
Formal Processes, Political Attitudes and Multiple of Interpersonal Relations in Policy Programmes Implementation in Nigeria: A Contentional Discourse 1980 – 2019

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Abstract

This paper examines variables such as: formal processes, political attitudes, multiple of interpersonal relations as they affect policy programmes implementation in Nigeria as a developing country. It is purely an exploratory discourse in terms of methodology, which relies on secondary and archival data. The paper concludes that policy programmes in Nigeria are shaped by formal processes, political attitudes, multiple of interpersonal relationships at the implementation stage, which often results at policy failure. It recommends increase in training for public policy experts to foster implementation as well as political socialization and re-orientation to ginger policy acceptance and support.

Keywords: Policy, programme, implementation, political attitude, inter-personal relations, formal processes.

INTRODUCTION

Policy implementation is one of the most important units of policy process. It is the stage that gives policy a physic with which it can be critically examined. Public policy according to Jenkins in Egonmwan

(1991: 3) is defined as "a set of interrelated decisions by a political actor or group of actors concerning the selection of goals and the means of achieving them within a specified situation where those decisions should, in principle be within the power of those actors to achieve". This definition viewed policy as decisions and actions, policy implementation which is the main focus of this paper to Egonmwan (1991:5) involves the translation of goals and objectives of policy into concrete achievements through various programmes.

The persistent failure of public policy at all governmental levels (federal, state and local) in Nigeria shows that there are certainly problems in the policy process which hindered the success of public policy. Adamolekun (1936:143), and Egonmwan (1991: 4) itemized and explained the three stages in policy process to include policy formulation, implementation and evaluation. The formulation stage is where government takes decisions as to what is to be done and how it is to be achieved while the evaluation stage evolves round comparison between intended outcomes of policy and actual achievements on basis of experience gained during implementation (Egonmwan, 1991). From the definitional explanation it could be easily inferred that policy problems are principally fashioned at the formulation and implementation stage. The focus of this paper is to assess the contention that implementation of policy programmes in Nigeria is conditioned and limited by "formal processes, political attitudes, and multiple of interpersonal relationships". Primary interest is specifically on policy implementation with particular reference to Nigeria.

This paper aims at addressing the question above and expose the various problems and limitations of policy at the implementation stages. It is significant to the extent that the paper will contribute immensely to contemporary knowledge on public policy by illustrating various governmental programmes and policy in Nigeria within the scope and direction of the discourse. Methodologically, the paper is a review discourse, relying on secondary materials from texts, newspapers, journals, etc.

AN OVERVIEW OF POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

When a policy has been established, what is done next is the implementation of the said policy. Adamolekun's (1986:152) examination of the policy process revealed that there are four basic components of policy implementation, which is equally supported by Adebayo (1986:50), Egomowan (1991:217) and Okigbo (1993:63).

There are:

1. Clarity and specificity of goals of public policy to be implemented.
2. The issue of implementation organisation
3. Target group to be affected by the policy to be implemented.
4. Finally, the environment within which the actual implementation process takes place.

Before going into the actual problems and limitations of policy implementation process generally and in Nigeria specifically, it is appropriate to first of all examine these four main components of policy implementation. In any policy, if the policy goals are not properly specified and made clear, the executor of such policy may likely lack policy focus and direction thereby following paths that may not likely lead to the realization or actualization of policy programmes.

There is also a need for governmental bureaucratic organization for the implementation of public policy. It may be a new or an existing institution. In terms of existing institution, the armed forces and defence policy, or people bank and poverty alleviation policy. What is necessary are institutional structural comparability with policy nature, its personnel quality and fitness, leadership of the organization and institutional capacity to inclement programmes.

Also, is the issue of target group, which is simply the group most affected by the policy. For instance, the National Housing Policy is directly targeted at low and medium income earners (who constituted the target group). The main questions here are concerned with degree of mobilization and organisation of the target group; the leadership of the target group, their prior experience, and response to policies.

Fourthly are environmental factors which can influence and be influenced by the policy implementation. Egonmwan (1991: 222)

looked at this as a sort of constraining corridor through which the implementation or policy must be forced, which to him include cultural, social, economic and political environment. This environmental interplay with target group induces tension which may result in policy change, or adjustment. It is in line with this that Adamolekun (1986:153) states that “the formulation and implementation of policies are not completely distinct phases of activity; there is no definite end to the policy implementation process”. This proved that policy at the stage of implementation can be reformulated as earlier noted as policy change or adjustment.

As noted in the preamble, Nigerian public policy when evaluated, most often moves in the direction of policy failure. At implementation stage, problems and limiting conditions set in that result in this policy failure. This paper with regards to the question, limits analysis of policy limitation and conditional problematic to implementation stage are critically examined below.

