

THE THOMAS KEMPE PHENOMENON AND PUBLIC POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN NIGERIA

By

Jude Cocodia and Kelechi Cocodia

Department of Political Science, Niger Delta University, Nigeria.

Email: jcocodia41@gmail.com

Abstract

In Irish myth, Thomas Kempe is a mischievous ghost who sets homes in disarray leaving the inhabitants blaming each other. At the end of the day, no one takes responsibility for all that goes wrong. This is the problem of public policy implementation in Nigerian where public officers are seldom held accountable for policy failures that have thus become regular occurrences. Unlike in the Kempe folklore, ghosts are not responsible for these policy lapses in Nigeria, but a lack of commitment toward the common good by public servants. How can this trend be turned around for public sector effectiveness? While it is acknowledged that formalism, clientelism, ethnicity and similar ills contribute to the lethargy of public policy implementation, this study advocates that sanctions should be firmly and appropriately utilized to address this deficit. This study therefore recommends the effective use of sanctions and reward within the public service, as studies have shown that this encourages hard work and builds a merit-oriented system. The methodology for this study consists of the ex-post-facto for the research design, secondary sources for the collection of data, and thematic and social analysis, as the adopted research analyses.

Keywords: Public Policy, Public Service, Sanctions, Reward, Nigeria

Introduction

Governments all over the world are assessed based on their ability to meet the yearnings and aspirations of their citizens. In order to meet these goals there is a conduit channeled at conveying governments directions. These conduits are public policies. Public Policy is the vehicle in which the business of government is conducted. It is the

blue print of government intentions articulated in order to meet the needs and aspirations of the state for the overall good of the people. It could also be said to be a body of decisions that show guidelines on how government intends to dedicate its resources over a specific period of time. Policies are products of months and years of research articulated by a team of professionals and political gladiators who foresee a need in society and attempt to address this need.

The problem of policy implementation permeates all strata of society and policy failure is inherent because of varying class interests. That a policy would fail is somewhat evident from the onset and studies abound as to the causes of failure in policy implementation. Scholars such as Ademolekun (2011) identified corruption, weak accountability and poor intergovernmental relations. Okonjo-iweala (2018) attributes the poor implementation of public policy to the existence of small kleptocratic ruling elite. Agbor and Akpan (2015, p.96) described poor clarity of goals, lack of cooperation by citizens, inadequate preparation, poor leadership, limited resources and communication as pathologies as factors that inhibit the implementation of policies. For these scholars, factors that are exogenous to public institutions such as leadership, corruption and funding are the basis for poor policy implementation.

Another school of thought consisting of authors such as Bovens et al. (2008), Mulgan (2000), and Przeworski et al. (1999), argue for public accountability as the corner stone of functional public institutions which give rise to stable democracy. These authors contend that the principle that public actors should be answerable to the public and can be

held to account for their actions is fundamental in the development of society. This study, while in tandem with this group, explores a different path that has been given too little attention. This study examines blame avoidance in public institutions and argues that the poor implementation of policies is as a result of structures inherent in Nigeria's public service. The emphasis on blame avoidance (exogenous factor) and the inherent deficit in Nigeria's public service (endogenous factor) expands the debate on policy implementation.

Public service actors (political appointees and career public servants) are pivotal to the outcome of policy implementation. So when they are not compelled to deliver, projects become sloppily implemented, and capacity building suffers. The 2008 Public Service Rules of the Federal Republic of Nigeria offers little in terms of penalties for failure to deliver on policy. As stated in Abgor and Akpan (2015, p.96), "individuals who hold public trust should be held accountable for their actions or inaction." Failure to do this leads to no one taking responsibility, and just like in the Thomas Kempe tale, things consistently go wrong.

Thomas Kempe is an Irish folklore of the meddlesome ghost of a 17th century sorcerer who returned to haunt his former home in an Oxfordshire village. He consistently turned the house upside down and caused chaos in every aspect of the lives of inhabitants, yet he remained unnoticed. He was the unseen hand that broke every cup, window, and scribbled graffiti on the walls and poured tea on the unsuspecting vicar. Things kept going wrong in the house and no one could be held responsible, so no one got sanctioned. This medieval story captures the implementation of public policies in Nigeria which shows huge deficits in identifying the reasons and persons responsible for the failure of policy implementation and apportioning appropriate sanctions as

deterrent for erring public officers. So how can we turn things around?

Statement of the Problem

The pivot on which government is measured and legitimised, is rooted in the effectiveness of its public policies. That is, the ability of its policies to impact positively and meaningfully on the lives of the citizens. However, there is overwhelming evidence of the inability to reach this goal due to the occurrence of policy paradoxes (Dialoke, et al 2017; Okeke & Ifeagwazi 2018). When, how and why do policy failures occur on a regular basis in Nigeria?

All through the country's existence as an independent country and through the various governance styles the country has experienced, promoting citizens welfare, improving the standard of living, enhancing production in the private and public sectors and keeping citizens secure would have been on the agenda of successive governments. To achieve these, policies would have been formulated and implemented such as the Directorate for Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), National Poverty and Employment Programme (NAPEP), National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS), and other multiple development plans. All these programmes have in common one denominator, and that is, their inability to create the desired impact on citizens and perceivable results in the development of the country.

