

Innovation and Public Service Delivery: how Innovative is Nigerian Bureaucracy?

¹Fatile, Jacob Olufemi & ²Adejuwon, Kehinde David
^{1&2}Department of Public Administration
Faculty of Management Sciences, Lagos State University Lagos, Nigeria

Abstract

The main objective of this article is to examine innovation management and public service delivery and its influence on Nigerian bureaucracy. Innovation as a creative idea has traditionally been associated with the private sector but has been adopted in the public sector for effective public service delivery. The article is qualitative in nature, relying on secondary sources of information. It is anchored on innovation theory. The article notes that in order to survive the challenges posed in a highly competitive environment, there is need for innovation for better service delivery. It observes that absence of effective innovation management hinder the performance of the public service by inefficient utilization of resources, time and quality standards are most times not achieved due to lack of creativity and innovation. The paper notes that tendency to resist innovative ideas is higher in Nigerian public service despite the several reform exercises Nigeria had undergone over time, bureaucracy have accounted for non-improvement of the public service. This is because bureaucracy has significant influence on the dysfunctionality of public service. This dysfunctional characteristic of bureaucracy vis-a-vis implementation of innovative ideas clearly manifest in the Nigerian situation. It also notes that Nigerian Public service is characterized by a spirit of animosity rather than of cooperation and team work. In fact, animosity becomes very high when a subordinate is perceived by his superior officer as being innovative. In order to forestall the implementation of innovative ideas that emanate from subordinates the superior officers resort to strict adherence to rules and regulations which they often believe are at variance with the innovation being contemplated. The article therefore identifies resistance to innovative ideas as one of the factors that differentiate the Nigeria public sector from public services in developed societies. It submits that bureaucracy and innovation are inextricably linked, any organizations that are desirous of survival and growth particularly in a turbulent environment requires the application of both concepts. This is because while bureaucracy introduces specialization, structure, rules and regulations, predictability, rationality and partial democracy amongst others, innovation brings about positive changes that quite often assist in surmounting impediments in the quest for growth. The article concludes that effective management of innovation is essential for public service delivery. This will guarantee survival and improve performance in public service delivery.

Keywords: *Bureaucracy, Innovation, Management, Public service, Service delivery*

Corresponding Author: Fatile, Jacob Olufemi

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Background to the Study

Over the past decade, fundamental changes have been transforming societies all over the world. There has been a significant shift within the field of public administration. This change in the view of Tunggul (2016) compels bureaucracy to tidy up its organizational aspects significantly. Many developing countries, including Africa, are now realizing the need for innovation to provide customer-focused, cost effective, and updated method to improve public service performance. Innovation in the public sector as observed by Awosika (2015) has become increasingly popular around the world as a strategy for improving governance and scaling up service quality. As a result, the shift towards a practice of treating the citizen as a customer has led to a real change in the relationship between the citizen and the public sector. The replacement of the term 'citizens' with the term 'customers' to describe the users of public services exemplifies this movement towards characterizing the public sector regarding service delivery to the people.

Improving public sector has to be an essential purpose embedded in reform movement since the 1970s. Public service organizations are often under as much pressure to cut costs, reduce waste and improve efficiency as private sector ones. Indeed, there is a historical tendency for expenses in the public sector to rise faster than those in the rest of the economy (Mulgan & Albury, 2003). As such, the need for innovation in public service delivery has long been stressed. Innovation in the public sector is now recognized as a vital factor in meeting the challenges of globalization and demographic changes, while at the same time, sustaining a high level of services to the citizens (Donahue, 2005). This is due to its potential in opening new doors, reformulating old problems, breaking with policy deadlocks, bringing new actors together and formulating and implementing new ideas (Sørensen & Torfing, 2012). Public sector agencies, therefore, adopt innovations in response to the constant economic, political, social and technological changes in a more globalized and networked world, constrained by rising citizen expectations, complex problems, and tight budgets.

