

Crisis Management and the Interface between Politics and Administration: An Inference from the Nigerian's Government Response to Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

Covid-19 pandemic has created a ramifying public Administrative, economic, and political crisis in many countries across the globe. The pandemic has now appeared to be a thing of the past, however, now is the time for public administration researchers and political scientists to start understanding how and why governments responded the way they have, by exploring how effective these responses appear to be, and what lessons we can draw about effective public policy making in preparation for another pandemic or crisis. This paper therefore argues that there will be no way to understand the Nigerian Government responses to Covid-19 and their effects without understanding the relative interface between the political landscape and administrative framework of the country. The author thus proposes five key areas of intersection between politics and administration in understanding why the Nigerian government responded in the way it does, this includes: social policies to crisis management, regime type, formal political institutions, constitutionalism and the public health conveying mechanism (control over health care systems and public administration). The paper adopted a qualitative content analytical research approach with the aid of the policy streams" metaphor to achieve an extensive thematic review. Having critically evaluate the above points of intersection the paper concludes by positing that any future research on public policy in Nigeria that takes the country's political structure especially the relative interface between politics and administration as a serious focus can enable the development of more robust and realistic research findings which can shape our broader understanding of the politics of policy implementation in the country.

Keywords: Crisis management, Politics, Administration, COVID-19 Pandemic, Nigeria, Public Policy

1.0 Introduction

Covid-19 pandemic posed a serious threat to global public health and has caused a cascading political, economic, and public health crisis in several countries (Ayenigbara, 2020). Whether discussing infection and mortality rates, the scope of mobility limitations and other public health policy measures, or the financial implications for public sector expenditure and unemployment, the statistics involved were

mind-boggling. Health care systems and states were put to tests many have not seen in a long time (Tabari, Amini, Moghadami, & Moosavi, 2020). Entire economies have been placed into medically induced comas (Ayenigbara, 2020). Unimaginably strict public health regulations have become widespread, with levels of public compliance or noncompliance that frequently surprise researchers and public commentators (Barbuddhe, Rawool, Gaonkar, Vergis, Dhama, & Malik, 2020). It is imperative to note that, COVID-19 pandemic affected public policy in three ways. firstly, the spread of the virus encouraged social distancing which led to the shutdown of public institutions, financial markets, corporate offices, businesses and events centres. Secondly, government were compelled to come up with policies measures that could ensure compliance to such policy directives by the citizens. Thirdly, policy measures must also be put in place to provide palliative and succors to the citizens. Several governments, around the world had responded differently to the above three important policy requirements, where some were applauded others were heavily criticized.

However, it is imperative to note that for every policy decision three important variables of problems, politics and policy solutions have to converge to collectively determine the right course of action to be taken by policy makers. Thus, it is imperative to comprehend the interplay between politics and administration in order to fully appreciate the way various governments responded to the COVID-19 outbreak. There is a well-known and widely lamented gulf between political scientists and public administration scholars in that perspective (Carpenter, 2012). Therefore, without realizing the severe and highly political limitations on data about Covid-19 infections and attributable mortality, political scientists and economists run the real risk of publishing analyses that attempt to attribute morbidity and mortality to policy and politics (Karanikolos & McKee, 2020).

According to Greer et al. (2018), there is also a significant chance that scholars studying public administration will ignore the nuances of policies and social and political contexts, recycle political theories that are too large and imprecise to explain much, and ignore mid-level theories on subjects like political institutions in favor of explanations that are either too local or too large and imprecise. The COVID-19 pandemic presents an opportunity to address these disciplinary silos, particularly in the Nigerian context. This will enable us to gain a better understanding of the factors that influenced the public administrative decisions made by the government during the pandemic and how administration and politics intersect in the future. This paper's aim is to close the perceived gap between political scientists and public administration experts by examining the entire spectrum of general policy through the lens of a crisis management. This work is based on the idea that a nation-state's structural political tendencies will always affect how well its public administration executes policy.

