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PUBLIC POLICIES AND CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE : AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF THE NIGERIAN STATE

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Abstract

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Introduction

People's confidence in policies of government in any nation is very important in the realization of development in such a society. Recent happenings in Nigeria as it relate to the willingness of the people to support the policies of government, showed that majority of the populace seems not to have confidence in policies of government.

The reasons may not be unconnected with the level of poverty and hardship in the society, particularly between 1999 and now. Kwanashie (2001:34) observed:

The country is rich, but the people are poor. As more wealth was discovered in the country (Nigeria) the people became progressively poorer ... the country has oil and natural gas resources, from which it has earned unprecedented amount of foreign exchange yet the country has sunk into huge foreign debt.

Of late, there has been strong resistance from the people as regard some policies of government, particularly the deregulation policy of the down-stream petroleum

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sector of the Nigeria oil and gas industry. Although government and its officials have consistently argued that the deregulation policy of the down-stream petroleum sector as it is currently implemented in the country, is what is best for the nation. In spite of the spirited defence of government and its officials about its policies,. The populace have openly refuse to accept the explanation of government about the reasons given for the formulation and implementation of the policy of deregulation of the down-stream petroleum sector, the way it is being implemented in Nigeria.

No doubt, the hardship in the country, which can be attributed to the current reform agenda of this present administration, could have led to the high level of distrust about government policies in the mind of the people. The state of affairs of the nation, calls for urgent attention in the area of provision of social amenities to enhance the living of the people. However, those in government think otherwise. President Obasanjo, while commenting recently on the state of affairs in Nigeria asserted that "there is virtually nobody in the rural areas as far as i know, that does not know what he would eat tomorrow morning. Now, there's poverty, yes, but there is no abject poverty" (Daily Independent 2004, Nov. 18). While reacting to the views of the President as stated above, Coker-Onita (2004, Nov. 18) pointed out:

My position is that between poverty and abject poverty, there may be no middle road position. Our government must continue the battle against poverty, whether 'abject' or not. Government must continue with the battle against hunger, housing, lack of portable water, poor and dilapidated infrastructure. Only then shall we be on the road to economic recovery and better quality of life for our citizens.

When policies of government are introduced and are faced with resistance from the people, whatever the government intend to achieve would have been defeated. The result will be that of policy failure, and development is hindered in that society. If truly government and its official through their policies they introduced are for the benefit of people as propagated by them, why is it so difficult to make people to accept the position of government in this direction, in spite of its good intentions?

This paper therefore, seeks to find out the causes of crisis of confidence in government policies in Nigería.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the crisis of confidence in government policies in Nigeria, with a view to identifying some of the factors that militates against them. The outcome of this research work will serve as a guide to government and its officials about the need to introduce policies that are likely to be acceptable to the people and hence obtain their support at implementation stage.

Research Hypotheses

To achieve the objective of the study, the following hypotheses were tested:

- 1. The more people in a country are involved in the policy process, the more likely the success of such polices at implementation stage.
- 2. The more the policies of government are tailored towards the interest of the people in a country, the more likely such policies of government will receive the support of the people.

Research Methodology

This research work used the survey method by means of questionnaires to respondents made up of government employees – those who implement government policies; and private sector employees – some of those who benefit from the outcome of government policies, residents in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Sample Size

The study was based on a sample size of 300 respondents, made up of 150 government employees and another 150 private sector employees, residents in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Techniques for Data Collection

Data were collected from primary and secondary sources. The questionnaire was used to collect data from the primary source. Information was elicited on the policies of government and crisis of confidence in Nigeria. The questionnaire was divided into two sections of A and B. the A part was designed to elicit personal data like: years of work experience; and type of employment i.e. whether public or private sector employment. The B part was designed to elicit information on the reasons for crisis of confidence in government policies in Nigeria.

Return Rate of Questionnaires

Out of the 150 questionnaires administered to the public sector employees, 100

questionnaires were returned, while of the 150 questionnaires administered to the private sector employees, 110 questionnaires were returned. These represent 210 questionnaires or 70% return rate. As a result, the data analysis was based on 210 respondents and not the original sample size of 300 respondents as earlier stated.

