



Human Resource Management and Public Sector Reform in Nigeria: Exploring Innovative Solution for Public Sector Governance

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Abstract

This article discusses human resource management and public sector reform in Nigeria; exploring innovative solution for public sector governance. There is no gainsaying the fact that Nigeria's public sector faces significant challenges such as corruption and inefficiencies, necessitating innovative solutions for improved service delivery. It is in the light of the above, this study aims at examining the roles of Human Resource (HR) as well as innovative solutions for public sector governance and its challenges. The research design was qualitative. The data were collected using secondary source, in which a thorough literature review of academic articles, books, and reports related to the study were explored and the study situated on the New Public Management Theory. The study posited that to enhance service delivery, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness in the governance of public sector, and citizen engagement, the public service needs to leverage on digitalization technologies and e-governance platforms, utilizing Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Internet of Things (IoT) for smart solutions, building a culture of innovation within government through talent development and collaboration. The paper suggested that government should make deliberate effort to build public trust, adequately fund innovations in the service, ensure collaboration with private interests and make regulatory frameworks flexible and adaptable. The study concludes that Unless HR is involved at the heart of this process to ensure that key people management issues are addressed, public service reform and plans will remain frustrated.

Keywords: Efficiency, Human Resource Management, Innovative Solution, Public Sector Reform, Public Sector Governance.



1.1 Introduction

Human resource management simply refers to the strategic and coherent approach to managing an institution or organization's most valuable assets. That is, its employees or personnel. Human resource management (HRM) plays a critical role in shaping public administration by ensuring the efficiency, effectiveness, and adaptability of public institution. Efficiency of administration is directly depending on human resources, therefore we need to develop our public institutions through modernizing and improving human resource management by building up efficiency of individuals and improving their performance. (Yahiaoui, *et al*, 2015). The increasing complexity in the role of the state in the context of rising aspirations of people and scarcity of resources pose tremendous challenges to the management capacity of the state. In a rapidly changing environment where the needs are great, resources are scarce and pressure to achieve objectives is high, effectiveness of a civil service is crucial. This in turn signals that countries have to make efforts in order to maximise the benefit derived from resources invested in Human Resource Development (HRD). HRD has become a widely used term and its conceptions vary widely. Citing the work of Lee, (2014), Werner and DeSimone, (2009) and Pynes, (2009) Mussie *et al* (2015) viewed HRD as an organisational effort to upgrade and improve the skills, knowledge, ability, and behaviour of the organisational workforce.

HRM plays a pivotal role in enhancing organisational performance by optimizing human capital, aligning employee competencies with strategic objectives, and fostering innovation. In the public sector, HRM is equally crucial, as governments must balance efficiency, accountability, and service quality while managing limited resources (Andrews & van de Walle, 2013; Bišćak & Benčina, 2019). The roots of HRM go back as far as the 1950s, when writers like Drucker and McGregor stressed the need for visionary goal in the 1960s, headed by Maslow, Argyris and Herzberg. These scholars emphasized the 'value' aspect of human resources (HR) in organisations and argued for a better quality of working life for workers. This formed the basis of the 'organisational development movement' initiated by Bennis in the 1970s. (Yahiaoui, *et al*, 2015).

The beginning of the century brought plenty of reforms, changes and novelties into the sphere of public administration. Seeking to solve complicated problems of the country main attention is focused on the increase of the effectiveness and usefulness of the state structures, the stability of the machinery of state, as well the improvement of professionalism and responsibility. The human recourses development approach is closely related to the new quality creation, because



of its objective – first, to create human resources system, which would be integrated and governed by central and local government, second, to evaluate the development of the system and related programmes.

It is an indisputable fact that Nigeria public sector has over the years experienced tremendous set back due to inefficiency, ineffectiveness, corrupt practices, excessive bureaucracy and unnecessary political interference. These resulted to poor productivity in terms of service delivery. The aforementioned factors have made successive government in Nigeria to embark on the reformation of the public sector from colonial period to the fourth republic. It is also correct to say that most of the reforms have not yielded positive results as the sector still experience poor performance. Flowing from the above, this paper is set to examine Human resource management (HRM) and public sector reform in Nigeria. It will explore innovative solution for public sector governance. The objective is to discuss the role of HR in public sector reform and evaluates innovative solution for public sector governance and well as its challenges.

