

GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS AND THE PATHWAY FROM POLICY FORMULATION TO IMPLEMENTATION

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Abstract

The formulation and implementation of public policies are essential for the development of any country. However, Nigeria has faced challenges in implementing its numerous well-formulated policies. Successive governments have exhibited a pattern of abandoning inherited policies and introducing new ones, leading to a trail of unimplemented policies and unfinished projects. This paper examines how government institutions in Nigeria formulate and implement policies, using the Treasury Single Account (TSA) and Naira Redesign Policy as examples. Additionally, it assesses the performance of these public policies. The study employs a qualitative research design, analyzing secondary data from various sources, including literature books, academic journals, articles, reports, and newspapers. The findings reveal that inadequate statistical data, poor policy focus and objectives, misconception and misapplication of policy contents, weak political and administrative institutions, political instability, and inconsistency in policy-making and implementation are key contributors to policy failures in Nigeria. The paper therefore concludes that to achieve its development goals, the Nigerian government must actively engage all policy-making actors, both within and outside the government, and prioritize continuity in implementing effective policies regardless of changes in administrations.

Keywords: Public policy, Formulation, Implementation, Institutions, Policy failures, etc.

Introduction

The effectiveness of a political system depends significantly on how public policies are formulated and executed. In Nigeria, the process of policy formulation and execution has attracted considerable attention, partly due to global calls for transparency and accountability in governance. This shift has made citizens realize that good governance can only be achieved if they are informed and involved in decisions affecting their lives (Wilson & Epelle, n.d.). Public policy plays a central role in shaping the success of any administration, whether in the public, private, or non-profit sectors. These policies are designed to address specific social issues within a political system, encompassing a range of programs and initiatives aimed at tackling societal challenges. Public policies employ all legitimate means necessary to achieve the government's goals and objectives, ensuring the provision of essential services through various governmental agencies or departments. In developing

countries like Nigeria, public policy is crucial as it serves as a foundation for national development. Arowolo and Egugbo (2010) argue that public policy is the key to transforming government intentions into tangible actions. However, the challenge in Nigeria lies not in policy formulation but in its effective execution. Policies are often formulated, but the critical question remains: how can these policies be successfully implemented? The formulation and execution of policies in Nigeria are heavily politicized, leading to a fragmented landscape with multiple governments and agencies often engaging in overlapping or conflicting activities. This complexity is heightened by Nigeria's federal system and democratic framework, where different political parties control various levels of government. As noted by Abdulsalami in Yakubu and Obasi (1998), these parties' ideological inclinations and priorities often influence their developmental objectives, contributing to inconsistency in policy-making and implementation. Unfortunately, this political fragmentation often overlooks the perspectives and needs of the masses, leaving them out of the policy-making process. The policy-making process in Nigeria involves various actors, including governmental and non-governmental entities. Governmental actors include the legislative, executive, judiciary, and bureaucracy, while non-governmental actors include political parties, pressure groups, the media, and citizens (Ikelegbe, 1996). Despite the involvement of these actors, policy failures in Nigeria can be attributed to several factors, such as a lack of adequate data on public issues, poorly defined policy objectives, misapplication of policy content, weak political and administrative institutions, political instability, and inconsistent policy-making. These issues have resulted in ineffective policy implementation, preventing the realization of the intended outcomes and hindering Nigeria's development. The primary aim of this paper is to examine the processes of policy formulation and implementation within Nigerian government institutions, with a focus on specific policies such as the Treasury Single Account and Naira Redesign. Additionally, this study will evaluate the effectiveness of these policies in addressing Nigeria's socio-economic challenges. By assessing the methods used in formulating and implementing these policies, the paper seeks to provide insights into their impact on the Nigerian socio-economic landscape.

Conceptual Discourse

The concept of policy has been subject to diverse interpretations. According to Ikelegbe (2005), policy refers to the actions taken or to be taken and actions not taken or not to be taken by government or private organizations. It is a statement of what an organization wants to do, what it is doing, what it is not doing and what would not be done. It encompasses what an organization intends to do, is currently doing, refrains from doing and will not do. Implicit in Ikelegbe's definition is the inclusion of both implemented and proposed actions for the future (that is, intended actions). Conversely, Anderson (2003) holds a different perspective, challenging the notion that intended courses of action constitute policies. Anderson (2003:2) defines policy as "what is actually done instead of what is only postponed or intended." He characterizes policy as a relatively stable, purposeful course of action undertaken by an actor or set of actions to address a specific problem or concern. Despite their differences, both definitions converge on the understanding that policy goes beyond individual decisions. A policy establishes a broad framework within which discrete decisions are made, accounting for greater complexity and a longer time horizon for its achievement compared to individual decisions. Ezeani (2006), asserts that that policy can be defined as a proposed course of action which government

intends to implement in respect of a given problem or situation confronting it. On the other hand, Abdulsalami (in Yakubu & Obasi, 1998), argues that a policy refers to hard patterns of resource allocation represented by projects and programmes designed to respond to perceived public problems or challenges requiring government action for their solution. Dye (1995) further emphasizes that policy is concerned with understanding the reasons behind governmental actions and the discrepancies between what they do and what they fail to do. In essence, these perspectives highlight the proactive nature of policy-making, the allocation of resources to address public issues and the analysis of governmental decisions and actions.