Table 1:

The Rate of Administered and returned Questionnaires on the Sample Size

Type of employment	Number of Administered Questionnaires	Number of Returned Questionnaires
Public Sector	150	100
Private Sector	150	110
Total	300	210

Source: Field Work

Technique for Data Analysis

The Z – test of population proportions (two samples) was used to test for significant difference between the two populations proportions of those that are in the public and private sector employment residents in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State. The purpose is to find out the reaction of both populations as regard the policies of government and crisis of confidence in Nigeria, with a 95% confidence level.

The formula is as follow:

1.

$$P_{1} = \frac{X_{12}}{n_{1}} P_{2} = \frac{X_{2}}{n_{2}}$$

$$X_{1} \& X_{2} = \text{Those in favour, } n_{1} \& n_{2} = \text{sample size, } P_{1}$$

and P_2 = Population (Ogbeide 1997:172).

2. $Dp = P_1 - P_2$, where Dp = difference in populations

3. Sp - p = $\sqrt{\underline{p_1q_1} + \underline{p_2 - p_2}}$ standard error of population difference. n1 n2

4. Confidence interval: $C1P_1 - P_2 = (P_1 - P_2) + Zc_1 (Sp_1 - P_2)$

Conceptual Framework

In this paper, there are four concepts that are crucial to the clear understanding of this study. These are: The Policy process; Public Policy; Development and Crisis of Confidence.

The Policy Process

According to Denhardt (1999:47-48) the policy process can be described as the process by which policies are developed. It involved three main stages; agenda setting; policy formulation and policy implémentation. He argued that agenda setting process may be viewed as the confluence of three streams of events, namely; policy recognition, policy generation and political statements (legislation, executive orders, administrative rules, etc.) that are viewed as legitimate. Policy implementation on the other hand is the actualization of the policy formulated in real life situation, which includes building the policy agenda, shaping legislative policy and developing administrative rules to give detail to the legislation and effect its realization.

Heywood (2002:400) on his own part sees the policy process as it relates to the mechanisms through which policy is made. To him, policy making is a process in two senses; Firstly, it involves a series of actions or events which commences with the germination of ideas and the initiation of proposals concerned with some form of debates, analysis and evaluation and conclude with the making of formal decisions and the implementation through designated actions. Secondly, it is a process in the sense that it distinguishes the 'how' from the 'what' of government: that is, it focuses on the way in which policy is made (process) rather than the substance of policy itself and its consequences (product). Ultimately, policy can be evaluated only in the light of its impact, according to 'what actually happens' either for good or ill (Heywood 2002:401).

Where policies of government fail to follow the policy process at the formulation stage, there is more likely to be resistance from the people at the implementation. And when that happens the purpose of such a policy, no matter how good intentioned ,may not materialize.

Public Policy

Public policy according to Heywood (2002:400) is the formal or stated decisions of government bodies. He posited that, generally a public policy is a plan of action adopted by government, and that to designate something as public policy implies that a formal decision has been made, giving official sanction to a particular course of action by the government. He stated that public policy is a formal authoritative decision that establishes a plan of action for the community (Heywood 2002:5).

Denhardt (1999:69) on his own part sees public policy as authoritative statements made by legitimate government actors about public problems. Dye (1981) defines public policy as whatever government chooses to do or not to do (Oronsaye 1999:46).

Oronsaye (1999:46) in summing up the definition of public policy viewed it as the determination, development and crystallization of the will or ends of the society. This will or ends of the society according to him may be a course of action, a decision or high level statements of preferences by government intended to shape future decisions.

Where decisions of government do not reflect the feelings and the reactions of the people, that government policy would have been successfully formulated only on paper. For its implementation is more likely to face stiff opposition from the people.

