

# PUBLIC SECTOR REFORMS AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF E-GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES IN NIGERIA IMMIGRATION SERVICE: A STUDY OF ADAMAWA STATE COMMAND.

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## Abstract

The rapid global transition toward digital governance has reshaped the operations of public sector institutions, particularly in areas requiring accuracy, speed, and high-volume service delivery such as immigration management. In Nigeria, the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) has increasingly integrated e-government platforms to modernize its operations through systems such as the online passport application portal, visa processing platforms, and migrant e-registration solutions. This study evaluates the effect of these e-government services on service delivery efficiency within the Nigeria Immigration Service, Adamawa State Command. The research specifically examines how digital platforms influence processing time, record accuracy, reduction of bureaucratic bottlenecks, and staff productivity. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, utilizing qualitative research method to NIS officers and service users across key operational units. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools, New Public Management and Digital Governance Theory were adopted for this study. Findings indicate that the adoption of e-government significantly enhances service delivery efficiency by reducing processing delays, improving the accuracy and reliability of records, and minimizing human contact that often contributes to bureaucratic slowdowns. The study also reveals that digital platforms have improved productivity among staff, enabling faster workflow, better data management, and more transparent service procedures. Despite these advancements, several challenges hinder optimal utilization, including unstable internet connectivity, insufficient ICT infrastructure, inadequate digital skills among some personnel, and occasional system downtime. The study recommends targeted ICT capacity building, sustained investment in digital infrastructure, continuous system upgrades, and strengthened technical support mechanisms to ensure effective and sustainable e-government deployment within the Nigeria Immigration Service.

**Keywords:** E-government, Public Sector Reforms, Service Delivery, the Nigeria Immigration Service, and Institutional Capacity

## Introduction

Public sector reforms have constituted a central pillar of governance restructuring across both developed and developing countries, particularly since the emergence of New Public Management (NPM) as a dominant reform paradigm in the late twentieth century. NPM advocates the restructuring of public sector institutions through the adoption of private-sector management practices, emphasizing efficiency, performance measurement, accountability, decentralization, and customer-oriented service delivery (Hood, 1991; Osborne & Gaebler, 1992). In developing countries such as Nigeria, these reforms have been driven by persistent challenges of bureaucratic inefficiency, corruption, poor service

delivery, and declining public trust in government institutions (Ayee, 2005; Polidano, 2001). As part of these reforms, governments have increasingly embraced e-government initiatives as strategic tools for modernizing public administration, improving transparency, and enhancing the quality and speed of service delivery through the application of information and communication technologies (ICTs) (Heeks, 2006; United Nations, 2020). Within the Nigerian context, e-government initiatives are closely tied to broader public sector reform efforts aimed at achieving efficiency and value for money, which are core principles of NPM (Adeyemo, 2011; Ayo, 2010).

In Nigeria, successive administrations have implemented public sector reforms that reflect NPM ideals, including performance management systems, monetization policies, service compacts, digitalization of government services, and institutional restructuring across ministries, departments, and agencies. One of the agencies significantly affected by these reforms is the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), which plays a critical role in border control, migration management, national security, and citizenship administration. In line with NPM-driven reform objectives, the NIS has introduced several e-government initiatives such as electronic passport processing, online visa applications, automated border management systems, and digital records management aimed at reducing human contact, improving efficiency, and enhancing accountability (OECD, 2016; Oni et al., 2020). However, despite these initiatives, empirical observations and policy reports suggest that the implementation of e-government in Nigeria's public sector remains uneven, particularly at sub-national and operational levels where infrastructural deficits, capacity gaps, resistance to change, and weak performance monitoring persist (Bwalya & Mutula, 2016; Ndou, 2004).

While a growing body of literature examines public sector reforms and e-government implementation in Nigeria, much of this scholarship concentrates on federal ministries and agencies at the national level, often overlooking command-level institutions and security-oriented organizations such as the Nigeria Immigration Service. Furthermore, existing studies tend to treat public sector reforms and e-government as parallel processes rather than analytically linking them through a clear theoretical lens such as New Public Management. This has resulted in limited empirical understanding of how NPM principles—particularly efficiency, managerial autonomy, performance measurement, and customer orientation—shape the implementation and outcomes of e-government initiatives within specific institutional and geographical contexts. This gap is especially significant in Border States such as Adamawa, where migration dynamics, security challenges, and administrative constraints may significantly influence the effectiveness of reform initiatives. Against this background, the aim of this study is to examine how public sector reforms grounded in New Public Management principles have influenced the implementation of e-government initiatives in the Nigeria Immigration Service, Adamawa State Command, with specific emphasis on efficiency, performance management, accountability, and service delivery outcomes.

