

VOL. 6 NO. 1 & 2, (JUNE & DEC., 2020)



ISSN: 2536-7358

IJAD



ILORIN JOURNAL OF ADMINISTRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

**JOURNAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN, NIGERIA.**

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ILORIN JOURNAL OF ADMINISTRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

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Administration, Faculty of Management Sciences, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.
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Published by the Department of Public Administration,
Faculty of Management Sciences, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.

The Journal is available online at:
<http://ejournals.unilorin.edu.ng/journals/index.php/ijad/index>

IJAD is indexed with: Google Scholar; Advance Science Index (ASI); Index Copernicus International;
Indexed for Cosmos Impact Factor; INFOBASE Index and Journal Factor

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGES
Editorial Board	iii
Instruction to Contributors	iv
Editorial Comments	v-vii
Contents	viii-ix
INEC and the Administration of Elections in Osun State, Nigeria (2015-2019) BAKARE, Lawal Ayofe, and OLADIPUPO, Deborah Oluseun	1-22
Perceived Organizational Support, Perceived Superior Support, Employee Engagement, and Performance in the Nigerian Public Sector: A Proposed Framework Sulaiman Adewumi ABDULLAH and Azura Abdullah EFFENDI	23-34
State's Contradictions: Farmers, Herdsmen and Environmental Struggle in Nigeria OGUNBELA, Gbeminiyi Kazeem and OGUNBIYI, Toyin Labake	35-48
New Public Management: Empirical Analysis of Local Government Areas Performance in Nigeria ¹ Olushola J. Omolekan, Ph.D.; ² Ayomide O. Omolekan	49-61
Struggling with Economic Recession: Youth Unemployment and Crisis of Legitimation in Africa Rahim, A.G., Wale-Oshinowo, B.A. & Agbi, B.D.	62-81
Alternative Work Arrangements in Nigeria: Is it avoidable by Modern Organizations? ABOGUNRIN, Abiodun Peter; AREMU, Nuha Salihu; ABDULLAH, Adewumi Sulaiman and LAWAL, Azeez Tunbosun	82-96

In-service Training and Job Performance of Non-Teaching Staff of Osun State College of Education, Ilesa HASSAN, Afees Olumide and ADEGOKE, Sunmola Kadiri	97-105
Effect Of Organisational Culture On Employees' Organisational Citizenship Behaviour In Nigerian Manufacturing Industry AMOSI, Jimoh Rafiu OMOLABI, Issa SULEIMAN, Ahmed Arenu	106-121
Social Protection and Compensation Management in the Nigerian Public Sector: A Historical Review from 1934 - 2019 Joy Onyinyechi Ekwoaba and Christopher Odogwu Chidi	122-147
The Impact Of Social Media On Local Government Administration In Nigeria Prof. Anthony Mayowa Oladoyin ONABANJO Loke Kayode (Ph.D Student)	148-166
Career Management: A Predictor of the Performance of Civil Servants in Osun State Rosemary Adishetu DANESI, James Aransiola ISHOLA and Nuha Salihu AREMU	167-178
Academic Staff Union of Universities Strikes and Employees' Job Performance in University of Lagos Joy Onyinyechi EKWOABA and Rosemary Adishetu DANESI	179-194
Domesticity and Implementation of Affirmative Policy at the Local Government Tier in Nigeria Umar Elems MAHMUD, Yusuf Abdullahi OGWUZEBE and Bage Yahaya AHMAD	195-211
Influence of Cabotage Act, 2003 on Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency Coastline Operations JAMAL Bashir Yusuf (Ph.D)	212-224

New Public Management: Empirical Analysis of Local Government Areas Performance in Nigeria

