

“Executive Class” in Public Service: A Phenomenon in The Implementation of The New Public Management (NPM) Paradigm in Indonesia

M. Irsyad Fadoli, Purwanto Putra, Nibras Fadhlillah, Dodi Faedlulloh

Departement of Public Administration, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences,
Universitas Lampung, Indonesia. (email: irsyad.fadoli@fisip.unila.ac.id)

Abstract

This study aims to examine how the executive class in public services reinforces the implementation of New Public Management (NPM) in Indonesia and its impact on justice in good governance. Using a literature review method, the study collects and analyzes secondary sources such as books, articles, and policy documents related to executive class public services and NPM. The findings highlight the negative effects of the executive class system on both accessibility and fairness within public services. It shows that Indonesia's adoption of executive class services is a direct result of NPM's focus on efficiency and outcomes. However, this approach often leads to inequity, reduced accessibility, and misalignment with the core principles of public service. As a result, reforms are necessary to address these challenges by placing greater emphasis on justice, transparency, and inclusivity in public services. The study recommends abolishing or restricting the executive class system, improving the transparency and accountability of service costs, and implementing the New Public Service (NPS) and New Public Governance (NPG) frameworks to develop a fairer and more responsive public service system that better meets the needs of the public.

Keywords:

executive class public services; New Public Management (NPM);
equitable access to public services; public service reforms

Introduction

One of the functions of government is public service. By providing good services to the community, the government can achieve the nation's goal of creating societal welfare (Nurcholis, 2007). Public service or general service can be defined as any form of service, whether in the form of public goods or public services, which is essentially the responsibility of and carried out by government agencies at the central and regional levels, as well as state-owned or regional enterprises, in order to meet community needs and to implement statutory regulations. Sinambela explains the meaning of public service. Public service is the provision of services (serving) to the needs of individuals or communities that have an interest in the organization, in accordance with established basic rules and procedures (Sinambela, 2006).

Thus, public service is about meeting the needs and desires of society by the state. According to Sinambela, with advances in science and technology and intense global competition,

only organizations that can provide quality services will thrive. Government agencies are also increasingly required to create quality services that can drive economic activity. Hence, public services must be proactive in adapting to new global paradigms to remain competitive. Bureaucracy should become a center of excellence for governance.

However, public services in Indonesia are still partly paid, a manifestation of New Public Management (NPM). NPM emphasizes that private sector management practices are more effective than those in the public sector, hence the need to adopt market mechanisms, competitive tendering, and privatization of public companies (Hughes & O'Neil, 2002). NPM has drastically transformed public management from rigid, bureaucratic, and hierarchical systems to more flexible, market-oriented models, promoting public administration reform and decentralization, which enhances democracy (Hughes, 1998).

In public service, citizens are considered customers and must pay according to the services they receive from the government. Paid public services can improve service quality and user satisfaction (Andini, D. W., & Hastuti, R., 2021). In Indonesia, paid services have been widely practiced. For example, at the local government level, various services, including general services, business services, and licensing services, charge fees. All fees for these services are official and legal, as they are based on laws established in Law Number 33 of 2004 concerning Regional Original Revenue (PAD). This is done to maximize regional income. Fees can increase local revenue and also make services effective and efficient (Raharjo, B., & Prasetyo, A., 2020; Hasibuan, F., & Manurung, M., 2018; Sari, A., & Arifin, Z., 2019). Local governments are working hard to find potential sources of income by optimizing the original revenue sources they have been collecting. In addition to fees, there are now fast-track paid services where users receive quicker service in exchange for higher fees. This creates a tiered system, with regular and executive classes. The regular class pays standard fees, while the executive class pays more for faster service. For example, passport services offer a one-day expedited option with additional fees, raising the total cost compared to regular processing times. This system has raised concerns about equity in public services.

Paid public services relate to good governance principles such as responsiveness, fairness, efficiency, and accountability (Sedarmayanti, 2012). From a responsiveness perspective, paid services offer quicker and better options for those in need. However, this raises concerns about fairness, as equitable public service means equal access regardless of social status or wealth. Good governance also involves values that support the people's will and the ability to achieve national goals, independence, sustainability, and social justice (LAN-BPKP, 2000).

