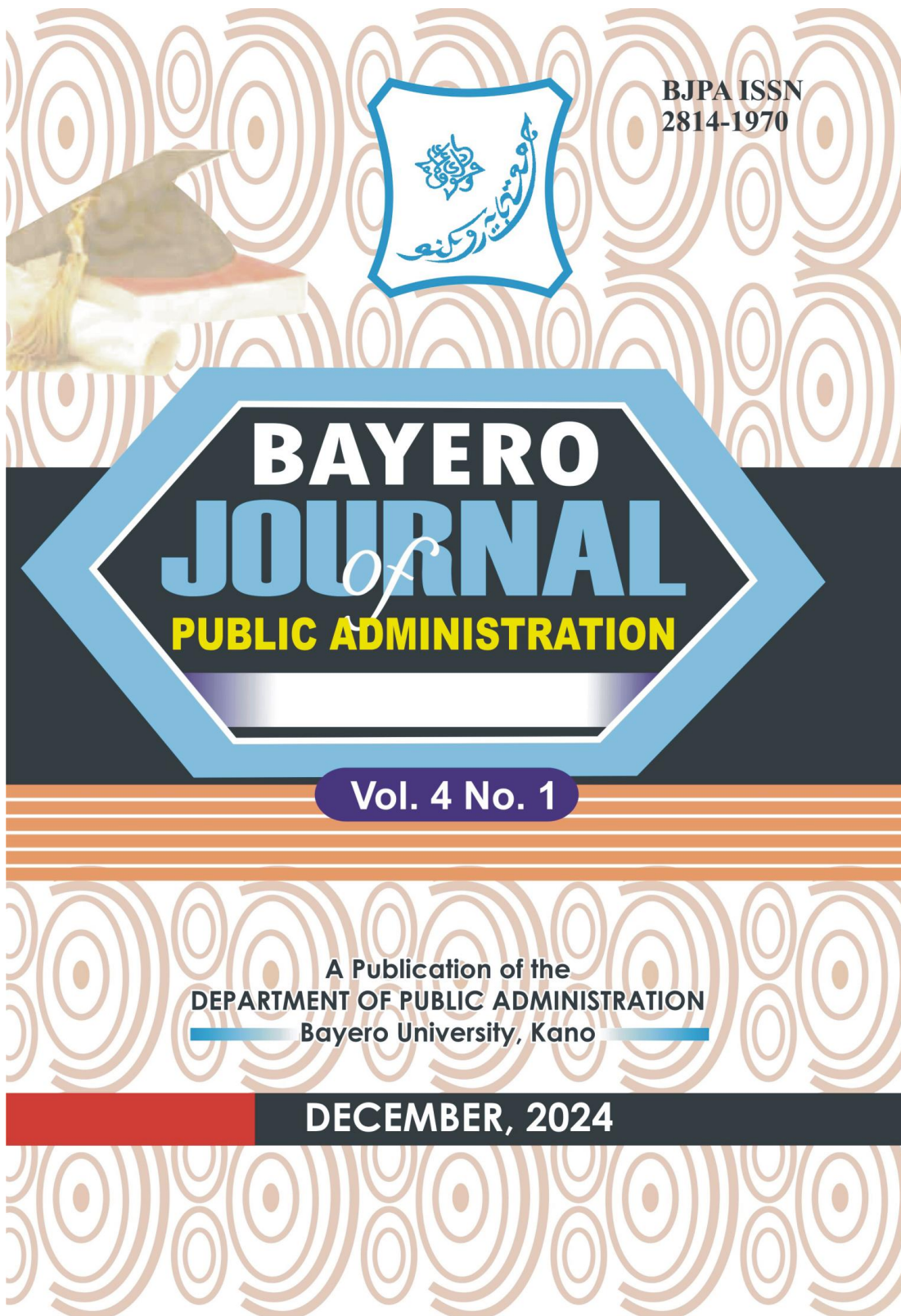


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CHALLENGES OF THE PUBLIC POLICY EVALUATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Public policy performance is vital to effective service delivery. However, weak government's performances in Nigeria are an indication of ineffective policy evaluation. Therefore, the paper examines the challenges constraining the effectiveness of policy evaluation in Nigeria. The objectives are; to examine the relevance of evaluation to the policy performance, identify challenges to effective evaluation, and determine ways to improve evaluation processes for effective policy outcomes. The study adopts descriptive analysis method to review the findings on case study of selected three public policies in Nigeria; Universal Basic Education (UBE), National Rural Electrification (NRE), and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH). It relies on the secondary data by the supervisory agencies on evaluation of each programme. The scope of the review is the effectiveness in achieving main goal/objectives of each programme. However, the review of secondary data from the case studies indicates neglect of policy evaluation exercise by the supervisory agencies. The paper identifies inadequate availability of quality data, political interference, corruption, and inadequate funding as challenges. However, it recommends enhancing capacity-building, investing in data management, strengthening collaborations, and the establishment of an independent evaluation agency to enhance the effectiveness of evaluation, for efficient policy performance and service delivery in Nigeria.

Keywords: Policy Evaluation, Policy Indicators, Policy Performance, Public Policy, Service Delivery

1. Introduction

Governance in public sector is driven by public policy. It is the central tool by which governance is planned, implemented and evaluated from time to time. Though, there are several schools of thought, generally, there are three identifiable stages of policy process in policy cycle: formulation, implementation, and evaluation. Evaluation is more germane because of its relevance in reviewing the other stages for amendment. It provides reliable data for evidence-based decision-making, fits policy design, and optimizing resource allocation, and accountability of government actions (OECD, 2020).

To some extent, the low level of development in developing nations, of which Nigeria is one, is traceable to the low performance of public policies, and for various reasons relates to evaluation constraints. Available development indices indicate that Nigeria is at the lower

side of Human Development Indices. Nigeria HDI gradually increases within 19 years to about 22%, but it still remains in low human development category with HDI 0.548, whereas developing countries like Seychelles, Mauritius, Libya, Algeria, and Tunisia in Africa, and others like Vietnam are categorised as high or very high HDI (UNDP, 2024).

