Governance approach to policy implementation challenges and sustainable development: Conceptual implications from the Nigerian case of TraderMoni empowerment scheme

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Abstract: Policy processes in developing societies have been challenged by contending political factors. Hence, attainment of intervention schemes and sustainable development of the policy regime in Nigeria is in dares need of a sound governance policy framework. The purpose of this study was to assess the application of sound governance approach in the Implementation of Trader Moni Scheme (TMS) of Nigeria targeted at empowering local traders, to understand the policy processes and ecology, and the results within the framework of sound governance and sustainability indicators. Eight (8) persons were involved in Focus Group Discussions while 15 persons drawn from selected TMS target beneficiaries were interviewed. Findings revealed that the scheme did not adapt to sound governance dimensions—process; structure; management and performance; and ethics, accountability and transparency. Hence, it concluded that it derailed from the core objective of empowerment for sustainable socio-economic development, validating the papers arguments.

Keywords – Policy politicisation, Policy processes, Sound governance, Sustainable development goals, Trader Moni empowerment

1. INTRODUCTION

Public policy process derives its complexity from both technical and political considerations. Theoretical and practical underpinnings of the above assertion owe lots to the Finer-Friedrich debate. The debate has created mixed scholars' worldviews of administration-politics correlations (inverse or linear) with a far-reaching impact on policy outcome. While Davidson (2005) and Weimer and Vining (2005) maintain that it is popularly held that the

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technicalities of policy design be kept free from politics, McConnell (2010a) stresses that politicians have not been able to restrain their political interests from the policy-making processes. Although policy-making is the official right of political officials, policy design and analysis are necessary decision support (Hoppe, 2018), professional skills (Howlett, 2010) and depoliticised exercises in rational choice that invites suitable solutions to the government and people's problem (Weimer & Vining, 1999). However, the required solutions are lost to strong influence of narrow political considerations and interests, resulting in passive popular participation, erosion of public trust, policy failure and a self-help syndrome.

Mukherjee and Bali (2019) argue that policy success is dependent on the effectiveness of its design. While this might enjoy theoretical acceptability, it is an empirically defeatist submission in most settings. In most developing countries like Nigeria, policy blueprint and successful implementation (Ukeje & Chukwuemeka, 2021) rarely converge owing to the non-compliance to ethical requirement of the implementation processes (Ukeje et al., 2020). Distribution of government benefits through policy programs often suffer from inclusion/exclusion errors (Idike et al., 2020), particularly at the Street-Level Bureaucracies (SLBs) where chauvinistic tendencies like party affiliation, religion, nepotism, and personal instinct and idiosyncrasies are dominant (Ukeje et al., 2015; Ndukwe et al., 2015; Okechukwu et al., 2016; Ukeje et al., 2021) stemming from initial lack of political will for effective and efficient service delivery (Edino et al., 2021). The identified character is also traceable to corruption tendency that has become embedded in the public institution, just like a similar case in Mexico's bureaucratic procedures (Moreno-Jaimes, 2022). Laudable in the literature is the disclosure that public administration practitioners are often found in the practice of disfavour to minority groups, and these contest the disposition; however, the knowledge of the extent and scope of this contestation in the countries other than those of the West are lacking in the literature (Nisar, 2018).

Another characteristic is captured in the view of Hoppe (2018) that there is a tendency of the public servants to favour incumbent leaders in policy processes, although they are seen as brokers who should provide governance interface between the government and the people to make the system work (Wangchuk &Turner, 2019), because the role of public administration is to set the society on the right development track (Oliveira, Jing, & Collins, 2015). The essence of policy design is to satisfy the needs of the people, solve socio-economic problems and eventually make the world a better place (Olejniczak, Wolański & Widawski, 2018; Howlett, 2011; Peters, 2017).

