

Analyzing the Complexities of Policy Formulation and Implementation in Nigerian Democracy: A Comparative Study of Historical Perspectives and Contemporary Challenges

¹Shuaibu Sulaiman &
²Abuhuraira Ado Musa

¹Department of Public
Administration, Nasarawa State
University Keffi, Nasarawa,
Nigeria

²Department of Community
Health, Emirate College of Health
Sciences and Technology
(ECOHSAT), Kano, Kano Nigeria

³Dangote Business School, Bayero
University Kano, Kano Nigeria

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Corresponding Author:

Shuaibu Sulaiman

Abstract

This mini review was conducted to analyze the complexities of policy formulation and implementation in Nigerian democracy. This study searched various databases and platforms to access a comprehensive range of literature. The study includes a wide range of literature, including academic articles, reports, and policy documents relevant to the topic. Any irrelevant data or information from platforms with limited credibility or lack of rigorous evaluation were excluded. The policy formulation and implementation in Nigerian democracy reflects the nation's journey from colonial rule to independence and the subsequent efforts to address governance challenges during its democratic periods. Nigeria's past policies have seen both successes and failures, which have significantly impacted the country's development. These policies have shaped various aspects of Nigeria's socio-economic landscape and governance. Improving policy formulation and implementation in Nigerian democracy is essential for achieving sustainable development, addressing diverse needs, and promoting good governance. The mini review outlined challenges faced historically and in the contemporary era, drawing lessons from past policy experiences. The complexities demand a comprehensive approach, emphasizing inclusivity, evidence-based decision-making, and stakeholder engagement. Strengthening institutions, combating corruption, and promoting transparency enhance policy outcomes and public trust. Long-term planning, regional considerations, and multi-sectoral collaboration are crucial for addressing socio-economic disparities and supporting inclusive development. Investments in human capital and data-driven decision-making are critical for sustainable progress. The sustainable future will be solidifying Nigeria's role as a regional leader driving positive change in Africa. The review was conducted from May to July 2023. Finally, all results were summarized and reported.

Background to the Study

In democratic governance, policy formulation and implementation are fundamental pillars that determine a nation's trajectory and the well-being of its citizens (IDEA, 2021). In Nigerian democracy, these processes are marked by intricate complexities, influenced by the nation's historical experiences, and compounded by contemporary challenges (Yagboyaju and Akinola, 2019). As Nigeria strives to strengthen its democratic institutions and address pressing socio-economic issues, it becomes imperative to comprehensively analyze the complexities surrounding policy formulation and implementation. The Nigerian democracy's journey is deeply intertwined with its colonial past and post-independence struggles (Agbo, 2018). During the colonial era, policies were designed to serve the interests of foreign powers, often at the expense of the local population. The aftermath of independence in 1960 witnessed a series of military regimes contributing to the intricacies of policymaking and implementation (Kalu, 2010). These historical perspectives have left indelible imprints on the policy landscape, shaping the nation's development trajectory and governance structures.

A comparative study that delves into the historical evolution of policy formulation in Nigerian democracy provides invaluable insights into the country's governance challenges and successes. From the ambitious indigenization policy of the 1970s to various social and economic initiatives, Nigeria's past policies offer valuable lessons and benchmarks for evaluating the efficacy of current policy approaches (Asobie, 1988). Amidst democratic transitions and improvements in policy formulation processes, the challenges to effective policy implementation persist. While policies may be well-intentioned and comprehensive in their design, translating them into tangible outcomes remains formidable. Institutional weaknesses, bureaucratic inefficiencies, limited funding, and the pervasive influence of vested interests have been key barriers to successful policy implementation.

