
Assessing the impact of new public management (NPM) reforms on human resource management in Kosofe local government area, Lagos: challenges, benefits, and recommendations.

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ABSTRACT

The present study examines how the New Public Management paradigm influences the management of human resources in Kosofe local government area in the state of Lagos, Nigeria. The emphasis of New Public Management reforms on efficiency, performance orientation, and decentralization to subordinate departments intends to advance public management. However, their practice in the Kosofe has registered a number of shortcomings and criticisms, particularly in resistance to change from old employees, work overload, insecurity, and inconsiderate policy implementation. This study triangulated both qualitative data from interviews involving selected former and current employees of the organization as well as officials and documents and reports from the company. It was determined that, on the one hand, NPM practices have certainly introduced some positive changes, such as the introduction of the merit system and accountability, on the other hand, many employees have encountered problems such as dissatisfaction and adaptation. Some of these recommendations include lifting of restrictions on employee involvement, targeted employee trainings, cadence in the assessment of employees, improvement in communication and control of resources among others. The study observes that more than one strategy would be required, and the various strategies employed must consider the cultural dimensions and employee concerns for NPM to be beneficial to the Kosofe LGA

Keywords;

New Public Management (NPM), Human Resource Management (HRM), Kosofe Local Government Area, Lagos, performance measurement, decentralization, employee adaptation, public sector reform, organizational efficiency, job security

1. INTRODUCTION

Public administration, particularly at the local government level, is central to delivering essential services and maintaining governance structures in Nigeria (Agagu, 2019, p. 112). Traditionally, human resource management (HRM) in public administration has been characterized by centralized decision-making, rigid hierarchies, and rule-based processes (Olaopa, 2017, p. 45). However, the growing need for efficiency, accountability, and responsiveness in public services has driven many governments to adopt reform approaches like the New Public Management (NPM) framework (Hood, 1991, p. 3; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017, ch. 2).

NPM represents a paradigm shift from traditional public administration models by incorporating market-oriented principles, decentralization, and performance-based management to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of public sector organizations (Gruening, 2001, pp. 3-5). Since the 1990s, several countries, including Nigeria, have embraced NPM reforms to improve public sector performance by adapting private sector management techniques (Adeyemi, 2015, pp. 64-65). In the context of HRM, NPM has led to the introduction of performance appraisal systems, merit-based recruitment and promotion, decentralization of HR functions, and increased reliance on contractual or temporary staffing (Suleiman, 2018, pp. 102-103).

Kosofe Local Government, one of the 20 local government areas in Lagos State, Nigeria, offers a critical case study for examining the impact of NPM reforms on HRM practices (Lagos State Government, 2023, p. 7). As a key administrative unit in Lagos, Nigeria's most populous state and economic hub, Kosofe Local Government has implemented several reforms to improve service delivery and operational efficiency (Ogunnaike, 2020, p. 55). This study focuses on how NPM-driven HRM practices, such as performance-based management and decentralization, have influenced HR policies, employee performance, and service delivery outcomes in Kosofe.

While NPM reforms potentially offer benefits like enhanced efficiency, accountability, and employee motivation, they also pose significant challenges (Hope, 2001, p. 120). In Kosofe, these challenges may include resistance to change from employees accustomed to traditional HR practices, equity concerns arising from performance-based pay systems, and complexities of decentralizing HR functions within a bureaucratic environment (Ezeani, 2016, pp. 88-90). Moreover, implementing NPM in Kosofe must be considered within Nigeria's broader socio-political and economic context, where local governments face resource constraints, political interference, and varying administrative capacities (Olowu, 2002, p. 93).

This article explores the impact of New Public Management (NPM) reforms on HRM practices in Kosofe Local Government, focusing on performance management, employee motivation, and service delivery. It analyzes challenges like resistance to change and decentralization complexities, compares HRM practices with other Lagos State local governments, and provides policy recommendations for improvement.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study examines the impact of New Public Management (NPM) reforms on HRM practices in Kosofe Local Government, Lagos State. Data was collected through document analysis, government publications, and comparative case studies. Existing literature was

reviewed, and interviews were conducted with HR managers and employees. The study aims to identify themes and patterns in official documents and compare findings with other local governments. Ethical considerations include informed consent and confidentiality.

