

Understanding Policy Responses for a Sustainable Post-COVID-19 Recovery in Nigeria: Implications for SDG:3

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Abstract

This article reviews recent literature on post pandemic recovery policy in Nigeria with respect to sustainable health. To date, this area has received less analysis despite being relevant to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG:3 (Good Health and Wellbeing). Building on institutional capacity and sustainable development framework, the study examined the patterns of policy response to post COVID-19 recovery in Nigeria to understand its effectiveness in relation to sustainable health. Through a structured survey instrument, data were collected from a nationally representative sample of 350 Nigerians from the age of twenty years and above drawn from a cross-section of purposively selected participants from the country's six geopolitical zones. The aim is to determine their knowledge of effective state policy response for a sustainable post COVID-19 recovery. Findings suggest that while the majority of the respondents were familiar with the pandemic, they, however, were not aware of any substantial post pandemic recovery policy of the Nigerian government and its effectiveness. To fill this gap the study made alternative policy recommendations including but not limited to inclusiveness and economic diversification.

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Background to the Study

The recent out- break of COVID- 19 has had complex adverse effects both on the developed and developing countries. With the intense health problems arising from the pandemic, it appears that the understanding of post pandemic policy response of the Nigerian government is essential. Such trend is particularly important to deepen the understanding of the complex linkages between post pandemic recovery and sustainable health. This has attracted recent scholarly attention as well as media discourses focusing on what appears to be an unprecedented era in the chronicles of Nigeria's health system (World Bank, 2020; Onuigbo, 2021; Jeremiah,2021; UN,2021). Many of these studies, however, have tended to overlook the significance of sustainable health in the attainment of Agenda 2030 in Nigeria and indeed the developing countries – a gap that extends to the mainstream theorizations in global health discourses- that emphasize post pandemic interventions based on the socio-economic and existential realities of the high-income countries believed to have been more adversely impacted (Nixon,2020).

Such lopsided view- points have accounted for a new research agenda to explore issues of post pandemic policy response in the global South. The pandemic has placed Nigeria, Africa's largest economy at a critical juncture. The country entered the crisis with falling per capita income, high inflation, and governance challenges (Aisen, Rahman and Yao, 2021). Recent scholarly interest to review state policy response on post pandemic recovery in Nigeria has become more important in contexts linked to the understanding of sustainable health and to fill important policy gap as mainstream debates have not given the developing countries adequate attention (Pereira, M., & Oliveira, A. 2020; Kibrom, A. et al, 2021). Critical for understanding the federal government's post pandemic response is the evidence provided by recent report of the Nigeria Center for Disease Control (NCDC), (2021) which showed the figures of COVID -19 infection across number of deaths, hospitalized, discharged, and quarantined as at August 2021 as follows; confirmed cases 187,588; active cases 16,494, discharged cases 168,818, samples tested 2,727,834 and death 2,276 (NCDC, 2021).

These have been the fundamental basis to interrogate patterns of state post pandemic policy response. For instance, recent report of the NCDC points out the complex ways COVID -19 have undermined Nigeria's health sector and overall socio-economic development. The foregoing combined to fuel persistence of post pandemic challenge as there appears to be post pandemic economic hardship across various sectors in Nigeria. Cadell, (2020), aptly described this as 'grief in the time of COVID-19'.

The vulnerability of the people to complex health challenges an attribute of poverty and underdevelopment, is traceable to several factors: such as poor health facilities, recent and ongoing insecurity following the emergence of Boko Haram terrorism in the north east in the late 2000s, the killings and criminality of herdsmen, and more importantly the recent status of Nigeria as the world poverty capital by the Brookings Institute (Kharas, Hamel and Hofer,2018),which contrasts Nigeria's oil wealth and its position as Africa's largest economy. These are some of the critical elements in the understanding of the contradictions of the political system especially in contexts linked to post pandemic policy response.

To capture the significance of post pandemic recovery policy, it is necessary to examine the various key processes and dynamics through which such policies have been either effective or otherwise in line with institutionalizing sustainable health. By locating Nigeria's post pandemic recovery policy response in the more extended context of sustainable health, this paper aims to make a new contribution in the broader literature and scholarship on post pandemic recovery and deepen the scope of study on post pandemic recovery in the context of sustainable development .

