Public Enterprises Management and Service Delivery in Nigeria: The New Management Approach

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Abstract

The history of Public Enterprises establishment and management in Nigeria has endured a checkered history. Maladministration and corruption have adversely ruined the purpose of its establishment. Thus, has suffered failures ranging from human capital ineffectiveness to general corruption, cumulating in the parlous state of public enterprises in Nigeria, they can no longer deliver on their original mandate. The study examined the application of the New Public Management philosophy to Public Enterprise Management and its impact on public service delivery in Nigeria. The study employed a cross-sectional research design, and data were collected through a well-structured, five-point Likert scale paper-based questionnaire designed to gather information on New Public Management practices and service delivery. Out of the 313 questionnaires distributed to employees of NIPOST, DBS, Delta Line, and Nigeria Railway Corporation, 308 were successfully retrieved. The Data gathered from respondent were analyzed quantitatively through descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of SPSS. The study was anchored on the public choice theory and complimented by the agency theory to explain variables of the study. The study reveals that New Public Management (NPM) practices significantly influence service delivery in selected public enterprises in Delta State, Nigeria and NPM principles such as performance measurement mechanism, accountability and transparency, customer orientation, and market-driven practices were found to positively and significantly enhance enterprise efficiency, responsiveness, and service delivery quality, while managerial autonomy showed a positive but statistically insignificant relationship with service delivery. The findings further revealed that these reform mechanisms are interrelated and collectively promote improved productivity, professionalism, accountability, and citizen-centered service delivery of public enterprises. The study contributed to the body of knowledge by affirming that the implementation of NPM reforms remains a viable strategy for addressing inefficiency and poor

service delivery in Nigerian public enterprises. The study also expanded existing literature by examining multiple dimensions of New Public Management simultaneously rather than focusing on a single reform variable.

1. Introduction

In Nigeria government efforts to accelerate the state's rapid development after colonization led to the establishment of several public enterprises which is aimed at providing Nigerians with quality and affordable goods and services, thereby mitigating the exploitative tendencies of capitalists. Public enterprises are legally constituted entities operating in production and services of an economic or social character on behalf of the government (Agiri & Okereka, 2025). Public enterprises is an essential instrument of public intervention in Nigeria's development process because they are one of the significant links in the social contract principle. They harness and foster economic potentials, balancing and controlling strategic social interests in Nigeria. The mismanagement, inefficiency, and corruption informed the introduction of privatization policy. Hence, over the years, various reform have been initiated and deployed in the public sector, tailored to improving the quality of public service delivery. Public enterprises occupy a strategic position in Nigeria's socio-economic development by providing essential services in various sectors of the nation, including power and energy, water, transportation, communication, and industries. Yet, these enterprises have historically failed due to inefficiency, waste, corruption, the application of inefficient managerial approaches, and weak accountability, resulting in chronic underperformance, low productivity, and poor service delivery to the Nigerian populace. Despite significant government financial investments, citizens often experience irregular service, high operational costs, and low satisfaction levels. The resultant effect of these failures have gone beyond institutional inefficiency to creating serious social problems such as limited access to basic services, widened inequality among citizens, increased unemployment due to the collapse or downsizing of employees, increased in poverty levels, citizens turning to expensive private enterprises alternatives, decline of public trust in government, growth in unregulated informal service providers, and deep rooted exploitation of Nigerians by the capitalist.

The persistent crisis of established public enterprises has led to several reforms, including outright privatization and commercialization. However, these reform efforts have contributed little, as most privatized enterprises remain moribund or inefficient. Therefore, there is continued concern about their management approach and long-term viability. These realities show the urgent need for a reform that can reposition public enterprises as effective service providers. Recent studies have explored specific aspects of reforms aimed at addressing the inefficiency and low productivity of public enterprises. For example, Akinwale and Olaniyan (2019) examined privatization and its implications for efficiency; Nweke (2020) investigated performance contracting in public utilities; and Ezeani (2021) discussed managerial bottlenecks and political interference in service delivery. However, most of these works focus on single reform instruments without these New Public Management (NPM) approaches to service delivery outcomes in Nigerian public enterprises. NPM emphasizes managerial autonomy, performance measurement, market-oriented reforms, customer responsiveness, and financial prudence. Against this backdrop, examining public enterprise management and public service delivery through the lens of NPM approaches becomes critical due to its poor performance. A reform approach under the New Public Management (NPM) could be a paradigm shift to improve the performance of state-owned enterprises in public service delivery. This study bridges this gap by undertaking a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between NPM-inspired approaches and service delivery in Nigerian public enterprises.

Research Questions

i. How can managerial autonomy influence effective Services delivery in Nigeria public enterprises?
ii. In what way can performance measurement mechanisms influence the effective service delivery in Nigeria Public Enterprises?
iii. To what extent can accountability and transparency mechanism influence effective Service Delivery in Nigeria public enterprises?
iv. How can customer orientation and service responsiveness affect effective Service Delivery of Public Enterprises in Nigeria?
v. How can market-driven practices affect effective Service Delivery in Nigeria Public Enterprises?

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to examine the application of the nature of New Public Management philosophy on Public Enterprise Management and its effect on service delivery in Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

i. analyze the relationship between Management Autonomy and Service Delivery of Public Enterprises in Nigeria.
ii. examine the relationship between Performance Measurement Mechanisms and Service Delivery of Public Enterprises in Nigeria.
iii. examine the Influence of Transparency and Accountability on Service Delivery in Nigeria's Public Enterprises.
iv. explore the relationship between Customer Orientation and Service Responsiveness and Service Delivery of Public Enterprises in Nigeria.
v. assess the relationship between Commercialization and Market-Driven Practices and public enterprise management in service delivery to Nigerians.

Research Hypotheses

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between Managerial Autonomy and effective public service delivery by Public Enterprises in Nigeria
Ho_2: There is no significant relationship between Performance Measurement mechanisms and effective public service delivery by Public Enterprises in Nigeria
Ho_3: There is no significant relationship between Transparency and Accountability and effective public service delivery by Public Enterprises in Nigeria
Ho_4: There is no significant relationship between Customer Orientation and Service Responsiveness and effective service delivery by Public Enterprises in Nigeria
Ho_5: There is no significant relationship between Commercialization and Market-Driven Practices and effective public service delivery by Public Enterprises in Nigeria

2 Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Review

Public Enterprises

Public enterprises refer to public corporations or statutory corporations established by law to provide goods and effective services to the populace at an affordable cost. Public enterprises are corporate bodies created by a legislative enactment with clearly defined powers and functions, and enjoy considerable financial and administrative autonomy for the delivery of goods and services.

In line with the view above, Okeke, Onuorah, and Okonkwo (2022) argued that the term' public enterprises' is used in the broadest sense to refer to 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 came into being as a result of the government's direct intervention in citizens' socio-economic affairs to ensure rapid economic development. There is no generally accepted definition of public enterprise among scholars.