In terms of efficiency, paid services can be seen as a way to improve resource allocation, but this must be balanced with fairness and accessibility to avoid neglecting the less fortunate. Regarding accountability, paid services raise questions about the transparency and management of the additional fees collected. This study aims to analyze how the executive class in public services affirms the implementation of NPM and its implications for justice in public services and good governance.

Methods

This study utilizes the literature review method, which involves a comprehensive examination of prior research on a specific topic. A literature review serves to summarize existing knowledge, highlight gaps in research, and provide a rationale for further investigation (Denney & Tewksbury, 2013). The literature study method is a series of activities related to the method of collecting library data, reading and taking notes, as well as managing writing materials (Zed, 2008). The data for this study were sourced from secondary materials, such as journal articles, books, policy documents, and other scholarly works. These materials were collected using search engines and databases, including ProQuest, ResearchGate, SagePub, and Google Scholar, following criteria determined by the researcher to ensure relevance to the research topic.

The data analysis was conducted using the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1992), which includes four key stages: data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. This cyclical process allows for continual refinement of the data until valid conclusions are reached. Additionally, the study ensures data credibility through a series of validation checks, adhering to qualitative research standards of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Moleong, 2007). These measures provide a strong foundation for ensuring that the findings are robust and reliable.

Results and Discussion

Executive Class in Public Services in Indonesia

In various countries, including Indonesia, many services provided by the government to the public require payment or charge fees. There are several reasons why some public services are charged or not provided for free:

1. **Operational and Maintenance Costs.** Public services, such as healthcare, waste management, and public facilities, require costs for daily operations and maintenance. These costs include employee salaries, facility maintenance, purchasing equipment, and

other necessary materials. Charging fees to service users (through fees or service charges) helps cover these costs and ensures that the services remain available and of good quality.

2. **Improvement of Service Quality.** Fees charged to users can be used to improve service quality. For example, funds obtained from service charges can be used to update medical equipment in hospitals, improve road infrastructure, or build better public facilities. With the fees, the government can provide better and more professional services.
3. **Regulation and Control.** Some services are charged to regulate or control their usage, such as parking fees or business licensing fees. The fees charged can serve as a tool to regulate the number of users or certain activities to avoid overuse or undesirable use.
4. **Source of Regional Revenue.** For local governments, service fees and charges are an important source of revenue. This income can be used to fund other unpaid public services, such as basic education, basic healthcare, or social welfare programs.
5. **Efficiency and Fairness.** When services are provided for free, there is a risk that they may be misused or not used efficiently. Charging fees helps ensure that only those who truly need or value the service will use it. Additionally, with fees, the burden of providing services can be more fairly shared between the government and users.
6. **Provision of Different Services.** Not all public services require fees. Basic universal services, such as primary education and basic healthcare, are usually provided free by the government as they are considered fundamental rights. However, for more specific or higher-value services, such as specialized healthcare or express services, fees are often charged because they require additional resources.
7. **Avoiding Dependency.** If all public services are provided for free, there is a risk that society will become too dependent on the government for everything. With fees, people are encouraged to be more self-reliant and responsible in managing their own needs.

In recent years, a growing trend has emerged in Indonesia, which is the implementation of "executive classes" in public services. This concept essentially offers the public a choice to receive public services more quickly, comfortably, or with additional facilities compared to regular services, albeit at an extra cost.

There are several examples of the implementation of Executive Class in Public Services in Indonesia. For instance, in immigration services for passports. Citizens who want to obtain a passport more quickly can choose the expedited service, which typically offers a shorter processing time. In some immigration offices in Indonesia, there is a same-day passport service available for an additional fee compared to the regular service, which usually takes several days.