Nyong, Bapna, Jaeger and Clarke (2021), identify the potentials of Nigeria toward a sustainable COVID-19 recovery. Similarly, Jeremiah, (2021), highlights the need for policy makers to take caution over post-COVID-19 recovery plans which could be both transformative and essential for socio-economic, and political regeneration especially in relation to rebuilding and preserving human health. The World Bank (2020) discusses post pandemic recovery as a useful proxy for reinvigorating both the health sector and overall human wellbeing embodying building individual and institutional capacities in post pandemic era. This is crucial especially against the background of Nigeria's frail health sector. The Joint External Evaluation (JEE) of Nigeria's International Health Regulations (IHR) report of June 2020 showed that Nigeria performed poorest in its ability to respond to public health risks with an average score of 1.5 across 20 indicators. Each indicator receives a score of 1 to 5, where 1 is no capacity and 5 is sustainable capacity. The JEE is an independent, collaborative multi-sectoral effort, based on a country mission to capture a country's capacity to prevent, detect and respond to public health risks.

Against this backdrop, this study builds on development perspective and sustainability framework, to examine the patterns of policy response to post COVID -19 recovery in Nigeria in order to understand its effectiveness in relation to sustainable health. While this paper supports the broad outlines of these perspectives, by placing post pandemic recovery within socio-economic parlance, the paper seeks to expand these analyses to an engagement with the role of post pandemic policy response in building and strengthening sustainable health in Nigeria. The paper argues that there is need to understand the role state policy response plays in post pandemic recovery. Additionally, the paper argues that policy makers and relevant stakeholders can understand the specific role policy response can play or otherwise with a critical review of the intricate dynamic of post pandemic recovery policy. The study of post pandemic policy response has consequences for sustainable health, Agenda 2030 in general and collective reconfiguration of global health system in particular. While many studies continue to explore the pandemic from different perspectives (Sas, 2020; FAO,2020; IMF,2021),the World Bank's recent call for post pandemic recovery as essential for overall welfare and economic reinvigoration(World Bank,2021), points to a reflection on the ways new post pandemic policy initiative can propel dynamic and transformative focus on “the linkages and dialectical tensions between policy response and post pandemic recovery as a socio-economic and sustainable development organizing strategy. Within the Nigerian context, understanding such policy response(s) invariably intersects in many ways with issues of responsive policy intervention and good governance central to sustainable development.

To make an original contribution in the broader literature and arguments, this paper explores Nigeria's political economy in relation to post pandemic recovery and sustainable health in particular. Building on this perspective, which is useful to understand post pandemic recovery, the article specifically engages with recent scholarship in post pandemic recovery (UN,2021), and argues that post pandemic recovery is important for sustainable health in Nigeria and the attainment of SDG: 3 in particular. This is essential in a context which has seen health challenges and vulnerability intensify in ways that call for urgent policy response as majority are “affected by adverse pandemic effects beyond health concerns such as decline in wage, loss of jobs, rise in job insecurity, displacement, pandemic induced forced migration and crisis of hunger (FAO,2020). The increasing concern over post COVID-19 recovery and similar intervention to overcome the overall effects of the pandemic call for the need to understand how post pandemic recovery is essential for sustainable health. To deepen this argument, understanding the role of state policy response in the advancement of inclusive and sustainable health system is essential.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: objectives; methodology; theoretical framework; post pandemic recovery and sustainable health in Nigeria; results and discussions; conclusion; and recommendations.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to:

- (i) Understand Nigeria's policy responses for a sustainable post-COVID-19 recovery
- (ii) Identify the implications of such policies to SDG:3 and
- (iii) Identify and fill identified policy gaps to meet SDG 3 in line with Agenda 2030.

Methodology

Sample and Procedure

A mobile phone survey design was used to recruit respondents in this study, considering COVID-19 restrictions. This was largely based on the respondents' preferences including time schedules. To meet the target audience across Nigeria, a national telephone directory was used through Nigeria's telecommunications service. The numbers were selected randomly on a quota-based system. The essence of the quota-based system is to achieve full representation of respondents across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones, thus, respondents from each of the zones were afforded the opportunity to express their views.

With a brief introduction and the aim of the study clearly spelled out the telephone interviews were conducted and recorded. This procedure was suitable for the study for a number of reasons. Firstly, the COVID -19 restrictions impeded direct and in person conversation secondly, the respondents could discuss and express their views freely without any form of restrictions, thirdly, considering the objectives of the study the researcher wanted a nationally represented sample for a deepened understanding of a wide range of experience regarding post pandemic recovery policy and practices across Nigeria.

