

Implications of New Public Management Strategy on Performance of Selected Public Enterprises in Ebonyi State Nigeria

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Abstract

In recent years, researchers and practitioners in the field of Public Administration have been concerned about public sector Performance and advocated the adoption of management practices from the private sector in the public sector for improvement. In view of the above, the study examined “Implications of New Public Management Strategy on Performance of selected Public Enterprises in Ebonyi State”. Content analysis technique was adopted. Findings revealed that State; new public management will significantly improve revenue generation by public enterprises in Ebonyi State; new public management will significantly promote satisfaction of needs of the customers by public enterprises in Ebonyi State; and new public management will positively enhance employment generation by public enterprises in Ebonyi State. The implication being that management of public enterprises has depended on civil service mentality and this has accounted for recurrent failure of these enterprises in providing desired public goods and services for the wellbeing of the people. The study therefore recommended that there is need to invent new public management in order to improve revenue generation by public enterprises in Ebonyi State. There is need for public enterprises to adopt new public management strategy to promote satisfaction of needs of the customers by public enterprises in Ebonyi State. Public enterprises managers should as a matter of urgency apply new public management to enhance employment generation by public enterprises in Ebonyi State.

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1. Introduction

It has been argued that the task for any establishment including public enterprises in seeking to remain productive is to determine what its customer wants, what its competitors do differently and internal structural shortcomings hindering operational efficiency. Public enterprises are entrepreneurial ventures established by government to provide employment, ensure equitable distribution of income, provide quality public goods and services for improved standard of living, and ensure economic independence (Ayebe, 2021). By implication, public enterprises arose on the predication of facilitating social and economic development in critical sectors.

In Nigeria, the genesis of involvement of Nigerian government in the establishment, ownership and management of public enterprises could be pigeonholed within the epochs of Nigeria's pre-independence and post independence periods (Okeke, Onuorah and Okonkwo, 2022). During colonial rule and after independence in 1960, it was discovered that it was imperative that the government became involved in businesslike activities as an entrepreneur to perform some business roles, secure economic independence and economic development for the nation due largely to the absence of capable indigenous entrepreneurs with enough technical knowhow and financial capacity to compete with multinational corporations operating in the country as at then. As such, public enterprises were established expressly to combat the dependence on foreign firms, mitigate capital flight and most importantly engage in those enterprises which were not so attractive to local and foreign entrepreneurs but which were nonetheless, necessary for the socio-economic prosperity of the nation. Consequently, the offspring of that conception was the establishment of public enterprises with dual genes of public administration on one hand, and the genes of private management. Regrettably, public enterprises established to fill this vacuum have recurrently been faced with myriads of encumbrances inhibiting their productive ability.

Successive governments in Nigeria since 1980s have been losing sleep over the dismal performance of public enterprises as such; have sought palliatives to the sinking situation of state-owned enterprises. This necessitated the government to embark on countless variegated reforms such as liquidation, privatisation, and commercialisation of most public enterprises in order to channel government resources to other productive uses. In line with this, Anyebe (2021) wrote that in recent years, privatisation and commercialisation of public enterprises has preoccupied policy analysts in the search for solutions to improve the performance of state-owned enterprises.

Performance of public sector organisations is measured in terms of the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of public goods, revenue generated and services delivered. Schick (2014) cited in Onyegbule (2022) remarked that in the burgeoning literature on public sector Performance, efficiency generally is associated with input-outputs ration (the goods and services produced) and effectiveness with outcomes (the extent to which objectives were achieved). Efficiency has both quantitative and qualitative characteristics that include the volume and cost of services, response times and error rates, as well as the accessibility.

In recent years, researchers and practitioners in the field of Public Administration have been concerned about public sector performance and advocated the adoption of management practices from the private sector in the public sector for improvement. This is called New Public Management. Emerson and Alexandre (2022) asserted that in striving to achieve the best possible performance, the public sector in a number of countries has gone through a metamorphosis labeled New Public Management (NPM). NPM, in its simplest form, postulates that the public sector should be looked upon from a market and customer perspective, which means that the public sector should use knowledge and methods from the private sector. This clamour for modernization is predicated on the understanding that the public sector should

provide a more efficient and effective service to the citizens by adopting relevant management principles and practices. According to Hussain and Akhtar (2022), New public management centers around three variables viz a viz; customer orientation, competitor orientation and inter-functional coordination. On the one hand, customer orientation has to do with the culture of placing customer's needs and interests first so as to fashion products or services of higher value (Ahmad and Khan, 2021). Competitor orientation refers to the understanding of short term strengths and weakness and long term capabilities of public enterprises and the strategies of both the current and potential competitors (Francis & Kassimu, 2021). Public enterprises ought to understand the strengths and weaknesses of their competitors in the market through competitor orientation and continuously monitor the behaviour of the competitors and their strategies in response to the changing needs of the customers and them, develop their own strategies and services to match emerging demands. On the other hand, inter-functional coordination according to Hussain and Akhtar (2022) entails the coordination of all departments and functional areas in an organisation in utilizing customer and other market information to create superior value for customers. The aim is to ensure that there is improvement on the Performance of public enterprises.

