

Challenges and Prospects of Enhancing Productivity for Sustainable Development in the Public Sector: The Case of Bayelsa State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT The key emphasis for sustainable development in the public sector has been on efficient and effective ways of organising and executing public programmes to achieve desired results. But in recent times, the public sector has increasingly become saddled with problems of low productivity resulting from political, institutional and sociological factors. These factors or problems are accentuated by the absence of scientific measurement techniques and this paper aims at identifying the major factors militating against the measurement of productivity. It also examines the complexity, challenges and prospects in applying selected private sector techniques to enhance productivity in Nigeria. This is expected to positively change the current low trend and chart a pragmatic way forward. The paper adopts Max Weber's theory on bureaucracy and applies desktop experimental design method of data collection. The study observes that in spite of the difficulties, the measurement of productivity in the public sector is achievable. This would be a remarkable contribution because many practitioners and scholars have believed that productivity cannot be measured with reasonable degree of success in the public sector. The paper concludes that the public sector should adopt technique, such as management by objective (MBO), programme worthiness and law enforcement index erstwhile applied in the private sector.

INTRODUCTION

Whereas it is almost a routine practice to measure productivity in the private sector, this is not the case in the public sector. Several writers, including Berkley (1981: 305-308) have unravelled some reasons for the reluctance. The reasons range from intangibility of the products, inability to distinguish between efficiency and effectiveness, legal restriction on the public sector to lack of precise definition. Weber (1947) describes the public sector as "a legal entity operating on the basis of calculable rules, and staffed by professionals. It has uniform, non-arbitrary and non-personal methods of performing its functions. It is, however, criticised for low productivity," due mainly to political, institutional, and sociological factors. These problems are found in large degree in the Bayelsa State public service. Incidentally, there has been no concerted efforts to redress it as most practitioners, public and civil servants, and scholars tend to have accepted it the way it is.

This ought not to be the case and, the problem has led governments, especially in Europe, to take proactive measures, to develop and apply series of private-sector managerial techniques of planning, controlling, co-ordinating

and evaluation of programmes and projects in the public sector. In America, for example, there are four popular methods or techniques of measurement namely: management-by-objectives (MBO), programme planning and budgeting (PPB), zero-based budgeting (ZBB), and performance evaluation (PE). In practice, the number and complexity of these techniques have encumbered many public administrators. The problems of low productivity and how to measure it in the public sector are, indeed, serious, especially in the present era of cost containment, employee unrest, and conflicting goals in the state and the country.

The paper has identified three clear issues for public discourse. The first is the issue of public administrators deciding whether measurement techniques can be accurately developed with a minimum of confusion. The second is whether productivity measurement is so complex that attempts to define programme efficiency and effectiveness shall lead to over simplistic results. The third is whether the development and application of measurement techniques can accurately determine minimum performance standards derived from the organisational objectives. The three issues have raised the following related topics:

- 1) What is productivity?
- 2) What are the factors responsible for low productivity in the public service?,
- 3) How would productivity be measured in the public sector?,
- 4) How can the private-sector models be applied to measure productivity in the public sector?, and
- 5) What are the benefits, challenges and prospects?

In an effort to address these and related issues, the paper is divided into seven broad areas, beginning with this introduction. It is followed by objectives and examination of the prevailing theoretical issues and methodology. The fifth part analyzes the results-discussed the techniques to measure it and made three important observations. The analysis reveals that productivity in the public sector in Bayelsa state, like that of any other states in Nigeria is measurable with a high degree of success and pointed out areas where remarkable progresses are made. The final part-deals with the conclusion and recommendations that Bayelsa State in particular, and Nigeria, in general, should adopt the MBO, work sampling, law enforcement index as well as establish the post of Administrative Commissioner for public service matters.

Objectives

The paper aims at:

- 1) identifying the major factors militating against the measurement of productivity in the public sector; and
- 2) examining the complexity, challenges and prospects of applying selected private sector techniques in measuring productivity in the public sector, with emphasis on Bayelsa State, Nigeria

The essence is to produce new knowledge for multiple constituencies to evolve productive proactive policies to enhance productivity in the ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) in Nigeria. This is expected to turn around the present declining trend and chart pragmatic way forward.

Review of Related Literature

In reviewing related literature on productivity, Klingner (1980: 208) states that, "for years, public managers (administration) have worked

under the uneasy assumption that a good, smoothly functioning programme was an effective one." He went further to explain how a manager used to think that if he or she spent the entire budget allocation and did not hear complaints from clients or the public, he or she was running an effective programme. From that perspective, productivity is equated to the quantity of public complaints. Nevertheless, several more precise measures of the public sector have emerged in recent years where productivity is measured in terms of cost efficiency, cost effectiveness, and programme worthiness.

Brady (1973: 67) has detected two other challenges. The first is that such measurement is impossible, or at least too difficult to attempt because of what, Berkley describes as the "intangibility of the products" of the public sector. This school of thought emphasises that the products of the public sector cannot be quantified and there are no measurements of their value of service to the society. The other school of thought, pioneered by Wilson (1887), argues that despite the difficulties such as frequent opposition from public sector employee unions, and/or technologically induced work speed-ups, it is of utmost importance to measure productivity in the public sector. Proponents of this perspective have categorised the services or outputs of public sector into three – products, services and support for easy measurement.