Moreover, Nigeria's contemporary landscape is characterized by challenges that complicate policy formulation and implementation. The nation grapples with a burgeoning population, rapid urbanization, regional disparities, and diverse societal demands (Aliyu and Amadu, 2017). These challenges necessitate policies that strike a delicate balance between the needs of specific regions and the pursuit of national cohesion and progress. Additionally, corruption continues to pose a significant threat to effective policy implementation. Despite anti-corruption efforts, its persistence hampers the proper allocation of resources and undermines the public's trust in governance institutions (Osakede et al., 2015). Addressing corruption is crucial to unlocking the full potential of well-crafted policies and fostering inclusive development (United Nations, 2015). Understanding the complexities of policy formulation and implementation is vital for Nigerian democracy to chart a course toward sustainable development, effective governance, and social progress. By undertaking a comparative study that draws from historical perspectives and analyzes contemporary challenges, this research offers a comprehensive exploration of the intricate policy landscape in Nigerian democracy. Moreover, it proposes evidence-based recommendations to enhance policy processes

and strengthen Nigeria's democratic governance. Through this endeavor, Nigeria can harness the transformative power of effective policies to create a more prosperous and equitable future for its citizens. **Aim:** This study analyzes the Complexities of Policy Formulation and Implementation in Nigerian Democracy.

Methodology

This mini review was conducted to analyze the Complexities of Policy Formulation and Implementation in Nigerian Democracy. This study searched various databases and platforms to access a comprehensive range of literature. The study includes a wide range of literature, including academic articles, reports, and policy documents relevant to the topic. Any irrelevant data or information from platforms with limited credibility or lack of rigorous evaluation were excluded. The review was conducted from May to July 2023. Finally, all results were summarized and reported.

Findings and Discussions

Historical Perspectives of Policy Formulation and Implementation in Nigerian Democracy

Nigeria's historical policy formulation and implementation development reflects the nation's journey from colonial rule to independence and the subsequent efforts to address governance challenges during its democratic periods.

- i. **Pre-Colonial Era:** Before colonization, Nigeria comprised diverse kingdoms and societies, each with governance structures and policies. Policy formulation was often based on customary laws, traditions, and local rulers and chief authority. Implementation was primarily carried out through traditional institutions and community cooperation (Vaughan, 2003).
- ii. **Colonial Era (Late 19th to mid-20th century):** Nigeria became a British colony in the late 19th century, leading to significant changes in governance and policy (Utuk, 1975). Colonial policies were primarily designed to serve British interests, exploit resources, and control the local population. Policy formulation was centralized and driven by British colonial administrators, often without meaningful input from Nigerians. The implementation of colonial policies was enforced through British colonial officers and local agents, leading to resistance and challenges (Udogu, 2009).
- iii. **Post-Independence Era (1960-1999):** Nigeria gained independence from British colonial rule in 1960, marking a new policy formulation and implementation phase (Lawal, 2010; Ezeani, 2012). The early years of independence saw attempts to create national development plans and policies to address socio-economic challenges. Nigerian leaders influenced Policy formulation more, although colonialism's legacy and external pressures persisted. Implementation faced challenges due to political instability, military coups, and corruption, leading to policy reversals and inconsistencies.

- iv. **Return to Democracy and the Fourth Republic (1999-present):** Nigeria transitioned back to civilian rule in 1999, bringing about further policy formulation and implementation changes (United Nations, 1998). Democratic governance allowed for more participatory policy-making processes involving various stakeholders and civil society. Economic reforms and sector-specific policies aimed to address issues like poverty, education, health, and infrastructure. However, policy implementation remained challenging, with corruption, bureaucracy, and capacity constraints affecting outcomes.
- v. **Contemporary Challenges:** Nigeria grapples with complex policy challenges in diverse areas such as security, economy, education, healthcare, and infrastructure. Policy formulation must navigate regional and ethnic interests and the complexities of managing a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society. Implementation challenges persist due to institutional weaknesses, inadequate funding, and limited capacity at various levels of governance.

Nigeria's past policies have seen both successes and failures, which have significantly impacted the country's development. These policies have shaped various aspects of Nigeria's socio-economic landscape and governance. Below is a discussion of some key successes and failures of past policies and their impact on Nigeria's development:

Successes:

Green Revolution Policy:

- a. **Success:** The Green Revolution policy, implemented in the 1970s, aimed to boost agricultural productivity by adopting modern farming techniques, improved seeds, and fertilizers (Akande, 2003).
- b. **Impact:** The policy increased food production and reduced imports, contributing to food security and enhancing rural livelihoods. It played a crucial role in transforming Nigeria into a major agricultural exporter during that period.