Public enterprises Performance has been of major concern to scholars, overtime. Performance of public enterprises is measured by revenue generation, quality of goods and services delivered to satisfy the needs of the customers, and employment generation among others. Public enterprises are expected to generate revenue from the sale of goods and services produced; they are expected to render quality services or goods that meet customers' expectations, and create job opportunities through direct and indirect employment. In Ebonyi State in particular, there are numerous public enterprises such as Ebonyi State Transport Corporation (EBOTRANS) which was established to provide public transport services, Ebonyi State Newspaper Publishing Corporation established to provide newspaper production services, Ebonyi State Water Corporation established to provide portable water for the people; Ebonyi State Fertilizer Plant which was established to provide agro-based inputs such as fertilizers, and other chemicals, and Ebonyi State Broadcasting Corporation which was established to provide media/ journalism among others. These enterprises ought to contribute in revenue generation, employment creation as well as delivery of quality goods and services in line with the needs of the citizenry. It appears that the new public management has not been assimilated in the management of these enterprises. It is in view of the above that it becomes imperative to examine the implications of new public management on the Performance of public enterprise in Ebonyi State.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Public enterprises were created for the purpose of providing efficient public goods and services for the citizenry. It is however regrettable that these entities had long been unable to deliver public goods and services. As such, public enterprises in Nigeria have been adjudged as drain pipes of the nation's resources. The seeming poor performance or failure of numerous public enterprises, like the defunct National Electric Power Authority (NEPA), the Nigerian Telecommunication (NITEL), among others is very obvious in this regard. In Nigeria many public enterprises operate under performance level distinct from that of the private sector enterprises which are in the same line of business. For instance, shortly after the privatization of the telecommunication sector NITEL/MTEL operated alongside other GSM companies such as MTN, GLO and ECONET. Also state-owned banks such as National bank, Cooperative and Commerce Bank (CCB) etc operated alongside other privately owned banks before they went into liquidation. In a similar way, the Ebonyi State Water Corporation, which is mandated to provide potable water for the inhabitants of the state, has been unable to provide portable water supply leading to its assimilation into the Ministry of Water Resources. Most places do not even have pipelines and those who have do not have water flowing through their taps. This has led to the people resorting to alternative means of getting water, such as hand-dug wells, surface water bodies and drilled boreholes, for their daily water needs. The surface water sources are usually associated with diseases and sicknesses. The Ebonyi

Fertilizer and Chemical Company Ltd seems unable to produce fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides as well as other agro-chemicals necessary to boost agricultural productivity in the state. EBOTRANS seems not to have adequate sound operational vehicles to provide quality public transport in the state. As a result, people tend to boycott them and use the services of private mass transit companies like Peace Mass Transit. Also, EBBC which ought to provide digital journalism, quality programmes and generate revenue from advertising seem to lack modern digital satellites and equipments for operations.

As such, it has become worrisome that public enterprises in Nigeria especially in Ebonyi State go moribund or defunct within a short space of time in operation and this trend appears attributable to poor New Public Management (Aliyu, 2014). Most state owned enterprises operate with the spirit of civil service; they do not tend to understand their dual nature of being “businesslike” and “service orientation” as well as contemporary management strategies for achieving these objectives. Most state owned enterprises appear not to be concerned about identifying the needs of their customers (the citizens who are the consumers of their goods and services), they seem to pay no attention to the strategies, products and services of similar enterprises in the same line of operation and they tend to ignore internal dysfunctional structures or arrangements that inhibit their effective service delivery. This manifests in low patronage, poor returns on investment, poor quality service delivery and general wastages in public resources culminating into extinction or liquidation of most of them. It is in view of the foregoing that the researcher is poised to investigate the implications of New Public Management strategy on Performance of selected public enterprises in Ebonyi State. In view of the stated problem, the following research questions will be raised to guide the study.

1. How will new public management improve revenue generation by public enterprises in Ebonyi State?
2. How will new public management promote satisfaction of the needs of customers by public enterprises in Ebonyi State?
3. How will new public management enhance employment generation by public enterprises in Ebonyi State?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to determine the implications of new public management strategy on Performance of public enterprises in Ebonyi State. Specifically, this study has the following objectives:

1. To determine how new public management will improve revenue generation by public enterprises in Ebonyi State.
2. To ascertain how new public management will promote satisfaction of needs of the customers by public enterprises in Ebonyi State.
3. To examine how new public management will enhance employment generation by public enterprises in Ebonyi State.

2. Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Review

New Public Management

New Public Management (NPM) in its simplest idea postulates that the public sector should be looked upon from a market and customer perspective, which means that the public sector should use knowledge and methods from the private sector. This clamour for modernization is predicated on the understanding that the public sector should provide a more efficient and effective service to the citizens by adopting relevant management principles and practices. The NPM is a dynamic approach adopted by governments to restructure their bureaucracies supposedly in order to better provide services to the citizens. This refers to a combination of modern ideas and practices that seek, at its core, the use of private sector and business

approaches in the Public Sector. Under NPM, public managers have incentive-based motivation such as pay-for-performance, and clear performance targets are often set, which are assessed by using performance evaluations. As well, managers in an NPM paradigm may have greater discretion and freedom as to how they go about achieving the goals set for them. This NPM approach is contrasted with the traditional public administration model, in which institutional decision-making, policy-making and public service delivery is guided by regulations, legislation and administrative procedures.

New Public Management focuses on provision of superior value to customers. This provision of superior value is ensured by the knowledge obtained through the analysis of customers and competitors. Darabi (2022) observed that once an organisation performs a comprehensive analysis of the needs and wants of its customers and the activities undertaken by competitors in the market, it finds itself in a better position to devise those policies that help the organisation to perform effectively and ensure its long term sustainability. The returns are usually derived slowly from market orientation, and the effects become more visible in the long run as compared to the short run (Norizan et al, 2022). This leads to the emergence of firm as a learning organisation. The management focusing on New Public Management continuously scans the environment that helps in developing proactive strategies to respond effectively to the upcoming challenges.

Public Enterprises

Public enterprises otherwise known as public corporation, or statutory corporation, like most management science concepts defy a consensual conceptualisation. However, common view among scholars, institutions and practitioners is that public enterprises are government owned establishments for the provision of public goods and services in a “businesslike” manner. In line with the view above, Okeke et al (2022) argued that the term public enterprises is used in the broadest sense to mean all industrial and commercial firms, mines, utilities, transport companies, and financial intermediaries owned and/or controlled wholly or to some extent by government. Public enterprises are distinguished from the rest of the government enterprises because they are expected to earn most of their revenue from the sale of goods and services, are self-accounting, and have a separate legal identity. This definition of state enterprise also implies the concept of an expected return on investment. They are a corporate body specially created by a legislative enactment with clearly defined powers and functions and enjoying considerable financial and administrative autonomy.