PROBLEMS AND LIMITATIONS OF POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN NIGERIA

In view of the public policy implementation processes highlighted and explained above, what variation of problems and conditions limits overall policy success in Nigeria? The central question posed the conditions and limitation to be: Formal processes, political attitudes, and multiple of interpersonal relationships. This is viewed principally as a classificational scheme with which public policy implementation problems in the developing society and Nigeria in particular can be discussed, which clearly followed inadequacies in the components of policy implementation stage and the tension induced by environmental interplay with target groups. Hence, the formal processes are institutional problems and conditions limiting policy implementation in Nigeria, while political attitudes and multiple of interpersonal relationship are congruent with other socio-political and economic conditions and limitations. Comparing this semantics approach, Egonmwan (1991) rather focused on external and internal limitations and conditions for policy implementation in Nigeria.

Egonmwan (1991:242) listed the following conditions and limitations:

1. Inadequate definitions of goals;
2. Overambitious policy goals;
3. Lack of well-defined programmes for attainment of goals;
4. Choice of inappropriate organizational structure in implementation of policies;
5. Lack of continuity in commitment to policy;
6. Lack of clear definition of responsibility;
7. Political opposition during implementation;
8. Compromises during implementation capable of defeating policy purposes;
9. Political insensitivity to demands;
10. Factor of timing in implementation; and
11. Corruption.

All these to Egonmwan (1991) form the internal limitations to policy implementation. The external limitations on the other hand affect the entire policy process. But they generally include: Debt problem; balance of payment deficit and political economy constraint of dependency syndrome.

This paper will critically examine these conditions under the following headings: Formal processes limitations; political attitudinal limitations and multiple of interpersonal relationships.

Formal Processes Limitation:

In identifying formal processes that condition and delimits policy implementation in Nigeria, Adamolekun (1986:154) talks about judicial and legislative conditioning of public policy implementation process. For instance when the Supreme Court declared the 1981 Revenue Allocation Act null and void, the court decision automatically nullified the implementation of the act, so also was the appropriation Bill of 1982 based on the act rendered unrepresentable to the National Assembly. In terms of legislative conditioning, I consider the establishment of State Assemblies of policy implementation monitoring committees which carry out legislative oversight of the public policy implementation process.

Agabi (1999: 18-35) in his study of implementation of development plan which is a major public policy instrument,

identified the formal processes as the main determinants of policy implementation in third world countries in general and Nigeria in particular, to include: unavailability of data and error in data, lack of information, low administrative capacity, lack of fund, sectorial fragmentation, poor technical design and inability to identify action (strategy) to achieve policy target. This requires further analysis within Nigeria context.

Policy implementation in Nigeria is severely handicapped by widespread lack of information. There is a lack of reliable and up-to-date information about what is going on in the country. For instance, policy formulation based on such domestic data sources like census or Nigeria election results are purely unreliable due to fraud in the various data collection processes. Currently, the Nigeria poverty alleviation policy is seriously being slowed down at implementation stage due to lack of poverty level data like unemployment in Nigeria. The 2019 presidential election and rejection of results by opposition is a mark of identification.

Public bureaucracies are so fragmented to the extent that it is often difficult to identify specific institutions where government policy can be implemented. A clear example of this is the conflict between Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria and Federal Mortgage Finance Limited in the management of the National Housing Fund which is the lifeline of the National Housing Policy implementation. One can also examine this problem in the armed forces in terms of functional (role) conflict between various organizational institutions like Army, Navy or Air-force. There is role conflict between Army, Marine and Navy, and also Naval aviation and Air force. This institutional segmentation in the armed forces affects the implementation of defence policy in Nigeria. The current Social Investment Policy of Buhari government from 2015 to present day lacked institutional backup to the extent that the Vice President is carrying out implementation which today impedes upon federal balance in Nigeria (Bassey, 2012).

The administrative capacity of our public bureaucracies is not fully developed. This can be viewed from the perspective of personnel quality in terms of training and development, it can be viewed from the organizational capacity in terms of equipment and installations.

All these are grossly lacking. One cardinal problem in itself which affects this capacity building is lack of fund. For example, poor management of fund and its inadequacy in implementation of National pension Policy in Nigeria (Bassey, Akwaji and Abonor, 2015).

Policy makers more often than not always use inappropriate models and techniques which do not fit into Nigeria policy environment. Sometimes the institution implementation lack linkage with policy direction, due to historical evolution of such establishment may be as Instrument of colonialism. For instance, the Nigerian armed forces are product of colonialism which serves the interest of colonial overlords. It is very difficult to subject such institutions after independence to policy direction at variance with that of the mentor, which explained why Nigeria in foreign military engagement always follows Western alliance system in terms of collective security. This situation is also revealed in economic development policies as it pertains to the activities of multinational corporations in Nigeria (Bassey, Bisong and Omono, 2013).

Policy formulators also do not atimes express clear policy objective or direction. This affects policy implementation greatly, resulting in lack of focus and probably deviation from initial policy direction.

Political Attitudes and Multiple of Interpersonal Relations

Another major limitation which conditions policy implementation is political attitudes of policy maker, and policy executors. Agabi (1999: 28) expressed the views that the successful implementation of any policy strategy is dependent on political support and in most cases only those policies which do not threaten the main political elites are accepted for implementation. Support from the head of government is crucial for the success of policy, if this support is not forthcoming, priorities identified by the policy makers will be ignored, and agency heads will bargain for funds directly with the Chief Executive to execute the policy, failure of which totally circumvent the policy implementation process.

