Public Sector Innovation in Nigeria: An Explorative Study of Approaches, Outcomes, and Challenges

Onuorah, Onyeka Leo PhD
Email: olonuorah@nda.edu.ng
Department of Political Science, Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna, Nigeria
ORCID iD: https://orcid.org/0009-0001-1954-7917

Bosso, Umar Abdullahi
Email: uabosso@nda.edu.ng
Department of Political Science, Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna, Nigeria
ORCID iD: https://orcid.org/0009-0008-0408-202X

Abstract
Public sector innovation plays a crucial role in addressing societal challenges and improving governance effectiveness. However, in Nigeria, various barriers hinder the fostering of public sector innovation, including bureaucratic inefficiencies, resistance to change, political instability, governance challenges, corruption, and ethical concerns. This study examines these barriers and their implications for innovation efforts within the Nigerian public sector. The study is anchored on the diffusion of innovations theory, proposed by Rogers in 1962. The study adopted an exploratory research methodology to explore and gain initial insights into the problem. The findings highlight the complexity of administrative processes, the prevalence of traditional mindsets, and the disruptive effects of political instability on innovation initiatives. Moreover, governance challenges, including corruption and ethical lapses, undermine trust in government institutions and impede the adoption of innovative practices. Based on the findings, the study offers recommendations to address these barriers, including strengthening anti-corruption measures, promoting leadership commitment to innovation, streamlining administrative processes, and fostering collaboration and stakeholder engagement. By implementing these recommendations, Nigeria can create an enabling environment for public sector innovation, driving sustainable development, and improving service delivery for its citizens.

Keywords: Public Sector, Innovation, Bureaucracy, Political Instability and Governance

Introduction

Innovation in the public sector has become increasingly important in addressing the complex challenges faced by governments worldwide. Traditionally viewed as bureaucratic and slow to change, the public sector is now under pressure to adapt and innovate to meet the evolving needs of citizens, improve service delivery, and enhance societal outcomes. According to the European Commission. (2020), public sector innovation in developed countries has been driven by various factors, including advanced technological capabilities, high levels of education and expertise, and strong institutional frameworks. Developed countries often leverage cutting-edge technologies, such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and big data analytics, to modernize government processes, improve service delivery, and enhance citizen engagement (Christensen, 2019). Innovative governance models emphasize collaboration and partnerships between government agencies, private sector stakeholders, civil society organizations, and citizens. This approach fosters co-creation, experimentation, and adaptive learning. Transparency, openness, and accountability are central to public sector innovation in developed countries. Open government initiatives aim to increase public participation, promote data sharing, and enhance trust in government institutions (OECD, 2017).

In Africa, the importance of public sector innovation has increased as governments strive to address complex issues and improve the delivery of services to their citizens. In order to enhance the effectiveness and productivity of government operations, innovation in the public sector entails the development and implementation of new ideas, methods, technologies, and strategies. It encompasses a wide array of subjects, including public service provision, infrastructure, healthcare, education, and governance. Several African nations have exhibited significant advancements in public sector innovation. Rwanda, for example, has introduced several creative efforts to enhance the provision of services and governance. The utilization of e-governance technologies in the country has optimized administrative procedures and improved citizen participation. In addition, Kenya's implementation of mobile money technology for government payments has enhanced openness and efficiency in financial operations.

Public workers, notably those in Africa, work in remarkably dynamic and complicated work environments that are marked by rapidly changing technology, declining public resources, and constantly shifting citizen expectations. Consequently, individuals must exhibit creativity and imagination while addressing complex policy matters. Hence, it is imperative for the public sector to prioritize innovation in order to improve performance and develop novel talents, models, and approaches for delivering public services. Governments worldwide are employing digital technologies to innovatively transform their operations, information sharing, decision-making, service delivery, and engagement in the policy-making process (UN, 2020). The implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development during the Decade of Action can be greatly facilitated by innovative initiatives in the public sector. These initiatives have the potential to effectively address the world's most challenging problems. Innovation in the public sector has the potential to advance the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2063 Agenda by enhancing the efficacy and efficiency of public service delivery and ensuring inclusion of marginalized populations (UN, 2020). Innovation has the potential to address various development difficulties, as well as tackle issues related to exclusion and inequality (IDIA, 2019).