Performance of Public Enterprises

Public enterprises performance has been of major concern to scholars, overtime. Performance of public enterprises is measured by the extent to which they generate revenue, employment, job opportunities and quality goods and services that meet citizens’ needs (Eme, 2022). Based on this premise, Kalliola (2003) cited in Onyegbule (2022) aptly captured that the legitimacy of public services is derived from the capacity to respond to the needs of citizens in an economically efficient way. That concise statement encapsulates the emerging consensus that, while public sector Performance involves efficiency and outputs, it also involves effectiveness customer satisfaction. In Kalliola’s formulation, at least two points illustrate the issues that make the whole question of public sector Performance a highly contentious one in many countries: are citizens being provided with what they need, and how could the services concerned make better use of the resources at disposal? In the private sector’s production of goods for the market, Performance is defined as the ratio of outputs to inputs (Samuelson and Nordhaus, 2008 cited in Onyegbule, 2017).

A performing organization is one which turns out a high level of quality public goods with its resources. Performance of public enterprises focuses on the efficiency of governmental (that is, publicly authorized and funded) administrative agencies and their subunits. Despite the foregoing controversies, productively

of Public enterprises are measured in terms of the quality, revenue generated, effectiveness and efficiency of public goods and services delivered.

Application of the New Public Management Strategy in the Nigerian Public Sector Environment

Scholars have made efforts to identify new public management strategies for public sector Performance in Nigeria. Crucial among the strategies and their application to the Nigerian public sector environment were examined thus:

Market Orientation

In recent years, researchers worldwide have been concerned about public sector performance and advocated the adoption of management practices from the private sector in the public sector for improvement (Johan & Frans, 2022). New Public Management focuses on provision of superior value to citizens as customers. This provision of superior value is ensured by the knowledge obtained through the analysis of customers and competitors. Suliyanto & Rahab (2022) argued that once the organisation performs a comprehensive analysis of the needs and wants of the customers and the activities undertaken by competitors in the markets, it finds itself in a better position to devise those policies that help the organisation to perform effectively and ensure its long term sustainability. By looking deeply at the phenomenon of market orientation, it is evident that New Public Management increases the retention level of the customers that in turn improves the organisational performance. Those organisations that keep focusing continuously on acquiring the market intelligence become successful in developing an effective and updated organisational database of market information. Management focusing on New Public Management continuously scans the environment that helps developing proactive strategies to respond effectively to future challenges.

New Public Management is significantly important in aiding public enterprises to have clear understanding of the market place and develop suitable and proper products and service strategies to meet customer's needs, grow in line with alternative enterprises and promote internal operational efficiency. New Public Management guarantees public corporations customer focused strategy to achieve long term Performance (Hajipour & Ghanaviti, 2021). Ebonyi State Transport Corporation for instance out to gather and use knowledge about products, price and strategies of competitors like Peace Mass Transit Ltd, Romchi Mass Transit Ltd, etc, to offer similar or more conducive and effective transport services to people in Ebonyi State and beyond.

A market-oriented state enterprise presumably has established valuable resources in the form of customer loyalty, brand awareness, and expertise within the organisation on how to maintain strong customer relationships that afford it a competitive advantage. Innovation acts as the medium to achieve superior performance through market orientation. The hallmark of this idea is that innovation could strategise public organizations to observe and take up New Public Management as one of the important strategies in improving their marketing strategy to achieve superior performance hence higher Performance. It is posited that a strong market-oriented culture enables public enterprises to adapt to the changing business environment, provides them with a competitive advantage over their competitors and enhance their Performance (Gromark & Melin, 2022).

Customer orientation

Customer orientation implies that an organization (public or private) should develop a corporate culture based on customer driven strategies. Customer orientation is comprised of a set of beliefs that the customer should be given priority by public enterprises (Ali, Azarnoosh, & Safari, 2021). In a similar vein, Ahmad and Khan (2022) observed that customer orientation has to do with the culture of placing

customer's interest first by public enterprises and requires a thorough understanding of customer's needs so as to fashion products or services of superior value. Public corporations that are market oriented in nature have an insight into adopting multiple tools to add value and benefits to consumers resulting in achieving sustainable competitive advantage (Narver & Slater cited in Ahmad and Khan, 2022). In summary, this has to do with re-orientation of the public service, so that the public servants are made to see those that patronize them as, not just citizens, but also their customers. Since the customer is always right, they have to be patient with him and pet him if necessary and be generally more responsive to the needs of the public that they serve. It is only when the public servant in Nigeria is made to understand that he is not a master but a servant that he would become more accommodating to those he is paid to serve.

Competitor orientation

Competitor orientation is one of the strongest dimensions of new public management affecting organisational performance. It refers to the understanding of short term strengths and weakness and long term capabilities and strategies of both the key current and potential competitors (Musa, Iman, & Waleed, 2021). Organisations understand the strengths and weakness of their competitors in the market through competitor orientation and continuously monitor the behaviour of the competitors and their strategies in response to the changing needs of the customers. Organizations can better position their products if they have deeper understanding of the strategies of their competitors. Public enterprises could strive to keep ahead of their competitors through quick response mechanism and prompt adjustment of promotional and pricing strategies. Competitor orientation leads the organisations towards the development of innovative products that enables them to secure a distinct position in the market (Darabi, 2022).