Data Collection

Whilst a total of 361 interviews were conducted, 350 respondents completed the survey, translating to a response rate of 96 per cent and a margin of error of 4 per cent. The data collection procedure lasted for a period of three months, starting from December 2020 to February 2021.

Survey instrument and data analysis

The survey instrument was self-developed in line with the specific peculiarities of the pandemic, the Nigerian experience and in line with the overall objectives of the study but was further guided by extant literature reviewed. The survey tool comprised of ten open ended questions. The open-ended questions were thematically analyzed. In all, the survey questions probed the respondents understanding of policy responses for a sustainable post-COVID-19 recovery in Nigeria, evaluated their understanding of the implications of such policies to SDG:3 and based on the responses of the respondents, identified and filled policy gaps to meet SDG 3 in relation to Agenda 2030.

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of participants(n=350)

Gender	Age	Qualification	State/Geographical zone	Number per geographical zone
Female	27	B.Sc.	Ekiti (SW)	60
Female	32	NCE	Osun (SW)	
Female	22	B.Sc.	Ogun (SW)	
Female	35	MSc	Lagos (SW)	
Female	39	BSc	Enugu (SE)	55
Female	27	BSc	Anambra (SE)	
Male	40	BSc	Abia (SE)	
Female	-	BSc	Imo (SE)	
Male	26	BSc	Jigawa (NW)	52
Female	29	BSc	Kebi(NW)	
Female	36	BSc	Kaduna (NW)	
Male	30	BSc	Kano (NW)	
Male	41	BSc	Yobe (NE)	53
Male	36	BSc	Bauchi (NE)	
Male	32	BSc	Adamawa(NE)	
Male	41	BSc	Bornu (NE)	
Male	44	BSc	Benue (NC)	59
Female	45	BSc	Plateau (NC)	
Female	38	BSc	Kogi (NC)	
Female	32	BSc	Rivers (SS)	71
Male	40	BSc	Edo (SS)	
Female	-	Bsc	Akwalbom (SS)	
Male	28	BSc	Delta (SS)	
Female	-	BSc	Bayelsa (SS)	
Total		350		

Theoretical Framework

There are several theoretical debates on post pandemic recovery both in the developed societies of the North and the developing societies of the South. Dominant theorizations regarding COVID -19 have either adopted the conspiracy theory, or the global disease economy thesis (WHO, 2020). Such theoretical assumptions rest on neo liberal hypothesis aimed at unraveling bio conspiracy. This study goes beyond existing theoretical perspectives. It adopts a critical historical and theoretical exploration of the role of institutions in building a sustainable health system in post pandemic recovery. It follows the perspectives of the institutional theory (North, D. 1990; DiMaggio, P. and Powell, W. 1991).

Institutional theory questions the ways institutions within a state function effectively to meet societal needs and binaries used to reinforce social dynamics. It seeks to understand 'institutional capacity" and requisite processes linked to how institutions within a state function cope and meet essential policy choices and outcomes.

This theoretical framework is suitable in unraveling how the Nigerian government and NCDC (both as institutions) are able to evolve effective and sustainable post pandemic recovery policy framings in line with sustainable health needs of the people and in contexts related to SDG:3. To further deepen this investigation, the linkages between institutional theory and sustainable development framework are strengthened to identify evidence or otherwise of the long term (sustainable) impact(s) of Nigeria's post pandemic recovery policy response. This is particularly in relation to both sustainable health and SDG:3.

Sustainable development was popularized in 1987 following the Brundtland Commission report *Our Common Future*, which provided the definition of sustainable development as development which meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of the future from meeting theirs (Brundland, 1987). "Sustainability" implies being viable, ongoing, and capable of being indefinitely maintained. The sustainable development paradigm is framed within three pillars which includes economic, social, and environmental. Each pillar is presumed to reinforce the other. Thus, drawing on the concepts of "sustainability" and "development" as alternative theoretical perspectives, this study pays particular attention to the relevance of sustainability in post pandemic recovery both in the institutionalization of post pandemic policies and in contexts associated with building a sustainable health system.

The foregoing is appreciated when we recall that development is itself, a process which enables human beings to realize their potentials, build self-confidence and lead lives of dignity and fulfillment (The Report of the South Commission, 1990). The *process element* of development underscores the notion of formality and institutionalization which are requisite for sustainability.