The public policy literature is awash with evidence of policy goal politicization (Aroffin & Zahari, 2013; Fernandez & Gonzales 2016; Marsh & Connell, 2010). Specifically, despite the fact that the literature has drawn attention to the problem of implementation processes to policy success (Hudson, Hunter & Peckham, 2019), taking appropriate measures to ensure design-implementation coherence through a multi-stakeholder process; structure; cognition and values; constitution; organization and institution; management and performance; and ethics, accountability and transparency (Farazmand, 2004) was a far cry from TMS implementation in Nigeria. This study examines the implementation of TraderMoni, a part of the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) of the Nigerian Government, using sound governance framework which has implications for achieving the sustainable development goals SDGs targets: 1. "end poverty in all its forms everywhere." 5. "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls." 8. "promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all." 9. "Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation." 10. "reduce inequality within and among countries." 12. "Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns." 17. "Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development."

That the scheme appeared to be responsive to the needs of the people, the government approach is considered to fit into the description given by Farazmand (2004: 3) "...entrepreneurial government, competitive government, market-like governance, economic governance, social and political governance, enabling governance, participatory governance, regulatory governance, interventionist governance or government, steering government versus rowing government, and the like". Although it is an extension of good governance, Sound governance elements, with its relatively distinct qualities, were copiously lacking. Sound governance became a key governance analytical concept

with its distinctions from the conventional "good governance" theme as outlined by Ali Farazmand in 2004. One unshared feature being appropriation of international values is a remarkable one. According to Farazmand (2017), sound governance is more comprehensive than the previous concepts and has global elements of governance; it embodies normative, technical and rational features of good governance that considers indigenous governance system rather than follow unilateral governance of dominant neo-colonial powers; it possesses superior attributes compared to good governance and is sound professionally, technically, organisationally, managerially, democratically, economically and politically; it recognises constitutional values and respect international norms and governance systems. Sound governance-driven reforms, often builds on the people's expressed will, wider participation and service-justice (Ndukwe et al., 2022).

Sound governance approach is consistent with the New Public Governance (NPG) approach that validates citizens' engagement in the proces of policy implementation. It was a critical departure from the existing service model of Old Public Administration (OPA) later upgraded to a business like one with a new caption as New Public Management (NPM) (O'Flynn, 2007; Vigoda-Gadot, Cohen & Tsfati, 2016; Ugyel, 2021) with elements of efficiency and result orientation (Brinkerhoff, 2002). New Public Service is an improvement in the idea of NPM in the bid to arrest the shortcomings and orchestrate the relevance of deliberation and dialogue (Bryson et al., 2014) as well as recognition of representations from diverse sectors in the quest to maintain public value (Bolden, Gulati & Edwards, 2019). Furthermore, sound governance ensures transparency, accountability and responsiveness to the needs of the people (Farazmand 2004; Beshi & Kaur 2019). This is unlike the NPM that shortchange the social concerns of the people with the desire for profitable public outlets. The concept of sound governance rather helps to highlight issues of transparency, accountability, effectiveness, efficiency, responsiveness and openness of the scheme as they relate to objective and social impact. A policy process that permits greater participation would ensure the capacity of policy knowledge transfer or learning (Ball, 1995) as well as increased incentives by the political actors to select the most efficient policy (Badiane, Henning, & Krampe, 2018).

Following this section is the review of related literature on the key areas among others which include policy success, implementation, design and participation. This was followed by the explanation of the research methods adopted in the study. The next was the description of the Trader Moni Scheme (TMS) in Nigeria that revealed the design and implementation processes of the policy. Furthermore, the thematic analysis of the data gathered was presented as well as the testing of the sound governance model on the TMS to reveal the strengths and the weaknesses. The discussion was further made followed by the conclusion.