Public Policy

The term "public policy" can carry different meanings depending on the context and the perspective of the person providing the definition. It is worth noting that while there may be various definitions of public policy, these definitions serve to establish the scope and boundaries of the concept rather than presenting conflicting interpretations. Some definitions restrict the concept of public policy to the actual actions undertaken by the government, while others encompass the intentions and goals of the government. Additionally, certain definitions not only include the actions of the government but also its inactions (Lasswell and Kaplan, 1970; Sharkansky, 1970; Lowi, 1972; Dror, 1973; Jenkins, 1978; Gordon, 1986; Starling, 1988; Dye, 2004). Public policy is typically developed to impact a specific population within a defined geopolitical entity. This aligns with Dye's (2004) definition, which states that public policy encompasses the decisions made by the government regarding what to do or what not to do. Consequently, citizens may express their demands to the political system (government) for the establishment of industries, but it is ultimately the government's decision to either fulfil those demands or disregard them. When discussing public policy, Egonmwan (1991:1) suggests that it is often synonymous with "government policy." It encompasses "whatever government chooses to do or not to do" (Dye, 1972:18). Friedrich (1962:79), on the other hand, defines it as a proposed course of action by the government that provides challenges and opportunities which the policy was supposed to utilize and overcome in an effort to reach a goal or realize an objective. Although these definitions have faced criticism (particularly Dye's inclusion of government intentions or indecisions as public policy), they all indicate that public policy encompasses a wide range of activities, starting from the expression of government intent, through goal formulation and culminating in implementation. More specifically, these definitions convey the following points:

Public policies are actions taken by the government, distinct from individual or private decisions of public officials, and are purposeful and goal-oriented, driven by intention rather than random behavior. These policies are authoritative, carrying legal binding power and legitimacy granted by the government. Furthermore, public policies have a broader impact than those of the private sector, as they affect a wider spectrum of the population. These characteristics illustrate the distinct nature of public policy and differentiate it from individual decision-making or private sector policies. Public policy is driven by objectives that outline the desired outcomes and identify the individuals or groups affected by the policy. These objectives guide the development of plans or programs that outline the necessary steps to achieve them, providing a roadmap for implementation. Dimock *et al.* (1983) argue that public policy involves prioritizing objectives, selecting measures to address them and providing justifications for these choices. Ikelegbe (2005) states that public policy "is a course of action and a programme of actions which is chosen

from among several alternatives by certain actors in response to certain problems." This implies that policy actors have multiple options to choose from, whether they are government entities, private organizations or individuals. Ultimately, public policy is directed towards addressing specific problems, making it an action or inaction taken by the government, private organizations or individuals (Arowolo and Egugbo, 2010). Public policy possesses several characteristics that distinguish it from other forms of decision-making. Dror (1973) highlights the following key characteristics of policy:

Choice: Public policy involves making significant choices or critical decisions by individuals, groups, or organizations. This implies that there are multiple policy alternatives to consider.

Prospectivity: Policies are projected courses of action or sets of decisions. They pertain to future actions and outline the intended or desired actions. Policies articulate a planned trajectory of action in relation to specific objectives or events in the real world.

Goal-orientation: Policies are directed towards the achievement of specific end states or objectives. They are driven by purposes or intentions, seeking to attain desired outcomes.

Problem-focused: Policies are grounded in addressing particular problems or problem areas. They are not abstract concepts but rather responses to challenges and pressures arising from the environment. Often, policies are designed to resolve existing or anticipated problems or fulfil specific needs.

Action-oriented: Policies entail taking action and require flexibility to adapt to changing societal desires and the socio-cultural environment. Ikelegbe (1996) adds that policies are course-setting actions that provide direction, guidance, and a pathway to achieve goals. They establish the framework within which present and future actions are taken. These characteristics collectively shape the nature and function of public policy, enabling it to serve as a dynamic and purposeful instrument in addressing societal challenges and achieving desired outcomes.

Public Policy Formulation

Policy formulation encompasses all the activities that occur prior to the official announcement or implementation of a policy by the government. According to Ikelegbe (2005:77), it involves the process of "identifying the policy problem, developing and analyzing policy alternatives, and selecting a preferred alternative." This definition aligns closely with the perspective of Egonwam (1991:5), who states that public policy formulation involves the following key elements:

Goal Formulation: This stage involves multiple groups with diverse and sometimes conflicting interests coming together to establish the desired objectives or outcomes of the policy. Various stakeholders contribute their perspectives and interests in shaping the policy goals.

Problem Identification and Delineation: It is crucial to identify and define the specific problem or issue that the policy seeks to address. This step entails conducting research, gathering data and analyzing the root causes and implications of the problem.

Agenda Setting: During this phase, individuals and groups exert influence to ensure that the identified problem gains attention and priority on the policy agenda. They engage in advocacy, lobbying, and other activities to shape the focus of policy decisions and garner support for their preferred policy approaches.

Seeking Policy Alternatives: Policymakers explore various options and alternatives to tackle the identified problem. They consider different strategies, approaches, and interventions that could potentially address the issue effectively. The consequences and potential outcomes of each alternative are carefully evaluated and assessed.

