability and Service Quality: The results show that accountability and the quality of health services are positively correlated. The existence of accountability systems, such complaint hotlines, and their contribution to better service were acknowledged by the respondents. In Nigeria, public sector management and public service delivery are weakened by a lack of accountability, according to studies by Igboke-Ibeto et al. (2020). The NPM paradigm aims to restructure public sector organizations, especially by substituting dynamic systems for inflexible hierarchical structures. Raising the degree of accountability and autonomy among public managers and fostering an entrepreneurial culture about the use of public resources to boost productivity ways to eliminate inflexible institutions.

Technology and Mortality Rates: The findings show a favorable relationship between lower mortality rates and the use of technology. According to the respondents, technology has improved healthcare personnel' performance and decreased their stress levels. According to Oyegoke (2013), in addition to providing quick access to medical records and prescriptions without having to search through files on shelves, the e-health approach can also reduce issues like patients waiting for their turn, missing patient cards and files, a lack of information, etc. Patients will receive better care, have a higher chance of surviving, and receive adequate care because doctors will have more information about them, which will speed up their work to satisfy patients. Ogbeide and Enabunene (2022) state that in order for Nigerian healthcare services to be more effective and meet international standards, medical care must be improved through the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in healthcare delivery systems. Furthermore, the results of this study support those of Olorode and Oladunni (2019), who found that ICT has been incorporated into the healthcare delivery system, particularly in developed nations where doctors find it difficult to carry out their duties without using ICT tools like computers or network facilities for the prevention of disease and injuries, the promotion of healthy living, the alleviation of pain and suffering, the treatment of individuals with disorders, the prevention of premature death, etc.

Productivity and Management Efficiency: The study discovered a strong correlation between the productivity of health workers and management efficiency. The presence of a quality assurance unit, improved service delivery, and improvements in patient care were mentioned by respondents. This study reaffirms how crucial good management techniques are to raising the output and caliber of services provided by healthcare professionals. Robinson, (2015) used performance management as an example of administrative effectiveness, which is equivalent to "moving toward a focus on results or value for money and working to infuse quality management principles." Obi and Nwanegbo, (2006) asserts that inadequate resource management, a lack of development, and the lack of training of those working in the health sector are among the largest obstacles facing Nigeria's health sector. Amadi (2018) argues that with quick improvements from the government, medical professionals, and the implementation of the new public management approach, the health sector can modernize and start achieving the 21st century millennium goal.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings suggest that NPM principles, particularly accountability and the use of technology, Can positively impact public service delivery in the healthcare sector. The study reinforces the importance of effective management practices in improving health worker productivity and service quality. The study, therefore, conclude that NPM Can significantly enhance public service delivery. By adopting NPM principles, public organisations can become more productive, efficient, and responsive to Citizen needs. In this regard, this study added to literature the view that decentralizing public services, improving accountability and citizen satisfaction were essential in making public organizations more productive and effective.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Invest in improved technology and enhance customer complaint systems to further improve service delivery. Findings from this study shows that the use of technology and improve service delivery are positively correlated. The government and the management of public institution in Nigeria should invest more in technology and ensure that they are properly use and manage. There should an improve accountability mechanism in the public sector. The government and managers of the public service should develop a

- system where customers came channel there complains because finding shows that enhance customer complain system is positively corrected with service delivery in the public sector.
2. Provide intensive training and capacity building for management and staff on NPM principles and their application in service delivery. Staff development and training should be done regularly. Public servants should properly be motivated to work and the government should sponsor workers on the use of ICT/Technology.

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