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Abstract

Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Nigeria are expected to initiate development and bridge social and economic gap of the citizenry. However, the declining federal monthly allocation and stiff control from states government has impaired their performance. This necessitates LGAs to be proactive in revenue generation and cost-cutting approach to meet public utility demands. Thus, this study evaluated the impact of NPM reforms index on LGAs performance in Nigeria. Mixed design was used in the study. The thirty-three LGAs in Oyo State, Nigeria formed the population of the study. Multi-stage sampling technique was adopted and validated structured questionnaire was used to elicit information from the respondents. NPM reforms index considered in the study include inclusiveness, customer concept, and decentralization while LGAs performance measured were equity, effectiveness and efficiency which were moderated by political interference. The data was analysed using Partial least square with the aid of Smart PLS 3 Statistical software. The findings revealed that decentralization and inclusiveness influence LGAs performance and political interference affect LGAs performance. The study concluded that NPM reforms index impact LGAs performance. The study recommended among others that LGAs authority should focus on NPM reforms index to improve equity, effectiveness in revenue expansion and efficiency in spending.

Key words: LGAs performance, NPM reforms index, Political interference, citizens, social and economic development

Introduction

Performance measurement has been one of the major components in business evaluation for the purpose of continuity and survival (Shafritz & Guy, 2018). Private enterprises are known for topmost performance towards enhanced profit. Though, public organizations are mainly for the delivery of vital services to the betterment of the citizenries and not for profit making (Freeman, 2015). Hence, a critical analysis of these organizations revealed that despite huge government investment in public enterprises, many of them still perform below expectations. The underperformance of these public enterprises affects the level of service delivery to the citizenry. This necessitates the development of different strategies by the government such as creation of agencies, restructuring and merging of ministries, public private partnership, utilization of consultancy firms and privatization in some cases to improve performance (Scherer & Palazzo, 2011). Yet, the performances of public enterprises are still far below expectations. The noticeable performance decline in the public enterprises has been a major concern for the organizational psychologist, researchers, and public analyst in the 21st century due to the fact that despite the available resources (5m's i.e. man, materials, money, machine and methods) at their disposal, their performance cannot be compare to that of the private enterprises (Diefenbach, 2009). Though, a lot of factors has been identified as major causes of performance decline such as corruption, favoritism, poor management, political interference, poor attitude to work, government control and political instability ("Knowledge Management in the Public Sector," 2015). Thus, this necessitates the new public management concept.

New Public Management (NPM) is a system of administrative reforms that advocated the adoption of private sector ideology and techniques in the discharge of quality services to the citizenry. The NPM concept is sometimes referred to as market-based public administration where the traditional concept of public administration is modernized to public management (Alamsyah, 2016). NPM reform encompasses reviews of wage system, outsourcing, cost cutting and downsizing, performance management system, revenue expansion, training and development, management style, transparency in administrative work, collaboration with public enterprises, government assets and debt management, review of organizational structure, and information disclosure (Agranoff & McGuire, 2004). These indices are geared towards performance enhancement in the public services. Globally, NPM reforms have its advantages and inherent criticisms: NPM reforms ensures that money has better value in discharging public service; it moves public enterprises to higher productivity; it gives the citizenries voice in demanding for better services through transparency and

accountability; and it promote good governance. Though, the policy was criticized for promoting efficiency over democracy, de-emphasized civil servant creativity and giving room for specialized agencies to handle sensitive public information (Scherer & Palazzo, 2011). Yet, past researches such as Levy(2010); Chappoz and Pupion(2012); and Alamsyah(2016) revealed that NPM reforms have been a good performance strategy for public enterprises in the twenty-first century. Nigeria has three Tiers of Government (Federal, state and local governments) which controls the activities of different Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs). Local Government Areas (LGAs) are the closet to the citizens in delivery of public services and grassroots development. The essence of LGAs is to bridge the gap and increase government responses in meeting demands and expectations for economic and social development of its populace(Agranoff & McGuire, 2004). There are divergence views on the performance of LGAs by different scholars (Gruening, 2001; Agranoff & McGuire, 2004; Kalimullah et al., 2012). Likewise, Manning(2001); and Basheka(2018) were of the opinion that the application of NPM reforms enhance public enterprises performance. Besides, there are controversies on the performance metrics used in measuring the municipal performance. Manning (2001) measures LGAs performance based on efficiency while Gruening(2001); and Agranoff and McGuire(2004) measures LGAs performance using fairness and revenue generation ability respectively. It is important to inculcate these views and established LGAs performance metrics that can be influence using NPM reforms index in Nigeria. Hence, this study evaluates the NPM reforms index on LGAs performance in Nigeria.