In joining the debate, Frederick Taylor contends that despite the difficulties, it is imperative to measure productivity in the public sector. His contention, which later become *Taylorism* (Thayer1972: 838), outline three specific areas for measurement, namely:

- (i) *Products*: Manufactured goods, power generation and distribution, printing, and preservation of resources;
- (ii) *Services*: Loans and grants, and regulatory services; and
- (iii) *Support services*: Procurement, supply, social goods, and personnel.

For Wilson (1887), Taylor (1972), and many others (Drunker 1972; Jun 1976), public service should concern itself with means and not ends; that is, simply doing things well as pre-determined and not with deciding what things to do well. But today, public administrators do not, and to some degree cannot limit themselves to merely executing the policies of the executive arm well. This is because, as Berkley (1981:

14) puts it, “the complexity and challenges of their craft force them to create policy as well. And they cannot ignore the political system within which they operate. Since the public service imposes itself on and influences nearly every other aspect of the citizenry”. The debate for enhancing productivity in the public sector has gained momentum in the last 10 years, and has become a central theme in public administration in the 21st century. In discussing at the 3rd Media Trust Annual Dialogue, Nuhu Ribadu, former Chairman, Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC), said, “the trouble with Nigeria is simple corruption and declining productivity in the public sector” (Jega 2005: 9-13). He then traced these malaises to the military administration of Murtala Mohammed/ Olusegun Obasanjo in 1975 that carried out an unprecedented purge of civil/public servants. This, not only ruined their moral, but also impacted negatively on efficiency and effectiveness (Ujomu 2000; Jega 2005). The Buhari/Idiagbon military regime that succeeded it, made dramatic effort to reduce the consequences of the purge on productivity, but wound up merely scratching the surface. Subsequent government after that regime, especially, civilian governments in the Fourth Republic 1999 have not done much.

That is why the report of the President Advisory Committee (PAC), led by Theophilus Danjuma, former Minister of Defence, to Nigeria’s President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan (GEJ) is relevant here. The report, *The Evils Jonathan must fight*, urged GEJ to “... reduce the usual inconsistency in policy implementation....But, this step alone will not solve all the problem of decay in the public sector in Nigeria. Rather, it will address only one of the 12 evils identified as bane of the country” (Adeyem 2010: 38-40). Among the 12 evils, ‘idleness (low productivity) ranked high as malignant growth hindering the development of Nigeria’. The report, however, stated ‘windows to drive out each of the evils’ they hinge on GEJ demonstrating political will to revert the trend.

Adeyemo (2012: 14), a social critic, has analyzed the issue from the perspective of leadership. He argues that “low productivity is a function of the type of leadership Nigeria has settled for”. This may be true because the role of a leader – state governor or President, is so important that “a society advances or fails primarily due

to its leadership. It is the leader that steers the people (especially, civil/public servants) in whatever direction they must go” (Agbo and Suleiman 2010; Adeyemo 2012).

That is why the European Union (EU) told Nigerians during the last presidential election in 2011 that, “the international community was looking forward to Nigeria getting its election right” (Babalola 2011: 11). The EU’s position was in line with that of Akoro’s thesis on ‘leadership and the metaphor of locusts’. Akoro’s (2003: 35) thesis was that “Nigeria should begin to search for statesmen who would ensure that the country progresses steadily, as well as give account of their stewardship.”

Regrettably, the past leaders at Bayelsa state or federal government levels have demonstrated very high level of incompetence (Adeyemo 2012). Thus, the discourse on productivity is still very relevant in Nigeria. That is why it is necessary at this point to identify the major theoretical issues and methodology raised in this paper.

METHODOLOGY

Here, I shall clarify three dominant concepts and discuss the prevailing theoretical issues, and methodology applied in this paper, beginning with the concept of productivity.

(1) Productivity: Productivity is referred to in this paper as the production of goods and services in abundance, or applying the factors of production to create favourable output/result. In the economic terms, it means the efficient and effective creation of goods and services to produce wealth or value. Productivity is usually associated with efficiency, which is defined by Adebayo (2001: 168) as “a ratio between input and output, effort and result, expenditure and income, cost and the resulting pleasure....” Whereas, efficiency seems to be synonymous with effectiveness, it (effectiveness) is generally referred to as achievement of high output/result based on the policy goal at minimal cost. He went further to explain that efficiency and effectiveness (EE) are an “input-output relationship where maximum work is achieved for minimum input of energy or resources.” In other words, the efficiency-effectiveness equation suggests optimisation whereby maximum satisfaction is obtained from the investment of given resources.

According to Klingner (1980: 208), top government officials or political executives (that is, commissioners, permanent secretaries, directors-general and/or general managers) often misinterpret effectiveness to mean a situation where if the “entire budget allocation was spent and there was little or no complaint from the clients or elected officials.” Be that as it may, Woodrow Wilson (1887) seems to have settled the debate in his *Federalist Paper* where he argues that efficiency and effectiveness are central to productivity in the public sector – be it in developed and developing countries. And for this reason, he advocates the separation of the field of public administration from that of politics in order to:

Strengthen the paths of government to make its business less un-business-like, to strengthen and purify its organisation, and to crown its duties with dutifulness.