Sustainable health, therefore, emphasizes meeting the health needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future from meeting theirs. It is health continuum. However, to build such “sustainable” health system, institutional capacity is a sine qua non. Thus, the emphasis on the mutual linkages between institutional theory and sustainability framework in post pandemic recovery and sustainable health does not only underscore some neglected aspects of SDGs but also demonstrates the specific ways sustainability model could strengthen inclusive and long-term post pandemic recovery.

Simply put, the theoretical assumption that sustainability is essential for inclusive and equitable development will be supported and adopted in this study. Our theoretical position follows on the heels of a number of scholars who have emphasized the need for institutional capacity and sustainability in post pandemic policy response especially in the developing societies (Rodrik, 2008; Fukuyama, 2006; Huang and Smith 2020; Olanrewaju,2020).

Much of these theoretical contributions have strengthened the relevance of inclusive, equitable and participatory post pandemic recovery policy. This is particularly suitable for the Nigerian context as there have been growing concern regarding possible sustainability crisis in the post pandemic policies of the federal government. In our context, the study draws on some of these theoretical arguments and makes a new contribution.

Post Pandemic Recovery and Sustainable Health in Nigeria: Review of the Literature

Post pandemic recovery has a substantial body of literature (see, Huang, and Smith, 2020; Loayza, 2020;), with specific attention to the developing societies of the Third World and, in particular, the distinct implications of the pandemic on economic advancement and development of African societies. A number of empirical and theoretical perspectives have sought to examine the linkages between the pandemic and various sub themes of development studies (Pandya and Redcay, 2021; Hart 2021).

Our primary focus here centres on post pandemic recovery and sustainable health in relation to SDG:3 (Good Health and Wellbeing). The literature on post pandemic recovery accounts, arguably the most seminal explanation of rebuilding the social order in post pandemic era in relation to a wide range of approaches and perspectives (Banati, Jones and Youssef,2020;Herrera, Ordoñez, Konradt, et al. 2020; Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center,2021). IMF (2021) has provided one of the most sustained accounts of both COVID -19 pandemic and post pandemic recovery and why effective post pandemic recovery policies are essential to overcome several post pandemic development crises that has confronted the liberal order.

Çakmaklı, et al (2021), have drawn out the structural interconnections between post pandemic policy framework and economic recovery, particularly in the high-income countries, providing further empirical and theoretical substance to the developmental relevance of post pandemic recovery. Similarly, OECD (2020) explicates “the underlying”

importance of post pandemic response as a mechanism that could shape the various approaches adverse effects of the pandemic could be mitigated, whilst demonstrating the ways in which both local and global actors including the civil society group could respond to forge a collective fusion of responsibility that could legitimize socio-economic response to the pandemic.

Based on the assumptions of the collective response thesis a number of studies in the literature tend to suggest that since the pandemic is a global phenomenon, it requires a collective or all-inclusive response (Hupkau, and Petrongolo, 2020; Nixon, 2020; Kanem, 2020). This has increasingly pointed to the need to review the literature on the Nigerian context to understand the ways State policy response to the pandemic has been either responsive, collective or otherwise. This is important for policy makers and similar stakeholders seeking for new approaches to resolve the increasing problems of post pandemic economic recovery and sustainable development, particularly in line with Agenda 2030.

For these reasons, it is worth exploring the Nigerian experience. In 2021, the World Bank wrote that Africa needs to build its capacity for post pandemic recovery. This has to do with a number of factors such as poverty. Firstly, Africa is generally poor with low GDP growth rate (Collier, 2007). Secondly, IMF (2021) engaged two central themes essential for post pandemic recovery: economic diversification and creation of more jobs to meet the rising profile of job loss and unemployment. Thirdly the UN (2021) emphasized “work, health and well-being in building back after the pandemic.

These insights are reinforced with the premise that socio-economic well-being such as job creation and employment generation are not only foundational to post pandemic economic recovery but shapes a variety of socio-economic realities that constitutes essential elements of sustainable livelihood in Nigeria (IMF,2021). In the Nigerian context, critical for understanding post pandemic recovery is the way government and its agencies respond to such issues as vaccination, quarantine, provision of alternative means of livelihoods such as palliatives as measures central to Nigeria's political economy.

In July 2020, the federal government adopted a post-COVID economic recovery blue print namely The Economic Sustainability Plan, which aimed to address the economic challenges of the pandemic and approved the sum of \$5.9 billion (N23 trillion) (Nyong, et al.2021) stimulus package. Olanrewaju (2020) highlights that despite the focus of the plan it had several shortcomings such as inability to stimulate the economy by preventing business collapse and ensuring liquidity, also shortcomings related to retaining or creating jobs in key areas like agriculture and housing, infrastructure growth enhancing and job creating infrastructural investments and the exclusion of a number of key projects.