2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is grounded in the theoretical principles of New Public Management (NPM), which emerged as a dominant paradigm in public administration in the late 20th century. NPM theory advocates for adopting private sector management practices within the public sector to enhance efficiency, accountability, and service delivery (Hood, 1991, p. 3). The core principles of NPM include decentralization, performance measurement, market-based mechanisms, and a focus on results rather than processes (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992, pp. 31-34).

A fundamental principle of NPM is decentralization, which seeks to transfer authority from central bodies to local government units, granting them greater autonomy in managing their resources, including human resources (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017, ch. 4). In the context of HRM, decentralization allows local governments like Kosofe to develop localized HR policies that reflect the specific needs and challenges of their communities. This can lead to improved responsiveness and adaptability in HR practices, as local managers have more control over recruitment, training, and performance management (Christensen & Lægheid, 2011, p. 57).

Under NPM, performance management becomes a crucial tool for enhancing accountability and efficiency. The focus shifts from inputs (such as the number of employees or hours worked) to outputs and outcomes, such as service delivery quality and employee productivity (Bevan et al., 2014, p. 188). Performance measurement systems, which include performance appraisals and performance-based incentives, are expected to align individual performance with organizational goals, thereby fostering a culture of accountability and results (Kettunen, 2020, p. 37). In Kosofe Local Government, these practices can be assessed by examining performance management reports and employee evaluations. NPM also emphasizes merit-based recruitment and promotion, aiming to create a more competitive and transparent process that attracts and retains qualified personnel (Hood, 1991, p. 6). This principle counters the traditional public sector practices that often rely on seniority or political patronage. By employing merit-based systems, Kosofe Local Government can enhance organizational effectiveness, ensuring that the most capable individuals occupy key positions (Suleiman, 2018, pp. 105-106).

Moreover, market mechanisms such as outsourcing and public-private partnerships are promoted to reduce costs and improve service delivery efficiency (Margetts, 2018, p. 103). These mechanisms introduce competition, encouraging public organizations to adopt innovative HRM practices that mirror those of the private sector (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992, p. 45). Understanding how Kosofe Local Government utilizes these mechanisms can provide insights into the effectiveness of NPM reforms.

Applying the NPM framework to Kosofe Local Government allows for an examination of how these principles manifest in local HRM practices. By focusing on decentralization, performance management, merit-based recruitment, and market mechanisms, this study aims to identify the successes and challenges encountered by Kosofe in implementing NPM reforms. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for evaluating the overall impact of NPM on HRM practices in the context of Lagos State and broader Nigerian public sector reforms.

This theoretical framework provides a foundation for analyzing the transformation of HRM practices in Kosofe Local Government under NPM, highlighting key areas where theory meets practice.

2.2 HRM Practices in Kosofe Local Government under NPM

Human Resource Management (HRM) practices in Kosofe Local Government are shaped by the principles of New Public Management (NPM), which emphasize efficiency, accountability, and a shift toward private sector management techniques in public administration (Hood, 1991, p. 3). Under NPM, Kosofe Local Government has adopted several key HRM practices aimed at enhancing service delivery and employee performance.

Kosofe Local Government has implemented decentralized HRM practices to grant more autonomy to departmental managers in recruitment, training, and performance management. Decentralization is a key NPM principle that allows local managers to respond more effectively to the unique needs of their workforce and community (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017, ch. 4). By decentralizing HR functions, Kosofe Local Government aims to increase flexibility in decision-making and reduce bureaucratic delays, thereby improving overall organizational efficiency (Akindle, 2019, p. 124).

Performance management has been central to HRM reforms in Kosofe under NPM. The local government has implemented performance appraisals and key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure employee effectiveness and align individual performance with organizational goals (Bevan et al., 2014, p. 188). This approach fosters a culture of accountability and aims to motivate employees by linking performance with rewards and promotions (Kettunen, 2020, p. 39). In Kosofe, performance reviews are conducted annually, and employees are evaluated based on both quantitative and qualitative criteria, reflecting a shift toward results-oriented management (Afolabi, 2021, p. 82). Kosofe's HR policies now emphasize the qualifications, experience, and competencies of candidates, rather than seniority or connections, when filling vacancies or promoting staff (Suleiman, 2018, pp. 105-106). This shift is intended to enhance the quality of public service delivery by ensuring that only the most capable individuals are recruited or promoted.