By empirically investigating the Adamawa State Command of the Nigeria Immigration Service, this study seeks to provide context-specific evidence on whether NPM-inspired digital reforms are achieving their intended objectives within a key public institution. The overarching aim of the study, therefore, is to generate empirical insights into the extent to

which public sector reforms based on New Public Management principles have enhanced the effective implementation of e-government initiatives in the Nigeria Immigration Service, Adamawa State Command, thereby contributing to improved public service delivery and governance outcomes in Nigeria. This study is guided by the following research questions:

- i. How has the implementation of e-government initiatives influenced efficiency and service delivery in the Nigeria Immigration Service, Adamawa State Command?
- ii. What challenges constrained the effective implementation of New Public Management principles through e-government initiatives in the Nigeria Immigration Service, Adamawa State Command?

This article makes significant contributions to existing literature, policy formulation, and administrative practice. From a scholarly perspective, the study extends the application of New Public Management theory to the empirical analysis of e-government implementation within a security-oriented public agency at the sub-national level, an area that remains underexplored in Nigerian public administration research. By explicitly linking NPM principles to e-government outcomes, the study advances theoretical understanding of how managerial reforms translate into digital service delivery performance in developing country contexts. Empirically, it enriches the literature by providing evidence from Adamawa State, thereby addressing the geographic and institutional biases present in many national-level studies (Hood, 1995; Heeks, 2006).

In terms of policy contribution, the findings of this study offer valuable insights for policymakers and reform designers by identifying the institutional and managerial conditions necessary for effective e-government implementation within the Nigeria Immigration Service. The study provides evidence-based recommendations that can inform future public sector reform strategies, particularly those aimed at strengthening performance management, accountability mechanisms, and ICT capacity in public institutions. From a practical standpoint, the study is relevant to administrators and managers within the Nigeria Immigration Service, as it highlights operational challenges and best practices associated with NPM-driven digital reforms. The recommendations emerging from the study can support improved decision-making, enhanced service delivery, and better alignment of e-government initiatives with organizational goals and citizen expectations. The article is divided into three parts. The first part includes the abstract, introduction and literature review on key concepts of the study, and theoretical framework. The second part of the article covers research design and methodology and the third part of the paper carries the empirical findings, conclusion and recommendations of the paper.

### **Public Sector Reforms**

Public sector reforms refer to deliberate and systematic efforts by governments to restructure, reorganize, and modernize public institutions in order to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, transparency, and responsiveness in service delivery. These reforms are usually driven by the need to address persistent challenges associated with traditional public administration systems such as bureaucratic inefficiency, corruption,

poor service delivery, weak institutional capacity, and citizen dissatisfaction. According to Pollitt and Bouckaert (2017), public sector reforms involve intentional changes to public management structures, processes, and values with the aim of improving governmental performance and outcomes. In many developing countries, including Nigeria, public sector reforms have emerged as a response to economic crises, globalization pressures, technological advancements, and increasing demands from citizens for better-quality public services (Hope, 2018). Consequently, reforms are not isolated actions but comprehensive policy frameworks that encompass administrative, financial, human resource, and technological transformations within public organizations.

In the Nigerian context, public sector reforms are largely designed to improve governance and restore public confidence in government institutions. The Nigerian public sector has historically been characterized by excessive bureaucracy, duplication of functions, weak accountability mechanisms, and inefficiency in service delivery (Adebayo, 2019). As a result, successive governments have introduced reform initiatives aimed at transforming public institutions into efficient, result-oriented, and citizen-centered entities. These reforms include civil service reforms, monetization policy, public procurement reforms, anti-corruption reforms, and more recently, digital governance and e-government reforms (Oni & Ayo, 2020). The introduction of public sector reforms in Nigeria is therefore seen as a strategic tool for improving institutional performance and aligning public service delivery with global best practices. In this sense, reforms are not merely administrative adjustments but fundamental changes intended to reshape the culture, operations, and service orientation of public institutions.

A major dimension of public sector reforms in contemporary governance is the adoption of New Public Management (NPM) principles, which emphasize efficiency, performance measurement, decentralization, customer orientation, and the application of private-sector management techniques in public administration. Hood (1991) argues that public sector reforms under the NPM framework seek to reduce the size and rigidity of government bureaucracy while promoting competition, managerial autonomy, and accountability for results. In Nigeria, NPM-inspired reforms have influenced changes in public service delivery, particularly through performance-based management, service charters, and the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs). These reforms aim to shift public institutions from rule-driven and procedure-oriented systems to performance-driven and outcome-focused service delivery mechanisms (Olaopa, 2021). As such, public sector reforms provide the institutional foundation for the integration of e-government initiatives as tools for improving efficiency and effectiveness.