Making the Policy Choice: Ultimately, policymakers make a decision and choose a specific policy option among the alternatives. This decision is translated into various forms such as decrees, directives, laws, acts, or guidelines, depending on the legal and institutional framework of the governing system. Together, these steps and processes constitute the formulation stage of public policy, where goals are defined, problems are identified, alternatives are explored and a policy choice is made to guide subsequent implementation efforts. Undoubtedly, the process of public policy formulation described above portrays an ideal and rigorous approach. It involves the transformation of a localized social problem into a widespread public issue, capturing the attention of the government and prompting legislative action. The aim is to develop a policy that is well-considered, clear in its objectives and intended to serve the broader public interest. However, it is questionable whether public policies formulated by government officials in the country consistently embody these qualities. Instead, what often occurs is that public policies are shaped by the personal interests, moods and arbitrary decisions of these officials (Epelle, 2011:55). Consequently, this can lead to a misalignment of goals, weak political institutions and unsatisfactory policy outcomes.

Public Policy Implementation

Policy implementation is the stage where policies are brought to life and tested. As Eminue (2005) points out, this process is crucial for determining whether a policy succeeds or fails. It involves converting inputs — information, technical expertise, human resources — into concrete outputs, such as public services. Akindele *et al.* (2006) define implementation as the government's actions to turn laws into reality, which includes delivering services and allocating resources. Successful implementation requires robust administrative structures and political will. Public policy implementation is a critical phase in the policymaking process. Honadle and Klauss (1979) suggest that it is often seen as the downfall of policy designers, with plans going astray or failing to meet expectations, leading to disappointment. This is because policies are frequently derailed by administrative issues or failure to follow through, which undermines carefully crafted plans (Egonmwan, 1991). According to Ikelegbe (1996), implementation involves allocating funds, setting up structures, recruiting personnel, executing activities, and safeguarding intended outcomes. Essentially, it is the process of transforming resources, such as human capital and technical expertise, into tangible services and goods. The execution phase is crucial, as it is at this stage that political and administrative forces can distort the original intentions of policy designers. This makes a thorough analysis and assessment of the implementation process necessary for success. Ikelegbe (2005) emphasizes that the process includes allocating funds, building

administrative frameworks, recruiting personnel, managing activities, and ensuring that policy goals and services are protected. Addressing these factors increases the likelihood of achieving desired outcomes. Eminue (2005) identifies three interconnected concepts that are integral to policy implementation:

Tension: When a new policy is introduced with the aim of transforming an undesirable situation into a desired and improved state, it naturally generates tension within and among the administrative organizations responsible for implementation, the target groups and the broader environment. This tension can arise from various factors, such as a lack of necessary skills among personnel or resistance from the target audience. The effective management of this tension becomes pivotal in determining the degree of success in policy implementation.

Institutionalizations: The implementation of a new policy typically involves the establishment of institutional structures and mechanisms. This raises important questions about the long-term sustainability and survival of these institutions. The institutionalization of a policy ensures its integration into the existing systems and processes, thereby increasing the likelihood of its continued operation and impact.

Feedback: During the actual implementation of a new policy, the tensions that emerge can provide valuable feedback that informs further adjustments and refinements to the implementation process. This feedback loop allows for the incorporation of new demands, which are then processed and transformed into additional policies that must be implemented. This iterative process challenges the notion that policy formulation and implementation are completely distinct phases of activity, as noted by Adamolekun (1983). Pressman and Wildavsky (1984) argue that separating policy from its implementation can be harmful. Simply executing a policy without direction is ineffective. While policy formulation and implementation can be discussed separately, they should be closely aligned to ensure success, as emphasized by Egonmwan (1991). Without effective implementation, a policy remains an abstract set of guidelines or intentions. Policy implementation is the crucial bridge between policy goals and real-world outcomes, translating plans into concrete actions. As Ikelegbe (2005:83) states, policy implementation turns prescriptions into measurable outcomes and brings goals into reality. Thus, it serves as the vital link between policy formulation and its tangible effects, making the enforcement of actions essential for policy success.

Theoretical Framework

Elite Theory: The elite theory posits that societies can be divided into two distinct groups: a small group of individuals who possess power and occupy top positions in society by virtue of that power, and a larger group of individuals who lack social influence or power and are positioned at the bottom of the social hierarchy. The power-holding few in the first group exercise governance over the many in the second group. In light of this perspective, public policy formulation and implementation are seen as processes that primarily reflect the preferences and values of the governing or political elites. Consequently, the notion that public policy is a result of the demands of the people is considered more of a myth than a reality (Okereke, 1998:35). This theory, which gained prominence through scholars such as Vilfredo Pareto, Gaetano Mosca, and C. Wright Mills, assumes that the masses are generally

apathetic and lack sufficient knowledge about public policy, making it unreliable to rely on them to drive policy matters. Consequently, the responsibility falls squarely on the elites to initiate policies and disseminate them to the masses. In the Nigerian context, it is undeniable that the elite exert significant influence over the policy formulation and implementation processes. Often, it is the elites who wield the power to determine which policies are enacted in the country and who stands to benefit from them. Due to their shared consensus on certain social values, they actively work to undermine policies that are formulated without their input or are perceived to be against their class interests. This situation is exemplified by the anti-graft policy of the government, which has struggled to effectively curb corruption among the elite in the country. Despite the policy's intentions, the influence and resistance of the elite have hindered its success in combating corruption at that level.

