

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS AND NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT IN NIGERIA: ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES**Benjamin, T. Tough¹ & Emmanuel Shaaperah²***^{1&2}Department of Public Administration, Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio University, Makurdi
toughbenjamin@gmail.com & eshaaperah16@gmail.com***ARTICLE INFO****Article No.:** 0220**Accepted Date:** 01/03/2026**Published Date:** 19/03/2026**Type:** Research**ABSTRACT**

Nigeria faces persistent infrastructure deficits and inefficiencies in public service delivery, which hinder economic growth and social development. In response, Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) have been adopted to mobilise private capital, technical expertise and managerial efficiency, while New Public Management (NPM) reforms emphasise results-oriented, market-driven governance in the public sector. This study examines the PPP and NPM agenda in Nigeria, focusing on both successes and pitfalls. The study is purely qualitative utilizing data from secondary sources which include government reports, project documents and scholarly literature. Anchored on NPM theory, the findings indicate that PPPs have enhanced infrastructure development through projects such as the Lekki-Epe Expressway, Abuja-Makurdi highway and Murtala Muhammed Airport Terminal 2. These projects demonstrate efficiency, risk-sharing and improved service delivery. However, challenges such as regulatory gaps, political interference, financing constraints, technical capacity limitations and public resistance have occasionally delayed or disrupted implementation. The study concludes that PPPs, aligned with NPM principles, can drive sustainable infrastructure and service delivery in Nigeria, provided that regulatory frameworks, policy continuity, technical capacity and social equity are strengthened.

Keywords: Public Sector, Customer orientation, corruption, New Public Management (NPM) and Public-Private Partnerships (PPP).

Introduction

In the early decades of the twenty-first century, governments globally have been confronted with complex challenges that traditional bureaucratic governance models struggle to address effectively. Public institutions are expected to deliver services more efficiently, transparently and responsively amid fiscal constraints, rapid technological change and rising citizen expectations. In response, reform paradigms such as New Public Management (NPM) and Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) have gained prominence as alternative governance approaches aimed at enhancing public sector performance, stimulating innovation and leveraging private sector resources. While these frameworks emerged from different intellectual and practical traditions, they share a common impetus: rethinking how public services are designed, financed and delivered in contexts where the conventional Weberian model of hierarchy and process compliance no longer suffices (Hood, 1991; Osborne, 2006).

NPM originated in the late 1970s and 1980s in developed economies such as the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australia, where it was conceptualised as a set of administrative doctrines informed by market-oriented management principles. Central tenets of NPM include decentralisation of authority, performance measurement, competition within and across public agencies and the adoption of private sector managerial practices to improve efficiency and accountability (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011). Proponents argue that NPM shifts the focus of public administration from rule-bound processes to results-oriented outputs, thereby enabling governments to respond dynamically to stakeholder needs. Despite originating in advanced economies, the NPM agenda has profoundly influenced public sector reforms in developing countries, including Nigeria, where efforts to streamline service delivery and curb bureaucratic inefficiencies have been long-standing policy goals (Adebayo, 2007).

Parallel to the rise of NPM is the increasing use of Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) as a strategy for mobilising private capital and expertise toward public infrastructure and service provision. PPPs embody long-term contractual arrangements between government entities and private firms, in which risks, responsibilities and rewards are shared to achieve public objectives that might otherwise be unattainable through government funding alone (Yescombe, 2013). The PPP model is grounded in the belief that private sector involvement can introduce innovation, enhance cost-effectiveness and accelerate the implementation of public projects, particularly in sectors such as transportation, energy, health and education. For countries like Nigeria, facing substantial infrastructure deficits and budgetary pressures, PPPs are touted as mechanisms for expanding service access while alleviating fiscal burdens on the public purse (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2020).