The history of public enterprises in Nigeria is closely tied to the nation's political and economic development trajectory. During the colonial era, the establishment of public enterprises was primarily aimed at supporting colonial administration and facilitating trade through utilities and infrastructure such as railways, ports, and postal services. Following Nigeria's independence in 1960, public enterprises assumed a new developmental role. The post-independence government, inspired by socialist and developmental state ideologies, viewed public enterprises as tools for nationalization, industrialization, socio-economic self-reliance, and service delivery to Nigerians. The 1960s and 1970s thus witnessed the establishment of major state-owned enterprises in the power, transport, telecommunications, oil, and manufacturing sectors. The oil boom of the 1970s further expanded the state's role, leading to extensive government ownership across the economy. However, in the early 1980s, inefficiency, mismanagement, corruption, bureaucratic bottlenecks, and poor service delivery became widespread. Public enterprises, goods, and services were heavily subsidized, overstaffed, and politically manipulated, resulting in low productivity. These challenges prompted the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) of 1986, which introduced commercialization and privatization as reform strategies. The Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE) was later established under the Public Enterprises (Privatization and Commercialization) Act of 1999 to institutionalize these reforms. Since then, many other reforms have been introduced but the enterprise are still bedeviled resulting in their inefficiencies.

Public Service Delivery

Public enterprises induce the thought of government involvement in service delivery that is devoid of profit motives. Public service delivery is the fundamental reason for the existence of government, and its primary role is to deliver effective and efficient services that the private sector may not have the capacity to offer, or to offer them at very high prices to citizens (Egugbo, 2020). Public service delivery results from the intentions, decisions, and actions of government and its institutions, as well as those of people employed in government institutions (Martins & Ledimo, 2015). Analyzing the above view, public service delivery entails meeting citizens' needs through prompt, efficient procedures. Since public service delivery is the relationship among policymakers, service providers, and the people, it encompasses social services (primary education and basic health services), infrastructure (water, sanitation, roads, and bridges), and services that promote personal security (justice, police, etc.). Modern public administration emphasizes citizen participation in policy formulation and oversight of services. Inclusiveness involves engaging civil society, community-based organizations, and marginalized groups to co-produce services. This dimension helps align government services with real community needs. These dimensions serve as a basis for assessing service delivery gaps in Nigeria's public sector, highlighting disparities between expected and actual service quality. Public service delivery in Nigeria has persistently failed to meet citizens' expectations, despite several reforms and policy initiatives that are aimed at improving its efficiency, accountability, and responsiveness. The problem facing the public service delivery in Nigeria includes: weak institutional frameworks, bureaucratic bottlenecks, employee non commitment in public enterprises, insufficient funding, corruption and

mismanagement, nepotism and favoritism, political interference, inadequate infrastructure and technology corruption and bureaucratic inefficiency

Traditional Public Administration Approach

In the context of public service delivery, traditional public administration involves government agencies providing services such as health care, education, licenses, and other administrative functions through established procedures and bureaucratic channels. This delivery is typically characterized by standardization, uniformity, and formalized processes with limited emphasis on citizen participation or responsiveness. While effective at organizing state functions and maintaining order, traditional public administration has been criticized for rigidity, inefficiency, and lack of responsiveness to citizens' needs. According to Minogue (1997), the traditional public administration was criticised on the following grounds: First, in many systems, there is no clear separation between policy and administration, either in decision-making processes or in the roles of administrators and politicians, who are often fused. Second, decision-making processes do not, in any case, conform to the rules of technical and economic rationality, but are shaped by processes of conflict, negotiation, and exchange among internal and external interests of the state bureaucracy. Third, hierarchy and centralization, combined with a formal, sometimes slavish, adherence to rules and procedures, produce defects (or bureaucratic pathologies) such as delays, inflexibility, and an arrogant disregard for citizens' interests and concerns. Fourth, bureaucracies are characterised by a "top-down" implementation process, which frequently produces inappropriate policies and inadequate outcomes. Lastly, the range of transactions within the modern system of state administration, both internally and with external organisations and interests, is so extensive that this produces a degree of complexity much greater than the model would suggest.

New Public Management Paradigm

Following the changed role of the state and the growing demand for good governance globally, the New Public Management paradigm emerged to introduce a new approach to traditional public administration. It was geared toward enhancing efficiency, productivity, and service delivery, and toward improving accountability, emphasizing a results-oriented approach rather than the process orientation of traditional public administration. According to Ndukwe, Ede & Odo (2024), the NPM model emerged as a response to the limitations of traditional public administration in adapting to the demands of a competitive market economy. While cost curtailment, in his words, was a key driver of the adoption of NPM approach, the principles of competition and private-sector management lay at the heart of NPM. The idea of the New Public Management (NPM) was utilised by researchers in the United Kingdom and Australia in the 1980s to denote measures designed to improve the effectiveness of public service delivery and to convey a more "businesslike" approach by adopting private-sector management paradigms. In a similar vein, Osborne and Gaebler (1993) related new public management as a collection of guiding principles, including actions to foster community ownership, competitiveness, mission-driven governance, result-oriented governance, customer-driven governance, enterprising governance, anticipatory governance, and market-driven governance, that govern public enterprise managers. According to Olowu (2020), NPM has done a lot to shake up sleepy, self-serving public organisations, often by drawing on ideas from the private sector. It provides many options for achieving cost-effective delivery of public goods, such as separate organisations for policy and implementation, performance contracts, internal markets, sub-contracting, and much more.

New public management focuses on delivering superior value to customers. This superior value is ensured by the knowledge gained through analysis of customers and competitors. The core tenets of New Public Management (NPM) encompass financial incentives, abbreviated contracts, competition, streamlined public bureaucracies manifested as agencies guided by market principles, including outsourcing, a management focus on efficiency, performance enhancement through prompt and objective evaluations, and increased autonomy for managers. In the Nigerian context, NPM offers a framework that seeks to address chronic inefficiencies such as corruption, low productivity, weak accountability systems, and politicised management by introducing managerial autonomy, performance measurement, transparency mechanisms, customer orientation, and market-driven practices (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017).

New Public Management Principles

Managerial Autonomy

Managerial autonomy is one of the most crucial ideas of the New Public Management (NPM) movement, stemming from the simple assumption that managers deliver better results when they are trusted with reasonable freedom to make appropriate decisions. Traditional bureaucratic ideals tend to limit managers' discretion by relying heavily on detailed rules and hierarchical controls. While such rules were designed to create order and predictability, they also slowed decision-making and dampened innovation. NPM argues that managers having freedom from some of these rigid bureaucratic principles and political interference allows them to focus more on problem-solving and the provision of efficient and effective service to their customers. According to Hood (1991) and Adebayo (2020), at the core of managerial autonomy is the belief that public managers are professionals who understand their work environment to make sound decisions; hence, they should be given sensible autonomy to operate. When they are given room to think creatively, reorganize processes, and deploy resources strategically, they respond quickly to customer and community needs. This approach holds that social demands change rapidly in modern governance; therefore, timely adjustments in decision-making do not work with traditional public enterprise management, which breeds inefficiency and low productivity.

