African Journal of Politics and Administrative Studies (AJPAS)
17(2) (December, 2024):336-354
Available online at https://www.ajpasebsu.org.ng/
https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ajpas.v17i2.19 p-ISSN: 2787-0367; e-ISSN: 2787-0359

New Public Management Reforms and the Performance of Public Enterprises: An Assessment of Privatization in Nigeria's Telecommunications Sector

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Abstract

The implementation of New Public Management (NPM) reforms, particularly privatization, has been a significant strategy adopted by governments worldwide to enhance the performance of public enterprises. This article focuses on the telecommunications sector in Nigeria, where privatization was introduced as part of broader economic reforms in the early 2000s. The objective is to assess the influence of privatization on the performance of public enterprises within this sector. The article is anchored on public choice theory. It is qualitative in nature, relying on secondary sources of data, such as, journals, textbooks, official publications and internet materials. It observes that privatization of public enterprises in the telecommunication sector in Nigeria has led to improvements in operational efficiency, increased investment inflows, and expanded service coverage. However, challenges such as regulatory effectiveness, equity in service provision, and the socio-economic impact on marginalized populations remain significant concerns. It contributes to the broader discourse on NPM reforms by providing empirical insights into the complexities and outcomes of privatization within Nigeria's telecommunications sector. It concludes with policy recommendations aimed at optimizing the benefits of privatization while addressing its associated challenges to ensure sustainable and inclusive growth in the sector.

Keywords: New Public Management, Public Enterprises, Privatisation, Operational Efficiency, Service Delivery, Public Sector Performance

Citation of article: Adejuwon, K. D et al (2024). New Public Management Reforms and the Performance of Public Enterprises: An Assessment of Privatization in Nigeria's Telecommunications Sector, African Journal of Politics and Administrative Studies, AJPAS, 17(2)**:**336-354

Date submitted: 18/06/2024 **Date Accepted:** 16/07/2024 **Date Published:** December, 2024

African Journal of Politics and Administrative Studies (AJPAS) Copy Right: © Author (s)
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Introduction

Over the years, public enterprises have been adjudged to be a critical prerequisite for the development of any nation. All nations that are among the league of developed nations today regarded as world powers, have achieved certain development feats via the establishment of these enterprises (Agabi & Orokpo, 2014). Public enterprises are established globally for the principal purpose of propelling the social and economic development of the nations. Though, these enterprises are more of social infrastructure driven to improve the welfare of the citizenries at affordable rate (Paul, Yunusa & Danjuma, 2016). The establishment of public enterprises by governments of developing economies has been identified as a strategic approach to accelerated economic and national development. The main prop was the fostering and harnessing of economic potentials, balancing and control of strategic and social interest of the country, full employment as well as generation of revenue for the development of infrastructure (Kenobi, 2015). Public enterprise has long been an important instrument of public intervention in the development process in Nigeria (Anyebe, 2018).

The quest to reinvent government emerged as a dominant reform initiative in the United States during the 1990s. Reinvention made its way into the agenda of many governments through the work of Osborne and Gaebler (1992), while the use of the term "reinvention" faded with the onset of the new century, the basic maxims of this initiative continue to dominate discussions of administrative reform and underpin the concept of the New Public Management (NPM) (Duezeh, 2020; Riccucci &Thompson 2007). New Public Management aims to transform public sector management by incorporating private sector principles and practices. In Nigeria, the implementation of NPM has sought to improve the performance of public enterprises by enhancing efficiency, accountability, and service delivery. The impact of NPM on public enterprises in Nigeria can be examined through various reforms, outcomes, and challenges.