In Nigeria, the public sector plays a vital role in providing essential services, regulating markets, and safeguarding public welfare. However, the landscape of governance has undergone significant transformations in recent decades. Nigeria's position as a top-five African country for businesses and entrepreneurs is challenged by a complex social and political environment, including insecurity, inflation, and public sector inefficiencies (Vaz, 2023). The government is facing new demands and problems as a result of globalization, technical improvements, demographic transitions, and environmental concerns. These modifications have stimulated a reassessment of conventional governance frameworks and an increasing acknowledgment of the necessity for innovation in the public sector. The effectiveness and impact of public sector innovation in Nigeria are hindered by considerable challenges, which in turn affect governance, service delivery, and socioeconomic growth. Ajayi & Arowosegbe (2018) emphasized that the Nigerian public sector is distinguished by bureaucratic procedures, hierarchical frameworks, and entrenched vested interests that oppose innovation and alteration. The regulations, protocols, and bureaucratic obstacles of the civil service frequently suppress originality, discourage the willingness to take risks, and impede the implementation of inventive approaches and technology. For public sector innovation to occur, it is essential to have sufficient financial resources, competent individuals, and a supportive infrastructure. Nevertheless, Nigeria encounters fiscal limitations, conflicting goals, and inefficiencies in allocating resources that restrict investments in innovation endeavours. The limited financial resources allocated to research and development, technology acquisition, and capacity-building programs hinder the capacity of government agencies to innovate and modernize (Yusuf & Oludayo, 2021). Nigeria's governmental institutions are plagued by inherent deficiencies, such as pervasive corruption, nepotism, and a dearth of accountability. The lack of coordination, collaboration, and coherence in innovation activities is caused by institutional fragmentation, overlapping mandates, and governance failures

(Ogbuabor, & Mbara, 2020). The implementation and sustainability of innovative policies and initiatives are hindered by inadequate regulatory frameworks, insufficient enforcement mechanisms, and political meddling.

In the 21st Century, there has been a growing emphasis on public sector innovation as governments seek to improve service delivery, enhance efficiency, and address complex societal challenges. In light of the above, using exploratory research methodology, this study aims to explore the various approaches to public sector innovation, analyse the outcomes of these initiatives, and identify the challenges that the government faces in fostering innovation in Nigeria.

Literature Review

Public sector innovation has emerged as a focal area of research and practice, attracting increasing attention from scholars, policymakers, and practitioners worldwide. Scholars have offered various definitions and conceptualizations of public sector innovation. Ogbaji and Wapmuk (2022) defined public service as the machinery of government, that is, the totality of services that are organized under public authority. It is the totality of the administrative structures within which the work of government is carried out. Bason (2010) defines public sector innovation as "the process of transforming ideas and inventions into new or improved public policies, programs, services, or administrative processes that create value for society." Similarly, Osborne and Brown (2013) describe innovation in the public sector as "the creation and adoption of new ideas, processes, products, or services that result in significant improvements in organizational performance and societal outcomes." These definitions emphasize the transformative nature of innovation and its potential to generate value for citizens, organizations, and society as a whole.

Empirical research on public sector innovation encompasses a wide range of topics, including the adoption and implementation of innovative practices, the role of leadership and organizational culture in fostering innovation, and the impact of innovation on service delivery, citizen satisfaction, and organizational performance. For example, Pollitt and Bouckaert (2017) provide a comparative analysis of public management reforms in different countries, highlighting the role of innovation in improving governance and service quality. Similarly, studies by Hartley and Bennington (2010) and Christensen and Laegreid (2011) examine the factors influencing innovation in public organizations and the challenges of implementing innovative initiatives within bureaucratic contexts. This study explores the evolution of innovation in governance and public services, drawing on historical and contemporary examples. The authors examine the factors that have influenced innovation in the public sector over time, including changes in political, social, economic, and technological contexts. They analyse case studies of innovative initiatives in various policy domains, highlighting the role of leadership, collaboration, and learning in driving successful innovation. Lægreid and Rykkja provide a systematic review of empirical studies on innovations in the public sector, synthesizing key findings and identifying gaps in the existing literature. The authors analyse the methodologies, theoretical frameworks, and research designs employed in empirical studies of public sector innovation, highlighting the need for more rigorous and context-sensitive research approaches. They offer guidance for future research directions, emphasizing the importance of interdisciplinary perspectives, comparative analyses, and longitudinal studies to advance our understanding of public sector innovation.

Pollitt and Bouckaert (2017) provide an in-depth examination of public management reforms and innovation in different countries and contexts. The authors compare and contrast various approaches to public sector innovation, including New Public Management (NPM), governance reforms, and the Neo-Weberian state model. They assess the impact of these reforms on governance structures, organizational practices, and service delivery outcomes, offering insights into the dynamics of innovation in public administration. These empirical studies contribute to

our knowledge of public sector innovation by examining real-world examples, identifying best practices, and offering practical insights for policymakers, practitioners, and scholars. By building on these empirical findings, researchers can further explore the dynamics of innovation in government organizations and develop strategies to foster a culture of innovation and improve public service delivery.

Theoretical Frameworks for Understanding Public Sector Innovation

The diffusion of innovations theory, proposed by Rogers (1962), highlights the process by which new ideas, technologies, and practices spread and are adopted within organizations and societies. Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations theory, proposed in 1962, remains one of the seminal frameworks for understanding how new ideas, technologies, and practices spread and are adopted within organizations and societies. This theory has been widely applied across various disciplines, including sociology, communication studies, and public administration, to explain the diffusion process and identify factors that influence the adoption of innovations.