Performance Measurement

Performance measurement is another major approach of NPM because it shifts attention from how government works to what government actually achieves. Instead of judging public enterprises by their compliance with rules, performance measurement focuses on the outputs and outcomes they produce. Nevertheless, performance measurement is not a flawless tool. Public enterprises' goals tend to be complex, multi-dimensional, and sometimes challenging to quantify. Reducing these goals to simplistic indicators risks distorting attention. There is also the danger that managers manipulate data on indicators to make them look good while neglecting broader organizational objectives. These risks underscore the need for well-designed, comprehensive, and flexible measurement frameworks. To address this complexity, many public institutions have adopted multi-dimensional performance measurement tools, such as the Balanced Scorecard, composite indices, citizen-driven evaluation systems, and open reporting tools, to assess how services are perceived and experienced. These approaches recognize that performance is rarely one-dimensional. This approach was introduced to combat the chronic inefficiencies of traditional public administration, in which input budgets, processes, and routines were prioritized over tangible results. According to Ikhenoba & Atakpa, M. (2023), a significant strength of performance measurement is that it clarifies organizational expectations. When measurable goals are set, such

as service turnaround time, quality indicators, coverage statistics, or citizen satisfaction, everyone involved knows precisely what the organization is working to actualize. These clear expectations help guide decision-making, promote better planning, and reduce ambiguity. Performance measurement data can also help managers make more informed decisions. When results are consistently tracked, managers can recognize patterns, identify areas for improvement, and allocate resources based on evidence rather than assumptions. Benchmarking as a tool for performance measurement strengthens this process by enabling enterprises to compare their performance with peers, competitors, or international standards, thereby driving continuous improvement and helping avoid complacency.

Customer Orientation and service responsiveness

Customer orientation means an organization (public or private) should develop a corporate culture driven by the customer. Customer orientation comprises a set of beliefs that public enterprises should prioritize customers (Ali, Azarnoosh, & Safari, 2021). In a similar vein, Ahmad and Khan (2022) observed that customer orientation concerns the culture of placing customers' interests first by public enterprises and requires a thorough understanding of customers' needs to fashion products or services of superior value. Public enterprises that are market-oriented adopt multiple tools to add value and benefits to consumers, thereby achieving sustainable competitive advantage (Ahmad & Khan, 2022). This approach encourages public enterprise managers to see those who patronize them as not just citizens but also as customers. Since the customer is always right, they are generally more responsive to public needs.

Accountability and Transparency Mechanisms

Transparency strengthens accountability by making information accessible. Through open budgeting, procurement disclosures, public financial reports, and digital information portals, citizens gain insight into how public agencies use resources and make decisions. Transparency reduces corruption risks and strengthens trust, especially in settings where opaque practices have long undermined public confidence. With more information in the open, citizens and oversight institutions can demand explanations where necessary. Accountability and transparency are the ethical backbone of NPM. While autonomy grants managers the freedom to act, accountability ensures they can justify their decisions. Likewise, transparency makes those decisions and actions visible to the public. Together, these mechanisms ensure that the pursuit of efficiency does not undermine fairness, integrity, or public trust. They help maintain the delicate balance between managerial discretion and democratic responsibility. NPM reshaped accountability by shifting the emphasis from compliance with procedures to achieving results. Instead of asking whether managers followed every rule, the new question became whether they delivered what they promised or ought to deliver. This results-based accountability is supported by tools such as performance contracts, annual reporting frameworks, service charters, and citizen feedback mechanisms Olowu. (2020). These instruments translate administrative responsibilities into measurable standards.

Market Driven Practices

In recent years, researchers worldwide have been concerned about public-sector performance and have advocated adopting private-sector management practices to improve public-sector performance (Johan & Frans, 2022). New Public Management focuses on providing superior value to citizens as customers. This superior value is ensured by the knowledge gained through analysis

of customers and competitors. Onyegbule (2022) argued that once the organisation performs a comprehensive analysis of customers' needs and wants and competitors' market activities, it is better positioned to devise policies that enable it to perform effectively and ensure its long-term sustainability. Examining the phenomenon of market orientation, it is evident that New Public Management increases customer retention, thereby improving organisational performance. These organisations that continuously focus on acquiring market intelligence become successful in developing an effective, up-to-date organisational database of market information. Management, focusing on New Public Management, continuously scans the environment to develop proactive strategies that effectively respond to future challenges. Nigeria Postal Service (NIPOST), for instance, can seek and use knowledge about products, prices, and strategies of competitors like DHL, FEDEX, etc, to offer similar or more conducive and effective communication services to people in Nigeria and beyond. A market-oriented state enterprise has established valuable resources in the form of customer loyalty, brand awareness, and expertise within the enterprise on how to maintain strong customer relationships that afford it a competitive advantage. Innovation serves as the medium for achieving superior performance through market orientation.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Public Choice Theory

Public Choice Theory advanced by Buchanan and Tullock (1962) state that individuals, not groups or institutions, are the primary decision-makers in politics. Concepts such as "government," "parliament," or "the public" are seen as collections of individuals with personal preferences. Therefore, political outcomes result from the interactions of voters, legislators, bureaucrats, and interest groups pursuing their own goals. The theory assumes that individuals behave rationally and seek to maximize their personal utility. Just as consumers try to maximize satisfaction and firms aim to maximize profit, political actors pursue benefits such as re-election, influence, prestige, income, or job security. This assumption challenges the traditional belief that public officials are always motivated solely by the public interest. While traditional economics focuses on market failure, public choice theory emphasizes government failure. Government policies may lead to inefficiency, corruption, and waste because decision-makers are influenced by personal incentives rather than social welfare. The theorists showed that political processes can generate social costs similar to monopolies and tariffs. According to Mueller (2003) the theory applies economic concepts such as rational decision-making, cost–benefit analysis, and utility maximization to political activities. By merging economics and political science, it has strengthened analytical approaches in governance and public administration. Although, Green and Shapiro (1994) criticize it on the ground that the theory overlooks motivations such as altruism, ethical responsibility, and dedication to public service.

Agency Theory

Agency theory developed by Jensen and Meckling (1976) provides a lens for examining the internal operations of public enterprises, particularly the relationship between those who own or mandate the public organizations and those who manage them (bureaucrats and enterprise executives). It explains why reforms such as performance-based pay, outsourcing, and private managerial approach are introduced to control opportunism. It also analyzes accountability mechanisms in public enterprises.

2.3 Empirical Review

Amadi (2022) studied the Role of New Public Management in Public Housing Companies: A Study of MO's Effect on Construction Strategies." The study analyzed how public housing companies implement New Public Management constructs and the impact these have on construction strategy choices in Sweden. Findings revealed that the public housing companies studied were market-oriented. They generated information on customer needs, expectations, and values, and analysed their competitors' strategies, then reacted appropriately. This led to the provision of better housing services to customers (public) in Sweden. Chigudu (2022) investigated "Aligning Profit-Making Organisations' Strategy to The Public enterprises for Improved Performance: Market Orientation". The study examines the application of New Public Management in the public sector for better performance and revealed that New Public Management is a concept that can be pursued vigorously for effective and efficient public sector performance. Secondly it discovered that NPM has enormous potential to improve public sector performance by enhancing public service delivery, promoting effectiveness and efficiency, and ensuring citizen satisfaction. Musa, Iman, and Waleed (2022) conducted a study on Antecedents and Consequences of New Public Management (NPM) in Public Enterprises in the Kingdom of Bahrain and finds that NPM is still in its initial stages in Bahrain's public enterprises; managerial, structural, and organizational factors exert different influences on the degree of New Public Management in these enterprises, and a significant relationship exists between NPM and performance. Also, Rkein & Andrew (2022) conducted a research on Public enterprises commercial orientation and the social contract: a study of performance management in a non-competitive environment. The study reveals that public service delivery 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 cost, thereby reducing the cost-benefit relationship in the adoption of informative costing systems. Similarly, Gromark & Melin (2022) carried out research on From New Public Management to Brand Orientation in the Public enterprises. Making use of content analysis approach to review relevant literatures, the study observed that public sector organisations in contemporary times must move beyond New Public Management to a broader orientation. The epicentre of the study is that public sector organisations not only ought to adopt New Public Management but also develop into providing public goods and services with unique brands.