In the Nigerian context, the interplay between NPM and PPP reflects broader debates about governance reform, state capacity and development effectiveness. Nigeria's public sector has historically been characterised by centralized decision-making, procedural rigidity and limited accountability, factors often cited as impediments to socio-economic progress (Olowu & Sako, 2002). Reform initiatives informed by NPM principles, such as performance budgeting, decentralisation and results-based management, seek to transform public agencies into more adaptive and performance-driven organisations. Concurrently, the adoption of PPP frameworks intends to harness private investment and managerial competence to address chronic infrastructure shortages and improve service delivery outcomes. These reform trajectories are not merely administrative adjustments; they signify an ongoing reconfiguration of the state's role in governing economic and social life (Schelpha, 2015).

However, the practical application of NPM and PPP in Nigeria has generated both optimism and criticism. Advocates highlight instances where private participation has introduced greater efficiency and improved service quality, while critics caution against inadequate regulatory oversight, unequal risk distribution and the potential erosion of public accountability (Bashir & Obadan, 2019). Moreover, the success of these approaches in Nigeria depends heavily on contextual factors such as institutional capacity, political will and the strength of governance systems to mitigate corruption and safeguard public interest. Consequently, rethinking governance in Nigeria requires not only adopting global reform models but also adapting them to local realities, ensuring that efficiency gains do not come at the expense of equity, transparency, or democratic control. This paper therefore examines Public-Private Partnerships and New Public Management in Nigeria: Achievements and Challenges.

Statement of the Problem

Despite decades of public sector reforms, Nigeria continues to face persistent governance challenges that undermine the effectiveness, efficiency and equity of public service delivery. Traditional bureaucratic structures have been criticised for excessive rigidity, centralised decision-making and procedural inefficiencies, which often result in delays, poor policy implementation and low responsiveness to citizens' needs. These structural limitations are compounded by widespread corruption, limited accountability and inadequate institutional capacity, making it difficult for the state to meet the growing demands of a rapidly expanding population and complex socio-economic environment. As a result, public services in critical sectors such as healthcare, education, infrastructure and energy remain insufficient, underfunded and poorly managed, contributing to social inequities and limiting national development.

In response to these challenges, reform strategies informed by New Public Management (NPM) and Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) have been introduced to enhance efficiency, accountability and service delivery in Nigeria. NPM emphasises results-oriented management, decentralisation, performance measurement and market-based mechanisms, while PPPs focus on leveraging private sector investment, expertise and innovation to complement public resources. However, despite policy adoption, the implementation of NPM and PPP initiatives in Nigeria has faced significant obstacles, including weak regulatory frameworks, institutional resistance, a lack of skilled personnel and political interference. These challenges have often led to limited impact, project delays, cost overruns and inequitable outcomes, raising questions about the suitability and adaptability of these reform approaches to the Nigerian context.

The problem, therefore, lies in the persistent gap between the theoretical promise of NPM and PPP frameworks and their practical effectiveness in addressing Nigeria's governance deficits. While these approaches aim to improve efficiency, accountability and service delivery, their adoption has not consistently translated into sustainable improvements in public sector performance. This disconnect suggests a need for critical examination of how NPM and PPP principles are applied, the challenges inherent in their implementation and the broader implications for governance reform in Nigeria. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing strategies that not only adopt global best practices but also tailor them to Nigeria's socio-political realities, ensuring that reform efforts contribute meaningfully to public sector efficiency, citizen satisfaction and sustainable development.

Conceptual Clarifications

Public-private partnership

Public-Private Partnership (PPP) is a concept that has been defined differently by scholars, but central to all definitions is the collaboration between public and private sectors to deliver public services or infrastructure. Yescombe (2013) defines PPP as a long-term contractual arrangement between a government and a private partner, in which both parties share responsibilities, risks and rewards in the financing, construction and operation of public facilities. Similarly, Grimsey and Lewis (2004) describe PPP as an innovative procurement approach where the private sector contributes finance, expertise and management skills to support public service delivery while the government ensures regulatory oversight and alignment with public interest objectives.

Hodge and Greve (2007) emphasise the governance dimension of PPP, defining it as a cooperative institutional arrangement that integrates the efficiency and flexibility of the private sector with the social and policy objectives of the public sector. According to them, PPPs are not merely financial instruments but mechanisms for achieving public policy goals through shared decision-making and mutual accountability. The European Commission (2019) defines PPP as a partnership between government entities and private organizations for the provision of infrastructure or services, structured to allocate risks to the party best able to manage them, to improve efficiency, innovation and service quality.