The importance of innovation in public service delivery in Nigeria cannot be over emphasized, nor can it be down played. In fact, the benefit of innovation to the operation of Nigeria's public service is not in doubt. No wonder, Hartley (2005) noted that innovation is crucial for effective public service management in a dynamic society like Nigeria. It is based on this that the main thrust of this paper is advanced.

Statement of the Problem

Public service delivery in Nigeria has recorded a history of miserable failure and disappointment. As a result, the Nigerian civil service has often come under heavy criticism for poor organization, over-staffing, indiscipline, red tape and secrecy, insensitivity, rigidity, over centralization, apathy, incompetence, corruption and favouritism, rudeness and high-handedness, laziness, truancy and malingering (Oyedele, 2015; Okon, 2008; Adamolekun, 1986). Too often, the public service is seen by citizens as plodding, inefficient, bureaucratic, change-resistant, incompetent, unresponsive and worst of it corrupt. Citizens often complain that the public service provides services that are inadequate, inappropriate, inferior, or too costly for their hard-earned tax payments (Muhammad, Muhammed & Aliyu, 2013).

Although innovation in the public sector has received increased attention recently, it has been tried and tested in the public sector using various models and principles, which were mainly influenced by experiences from the private sector. Experience in Nigeria is pointing to the fact

that innovative ideas have not been effectively imbibed and successfully implemented in Nigeria due to the nature and character of its bureaucracy.

Although several scholars like Mori, (2017). Osborne & Gaebler (1993), Okibo, & Shikanda, (2013), Walker (2006), Sørensen & Torfing, (2012), Oslén, (2007), Rakate, (2006), Mulgan, & Albury, (2003). Eran, Aviv, Nitza & Ayalla (2008). etc. have written on innovation and public service delivery. As laudable as their contributions to the field of public administration in general and innovation in the public sector in particular. It is important to note that their contributions focused mainly on developed societies. There is no doubt that these contributions significantly influence public service delivery, but due to environmental factors and peculiarities of African societies in general and Nigeria in particular, their contribution may not be wholly practicable. As a result, some scholars like Oyedele (2015), Olumide (2015), Awosika (2015), Maduabum (2014), Obianyo, (2010), have conducted studies on innovation and public service delivery in developing societies and Nigeria. Some of these scholars failed to look at how innovative is Nigerian bureaucracy in enhancing effective service delivery. It is on this premise that this article tries to address the identified gap in the literature.

Objective of the Study

The main aim of this article is to evaluate the influence of innovation on public service delivery and critically examine the level of innovative ideas in Nigerian bureaucracy.

Methodology

This article is a qualitative study on innovation and public service delivery. It relied on secondary sources of information. This involves a careful identification, reading, summarization, and evaluation of published articles, books, conference paper, as well as internet entries, etc. on the topic under consideration. The main benefit of secondary data is such data are cheaper and more quickly obtainable than the primary data and also may be available when primary data cannot be obtained at all. To improve the validity of the study, multiple secondary sources were used to minimize the risk of error.

Conceptual and Theoretical Analysis

The concepts of innovation, innovation management, bureaucracy and public service delivery are explained in this section.

The Concept of Innovation

Innovation has been explained from different perspectives. While some scholars see it regarding implementing something new, as an invention (Kanter, 1983). Other scholars define “innovation” as the adoption or improvement of an existing idea, process, product, or service by an organization (Rogers, 2003; Abramson & Litman, 2002).

Drucker (1988) see innovation as a purposeful and focused effort to achieve change in an organization's economic or social potential. In the view of Awosika (2015) innovation involves the act of researching, acquiring, introducing and building up new ideas, technology, processes and products aimed at not just for solving problems, but improving efficiency and effectiveness, and thus enhancing the standard of living. He observes further that innovation must not just look only at improving organization competitiveness in the commercial world but should also seek to enhance living standards. From the viewpoint of Sullivan (2008), innovation is the process of making changes, large and small, radical and increment, to products, processes, and

services that result in the introduction of something new for the organization that adds value to customers and contributes to the knowledge store of the organization. Innovation can also bring change to the governance of public services, by improving their level of accountability and transparency, their performance, or the user involvement and satisfaction level (Walker, 2006).