2. LITERATURE SURVEY

2.1. Conceptualising policy, processes and success dimension

The reality of contending interests among actors and stakeholders in the policy space causes serious disagreement over what should be the definition of policy success. This lack of harmony produces outcomes that are inconsistent with the initial aspiration of the policy idea (Virani, 2019). One of the problems also confronting the literature is what should constitute the definition of policy success. Another challenge is what sufficient condition should satisfy and certify a policy as successful. McConnell (2010a) conceptualizes dimensions of policy, which has implication for its success namely, process, program, and politics. The realm of process involves the means of policy making which includes policy design, public engagement, problem solving, resolving controversies and policy circle. Then, program is concerned with what the government actually does. In the realm of politics it is observed that policies have political implications to which political actors give attention. Many scholars and policy analysts have agreed that what determines policy success is policy goal (Virani, 2019; Katsonis, 2019). As a result, achievement of predetermined policy goals could be seen as policy success (McConnell, 2010a). Policy success is confined in achieving outcomes and reaching targets (Boyne, 2003, 2004; Sanderson, 2002). While policy success is desirable, it is not the end. In fact, while policy goals are diverse and diffused, policy options specify and harmonize goals according to exigencies.

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Policy options are often a product of construction rather than a response to societal situations, which is human-centred (Sunstein, 2000; Mayer, 2009). Unfortunately, in the construction, public servants tilt policies to the interest of their minority political heads (Hoppe, 2018). In most cases, parochial political interests underlie avowed public policy preoccupations. Then, the design space, which embodies government priorities or how the people should be governed (Mukherjee & Bali, 2019) eventually becomes infiltrated and hijacked by self-seeking politicians and party men. Weimer and Vining (1999) insist that policy design should be a depoliticised exercise through which the government and people's problem is resolved. Policy experts see policy design and analysis as professional skills that selectively combine instruments from toolkits of skill and resources and prescribe institutional mode of governance (Howlett, Mukherjee & Woo, 2015; Hewlett, 2010).

The dynamic of the world's challenges and opportunities is the driving force of modern policy designs and, ultimately sincere policy regimes (Mukherjee & Bali, 2019). Invigoration of the government to formulate policies is not sufficient for policy impact rather identification, assessment, and deployment of policy alternatives. Policy design must consider differentiating between political and technical considerations in public policy making and look into existing prospects for policy failure or success (Chindarkar, Howlett, Ramesh, 2017) bringing to fore policy options. Policy design is more than statements of aspirations: it is simple to state what needs to be achieved, how to go about it and how to correct the wrongs done. Graycar (2018, p. 63), affirms that "The steps in policy design include being clear on the philosophy shaping the policy; the framework for action; the process and policy instruments by which the goals can be achieved; and at the end, the product."

Scholars have come to agreement that the main idea of policy design is effectiveness (Mukherjee & Bali, 2019; Bali, Capano & Ramesh, 2019). The aim of policy design is to devise policies in order to achieve a planned policy objective (Virani, 2019). Developing effectiveness is a function of interplay of managerial, analytical and political capabilities also known as competencies and skill-sets (Mukherjee & Bali, 2019). Analytical strengths are needful to reconcile policy means and goals while the managerial skills helps to redeploy resources for the policy priority areas. Then, political advantages offer the designers the opportunity to create, coordinate and execute policy plans (Wu et al. 2017; Howlett & Ramesh, 2016). Mukherjee and Bali (2019) spot the unanswered question of feasible, sustainable and suitable policy design in a given contextual and political reality in contemporary studies of policy formulation. They demonstrated the importance of capabilities to enhancing effectiveness in policy designs and eventual policy success. For this reason, profiling designers and implementers is a matter of necessity. Virani (2019) argues that the failure to clarify the scope and goal of what is policy success eventually leads to policy ineffectiveness. When the contending interests of different stakeholders or actors are not harmonised the tendency is to produce outcomes that could be inconsistent with the prior motivating aspiration of the policy.