Literature Review And Hypothesis Development

Concept of NPM

The novel approaches of NPM which was pioneered by Christopher Hood refer to a sequence of change from public administration to management (Tolofari, 2005). The concept emerged in the 80s to tackle the flaw of public administration in adjusting to the competitive nature of market and economy demand. NPM was formulated to improve the quality of public services and governmental operations, cut government expenses and improve the efficiency of policy implementation. One of the major drivers of NPM approaches is cost containment, injecting competition principles and inculcating private sector management ideology to enhance public enterprise performance(Levy, 2010). NPM key elements are embracing private sector management ideology in public enterprises; making efficiency a priority; adopting entrepreneurial traits in public sectors a paradigm shift from procedures, control and rules to performance output targets; a proper input –output analysis and performance audit, private ownership

preference, embracing the concept of outsourcing in public services; decentralization of public services to units with cost cutting focus delegation of control with better monitoring and reporting system; and competitive market growth approach and efficient allocation of resources in public services (Stoker, 2006).

NPM reforms index

NPM reforms index referred to the identified metrics used in measuring private sector performance that can be adopted by the public enterprises to improve performance and ensure quality service delivery to the populace (Diefenbach, 2009). Based on the opinion of scholars (Gruening, 2001; Levy, 2010), the identified metrics were categorized into groups in Table 1 showing the rate at which each index were being used by public enterprises. The NPM reforms mostly used by public enterprises were categorized as first order followed by second and third orders.

Table 1: NPM reforms index based on the public enterprises usefulness

1st order	2 nd order	3 rd order
Cost cutting and downsizing	New personnel systems	Introducing performance management systems
Introducing market mechanisms	Introducing agencies	Separation of purchaser and provider
Quality and customer responsiveness	Democratization/Participation	Human capital development
Decentralization of management authority	Organizational structure and management style	

Source: NPM reforms matrix of usage applicability based on literatures (Lapsley, 2009)

NPM reforms adopted for the measurement of LGAs performance in this study based on the researchers' consensus in the literatures (Gruening, 2001; Manning, 2001; Agranoff & McGuire, 2004; Kalimullah et al., 2012; and Basheka, 2018). Based on factor analysis and rating as applicable to the LGAs, the researchers selected the highest rated NPM reforms in each usability categories stated in Table 1 which are decentralization, democratization (which depict inclusiveness in this study) and customer concept which coincidentally supported the views of Agranoff and McGuire (2004); and Basheka (2018) in their different studies: *Decentralization*: The deliveries of quality services valued by the citizens and enhanced managerial autonomy through reduction in central administrative

control by public services are the crux of decentralization. It ensures a good motivation and reward for both the individual and organizational performance. Decentralization deploys good technological and human resources in proper direction to achieve the predetermined goals. It increases response rates to contingency issues which promotes transparency and competition among civil servants to use their initiative, contribute meaningfully in decision making process and planning to improved performance. This enhanced better managerial, economic effectiveness and efficiency in governance (Kalimullah et al., 2012). For the purpose of this study, decentralization was proxy by delegation, outsourcing and collaboration with private enterprises.