This paper sees innovation not solely as an invention, but also as any organizational change that is intended to improve performance. Innovation is the process of making changes, large and small, radical and increment, to products, processes, and services that result in the introduction of something new for the organization that adds value to customers and contributes to the knowledge store of the organization (Maduabum, 2014b).

Public sector innovation is the 'implementation by a public sector organization of new or significantly improved operations or products,' covering both the content of the services and products and the instruments used to deliver them (OECD, 2012). While Bason (2010) see public sector innovation as the process of creating new ideas and turning them into value for society.

Bureaucracy and Public Service Delivery

Max Weber refers to bureaucracy as the ideal and rational type of administration useful for the achievement of positive results. He took bureaucracy as a system of administration where organization operations are guided by laid down rules, regulations, procedures, and methods to achieve efficiency (Mori, 2017). Bureaucracy also refers to a professional, full-time administrative staff with life-long employment, organized careers, salaries, and pensions, appointed to office and promoted by formal education, merit, and tenure, with legal protection against discretionary dismissal (Weber, 1978). Weber emphasized the technical superiority and the procedural rationality of bureaucracy. The bureaucratic structure is assumed to contribute to unity and coordination, precision and speed, predictability, obedience, loyalty, impartiality, reduction of costs, institutionalized memory and knowledge of files, and continuity across changes in government.

Weber's ideal type is embedded in a set of ideas and hypotheses concerning the relations between organizational characteristics and administrative behavior, mentality, performance, and change. A core assumption is that rationality is an attribute of organizational structure and the procedures used to reach an outcome, and not of the outcome itself. The bureaucrats' willingness and capacity to follow orders and rules depend on a variety of mechanisms (Olsen, 2007). The characteristics of bureaucracy include; leadership, authority, a division of labor and specialization, hierarchy, functional specificity, rules, regulations, procedures, methods and job performance. The dysfunction of bureaucracy is due to excessive application of its guiding principles by office holders.

Public service is the main machinery of government for the implementation of public policies and decisions. It, therefore, follows that the primary responsibility of government is to deliver, promptly and efficiently, quality services to its citizens at affordable prices. Indeed, service delivery is the "raison d'etre" of the public service (Oyedele, 2015). He stated further that due to the strategic importance of public service delivery to the citizens of any country, the need for effective delivery of these categories of services could not be over-stressed. This is why public service delivery should also be accessible, high in quality and be effectively delivered.

Two fundamental notions have shaped the concept of public services delivery. These are that one; provision can be separated from production. The primary responsibility of a provider is to aggregate and articulate the demand of its constituents and to raise funds, using its coercive governmental powers over citizens, to finance public goods (Olumide, 2015). Public service delivery is the result of the intentions, decision of the government and public institutions, and the actions were undertaken and a decision made by people employed in public institutions (Rakate, 2006). Public service delivery demands structures not only to make the civil service adhere to impartiality, integrity, objectivity, selection, and promotion on merits but also to give value for money and high-quality services that customers want (Okafor, Fatile & Ejalonibu, 2015).

Socio-Technical System Theory

The theory dates back to the early 1950s. It originates from pioneering work at the Tavistock Institute and has been continued on a worldwide basis by key figures such as Harold Leavitt, Albert Churns, Ken Eason, Enid Mumford and many others (Trist, 1981). The socio-technical theory is one of the most widely used and accepted paradigms in social science. It is also underpinned by an extensive body of theoretical and experiential work regarding work design and operation of organization (Abdelnour-Nocera, 2005).