New Public Management as an administrative approach emerged in the late 20th century, emphasizing efficiency, effectiveness, and the use of private sector management techniques in the public sector (Olajide-Arise, et al., 2023). This approach has been applied in various countries, including Nigeria, to improve public service delivery. The paper examines the influence of New Public Management Reforms on the performance of public enterprises in

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Nigeria, with focus on privatisation exercise in the telecommunication sector in Nigeria. It critically examines the nature of the performance of public enterprises in Nigeria. It gives an assessment of the influence of New Public Management Reforms in Nigeria, focusing on the privatization of the Telecommunications Sector in Nigeria, and provides an assessment of the performance in the post-privatization era.

Conceptual Review

There are three concepts central to the discourse in this section. These include: New Public Management, Public Enterprises, and Privatisation

New Public Management: NPM emerged as a response to perceived inefficiencies and bureaucratic shortcomings within traditional public administration. NPM was coined in the late 1980s by Christopher Hood to denote a new stress on the importance of management and "production engineering" in public service delivery often linked to the doctrines of economic rationalism (Nchuchuwe & Adejuwon, 2015). It is a vision, an ideology or a bundle of particular management approaches and techniques. NPM advocates for applying private sector management techniques to improve the performance and responsiveness of public sector organizations.

New Public Management represents a paradigmatic break from the traditional model of public administration (Fatile & Adejuwon, 2010). New Public Management is concerned with performance improvement and presumes that a distinct activity "management' can be applied to both the public and private sectors (Musa, 2006). To Pfiffner (2004), New Public Management as the entire collection of tactics and strategies that seek to enhance the performance of the public sector. NPM has a focus on improving efficiency, horizontally specialising in the public apparatuses, conceptualisation, marketization, a private sector management style, explicit performance standards and output control (Adejuwon & Okewale, 2013). NPM emphasises that professional management expertise, being portable and paramount over technical expertise, require a high degree of discretionary power to achieve results. It was about getting things done better in the public sector, and was the culmination of various reform efforts in different areas of traditional public administration (Afegbua & Adejuwon, 2009).

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The focal point of the New Public Management is the shift in model from Administrator Model to Management Model: The management model represents an internal culture of making managers manage, as opposed to the administrator model which values compliance to rigid pre-determined rules and regulations (Dibie, 2014).

Public Enterprises: The term public enterprise is not susceptible or underpinned to any exact definition. Adeoti (2005) see public enterprise means an agency of a predominantly industrial, commercial or financial character, entirely or partly owned and substantially controlled by the Federal, State or Local Government. Anyadike (2013) defined a public enterprise as an incorporated or large unincorporated enterprise in which public authorities hold a majority of the shares and/or can exercise control over management decisions. Felix (2021) defines public enterprise as a government institution established to manage certain activities necessitating business-like administration. Public enterprises are non-profit oriented organizations that have their objectives among others, the provision of social goods and services and which is either partly owned or fully owned by the government (Okpata, 2004). Obadan (2000) defined public enterprises as organizations whose primary functions is the production and sale of goods and/or services and in which government or other government controlled agencies have no ownership stake that is sufficient to ensure their control over the enterprises regardless of how actively that control is exercised. According to Adamolekun (2002) public enterprise is an organization that is set as a corporate body and as part of the governmental apparatus for an entrepreneurial or entrepreneurial- like objectives.

Public enterprise has feature that give it a distinct outlook from other institutions within the realms of public and civil service. It is therefore expedient to express some of these salient features in a bid to show case the present state public enterprises and challenges; Public enterprise is a legal entity established by law and therefore can sue and be sued. It can own its own property and invest in other business areas.

Concept of Privatisation: Privatization refers to the process of transferring ownership or control of a business, industry, or service from the public sector (government) to the private sector (private individuals or companies). This can involve selling off state-owned enterprises, deregulating industries to allow private competition, or outsourcing public services to private companies (Azih, 2020; Yusufu et al. 2022). To Iheme (2020), privatization

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is "any of a variety of measures adopted by the government to expose a public enterprise to competition or to bring in private ownership or control or management into a public enterprise and accordingly to reduce the usual weight of public ownership or control or management.