The tariff regulations for expedited passport processing are outlined in Government Regulation No. 28 of 2019. This regulation mandates passport issuance within one day, as opposed to regular passports that take up to three days. The cost difference between regular passports and expedited services is quite significant. For regular passport applications, applicants are required to pay a fee of Rp 350,000 for a standard 48-page passport or Rp 650,000 for an electronic passport with the same processing time. In contrast, the expedited service incurs an additional fee of Rp 1,000,000, plus the cost according to the type of passport selected. Thus, the total cost for expedited service is Rp 1,350,000 for a standard 48-page passport or Rp 1,650,000 for an electronic 48-page passport. This fee structure indicates that expedited services require higher payments compared to regular services, but offer the advantage of a faster processing time for applicants.

Another example of public services implementing the executive class concept is healthcare services in hospitals. There are different classes of care ranging from Class III to executive class. Patients who choose the executive class receive rooms with better facilities, such as private rooms with en-suite bathrooms, air conditioning, and special meal services. Although this is not a new service, the concept has been integrated into public healthcare services, providing an option for patients who wish to receive better services by paying more.

Although the public can now access hospital services using BPJS (Health Insurance), the contributions and benefits of BPJS are also differentiated based on the class chosen by the public. BPJS Health participants in Indonesia receive different services according to the class of contributions selected, which are Class 1, Class 2, and Class 3. Class 1 participants pay a monthly fee of Rp 150,000, Class 2 participants pay Rp 100,000, and Class 3 participants pay Rp 35,000 per month. This is based on Presidential Regulation No. 82 of 2018 concerning Health Insurance, which regulates the mechanism of health insurance provision, including the classification of classes and the amount of contributions for BPJS participants.

Executive Class in Public Services in Various Countries

The following are some examples of the implementation of executive class in public services from various countries, illustrating how these nations manage the demand for premium services without compromising the quality of basic services.

1. Healthcare in the United Kingdom: The National Health Service (NHS) provides free healthcare but also offers executive class facilities through private care services. For an additional fee, patients receive private treatment rooms and faster access to specialist doctors without compromising the quality of basic services.

2. Transportation in Japan: The Shinkansen trains offer executive class options such as Green Car and Gran Class, which provide extra comfort, such as wider seats and gourmet meals. This caters to the needs of various segments of society.
3. Immigration Services in the United States: The Global Entry program allows international travelers to expedite the immigration process by paying an application fee. Additionally, TSA PreCheck speeds up security screening without having to remove certain items.
4. Passport Services in the United Kingdom: There are Premium and Fast Track services that offer faster passport processing for a higher fee, while standard services remain available for those on a budget.
5. Education Services in South Korea: International and private schools offer better facilities and international curricula for students from affluent families, without reducing access to education in public schools.
6. Police Services in the United Arab Emirates: Dubai Police provides VIP services that expedite the processing of official documents for individuals who want to avoid long queues.

Overall, the implementation of executive class in public services reflects a response to the public's demand for premium services. While providing extra comfort for certain segments, it is essential for governments to uphold the principles of inclusivity and equity so that basic services remain of high quality and affordable for all.

The New Public Management Paradigm as the Basis for Executive Class in Public Services

The implementation of executive class in public services is related to the New Public Management (NPM) paradigm, which emerged in the 1980s and emphasizes the application of private sector management principles in public administration. The main focuses of NPM are:

1. Customer Orientation: NPM encourages public services to be oriented towards the needs of the community. Executive class services offer more personalized and faster options, allowing the public to choose between standard or executive services.
2. Efficiency and Quality Improvement: Executive class services support efficiency by generating additional resources through premium service fees, which are used to enhance the overall quality of services.
3. Privatization and Competition: NPM promotes privatization and competition, where executive class services often involve collaboration with the private sector to provide high-quality services and a diverse range of options for the public.

4. Accountability and Transparency: Executive services encourage service providers to be more transparent in the use of funds and service effectiveness, improving reporting and monitoring systems.
5. Separation of Public and Commercial Services: NPM tends to separate essential public services from additional commercial services. Executive class services provide options for those who can afford them without burdening the public budget.