Within a socio-technical systems perspective, any organization, or part of it, is made up of a set of interacting sub-systems, as shown in the diagram below. Thus, any organization employs people with capabilities, who work towards goals, follow processes, use technology, operate within a physical infrastructure, and share certain cultural assumptions and norms. The theory examines the influence of technologies on organizations and the effects of organizational process, culture, and activity on technology. Another important contribution of the sociotechnical framework is the recognition that the work system is an open system. The work process and all the interdependencies within it have to cope as the environment throws up new challenges (Orlikowski, 2000). The socio-technical theory has at its core the idea that the design and performance of any organizational system can only be understood and improved if both 'social' and 'technical' aspects are brought together and treated as interdependent parts of a complex system.

Innovation and Public Service Performance: The Nexus

Innovation in the public sector is a powerful engine and a key instrument for the reform and revitalization of both fully state-owned bodies and quasi-governmental organizations and agencies (Eran, Aviv; Nitza & Ayalla, 2008). Innovation has become the gateway and engine to growth, economic transformation, and a decrease in poverty. Innovation is the driving force behind economic growth. It deals with governance, political issues and a human problem which are very difficult to solve (Okibo & Shikanda, 2013). Innovation has the potential of opening new doors, reformulating old problems, breaking with policy deadlocks, bringing new actors together and formulating and implementing new ideas (Sørensen & Torfing, 2012).

Public sector innovation is about new ideas that work at creating public value (Mulgan, 2007). Innovation in the public sector does not always result in new public services but may be linked to institutional renewal, new forms of governance, process innovation, digitization and organizational improvements (Cunningham & Karakasidou, 2009). As observed by Sørensen & Torfing (2012) innovation has the potential of opening new doors, reformulating old problems, breaking with policy deadlocks, bringing new actors together and formulating and

implementing new ideas. No wonder, Awosika (2015) remarked that innovation is at the heart of the public service's efforts to improve performance and productivity and develop new capabilities, business, and markets, and also contribute to enhancing the standard of living as well as creating new opportunities.

Innovation in the public sector has become an important domain in response to a substantial criticism of governments due to their inability to produce high-quality public services, or develop efficient and effective ways of achieving desired social outcomes. Unlike the private sector, where innovation is at the base of the competitive advantage of firms and represents a necessary condition for survival and longer-term sustainability, governments do not face the same pressure to innovate. Still, they have to meet demands for improved performance and societal impacts (Awosika, 2015).

Innovation improves the public services quality and efficiency as well as to enhance governmental capacity in solving problems. Innovation can contribute to improve the public services quality and effectiveness as well as to enhance government capacity in solving problems. In the views of Hargadon & Sutton (2000), innovation is considered important to public sector organisations by maintaining competitiveness in a globalised economy; the organisation's ability to adapt to changing technological, social, economic, and political environments; reducing costs and increasing productivity, thereby improving profits and strengthening the organisation; inculcating an organisational culture of creativity. It is relevant to public sector management because it seeks to attract high-quality creative staff and breathing new life into slowing or stagnant markets or other operational areas, alternatively facilitating entry into new markets.

Bureaucracy and Innovation: The Divergent and Convergent Views

Two schools of thought have emerged as regards the relationship between bureaucracy and innovation. These include; the divergent and convergent schools. The divergent school believes that bureaucracy is inefficient and incapable of being able to respond to external changes. Public sector bureaucracy has been notorious for its inefficiencies due to issues in pricing, budgets, employment, and incentives. The rigidity in roles occasioned by strict adherence to rules and regulations often creates a situation where public officials perform their jobs without any emotional attachment, particularly, where subordinates come up with official problems (Maduabum, 2014b). Innovation will not happen if there is no freedom to develop ideas and creativity.

Thompson (1961) is one of the proponents of this school. He refers to the ills of the bureaucratic organization as "Bureau-pathology." This according to him is associated with bureaucratic insensitivity; misuse of administrative power and discretion; lack of concern for customer's plights; lack of customer focus; and abuse of monopoly in service delivery (Modibo, 1978). Similarly Peter (1997) calls bureau-pathology the administrative evils in public service delivery, because it is arbitrary due to the use of discretionary power, violate economic, social and political rights of consumers of public service; it sabotage government socio-economic and political programmes to the disadvantage of constituents; they delay services delivery to strategic investors and other consumers; and, is associated with ritualism and self-egoism of professional and experts.