There is no doubt that a lot of resources have been ploughed into the implementation of these policies, yet there is an unseen hand that prevents the actualisation of these policies. Who or what is this unseen hand responsible for the failure of public policies in Nigeria? Has Nigeria its own version of Thomas Kempe that roams our public institutions or is it just plain inefficiency of the Nigerian public service? Given that empirical investigations avoid alluding to the

supernatural, then the question guiding this quest is: What factor or set of factors could be responsible for the poor implementation of public policies in Nigeria? The research question for this paper therefore is: Is the inability to hold policy holders accountable, responsible for poor implementation of public policy in Nigeria?

Literature Review

The study of policy implementation developed because there was a gap between intent, expectation, implementation and result. Seldom did policies translate into desired results so academics were required to identify factors responsible for this fit, and in other cases, why policies met their targets (Signe 2017). The following are the major core issues related to public policy implementation discourse; goals and challenges of policy implementation.

Goals of Policy Implementation:

According to Rahmat (2015) the goals of public policy is essentially about accomplishing public objectives. The goals of public policy implementation differ according to country, need and context. Whatever the unique context, the overarching goal of public policy implementation is utility/profit maximisation or social welfare maximisation. The fact that needs and contexts vary within societies, it is impossible for any society or political institution to have the capacity to address all possible needs that arise at any one time. Schneider and Ingram (1997) accede to the problem of diverse needs when they contend that every policy has different interests to satisfy, so designing policies require some degree of discretion on the amount needed, if it is achievable, what is needed for implementation and clarity on the objectives. Miscalculations at the planning stage of policies, makes them prone to failure. Hill and Hupe (2009), sharing similar thoughts contend that, policies are decided upon without fore knowledge of how it would pan out or meet its objective amid supportive and counteractive forces that affect

implementation and performance. Thus, despite best laid down plans, unforeseen circumstances leading to unintended consequences still occur and it is the responsibility of policy planners to have contingency plans to manage worst case scenarios and avoid crises.

So the goal of policy implementation is to prioritise issues, understand these issues and their causes, and proffer solutions (Birkland, 2007, p.63). Thomas Birkland argues that prioritisation is a first important step to policy implementation goals since there are a lot of competing needs which cannot all be addressed at the same time. Often, it is those issues that command the most public attention that are actively tackled. The implication here is, pressing issues that remain in obscurity hardly get the attention of policy makers and are hardly addressed.

Since there are unlimited needs to be met in society, scholars are often reluctant to specify goals of policy implementation and rather theorize around the needs of society and the necessity to prioritise. The forum, Economics Discussion (2017) breaks away from this trend and makes bold to identify eight objectives of public (fiscal) policy. They maintain that public policies should be directed at; creating employment, effecting price stability, accelerating economic development, ensuring optimum allocation of resources, equitable distribution of wealth, economic stability, guiding capital formation and growth and encouraging investment. Attending to these areas allows for the expansion of the economy and the creation of wealth. When these have been achieved, other aspects of development follow. They make special note that for under-developed and developing economies, the main goal of policy should be to accelerate the rate of capital formation and investment.

Challenges of Policy Implementation:

This study examines the factors internal to the structure of public institutions which include its rules, norms and administrative

mechanisms, and those endogenous to it such as the leadership skill, work ethics and commitment of employees. As such it examines both the individual and institutional dimension to public policy implementation.

The Individual Dimension: When public professionals are unwilling to implement public policies, serious consequences can result. First, it can significantly decrease the effectiveness of policy implementation. Second, the quality of interactions between professionals and citizens may be affected, possibly influencing the output legitimacy of government (Ugwuanyi and Chukwuemeka, 2013). Ugwuanyi and Chukwuemeka (2013, p.39) contend further that the challenge of public personnel to keep away personal interest, prejudice and the influence of primordial values in the context of official business is critical to development. Makinde (in Ugwuanyi and Chukwuemeka, 2013) contends that if these office holders are not favorably disposed towards a policy, they may not approach its implementation with the enthusiasm and zeal that its effective implementation may require. This scholars argue that the disposition of public service.

Corruption: According to Olaopa (2014: 139) corruption must be given significant consideration due to the fact that the behaviours and activities of bureaucrats affect not only micro-economic and administrative activities, but also the performance of institutions themselves. Jan-Erik (1987) singled out corruption as especially damaging to policy implementation in Third World countries as it dissipates the few resources available and creates cynicism in the political elite. Ademoloku (2001) and Olaopa (2014) identified corruption as one of the weaknesses militating against the implementation of public policies and note that corruption can come in different forms namely bribery, embezzlement, fraud, extortion, abuse of power, conflict of interest, insider trading/abuse of privileged information, favouritism and nepotism.

When these abound, public institutions are compromised and policy implementation remain moribund.

Leadership and policy implementation: The role of leadership in the implementation of public policies cannot be overemphasized. Policies in and of themselves cannot operate in a vacuum. They need the human capacity to translate them to desired ends. This however can be greatly impaired by leadership style. Leadership is essential for policy implementation. High-level actors and influential leaders can communicate about the policy's rationale and mechanism, and champion the policy to ensure implementation which requires coordination and cooperation (Mthethwa, 2012:41). Negative leadership styles often encourage conflict within public institutions and infighting mitigates the effective implementation of policies.