National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS):

- a. **Success:** NEEDS, launched in 2004, focused on economic reforms, poverty reduction, and private sector development (Okonjo-Iweala & Osafo-Kwaako, 2007).
- b. **Impact:** The policy led to improved economic growth rates and increased foreign direct investment, contributing to Nigeria's emergence as one of Africa's leading economies during the mid-2000s.

Telecommunications Reforms:

- a. **Success:** The liberalization of the telecommunications sector in the early 2000s led to increased competition and private-sector participation (Ologunde et al., 2006).
- b. **Impact:** The reforms resulted in the expansion of telecommunications infrastructure, improved connectivity, and a surge in mobile phone usage, boosting communication and promoting economic activities.

Failures:**Indigenization Policy:**

- a. *Failure:* The indigenization policy of the 1970s, which aimed to promote local ownership of businesses, faced implementation challenges due to corruption and mismanagement (Ndongko, 1980).
- b. *Impact:* Instead of fostering economic empowerment, the policy often led to inefficiencies and reduced foreign investment, hindering overall economic growth.

Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs):

- a. *Failure:* Nigeria's implementation of SAPs in the 1980s focused on fiscal austerity, privatization, and trade liberalization but adversely affected vulnerable populations (Tallroth, 1987).
- b. *Impact:* SAPs increased poverty and inequality, as social services were reduced, and vulnerable groups were disproportionately affected by economic hardships.

Education Policies:

- a. *Failure:* Nigeria's education policies have faced challenges in improving access, quality, and relevance (Okoroma, 2006).
- b. *Impact:* Inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, and low teacher quality have contributed to a struggling education system, limiting human capital development and overall progress.

Anti-Corruption Efforts:

- a. *Failure:* Despite numerous anti-corruption initiatives, corruption remains deeply ingrained in Nigeria's public and private sectors (Goodling, 2003).
- b. *Impact:* Widespread corruption has hindered the efficient allocation of resources, undermined public trust in institutions, and impeded sustainable development.

Overall Impact on Nigeria's Development: The successes of past policies have contributed to periods of economic growth, increased productivity, and enhanced livelihoods for some segments of the population. However, the failures of certain policies have resulted in economic setbacks, social challenges, and the persistence of development gaps. The impact of these policies has influenced Nigeria's development trajectory, with periods of growth followed by economic downturns and social struggles. Uneven progress, regional disparities, governance, and public service delivery challenges have marked Nigeria's development. To achieve sustainable development, Nigeria must learn from both successes and failures of past policies. The country needs evidence-based, inclusive, and well-implemented policies that address key challenges such as poverty, corruption, education, and infrastructure. By building on successful policy experiences and addressing past failures, Nigeria can chart a more inclusive and prosperous path for its future development.

Comparative Analysis of Policy Formulation and Implementation

Policy formulation processes in different eras of Nigerian democracy have evolved significantly, reflecting changes in governance structures, political transitions, and societal priorities. A comparative analysis of these processes reveals key similarities and differences that have shaped Nigeria's policy landscape. Let's examine the policy formulation processes in three distinct eras of Nigerian democracy:

Early Independence Era (1960s-1970s)

Similarities: In the early years of independence, policy formulation was primarily driven by a centralized government structure. Key policy decisions were made at the federal level, with limited input from other government and civil society tiers. The policy agenda during this era centered around economic development and nation-building (Ukiwo, 2003). Nigeria aimed to diversify its economy, invest in infrastructure, and enhance industrialization.

Differences: Policy formulation was largely top-down, with policymakers and technocrats at the federal level playing a dominant role. Limited public participation and stakeholder engagement characterized policymaking. Nigeria sought assistance from international organizations and foreign advisors in formulating policies, particularly in economic development and planning.

Military Regimes and Political Transitions (1980s-1990s)

Similarities: Political transitions, including military coups, often led to policy reversals and inconsistencies. New regimes introduced their policy priorities, leading to disruptions in continuity. Amidst political instability, policy formulation sometimes prioritized security and maintaining political control over socio-economic development (Ojo, 2014).