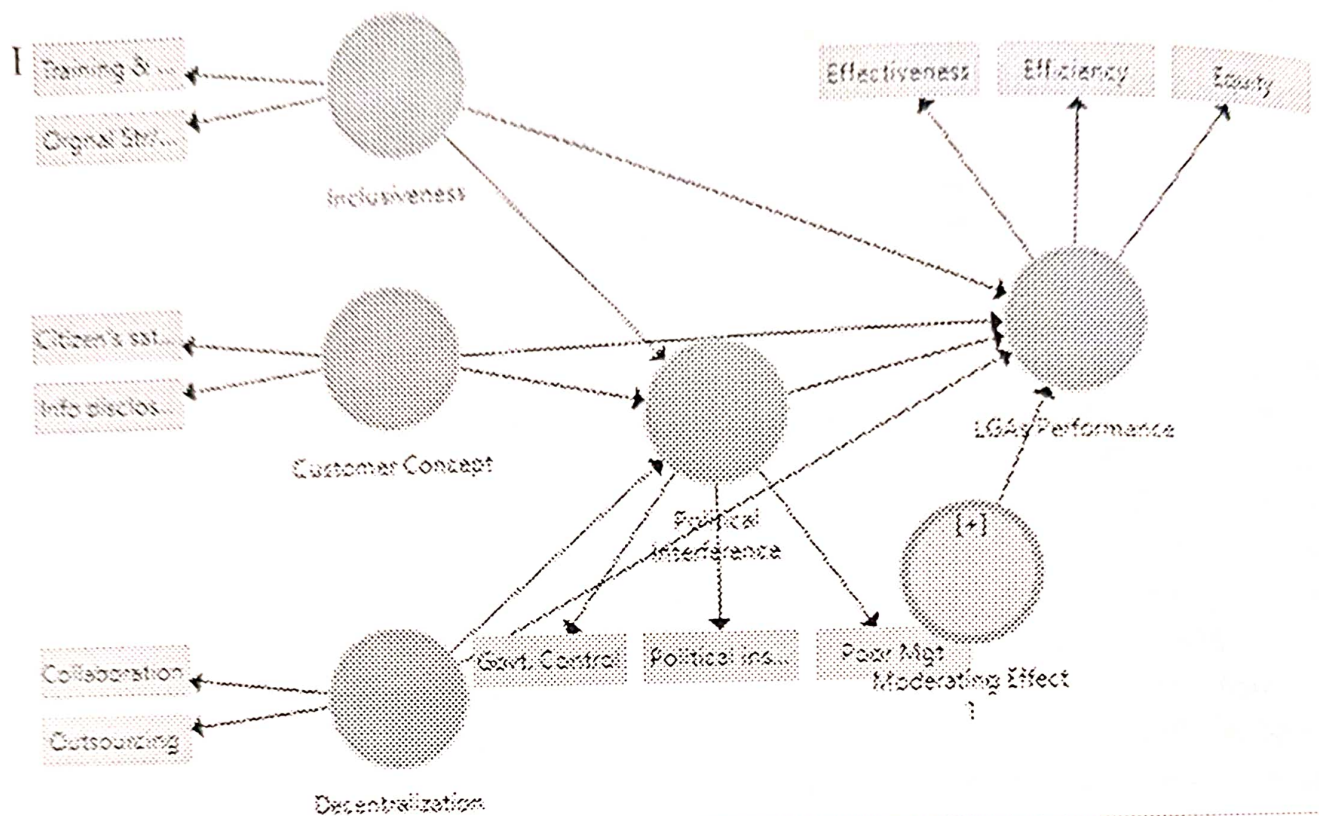
Inclusiveness: This involves decision-making and human capital development. Capacity building of human resources agents of any organization helps to achieve developmental goals in public services (Dunleavy et al., 2006). Staff training and development is essential ingredients in capacity building. Human capital development is needed for policy reforms, acceptance and possible change expected by the civil servants. Periodic training by civil service institutes to intimates civil servants on the new management responsibilities to enhance economic liberation and good governance in public services (Levy, 2010). For the purpose of this study, inclusiveness was proxy by training and development, organizational structure and management style.