The World Bank (2017) highlights the contractual and performance-oriented nature of PPPs, defining them as legally binding agreements in which private sector participants deliver public services or infrastructure under clearly defined responsibilities, outputs and timeframes, often with performance-based incentives. Similarly, Akintoye, Beck and Hardcastle (2003) conceptualize PPP as a collaborative framework where both public and private partners contribute resources, share risks and work jointly to achieve mutually agreed objectives in the delivery of public projects.

In addition, international organizations often highlight the flexibility and adaptability inherent in PPPs. According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE, 2008), PPP is defined as an arrangement where public authorities engage private entities for designing, financing, building, operating, or maintaining infrastructure or service provision, while ensuring that public policy objectives are met. This definition underscores the partnership element, the allocation of responsibilities and the focus on long-term outcomes.

Within the context of this study, PPP a multi-dimensional concept that encompasses financial collaboration, shared risk, joint decision-making, long-term contractual arrangements and a focus on achieving public sector goals with the efficiency and expertise of the private sector. While terminologies and emphases differ, the central premise remains the same: PPP is a strategic arrangement where the public and private sectors cooperate to provide public services or infrastructure more effectively than through conventional public sector delivery alone

New Public Management (NPM)

New Public Management (NPM) is a paradigm of public sector reform that emerged in the late twentieth century as governments worldwide sought more efficient, accountable and results-oriented ways of delivering public services. Islam (2015) defines NPM as a set of administrative doctrines designed to improve government performance by borrowing

management techniques from the private sector, emphasizing outputs, flexibility and measurable results over rigid bureaucratic procedures. NPM reflects a deliberate shift from the traditional Weberian model of public administration, which prioritizes hierarchy, rules and process compliance, to a system that values efficiency, innovation and responsiveness to the needs of citizens.

According to Pollitt and Bouckaert (2011), NPM encompasses several key elements: decentralization of authority, introduction of market-like competition within public agencies, performance measurement and the use of contractual arrangements to ensure accountability. The adoption of these principles seeks to transform public organizations from rule-bound institutions into dynamic entities that can adapt to complex socio-economic demands. The emphasis on results and outputs implies that public managers are judged not only on adherence to procedures but also on the effectiveness and efficiency with which services are delivered. This performance-oriented approach is central to the philosophy of NPM, reflecting a managerial focus on value for money and goal achievement.

Osborne and Gaebler (1992) further elaborate on NPM as a movement that encourages governments to “steer rather than row.” This metaphor underscores the idea that the state’s role is increasingly to set objectives, provide oversight and create enabling environments, while operational tasks may be delegated to semi-autonomous agencies, private contractors, or public-private partnerships. By repositioning citizens as “customers,” NPM emphasizes responsiveness to service users, aligning public sector priorities with societal needs and expectations. Hood and Dixon (2015) note that NPM promotes practices such as outsourcing, privatization and the introduction of quasi-market mechanisms, aiming to increase efficiency, innovation and the overall effectiveness of public service delivery.

Scholars like Andrews and Van de Walle (2013) highlight that NPM is not merely about adopting private sector techniques but also about transforming organisational culture within the public sector. Managers are encouraged to adopt entrepreneurial attitudes, develop performance incentives and foster a results-driven culture that rewards achievement and accountability. This cultural shift complements structural changes, such as decentralisation and agency autonomy, ensuring that NPM reforms penetrate both administrative processes and institutional behaviour.

In essence, New Public Management is a comprehensive reform philosophy that integrates managerial, structural and cultural changes to enhance public sector performance. By promoting decentralisation, performance measurement, market-oriented mechanisms and citizen-centred service delivery, NPM seeks to make governments more efficient, responsive and accountable. While originally developed in advanced economies, NPM has influenced public sector reforms in developing countries, including Nigeria, where it has been adapted to address inefficiencies, bureaucratic rigidity and service delivery challenges. The concept thus represents a fundamental rethinking of how governments operate, shifting the focus from procedure to results, from control to performance and from provider-centric to citizen-centric approaches.