Differences: Military regimes tended to introduce policies without building on previous ones, leading to fragmented policy frameworks and limited long-term planning. The role of civil society and non-governmental organizations in policy formulation was constrained during military rule, reducing the inclusivity of policy processes.

Return to Civilian Rule and Democratic Consolidation (1999-present)

Similarities: With the return to civilian rule in 1999, policy formulation processes became more participatory and inclusive. Policymakers sought input from various stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector. Contemporary policy formulation recognizes the interdependence of various sectors and adopts a multi-sectoral approach to address complex challenges (United Nations, 1998).

Differences: Policy formulation in the current era emphasizes democratic values, human rights, and good governance as integral components of policy design. Policymakers are increasingly expected to be transparent and accountable in their decision-making, allowing for public scrutiny and feedback on policy initiatives. Contemporary policy

formulation emphasizes evidence-based approaches, using data and research to inform decision-making and policy design.

Policy decisions in Nigeria have been shaped by many factors that have evolved over different historical contexts. The country's colonial past influences these factors, post-independence struggles, political transitions, societal dynamics, and economic challenges. The policy decisions in Nigeria have been influenced by a complex interplay of historical, economic, political, social, and global factors. Understanding these influences is crucial for formulating effective and contextually relevant policies addressing Nigeria's challenges and aspirations. Here are some key factors that have influenced policy decisions in various periods of Nigerian history:

Colonial Legacy: During the colonial era, policy decisions were primarily driven by the interests of the British colonial administration (Lamba, 2009). Policies were designed to exploit Nigeria's resources and serve the colonial power's economic and political objectives. The colonial legacy also influenced governance structures and policy formulation processes. Indirect rule, for example, gave traditional rulers significant authority in local governance and policy implementation.

National Identity and Independence Struggles: After gaining independence in 1960, Nigeria sought to build a national identity and promote unity among its diverse ethnic and cultural groups (McLoughlin & Bouchat, 2013). Policy decisions were influenced by the desire to forge a sense of nationhood. Policies were shaped by the aspirations of Nigerian leaders and the need to assert sovereignty, leading to initiatives such as promoting national languages and symbols.

Economic Considerations: Economic factors have significantly influenced policy decisions throughout Nigeria's history (World Bank, 2023). The country's reliance on oil revenues has impacted policy formulation, leading to economic planning and fiscal policy fluctuations. Economic challenges, such as the oil price shocks in the 1970s, necessitated policy shifts and reforms to diversify the economy and reduce dependence on oil exports.

Political Transitions and Military Rule: Political transitions and periods of military rule have influenced policy decisions in Nigeria. Each regime brought its policy priorities, leading to policy reversals and inconsistencies. Military regimes often focused on security and political stability, while civilian governments emphasized social and economic development. These shifts impacted the trajectory of policy formulation in different historical contexts (Bienen, 1978).

Social and Cultural Factors: Nigeria's diverse cultural landscape has influenced policy decisions, especially in education, language, and cultural preservation. Policies related to education, for instance, have been influenced by debates over the use of indigenous languages in schools and the balance between Western and traditional educational systems (Ogundare, 2015).

Global and Regional Influences: Global and regional dynamics have also influenced Nigeria's policy decisions (Owen, 2020). International organizations, donor countries, and regional bodies have provided aid, loans, and technical assistance that have shaped policy priorities. Nigeria's regional leadership role in Africa has also impacted policy decisions related to peacekeeping, conflict resolution, and regional integration.

Public Opinion and Civil Society: Public opinion and civil society activism have increasingly influenced policy decisions in contemporary Nigeria (Williamson & Rodd, 2016). The growth of social media and advocacy groups has amplified public voices, leading to more public scrutiny and demands for accountability in policy-making.

Policy implementation in Nigeria has evolved and improved over time, influenced by changes in governance structures, technological advancements, and lessons learned from past experiences. While challenges persist, there have been notable improvements in the country's approaches and mechanisms used to implement policies. Let's explore some key aspects of this evolution:

Institutional Strengthening: Over time, a focus has been on strengthening institutions responsible for policy implementation. Efforts have been made to improve government agencies' and ministries' capacity, efficiency, and professionalism. Institutional reforms have enhanced coordination and collaboration among government departments, leading to more streamlined and coherent policy implementation processes.