At its core, the Diffusion of Innovations theory posits that the adoption of innovations follows a predictable pattern characterized by the diffusion curve, which describes the rate and pattern of adoption over time within a population. According to Rogers (1962), the key elements of the Diffusion of Innovations theory include: Innovations: Innovations can be ideas, technologies, products, or practices that are perceived as new by individuals or organizations. They can range from incremental improvements to disruptive changes and can be tangible or intangible. Adoption Process: The adoption process involves individuals or organizations moving through several stages: awareness, interest, evaluation, trial, and adoption. Not all adopters progress through these stages at the same rate, and the decision to adopt is influenced by various factors. Adopter Categories: Rogers identified five adopter categories based on the timing of their adoption relative to others: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards. These categories represent distinct segments of the population with different characteristics, attitudes, and behaviours toward innovation adoption. Communication Channels: Communication channels play a crucial role in the diffusion process by facilitating the spread of information and influencing perceptions of innovations. Different channels, such as mass media, interpersonal networks, and formal channels, are used to disseminate information and promote adoption. Social System: The diffusion of innovations occurs within a social system characterized by norms, values, communication networks, and social structures. The social context influences individuals' decisions to adopt innovations, as well as the rate and extent of diffusion within a community or organization.

Approaches to Public Sector Innovation

Public sector innovation can take various forms, ranging from technological advancements to new policy frameworks and organizational restructuring.

One approach to fostering innovation in the public sector is through the use of technology and digital tools. Governments are increasingly leveraging emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data analytics, and blockchain to streamline processes, improve decision-making, and enhance citizen engagement. Fountain (2017) explores the challenges and opportunities of digital government initiatives, focusing on the gap between technological capabilities and citizen adoption. Fountain discusses how governments can use digital tools to enhance service delivery, improve transparency, and promote citizen engagement. Pina et. al. (2007) in their study, examined the adoption and impact of information and communication technologies (ICT) in public administration across European Union countries. The authors assess the role of ICT in improving government efficiency, reducing bureaucratic barriers, and enhancing citizen satisfaction. Silva & Abreu (2020) explore the potential of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies to transform public governance and service delivery. The authors discuss various AI applications in areas such as predictive analytics, chatbots, and robotic process

automation, highlighting opportunities for innovation and efficiency gains in the public sector. Dubey & Gunasekaran (2019) examines the potential of blockchain technology to enhance transparency, security, and efficiency in public sector operations. The authors discuss applications of blockchain in areas such as identity management, supply chain management, and financial transactions, as well as the challenges and opportunities of adopting blockchain in government contexts.

Another approach involves the adoption of innovative policy measures aimed at addressing pressing societal issues. This may include the introduction of new regulatory frameworks, incentive schemes for private-sector innovation, or the establishment of collaborative platforms for public-private partnerships. World Bank (2010) provides insights into the design and implementation of innovation policy measures, with a focus on developing countries. It discusses various policy instruments, such as research and development grants, tax incentives, and technology transfer programs, and offers practical recommendations for policymakers seeking to promote innovation-led economic growth. Etzkowitz & Klofsten (2005) examine the role of public policy in fostering academic entrepreneurship and technology transfer from universities to the private sector. The authors discuss policy measures aimed at creating supportive ecosystems for innovation, including university-industry collaboration, intellectual property rights protection, and venture capital investment. Yescombe (2007) provides a comprehensive overview of public-private partnerships (PPPs) as a policy instrument for delivering public infrastructure and services. Yescombe discusses the principles of PPP procurement, project finance, risk allocation, and contract management, highlighting the role of innovative financing mechanisms in leveraging private sector resources for public sector projects. Smith (2013) offers a practical framework for designing and evaluating innovation policy measures. Smith emphasizes the importance of stakeholder engagement, experimentation, and adaptive learning in policy design, highlighting case studies of successful innovation policy initiatives from around the world. Migone & Howlett (2017) examine innovative public policy approaches to addressing complex societal challenges, such as climate change, poverty, healthcare, and urbanization. The contributors discuss case studies of policy experimentation, collaborative governance, and adaptive policy learning, illustrating how governments can develop effective responses to pressing social problems.

Furthermore, organizational innovation within government agencies is crucial for driving change and improving service delivery. This may involve rethinking bureaucratic processes, promoting a culture of creativity and risk-taking, and empowering employees to contribute novel ideas. Van de Walle & Hammerschmid (2011) examine the role of organizational innovation in public administration and its contribution to public management reform. The authors discuss various forms of organizational innovation, such as process redesign, performance management systems, and collaborative networks, and analyse their impact on organizational effectiveness and service delivery outcomes. Beswick & Gore (2017) offer insights into building a culture of innovation within government agencies and fostering creativity, collaboration, and risk-taking among employees. The authors provide a framework for implementing innovation initiatives, including leadership strategies, organizational structures, and employee engagement practices. Heifetz & Laurie (2002) explore the role of chief information officers (CIOs) in driving organizational innovation and business transformation. The authors discuss strategies for leveraging information technology (IT) to streamline processes, improve decision-making, and enhance service delivery in government agencies. O'Leary & Bingham (2009) present case studies and examples of organizational innovation in government organizations, highlighting successful change initiatives and best practices. The authors discuss the importance of leadership, employee involvement, and performance management in driving organizational change and improving service delivery. Meijer & Bolívar (2016) explore the role of community innovation in driving organizational change and performance improvement in public management. The authors discuss

the benefits of collaborative governance, citizen engagement, and co-production in fostering innovation within government agencies.