Inter-Functional Coordination

Inter-functional coordination according to Hussain and Akhtar (2022) is the coordination of all departments and functional areas of an organisation in utilizing customer and other market information to create superior value for customers. According to them, personnel's implementation of New Public Management is essential for the success of state-owned enterprises. The front-line employees play a crucial role in performance of an organisation. These employees are the representatives of the organisation and can contribute significantly by actively interacting with the customers of the organisation. This component calls for the coordination of personnel and other resources of the various functional units throughout the enterprise in order to create value for citizens as customers (Slater & Narver, 2000 cited in Boachie-Mensah & Kassimu, 2021). For example, engineering and production staff in public enterprises could regularly discuss their capabilities and limitations with those in sales and marketing, so that capabilities can be leveraged and limitations avoided, when promoting products/services (Slater & Narver, 1994 cited in Boachie-Mensah & Kassimu, 2021). The effectiveness and efficiency that benefit customers will be creatively realised when all functions within the organisation are geared towards enhancing customer value.

Decentralized decision-making:

The main rationale for the NPM as we have stated earlier is that centralization costs much due to lost flexibility. Hence it favours a decentralized management, which is referred to as managerialism and with the aim to 'debureaucratize' the public service. It thus favours allowing managers to manage which implies giving managers enough freedom to use their discretion or initiatives in managing their units. In Nigeria, agencies like the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) suffer from excessive centralization. These are agencies whose services cover the entire country, but the management structure is such that before anything meaningful is done by the branches, they must get permission from the Headquarters at Abuja. To replace a damaged transformer, could take up to a year or more, because the field managers have no powers over such matters. Meanwhile, as the application for replacement of the transformer is

undergoing the stipulated protocol, the affected citizens are suffering, while the manager of the affected area is completely helpless. This needs not be so. Managers at the regional and zonal levels should have powers to handle matters that affect their regions or zones. By allowing street-level administrators enough latitude to take decisions, they feel empowered and as such well motivated. This will make the administrator more responsive, careful and responsible to public needs.

Cost Recovery

The major reasons behind the introduction of user-fees are to recoup a substantial part of the cost of providing services due to dwindling resources and also to increase market discipline by preventing the overuse of social services by consumers. The Nigerian government under Obasanjo introduced cost-recovery measures in many areas through the removal/reduction of subsidies. Thus Nigerians now pay higher for petroleum products and public power supply. However it needs be pointed out that in terms of the NPM, their user-cost recovery measures are completely wrong. The first step in cost-recovery is to make sure that the cost is reduced to the barest minimum through the elimination/reduction of wastage. The essence of this is to arrive at the real cost of providing the service.

In the case of public energy supply, the people are made to pay for services not rendered in the sense that the Distribution Companies make sure that Nigerians have more darkness than light. At the end of the month meters are not checked so as to know what the consumer actually consumed. Rather they rely on estimates, thereby ending up charging people for energy they never consumed. Meanwhile the government has kept pumping billions of dollars into the sector without any noticeable improvement in public power supply.

As for the petroleum sector, the case is even worse. Nigeria is the sixth largest exporter of oil yet the country imports petroleum products. All the monies pumped into repairing the nations four refineries have ended up in leaking private pockets. What Nigerians now pay as user-fees in the case of petroleum products are actually cost of imports and servicing the greed of public officials who are aware that it pays them more to import the same commodity that Nigeria exports than to keep the refineries working.

Review of Empirical Studies

Researchers concerned about the dismal performance of public enterprises and possible remedies to the situation have carried out some studies to this regard. Some of them are reviewed thus:

Musa, Iman, & Waleed (2022) carried out a study on “Antecedents and Consequences Of New Public Management In Public Sector In The Kingdom Of Bahrain”. The study aimed to extend New Public Management (MO) model in the public sector of Bahrain. Descriptive survey research design was adopted to study a cross section sample of 250 managers and senior managers from public organizations in Bahrain. Data for the study were collected through questionnaire instrument. The study adopted statistical regression in empirical testing of the hypothesis that guided the study. The study findings revealed that New Public Management is still in its initial stages in the public sector in Bahrain; managerial, structural, and organizational factors showed a different influence on the degree of New Public Management in the public sector; and a significant relationship was shown between the New Public Management and performance. The study recommended further researches in non-western countries to ascertain the relationship between New Public Management and performance of public sector organizations.

Also, Rkein & Andrew(2022) carried out a study titled “Public sector commercial orientation and the social contract: a study of performance management in a non-competitive environment”. The paper aimed to study the workings of commercial orientation, with a focus on performance management, in an

environment that is characterised by limited competition between the public and the private sectors and a high level of government social responsibility. An interpretive case study approach is adopted for this study. It draws on primary data from interviews with key personnel in public sector organisations, and on secondary data from government publications such as annual reports and budget papers. The study shows that service delivery to the public has remained driven by social rather than economic imperatives. In the absence of other service providers, the Government's social responsibility towards its citizens has compelled service provision irrespective of the cost and reduced the cost-benefit relationship in having informative costing systems.

Similarly, Gromark & Melin (2022) carried out a research titled “From New Public Management to Brand Orientation in the Public Sector”. The study aimed to establish the need for public sector to make an advancement from New Public Management to brand orientation and also examine the influence of brand orientation and New Public Management on public service delivery in Sweden. The study adopted a content analysis approach to review relevant literature. The study observed that public sector organisations in contemporary time have to make advancement from New Public Management to brand orientation. The study also observed that brand orientation is very powerful, since it provides a holistic and balanced perspective on an organisation. The empirical center of the study is that public sector organisation not only ought to adopt New Public Management but also develop into providing public goods and services with unique brands.

Chigudu (2022) investigated on “Aligning Profit Making Organisations’ Strategy To The Public Sector For Improved Performance: Market Orientation”. The study sought to examine the application of New Public Management in public sector for better performance. Content analysis was adopted to review relevant literature. The study revealed that New Public Management as a concept that can be pursued vigorously for effective and efficient public sector performance. New Public Management has enormous potentials for public sector performance as it would improve public service delivery, promote effectiveness and efficiency and ensure citizens’ satisfaction. Hence, the study recommended that public officials should develop New Public Management strategies and run the public sector in a business-like manner in view of governments’ limited resources against growing populations and social demands.