Historical Overview of Public Policy Formulation and Implementation in Nigeria

The formation of Nigeria dates back to 1914 when Lord Frederick Lugard, the British Governor-General, amalgamated the northern and southern protectorates. However, Nigeria did not gain independence until 1960. Since then, the country has launched numerous policy initiatives aimed at national development, but these efforts often fall short due to poor execution. Policies introduced by one government are frequently abandoned by subsequent administrations, with little recognition of the successes of previous governments. In a developing country like Nigeria, public policy is vital as a catalyst for progress. The country has devised various developmental, economic, and social policies to propel it forward. The challenge, however, lies in the effective implementation of these policies, which has often been inadequate. Implementation in Nigeria is influenced by the interplay of administration, politics, and the involvement of the citizenry. Unfortunately, policymakers tend to overlook the importance of execution, creating a disconnect between the government and the public. This gap between policymakers and the people has led to policy failures and abandonment, causing significant hardship for citizens who are deprived of the intended benefits. Service delivery has been severely impacted. The societal stratification in Nigeria, as discussed by Adamolekun (1983), further complicates matters. Class struggles among the elite, along with inter and intra-party rivalries, ethnic divisions, religious disparities, and regionalism, all intensify the challenges. The absence of a direct link between the policymaking elite and the masses, who bear the brunt of ineffective policies, is a major issue. To bridge this gap, it is essential that Nigeria fosters inclusivity, transparency, and accountability in the policy process. Policymakers must prioritize the welfare of the people and ensure that policies are designed and executed with their needs in mind. Only through collaboration and a shared commitment to national development can Nigeria overcome the challenges of policy failure and deliver meaningful outcomes. A significant challenge in Nigeria is the lack of proper consultation with the public regarding policies. The masses are rarely involved in decision-making, and there is a lack of participatory governance that values their perspectives. Furthermore, policy continuity remains a problem, as new administrations often discard previous policies. This cycle of discontinuity hinders Nigeria's development and perpetuates the problem of policy failure. For example, Eleagu (2019) cited the agriculture sector as a case study. Between 1976 and 2001, several policies aimed at poverty alleviation were introduced, such as Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) in 1976, Free and Compulsory Primary Education (FCPE) in 1977, and the Green Revolution in 1980. Institutions like the People's Bank of Nigeria (PBN) and the Family Economic

Advancement Programme (FEAP) were also established. However, many of these initiatives failed due to corruption, lack of continuity, poor implementation, and inadequate supervision (Okoye and Onyeukwu, 2007, as quoted in Eleagu (2019). This pattern of renaming policies without sustained implementation has undermined their effectiveness, particularly in the agriculture sector. Corruption, discontinuity, and lack of oversight have further hampered progress, highlighting the importance of a consistent and coherent approach to policy implementation. Nigeria's inability to sustain and properly execute policies has contributed to its ongoing developmental challenges.

Naira Redesign and Treasury Single Account Policies

Naira Redesign: Public policy formulation and implementation are essential processes used globally to address societal challenges and improve the welfare of citizens. Public officials are tasked with designing policies to achieve two key objectives: institution-building and socio-economic progress. These goals are crucial for improving the well-being of individuals and society at large. By focusing on institution-building, policies aim to establish strong frameworks for effective governance and service delivery, while socio-economic policies seek to promote economic growth, reduce inequality, and foster social development. The ultimate goal is to align government actions with the aspirations of the people, thereby improving quality of life and societal outcomes. In October 2022, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) announced plans to redesign the N200, N500, and N1000 currency notes. The decision followed a two-decade period in which the existing notes had remained unchanged. This change was intended to address multiple issues, such as counterfeiting, corruption, kidnapping, money laundering, and other illicit financial activities that have hindered the nation's economic progress. Another significant concern was the large volume of cash transactions occurring outside the formal banking system, which impacted financial transparency. Advocates also saw the policy as a potential tool to reduce vote-buying during elections. The redesigned currency notes aimed to strengthen security features and make counterfeiting more difficult. Additionally, the CBN encouraged the use of digital transactions to reduce reliance on cash, thus improving financial inclusion and enabling better tracking of financial flows. The policy intended to address various challenges, including promoting a more efficient and transparent financial system, safeguarding currency integrity, and ensuring fair elections. While the initial announcement focused primarily on the introduction of new currency notes, it soon became clear that the policy had broader implications. It was not just a currency redesign but a move toward "demonetization." The CBN expected citizens to embrace electronic payment methods and reduce their dependency on cash. Given Nigeria's dual economy, with a significant informal sector, the use of cash is widespread.