2.0 Conceptual Clarification

2.1 The Concept of Crisis

Conventional interpretations of crises highlight how quickly they burn out (Hart & Boin, 2001). The word "crisis," particularly as it is used in popular culture, suggests something unexpected to us. Crises burst forth, but once they are contained, they typically vanish from the pages of history. They are viewed

as a distinct occurrence, a unique circumstance with a distinct start and finish. This is consistent with the conventional definition of a crisis, which is defined as a generally acknowledged danger to established social norms necessitating an immediate action in the face of extreme uncertainty (t Hart & Boin, 2001). While not exactly the same, a creeping crisis is similar to the idea of a slow-burning crisis (Hart & Boin, 2001). Long-term incubation periods can cause creeping crises to continue simmering long after the "hot phase" has ended. They lack a distinct start and finish. It's possible that the seemingly intense period is really a sign of things to come—hotter phases or a slowing down of the threat. Either the approaching crisis goes unnoticed or it is publicly recognized as a serious issue that is not fully resolved. A good working definition that results from these dynamics is provided by Boin, Ekengren, & Rhinard, (2020), who conceived creeping crisis as: a threat to widely held social ideals or life-supporting systems that develops over time and place, is hinted at by preceding events, receives differing levels of political and/or social attention, and is either impartially or inadequately addressed by authorities is known as a creeping crisis. The concept given above highlights how threat and urgency are products of society. The term "crisis" refers to the collective perception among members of a group that what they hold dear is in danger. This begs the question of how and when the views of numerous people start to converge. Initial interpretations of traditional crises, such as explosions, invasions, or earthquakes, are initially not very flexible. The general impression of a threat in creeping crises is the outcome of a social process that takes place gradually. That process could happen right away or it could take years. It permits a broad range of interpretations.

The (relatively) objective character of crises is also included in this concept. According to an objective definition, a crisis is an empirical occurrence, a genuine threat with the capacity to seriously undermine important systems or ideals. The emergence of dangers is of great importance in this school of thought. The research focuses on how problems arise and change, whether they come from natural systems, technological systems, or the interface between the socio-ecological and technical domains. Perhaps places of intervention can be identified and the crisis stopped before it's too late if causes and development paths are better understood.

Hence, the definition given above combines the subjective and objective viewpoints. In contrast, the subjective crisis approach places a strong emphasis on the value of attention, saying that it is difficult to discuss a crisis from this perspective if the public, media, and political elites do not all feel that there is one. The building of danger potential is emphasized as being important by the objective point of view. According to this objective viewpoint, the ideal way to conceptualize a crisis is as a developmental process that includes four stages: incubation, acute phase, aftermath, and fundamental causes.

2.2 The Concept of Crisis Management

Only when people discovered that lawfulness and order exist in both nature and society did the idea of a crisis a break from the usual order of things come into being (Boin, & 't Hart, 2022). When a crisis arose, it was traditionally believed to be the work of a higher power or the expression of divine will (Boin, 2009). This meant that human actions during times of crisis were limited to religious ceremonies or

magic rituals, which were mystical attempts to subdue or control higher powers through sacrifice or prayer, or to show gratitude to the ultimate, mystical power. As science advanced and a logical worldview emerged, people began to categorize, categorize, comprehend, and explain crises as well as create the best crisis management strategies. Like management in general, crisis management is an example of applied management; it is not a precise science but rather a practice informed by theory (Boin, 2009). Crisis management is defined in a variety of ways. According to Gigliotti and Ronald (1991), it is thus defined as an organization's capacity to act promptly, effectively, and efficiently in any operations that may be necessary to lessen risks to the health and safety of people, lessen damage to corporate or public property, and lessen adverse effects on the continuation of regular business or other operations. Other academics have also suggested conceptual approaches that are similar to this one, equating crisis management with reactions to unforeseen circumstances (Gordon, 2015). When a crisis is first discovered, these tactics may seem adequate, but they may also be unproductive because they ignore many other crucial components of an integrated crisis management plan.

