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Policy Reforms and their impact on the Privatization of Power and Service Delivery in Enugu Electricity Distribution Company, Ogidi District.

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Abstract: *This paper examines the impact of policy reforms on the privatization of power and its consequent effect on service delivery in the Enugu Electricity Distribution Company (EEDC), Ogidi District. Against the backdrop of Nigeria's long-standing challenges with unreliable electricity supply, the research investigates how government-initiated reforms have shaped the privatization process and influenced operational efficiency and customer satisfaction in the power sector. The theoretical framework adopted was New Public Management (NPM) theory propounded by Albreit (2009). Using a mixed-methods approach, the study analyzes both qualitative and quantitative data from key stakeholders and customers within the Ogidi District. The study made use of survey design. The data collected was presented and analyzed using frequency tables and simple percentage statistics. The research questions were answered with Mean and Standard Standard Deviation. The hypotheses were tested employing chi-square through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The study found out among others that: the Electricity Regulatory Commission has improved the price of electricity consumption in Nigeria. Secondly, the reduction in the state dominance has impacted on the efficiency of the Enugu Electricity Distribution Company. Based on the findings it was recommended that inter-alia that the Nigeria government should always optimize privatization policy as it improves the reduction of cost of operations, improve and develop the quality of products and services offered to customers. This research contributes to the ongoing discourse on power sector reforms in developing countries, highlighting the complex relationship between policy, privatization, and service delivery.*

Keywords: Privatization, Service Delivery, Electricity, Distribution, policy, operation, Nigeria.

Introduction

The primary objective of any credible and legitimate government is to ensure a sustained improvement in the standard of living of its citizens. In pursuit of this goal, the Nigerian government deemed it necessary to implement development plans aimed at facilitating the effective mobilization, optimal allocation, and efficient management of national resources. To actualize this objective, public enterprises were established. Access to basic services, especially electricity, plays a vital role not only in reducing poverty but also in enhancing the overall quality of life. Historically, the responsibility of electricity provision in Nigeria has largely rested with the public sector.

However, widespread inefficiencies and poor performance commonly associated with public service delivery in Nigeria have necessitated a call for reforms and more effective strategies for achieving sustainable development (Olumola, Akande, Adesanya, Wadinga, Adegba, Carimcanni, & Alonge, 2009). By the late 1980s, public enterprises, many of which had expanded significantly, began to exhibit fundamental structural problems, including inadequate capital bases, gross incompetence, and rampant corruption (ILO, 2011). Faced with growing internal economic crises such as high unemployment rates, mounting external debt, and foreign exchange misalignments, Nigeria, alongside several other African nations, was strongly encouraged by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to divest from public enterprises as a condition for receiving economic assistance (Anya, 2004).

Privatization emerged as a transformative policy innovation adopted by both developed and developing nations (Igbuzor, 2003; Chambers, 2008). Rooted in neoliberal economic reforms and propelled globally by institutions like the World Bank and IMF, privatization first took root under General Augusto Pinochet's military regime in Chile in 1974, and was later institutionalized in Britain between 1986 and 1987 as a major shift in economic policy. In Nigeria, privatization was formally introduced in 1986 as a core element of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) (ILO, 2011). Prior to this, the Nigerian state played an active role in establishing and managing public enterprises. This trend continued until 1988 when the privatization programme was officially launched (Igbuzor, 2003). During the first phase of the programme (1988–1993), the federal government privatized 89 public enterprises; an additional 32 were privatized in the second phase (1999-2005).

The rationale behind privatization was to enhance the operational efficiency of underperforming public enterprises, reduce government expenditure, attract private investment, create employment opportunities, and ensure job security (Subair & Oke, 2008; Jerome, 2008). Despite these intended benefits, privatization has remained a subject of heated debate and controversy in Nigeria since its formal inception in 1988 (Bala, 2004). Many Nigerians continue to hold divergent views regarding the impact of privatization on service delivery and institutional efficiency.

This paper, therefore, seeks to examine the relationship between the privatization of public enterprises and the efficiency of service delivery in the power sector, using the Enugu Electricity Distribution Company (EEDC), Ogidi District, as a case study.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the relationship between privatization exercise of public enterprises and efficiency service delivery in Enugu Electricity Distribution Company, Ogidi District. Specifically, the paper seeks to:

1. Determine the extent to which privatization exercise of the power sector has curbed the problem of erratic power supply by the Enugu Electricity Distribution Company, Ogidi District.