Development

The concept of development has many definitions. According to Rodney (1986:9) it means at the level of the individual increase skills and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well being. Todaro (1985:108) defines development as a multidimensional process involving the reorganisation and re-orientation of the entire economic and social system. This according to him involves, in addition to improvement of income and output; radical changes in institutional, social and administrative structures as well as in popular attitudes, customs and beliefs. The main contention of Todaro is that development is both a physical and psychological process. The transformation of institutions is one aspect and while the other aspect is that of the thinking of the people about positive change.

Seer (1969) on his own part sees development in terms of the improvement in the standard of living of the individual in the society. To him, development involves a reduction in poverty, unemployment and inequality in the society. In agreeing with Todaro, Seer concluded that the objectives of development are: life sustenance, self-esteem or respect and freedom (Ujo 1999:6-7).

Development can be said to have taken place only when the people have the sense of belonging to contribute towards decisions taken in such society, and that decisions leads to the enhancement of the living standard of the people.

Crisis of Confidence

Dudley (1973:6) explains crisis of confidence in its general terms. According to him, the inability of political leaders to satisfy the expectations, which the people look forward to from their political leaders, creates a gap of distrust between the government and the governed in the society. Dudley argued that with the attainment of independence, most leaders of the post-colonial states in Africa found it impossible and impracticable to fulfill their earlier promises. According to him promises were made, while policies, which were initiated to satisfy these promises, were economically unprofitable projects and expenditure, which merely serve to raise the expectations of the people without satisfying them. This leads to crisis of confidence, which breeds counter-elites with more radical view at the overthrow of existing power-holders. The awareness of this makes those in politica position to adopt coercive measures, which further leads to crisis of confidence in the society.

We can therefore define crisis of confidence as the lack of trust on the part of the people as it affects governmental policies and programmes in the society. The inabilities of government to satisfy the demands of the people who are the target group of government policies create a credibility problem as regard government policies and programme. The result is that of resistance from the people about such policies at implementation and when that happens, development is hindered in such a society.

Causes of Crisis of Confidence in the Policies of Government in Nigeria Crisis of confidence in government policies in Nigeria and indeed in Africa may be attributed to the fact that policies of government that are suppose to be for the upliftment of the living standard of the people in the society, are formulated surreptitiously without input from and due regard to the people to whom the policies are to affect. And these policies are implemented as if the purpose in

purely to satisfy the interest of those in government alone. The result is that o lack of confidence in government policies by the people. As observed by Gberevbia (2004:228):

> Most conflicts in African states today are brought about by the inability of its leaders to evolve sound policies and programmes devoid of bitterness and self-gratification, and the result is that of ethnic revolt and bitter civil wars.

In a situation where government officials preach about the need to evolve a cor ruption-free society and do otherwise, cannot give room for people to trust gov

ernment policies. As observed by Aliyu (2003:6) "It is a common practice for top government jobs to be filled with cronies who serve as conduit pipes to siphon public money to foreign accounts of some top government functionaries" When people see government officials that suppose to show good examples to the citizenry in what they say and do, turnout to behave differently, leads to frustration on the part of the people. The result is that of lack of confidence on the part of the people in government policies and as a result, development is hindered in that society.

One of the major issues that has created serious crisis of confidence in government polices in the mind of the people in Nigeria lately, is the reform currently embark upon by the federal government. The criticism is that, reform policies of government in the past have not been sustained and this has created credibility problem for the current reform movement of the present administration of chief Olusegun Obasanjo. The truth is that government, both in the past and present could not sustain reforms because they lack the political will to handle the hard choices and the price the economy had to pay for years of mismanagement (Kwanashie 2001:31).

Most African Leaders and indeed Nigeria by their deeds have created an atmosphere of fear and distrust on the minds of the people, which has aggravated the issue of lack of confidence in the policies of government in Nigeria. This according to Machungo (2001:5) is brought about by the fact that "most African leaders have failed to deliver the dividends of democratic governance to their people because they themselves do not possess the credentials of good leaders, nor do they seem to have a clue on governance.

The way structures and institutions of government are currently dominated by powerful individuals, has rendered their functions non-effective before the very eyes of the people, thereby further creating crisis of confidence in the mind of the people about government and its policies. There have been instances where judgments of courts where seen to be biased towards the interest of the executive arm of government to the detriment of the people. In a situation like that, the tendency is for people not to trust government and its policies.