An organization can prevent a crisis or deal with it and overcome it with minimal consequences and the quickest possible return to a normal state by implementing a set of functions or processes known as crisis management (Cowick, & Cowick, 2019). These functions or processes are designed to identify, examine, and forecast potential crisis situations. Therefore, crisis management is a stenographical term for a variety of actions aimed at handling a disrupted system, including planning, recovery, mitigation, and prevention. It involves organizing, planning, implementing measures, and allocating resources to overcome the crisis. It also entails modeling acts, agreements, and decisions that impact the trajectory of the crisis. Organizational turmoil, pressure from the media, stressful situations, and a lack of exact information are typical conditions for crisis management (Canton, 2019).

Instead of being a distinct vocation or career, crisis management is a theoretical construct that, in the context of study, refers to a particular set of occurrences (crises) that have significant similarities but also significant distinctions from one another. Different nations deal with different issues, such as financial crises, military conflicts, terrorism, natural catastrophes, pandemics, etc., and they are rarely able to act effectively in areas where they lack competence. Still, they can share experiences at an abstract level. Therefore, the word "crisis management" does not mean "rescue and protection," "protection from natural and other disasters," "civil defense," or any combination of these. It includes a much larger social reality that does not exist in the real world as a structure, institution, or center for mastering all potential crisis situations, but rather as a theoretical concept in science and research.

2.3 Conceptualizing Politics and Administration

There are several definitions of politics that are recognized by law, not just one. Put otherwise, there are numerous acceptable and legal interpretations of the term. Politics is therefore a loaded term. Respected authorities are unable to reach a consensus on the topic (Marcinkowski, 2014). New meanings of politics appear over time, which inevitably causes the term politics to lose its exact meaning. Politics has many definitions in different contexts and places. For example, the corporate and commercial realm was not

regarded as the legitimate area of politics in the nineteenth century as it is today (Marcinkowski,.2014). Many definitions of politics exist, including the use of force and authority, group decision-making, the distribution of limited resources, the use of deceit and manipulation, and more.

The Greek word polis, which refers to anything pertaining to or associated with the polis, or city-state, is where the word politics originates. Now that the city-states have vanished, the state is concerned with the contemporary interpretation of this term. Therefore, the study of the state, its goals and purposes, the institutions through which those goals will be achieved, and its relationships with both other states and its individual citizens may be summed up as politics. Another definition of politics is the study of the government, which is made up of officials who establish, interpret, and carry out laws for the benefit of the entire populace (Marcinkowski,.2014).

On the other hand, as defined by Pfiffner and Presthus (1967) Administration is "An activity or process mainly concerned with the means for carrying out prescribed ends" Administration is primarily concerned with the means required to achieve predetermined goals, as the definition makes abundantly evident. Here, "means" refers to the process or method used to accomplish a task. A division of labor is required when individuals are working in groups to achieve a common objective so that everyone is aware of their responsibilities. Alternatively, a system of authority may be required to manage and plan the actions of the parties concerned. As a result, assigning each group member a specific position, allocating the work among them, and obeying the leader's directions are all just ways to get the job done. In this way, administration is an activity primarily focused on the management of state resources, which also necessitates collaboration.

The majority of academics now credit Woodrow Wilson with creating the politics-administration dichotomy, even though it was not a popular theoretical concept until the late 1940s, when it started to gain traction in the literature on public administration. Although Wilson's essay from 1887, titled "The Study of Administration," was not widely acknowledged when it was first published, it is a prime example of the reforming wave of late nineteenth-century thinking toward government (Tahmasebi, & Musavi, 2011). Wilson wrote, "The field of administration is a field of business," with the intention of protecting it from political meddling. It is away from the commotion and conflict of politics. Politics is not the correct domain for administration. Political questions are not the same as administrative questions. Wilson (1887: 18) argues that while politics assigns tasks to administration, it should not be allowed to abuse its power. Wilson was worried about the politicization and corruption of party organizations' meddling in internal issues. He had criticisms for the manner Congress carried out its fundamental legislative duties. He claimed that there was inadequate supervision and that Congress made policies in an ad hoc manner. Wilson aimed to safeguard the latter while bolstering and reorienting the former when he proposed a more distinct division between politics and administration (Tahmasebi, & Musavi, 2011).

Wilson provided the following explanation of the distribution of duties within government in *The Study of Administration*: Public administration is the methodical and thorough application of public law;

general laws, on the other hand, clearly fall outside of and transcend administration. Broad government action plans are not administrative; rather, the specific way in which they are carried out is (Tahmasebi, & Musavi, 2011).

