

Research

An Assessment of the Institutions Saddled with the Responsibilities of Policy Implementation in the Nigerian Economy in the Past Ten Years.

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Abstract: Effective policy implementation strategies are crucial for national development, as they directly impact the success of government initiatives and the achievement of societal goals, fostering socio-economic and political progress. Public policy making and implementation is a very critical area that both government and non-governmental organizations endeavour to make and implement for greater national development. It is the success and viability of the implementation or otherwise of a policy that determines the policy's sustainability and effectiveness. This study assesses the impact of public policy implementation strategies on national development using the Nigerian context. A set of socio-economic policies will be identified viz-a-viz the respective strategies of implementation Ministries/Department/Agency (MDA). Accordingly, both primary and secondary methods of data collection will be employed in this study, and relevant literature will be reviewed, and elite theory will be adopted as the framework of analysis. Content analyses, along with descriptive and inferential statistics, will be used in analyzing the data. Results will be presented in both tabular and graphical formats.

Keywords: Public policy, Policy implementation, National development, Nigeria, Ministries Departments and Agencies (MDAs)

Background of the study

Every country in the world, including Nigeria, has the desire and obligation to ensure the well-being of its population. This is accomplished through government-designed policies aimed at developing various societal sectors. Thus, Governments in both the developed and the developing parts of the world are constantly developing and evaluating their socio-economic policies to address these needs, as at when due, with the goal of

accomplishing the desired requisite growth and national development for the welfare of the populace. However, the fact remains that the process or strategies being adopted by the implementing Ministries/Departments/Agencies (MDA) have the potential of affecting the outcome either positively or negatively. Policy outcomes may tend to vary at both spatial and temporal scales with more successes seen in developed countries and less success in most countries of the developing part of the world (Olalekan, 2023). Thus, most countries in the developing world (especially Africa) are characterized by hunger, diseases and poverty due to poor successes recorded in the implementation of policies (Akinseye, 2025). The need to ensure that socio-economic policies are implemented to the latter is thus panacea for national growth and development of a national. These policies determine the activities of the government in the provision of services meant to solve problems (Oguejiofor, U. H., Obansa, S. J., Ihuoma, A., & Olushola, T. 2024). In most cases, public policies are developed by the executive arm of governments at the federal and states and Local Governments levels, while the legislative arm of government enacts the requisite laws (establishing) and setting out the processes and the jurisdictional boundaries of each MDA that will implement such each a policy (Osinuga, Raji, Asiyanbi, & Fadahunsi, (2025). For the fact that Nigeria, a country in west Africa, recognized globally as a leader in the socioeconomic and infrastructural development of the entire African continent, has long wished to develop its agriculture, education, health care, housing, transportation, communication, technology, infrastructure, commerce, banking, roads, and water sectors of her economy, it has become imperative to assess the impact of socioeconomic policies. This study will to seek to evaluate the successes, sustainability and viability of policy implementation in Nigeria.

Statement of problem

Public policy implementation has been described as a major problem confronting Nigeria in its effort to achieve national development. Implementations often turn out to be the graveyard of many policies. From all indications, very little attention is paid to the subject of policy implementation and evaluation thereof by policy makers. It is often taken for granted that once a policy is adopted by government, it is generally assumed that when the outcome of the implementation is bad, the policy is tagged a bad one and un-implementable, without recourse for the unavailability of funds and other implementation strategies as a possible cause of the failure (Akinseye, 2025); Bolaji, Gray & Campbell-Evans, 2015). Thus, in most cases little or no attention is paid to the problems

and complexities associated with execution of policies. Large amount of energy and resources are spent on designing and preparing plans for all kinds with little or no thought given to the complex chains of reciprocal repercussions just as can be seen in recent government's policy on the removal of the petrol subsidy and widening gap between intentions and results (Akinseye, 2025). This is a typical situation in Nigeria, where the intentions of designers of Policies are often underline by constellation of powerful forces of politics and administration coupled with prevalence of high-level corruption. The short-comings, difficulties and failures have affected major policies in developing countries, especially Nigeria. This study will help to channel the attention policy designers and implementers on the need for explicit planning, implementation and management of policies.

Research Questions

- i. Have the institutions saddled with the responsibilities of policies implementation in the Nigerian economy in the past ten years performed?
- ii. How have factors such as divergent interests, power games, future uncertainties influence the variations in the outcomes of policy implementations by MDAs in Nigeria?

Aim of the study

The main of aim of this study is to assess the impact of policy implementation strategies on national development. The specific objectives are to:

- i. To assess the institutions saddled with the responsibilities of policy implementation in the Nigerian economy in the past ten years.
- ii. Analyse how factors such as divergent interest, power games, and future uncertainties influence the outcomes of policy implementation in Nigeria.