1.2. CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

1.2.1 The Concept of Human Resources Management (HRM)

HRM is a process for staffing the organisation and sustaining high employee performance. HRM can be defined as all the practices, systems and procedures implemented to attract, acquire, develop and manage human resources to achieve the goals of an organisation. Simply put, it is managing the employment relationship (Yahiaoui, *et al*, 2015). The concept also refers to all planned and controlled activities of an organisation to build and maintain the relation between employees and the organisation in order to meet both business objectives and employee's expectations.

Human resources (HR) refer to all the potential, skills, knowledge, and capabilities of individuals that are the main components of an organisation or institution (Rustiawan, *et al* (2023). In an organisational context, including public institutions, HR encompasses all the workforce involved in the operation and development of the institution (Susantinah, *et al*, 2023). This includes administrative staff, and management. Human resources cover not only academic qualifications but also factors such as experience, interpersonal skills, motivation, and commitment to the organisation's vision and mission (Sugiarto, 2023).



Human Resource Management (HRM) is a discipline responsible for planning, developing, and managing HR optimally to achieve organisational goals (Ryketeng, et al, 2023) HRM includes processes such as recruitment, selection, training, performance evaluation, career development, as well as conflict management and employee welfare (Agustian, et al 2023). The importance of HR in the context of public sector cannot be ignored because HR quality directly affects the quality of service provided by the institution. Therefore, effective and efficient HRM becomes key to achieving excellence and innovation in public institutions (Tusriyanto, 2024).

1.2.2. Innovative approaches

Innovative Approach refers to a systematic and creative approach to designing, developing, and implementing new measures to achieve specific goals (Ibrahim, 2023). In a given context, innovative strategy includes identifying new opportunities, using cutting-edge technology, changing work processes, and implementing creative ideas to enhance efficiency, competitiveness, and organisational goal achievement. Focused on renewal and positive change, innovative strategy reflects an entity's ability to adapt to environmental dynamics, respond to changing needs or market demands, and create added value (Arsawan, 2022). In the world of higher education, innovative strategies may involve developing new learning methods, improving information technology infrastructure, or even forming strategic partnerships to optimize resource management and provide a higher quality service delivery.

We describe HRM innovation as a new idea adapted to the human resources programs, systems and practices of a firm with the intention of adding value (at least indirectly) to the decision-making firm. This determination covers both novelty and assumed value added that is considered important for organisational innovation. Intentional value addition here is a contextual, subjective assessment of the novelty and adequacy of a program, system or practice, (Tukhtasinova, 2020).

1.2.3. Public sector reforms

Public sector reform is a systematic intervention directed at the structure, operations and procedures of the public service with the purpose of inducing its transformation as multi-faceted agent of change as well as an instrument of national cohesion and socio-economic development (Okoye, 2017). In the same vein, "public sector reform is the total overhaul of government administrative machinery with the aim of injecting real effectiveness, efficiency, competence and financial prudence in the running of public sector". (Okoye, 2017)



Meanwhile, the United Nations Economic and Social Council, in its 2006 paper, states that "public sector reform consists of deliberate changes to the structures and processes of public sector organizations with the objective of getting them to run better. Structural change may include merging or splitting public sector organizations while process change may include redesigning systems, setting quality standards and focusing on capacity-building". Again, public sector reform involves the idea of improvement in the ways and manners in which government is managed and public goods and services are delivered effectively, efficiently, economically and with value for money. It involves the "processes and practices which are concerned with improving the capacity of institutions to make policy and deliver services in an efficient, effective and accountable manner"

Public sector reforms aim to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and responsiveness of government institutions. These reforms often involve a range of measures, including civil service reform, financial and fiscal reform, decentralization, and enhancing accountability. Success depends on strong leadership, clear strategies, and effective implementation, with a focus on building strong institutions and tackling corruption

