



## Original Research Article

# Analysing the Case of Different Models of Public Administration in Government Effectiveness Lessons and Best Practices in Uganda

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**Abstract:** This paper provides an analysis of the models of public administration in government effectiveness in Uganda. The analysis was based on three selected models: The Classical Public Administration model, New Public Management model, and Post-modern model and highlights the lessons learnt in embracing these models. Literatures was drawn from secondary sources that included focus books, Journals, and other internet materials. The paper relied on experts who were public management practioners to qualitatively interpret and analyse salient remarkable issues during adaptation of these approaches in Uganda's public service regimes. Findings were that each approach had for some time dominated public management in Uganda but with differing success, challenges and lessons learnt. The paper concludes that more concerted efforts should be geared towards theorizing old, contemporary and new terms in public administration so as to gain an in-depth understanding of the causes and consequences of any given subject matter in the field, as well as building new field of enquiries, and help clarifying and directing inquiry into Uganda's public policy making, governance and ethics among other subjects within public administration.

**Keywords:** Government Effectiveness, Public Administration Models, Lessons Leant, Uganda.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Kolawole (1997) defines public administration as the machinery, as well as the integral processes through which government performs their functions. It is as well the study of the most efficient and effective ways of organizing the executive branch of government, its institutions and its procedures Andrews, (2013). While Ezeani, (2006) posits that public administration is the

management of government activities and accordingly, refers both to the activities of bureaucrats concerned with the management or administration of government organizations and the study of these activities. Therefore, in sum, it can be said that public administration is a system of roles and relationships which define, (in a clear and practicable terms as possible and in as much detail as possible) the intentions and programmes of government; the means available internally and

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externally to accomplish them; where, when and how they are to be accomplished and who is to benefit from them.

Galukande-Kiganda, (2019) explained effectiveness as a degree to which the set objectives are met when the results of the expenditure activity are compared with the objectives in relation to the resources needed to achieve the objectives. Effectiveness is thus the relationship between the planned result of the activity and the actual result of the activity in terms of the public funds used. It describes the use of public funds in such a way that ensures the optimum level of achieved objectives. Effectiveness indicators depict the relationship between services/products and the resources needed to produce them.

Government effectiveness captures perceptions of the quality of public services, the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government's commitment to such policies (Galukande-Kiganda, 2019). Effectiveness can therefore be considered as a higher performance measurement criterion. The 21<sup>st</sup> century has witnessed high demand for government effectiveness in terms of its service delivery in areas of infrastructure, health, education and governance among others. A number of studies have indicated a strong correlation between public administration approaches and government effectiveness.

Changes in the wider global environment amidst complex and multi-faceted public policy problems require more coherent responses from governments and greater collaboration across public sector agencies. The emergence of hybrid forms of public management therefore, drawing on elements of all the three approaches is presented as an inevitable consequence of these changes.

Historically, several frameworks have been developed to classify and analyze different approaches to public administration and public sector reforms in both advanced industrialized and growing countries. Most of these focus on the transition from the *Old Public Administration* to the *New Public Management* that occurred in the 1980s and 1990s. From 2000 there was a discernible trend towards an emerging model variously termed as the "*New Public Service*", the "*New Public Governance*" or the "*Post-modern Public Management*" (Dunleavy & Hood, 1994; Denhardt & Denhardt, 2000; Osborne, 2006).

Each of these approaches to public administration was associated with distinct

philosophy and conceptual frameworks. This paper examines the impact of three different models of public administration: The Classical Public Administration; New Public Management; and Postmodern Public Administration on government effectiveness in Uganda as a result of the concerted efforts and contributions from practicing public administrators in Uganda undertaking postgraduate training in public administration, policy, urban management and governance.

## METHODOLOGY

Empirical presentations in this paper are based on the studies and discussions carried out on the impact of Classical, New and Postmodern Public Administration models on service delivery in Uganda. The study used an exploratory qualitative approach, combining a literature review and expert opinions on these public administration practices in Uganda. Besides, the paper relied on the authors' experiences as practitioners in various capacities in Uganda's public service. Findings were qualitatively analysed and presented in the discussion that follow.

### 2.0 Analysis of Public Administration Models

In agreement with Osborne, (2006) who also outlined three modes of public administration and management and, by association, outlining their principal characteristics as follows: Classical Public Administration (PA-statist and bureaucratic), New Public Management (NPM-competitive and minimalist) and New Public Governance (NPG-plural and pluralist); this study was aligned to the same paradigm. First, the paper assesses the Classical Public Administration model, then the New Public Management and the New Public Governance (as a Postmodernist model) highlighting a few lessons learnt in the processes of embracing them.