No doubt, policies of government that are misunderstood by the people, can further bring about crisis of confidence if proper enlightenment campaign is not carried out by the government, to educate the people on how and why such policy of government was adopted. When the citizenry and indeed the entire civil society are involved in the policy process, it will go along way to bring smooth implementation of such policies in the society.

For any nation to be on the path of greatness, its leaders must be focus, courageous and determined to lead by example in both words and deeds. It is the responsibility of the government to give hope to the hopeless in the society through its policies and programmes. As rightly observed by Zuma (2003:44) "Leadership is about reaching out, embracing change and taking some risks. It also means recognizing that as you take those risks and move forward, you indeed creates a better nation ... " Reforms of government may be considered therefore as some of the risks that political leaders need to take in order to move the nation and her people forward for good. However, while reforms may help to rejuvenate the economy, which ultimately provide the government with the much needed funds required to meet the needs of the people, in terms of the provision of social amenities in the society, reforms policies of government must take into consideration the present living condition of the people to ascertain the extent to which the can bear further due to their present economic state. And when that happens, government would have succeeded in building confidence in the citizenry about its policies.

Without confidence of the people in government policies, the necessary support needed to enhance the successful implementation of government policies will be absent. Kwanashie (2001:31) pointed out "the challenge now is to evolve sustainable policy measures, which addresses the fundamentals and deliver in good time tangible benefits that are equitably distributed in line with the aspirations of the totality of the Nigeria people" In the same vein, Ayam (2003:53) observed that political leaders must stop operating under a democratic era as if they are under a military dispensation whereby people are ordered around and decision taken without consideration to the feelings of the people. He argued that there is need for the culture of accommodation and consensus to begin to pervade the management of this new democracy, if its growth and sustenance must be guaranteed.

That in a democracy, the will of the people is the will of the government of the day is no longer strange. For people to fully support government policies, which ultimately enhances its implementation, requires that people must be fully involved in the policy formulation stage. It is the level of people's involvement in the policy process that determines the quality of the policy outcome in the society. The more qualitative a policy of government is, the more support the policy is likely to receive from the people at the implementation stage. Kwanashie

(2001:33) observed "the quality and sustainability of the social institutions" And lkelegbe (1995:72) sees the policy process as : "the method, conditions, procedures, activities, interactions and stages by which policies are made"

Data Analysis, Interpretation and Discussion of Findings

The Z – test of population proportion (two samples) and the simple percentage were used as statistical tools for the analysis of data in this paper. Eight questions were raised, out of which two were used to answer the two hypotheses stated in this paper. Below are the analyses:

Employment Type	Response	Percentage (%)
Public Sector	100 - •	47.62
Private Sector	110	52.38
Total	210	100

Table 2 : Response by Type of Employment

Source: fieldwork

The table above shows that 47.62% of the respondent are employed in the public sector, while 52.38% of respondents are employed in the private sector.

Table 3 : Response by Years of Work Experience

Years of Service	Public Sector	Private Sector	Total	(%)
1 – 10 yrs.	. 42	58	100	47.62
11vrs above	58	52	110	52.38
Total	100	110	210	100

Source: Fieldwork

The table above shows that 47.62% of respondents in both public and private sector employment have years of work experience of between 1 - 10 years, while 52.38% of respondents in both public and private sector employment have years of work experience of between 11 years and above.

Table 4 : Response by current Grade at Work

Response	Public Sector	Private Sector	Total	(%)
Grade level	30	27	57	27.14
01-07				
Grade level 08-above	70	83	153	72.86
Total	100	110	210	100

Source: Fieldwork

The table above shows that 27.14% of respondents in both public and private sector employment are in grade level 01 - 07, while 72.86% of respondents in both public and private sector employment are in grade level 08 - above.