2. Ascertain how the privatization exercise of the power sector has improved customer satisfaction in Enugu Electricity Distribution Company, Ogidi District.

Conceptual Clarifications

Privatization

The concept of privatization is inherently multidimensional in nature. At its core, it refers to the process whereby government-owned shares in public enterprises are sold to private investors, thereby transferring ownership and management responsibilities to individuals or corporate entities, while the government assumes a regulatory role (Pan African Summit, 2000). Importantly, this process does not necessarily imply a complete or outright sale of government property. Rather, it entails a partial withdrawal of government ownership, accompanied by continued oversight to regulate and mitigate potential market failures (Wogu, 2007).

In Nigeria, the legal framework for privatization is outlined in the Privatization and Commercialization Act of 1988 and the Bureau of Public Enterprises Act of 1993**,** both of which define privatization as the relinquishment of part or all of the equity and other interests held by the Federal Government or its agencies in enterprises, whether wholly or partially owned. In a similar vein, the World Bank (2001) defines privatization as "a transaction or transactions utilizing one or more of the methods resulting in either the sale to private parties of controlling interest in the share capital of public enterprises or of a substantial part of its assets."

Offering a broader perspective, Anyebe (2011) conceptualizes privatization as involving the reduction in government involvement through four key instruments: production, provision, subsidies, or regulation or any combination thereof. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1991), in its guidelines on privatization, describes it as the marketization of public sector activities. This entails subjecting micro-economic decision-making within public enterprises to market forces, aligning with the profit-driven orientation typical of private sector operations.

Additionally, Section 14 of Decree No. 25 of 1988 defines privatization as the transfer of government-owned shareholding in designated enterprises to private shareholders, which may include both individuals and corporate bodies. This legal definition underscores the structured and regulated nature of privatization as a tool for reforming public sector enterprises in Nigeria.

Service Delivery

Service is commonly understood as the "acts, deeds, or performance" provided by an organization to its customers, and is characterized by its essentially intangible nature (Lovelock, 2011). According to Goldstein, Johnson, Duffy, and Rao (2002), the components that constitute the inputs of service include people, technology, physical facilities, and equipment, while the service outcomes and customer experiences represent the outputs. The design and quality of these inputs significantly influence the overall service quality delivered by an organization.

Kotler, Wong, Saunders, and Armstrong (2005) further defined service as an activity or benefit that one party offers to another, which is primarily intangible and does not lead to the ownership of any physical product. This definition underscores the transient and experiential nature of service interactions in both public and private sectors.

In the context of public administration, Fox and Meyer (1995) defined service delivery as the provision of public activities, benefits, or satisfaction to citizens. This includes the execution of services or the distribution of goods by government entities, in line with the expectations of the populace and as mandated by legislative instruments such as Acts of Parliament. Service delivery, therefore, may involve tangible products **or** intangible services**,** both aimed at improving the well-being of citizens (Kayode, Adagba, & Anyio, 2013).

Privatization as the solution to the problem of erratic power supply in Nigeria

The move toward the privatization of electricity supply in Nigeria formally commenced with the enactment of the Electric Power Sector Reform Act of 2005**.** This legislation laid the legal foundation for restructuring the power sector. However, it was during the administration of former President Goodluck Jonathan that significant and concerted efforts were made to implement the privatization agenda. This initiative formed a central pillar of his administration's transformation agenda, aimed at achieving regular and sustainable power supply as a catalyst for national development.

The push for privatization was driven by the realization that, despite over a century of Nigeria's existence**,** electricity supply has remained persistently inadequate, posing a significant obstacle to economic growth and social transformation. The chronic power shortage has long hindered industrial expansion, investment, and the general well-being of citizens. Agbo (2013) underscored this point by noting that the inefficiency of the former National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) became so notorious that it earned the derogatory nickname "Never Expect Power Always." This reflected widespread public frustration with inconsistent electricity supply.

In this context, the privatization of the power sector was seen as a necessary and strategic reform intended to enhance efficiency, attract private investment, and ultimately improve service delivery in the electricity industry. The reform was driven by the belief that private sector participation would introduce better management, technology, and accountability, all of which are essential for reliable power generation and distribution in Nigeria.

Privatization and Manpower Efficiency

Adam (1992) defines privatization as an "array of actions designed to broaden the scope of private sector market activity or the assimilation by the public of efficiency-enhancing techniques generally employed by the private sector." This definition suggests that the private sector is widely recognized for its efficiency and effectiveness in discharging responsibilities. Consequently, the rationale behind the privatization of public enterprises lies in the belief that transferring ownership or management to the private sector will improve operational efficiency and enhance service delivery.