1.3. The Trajectory of Public Sector Reforms in Nigeria

The Nigerian public sector which is a colonial creation consists of wide-ranging organizations that include the civil service, commissions, boards, agencies, bureaus, parastatals, the judiciary, the armed forces, and the Federal Capital Territory Administration (FGN, 2005). The public service consists of the civil service- career staff whose appointment, promotion and discipline are under the exclusive control of the Federal Civil Service Commission (FCSC), National Assembly Service, the Judiciary, public officers in the military, police and paramilitary services, employees of parastatals, educational and health institutions. Besides, the need to improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the Nigerian public service has been recognized from pre-independence days that necessitated the instituting of several administrative reforms (El Rufai, 2011, cited in Okoye, 2017). The idea of reform in Nigeria straddles both its backward and forward dimensions. In other words, the attempts at reforms in Nigeria are meant not only to capture the framework of a professional and efficient civil service the Nigerian state was blessed with at independence (<http://www.tunjiolaopa.com/a-critical-overview-of-public-sector-reform-in-nigeria-framework-of-transf-ormation-for-the-federal-civil-service/>), it also aims at repositioning the sector for meeting future needs and challenges. In this sense, public sector reform is conceived as "the process of aligning public service



structures, systems and processes, human and material resources to government policies, targets and plans under the justification that it is always only possible to determine the configurations of the public sector organizations from the nature of the comprehensive plans they exist to implement (Olaopa, 2009: 55 cited in Okoye, 2017)

There is no gainsaying that the Nigerian public service has since the days of colonial rule been subjected to numerous reforms. However, the changes of government, styles of government and policies have meant that no single policy had had the chance of making the necessary impact before a new policy direction will be introduced by the succeeding administration/ regime (National Political Reform Conference, 2005). In fact, the Nigerian public service (sector) over the years had gone through a lot of reform phases all in a bid to make it result-oriented, professional as well as effective and efficient in the service delivery. Meanwhile, the litany of public sector reforms in Nigeria is presented in the table below:

Table 1: Public Sector Reforms in Nigeria, 1934 – 2012

s/n	Name of Commission that conducted the reform	year
1	Hunts Commission	1934
2	Tudor Davis Commission	1945
3	Harragin Commissio	1947
4	Foot Commission	1948
5	Gorsuch Commission	1951
6	Phillips-Adebo Commission	1954
7	Mbanefo Commission	1959
8	Hern Committee	1959
9	Morgan Committee	1963
10	Eldwood Commission	1966
11	Adebo Commission	1971
12	Udoji Commission	1972
13	Onosode Commission	1982
14	Dotun Phillips Commission	1985
15	Decree No 43	1988
16	Ayida Review Panel	1995
17	Bureau of Public Service Reform (BPSR)	2000
18	Steve Oronsaye Report	2012

Source: As adapted from Okoye, 2017.

Basically, the Harragin Commission of 1947 divided the service into junior and senior services; the Gorsuch Commission of 1954, restructured the service into five (5) sections namely, the sub-clerical, clerical, sub-professional/technical, administrative/professional and super-scale. The Mbanefo Commission of 1959 focused on the issues of salaries; just as the Hern Commission, which was constituted the same 1959 integrated the pre-existing departments into



ministries as well as replaced the directors with permanent secretaries as heads of these ministries. This is followed by the Adebo Commission of 1971.

Besides, the Udoji Commission of 1972, harmonized the structure and organization of the country's public service. It later on suggested a unified public service structure for the entire country. Hence, the recruitment/appointment, promotion, remuneration, retirement, discipline and dismissal of public/civil servants all over the country came under the same condition all over the country (PRSC, 1974:297). Moreover, the Philip Dotun led reform of 1988, successfully aligned the public service with the presidential system of government as well as the change in the designation of the heads of ministries from permanent secretaries to directors-general. Again, the outcome of the suggestion made by the 1995 Ayida Panel resulted in the revision of the position of directors-general back to permanent secretaries (FGN, 1997:280).