To investigate and correct organizational failures, there is the need to identify officials who can be held accountable, but this is difficult to do when there are too many people on the job leading to a duplication of responsibilities. When this happens, most officers expect some other to get the job done, there is a lot of lethargy to duty, and becomes difficult to hold anyone responsible when things go wrong as they likely would. Worse is the scenario where there is a specific chain of command, yet persons are barely reprimanded for their failures because of affiliation to one or more patrons as obtains in corrupt climes. Sometimes, in the face of investigation, the search for the officer who is responsible is cut short (McConell, 2013).

The Role of conflict: Tummers et al (2012) identified conflict faced by professionals during implementation as an important factor that compels reservations in implementing public policies. Referred to as role conflict, it happens when policy implementers rationalize that the behavior elicited by the policy to be executed is at odds with the outcome demanded by their clients. In this case, the difficulty in implementing policies,

is the clash of professionalism as against the wellbeing of the end beneficiary. In differentiating these needs, Wilson (in Tummers et al, 2012) contends that robust policies should be redistributive, protective and competitive.

The Institutional Dimension: It is an obvious fact that African countries are beset with weak institutions organizational, and so, rather than emphasise on commitment in the public service and professionalism as well as promoting public service interest, the culture of formalism that has crept in has seen an emphasis on motivation instead (Olaopa, 2014).

Inadequate preparation: Light (2014) described failure in plethora of public failures as a cascade. In his words “just as one breakdown recedes from the headlines, another pops up... Federal failure has become so common that they are less of a shock to the public than an expectation”. The question is no longer if government will fail every few months, but where. And the answer is “anywhere at all”. The first step in identifying the cause of public failure and preventing failure is to find a reasonable set of past failure that might yield lessons for repair (Light 2014)

Adopting Alien Policies: This institutional challenge of policy implementation in Nigeria begins with the country’s colonial legacy. The country came into existence with the formal joining of two hitherto separate British colonies; Northern and Southern Protectorates in a process called the amalgamation in 1914. Policies of the colonial government were formulated by the Governor in association with the leading members of the Colonial Service in the secretariat Adamolekun (2004:43). According to Ademolekun (2004) British colonial rule in Nigeria was described as administrative, dictatorial and authoritarian in its mode of administration. There is a general consensus of the pattern of British administrative style as alien to the people of Nigeria. Secondly power was concentrated in

the hands of appointed officials who were responsible to the imperial government and not the indigenous people they served. This historical antecedent explains the reason for the lack of accountability of present day public office holders.

Reward and Punishment as Tonic for Effective Public Service: Public officials should be compelled to render account on a regular basis to specific forums to supervisory agencies as this would ensure accountability and efficiency. When policies fail or disasters that could have been avoided, occur, public officials responsible should be forced to appear in administrative or penal courts, or testify before fact finding committees (Bovens, 2006). Just as well, a system should be created where public officers, in the execution of policies should render explanations and justification for the quality of work done. This informs the decisions taken either for punishment or for reward by supervisory bodies (Bovens, 2006).

Methodology

The ex-post-facto research design that was adopted for this study is a non-experimental research methodology that examines the relationship between variables within the context of pre-existing events. Ex-Post-facto study also described as after-the-fact research is a category of research designs that depend on the investigation of issues after the fact has occurred without the interference of the researcher (Neil, 2010). In this study, the relationship under investigation is the failure of public policies and the inability to take responsibility or indulge in blame game. The failure of public policies is witnessed often at the level of implementation, but sometimes this happens at the planning stage, hence policies sometimes fail even before the implementation state. In examining such relationships, the ex post facto enables the researcher make logical deductions on how to curb the trend and possibly reverse them.

The study adopts the thematic and social methods of analysis for its research analysis. Thematic analysis is a method of qualitative data analysis that is widespread in the social sciences (Nowell et al, 2017). It is one of various methods that is used in identifying trends across a data set. The study investigates modes of public policy implementation within public administration in Nigeria with the intention to examine the implications of absence of measures to hold public office holders accountable for the outcome of public policy implementation. The thematic approach aligns with this research because this study investigates modes of public policy implementation in Nigeria's public administration with the intention of examining the implications when measures to hold public office holders accountable for the outcome of public policy implementation are non-existent. This examination also extends to implications accruing from a fair reward system in the public service.

Social Analysis was adopted for this study to examine the extent to which the Thomas Kempe phenomenon affects public policy implementation in Nigeria with the aim of assessing the likely outcomes and impact of the *invisible hand* on policy implementation. Social analysis which was introduced by the World Bank, is designed to gauge the impact of policies on the various stakeholder groups, the poor/vulnerable and non-poor. In examining the utility and disadvantages, as well as the positive and negative impacts of policies on society, it enables institutions and organisations orientate their policies towards having more positive social impacts (Haider & Rao, 2010, p.25). This implies that social analysis assess all aspects and stages of public policy making (US Department of the Interior Bureau of Reclamation Technical Service Center, 2001, p.17). Social analysis is thus aimed at eradicating or at least reducing the Thomas Kempe effect on public policy implementation service. Hence this study advocates that one way this can be achieved is holding public office holders

accountable when policies fail, as this would lead to a turn around in policy implementation from which the general public benefits.

Data was derived from secondary and primary sources consisting of texts and official documents respectively. Beyond saving cost and time, secondary data was largely relied on because of its breadth and depth. Research breadth and the fact that relying on secondary data increases the viability of studies (Ghauri, 2005; Heaton, 2008).