Notwithstanding, a more primary failure comes from complexity on the end goals of policy, which makes it unthinkable to work backwards to evolve suitable designs (Howlett, 2019). In the context of public programs, goal ambiguity can be defined as the level to which a collection of goals in a public program permits diverse interpretations in choosing work related to time limit, target and external evaluation (Jung, 2012). While Virani (2019) agrees with Weaver (2010) that policies persist when it has not achieved its goals. Ironically, some policy programmes in a setting like Nigeria are evacuated into the dustbin of history even when the goals are still far from achievement or when political incumbents have achieved their electoral interests. It is in this line of thought that Bardach (1976) and Geva-May (2004) posit that some circumstances of unannounced political or administrative change, political downturns and political-ideology de-legitimisation favour termination of policies that even appeared effective. Hudson, Hunter and Peckham (2019) argue strongly that a range of stakeholders at various administrative, managerial, political and policy-making and implementation levels are in a continuous collaboration required in policy design.

Further, Katsonis (2019) opines that public engagement enhances the capacity of policy to spotting challenges and solving greater problems in policy initiation and designs. Obviously, in strengthening democracy and policy processes, the public are engaged (Bua & Escobar, 2018), but there are risks where those engaged are only a selected

few in patron-client network. So neglecting expectations of the popular engagement often leads to cynicism (Katsonis, 2019).

2.2. Towards a sustainable empowerment scheme: Case of tms in Nigeria

No doubt, the main role of governments in every economy is to ensure a better living standard for its citizens (Agyeman-Boaten, Fumey & Norman, 2022) through a sound and sustainable human capital policy intervention framework (Idike et al., 2020; Nnaji, Ojiako, Ukeje & Nwangbo, 2022). Such intervention and empowerment programs should be able to reduce poverty among families and improve their income at households levels (Mobosi, Okonta & Ameh, 2022) through the principle of equal opportunities (Umunakwe, Nzeagwu, Aguzie & Akaire, 2022). According to Ukeje et al., (2020c), empowerment has become a buzzword in the contemporary development discourse and represents the ideal form of intervention for sustainable development. Thus, TraderMoni is an initiative of the federal government through the Bank of Industry (BoI) and Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) (Akinkuotu, 2019). The programme was part of the federal government social intervention aimed at funding micro businesses in the country through interest-free loans of a minimum of #10,000. It was launched in August 2018. Statistically, the federal government targeted to disburse 2 million TraderMoni loans across the 36 states and the FCT by the end of 2018. Each state and the FCT would receive a minimum of 30,000 loans. With the TMS, the federal government intended to help the target beneficiaries to grow their businesses or trades by providing incremental loans, starting with #10,000 at first instance. Based on the programme design, the loan ranges: #10,000 to #100,000. A breakdown of incremental loan tranches is #10,000; #15,000; #20,000; #50,000 and #100,000. Basically, repayment of previous loan is a precondition for a higher loan.

During implementation there were enlightenment campaigns for potential beneficiaries. Of great importance is that Vice-president, Yemi Osibanjo, undertook personal publicity of the programme and championed the sensitisation of would-be-beneficiaries. His proposed tours of local markets in the 36 states of the federation were partially executed. At the first tour, on September 3, 2018, the Vice-president was accompanied to Iwo market by the Governor of Osun state, Rauf Aregbesola; Deputy Governor of Osun state, Mrs. Titilayo Laoye-Tomori; Oluwo of Iwo, Oba Abdulrasheed Akanbi; and other government officials. The Vice-president further took the tour to Lagos markets in company of the then All Progressives Congress governorship candidate, Babajide Sanwo-Olu; Governor Akinwomi Ambode; and other APC stalwarts. He later visited over 20 states during the countdown to the 2019 polls (Akinkuotu, 2019). Besides the sensitisation exercise, lots of tasks were built in the implementation stage. According to the design, the BoI was the official agency charged with implementation and coordination of the TMS. However, "unofficial" groups and individuals sprang up and were assigned tasks such as registration of interested applicants, consultation, etc. Without prejudice, the BoI retained the official right of loan disbursement on the information transmitted to it by subordinate agents (its designated agents). Among the agents were political party members, local market associations, and educated local traders and artisans.