Testing of Hypothesis

An hypothesis testing is a fundamental activity in statistical analysis. Hypothesis are stated either in null (Ho) or research (Hr) form. A null hypothesis (Ho) indicates that there is no significant relationship between variables under consideration, while a research hypothesis (Hr) indicates that there is a significant relationship between variables under considerationship between variables under consideration. Two hypotheses were tested in this paper as shown below:

Hypothesis 1

Ho: There is no significance between people's involvement in the policy process and the success of the policy at implementation stage.

Question: Do you support the view that the policy of government that involved people at its formulation stage is more likely to succeed at its implementation stage?

Yes () No ().

Table 5 : Type of Employment and Crisis of Confidence in Government Policies

Response	Public Sector	Private Sector	Total
Yes	90	105	195
No	10	5	15
Total	100	110	210

Source: Fieldwork

State Result

 $-0.021 \le P_1 - P_2 \le 0.123$

Interpretation of Result

The researcher is 95% confident that the population proportion difference between those in the private and public sector employment sampled who agreed that policy of government that invovled people at its formulation stage are -0.021and 0.123. However, there is a 5% chance that the difference in population proportion of those who agreed between those in the public and private sector employment sampled may not fall within this interval.

Discussion of Findings

The findings are based on the earlier stated hypothesis, which states that, Ho: there is no significant relationship between people's involvement in the policy process and the success of that policy at the implementation stage. Based on the Z - test of population proportion, the findings revealed that the researcher is 95'% confident that there is a significant relationship between people's involvement in the policy process and the success of that policy at the implementation stage. The result is to accept Hr. and reject Ho, which stated that there is no significant relationship between people's involvement in the policy process and the success of that policy at implementation stage.

Out of the 210 respondents sampled in this study, 195 or 92.86% of the respondents both from the public and private sector employment agreed that people's involvement in the policy process enhances the success of that policy at the implementation stage, while 15 respondents or 7.14% disagreed. The outcome of this study goes to support the work of Kwanashie (2001:33) in which he posited, "The quality of the policy process is enhanced by the involvement of policy actors in the formulation of public policy, and in this case the actors are the citizenry to whom the policy is to affect.

Hypothesis 2:

Ho: there is no significant relationship between the policies of government tailored towards the interest of the people and the people's support for such policies in the country.

Ouestion: Do you agree with the argument that citizens support government policies that reflect the preferences of the people in a country? Yes () No ()

Response	Public Sector	Private Sector	Total
Yes	32	53	85
No	10	5	15
Total .	42	58	110

Table 6 : Years of work Experience and Crisis of Confidence in government Policies (1 - 10 years)

Source: Fieldwork

Table 7 : Years of work Experience and Crisis of Confidence in government Policies (11 years- above)

Response	Public Sector	Private Sector	Total
Yes	50	49	99
No	8	3	11
Total	42	52	110

Source: Fieldwork

State Result $0.022 \le P_1 - P_2 \le 0.198$

Interpretation of Result

The researcher is 95% confident that the population proportion difference between those in the private and public sector employment sampled who agreed that the policies of government tailored towards the interest of the people are more likely to receive the support of the people in a country are 0.022 and 0.198. However, there is a 5% chance that the difference in population proportion of those who agreed between those in the public and private employment sampled may not fall within this interval.

Discussion of Findings

The findings are based on the earlier stated hypothesis, which states that, Ho: there is no significant relationship between the policies of government tailored towards the interest of the people and the people's support for such policies in a country. Based on the Z – test of population proportion, the findings revealed that the researcher is 95% confident that there is a significant relationship between policies of government tailored toward the interest of the people and the people's support for such policies in a country. The result is to accept Hr. and reject Ho, which stated that there is no significant relationship between the policies of government tailored towards the interest of the people and the people's support for such policies in a country.

Out of the 210 respondents sampled in this study, 184 or 87.62% of the respondents both from the public and private sector employment agreed that policies of government tailored towards the interest of the people is more likely to receive the support of the people in a country, while 26 respondents or 12.38% disagreed. The outcome of this study goes to support the work of Usman (1999:4) in which he posited, "good government is that in which there is respect for people and equal opportunity for every one to contribute" In societies where policies of government are tailored towards the interest of the people is an indication of government respect for the people it governs.