Emerson & Alexandre (2022) in a study carried out a research titled “Measuring the Internal-New Public Management in the Public Sector”. The study aimed to measure the level of internal New Public Management in the public sector using the case of the Military Fire Department of the State of Espírito Santo (MFDESS). A descriptive survey research design was adopted to study 522. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. Data for the study were analysed using frequency distribution tables, mean and standard deviation. Findings from the study revealed that firefighters have the perception that there is little internal-New Public Management in the Military Fire Department and the level of job satisfaction is low leading to poor fire service delivery by the department. Furthermore, the research concluded that job satisfaction is influenced by the identification of the exchange of value, segment internal market, job description, management concern and training. The study concluded that the level of job satisfaction of firefighters is relevant for the achievement of excellence in their missions.

Amadi (2022) carried out a study titled “The Role of New Public Management in Public Housing Companies: A Study of MO’s Effect on Construction Strategies.” The study aims to analyze how the public housing companies’ deal with New Public Management constructs and what their impact is on construction strategy choices in Sweden. Descriptive survey research design was adopted to study 289 public housing companies reduced to a sample of 165 respondents in Sweden. Data for the study were collected through questionnaire instrument. Data collected were analysed using statistical package for social sciences. Findings revealed that public housing companies studied were market oriented. They generated information on customer needs, expectations and values; and they analysed the strategies of

their competitors and reacted appropriately. This led to provision of better housing services to customers (public) in Sweden.

Though significant the achievements of the above studies are, they were carried out in foreign countries which are alien to the Nigerian situation and as such, different from the area of the present study. Therefore, the present study seeks to investigate New Public Management and the Performance of public enterprises in Ebonyi State in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

This study was firmly rooted on the New Public Management Theory. For several authors, the event leading to the emergence of New Public Management was the reform of Britain's administration, launched in the wake of nascent neo-liberalism and coinciding with the coming to power of Margaret Thatcher in 1979. However, the term new public management was first coined by Hood Christopher a UK scholar in 1991 (Charbonneau, 2022). NPM seeks to apply market principles to governmental administration, with an emphasis on competition and customer orientation. As submitted by Ibieta (2021), it also emphasizes merit-based recruitment and promotion; increased autonomy for managers ("letting managers manage") with corresponding responsibility; performance related pay; continuous skills development and upgrading. In a similar vein, Andrews & Steven (2021) argued that there is also an emphasis on performance measurement, with particular attention to the delivery of services to the public.

The relevance of this theory to the study cannot be overemphasized owing to the desirability of a reform initiative such as New Public Management in management of public enterprises in Nigeria where the quality of public service delivery is perceived as abysmally low. The theory underscores the imperative to make the public service more "businesslike" and to improve its efficiency by using private sector management models. As it is with the private sector, which focuses on "customer service", New Public Management practices such as New Public Management focuses on the centrality of citizens who are the recipients of the services or customers to the public sector. Its introduction would offer a recipe for treating citizens as "Kings" in the delivery of public or social goods/services. Additionally, the enthronement and enforcement of Public accountability will in no small measure provide remedy to the cancerous phenomenon of corruption in the Nigerian public affairs. The theory also implies that public enterprises are disconnected from the people, unnecessarily politicized and hijacked by vested interest. As a result, it ignores citizens' preferences and leads to oversupply of low quality and irrelevant services. This state of affairs calls for more efficacious remedy which could be found in the adoption of New Public Management in management of public sector organizations.

3, Methodology

The study adopted content analysis design. Data were collected from secondary sources including journals, textbooks, and annual performance reports of public enterprises from Office of Auditor General of Ebonyi State. Data collected were analyzed using statistical tables.

4. Findings and Discussion

Role of New Public Management on Revenue Generation by Public Enterprises in Ebonyi State

The study observed that new public management will significantly improve the revenue generation by public enterprises in Ebonyi State. The poor revenue performance of public enterprises in Ebonyi State is very worrisome. Most of the public enterprises hardly break even not to talk of generating revenue for the state government to invest in infrastructure and other projects. The evidence is shown in the following

tables which reveal the revenue performance of some selected public enterprises over between 2015 and 2023.

This manifests in low patronage, poor returns on investment, poor quality service delivery and general wastages in public resources culminating into extinction or liquidation of most of them. Evidence abound as can be seen from the data presented in the subsequent tables below:

Table 1: Revenue Performance of the Selected State-Owned Enterprises in 2016

SN	Enterprise	Actual Revenue Budget	Revenue Generated	Actual Expenditure	Performance Remarks
1	Ebonyi State Transport Corporation	5,000,000.14	None Reported	12,517,602.30	Budget Deficit
2	Ebonyi State Fertilizer & Chemical Company	52,500,000.00	None Reported	60,614,419.12	Budget Deficit
3	Ebonyi State Broadcasting Corporation	93,319,830	801,458.16	126,198,412.52	Budget Deficit
4	Ebonyi State Newspaper Publishing Corporation	43,349,700	200,000	28,996,389.70	Budget Deficit

Source: Compiled from the 2016 Audited Financial Statements of Ebonyi State Government, Office of the Auditor-General of Ebonyi State (2024)

The table above shows Ebonyi State Government spent about two hundred an fifty-eight million, (₦258m) on the four SOEs in 2016. Despite this huge financial commitment by the government, the state-owned enterprises studied operated on budget deficit for the year ended 2016. In terms of revenue generation, Ebonyi State Transport Corporation, Ebonyi State Fertilizer & Chemical Company, did not report any internally generated revenue within the period under review. Despite such performance, Ebonyi State Transport Corporation spent ₦12million while Ebonyi State Fertilizer & Chemical Company spent ₦60million. Similarly, Ebonyi State Broadcasting Corporation generated ₦801,458.16 only and spent ₦126million while Ebonyi State Newspaper Publishing Corporation generated ₦200,000 only but spent ₦28 million. This corroborates the result gotten from the field survey showing that majority of the respondents were of the view that public enterprises have not significantly contributed to revenue generation in Ebonyi State.