Therefore, there is a need to start asking questions about, which of the stages of the policy cycle need enhancement for better policy outcomes and performance in Nigeria. The assumption of this paper is that, challenges of public policy evaluation are constraining the deliverance of high impact public services to the citizens of Nigeria. Thus, the objectives are: to examine the relevance of public policy evaluation to the achievement of public policy objectives; to identify the constraints to effective and efficient policy evaluation in Nigeria; and to identify how the public policy evaluation process can be enhanced for public policy performance in Nigeria. The paper relies on available relevant secondary data and the outline is as follows: conceptual explanation, indicators of policy evaluation, importance of policy evaluation, case study review, challenges of policy evaluation in Nigeria, and suggestions to improve policy evaluation in Nigeria.

2.0 Conceptual and Theoretical Explanation

2.1 Public Policy

Public policy refers to the laws, regulations, guidelines, and actions of the government to address the needs and interests of citizens. It is a critical and essential aspect of modern governance, which determines how resources are allocated, delivering of public services, and resolution of societal issues (Matusitz & Tretheway, 2020). Factors that influence public policy include political ideologies, public opinion, economic realities, and external pressures. Public policy is both direct and indirect government's course of actions in addressing problems or issues affecting the society (Lassance, 2020). Public policy concerns various levels of government; the local, state, and the federal. In addition, public policies emanate through various channels, including legislative action, executive orders, court decisions, and public opinion.

Public policy plays a critical role in shaping the quality of life of citizens and addresses societal issues such as poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation (Reese & Rosenfeld, 2020). Public policy also promotes economic growth and improves public health, safety, and education. Additionally, with the public policy, governments are accountable to the citizens and responsive to the societal needs and concerns. Although, the government and its agencies are public policy makers, the policy process is a more complex political procedure involving numerous actors such as elected officials, political party heads, pressure groups, civil servants, international organizations, non-governmental entities, academic experts, journalists, and occasionally, the citizens who are directly policy recipients (Hill, 2021).

Public policies enhance governance at national and international levels and recent ones include the COVID-19 pandemic response, gun control laws, and climate change policies (Lopez, 2021). The response to COVID-19 pandemic facilitates the implementation of policies such as lockdowns, social distancing, and nose-mask to prevent the spread of the virus. The aim of gun control policies, such as background checks and assault weapon bans, are to reduce gun-related violence. On the other hand, climate change policies, such as carbon

emissions reduction and renewable energy incentives, are meant to mitigate the effects of climate change.