Theoretical Framework

Though the study of politics has centred around the emergence, influence and survival of institutions, a specific theory devoted to the workings and norms that influence institutions was not developed until John Meyer and Brian Rowan in 1977 who sought to explore how organisations adapt to and are shaped by environmental influences from local cultures or forces of formalism, to global norms and pressures (McCarron, 2021). However, the roots of institutional theory can be found in the writings of Max Weber on Legitimacy and Authority and Talcott Parson through the 50s and 60s (David et al, 2019). The efforts of these scholars gave rise to institutional theory arguments of this work paper were situated within the context of the institutional theory which. This theory focuses on the deeper and more resilient aspects of social structure. In modern time, institutional theory is recognized as one of the most prominent approaches to organizational research (David et al 2019). A major asset of this theory is its ability to explain and predict the tendency of organisations to become less strategic and interest driven (Aksom & Tymchenko, 2020). It considers the processes by which the structures, schemes, rules, norms and routines become established authoritative guidelines for social behavior (Izueke, 2014). Institutionists believe that institutions constrain and model behavioural patterns of individuals within the system. According to

Kraft and Furlong (in Tebele, 2016: 40), the institutional model proposes that structures and the code of conduct that govern the government and its departments play a major role in the different kinds of policies that takes place and eventually how policy role-players will be influential in the policy process. Its relative application can be applied to responsibility and accountability which implies that when rules and norms are enshrined in the structure of institutions such as the public services with accompanying penalties for defaulters, the tendency for public office holders to act in conformity to prescribed tenets is high. Institutionalization of sanctions for ailing implementers would result in a positive outlook of the policy implementation process.

Literature Review

The study of policy implementation developed because there was a gap between intent, expectation, implementation and result. Seldom did policies translate into desired results so academics were required to identify factors responsible for this fit, and in other cases, why policies met their targets (Signe 2017). The following are the major core issues related to public policy implementation discourse; goals and challenges of policy implementation.

Goals of Policy Implementation: According to Rahmat (2015) the goals of public policy is essentially about accomplishing public objectives.”

The goals of public policy implementation differ according to country, need and context. Whatever the unique context, the overarching goal of public policy implementation is utility/profit maximisation or social welfare maximisation. The fact that needs and contexts vary within societies, it is impossible for any society or political institution to have the capacity to address all possible needs that arise at any one time. Schneider and Ingram (1997) accede to the problem of varying needs when they contend that every policy has different interests to satisfy, so designing policies require some

degree of discretion on the amount needed, if it is achievable, what is needed for implementation and clarity on the objectives. Miscalculations at the planning stage of policies, makes them prone to failure.

Hill and Hupe (2009), sharing similar thoughts contend that, policies are decided upon without fore knowledge of how it would pan out or meet its objective amid supportive and counteractive forces that affect implementation and performance. Thus, despite best laid down plans, unforeseen circumstances leading to unintended consequences still occur and it is the responsibility of policy planners to have contingency plans to manage worst case scenarios and avoid crises.

So the goal of policy implementation is to prioritise issues, understand these issues and their causes, and proffer solutions (Birkland, 2007: 63). Thomas Birkland argues that prioritisation is a first important step to policy implementation goals since there are a lot of competing needs which cannot all be addressed at the same time. Often, it is those issues that command the most public attention that are actively tackled. The implication here is, pressing issues that remain in obscurity hardly get the attention of policy makers and are hardly addressed.

Since there are unlimited needs to be met in society, scholars are often reluctant to specify goals of policy implementation and rather theorize around the needs of society and the necessity to prioritise. The forum, Economics Discussion (2017) breaks away from this trend and makes bold to identify eight objectives of public (fiscal) policy. They maintain that public policies should be directed at; creating employment, effecting price stability, accelerating economic development, ensuring optimum allocation of resources, equitable distribution of wealth, economic stability, guiding capital formation and growth and encouraging investment. Attending to these areas allows for the expansion of the economy and the creation of wealth. When these have been achieved,

other aspects of development follow. They make special note that for under-developed and developing economies, the main goal of policy should be to accelerate the rate of capital formation and investment.

Challenges of Policy Implementation: This paper examines the factors internal to the structure of public institutions which include its rules, norms and administrative mechanisms, and those endogenous to it such as the leadership skill, work ethics and commitment of employees. As such it examines both the individual and institutional dimension to public policy implementation.

The Individual Dimension:

When public professionals are unwilling to implement public policies, serious consequences can result. First, it can significantly decrease the effectiveness of policy implementation. Second, the quality of interactions between professionals and citizens may be affected, possibly influencing the output legitimacy of government (Ugwuanyi and Chukwuemeka, 2013). Bartholomew Ugwuanyi and Emma Chukwuemeka (2013:39) contend further that the challenge of public personnel to keep away personal interest, prejudice and the influence of primordial values in the context of official business is critical to development. Makinde (in Ugwuanyi and Chukwuemeka, 2013) contends that if these office holders are not favorably disposed towards a policy, they may not approach its implementation with the enthusiasm and zeal that its effective implementation may require. This scholars argue that the disposition of public service.