(2) Measurement: Measurement here is referred to as a standard of reference or sample used for the quantitative comparison of properties. The concern in this paper is not on scale (inch or feet), metric system (kilogram) or graduated container as applicable to other forms of measurement. The meaning goes beyond these. In the United State of America, for example, there are three popular methods of measurement. The methods: have management-by-objectives (MBO), programme planning and budgeting system (PPBS), and performance evaluation (PE). have spread to other developed and developing counties. Nigeria is just beginning to adopt it at selected parastatals such as health services management board, National Health Insurance Scheme and the Federal Road Maintenance Agency. According to Jun (1976: 3), “MBO is a process whereby organisational goals and objectives are set through participation of organisational members in terms of results expected.” As a technique, MBO emphasises series of steps in the supervisory relationship between a programme manager and his/her subordinates that focus on achieving specific goals, participative goal setting, employee accountability, and the efficient use of organisational resources.

As Nigeria aspires to apply MBO within the framework of *Vision 20: 20: 20* to remain competitive in the global political and economic affairs, the following steps have to be taken;

a) Objectives are set jointly by the political executive(s) and their subordinates;

- b) Each objective includes the specification of organisational resources (that is, money, equipment, logistics, and personnel) required to meet the production target;
- c) The public servants are allowed the opportunity to choose the means of accomplishing the objectives;
- d) The public servants are responsible for initiating corrective action, or seeking for assistance if the conditions vary from expectations;
- e) The public servants and political executives jointly evaluate accomplishment of production targets; and
- f) The public servants receive awards in proportion to their achievements.

In following these steps, the MBO method improves civil servant performance through the establishment of objectives and measurement of performance of each Unit and Department in the Ministry or Parastatal. The interesting aspect of this method of management is that goal setting proceeds from the bottom-up, with emphasis on participation by the individual in setting his or her own objectives.

PPBS, on the other hand, developed in the 1960s by the United States’ Department of Defence, as a planning and control device for comparing alternative programmes for achieving “targets” on the basis of cost and effectiveness. The emphasis in PPBS is on the synthesis of planning and costing of each segment of the defence plan to generate cost-effectiveness. The emphasis on planning is understandable as it is pivotal to productivity. This is because, where defence programmes are planned haphazardly, they would definitely affect the final result (that is, productivity). Unfortunately, this is rarely done in this method of country and for that reason, poor planning has been identified as the bane of the public sector in Nigeria since independence in 1960. It should be emphasized that in applying this measurement method, the focus is on “*a priori*” long range planning that is comprehensive in scope and comparative in cost effectiveness. It is ideal for both the Bayelsa State and the Nigerian public sector as it does not give room for “god-fatherism”.

Performance evaluation (PE), is “*a posteriori*” evaluation, with a scope that is comprehensive enough to warrant efficiency, cost effectiveness, or programme/project worthiness. As it is most useful in the assessment and moni-

toring phases of production, top management should make concerted effort to control contractors and staff from influencing the output of the programme/projects in the parastatals or government ministries.

Like MBO and unlike PPBS, PE takes place during the implementation phase of a programme. It is most frequently used by the legislators, directors or permanent secretaries of public organisations toward accomplishing pre-determined objectives. The data is then applied for resource allocation to further enhance productivity.

(3) Efficiency-Effectiveness-programme Worthiness Quadrant (EEPWIQ): Klingner (1980: 208-209) observes that MBO, PPBS, and PE are, complex measurement methods or techniques and are rarely used in developing countries like Nigeria. He then suggests three other simpler measurement techniques (EEPWIQ) that were earlier highlighted but now require elaboration:

(a) Cost Efficiency: This technique measures programme effectiveness, that is, the number of persons it benefits at what cost by calculating the unit cost of the organisational output. This technique is ideal for programmes involving street lights, electricity, potable water scheme, scholarships, and hospitals. In applying efficiency, the tendency is for lower unit costs to increase effectiveness, regardless of the objective of a particular or Department or Ministry. To achieve this, the management and employees have to interface in determining standard output of products or services. The technique is ideal for a young state like Bayelsa as it reduces friction between management and employees, as well as, resistance by employee unions.

(b) Cost Effectiveness: This technique involves calculating alternatives that would give the least cost and at the same time accomplish set goals and objectives. In Bayelsa State, this technique is particularly applied in the Ministries of Energy and Education. The State has a centrally powered gas turbine in Kolo Creek, as well as a rural electrification scheme. The idea of the two outfits performing the same function generated an intense debate. The crux of the debate was on whether or not rural electrification scheme would be cheaper than the centrally powered gas turbine. The debate was eventually resolved through the application of cost-benefit analysis (CBA) quadrant, and the result

supported the centrally operated gas turbine. Thus, almost the entire State is powered by the State gas turbine scheme, until recently when it was connected to the national grid and the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) is gradually asserting its responsibility to supply electricity.

In the Ministries of Health and Education, cost effectiveness technique was applied to resolve similar problems bordering on the 500-bed hospital at Imgbi Road, Yenagoa, (the state capital). Again, the crux of the matter was whether it would be cheaper to run it than to build neighbourhood comprehensive health centres in the 32 local government areas? Or, would the comparative cost of building one model secondary school in each of the three Senatorial Districts at the cost of N6(US\$) billion each be cheaper than renovating and equipping the existing 210 secondary schools in the State? In applying cost effective techniques, the result of the analyses favoured the decentralisation policy for the programmes.