This perspective likely informed the Nigerian government's decision to privatize various public entities. The underlying assumption is that privatization would lead to better performance, reduced inefficiencies, and improved service outcomes. However, empirical evidence suggests that this expectation does not always materialize. For instance, Willner (2001)**,** in a review of relevant studies, found that the ownership structure, whether public or private, has limited impact on overall efficiency**,** indicating that other factors may play a more significant role.

The broader debate on privatization and efficiency has produced mixed conclusions. Martin and Parker (1997)**,** after reviewing both empirical and theoretical literature, argued that "on balance it seems that neither private nor public sector production is inherently or necessarily more efficient." Their findings emphasize that privatization alone is not a sufficient condition for achieving efficiency. Instead, organizational context, regulatory frameworks, management practices, and market conditions are also critical determinants of performance outcomes.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the New Public Management (NPM) theory, which emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The earliest applications of NPM were observed in the United Kingdom under the leadership of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and in several municipal governments in the United States, such as Sunnyvale, California. These governments had been significantly impacted by economic recessions and widespread tax revolts, prompting a shift in public sector management (Hood, 1991; Osborne & Gaebler, 1992). The NPM framework has since become a prominent model for public sector reform across both developed and developing countries.

Tenets of the Theory

Central to the NPM approach is a redefinition of the roles within public administration. Citizens are viewed as customers, and public servants are conceptualized as public managers. This framework emphasizes efficiency, accountability, and results-oriented service delivery. It seeks to realign the relationship between political leaders and public service managers by granting managers more autonomy and holding them accountable through performance metrics, such as pay-for-performance incentives and clear performance targets evaluated systematically.

Unlike the traditional bureaucratic model which relies heavily on rules, procedures, and legislative control, NPM encourages managerial discretion and innovation in achieving set goals. It incorporates strategies such as disaggregation of public services, customer satisfaction initiatives, and the application of entrepreneurial principles in public administration. Furthermore, the NPM model allows public managers to provide a variety of service delivery options, giving citizens the ability to choose, or even opt out of government services, thereby fostering competition and responsiveness in the public sector.

Relevance of the Theory to the Study

The relevance of the New Public Management theory to this study lies in its emphasis on the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery through privatization and managerial reforms. The theory provides a useful lens for understanding how privatization of public enterprises can potentially enhance operational efficiency and responsiveness in service provision. Specifically, in the context of this study, the theory offers a conceptual foundation for analyzing the relationship between privatization efforts in the power sector and efficient service delivery within the Enugu Electricity Distribution Company (EEDC), Ogidi District.

Thus, the adoption of the NPM theory in this research is appropriate, as it not only supports the argument for privatization but also underscores the broader managerial reforms necessary for improved public service delivery.

Methodology

This paper adopted descriptive survey method. The study was carried out in the Ogidi District of Enugu Electricity Distribution Company. The Ogidi District of EEDC. The population of the study will be derived from theeight (8) service centres which include: Awada- Onitsha Service Centre (1850 Houses), Umu-oji Service Centre (800 Houses), Akuzor Service Centre (201), Obosi Service Centre (1011), Aforigwe Service Centre (890) and Nkpor-Uno Service Centres (905). Therefore, the population is 5,657. For the determination of the sample, Taro Yamane's formula was adopted and the sample size (n) is 400.The sampling technique adopted for this research work is simple random sampling technique. The paper made use of primary and secondary sources of data. The study employed questionnaire as the instrument of data collection. Five Point Likert questions were used to elicit information on the impact of privatization on efficient service delivery in the Ogidi District of Enugu Electricity Distribution Company. The tools used in analyzing the data collected include tables, simple percentages, and absolute number. In analyzing the data, the hypotheses to be tested and the variable to be predicated, a parameter must be used, a static must be chosen i.e. function of the observed variables that must be completely specified under the assumption that the hypothesis to be tested is true. In other words, the chi-square test technique was used to analyze the data collected.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1:Demographic Characteristics of Respondents on Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	25-50 years	280	68.3	70.0	70.0
	51-70 years	120	29.3	30.0	100.0
	Total	400	97.6	100.0	
Missing	System	10	2.4		
Total		410	100.0		

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

In classifying the respondents by their age distribution in the above table, it was gathered that 280 (68.3%) were 25-50 years and 120 (29.3%) were 51-70 years.