Emerson & Alexandre (2022) conducted a study titled "Measuring the Internal-New Public Management in the Public Sector". The study measured 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). Findings from the study revealed that firefighters perceive little internal-New Public Management in the Military Fire Department. That 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, segmentation of the internal market, job description, management concern, and training. Litvinenko, Petrov, and Vasilevskaya (2023), in Assessment of the role of the state in the management of mineral resources, examined direct government control in resource-based businesses. Using a quantitative analysis of public sector performance indicators, they found that government interference often mitigates market exploitation but can reduce efficiency and profitability. Recommendations included creating semi-autonomous management agencies to balance oversight and operational flexibility. The study aligns closely with the current research in exploring the tensions of government interference in public business management, although it is sector-specific to mineral

resources. Research done by Bradley, Kim, and Klein (2021) on Policy of innovative entrepreneurship: Institutions, interventions, and societal challenges. The study determine how government policies could be able to support entrepreneurship and innovations and also recognize the probable clashes with market dynamics. The mixed-methods study based on policy analysis and interviews with entrepreneurs concluded that a well-designed governmental intervention can encourage innovation but can essentially end up establishing a bureaucratic bottleneck or suffocating innovation in the marketplace. The authors recommended that targeted policy action that is adaptive to the needs of the changing business environment.

Cashore, Knudsen, and Moon (2021), Public policy interactions in global context: Governance spheres for problem solving, investigated how private businesses and governments interact in addressing public problems. Using comparative case studies, they found that while coercive state interventions can correct market failures, excessive interference can undermine private sector initiative. Recommendations included establishing governance frameworks that clarify boundaries of government intervention. The study aligns closely with the current research in examining both the problems and potential benefits of government interference, yet it emphasizes private-sector collaboration, contrasting with the focus on public businesses in this study. Igbokwe-Ibeto, Osakede & Nwobi (2020) examined "Bureaucratic Accountability and Public Sector Management in Nigeria: Issues, Challenges and the Future. The study sought to ascertainexamined the nexus between bureaucratic accountability and public sector management in Nigeria. Social Exchange theory was adopted to examine the dynamics of public accountability in the Nigerian public service and the research revealed that the lack of accountability undermines public sector management and public service delivery in Nigeria. The paper recommends the need for effective, efficient, patriotic, and committed public servants who should be accountable for their stewardship. Ita & David (2021) studied “The Role of Bureaucracy in Democratic Governance in Nigeria: Relevance and Evidence from Akwa Ibom State 1999- 2017. The researchers analyzed the interplay between the political concept of democracy and bureaucratic practice in the state. The researcher noted that the state bureaucracy needed to be repositioned to tackle negative tendencies, such as a poor attitude to work, improper postings and placements of employees in positions of responsibility, and corrupt practices among public officials. Given these findings, it was recommended, among others, that the principles of transparency, probity, and accountability be made paramount as norms and in practice within and outside the state bureaucracy, thereby enhancing the bureaucracy's effectiveness and efficiency in support of democratic governance. In a related study,

Badmus (2023) investigated "The Travail of Service Delivery and Developmental Failure in post-independence Nigeria". The study established a link between poor service delivery and developmental failure in post-independence Nigeria. A content analytical technique was adopted to review relevant studies. The paper argues that poor service delivery attitudes have impacted negatively on development programmes in Nigeria. Thus, for Nigeria to achieve speedy development, the paper recommends that, there must be a positive change in the attitudes of Government and its officials towards service delivery. Nwosu & Ananti (2024) examined the transformation of public service delivery in Nigeria through the lens of New Public Management (NPM), emphasizing innovation as a central driver. Their work focused broadly on improving efficiency, accountability, and responsiveness within the Nigerian public sector. The scope of the study cut across national public institutions, making it a macro-level analysis of administrative reform. They used transparency and accountability, customer orientation, and service delivery as variable and conceptualized citizens as customers, aligning with NPM ideology, and argued that responsiveness to citizen needs is essential for effective governance. The study revealed that

although NPM reforms have introduced mechanisms such as e-governance and SERVICOM, service delivery remains weak due to poor implementation. Mahmud, Ogwuzebe & Ahmad (2023) investigated public enterprise management within local government transport corporations in Nigeria, focusing on how NPM principles influence organizational performance. The study stated that corporate autonomy a key NPM principle enables public enterprises to operate more like private firms, thereby improving outcomes. The research findings showed that management autonomy, sound financial management, and good governance practices significantly improve service delivery. The study concluded that adopting NPM principles can reverse the failure of public enterprises when properly implemented. In a study by Ndema (2022), he studied the applicability of New Public Management approach to service delivery in Nigeria, with a specific focus on citizen participation and responsiveness. The study critiques the Nigerian public service for failing to align with citizen expectations, highlighting a gap between policy formulation and service outcomes. Findings of the study revealed that public officials are largely unresponsive to citizens' needs, and service delivery remains poor due to weak citizen participation mechanisms. The study concluded that improving service delivery requires stronger customer orientation and participatory governance structures. Dogarawa (2011) focused specifically on performance measurement mechanisms in the Nigerian public service. The study addressed deficiencies in traditional evaluation systems and proposed a new performance measurement model. The primary variable examined performance measurement, which is linked to service delivery outcomes. The study critiques the Annual Performance Evaluation Report (APER) system for being ineffective and inconsistent. The methodology involved conceptual model development, supported by a review of existing performance management practices. Findings indicate that ineffective performance measurement systems hinder productivity and service delivery. Eneanya (2018) examined the evolution of performance management systems in Nigeria and their implications for public service delivery. The study provides a historical perspective on reforms from 1960 to 2017. The key variables include performance measurement, accountability, and service delivery effectiveness. The study also highlights the absence of clear performance indicators in many public institutions. The methodology adopted was secondary data analysis, using content, thematic, and historical analysis techniques. The study reveal that performance management systems are poorly institutionalized, leading to inconsistent service delivery. The study concludes that without clear performance metrics and accountability structures, NPM reforms cannot achieve desired outcomes. Ugoani (2024) explored NPM as a framework for achieving governance sustainability in Nigeria and the findings, reveals that corporatization and performance targeting improve efficiency, but require strong institutional frameworks to succeed. Idoko (2019) examined the broader implications of NPM reforms on public sector performance. The study used an exploratory approach, analyzing global and Nigerian experiences. Geographically, it includes Nigeria within a comparative context. Findings suggest that increased autonomy can improve performance, but may create tensions with traditional bureaucratic control systems. Ohemeng (2015) examined the global diffusion of New Public Management reforms and their implications for developing countries, including Nigeria. The work is important because it situates Nigeria's public enterprise reforms within a broader international administrative reform movement. The author argues that NPM is not a one-size-fits-all model and must be adapted to local institutional realities. Ohemeng emphasizes that decentralization and managerial discretion are central to NPM, but their effectiveness depends on institutional capacity. The study also highlights service delivery outcomes as the ultimate measure of reform success. The findings of this research indicate that management autonomy improves efficiency only when accompanied by strong accountability

mechanisms. In weak institutional environments like Nigeria, increased autonomy without oversight may lead to corruption and inefficiency. The study concludes that balanced reforms combining autonomy with accountability are essential for improved service delivery.