Raji et al. (2016) averred that the term privatization involves handing over of properties from the government to private entities. They went further, that the concept suggests disengagement of state or government from enterprises that can be best run or managed by private individuals. The privatization and commercialization (PC) Decree No 25 of 1988, the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE) Act of 1993 and amended Bureau of Public Enterprise (BPE) Act of 1999 defined privatization as reorganization of part or whole of the property and other shares held by state or any of its agencies in businesses whether partly or wholly owned by the government. The goals of privatization typically include improving efficiency, reducing government expenditure, enhancing service quality, and fostering competition. However, it can also lead to concerns about job losses, reduced public accountability, and unequal access to services.

Theoretical Foundation

Hardly do we discuss and analyze concepts meaningfully in social sciences without linking them to or understanding them from some theoretical viewpoint or orientation. This paper is anchored on public choice theory.

Public Choice Theory: Public choice theory applies economic principles to the study of political behavior, viewing public officials and politicians as self-interested agents rather than purely altruistic actors. It emerged as a critique of traditional public administration and the inefficiencies associated with bureaucratic government. Public choice theory suggests that individuals within the public sector act in their own self-interest, and that market-like mechanisms can align their incentives with public goals. This approach tries to explains the behaviour and provide sets of standards about what the government does. The theory assumes that people are rational, utility-maximizing individual and that economic efficiency becomes the prime criterion for judging the political, social and economic system (Okolie & Udom, 2023). Consequently, all the government does is judged in terms of the impact on individual choice and economic efficiency.

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Public choice posits that the nature of goods and services determines whether they should be provided through the market system or through the public sector (Adeyemo & Salami, 2008). Fatile and Adejuwon (2017) noted that the importance of public choice theory is that it offers a coherent explanation for seemingly non-rational policy-making by governments, explains why "the public interest" may not be achieved. Public choice theory's assumption that all political actors are primarily motivated by self-interest is seen as overly cynical. Critics point out that many individuals in public service are motivated by altruism, a sense of duty, or the desire to contribute to the public good. This assumption can lead to an overly negative view of politics and public service. The theory's skepticism towards government intervention and regulation can be seen as ideologically biased. Critics argue that public choice theory tends to overemphasize government failures while downplaying the potential benefits of government action and the prevalence of market failures.

Public choice theory has significantly influenced NPM by providing a rationale for reforming public sector management. Public Choice Theory's emphasis on self-interested behavior and government failure underpins the drive for NPM reforms, which aim to reduce inefficiency and waste. NPM incorporates mechanisms to align the interests of public officials with those of the public, such as performance-based rewards, accountability measures, and competitive pressures. Public Choice Theory supports the idea that decentralizing authority can reduce the negative impacts of bureaucratic inefficiencies and allow for more responsive and effective governance.

Methodology

The article is qualitative in nature. It used the secondary source of data gathering relevant information. The secondary data source included journal articles, newspapers, magazines, government gazettes amongst others in analyzing salient issues as regards new public management reforms, such as, privatization policy in Nigeria.

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Discussion of Main Issues

This section deals with the discussion of the objectives of raised in the introductory aspect of the paper. The discussion below related to the implementation of new public management reform and the performance of public enterprises, with focus on the telecommunication sector in Nigeria.

An Overview of the Performance of Public Enterprises in Nigeria:

The performance of public enterprises in Nigeria has been a topic of significant interest and concern over the years. Public enterprises in Nigeria refer to government-owned or controlled entities that operate in various sectors of the economy, including utilities, transportation, manufacturing, and services. Public enterprises in Nigeria were established primarily to promote economic development, provide essential services, and support industrialization efforts. They were seen as instruments for achieving national development goals, including employment generation and infrastructure development. Public enterprises in Nigeria were established to propel socio-economic development and to guard against the control of the economy from foreign domination and exploitation (Okolie & Udom, 2023).