Kosofe Local Government has also focused on improving employee skills and competencies through targeted training and development programs. Under NPM, continuous professional development is critical for maintaining a competent and motivated workforce (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017, p. 122). The local government organizes regular training workshops and seminars to enhance employees' technical and managerial skills, aiming to build a more dynamic and adaptable workforce (Ajibade, 2020, p. 58). This approach aligns with the NPM emphasis on capacity building and improving public sector efficiency. Following NPM's advocacy for market-based mechanisms, Kosofe Local Government has experimented with outsourcing non-core services to private contractors to reduce costs and improve efficiency (Margetts, 2018, p. 103). Employee engagement and empowerment initiatives have been introduced in Kosofe to promote a more participatory management style. This includes encouraging employees to take part in decision-making processes and providing opportunities for feedback (Christensen & Lægveid, 2011, p. 63). By fostering a more inclusive environment, Kosofe aims to increase job satisfaction, reduce turnover, and enhance productivity, aligning with NPM's emphasis on employee motivation and performance (Akindele, 2019, p. 130).

Overall, the HRM practices in Kosofe Local Government reflect key NPM principles, including decentralization, performance management, merit-based recruitment, continuous training, and the use of market mechanisms. These reforms aim to create a more efficient, accountable, and responsive local government that meets the needs of its community.

2.3 Impact of NPM Reforms on HRM in Kosofe Local Government Area

The implementation of New Public Management (NPM) reforms has had a profound impact on Human Resource Management (HRM) practices in Kosofe Local Government Area (LGA). These reforms have emphasized decentralization, performance orientation, and market-based mechanisms to enhance efficiency and accountability in public administration (Hood, 1991, p. 5). This section explores the impact of NPM reforms on HRM in Kosofe LGA, incorporating insights from interviews with local government officials and HR managers, as well as analyses of local government reports and staff performance records.

NPM reforms have significantly improved accountability and performance orientation in Kosofe LGA. Interviews with HR managers reveal that the introduction of performance management systems, such as key performance indicators (KPIs) and performance appraisals, has created a results-based culture where employees are evaluated based on their contributions to organizational goals (Afolabi, 2021, p. 82). Local government officials reported that these reforms have led to a more transparent and accountable workforce, where performance reviews and evaluations are conducted regularly to track progress (Ogundipe, 2022, p. 48). An analysis of Kosofe LGA's staff performance records from 2021 to 2023 corroborates these findings, showing a 15% increase in overall employee productivity and a 10% reduction in absenteeism rates following the implementation of performance management practices (Kosofe LGA HR Report, 2023, p. 12). Similarly, comparative case studies from Ikeja and Surulere LGAs have demonstrated that the adoption of NPM reforms, particularly in performance management, has resulted in improved service delivery and enhanced employee morale (Ajibade, 2020, p. 67).

Decentralization has also played a crucial role in reshaping HRM practices in Kosofe LGA. Local government officials and HR managers emphasized that the decentralization of HR functions has enabled quicker decision-making and more tailored HR practices that reflect local needs (Akindele, 2019, p. 124). According to interviews, this shift has allowed Kosofe LGA to address staffing needs more efficiently, particularly in critical areas such as health and education, where timely recruitment and deployment are essential (Olawale, 2021, p. 39). Local government reports indicate that decentralization has reduced bureaucratic delays by 20%, allowing for faster recruitment processes and improved service delivery outcomes (Kosofe LGA Administrative Report, 2022, p. 8). The experience of Ikeja LGA, which also adopted decentralized HR practices, supports these findings, highlighting that greater managerial autonomy has led to more responsive and effective HR management (Ogundipe, 2022, p. 50).

NPM reforms have led to the adoption of merit-based recruitment and promotion practices in Kosofe LGA. Interviews with HR managers reveal that this shift has been critical in attracting skilled personnel and reducing political interference in hiring decisions (Suleiman, 2018, pp. 105-106). The merit-based system emphasizes qualifications, experience, and performance as key criteria for recruitment and promotion, aligning with NPM's focus on efficiency and effectiveness (Hood, 1991, p. 6). An analysis of recent recruitment data from Kosofe LGA shows a marked improvement in the quality of hires, with a 25% increase in the number of employees possessing advanced degrees and professional

certifications (Kosofe LGA HR Report, 2023, p. 15). Case studies from Surulere and Ikorodu LGAs also highlight the positive impact of merit-based recruitment on staff competence and service delivery (Ajibade, 2020, p. 72). In Surulere LGA, for instance, merit-based hiring practices have been associated with higher levels of citizen satisfaction and service quality (Olawale, 2021, p. 45).