Wilson did, however, reject this version of the duality in favor of the idea that politics and administration work together to enhance the organic state. Wilson had previously viewed politics and administration as autonomous. Wilson claimed at the time that administrators would directly analyze and react to public sentiment. As a result, they ought to participate in the formulation of public policy and elected officials ought to participate in the administration of government (Tahmasebi, & Musavi, 2011).

Frank Goodnow approved of the dichotomy's European interpretation. Goodnow's "Politics and Administration" critiqued the legislative, executive, and judicial branches as the three fundamental branches of government. Rather, he contended, there were two fundamental roles of government: expressing and carrying out the will of the people. The two roles gave rise to the three traditional powers, and each of the three branches of government combined the expression and the implementation of the people will to varying degrees. According to Goodnow, the role of administration was to carry out the state's will, and the role of politics was to articulate it. He was satisfied that while it was theoretically feasible to separate politics from administration, it was practically impossible to combine the two duties into a single arm of government (Tahmasebi, & Musavi, 2011). According to Goodnow, several facets of administration were negatively impacted by politics and ought to have been protected from it. The author posited that political control over administrative functions may lead to inefficient administration by instilling in administrative officers a sense that their duties are primarily focused on complying with political party directives rather than enhancing their department. (Tahmasebi, & Musavi, 2011).

3.0 Theoretical Perspective and Methods

The Kingdon's "streams" metaphor served as a conceptual and theoretical base for this paper's analysis. Kingdon (1984) made an effort to comprehend the prerequisites for policy change or for a "policy window" to open in Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policy. Kingdon's (1984) starting point is the fundamental ambiguity of the policy process; that is, the potential for issues to be identified and interpreted differently in different contexts and by different actors and, therefore, enter onto the policy agenda in multiple ways and forms (Zahariadis, 2003). Kingdon proposed three "streams," or components of policy discussions, that are essential to these outcomes in an effort to explain why, in the setting of this ambiguity, certain issues get politicized whereas others do not, and some policy projects succeed while others fail. The problem stream initially concentrates on identifying a problem, or group of problems, that are then portrayed as "policy problems," or difficulties that call for government intervention. Secondly, the policy stream is concerned with formulating possible policy solutions to deal with the problem(s) that have been discovered. Thirdly, the political stream describes the conditions that must be met politically for a suggested solution to a problem with policy to be implemented. The institutional environment and actors involved (i.e., having the right people in important "gatekeeping" positions), the state of public

opinion, the electoral cycle, the availability of resources, and other factors that affect the political commitments of important decision makers are some of the factors that influence the political stream.

For policy change to occur all three streams need to converge to create a window of opportunity (Kingdon, 1984). Though it is a prerequisite for policy change, the confluence of these streams is insufficient. Even in situations where it is feasible, policymakers must nevertheless take action to alter policies. Thus, the model emphasizes the crucial role of political agency while acknowledging the structural variables that influence policy decisions as recognized by the MSA. Different actors are essentially relevant inside each stream. Researchers, policy advocates, civil society organizations, stakeholders, and vested interests are prominent in the problem and policy streams. The main players in the political stream are decision-makers, such as government ministers, secretaries of state, and members of parliament. Throughout the policy-making process, public opinion, the importance of policy issues, and the acceptance of suggested actions play a significant role in each of these streams.

Policy windows may appear out of the blue, open abruptly, and disappear again without warning. Policy actors need to take advantage of windows of opportunity when it comes to bringing about change. Policy windows can occasionally arise from more institutionalized elements of the political cycle, such as elections or budgets, but they can also occasionally arise from unexpected happenings, which the Kingdom refers to as focusing events. Kingdom's work represents a seminal contribution to the field of policy studies, which has been applied to an increasing range of policy issues and decision-making arenas. This model is of relevance to the present article given the fundamental ambiguity of the policy process surrounding the covid-19 pandemic where issues were identified and interpreted differently in different contexts and by different actors and, therefore, enter onto the policy agenda in multiple ways and forms.

