

Innovations

The Importance of Policy Initiative, Strategic Implementation to Address Social Challenges Affecting Young People in Nigeria

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Abstract: Record shows that more than 90 million young people are unemployed (47 per cent of the total global labour force) and 300 million are working in poverty in low-skilled, insecure jobs in terrible conditions. The need for a better society has called for a clearer delineation of what constitutes a healthy state. Public policy initiative is a product of substantive measures chosen at a particular time or place to solve a particular problem. From the discursive point of view, every policy and law codifies a specific construct of social reality, both the informative goal and the planned means required to achieve that goal are part of that construct. The policy also connects and represents practises, actors and communities that are intertwined with politics. Policy can be referred as a fluid field that aims to shape the exercise of state power, but whose boundaries are regularly redrawn in public discourse. The Researcher explored quantitative concept approach with questionnaire method to conduct investigation in 12 communities of Anambra State Eastern Nigeria. 390 respondents comprising parents of 25-60 years of age sampling frame were randomly selected to represent the total research population. Data were analysed using SPSS statistics version 24. The study made an in-debt investigation involving parental care level, stakeholders and policy implementation to ascertain hypothetical outcome in justifying and examines the impediment issues that would result to a family better live-hood and that of the society at large. Findings indicates Lack of policy evaluation ministries leads to failure in policy implementation". Likewise, with the mean score ($M=2.68 - SD=1.246$) majority of respondents in the study disagree with the statement "Existing policies adequately address social welfare, youth, and adolescent wellbeing in Nigeria. Lastly, with the mean score ($M=2.56 - SD=1.250$) majority of respondents in the study disagree with the statement "Policy implementation affects economic growth and impact on citizen wellbeing. Finally, government as the key stakeholder mediates Adolescent wellbeing, family and the community. Therefore, the development of families will inevitably have an impact on the improvement of the young people, communities and societies to which they belongs when there is right policy initiative and implementation mechanism in place.

Keyword: Youth Challenges, Policy Initiatives, evaluation and Implementation,

Introduction.

The Policy Capacity Framework (PCF) provides an integrated, systematic method for understanding the types of capacities needed for policy success.

However, it has not yet been used systematically in the entire wellbeing health sector. Recent studies on policy implementation have highlighted several factors that can lead to policy failure, including overly optimistic expectations, implementation in a dispersed administration, insufficient collaboration on policy design, and the vagaries of the policy cycle (Hudson et al., 2019). Studies have also shown that insufficient attention is paid to policy design in relation to implementation. A common theme in discussions of policy failure and success is the idea of capacity both individual and organisation to deal with problems, change and complexity (Hudson et al., 2019; Peckham et al., 2022).

An integral part of this study is to measure the impact of the government initiative from its emergence as a policy strategy to its implementation in practise, in order to influence the well-being of young people from the perspective of the various stakeholders involved in the process. And to provide insights for the evaluation of other strategies and subsequent programmes (KombiInyang et al. 2022). The importance of the family to society has been underlined by sociologists. Since the family is the most important unit of society, providing support, procreation, socialisation and discipline, any stress on the family, such as divorce, parental mortality, poverty and unregulated family formation can have a significant impact on the young people and the rest of the society.

The interdependence of economic, social and environmental development is complex. The economic and environmental environment of young people can have a significant impact on their social environment, including their quality of life, physical and mental health and levels of inequality. According to the 2019 on Human Development Report, climate change is both a cause and an effect of inequality (UN New York Development Programme 2021). There is compelling evidence of a link between mental health and economic challenges such as unemployment, declining income and debt (Frasquilho, D; Matos, M.G & Salonna. F 2016). A study conducted in Brazil found that a recession-related increase in unemployment was associated with an increase in mortality (Hone, T.; Mirelman, A.J.; Rasella, D.; Paes-Sousa, R 2019). On the other hand, economic growth in South Africa has been shown to have a positive impact on infant and child mortality. However, economic growth does not always lead to better social development outcomes. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has been heavily criticised for not accurately reflecting the social and environmental aspects of development, making it an inadequate indicator of progress (Costanza, R.; Hart, M & Posner, S Beyond GDP 2021).