Corruption: According to Tunji Olaopa (2014: 139) corruption must be given significant consideration due to the fact that the behaviours and activities of bureaucrats affect not only micro-economic and administrative activities, but also the performance of institutions themselves. Lane Jan-Erik (1987) singled out corruption as especially damaging to policy implementation in Third World countries as it dissipates the few resources available and

creates cynicism in the political elite. Ademoloku (2001) and Olaopa (2014) identified corruption as one of the weaknesses militating against the implementation of public policies and note that corruption can come in different forms namely bribery, embezzlement, fraud, extortion, abuse of power, conflict of interest, insider trading/abuse of privileged information, favouritism and nepotism. When these abound, public institutions are compromised and policy implementation remain moribund.

Leadership and policy implementation: The role of leadership in the implementation of public policies cannot be overemphasized. Policies in and of themselves cannot operate in a vacuum. They need the human capacity to translate them to desired ends. This however can be greatly impaired by leadership style. Leadership is essential for policy implementation. High-level actors and influential leaders can communicate about the policy's rationale and mechanism, and champion the policy to ensure implementation which requires coordination and cooperation (Mthethwa, 2012:41). Negative leadership styles often encourage conflict within public institutions and infighting mitigates the effective implementation of policies.

To investigate and correct organizational failures, there is the need to identify officials who can be held accountable, but this is difficult to do when there are too many people on the job leading to a duplication of responsibilities. When this happens, most officers expect some other to get the job done, there is a lot of lethargy to duty, and becomes difficult to hold anyone responsible when things go wrong as they likely would. Worse is the scenario where there is a specific chain of command, yet persons are barely reprimanded for their failures because of affiliation to one or more patrons as obtains in corrupt climes. Sometimes, in the face of investigation, the search for the officer who is responsible is cut short (McConell, 2013).

The Role of conflict: Tummers et al (2012) identified conflict faced by professionals during implementation as an important factor that compels reservations in implementing public policies. Referred to as role conflict, it happens when policy implementers rationalize that the behavior elicited by the policy to be executed is at odds with the outcome demanded by their clients. In this case, the difficulty in implementing policies, is the clash of professionalism as against the wellbeing of the end beneficiary. In differentiating these needs, Wilson (in Tummers et al, 2012) contends that robust policies should be redistributive, protective and competitive.

The Institutional Dimension

It is an obvious fact that African countries are beset with weak institutions organizational, and so, rather than emphasise on commitment in the public service and professionalism as well as promoting public service interest, the culture of formalism that has crept in has seen an emphasis on motivation instead (Olaopa, 2014).

Inadequate preparation: P.C. Light (2014) described failure in plethora of public failures as a cascade. In his words “just as one breakdown recedes from the headlines, another pops up... Federal failure has become so common that they are less of a shock to the public than an expectation”. The question is no longer if government will fail every few months, but where. And the answer is “anywhere at all”. The first step in identifying the cause of public failure and preventing failure is to find a reasonable set of past failure that might yield lessons for repair (Light 2014)

Adopting Alien Policies: This institutional challenge of policy implementation in Nigeria begins with the country’s colonial legacy. The country came into existence with the formal joining of two hitherto separate British colonies; Northern and Southern Protectorates in a process called the amalgamation in 1914. Policies of the

colonial government were formulated by the Governor in association with the leading members of the Colonial Service in the secretariat Adamolekun (2004:43). According to Ademolekun (2004) British colonial rule in Nigeria was described as administrative, dictatorial and authoritarian in its mode of administration. There is a general consensus of the pattern of British administrative style as alien to the people of Nigeria. Secondly power was concentrated in the hands of appointed officials who were responsible to the imperial government and not the indigenous people they served. This historical antecedent explains the reason for the lack of accountability of present day public office holders.

Reward and Punishment as Tonic for Effective Public Service: Public officials should be compelled to render account on a regular basis to specific forums to supervisory agencies as this would ensure accountability and efficiency. When policies fail or disasters that could have been avoided, occur, public officials responsible should be forced to appear in administrative or penal courts, or testify before fact finding committees (Bovens, 2006). Just as well, a system should be created where public officers, in the execution of policies should render explanations and justification for the quality of work done. This informs the decisions taken either for punishment or for reward by supervisory bodies (Bovens, 2006).

Thomas Kempe and Policy Implementation in Nigeria

McConnell (2010) argued that aborted policy proposals abound the world over along similar lines when he says that failure does not just happen, but is a process. He cautions on using the term failure as a blanket qualification for policy implementation that fall below par, noting that there are transitory phases from success to failure, and this is expressed in the table 1 below.