2.3. Sound governance on TMS

As an emerging governance dimension, sound governance is not popular a theme in Nigeria to inspire strong claim to analytical status for public governance program/project. However, this observed deficiency is also its strongest merit worthy of attention in assessment of TMS as it concerns process; structure; cognition and values; constitution; organization and institution; management and performance; policy; sector; ethics, accountability, and transparency (Farazmand, 2004). These dimensions are interwoven and interrelated in some ways as shown below.

i.   **Process of TMS**

Process explains how governance works, whereas structure gives framing directions with rules and regulations to the process (Farazmand, 2012, p.231).

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While stakeholders are critical elements in social programs, for instance, because of how they shape program/project outcome, level of involvement of petty traders and artisans raise suspicion, and highlights its consequences for sustainable socio-economic empowerment for micro and macro economic growth. In the design of the scheme, the listed categories ranged from small kiosk owner, food stuff seller, bread seller, wheel barrow pusher, mobile tailor, mobile cobbler, fruits seller, keke rider, etc, who are particularly key targets. Importantly, the government, civil society group and intended beneficiaries' contributions to the scheme's design would matter to its implementation and social impact; contrarily, the government relegated these critical segments to the background. The target groups became aware of the program at the point of implementation, instead. In one of our interview sessions, one respondent stated that:

> I got to know of the empowerment stuff when my friend invited me to apply for the free loan. Isn't that funny? (Respondent 21)

Also important is that not just non-involvement of the target groups marred the process, both the design and implementation exhibited incoherence and incongruity as noted in the discussion section.

ii. structure of TMS

The fact that the internal process suffered from important requirement gaps, the structure, in terms of actors in the design and implementation, represented the interests of key participants. The government of APC and members formed, dictated and directed what constituted the actors, rules, regulations, procedures, decision making frameworks and sources of sanction of the process.

iii. management and performance of TMS

> The managerial and performance dimension of sound governance are directly related. They are integral part of the whole system. But mere performance is not sufficient; it must produce desired and intended outcomes, outcomes that translate into institutional and system legitimacy. The management dimension is a glue, an operating transmission of the system that must produce intended outcomes. Management must be informed by the latest knowledge, technology, capacity, resources, and skills, essentials that need to be constantly updated by research and development, training and enhancement and capacity building. Without a sound management system characterized by efficiency and effectiveness, sound governance will suffer from incompetence, poor performance, waste and duplication, bureau-pathologies, and lack of legitimacy (Farazmand, 2004: 15).

From our interviews and FGD, as reflected in our discussion also, these dimensions of sound governance were conspicuously absent. Of particular reference is the implementation stage where engagement of party members and other multiple agents (auxiliary agents) by the official implementing agency (BoI) did not organize rigorous goal-driven training sessions for the auxiliary agents.

Although the agents were given orientation on what to do, there is the tendency that such orientation did not influence their activity or was not thorough or goal-specific. A proper orientation should rather border on well-defined goals, plan of action and the expected results. It should have also involved adequate incentive for both negative and positive attitudes. The agents should also have been intimated with the plan and the basis of evaluation after their work. With all these in place, the agents would have been more cautious of their activities. Then, the SPE should have evolved an effective evaluation and monitoring mechanism to reduce a tendency of perverting the objective of the programme.

From the foregoing, the TMS did not achieve its intended objective of sustainable empowerment of petty traders and artisans. Post-TMS review shows that both beneficiaries and excluded target beneficiaries still live on the verge of the economy without improved socio-economic status.

iv. Ethics, accountability, and transparency of TMS

A key feature of sound governance is its principled foundation on ethical values, accountability requirements, and transparency structures and values. This cardinal principle of sound governance checks against the potential abuses and corruptions of the system as well as against the blind principles of pure efficiency and economy in the management and administration processes (Farazmand, 2004: 18).