The increased consideration of youth in global politics is progressive. In policy papers, dealing with children or adults, the needs of youth are usually subsumed or narrowly focused on addressing specific social problems for which young people are assumed to be solely responsible. The long-term development of today's young people depends on their active participation in community development programmes, especially in their decision-making and implementation. In Nigeria, however, youth participation in community-building

programmes is extremely low. According to Thomas and Eforuoku (2016), young people have a positive attitude towards community development programmes, but are hindered by a number of problems, including limited training opportunities. In the words of Akpomuvia, " (2010). From the family level to the community level, the economic crisis has a huge impact on both young and old - particularly those at the lower end of the socio-economic spectrum, and it also restricts their personal, collective and national development. Take for instance, Greece has experienced a recession that has negatively impacted both its citizens and the Greek economy as a whole with higher rate effect on Adolescent and youth. Unemployment rates which stood at 20.6% in January 2018 and 42.3% on concerned people aged 15-24, according to the Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT, 2018). Over the year 2017, a total of 34.8% of people were at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

Doing it all in one grandiose plan is a factor in conceptualising development planning as a "big-push strategy" Professor Usman of the University of Southern California wrote that Nigeria's political office holders are almost exclusively drawn from the wealthy business community, schools and universities, as well as administrative groups, religious organisations and traditional authority bodies. The youth are the target of all the negative effects that come from these government attitudes. Let us now look at the world from the perspective of the youth,

Globally, there are approximately 1.8 billion young people between the ages of 10 and 24 living in our world. As a result, the youth population is growing worldwide, and fastest in the world's poorest countries. The 600 million adolescent girls of this generation all have their own specific needs, challenges and goals for the future. (UPFPA) United Nations Population Fund Survey 2015. The future of a country lies in the hands of its youth, this is common knowledge and the policy initiative to address their challenges will have positive effect on the entire society with no exception in Nigeria.

Literature Review

Governments formulate and implement public policies to intervene in society's problems. Policy is a deliberate plan of action and implies a broader framework for defining and implementing a vision, ideology, philosophy, decision, mandate or principle that is translated into various actions, programmes and projects (Khan, 2016). It encompasses a set of actions to address a particular interest or problem. Public policy, on the other hand, refers to a statement of what the government intends to do or not do, and it includes a comprehensive statement of expected actions and outcomes and specifies the ways and means to achieve them (Howlett & Cashore, 2014). Consequently, the policy can be seen as an outcome of the policy process and requires input or commitment from the organisational structure responsible for its implementation. There is a growing recognition that policies do not succeed or fail by themselves. Their success

depends on how they are implemented (Hudson et al., 2019). Even the 'perfect' policy has no value or meaning if it is not correctly or successfully implemented. Sager & Gofen (2022) define policy implementation as an interactive political process that begins with the translation of political ideas into social action. O'Toole (2003) defines it as what happens between a government's apparent intention to do or refrain from doing something and the ultimate effects of that action or inaction. Therefore, policy implementation can be seen as a process of 'high hopes' or 'dashed hopes' (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1974). Although policy implementation is increasingly recognised as necessary and crucial for bridging the gap between policy goals and expected outcomes and desired impacts, the process is dynamic, complex and problematic and has yet to be adequately understood (Bullock & Lavis, 2019). McConnell (2010) and Osmani et al. (2022) argue that policy implementation problems arise when a policy faces challenges that prevent it from achieving the objective sought by policy makers. Makinde (2005) states that an implementation problem occurs when the expected outcomes for the target beneficiaries are not achieved within a certain period of time. According to Howlett (2012), an implementation problem occurs when a policy intervention fails to solve or correct a problem that a particular policy was intended to remedy. These explanations suggest that implementation problems create a gap between what was planned and what actually happens on the ground. Policy implementation therefore requires a comprehensive ground work, understanding the social norms, analytical involvement and total knowledge of the PCF systematically for easy implementation.