TABLE 1 Policy as Program: The spectrum from success to failure

Programme success	Resilient success	Conflicted success	Precarious success	Programme failure
Implementation in line with objectives.	Implementation objectives broadly achieved, despite minor refinements or deviations.	Mixed results, with some successes, but accompanied by unexpected and controversial problems.	Minor progress towards implementation as intended, but beset by chronic failures, proving highly controversial and very difficult to defend.	Implementation fails to be executed in line with objectives.
Achievement of desired outcomes.	Outcomes broadly achieved, despite some shortfalls.	some successes, but the partial achievement of intended outcomes is counter-balanced by unwanted results, generating substantial controversy.	some small outcomes achieved as intended, but overwhelmed by controversial and high profile instances or failure to produce results.	Failure to achieve desired outcomes.
Creating benefit for a target group	A few shortfalls and possibly some anomalous cases, but intended target group broadly benefits.	Partial benefits realised, but not as widespread or deep as intended	Small benefits are accompanied and overshadowed by damage to the very group that was meant to benefit. Also likely to generate high profile stories of unfairness and suffering.	Damaging a particular target group.
Meets policy domain criteria.	Not quite the outcome desired, but close enough to lay strong claim to fulfilling the criteria.	Partial achievement of goals, but accompanied by failures to achieve, with possibility of high profile examples e.g. ongoing wastage when the criterion is efficiency.	A few minor successes, but plagued by unwanted media attention e.g. examples of wastage and possible scandal when the criterion is efficiency.	Clear inability to meet the criteria.
Opposition to program aims, values, and means of achieving them is virtually non-existent, and/or support is virtually universal.	Opposition to program aims, values, and means of achieving them is stronger than anticipated, but outweighed by support.	Opposition to program aims, values, and means of achieving them is equally balanced with support for same.	Opposition to political benefits for government outweighs small levels of support.	Opposition to political benefits for government is virtually universal and/or support is virtually non-existent

Source: McConnell's (2010) Policy Failure thesis

McConnell's success/failure continuum brings to realization that it is commonplace to allude that policies have failed when in essence the degree to which we can say a policy has failed absolutely is relative. His work alludes to the fact that

success and failure are not absolute variables but rather they can be plotted against a range in the following order: programme success – this is where the objectives of the policy are achieved; resilient success - this is a case where the policy is perceived to be successful with minor deviations in its goals;

conflicted success - with this type of success there are mixed reactions about the outcome of the policy given the multiple interpretations of outcomes. It is important to note that this type of success is enmeshed in problems and challenges. Precarious success on the other hand refers to cases where minor success is achieved in attaining policy objectives. The final type of policy on this continuum is failure, this is the total inability to meet policy objectives.

It is evident that scholars such as McConnell have identified many factors responsible for poor policy implementation in Nigeria, but not much has been said about those unseen fingers, in which case Thomas Kempe remains an unidentified poltergeist in public policy implementation.

From the exogenous or external perspective, a lot rests on the bureaucrats or senior public servants who determine the transition of public policies from the drawing board to tangible outcomes for the overall good of all. Their role in public policy implementation is pivotal to the success of the policies. McConnell's success continuum highlights public policies in Nigeria that have failed. The inability of various regimes to have a meritocratic system of recruiting the best hands for government jobs resulted in leaving the act of policy making in the hands of unskilled and less educated politicians who had little or no knowledge about policy formulation implementation and evaluation (Olaoye, 2010).

Whether they take the nomenclature of public servants, public office holders bureaucrats or politicians, if lacking in the required knowledge or are partisan in their approach, these individuals can subvert the successful implementation of policy and undermine the process. Adamelokun (2004) is of the view that when vital information is placed in the hands of the wrong official, this can be used to frustrate the efforts of government in bringing about desired changes in society. When this happens, the

public officer turned saboteur often goes scot free especially if the beneficiaries of his actions become the decision makers. Okonjo-Iweala (2018: 17) illustrates this with her experience of Donald Duke, a former governor of Cross Rivers state in south-south Nigeria, who advised her against taking up the appointment of Minister for Finance in 2011 so that the Nigerian economy during the Goodluck Jonathan regime (2011-2015) would collapse so that re-election in 2015 will be impossible. Okonjo-Iweala makes a case that there were powerful forces that focused on undermining policies of government right from the onset of the Jonathan regime in 2011. This led to lots of money spent and policies poorly implemented or not at all, and no one is held culpable.

While the Okonjo-Iweala experience captures the role of influential people in subverting policies, their ability to hold the system to ransom is made possible with the assistance of public officials. As major stakeholders in the policy implementation process these officials should be held culpable for the non performance by the public institutions they serve. This in turn would discourage the need to sabotage policies and the lackadaisical attitude displayed in the discharge of their function as administrators and so discourage the attitude of inefficiency in the public service.

One way of effecting responsibility and accountability on public office holders is to devise administrative structures that serve as checks and balances. These act as deterrents to intending public policy implementation offenders. One of such cases is the Bank Verification Number (BVN) whose success has been linked (in part) to the use of sanctions (NgEX 2018). The (BVN) policy is a financial regulation policy introduced by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to link bank accounts on a central platform. The essence of this policy is to curb or reduce illegal banking transaction in Nigeria. The major sanction is

the suspension of accounts of erring bank customers.

Consider the success of policies like the seat-belt-policy of the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) and the treasury single account policy of the Federal Government of Nigeria. These policies that have been successful due to the existence of penalties for non-conformity to the rule. If sanctions work for the wider public, then punitive measures will work in the public service. Punitive measures can be adopted to policies such as the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) where failure to access health services is the bane of health care providers.

An existing policy that shows the role of sanctions and reward systems in executing public policies can be seen in Executive Order 001, 2017 (EO-001,2017) that promotes accountability and effectiveness in Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) (Daily Nigerian, 2017). The progress of implementation of E.O 001 2017 can be tracked by the Presidential Enabling Business Environment Council (PEBEC) such that star performing MDAs will be recognised and non-performers will be sanctioned by the Office of the Head of Civil Service of the Federation (OHCSF, 2017).