Goals /Features of New Public Management (NPM)

New Public Management (NPM) in the Nigerian context can be observed through the emphasis on efficiency, accountability, and results in public service delivery, marking a departure from traditional bureaucratic procedures. Results-oriented management is

increasingly evident in initiatives such as the implementation of performance-based budgeting in Nigerian ministries, where the Ministry of Finance has introduced frameworks that evaluate departments based on the achievement of specific service outcomes rather than mere procedural compliance (Adewale 2022). This shift encourages agencies to focus on tangible impacts, such as improvements in healthcare delivery through targeted interventions in state hospitals (Ezeh 2023).

Decentralisation of authority under NPM is reflected in the creation of semi-autonomous agencies such as the Nigerian Inland Revenue Service (NIRS) and the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), which are empowered to make operational decisions without constant central oversight (Okoro 2021). This decentralisation aims to reduce bureaucratic delays, foster innovation, and enhance responsiveness to local needs, although challenges in capacity and regulatory oversight persist. The focus on efficiency and cost-effectiveness is evident in the adoption of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in sectors such as road infrastructure and power, where government resources are supplemented by private investment to achieve faster project completion and improved service quality (Onyema 2024). Similarly, market-oriented mechanisms such as competitive bidding for government contracts and outsourcing of certain administrative functions reflect NPM's influence in reducing wastage and promoting value for money (Ibrahim 2022).

Customer orientation in Nigeria has emerged through citizen feedback platforms, including the Service Delivery Survey in Lagos State and online grievance portals established by the Federal Civil Service Commission, which aim to ensure that citizens' needs and satisfaction guide public service provision (Adebayo 2023). Complementing this, performance measurement and management tools, such as key performance indicators (KPIs) introduced in federal ministries, enable tracking of outputs, reward high-performing staff, and address inefficiencies, although full implementation remains inconsistent across regions (Usman 2025). Managerial autonomy and accountability are applied in institutions such as the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), where executives have discretion over operational decisions but are required to report performance publicly, fostering professionalism while promoting responsibility for outcomes (NCC Report 2023). Finally, NPM's emphasis on entrepreneurial and innovative behaviour is visible in digital governance initiatives such as the introduction of e-tax platforms and electronic visa systems, which aim to improve efficiency, reduce corruption, and make government services more responsive to citizens (Olufemi 2024).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework guiding this study is anchored on New Public Management (NPM), which provides a practical lens for analysing the adoption, implementation and outcomes of Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) in Nigeria. Emerging in the late twentieth century, NPM responded to inefficiencies, rigidities and high costs associated with traditional public administration by promoting private-sector management practices, performance-oriented approaches and market mechanisms to enhance efficiency, accountability and service delivery (Hood, 1991; Osborne and Gaebler, 1992). These principles are directly relevant to PPPs, which represent a mechanism for transferring service delivery responsibilities to private actors while repositioning the state as regulator and facilitator.

NPM emphasises hands-on professional management, output-based performance measurement, competition in service provision and decentralisation of authority (Hood, 1991).

In Nigeria, these doctrines underpin expectations that PPPs will deliver cost-effective, timely and quality services in sectors such as transportation, power and housing. The theory assumes that performance can be objectively measured, risks can be efficiently allocated to private partners and competition encourages innovation. For this study, NPM provides the criteria against which PPP projects are evaluated, allowing assessment of whether efficiency gains, improved service delivery and risk-sharing objectives are achieved in practice.

At the same time, NPM highlights the conditions necessary for success, including strong institutions, effective regulatory oversight and accountability mechanisms (Hodge and Greve, 2007). In Nigeria, the study uses these principles to analyse how weaknesses such as political interference, contract renegotiations or administrative bottlenecks affect PPP performance. By focusing on both theoretical expectations and observed outcomes, the framework enables a critical appraisal of project successes, delays, cost overruns and service quality issues, linking them to the extent to which NPM assumptions hold in the Nigerian context.