Family systems can be compared to political systems which can be affected both positively and negatively by a transition programme. In other words, the family as a whole can become unstable due to factors such as economic, religious and cultural factors, cohabitation, divorce and educational instability. Ugwuoke and Duruji (2015) and Okemini (2020), in their attempt to analyse family disorganisation, have identified some major causes of instability that have serious consequences for family instability, including economic downturn, divorce/separation, loss of breadwinner's job, spouse abuse, infidelity, substance abuse and others. These factors include family, peers/friends, social and economic status, class, and environmental in which an individual grows and associate with (Kern, et al., 2020). Thus, in view of the developing role of family, community system, policies and governmental institutions as stakeholders involved in influencing young people's well-being, the interaction between these components ensure the wellbeing of youths and young adults positively (Tramonti, Giorgi, & Fanali, 2019). The quality of a country's and region's infrastructure can be seen as the most important leading indicator of economic progress.

The development of human infrastructure contributes to both the expansion of the economy and the improvement of people's quality of life. Previous studies have concluded that the level of a nation's investment in its

human capacity, especially in youth and other sectors of the economy, plays an important role in determining its overall economic performance (Galdeano, D., Ahmed, U., Fati, M., Rehan, R., & Ahmed, A. 2019). when policy direction has a significant impact on the youthful and coalescent young population, it indicates the healthy and sustainability of a nation's economy

Methodology:

Although a distinction is made in research between different methods (quantitative and qualitative studies), the choice of one method over the other depends on the extent to which it is suitable for answering the research questions. According to Mehrad and Zangeneh (2019), quantitative research uses numerical data and is a statistical analysis and mathematically based procedure for collecting and analysing data. Similarly, quantitative research, as an empirical investigation, is often used to test theories consisting of variables measured with numbers and statistically analysed with models to determine whether the theory predicts or explains the phenomena of interest. Essentially, the aim is to determine whether the theory predicts or explains the phenomena under consideration (Sakyi, Musona & Mweshi, 2020).

Quantitative research was chosen for this study because it is the most appropriate and perhaps even the best fit for a study such as this. Accordingly, the quantitative research approach is best suited for this study because it requires a systematic process of observing and describing characteristics and attributes of the study subject in order to uncover relationships between (independent variable as predictor) and (dependent variable as outcome variable) within the study population (Mohajan, 2020).

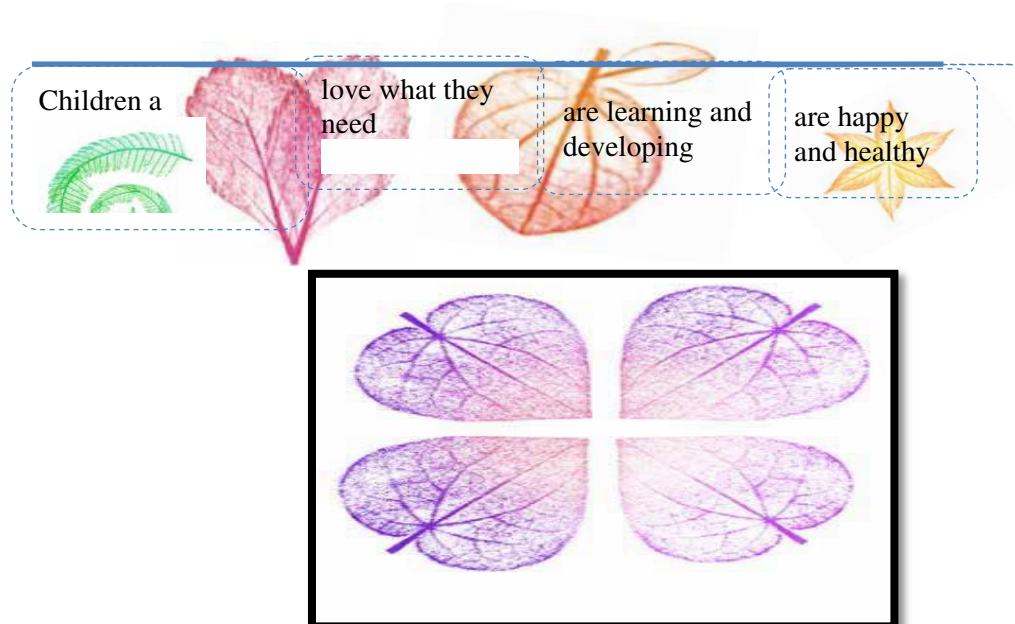
More importantly, with a large sample size of 390 respondents, the study requires a quantitative approach/method to examine the relationship between the variables in the study and test the assumptions. The data collected from the respondents during the survey is quantified in numerical form for statistical purposes, using SPSS software for analysis. Similarly, quantitative research will enable the uncovering of the issues in question relating to the role of government and family, education and peer influence in the implementation of policies for the wellbeing of young people. By collecting data in numerical and unchanging form and analysing it using mathematical methods (statistics), a quantitative approach is essential for this study.