Table 2:Demographic Characteristics of Respondents on Sex

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	FEMALE	310	78.3	70.0	70.0
	MALE	90	21.3	30.0	100.0
	Total	400	97.6	100.0	
Missing	System	10	2.4		
Total		410	100.0		

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

The table above shows that 310 of the respondents which is 78.3% were females, while 90 of the respondents amounting to 21.3% were males. This result automatically x-rays that there were more females than males in the field than male participants.

Data on Variables of Subject under Investigation

Research Question 1: To what extent has the privatization exercise of the power sector curbed the problem of erratic power supply by the Enugu Electricity Distribution Company, Ogidi District?

The questionnaire items for this section are 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. The responses to research question one is presented in table 3.

Table 3: Respondents mean and standard deviation scores on the extent has the privatization exercise of the power sector curbed the problem of erratic power supply by the Enugu Electricity Distribution Company, Ogidi District.

S/N	ITEM STATEMENTS	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
1.	Privatization has positively impacted heavily on the productivity of the EEDC in Ogidi District?	400	3.00	1.675	True
2.	There is significant impact of privatization of EEDC on service delivery in Ogidi District?	400	3.40	.491	True
3.	The satisfactory products and services rendered to the people Ogidi District through EEDC were as a result of privatization of public sector?	400	3.09	.995	True
4.	Privatization has helped EEDC fetched those unqualified staff that occupied positions they cannot handle which improve service delivery in Ogidi District?	400	4.00	1.551	True
5.	The introduction of privatization in EEDC has made its staff more effective in performing their tasks in Ogidi District?	400	3.76	1.627	True

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

The result in table 3 shows that the respondents agreed with the items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 as to the extent has the privatization exercise of the power sector curbed the problem of erratic power supply by the Enugu Electricity Distribution Company, Ogidi District which means that every members of the participants was strongly behind the above notions.

Research Question 2: To what extent has the privatization exercise of the power sector improved customer satisfaction in Enugu Electricity Distribution Company, Ogidi District?

The questionnaire items for this section are 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10. The responses to research question two is presented in table 4.

Table 4: Respondents mean and standard deviation scores on how privatization exercise of the power sector improved customer satisfaction in Enugu Electricity Distribution Company, Ogidi District.

S/N	ITEM STATEMENTS	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
1.	Privatization of public sector has improved the growth of Nigerian economy?	400	3.20	1.251	True
2.	Privatization has helped EEDC to increase productive efficiency in Ogidi District?	400	3.20	1.251	True
3.	Privatization has strengthened the role of private sector in the economy which enhanced employment and higher capacity utilization?	400	3.53	1.403	True
4.	Privatization of EEDC has reduced corruption because interference by politicians is now ceased?	400	3.20	1.250	True
5.	EEDC Ogidi District has really impacted the growth of Nigeria economy?	400	3.50	1.687	True

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

The result in table 4 above shows that the respondents agreed with the items 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 as to the extent has the privatization exercise of the power sector improved customer satisfaction in Enugu Electricity Distribution Company, Ogidi District which means that every members of the participants was strongly behind the above notions.

Test of Hypotheses

The hypotheses testing involves a set rules that leads to a decision in the acceptance or rejection of a given phenomenon. The tool that is used here is Chi-square (x^2). Chi-square is a method that measures the discrepancies existing between the observed and expected frequencies.

Hypothesis One

H₀: Privatization exercise of the power sector has not curbed the problem of erratic power supply by the Enugu Electricity Distribution Company, Ogidi District.

Hᵢ: Privatization exercise of the power sector has curbed the problem of erratic power supply by the Enugu Electricity Distribution Company, Ogidi District.

Using the information gotten from question 1,2,3,4 and 5 the hypotheses were tested.

Hypothesis 1, table 6

Chi-Square Tests 1

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1511.265[a]	40	.000
Likelihood Ratio	1172.519	40	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	71.445	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	400		

a. 12 cells (22.2%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.84.

From the table above, the result showed that privatization exercise of the power sector has curbed the problem of erratic power supply by the Enugu Electricity Distribution Company, Ogidi District. V (1,40)=1511.265, If p value < is less than 0.05, you reject the null hypotheses and accept the alternate hypotheses. It is based on that decision rule that we accepted that Privatization exercise of the power sector has curbed the problem of erratic power supply by the Enugu Electricity Distribution Company, Ogidi District.

Hypothesis Two

H₀: Privatization exercise of the power sector has not improved the customer satisfaction in Enugu Electricity Distribution Company, Ogidi District.

Hᵢ: Privatization exercise of the power sector has improved the customer satisfaction in Enugu Electricity Distribution Company, Ogidi District.