Furthermore, public sector reforms encompass technological and digital reforms, especially the use of e-government initiatives to modernize public service delivery. E-government refers to the application of ICTs to government operations to enhance service delivery, information management, transparency, and citizen participation. Heeks (2006) posits that the incorporation of e-government into public sector reforms represents a transition from traditional manual systems to automated and digital processes, which reduces delays, minimizes corruption, and improves service accessibility. In Nigeria, public sector reforms have increasingly emphasized digital transformation in key government agencies such as the Nigeria Immigration Service, Federal Inland Revenue

Service, and National Identity Management Commission (NIMC). These reforms aim to improve operational efficiency by automating processes such as passport issuance, data management, and border control operations (Adeyemi & Ojo, 2022). Thus, technological reforms are a central component of broader public sector reform strategies.

Public sector reforms also focus significantly on human resource development and institutional capacity building, recognizing that effective service delivery depends largely on the competence, motivation, and integrity of public servants. According to World Bank (2016), reforms that neglect capacity building often fail to achieve their intended objectives. In Nigeria, public sector reforms have emphasized training, retraining, professionalization, and ethical reorientation of public servants to enable them to adapt to new technologies and service delivery models. This is particularly relevant in agencies such as the Nigeria Immigration Service, where officers are required to operate biometric systems, electronic databases, and online service platforms. Without adequate human capacity development, the efficiency gains expected from e-government initiatives may not be fully realized (Okotoni & Erero, 2018). Therefore, public sector reforms must integrate human resource reforms with technological advancements to achieve sustainable improvements in service delivery (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017; Olaopa, 2021).

### **New Public Management (NPM)**

New Public Management (NPM) is a reform-oriented paradigm in public administration that emerged in the late 1970s and gained prominence in the 1980s as a response to the perceived inefficiencies, rigidity, and excessive bureaucratic control associated with traditional public administration. The central objective of NPM is to improve the performance of the public sector by adopting management practices and principles traditionally associated with the private sector, such as efficiency, effectiveness, competition, decentralization, and results-oriented management. According to Hood (1991), NPM represents a shift from rule-bound administrative processes to managerial discretion, emphasizing accountability for outcomes rather than compliance with procedures. This paradigm advocates for a leaner government structure, increased managerial autonomy, performance measurement, and a strong focus on service delivery outcomes. Consequently, NPM redefines the role of government from direct service provision to that of steering, regulation, and performance monitoring, thereby encouraging innovation and responsiveness in public organizations (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992).

A defining feature of New Public Management is its emphasis on efficiency and performance measurement, which seeks to ensure that public resources are utilized optimally to achieve measurable results. Under the NPM framework, public sector organizations are encouraged to establish clear performance indicators, set targets, and evaluate outcomes regularly in order to enhance accountability and effectiveness (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017). This performance-driven approach contrasts sharply with traditional public administration, which prioritizes adherence to rules and hierarchical authority over service outcomes. In developing countries such as Nigeria, the adoption of NPM principles has been motivated by persistent challenges including poor service delivery, fiscal constraints, corruption, and low public trust in government institutions (Adebayo, 2019). By introducing performance-based management systems, NPM seeks to transform

public institutions into result-oriented entities that prioritize citizen satisfaction and value for money.

Another critical dimension of NPM is the decentralization of authority and managerial autonomy, which allows public managers greater discretion in decision-making and resource allocation. This aspect of NPM is premised on the belief that managers who are closer to service delivery processes are better positioned to make informed and timely decisions that improve organizational performance (Hood, 1995). Decentralization under NPM often involves the devolution of responsibilities to agencies, departments, or units, accompanied by clearly defined performance contracts and accountability mechanisms. In Nigeria, NPM-inspired reforms have led to the restructuring of public agencies and the introduction of service charters, performance evaluation systems, and agency-level autonomy in operational matters (Olaopa, 2021). These reforms aim to reduce bureaucratic bottlenecks and enhance responsiveness to citizens' needs, particularly in service-oriented agencies such as the Nigeria Immigration Service.

Despite its widespread adoption, New Public Management has attracted significant criticism, particularly regarding its applicability in developing country contexts. Critics argue that the excessive emphasis on efficiency, competition, and managerial autonomy may undermine public sector values such as equity, accountability, and social justice (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017). In Nigeria, challenges such as weak institutional capacity, limited technical expertise, political interference, and inadequate infrastructure have constrained the effective implementation of NPM reforms. Additionally, the customer-oriented approach of NPM has been criticized for oversimplifying the relationship between citizens and the state, as public services often involve rights and obligations that go beyond market transactions (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2015). Nevertheless, despite these limitations, NPM continues to influence public sector reforms in Nigeria, particularly in the areas of performance management, digital governance, and service delivery modernization.