(c) Programme Worthiness: Here, the emphasis is not just on efficiency or effectiveness, but also on the political and moral justification for the particular programme to be operated. A typical example in this regard is the State Government's proposal to build an International Cargo Airport at the Okordia-Zarama axis of the state in 2008. The project, which commenced in March 2009 without an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), involved clearing and sand-filling a vast swampy forest where there were natural lakes, streams, fish dams, and economic trees that had sustained the people from the ancient days. Considering the huge loss to the 13-landlord communities whose livelihood depended on the forest, the debate was on the worthiness of the Airport to the host communities and the state.

The parameters of "worthiness" here include the level of patronage since the neighbouring states of Rivers and Delta already have airports, and the level of traffic as there are no Bayelsans presently owning aircraft or operating an airline business. Thus, from the perspectives of the people, the project was not worthy. Nevertheless, the State Government ignored the measurement and went ahead to commence with land preparation; but abandoned it in 2010 when it came to terms with reality that the project is not worth it.

Another example worth stating is the establishment of the Bayelsa State Micro-Credit Financing Agency (BSMCFA) to replace the existing framework where micro-credits were disbursed from authorised financial and allied institutions directly to the beneficiaries. BSMCFA now a monopoly has so restricted the processes of securing credits that the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are now disillusioned about its. Thus, for SME and the general public, the programme (BSMCFA) is not equally worth it.

The analyses would become clearer as we discuss the theoretical framework.

The other theoretical issue in this paper is that of the framework. We applied Weber (1946) "theory on bureaucracy". Weber defines bureaucracy (the bedrock of public organisations) "as a system aimed at achieving precision, speed, unity, unambiguous knowledge of the files, continuity, discretion, strict subordination, and reduction of friction between management and employees...." He explains that these "qualities" are capable of eliminating from official business hatred, laziness and emotion in order to enhance productivity.

He went further to enumerate eight guidelines of bureaucracy (capable of enhancing productivity in Bayelsa State and Nigeria), namely:

- 1) The official activities or duties to be distributed in a fixed way;
- 2) The staff to be competent in the chosen field and jobs to follow a systematic division of labour;
- 3) The staff to be subjected to strict and systematic discipline and control in the conduct of official duties;
- 4) All official activities to be governed by consistent system of abstract rules;
- 5) The organisation of offices to follow the principles of hierarchy whereby each staff is under the control and supervision of a higher one;
- 6) Officials are to be subjected to authority only with respect to their impersonal obligations;
- 7) Staff are to be recruited on the basis of their technical qualifications tested by examinations or guaranteed by certificate, or both; and
- 8) Staff to be careerists, with a system of promotions according to seniority, achievement, or both.

The principles have been increasingly criticised over the years, especially from the

1980s as perceived to be the cause of low productivity, inefficiency and ineffectiveness in the public sector. It is also said to have led to red-tapeism. Merton (1957), for example, describes bureaucracy as the source of "over-organisation", that is, an excessive development of routines which impedes efficiency. Dimock (1944) examines the aspect of specialisation, and concludes that "specialisation tends to restrict and narrow individuals, just as hierarchy makes institutions rigid."

In spite of the criticisms, there are some other writers, including Adebayo (2001: 27) that have defended bureaucracy in the public sector. He says:

...it is important that while bureaucracy has inherent elements that make its processes often cumbersome or distasteful to its publics, yet it is indispensable and indeed an instrument for the achievement of efficiency in large organisations. It is concerned with the most efficient means of planning and control, and the fact that these processes are often misused and abused by inefficient, corrupt, and stubborn officials is not a case for the total condemnation of bureaucracy (as responsible for low-productivity).

The paper applies the desktop experimental design method for data collection. This method included state and federal governments' gazettes, specialized publications and journals. It was complemented by the author's experience in executive positions in several public offices, as well as participation in public hearings in both Bayelsa State House of Assembly (BSHA) and National Parliament.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The paper finds four fundamental factors namely political, institutional, psychological, attitudinal and sociological (PIPAS) responsible for low productivity in the public sector. The categorisation is widely accepted by several other practitioners and scholars, including Adebayo (2001: 169-187) and Stah (1976: 466). Thereafter, the paper discussed appropriate measurement techniques, and made several observations

1. Factors Responsible for Low Productivity

a) Political Factors: The prominent political factors militating against productivity are

lack of political direction by some political executives who suddenly find themselves in top management positions, political interference, and undue promotion. The issue of undue promotion started from the time Bayelsa State was created out of the old Rivers State on October 1, 1996. As expected, the State then setup its own paraphernalia of government such as Permanent Secretaries, Directors, General Managers, etc, as well as, enticed the indigenes of the State to transfer their services from the federal and old Rivers State civil service to Bayelsa State. The people responded and eventually occupied the newly created positions. In view of the mass movement, there were no thorough scrutiny of the staff and their credentials for the new positions they occupied. In consequence, several of the new positions were filled by staff too junior for them, and they could not meet up the responsibilities and demands of the new offices. Over time, this created a pool of inefficient officers that have become clogs in the wheel of productivity in the state. They could not be sacked or demoted; instead, they are allowed to continue and even progress to much higher positions till today.

b) Institutional Factors: These factors hinge on a faulty system of recruitment of employees based on the concept of “god-fatherism”, which did not consider merit. Atypical example is in the area of employment. The State has embargoed employment since 2001, and yet, the number of civil servants has jumped from the initial 2,000 in 1996 to 8,000 in 2009, and now over 24,000 in 2007. This means, the additional 16,000 employees were not subjected to the normal rules and regulations of the Civil Service Commission. Investigations in course of this study show that these categories of civil/public servants are either the blood relations, a relation of a family friend, or from the same town or clan of the “godfather”. This has become more pronounced in the present Presidential System where the State Governor or Chairmen of Local Government Councils exercise executive power and would violate existing embargo or regulation with impunity for his/her selfish reasons.