Osborne & Gaebler (1993) argue that public organizations are inefficient because they are hierarchical, over-centralized and routinized. They suggest that the inefficiencies nullify the fundamental objective of creating a public service bureaucracy – that is, the intent to eradicate patronage, create a career civil service and safeguard against the misuse of public money by government officials. As a result, the public service has become unresponsive and inept in adapting to changes in the socio-economic and political environments. As observed by Merton (1957), excessive bureaucracy makes public organizations more arthritic and self-serving, less able to achieve their core missions and less responsive to service users. Hamel (2006) noted that bureaucracy has limitations on individual's creativity. The problem is that there is little room in bureaucratic organizations for passion, ingenuity, and self-direction and this hinders introduction of new management practices.

This view holds that bureaucracy is not suitable for modern organizations due to changes in objectives, approaches, culture, structure, and environment in which organizations operate. Its inefficiency is caused by too much emphasis in rules, rigidity and its impersonal approach. What the belief is that bureaucracy is antithetical to innovation. This implies that organizations should be managed using unbureaucratic management principles. This is in agreement with the views of Hicks & Gullet (1982) that bureaucratic officials see innovative ideas as disturbances to an otherwise ordered situation. Such ideas are therefore never perceived as a necessary life – giving elements to an evolving, adaptive organization. This prompted Hamel (2012) to aver that for an organization to be innovative in a competitive business environment, “bureaucracy must die.”

On the other hand, the convergent view opined that the application of innovative ideas is inevitable for an organization that is desirous of survival and growth. Moreover, bureaucracy is a means of achieving that purpose. The convergent school argues that the Weberian concept of bureaucracy advocates that been a bureaucratic official constitutes a career. In other words, the civil service is a profession with its unique knowledge and skills. The attempt to improve the public service through innovation has been a continued trend in the history of Public Administration (Olumide, 2015). The school believes that demand to professionalize the civil service through innovation escalated at the advent of the public sector reforms which swept across the developed and developing countries in the late 1980s and early 1990s. This was as a result of the negative impression given to the profession by civil servants who were seen as officials that just observed rules and were not result oriented.

This school believes that Weber's bureaucracy is, however, an ideal type, which means that not all the tendencies need to be present for an organization to be categorized as a bureaucracy. In practice in organizations labeled as bureaucracies only *some* of the bureaucratic tendencies are found, and the ideal type remains a sort of a backdrop against which the realization of bureaucracy in organizations is evaluated. Therefore, it is useful to approach bureaucracy from a tendency perspective (Hall, 1961). The conclusion of their argument is that innovation is not a threat to red tape, while bureaucracy cannot hinder innovative ideas in the public service.

An Overview of Nigerian Bureaucracy

The Nigerian bureaucracy is strategically located in roles, functions, activities, resources, and services that their performance determines the state and level of development. During the early years of independent, the Nigerian civil service was regarded as one of the best in the Commonwealth. Unfortunately, from the mid-1980s, the Nigerian public service was far from

being ideal. It has been riddled with inefficiency, ineffectiveness, mismanagement, shoddiness, inertia, routine, poor responsiveness, conflicts, corruption, sectionalism, incompetence, and low productivity. The service has not had the skills, techniques, values, orientations, drive, and awareness that would direct and enable it to manage efficiently and more their enormous task and responsibilities (Ikelegbe, 2005). This is a contributory factor in diminishing the administrative capacity in public bureaucracy, as the performance of the civil service in Nigeria has remained very dismal, inefficient and ineffective (Okafor, 2005). This has led to poor performance in service delivery and has been criticized for being one of the slowest to integrate technological advancement. The poor performance of the Nigerian bureaucracy in the view of Okafor (2005) is the bureaucratic inflexibility and rigidity inherited from colonial administration.