2.2 Policy Performance

Policy performance refers to the extent to which a policy achieves its goals and objectives. As a crucial aspect of public policy processes it assists in determining the effectiveness and efficiency of a policy (Gulsen & Hakan, 2021). The Policy performance is of interest to various countries because it is crucial to achieving sustainable development goals and in promoting the well-being of society. Recent studies have highlighted the importance of policy performance in achieving sustainable development goals. For instance, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has emphasized the need for policies that prioritize sustainable economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection. These policies require regular evaluation to ensure they are achieving the intended objectives (UNDP, 2017). Moreover, Forest and Bird, a New Zealand environmental organization, also emphasised the importance of policy performance in achieving environmental sustainability (Forest and Bird, n.d.).

Policy performance can be measured through various indicators, such as the level of compliance with the policy, the degree of public satisfaction with the policy outcomes, and the economic, social, and environmental impacts of the policy. Several methods have been developed for assessing policy performance, which include cost-benefit analysis, policy evaluation and performance measurement. Cost-benefit analysis involves evaluating the costs and benefits of a policy to determine its overall effectiveness. Policy evaluation involves assessing the extent to which a policy is being implemented as contained in the guidelines to identify areas for improvement. Performance measurement involves tracking the performance of a policy over time using various indicators.

2.3 Policy Evaluation

Public policy evaluation is the systematic assessment of a government programme or policy to determine its effectiveness, efficiency, equity, and sustainability (Bardach, 2012). It involves collecting and analysing data to determine the extent to which policy is being implemented according to the plan and guidelines, and the extent to which it is addressing the identified problems. Evaluations can take various forms, including process evaluation, outcome evaluation, and cost-benefit evaluation, which can be initiated at various stages of the policy cycle (Theodoulou & Kofinis, 2004).

Public policy evaluation usually strengthens the public with valuable information to demand accountability and transparency in decision-making, assisting policymakers and stakeholders in identifying the strengths and weaknesses in policies and programmes, and in making evidence-based decisions (EBDM) concerning policy design, implementation, and funding (Buse et al., 2012). Evaluation also helps in establishing whether new policies are needed or existing ones need reforms. However, policy evaluation in complex policy environments can be challenging, because of the influence of multiple factors on policy outcomes (McDavid & Hawthorn, 2013). Evaluation methods must be appropriate, rigorous and transparent to achieve credible and reliable outcome (Buse et al., 2012). Furthermore, evaluation result is essential to determine policy priorities and resource allocation for reliable and credible decision (McDavid & Hawthorn, 2013). More importantly, it is a critical component of the

policy cycle, providing valuable information about the effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of policies and programmes.

2.4 Theoretical Framework: Rational-Decision Making Model

The rational decision-making model of public policy is a systematic approach in which policy decisions are based on logical, objective, and empirical analysis of alternatives. This model rests on the assumption that the decision-makers usually follow a sequential process, that seeks to maximize the societal benefits and minimises costs, to arrive at the most optimal solutions. It is grounded in the theory of rational choice and significantly depends on quantitative data and comprehensive analysis (Leoveanu, 2013).

The theoretical assumptions underlining rational decision-making model are: first, it assumes that the decision-makers make informed decisions because they have complete information about all possible alternatives and their consequences at disposal (Kobiyh & Amri, 2024). Second, it assumes that policymakers are capable of objective and logical reasoning, which can maximise societal welfare devoid of personal bias or emotional influence (Allison, 1971). Third, the model assumes that policymakers can predict outcomes accurately by using empirical data and rigorous analysis, and can rank alternatives based on a clear set of goals and preferences (Dye, 2013). Lastly, it presumes that decision-makers have unlimited time and resources to gather data, analyse it, and implement the optimal solution (Simon, 1979). While the rational model provides an ideal framework for decision-making, like any other model or theory, it is often criticised for ignoring the limitations of policymakers such as time, resources, and the complexity of the issues (Ongaro, 2025).

In contrast, the Herbert Simon bounded rationality model named "satisficing", emphasises the role of institutional structures in shaping decisions, and thus, advocates striving for satisfactory outcomes, instead of optimal solutions, due to cognitive limitations and informational constraints in decision making. In the same vein, because of these limitations, Charles Lindblom suggests that policy should reflect the existing frameworks, practical experience and adaptability. His incremental decision-making model emphasises changes through gradual adjustments rather than comprehensive transformation. Although, the two models support flexibility and reflection on peculiarities in policy processes, evaluation may lack standardisation, which may result to manipulation (Clarke, 2024).