In 2015, informal sector activities contributed 41.43% to GDP, and by 2021, around 80.4% of Nigerian employment was in this sector, according to the World Bank. This heavy reliance on cash reflects the financial needs of individuals in this sector. Surveys further highlight the pervasive use of cash. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reported that only 35.4% of women and 47.2% of men aged 15-49 had bank accounts in 2021. In states like Bauchi, Jigawa, and Kebbi, fewer than 8% of women had bank accounts, and many cited the lack of stable income as the reason for their reliance on cash. A separate survey by Enhancing Financial Innovation in Africa (EFINA) revealed that 100% of adults surveyed used cash for payments, while only 24% utilized digital payment methods. Additionally, 86% of

respondents received income in cash, with only 13% reporting digital income channels. These figures underscore the critical role cash plays in the daily lives of Nigerians, especially those in the informal sector. Despite the policy's focus on reducing cash usage, Nigeria's cash-to-GDP ratio has already been declining. In 2007, cash accounted for 11% of the money supply, but by 2022, this had reduced to approximately 5.6%. Similarly, cash's proportion of GDP fell from over 2% in 2007 to 1.67% by 2021. Comparatively, countries like the UK, US, China, and Japan have currency in circulation accounting for 3.5%, 7.5%, 9%, and 20% of their GDPs, respectively. This suggests that Nigeria was already moving towards digitalization before the currency redesign. However, the policy's implementation revealed significant weaknesses. The Nigerian Security Printing and Minting Company (NSPMC), responsible for printing currency, had a limited capacity to meet the demand. The company's printing capacity was reportedly only N200 billion, while approximately N2.73 trillion in cash was in circulation as of September 2022. This disparity, coupled with the rapid transition to digital platforms, overwhelmed key financial institutions like the Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement System (NIBSS), which lacked sufficient time to prepare for the surge in demand. The consequences of the policy's miscalculation were profound. Long queues at ATMs and bank counters, alongside frequent digital transaction failures, created significant challenges for Nigerians. The poor, particularly women, bore the brunt of these issues, as they are more likely to rely on cash for daily survival. The shift to digital payments, while commendable in principle, created substantial hardship for those who lacked access to banking infrastructure or digital platforms. While some of the policy's objectives—such as combating money laundering and vote-buying—may be valid, the economic costs, particularly for vulnerable populations, cannot be ignored. The unpreparedness of financial institutions, limited printing capacity, and insufficient public awareness of the policy's broader implications raised questions about the policy's overall effectiveness.

As Achebe (1983) noted, Nigeria's central issue is one of leadership. The country needs leaders with the determination to execute policies effectively. Political will must be a key factor in both the formulation and implementation of government policies. Policy execution has long been a challenge for developing nations, and Nigeria's experience with the currency redesign underscores the importance of careful planning, foresight, and the consideration of all segments of society when formulating public policy. The policy change, while well-intentioned, demonstrates that effective governance requires more than just the introduction of new policies. It necessitates understanding the socio-economic realities of the population, ensuring institutions are prepared for implementation, and assessing the full range of potential costs and benefits. The failure to do so in this case has highlighted significant gaps in policy execution, and the consequences for the Nigerian public have been substantial. Future policy initiatives should be designed with a comprehensive understanding of these complexities, ensuring that they are both feasible and inclusive.

Treasury Single Account (TSA): The Treasury Single Account (TSA) is an integrated system, officially introduced in Nigeria in 2012 under President Goodluck Jonathan's administration, aimed at consolidating and streamlining government bank accounts to provide a unified view of cash resources. This system is part of the broader personnel financial management (PFM) reform agenda, promoting transparency, accountability, and efficiency in financial transactions. In countries with fragmented banking systems, the TSA plays a crucial role in improving cash management by centralizing government revenue and ensuring that funds are not left idle in various commercial banks. The TSA policy aligns with Nigeria's broader

objective of curbing corruption and improving cash flow management. This has become particularly necessary due to declining revenues and increasing demands from the government to meet statutory obligations. The TSA aims to address the inefficiencies and potential for misconduct linked to manual payment processes and multiple bank accounts within Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs). By centralizing government funds, the TSA increases transparency and reduces opportunities for fraud. The TSA is a public accounting system that consolidates all government revenues, receipts, and income into a single account, typically managed by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). According to Adeolu (cited by Okoye and Okerekeoti, 2017), this approach eliminates the practice of maintaining idle funds in various commercial banks and enhances the reconciliation process for revenue collection and payments. While the origin and complete implementation of the TSA were difficult in Nigeria's unstable economic environment, its significance should not be underestimated. Initially, former President Jonathan's government faced criticism for not fully enforcing TSA implementation. Some argued that Jonathan either lacked the determination or was influenced by powerful bank executives and business figures. However, the arrival of President Buhari in 2015, known for his anti-corruption stance, marked a turning point. Under his leadership, revenue-generating agencies began complying by moving their accounts, including offshore accounts, from commercial banks to the Central Bank without additional government directives. Nigeria's TSA practices were designed to unify the government's banking arrangements, with the exception of agencies such as the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and the security sector. This unification ensures that all government revenues are deposited into the Federation Account, as required by Section 161(1) of the Nigerian Constitution, which mandates that government revenues (excluding certain funds) be placed in a special account.