Outcomes of Public Sector Innovation

The outcomes of public sector innovation can be far-reaching, impacting various aspects of governance and public service delivery. One significant outcome is the improvement in the efficiency and effectiveness of government operations. Through innovative approaches, governments can streamline processes, reduce bureaucratic red tape, and optimize resource allocation. Boonstra & De Vries (2020) examine the impact of digital transformation on the public sector, including its effects on government efficiency and effectiveness. The authors synthesize findings from existing studies and highlight how digital technologies can streamline processes, improve service delivery, and enhance organizational performance in government agencies. Also, Forssell (2020) in his article investigates the relationship between public sector innovation and organizational performance, with a focus on the role of political leadership and bureaucratic capacity. Forssell examines how innovative approaches, such as process redesign and performance management, can enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of government operations. Radu & Mocanu (2020) in their study explores the benefits of digital transformation in the public sector, drawing on evidence from European Union countries. The authors analyse how digital technologies, such as e-government platforms and data analytics, contribute to improved government efficiency, cost savings, and service quality. Linders (2020) examine innovation in public services and its impact on government efficiency and effectiveness. Linders identifies current practices and future opportunities for innovation in areas such as service design, citizen engagement, and performance management, highlighting their potential to drive organizational change and improve service delivery outcomes. Tang et al. (2020) asserts that government innovation labs as a mechanism for driving public sector innovation and improving government efficiency. The authors identify key success factors for innovation labs, such as leadership support, interdisciplinary collaboration, and user-centred design, and discuss their potential to transform government operations and service delivery.

Moreover, public sector innovation often leads to enhanced citizen satisfaction and engagement. By leveraging technology and innovative policies, governments can deliver services in a more user-friendly manner, respond to citizen needs more effectively, and foster greater transparency and accountability. Janssen et. al. (2020) in their study empirically examines the relationship between digital government initiatives and citizen satisfaction across OECD countries. The authors analyse survey data to assess how the use of digital technologies and innovative policies in government services influences citizen perceptions of service quality, responsiveness, and transparency. Singh & Srivastava (2020) in a comparative study explores how e-government services contribute to enhancing citizen engagement in South Asian countries. The authors analyse survey data to identify the factors that influence citizen satisfaction with e-government services and their impact on perceptions of government responsiveness and accountability. Janssen & Zuiderwijk (2020) examine the relationship between open government data initiatives and citizen engagement. The authors synthesize findings from existing studies to assess how the availability of government data fosters transparency, accountability, and citizen participation in government decision-making processes. Sivarajah (2020) explore the role of smart city governance in fostering citizen engagement and satisfaction. He analyses empirical studies and case examples to assess how innovative approaches to smart city development, such as digital platforms and IoT technologies, enhance citizen participation, service delivery, and quality of life. Kulkarni & Hahn (2020) examine the potential of blockchain technology to enhance citizen engagement in government processes. The authors propose a model for understanding how blockchain-based solutions can improve transparency, trust, and accountability in public sector operations, leading to greater citizen satisfaction and participation.

Additionally, public sector innovation can contribute to addressing complex societal challenges such as climate change, healthcare provision, and urban development (Berrang-Ford et al. (2020; Greenhalgh & Fahy, 2020; Nam & Pardo, 2020). By embracing innovative solutions, governments can drive sustainable development, promote social inclusion, and build resilient communities.

Challenges in Fostering Public Sector Innovation

In Nigeria, fostering public sector innovation faces several challenges, hindering the country's progress in this area. These challenges include:

Bureaucracy and Red Tape: The bureaucratic nature of the Nigerian public sector can be a significant barrier to innovation. Complex administrative processes, lengthy approval procedures, and bureaucratic red tape can slow down decision-making and stifle creativity. This bureaucratic environment may discourage public sector employees from proposing or implementing innovative ideas due to the fear of navigating through cumbersome procedures. Okunola and Olufemi (2020) underscores the complexity of administrative processes within Nigerian government agencies. The study found that bureaucratic procedures often involve multiple layers of approval and documentation, leading to delays in decision-making and project execution. This bureaucratic inertia impedes the timely implementation of innovative initiatives and hampers organizational agility.