The civil service structures in Nigeria were based on the bureaucratic model which led to inefficient organizations, excessive red tape and structural arrangements that impeded as much or more than serving the implementation of public policy. It discouraged individual initiative and supported a culture of un-reflective defense of the status quo. The dysfunctional characteristic of bureaucracy vis-à-vis implementation of innovative ideas manifests in the Nigerian situation. Nigerian bureaucracy was not results-oriented. As a result, the public service is characterized by a spirit of animosity and jealousy rather than of cooperation and team work (Maduabum, 2014a). The attitudes and work ethics displayed by civil servants in Nigeria are appalling. Government officials are more concerned about the security of their positions than how to effectively manage the affairs of the state. This is compounded by the unethical way individuals are recruited into the public service (Olumide, 2015).

Nigerian Bureaucracy and Innovation in Service Delivery

Given the numerous weaknesses associated with the Nigerian public service over the years, innovation is long overdue if it would be in the direction of making service delivery more customer in a friendly way, more output and consumer-driven than power and privilege-driven (Okon, 2008). This is because innovation is considered as the backbone engine, which will run good governance that will drive social and economic transformation in the public service (Obasanjo, 2004). Innovation is now seen to be critical to public services' ability to respond effectively to the challenges posed by social and technological change and rising public expectations that come with it. In most developing countries like Nigeria, there is a perception that public sector is not innovative and that there is much room for improvement (Blayse & Manleyi, 2004). Public sector organizations in Nigeria have been ineffective on management innovation because the bureaucratic systems under which they operate are not flexible despite being confronted with the very dynamic business environment.

The dysfunctional characteristics of bureaucracy vis-a-vis implementation of innovative ideas manifest in the Nigerian situation (Maduabum, 2014b). It has been observed that the decision-making process and implementation mechanics of the Civil Service have been highly criticized because the public service is bureaucratic, slow, rigid, secretive and not development - oriented. This has resulted in the inability of senior officers to take decisions unless a clearance is obtained from the top - most senior officer in whom all authority is vested. As a result, innovative ideas emanating from subordinates are not accepted by a superior officer who feels that he is incompetent to implement such ideas and similarly feels reluctant to pass such suggestions to the point where a decision could be taken.

Maduabum (2014a) notes that Nigerian bureaucracy is characterized by a spirit of animosity and jealousy rather than of cooperation and team work. This spirit of animosity, it further observed, exists between peers as well as between superiors and subordinates. In fact, the animosity and jealousy become very high when a subordinate is perceived by his superior officer as being innovative and may supersede him. To forestall the implementation of innovative ideas that emanate from subordinates the superior officers resort to strict adherence to rules and regulations which they often argue are at variance with the innovation being contemplated. Maduabum (2014b) notes further that the superior officer may even use his leadership position to ensure that other organizational members, particularly in his department, similarly support and cooperate with their peers in implementing the innovative ideas. In this circumstance, a more plausible conclusion concerning leadership support for innovation in the Nigerian public service is that such support is more likely to be given where the superior had similar exposure.

Assessment of Innovative Ideas in Nigerian Public Service

Recent innovations in the area of Public service delivery has seen a shift from the traditional model of government been the sole provider to a more pragmatic approach such as public-private partnerships and alternative service delivery (Olumide, 2015). In the area of public service delivery, the old approach was to have public agencies serve as the sole producer and provider. However, this practice has given way to innovative ideas such as Public-Private-Partnership (PPP), outsourcing, performance measurement and so much more (Olumide, 2015).

Regarding improving performance through innovations in Nigeria civil service, the Federal Civil Service Commission introduced innovation in Appointments, Promotion, and Discipline. Also, through innovation in the public service, governments have been adopting Alternative Service Delivery (ASD) like agencification, concessions, a public-private partnership, etc. in delivery services to the people. Alternative Service Delivery is a creative and unique procedure that involves changes in the style of existing public sector organizations or the design of new forms of organization and is sometimes referred to as “restructuring” and “organizational innovation.” The development of ASD arrangements as observed by Olumide (2015) has been closely linked with the advent of New Public Management (NPM) movement which advocates for innovative approaches to service delivery.