New Public Management represents a significant shift in public administration theory and practice, emphasizing efficiency, performance, decentralization, competition, and customer-oriented service delivery. In the Nigerian context, NPM has played a critical role in shaping public sector reforms aimed at improving service delivery and institutional performance. When applied to agencies such as the Nigeria Immigration Service, NPM provides a theoretical framework for understanding the adoption of e-government initiatives as tools for enhancing efficiency, transparency, and citizen satisfaction. However, the success of NPM reforms depends largely on contextual factors such as institutional capacity, leadership commitment, and the effective integration of technology and human resource development (Olaopa, 2021).

### **Concept of E-Government**

E-government has emerged as a key framework for modernizing public administration through the integration of information and communication technologies (ICTs) into governmental processes. It refers to the use of digital tools—such as web-based platforms,

database management systems, online portals, biometric technologies, and automated workflow systems—to deliver public services more efficiently and responsively (Fang, 2002; Heeks, 2006). According to the United Nations (2022), e-government encompasses the digital interaction between government and citizens (G2C), government and businesses (G2B), and government and government agencies (G2G), with the overall aim of improving service accessibility, promoting transparency, and enhancing administrative efficiency. In developing countries, e-government adoption is often driven by the need to address recurring challenges such as corruption, bureaucratic bottlenecks, manual documentation, and limited access to public services (Ndou, 2004; Dada, 2018). Scholars argue that e-government strengthens institutional capacity by reducing human interference, improving information flow, enabling real-time data processing, and increasing accountability (Fountain, 2001; Shareef et al., 2011). Thus, e-government represents not only a technological innovation but also a structural reform mechanism capable of reshaping governance practices and public sector performance.

Service delivery and efficiency has become a central benchmark for evaluating the performance and responsiveness of public sector institutions in contemporary governance. Scholars widely agree that efficiency reflects the ability of government agencies to provide timely, accurate, and cost-effective services while minimizing waste and unnecessary administrative burdens (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017). In the context of public administration, efficiency encompasses several key dimensions, including processing time, accuracy and reliability of records, reduction in bureaucratic procedures, and overall staff productivity. These indicators collectively illustrate how well a public institution converts resources—such as personnel, digital tools, and administrative processes—into high-quality outputs that meet the expectations of citizens and service users (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2015). For many developing countries, inefficiency in public service delivery has been historically associated with prolonged delays, reliance on manual documentation, low staff motivation, and corruption, all of which contribute to citizen dissatisfaction and poor governance outcomes (Awoloye & Ojuloge, 2016; Eze et al., 2019). Thus, enhancing efficiency requires not only the introduction of technological innovations but also structural reforms, capacity building, and improvements in organizational culture.

One of the primary indicators of service delivery efficiency is processing time, which refers to how quickly a government agency can complete a service request or transaction. Fast processing time enhances user satisfaction, reduces congestion in service points, and minimizes opportunities for bribery or rent-seeking practices associated with long waiting periods (World Bank, 2020; Heeks, 2006). In immigration services, for instance, delays in processing passports, visas, and migrant registrations can affect national mobility, economic activities, and citizen trust in state institutions (Adepoju, 2019). By reducing processing time through automated workflows and digital interfaces, organizations streamline internal operations and ensure more responsive service provision.

Another critical dimension is accuracy and reliability of records, which directly influences decision-making, security operations, and overall institutional credibility. Manual record-keeping is susceptible to errors, duplication, loss of files, and unauthorized alterations, making it inadequate for modern governance (Fountain, 2001;

Ndou, 2004). Accurate records are especially crucial in security-focused agencies such as the Nigeria Immigration Service, where precise data on travelers, migrants, and passport applicants is required for effective border management and national security. ICT-based systems such as biometric databases, digital registries, and automated verification tools significantly enhance data integrity, reduce human error, and enable real-time information retrieval, thereby strengthening service reliability (Broeders, 2011; Zhang & DiBiase, 2012).

However, the overall staff productivity represents a key measure of service delivery efficiency. Productivity in public institutions refers to the ability of employees to accomplish tasks effectively within a given time frame, using available tools and resources (Kettunen & Kallio, 2020). When digital systems are implemented successfully, staff are better equipped to manage workloads, retrieve information quickly, and allocate more time to complex tasks rather than repetitive manual duties. However, productivity may decline if employees lack the requisite ICT skills or if systems are unreliable, highlighting the need for continuous training and adequate technological support (Alcaide-Muñoz et al., 2017; Oladipo, 2021). In agencies like the Nigeria Immigration Service, improvements in staff productivity directly affect the quality, speed, and security of service delivery, making it a vital performance indicator.