Table 2: Revenue Performance of the Selected State-Owned Enterprises in 2017

SN	Enterprise	Actual Revenue Budget	Revenue Generated	Actual Expenditure	Performance Remarks
1	Ebonyi State Transport Corporation	10,000,000	None Reported	14,455,983.94	Budget Deficit
2	Ebonyi State Fertilizer & Chemical Company	482,148,929	None Reported	18,318,971	Budget Deficit
3	Ebonyi State Broadcasting Corporation	71,613,190	None Reported	140,973,406	Budget Deficit
4	Ebonyi State Newspaper Publishing Corporation	10,100,000	None Reported	29,213,280.13	Budget Deficit

Source: Compiled from the 2017 Audited Financial Statements of Ebonyi State Government, Office of the Auditor-General of Ebonyi State (2024)

The table above shows Ebonyi State Government spent about two hundred an three million, (₦203m) on the four SOEs in 2017. Despite the huge financial commitment above, the result still shows that the state-owned enterprises studied operated on budget deficit for the year ended 2017. None of the enterprises reported any internal revenue within the year under review. In the midst of the poor performance: Ebonyi State Transport Corporation spent N14million; Ebonyi State Fertilizer & Chemical Company spent N18million; Ebonyi State Broadcasting Corporation spent N140million; while Ebonyi State Newspaper Publishing Corporation spent ₦29 million. This corroborates the result gotten from the field survey showing that majority

of the respondents were of the view that public enterprises have not significantly contributed to revenue generation in Ebonyi State.

Table 3: Revenue Performance of the Selected State-Owned Enterprises in 2018

SN	Enterprise	Actual Revenue Budget	Revenue Generated	Actual Expenditure	Performance Remarks
1	Ebonyi State Transport Corporation	12,000,000	None Reported	19,209,109.11	Budget Deficit
2	Ebonyi State Fertilizer & Chemical Company	578,578,714.80	15,000	51,928,149.93	Budget Deficit
3	Ebonyi State Broadcasting Corporation	145,935,828	5000	131,718,540.0	Budget Deficit
4	Ebonyi State Newspaper Publishing Corporation	57,120,000	2,500,000	107,231,251	Budget Deficit

Source: Compiled from the 2018 Audited Financial Statements of Ebonyi State Government, Office of the Auditor-General of Ebonyi State (2024)

From the table, it was observed that the state government spent over three hundred and two million (₦302m) in the year ended 2018. It can be observed also from the table that Ebonyi State Transport Corporation did not make any revenue contribution to the state government in 2018. On the other hand, Ebonyi State Fertilizer & Chemical Company reported N15000 revenue and spent N19million; Ebonyi State Broadcasting Corporation generated N5000 and spent N131million whereas Ebonyi State Newspaper Publishing Corporation generated N2500000 and spent N107 million. The implication is that all the enterprises operated at a deficit in 2018. This corroborates the result gotten from the field survey showing that majority of the respondents were of the view that public enterprises have not significantly contributed to revenue generation in Ebonyi State.

Table 4: Revenue Performance of the Selected State-Owned Enterprises in 2019

SN	Enterprise	Actual Revenue Budget	Revenue Generated	Actual Expenditure	Performance Remarks
1	Ebonyi State Transport Corporation	200,000,000.00	None Reported	22,113,412.30	Budget Deficit
2	Ebonyi State Fertilizer & Chemical Company	578,587,714.00	None Reported	55,294,528.83	Budget Deficit
3	Ebonyi State Broadcasting Corporation	137,000,000.00	303,000.00	147,477,027.29	Budget Deficit
4	Ebonyi State Newspaper Publishing Corporation	22,557,554.00	None Reported	14,126,225.91	Budget Deficit

Source: Compiled from the 2019 Audited Financial Statements of Ebonyi State Government, Office of the Auditor-General of Ebonyi State (2024)

The data above showed that the state government spent over two hundred and forty million (N240m) on the four state-owned enterprises in 2019. The table further showed that the state-owned enterprises studied operated on budget deficit for the year ended 2019. None of the enterprises reported any internal revenue within the year under review. Amidst the poor performance: Ebonyi State Transport Corporation spent N22million; Ebonyi State Fertilizer & Chemical Company spent N55million; Ebonyi State Broadcasting Corporation spent N147million; while Ebonyi State Newspaper Publishing Corporation spent ₦14 million(see Appendix VI). This corroborates the result gotten from the field survey showing that majority of the respondents were of the view that public enterprises have not significantly contributed to revenue generation in Ebonyi State.

Table 5: Revenue Performance of the Selected State-Owned Enterprises in 2020

SN	Enterprise	Actual Revenue Budget	Revenue Generated	Actual Expenditure	Performance Remarks
1	Ebonyi State Transport Corporation	2,500,000.00	None Reported	52,517,602.30	Budget Deficit
2	Ebonyi State Fertilizer & Chemical Company	16,670,598.00	None Reported	58,812,677.28	Budget Deficit
3	Ebonyi State Broadcasting Corporation	160,983,540.00	None Reported	144,811,286.59	Budget Deficit
4	Ebonyi State Newspaper Publishing Corporation	45,755,063.00	None Reported	34,335,383.47	Budget Deficit

Source: Compiled from the 2020 Audited Financial Statements of Ebonyi State Government, Office of the Auditor-General of Ebonyi State (2024)

The table above shows that the state government spent over two hundred and ninety million (N290) on the four enterprises in 2020. Notwithstanding the enormous financial commitment of the state government, the state-owned enterprises studied all operated on budget deficit for the year ended 2020 as none of them reported any internal revenue within the year under review. Amidst the poor performance: Ebonyi State Transport Corporation spent N52million; Ebonyi State Fertilizer & Chemical Company spent N58million; Ebonyi State Broadcasting Corporation spent N144million; while Ebonyi State Newspaper Publishing Corporation spent ₦34 million. This corroborates the result gotten from the field survey showing that majority of the respondents were of the view that public enterprises have not significantly contributed to revenue generation in Ebonyi State.