Customer concept: This concept view populace as the consumer of public utility i.e. the reason for public enterprises is to meet the needs and satisfy public outcry. NPM reforms and principles such as transparency, competition, public utility and citizens' satisfaction as it is applicable in private sector management ("New Public Manag. Eur.," 2007). NPM reforms may crowd out other reforms or values. In this study, customer concept was proxy by citizen's satisfaction (customer orientation) and information disclosure and transparency.

Local Government Areas (LGAs) performance

Local Government Areas has been described as the government arms that are saddle with the responsibility for grassroots development (Chappoz & Pupion, 2012). There are seven hundred and seventy four LGAs in Nigeria recognized by law while some states also created Local Council Development Areas (LCDAs) just to move grassroots development closer to people. Meanwhile, LGAs faces many challenges in the discharge of their duties. The challenges ranges from declining federal monthly allocation, corruption, poor management, political interference and government control especially states governments' control of LGAs allocation despite executive orders of autonomy. The performance of these LGAs has not being satisfactory to the citizenry. Based on past research (Manning, 2001), this study identified LGAs performance metrics:

equity, efficiency and effectiveness.



Source: Researcher's Path Model, 2020

Figure 1 shows the path model analysis of the NPM reform index effect on LGAs performance mediated by political interference. NPM reform index measured in the study are Inclusiveness - proxies by training & development and organizational structure & management style; Customer concept - proxies by customer orientation (citizen's satisfaction) and information disclosure & Transparency; and Decentralization - proxies by outsourcing and collaboration with public enterprises. These variables were measured on LGAs performance proxies by equity, efficiency, and effectiveness. The effect was moderated by the political interference proxies by government control, poor management, and political instability to check if the moderating variables effect will be significant. The figure presents interaction effects where more than single variables contribute to the latent variables.

	Customer Concepts	Decentralization	Inclusiveness	LGAs Performance	Moderating Effect I	Political interference
Political Interference	coefficients			-0.360		
Moderating Effect				-0.031		
LGAs Performance						
Inclusiveness				0.295		-0.178
Decentralization				-0.140		0.864
Customer Concept				-0.198		-0.160

Source: SMARTPLS Output, 2020

The findings from the path coefficients in Table 1 show a given standardization of weight ranging from -1 to +1 and the closeness of the weight to absolute 1 shows the strongest paths. On the other way round, weights close to zero reflect the weakest paths. Inclusiveness as NPM reforms index shows a positive but low contribution to the latent variable while decentralization and customer concept gives a negative but low contribution to LGAs performance. Also, Inclusiveness and customer concept (citizen's satisfaction) shows negative contribution to the moderating variable while decentralization gives a positive and strong contribution to political interference. This implies that outsourcing and collaboration with public enterprises are more influence by political instability, poor management, and government control. Politicians most times see these variables as an opportunity to payback their loyalist through awarding of contract and maximizing citizens' collaboration to their advantage. The absolute magnitude of decentralization index gives a better coefficient under the political interference (Moderating variable) while the Inclusiveness index gives a better coefficient under the LGAs performance. The result also shows that the path coefficients mediated by political interference shows weak standardized weight compared to the weight under LGAs performance while the political interference index gives a negative weight coefficient to LGAs performance. This implies that NPM reform index are good model for the prediction of LGAs performance while

the interference of the moderating variables seems significant with low coefficient. The identified NPM reform indices variables contribute significantly to the prediction of LGAs performance.