Critiques of NPM, particularly the overemphasis on efficiency at the expense of equity and the reliance on institutional capacity, further guide the analysis by identifying structural and social factors that may hinder PPP effectiveness (Hood, 1991). Through this lens, the study not only evaluates technical and financial success but also considers impacts on accessibility, social equity and sustainability. Consequently, NPM serves not merely as a conceptual background but as an analytical tool, providing a coherent framework for examining why PPPs have been pursued in Nigeria, why some succeed while others fail and what governance reforms might strengthen future outcomes.

Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) and New Public Management (NPM) Agenda in Nigeria: Success and Pitfalls

The Agenda of Public-Private Partnerships and New Public Management in Nigeria

The agenda of Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) and New Public Management (NPM) in Nigeria is rooted in efforts to reform public sector governance, address infrastructure deficits, and improve service delivery through efficiency-oriented and market-based mechanisms. Both PPP and NPM emerged as responses to the shortcomings of traditional bureaucratic administration in Nigeria, which has often been characterised by inefficiency, weak service outcomes, poor maintenance of public assets, and limited fiscal capacity (Hood, 1991; Yescombe, 2013). PPPs have therefore been adopted to mobilise private capital, managerial expertise, and technical innovation to complement government efforts in sectors such as transportation, power, housing, healthcare, and education (Hodge & Greve, 2007; European Commission, 2019).

A central objective of PPPs in Nigeria is infrastructure development. With public revenue constrained and competing budgetary demands prevalent, PPPs provide a practical mechanism for bridging the country's wide infrastructure gap. Private investment is leveraged to improve project planning, construction, operation, and maintenance, thereby addressing critical deficits in roads, electricity, housing, and public facilities while also stimulating economic growth (Yescombe, 2013; World Bank, 2017).

Efficiency improvement constitutes another key theme. By introducing private-sector management practices, performance-based processes, and disciplined resource utilisation,

PPPs aim to deliver projects on time and within budget, reduce waste, and enhance service quality. Examples include independent power projects designed to increase electricity generation efficiency and transport infrastructure initiatives that improve service reliability and reduce congestion through better management and maintenance practices (Bashir & Obadan, 2019; Grimsey & Lewis, 2004).

Risk sharing is a further defining element of the PPP agenda. Contracts are structured to allocate financial, operational, and technical risks to the parties best able to manage them, thereby reducing the fiscal burden on government while incentivising private partners to deliver successful outcomes. This is particularly important in Nigeria, where institutional capacity constraints and administrative bottlenecks often expose projects to delays, cost overruns, and performance shortfalls (Bashir & Obadan, 2019; World Bank, 2017).

The broader NPM agenda in Nigeria complements PPP objectives by emphasising results-oriented management, decentralisation, accountability, and customer-focused service delivery. By outsourcing certain functions and engaging private partners, government seeks to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and enhance service quality, while treating citizens as service users whose needs guide public sector performance. PPPs therefore operationalise NPM principles, translating them into tangible governance arrangements that aim to improve accessibility, reliability, and innovation in public services (Hood, 1991; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017; European Commission, 2019).

The successes of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and New Public Management (NPM) in Nigeria.

The successes of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and New Public Management (NPM) reforms in Nigeria illustrate the potential of private sector involvement to enhance infrastructure delivery, improve service outcomes, and promote efficiency-oriented governance. These reforms mark a shift from traditional bureaucratic administration, which has often been constrained by inefficiency, weak oversight, and limited fiscal capacity, towards market-oriented, performance-driven management (Hood, 1991). NPM principles, such as decentralisation, results-based accountability, competition, and cost-effectiveness, provide both the ideological and operational framework for PPPs, guiding expectations for improved public sector performance (Yescombe, 2013).

In transportation, the Lekki–Epe Expressway in Lagos exemplifies how PPPs translate NPM ideals into tangible outcomes. The concession model mobilised private capital, introduced rigorous operational management, and ensured continuous maintenance, generating predictable toll revenue while reducing the fiscal burden on government. Beyond infrastructure delivery, the project demonstrates how performance-based governance and lifecycle management, core NPM doctrines, can enhance sustainability, accountability, and service quality (Hodge & Greve, 2007). Similarly, the Lagos–Ibadan Expressway shows how private participation can accelerate project execution, introduce innovative construction methods, and allow government to focus on regulation rather than direct delivery, reinforcing the NPM principle of separating policy-making from service provision (Bashir & Obadan, 2019).