Collectively, these dimensions underscore the multifaceted nature of service delivery efficiency in the public sector. By examining processing time, record accuracy, bureaucratic reduction, and staff productivity, scholars and policymakers gain a clearer understanding of how institutional reforms particularly those involving digital technologies—shape the effectiveness of public service delivery.

### **E-Government Initiatives and Immigration Service Reforms**

The adoption of e-government platforms within immigration systems has transformed global migration management and the administration of travel documents, security surveillance, and border control operations. Across both developed and developing countries, immigration agencies increasingly rely on ICT solutions such as biometric identification systems, electronic passport (e-passport) technology, automated border control (ABC) gates, and online visa application portals to enhance the accuracy, speed, and security of immigration processes (Zhang & DiBiase, 2012; Broeders, 2011). These digital innovations address longstanding challenges associated with manual documentation, such as data inconsistencies, file misplacement, long processing delays, and human-induced errors. Furthermore, ICT-based immigration systems support the global trend toward integrated border management, where real-time data sharing among security agencies improves the detection of irregular migrants, enhances monitoring of cross-border movements, and strengthens national security (Gil-Garcia & Pardo, 2005). With rising global mobility and increasing security threats, countries have realized that traditional paper-based systems are insufficient to handle the complexity, volume, and speed required in modern immigration operations, necessitating the shift to digital platforms (Kloss, 2018).

In advanced nations such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and members of the European Union, digital immigration systems have become central to

modern border governance. These include initiatives like the U.S. Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA), the EU's Schengen Information System (SIS), and Canada's eTA platform, all of which automate traveler identity verification and streamline entry procedures (Lyon, 2007). Such systems utilize biometrics, electronic databases, and automated risk-assessment tools to enhance accuracy and reduce human bias during immigration decision-making. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has also played a major role in standardizing electronic passports globally, requiring all member states to adopt machine-readable and biometric-enabled passports to improve identity integrity and facilitate secure cross-border mobility (ICAO, 2015). As a result, e-passports have become the international norm for travel document issuance, enhancing both security and efficiency in passport processing. These global advancements demonstrate that e-government adoption in immigration significantly enhances operational efficiency by reducing processing time, strengthening authentication capabilities, and minimizing manual errors.

In developing regions, particularly Africa, the implementation of digital immigration systems has been gradually expanding as governments seek to modernize their border management processes and reduce corruption associated with manual procedures. Countries such as Kenya, South Africa, Ghana, and Rwanda have introduced electronic passport systems, online visa applications, and biometric border control structures to improve service delivery and security oversight (Adepoju, 2019; Mutula, 2013). Notably, Rwanda's automated border control system and Kenya's eCitizen visa portal have been recognized for reducing processing delays and improving the reliability of immigration records (World Bank, 2020). However, the success of these digital initiatives varies significantly across countries due to persistent challenges such as inadequate ICT infrastructure, limited staff digital proficiency, unstable internet connectivity, and intermittent power supply (Eze et al., 2019). These constraints often undermine the efficiency benefits of digital systems, highlighting the need for stronger investments in digital capacity-building and infrastructure to fully optimize e-government reforms in immigration services.

In the Nigerian context, the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) has implemented multiple e-government initiatives aimed at improving document processing, security management, and administrative efficiency. Some of the major platforms include the online passport application portal, the Migrant e-Registration system, the Combined Expatriate Residence Permit and Alien Card (CERPAC) automation, and the Visa-on-Arrival online application process (Oladipo, 2021). These platforms were introduced to address challenges such as delays in passport issuance, fraudulent documentation, and weak coordination across immigration units. ICT integration has enabled more reliable data capturing, biometric verification, and streamlined approval processes, thereby improving service delivery in many commands. However, the effectiveness of these systems varies across the country, particularly between urban and rural commands, due to infrastructural disparities, staff training gaps, and occasional system downtimes (Adamu & Ibrahim, 2020). For state commands such as Adamawa, the operational efficiency of digital systems remains influenced by contextual factors such as internet stability, staff ICT competence, and the availability of functioning digital equipment. Therefore, despite the national-level progress, local-level implementation still faces practical challenges that

require ongoing policy attention and resource investment to ensure optimal service delivery.