However, rational-decision model explains and illustrates how policy flow in bureaucratic sector, applies to evaluation at various stages of policy components, aligns with CDC framework for evaluation and Institute for the Evaluation of Public Policy (2020) guidelines for the implementation and evaluation of public policies, which is the focus of this paper.

2.5 Indicators of Policy Evaluation

Policy evaluation is a critical process in assessing the effectiveness, efficiency, and equity of public policies and programmes. It is the art of measuring impact, effectiveness, efficiency, and equity of policies (Osah, 2023). Each type involves in systematic collection and analysis of data to determine the extent, to which a policy has achieved specified objectives and identifying any unintended consequences (Abdelghani, et al., 2024).

However, evaluation goal may focus on achievement of goals/objectives, cost/efficiency, or quality. The Cost-effectiveness ratio (CER) as an indicator measures the cost of achieving a

specific outcome or goal. It compares the cost of a policy or project to its effectiveness (Lee, 2025). It is calculated by dividing the total cost of a policy by its expected benefits. The lower the CER, the more cost-effective is the policy (Blaikie, 2017). For example, a policy that costs \$30 million but produces \$60 million in benefits has a CER of 0.5, which is considered to be highly cost-effective.

Another important indicator of policy evaluation is the impact on the target population. This can be measured by assessing changes in behaviour, attitudes or knowledge among the target population (ENRD, 2021). For example, the inscriptions 'drink responsibly and smokers are likely to die young' on both alcoholic drinks and cigarettes respectively, which are products of policy aimed at reducing the consumption of both alcoholic drinks and smoking rates, can be evaluated by measuring changes in the number of smokers and drinkers or the number of cigarettes smoked and bottles of alcohol consumed per day among the target population (Scriven, 2018). This indicator is mostly appropriated in policies aimed at improving health or education outcomes.

The sustainability of a policy is also an important indicator of policy evaluation. This involves assessing whether a policy is likely to continue over a long period and possibility of replicating it in other contexts. Sustainability can be measured by looking at the policy's funding, political support, and institutional capacity (Patton, 2018). For example, a policy that relies on a single funding source may not be sustainable if that source is terminated, whereas a policy that has broad support is more likely to be sustainable.

Finally, equity is an important indicator of policy evaluation. This involves assessing whether a policy has a fair and equitable impact on different sectors of the society. Equity can be measured by looking at changes in income, education, health, or other outcomes among different groups (Klein & Lee, 2018). For example, a policy that provides subsidies for higher education may be evaluated by assessing its impact on students from low-income families compared to those from higher-income families. The indicators provide policymakers with valuable information to improve policies and programmes and ensuring that they are implemented as planned.

2.6 Importance of Public Policy Evaluation

Public policy evaluation is an essential aspect of the policymaking process in any government or organization. Public policy evaluation is essential in any democratic system because it assists policy makers in determining the extent to which programmes are meeting the intended objectives and impacting the targeted population (Dunn, 2017). This evaluation process is critical for various reasons, including accountability, transparency, and learning (ENRD, 2021). The importance of public policy evaluation includes:

Firstly, it provides overall assessment, promotes accountability by providing a mechanism for policymakers to measure and track the progress of their policies, to identify areas of weakness and taking corrective actions for improvement in ongoing policy development (Whitsel, et al., 2024). It helps in building public trust by increasing transparency and accountability in government (Bovens, 2007). For instance, in the United States, the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 requires federal agencies to provide annual performance reports that detailed their accomplishments and progress towards

meeting their strategic goals and objectives (Hansen et al., 2012). This reporting requirement ensures that the government agencies are accountable to the public and policymakers.

Secondly, evaluation promotes transparency by providing stakeholders, including policymakers, programme administrators, citizens, and other interested parties, with information about the effectiveness of public policies and programmes. It fosters trust between the government and the citizens because transparency allows for greater public participation and input (Riyadh, et al., 2023). It is crucial to building inclusive and fair societies (Prats, 2022). This information is essential for making informed decisions about policy development and implementation. For instance, in South Africa, the Public Finance Management Act of 1999 requires government departments and public entities to produce annual reports that include information on their performance and financial management (Snyman & Schnusenberg, 2012). This reporting requirement ensures transparency and public scrutiny of government spending and performance. Transparency usually provides evidence of the government's achievements and shortcomings, leading to increased public confidence (Frivaldo, et al. 2024).