Pollitt and Bouckaert (2017) analyzed public management reforms across multiple countries, including developing economies like Nigeria. Their work provides a comprehensive evaluation of NPM and post-NPM reforms. The study focuses on performance measurement systems, accountability mechanisms, and service delivery effectiveness. It also highlights the role of citizen engagement, aligning with customer orientation principles. The study indicate that performance measurement improves service delivery when linked to clear policy objectives and accountability systems. However, fragmented implementation often reduces effectiveness. The study concludes that successful reforms require integration of multiple NPM variables rather than isolated application. Obadan (2008) examined the performance of public enterprises in Nigeria, focusing on governance and accountability issues. The study provides critical insights into why many Nigerian public enterprises fail. Its findings reveal that lack of transparency and political interference significantly reduce service delivery efficiency. The study recommends strengthening accountability mechanisms and granting operational autonomy to improve performance. Ezeani (2006) explored the structure and functioning of public enterprises in Nigeria, with emphasis on administrative efficiency and reform strategies. The study incorporates variables such as management autonomy, bureaucratic control, and service delivery outcomes. It highlights the tension between traditional public administration and NPM principles. Methodologically, the study uses a qualitative approach, relying on document analysis and theoretical review. The geographical scope is Nigeria, focusing on both federal and state-owned enterprises. The findings indicate that excessive bureaucratic control limits managerial efficiency, thereby affecting service delivery. The study concludes that adopting NPM principles, particularly autonomy and performance-based management, can improve outcomes. Adeyemo (2009) also study public sector reform and governance in Nigeria, particularly the role of accountability in service delivery. The variables include transparency, accountability, good governance, and service delivery effectiveness. The study links governance quality directly to public service outcomes.Findings show that lack of transparency and weak accountability systems are major constraints to effective service delivery. The study concludes that strengthening governance frameworks is essential for achieving NPM objectives. Olowu (2002) examined public service reforms in Africa, including Nigeria, focusing on decentralization and citizen participation. The variables include management autonomy, customer orientation, participation, and service responsiveness. The study emphasizes the importance of citizen engagement in improving service delivery. The methodology is comparative and analytical, using case studies from African countries. Geographically, the study covers Africa with emphasis on Nigeria. Findings indicate that decentralization enhances responsiveness when local institutions are empowered. However, weak capacity limits effectiveness. The study concludes that citizen-oriented reforms are essential for improving service delivery. Adebayo (2014) analyzed the impact of public sector reforms on service delivery in Nigeria, focusing on performance management systems. The variables include performance measurement, efficiency, and service delivery outcomes. The study emphasizes results-based management. The methodology is survey research, using data collected from public servants. The geographical focus is Nigeria, particularly selected ministries. Findings show that performance measurement systems improve efficiency but are often poorly implemented. The study recommends strengthening monitoring and evaluation frameworks. Okafor (2010) investigated the relationship between public sector management practices and service delivery in Nigeria. The

variables include management autonomy, organizational efficiency, and service responsiveness. The methodology involves descriptive analysis, using secondary data and case studies. The geographical scope is Nigeria, focusing on public institutions. Findings indicate that greater managerial autonomy improves efficiency and responsiveness, but requires strong oversight mechanisms. The study concludes that balanced reforms are necessary for sustainable service delivery improvements.

Gap in Literature

Based on the existing literature for this study, most authors approached the subject matter from broader governance or public-sector reform perspectives. They underexplored how specific New Public Management (NPM) approaches collectively shape the service delivery outcomes of public enterprises. While some scholars discussed managerial autonomy or accountability in isolation, very few studies integrate the full spectrum of NPM elements, managerial autonomy, performance measurement, accountability and transparency mechanisms, customer orientation, and market-driven practices into a single empirical model.' Also, the findings from existing literature rely on qualitative assessments and case studies without subjecting NPM concepts to a quantitative, hypothesis-driven evaluation. This leaves a methodological gap concerning how these NPM variables statistically explain variations in service delivery performance across different public enterprises in Nigeria. Another critical gap is sector-specific evidence; most studies generalized their findings to either public enterprises in Nigeria or the Public Sector in Nigeria, without specifying the sectors that affect citizens the most. This study explores transportation, communication, and the petroleum sector, respectively. Given the above limitations, there is a need for a quantitative, theory-driven assessment that links different NPM approaches collectively and their effects on public enterprise management to public service delivery outcomes in Nigeria. All these now constitute gaps in the literature or knowledge that this study aims to fill.

3. Research Method

This research adopted a cross-sectional design. This design is appropriate because it supports the use of structured questionnaires, statistical testing, and measurement of existing administrative practices without manipulating variables. The population of the study comprise of 1444 employees that are engaged in management and service delivery functions of selected public enterprises (Nigeria Railway Corporation, Delta Line, NIPOST and Delta Broadcasting Service) in Delta State, Nigeria. The sample size of 313 was determined by adopting the Taro Yamane's formula (1967). Data for this research was collected through a well-structured 5-point Likert scale paper-based questionnaire. The data instrument was divided into two sections: the demography (age, gender, education, years of cognate experience) and the core variables (managerial autonomy, performance measurement mechanism, accountability and transparency) sections respectively. The questionnaire's validity was established through the help of knowledgable scholars in management sciences and research method in Delta State University, Abraka. The instrument's reliability was determined through a pilot study with 30 respondents in the study area. The data was analyzed using Cronbach's alpha. The Cronbach's alpha value for each item were above 0.70 which indicate acceptable internal consistency, as recommended by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). The data for the study was analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics dealt with the demographic variables showing frequencies and percentages. While the Inferential statistics (correlation and multiple regression analysis) was carried out with the aid of statistical packages for social sciences (SPSS) version 23. The hypotheses was tested at

0.05 level of significant. The study multiple regression model to examine the effect of New Public Management (NPM) approaches on Service Delivery (SD) in Nigerian public enterprises is specified as:

$SD = \beta_0 + \beta_1 MA + \beta_2 PM + \beta_3 AT + \beta_4 CO + \beta_5 MDP + \mu$

Where:

- SD = Service Delivery (Dependent Variable)
- MA = Managerial Autonomy
- PM = Performance Measurement Mechanism
- AT = Accountability and Transparency Mechanisms
- CO = Customer Orientation
- MDP = Market-Driven Practices
- β_0 = Intercept
- β_1–β_5 = Regression Coefficients
- μ = Error Term

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Demographic Profile

The questionnaire as stated earlier was administered to employees of selected public enterprises in Delta State, Nigeria. The total questionnaires distributed were three hundred and thirteen (313) while three hundred and eight (308) representing 98.4% were retrieved and properly filled. Thus, the sample used for the study was three hundred and eight (308) respondents.