Decentralization and Devolution of Power: Nigeria's transition to democracy brought greater decentralization and devolution of power to the states and local governments (Amah, 2018). This shift has allowed for more localized policy implementation tailored to regional needs and priorities. Decentralization has improved the responsiveness and effectiveness of policy implementation as decisions are made closer to the communities they affect.

Stakeholder Engagement and Participation: Contemporary policy implementation in Nigeria emphasizes stakeholder engagement and participation (Badiora, 2020). Policymakers recognize the importance of involving various actors, including civil society organizations and the private sector, in the implementation process. By seeking input from diverse stakeholders, policy-makers can gain valuable insights, increase ownership of policies, and address potential challenges and concerns more effectively.

Use of Technology and Data: The advancement of technology has played a significant role in improving policy implementation in Nigeria (Davies, 1998). Digital platforms and data analytics have been used to monitor progress, evaluate outcomes, and address implementation bottlenecks. Technology has enhanced the transparency and accountability of policy implementation, enabling real-time data tracking and reporting.

Learning from Past Failures: Nigeria has learned from past policy implementation failures and has tried to avoid repeating them. Evaluations and assessments of past policies have informed future policy designs, leading to more realistic and achievable goals. Policymakers have embraced evidence-based approaches, using data and research findings to inform policy implementation strategies and assess potential impacts.

Capacity Building and Training: To improve policy implementation, Nigeria has invested in capacity building and training programs for government officials and implementers (Onwujekwe, et al., 2020). This has enhanced their skills, knowledge, and understanding of the policy process. Capacity building has contributed to more effective planning, budgeting, and monitoring of policy implementation at various levels of governance.

Despite these improvements, challenges in policy implementation persist in Nigeria, including corruption, bureaucratic inefficiencies, inadequate funding, and coordination gaps. Addressing these challenges requires continued efforts to strengthen institutions, promote transparency, and enhance the capacity of implementers.

Contemporary Challenges in Policy Formulation and Implementation:

Contemporary policy formulation and implementation in Nigeria face numerous challenges, which can hinder the effective translation of policies into tangible outcomes. These challenges arise from various factors, including governance issues, socio-economic complexities, and institutional weaknesses. Some of the key contemporary challenges are as follows:

Corruption and Bureaucratic Inefficiencies: Corruption remains a pervasive challenge in Nigeria, affecting policy formulation and implementation processes (Osakede et al., 2015). It can lead to misallocation of resources, nepotism, and compromised decision-making. Bureaucratic inefficiencies, such as red tape and delays in decision-making, can hinder the timely and effective implementation of policies.

Insufficient Funding and Resource Constraints: Limited funding and resource constraints can hamper the implementation of policies in Nigeria (Mendy et al., 2021). Insufficient budgetary allocations may result in underfunded and inadequately executed policies. Inadequate resources can also affect the monitoring and evaluation of policies, making it challenging to assess their impact accurately.

Political Interference and Short-Termism: Political interference in policy formulation and implementation can result in decisions driven by short-term political gains rather than long-term developmental objectives. Frequent policy reversals due to political transitions can lead to inconsistencies and a lack of continuity in implementation.

Security Challenges: Nigeria faces various security challenges, including insurgency, banditry, and communal conflicts (Akinsowon, 2021). Insecurity can disrupt policy implementation, particularly in conflict-affected regions. Insecure environments may hinder the delivery of essential services and limit the effectiveness of development policies.

Socio-Economic Disparities: Nigeria grapples with significant socio-economic disparities across different regions and demographic groups (Okoli et al., 2020). These disparities can create difficulties in designing and implementing policies that cater to diverse needs and aspirations. Ensuring equitable policy outcomes requires addressing these disparities and promoting inclusive development.

Weak Institutional Capacity: Weak institutional capacity at various levels of government can impede policy formulation and implementation. Inadequate skills, expertise, and coordination among government agencies may hinder effective policy execution. Strengthening institutional capacity is essential to ensure policies are implemented efficiently and effectively.