While NPM reforms have introduced market mechanisms such as outsourcing and public-private partnerships in Kosofe LGA, these practices have presented certain challenges. Interviews with local government officials indicate concerns about job security and fairness, particularly when outsourcing is used to replace internal functions (Margetts, 2018, p. 103). According to HR managers, these concerns have led to a decline in employee morale and trust in management, reflecting the complexities of applying market-based approaches in the public sector (Olawale, 2021, p. 41). Local government reports and staff surveys further highlight these challenges, showing that over 40% of employees feel insecure about their jobs due to outsourcing practices (Kosofe LGA Employee Survey, 2023, p. 18). Similar challenges have been reported in Mushin LGA, where outsourcing led to labor disputes and a decline in organizational commitment (Ogundipe, 2022, p. 52).

Despite the challenges, NPM reforms have also fostered a culture of employee engagement and capacity building in Kosofe LGA. Interviews with HR managers reveal that the local government has invested in regular training and development programs to enhance employee skills and competencies, aligning with NPM's emphasis on continuous improvement (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017, p. 122). An analysis of training attendance records and feedback forms shows a positive correlation between participation in capacity-building initiatives and improved employee performance, with a 30% increase in task completion rates and a 20% reduction in error rates (Kosofe LGA Training Report, 2023, p. 10). A comparative case study from Agege LGA supports these findings, indicating that investment in employee development has led to a more skilled and adaptable workforce (Afolabi, 2021, p. 85).

The impact of NPM reforms on HRM in Kosofe LGA is evident in increased accountability, efficiency, merit-based practices, and enhanced employee engagement. However, challenges remain, particularly with the application of market mechanisms and job security concerns. Insights from interviews, local government reports, and comparative case studies provide a comprehensive understanding of how NPM principles are shaping HRM practices in Kosofe and other LGAs within Lagos State.

2.4 Benefits of NPM-Driven HRM in Kosofe Local Government Area

The adoption of New Public Management (NPM) principles in Human Resource Management (HRM) within Kosofe Local Government Area (LGA) has yielded several benefits, enhancing overall public service delivery and operational efficiency. This section outlines the benefits of NPM-driven HRM practices in Kosofe LGA, drawing insights from interviews conducted with local government officials and employees.

One of the most significant benefits of NPM-driven HRM practices in Kosofe LGA has been the improvement in employee performance and productivity. Interviews with HR managers and local government officials indicate that the introduction of performance management systems, such as regular performance appraisals and key performance indicators (KPIs), has created a culture of accountability and results-oriented management (Ajibade, 2020, p. 57). Employees are now more aware of their roles and responsibilities, which has

driven them to perform better and align their efforts with organizational goals. Data from staff performance records shows a 15% increase in productivity since the implementation of these systems (Kosofe LGA HR Report, 2023, p. 12). Employees interviewed expressed that the new focus on performance has not only motivated them to work harder but has also provided clearer expectations and feedback on their job performance, leading to greater job satisfaction and engagement (Olawale, 2021, p. 40).

Interviews with employees and HR managers highlight the perceived increase in transparency and fairness in HR practices as a result of NPM reforms. The move towards merit-based recruitment and promotion has minimized favoritism and political interference in hiring decisions (Suleiman, 2018, p. 106). Employees stated that they now feel more confident in the fairness of recruitment processes, knowing that selections are based on qualifications, experience, and performance rather than political affiliations (Akindele, 2019, p. 125). Analysis of recent HR reports from Kosofe LGA supports this sentiment, showing a 20% reduction in grievances related to recruitment and promotion practices over the past three years (Kosofe LGA Administrative Report, 2023, p. 10). This shift towards fairness has also been linked to higher levels of employee trust and morale, fostering a more positive organizational culture.

NPM-driven HRM practices have also led to enhanced employee skills and capacity building in Kosofe LGA. According to HR managers, the local government has implemented regular training and development programs to improve employee competencies, in line with NPM's focus on continuous improvement and capacity development (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017, p. 122). These programs have been particularly effective in equipping employees with the necessary skills to meet evolving public service demands. Also, feedback from employees suggests that participation in these capacity-building initiatives has increased job satisfaction and reduced turnover intentions, as employees feel more valued and supported by the organization (Ajibade, 2020, p. 60). The Kosofe LGA Training Report indicates that employees who participated in training programs showed a 30% improvement in task efficiency and a 20% reduction in error rates (Kosofe LGA Training Report, 2023, p. 11).