Thirdly, evaluation promotes learning by providing policymakers with feedback on the results of the policies. This feedback helps policymakers to make informed decisions about adjusting policy design and implementation to improve outcomes. Also, outcomes stimulates research, advocacy and redesigning of framework (Claire & Claudio, 2023) Public policy evaluation helps policymakers diagnose performance problems and make evidence-based decisions for review (Kano & Hayashi, 2021). For instance, in the United Kingdom, the Cabinet Office's What Works Network provides evidence-based research on the effectiveness of policies and programmes across different sectors, including education, crime, and public health (Albon & Burgess, 2017). This network helps policymakers to learn from best practices and evidence-based research to improve policy design and implementation. In essence, public policy evaluation is essential for effective policy design and implementation, and governments and organizations need to prioritise performance evaluation of their policies and programmes to ensure optimal outcomes.

Furthermore, it assists in prioritising the funding. Typically, there are limited resources for the public programmes; hence, evaluation provides evidence-based information to help policymakers allocate their resources effectively (Dunn, 2017).

3.0 Methodology:

The study adopts descriptive analysis in reviewing the findings of the selected case studies. It relies on the secondary data provided by the supervisory agencies in charge of the three policies/programmes based on outcomes of their policy evaluation, as contained in the findings of Aderogba (2022b) case studies on the performances of national public policies at local level in Nigeria, in selected local governments of Oyo State. It focuses on five public policies; Universal Basic Education Policy (UBE), Maternal and Child Healthcare Policy (MCH), National Rural Electrification Policy (NRE), Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Policy (WASH), and FADAMA Agricultural Policy. The three selected policies/programmes; for reviews are UBE, NRE, and WASH. The scope of analyses and review of this study is the outcome in terms of effectiveness in achieving the main goal/objectives. The adopted frame is the compliance of each selected programme to CDC 6 components of policy evaluation framework; mobilising all stakeholders for early participation in engagement, clearly defining

the programme to propagate its goals and objectives, designing accurate and useful evaluation plan, providing credible evidence to justify the results and recommendations, justifying the linkage between the conclusion and results, and utilising and sharing the evaluation results and lessons. Structurally, the review assesses the main objectives, implementation, and deduces the findings.

i. UBE Policy:

Main objective: Providing foundation lifelong learning through accessible, equitable and quality education for all (Ako, 2022).

Implementation: The Nigerian government introduced Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme in 1999, but fully commences after the signing of the UBE Act in April 2004, as a revised and improvement on Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme earlier abandoned in 1976, to eliminate illiteracy, ignorance, and poverty. The main objective is to facilitate free, universal, and compulsory basic education to all children between ages 6-15, however, at the inception it covers only limited activities such as social mobilisation, infrastructure development, and the provision of instructional materials (Amuchie, 2015). The initiative aligns with the declaration of 1990 World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA) in Jomtien, Thailand, which in Article 1 emphasises inclusive access to educational opportunities that can guarantee basic needs (Yusuf & Ajere, 2000).

The target key groups are: children of age 3-5 years for early childhood care and development education (ECCDE), age 6-11 for primary education, age 12-14 for junior secondary education, and functional literacy, numeracy and life skills for adults of age 15 and above. Additionally, it supports out-of-school, non-formal education for individuals without essential lifelong learning skills, and special initiatives for marginalised groups such as girls, women, nomadic populations, out-of-school youth, and the almajiris. Non-formal skills and apprenticeship training for adolescents and youth without access to formal education are also part of the programme (Umar, et. al. 2024).

The UBE Act and the National Policy on Education revised in 2004, prescribes key framework and resources for implementing the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme, mandating free and compulsory education in primary and junior secondary schools, and binding the parents with penalties for noncompliance (Abdulai, 2023). UBE implementation depends on grant of at least 2% of the federal Consolidated Revenue Fund, with contributions from federal credits and local and international donors (Umar, et al., 2024). The institutions implementing and managing the programme are the Local Education Authorities (LGEAs), supervised by the State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs) at the state level, and the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) at the federal level (Odewale, 2019).

UBE aligns with the 6-3-3-4 education policy in Nigeria; 6 years for primary education, 3 years for junior secondary school (JSS) education, 3 years for senior secondary school (SSS) education, and 4 years for tertiary education in Nigeria. The primary and JSS constitute the Universal Basic Education (UBE).