Related to the foregoing are faulty and frequent postings of personnel. The postings are equally done haphazardly without due consideration to training and experience, and is most common in the posting of Permanent Secretaries. Six Permanent Secretaries were, for ex-

ample, appointed and posted in the State in March 2007, but had no offices to settle down in performing their duties until August 2009, that is, a period of two years. It should be noted that while not contributing to high productivity, they were paid their salaries and other entitlement. In his comment on this and other unsystematic posting, Adebayo (2001: 171) argues that, “very often exigencies of the service are pleaded as excuse for this sort of situation”. He then concludes that, “it is important to recognise at all times that the deployment of a man to the task for which he is most qualified and suited is an essential factor of efficiency.”

Inadequate training and poor staff development programmes have equally affected productivity. The Report of the *Public Service Review Commission* of 1972 was very clear on it and provided specific provisions to redress it. Unfortunately, the quantity and quality of training are still too inadequate to cope with the contemporary demand of the public sector. In Bayelsa State, the issue is compounded by the painful manner in which the Civil Servant Institute in Ovom, Yenagoa was demolished to pave way for the construction of a “Peace Park”. Since then, there has been no alternative facility, and the training and re-training programmes have virtually grounded to a halt in the State.

The issue of incompetent political executives climbing to senior positions without a cognate experience to dutifully direct and supervise their subordinates is becoming worrisome especially from 2007. While such political executives might have shown some degree of loyalty and enthusiasm, they have risen to achieve what Drunker (1972) describes as “final placement at their level of incompetence”. Such officers, especially in the Ministries of Rural Development and Chieftaincy, Works and Infrastructure, Power and Energy, and Finance in the State have eventually infected their subordinates with their incompetence. This has, to a large extent, generated conflicts between the political executives and their civil/public servants, who insist on following the principles and procedures laid down in the *General Order* (GO) of service (Ibodje and Etekepe 2010: 7-12).

Again, the unclear and conflicting goals and objectives in the public service cannot be over-emphasised. It is true that there are ambiguous goals or objectives, which the political executives, especially the Commissioners and Spe-

cial Advisers, on the one hand, and the career civil servants such as Permanent Secretaries, and Directors, on the other hand, exploit in pursuance of accomplishing their tasks. For example, a public officer placed on a schedule in the State Ministry of Power and Energy would think his main duty is to treat any file that is found in his file-tray. How would one blame him when he has no job description, and bases his activities on evolutionary knowledge? He or she is totally oblivious to the need to define objectives and work towards them. Instead, such public servants merely attempt to solve problems day by day as they arise. This was a serious problem even when the author was active in governance as the Special Adviser to the Governor of Bayelsa State on Civil Societies and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) between 2002 and 2003. The issue was raised on December 10, 2002 in the State Executive Council meeting as “a matter of urgent public importance”. It was then discussed and resolved that like the private sector employees, political executives and public servants be equally given their specific job descriptions to serve as tool for assessment of their performance. The question was, “how and who was to design the job description?” especially as the public servants are not used to it. The political executives, on the other hand, were used to pursue whatever activity they consider relevant to them, regardless of whether or not it conflicts with that of their colleague (s). The matter did not receive adequate attention until the author, who raised it, left the office on June 1, 2003.

Chief D.S.P. Alamieyeseigha, the Governor, revisited it one year after and set up a committee to prepare job description for political office holders in the state, other than Commissioners in 2004. Incidentally, he appointed the author to chair the 16-member Committee; most of them were serving political executives. The Committee met several times, interviewed past and serving officers, perused their appointment letters, and prepared and presented a comprehensive report to the then Governor. The report was very revealing on the deficiencies of public officers and contained far-reaching recommendations to enhance productivity. Unfortunately, in spite of the then Governor’s initial enthusiasm, the report was dumped; and today, those issues in the report that were swept under the carpet are re-surfacing to militate against pro-

ductivity in the state. It is important that the Report be re-visited as it has tremendous value to productivity.

It should be equally emphasised that there are occasional conflicts between political executives and professionals that have adversely affected productivity in the ministries and parastatals. This factor was contained in “paragraph 12” in the Report of the *Public Service Review Commission* in 1974. The Report was categorical on the “frequent clashes between political officers and professionals in the discharge of their duties, and the lack of team work resulting from it”. It concluded that the conflict has limited productivity. This phenomenon is most prevalent in the State Ministries of Works and Infrastructure, Justice, Health, Public Utilities, and Education.

c) Psychological and Attitudinal Factors: The issue of colonial mentality is still lingering in the public service. This has made several employees to subconsciously avoid responsibility with the cliché – “Is it my father’s job?” Such public servants often leave their duty posts at critical hours only to assemble and chat; the female staff members even take time out to market their wares. Whenever their supervisors caution them, they would exclaim that government work is for those who have “godfathers”, or cannot be finished in a day. The morale and work ethics of such a large proportion of work force that falls within this category have fallen so low that for them it is foolishness to speed up or apply any degree of private sector measurement/ or standard(s).

d) Sociological Factors: It is also important to state that public servants do falsely under-declare their ages in order to remain on the job until death overtakes them. It is amazing that several employees consciously declare a wrong age before joining the public service or re-declare to avoid retirement. The author witnessed this on a large scale when he was a member of the Governing Council at the Federal Polytechnic, Oko in Anambra State of Nigeria between 2001 and 2003. This became clear when the Council embarked on several cost-saving measures, including conducting a personnel audit.