Research Hypotheses

- i. Most policies have no specific department or agency of implementation and no clear-cut implementation strategies;
- ii. Most MDAs did not make any significant achievement in the implementation of Policies in Nigeria.

Scope of the Study

This study is limited to policy implementing structures and strategies been deployed towards meeting policy goals. Thus, only MDAs in the most active policies in the past ten years will be assessed.

Significance of the Study

Given the fact that this study will focus mainly on the examination of the various inputs, activities and outputs involved in the implementation of any given policy, its significance to both the socio-economic and academic sphere cannot be overemphasized. It will provide requisite information bordering on policies implementations orientation, sustainability plans, provisions of requisite funds, citizens perceptions and awareness.

Review of literature

Public discourse today is saturated with the advocacy or criticism of various policies in Nigeria especially the fuel subsidy removal by the present regime. It is common to hear of foreign policy, defense policy, economic policy, educational policy and policies in almost every area of government and private sectors. We also hear of policy statements, enactment of policies, and declaration of policy intentions and the commitments of millions of naira to the implementation of these policies but in most instances these policies fail to intended for which the policies were promulgated. The lives of citizens are affected and influenced by policies made by governments. Communities, social organizations, churches, labor groups, educational institutions, businesses and service organizations are all influenced by government policies. The provision of social services, the cost of fuel, the availability or non-availability of imported goods, the scope of the economic activities, and employment opportunities, the security of our jobs and tax reforms are all determined by government policies (Ikelegbe, 1994).

Olaoye, Al-Faryan, & Tabash, (2024) define policy as “actions and pronouncements of government on a particular matter and the steps taken to implement these actions”. He stated that since policies are operational statements of values, prescriptive intent, authoritative allocation of values among others, these values need to be conceded. Some of which include educational, economic, social and institutional values. According to him, policies need to be sure it relates to values. From the above, we could deduce that policies are decisions, aspirations, stance, plans and expectations. Though some policy statement can be based on considered judgment of top government functionaries very often, major policy statements are created by a careful study of the situation related to issue at stake.

Bivan & Abubakah (2023) see public policy implementation as “the stage where government (through its MDAs) executes an adopted policy as specified by the legislation or policy action”. In terms of policy evaluation, it is seen as the application of evaluation principles and methods in the examination of the content, implementation or impact of a

policy; it is the activity through which we develop an understanding of the merit, worth, and utility of a policy.

Wu and Hawlett, (2017) opined that policy failures are due to disproportionate attention to the various components of policy capacity. Accordingly, Wu and Hawlett, (2017) presented a conceptual framework for analyzing and measuring capacity based on competence and capabilities by identifying analytical competence, operational competence and political competence on the one hand and; individual capability, organizational capability and system resources levels on the other hand. Earlier in 1982, Schneider published a guide for the identification of the variables that should be included in the study of policy implementation, which focused on two main concepts:” those from which variables can be developed that measure the "amount" or "degree" of implementation and those that can be used to identify the aspects of a policy that need to be incorporated in the study of implementation.”

Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs)

MDAs are central to improving the effectiveness of the planning and development system. State policies and long -term proposals are implemented through Sector strategies prepared by MDAs. MDAs are thus expected to demonstrate the effectiveness of their development role through timely production of good quality data, Budget submissions, Performance Management Reports (PMRs), etc.

Attributes of Public Policy

Public policy has so many characteristics that make it to be unique in the eyes of many people. However, Abraham & Oba, (2018) offer us with the following characteristics of public policy:

- i.** A statement of intention in the form of goals and objectives to be accomplished
- ii.** A choice of action or selection of alternative strategies for achieving the objectives among various orientations by governmental organs.
- iii.** An exercise of authority by a governmental institution or political actor in a bid to achieve objectives
- iv.** A very complex exercise that is conducted amidst high degree of uncertainty, thus involving intelligent guesswork or hunches
- v.** A teleological or purposive action taken by governmental institutions or political actors, ostensibly aimed to achieve what is in the public interest

- vi. Action that requires flexibility in order to cope with changing desires of the people, shaped in consonance with their socio-cultural environment from the characteristics of public policy as seen above, one can rightly observe that in most instances, government involve itself in guesswork in the course of trying to formulate certain policies. This could be true because often time's government take decision without empirical data or scientific tools before arriving at certain policy-decisions

Theoretical Framework

The discussion in this article is linked to institutional theory. Institutional Theory examines how structures, norms, and rules within organizations influence their behavior and how they operate within a broader social and cultural context. This theory is particularly relevant for understanding the dynamics of public sector organizations and how they adapt to changes, implement policies, and build capacity. The study employs Institutional Theory to analyze the challenges and dynamics of policy implementation and capacity building in Nigeria's public sector. It explores how historical legacies, colonial administrative structures, and contemporary governance challenges shape organizational behavior and practices. The theory emphasizes the importance of legitimacy and compliance, suggesting that Nigerian public institutions strive to align with global standards such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to gain credibility. Institutional isomorphism is evident as these institutions adopt successful practices from other governments. The article also highlights path dependency, where historical policies continue to influence current practices, and calls for innovative reforms to improve public sector performance by integrating new technologies, enhancing training programs, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement and ethical governance.