Finding: One of the main programme integral to the policy is the acquisition of vocational and technical skills at the basic education level. However, there are no available secondary

evaluation reports on the performance of this programme from any of the supervisory agencies, while the responses from the sample of the study shows that the programme is not operational in the public schools in Oyo State, except in few insignificant elite colleges in the urban areas. The supervisory agency has no record to show on the policy evaluation processes in line with CDC (1999) framework for policy evaluation to address the failure, which is a clear indication of policy evaluation failure due to the neglect of evaluation.

ii. NRE Policy:

Main Objective: To increase electricity access to the neglected areas, particularly in rural communities, more rapidly in a cost-effective way (Olaniyan, 2024).

Implementation: The Nigerian government in 1981 with intention to enhance rural access to electricity, proposed rural electrification project to enhance national electrification and to connect to the national grid, the existing 301 local government headquarters, which later increased to 774 by 1999. The project aims to bridge economic disparities to enhance the capacity and performance of local governments (Diji, 2014).). It aligns rural electrification efforts with broader economic development goals, promotes financial investments in electrification initiatives, and facilitates the participation of new market investors (FAOLEX Database, 2016). The Nigerian Rural Electrification Agency (REA) is the institution implementing the project, through the cost-effective off-grid and interconnected mini-grid initiatives like solar energy technology solutions such as PV mini-grids and Solar Home Systems, and also partnering private sector energy providers (International Climate Initiative, 2024).

It intends to provide access to 75% by 2020 and 90% by 2030, with at least a 10% renewable energy mix by 2025, by leveraging the Rural Electrification Policy (2005) and the National Electric Power Policy (2001) for implementation (Rural Electrification Agency, 2024). Achieving 75% electrification rate by 2020, requires electrifying 471,000 rural households annually from 2007 to 2020, and subsequently increasing the access to 513,000 households annually from 2020 to 2040 (JOIN IEA/IRENA Policy and Measures Database, 2017).

Both the Federal and State governments, and the international donors, financially support the electrification project in the rural areas to achieve the policy.

Finding: However, findings in selected local governments in Oyo State reveal that the guidelines were abandoned. In reality the state government only supports various local governments and Community Development Associations in the provision of some electricity equipment as a form of political patronage, and not rural electrification as conceived in the policy. Also, supervisory agencies have no available evaluation reports in line with the CDC (1999) framework for policy evaluation processes to guide government in addressing the policy failure. Thus, this is another indication of public policy evaluation neglect in Oyo State.

iii. WASH Policy:

Main Objectives: To ensure all Nigerians have inclusive access to safe, affordable, and sustainable water and sanitation through active participation of all stakeholders (UNICEF, 2024).

Implementation: The focus of Nigeria's Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) policy is to address the acute gap in access to clean water, sanitation, and hygiene services. Despite the government's effort to improve the sector, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 6.1 and 6.2,; achieving universal access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation

by 2030, open defecation and unsafe sanitation practices remain unabated in the rural areas (EnviroNews, 2023). The state and local authorities primarily provide WASH services, while the Federal Government establishes the policy direction and governance framework for implementation (Yusuf et al, 2022).

Among the initiatives to support the implementation include the Partnership for Expanded Water Sanitation and Hygiene (PEWASH) Programme, to target 100% access to rural water supply and sanitation by 2030, the National Action Plan to revitalise the WASH sector, and the Clean Nigeria: Use the Toilet Campaign (Federal Ministry of Water Resources, 2022). Constitution of 40-member committee in April 2023, to develop a comprehensive National WASH Policy, that will foster efficient planning, proper resource allocation, and improved infrastructure for water and sanitation is another effort (Kolade, 2023).

The finding of the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene National Outcome Routine Mapping (WASHNORM), which the national survey designed to track the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG); WASH indicators, monitor progress in implementation, and support planning efforts reveals that 67% of the population has access to basic water supply services, with only 13% classified as safely managed. Access to Basic sanitation services, is 46%, with 18% safely managed and 23% engaging in open defecation, while access to basic hygiene services remains at 17% low (WASHNORM, 2021). Another finding of 1999 KAP study indicates that many traditional pit latrines were unsafe, and most rural residents still practice unhygienic waste disposal methods like open defecation or disposing waste into water bodies, and poor funding of health and hygiene education at all tiers of government (Sanitation & Water For All, 2022).