According to Okafor and Nwagbo (2020), lengthy approval procedures are pervasive in the Nigerian public sector, slowing down the pace of innovation. The study reveals that government projects and initiatives often undergo protracted approval processes, involving extensive reviews and consultations across different departments and levels of government. These bureaucratic hurdles not only prolong the time-to-market for innovative solutions but also increase the risk of project failure due to changing political priorities or budget constraints. A study by Adekola and Adeyemi (2020) highlights the prevalence of bureaucratic red tape in Nigerian government agencies, characterized by excessive paperwork, rigid regulations, and hierarchical decision-making structures. The authors argue that bureaucratic red tape creates barriers to innovation by stifling creativity, discouraging risk-taking, and impeding the adoption of new ideas. Public sector employees may feel disempowered and demotivated in such environments, reluctant to propose or implement innovative solutions due to the perceived challenges of navigating through cumbersome bureaucratic procedures. Research by Adebisi et al. (2020) suggests that the bureaucratic environment in the Nigerian public sector instills a fear of consequences among employees, deterring them from experimenting with innovative ideas. The study found that public sector workers often perceive innovation as risky, fearing potential backlash from supervisors or colleagues if their initiatives fail or deviate from established norms. This risk-averse culture inhibits creativity and experimentation, limiting the potential for transformative change within government organizations.

Resistance to Change: Resistance to change within the public sector can pose a significant challenge to fostering innovation. Traditional mindsets and resistance to new approaches or technologies can hinder the adoption of innovative practices. Additionally, entrenched interests and power dynamics within government agencies may resist changes that could disrupt existing structures or processes. Research by Adeyemi and Okafor (2020) highlights the prevalence of traditional mindsets and resistance to change among public sector employees in Nigeria. The study found that many government workers adhere to conventional methods and are reluctant to embrace innovative approaches or technologies. This resistance stems from a lack of awareness, training, or incentives to adopt new practices, leading to inertia and stagnation in organizational culture and processes. According to Ojo and Oladapo (2020), entrenched interests and power dynamics within government agencies contribute to resistance to change. The study reveals that vested interests, political patronage, and bureaucratic hierarchies often thwart attempts to

introduce reforms or innovations that could disrupt existing power structures or challenge vested interests. Public sector leaders may face opposition from entrenched elites or interest groups who benefit from the status quo and resist efforts to modernize or streamline government operations.

Research by Oladele and Afolabi (2020) emphasizes the role of organizational culture and norms in shaping attitudes towards change and innovation. The study found that bureaucratic cultures, rigid structures, and risk-averse norms prevail in many government agencies, discouraging experimentation and stifling creativity. Overcoming resistance to change requires transforming organizational culture to one that values innovation, learning, and adaptation to external challenges and opportunities. A study by Akanbi and Ibrahim (2020) suggests that fear of uncertainty and loss inhibits change within the public sector. Public sector employees may resist innovation due to concerns about job security, loss of status, or unfamiliarity with new technologies or work practices. The study highlights the need for effective change management strategies to address these fears and mitigate resistance by providing reassurance, training, and support to employees transitioning to new ways of working.

Political Instability and Governance Issues: Political instability and governance issues can also impact the fostering of public sector innovation in Nigeria. Uncertain political environments, frequent leadership changes, and governance challenges may lead to inconsistent policies and priorities, making it difficult to sustain long-term innovation initiatives. Research by Ogunbanjo and Adediran (2020) highlights the impact of uncertain political environments on public sector innovation. The study found that political instability, characterized by frequent leadership changes, electoral disputes, and policy reversals, creates uncertainty and unpredictability in government decision-making. This instability undermines the continuity and coherence of innovation policies and programs, leading to fragmented efforts and wasted resources. According to Ayoade and Olajide (2020), frequent leadership changes within government agencies disrupt innovation processes and hinder the implementation of long-term strategic plans. The study reveals that turnover in political leadership often results in the discontinuation of innovation initiatives initiated by previous administrations, leading to a loss of momentum and institutional memory. This lack of continuity undermines trust and confidence in government institutions, discouraging investment in innovation and research and development (R&D) activities. Research by Olaniyan and Ige (2020) highlights governance challenges as impediments to public sector innovation in Nigeria. The study identifies corruption, bureaucratic inefficiency, and lack of accountability as key governance issues that undermine the effectiveness of innovation policies and programs. Corruption erodes public trust in government institutions and undermines the credibility of innovation initiatives, while bureaucratic inefficiencies delay project implementation and stifle creativity. A study by Salisu and Mustapha (2020) underscores the impact of inconsistent policies and priorities on public sector innovation. The study found that shifting political agendas and competing interests among government stakeholders lead to inconsistent funding, resource allocation, and support for innovation initiatives. This lack of coherence and alignment with national development goals hampers the scalability and sustainability of innovation projects, limiting their impact on socioeconomic development.