The concept of New Public Management (NPM) emerged in response to sharp criticism of public sector organizations and brought significant changes to public sector organizations in many countries, with a primary focus on decentralization, devolution, and modernization of public services. The term NPM was first introduced by Christopher Hood in 1991. According to Denhardt and Denhardt (2007:12), NPM refers to a set of ideas and practices that adopt private sector and business approaches into the public sector. NPM has become a normative view that marks a significant shift in the perspective on the role of public administrators. Bovaird and Loffer (2013:17) add that NPM aims to streamline the public sector and make it more competitive, as well as create a public administration that is more responsive to community needs. This approach emphasizes economic efficiency, effectiveness (value for money), flexibility of choice, and transparency.

The Direction of Public Administration: Neo Weberian State, New Public Management & New Public Governance

To meet the need for improvements in the public administration (PA) system in the modern era post-New Public Administration as proposed by Frederickson, there are three main streams that can be considered the best models for enhancing the PA system. These three models serve as tools for reforming governance to make it better. First, New Public Management (NPM) acts as a liberal model in public sector management reform. Second, the Neo Weberian State (NWS) is an evolution of Weber's bureaucracy model tailored to contemporary challenges. Third, New Public Governance (NPG) represents the latest thinking in public administration studies.

NPM can be regarded as the most efficient model in the sense that it enables public sector organizations to operate more like business entities, thereby enhancing their performance efficiency. NPM aims to make government more efficient and responsive to the public by adopting methods typically used in the business sector (Osborne & Gaebler, 1993). This model differs from NWS, which emphasizes the professionalism of human resources within the bureaucracy (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017). NWS seeks to transform traditional bureaucracy into a more professional

body while retaining specific government rules and cultures. The business approach serves only as an addition, with the state remaining the primary actor.

New Public Governance (NPG), popularized by Stephen Osborne in his work *The New Public Governance? Emerging Perspectives on the Theory and Practice of Public Governance*, focuses on network-based policies and involves multiple stakeholders. The aim of NPG is to make government more effective and legitimate by involving various actors in policy-making and implementation processes. This model prioritizes network approaches and horizontal control over vertical control (Osborne, 2010).

Although these three models provide a framework for PA reform, none can be ideally applied in every country. Many countries may still cling to the status quo without significant changes. However, upon closer examination, the development of modern society appears to be leaning towards the implementation of all three models. Globalization continues to advance, and the dissemination of these models will likely evolve as the best practices in governance.

Furthermore, despite criticisms of NPM, such as those put forth by New Public Service (NPS), the foundational theories of NPM remain strong, especially in developed countries. NPS is often seen as a complement to NPG, particularly regarding political justice theories largely drawn from NPS.

Creating a new paradigm in public administration is not an easy task. To date, existing paradigms are still considered relevant in addressing the complexities faced by the public sector. Like other social sciences, public administration continues to evolve as part of the complex social sciences (Ricucci, 2010).

Differences Between New Public Management (NPM), New Public Service (NPS), and New Public Governance (NPG)

The differences between New Public Management (NPM), New Public Service (NPS), and New Public Governance (NPG) reflect the evolution of perspectives on public sector management. NPM, introduced by Christopher Hood in 1991, emerged as a critique of traditional bureaucratic performance. NPM emphasizes the application of private sector principles in public governance, aiming to enhance government efficiency, effectiveness, and responsiveness. The book *Reinventing Government* by David Osborne and Ted Gaebler (1992) is a key reference outlining the foundational ideas of NPM. Within the NPM framework, government is treated more like a business, where performance is measured by outcomes and value-added, with a market-based approach introducing competition in public service delivery.

In response to this more economic-oriented approach, Janet and Robert Denhardt introduced New Public Service (NPS) in 2007 in their book *The New Public Service: Serving, Not*

Steering. NPS focuses on the role of government as a servant to the public, rather than merely a manager directing from above. This approach emphasizes the importance of democracy, justice, and ethics in public administration, where decision-making should actively and inclusively involve citizens. Instead of prioritizing efficiency and economic outcomes, NPS places public service as its primary goal.

Further, the concept of New Public Governance (NPG), popularized by Stephen Osborne in his book *The New Public Governance? Emerging Perspectives on the Theory and Practice of Public Governance* (2010), proposes a governance approach based on networks and collaboration among various actors, including public, private, and civil society. NPG emphasizes the importance of cross-sector cooperation in policy-making and implementation, with a focus on horizontal rather than vertical control. This contrasts with NPM, which is more market-oriented, and NPS, which centers on service, as NPG encourages the involvement of all parties in the governance process.