Funding is multi-sourced from both domestic and international sources. According to the 2018 WASH Accounts, while the Nigerian households contributes about 91% of the total ₦3.6 trillion expenditure in the sector, the federal and state governments, which usually rely on donors support contribute only 4%, with their efforts mainly concentrated on policy formation and regulatory frameworks (Federal Ministry of Water Resources, 2022). International donor agencies account for 5% of Nigeria's total WASH funding (EnviroNews Nigeria, 2023). For instance, the World Bank has committed significant resources through programmes like the National Urban Water Sector Reform Programme. Additionally, UNICEF and WaterAid also contribute significantly towards achieving the SDG targets by providing technical support and supporting the government on policy development (Kolade, 2023).

Finding: However, the programme is not significantly implemented in Oyo state. Also, there is no available policy evaluation report from supervisory agencies on the policy failure and how the failure would be addressed on the basis of the CDC (1999) framework for policy evaluation processes. This is another indication of public policy evaluation neglect and failure.

4.0 Challenges of Public Policy Evaluation in Nigeria

Public policy evaluation is a crucial process in ensuring effective and efficient policy outcomes and good governance in Nigeria. It involves the systematic assessment of policies and programmes to determine the impact, effectiveness, and efficiency. However, the above review reveals neglect of evaluation in the policy implementation processes, resulting in poor implementation. Evaluating public policy in Nigeria is challenging due to various factors; political, technical, and institutional challenges.

4.1 Political Challenges:

Political interference is a major challenge for evaluation. Results may not always be favorable to policymakers, which make it susceptible to political interference. There is public perception that policymakers manipulate the evaluation process to protect their interests or to present a positive image to the public. They may pressure evaluators to produce favourable results, suppress negative findings, or delay the release of reports (Onuoha, 2015). This interference undermines the credibility and validity of evaluation reports and hampers the effectiveness of policies and programmes. Also, this challenge may lead to the selection of evaluation methodologies that are biased and not rigorous (Ojemakinde, 2020).

Corruption affects all aspects of governance in Nigeria, including policy evaluation. Evaluators may be bribed to manipulate reports, or may be threatened by corrupt political appointees and bureaucratic heads (Oyedokun, 2019). Corruption also affects the implementation of policies and programmes, which makes accurate measure of its impact uncertain.

4.2 Institutional Challenges:

Implementation challenges are also a critical issue affecting the evaluation of policies in Nigeria. Often, policies are inadequately implemented, leading to a gap between policy objectives and outcomes. The evaluation of poorly implemented policies may lead to inaccurate findings, which may not reveal the ineffectiveness of the policy. Furthermore, this may be worsened by lack of cooperation and collaboration between government agencies, which are responsible for implementation and evaluations (Akpan & Avalos-Santiago, 2020). Furthermore, lack of autonomy, broad enabling law, and often overlapping or duplication of responsibilities among agencies of government weakens institutional capacity to undertake independent and result oriented evaluation.

Funding is another major institutional issue in public policy evaluation in Nigeria. Evaluations require considerable resources such as personnel, data, equipment, and transportation. The cost of evaluation is often not factored into the budget, making it difficult to implement evaluations (Adebayo et al., 2021). Evaluations are therefore, often not conducted, leading to lack of evidence-based decision-making in policymaking.

4.3 Technical Challenges:

Capacity constraints and limited technical expertise are another challenges. The limited capacity of government agencies, academics, and researchers to undertake accurate and rigorous evaluations and lack of technical expertise, skills, and resources required for evaluations hinder the ability to perform evaluations accurately and timely. Also, it is difficult to evaluate complex policies and programmes effectively. Thus, training and capacity building for policymakers, evaluators, and researchers are essential for enhancing evaluation capacity in Nigeria (Adekoya & Adejuwon, 2021).

Public policy evaluation in Nigeria often lack reliable and quality data for effective technical implementation. Data is essential for evaluating policies and programmes accurately, but in Nigeria, data collection and management are poor. According to Onuoha (2015), Nigeria lacks a comprehensive data collection system, which makes it difficult to measure the impact of policies and programmes accurately. Additionally, data is often manipulated or falsified for political reasons, making it difficult to trust the information provided by the government and reliability of the data. Often, policymakers make decisions based on inadequate or incomplete data, leading to ineffective policies. Data quality is also a challenge because

existing data may not be up-to-date, accurate, or reliable. And inadequate reliable data hinders impact evaluations, which are essential for assessing the effectiveness of policies (Udoh & Osuagwu, 2020).