As noted in the analysis above and discussion below, lack of accountability mechanism and transparency structures was a major weakness of the TMS; this interrogate sits ethical foundation. While the auxiliary agents diverted the cause of the scheme for personal profits, the BoI was blind to this fact. As learnt in one of our FGD, "…Whereas money was disbursed by the federal government as I learnt, it did not reach the traders" (Residential area one focus group). Throughout the scheme process- from design to implementation- nobody was brought to account.

2.4. SDGS and sound governance analytical framework

With the overriding impact of gains and pains of globalization, states have developed a requisite posture of either defensive or offensive and in some cases a mixture of both. In whichever way, what is common is that all states of the world seek to harmonise its impacts. One of the prominent gains of the global compartment was the inauguration of SDGs sequel to the expiration of MDGs in 2015 as an enduring policy directive and direction for world comprehensive development. However, global consensus on policy direction is not sufficient for the 'big project' as there is a lack of requisite consensus on 'policy tool' and 'implementation preference' among world states. This is why implementation is a difficult policy process stage in both 'pluralist' and 'non-pluralist' states (Fischer-Smith, 2018). Howlet (2009) had taken a step in this research direction by arguing for policy aim, implementation preference and tool consistency but there still remains significant gap that demands attention of further research and proposition in that direction.

In fact, the SDGs sound policy prescription cannot have its desired impact unless necessary approach is taken in its domestication and implementation in every state. It was in this thought path that scholars have vetted the importance of national planning in the developing states (Wangchuk & Turner, 2019), which is a strategic policy harmonisation approach for national growth and citizen economic emancipation. It has been observed also that local authorities (Yeboah-Assiamah, 2014) and private organisations (Kim & Maroulis, 2018; Lu & Zhao, 2019) have reasonable share in the project. Leonard (2010) goes further to stress that there are handful of institutions even in developing states which can be trusted also to deliver adequately. Institutions must demonstrate adaptability to the external impulses coming to them (Lundsgaarde & Fejerskov, 2018), so as to be a better position to participation societal development. A more specific survey has been made and it was observed that political parties (Brouard et al, 2018), bureaucrats (Cooper, 2018), managers (Rauh, 2016), and institutional structure (Egeberg & Stigen, 2018) have significant impact on policy processes.

Notwithstanding, Ankamah and Khoda (2017) pinpoint a hole in good governance process and that is, 'political will'. The authors further argue that though political will is necessary for policy success, it is not sufficient. Farazmand (2009) observes the dynamism of the world and transformation in its governance system and submits that there is need for a new approach- innovation in policy and management. Scholars suggest management innovation in service delivery models (Onele et al., 2021), innovation for sustainable governance (Nnaji et al., 2022; Ukeje et al., 2022). The new thinking required is 'sound governance' not good governance. Sound governance provides answer to the impact of globalization, which is outside the scope of good governance. Thus, application of sound governance principles in SDGs policy implementation would provide clarity, form and content to the Federal Government's TMS. SDGs is a global thing and approach to actualising it must recognise that scope soundly. Sound governance, therefore, requires genuine openness, inclusion and effective partnership building, participation and development (Farazmand, 2017). It is a natural extension of the New Public Governance (NPG) approach that focuses on diverse engagement of entities including the citizenry in policy processes, unlike the OPA that limited participation to public

professionals with big government posture, and the NPM that ran like a government business with little or no concern for the social implications on the people. Thus, approach to development and service delivery must be anchored on strategic partnership and collaboration through innovative management (Onele et al., 2021). TMS is a way of engaging citizens in a collaborative development but lack of sound governance approach in its implementation led to its flaws. It is with utmost conviction that we affirm that the adoption of the sound governance framework will help not only to achieve the aim of TMS, but also the umbrella SDGs targets.