Relevant from the above perspective is the understanding that post pandemic recovery must be bottom up and inclusive. The aim is to achieve a particular set of socio-economic transformation through which the vulnerable groups can re-assert relevance in an adverse economy rooted particularly in recovery and which are built on economic stabilization logics.

As Olanrewaju (2020), noted following trends in 2021, the Nigerian government has adopted post recovery policies which have some merits such as addressing issues of loss of lives, jobs and displacement however, there are salient gaps, which according to Olanrewaju (2020), as highlighted should be filled. Earlier reports seem to support the foregoing as shown in the below figure 1 highlighting the various policy responses and gaps in this regard.

Figure 1: Nigeria's Policy Response to COVID-19 Pandemic and Identified Gaps



Source: Centre for Policy Impact in Global Health: Nigeria's Policy Response to COVID-19, June 2020

The central role effective post recovery policies play has implications for overall development of Nigeria. The literature on post recovery policy response suggests that it has long been used to shore up and consolidate economic recovery within various periods of adverse economic experience such as global meltdown, war, or natural disaster and in our context global pandemic. It is also essential for expanding new socio-economic and developmental configurations in ways that promote socio-economic reinvigoration and transformation for various vulnerable groups including the economically disadvantaged.

A key relevance of post pandemic recovery in Nigeria and a central question that has long driven post pandemic recovery scholarship, concerns how post pandemic policy responses are deployed strategically to build sustainable health. Additionally, because of the multi-ethnic logic, which has long accounted for structural inequality in resource allocation in Nigeria, the understanding of specific policy response and their effectiveness in effecting post pandemic recovery becomes daunting.

This is espoused as a problem to the prevailing inequality, which is evident in Nigeria's asymmetrical federal system and unequal revenue allocation formula (Akpan and Amadi,2019, Igwe and Amadi,2020). Both Onuigbo, (2021) and Jeremiah (2021) argue that there is need to re-examine the focus and direction of Nigeria's post pandemic recovery initiative that is within the political elites and the people. They posit that the political system and the prevailing social order has blurred fuller comprehension of transparency and accountability.

Furthermore, scholarship within sustainable development has looked at the ways post recovery policies are framed and implemented in line with meeting SDG 3 and more broadly Agenda 2030 (Nyong, Bapna, Jaeger and Clarke, 2021). Because post pandemic recovery is construction that builds into achieving SDGs, it is essential to focus on how post pandemic policy responses and the foundation of structural policy failures in Nigeria remain a continuous set of occurrences and central to the transformation of Nigeria. As a result of this reality, post pandemic recovery must be inclusive. This inclusiveness enables the Nigerian state to meet complex post pandemic needs of the wider groups including complex unfolding challenges. Such developments have accounted for scholarly debates on post pandemic recovery (Anderson, Mckee, and Mossialos, 2020, Pierleoni,2020, Nixon, 2020; Mazzucato, 2020.) Many of these responses, however, have tended to overlook the longer-term significance and role of effective post pandemic response could play in building sustainable health. This has been a major gap this study seeks to fill as it emphasizes sustainable health in the post pandemic recovery trajectories.

By highlighting the linkages between post pandemic recovery and sustainable health in Nigeria, Africa's biggest economy the paper seeks to fill an important gap in the literature. In particular, it draws attention to the role of effective post pandemic recovery policies building and strengthening of a distinct health sector to forestall future reoccurrence of the pandemic. This emphasis on forestalling resurgence of COVID 19 pandemic not only underscores some neglected aspects of post pandemic recovery policy discourse but also better accounts for the distinct ways policy makers and similar stakeholders could institutionalize a sustainable health system one that could be resilient to pandemic and at the same time speaks to achieving SDG:3. Our review suggests the need for a construction of post pandemic sustainable health mechanism. Some of the important transformative perspectives in the literature highlight the relevance of post pandemic recovery. This is essential for transformative policies on post pandemic recovery. Against the backdrop of the reviewed literature, this paper draws on some of these arguments and specifically share their perspectives on the significance of policies at post pandemic recovery.

Results and Discussion

The results and discussion were grouped and analyzed thematically, reflecting response from the respondents and themes from the reviewed literature. These include issues relating to general understanding of post COVID policy response, knowledge about constraints to post pandemic recovery policy, attitudes towards post pandemic recovery policy, the level of involvement of the people in post pandemic recovery policy making processes.