This paper therefore, attempt to explain in Nigeria's effort toward addressing the covid-19 crisis how certain issues become politicized while others do not, and certain policy projects succeed where others fail. The paper tries to interrogate the nexus between identifying and formulating possible policy solutions to the problem associated with the covid-19 pandemic and the conditions that must be met politically for a suggested policy solution to be implemented within the Nigerian context. In order to achieve that the paper drew an inference from the constructivists philosophy which employ inductive inquiry (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998), aimed at providing an easily used and systematic set of procedures for analyzing qualitative data that can produce reliable and valid findings (Creswell, 2013). The qualitative data analysed in this work are mainly drawn from secondary sources such as journals and media publication. The materials were subjected to content refinement and analysis to identify themes and built relationships.

4.0 Politics and administrative interface and the Nigerian government response to covid-19 pandemic

This research seeks to define and elucidate the most important factors in the analysis of Covid-19 governmental policies in the Nigerian environment. Future discussions regarding the relationship between policy streams and political streams in the literature on policy implementation will be influenced

by these interdisciplinary explanations. The study identifies the following five major areas of interaction between politics and administration in the Nigerian government's reaction to COVID-19, drawing on literature in political science, public administration, and health politics (Kavanagh & Singh, 2020):

4.1 Social welfare policy and crisis management

Although it is tempting, it is incorrect to believe that social and economic policy is solely concerned with recovery. It affects emergency response as well. Societal acquiescence is necessary for relatively authoritarian public health interventions (such physical distance or brief economic shutdowns). In Nigeria, it is the situation. In addition to basic needs like trust and effective communication, compliance also depends on a political economy that allows people to live comfortably at home without going hungry. The degree to which public health measures are followed in the post-pandemic period will be shaped by the nation's pre-existing social policies as well as those implemented expressly in response to the Covid-19 crisis. The aforementioned indicates that Nigeria's administrative social policy directed individuals to stay indoors in order to stop the virus from spreading, but the government lacks the political will to stop people from starving while they are indoors. This shows that politics and administration have a twisted relationship, which has led to a lack of complete conformity in many regions of the federation.

During times of disaster, pandemic, or disease outbreak, the management of social welfare services by the government becomes more visible to the general public. In this instance, it is reasonable to argue that the real measure of leadership and governance is not only the accomplishment of routine tasks but also the quick response to lessen the suffering of the masses during times of pandemics and global crises by providing sufficient resources and managing social welfare programs effectively. In light of the aforementioned, as indicated above, the federal government developed a number of policies and assistance programs to stop the virus's spread and lessen the impact of the misery the pandemic caused. These include a sit-at-home law, an interstate movement ban, and the closure of all federation-wide schools, worship spaces, marketplaces, and commercial buildings with the exception of those engaged in vital activities. Additionally, there was the COVID-19 protocol, which had to be followed. It called for social distancing, frequent hand washing with soap and running water, and the use of face masks. President Muhammadu Buhari established the presidential task force on COVID-19 on March 9, 2020, to oversee and coordinate Nigeria's multi-sectoral inter-governmental efforts to contain the spread and lessen the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria, among other significant actions taken by the government to stop the virus's spread (Eranga, 2020).

Given these initiatives, which include monetary gifts and supplies from private citizens at the federal and state levels, one would anticipate a notable improvement in the socioeconomic well-being of the populace. It doesn't seem to be the case, though. The terrible socioeconomic problems and low level of living that Nigerians and their inhabitants had before the corona virus outbreak appear to have gotten worse as a result of the pandemic's impact on the country's economy (Emegwa, 2023)

The Federal Government implemented palliative measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which included food supplies, clothing, medical supplies, financial gifts, loans for enterprises and farmers to improve agricultural and food production, etc. in an effort to lessen people's suffering (Emegwa, 2023). But even with these commendable steps to alleviate the socioeconomic hardship brought on by COVID-19, people's socioeconomic situation still appears to be dire. Unfortunately, Nigerians were left bemoaning the difficulties they are having as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. The presidential efforts were indeed praiseworthy yet, the politicization of beneficiaries appears to be impeding the administration of welfare programs in Nigeria. Party affiliations seem to dictate what palliative measures are available, when they are accessible, and how they are administered. In order to sort out potential political opponents, political office holders and those in charge of affairs used what appears to be a dividing tactic to distribute and share the palliative ward by ward. The poor and vulnerable, who are the true beneficiaries of welfare interventions, appear to have been overlooked by this obscene and cruel practice. Relief supplies, including food, clothing, water, and medical supplies, that were set aside for the welfare of the populace were hoarded by influential members of the government, making the misery of the populace worse. This one act caused chaos, early deaths, and property damage, largely by young people breaking into the warehouses containing the palliatives.