Meanwhile, the Bureau of Public Service Reform (BPSR) which was established in 2003 sought to ensure minimum standard in the country's public service in addition to the reformation of all Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) of all arms and branches of government. Subsequent Reform efforts, as late as the Oronsaye Panel of 2010- 2012, have seen some changes and improvements in the public service. Yet, in all fairness, the public service cannot be said to have attained the desired level of optimally delivering on the democratic desires of the citizens.

As at September, 2005, the number of federal public servants was slightly above one million. The estimated number working for the 36 states and the FCT was another 2 million, broken down in the table below:

Table 2

S/n	Institution	Number
1	Federal Core Civil Servants	including some 2,000 directors 180,000
2	Uniformed Services - Military, Police and Paramilitary Services	457,000
3	Parastatals, Agencies, Educational and Health	470,000
4	Total Federal Public Service	1,107,000
5	Public Officers at the State Level - 36 States	(Estimate) 856,000
6	Public Officers in the Federal Capital Territory Administration	19,000
7	Public Officers at the 774 Local Governments and 6 FCT Area Councils	620,000



8	Total Sub-National Public Service	1,495,000
9	TOTAL: Public Sector Employees in Nigeria	2,602,000

Source: As adapted from El Rufai, 2011.

Adjusting for the increasing numbers of aides of the president, ministers, governors and legislators, it is not unreasonable to put the total number of those working directly for governments at about three million. So, while our national population has increased by about 160 per cent between 1960 and 1999, the size of our public service increased by 350 per cent in the same period.

Interestingly, prior to the reforms, the country's public service is clearly over-bloated, rapidly ageing, mostly untrained and largely undereducated. Its average age then was 42 years, and over 60 per cent were over 40 years. Less than 12 per cent of the public servants held university degrees or equivalent. Over 70 per cent of the service was of the junior grades 01-06, of sub-clerical and equivalent skills. About 20 per cent of the public service employees were "ghost workers" - non-existent people on the payroll which goes to staff of personnel and accounts departments. El Rufai (2011 cited in Okoye, 2017) specifically notes that in the FCT, out of an initial headcount of 26,000 staff that 3,000 ghosts workers were discovered and that by the time Public Service Reform Team (PSRT) introduced the use of biometric ID and centralized, computerized pay: that as much as 2,500 failed to show up for documentation.

Despite the fact that the public service pay is low relative to the cost of living, the overall burden of payroll as a percentage of the budget is huge. Indeed, in most states of the federation other than Lagos, Kano, Kaduna and Rivers States, an average of 50 per cent of the budget goes towards the payment of salaries. Out of the N2,425 billion included in the 2011 Budget for recurrent expenditure, between 73 per cent and 84 per cent for each MDA constitutes personnel cost. The breakdown of federal public service emoluments by class of service in 2005 is as follows:

- i. Core Civil Service - 18 per cent
- ii. Military, Police and Paramilitary - 35 per cent
- iii. Parastatals, Education and Health - 47 per cent (El Rufai, 2011).

1.4. Empirical review

Branka *et al* (2025) examines how reform requirements and resistance to change influence the transformation of HRM practices in public administration across post-socialist European countries. Using a structured literature review approach, the study systematically analyzes



peer-reviewed academic research published in quality journals indexed in the Web of Science database. A purposive and criterion-based sampling strategy was applied to select relevant studies that address HRM reforms, institutional challenges, and governance dynamics within the post-socialist context. Findings indicate that historical legacies, politicization, and institutional resistance remain significant barriers to the successful implementation of HRM reforms. This study also highlights that while legal and procedural adjustments have been made, many public administrations struggle with the practical application of reform policies due to entrenched bureaucratic cultures and limited professionalization of HRM functions. By providing a structured synthesis of existing research, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of HRM transformation in post-socialist public administrations. It also identifies areas wherein further empirical research is needed to explore potential strategies for overcoming barriers to reform. But did not explore innovative solution for public sector governance in Nigeria which this paper is set to address.