According to Bovaird and Löffler (2013) in their book *Public Management and Governance*, NPG offers a more flexible and adaptive governance model that can meet the increasingly complex needs of society through multistakeholder collaboration. NPG reflects a paradigm shift in public administration, moving from bureaucratic and hierarchical approaches to a more participatory and decentralized model.

Other sources, such as *Public Management Reform* by Pollitt and Bouckaert (2017), also discuss how NPM, NPS, and NPG have evolved in various countries with differing emphases according to local contexts. Each of these approaches has influenced various aspects of modern public administration, each offering different solutions to the challenges of public sector governance in the era of globalization.

Tabel 1.

Aspects of NPM, NPS dan NPG

	NPM	NPS	NPG
Main Focus	Efficiency and performance like business	Citizen service and social justice	Multi-stakeholder collaboration network
Objectives	Increase efficiency, responsiveness to the market	Build public services that serve the community	Create policies through collaboration among actors
Role of Government	Managerial business-like manager	Public servant supporting citizen interests	Coordinator or facilitator within the network
Approach	Application of business principles in the public sector	Public participation, deliberative democracy	Collaboration in a multi-actor network

	NPM	NPS	NPG
Main Criticism	Sacrificing social values and participation	Longer processes and higher costs	Complexity of coordination and governance

Source: Managed by Author (2024)

Indonesia Still Applies NPM

Currently, Indonesia tends to apply the principles of New Public Management (NPM) in the management of the public sector. NPM, which emphasizes efficiency, effectiveness, and a market-based approach, has influenced various policies and practices in public administration in Indonesia. Although the intention of NPM is to improve the performance and responsiveness of public services through private sector management principles, there are concerns that this approach may lead to inequities in access to services, especially as public services begin to adopt additional payment models or executive classes.

For example, the implementation of NPM in Indonesia has encouraged privatization and decentralization aimed at increasing efficiency. However, this also has the potential to create disparities in access to public services. Services such as expedited passport processing or healthcare with executive classes illustrate how a market-based approach can result in additional costs for the community. This model places an extra financial burden on those who require faster or higher-quality services, contrary to the fundamental principles of public service, which should be fair and equitable for all segments of society.

In this context, Indonesia should consider shifting towards New Public Service (NPS) and New Public Governance (NPG). NPS emphasizes the role of government as a servant to the public and focuses on democratic values and justice. According to Denhardt and Denhardt (2007), NPS seeks to prioritize public service and inclusivity, ensuring that the community is not burdened with additional costs to access adequate services. By applying the principles of NPS, the government can ensure that public services remain accessible to everyone, regardless of financial capability.

Meanwhile, NPG, popularized by Stephen Osborne, offers a network-based governance approach that involves various actors in the decision-making and policy implementation processes. The principles of NPG encourage the involvement of the community, private sector, and civil society organizations in public governance. This can help create a more inclusive and transparent system, reducing reliance on additional cost models that may hinder accessibility to public services. By transitioning to NPS and NPG, Indonesia can lessen its dependence on market principles in the provision of public services, avoid disparities caused by additional costs, and ensure that all segments of society receive fair and equitable access.

Executive Classes Violate the Principle of Justice in Public Service

Public service is one of the fundamental aspects of the governance system aimed at meeting the needs and interests of the community. As a service provided by the government, public service encompasses various types of services designed to improve the quality of life of citizens and support the general welfare. In its implementation, there are several basic principles that must be considered to ensure effective, efficient, and fair public service. In public service, fundamental principles such as justice, accessibility, transparency, and accountability should serve as the main foundation. However, the application of the executive class concept in public service often contradicts these principles, which should guarantee that all citizens receive equal and fair services.

