

# Proficient Public Government Service in a Globalized Economy: The Nigerian Paradox

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**Abstract:** *This paper is aimed at ensuring proficient public government service in a Globalized economy in Nigeria. The aim of this study is to produce a systematic analysis and rich theoretical and empirical description of ensuring efficient public service, implications on Nigerian economy the data for this study were collected from questionnaires and analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods to strengthen the validity of the findings. The results obtained from the data analysis show that the role of public administration in service delivery depends on the level of economic, political, social and technological development of the country. Hence it has a strong positive association on Nigerian economy; the political leadership in Nigeria should strengthen the public institutions. The introduction or adoption of ICT in our institutions is quite slow; hence there is the need for full computerization of the government institutions at all levels this will encourage efficiency in service delivery and will control the rising case of fraudulent and corruption acts in Nigeria and will propel national development and enhance quality economic growth and good leadership in Nigeria. It is hoped that this study will provide solutions to the problem of efficient public service administration, insecurity, and other social negative vices in Nigeria. Based on this, the study recommends that, Public administration should seek to strengthen the present weak institutions in the public sectors. Hence, strong institutions that is anchored on good governance structures, good legal instruments and a strong leadership that is properly focused, provide a framework for efficient service delivery, The political leadership in Nigeria should consciously seek to strengthen the public institutions, the introduction or adoption of ICT in our institutions is quite slow, hence there is the need for full computerization of the government institutions at all levels this will encourage efficiency in service delivery.*

**Keywords:** proficient, public government service, and Globalized economy

## 1. Introduction

Globalization in the world economic and political system has necessitated greater level of assimilation of socio-political systems and enriched information flows within the globalized economy, there is a believe that government has precarious roles to play in enhancing growth and development. These issues are predicted on good governance or management and the delivery of efficient services rendered to the citizenry. Hence the quality and efficacy of the public sector are essential indices of their level of developmental process. However, the Nigerian position provides a very carousing paradox. The country has veteran growth with partial efficacy of the public segment. However economic development has been proficient over the years, Government establishments in Nigeria have constrained this developmental process.

## 2. Conceptual Problems

Public organization is a systematic frame of understanding involving to a definite gradation, a systematic assembly and taxonomy of statistics, unprejudiced scrutiny, proviso and capacity of outcomes, substantiation and certainty applicable to it. Government is concerned with the administrative activities of Governance, simply the management of public matters by public bodies. This view is of the management point of view. Public administration or Government can also be said to encompass the implementation of Government policy at all levels of administration. According to (Abdulsalami, 2007), Public administration or Government is a system where men and materials represented by a large scale network or organization are charged with the responsibility of mobilizing and utilizing national resources

to implement public policy. Smith & Zurcher in American Dictionary define public administration as the Management of public affairs, enforcement of public law and fulfillment of public policy. Management is also seen as the act of getting things done through and with others, it can be more scientifically defined as the co-ordination of all the resources both man and materials of an organization through the process of planning, organizing, directing and controlling in order to attain organizational goal. The Government delivers social goods and services, in the form of economic benefit of the citizens, safety needs maintenance of law and order, stabilization goals and delivery of structures that enriches good Governance and socio-economic advancement of the country.

## 3. Concepts of Public Management or Administration

Pfiffer & Presthus (1967) posited that Organization represents a standard system of roles and the functional relationships designed to carry out such policies or programmes which such policies inspire. Good organizational structures create an avenue for measuring how proficient the public sector has performed. It is important that the organizational structures put in place by the Government specify the system of roles and the authority levels.

### 3.1 Public policy

According to Mbieli (2010) the major challenges to effective public policy include, ideological differences, paucity of information for policy making, poor education and ignorance of the citizens, unethical behaviour of public

officials, subjectivity or unhealthy emotions attached by political executive, deliberate delays in executing public policies, religious considerations. Hence public policy is both proactive and reactive to matters of the past, public policy is an implicit, explicit document of understanding which reacts to past issues, and acts on the present issues and proposes proactive solutions to problems, and resolution to problems. Carl (1963) said that public policy is a proposed course of action of persons group or Government within a given environment providing opportunities and obstacles which policy proposes to utilize or overcome in an effort to reach a goal or realize an objective or purpose. Hence public policy represents Government action and is generally said to be the principled executive arm of Government. The citizens seek to influence public policy through advocacy or mobilization of interest groups or the education and enlightenment of the citizen. In Nigeria, human rights groups influence public policy through lobby, and advocacy and mass education.