The TSA initiative formally began in 2012, although its roots trace back to 2004 when plans were made to withdraw public sector funds from commercial banks as part of a broader bank consolidation policy. However, it was in 2016 that implementation was fully enforced, with the government requiring all MDAs to transfer their accounts to the CBN. A key part of the policy was the use of the REMITA payment portal, developed by SystemSpecs, which facilitates direct payments to government accounts via codes assigned to MDAs through the Government Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS). This transition to a centralized payment system has brought about significant improvements in fiscal transparency and accountability. The TSA has helped consolidate over 17,000 MDAs bank accounts, reducing bank charges by N4 billion monthly. Additionally, e-payment systems have streamlined the remittance process, providing clear guidelines based on each MDA's funding status, whether fully, partially, or self-funded. The implementation of TSA has already shown financial benefits. Following a successful pilot phase, Nigeria saved approximately NGN 500 billion through improved spending practices. The government intensified the TSA's full implementation due to its potential to enhance transparency, accountability, and revenue generation while reducing financial leakages. As part of this, the CBN issued strict directives prohibiting government agencies from operating bank accounts outside the oversight of the TSA. While the TSA has had notable successes, the implementation of both the TSA and the Naira redesign policies has faced challenges. These reforms were intended to combat corruption and establish a culture of accountability and transparency. However, the assumption that transparency would automatically lead to good governance underestimated the challenges posed by social behaviors, including resistance and sabotage.

The challenges encountered in implementing the TSA highlight the complexities of enforcing policies within Nigeria's diverse and often fragmented institutional framework. Despite these challenges, the TSA remains a vital step in improving Nigeria's financial management, fostering greater transparency, and curbing corruption. However, for it to achieve its full potential, continued efforts must be made to address the obstacles that hinder its effectiveness. These include resistance from certain sectors, inadequate institutional capacity, and the need for a comprehensive strategy to ensure the broader adoption and sustainability of the policy.

Factors Affecting Policy Formulation and Implementation in Nigeria

As stated by Cochran (2015), policy involves political decisions aimed at implementing programmes to achieve societal objectives. However, in developing countries, a significant challenge arises in the form of the implementation gap, which refers to the widening disparity between policy intentions and actual outcomes. This gap becomes evident as there is a growing divide between the stated policy goals and the realization of those goals. In Nigeria, the implementation gap stemming from policy formulation cannot be underestimated, as successive governments have formulated policies that prove to be unattainable throughout their tenures. Over the years, Nigeria has introduced well-designed developmental, economic and social policies with the aim of drifting the nation towards meaningful development. However, the flawed nature and approach to policy formulation and implementation in Nigeria have resulted in the failure of many policies to achieve their intended goals and targets. This includes a range of policies, such as but not limited to the following examples:

Inadequate Statistical Data on the Perceived Public Problem: In Nigeria, public policy is intended to address societal problems and improve the well-being of citizens. However, the formulation and implementation of policies often face challenges that hinder their effectiveness. One of the main obstacles is the lack of adequate statistical data to inform policy decisions. Policymakers rely on available data to design solutions, but in Nigeria, many policies are developed without sufficient information, resulting in misguided approaches. For instance, the Amnesty Programme aimed at resolving insecurity in the Niger Delta lacked data on the insurgents' number, activities, and resources, leading to its ineffectiveness in curbing hostility in the region. Without comprehensive statistical data, policies often fail to address the root causes of public problems, leaving them unresolved.

Poor Policy Focus and Objective: Another significant challenge is poor policy focus and objective setting. Public policies are supposed to tackle specific problems, but many Nigerian policies lack clear goals, making it difficult to achieve intended outcomes. Environmental factors, such as political pressures, interest group dynamics, and the absence of relevant information, can skew the policy formulation process. As a result, policies may deviate from their original objectives, complicating existing issues. For example, if policymakers do not clearly define objectives, their policies may become ineffective or exacerbate the problems they aim to solve.

Misconception and Misapplication of Policy Content: The misapplication and misconceptions surrounding policy content further undermine policy implementation. Often, those who stand to benefit from policies may misinterpret or distort their content, while

those who are adversely affected may resist compliance. The "Change Agenda" introduced by President Muhammadu Buhari is an example of a policy that faced opposition from political figures and bureaucrats who had benefitted from corrupt practices. These stakeholders hindered its implementation, demonstrating how vested interests can affect the successful realization of policy goals. Overcoming these misconceptions and conflicts of interest is critical to ensuring policies achieve their desired outcomes.

The Activities of Policy Actors in Policy Making and Implementation in Nigeria: According to Okeke (2001:78), the formulation and implementation of policies involve the collective efforts of various individuals and institutions within the state. Obi, Nwachukwu & Obiora (2008) further identify these individuals and institutions as policy actors, categorizing them into official actors and non-official actors. The official actors include branches of government such as the legislature, executive, judiciary and state agencies, while the non-official actors comprise political parties, pressure groups, interest groups, and influential individuals. These actors may have conflicting interests that complicate policy implementation. For example, the proposed Cattle Colony Policy, aimed at addressing challenges posed by cattle herders, has sparked disagreements among various stakeholders. Clashes between actors' interests and viewpoints can hinder the successful implementation of policies. To improve policy outcomes, it is essential to engage in dialogue and address the concerns of all involved parties.