Study area

The study will cover six MDAs. Structured questionnaires will be distributed and interviews will be carried out on the selected MDAs. The study will focus on Federal Ministry of Education, Federal Ministry of Health, National Drug Law enforcement Agency, National Agency for Food and Drug Administration, National Ecological Maintenance Agency and National Center for Disease and Control.

Research Methods

This study will adopt the causal survey approach with a blend of qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate the impact of policy implementation strategies on national development. A mix method approach involving both qualitative and quantitative

techniques will be used in this study. In terms of the qualitative research design, MDAs survey will be conducted. In terms of quantitative design, questions will be asked on how strategies adopted by MDAs affect the outcome of a given policy for descriptive and inferential analysis.

Sample Selection and Size

The target population for the study consists four hundred staff selected from Ministries, Departments and Agencies constitutionally saddled with the tasks of implementing public policies in Nigeria.

Sources and Instruments of Data Collection

The instruments of data collection for this study are a questionnaire. The questionnaire will be used to collect data on MDAs. Other secondary sources of data will come from extant literature on public policies, institutions and processes.

Data Analysis and interpretation

Research Question 1: How have the institutions saddled with the responsibilities of policies implementation in the Nigerian economy in the past ten years?

S/N	Items	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	The level of infrastructure development in Nigeria is adequate.	100	120	50	70	60
2	Rural communities in Nigeria have seen improvements in access to healthcare.	130	100	40	80	50
3	Educational facilities in rural areas have significantly improved in recent years.	90	140	60	60	50
4	Agricultural productivity has improved due to government initiatives.	120	130	50	50	50
5	National poverty rates have decreased due to public policy interventions.	110	130	40	60	60

Types of Public Policies

S/N	Item	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	Public policies effectively address the needs of development in Nigeria.	30	50	70	100	150
2	Investment levels in Nigeria are sufficient to promote sustainable development.	50	70	60	120	100
3	The government plays a significant role in implementing public policies for national development.	40	30	60	110	160
4	There are adequate resources allocated to various sectors involved in national development.	60	80	50	90	120
5	Barriers to effective policy implementation are being adequately addressed.	70	60	80	90	100

Model	R	R square	Adjusted Square	Std. error of the estimate	R square change	F change	Df1	Df2
1	0.999	0.997	0.997	0.16548	0.997	1.43E+05	1	398

The regression analysis for Objective 1 shows an unusually strong association ($R = 0.999$) between various types of governmental policies (independent variable) and rural development in Nigeria (dependent variable). This suggests that changes in governmental policies are strongly related to differences in rural development outcomes. The R-squared value of 0.997 indicates that public policies account for about 99.7% of the variation in rural development, suggesting a high level of explanatory capability. The adjusted R-squared value of 0.997 confirms the model's robustness even after accounting for the number of predictors. A low standard error of 0.16548 indicates that forecasts are reliable. The significant F-change value ($1.430E5$) with a p-value of 0.000 supports the model's statistical significance. Given the p-value is less than 0.05,

Result

The analysis of Objective 1 demonstrates a good association ($R = 0.999$) between different forms of public policies and rural development outcomes in Nigeria, with an

R-squared value of 0.997. This shows that public policies account for roughly 99.7% of the variability in rural development, emphasizing their importance in rural progress. The adjusted R-squared of 0.997 and minimal standard error support the model's precision. With a p-value of 0.000, the null hypothesis is rejected, demonstrating that public policies have a significant multi-sectoral impact on rural development. This finding is consistent with Demirgüç-Kunt et al. (2022) and Ghosh (2021), who underlined the importance of good public policy in fostering rural economic growth.

Summary of findings of research question 1

The research in Objective 1 demonstrates a very strong connection ($R = 0.999$) between different types of governmental policies and rural development results in Nigeria. This significant association indicates that public policies account for about 99.7% of changes in rural development, underscoring their crucial multi-sectoral effect.

Research question 2: Analyze how factors such as divergent interest, power games, and future uncertainties influence the outcomes of policy implementation in Nigeria.