As a member of the then Appointment and Promotion Committee (A and PC), the author took part in the audit where out of a total number of 2,050 staff audited, 640 were found to have falsified their ages “under oath”. They,

therefore, not only committed perjury, but were also clogs in the wheel of productivity in the Institution. The A and PC recommended to the then Minister of Education that similar audit exercises be conducted in the other 45 Federal Polytechnics across the country. The recommendation was accepted but not implemented until the Minister was removed from office in 2004.

2. Measurement Techniques

In discussing the subject matter, it is worth emphasizing that the most popular techniques are efficiency and effectiveness (EE). But as earlier pointed out, the problem of EE is not easy to resolve as the public sector deals with products and services that are usually intangible for the application of conventional measurement methods. How would, for example, the productivity of a Director of Planning, Research and Statistics (PRS) in the Ministry of Information be compared with that of a heart surgeon in the Ministry of Health? Another example is that of the Director of PRS efficiently researching on a policy framework for a "Community Radio Project", but might not be effective until the question of whether or not he should have been working at all on the project at this level of the nation's development is settled.

Going forward, how would the productivity of staff of the Department of Social Welfare in the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development involved in "poverty alleviation programme (PAP)" be measured? Here, the measurement shall, indeed, be susceptible to distortion. It is probably for this reason, Berkley (1981: 305-8) argues that "some public sector activities are simply not measurable with the tools currently at hand."

Related to this is the problem of counter-productive behaviour of public servants. A typical example can be found in public hospitals in the state where employees who are placed under "carelessly drawn up productivity schemes" end up turning away sick patients and such acts are not well documented on the balance sheets. They would equally discharge ill-treated patients just to score the point that the recovery rate in the hospital is very high. This problem is interwoven with that of cost accounting in the hospitals where there is confusion on how to determine cost accounting principle to apply creating doubt on, for example, should man-hours

or cost-per-output be used? Cost-per-output is sometimes impossible to measure while man-hour measure would not reflect the cost of new equipment.

In spite of the foregoing difficulties, the clamour for measurement of productivity has started to assume increasing importance in the public sector, and remarkable progress relevant to the state and Nigerian public sector has been achieved. The progresses in application of measurement technique, include:

a) Work-Sampling: Under this measurement technique, a public servant in the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) responsible for PAP would, for example, periodically measure the amount of work done by the various employees. These samples are not taking in an attempt to judge the employees' efficiency but to determine how long it takes to handle the various activities that the Department is performing. The information from the 32 local government offices in the State are then compiled into averages and each office is subsequently rated as to how it performs in respect to the overall averages. The averages provide a useful yardstick to measure how any one office is operating. In spite of the extraneous factors affecting it, the technique indicates which local government area (LGA), which offices, and individuals are performing well and which are not.

The technique (method) was first applied in the Department of Social Security in the United States of America (USA) in the mid-1950s. With the high success rate recorded, the Bureau of Budget, Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in the US Presidency adopted it in 1962, and extended it to five additional Departments or Agencies. The results of the experiment were so good that the federal government in 1964 directed that productivity indices be developed in all the public sectors in the country. According to Wildavsky (1966), "this enthusiasm undoubtedly contributed to the introduction of programme planning and budgetary system (PPBS)".

By 1970, the General Accounting Office (GAO) collaborated with the OMB and Civil Service Commission (CSC) to study productivity trends in all the federal agencies. The joint effort produced productivity gauging criteria that covered 56 percent of the federal government's workforce. On May 24, 1972, OMB directed each federal agency with 200 or more public

servants to report annually on what progress it was making to enhance productivity. Furthermore, in 1973, New York City Council sponsored a two-day conference on productivity measurement (Hamilton 1973). The resolution of that conference facilitated the widespread application of productivity measurement techniques to the lower cadre of the civil/public service in the country. The technique can easily be adapted to the Nigerian system to produce similar impressive results.

b) Usage: Here, usage is concerned about how many people actually use a particular public service or facility, how often they use it, and for how long. This is measured by visiting the public facility at different times and taking random samples of the participants. This method is ideal for the Department of Environmental Sanitation, Hospitals, Motor Parks, Fire Services, Public Utilities, and Recreational Parks/Gardens in the public sector.

c) Law Enforcement Index: One area where the need for productivity measurement is so pronounced is that of law enforcement, especially the Nigeria Police (NP) and the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC). Interestingly, the Institute of Traffic Management (ITM) at Northwestern University, USA has developed a law enforcement index (LEI) for measuring the performance of Police Department in enforcing traffic laws. It is based on a simple equation where the number of citations is divided by the number of fatal and personal injury accidents.