#### 2.1 Classical Public Administration Model

The focus in this traditional approach to public administration was predicated on a top-down and elitist approach in which public officials were instilled with values of hierarchy, independence, and integrity, and insulated from politicians and citizens. Influenced by the ideas of Max Weber, this approach to public administration for much of the 20th century drew on a model of bureaucracy based on the twin principles of hierarchy and meritocracy. In Uganda, as elsewhere, this approach was assessed on structure and organizational efficiency, epitomized by command and control and underpinned by clear public sector ethos. Distinctively, the model relied on centralized control, set rules and guidelines, separation of policymaking from implementation, and employing a hierarchical organizational structure as Osborne, (2006) earlier contended. Key objectives of the model were establishing efficiency and effectiveness in public management and further

drawing on the works of Minogue (2001) and McCourt (2013), the central features of this model are summarized as:

- i. Separation between politics and elected politicians on the one hand and administration and appointed administrators on the other;
- ii. Public administration as continuous, predictable and rule-governed;
- iii. Public administrators appointed on the basis of qualifications, training and professionalism;
- iv. Division of labour built in a hierarchy of tasks and personnel;
- v. Public resources belonging to government not to the individuals who work in it;
- vi. Public servants serve public rather than private interest.

This model had worked well in the early post-independence political leaderships that were built along the British colonial system of administration that was itself characterised by high quality and efficient civil service. However, with the political tamoils that followed the 1966 constitutional crisis, the model suffered severe setbacks leading to decline in the quality of governance and public administration effectiveness. Besides, political leadership at the subsequent periods of time lacked adequate skills for exercising this model that is bench marked and facilitated by existence of professional cadres in public service (Bayart, 2009; & McCourt, 2013). Consequently, the application of this classical model lost center stage but did not fade entirely as it continued being practiced in some public spheres such as in education and prisons services but with declining effectiveness and efficiency. In these few public sectors, there are still significant evidence of quality public services delivery manifested in higher levels of accountability and low levels of abuse of office.

However, despite the evident anticipated success in promoting sustained development, the classical public management model was not without its challenges. For example, employing, training and retaining public service leaders and officers with the right skills and attitudes in the face of high levels of employee turnover to the private sector remained very challenging. Besides, engaging and catering for the ever rising citizen expectations from their governments was definitely harder to be fulfilled under this classical model. In another way, the model had been criticized for its rigidity and failure to promote meritocracy, accountability and providing living wages and emoluments to civil servants that contributed to undermining the morale and motivation in public service. All the above created massive shortcomings in public transparency and responsiveness; and deficiencies in dealing with the uncertainties and complexities in cross-cutting public

policy problems which progressively undermined good governance in the country during periods when it was occupied center stage in public administration in Uganda (Saxena, 2011).

### **Lessons Learnt**

Despite the above shortcomings, there are still scholarly lessons that can be learned for wider application in developing countries:

First, when the classical model was entrenched into public administration systems, there was growth in ethical conduct in public services that was usually manifested in increasing integrity and anti-corruption tendencies in the public sphere. For example, institutions like the Uganda Prison Services that embraced the model had lower reported cases of unethical conducts compared to similar institutions in the armed services that did not embrace this approach. And when salaries were set at competitive levels (near to those in the private sector), there were even lower reported corruption cases and unethical conducts.

Secondly, the classical model was the foundation of meritocracy in public administration. Progression in service was by merit following clearly laid down criteria build in rules, regulations and standing instructions. Only tested staff were entrusted to certain positions and this was maintained through selective recruitment of the best talents as prerequisite for quality service.

Besides, the classical model encouraged results-based public performance in which reward and promotion were driven by individual performance. The model thus encouraged individual contribution and innovation that in the ended in improved policy outcomes. Tested and trusted high caliber serving officers ascended the public service hierarchy and spearheaded public management at that time.

In a related way, the classical model seemed to encourage public sector institutional reforms that offered additional lessons, including operational autonomy for semi-autonomous boards and corporations while retaining regulatory oversight and policy direction within central agencies. These semi-autonomous public agencies were able to improve on staff rewards and motivations and reduce public sector staff turnover. In turn, staff in such organisations embraced continuous innovation and research due to high personal skills and motivation and as Saxena, (2011) had earlier attested.