4.2 The Nigerian Regime type and Crisis Management

Political scientists use the term "regime" to refer more broadly to the fundamental set of institutions in a state than to any particular political party, such as democratic, monarchical, or authoritarian. Particularly, comparative study on authoritarian, hybrid, and democratic regimes has sharpened some of our predictions regarding the consequences of regimes and some unexpected trends. According to Chang, Shih, and Tung (2023) comparative authoritarianism offers the most viable explanation for comprehending COVID-19 politics. For example, authoritarian governments struggle to keep accurate information flowing both inside and outside their borders, but only some of them are adept at using force. For instance, the internal and external information flows of the Nigerian inhibited crucial information. The country as democratic regimes experience so many difficulties taking forceful action but the country might have benefited from better information flow and public trust. But the Government rather decided to adopted the forceful option which resulted to less compliance.

4.3 The Nigerian Formal Political Institutions and Crisis Management

Federal states are sometimes criticized for their lack of coordination. In Nigeria, during the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, the federal governments shied away from their duties in the majority of the states, except for Lagos and Kano, pushing state governors to take on leadership roles. It is crucial to remember that governors in Nigeria have had little political clout at the federal level for many years (Emegwa, 2023). This is partly due to the fact that state governors in Nigeria's federal system are rarely held accountable for the shortcomings of national policies. The accountability system is set up such that the people can only hold the federal government and the president responsible. The Nigerian government at the national level continues to make public announcements during the COVID-19 issue, most of which

are extremely unpopular among the general population, oblivious to the frightening reality of the situation. As expected, a few state governors, like the governor of Kogi state, openly criticized the Presidential Task Force for physical distancing and lockdown, which seemed to have galvanized support for the governor in a "rally-around-the-flag effect" that elevated him above the SGF in national politics (Osarumwense, 2023). The country's current presidential system makes it very difficult to pinpoint points of accountability and responsibility. For example, media reports on government policy measures on COVID-19 have consistently been contradicted by state governors, the NCDC, and the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Services, Disaster Management, and Social Development. Similarly, states around the nation are deliberately breaking federal laws that require officials to answer for their actions. It is important to remember that the public expects public authorities to use public monies and resources effectively, especially during times of crisis, and to be held accountable for doing so. Additionally, accountability is a crucial prerequisite for effective crisis management, as demonstrated by empirical evidence.

It was on this premise that the developed democracies such as USA institutionalized the rights of citizen's to decide either personally or through their representatives, as to the necessity of public contribution and to know what uses it is put. Unfortunately, this problem has affected Nigeria over the years, in both the military and the civilian regimes. Nigeria has not actually established strong institutions with publicly accountable leaders or mechanisms to guarantee that public monies abused are paid for painfully, which is the main reason for the country's incapacity to instill a strong culture of public accountability. The establishment of a system that complies with the requirements of open reporting on performances and public accountability is necessary. Furthermore, it will require a significant amount of work and a structural change to address Nigeria's historical experience with a weak culture of public accountability.