Weak Political and Administrative Institutions: Weak political and administrative institutions also pose a significant barrier to effective policy implementation in Nigeria. Despite the existence of anti-corruption agencies such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), corruption remains pervasive, undermining governance and policy effectiveness. The inability of institutions to carry out their responsibilities compromises the achievement of policy objectives. To overcome this, Nigeria needs to strengthen its institutions, promote transparency, and enhance collaboration between agencies. By improving the functioning of key institutions, Nigeria can tackle corruption more effectively and achieve better policy outcomes.

Activities of Corrupt Politicians and Public Bureaucrats: According to Wilson (2018), the activities of corrupt politicians and public bureaucrats exacerbate the challenges facing policy implementation. These individuals often exploit their positions to redirect state resources for personal gain, undermining policies aimed at addressing societal problems. For example, corrupt politicians may resist policies that curb their ability to misuse public resources, instead promoting policies that perpetuate the status quo. Addressing this requires comprehensive anti-corruption strategies, focusing on strengthening institutions, promoting ethical behavior, and fostering a culture of integrity across the public service. Protecting whistle-blowers and ensuring the swift prosecution of corrupt individuals will also contribute to a more transparent and accountable government.

Political instability and inconsistency in Policy Making and Implementation

Political instability and inconsistency in policymaking further hinder the effectiveness of public policies in Nigeria. Successive governments often abandon the policies of their predecessors and introduce new ones, leading to policy discontinuity. This has been seen with initiatives like the Agricultural Development Program (ADP) and the National

Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA), which were abandoned after political transitions. The lack of policy continuity results in inefficiency, as new policies duplicate previous efforts rather than building on existing ones. A more strategic approach to policy development, which transcends political transitions, is needed to ensure long-term goals are achieved and policies remain effective.

Lack of Political Will to Make and Implement Policies in Nigeria

According to Roberts (2017), the lack of political will to implement policies is another obstacle. Political will refers to the determination and resolve of political leaders to take necessary actions, even if it means facing challenges or social costs. Unfortunately, many Nigerian leaders have demonstrated a lack of political will to address pressing issues. For instance, during the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo, the Independent Power Project (IPP) aimed to solve Nigeria's electricity crisis but failed to produce the desired results due to insufficient political commitment. Similarly, although Presidents Yar'Adua and Jonathan acknowledged the insurgency in the North East, they lacked the political will to effectively address the situation. Political leaders must demonstrate the resolve to implement policies and follow through on their commitments to achieve meaningful change.

Irregular Evaluation of Existing Policies

Irregular evaluation of existing policies also hampers the progress of public policies in Nigeria. Many policies are abandoned or duplicated without being properly evaluated to determine their effectiveness. A regular evaluation process is necessary to assess policies, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and make adjustments where needed. By conducting thorough evaluations, policymakers can improve existing policies and ensure resources are used efficiently. Evaluation helps policymakers understand what works and what does not, enabling them to make informed decisions and enhance the effectiveness of public policies. In conclusion, several factors contribute to the challenges faced by public policies in Nigeria. These include the lack of adequate data, poor policy focus, misapplication of policy content, weak institutions, corruption, political instability, and the absence of political will. To address these challenges, Nigeria needs to prioritize data-driven policy formulation, clear objectives, stronger institutions, and the resolution of conflicts of interest among policy actors. By fostering political will and ensuring regular policy evaluations, Nigeria can improve its policymaking process and achieve better outcomes for its citizens.

Consequences of Policy Catastrophes

Policy failures have far-reaching consequences that afflict both citizens and the country as a whole, giving rise to a host of catastrophes. These include:

Underdevelopment: Inadequate policy implementation hampers a country's ability to provide for its citizens and create employment opportunities. When citizens are deprived of basic necessities, they are unable to contribute effectively to the nation's growth and development. The state of a country's economy is directly reflected in the quality of life experienced by its citizens.

Decreased Patriotism: Continuous failures in policy implementation diminish citizens' interest and engagement in national affairs. The lack of progress and positive change resulting from failed policies can erode patriotism and reduce public trust in government.

Stagnant Human Capital: Public policies are intended not only to address societal problems but also to enhance human resources. Human capital is the key driver of national progress and prosperity. Policy failures hinder the development and improvement of human capital, impeding the overall advancement of society.

Resource Waste: Failed public policies represent a squandering of valuable human and material resources invested throughout the formulation and implementation processes. The entire policy-making process is a significant undertaking. When policies fail to achieve their intended outcomes, the extensive resources expended from formulation to implementation stages are wasted. These resources could have been utilized in other areas requiring attention and investment in the country. It is the people's shared resources, or the nation's commonwealth, that are utilized in policy making and implementation. Addressing these policy failures is crucial to mitigate the negative consequences they bring about. By ensuring effective policy implementation, countries can foster development, enhance citizens' well-being, encourage patriotism, invest in human capital, and maximize the efficient utilization of resources for the benefit of the nation as a whole.