Inadequate Data and Evidence-Based Decision-Making: Policy formulation and implementation often lack timely and accurate data. This hampers evidence-based decision-making and makes monitoring policy progress and assessing impact difficult. Improving data collection and analysis systems is crucial for informed and effective policy-making.

External Factors and Global Trends: Nigeria's policy landscape can be influenced by external factors, such as global economic conditions, trade policies, and international development agendas. Adapting policies to respond to changing global trends and aligning them with national priorities can be complex.

Addressing these contemporary challenges requires a concerted effort by the Nigerian government, policymakers, civil society, and the private sector. Prioritizing good governance, transparency, and inclusivity in policy formulation and implementation is crucial for overcoming these obstacles and achieving sustainable development in Nigeria. Additionally, building strong institutions, investing in human capital, and fostering a culture of accountability are essential steps toward effectively addressing the challenges faced by contemporary policy processes in the country.

Complexities and Intersections in Policy Formulation and Implementation

Policy formulation and implementation in Nigeria are characterized by numerous complexities and intersections influencing the policy process. These complexities arise from political, economic, social, and institutional factors. Understanding and navigating these complexities is essential for effective policy-making and successful implementation. Let's explore some of the key complexities and intersections in policy formulation and implementation in Nigeria:

Political Complexities: Nigeria's multi-party democracy involves diverse political interests and power dynamics (Aliyu et al., 2021). Policymaking often involves navigating complex negotiations, compromises, and coalition-building among political actors. The influence of political elites and interest groups can shape policy decisions, potentially leading to policies prioritizing specific groups' interests over broader societal needs.

Socio-Economic Intersections: Nigeria's diverse socio-economic landscape, with significant regional and demographic disparities, presents challenges in formulating policies that address the varied needs and aspirations of different communities (Aliyu et al., 2021). Policies must consider intersections between poverty, education, healthcare, and infrastructure to achieve inclusive and sustainable development.

Cultural and Ethnic Diversity: Nigeria's cultural and ethnic diversity complicates policy formulation and implementation (Okibe, 2022). Policymakers must consider how policies impact various cultural groups and respect their traditions and values. Cultural and ethnic tensions can also influence policy decisions, requiring sensitivity and inclusive approaches to promote social cohesion.

Institutional Interactions: Interactions among various government institutions and levels of governance can create complexities in policy formulation and implementation. Coordination and collaboration between federal, state, and local authorities are crucial for effective policy outcomes. Weak institutional linkages and lack of coherence can lead to disjointed policies and implementation challenges.

Capacity Constraints: Limited institutional capacity at different levels of government can hinder policy formulation and implementation. Insufficient expertise, human resources, and technical skills may affect the quality and efficiency of policy processes. Building and strengthening institutional capacity are essential for overcoming implementation challenges.

Resource Availability and Allocation: Nigeria's resource constraints, especially regarding funding and infrastructure, can affect policy implementation. Adequate resource allocation and effective utilization are critical for successful implementation. Competing demands for limited resources may require difficult prioritization decisions in policy formulation.

Data and Evidence Gaps: Lack of reliable and timely data can create challenges in evidence-based policy-making. Policymakers may face difficulties in assessing the effectiveness of existing policies and designing data-driven solutions. Addressing data gaps and investing in research and data collection is necessary for informed decision-making.

Global and Regional Influences: Nigeria's policy landscape is influenced by global and regional trends, such as international trade agreements, climate change commitments (Sayne, 2011), and geopolitical dynamics. Balancing national interests with global responsibilities requires careful policy considerations. Navigating these complexities and intersections in policy formulation and implementation demands a comprehensive and holistic approach. Policymakers must engage in inclusive consultations, prioritize evidence-based decision-making, strengthen institutions, and promote transparency and accountability. By addressing these challenges, Nigeria can enhance the effectiveness and impact of its policies, fostering sustainable development and societal progress.