NPM reforms have empowered local managers in Kosofe LGA with more autonomy in decision-making, leading to faster and more effective HR-related decisions. Interviews with local government officials suggest that decentralization has enabled the local government to respond more quickly to staffing needs and to tailor HR practices to local conditions (Akindele, 2019, p. 124). This has reduced bureaucratic delays and increased responsiveness in managing human resources. Reports from Kosofe LGA highlight that decision-making processes have been expedited by approximately 25%, leading to quicker recruitment and deployment of staff in critical areas such as health and education (Kosofe LGA Administrative Report, 2022, p. 8). Comparative insights from other LGAs, such as Ikeja, further confirm that decentralized HR management has improved operational efficiency (Ogundipe, 2022, p. 50).

The adoption of NPM-driven HRM practices in Kosofe LGA has led to numerous benefits, including improved employee performance, greater transparency, enhanced skills, and more efficient decision-making. These changes have contributed to a more dynamic, accountable, and effective local government, capable of better meeting the needs of its citizens.

3. FINDINGS

The introduction of New Public Management (NPM) reforms in Kosofe Local Government Area (LGA) has brought both opportunities and challenges for the workforce. Personal interviews with employees and local government officials reveal that while some have embraced the changes, long-serving employees find the transition difficult and emotionally taxing. Many long-serving employees express discomfort and frustration with the new system, which has led to a sense of resentment among older employees who feel their years of service and experience are undervalued in the new system. The reforms have also impacted how employees perceive their workload and overall job satisfaction. Many employees report feeling overburdened, as they are expected to meet higher targets without additional resources or support. While the focus on goal-setting has made work more purposeful, it has also increased stress levels, as employees are often left without the tools or resources needed to accomplish their tasks effectively.

The New Public Management (NPM) reforms in Kosofe LGA have significantly impacted employees' career development and personal lives. The merit-based approach has opened doors for career advancement for younger, more dynamic staff, unlike the previous system where promotions were based on seniority or political considerations. However, this shift has created tension, particularly among older staff who feel sidelined by the emphasis on youth and performance over experience. The reforms have disrupted work-life balance, with employees working longer hours and extending responsibilities into weekends. Despite these challenges, the reforms have injected a sense of urgency and competitiveness into the workforce, motivating employees to strive for excellence. However, a more balanced approach is needed that considers employees' well-being alongside organizational goals.

While NPM reforms have aimed to modernize public sector management by introducing private sector practices like performance measurement, decentralization, and efficiency-driven operations, their application in Kosofe has encountered several obstacles. These challenges are shaped by both structural limitations and the cultural context of the local government.

One of the most significant challenges has been resistance to change among long-standing employees who were accustomed to the traditional, hierarchical, and less performance-driven public administration model. Interviews with these employees reveal a profound discomfort with the new system, which emphasizes measurable outcomes and constant evaluations. For instance, a senior administrative officer with decades of service noted that the shift from a tenure-based system to one focused on results has been difficult to navigate, especially for those who built their careers under different expectations. The officer expressed that many of his colleagues view the new performance metrics as overly rigid and not reflective of the complexities of public service delivery (Ajibade, 2020, p. 59).

Furthermore, the emphasis on cost-cutting and efficiency under NPM has led to perceptions of work intensification, where employees feel pressured to achieve more with fewer resources. This has been a common criticism voiced by many in the local government. For example, a mid-level HR manager stated that while NPM encourages a results-oriented approach, it has often resulted in unrealistic targets and expectations. Employees are frequently required to work longer hours without corresponding increases in resources or support, leading to burnout and decreased morale (Kosofe LGA HR Report, 2023, p. 13). This perception of being "overused" without sufficient support has sparked dissatisfaction among staff, who feel the reforms prioritize financial efficiency over employee well-being (Olawale, 2021, p. 42).

Another finding centres around the perceived erosion of job security and the psychological contract between the employees and the local government. The NPM-driven focus on performance has introduced new contract types, such as fixed-term and performance-based contracts, which deviate from the traditional permanent employment model. Interviews with employees reveal concerns that this approach threatens their long-term job security and fosters anxiety about future employment prospects. A clerical staff member, for example, highlighted the uncertainty faced by many colleagues who fear that failure to meet stringent performance criteria could result in job loss or demotion (Suleiman, 2018, p. 107). This shift has created an atmosphere of insecurity and has been criticized for undermining the loyalty and commitment of the workforce to the local government (Akindele, 2019, p. 130).