Table 6: Revenue Performance of the Selected State-Owned Enterprises in 2023

SN	Enterprise	Actual Revenue Budget	Revenue Generated	Actual Expenditure	Performance Remarks
1	Ebonyi State Transport Corporation	10,000,000.44	None Reported	14,455,983.94.56	Budget Deficit
2	Ebonyi State Fertilizer & Chemical Company	482,148,929.23	None Reported	18,318,971.34	Budget Deficit
3	Ebonyi State Broadcasting Corporation	71,613,190.42	None Reported	140,973,406.54	Budget Deficit
4	Ebonyi State Newspaper Publishing Corporation	10,100,000 .10	None Reported	29,213,280.13.88	Budget Deficit

Source: Compiled from the 2023 Audited Financial Statements of Ebonyi State Government, Office of the Auditor-General of Ebonyi State (2024)

The table above shows Ebonyi State Government spent about two hundred an three million, (₦203m) on the four SOEs in 2023. Despite the huge financial commitment above, the result still shows that the state-owned enterprises studied operated on budget deficit for the year ended 2023. None of the enterprises reported any internal revenue within the year under review. In the midst of the poor performance: Ebonyi State Transport Corporation spent N14million; Ebonyi State Fertilizer & Chemical Company spent N18million; Ebonyi State Broadcasting Corporation spent N140million; while Ebonyi State Newspaper Publishing Corporation spent ₦29 million. This corroborates the result gotten from the field survey showing that majority of the respondents were of the view that public enterprises have not significantly contributed to revenue generation in Ebonyi State.

It is therefore argued that adoption of new public management can improve the revenue performance of these enterprises. In the context of revenue generation by public enterprises in Ebonyi State, NPM can play a significant role in several ways. NPM focuses on efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery. By implementing NPM principles, public enterprises in Ebonyi State can streamline their operations, reduce wastage, and optimize resource utilization (Ayebe, 2021). This efficiency can lead to cost savings and increased revenue generation capacity. NPM emphasizes accountability and transparency in public

sector operations. Public enterprises in Ebonyi State can adopt measures such as performance-based budgeting, financial reporting standards, and regular audits to enhance accountability (Okeke, Onuorah and Okonkwo, 2022). Transparent financial management practices can instill confidence in stakeholders and attract investors, thereby boosting revenue generation. NPM encourages public sector organizations to adopt a market-oriented approach, focusing on customer needs and preferences. By understanding market demand and adapting their products or services accordingly, public enterprises in Ebonyi State can attract more customers and generate additional revenue streams (Okeke, Onuorah and Okonkwo, 2022).

Moreover, NPM emphasizes the importance of performance measurement and incentivization. Public enterprises in Ebonyi State can establish key performance indicators (KPIs) to evaluate their performance objectively. Introducing performance-based incentives can motivate employees to improve performance and innovation, leading to enhanced revenue generation. NPM advocates for decentralization and granting greater autonomy to public sector entities. By decentralizing decision-making authority, public enterprises in Ebonyi State can respond more effectively to local needs and market dynamics. Empowering local managers with greater autonomy can foster innovation and agility, enabling public enterprises to seize revenue generation opportunities more promptly.

Overall, the adoption of NPM principles can enhance the revenue generation capacity of public enterprises in Ebonyi State by improving efficiency, accountability, market orientation, and collaboration with the private sector. However, successful implementation requires strong leadership, institutional capacity building, and a supportive regulatory environment.

Role of New Public Management in Satisfaction of the Needs of Customers by Public Enterprises in Ebonyi State

Adopting New Public Management (NPM) principles can significantly improve the satisfaction of customers' needs by public enterprises in several ways. NPM emphasizes the importance of understanding and meeting the needs of customers or citizens. By adopting a customer-centric approach, public enterprises can tailor their products or services to better align with customer preferences, resulting in higher satisfaction levels. NPM promotes the delivery of high-quality services through performance measurement and benchmarking against industry standards (Okeke, Onuorah and Okonkwo, 2022). By focusing on quality improvement initiatives, public enterprises can enhance the reliability, efficiency, and effectiveness of their services, leading to greater satisfaction among customers.

NPM encourages public enterprises to be innovative in the design and delivery of services. By fostering a culture of innovation, public enterprises can develop new and improved services that better meet the evolving needs of customers, leading to increased satisfaction and loyalty. Also, NPM emphasizes the importance of timely and responsive service delivery. By streamlining processes, reducing bureaucracy, and empowering frontline staff to make decisions, public enterprises can improve their responsiveness to customer inquiries, complaints, and service requests, enhancing overall satisfaction.

NPM promotes transparency and accountability in public sector operations. By providing clear information about services, fees, and performance metrics, public enterprises can build trust with customers and demonstrate accountability for their actions, leading to greater satisfaction and confidence (Okeke, Onuorah and Okonkwo, 2022). NPM encourages public enterprises to solicit feedback from customers and use it to inform decision-making and service improvements. By implementing robust feedback mechanisms, such as surveys, focus groups, or complaint systems, public enterprises can gain valuable insights into customer preferences and concerns, allowing them to make targeted improvements that enhance satisfaction.