Numerous policies have failed to achieve their set goals in the past and the present despite the huge resources dedicated to these policies, but since there is hardly anyone to take the blame, the Thomas Kempe phenomenon holds sway. In recent time, the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) and its cascading counterparts SEEDS and LEEDS at the State and Local Government levels 2003- 2007, Subsidy Re-investment and Empowerment Programme SURE-P 2012-2015, the NHIS 1999- till date have huge implementation gaps. The failure of these projects have been attributed to the officials who have been entrusted with the responsibility to implement them and the

permeable structure of the institutions. While the human nuances discussed in this paper greatly affect policy implementation, institutional lapses hold much of the blame. Just like the compliant response of the public to laws exacting penalties for flouting them, public officials will be responsive to their duties when institutions begin exacting penalties for poor performance and reward for excellent service. If and when this is done, we can lay the ghost of Thomas Kempe to rest in the Nigerian Public Service.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Public policy implementation in Nigeria is not without its challenges from corruption to leadership style we have in-between various strains or factors that impede the implementation of public policies in Nigeria. While these factors can be singled out some are a combination of factors that work against public policy implementation in Nigeria. This paper highlighted the issue of unseen fingers – the Thomas Kempe phenomenon that compels policy failure. This phenomenon is one factor that adequate attention has not been paid to. It bothers around the inability to hold public office holders responsible for failure of policy implementation even when these officials are compelled to frustrate policies. The argument of this paper hinges on the premise that within the institution some individuals can circumvent the system, to ensure that policies do not meet their desired objectives.

In Nigeria, there seems to be no connection between public office holders and poor public policy implementation as anyone seldom takes the stick or faces reprimand just like in the Thomas Kempe story. In the same vein there is no accountability on the performance of the policy especially when it fails. This paper contends that the outcome of public policy implementation will be positive if provisions are made to hold public officers accountable for the failure in implementing

public policies. Just as well there should also be a healthy reward system for effective implementation of policy. Whichever way, it points to a system where public institutions encourage actors to be accountable and take responsibility for policy implementation processes and their outcomes. Unfortunately in Nigeria, failed policy implementation far outweighs those that have been successful.

Consequently, this study advocates for effective sanctions and reward systems to be part of the rules of public service institutions. This argument is made on the basis that, if sanctions can effect compliance of the wider public to laws, then they can compel public office holders to play by the rules and carry out policies efficiently.

References

- Adamolekun L. (2004) *Politics and Administration in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited.
- Adamolekun L. (2011) *Public administration in Africa Main Issues and Selected Countries*. Ibadan: Evans Brothers (Nigeria) Publishers
- Agbor U. & Akpan I. (2015) 'The Ecology of Policy Failures.' In Bassey C.O. And Agbor U.I. (2015) *Nigeria in Public Policy and Politics in Nigeria A Critical Discourse*. Lagos Concept Publications, 95-107.
- Aksom, H. and Tymchenko, I. (2020) 'How Institutional Theories Explain and Fail to Explain Organisations.' *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, June 29. <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/JOCM-05-2019-0130/full/html>. Retrieved 23/07/2022.
- Amhed I.K., & Danatata B.S. (2016) *Problems and Challenges of Policy Implementation For National Development Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*. ISSN (Paper) 2224-5766 ISSN (Online) 2225-0484 (Online) Vol 6. No 15
- Birkland, Thomas (2007) 'Agenda Setting in Public Policy.' In Frank Fischer, Gerald Miller and Mara Sidney (eds). *Handbook of Public Policy Analysis: Theory, Politics and Methods*. New York: CRC Press.
- Bovens M. (2006) *Public Accountability: Analyzing and Assessing Public Accountability. A Conceptual framework*. European Governance Papers (EUROGOV) No. C-06-01 Retrieved from <http://www.connex-network.org/eurogov/pdf/egp-connex-C-06-01.pdf>
- Chandrika Anil (2015) *Understanding Public Policy: Policy Analysis* by Thomas Dye. Retrieved from <https://www.slideshare.net/nida19/ppt-on-understaing-policy>
- Daily Nigerian (2017) *Nigerian Government to Sanction Non-Complying MDAs Over Executive Order Policy*, June 24. Retrieved from <https://dailynigerian.com/nigerian-govt-to-sanction-non-complying-mdas-over-executive-order-policy/6/05/2018>
- David, R. J., Tolbert, P. S. and Boghossian, J. (2019) *Institutional Theory in Organisation Studies*. December 23. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190224851.013.158>. Retrieved 22/07/2022.
- Dialoke, I., Ukah, F. O. and Maduagwuna, I. V. (2017): 'Policy Formulation and Implementation in Nigeria: The Bane of Underdevelopment.' *International Journal of Capacity Building in Education and Management*, 3(2): 22-27.
- Djerf- Pierre M, Ekstrom M. & Johansson B. (2013). *Policy Failure and Moral Scandal? Political Accountability, Journalism and New Public Management*. *Media, Culture and society* 35 (8) 960-976. Doi: 10.1177/0163443713501932. Retrieved 22/07/2022.