Another dimension of looking at how political attitude and multiple of interpersonal relations conditioned public policy

implementation in Nigeria is to examine the environmental factors that influenced public policy implementation in Nigeria. Egonmwan (1993: 222) considered the ecology of policy as those factors which can be thought of as a sort of constraining corridor through which the implementation of policy is forced. He further explained that different policies are implemented in differing cultural, social, political and economic conditions.

The political culture is one major factor to be considered in policy environment which condition policy response and tension which permits successful policy implementation. Almond and Verba in the classic work “Civic Culture” in Egonmwan (1993: 179) defined political culture as “the specific political orientations, attitude towards the political system and its various parts, and the role of the self in the system”. Verba and Almond typology of political culture into parochial, subject and participant expressed that Nigeria and other developing countries are within the scope of subject, participant political culture where there exists low cognition of citizens and opportunity for participation in policy process. This condition in no small measure affects the policy implementation process in terms of policy input and feedback from the political environment of the policy system. This alienation from the citizenry resulted in high lobbying sub-culture of the public bureaucracy and the instability culture of the political-administrative class. The implication of these conditionalities on policy implementation is continuous policy discontinuity and policy change and adjustment which do not enhance the realization of policy objective earlier formulated. Organisational culture also influence policy implementation success or otherwise. The effect of industrial socialization and organizational culture internalization by employees affect organizational policy positively and negatively, based on the level of industrial socialization by employees (Bassey, Attah and Bassey, 2012: 129).

Socio-economic conditions come from the environment and influence policy implementation through various sector variables as put up by Egonmwan (1993: 184) to include: Effects of population growth, health gap, external debt situation, and external capital flows. The social environmental variables like health gap, rapid population growth and urbanization exert budgetary pressure from

government, and deplete fund available for implementing other public policies. The structure of our economic relations of dependence does not allow the implementation of policies that depart from policies of the countries we depend on in one direction or the other. For instance, the defence policy in Nigeria cannot depart from that of the country Nigeria in procuring arms (Ekoko and Vogt, 1990).

In order to understand fully the multiple of interpersonal relationships that shape public policy implementation in Nigeria, it is important to look at other crucial actors in the policy making scene. Egonmwan (1993:198) identified two classes of actors who through the context of their personal behaviour and interaction with one another alter policy from its prescribed direction at the implementation stage. These are the primary policy makers and the supplementary policy makers. As earlier noted under legislative influence in the discussion on formal institutional limitations, this issue constituted a perpetual flux.

The primary policy makers have direct constitutional authority to engage in the policy process, for example, the members of National Assembly and State Houses of Assembly during the Second Republic. The President and his aids, the administrators and the judges also contribute substantially and formally either primarily or supplementary. This group of actors brought in their personal interest which atimes may conflict with the core national interest which guided the policy implemented. If this situation arise there is bound to be policy failure. Looking at the current issue of Sharia legal system in the Northern State (Zamfara, Kano and Niger). The decision of the National Council of State which embodied our national value, is sharply criticized by some very members of the council who interpreted the constitutional provision differently. This singular deviation is due to the personal religious bias and ethno-ideological stand of those personalities involved (Alhaji Shehu Shagari and the Governors of the pro-sharia states).

Any discussion on ecological influence on policy implementation is not complete without mentioning the technological environment. In so far as Nigeria is concerned, out technological base is zero and most public policy is development oriented. Our continuous believe on technological transfer is a myth leading to

perpetual technological dependence. Any country depending on foreign technology cannot achieve success in developmental policy implementation. This is why the first, second, third and fourth National Development plans and the various rolling plans failed.

PROSPECT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Most of the National policy mentioned in this paper did not survive beyond implementation. The question arising is: How can Nigeria achieve success in her policy implementation process.

Our policy makers and planning experts must be adequately trained in the art of policy analysis. This will give guide and the necessary know-how to help forecast on possible implementation obstacles and how to ameliorate them.

It is appropriate to examine our political culture and take necessary steps to improve citizens' cognition about the political world through various political socialization agencies, to ensure effective participation of citizens in the policy process.

There should be a re-orientation from external economics direction to inward looking approach. This will help in the reduction of policy problems arising from our foreign economic relations.

There should exist a strong national consciousness which will develop beyond the realms of ethno-religious value penetration in order to prevent personal and other parochial interest overriding our core national interest or context specific value.

CONCLUSION

This paper explains the policy implementation process, examining the various components in implementation stage of public policy. An overview was given of the context of the Nigerian decision making arena and the various factors that conditioned or influenced effective policy implementation was also given. Emphasis was led on the peculiar ecological tensions militating against policy success as they hinder effective policy implementation.

The need for overhauling the policy machinery was also highlighted and recommendations given towards the improvement of the various conditions which explained policy failure.

In conclusion, implementation of policy programmes in Nigeria is conditioned and limited by formal processes, political attitudes, and multiple of inter-personal relations and that other factors external to local environment also conditioned policy implementation.

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