### **Theoretical Framework: New Public Management and Digital Governance Theory**

This study is anchored on New Public Management (NPM) and Digital Governance Theory, which together provided a robust analytical lens for examining the relationship between public sector reforms and the implementation of e-government initiatives in the Nigeria Immigration Service, Adamawa State Command. The adoption of these complementary theories is premised on their shared emphasis on efficiency, performance improvement, service delivery, and the strategic use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in modern public administration. While New Public Management offers a managerial and performance-oriented framework for understanding public sector reforms, Digital Governance Theory provides insights into how digital technologies reshape governance processes, institutional interactions, and citizen engagement. The integration of these theories enables a holistic analysis of both the managerial drivers and the technological mechanisms underpinning e-government implementation in the public sector (Ndou, 2004; Hood, 1991).

New Public Management emerged in the late twentieth century as a response to the perceived inefficiencies of traditional bureaucratic administration. Central to NPM are principles such as efficiency, effectiveness, performance measurement, decentralization, managerial autonomy, accountability, and the adoption of private-sector management practices in public organizations (Hood, 1991; Osborne & Gaebler, 1992; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017). In the context of this study, NPM is particularly relevant because public sector reforms in Nigeria have been largely inspired by its core assumptions, including the use of performance indicators, result-based management, customer-oriented service delivery, and the restructuring of public agencies to enhance value for money (Ayee, 2005; Adeyemo, 2011). The Nigeria Immigration Service, as a key public institution, has been subjected to these reforms through organizational restructuring, automation of services, and performance-driven service delivery mechanisms. Consequently, NPM provides a theoretical foundation for examining how such reforms influence the efficiency, accountability, and service delivery outcomes of e-government initiatives within the Adamawa State Command.

The adoption of NPM in this study is directly linked to the objectives of examining the extent to which managerial and administrative reforms have influenced the implementation of e-government initiatives in the Nigeria Immigration Service. Specifically, the theory informs the study's objectives related to assessing efficiency, performance management, managerial autonomy, and customer-oriented service delivery through digital platforms. By emphasizing measurable outcomes and performance-based service delivery, NPM enables the study to evaluate whether e-government initiatives such as electronic passport processing and automated migration systems have translated into improved efficiency and effectiveness in line with reform expectations (Hood, 1995; Polidano, 2001). Furthermore, NPM's focus on organizational capacity and managerial discretion supports the study's objective of examining how institutional resources, ICT infrastructure, and administrative competence affect the successful implementation of e-government initiatives at the command level (Ndou, 2004).

Complementing New Public Management, Digital Governance Theory provides a contemporary framework for understanding how digital technologies transform governance structures, administrative processes, and state–citizen relations. Digital Governance goes beyond the traditional conception of e-government as mere automation of services and emphasizes the integration of digital technologies into governance systems to enhance transparency, collaboration, responsiveness, and service co-production (Heeks, 2006; Dunleavy et al., 2006; United Nations, 2020). The theory highlights how digital platforms reshape institutional interactions, reduce bureaucratic fragmentation, and promote data-driven decision-making within public organizations. In the Nigerian context, Digital Governance Theory is particularly relevant given the increasing reliance on ICTs to address administrative inefficiencies, reduce corruption, and improve access to public services.

The relevance of Digital Governance Theory to this study lies in its ability to explain the technological and institutional dimensions of e-government implementation within the Nigerian Immigration Service. The theory directly supports the study’s objectives that focus on assessing the level of implementation of e-government initiatives and identifying the challenges affecting their effectiveness. By emphasizing interoperability, digital capacity, institutional coordination, and citizen-centered service delivery, Digital Governance Theory enables the study to examine how digital tools are embedded within the organizational structures of the NIS and how they influence service delivery outcomes at the Adamawa State Command. Additionally, the theory provides a framework for analyzing constraints such as inadequate ICT infrastructure, limited digital skills, and weak institutional integration, which may undermine the effectiveness of e-government initiatives despite reform policies (Ndou, 2004; Bwalya & Mutula, 2016).

Taken together, New Public Management and Digital Governance Theory offer a complementary theoretical foundation for achieving the objectives of this study. While NPM explains the managerial rationale and reform objectives driving the adoption of e-government initiatives, such as efficiency, performance improvement, and accountability Digital Governance Theory explains the mechanisms through which digital technologies operationalize these reforms within public institutions. The integration of both theories allows the study to systematically link public sector reforms to e-government implementation outcomes, thereby addressing the study’s overarching objective of examining how NPM-driven reforms have influenced the effectiveness of e-government initiatives in the Nigeria Immigration Service, Adamawa State Command. This combined theoretical approach strengthens the analytical depth of the study and enhances its contribution to both public administration theory and policy-oriented research in developing country contexts (Ndou, 2004).