There were three open-ended questions that sought to evaluate the understanding of the respondents regarding post pandemic recovery policy. The first question requested the respondents to state issues relating to general understanding of post COVID policy response. As can be seen from their responses (Table 2), 36.0 per cent of respondents confirmed the existence of post pandemic recovery policy closely followed by those (30.9 per cent) who responded that the policy has been exclusionary. Some other respondents (23.1 per cent) stated that they have no clear understanding of the sustainable health context of the policy, while (10.0 per cent) identified that such policies are nonexistent.

The second open-ended questions allowed the respondents the flexibility to mention any evidence of sustainable health attributable to the federal government's post pandemic recovery. 51.7 per cent responded that there is no specific evidence.

Table 2: General Understanding of post COVID Policy Response

Response	Number of Respondents (%)
Understanding of the existence and effectiveness of the federal government's post pandemic recovery policies	
Existence	126 (36.0%)
Exclusionary	108 (30.9%)
No understanding of sustainable health context of the policy (unaware)	81(23.1%)
Non-existence of such policy	35 (10.0%)
Evidence of sustainable health attributable to the federal government's post pandemic recovery	
No specific evidence	181(51.7%)
Post pandemic policies are evident in sustainable health contexts	44 (12.6%)
Post pandemic recovery policy is not sufficiently directed to sustainable health	64(18.3%)
Policy needs to be redirected to sustainable health	61 (17.4%)
Government's capacity to implement post pandemic policies in lieu of SDG: 3	
Doubts on the possibilities of implementation of such policies	165 (47.1%)
No idea regarding federal government's capacity to implement post pandemic policy in relation to meeting SDG:3	125 (35.7%)
Government has the capacity to implement post pandemic recovery policies in line with meeting SDG:3	60 (17.1%)

Similarly, (12.6 per cent) responded that post pandemic policies are evident in sustainable health contexts. Furthermore, some respondents (18.3 per cent) stated that the post pandemic recovery policy is not sufficiently directed to sustainable health, other respondents stated that the policy needs to be redirected to sustainable health (17.4 per cent). This finding is consistent with a number of studies in the literature which conceive 'sustainability' as a missing component of the federal government's post pandemic recovery policy (See Campbell and McCaslin, 2020; UN, 2021; Nyong, Bapna , Jaeger and Clarke, (2021),it also reinforces research findings, which posit that post recovery policies should as a matter of policy expediency be linked to sustainable health issues to forestall or exit future wave and resurgence of the pandemic(Anderson, Mckee, and Mossialos, 2020).

Regarding government's capacity to implement post pandemic policies in view of SDG: 3, majority of the respondents doubted such possibilities (47.1%), while (35.7%) had no idea, on the contrary, (17.1%) responded that government has the capacity to implement post pandemic recovery policies in line with meeting SDG:3. This later perspective has been corroborated by several studies in the literature (See Nixon, 2020; UN,2021).

Table 3: Knowledge about constraints to post pandemic recovery policy

Areas of Knowledge	Percentage (n%)
I am familiar with constraints to post pandemic recovery policy	N=350
Yes	254 (72.7)
No	96(27.3)
Possible constraints to post pandemic recovery policy	N= 350
Corruption	132(37.8)
Poverty	117 (33.5)
Apathy/indifference	101(28.7)
Qualities that could foster effective post pandemic recovery	N=350
Transparency	263 (75.1)
Accountability	39(11.1)
Inclusivity	39(11.1)
Responsive governance	9 (2.5)

Regarding knowledge about constraints to post pandemic recovery policy, 254 (72.7%) respondents stated that they are knowledgeable of constraints to post pandemic recovery policy. This is consistent with the literature as a number of recent studies have emphasized the recent post pandemic recovery policy of Nigeria (See Games,2021; Nyong et al ;2021). On the contrary, 96(27.3%) responded that they are not familiar with such constraints. Further focus on likely constraints to the implementation of post pandemic recovery policy,132(37.8%) responded that corruption is a constraint. In line with extant literature a number of studies have explained the complex problems of

corruption in Nigeria and indeed Africa (See Amadi and Ekekwe, 2014; Nna,Igwe, and Taylor, 2010).Another group of respondents, 117(33.5%) stated that poverty is another factor. The literature on poverty shows that Nigeria was recently declared the world poverty capital by the Brookings Institute (2018). This has dire development implications despite the country's oil wealth and position as Africa's largest economy. 101(28.7%) responded that apathy / difference is a factor.