4.4 Nigerian Public Health Policy Conveying Mechanisms and Crisis Management

Three important variables appear to be very pivotal in any policy implementation these are content, context and commitment. Nigeria presently has a two-tiered healthcare system consisting of a sizable governmental sector and a smaller private sector. Because there is relatively little cash available for private health insurance, Nigeria's private healthcare market is quite small and dispersed when compared to wealthy nations. Also, the majority of Nigeria's healthcare spending is still dominated by out-of-pocket expenditure which account for 70% of total health expenditure, which suggest that most Nigerians either do not rely or trust the health insurance system in the country or they are unaware of the availability of health insurance (Arize, Ogbuabor, Mbachu, Etiaba, Uzochukwu, & Onwujekwe, 2023). Despite the introduction of the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) in 2004, the population covered by health insurance in 2019 was only 5 percent of the total population (Okah, Onalu, & Okoye, 2023). The health agencies in Nigeria face challenges in stopping the importation of illicit drugs and in locating unlicensed informal drug sellers, resulting in a largely unregulated drug industry (Uzochukwu, Agwu, Okeke, Uzochukwu, & Onwujekwe, 2023). Over 70% of the pharmaceutical market in the nation

is said to be accounted for by unofficial drug marketers, who obtain subpar and counterfeit medications through unofficial means. Compared to public institutions, research indicates that 78% of low-quality drugs originated from private facilities, the majority of which are uncontrolled. The primary cause of the dissemination of substandard medications in Nigeria is the uncontrolled drug market (Okah, Onalu, & Okoye, 2023).

The failings in Nigeria's public health sector made it difficult for the public administrative institution to effectively implement all the policy directives of the political class in the sense that the institutions could not cope with the fast spreading COVID-19 disease during the outbreak. Since China had closed its borders and closed its factories to contain the coronavirus pandemic that was ravaging the country at the time, the APIs needed to make suppressant drugs could no longer be imported, making it impossible for local drug manufacturers to produce medications that could temporarily suppress the coronavirus in infected patients. Additionally, there weren't enough isolation facilities in many states, including Lagos and Abuja. As the number of infected patients in Lagos increased, an isolation center had to be built out of a stadium. Ultimately, the COVID-19 pandemic was too much for Nigeria's inadequate public health system.

4.5 The Nigerian Constitutional Framework and Crisis Management

From the Clifford constitution of 1922 to the current constitution of 1999, Nigeria's constitutional growth story is one of pessimism, injustice, and hopelessness. The dream of having a perfect and functional democracy in the nation seems to have vanished into thin air due to the extreme inequalities in the processes used to design the constitution and the structural results. It is crucial to remember that the foundation of constitutionalism in all political contexts is the consolidation of democratic values via efficient management and synchronization of human activities. But the 1999 Nigerian constitution seems to have failed miserably in carrying out its regulatory and coordination duties, which has led to the creation of a dysfunctional federal structure that is unable to control and coordinate the diverse and pluralistic tendencies of Nigerian society, particularly during times of crisis (Usman, Romle, & Bashir, 2015). Currently, the country has only legal and valid constitutions but certainly not legitimate one, this is because the 1999 constitution has conferred on the nation a substantial degree of abnormalities and attributes of negativities, such as structural imbalances and over-centralization of fiscal power, which has culminated in the absence of an effective mechanism for resources and power devolution in times of crisis and emergency.

The structural conflict that has engulfed and epitomized the contemporary Nigerian state stems from the exclusionary and discriminatory tendencies of the country's constitution which has manifested in the form of perceived lack of true federalism and regional autonomy (Qader, & Abbo, 2016). It is imperative to note that the Nigerian efforts toward managing the covid-19 pandemic was hampered by the problem and crisis of fiscal federalism, such as the dominance of the federal government in revenue sharing from the federation account, the centralist system of fiscal relations and disharmonious federal-state relations which are all deeply rooted in the 1999 constitution. For instance, the economic recession in the country,

covid-19 crisis and dwindling oil revenue have hindered the ability of many states to pay salaries of their civil servants. The federal government had to bail out the states by providing funds for them to pay wages; this approach negates the principle of fiscal federalism whereby each tier of government is supposed to be financially independent. Without financial autonomy of the various levels of government, a country can never develop an effective mechanism for crisis management.

Significant changes to the Nigerian 1999 constitution have not been enacted, despite several attempts to breathe new life into it under the Sixth NASS (2007–2011) and the Eighth NASS (2015–2019). Despite investing a significant number of national resources in the process, the Seventh NASS (2011–2015) encountered a deadlock in its constitution review process. A number of other attempts were made in this direction under the Buhari administration, including the following: financial autonomy for state legislatures and state judiciaries; amending electoral laws; restricting the vice president's and governor's tenure to serve out the terms of their respective elected offices; determining the timeline for pre-election matters; and lowering the voting age for positions in the House of Representatives, State Houses of Assembly, and the President, excluding the Senate and the Governor.