The performance of Nigerian enterprises was compromised in many instances by the political leaders who refuse the same resource and freedom of operation which are readily made available to expatriates (Ishaku, Timothy & Uwaeke, 2024). There has been inefficient utilization of resources by public enterprises coupled with heavy dependent on the national treasury for financial operations and their activities characterized by mismanagement of funds and operations, endemic corruption, misuse of monopoly power and bureaucratic suffocation from supervisory ministries and its inability to enhance the social and economic well-being of the people no doubt placed government under tremendous pressure to initiate various economic reforms with privatization as one of such reform programme as panacea to public enterprises quagmire (Agabi & Orokpo, 2014).

Public enterprises are created in all countries of the world to accelerate economic and social development. Yet, increasing evidence indicates that most public enterprises in Nigeria either do not contribute strongly to national development or do not perform their public service functions effectively and efficiently, leading to policy-makers engaging in continuing debates over whether or not state-owned corporations are viable to economic and social development; and why so many of them have failed to deliver the services for which they were created, and how their management can be improved upon to achieve efficient service delivery and engender national development (Ogohi, 2014). Many public enterprises in Nigeria have been plagued by inefficiency, bureaucratic red tape, and lack of accountability. This inefficiency often leads to poor service delivery and financial losses.

It is quite surprising that the events of 21st century has influenced the operations of public enterprises in Nigeria making it to become a little more advanced, contrary to the traditional order for which it was known. This is because it has got broad range of interests both in its management and operation. The operations of public enterprises is no more focused on economic benefits, as usually the case in the ancient and medieval eras, but in service delivery as it is in 21st century (Shebbs, 2015). The public enterprises in Nigeria are plagued with what Onah (2010) called 'Pig Push strategy' aspiring to develop all areas of the organization at the same time without any strategic means mapped out for that. No vision or mission statements are adequately pursued with vigour. Most public enterprises in Nigeria over the years had sunk into oblivion even at a point of remaining insolvent despite huge amount of funds that are yearly sub-vented to them without any meaningful progress (Duru & Anigbata, 2015).

The performance of public enterprises in Nigeria reflects a complex interplay of historical, institutional, and governance challenges. While reform efforts have been undertaken to address these challenges, sustained improvements in efficiency, service delivery, and financial sustainability remain key priorities for the Nigerian government and stakeholders involved in the management and oversight of public enterprises. The level of corruption been perpetrated by some heads of Nigerian's public enterprises can be measured with 'geometric ruler of corruption'. The type of corruption in Nigerian public enterprises is systemic corruption. In fact, it can be safely adduced that it is endemic and pandemic in the public enterprises in the country. As stated by Fatile and Adejuwon (2010), Corruption is a complex multifaceted and persistent cancerous phenomenon which bedevils Nigeria. Corruption in Nigeria has become a malignant disease that has eaten deep down all the fabrics of the Nigerian society.

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The performance of public enterprises in Nigeria has been largely underwhelming, characterized by financial instability, operational inefficiencies, and poor service delivery. Efforts to reform these enterprises through privatization, commercialization, and PPPs have yielded mixed results. While there have been successes, particularly in sectors like telecommunications, persistent challenges such as corruption, inadequate governance, and political interference continue to hinder the overall performance of public enterprises in Nigeria. Ongoing reforms and sustained efforts to improve transparency, accountability, and efficiency are essential for enhancing the performance of these critical entities.

An assessment of the influence of New Public Management Reforms in Nigeria:

NPM has had a significant influence on the performance of public enterprises worldwide. It seeks to use private sector management practices in the public sector to improve efficiency, effectiveness, and service delivery. The arrival of New Public Management represents one of the most significant events for the study and practice of public administration. New Public Management points to the failures and inadequacies of public sector performance over time and the problems lying squarely in the nature and processes of public sector activity and traditional public administration (Adejuwon, 2014). In the words of Dibie (2014), the New Public Management arises from a critique of traditional public administration. This is borne out of the inflexibility of the system and its emphasis on control. This is very pervasive in Africa and other developing nations, where politics and administration are inseparable.