Conclusion

In Nigeria, the main challenge lies not in the formulation of policies, but in their implementation. This complexity stems from various factors, including conflicting interests, which can lead to policy failures if not properly managed. The success of any government or administration ultimately depends on the development and effective execution of sound public policies. For public policy formulation and implementation to be successful in Nigeria, it is vital to recognize the importance of involving not just the elite but also the broader population. Engaging all stakeholders provides a more comprehensive understanding of societal needs, addressing the gaps and weaknesses in the current system. This inclusive approach ensures that policies are more responsive to the challenges and aspirations of the nation, fostering greater transparency, accountability, and a sense of shared responsibility. Additionally, robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are crucial to track policy implementation, measure outcomes and make necessary adjustments to improve effectiveness. Moving forward, Nigeria must prioritize the enhancement of policy implementation, considering it a collective concern that requires active participation from all sectors of society. With this inclusive approach and continuous evaluation, Nigeria can bridge the gaps in its policy framework, leading to more effective public policies and better outcomes for the country.

Recommendations

It has been observed that despite the lofty and painstaking policies usually formulated in Nigeria, little or no tangible outcomes have been achieved as they always tend to fall by the wayside. This is because the critical elements in both the internal and external environments and the implementation process account for the gap between goals and achievements. Nigeria has never lacked in planning, but the problem has always been achieving results. The Late Indian Prime Minister, Pandhit Nehru lamented on similar situation in India saying. We in the planning commission and others concerned have grown more experts in planning, but the real question is not planning but implementing the plans. That is the real questions before the country. I fear we are quite as expert at implementation as in planning (Eminue, 2005). Despite the formulation of ambitious and meticulous policies in Nigeria, the country

has struggled to achieve significant and tangible outcomes, as these policies often fail to materialize. The disparity between policy goals and actual achievements can be attributed to various factors within the internal and external environments, as well as shortcomings in the implementation process. Nigeria has consistently demonstrated its capacity for planning, yet the challenge lies in translating these plans into concrete results. This issue is not unique to Nigeria, as even the late Indian Prime Minister, Pandhit Nehru, expressed similar concerns about the implementation of plans in India. He emphasized that while expertise in planning has grown, the crucial question lies in effectively implementing these plans. Regrettably, our expertise in planning does not necessarily translate into equal proficiency in implementation (Eminue, 2005). It is essential to recognize that successful policy outcomes rely not only on planning but also on the efficient execution of those plans. Nigeria must address the gap between planning and implementation to achieve meaningful progress. By improving implementation strategies, enhancing coordination among stakeholders and addressing underlying challenges, Nigeria can bridge the divide and turn its well-conceived policies into tangible and transformative results.

Strategies to Improve Public Policy Formulation and Implementation in Nigeria

Generating Adequate Data/Records: Prior to formulating a policy solution, policymakers should gather comprehensive data and records on the underlying causes of the identified public problem. This data will inform policymakers about the problem's scope, causes, and the necessary policy direction for addressing it. This approach will contribute to more effective policy making and implementation in Nigeria.

Targeting Beneficiaries: Recognizing that a single policy plan may not be sufficient to meet the diverse needs of the population, it is beneficial to target specific groups for more focused policy implementation. Involving the target beneficiaries in the formulation stage allows them to contribute their insights and ensures that the policy directly addresses their concerns, fostering a sense of ownership and commitment.

Enhancing Interaction and Communication: Meaningful engagement with non-governmental organizations, professional bodies, the private sector, and civil society groups should be prioritized throughout the policy process. This collaboration fosters a more inclusive approach, incorporating diverse perspectives and expertise in policy formulation and implementation.

Implementing Effective Monitoring: Adequate mechanisms for monitoring policy projects should be established to prevent the issue of abandoned projects and to ensure that policy goals are realized. Regular monitoring and evaluation allow for timely adjustments and corrective actions, enhancing the overall effectiveness of policy implementation.

Providing Adequate Resources: Sufficient material and human resources necessary for policy implementation should be allocated. This includes allocating budgetary provisions, ensuring skilled personnel are available and providing the necessary infrastructure and tools for successful policy implementation.

Promoting Effective Communication: Effective communication between the policy implementers and the target beneficiaries is vital for successful policy programs. Clear and

transparent communication channels facilitate understanding, address concerns, and ensure the policy's intended outcomes are achieved.

Encouraging a Culture of Continuity: Discouraging the discontinuity of policies is crucial. National and state assemblies should enact laws that promote policy continuity to support long-term growth and development. Policies should only be discontinued when they are found to be ineffective or do not serve the best interests of the people.

Sustained Effort and Continuity: Implementing policy decisions requires substantial effort and should be treated as an ongoing process. Adequate resources must be allocated to ensure the implementation of relevant policies, moving from intention to action and ultimately achieving policy objectives.

Embracing Governance as a Continuous Process: Successive governments should view governance as a continuous process and prioritize the continuation of good policies inherited from previous administrations. This approach ensures the interests of the populace are served consistently and avoids unnecessary disruptions.

Regular Policy Evaluation: Regular evaluation of existing policies is essential for objective assessment, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and informing future policy making and implementation. Evaluations provide valuable insights and guide decision-making to enhance the effectiveness of policies over time. By adopting these strategies, Nigeria can improve public policy formulation and implementation, leading to better outcomes and sustainable development for the country and its citizens.

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