### **2.2 New Public Management Model**

The second model that this study assessed, was the New Public Management (NPM). In contrast

to the Classical Public Administration Model, NPM in Uganda, as everywhere it was adopted, was based on the Public Choice Theories as well as the Principal-Agent theory. Under NPM, public officials would require oversight and supervision to constrain their self-interested behaviours to mitigate inefficiency and corruption (Dunleavy & Hood, 1994). This model was practiced in form of the *New Public Service* perspective, that was rooted in democratic theory, that emphasized accountability of officials to citizens, when officials served and responded to citizens' needs rather than steering society. NPM assumed that public officials should be motivated to serve by virtue of commitment to the public interest and would respond to citizens' expectations of a healthy and responsive public service (Osborne, 2006; Denhardt & Denhardt, 2011).

In practice, NPM constituted a series of approaches to public administration and management as they emerged in a number of OECD countries in the 1980s in reaction to the limitations of the classical public administration model in adjusting to the demands of a competitive market economy. NPM turned the public administration paradigm by injecting principles of competition and private sector management styles in public service driven by the quest to contain the escalating costs of public administration (McCourt; 2013). In Uganda, the NPM model was visible in almost all spheres of public service. It was welcomed by privatization of most of the state owned enterprises, contracting out public services, retrenchment of civil servants, reduction in the number of public institutions, to mention but a few.

There was again emphasis of public private partnerships or contracting private institutions to perform some services on behalf of government. Several government institutions and services embraced privatization as a *modus operandi* in execution of their functions. Unlucky institutions were totally divested and the private sector took center stage in public sector service delivery. In many cases, such moves initially led to higher degrees of service delivery and increased government revenue before the trend could reverse dramatically. In terms of public administration, there was importation of private sector management skills into the public service manifested by more professionals joining the public service and public institutions shifting into public policy management.

Further, NPM focused on entrepreneurial leadership within public service organizations, with emphasis on process controls, performance management, audits and evaluations. In practice, these led to increased financial and programme

accountability improved service delivery, at least in the short run.

In the same direction, NPM showed a disaggregation of public services to their most basic units and a focus on cost management that was witnessed mainly in local government service delivery. Even at sub national governments, this led to improved service delivery and alignment of public services to local needs.

In Uganda, the NPM thus resulted into significant changes in the public sector ethos and approach, especially the cultivation of new management practices, marketization and contracting out of core services to private companies and non-profit organizations, and the creation of "arms-length" executive agencies responsible and accountable for implementation. This had been envisioned by President Yoweri Museveni at his inaugural swearing in speech when he promised a 'fundamental change'. There was hence new focus on management by results that replaced the public sector orientation governed by inputs and outputs, while performance management increasingly pervaded the public sector (MFED, 2018).

NPM may thus be accredited for the improvements in government effectiveness at the times it took center stage in Uganda's public administration system. For instance, in the area of tax administration as demonstrated in progresses against key tax collection targets, the results were miraculous. Indeed, the tax collection agency, the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA), made impressive strides in increasing revenue collection and improving the efficiency of tax collection. To manifest this achievement, tax/GDP ratio almost doubled from 5.7 per cent to 11 per cent in the first phase though followed by stagnation in the late 1990s it rose again from 12.4 per cent in 2004/5 to 13.8 per cent in 2008/9, generating additional revenue of £80 million over the four-year period. This was more than 8 times the total donor expenditure of £9.5 million!

But in all senses, the consequences of NPM were far-reaching. In spite of providing a durable and consistent agenda for public sector reform, there were still mixed records of both success and failure. For instance, critics questioned the appropriateness of NPM reforms in the context of weak capacity and political support, emphasizing the existence of supportive institutional and political conditions as a condition for success, and of building core public sector capacity as the priority for public management reforms.

In any case, the ability of NPM in enhancing government effectiveness was limited in such a way

that was seen as coming from the top, with minimal consultation, public employees affected received little training or orientation, staff transfers disrupted several policy implementations, even the charter concept was not properly understood by clients because some charter service norms were either too lax or too tight for citizens to reflect citizens' priorities.

Furthermore, NPM met additional shortfalls when emphasizing singular private sector management practices to replace classical public administration approaches. In the process, democratic accountability mechanisms were weakened especially by the creation of executive agencies and citizens effectively lost focus as key private sector delivery agents. More so, coherence across government systems diminished as a result of the fragmentation of public policy and delivery across multiple agencies and service providers due to privatization. (Bangura, & Larbi, eds., 2006).