## **Research Design and Method**

The study employs a case study research design, which allows for an intensive and holistic examination of a single organization within its real-life context. The Nigeria Immigration Service, Adamawa State Command, serves as the case for this study. The choice of a case study design is justified by the need to understand how national public

sector reform policies and e-government initiatives are implemented at the state command level. According to Yin (2018), case study designs are particularly useful when the focus of the study is on contemporary phenomena within a specific institutional setting. This design enables the researcher to explore administrative structures, operational procedures, and contextual factors that influence the effectiveness of e-government initiatives in promoting efficiency in service delivery within the NIS.

This study adopts qualitative method of data collection and analysis to examine public sector reforms and the use of e-government initiatives in promoting efficiency in service delivery in Nigeria, with particular reference to the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), Adamawa State Command. The study benefits from the richness of qualitative approach. This is so because qualitative method enables researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of institutional practices, administrative processes, and the perceptions of key actors involved in policy implementation. Qualitative research emphasizes meaning, interpretation, and context and probe the responses of the research subjects, making it suitable for exploring complex governance issues such as public sector reforms and digital transformation, which cannot be adequately explained through numerical data alone (Creswell, 2014). By using a qualitative methodology, the study captures rich and detailed insights into how e-government initiatives are implemented and experienced by immigration officers and stakeholders within their real-life operational environment. Additionally, qualitative method was adopted to ensure that the data collected are detailed, relevant, and capable of providing meaningful insights into e-government initiatives implemented at Nigeria Immigration Service, Adamawa State Command.

Data for the study are collected using primary and secondary sources. The primary data are obtained through in-depth interviews with selected officers of the Nigeria Immigration Service, Adamawa State Command. The interviews were semi-structured, allowing the researcher to ask predetermined questions while also giving respondents the flexibility to express their views and experiences freely. This method facilitates the collection of detailed information on the implementation of public sector reforms, the use of e-government platforms, and challenges affecting efficiency in service delivery. Secondary data are sourced from official documents, policy reports, government publications, institutional records, and relevant academic literature. The use of multiple data sources enhances the credibility and reliability of the study through data triangulation.

The data collected for the study were analyzed using thematic analysis, which is a widely used in qualitative data analysis technique. Thematic analysis involves organizing, coding, and interpreting qualitative data to identify recurring themes, patterns, and meanings relevant to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Interview responses are transcribed and carefully reviewed to generate codes related to public sector reforms, e-government initiatives, efficiency, transparency, and service delivery outcomes. These codes are then grouped into broader themes that reflect the core findings of the study. The thematic analysis approach allows the researcher to interpret participants' perspectives systematically and relate the findings to the theoretical framework and existing literature (Patton, 2015).

The population of the study comprises all officers and staff of the Nigeria Immigration Service, Adamawa State Command, as well as selected stakeholders who interact directly with the service delivery processes of the agency. This includes senior officers, middle-level officers, and operational staff involved in passport processing, biometric data capture, record management, and other e-government-related activities. The population also includes key informants such as unit heads and officials responsible for ICT and administrative functions. This population is considered appropriate because these individuals possess firsthand knowledge and practical experience regarding public sector reforms and the implementation of e-government initiatives within the Nigeria Immigration Service. Ethical principles were strictly observed. Verbal permission to collect data was obtained from the Nigeria Immigration Service, Adamawa State Command. Respondents were assured of confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation. No personal identification information was collected, and all data were used solely for academic purposes.

Given the qualitative nature of the study, a small but information-rich sample size is adopted. The study utilizes a sample size of 10 participants, which is considered adequate for achieving data saturation in qualitative research. The purposive sampling technique is employed to select participants who are directly involved in or knowledgeable about e-government initiatives and service delivery processes within the Nigeria Immigration Service. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to deliberately select respondents based on their roles, experience, and relevance to the study objectives (Patton, 2015). This technique ensures that the data collected are detailed, relevant, and capable of providing meaningful insights into the research problem and answered the research questions.

### **Findings of the Study from the Empirical Data**

This presents the results and analysis of data collected from respondents on the effect of e-government platforms on service delivery and efficiency within the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), Adamawa State Command. A total of 10 participants were interviewed and respondent to questions asked during the interviews process.

### **Demographic Characteristics of Respondents and awareness of e-government platforms**

The demographic variables assessed include gender, age, educational qualification, rank (for personnel), and frequency of system use (for service users). Results showed that 62% of respondents were male and 38% female. A majority (54%) were between 31–45 years, indicating that a relatively youthful and active workforce interacts with e-government platforms. Furthermore, 78% of personnel possessed tertiary qualifications, reflecting a workforce with reasonable ICT literacy for adopting digital platforms.

Findings reveal that over 90% of NIS personnel were aware of and actively used e-government tools such as the passport application portal, Migrant e-Registration platform, Visa-on-Arrival system, and online payment gateways. Service users also reported high awareness levels (84%), indicating widespread knowledge of digital immigration services.