$$\text{Enforcement Index} = \frac{\text{Citations with Penalty}}{\text{No. of Fatal and Personal Injury}}$$

The Institute asserts that the Enforcement Index (EI) should be equal to 20. This means, a Police Station or Department should give out penalty citations equal to 20 times the number of fatalities and personal injury accidents caused by motorists. This is an improvement on the former technique that was based on "simplistic quota system". Under the quota system, traffic officers were instructed to hand out a fixed number of citations everyday or week. This, unlike the EI, was based on intuition that was subject to abuses. The EI has established a relationship between enforcement and accidents and, evidence from its application indicates that accident rates do respond positively to traffic enforcement. The adoption of the method shall go a long way in sanitising road users and make the Nigeria Police and Federal Road Safety

Commission (FRSC) much more friendly as their excesses can now be detected by the EI system.

d) MBO and PE: The MBO and PE are measurement techniques initially applied in the private sector. As the public sector now has overbearing influence on all other sectors in Nigeria, these private sector techniques/methods can be adopted to solve problems of public organisations.

In practical terms, there has been a re-orientation of government institutions, including the public service in Bayelsa State and Nigeria. This is to achieve four main objectives, namely: a reduction in the role of the state and federal governments in economic management, an enhanced role for sub-national governments, a new public-private balance in respect of the production and distribution of goods and services, and efforts aimed at achieving improved performance in the public sector.

In analysing "Governance Context and Re-orientation of Government" to enhance productivity, Adamolekun (2005: 14-15) states that:

the objective of improved performance in public sector management is often linked to the reduced role of the State in the expression 'moin d'etat, mieux d'etat', meaning a leaner but better (performing) state. The assumption is that poor performance in public sector management was a consequence of the over-extended State.

He went further to point out that a very helpful reformulation of the problem of low productivity in the public service is provided in the World Bank's *Development Report* of 1997. The report provides some guidelines on how best to relate a state's functions, as well as public service activities to their capability.

3. Observations

The paper observes that several African countries, such as Ghana, South Africa and Libya are implementing some aspects of the guidelines, especially in the areas of measuring productivity in their public sectors with high degree of success. Equally, some industrialised countries, such as Britain, USA, Australia, and New Zealand have drawn largely from the Report and International Public Sector Modernisation Movement (IPSM). The emphasis is to apply private-sector principles, especially healthy competition, contracting, and customer

(clientele) orientation to the public sector. It also emphasises merit-based recruitment and promotion, increased autonomy for public servants with appropriate responsibility, performance-related pay, and continuous skills development. For Nyerere (1969), there shall be no development where the people are not determined to be productive. Thus, Nyerere regards “productivity as an index of development”.

Japan has a strong work ethics driven by the principle of total quality management (TQM). The principle of TQM motivates workers to the extent that they exhibit good work ethics, virtue of hard work and diligence, and are selected for high positions. Remuneration is also tied to performance index (Charles 2008: 56).

The immediate past governor of Bayelsa State, Nigeria, Timipre Sylva, 2003 – 2011, tried to apply the Japanese model and set-up a special committee that comprised labour leaders and relevant ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) to recommend measures of enhancing productivity in the public sector. The committee recommended: resuscitation of the annual public service productivity award, payment of medical allowances, and lifting of embargo on employment into the state civil/public services (Welson 2006; Charles 2011).

The present governor, Henry Seriake Dickson, 2012- , has gone further to embark on systemic training and retraining programme of civil/public servants, as well as, directed the Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Lands and Housing to allocate land to all civil/public servants who paid for their allocation several years ago. Welson (2012) observes that these measures are beginning to pay off.

The Lagos state governor, Babatunde Fashola, has followed the line of Henry Dickson, and “identified provision of social infrastructure as backbone that will improve productivity” (Akoro 2012: 43). Accordingly, he has improved the transportation system that has allowed labour to easily reach employment locations (offices), irrespective of distance.

Lambright (1976: vii-ix, 29-30), on the other hand, took a slightly different perspective of the subject matter by “exploring and analysing an important but largely uncharted dimension of government in relation to science and technology.” In doing this, he laid emphasis on productivity in the public sector and the intersection, rather than separation of politics and bu-

reaucracy. He made an important point that understanding politics and bureaucracy is essential to productivity in the public sector as they reinforce each other while at other times, they conflict. Lambright went further to raise questions of, “who makes the decisions on productivity? What criteria, for whose benefit, and what effects?”

In giving insight to these questions, he stated that “the stakes of the contestants may be economic, bureaucratic, or ideological. The technology provides an opportunity for the focusing of attention of the contestants. The politics of science seldom rises beyond the subsystem level of participation. Technology much more frequently escalates to macro politics.”

The paper further observed that one area where declining productivity has impacted negatively is the millennium development goals (MDGs) targets for 2015. According to Komolo (2009: 39),

Based on available information, it is unlikely the country will be able to meet most of the goals by 2015, especially, goals related eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, reducing child and maternal mortality and combating HIV/AIDs malaria....

“That”, as Oparah (2012: 9) observed, “has increased the nation’s distress”. He then suggested that the civil society organizations, along with that 36 states and federal government “should lead on ethical regeneration by developing and assigning productivity index to every MDAs”. This has to be followed by an affirmative action plan where productivity has to be the bases for promotion and high responsibility as the case in Japan.