Osborne, (2006) further contested that NPM was actually a distinct paradigm and questioned its conceptual rigour, arguing instead that it consisted of a cluster of different approaches with some shared characteristics. The overwhelming critiques on the efficacy of NPM sooner bred fresh approaches to public administration that sought to address problems of coherence and collaboration through "whole-of-government" approaches. These emerging paradigms placed citizens at the centre of public sector reforms rather than privileging the market as the primary driver of reform; the mistake NPM shall never be forgiven of.

But the weakest of the weak NPM interventions was evidenced when it brought the private sector to center stage in public service delivery. This was the last blow to NPM. Uganda as a country lacked a competitive private sector (then and now), and majority of private business community were so weak and petty to undertake projects to the magnitude that government could require. In effort to quickly create a private sector, government fell in traps with fake entrepreneurs mainly from Asian countries who swindled huge sums of tax payers' money. This was the last blow to NPM and Professor Mahmood Mamdani, a leading social researcher commented that "the cure had killed the patient"

### **Lessons Learnt**

Notwithstanding the tragedy that befell NPM, some lessons were still learnt. One of the most far reaching lesson learnt from NPM is that well managed privatization policies may lead to increased public sector service delivery. Surely, consistent political leadership in policy direction and implementation was key intervention in sustainable

public governance that had created far reaching positive impacts and provided durable and consistent agendas for the public sector reforms. The consistence of the National Resistance Movement (NRM) government that had last for more than thirty-five years had seen steady progress in some sectors that embraced NPM. Even areas that previously were not doing good started to improve steadily.

The other lesson learnt under the NPM approach was that increased involvement of non-government actors especially the private sector actually led to increased cost of public service delivery that negatively impacted on citizens' welfare. The tendency towards universal privatization and contracting out of public services had raised the costs of service delivery extremely high as was manifested in the roads infrastructure projects whose unit cost multiplied multi folds after embracing NPM.

### **2.3 Postmodern Public Administration Model**

In the face of the conceptual and practical problems encountered with the old public administration and new public management approaches a number of theorists emerged and developed fresh conceptualizations of public management that departed from earlier schemes. These approaches did not form coherent paradigms, since they did have different frames of references and commonalities. One of the Postmodern public administration models was the New Public Governance (NPG). This model placed citizens rather than government at the centre of its frame of reference.

The centrality of citizens as co-producers of policies and the delivery of services fundamentally distinguished the postmodern public governance approach from both the earlier statist approaches associated with *Old Public Administration* and market-based NPM approaches. In this post-modern public management that incorporated a number of features where the state was both plural and public service delivery was undertaken by multiple inter-dependent actors in multiple processes and inputs, now shaped public policy making. In this respect Bourgon, (2011) for example, highlighted the fragmentation of policy space with the emergence of multiple actors and jurisdictions alongside growing interdependence between actors operating at local, national and global levels. Government was practically treated as just one actor alongside others engaged in public policy deliberation and service delivery and was no longer assumed to be the sole or predominant force shaping public policy and implementation (Weber and Khademan, 2008).

In this Post-modernism era, public management was pre-occupied by global issues and movements that divided societies such as terrorism, homosexuals, abortion, social media, pandemics and many others in line with tolerable disposition to others all of which had put the classical and NPM models to more critical evaluation. This Post-modern model of NPG was implemented in Uganda and was seen in new sets of values largely drawn from private sector and other non-state actors. The crop in NPG led to new organizational arrangements and relationships that governed the operational context of Ugandan public agencies. For example, the shape of the state and the executive arm of government in particular, greatly changed from being dominated by core politicians to representatives of several interest groups. Actors with no known political experiences, competences and constituencies started taking center stage in political appointments and recruitments in the foreign service were neither reflecting legitimate foreign national policy interests but private groups interests.

Thus changes in the external context and internal public administration compositions in which public agencies operate in Uganda become a critical determinant of the NPG organizational arrangements that in turn shaped the purpose and scope of public administration and management.

Therefore, in placing a fresh emphasis on the public interest and citizens as the focus of public service, the postmodern public administration model provided a useful corrective to prevailing notions of control and steering associated with earlier models of public administration and management. But it was still far from providing an all-encompassing paradigm that offered comprehensive solutions which public sector reforms grounded in earlier approaches have failed to deliver.