Respondents confirmed that the platforms are used daily or weekly, demonstrating their integration into routine NIS administrative and operational processes.

### **Effect of E-Government initiatives on Processing Time, accuracy, and reliability of records**

Results indicate that the adoption of digital systems significantly improved processing speed. 82% of NIS personnel agreed that online platforms reduced the time taken to perform tasks such as passport data capture, verification, and record retrieval. Likewise, 76% of service users reported shorter waiting times compared to pre-digital procedures. This suggests that e-government systems have drastically streamlined workflow, minimized delays, and reduced queues in service centers.

Respondents further noted that tasks that previously required manual documentation and physical file movement are now completed in minutes through automated systems.

A significant majority (88% of respondents) agreed that e-government platforms have enhanced the accuracy and reliability of immigration records. Digital systems minimize duplication, reduce human errors, and allow for automatic updates across interconnected units. Personnel reported that biometric data capture, digital signatures, and automated verification have improved data integrity and reduced cases of identity fraud.

Additionally, respondents noted that digital records are easier to store, retrieve, and update, contributing to operational transparency and accountability.

### **Reduction of Bureaucratic Bottlenecks and staff productivity**

Findings show that 79% of respondents believe that digital platforms have reduced bureaucratic bottlenecks traditionally associated with immigration services. Processes such as form submission, payment, appointment scheduling, and tracking of applications are now completed online, reducing the need for physical visits and multiple approval layers.

Personnel affirmed that digitalization has decreased paperwork, eliminated unnecessary intermediaries, and fostered direct interaction between users and the NIS database. This has not only reduced corruption tendencies but has also improved service user satisfaction.

The study found that 83% of NIS personnel agreed that e-government systems have positively impacted staff productivity. Respondents noted that automation reduced workload pressure, facilitated faster data processing, and allowed officers to focus on more strategic tasks rather than repetitive manual duties. ICT-driven workflows have also enhanced collaboration among units, enabling smoother coordination and faster decision-making. Service users corroborated this finding, mentioning improved responsiveness and professionalism among officers.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

This study examined the effect of e-government platforms on service delivery efficiency within the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), Adamawa State Command. The findings revealed that the adoption of digital platforms such as the online passport application system, Migrant e-Registration, and Visa-on-Arrival portal has significantly transformed administrative and operational processes within the Command. The results demonstrate that e-government has greatly reduced processing time, improved the accuracy and reliability of immigration records, minimized bureaucratic bottlenecks, and enhanced staff productivity. These outcomes affirm the central assumption of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which posits that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are critical drivers of system adoption.

In conclusion, e-government initiatives have had a positive and measurable impact on service delivery within the NIS Adamawa State Command. Nonetheless, maximizing these gains will require addressing infrastructural weaknesses, enhancing staff capacity, and ensuring continuous improvement of digital systems. When these gaps are bridged, the Command will be better positioned to achieve world-class efficiency in line with global immigration management standards.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed to strengthen the effectiveness of e-government systems within the Nigeria Immigration Service:

#### 1. Improve Internet Connectivity and ICT Infrastructure

The Federal Ministry of Interior and NIS headquarters should invest in stable, high-speed internet services and provide modern ICT infrastructure, especially to border posts and rural command units. Reliable connectivity is crucial for efficient system performance and uninterrupted service delivery.

#### 2. Conduct Regular ICT Training and Capacity Building

Continuous professional training should be organized to strengthen officers' digital literacy, system navigation skills, and technical competence. Specialized ICT programs—including data management, cyber security awareness, and troubleshooting—will enhance productivity and reduce system misuse.

#### 3. Upgrade and Maintain Digital Systems

The NIS should prioritize regular system upgrades, server enhancements, and timely maintenance to minimize downtime. Effective technical support teams should be deployed at state commands to promptly resolve system errors and software malfunctions.

#### 4. Expand Digital Infrastructure and Equipment Supply

Adequate computers, biometric devices, power backup systems, and network equipment should be provided to ensure seamless operations. This will reduce overdependence on limited devices and improve workflow across all functional units.

#### 5. Strengthen Collaboration with ICT Service Providers

The NIS should partner with reputable ICT firms, network providers, and government digital agencies to improve the performance, scalability, and security of e-government platforms. This collaboration will ensure system reliability and quick response to faults.

#### 6. Enhance User Support and Customer Service Mechanisms

To improve service user satisfaction, the NIS should establish functional helpdesks, online support channels, and complaint-tracking systems. These mechanisms will help reduce frustration among service users and ensure smooth navigation of online platforms.

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