Shuyu and Durham, (2022) carried out a study titled “The Reform of Human Resource System in the Public Sector under the New Public Management System”. The paper focuses on New Public Management (NPM) and the public human resource management system. The study identifies the problems with public sector human resource management, including but not limited to the following: the focus of Chinese public sector personnel on achieving public sector goals at the expense of personal goals; the unfairness of recruitment principles due to human relations, which is not conducive to the rational allocation of talent and leads to brain drain; and the outdated management style, problematic promotion system, and inadequate incentives in China's public administration. Increasing the effectiveness of the performance evaluation process is one way to solve these shortcomings. The study notes that these deficiencies can be rectified by enhancing the performance appraisal mechanism, establishing a flexible system for workers, and aiming for maximum efficiency in order to improve the difficulties in the public sector. This paper offers some references for the improvement of talent management in public organizations. But did not also explore innovative solution for public sector governance in Nigeria which is the thrust of this study.

Takudzwa (2024), presents a comprehensive comparative analysis of Strategic Human Resources Management (SHRM) strategies in Zimbabwe and other public sector organizations. The analysis examines the key components of SHRM, including mission and vision statements, environmental scanning, strategic analysis, human resources planning, talent management, performance management, employee engagement, and change management. The study reveals



that while Zimbabwe's SHRM strategy aligns with best practices in the field, there are areas for improvement, particularly in talent management and employee engagement. The article provides implications for public sector organizations and HRM practitioners, highlighting the importance of prioritizing SHRM, developing effective talent management and employee engagement strategies, and integrating change management and performance management into HRM practices. The study concludes with recommendations for future research and practice, emphasizing the need for further research on the impact of SHRM on organizational performance in the public sector and the development of effective SHRM strategies that align with organizational goals and objectives. Just like the other articles, did not explore innovative solution for public sector governance in Nigeria which is the focal area this paper is set to address.

Malthi and Rajagobalan, (2014) carried out a study on Human Resource Management Approach to Public Sector Companies. They find out that public service transformation is critically dependent on developing new skills, changing engrained behaviours and managing the uncertainty and conflict that can arise as a result. They noted that unless HR is involved at the heart of this process to ensure the key people management issues are addressed, public service reform plans will remain frustrated. HR policies with corporate strategy, its learning and development efforts its value-driven culture and its ability to create work-life balance for its employees are necessary approaches to public sector companies' flowing from above, it is very clear that the various study look at the various areas relating to public sector reform but to the best of my knowledge, none of articles examines human resource management and public sector reform in Nigeria by seeking to proffer innovative solution for public sector governance thereby leaving a gap for this study to cover.

1.5. Theoretical framework

The New Public Management (NPM) theory was propounded by Christopher Hood, who first used the phrase new public management in 1989, to describe the very similar administrative doctrines that were used in the United States, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and United Kingdom in the 1970s and 1980s, though with a different focus (O'Flynn 2013). Also, in his article, '*Public Management for all Season*', published in 1991. Through which he sought to describe trends that he and others had seen occurring in recent administrative reforms initiated across many Organisations for Economic cooperation and Development (OECD) countries. Some of the key figures associated with the development of NPM include: David Osborne and



Ted Gaebler in their book "Reinventing Government" in 1992; Christopher Pollitt, who has written extensively on NPM and its applications in various countries. These scholars, along with others, have contributed to the development of NPM theory (Mustapha & Ogbeide, 2024).

As a doctrine, the new public management identifies the failures and inadequacies of public sector performance over time and locates the problem as lying in the nature and processes of public sector activity and public administration, Centralised bureaucracies, waste, inefficiency in resource use and inadequate mechanisms of accountability. In response, advocates the implementation of private sector technique and values in the public sector along with the delivery of public service through markets processes. Its emphasis is on frugality, efficiency and effectiveness through its market orientation and customer - client services outlook.

Global institutions, such as the IMF, World Bank, and WTO, have supported the adoption of NPM principles. Reforms in the public sector inspired by the NPM doctrine have brought a novel perspective to HRM, integrating the idea that human resources are pivotal for achieving performance outcomes in line with the strategic goals of public organizations (Gardner & Palmer, 1997). However, these reforms led to a range of intended and unintended consequences. On the positive side, NPM has led to increased efficiency, accountability, and a shift towards more customer-oriented service delivery in many public institutions. It emphasizes performance-based management and results, which encourages public organizations to adopt a more business-like approach. NPM is relevant to this study because of its advocacy for the use of information technology and it emphasizes on efficiency and effectiveness in terms of processes and objectives. It emphasizes performance-based management and results, which encourages public organizations to adopt a more business-like approach. There is connection between the study and the theory.