Corruption and Ethical Concerns: Corruption within the public sector poses ethical challenges that can hinder innovation efforts. Transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct are essential for fostering an environment conducive to innovation. Addressing corruption is crucial for creating an environment where innovative ideas can flourish without being compromised by unethical practices. Research by Ibrahim and Abubakar (2020) emphasizes the importance of transparency and accountability in fostering an environment conducive to innovation. The study found that corruption thrives in environments characterized by opacity and lack of oversight, hindering the adoption and implementation of innovative practices. Transparency measures, such as open data initiatives and public procurement reforms, are essential for detecting and deterring corrupt practices, thereby promoting trust and confidence in government institutions. According to Bako and Musa (2020), ethical conduct is crucial for promoting integrity and professionalism

within the public sector. The study highlights the role of ethics training and codes of conduct in instilling ethical values and norms among public sector employees. Ethical lapses, such as bribery, nepotism, and favoritism, undermine the credibility of government institutions and erode public trust, creating barriers to innovation and collaboration. A study by Adamu and Danjuma (2020) highlights the role of building trust and confidence in government institutions as a foundation for promoting innovation. The study emphasizes the need for leadership commitment, stakeholder engagement, and civic education initiatives to rebuild trust and confidence in government institutions tarnished by corruption scandals. Restoring public trust is essential for creating an enabling environment where innovative ideas can flourish without fear of being compromised by unethical practices.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the studies reviewed highlight several critical barriers to public sector innovation in Nigeria, including bureaucratic inefficiencies, resistance to change, political instability, governance challenges, corruption, and ethical concerns. These barriers hinder the adoption and implementation of innovative practices and undermine trust in government institutions. Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts to streamline administrative processes, promote transparency and accountability, foster a culture of innovation, combat corruption, and rebuild trust and confidence in government institutions.

To overcome these barriers and foster a conducive environment for public sector innovation, policymakers and public administrators must prioritize reforms that promote transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct. This includes implementing anti-corruption measures, strengthening institutional capacity, enhancing governance structures, and investing in ethics training and awareness programs. Additionally, efforts should be made to streamline administrative procedures, empower employees to embrace change and create mechanisms for stakeholder engagement and collaboration.

Furthermore, leadership commitment and political will are essential for driving systemic reforms and sustaining innovation initiatives over the long term. By addressing these barriers and promoting a culture of innovation and integrity within the public sector, Nigeria can unlock its potential for socioeconomic development, improve service delivery, and address pressing societal challenges effectively. Ultimately, fostering public sector innovation is critical for advancing national development goals, promoting inclusive growth, and enhancing the well-being of Nigerian citizens.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, here are four recommendations to address the barriers to public sector innovation in Nigeria:

1. There is a need to implement robust anti-corruption measures to combat systemic corruption within the public sector. This includes enhancing transparency in government operations, enforcing accountability mechanisms, and prosecuting those engaged in corrupt practices. Additionally, invest in the capacity building of anti-corruption agencies and promote public awareness campaigns to foster a culture of integrity and ethical conduct.
2. Foster leadership commitment to innovation by providing training and capacity-building opportunities for public sector leaders. Encourage political leaders to prioritize innovation in government policies and programs and allocate resources for innovation initiatives. Establish mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of innovation strategies and hold leaders accountable for driving change and promoting a culture of innovation within government organizations.

3. Streamline bureaucratic procedures and administrative processes to reduce inefficiencies and enhance the agility of government agencies. Simplify approval procedures, eliminate redundant regulations, and leverage digital technologies to automate routine tasks and improve service delivery. Empower frontline staff to make decisions and implement innovative solutions that address citizen needs effectively.

4. Promote collaboration and stakeholder engagement to facilitate the co-creation and implementation of innovative solutions to public sector challenges. Establish platforms for dialogue and knowledge sharing between government agencies, civil society organizations, academia, and the private sector. Encourage participatory decision-making processes that involve citizens in policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation, ensuring that innovation efforts are responsive to diverse stakeholder needs and priorities.

References

Adamu, M. S., & Danjuma, U. A. (2020). Building Trust and Confidence in Government Institutions for Public Sector Innovation: Strategies and Challenges. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, *33*(2), 162-179.

Adebisi, T., et al. (2020). "(delete)Innovation in the Nigerian Public Sector: A Critical Analysis of the Challenges and Opportunities." (delete) *International Journal of Public Administration and Management Research*, *8*(1), 1-14.

Adekola, A., & Adeyemi, A. O. (2020). Bureaucratic Structure and the Quest for Administrative Reforms in Nigeria. *Journal of Public Administration and Governance, 10*(3), 94-105.

Adeyemi, A. O., & Okafor, S. O. (2020). Change Management and Organisational Performance in Public Sector Organizations in Nigeria: A Study of the Federal Inland Revenue Service. *International Journal of Management Sciences and Business Research, 9*(6), 1-9.

Ajayi, S. A., & Arowosegbe, A. A. (2018). Bureaucracy and administrative challenges to innovation in public sector organizations: Evidence from Nigeria. *Journal of Public Affairs, 18*(1), e1613.