Similarly, another potential form of achieving higher efficiency is to utilize the advantages of the private sector entities to develop alternative service delivery arrangements. This was the situation in Nigeria when the government could no longer finance most capital projects, and even public corporations were performing at a loss. The general trend was to privatize these entities and hands off management. However, issues bothering on equity and access had to be resolved to guide against the exclusion of certain strata of the society like the lower-class. Therefore, beyond the privatization process, other mechanisms were sought for to effectively deliver public goods and services (Olumide, 2015).

The introduction of e-government is another major innovation in Nigeria. This refers to the use of information technology application to perform government functions with maximum efficiency and at minimum cost. It enables governments to deliver information and in some cases, services to citizens, business, and other government agencies. The goals of e-government are: better service delivery to citizens, improved services for business, transparency and empowerment of the citizens through information and efficient government purchasing (AfDB, 2005).

Other benefits through the implementation of innovation in Nigeria include: the introduction of a national health insurance scheme and public expenditure management; procurement reform and the passage of a Fiscal Responsibility Act to ensure prudent management of resources; promoting the effectiveness of the civil service through organizational restructuring; waste curtailment through monetization of fringe benefits; establishment of service charters and institutionalization of compliance enforcement; and the setting up of the Bureau of Public Sector Reforms (BPSR) as the institutional framework for sustaining the reform (Agagu 2008; Adegoroye 2006; Babura, 2003).

Challenges to Public Service Innovation in Nigeria

A lot has been said as regards the benefits of the implementation of innovation in Nigeria or what it has to offer. Scholars have mentioned that when innovation is properly implemented, there will be professionalism, awareness and efficient and quality service delivery in the management of government business will be ensured. Unfortunately, this is not the case in Nigeria. By implication, however, the innovation implementation in the Nigerian public service is accompanied with many challenges.

The Nigerian bureaucracy is beset with some problems that have hampered it is effective public service delivery. These have limited the scope, speed, and quality of service rendered through innovative ideas. As observed by Maduabum (2014a), the tendency to resist innovative ideas is higher in the public service. This is because there is a tendency for senior officers to capitalize on the ills of bureaucracy to prevent the implementation of innovative ideas particularly, where such ideas emanate from subordinate civil servants (Maduabum, 2014b). Similarly, Balogun (1983) noted that resistance to innovative ideas is one of the factors that differentiate the Nigeria public sector from its private sector counterpart in situations where civil service is linked to the public sector while the business management is linked with the private sector.

One of the major problems confronting the public bureaucracy in Nigeria is the politicization of the offices of the Permanent Secretary and the Head of Service. Although, there is nothing wrong with the bureaucracy performing political functions, the fear is that unless such political functions are carefully controlled, they can further aggravate the already strained relationship between the political officers and the bureaucrats, with unpleasant consequences during a democratic regime. The political officers would regard such political roles performed by the bureaucrats as a usurpation of powers and trespass (Okotoni, 2001). Other challenges include the institutionalized corruption as a result of the inability of anti-corruption agencies to perform their functions; long years of military rule and its effects on the development of a democratic culture or ethos; and inadequate public service culture or tradition which is value-based (Agagu, 2008).

Also, highly centralized, hierarchical and rule-driven system which stifles individual initiative and muffles corporate accountability also constitute a major threat to innovation. Even though the federal civil service emphasizes uniformity, standardization, and transparency in recruiting competent applicants, the recruitment process lacks equity and transparency, making it difficult, if not impossible; to recruit the best-qualified applicants for available jobs in the service that can implement innovative ideas successfully. Ayo & Ekong (2008) also stress the absence of skilled workers to handle various ICT services and their applications in bringing about the successful implementation of innovation in the public sector. They also noted that the lack of government regulatory policy is a major issue that needs to be addressed if

innovative ideas are to be a reality. To them, the efficient and successful implementation of innovation requires experts to coordinate and operate the ICT-related infrastructures, because where there is no competent personnel to handle it infrastructure, it will be useless to procure the infrastructures. While in the views of Bansode & Patil (2011) the digital divide also poses a challenge to innovation implementation in Nigeria's public service. What this simply means is the gap between those with regular, effective access to digital and information technology and those without this access. Keniston (2003) sees digital divide as the level of ICT knowledge between the rich and powerful whom he terms as those part of the information age and the poor and powerless who are not.