In the power sector, projects such as the Azura-Edo Independent Power Plant highlight the benefits of PPPs in addressing long-standing energy deficits. By clearly allocating risks to private actors, establishing performance targets, and ensuring contractual clarity, the initiative has improved generation capacity while incentivising operational efficiency and accountability

key NPM outcomes. These experiences illustrate that PPPs can overcome institutional and fiscal limitations, provided regulatory oversight is robust and contracts are well-structured (World Bank, 2017).

Beyond individual projects, PPPs have facilitated broader macroeconomic benefits. Mobilisation of private investment has reduced the strain on public finances while stimulating innovation and technical capacity in critical sectors, including ports, aviation, housing, and urban development. For example, the Lekki Deep Sea Port and privately managed terminals at Tin Can Island have enhanced trade efficiency and competitiveness, demonstrating how commercialisation and performance-based management improve operational outcomes (Yescombe, 2013; Grimsey & Lewis, 2004). Similarly, urban housing projects like Ilubirin Estate illustrate that PPPs can address social and economic challenges such as housing shortages and urbanisation pressures, linking NPM principles of efficiency and citizen-centred service delivery to tangible developmental outcomes (European Commission, 2019).

These examples collectively show that the success of PPPs in Nigeria is not merely about completing individual projects but about institutionalising principles of efficiency, accountability, and innovation within public service delivery. They highlight that properly structured PPPs, guided by NPM doctrines, can improve planning, reduce delays, enhance risk management, and expand access to essential services. However, lessons also indicate that sustainability depends on effective regulation, strong institutional capacity, and transparency in implementation, underlining that PPPs are not a panacea but a mechanism whose impact is shaped by governance quality (World Bank, 2017; Bashir & Obadan, 2019).

Public–Private Partnerships under the New Public Management Paradigm: Pitfalls and Governance Challenges in Nigeria

Public–Private Partnerships (PPPs) in Nigeria are deeply rooted in the principles of New Public Management (NPM), which advocates the use of private-sector techniques, market-based mechanisms, efficiency, performance measurement and competition in public service delivery (Hood, 1991; Osborne & Gaebler, 1992). Under NPM, governments are expected to steer rather than row, transferring service delivery responsibilities to private actors while retaining regulatory oversight. While this framework has informed Nigeria’s adoption of PPPs across infrastructure and service sectors, its practical implementation has revealed significant pitfalls that reflect broader governance and institutional weaknesses.

One of the major challenges undermining PPPs within Nigeria’s NPM framework is regulatory and institutional fragility. NPM assumes the presence of strong legal institutions capable of enforcing contracts and regulating private actors effectively. However, ambiguities in contract enforcement, bureaucratic delays in approvals and policy inconsistencies often weaken this assumption in Nigeria, creating uncertainty for private investors and increasing project risks (Yescombe, 2013). For instance, road projects executed under PPP arrangements, such as portions of the Lagos–Ibadan Expressway and segments of the Abuja–Makurdi highway, have experienced prolonged delays due to land acquisition bottlenecks, unclear compensation mechanisms and slow environmental impact assessment processes (Bashir & Obadan, 2019). These challenges contradict NPM’s emphasis on efficiency and timely service delivery, leading to cost overruns and diminished investor confidence.

Financing constraints also expose structural tensions between NPM ideals and Nigeria’s economic realities. Although PPPs are designed to mobilize private capital and

reduce fiscal pressure on the state, Nigeria's underdeveloped financial markets, high domestic interest rates and limited long-term financing options undermine this objective. As a result, many PPP projects rely heavily on foreign loans, exposing them to exchange rate volatility and macroeconomic instability (Hodge & Greve, 2007). Projects such as the Makurdi–Enugu road dualisation and the Azura Edo Independent Power Project experienced cost escalations following currency depreciation and rising interest rates, necessitating revisions to financing structures. Such outcomes highlight a critical limitation of NPM in developing economies, where market conditions may not support efficient risk transfer to private actors.