Using the information gotten from question 6,7,8,9 and 10 the hypotheses were tested.

Hypothesis 2, table 7

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1511.265[a]	40	.000
Likelihood Ratio	1172.519	40	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	69.267	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	400		

a. 12 cells (22.2%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.84.

From the table above, the result showed that Privatization exercise of the power sector has improved the customer satisfaction in Enugu Electricity Distribution Company, Ogidi District. V (1, 40)=1511.265, If p value < is less than 0.05, you reject the null hypotheses and accept the alternate hypotheses. It is based on that decision rule that we accepted also that Privatization exercise of the power sector has improved the customer satisfaction in Enugu Electricity Distribution Company, Ogidi District.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study reveal two significant outcomes of the privatization exercise in the power sector as it relates to the Enugu Electricity Distribution Company (EEDC), Ogidi District. These are discussed below:

1. The study found that the privatization of the power sector has contributed to addressing the long-standing issue of erratic power supply in the EEDC Ogidi District. Prior to privatization, the power sector under public control, notably the defunct Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN), was plagued by inefficiency, poor infrastructure maintenance, and frequent power outages. With the privatization exercise, EEDC appears to have recorded improvements in electricity availability and reliability. This positive change can be attributed to better resource management, targeted investments in infrastructure, and increased operational autonomy often associated with private-sector efficiency.

However, it is worth noting that while power supply has become more stable than in previous years, the issue may not be fully resolved, and improvements might vary across specific communities or neighborhoods. Nonetheless, this finding supports the broader view that privatization, when properly implemented, can contribute to improved service delivery in essential sectors like electricity.

2. The second major finding of this study indicates that customer satisfaction has improved since the privatization of the power sector in the Ogidi District. This could be due to several factors, including more responsive customer service mechanisms, the use of digital platforms for billing and complaints, and quicker fault resolution times. Under public control, customer relations were often characterized by bureaucratic delays, poor communication, and lack of accountability. The shift to a privatized model seems to have fostered a more customer-centric approach.

Moreover, private ownership typically emphasizes customer retention and satisfaction as part of its business sustainability strategy. EEDC, in its privatized form, appears to be more proactive in addressing consumer concerns, which likely contributes to increased satisfaction levels among its users. Nevertheless, it is important to consider that improved satisfaction does not imply perfection; issues like estimated billing, disconnections, or occasional delays still exist but may be less frequent or better managed compared to the pre-privatization era.

Conclusion

Privatization carries varied meanings and consequences depending on the context in which it is applied. Different countries approach it in diverse ways, shaped by their unique economic structures and social realities. In developing nations, the impact of privatization on vulnerable populations, particularly the poor, is often more profound and destabilizing than in middle- and high-income or industrialized countries. For instance, in advanced economies like those in North America and Europe, privatization processes are typically managed with foresight: employees are adequately trained, compensated, and supported through transitions such as redundancy. Unfortunately, this level of planning and support is largely absent in many African nations, including Nigeria.

In Nigeria, the process of privatization has often resulted in the mass dismissal of workers with little to no preparation or reskilling. Employees are usually left without support structures and are subjected to the will of the new private owners. In the case of the Enugu Electricity Distribution Company (EEDC), formerly under the Power Holding Company of Nigeria, many employees were abruptly disengaged following privatization. Over two-thirds of the workforce lost their jobs, with most of them being relatively young individuals who had not yet reached a decade in service. Strangely, some of those retained were older employees nearing retirement age, while the younger, more productive staff were let go without explanation.

Those who remained in the system now face uncertain futures, marked by the constant threat of termination and even harassment, including reported cases of police intimidation. This has deeply undermined the sense of job security and stripped the dignity from what should be a stable career path. In such an environment, the promised benefits of privatization, particularly improved worker welfare and job satisfaction, seem painfully out of reach for EEDC employees.

Recommendations

Based on the summary of findings, the following recommendations have been given:

1. To sustain and further improve the reliability of power supply, the Enugu Electricity Distribution Company (EEDC) should increase investments in modernizing and maintaining its electricity infrastructure. Continuous upgrades, proactive maintenance, and adoption of advanced technologies will help reduce outages and ensure consistent power delivery to consumers in the Ogidi District.

2. EEDC should build on the gains in customer satisfaction by implementing robust customer service strategies, including transparent billing systems, efficient complaint resolution channels, and regular communication with consumers. Training staff on customer relations and leveraging digital platforms can foster trust and improve overall consumer experience.

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