With focus on qualities that could foster effective post pandemic recovery 236(75.1%) of the respondents stated that transparency is key. A number of studies in the literature have emphasized transparency in governance including natural resource transparency (See NEITI, 2020; Transparency International, 2021), while 39 (11.1%) of the respondents identified accountability, another 39 (11.1%) identified inclusive governance while 9 (2.5%) stated responsive governance. These findings appear useful in deepening scholarship on post pandemic recovery.

Attitudes towards post pandemic recovery policy

On the attitudinal scale (Table 4), the respondents were requested to rate whether they agreed or disagreed with the following item statements: Post pandemic recovery policy has significantly impacted my locality. Of the 350 respondents who responded to this item statement, 74 per cent (n¼259) disagreed that post pandemic policy recovery has made significant contributions in their respective localities. This stands in contrast to 20 per cent (n¼70) of the respondents who agreed with the statement. This result refutes the findings of some scholars that post pandemic recovery in Nigeria has been impactful (Nyong, et al, 2021).

In evaluating their response on whether post pandemic recovery policy has been valuable to sustainable health in their respective localities, a surprising number of respondents (90.5 per cent) disagreed that post pandemic recovery policy has been valuable to sustainable health in their respective localities as opposed to respondents (6.8 per cent) who had a contrary view.

Table 4: Attitudes towards post pandemic recovery policy (N=350)

Attitude Response	Strongly agree (n, %)	Agree (n, %)	No Idea (n, %)	Strongly Disagree (n, %)	Disagree (n, %)
Post pandemic recovery policy has significantly impacted my locality	14(4.0)	56(16.0)	21(5.9)	184(52.7)	75(21.3)
Post pandemic recovery policy has been valuable to sustainable health in my locality	10(2.8)	14(4.0)	9(2.7)	218(62.2)	99(28.3)
Post pandemic recovery policy has been inclusively implemented	5(1.4)	12(3.4)	22(6.3)	226(64.6)	85(24.2)

This finding is consistent with the position taken by Olanrewaju, 2(020) who argued for the need to improve the focus of the post pandemic policy response of Nigeria.

As an inclusive policy response, majority of the respondents (n¹/4311) disagreed that the policy has been inclusive in contrast with respondents (n¹/417) who had a contrary view. This finding corroborates the study by Onuigbo, (2021) which documented that the post pandemic policy response of Nigeria has been less inclusive and argued for the inclusion of climate change issues in the COVID-19 recovery plan in Nigeria and other African countries.

Level of involvement of the people in post pandemic recovery policy making processes

Given the criticism that post pandemic recovery policy of Nigeria has been less inclusive (Onuigbo, 2021), the subsequent open-ended question requested the respondents to mention the ways they think the people should be involved in post pandemic policy processes (Table 5).

A substantial number of respondents (66.4 per cent) recommended that the people who are core stakeholders should be directly involved in the policy discourse stage, which was followed by respondents (9.3 per cent) identifying policy adoption, with (8.2percent) on policy formulation with policy modification being the least (1.0 per cent). This finding is significant, given the fact that policies are made for the people therefore, they should be an integral part of the policy making processes.

Table 5: Ways of involving the people in post pandemic recovery policy

Response	Respondents (n.%)
Policy discourse	232(66.4)
Policy adoption	33 (9.3)
Policy formulation	29(8.2)
Policy implementation	27(7.8)
Policy outcome	7 (2.1)
Policy modification	4(1.0)
Policy review	18 (5.2)

Implications for SDG:3

Based on our findings, post pandemic recovery policy has implications for SDG:3. Essentially since both SDGs and Agenda 2030 are global development agendas, the era of global pandemic points out more strategic and inclusive policy initiatives for a more inclusive and sustainable post pandemic recovery. Thus, there is need to understand how the post pandemic policy of Nigeria has been formulated to meet sustainable health needs of the people, which is the central position of this study. SDG as a global agenda requires more concerted efforts by the Nigerian stakeholders including the government, the civil society groups, and similar stakeholders. To achieve SDG:3 it is essential to collaborate with multi-stakeholders and fully integrate existential realities into policy dialogues.