Olaopa (2014) identified inadequate funds allocated to the innovation initiatives, difficulty associated with streamlining various projects already existing or being implemented, perceived lack of value for money when the huge cost of deploying innovation projects is compared to the actual value to the people, false sense of transparency as some of the challenges to innovation in Nigeria. Resistance to Change is also a challenge in the public sector. Most senior bureaucrats in the public service still used to the old way of carrying out government activities. That is, they are still known to be working with many papers, carrying of files from one desk to the other or from one office to the other. Their resistance to innovation implementation in their services is what has culminated to the poor service delivery in the public service. To guard against such practices, this paper asserts that innovation is the necessary adjunct to efficient and effective public service delivery in Nigeria.

Conclusion

It is evident that in this 21st century, innovation is the theme of public administration. This is because it brings continual change to public organizations. Public sector innovation is increasingly regarded as a central factor to sustain a high level of public services for both citizens and businesses. Innovations in the public sector guarantee survival and improve performance in public service delivery. Thus, any state that is desirous of such growth should invest heavily in research and development as well as training activities which have been identified as fast sources of innovation and acquisition of innovative ideas.

This paper examined the influence of bureaucracy on innovation and public service delivery in Nigeria. The paper however discovered that public service delivery in Nigeria has remained largely ineffective due to ineffective implementation of innovative ideas. Innovative ideas were designed to make the public service delivery efficiency. However, the good intentions of innovation have been largely unrealized as the provision of services is still ineffective and inefficient as a result of excessive adherence to rules and red tape in the Nigerian public service.

Innovative ideas have the potential to transform the structure and processes of the public sector to make it more efficient and effective. This is possible if such innovative ideas are given the necessary support by the political class and top echelons of the civil service (Olumide, 2015).

It is therefore important to note that since bureaucracy is a characteristic feature of large scale organizations, it can not be avoided or eradicated, but it can be reduced for innovation to thrive and be well established. This is because bureaucracy and innovation are inextricably linked. Therefore any organizations that are desirous of survival and growth particularly in a turbulent environment requires the application of both concepts with modification. This is because while bureaucracy introduces specialization, structure, rules and regulations, predictability,

rationality and partial democracy amongst others, innovation brings about positive changes that quite often assist in surmounting impediments in the quest for growth. By minimizing bureaucracy, organizational hierarchy, and unnecessary politics, the public sector will be able to provide a conducive environment for innovation and spontaneous structure which will be beneficial to effective service delivery.

Recommendations

It is imperative at this juncture to suggest what can be done to achieve a successful implementation of innovation in Nigeria's public service. Based on the issues identified as some of the greatest challenges to innovation implementation in the public service, the following recommendations are advanced:

1. Public sector organizations in Nigeria should have well-shared vision and mission rather than being organized through the hierarchy and established procedures.
2. The government should set up innovation implementation committees that will work out modalities for effective implementation, with performance evaluation units, establish to evaluate the successes and failures in its targets as well as a feedback mechanism to report implementation effectiveness.
3. For innovation to thrive in Nigeria, there is the need for continuous training of the public servants, and developmental oriented technocrats training and updating of their technical expertise remains cardinal.
4. The government must provide the necessary infrastructure that will aid the successful implementation of innovation in Nigeria's public service.
5. Public Private Partnership should be encouraged by the government to increase efficiency in the area of public service delivery. This will reduce the influence of bureaucracy to the barest minimum.
6. Though bureaucracy cannot be eradicated, there is need to minimize the effect of bureaucracy in the public service. By minimizing red tape, employers will be able to provide a conducive environment for innovation within their organizations.

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