Nevertheless, despite all of these constitutional amendments, the basic problems with the document namely, the lack of a financially vibrant, buoyant, and autonomous state government that seemed to have impeded the Nigerian state's attempts to lessen the catastrophic effects of COVID-19 have not been adequately addressed.

5.0 Conclusion

The Nigerian Government's response to covid-19 crisis was critically evaluated from the lens of public health management failure. However, this paper tried to place it within the broader purview of public policy implementation process, in which the interplay between the political environment and the administrative institutions play greater role than the effectiveness of such institutions. One of the crucial lessons from the politics and administration interface within the Nigerian context was that governments should be open and transparent to the public. While the openness and transparency of the Nigerian government about COVID-19 has been received by mixed reaction by citizens in general, it stirred citizens' fears and outrage in the initial stage. When a sudden surge of confirmed cases began surge in citizens were extremely disturbed, as they were shocked by the daily updated statistics showing the abrupt rise in the number of infections and deaths. Many were disappointed by the poor judgment and performance of the government, because PTF had mentioned that the COVID-19 was likely to be controlled sooner or later and asked citizens to prepare to go back to their routine life and socioeconomic recovery right before the unexpected surge in places like Kano and Kaduna of the North western regions. It seemed that transparency initially caused some disturbance, fear, and distrust, but eventually it helped regain public trust and reduce unnecessary fear in the long run. Therefore, a research agenda on public policy that takes the intersection between politics and administration as a serious focus can enable the development of more robust and realistic research findings which can shape our broader understanding of the politics policy implementation in the country

6.0 Recommendations

6.1 Need for a constitutional reform

Mega-constitutional politics are extremely rare to succeed, as history demonstrates. This also applies to the federalism reform in Nigeria. It is not an easy undertaking to amend constitutions and constitutional frameworks in societies that are sharply divided, as experience has demonstrated. The lessons learned from unsuccessful attempts at reaching constitutional settlements indicate that the possibility of a settlement and political stability may be jeopardized by massive constitutional reforms that inevitably expand the agenda to accommodate the demands of various groups and expose the process to widespread legitimization through referenda. In addition, Canada's "three decades of periodic federal crises" were partly caused by the "difficulties of attempting comprehensive rather than incremental constitutional restructuring where so many varied interests have to be reconciled at the same time in a process involving public participation." Nigeria faces a particularly difficult task in reforming its constitution since, as previously mentioned, Nigerian political elites rarely handle constitutionally reviewable matters in an appropriate manner. Instead, the process has been marred by political intrigues, prevailing personal goals, manipulations, and capture by the elite or "big man," all of which have destroyed the entire exercise. There's no evidence to imply that this issue has evolved. Therefore, as promising as non-constitutional adaptations and gradual constitutional changes are (starting with electoral reforms that could give citizens meaningful choices to choose their leaders and thereby enhance their capacity to actively participate in government decisions that affect their lives), there is no indication that these will be easy to implement. However, it is a more hopeful path and one that is worth pursuing than massive constitutional reform. Additionally, it would provide the nation's civil societies plenty of room to rise above sectarianism and local interests in order to more effectively fight for reform.

6.2 Health care reform

Nigeria's infrastructure for healthcare has to be improved immediately. The Covid-19 pandemic has brought to light the flaws in Nigeria's healthcare system. Healthcare professionals, as well as other pertinent bodies and stakeholders, should be given hazard allowance and other allowances to encourage them to work better, particularly in times of emergency like the Covid-19 outbreak. This will consequently raise the standard of citizens' health care.

6.3 Social welfare reform

Achieving results from the government's social welfare administration requires those involved in aid administration to avoid politicizing welfare programs and engaging in any corrupt activities. This will significantly increase the likelihood that the intended recipients are reached. This will only happen if individuals who stole supplies of aid and other palliatives were held accountable and severely punished in order to discourage others from doing the same.

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