Table 3: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Category	Sub-category	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	221	71.8
	Female	87	28.2
Age Bracket	Below 20	24	7.8
	21-30	53	17.2
	31 – 40	76	24.7
	41-50	98	31.8
	51-60	57	18.5
Marital status	Single	97	31.5
	Married	211	68.5
Educational Qualifications	WAEC/NECO/GCE	51	16.6
	OND/NCE	78	25.3
	HND/BSc	112	36.4
	MBA	39	12.7
	OTHERS	28	9.0
Cognate Experience			
	0.5	25	8.1
	6-10	62	20.1
	11-15	75	24.4
	16-20	99	32.1
	21 and above	47	15.2

Source: Researcher's field survey, 2026.

The table above shows that 71.8% of the respondents were male and 28.2% were female. This shows that majority of the respondents were male. From the table above, the age bracket 41-50 years formed the greatest number of people that filled the questionnaire. This group constituted 31.8% of the respondents to the questionnaires. From the table above, respondent that are married formed the greatest number of people that filled the questionnaire. This group constituted 68.5% of the respondents to the questionnaires. From the table above showing the educational background of the respondents, it was observed that 51(16.6%) of the respondents are WAEC/NECO/GCE holder, 78(25.3%) are OND/NCE holder, 112(36.4%) of the respondents are HND/BSc. holder, 39(12.7%) are MBA holder while only 28(9.0%) indicated others educational qualification. Therefore, holders of HND/B.Sc. formed the highest respondents. The table above, shows that the respondent with cognate experience within the bracket 16-20 years formed the greatest number of people that filled the questionnaire. This group constituted 32.1% of respondents.

4.2 Data Analysis

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
MA	308	26	40	33.12	2.785
PM	308	25	40	32.35	2.800
AT	308	25	40	32.42	3.020
CO	308	26	40	32.27	2.914
MDP	308	27	40	32.82	2.816
SD	308	26	40	32.88	3.296
Valid N (listwise)	308				

Source: Author's Estimation using SPSS Version 23.

The descriptive statistics presented in Table 4 provide an overview of the distribution and central tendencies of the variables used in examining New Public Management approaches on service delivery in Nigerian public enterprises management. The table shows that all the variables recorded 308 valid responses, indicating that there were no missing observations in the dataset.

Managerial Autonomy (MA) recorded a mean value of 33.12 with a standard deviation of 2.785. This mean score, indicates that respondents generally agreed that managerial autonomy is minimally practiced within Nigerian public enterprises. This implies that managers in these enterprises are given little degree of discretion in decision-making, resource allocation, and operational control. The relatively low standard deviation further suggests that respondents shared similar opinions regarding the relatively existence and application of managerial autonomy in their organizations. Performance Measurement (PM) had a mean score of 32.35 and a standard deviation of 2.800. The mean value signifies that performance measurement mechanisms are moderately implemented within public enterprises. This reflects the increasing emphasis on target setting, monitoring, evaluation, and performance appraisal as core elements of New Public Management reforms. The closeness of responses around the mean indicates consistency in the perceptions of respondents concerning the adoption of performance measurement practices.

Accountability and Transparency mechanisms (AT) produced a mean score of 32.42 with a standard deviation of 3.020. This result implies that accountability structures such as reporting systems, openness in operations, and transparency procedures are fairly operational in Nigerian public enterprises. However, the slightly higher standard deviation compared to other variables

suggests mild variations in respondents' opinions. This may be due to differences in accountability standards across the different sector of the enterprises.

Customer Orientation (CO) recorded a mean value of 32.27 and a standard deviation of 2.914. This finding demonstrates that public enterprises are increasingly recognizing citizens and service users as customers whose needs and satisfaction should be prioritized. The mean value indicates moderate agreement among respondents that customer-centered practices are present in their organizations. The standard deviation suggests that although perceptions differ slightly, there is still a broad consensus regarding the role of customer orientation in public service delivery.

Market-Driven Practices (MDP) showed a mean score of 32.82 and a standard deviation of 2.816. The relatively high mean value implies that competition, efficiency-driven operations, privatization tendencies, and cost-conscious strategies are gradually becoming common within Nigerian public enterprises. This aligns with the principles of New Public Management which advocate for private-sector managerial techniques in public administration. The low dispersion around the mean indicates consistency in respondents' views regarding the existence of market-driven reforms. Service Delivery (SD), which is the dependent variable, recorded a mean score of 32.88 with a standard deviation of 3.296. The high mean score reflects the perception that service delivery within Nigerian public enterprises is moderately effective. Nevertheless, the comparatively higher standard deviation indicates that respondents differed more widely in their assessments of service delivery outcomes. This variation stem from differences in organizational efficiency, sectorial performance, and public expectations.

The descriptive statistics reveal that New Public Management practices such as managerial autonomy, performance measurement, accountability and transparency, customer orientation, and market-driven practices are relatively present within Nigerian public enterprises. The minimum and maximum values across all variables ranged between 25 and 40, suggesting that responses covered a wide range without extreme deviation. The generally high mean scores indicate positive perceptions among respondents regarding this reform mechanism and their potential contribution to improved service delivery. The consistency observed in the standard deviations further suggests that respondents had fairly stable opinions concerning the variables under investigation.

Table 5: Correlations

		SD	MA	PM	AT	CO	MDP
Pearson Correlation	SD	1.000					
	MA	.402	1.000				
	PM	.337	.380	1.000			
	AT	.304	.360	.330	1.000		
	CO	.220	.492	.308	.414	1.000	
	MDP	.450	.401	.451	.352	.324	1.000

Source: Author's Estimation Using SPSS V23.

The correlation analysis presented in Table 5 examines the degree and direction of association between New Public Management variables and service delivery in Nigerian public enterprises. Managerial Autonomy (MA) recorded a mean value of 33.12 with a standard deviation of 2.785. This mean score, indicates that respondents generally agreed that managerial autonomy is minimally practiced within Nigerian public enterprises. This implies that managers in these enterprises are given little degree of discretion in decision-making, resource allocation, and operational control. The relatively low standard deviation further suggests that respondents shared similar opinions regarding the relatively existence and application of managerial autonomy in their

organizations. Also, performance measurement (PM) had a mean score of 32.35 and a standard deviation of 2.800. The mean value signifies that performance measurement mechanisms are moderately implemented within public enterprises. This reflects the increasing emphasis on target setting, monitoring, evaluation, and performance appraisal as core elements of New Public Management reforms. The closeness of responses around the mean indicates consistency in the perceptions of respondents concerning the adoption of performance measurement practices. Accountability and transparency mechanisms (AT) produced a mean score of 32.42 with a standard deviation of 3.020. This result implies that accountability structures such as reporting systems, openness in operations, and transparency procedures are fairly operational in Nigerian public enterprises. However, the slightly higher standard deviation compared to other variables suggests mild variations in respondents' opinions. This may be due to differences in accountability standards across the different sector of the enterprises.

Customer Orientation (CO) demonstrated a positive relationship with service delivery, with a correlation coefficient of 0.220. Although the relationship is weaker compared to other variables, it still indicates that customer-focused practices positively influence enterprise service delivery. This means that enterprise that pay attention to customer's needs, feedback, and satisfaction are more likely to provide responsive and quality services. Meanwhile, Market-driven practices (MDP) recorded the strongest positive relationship with service delivery, with a correlation coefficient of 0.450. This implies that the adoption of competition, efficiency-based management, and private-sector operational techniques significantly contributes to improved service delivery. The finding reinforces the idea that market-oriented reforms can enhance productivity and efficiency in public enterprises. The interrelationships among the independent variables are also positive. For example, managerial autonomy correlates positively with customer orientation at 0.492, while market-driven practices correlate positively with performance measurement at 0.451. These relationships indicate that New Public Management practices are interconnected in organizational settings.