Table 2: Outer Loadings

	Customer Concepts	Decentralization	Inclusiveness/ Participation	LGAs Performance	Moderating Effect I	Political Interference
Collaboration		0.930				
Customer Orientation	0.840				0.923	
Decentralization				0.891		
Effectiveness				-0.783		
Efficiency				0.585		
Equity						0.859
Govt. Control						
HRD			0.883			
Info. Disclosure	0.896					
Original Str. Mgt Style			0.879			
Outsourcing		0.914				
Political Instability						-0.378
Poor Mgt						0.789

Source: SMARTPLS Output, 2020

The outer model shows the indicators contribution to the definition of the latent variables. Though, the closer the loading to 1 the better, the convention well-fitting reflective model state that the path loading must be above 70% (criterion for minimum measurement loading) which explained about half of the variance in the indicator and its factor should be greater than error variance. From the result outputs, all the identified variables meet this condition except for equity – a variable under the LGAs performance, which could have been dropped but dropping the indicators did not improve composite reliability. Outer weight model varies from zero to an absolute maximum lower than 1, it has been established that the more the indicators for a latent variable, the lower the maximum and the lower the average outer model weight. The results of outer model weights justify why the weak loading could not be dropped as the indicators loading weight was greater than or close to 0.50. Also, this variable was a major constituent of the latent variables from the literature as the

metrics for measuring LGAs performance.

Table 3: R Square

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
LGAs Performance	0.809	0.799
Political Interference	0.782	0.775

Source: SMARTPLS Output, 2020

The common effect size measure in the path with political interference shows the R square of 0.782 (i.e. 78.2%). This variation effect is strong while direct effect shows R square of 0.809 which means that 80.9% of the variance in LGAs performance can be explained by the joint model of NPM reforms index metrics. This implies that the variation of direct effect is approximately higher than the moderating effect. Thus, this is a strong effect (i.e. the variation is greater than 80%) as the identified variables affect LGAs performance which implies that the remaining 19.1% is due to other variables not imputed in the model. Though, R-square greater than 80% suggests a possible multicollinearity problem (Tolerance = $1 - R^2$) but in this case, there is no multicollinearity problem as tolerance in this data set is 0.20 at the extreme. However, adding predictors to a regression model tends to increase R^2 . The adjusted R-square of 0.799 is close to the unadjusted R square in this model because of the small number of variables involved in the model. This does not have any effect on the result output as the models were built from the literature. The findings revealed that moderating effect reduced the variation effect of the NPM reform index on LGAs performance.

Table 4: f Square

	Customer Concept	Decentralization	Inclusiveness	LGAs Performance	Moderating Effect 1	Political Interference
Customer Concept				0.056		0.036
Decentralization				0.012		0.672
Inclusiveness				0.132		0.052
LGAs Performance						
Moderating Effect 1				0.003		
Political Interference				0.143		

Source: SMARTPLS Output, 2020

The weights of these variables are shown in the f square table where the changes in contributions of NPM reform index were revealed according to their importance. The f square result revealed the strength of the path in the change effect. The contribution change of NPM reform index is 0.036, 0.572 and 0.052 of the latent variables to the moderating variable. This change weight was better compared to the change effect on the LGAs performance which gives a value of 0.056, 0.012 and 0.132 respectively for consumer concept (citizen's satisfaction), decentralization and inclusiveness. The moderating effect change of 0.003 is relatively low. The implication of this is that, political interference of political instability; poor management and government control slightly reduce NPM reform index effect on LGAs performance. With this, political instability, poor management, and government control have weak and low effect on LGAs equity, efficiency and effectiveness. F square change effect shows that decentralization metrics is stronger to other NPM reform index. The implication of this is that outsourcing and collaboration with public enterprises contribute most significantly to the change effect of LGAs performance in terms of equity, efficiency and effectiveness. Thus, it is important for the public enterprises to take these variables seriously to enhance favourable LGAs performance.