### 3.2 Management

Management is the effective utilization of public resources i.e., man, money, and materials to achieve the basic goals and objective of Government, hence Management is the process of attaining organizational goals by engaging in the major functions of planning, organizing, staffing, leading and controlling in order to attain organizational goals or objectives. Ogunna (1999) posited that Management is a process of organizing, coordinating, planning, directing and controlling of human, material and financial resources in order to achieve the goals set by the public segment. Management involves converting people's effort, machines, money and materials in an organization to attain group goals. Nzotta (2010). Public administration provides a measure of management. Here goals are attained; services are provided through the efforts of others, materials and money provided through the budgetary process of Government.

### 3.3 Accountability

Government is a public business and so public officials and administrators engaged in the business of governance must be accountable to the public. There are structural roles used to carry out the policies that are made by others such as the large scale public organizations. Bureaucracy is destructive if it engages red tapism. Hence in public administration, there is the issue of public interest and responsibility to inform the public on matters of common interest. Accountability requirement is not just for government institutions, alone it also entails that both the private sector and civil society organizations should be accountable to the public. Accountability is guaranteed by the process by which decision making processes especially in the public sectors and the results they produce are held up to public scrutiny and feedback. In the same vein, Adamolekun, (2002) contended that a public administrative system that functions in an environment of transparency, with officials fully aware that they would be held accountable for their actions, is likely to perform more efficiently and effectively than one that operates in an obscure environment where the rules are accountable to the ruled

## 4. Performance as a Measurement of Public Administration

The basic foundation for improving the efficacy and effectiveness of the public sector is performance capacity according to Nicholas (2010) the ongoing monitoring and reporting of programme accomplishments. In order to guarantee good performance capacity or measurement, there must exist performance gauges or operational matters on which to base the performance assessment.

Purpose of performance measurement in the public sector:

- **Budgeting:** Performance measurement sustains effective public sector budgeting. Budgeting involves deciding what programmes and projects the public administrator should spend the public's money. Measurement scrutinizes the level of budget implementation, the level of fiscal discipline and achievements of budget targets.
- **Motivation:** The performance measurement also serves as a yardstick for motivation of public administrators.
- **Evaluation:** This involves determining the level of public organization performance in project accomplishment and in programme implementation. Monitoring of government project implementation by another agency or key official, form the basis for evaluation.
- **Control:** This guarantees that public administrators are doing the right thing and that events conform to plans, or the established principles.
- **Celebration:** This involves recognizing success and the attainment of these goals. Performance measurement assist in recognizing superior performance and the attainment of the goals stated. This will serve as a framework for rewarding performance in the future.
- **Learning:** Determining what is working or not working in the art of governance and why. The learning practice is very useful in the formulation of policies in the future.
- **Improvement:** Performance measurement also seeks to ascertain what should be done differently and by whom, to further improve the performance of the public sector.
- **Promotion:** Convincing stakeholders, politicians, journalists, and others that the public administrator is effective.

Types of performance measures:

Governments essentially use five performance measures in assessing performance of the public sector. These include:

- **Workload or output measures:**
  - This measure calculates the amount of work performed or service provided by the public agency. This is achieved by using a work breakdown structure which specifies the different aspect of the work to be done and the resources needed to accomplish it.
- **Unit cost or efficiency measures:**
  - This assesses the monetary expense per unit of output or workload. An example is the cost of trash collected per residence or cost of education per child. This efficiency measures assist the public agency to assess the level of efficiency achieved over a period of time or relative to

another government or public agency. Usually global best practice could be used in this regard.

- **Outcome or effectiveness measures:**  
This measure quantifies the extent of which goals set by a public agency and attained needs are produced or service levels attained. In using this measure, the goals of the public agency must be clearly set at the onset and the needs must be clearly specified. However, in the Nigerian public sector, this measure is not effective in assessing the effectiveness of the difference in perception of the output level to be attained by the public-agency.
- **Service quality measures:**  
The service quality measures are value based assessment of a public administrator's responsiveness to the client's needs or expectations. According to Nicholas (2010), these measures focus on timeliness, accuracy and courtesy. In this assessment, the responsiveness can be objectively measured (e.g. the time it takes a fire service engine to arrive at fire scene). However, determining whether or not the response is of adequate quality is often a subjective judgment. (Does an average arrival time of forty minutes amount to adequate service or should it be ten minutes). Assuming the firemen are required to be at the scene of the fire within ten minutes of the minutes of the commencement of a fire incident so as to contain the fire, would an average arrival time of thirty minutes be deemed as good service delivery? These are critical an issue in service quality measures is very low in Nigeria.
- **Citizen satisfaction measures:**  
These measures assess the extent to which the average citizen feels that their needs have been met by government programmes or a public project. The focus is assessing the level of attainment of the needs of the citizen by a public agency. From a practical point of view, the public sector in Nigeria often do not consciously seek to meet the aspirations and needs of the average citizen. Although the World Bank in their project specifications insist that the stakeholders expectations and needs must be factored in the programmes of government and all projects to be executed, experience has shown that this is often not the case. Public programmes should properly reflect the needs of stake holders or the citizens. This could be achieved through listening to the citizens and also focus group discussions. It is thus easy to measure the level of attainment of the needs as specified.