Given the nature of the questions in a quantitative study where the “what” questions seeks to as to what the level or nature of the studies phenomenon by measuring it with statistical tools. Therefore, the logic of numbers deployed in a quantitative study is geared toward access the phenomena from an objective perspective and unbiased manner. Consequently, from an objective perspective quantitative methodology deploy a scientific method starting with specific theoretical perspective and making hypothesis/assumptions in the research process and procedures.

Results and Discussion:

Addressing the Adolescence current challenges in Nigeria mostly regards to their health and wellbeing related issue has been challenging. Nigeria policy framework does not allow an examination of policy progress in the country and may not provide useful insights for other countries developing policy in this area. Policies (describing government actions, frameworks, plans, strategies or designs) play a critical role in shaping the wellbeing system and can help to address entrenched inequalities in the society.

Policies are used to identify needs, direct funding, influence governance structures, guide change, promote innovation and support implementation. High-level Adolescent wellbeing policy sets the agenda for health issue prioritisation and funding, and guides for the formulation of localised and/or issue-specific guidance and action at lower levels (NSW Ministry of Health: North Sydney (2017). Recognising youth plight as an important issue in high-level policy, for example, is likely to help increase funding opportunities and support the development of programmes and services or the development of other related normalcies witnessed among the young people and how best policy implementation intervention that can help to curb the excesses.



Involving young people is a strategy developed by ministerial department of in News Zealand to assist policy makers on strategic policy implementation for the youth. It is meant for the government to continues to engage with other participants to support and develop responses that works in their local communities. There would be annual reporting, achievement and evaluation on the processes. The successes, transparency and the criticisms will be measured. Accountability strategy reviewed periodically,the emergence

issues ascertained and collected to be addressed by the policy makers. (Child and wellbeing strategy 2019)

Theoretical Framework of Systems Theory



Author's Construct of systems theoretical framework

multidimensional development theories, The findings indicates that young people go through a period of profound change called macro and micro level factors. It is a time when physical changes accelerate. However, adolescence is not only characterised by physical changes, but also by changes in cognitive abilities, social and emotional state and interpersonal relationships. A young person's growth and development are influenced by a variety of internal and external variables, including parents, peers, community, culture, religion, school, events in the world and the surrounding media. There are several different schools of thought or perspectives on the topic of adolescent growth and development.