Consequently, this study has three inter related implications for SDG 3 (i) effective post pandemic policy formulation and implementation would strengthen the sustainable development agenda, which has long term development implication within the development literature, (ii) inclusive post pandemic recovery policy would give credence to mitigation of new wave of the pandemic and account for peoples' health and wellbeing (SDG:3) and (iii) as a global concern post pandemic recovery remains central to mainstream development discourse and constitutes a springboard towards meeting the sustainable health needs of the people in relation to SDG: 3.

The crux of actualization of SDG: 3 is therefore central and linked to effective post pandemic recovery policy. Whilst this study reaffirms the importance of post pandemic recovery policy in the Nigerian context, it also supports the legitimization of direct involvement of the people in such policies as our findings suggest. Analyzing from the IMF perspective, Aisen, Rahman, and Yao, (2021) posit that Nigeria's recovery is expected to be weak and gradual under current policies. Real GDP growth in 2021 is expected to turn positive at 1.5 percent. Real GDP is expected to recover to its pre-pandemic level only in 2022.

Conclusion

As shown, post pandemic recovery has been daunting which reinforces the need to reexamine the extent to which the strategies of the government are theoretically adequate, empirically valid and policy wise, effective. While there is no simple, straightforward exit strategy for COVID-19 yet, there is need for proactive post pandemic recovery strategies. The Nigerian experience as revealed from the findings of this study point out that policy responses for sustainable post pandemic recovery in Nigeria were largely undermined by non- inclusive and non- participatory approaches through the top-down methodologies of the government. This has serious implications for the actualization of sustainable health. As such, the divergent roles effective policy response could have played have been missing. This accounts for second wave resurgence and post pandemic economic hardship across Nigeria exemplified by the decline in GDP and overall standard of living.

The theoretical basis of the sustainability and institutional capacity paradigm which formed the springboard of the argument in this study is essential to reinvigorate and redirect Nigeria's policy response for a sustainable post pandemic recovery, particularly with regards to preserving the health sector.

Similarly, our findings suggest that there is need to improve the focus, content, and direction of Nigeria's post pandemic policy in ways that is more open to the complex health problems of Nigeria social bases that transcends narrowly framed policies of the government. The integration of sociopolitical, cultural, ethno-religious and economic forces constitutive of the complex adverse effects of COVID -19 pandemic is essential as a counter policy tool to meet divergent views and concerns for a sustainable health system. In this sense, such policies would make more sense to conceptualize and actualize post pandemic recovery. It is these superficial non- strategic policy approaches that have been

deployed in Nigeria's post pandemic order. A number of studies in line with our findings suggest the need for urgent response to redesign the existing policy instruments as enunciated intermittently in this study.

Recommendations

This study has attempted to deepen the understanding of the intricate dynamics as well as linkages between post pandemic recovery and sustainable health in Nigeria. Given that this study is amidst the first to explore policy responses for a sustainable post-COVID-19 recovery in Nigeria as well as implications for SDG:3, the researcher deems it expedient that further research be conducted on this particular subject matter as post COVID-19 recovery in relation to sustainable health, SDG :3 and Agenda 2030 remains topical issue of policy discourse. However, the study made the following recommendations:

- (i) Economic diversification is essential for post pandemic recovery for Nigeria. Aisen, et al, (2021)made similar observation when they highlight that policy adjustments and reforms designed to shift the country from its dependence on oil and to diversify the economy toward private sector-led growth will set Nigeria on a more sustainable path to recovery.
- (ii) To effectively overcome adverse effects of the pandemic to shore up economic backlash and meltdown, there is urgent need for policy response on issues of exchange rate reform and a boost in government revenue base. Aisen, et al (2021) point out that Nigeria needs exchange rate reforms and strengthened efforts to increase government revenues.
- (iii) In addition to economic diversification, there is need for improved health sector to meet SDG: 3 and other goals of the SDG ahead of Agenda 2030. Improved health sector here also implies a robust health sector reform with focus on adequate level of health care financing and effective sectoral human resource management to forestall low levels of motivation, remuneration and brain drain-human capital flight.
- (iv) Nigeria needs to strengthen non-oil sector growth thereby improving the overall economic base of the nation. This includes incorporating the informal sector in tax rebates and economic stimulus packages in order to foster inclusive growth and development.
- (v) There is need to adopt home grown development policies to match post pandemic recovery response with participatory inward-looking policies that meet the peculiar development needs of the people. That is, building internal synergy; effective collaboration; adoption of the needs-based and bottom-up approaches to development.
- (vi) Investing in infrastructure – communications, transport, seaports, and electric power. This includes adopting green technologies that are carbon neutral, more efficient and environmentally sustainable.

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