- Economics Discussion (2017). Top 8 objectives of Fiscal Policy. <http://www.economicsdiscussion.net/fiscal-policy/top-8-objectives-of-fiscal-policy/4694>.
- Eneanya, Augustine (2009) Policy Research, Analysis and Effective Policy-Making in Nigeria. Lagos: Concepts Publications.
- Ghuri, P. N. (2005) 'Research methods in business studies: A practical guide.' Pearson Education.
- Haider, H and Rao, S. (2010) Political and Social Analysis for Development Policy and Practice: An Overview of Five Approaches. Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC). <http://www.gsdr.org/docs/open/eirs10.pdf>. Retrieved 24/07/2022
- Heaton, J. (2008) 'Secondary analysis of qualitative data: An overview.' Historical Social Research, 33(3), 33-45.
- Izueke E.M.C. (2014). Some Theoretical Frameworks of Analysis in Public Administration in Ikeanyibe O.M. & Mbah P. M (Ed) (2014). An Anthology Of Theories For Social Research. University of Nigeria Press Enugu Nigeria.
- Jan-Erik, Lane (1987). Implementation, Accountability and Trust. European Journal Of Political Research. 15(5) 527-546
- Khan A.R. (2017) Policy Implementation: Some Aspects and Issues. Journal of Community Positive Practices, 16(3) 2016, 312-328.
- McCarron, G. (2021) 'Background on Institutional Theory.' Study.com December 14. <https://study.com/academy/lesson/institution-theory-environment-social-structure.html#:~:text=Institutional%20theory%20was%20introduced%20in,%2C%20national%2C%20and%20global%20environments>. Retrieved 22/07/2022.
- McConnell A. (2010) Policy success, policy failure and grey areas in-between jn Publ. poll, 30,3, 345-362doi: 10.1017/S0143814X10000152. Retrieved 22/07/2022.
- McConnell A, 2014 Why Do Policies Fail? A Starting Point for Exploration. Political Studies Association (PSA)
- Neil, J. S. (2010). Ex Post Facto Study. In Encyclopedia of Research Design Method. Sagepub.Com, DOI:[https://dx-doi.org/10.4135/9781412961288.n145](https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412961288.n145). Retrieved 23/07/2022.
- NgEX (2018) Understanding Bank Verification Number In Nigeria. <http://ngex.com/business/starting-a-business/understanding-bank-verification-number-bvn-in-nigeria>, Retrieved on 8/06/2018
- Nowell L. S., Norris J.M., White D.E., and Moules N.J. Thematic Analysis: Striving to meet the Trustworthiness Criteria. International Journal of Qualitative Methods vol 16: 1-13. DOI: 10.1177/1609406917733847 [journals. Sagepub.com/home.ijq](https://journals.sagepub.com/home/ijq). Retrieved 23/07/2022
- Office of the head of civil service of Nigeria 2017 retrieved on 6/05/2018 on <https://www.ohcsf.gov.ng/index.php/about-us>. Retrieved 23/07/2022/
- Okeke, R. C. and Ifeawazi, P. A. (2018) Public Policy and National Development in Nigeria: A Focus on Admission Policies in Tertiary Education. A Paper Presented at the 8th International Conference of the Society for Research and Academic Excellence, February 5-8, University of Nigeria Nsukka.
- Okonjo-Iweala, Ngozi (2018). *Fighting Corruptions is Dangerous*. The MIT Press Cambridge.
- Olaopa T. (2014) *The Nigerian Civil Service of the Future A Prospective Analysis*. Bookcraft Ibadan.

Olaoye O. (2010) 'Why policies fail in Nigeria an evaluation of agricultural policies made from 1972-1985.'

<http://www.ssrn.com/link/OIDA-Intl-Journal-Sustainable-Dev.html>.

Retrieved 5/6/2018

Schneider, A. I. and Ingram, H. (1997) *Policy Design For Democracy*. Kansas, University Press of Kansas.

Signe L. (2017) *Policy Implementation – A synthesis of the Study of Policy Implementation and the Causes of Policy Failure*. Rabat, Morocco OCP Policy Center..

Tebele M. (2016) Problems and challenges related to public policy implementation within the South African democratic dispensation: A theoretical exploration .retrieved on 6/07/2016 from https://dspace.nwu.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10394/25883/Tebele_MM_2016.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Turner, Scott F., Cardinal, Laura B. and Burton, Richard M. (2015) 'Research Design for Mixed Methods: A Triangulation-based Framework and Roadmap', *Organisational Research Methods*, 1-25.

The Nigerian Journal of Politics and Public Policy (NJPPP) 1997(1) Prof OLA RF. AND Oronsaye A.O. (Ed)

Thompson, D. F.(2014). "Responsibility for Failures of Government: The Problem of Many Hands." *The American Review of Public Administration* 44 (3) (May 1): 259–273. doi:10.1177/0275074014524013

Tummers, Lars G., Vermeeren, B., Steijn, A.J. & Bekkers, V.J.J.M. (2012). Public Professionals and policy implementation: conceptualizing and measuring three types of role conflict. *Public Management Review*, 14(2): 1041-1059.

Ugwuanyi B.I. and Chukwuemeka E.E.O (2013) *The Obstacles to Effective Policy implementation by the Public Bureacracy in*

Developing Nations: The Case of Nigeria. Singaporean Journal of Business Economics, And Management Studies VOL 1 No 8, 2013

US Department of the Interior Bureau of Reclamation Technical Service Center (2001) *Social Analysis Manual. Volume 1: Managers Guide to Using Social Analysis*. <https://www.usbr.gov/tsc/techrefereces/economics/SAManV1.pdf>. Retrieved