Although the instincts of each theory differs, many aspects of the theories have commonalities. While it is true that each adolescent is unique and has their own hobbies and idiosyncrasies, there are also a number of common developmental stages that almost every teenager goes through in the early, middle and late stages of their teenage years, Subsequently this is supported by the systemtheory which centres on the notion that human behaviour are influenced by various factors within a system. These factors include family, peers/friends, social and economic statues class, and environmental in which an individual grows and associate with (Kern, et al., 2020).The feelings and actions of teenagers in middle and high school can be divided into five broad categories. These are: 1.) the pursuit of independence; 2.) future interests and cognitive

development; 3.) sexuality; 4.) changes in physical appearance; and 5.) ethics and self-determination. The following information describes specific aspects of adolescent behaviour found in each domain. Although some adolescents may vary only slightly from the following descriptions, it is generally accepted that the feelings and actions described are characteristic of each stage of adolescence.

Movement towards independence: Development of an identity shaped over time by internal and external influences; moodiness; improved ability to express one's feelings through language; feelings expressed through actions rather than words (this may be more true of males); close friendships become more important; less attention paid to parents, with occasional rudeness; realisation that parents are not perfect; recognition of one's faults; search for new people with whom to socialise; increasing vocational interest; focus on the present and immediate future; increasing ability to work. More showing off; greater interest in seclusion; increased experimentation with the body (masturbation) and concern about being normal are all characteristics of female sexuality.

Weight gain and hair growth in the pubic area and armpits are among the most noticeable physical changes during puberty. Other common changes include the development of body mechanisms, the development of breast tissue, the onset of monthly menstruation, the development of the testes and other organs, and an increase in hair and skin fat production. Ability to perceive abstractly; occasional experimentation with cigarettes and alcohol; trying out rules and boundaries - these are all visible changes of adolescence in the middle years (approx. 15-16 years) concern about one's appearance and body, feelings of strangeness about self and body, lower opinion of parents; desire to make new friends, emphasis on new peer group, periods of sadness when psychological loss of parents occurs; sexual and violent impulses may be directed towards creative and vocational goals, leading to feelings of anxiety about school and academic performance. Relationships: greater focus on sexual beauty, more frequent changes in relationships, more precise definition of sexuality. The transition from childhood to adulthood is the focus of this stage of development.

Adolescents' sense of belonging is crucial to their development (Alle&Ken2017). In order to accurately ascertain the level correction and how strategic policy implementation can positively effect young people's live. Factor analysis is used to reduce items into a few numbers of items and dimensions. However, it can also be used to establish essential dimensions between variables and latent constructs and thus enabling formation and refinement of a theory. Nevertheless, in this study factor analysis was mainly used to access the strength of constructs accurately measuring variables as well as access the structure of relationship between variables. As such, it was important to deploy factor analysis as the sample was above 300 participants Thus, the criterion for assessing the suitability of data for factor analysis as indicated in the table below:

Factor Analysis Indices

Variables	KOM	Bartlett's test	Screen Plot	Variance Eigen Value Close to 1 or >1	Dimension	Sig	Items Deleted
Family	0.785	0.000	2	6	2	0.000	Non
Education	0.720	0.000	4	4	2	0.000	Non
Peer Group	0.628	0.000	3	4	3	0.000	Non
Government	0.643	0.000	2	3	2	0.000	Non
Implementation	0.827	0.000	2	5	1	0.000	Non

Data were subjected to factor analysis using principle component analysis and varimax rotation. All Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KOM) values for individual items were above 0.5 indicating the data were sufficient for EFA. The Bartlett's test or Sphericity $p < .001$ showed that there were patterned relationships between the items. Using the eigenvalues cut-off of 1.0, there were at least 3 factors that explain a cumulative variance of the various variables. The screen plot confirmed the findings of retaining factors. The factor loading after rotation using a significant factor criterion of 0.4 indicated that items were significant for our model and as such, no item was removed. All the questions correlated fairly and there was no need to eliminate any question since only few questions with large correlation coefficients were observed in the study.