This is where the recent national broadcast of Nigeria’s President Jonathan on 01 October 2012 to mark Nigeria’s 52nd independence anniversary becomes very relevant. In the broadcast (Bayagbon 2012: 1, 2), he announced four cardinal measures (programmes) to enhance public sector productivity, namely:

- 1). Revitalising the federal civil service promotion examinations in Nigeria; and to work with 36 states civil services commissions, and that of Federal Capital Territory;
- 2). Institutionalising performance index in the Nigerian Armed Forces;
- 3). Institutionalising performance contract for all categories of civil/public servants; and

- 4). Budgeting for regular training and re-training of civil/public servants, including making the Public Service Training Institute, Abuja, Nigeria, a certificate/diploma awarding academy.

These measures go beyond mere expression because already, Ministers, Permanent Secretaries and/or Director – Generals are held jointly or severally responsible for the performance of their

MDAs. By this, every civil/public servant is accountable for his/her action or inaction.

The final observation is that the problem of declining productivity is gradually spilling into the private sector that used to be the trailblazer. This was the position of National Association of Telecom Subscribers (NATCON) that the quality of services offered by the four global system for mobile (GSM) communications operators in Nigeria: MTN, Glo, Airtel and Etisalat, are degenerating (Ajanaku 2012: 30-1). The Association alleged that the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), sector regulator, is not doing enough to improve productivity (that is, quality of services). The NCC eventually rose up and slammed a total fine of N1.7 billion on the four operators in May 2012. The GSM operators, on the other hand, attributed their declining productivity to poor social infrastructures in the country and contended that, “until the challenges confronting them are redressed, the quality of their services will continue to fluctuate” (Ajanaku 2012).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the paper has discussed the importance of measuring productivity in the public sector and examined three popular methods, namely: work sampling, usage, and law enforcement index within the context of management-by-objectives (MBO) and performance evaluation (PE) that were erstwhile exclusive techniques for the private sector. The paper adopted Weber’s “theory of bureaucracy” as theoretical framework, and analysed, discussed and observed the major factors and challenges of measuring productivity in the public sector. It concludes that in spite of the difficulties, the momentum for measuring productivity in the public sector in Bayelsa state and Nigeria is growing with remarkable achievements.

The paper finds that there is the need for the regular review of these measurement techniques,

including programmes and activities of the public sector, especially staff career development, merit-based recruitment and promotion, contracting, and confidence building to enhance productivity in the public sector. It discussed the need for management to change the prevailing orientation of finding faults to success-seeking approach in the public service. This is important because experience has shown that many civil servants are mostly concerned about avoiding mistakes that would attract queries or disciplinary actions. The political executives should not be seen as interested only in finding faults or failures of the staff in achieving production targets.

The Personnel Audit Department of the Office of the Head of Service or Civil Service Commission (CSC) is particularly guilty of it. The proceedings and findings of their (that is, CSC) reports are basically on identifying faults. Thus, the public servants approach their jobs with extreme care, taking all possible precautions to avoid mistakes. Under such a circumstance, work is slow as employees would not like to venture into creativity and innovation to enhance productivity, but stick to following rules in the *General Order* (GO). This has, invariably, caused undue bureaucracy or red tapeism to the detriment of productivity, and in turn sustainable development.

To forestall it, the paper observes that the concept and practice of “*One Minute Management*” becomes useful. Blanchard and Johnson stated that every political executive of a public organisation should regularly “take a minute out of each day to look into the faces of the people he manages as a way of realising that they are the most important resources”.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the issues, results, discussions and observations, the paper wishes to make the following recommendations:

a) Adoption of Private-Sector Methods: As the public sector imposes itself and influences every other sector, the measurement techniques, that is, work-sampling, usage, and law enforcement index within the context of MBO and PE that are widely used in the private-sector should be adopted in the public sector. It is believed that these techniques shall work well in the public sector, and where problems arise in the course

of implementation, they would be addressed on the spot.

b) Application of Scientific Approach: The term, scientific, as different from technology, is used here to reflect regular adaptation to the culture of measurement of productivity; not the prescription of some single “right method” to manage public sector. If the public sector is to be productive, the State and Federal Governments policies and programmes have to be based more on objective research and development (R and D) than it has been in the past 20 years. The present system where political executives would do before thinking, act before discussing, and punish before reviewing, has to change if productivity is to be enhanced. Also, the prevailing tendency where measurement techniques are determined by trial and error, intuition, and compulsion should be discouraged. It is by applying scientific analysis that the ideal measurement methods would evolve for the enthronement of ethical standards in the public sector in the state and country.

c) Establishment of the Post of Administrative Commissioner: Whereas the position of Public Complaints Commissioner (PCC) exists at the federal and state levels, that of an Administrative Commissioner (AC) that is fundamental to the enhancement of productivity has been ignored for too long. Thus, the paper argues for the establishment of the Office of AC to handle cases of “malfeasance” or “non-feasance” on the part of top government functionaries. The cases that the AC would ordinarily handle but now swept under the carpet are increasingly becoming inimical to the public good, leading to unpleasant conflicts. It is believed that the establishment of an AC would go a long way in addressing cases of conflicts, corrupt practices, and unreasonable political interference, especially by some inexperienced Commissioners and Advisers in the State and Federal public service.

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