The role of public administration in service delivery in Nigeria:

The role of public administration varies from one country to another. However, the role of public administration in service delivery depends on the level of economic, political, social and technological development of the country. In developing countries, the role of public administrators could be said to include:

- Public administrators serve as a think tank for the public sector. The public administration provides the intellectual depth and background for public service delivery. Modern public administration demands an intellectual rigor which only the public administrator provides.
- Public administrators play a key role in policy making. According to Nicholas it comprises of three principal processes: discovering and expressing new social

problems that need addressing, or what is known as setting 'policy agenda', developing options about how to resolve those problems and implementing the policy. Public administration plays very powerful roles in these processes. The key role of public administrators is in articulating and recommending various policy measures. This involves conceptualizing and articulating the critical stages in policy making. The process also entails implementing policies and programmes. The public administrator exercises considerable discretionary authority in this regard and their roles are critical to the success of policy making.

- **Record Keeping:** The record keeping role of the public administrator is critical to government business. Policy issues are made from the records and information that the disposal of the public administrator.
- **Execution of routine tasks of Government:** The public administrator plays a key role in carrying out the routine business of government. These are in the areas of the economic stabilization and regulatory roles of the public sector, provision of security, maintenance of law and order.

#### **Major challenges facing public administrators in service delivery in Nigeria:**

Public administrators are confronted with a number of challenges in the delivery of efficient services in Nigeria. These challenges have been concern to the government and the citizens. The first major challenge relate to the high level of political instability in Nigeria. Political developments include the stability of governments, the policy making structures, political parties, system of elections, the structure of the Nigeria federalism, the level of democratization in the country, etc. it has been discovered that all issues point to the fact that there is a high level of instability in Nigeria which constrains the 'dividends of democracy' and the quality of services rendered. For example, the cost of governance in Nigeria is high due to the structure of the polity. Funds for regenerative investments are thus employed in servicing the rapacious ruling class and the distorted structure in place to contain the contradictions in the polity and the fall out of contradictions.

#### **Infrastructural and institutional challenges**

Another major challenge facing the Nigerian economy is poor social infrastructure in terms of bad road, erratic power supply, limited access to portable water and basic healthcare, and ineffective regulatory agencies. The broken institutions and dilapidated infrastructure have contributed to the ineffectiveness of the plethora of publics in the society, (Hoff, 2003). Thus, to ensure long-term growth and prosperity, Nigeria must use its resources wisely, invest in advanced technology and rebuild the institutions and infrastructure without which the economy will not gain from the 'power of productivity' (Lewis, 2004; Dike, 2006). A nation enjoys higher standards of living if the workers can produce large quantity of goods and services for local consumption and extra for export (Mankiw, 2001).

### **5. Macroeconomic Challenges**

Policy inconsistency and greed are among the causes of the 'haemorrhage' in the economy (Eichengreen, 2004). Every



administration that comes on board takes on a new policy initiative instead of building on the previous ones. As a result, Nigeria has toyed with a series of ineffective and poorly implemented policies. For instance, as Chief Economic Adviser to Obasanjo, Charles Soludo instituted the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), which was supposed to focus on creating wealth

## 6. Conclusion

In globalized economy, development is usually anchored on sound economic policies put in place by the public sector. These policies should decide between direct government participation in the economic process and a set of regulatory mechanisms and control measures that determine who produces what, by whom and at what price. Hence the regulatory policies should be properly focused and channeled to the moderation of the workings of the market mechanism and ensuring that there are strong institutions in the public sector. Good policy trusts are very vital to the provision of quality services.

## 7. Recommendations

Public administration should seek to strengthen the present weak institutions in the public sectors. Hence, strong institutions that is anchored on good governance structures, good legal instruments and a strong leadership that is properly focused, provide a framework for efficient service delivery. In a globalized economy, public administrators must be properly recruited, properly trained and properly motivated.

The political leadership in Nigeria should consciously seek to strengthen the public institutions, the introduction or adoption of ICT in our institutions is quite slow, hence there is the need for full computerization of the government business at all levels this will encourage efficiency in service delivery.

Public administrators should put in place measures to reduce the level of insecurity in the country. Government must rise up to these challenges.

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