### **Lessons Learnt**

The main lesson learnt from the NPG model was that for all reasons, public management should focus on the citizens, the communities and civil society. The primary role of public servants should always be to help citizens articulate and meet their shared interests rather than to control or steer society as Denhardt and Denhardt (2011) had earlier on postulated. Public governance should thus focus on the timely and effective responsiveness to society needs rather than politicians' interests. This was in sharp contrast to the philosophical premised within NPM approach in which transactions between public managers and customers reflected individual self-interest and were framed by market principles. It was also distinct from the old public administration approach where citizens related to the bureaucracy as clients or constituents and were treated as passive

recipients of top-down policy making and service delivery mechanisms (Bourgon, 2007).

Secondly, under NPG, citizens should always look beyond the narrow self-interests to wider public interests if NPG has to yield sustainable impact. When citizens' focus is short cited and shall, government response also follows suit. The role of public officials should therefore be to facilitate opportunities for strengthening citizen engagement in finding solutions to societal problems.

In this line, public managers should acquire skills that go beyond capacity for controlling or steering society in pursuit of policy solutions to focus more on brokering, negotiating and resolving complex problems in partnership with citizens. In seeking to address wider societal needs and develop solutions that are consistent with the public interest, governments will need to be open and accessible, accountable and responsive, and operate to serve citizens.

Lastly, the prevailing forms of accountability need to extend beyond the formal accountability of public servants to elected officials in the management and delivery of budgets and programmes to accommodate a wider set of accountability relationships with citizens and communities. This is because NPG recognises the importance of a public service ethos, emphasizing the values and motivations of public servants dedicated to the wider public good.

### **3. SUMMARY**

This paper has outlined the opportunities presented by the New Public Governance and New Public Service approaches. While they offer a useful corrective to the problems of earlier models of public management by focusing on inter-organizational relationships and citizen engagement, these approaches are still very new. They do not yet offer a comprehensive approach to problems of public service efficiency and effectiveness in developing countries, and simply substituting these approaches for earlier models of public management runs the risk of replicating approaches that may have limited applicability in developing country contexts.

This therefore necessitates the need for guarding against wholesome embracing of the best practice solutions that seek to replicate experience from advanced industrialized countries. Nevertheless, placing citizens at the centre of public sector reform efforts and focusing on the public sector ethos has important implications for the design and sustainability of reforms and government effectiveness.

In summarising this paper, the examination of the role of the three models of public

administration as have been assessed in Uganda’s public service is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Comparison of public administration models and service delivery in Uganda**

Indicator	Classical/old public Administration	New public management	Postmodern
Conception of the public interest	Political, enshrined in law	Aggregation of individual interests	Dialogue about shared values
To whom are civil servants responsive?	Clients and constituents	Customers	Citizens
Role of government	Rowing”, implementation focused on politically defined objectives	Steering, serving as catalyst to unleash market forces	Serving, negotiating and brokering interests among citizens
Mechanisms for achieving policy objectives	Administering programmes through government agencies	Creating mechanisms and incentives through private and non-profit agencies	Building coalitions of public, non-profit private agencies
Approach to accountability	Hierarchical - administrators responsible to elected leaders	Market-drive-outcomes result from accumulation of self-interests	Multifaceted-public servants guided by law, values, professional norms and citizen interests
Administrative discretion	Limited discretion granted to public officials	Wide latitude to meet entrepreneurial goals	Discretion needed but constrained and accountable
Assumed organizational structure	Bureaucratic organizations with top-down authority and control of clients	Decentralized public organisations with primary control within agency	Collaborative structures with shared leadership
Assumed motivational basis of public servants	Pay and benefits, civil-service protections	Entrepreneurial spirit, desire to reduce size and functions of government	Public service, desire to contribute to society

**Source:** Adopted from UNDP Global Centre for Public Service Excellence (2015) and modified by Researchers

The classical public administration approach relied on centralized control, set rules and guidelines, separated policymaking from implementation, and employed a hierarchical organizational structure. Watchwords were efficiency and effectiveness in the management of budgetary and human resources. The NPM perspective, assumed that public officials will be motivated to serve by virtue of a commitment to the public interest and will respond to citizens’ expectations of a healthy and responsive public service. The postmodern approach adopts a very different starting point from the two earlier public management traditions. The Postmodern approach places citizens rather than government at the centre of its frame of reference.

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