Table 5: Bootstrapping

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Customer concept -> LGAs Performance	-0.198	-0.197	0.107	1.845	0.066
Customer concept -> Political Interference	-0.160	-0.152	0.135	1.187	0.236
Decentralization -> LGAs Performance	-0.140	-0.148	0.135	1.037	0.300
Decentralization -> Political Interference	0.864	0.846	0.128	6.739	0.000
Inclusiveness -> LGAs Performance	0.295	0.297	0.096	3.084	0.002
Inclusiveness -> Political Interference	-0.178	-0.193	0.090	1.976	0.049
Moderating Effect 1 -> LGAs Performance	-0.031	-0.035	0.088	1.965	0.049
Political Interference -> LGAs Performance	-0.360	-0.353	0.091	3.954	0.000

Source: SMARTPLS Output, 2020

The PLS bootstrapping output showing the t and p value revealed that any t value above 1.96 will be significant at 95% confidence interval and 5% significance level. From the output result, it was observed that political interference is significant on LGAs performance. This implies that political instability, poor management and government control affect LGAs performance. This is supported by the moderating effect on LGAs performance with t value approximately to 1.96 and p-value less than 0.05. Though, the value seems to be on the borderline which explains a slight weak effect of the latent variable. Also, decentralization metrics was significant to the moderating variable and insignificant to the LGAs performance. This further revealed the important of these index used often by the politicians to their advantage. Customer concept (citizen's satisfaction) was not significance to both the moderating variable and LGAs performance. On the other hand, inclusiveness index is significant with both political interference and LGAs performance. With this, NPM reform index were significant in predicting LGAs performance except customer concept. It is suffice to say that, the local government areas performance are influence by NPM reforms index while political instability, poor management and government control has weak influence on the identified local government areas performance metrics of equity, efficiency and effectiveness.

Discussion of findings

The output of the analysis revealed that to enhanced LGAs performance of equity in term of fairness in social and economic development; efficiency in term of spending; and effectiveness in revenue generation, there is need to strengthen the LGAs collaborations with public enterprises, involvement of the services of professionals to take charge of some specific aspects (outsourcing), engages in open door policy by information disclosure and transparency to the citizenries, proper training and development of their staff, a good organizational structure and sound managerial orientation in bridging the gap between the government and the citizenry. All these NPM reform index metrics are important to improve LGAs performance. This is in line with the study of Diefenbach(2009);Levy(2010); and Shafritz and Guy(2018) who concluded that NPM index influence public enterprises performance. Likewise, the local government areas authorities need to work on customer concept index in terms of customer orientation (i.e. citizen's satisfaction) and information disclosure to instill citizen's trust and confidence in local government administration. It was also revealed that the loading weight of equity gives negative values far below the 0.70 cut off suggested for the loading weight. This is a great divergence from prior expectation. The equity in fairness is likely to increase if information disclosure and transparency is encouraged. Thus, when citizens' social and economic

expectations are met, there is high tendency of increase in participation such as willingness to pay taxes and other levies which will lead to revenue expansion. However, NPM reform index metrics influence LGAs performance in Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendations

NPM reforms index was evaluated against LGAs performance in Nigeria and the model was moderated by political interference to check if political instability, poor management and government control have effect on the interaction between the two latent variables. The findings revealed that both decentralization and inclusiveness index such as collaboration with public enterprises, involvement of professionals by outsourcing of some functions to increase revenue, proper organizational structure and sound management style, and training and development contribute significantly to LGAs performance in terms of equity i.e. fairness in social and economic development; efficiency in spending prudently; and effectiveness in revenue expansion with R-square of 80.9%; t-value of NPM reforms index variables are greater than 1.96 and p-value of less than 0.05. Meanwhile, the political interference used to moderate the latent variables is significant though with weak coefficient. The study concluded that NPM reform index influence LGAs performance while the political interference affects LGAs performance in Nigeria. This implies that NPM reform index were significant in predicting LGAs performance. The study recommended that; i. LGAs authority needs to focus on all identified NPM reforms index to improve fairness in social and economic development; efficiency in spending; and effectiveness in revenue expansion. Also, efforts should be geared towards customer orientation (i.e. citizen's satisfaction) and information disclosure to instill citizen's trust and confidence. ii. State government should allow the LGAs to enjoy full autonomy without any form of political interference and control in spending and revenue generation to meet the growing social and economic need of the populace.

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