1.6. Methodology

The paper attempts to draw attention to the factors militating against the smooth implementation of reform efforts in the public sector in Nigeria and innovative approaches to overcoming the challenges. The study adopted the historical descriptive method hence data for the study were sourced through the secondary means.



1.7. The HR Roles in Public Sector Reform

Human resource plays vital role in public sector reform. Some of these roles are briefly discussed below:

1. **Aligning HR with reform goals:** A major responsibility of HR is to ensure that personnel policies and practices support the overall reform agenda
2. **Developing reform-oriented HR strategies:** HR designs strategies to attract, retain and develop talent that support reforms initiatives.
3. **Facilitating cultural change:** HR helps to create a culture that supports reform by promoting values such as innovation, transparency and accountability
4. **Managing resistance to change:** HR develops strategies to address resistance to change and ensures a smooth transition
5. **Training and development:** HR provides training and development programmes to enhance employees' skills and competencies, enabling them to support reform initiatives
6. **Performance management:** HR establishes performance management systems that align with reform goals, ensuring employees are held accountable for their contributions.
7. **Succession planning:** HR identifies and develops future leaders who can sustain reform efforts.

1.8. Innovative Solutions for Public Sector Governance

A key innovative solution for public sector governance is leveraging digital technologies to enhance service delivery, transparency, and citizen engagement. This includes adopting

1. **Digitalization Technologies and e-governance platforms:** Digitalization and e-governance in the public sector involve using Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to transform government operations and service delivery. This includes integrating ICTs into various government functions to enhance transparency, efficiency, and citizen participation. E-governance specifically focuses on utilizing these technologies to deliver government services to citizens, businesses, and other government entities. E-governance initiatives can provide citizens with greater access to information and opportunities to interact with government through online portals and feedback mechanisms. While digitalisation provides the foundation for e-governance by enabling the digitization of government processes and data, making them more accessible and manageable.



Utilizing artificial intelligence (AI) and Internet of Things (IoT) for smart solutions, and fostering open data initiatives. The application of AI and IoT technologies can significantly enhance public sector governance by improving efficiency, enabling data-driven decision-making, and fostering innovation in service delivery. AI can automate tasks, analyze data for insights, and personalize citizen interactions, while IoT (which is a network of physical devices, vehicles, and other items embedded with sensors, software, and connectivity, allowing them to collect and exchange data) provides real-time data collection for monitoring, resource management, and predictive maintenance.

2. **Building a Culture of Innovation within Government through Talent Development and Collaboration:** Building a culture of innovation within government through talent development and collaboration can serve as an innovative solution for public sector governance in several ways. These include talent development and collaboration. Talent development manifest by attracting and retaining top talent, developing digital literacy and fostering a growth mindset. What these implies is that government can attract and retain skilled professionals who can drive innovation and improvement, training programmes can enhance employees' digital skills, enabling them to leverage technology for better governance as well as encouraging continuous learning and experimentation helps employees adapt to changing environments. While collaboration across departments and agencies facilitates knowledge sharing, idea generation, and problem solving. Collaboration can also stimulates partnership with external stakeholders. That is, governments can leverage expertise from private sector, academia, and civil society to drive innovation. Involving citizens in the innovation proves ensures that solution meet their needs and expectation. This will not only lead to improved service delivery, but increase transparency and accountability, enhance problem solving and better management of resources.
3. **Evidence-Based Policymaking** Evidence-Based Policymaking is crucial for innovative solutions in public sector governance because it ensures that policies are informed by data and research, effective and efficient, transparent and accountable, as well as innovative and adaptive. When policies are based on empirical evidence, it reduces the risk of ineffective or harmful interventions as well as incorporate findings from rigorous

research, ensuring that solutions are grounded in reality. Evidenced based policies are more likely to achieve their intended goals, leading to better outcomes for citizens. By identifying what works and what doesn't, governments can allocate resources more efficiently. From the lens of transparency and accountability, evidence-based policy making promotes transparency, as decisions are based on publicly available data and research and government can be held accountable for policy decisions as they are grounded in evidence. Finally, evidence based policy making fosters a culture of experimentation, learning and adaptation. By analyzing data and research, governments can identify innovative solutions that address complex challenges.