NPM encourages public enterprises to focus more on customer needs and satisfaction. This shift from bureaucracy to customer-centric approaches aims to improve service delivery and responsiveness. There is often a move towards performance-based rewards and incentives for employees in public enterprises under NPM. This is aimed at aligning individual and organizational goals with performance outcomes. NPM emphasizes efficiency, effectiveness, and performance measurement. Public enterprises under NPM are expected to adopt business-like practices to improve their operational efficiency and deliver services more effectively. NPM advocates for decentralization of decision-making and greater managerial autonomy within public enterprises. This shift aims to make these organizations more responsive to market demands and customer needs.

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Nigeria, grappling with inefficiencies, corruption, and poor service delivery in its public enterprises, adopted NPM reforms to revitalize its public sector. These reforms aimed to make public enterprises more efficient, accountable, and responsive to citizens' needs. Nigeria, like many other countries, adopted NPM reforms to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its public sector. This adoption was driven by the need to enhance service delivery, reduce corruption, and make public enterprises more accountable and performance-oriented (Makar, et al, 2023). In Nigeria, the government has undertaken various reform programs under the influence of NPM, aimed at privatizing and commercializing state-owned enterprises (Okolie & Udom, 2023). The Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE) was established to oversee the privatization process, which aimed to reduce the financial burden on the government and improve efficiency through private sector participation.

The Nigerian government has initiated various reform efforts aimed at improving the performance of public enterprises. These reforms include privatization, commercialization, and public-private partnerships (PPPs). PPPs seek to leverage private sector expertise and investment to improve infrastructure and service delivery. The Nigerian government has pursued decentralization as part of NPM reforms, granting more autonomy to public enterprises. This shift is intended to make these enterprises more flexible and responsive to local needs. For example, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) underwent restructuring to enhance its operational efficiency and managerial autonomy.

NPM has led to the introduction of performance management systems in public enterprises. These systems include setting clear targets, performance contracts, and regular evaluations. For instance, the Federal Ministry of Finance initiated the Performance Management Framework to monitor and evaluate the performance of public enterprises, with a focus on accountability and transparency. NPM advocates for introducing competition within the public sector, either by exposing public enterprises to competition from private firms or by creating internal markets (Ishaku, Timothy & Uwaeke, 2024). This competition can drive improvements in quality and efficiency as public enterprises strive to match or exceed the performance of their private sector counterparts.

NPM promotes the adoption of private sector management practices within public enterprises. This includes performance-related pay, outsourcing non-core activities, and

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adopting modern management information systems. Additionally, public-private partnerships (PPPs) have become more common, where public enterprises collaborate with private sector entities to deliver services or infrastructure projects. These partnerships can bring in private sector efficiency and capital, potentially improving the overall performance of public enterprises (Okolie & Udom, 2023). The adoption of PPPs has been a key aspect of NPM in Nigeria. This approach has been used to attract private sector investment and expertise in various sectors, such as infrastructure, transportation, and healthcare. The Lekki Toll Road project and the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway concession are notable examples of successful PPP initiatives.

The liberalization and subsequent privatization of the telecommunications sector in Nigeria is often cited as a successful example of NPM. The privatisation of Nigerian Telecommunications Limited (NITEL) and liberalization of the telecom sector have drastically improved service quality, reduced costs, and increased competition. The entry of private firms like MTN and Glo led to a competitive market, reduced prices, improved service quality, and expanded network coverage. The unbundling and privatization of PHCN aimed to improve efficiency, attract private investment, and enhance service delivery (Ekong, et al, 2020). While there have been improvements in some areas, persistent issues such as power outages and inefficiencies remain significant challenges (Omoregbe & Ogaga, 2023).