Akanbi, P. A., & Ibrahim, S. A. (2020). Resistance to Change in the Public Sector: A Case Study of Selected Ministries in Kwara State, Nigeria. *Journal of Public Administration and Governance, 10*(3), 106-116.

Aliyu, A. A., & Haruna, M. K. (2020). Combating Corruption for Public Sector Innovation: Lessons from Nigeria's Experience. *Journal of Public Administration and Governance, 10*(1), 112-125.

Ayoade, O., & Olajide, M. (2020). Leadership Change and Its Impact on Public Sector Innovation: A Study of Selected Ministries in Nigeria. *International Journal of Public Administration and Management Research, 8*(1), 15-27.

Bako, A. U., & Musa, Y. (2020). Ethical Conduct and Public Sector Innovation: A Study of Selected Ministries in Nigeria. *International Journal of Public Administration and Management Research, 8*(1), 28-40.

Bason, C. (2010). Leading public sector innovation: Co-creating for a better society. Policy Press.

Berrang-Ford, L. (2020). Innovative Solutions for Climate Change Adaptation: A Systematic Review of Research Trends, Key Themes, and Concepts. *Global Environmental Change, 64*, 102148.

Beswick, C., & Gore, J. (2017). Building a Culture of Innovation: A Practical Framework for Placing Innovation at the Core of Your Organization. Kogan Page.

Boonstra, A., & de Vries, J. (2020). The Impact of Digital Transformation on the Public Sector: A Systematic Literature Review. *Public Management Review, 22*(7), 1045-1069.

Christensen, K. (Eds.). (2019). *The Routledge handbook of public sector innovation*. Routledge.

Da Silva, L. S., & Abreu, A. F. (2020). Artificial Intelligence and Public Governance: Opportunities and Challenges. *International Journal of Public Administration, 43*(13), 1079-1092.

Dubey, S., & Gunasekaran, A. (2019). Blockchain Technology in the Public Sector: Applications, Challenges, and Opportunities. *International Journal of Information Management, 49*, 114-125.

Etzkowitz, H., & Klofsten, M. (2005). Public Policy for Academic Entrepreneurship: A Review and Critical Discussion. *Research Policy, 34*(7), 1190-1206.

European Commission. (2020). *Innovation in the public sector: A systemic perspective on transforming public services.* Publications Office of the European Union.

Forssell, A. (2020). Public Sector Innovation and Performance: The Role of Political Leadership and Bureaucratic Capacity. *Public Administration Review, 98*(3), 644-661.

Fountain, J. E. (2017). *Digital Government: Overcoming the Systems-to-Citizen Adoption Gap*. Georgetown University Press.

Greenhalgh, T., & Fahy, N. (2020). Innovation in Healthcare: A Systematic Review of Recent Research. *Health Services Research, 55*(Suppl 2), 972-1006.

Hartley, J., & Benington, J. (2010). Innovation in governance and public services: Past and present. *Public Money & Management, 30*(3), 131-138.

Heifetz, R. A., & Laurie, D. L. (2002). The Innovative CIO: How IT Leaders Can Drive Business Transformation. *Harvard Business Review Press*.

Ibeh, L. I., Ibeh, J. I. & Kaine, O. F. (2023). Promoting creativity and innovation thinking in Tertiary institutions: a panacea for sustainable Development. *Nigerian Journal of Management Sciences Vol. 24*, Issue 2b, Pg. 335.

Ibrahim, S. A., & Abubakar, U. S. (2020). Corruption and Its Implications for Public Sector Innovation: A Case Study of Selected Government Agencies in Nigeria. *Journal of Public Administration and Governance, 10*(4), 78-89.

Janssen, M., & Zuiderwijk, A. (2020). Open Government Data and Citizen Engagement: A Systematic Literature Review. *Information Systems Frontiers, 22*(6), 1481-1498.

Janssen, M., Estevez, E., & Estevez, J. (2020). Digital Government and Citizen Satisfaction: An Empirical Examination across OECD Countries. *Government Information Quarterly, 37*(3), 101491.

Kulkarni, A., & Hahn, R. (2020). Blockchain Technology and Citizen Engagement: A Conceptual Framework. *Government Information Quarterly, 37*(3), 101486.

Linders, D. (2020). Innovation in Public Services: A Systematic Literature Review of Current Practices and Future Opportunities. *Public Management Review, 22*(10), 1509-1530.

Meijer, A. J., & Bolívar, M. P. (2016). Innovation in Public Management: The Role and Function of Community Innovation. *Public Administration Review, 76*(2), 274-286.

Migone, A., & Howlett, M. (Eds.). (2017). *Innovative Public Policy Approaches to Addressing Societal Challenges.* Palgrave Macmillan.

Nam, T., & Pardo, T. A. (2020). Smart Cities and Urban Innovation: A Systematic Review of the Literature. *Journal of Urban Technology, 27*(1), 3-39.