Moreover, the move towards decentralization, a core element of NPM, has faced operational challenges in Kosofe LGA. While decentralization aims to empower local managers to make decisions more efficiently, it has sometimes led to inconsistencies in HR practices across different departments. Some departments have been able to adapt quickly to the new decentralized approach, while others struggle with a lack of clarity and coordination. As a result, employees report feelings of confusion and frustration regarding the application of HR policies, which are now interpreted and implemented differently across various units of the local government (Kosofe LGA Administrative Report, 2022, p. 9). This inconsistency has sparked criticism that decentralization, while beneficial in theory, has created disparities and inequalities in practice (Ogundipe, 2022, p. 52).

Additionally, the introduction of performance-based appraisal systems has not been universally welcomed. Employees argue that the metrics used to evaluate performance are often inappropriate or too narrow, failing to capture the full scope of their responsibilities. A junior administrative officer shared that, while the NPM reforms aim to foster accountability, they do not account for the unique challenges faced in the public sector, where outcomes are not always measurable in straightforward terms (Ajibade, 2020, p. 61). This misalignment has led to criticisms that the performance appraisal system is unfair and demoralizing, particularly for employees whose roles involve complex, multi-faceted tasks that are difficult to quantify (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017, p. 123).

The lack of sufficient training and capacity-building initiatives to support the NPM transition is another critical challenge. Although the reforms emphasize efficiency and effectiveness, many employees feel ill-equipped to meet the new expectations without adequate training. HR reports from Kosofe LGA indicate that while some training programs have been introduced, they are often irregular and insufficiently tailored to address the specific needs of staff adapting to new roles and responsibilities (Kosofe LGA Training Report, 2023, p. 11). Employees have voiced concerns that the lack of proper training exacerbates feelings of inadequacy and frustration, leading to lower job satisfaction and higher turnover intentions (Olawale, 2021, p. 44).

In conclusion, while NPM reforms have introduced positive changes, such as increased accountability and a focus on results, their implementation in Kosofe LGA has also faced significant challenges. These include resistance to change, perceptions of overwork, job insecurity, inconsistent application of policies, and inadequate training support. These criticisms underscore the need for a more balanced approach that considers the unique context and needs of the local government workforce, ensuring that reforms are both effective and fair.

3.1 ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

To enhance the effectiveness of Human Resource Management (HRM) under New Public Management (NPM) reforms in Kosofe Local Government Area (LGA), several strategic measures can be recommended. These measures aim to address the challenges identified in the previous section and to ensure a smoother transition and greater acceptance of NPM principles among employees and management.

Firstly, there is a need to increase employee engagement and participation in the reform process. Employees should be actively involved in discussions and decision-making regarding the implementation of NPM practices, particularly those that affect their roles and responsibilities. This approach can help reduce resistance to change by making employees feel heard and valued. Conducting regular forums, feedback sessions, and consultations where employees can express their concerns and suggest improvements could foster a more inclusive and collaborative work environment. Engaging employees from the onset can also help in tailoring reforms to better fit the local context and specific challenges of the LGA (Olowu, 2021, p. 78).

Another key recommendation is to provide comprehensive training and capacity-building programs tailored to the specific needs of Kosofe LGA employees. The transition to NPM-driven HRM practices requires new skills, particularly in areas like performance management, data analysis, and customer-oriented service delivery. Regular training sessions should be institutionalized to help employees develop the competencies required to meet new performance standards. Training should not only focus on technical skills but also on developing soft skills, such as adaptability and communication, which are crucial in a changing organizational environment (Akindele, 2019, p. 134). Additionally, mentoring and coaching programs can be established to support employees, particularly those who have served longer and may find it challenging to adapt to the new system.

It is also essential to adopt a balanced performance appraisal system that considers both quantitative and qualitative measures. While NPM emphasizes measurable outcomes, the unique nature of public sector work means that some important contributions may not be easily quantified. Therefore, a hybrid performance evaluation approach should be developed, combining both objective metrics (such as project completion rates) and subjective assessments (like peer reviews and self-assessments). This more comprehensive evaluation system can ensure fairness and reflect the diverse range of activities performed by employees (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017, p. 125). Regularly reviewing and updating these performance metrics to align with local government objectives and employee roles will also help in maintaining fairness and relevance.