1.9. Challenges to innovative solutions to public sector governance

Challenges to adopting innovative solutions in the public sector include; lack of funding and resources, rigid bureaucratic structures and cultures, insufficient skilled workforce, the need to balance innovation with strict regulatory frameworks and privacy concerns, difficulty in establishing collaboration across sectors, and the "technology gap" in some regions. These barriers collectively impede the implementation of new methods and technologies to improve public services and address complex societal problems. These are further explained briefly below:

- i. **Bureaucratic Inertia:** Public institutions often have entrenched, outdated practices and a rigid hierarchical structure that makes it difficult to adopt new methodologies and stifles creativity.
- ii. **Regulatory Frameworks:** The complex web of laws, rules, and procedures governing public sectors can unintentionally limit or discourage innovation, even when specific parts of legislation might need reform to be more innovation-friendly.
- iii. **Lack of Resource Flexibility:** Policies for allocating financial and human resources can make it costly or difficult for public organizations to invest in new projects or share resources for common goals.

Resource and Capacity Limitations

- i. **Funding Gaps:** Many public sectors lack adequate funding and resources specifically allocated for innovation, hindering the implementation of new ideas and projects.



- ii. Skills Gap: There is a noticeable lack of employees with the necessary training in modern innovation techniques, data analytics, and digital technologies.
- iii. Infrastructure and Technology: A "technology gap" can arise where certain regions lack sufficient access to or capability in technology, creating disparities in service quality and inhibiting digital innovation.

Organizational and Cultural Factors

- i. Conservative Culture: A conservative organizational culture can resist new approaches, hindering the adoption of innovative solutions.
- ii. Lack of Trust: Public confidence in the government's ability to adopt innovative ideas can be low, requiring better responsiveness to citizens' concerns.

Collaboration and Governance Issues

- i. Limited Collaboration: Slow progress can result from challenges in building effective collaboration between government, the private sector, and civil society.
- ii. Transparency and Oversight: A lack of effective oversight systems can lead to the misuse of innovations or a failure to deliver expected results, raising transparency and accountability concerns.
- iii. Data Ethics: While data analysis offers benefits, navigating the ethical concerns around privacy, fair data use, and transparency in data collection is a significant challenge for public sector innovation.

1.10. Conclusion and Recommendations

From the foregoing this paper focuses on human resource management and public sector reform in Nigeria with a clear intention to explore innovative solution for public sector governance. The study aims at examining the roles of Human Resource (HR) as well as innovative solutions for public sector governance and its challenges. The research design was qualitative. The data were collected using secondary source, in which a thorough literature review of academic articles, books, and reports related to the study were explored and the study situated on the New Public Management Theory. The study opined that to enhance service delivery, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness in the governance of public sector, and citizen engagement, the public service needs to leverage on digitalization technologies and e-governance platforms, utilizing Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Internet of Things (IoT) for



smart solutions, building a culture of innovation within government through talent development and collaboration.

The paper identified some challenges to adopting innovative solutions in the public sector to include lack of funding and resources, rigid bureaucratic structures and cultures, insufficient skilled workforce, the need to balance innovation with strict regulatory frameworks and privacy concerns, difficulty in establishing collaboration across sectors, and the "technology gap" in some regions. To overcome the above-mentioned challenges, the paper suggested that government should make deliberate effort to build public trust, adequately fund innovations in the service, ensure collaboration with private interests and make regulatory frameworks flexible and adaptable. The study concludes that Unless HR is involved at the heart of this process to ensure that key people management issues are addressed, public service reform and plans will remain a mirage.

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