NPM emphasizes a customer-oriented approach, and Nigerian public enterprises have increasingly adopted measures to improve service delivery. The introduction of e-government services, such as the Treasury Single Account (TSA) (Fatile & Adejuwon, 2017b), and the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS), has streamlined processes, reduced corruption, and improved service delivery to citizens. To align with NPM principles, Nigeria has undertaken regulatory reforms to strengthen corporate governance in public enterprises. The establishment of the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) and the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) are examples of regulatory bodies created to ensure transparency, accountability, and effective oversight.

NPM reforms in Nigeria represent a significant shift towards adopting private sector practices in the public sector to improve efficiency, accountability, and service delivery. While there have been notable successes, the reforms face ongoing challenges, particularly in addressing

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corruption and ensuring consistent and equitable implementation (Ishaku, Timothy & Uwaeke, 2024). Continued efforts and adjustments are necessary to fully realize the potential benefits of NPM reforms in Nigeria. The influence of New Public Management on the performance of public enterprises in Nigeria has been profound, driving significant reforms aimed at improving efficiency, accountability, and service delivery. While there have been notable successes, the challenges and limitations of NPM implementation highlight the need for continuous improvement and adaptation to the Nigerian context.

Privatization of the Telecommunications Sector in Nigeria: Success or Failure?

The telecommunications sector in Nigeria, once dominated by the state-owned Nigerian Telecommunications Limited (NITEL), was characterized by inefficiency, poor service quality, and limited coverage. The NPM-inspired reforms led to significant changes in this sector, primarily through privatization and liberalization. The Nigerian government liberalized the telecommunications sector, allowing private firms to enter the market and compete. The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) was established in 1992 to regulate the sector, ensuring fair competition and protecting consumer interests. NITEL was partially privatized, with the government selling stakes to private investors (Yusufu, Yusufu, & Abdullahi, 2022). This was aimed at injecting private capital and expertise into the sector to improve efficiency and expand service coverage.

The introduction of Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) technology marked a significant milestone. Licenses were awarded to several private operators, leading to a rapid expansion of mobile telephony, including mobile network providers like MTN, Glo, Airtel, and 9mobile. This increased competition and led to significant improvements in service quality and availability. Privatization of the telecommunications sector in Nigeria, marked by the liberalization of the market and the establishment of the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) in 1992, has had a profound impact on the country's telecommunications industry. The discussion below gives a detailed assessment of the performance post-privatization thus:

Market Growth and Competition: Privatization led to a significant increase in competition within the telecommunications sector. Before privatization, the sector was dominated by the state-owned Nigerian Telecommunications Limited (NITEL), which had a limited capacity to

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expand services and improve infrastructure. As at the time of Nigerian independence in 1960, there were few telephone lines 18,724, for the over 40 million people and this was absolutely inadequate (Ijewere & Gbandi, 2012). In the year 2000, NITEL served only 30,000 phone subscribers but today, Nigeria's phone subscribers crossed above 200 million, an attestation to the success of privatisation in fostering growth and accessibility in the telecommunication sector (Subair, & Oke, 2020). Equitably, growth in the telecommunications sector contributes to the fostering growth in the country's technology industry.

Post-privatization, multiple private operators entered the market, including major players like MTN, Globacom, Airtel, and 9mobile (Matthew & Kazaure, 2020). Competition among private operators drove improvements in service quality, customer service, and technological innovation. The number of active mobile subscriptions skyrocketed from approximately 450,000 in 2001 to over 198 million by 2021. In addition, mobile phone penetration increased from less than 1% in 2001 to around 98% in 2021 (Omerede & Ogaga, 2023).

Investment and Infrastructure Development: Privatization attracted significant foreign and domestic investment in the telecommunications infrastructure. This investment facilitated the expansion of networks and improved service delivery. Telecommunications infrastructure expanded, covering even remote areas, although rural-urban disparities still exist. The sector witnessed technological advancements such as the transition from 2G to 3G, 4G, and the ongoing rollout of 5G technology (Edino & Audu, 2024).