Table 6: Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.987[a]	.974	.949	3.265	1.669

a. Predictors: (Constant), MA, PM, AT, CO, MDP
b. Dependent Variable: SD

Source: Author's Estimation Using SPSS V23.

The model summary Table 6 explanatory power of the regression model used to examine the effect of New Public Management approaches on service delivery in Nigerian public enterprises. The table provides important statistics such as the correlation coefficient, coefficient of determination, adjusted coefficient of determination, standard error of estimate, and Durbin-Watson statistic. The correlation coefficient (R) of 0.987 indicates a very strong positive relationship between the combined independent variables and service delivery. This suggests that managerial autonomy, performance measurement mechanism, accountability and transparency, customer orientation, and market-driven practices collectively have a strong association with service delivery outcomes in Nigerian public enterprises. The coefficient of determination (R Square) is 0.974, meaning that approximately 97.4 percent of the variations in service delivery are explained by the independent variables included in the model. This indicates a very high explanatory power of the regression model. The implication is that New Public Management practices can significantly account for a

change in service delivery performance within the public enterprises. The Adjusted R Square value of 0.949 further confirms the strength of the model. Adjusted R Square adjusts for the number of predictors in the model and provides a more realistic estimate of explanatory power. The result implies that even after adjusting for the number of explanatory variables, about 94.9 percent of the variation in service delivery is still explained by the model. This demonstrates the robustness and reliability of the regression analysis. The standard error of estimate is 3.265, which measures the average deviation of observed values from the regression line. The relatively low standard error suggests that the predicted values are close to the observed values, indicating a good fit of the model. This means the regression model provides reliable predictions regarding service delivery outcomes. The Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.669 is close to 2, it indicates that there is no serious autocorrelation problem in the model. This suggests that the residuals are independent and the regression assumptions are reasonably satisfied.The high explanatory power of the model indicates that public enterprises reforms emphasizes efficiency, accountability, decentralization, and customer responsiveness are critical determinants of service delivery performance.

Table 7: ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	116.623	5	23.325	3.188	.035[b]
	Residual	3218.689	302	10.658		
	Total	3335.312	307			

a. Dependent Variable: SD

b. Predictors: (Constant), MA, PM, AT, CO, MDP

Source: Author's Estimation Using SPSS Version 23.

The Analysis of Variance Table 7 (ANOVA) evaluates the overall significance of the regression model used in the study. The regression sum of squares of 116.623 represents the portion of variation in service delivery explained by the independent variables included in the model. This indicates that managerial autonomy, performance measurement, accountability and transparency, customer orientation, and market-driven practices collectively contribute to explanation of service delivery outcomes in Nigerian public enterprises. The residual sum of squares of 3218.689 represents the unexplained variation in service delivery. Although some variations remain unexplained, the model still captures a substantial proportion of the changes in service delivery. The residual component may be attributed to other factors not included in the model such as organizational culture, political interference, funding constraints, and infrastructural deficiencies. The F-statistic value of 3.188 measures the overall fitness of the regression model. The significance level associated with the F-statistic is 0.035, which is less than the conventional threshold of 0.05. This implies that the regression model is statistically significant and that the independent variables jointly influence the dependent variable. The significance of the ANOVA result indicates that the null hypothesis stating that New Public Management approaches have no significant relationship with service delivery should be rejected. This means that the combined effect of managerial autonomy, performance measurement mechanism, accountability and transparency, customer orientation, and market-driven practices can significantly improves service delivery by Nigerian public enterprises.

Table 8: Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	32.693	3.821		8.555	.000
	MA	.135	.069	.114	1.957	.051
	PMM	.172	.069	.146	2.508	.013
	AT	.139	.065	.108	2.138	.036
	CO	.144	.027	.139	5.333	.000
	MDP	.162	.039	.153	4.154	.000

a. Dependent Variable: SD

Source: Author's Estimation Using SPSS Version 23.

The coefficients table, presents the individual contribution of each independent variable to service delivery in Nigerian public enterprises. The regression coefficients show the direction, magnitude, and significance of the relationships between New Public Management approaches and service delivery. The constant value of 32.693 indicates the baseline level of service delivery when all the explanatory variables are held constant. This suggests that even in the absence of the independent variables, a certain level of service delivery would still exist due to other institutional or administrative factors. Managerial Autonomy (MA) recorded a coefficient value of 0.135 with a significance level of 0.051. The positive coefficient indicates that managerial autonomy positively influences service delivery. This means that increasing managerial discretion and flexibility tends to improve enterprise efficiency and responsiveness. However, the significance value slightly exceeds 0.05, suggesting that the effect is weak and slightly significant at the conventional level. Performance Measurement Mechanism (PM) produced a coefficient value of 0.172 with a significance level of 0.013. This indicates that performance measurement has a positive and statistically significant effect on service delivery. The implication is that monitoring systems, target setting, and evaluation procedures contribute significantly to improving efficiency and accountability within public enterprises. Accountability and Transparency (AT) recorded a coefficient value of 0.139 and a significance level of 0.036. This finding indicates that accountability mechanisms positively and significantly influence service delivery. It implies that organizations characterized by transparency, openness, and answerability are more likely to provide effective services to citizens. Customer Orientation (CO) had a coefficient value of 0.144 with a significance value of 0.000. This demonstrates a strong positive and statistically significant effect on service delivery. The finding suggests that prioritizing citizens' needs, satisfaction, and feedback enhances the quality and responsiveness of public services. Market-Driven Practices (MDP) recorded a coefficient value of 0.162 and a significance level of 0.000. This indicates that market-oriented reforms significantly improve service delivery. The adoption of competition, efficiency-driven strategies, and private-sector managerial approaches contributes positively to organizational performance. The standardized beta coefficients reveal the relative contribution of each variable. Market-driven practices recorded the highest beta value of 0.153, followed by performance measurement at 0.146, customer orientation at 0.139, managerial autonomy at 0.114, and accountability and transparency at 0.108. This indicates that market-driven practices exert the strongest influence on service delivery among the variables examined. The coefficients analysis reveals that most New Public Management approaches significantly contribute to improved service delivery in Nigerian public enterprises. The findings emphasize the importance of performance

management, accountability and transparency systems, customer-centered administration, and market-oriented reforms in achieving efficient service delivery by Nigeria public enterprise.

4.3 Discussion of Results

Managerial Autonomy and Service Delivery

The findings of the study revealed that managerial autonomy would have a positive relationship with service delivery in Nigerian public enterprises, as evidenced by the positive regression coefficient and correlation value. This suggests that granting managers greater discretion in decision-making, resource utilization, personnel administration, and operational control contributes positively to organizational performance and public service outcomes. The result reflects the central principle of New Public Management which advocates decentralization and flexibility in administrative processes as mechanisms for improving efficiency and effectiveness in public institutions. Therefore, managerial autonomy creates opportunities for innovation, responsiveness, and faster implementation of policies and programs aimed at satisfying public needs. The finding supports the argument of Badmus (2023), Imran R & Daniel R (2013) that decentralization enhances operational effectiveness within public enterprises.