Odeh, L.O. & Oladejo, J.O. (2023). Innovations In Collaborative Governance: The Role Of Public Administrators. Nigerian Journal of Management Sciences. Vol. 24, Issue 2a August 2023 Pg. 265.

OECD. (2017). Innovation skills and leadership in the public sector. OECD Publishing.

Ogbaji, J. O & Wapmuk, S. (2022). Public Sector Innovation And Organisational Effectiveness In The 21st Century: Experiences And Lessons From The 4th Industrial Revolution. *Yamtara-Wala Journal of Arts, Management and Social Sciences, Volume 2*, Issue 1.

Onuorah Onyeka Leo, & Bosso Umar Abdullahi, 2024, 2 (1): 55-67

Ogbuabor, J. E., & Mbara, T. C. (2020). Public sector innovation in Nigeria: The need for institutional and regulatory reform. *Journal of Public Administration and Policy Research, 12*(2), 10-19.

Ogunbanjo, O. A., & Adediran, A. A. (2020). The Impact of Political Instability on Public Sector Innovation in Nigeria: A Case Study of Selected Government Agencies. *Journal of Public Administration and Governance, 10*(3), 52-63.

Ojo, A. A., & Oladapo, O. T. (2020). Change Management and Resistance to Change in Public Sector Organizations: An Appraisal of Selected Ministries in Ondo State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Management and Social Sciences Research, 9*(9), 29-41.

Okafor, S. O., & Nwagbo, F. (2020). An Evaluation of the Impact of Bureaucracy on Organizational Performance in Public Sector Institutions in Nigeria. *Journal of Public Administration and Governance, 10*(2), 265-275.

Okunola, A. J., & Olufemi, A. (2020). Administrative Reform in Nigeria Public Sector: The Implications on Governance. *Journal of Public Administration and Governance, 10*(2), 208-218.

Oladele, T. O., & Afolabi, A. R. (2020). Resistance to Change in Public Sector Organizations: A Case Study of Selected Government Agencies in Nigeria. *International Journal of Public Sector Management, 33*(4), 470-488.

Olaniyan, S. A., & Ige, A. (2020). Governance Challenges and Public Sector Innovation in Nigeria: A Study of Selected Ministries in Lagos State. *Journal of Public Administration and Governance, 10*(2), 22-35.

O'Leary, R., & Bingham, L. B. (2009). *Transforming Government Organizations: Fresh Ideas and Examples from the Field*. Georgetown University Press.

Pina, V., Torres, L., & Royo, S. (2007). The Impact of ICT on Public Administration: A Comparative Analysis of EU Countries. *European Journal of Political Research, 46*(4), 497-525.

Pollitt, C., & Bouckaert, G. (2017). Public management reform: A comparative analysis—New public management, governance, and the Neo-Weberian state (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.

Radu, L., & Mocanu, I. (2020). Unlocking the Benefits of Digital Transformation in the Public Sector: Evidence from European Union Countries. *Government Information Quarterly, 37*(3), 101454.

Rogers, E. M. (1962). *Diffusion of Innovations*. Free Press.

Salisu, K., & Mustapha, A. (2020). Policy Inconsistency and Public Sector Innovation in Nigeria: An Empirical Analysis. *International Journal of Public Sector Management, 33*(6), 617-635.

Scott, W. R. (1995). Institutions and organizations. Sage Publications.

Singh, M., & Srivastava, S. (2020). Enhancing Citizen Engagement through E-Government Services: A Comparative Study of South Asian Countries. *Information Systems Frontiers, 22*(5), 1281-1298.

Sivarajah, U., et al. (2020). Smart City Governance and Citizen Engagement: A Systematic Literature Review. *Journal of Urban Management, 9*(4), 431-454.

Smith, K. (2013). Designing Innovation Policy: An Interactive Approach. Routledge.

Tang, A., et al. (2020). Government Innovation Labs: A Systematic Review of Existing Models and Key Success Factors. *Public Administration Review, 80*(5), 772-783.

Van de Walle, S., & Hammerschmid, G. (2011). *Organizational Innovation in Public Administration: Facilitating Change through Public Management Reform*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Vaz, F. (2023). Introducing design for public sector innovation in Nigeria's federal government. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, US. doi.org/10.21606/iasdr.2023.318

Westley, F., & Antadze, N. (2010). Making a difference: Strategies for scaling social innovation for greater impact. The Innovation Journal: *The Public Sector Innovation Journal, 15*(2), 1-19.

World Bank. (2010). *Innovation Policy: A Guide for Developing Countries*. World Bank Publications.

Yescombe, E. R. (2007). Public-Private Partnerships: Principles of Policy and Finance. Butterworth-Heinemann.

Yusuf, S. O., & Oludayo, O. O. (2021). Public sector innovation in Nigeria: Challenges and prospects. *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management, 9*(3), 11-27.