Thematic analyses

The first theme is the clarity of policy objectives. Most commands are given without understanding the bigger goals. Instructions are simply followed without considering the eventual purpose. Policy documents are frequently overly complicated and not simplified for implementers. Most of the time, the public hears that programs are being implemented; however, no one explains what they are actually intended to achieve. "Tracking policy implementation progress is very impossible without a clear grasp of the policy aims.

Uncertain policy communication leads to misinterpretation, low effectiveness, and inadequate accountability in execution.

Theme 2:

Stakeholder engagement. Some stakeholders are never consulted in planning; we are only notified once implementation begins. "People in the community feel excluded; they do not own the programs, so they do not care about them. If stakeholders, particularly traditional rulers, are consulted, cooperation will improve. Engaging stakeholders early would have helped to avoid the resistance we encountered during the deployment. Limited engagement leads to limited community buy-in, reducing policy sustainability and contextual relevance.

Theme 3:

Resource Allocation. Funds are released late, and sometimes the resources are misappropriated. Logistics especially vehicles are mostly insufficient one vehicle is shared between three or more departments; how can delivery of services be effective? The resources allocated on paper are different from what is received in reality. It often said the government is working, but people still fetch water from streams.

Interpretation Insufficient and mismanaged resources undermine implementation efforts and delay essential service delivery.

Theme 4:

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). There are no standard monitoring tools available. we just rely on field visits and word of mouth. There is no follow-up after programs are launched. Reports are sent, but there are no feedbacks or evidences of review. Modalities should be given to rate the services received, but that does not exist.

Interpretation Weak M&E systems hinder feedback, learning, and adaptive improvements in policy execution.

Theme 5:

Administrative Capacity. “Some of the staff of the policy implementing MDAs don’t even understand how to write reports; there’s a huge skills gap. MDA staff work with volunteers because they don’t have enough trained personnel on the ground. Regular training is needed to acquaint the MDA staff on how to cope with evolving responsibilities and technology. The health center in our ward operates with just one nurse who doubles as a cleaner.

Interpretation Building human and institutional capacity is crucial for implementing and sustaining effective service delivery systems.

Discussion of findings of objective 2

The results of this study show that unclear policy objectives, inadequate administrative frameworks, and low stakeholder involvement seriously impede policy implementation in Nigeria. Participants frequently underlined that policies are frequently passed down from higher levels of government without sufficient justification, leaving local authorities and implementers unsure of the objectives and standards. This is consistent with Olowu's (2025) observations that successful implementation of top-down policy directives is often hampered by their lack of clarity and grassroots engagement. Additionally,

Abraham & Oba (2018) noted that excluding community stakeholders and frontline employees' lowers commitment and prevents ownership of local development projects. Mismanagement of resources and insufficient monitoring and evaluation systems have been recognized as additional important issues. Even while policies are created with the best of intentions, their implementation is frequently hampered by inadequate logistics, a lack of personnel, and delayed fund distribution. This result corroborates the findings of Bivan & Abubakah's (2023) analysis, which highlighted institutional inefficiencies and inadequate resource allocation as major obstacles to local policy implementation. Olaoye Al-Faryan & Tabash (2024) also emphasized the significance of responsive governance structures and real-time input, without which inefficiencies continue. The absence of communication channels for reporting service gaps was a source of irritation for community members in this study; Olofin & Orisadare (2024) also noted this issue in their study on the provision of education services.

Lastly, the study emphasizes how crucial bureaucratic responsibility and political will are to the effectiveness of policies. Participants observed that political interests regularly cause initiatives to be halted or manipulated, and that mediocrity and corruption are encouraged when there are no repercussions for poor performance. This is consistent with Olowu's (2025) conclusions that a key factor in successful policy results is persistent political commitment. Furthermore, Özekin (2024) stressed that in order to match execution with policy goals, open leadership and accountability structures are essential. In order to close the gap between policy goals and actual service delivery in Nigerian, these findings collectively advocate for institutional reforms, participatory governance, performance-based management, and accountability systems.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

In Nigeria, it is evident that the planning, programming and implementation of the policy and programs suffer grossly from planning inconsistency and weak organizational structures due to political instability, and over centralized mechanism of decision making and execution. This has greatly affected the focus of vibrant policies that may have had significant impact on the development of the nation. In order to achieve the execution of more vibrant policies, the following should be adopted by implementing institutions: Policy goals should not be robust, rather, they should be formulated in relation to developmental needs and realities of the target population. The citizens should be allowed to participate actively in the policy processes, as this will bring about a higher level of

commitment from various parties involved at the implementation stage Effective implementation can only be achieved through accountability, thus, the accountability of implementing institutions can only be guaranteed if the welfare of the personnel is guaranteed by the government.

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