3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Despite the popularity of normative causative view of policy procedures, Hudson et al. (2019) believe that policy success or failure is not dependent on its merit but on some implementation processes. Implementation actors at local or national levels should be integral part of policy design. That is, implementers of policy should be those who understand the goal of such policy, having been part of the making. This draws attention to the agencification and delegation of implementation, which cast many questions on its consequence on policy processes (Bach, Niklasson & Painter, 2012). Kim and Maroulis (2018) underscored this point, when they observed that governments have the tendency to contract out welfare programmes to private organisations as a more reliable agencies or as a way of sharing responsibility of service delivery (Lu & Zhao, 2019). It is believed that even in developing countries, there are crop of agencies that are genuine and productive in their operations (Leonard, 2010). However, the problem that characterise this approach is detecting irregularities in a system of chain agencies, which has become complicated and at the same time difficult in resolving (Kim & Maroulis, 2018). This situation enables corruption in the system (Umunakwe & Osaren, 2023) and policy capture by entities that influence and appropriate such policy to their interests (Omotoye, 2018). Furthermore, McConnell (2010a) avers that good policy design is necessary to achieving policy success as it gives the opportunity for prior evaluation of the possible impact of a policy rather than relying on its later evaluation, which is a stamp on the policy consequence. By implication, good process results in successful or viable programs as it brings into dialogue stakeholders and by so doing pre-empt implementation challenges and build policy legitimacy.

Table 1: List of FGD and in-depth interview questions and each scheme's issue predominantly focused on

No.	Question
1	Are you aware of TraderMoni empowerment programme? How did you get to know about it?
2	Did you participate in the programme? If yes in what capacity?
3	What means was adopted in selecting beneficiaries? What was your observation?
4	Do you think that TraderMoni was a sufficient approach to addressing traders and artisans financial challenges, poverty, low income and general social development?
5	Who were the organisers of the programme and what do you think of them?
6	With your assessment of the programme implementation, do you think that it was well monitored and supervised?
7	With your observation, do you think that the purpose of the Trader Moni scheme was achieved? How do you rate it?
8	What is your assessment of the implementation process? Do you think it was transparent?
9	What do you think about the idea of TraderMoni in the first place?
10	How can programmes like this be improved in the future? What else do you have to add to what you have said?

Source: Authors survey, 2019.

Source: Adapted from Emma et al., (2020) Conceptual Moni Intervention policy and Sustainability indicators and modified by the researchers.
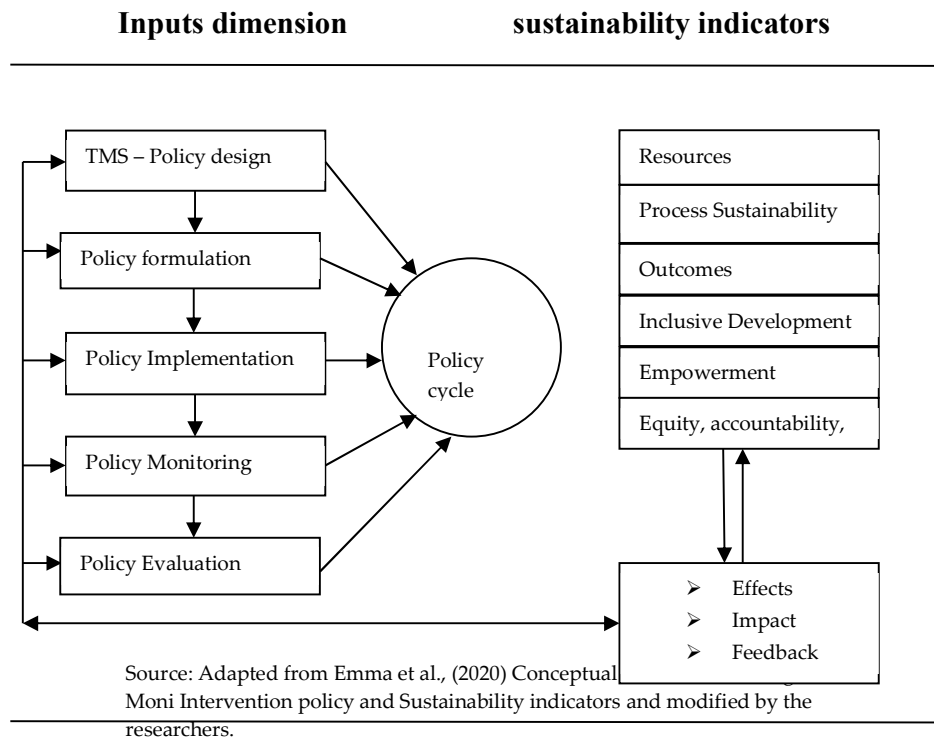
Figure 1: Conceptual framework linking Trader Moni Intervention policy and Sustainability (TMIS) indicators