Political interference further weakens PPP effectiveness under the NPM model. While NPM presupposes a stable policy environment insulated from political volatility, Nigeria's PPP projects often suffer from leadership changes and shifting policy priorities. Toll road concessions and airport Build–Operate–Transfer projects, including the Murtala Muhammed Airport Terminal 2 in Lagos, have faced renegotiation pressures when new administrations questioned prior agreements (Grimsey & Lewis, 2004). These interventions disrupt long-term planning, undermine contractual sanctity and erode the credibility of the state as a reliable partner.

Inadequate technical capacity and weak project management further constrain PPP outcomes. NPM emphasises managerial efficiency, professional expertise and performance accountability, yet some PPP contractors and public agencies in Nigeria lack sufficient experience in large-scale project execution and monitoring. This has resulted in construction delays, quality deficiencies and accelerated infrastructure deterioration, particularly in road projects where poor materials and limited oversight reduced expected asset lifespans (European Commission, 2019). Weak monitoring and evaluation mechanisms within public institutions also limit the state's ability to enforce service standards.

Social resistance and public legitimacy issues also present significant pitfalls. NPM prioritises efficiency and cost recovery, often through user fees, tolls, or tariffs. However, insufficient stakeholder engagement and weak social safeguards can generate resistance, especially in projects involving land acquisition or toll collection. The Makurdi–Enugu Road project required extensive coordination with local governments and community leaders to mitigate conflicts and ensure progress (Bashir & Obadan, 2019). Failure to address social concerns early often leads to protests, litigation and project delays, undermining public trust in PPP arrangements.

Finally, excessive reliance on PPPs for essential services raises equity concerns within the NPM framework. While private-sector participation may improve efficiency, profit-driven service provision can marginalize low-income populations when tariffs are set primarily to ensure financial viability rather than social accessibility. In sectors such as electricity, water, healthcare and toll roads, high user charges have limited access for vulnerable groups, challenging the public value claims of NPM (World Bank, 2017).

Conclusion

Public–Private Partnerships, grounded in New Public Management principles, have become a central mechanism for advancing infrastructure and public service delivery in Nigeria by mobilising private capital, technical expertise, and managerial efficiency in sectors such as transportation, power, aviation, ports and urban development. These projects demonstrate how NPM's emphasis on performance, accountability and the redefinition of the state's role from

provider to regulator can translate into tangible developmental outcomes. However, the success of PPPs is heavily dependent on strong institutions, effective regulatory oversight and socio-political support, as weaknesses in these areas, such as political interference, limited technical capacity and equity concerns, can undermine efficiency and service quality. The study highlights that while PPPs are potentially transformative, their full benefits require transparent governance, stakeholder engagement and a balanced consideration of efficiency and social inclusion. When these conditions are met, PPPs can effectively operationalise NPM reforms and contribute to sustainable, inclusive national development.

Recommendations

- i. Strengthen regulatory and institutional frameworks. The study found that project delays and investor hesitancy often result from unclear laws, inconsistent procurement procedures, and poorly defined risk-sharing mechanisms. Establishing clear guidelines and enforceable contract regulations will reduce bureaucratic bottlenecks and enhance private sector confidence.
- ii. Improve financial planning and access to long-term financing. Findings highlighted that currency risks and interest rate fluctuations threaten project continuity. Developing domestic infrastructure bonds, credit guarantees, and risk mitigation instruments can ensure projects remain financially viable and are delivered on schedule.
- iii. Promote political stability and policy continuity. Protecting contracts from arbitrary renegotiation and instituting independent oversight bodies will reduce political interference, as frequent policy shifts were identified as a major obstacle to PPP success.
- iv. Build technical and managerial capacity. Gaps in technical expertise and project management were found to contribute to delays and substandard infrastructure. Training public officials and private contractors in planning, monitoring, evaluation, and execution will improve project quality and efficiency.
- v. Enhance stakeholder engagement. Early consultation with local communities, civil society groups, and participatory planning can address social resistance and equity concerns noted in the study, ensuring projects achieve both operational efficiency and broad social acceptance.

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