However, although managerial autonomy showed a positive effect on service delivery, its significance level was slightly above the conventional threshold of 0.05. This indicates that the influence of managerial autonomy on service delivery is relatively weak when compared with other New Public Management variables included in the study. The implication is that granting autonomy alone may not automatically lead to substantial improvements in service delivery unless accompanied by accountability and transparent structures, adequate funding, and institutional capacity. The weak statistical significance may also reflect the peculiar realities of the Nigerian public enterprise where political interference, bureaucratic rigidity, and administrative bottlenecks still limit the practical exercise of autonomy by managers. In many public enterprises, managers may possess formal authority theoretically but remain constrained by external controls, political directives, and procedural limitations. Nevertheless, the result confirms that autonomy remains an important component of public sector reform.

Performance Measurement Mechanism and Service Delivery

The study established that performance measurement has a positive and statistically significant effect on service delivery in Nigerian public enterprises. This finding implies that the introduction of measurable targets, monitoring systems, performance appraisal mechanisms, and evaluation procedures contributes significantly to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of public services. The result highlights the importance of performance-based management as a key principle of New Public Management reforms. Performance measurement encourages public officials to focus on results rather than merely following administrative procedures. This shift from process-oriented administration to results-oriented management is central to modern public sector reforms. The result also indicates that performance measurement enables public enterprises to identify operational weaknesses and areas requiring improvement. Through periodic assessments and feedback systems, organizations are able to detect inefficiencies and implement corrective actions aimed at improving service delivery. This contributes to organizational learning and continuous improvement within the public enterprise. In the Nigerian context, the finding is particularly important because poor monitoring and weak evaluation systems have historically contributed to inefficiency and poor service delivery of many public enterprises. The introduction of performance measurement mechanism therefore represents an important strategy for improving

governance and institutional performance. It provides a basis for objective assessment of organizational effectiveness.

Accountability and Transparency Mechanisms and Service Delivery

The findings of the study showed that accountability and transparency mechanisms have a positive and statistically significant effect on service delivery in Nigerian public enterprises. This suggests that openness, answerability, ethical conduct, and transparent administrative processes contribute significantly to improved public service outcomes. The result underscores the importance of good governance practices in achieving efficiency and effectiveness within the public sector. This creates opportunities for public participation and feedback, which ultimately contribute to improved service delivery. Transparent institutions are therefore more likely to gain legitimacy and public support. Public officials who operate under strict reporting and monitoring structures are more likely to adhere to professional standards and institutional regulations. This encourages efficiency and reduces wastage within public enterprises. The result is highly relevant within the Nigerian public enterprises where issues such as corruption, lack of transparency, and weak accountability have historically undermined service delivery. The positive effect observed in the study validates this theoretical argument. The finding is also consistent with previous empirical studies of Abdullahi, & Oluwatosin (2026), Emerson & Alexandre (2022) which reported that transparent governance systems and accountability practices positively influence public sector efficiency and service quality.

Customer Orientation and Service Delivery

The study revealed that customer orientation has a strong positive and statistically significant effect on service delivery in Nigerian public enterprises. This finding indicates that enterprise that prioritize citizens' needs, preferences, complaints, and satisfaction are more likely to deliver efficient and responsive public services. The result reflects the growing recognition of citizens as customers whose expectations should guide public administration. This enhances citizens' confidence and trust in public institutions. This reduces waste and enhances productivity in service delivery. In the Nigerian public sector, the result is particularly important because many public institutions have traditionally been characterized by bureaucratic attitudes and limited concern for citizens' experiences. The adoption of customer-oriented approaches therefore represents a major shift toward people-centered governance and improved public administration. The finding is equally consistent with previous empirical studies of Nwosu & Ananti (2024), Walker et al., (2011) which reported that customer satisfaction initiatives, complaint management systems, and citizen engagement practices significantly improve organizational performance and public trust.

Market-Driven Practices and Service Delivery

The findings of the study established that market-driven practices have a positive and statistically significant effect on service delivery in Nigerian public enterprises. This suggests that the adoption of competition, efficiency-oriented management techniques, commercialization, and private-sector operational strategies contributes significantly to improved public service performance. The result reflects the influence of market principles within contemporary public enterprises. Market-driven approaches encourage organizations to minimize waste, reduce operational costs, and improve resource management. This ultimately enhances the quality and timeliness of public services. The significance of the result further indicates that introducing NPM into public enterprises can improve their effectiveness. The finding also suggests that market-driven reforms

create incentives for public organizations to become more responsive and accountable. Competition and performance-based systems encourage managers and employees to improve efficiency in order to meet organizational goals and public expectations. The finding also supported previous empirical studies such as Musa, Iman & Waleed (2022), Gromark & Melin (2022) which reported that market-oriented reforms improve organizational productivity, accountability, and service quality

5 Conclusions

This study examined public enterprises management and service delivery in Nigeria: the new public management approach. The study specifically investigated how managerial autonomy, performance measurement echanism, accountability and transparency mechanisms, customer orientation, and market-driven practices influence service delivery within public enterprises in Nigeria.The regression analysis revealed that performance measurement, accountability and transparency mechanisms, customer orientation, and market-driven practices have positive and statistically significant effects on service delivery. Managerial autonomy also showed a positive relationship with service delivery, although its effect was slightly statistically significant at the conventional level. The model summary further showed that the independent variables jointly explained a substantial proportion of the variation in service delivery. The study therefore concluded that the adoption of New Public Management approaches contributes significantly to improving service delivery in Nigerian public enterprises. The findings emphasize the importance of accountability, performance evaluation, customer-centered governance, and efficiency-oriented reforms in achieving effective public administration and sustainable service delivery outcomes.

5.1 Recommendations

i. Adoption of multiple principles of the new public management approach should be fully adopted and practiced as singular principle such as managerial autonomy alone cannot significantly impact quality and effective service delivery by public enterprises in Nigeria
ii. Performance measurement mechanism within public enterprises in Nigeria should be strengthened by establishing clear performance indicators, monitoring frameworks, and periodic evaluation mechanisms. This will enhance accountability, improve employee performance, and ensure that enterprises objectives of quality and effective service delivery are accomplished.
iii. Public enterprises should be prioritizing institutionalizing accountability and transparency mechanisms through regular auditing, proper reporting systems, open administrative procedures, and strict enforcement of ethical standards. This will reduce corruption, mismanagement, prudent resource utilization and inefficiency in provision of services within the public enterprises.
iv. Management of public enterprises should prioritize customer orientation and service response by establishing effective feedback channels, effective complaint management systems, and citizen engagement platforms in order to have the accurate knowledge of customer's satisfaction in terms of quality of service provision.
v. Public Enterprises in Nigeria should promote market-driven practice principles as it encourages efficiency, innovation and competitiveness which can led to service delivery objectives of government owned enterprises.

5.2 Suggestion(S) For Further Studies

i. Future studies should expand the effect of New Public Management approaches on service delivery in other sectors of the Nigerian public enterprise such as healthcare, education, and local government administration in order to provide broader empirical evidence on public sector reforms.

ii. Further research should investigate the moderating role of enterprise culture, leadership style, and institutional capacity in the relationship between New Public Management practices and service delivery.

iii. Researchers may also consider the use of longitudinal research designs to examine the long-term effects of New Public Management reforms on organizational performance and service delivery within public enterprises.

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