Assessment of Data Normality Descriptive

Variable	N	Skewn wss	Kurtosis		Q-Q Plot		Histogram
			SE	Statistics	SE	Normal Distribution	
Family	390	-.073	0.124	-.078	0.247	Normal Distribution	Normal Distribution
Education	390	0.143	0.124	0.158	0.247	Normal Distribution	Normal Distribution

Peer group	390	0.256	0.124	-.018	0.247	Normal Distribution	Normal Distribution
Government	390	0.256	0.124	-.018	0.247	Normal Distribution	Normal Distribution
Implementation	390	0.000	0.124	-.193	0.247	Normal Distribution	Normal Distribution

According to André (2022) removing outliers by condition runs against the logic of hypothesis testing and may lead to false and inflated positive rates. Thus, exclusions or removal of outliers depends on specificity of the case which is blind to the hypothesis tested. While slight deviations from the assumptions are typically inconsequential, however larger deviations may threaten the conclusions of statistical tests. Thus, Leys et al., (2019) states that whether the outlier is global or contextual if the response is not anomalous to be excluded from the data the research may allow it so long as it does not change the outcome of the research study. Although there was a single outlier with respondent (1) in the variable peer group and government respectively, however it appeared to have no significant bearing on the data or outcome of the study nor did the assumption deviates so much from other observations in a manner that aroused suspicions normality in distribution of data. Base on the table above variables in the study approached normal distribution assumption as the Skewness and Kurtosis were not grater then + or – 1 indicating a normally distributed data. Equally, the QQ-plot- points in the plot laid on and along the straight diagonal line thus indicating normal distributed data in the figures. Likewise, the Box Plot did not have any extreme values except for just 1 case which was a milled outliers and no significant impact on the data. Equally, Histogramgraph followed the bell shaped symmetriccurve.

Although few spots deviated from the line, it can be assumed that the set of data in the study is normally distributed and follows normal distribution process (Oppong & Agbedra 2016; Bhatnagar et al. 2021). However, Rashid, Sarkar and Phuyal (2022) argued that the approximation can be acceptable if distribution is closer to normality particularly instances where the scatter plot ellipse shows about 95% of the observations lies within the lines if the data is bivariate/multivariate normal.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Although, considering the system theory, humanistic theory, macro system and micro system theories, both internal and external influences can have an

impact on a child's development cognitive behaviours and life challenges. The parents' level of formal education, the number of dependants and children in the family, the family's financial circumstances and attitudes towards formal education, all have an impact on internal factors. State laws, information system, educational resources, unemployment factors, divorcee families, bereave of family breadwinner, cost of living and that of children study funding. These factors are believed to have a strong effect on young people. External variables with the combination of internal variable, Adolescent lives is found in the mist of all these prevailing circumstances with less attention by the surrounding stakeholders is worrisome. The most being the broken homes, single parents with no meaningful source of living. This is where social security if adopted in Nigeria would go along way in Adolescent wellbeing and social stability.

The model accounted for 8.5% of variance in the dependent variable on strategic poly implementation. Thus, findings of this mediation analysis provide support for the hypothesis that government plays a mediating role in the relationship between family and implementation of policy to douse the stress and challenges faced by Adolescent. The significant indirect effect suggests that family's impact on implementation is not solely due to a direct relationship but is also influenced by its effect on government. These results have important implications for understanding the dynamics between family, government, and strategic implementation processes. Thus, the result suggests improving the family quality contributes to increase in implementation of policy for youth wellbeing. The study in relation with the empirical analysis discovered that the impact of infrastructure on the development of the quality of life can be seen in the rising value of consumption, increased labour productivity, increasing employment opportunities for the young population and growing prosperity in people's lives. The development of a region's economy can be significantly boosted by improving community infrastructure from community all the way to the national level, Wong MC, Yip TL. (2019). The researcher argues that the government still faces a number of challenges when it comes to providing adequate policies, necessary education, social security and appropriate infrastructure. These challenges include problems associated with investment efficiency, lack of funding and the need to prioritise citizens wellbeing. On the other hand, the government of Anambra State in the eastern region of Nigeria still need to make additional efforts to assess whether or not the construction of the above infrastructures can boost economic growth with improved young people's lives if properly implemented.

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