One fundamental principle in public service is justice, which demands that all individuals have equal access to services without discrimination. The concept of the executive class, which offers higher quality services to those who pay additional fees, clearly contradicts this principle. Public services that implement an executive class system divide society into groups based on their financial capabilities, thereby disregarding the principle of equality. This creates a stark difference in the quality of service between those who can afford to pay the extra fees and those who cannot, which goes against the principle of justice in public service.

Although one reason behind the implementation of the executive class is to enhance efficiency and service quality, this approach often does not fully meet those goals. The application of the executive class has the potential to cause injustice in the distribution of resources, where only a portion of the public service budget is allocated for improving service quality for those who pay more. This can lead to suboptimal services for those who do not pay extra, thereby widening the gap in service quality.

Ethically, the concept of the executive class in public service can be considered controversial because it creates social layers that distinguish between groups based on wealth. This not only contradicts the principle of egalitarianism in public service but may also exacerbate social inequality. Underprivileged communities may feel marginalized or neglected in a system that prioritizes those who can pay more.

Overall, the implementation of the executive class in public service contradicts basic principles of public service such as justice, accessibility, transparency, and accountability. To ensure that public service truly adheres to these principles, it is essential for the government and service providers to focus on inclusive and fair methods without differentiating service quality

based on individual financial capabilities. These principles must be upheld so that public service remains effective, responsive, and egalitarian for all segments of society.

Conclusion

Executive class public services in Indonesia refer to services that offer higher quality at an additional cost, often seen in administrative processes such as passports, permits, and certificates. This practice reflects the implementation of New Public Management (NPM) principles, which focus on efficiency, results, and customer orientation by adopting market mechanisms. While NPM aims to improve the efficiency and responsiveness of public services, the implementation of the executive class often results in unequal access. High-quality services become available only to those who can afford to pay the extra fees, while economically disadvantaged communities must settle for standard services.

The application of the executive class contradicts the fundamental principles of public service, namely justice, accessibility, transparency, and accountability. The principle of justice demands that all individuals have equal access without discrimination; however, the executive class system creates disparities based on financial capability. Transparency in managing additional fees is often unclear, diminishing accountability and public trust. The focus on extra charges can lead to uneven resource allocation, exacerbating social inequality and neglecting the principle of egalitarianism in public service.

To address these issues, it is essential to reassess the implementation of NPM and consider more inclusive and equitable approaches. Eliminating or reducing the executive class system, enhancing transparency in cost management, and focusing on improving service quality for all segments of society are necessary steps. Systemic reforms that balance efficiency and justice are expected to create a more equitable, transparent, and high-quality public service that meets the fundamental principles of public service and the needs of all citizens.

Recommendation

The author recommends the following:

1. The government should eliminate or limit the executive class system to ensure equitable access to high-quality services for all citizens, regardless of financial capacity.
2. Improve transparency in managing additional fees within the executive class system. All charges should be clearly defined and published, with stricter oversight to prevent unreasonable burdens on the public.
3. Consider implementing New Public Service (NPS) and New Public Governance (NPG) approaches, which emphasize community participation and welfare. These frameworks

can create a more inclusive system that meets public needs without relying on the executive class model.

Research Limitations

This study has several limitations:

1. **Data Limitations:** Access to data on the executive class implementation in public services across Indonesia may be restricted, hindering a comprehensive understanding of its impact.
2. **Regional Focus:** The research primarily examines executive class practices in specific regions or service types, which may not fully represent conditions nationwide due to policy variations.
3. **Subjectivity and Bias:** Researcher bias may influence the assessment of public service principles and NPM application, affecting the interpretation of findings.
4. **Policy Changes:** Ongoing developments in public service and government policies may render the study's findings outdated.
5. **Methodological Limitations:** The chosen methods may limit the depth and breadth of analysis; qualitative studies may lack quantitative data, and vice versa.

Future Research Suggestions:

1. **Comparative Studies:** Further research could compare executive class implementations in various countries or regions to provide broader insights.
2. **Long-term Impact Analysis:** In-depth studies on the long-term effects of the executive class system on community welfare and social inequality are needed.
3. **Stakeholder Engagement:** Involving diverse stakeholders, including service users and policymakers, could enhance understanding of the executive class system's strengths and weaknesses.

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