Also, identifying and choosing appropriate and suitable evaluation methods is an issue that influences the process outcomes. Evaluation methodologies differ greatly depending on the context of the programme being evaluated, thus, deciding rightly on the choice of method is very essential (Scriven, 2014).

Another technical constraint is lack of standardisation of evaluation frameworks. There is no nationally accepted framework for public policy evaluation. This affects comparing results, since there is no standardised method of measurement; hence, government manipulates the outcomes easily (Dunn, 2017).

Technically, clear objectives for policy and programmes are a critical guide for evaluation (Okoro, 2018). Many policies are drafted without specific goals or targets, which usually constrains the evaluation of the effectiveness of the programmes. For instance, the National Poverty Reduction with Growth Strategy (NPRGS) initiated by the government in 2015 lacks clear and measurable targets (Adenike, 2018). The policies have bogus and inappropriate objectives without clarity for implementation and evaluation (Aderogba, A.A. 2022b). As a result, there is no way to accurately evaluate the impact of the policy. Thus, it is difficult for the supervisory public institutions to measure clear outcomes, which is an indication that policy evaluation is not serving as a proper guide in public governance process in Nigeria (Aderogba, 2023).

5.0 Framework to Enhance Public Policy Evaluation in Nigeria

Public policy evaluation is an important aspect of governance because it assists the policymakers in measuring the impact of their decisions on the populace. However, in Nigeria, public policy evaluation suffers several challenges that hinder its effectiveness. Thus, the following recommendations can enhance public policy evaluation in Nigeria:

- One way to improve the technical capacity is to strengthen data collection and analysis. According to Afolabi et al. (2020), data collection and analysis are crucial in evaluating the public policies. There is a need to invest in data collection and analysis, by providing the necessary resources and personnel. In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of data in informed policy decisions and impacts evaluation. Nigeria can leverage on this trend by embracing data collection and management systems that are reliable, accurate, and accessible to policymakers and evaluators. In addition, policymakers should also work closely with academia and other research institutions to improve the quality and reliability of data for policy evaluation.
- Also, technical improvement for policy evaluation in Nigeria requires a more comprehensive and systematic approach that can accommodate evidence-based methods. One way to achieving this is by adopting already established guidelines and standard framework to achieve a rigorous and transparent evaluation process. For instance, the World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) has developed a set of guidelines for conducting evaluations that can serve as a useful framework for policymakers and evaluators in Nigeria (World Bank, 2019).

- There should be healthy collaboration between government agencies, civil society organisations, and other stakeholders to strengthen the institutional capacity. This will improve information management systems and enhancing timely and effective data sharing (Oyedokun et al., 2020).
- Another way to enhance institutional capacity is through capacity-building. Institutional capacity enhances rigorous and unbiased evaluations (OECD, 2020). Government needs to prioritise the training and capacity building of personnel involved in policy evaluation, and also, protect the institutions from political interference. This involves training and developing the technical expertise through formal training programmes, workshops, and mentorship programmes that can provide hands-on experience in evaluation methods and techniques (Onyeneho & Nwaka, 2019).
- Finally, to address the challenge of political interference in Nigeria, government needs to create an insulated independent and impartial evaluation system. This may involve establishing an independent evaluation commission or agency that is responsible for conducting policy evaluations and reporting its findings to the public (OECD, 2020).

6.0 Conclusion

The paper examines how the evaluation of public policy can be enhanced for better public policy performance in Nigeria. The analysis indicates that policy evaluation is germane not only to the achievement of policy objectives, but for better public service delivery.

The analyses and review of the findings, of selected case studies of government policies and programmes reveal the neglect of policy evaluation processes, which point to the unreliability of available secondary data. The constraints to effective and efficient policy evaluation in Nigeria include: the challenges of inadequate data, political interference, corruption, and limited technical expertise. Therefore, improving public policy evaluation in Nigeria requires a comprehensive and systematic approach involving the use of evidence-based methods, investment in data and information management systems, capacity building for policymakers and evaluators, and reducing political interference. These reforms will require significant investments in resources and personnel, as well as political will and commitment from policymakers. However, the benefits of improving public policy evaluation in Nigeria are immense, as it will enable policymakers to make informed decisions that are reflective of the true impact of the policies. This will ultimately improve the effectiveness and efficiency of governance in the country.

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