NPM advocates for empowering employees to take ownership of customer satisfaction and engage with customers proactively. By empowering frontline staff to resolve issues and make decisions, public

enterprises can improve the customer experience and build stronger relationships with customers, leading to increased satisfaction and loyalty. NPM promotes a culture of continuous improvement within public enterprises (Okeke, Onuorah and Okonkwo, 2022). By regularly evaluating performance, identifying areas for enhancement and implementing changes, public enterprises can ensure that they remain responsive to customer needs and deliver high-quality services that meet or exceed expectations.

The study revealed that focusing on satisfaction of the needs of customers has the efficacy of improving Performance of public enterprises in Ebonyi State. Customer orientation would enable public enterprises periodically review their product development efforts to ensure that they are in line with what the citizens want (Onyegbule, 2022). Customer orientation would ensure public enterprises carry out customer satisfaction surveys to create valuable public goods and services. Through customer orientation, public enterprises would provide avenue for customer comments, complaints and feedback for effective delivery of public goods and services. Through customer orientation public enterprises would prioritise delivery of public goods and services for satisfaction of the citizenry. Customer would improve patronage of public enterprises thereby increasing their growth sustainability. This has to do with re-orientation of the public service, so that the public servants are made to see those that patronize them as, not just citizens, but also their customers. Since the customer is always right, they have to be patient with him pet him if necessary and be generally more responsive to the needs of the public that they serve. It is only when the public servant in Nigeria is made to understand that he is not a master but a servant that he would become more accommodating to those he is paid to serve.

Also, Emerson and Alexandre (2022) asserted focusing on the strategies of competitors promotes efficiency in delivery of public goods/services by public enterprises in Ebonyi State. Competitor orientation would that public enterprises regularly monitor the strategies of similar organisations to ensure efficiency in delivery of public goods and services to the citizenry. Through competitor orientation, public enterprises would frequently collect marketing data on competitor's to help direct their marketing plans and improve revenue. According to Hussain and Akhtar (2022), public enterprises through New Public Management could respond rapidly to changes in the business environment to reduce production of moribund public goods and services. Competitor orientation would enable public enterprises to reduce wastages in the cost of delivery of public goods and services. Through competitor orientation, state owned would strive to identify their weaknesses in comparison with the strength of similar private enterprises.

Role of New Public Management in Employment Generation by Public Enterprises in Ebonyi State

The adoption of New Public Management (NPM) principles can positively impact employment generation by public enterprises in various ways. NPM emphasizes efficiency and Performance improvements through measures such as performance-based management and outcome-oriented goals. By streamlining operations and reducing inefficiencies, public enterprises can optimize their workforce and generate more output with the same or fewer resources, potentially leading to increased employment opportunities (Francis & Kassimu, 2021).

NPM encourages public enterprises to innovate and adapt to changing market conditions. By fostering a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship, public enterprises can develop new products, services, and business models, creating opportunities for job creation in emerging industries and sectors. Public enterprises, particularly those in sectors such as transportation, energy, and utilities, play a vital role in infrastructure development (Hussain and Akhtar, 2022). By investing in infrastructure projects, public enterprises can create jobs directly through construction and maintenance activities, as well as indirectly through supporting industries and supply chains. Public enterprises can contribute to regional development by investing in projects and initiatives that stimulate economic growth and create employment opportunities in underserved areas. By targeting investments in infrastructure,

manufacturing, tourism, and other sectors, public enterprises can help alleviate unemployment and reduce disparities between regions.

NPM encourages investment in employee training and development to enhance skills and capabilities. Public enterprises can offer training programs, apprenticeships, and internships to equip workers with the skills needed for current and future job roles, thereby increasing employability and job prospects (Aliyu, 2014). NPM supports the establishment of social enterprises and community-based initiatives to address local challenges and create employment opportunities. Public enterprises can partner with community organizations, NGOs, and grassroots initiatives to implement projects that benefit disadvantaged groups and marginalized communities, such as women, youth, and persons with disabilities.

NPM encourages public enterprises to diversify their activities and expand into new markets to generate additional revenue and create jobs. Anyebe (2021) wrote that by exploring new business opportunities and entering strategic partnerships, public enterprises can create employment in sectors with high growth potential, such as technology, healthcare, and green energy.

Conclusion

From the application of the principles and elements of the New Public Management to the management of the Nigerian public sector in this study, there is indeed little doubt that it holds some promise for this greatly troubled sector. This study has shown that new public sector management strategy has significant positive implications for state-owned enterprises' Performance in Nigeria particularly in Ebonyi State. Management of public enterprises has depended on civil service orientation and this has accounted for recurrent failure of these enterprises in providing desired public goods and services for the wellbeing of the people. The study observed that new public management will significantly improve the revenue generation, customers' satisfaction and employment generation by public enterprises in Ebonyi State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were therefore put forward:

1. There is need to invent new public management in order to improve revenue generation by public enterprises in Ebonyi State. By implementing NPM principles, public enterprises in Ebonyi State can streamline their operations, reduce wastage, and optimize resource utilization. This efficiency can lead to cost savings and increased revenue generation capacity.
2. There is need for public enterprises to adopt new public management strategy to promote satisfaction of needs of the customers by public enterprises in Ebonyi State. By adopting a customer-centric approach, public enterprises can tailor their products or services to better align with customer preferences, resulting in higher satisfaction levels. This will promote the delivery of high-quality services through performance measurement and benchmarking against industry standards.
3. Public enterprises managers should as a matter of urgency apply new public management to enhance employment generation by public enterprises in Ebonyi State. By streamlining operations and reducing inefficiencies, public enterprises can optimize their workforce and generate more output with the same or fewer resources, potentially leading to increased employment opportunities. Public enterprises can offer training programs, apprenticeships, and internships to equip workers with the skills needed for current and future job roles, thereby increasing employability and job prospects.

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