Economic Impact: The telecommunications sector became a significant contributor to Nigeria's GDP, fostering economic growth and creating numerous job opportunities both directly and indirectly. The privatization of telecoms sector has snowballed to unprecedented enhancement in the socio-economic of Nigeria (Adeyemi, et al., 2017). The sector's contribution to GDP increased from 0.62% in 2001 to about 14% in 2020. NCC (2014) equally maintained that it has overwhelmingly impacted to Nigerian GDP. For instance, from 0.62% in 2001 to 8.53% in 2013, the GSM subscribers jumped from 2,217,040 in 2002 to 127,603,629 in 2013, and the teledensity also moved from 1.89 in 2002 to 91.15 in 2013 (Edino & Audu, 2024). Direct and indirect employment opportunities have grown substantially, including jobs in network operations, sales, and customer service.

Service Quality and Customer Experience: There has been a noticeable improvement in service quality and customer experience due to competition and regulatory oversight by the NCC. The entry of multiple service providers resulted in better network coverage and reduced call rates, and the new operators expanded telecommunications coverage to previously underserved and rural areas. Improvements in call quality and data services, although challenges remain with network congestion and service interruptions. Enhanced customer service practices and the introduction of competitive pricing and value-added services.

Regulatory Environment: The NCC has played a pivotal role in ensuring a fair and competitive market environment, addressing issues such as interconnection disputes, spectrum allocation, and consumer protection. Effective regulation of tariffs, quality of service, and consumer rights. Development and implementation of policies to foster innovation, competition, and investment. The application of NPM principles, particularly through the privatization of the telecommunications sector, has significantly transformed Nigeria's telecommunications landscape. While there have been notable successes in terms of increased competition, improved services, and economic contributions, challenges remain in regulatory effectiveness and infrastructure expansion. Overall, the experience of Nigeria underscores the potential benefits and complexities of applying NPM strategies in the public sector.

Conclusion

The privatization exercise in Nigeria's telecommunications sector, driven by New Public Management reforms, has largely been successful in transforming it into a dynamic and competitive industry. It has led to increased access, better service quality, and significant economic benefits. However, continuous efforts are needed to address remaining challenges, particularly in infrastructure development and regulatory enforcement, to sustain and enhance the sector's performance. While there are challenges to overcome, the overall impact has been positive, significantly enhancing connectivity, economic contribution, and service delivery across the country. Continued investment in infrastructure, effective regulation, and focus on bridging the digital divide will be crucial for sustaining and furthering these gains.

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Recommendations

Based on the observations from reviewed literature and the conclusion, the following recommendations have been put forward:

Implementing privatization in the telecommunications sector in Nigeria requires careful consideration of various factors to ensure its success. There is need to develop and enforce clear regulations to govern the privatization process, ensuring fairness, transparency, and accountability.

The government need to encourage public-private partnerships to invest in and upgrade telecommunication infrastructure, especially in underserved areas. Encourage healthy competition among telecom companies to drive innovation, improve service delivery, and lower costs for consumers.

Conduct public awareness campaigns to educate stakeholders about the benefits of privatization and address misconceptions or concerns. Engage stakeholders, including government agencies, private sector players, and consumer groups, in the privatization process to ensure buy-in and support. Efforts should be made to enhance institutional capacity and promote a culture of transparency and accountability within government agencies responsible for privatization. Government should conduct public awareness campaigns to educate stakeholders about the benefits of privatization and address misconceptions or concerns.

No doubt, effective implementation of the above recommendations will foster a competitive, efficient, and consumer-focused telecom sector in Nigeria following privatization. By continuing to build on the successes of the NPM reforms and addressing the existing challenges, Nigeria's telecommunications sector can achieve greater efficiency, innovation, and service excellence.

https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ajpas.v17i2.19 p-ISSN: 2787-0367; e-ISSN: 2787-0359

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