Additionally, strengthening internal communication and fostering a culture of transparency is crucial for the success of HRM under NPM in Kosofe LGA. Employees often feel uncertain and insecure about their job status and future due to a lack of clear communication about organizational changes. The local government should establish clear communication channels to provide employees with regular updates about NPM reforms, their implications, and how they are being implemented. This transparency can help reduce anxiety and build trust in the reform process (Ogundipe, 2022, p. 54). Regularly published newsletters, updates from HR managers, and open-door policies can all contribute to a more transparent work environment.

Moreover, there is a need to improve resource allocation to align with new performance demands. The Kosofe LGA should ensure that adequate resources, including financial, technological, and human resources, are made available to support the NPM-driven HRM practices. This might involve reallocating existing resources or lobbying for additional funding from the state government. By aligning resource availability with performance expectations, the local government can prevent employee burnout and enhance morale (Olawale, 2021, p. 46). Investing in modern HR technologies, such as performance management software and automated HR processes, can also increase efficiency and reduce administrative burdens.

The local government should also focus on fostering a supportive and inclusive workplace culture that accommodates employees' diverse needs and backgrounds. This includes recognizing the value of both long-serving and newer employees, ensuring equitable treatment, and providing opportunities for all employees to develop and grow. Introducing programs that promote work-life balance, such as flexible working arrangements or wellness initiatives, can help mitigate some of the stress and dissatisfaction associated with the increased demands of NPM reforms (Ajibade, 2020, p. 65).

Finally, periodic review and evaluation of NPM practices should be institutionalized to assess their effectiveness and address any emerging challenges. This process would involve gathering feedback from employees, managers, and other stakeholders to identify areas for improvement and to ensure that NPM practices are meeting their intended objectives. Regular evaluations can help Kosofe LGA adapt its strategies as needed, ensuring that HRM practices remain relevant and effective in achieving both organizational goals and employee satisfaction (Kosofe LGA HR Review Report, 2023, p. 18).

In summary, strengthening HRM under NPM in Kosofe LGA requires a multifaceted approach that includes engaging employees in the reform process, enhancing training and development, adopting balanced performance metrics, improving communication and transparency, aligning resources with performance expectations, fostering an inclusive culture, and conducting regular evaluations. By implementing these recommendations, Kosofe LGA can better navigate the challenges of NPM and create a more effective, motivated, and resilient workforce.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This study examined the impact of New Public Management (NPM) reforms on Human Resource Management (HRM) in Kosofe Local Government Area (LGA), Lagos, Nigeria. The findings suggest that while NPM reforms have introduced positive changes, such as enhanced accountability, performance orientation, and opportunities for merit-based career advancement, they have also presented significant challenges. Resistance to change among long-standing employees, perceptions of increased workload, job insecurity, and inconsistent implementation of HR policies were identified as major obstacles to the successful adoption of NPM practices in Kosofe LGA.

Interviews with employees and officials revealed that many workers, particularly those with long service records, struggle to adapt to the new performance-driven environment, feeling that their experience and service years are undervalued under the new system. Additionally, the emphasis on cost-cutting and efficiency has led to feelings of being overworked and under-resourced, impacting job satisfaction and overall morale. The introduction of performance-based contracts has created anxiety and insecurity among staff,

while inconsistencies in the decentralized application of HR policies have resulted in confusion and frustration. Moreover, the performance appraisal systems currently in use were criticized for failing to account for the unique and complex nature of public sector roles. The study also highlighted several benefits brought about by the NPM reforms, including improved accountability, a clearer focus on results, and opportunities for younger, more dynamic employees to advance based on merit. However, it was evident that these benefits are not uniformly experienced by all employees, with disparities in how the reforms have affected different segments of the workforce. To address these challenges and enhance the effectiveness of HRM under NPM in Kosofe LGA, several recommendations were proposed. These include increasing employee engagement and participation in the reform process, providing comprehensive and targeted training programs, adopting a balanced performance appraisal system, strengthening communication and transparency, aligning resources with performance demands, fostering an inclusive workplace culture, and conducting regular evaluations of NPM practices.

In conclusion, while NPM has the potential to modernize HRM practices and improve public service delivery in Kosofe LGA, its successful implementation requires careful attention to the unique local context, the provision of adequate support for employees, and a balanced approach that recognizes the complexities of public sector work. By adopting these recommendations, Kosofe LGA can mitigate the challenges of NPM, enhance employee satisfaction and performance, and ultimately achieve its organizational goals more effectively.

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