Conclusions

This research work was carried out to find out the causes of crisis of confidence in government policies in Nigeria. It was discovered that when policies of government are formulated without the input of the people to whom the policy is to affect, there is bound to be problem at the implementation stage. And in a situation where policies of government are not tailored towards the interest of the people, such policies are bound to suffer lack of support from the people.

The study showed that while reform policies of government are good, there is need for the government to consider the state of affairs of the people in terms of economic condition, to whom such policies are to affect. And when this happens, government would have succeeded in building in the citizenry confidence about its policies.

Recommendation

Following the outcome of the study, the authors hereby put forward these recommendations:

Government and its officials should learn to use democratic language when introducing policies of government. Language like "there is no going back on this government policy decision" particularly, when such policies did not follow the proper policy process during formulation, that has to do with the consideration of the reaction of the people, must be done away with, if the policies of government must get the full support of the people for easy implementation. Government and its officials should recognize that in a democracy, it is the wish of the people that government must consider before embarking on any venture, if it must stay relevant before people.

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Appendix

Statistical Calculation for Hypothesis 1:

Private Sector	Public sector
$X_1 = 105$	$X_{2} = 90$
$n_1 = 110$	$n_2 = 100$

Calculate the Population difference between the two samples. $P_1 - P_2 = X_1 = X_2 = \frac{105}{n_1} = \frac{90}{100} = 0.95 - 0.90$. Therefore, $P_1 - P_2 = 0.05$

Calculate Standard Error

 $P_{1} = \frac{X_{1}}{n_{1}} = \frac{105}{110} = 0.95, \quad q_{1} = 1 - 0.95. \text{ Therefore, } q_{1} = 0.05$ $P_{2} = \frac{x_{2}}{n_{1}} = \frac{90}{100} = 0.90, \quad q_{1} = 1 - 0.95. \text{ Therefore, } q_{1} = 0.1$ $Sp - p = \frac{\sqrt{p_{1}q_{1}}}{n_{1}} + \frac{p_{2}q_{2}}{n_{2}} \text{ standard error of population difference.}$

$$= \sqrt{(0.95 * 0.05} + (0.90 * 0.1)) + (0.90 * 0.1)}{100}$$

0.036

Determine the Z – score from the stated confidence level of 95%. The 95% confidence level of Z – score is 1.96z,

$$C1P_1 - P_2 = (P_1 - P_2) + Zc_1 (Sp_1 - P_2)$$

= 0.05 ± 1.96 (0.036)
= 0.05 ± 0.071
= - 0.021 & 0.123

State the Result $-0.021 \le P1 - P2 \le 0.123$.

Statistical; Calculation for Hypothesis 2:

Private SectorPublic Sector $X_1 = 102$ $X_2 = 82$ $n_1 = 110$ $n_2 = 100$

Calculate the Population difference between the two samples

 $P_1 - P_2 = X_1 = X_2 = \frac{102}{110} - \frac{82}{100} = 0.93 - 0.82$. Therefore, $P_1 - P_2 = 0.11$.

<u>Calculate Standard Error</u> $P_1 = X_1 \frac{82}{110} = 0.93, \ q_1 = 1 - 0.93$ Therefore, $q_1 = 0.07$

 $P_2 = \frac{x_2}{n_1} \frac{82}{100} = 0.82$, $q_1 = 1 = 0.82$ Therefore, $a_1 = 0.18$

Sp - p = $\sqrt{p_1 q_1} + p_2 q_2$ standard error of population difference. = $\sqrt{\frac{n_1}{101} + \frac{n_2}{100}} + (\frac{0.82 * 0.18}{100})$

Determine the Z – score from the stated confidence level of 95%. The 95% confidence level of Z – score is 1.96z,

 $C1P_{1} - P_{2} = (P_{1} - P_{2}) + Zc_{1} (Sp_{1} - P_{2})$ = 0.11 ± 1.96 (0.045) = 0.11 ± 0.0882 = - 0.022 & 0.198 State the Result - 0.021 ≤ P1 - P2 ≤ 0.198.

0.045

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