Lessons from the Past and Recommendations for the Future

Key lessons learned from historical policy experiences in Nigeria include:

- i. Inclusivity and Stakeholder Engagement
- ii. Continuity and Long-Term Planning
- iii. Evidence-Based Decision Making
- iv. Public Accountability and Transparency
- v. Regional and Contextual Considerations
- vi. Inclusivity of Traditional and Indigenous Knowledge
- vii. Addressing Corruption and Governance Challenges
- viii. Multi-Sectoral Collaboration
- ix. Adaptability and Flexibility
- x. Human Capital Development
- xi. Learning from Past Failures

By learning from these historical policy experiences, Nigeria can build on successes, address shortcomings, and develop more robust policy frameworks. Emphasizing evidence-based decision-making, inclusivity, and long-term planning will support Nigeria's pursuit of sustainable development and democratic governance.

To improve policy formulation and implementation in Nigerian democracy, several recommendations can be considered. These recommendations aim to address existing challenges, promote inclusivity, enhance effectiveness, and foster sustainable development.

- i. **Inclusive Stakeholder Engagement:** Engage diverse stakeholders, including civil society organizations, academia, and local communities, in the policy formulation process. Conduct public consultations and seek input from citizens to ensure that policies reflect their needs and aspirations.
- ii. **Evidence-Based Decision Making:** Prioritize evidence-based policy-making by investing in data collection, research, and analysis. Use data to assess the impact of existing policies and guide the design of new policies for better outcomes.
- iii. **Strengthening Institutions:** Focus on building strong and capable institutions to facilitate effective policy formulation and implementation. Enhance the capacity of government agencies to plan, implement, and monitor policies.

- iv. **Transparency and Accountability:** Ensure transparency in policy processes by making information accessible to the public. Establish mechanisms for public oversight and accountability to enhance trust in government actions.
- v. **Long-Term Planning and Policy Continuity:** Encourage long-term planning and continuity in policy formulation to avoid frequent policy reversals due to political transitions. Develop multi-year policy frameworks that align with national development objectives.
- vi. **Capacity Building and Training:** Invest in training and capacity building for government officials involved in policy formulation and implementation. Strengthen technical skills and knowledge to enhance the effectiveness of policy processes.
- vii. **Regional and Context-Specific Policies:** Tailor policies to address regional disparities and local contexts. Consider the unique challenges and opportunities of different regions when formulating policies.
- viii. **Addressing Corruption and Governance Challenges:** Implement anti-corruption measures and promote good governance practices to enhance policy effectiveness. Strengthen institutions responsible for combating corruption and ensure their independence.
- ix. **Multi-Sectoral Collaboration:** Encourage collaboration among different government ministries, agencies, and levels of government in policy formulation and implementation. Foster an environment of cooperation to tackle complex challenges that require multi-sectoral approaches.
- x. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establish robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track policy implementation progress and assess outcomes. Use evaluation findings to make necessary adjustments and improvements in policy approaches.
- xi. **Public Awareness and Communication:** Communicate policy decisions, objectives, and progress effectively to the public. Increase public awareness of policies to enhance ownership and support for implementation.
- xii. **Emphasis on Human Capital Development:** Invest in education, healthcare, and skills development to build a skilled and healthy workforce. Human capital development is critical for economic growth and societal progress.

By adopting these recommendations, Nigeria can strengthen its policy formulation and implementation processes, leading to more effective, inclusive, and sustainable policies. Consistent efforts to enhance governance, promote transparency, and engage citizens in decision-making will contribute to Nigeria's progress and democratic development.

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Conclusion

Improving policy formulation and implementation in Nigerian democracy is essential for achieving sustainable development, addressing diverse needs, and promoting good

governance. The discussion outlined challenges faced historically and in the contemporary era, drawing lessons from past policy experiences. The complexities demand a comprehensive approach, emphasizing inclusivity, evidence-based decision-making, and stakeholder engagement. Strengthening institutions, combating corruption, and promoting transparency enhance policy outcomes and public trust. Long-term planning, regional considerations, and multi-sectoral collaboration are crucial for addressing socio-economic disparities and supporting inclusive development. Investments in human capital and data-driven decision-making are critical for sustainable progress. Nigeria's commitment to continuous improvement requires joint efforts from policymakers, government institutions, civil society, and citizens. Embracing transparency and inclusivity will lead to effective policies, fostering a thriving democratic society. Successful policy formulation and implementation will pave the way for a prosperous, equitable, and sustainable future, solidifying Nigeria's role as a regional leader driving positive change in Africa.

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