This conceptual framework explains the implication of a thorough intervention scheme process where adequate policy design, formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, would lead to resources, processes, and outcomes sustainability. In other words, there would be inclusive development and empowerment sustainability of the entire policy processes through equity, accountability and transparency, which are imperatives of sound governance approach. Contrary to this, the TMS policy process was fragmented and bifurcated. It stretched from design up till implementation but was devoid of monitoring and evaluation so as to draw feedback for sustainability concerns.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Choice of methods for data gathering is considered very important because it depends largely on "the nature of social problem and how the researcher intends to investigate and solve it" (Idike et al., 2019: 3). This is because it seeks to analyse and describe targets' definite situational experience and not just to explain, which is objective of a quantitative research (Cropley, 2019). For the purpose of this article, the researchers chose one state in Nigeria, Lagos, in investigating performance of TMS. Merits of this choice are justified by the fact that Lagos is the economic hub of Nigeria with high population and highest number of traders and artisans. A purposeful sampling procedure was used to select 25 registered petty traders and artisans for the interviews and focus group discussions. A total of Eight (8) persons were involved in Focus Group Discussions while 15 persons drawn from selected TMS target beneficiaries were interviewed. We chose 7 strategic locations in 6 local governments out of the 20 local governments in the state. The chosen locations were Mile 12 market (Kosofe Local Government), Shogunle trading environment (Oshodi-Isolo Local Government), Iyana era Junction (Ojo Local Government), Oshodi market (under Oshodi-Isolo), Army Market Arena (Ikeja, Lagos State capital city), Tejuosho (Surulere local government), and Ojuwoye (Mushin local government) because of their centrality to business life of the state. The respondents were of mixed gender and age categorization ranging from 30-50 years. While some FGDs lasted between 30 minutes and 1 hour, interview sessions

lasted between 5 minutes and 30 minutes. Written up notes during interviews and FGD and audio-recorded responses were transcribed and analyzed. Fifteen (15) out of the 25 respondents were registered for the scheme but only four (4) accessed the loan scheme. The remaining nine (6) of the 25 respondents were not registered for a number of reasons namely, scepticism, pessimism and absence from market on the day of registration. Thematic analysis was applied. Responses from the interviewees and FGD were presented in themes and analysis was guided by the research questions. The method helped the researchers to assess the performance of TMS and its impact on the socio-economic life of the poor Nigerians.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

5.1. Thematic analysis

Lots of uncomplimentary activities were observed in the field of implementation. From interviews and FGD held, there were unmatched TMS procedure and implementation activities; implementation and outcomes, a situation that interrogates the entirety of the government-sponsored intervention (see Box 1).

Box 1: Themes, Responses and Analyses

Theme 1: Awareness and accessibility of the scheme:

From our respondents, many who were literally in the target set did not benefit because of late information, accessibility constraints and disaffection.

> Often, empowerment schemes' publicity is not handled well enough to reach intended targets. For instance, many of us who are not conversant with the social media do not get information on time. Respondent 011).
>
> Often governments announce that they are giving out something. Yet, it does not reach the target beneficiaries rather, it ends with the executors. We only hear on radio and read in newspapers. We don't get anything, simple! (Respondent 03)
>
> I got to know of the empowerment stuff when my friend invited me to apply for the free loan. Isn't that funny? (Respondent 21)

Theme 2: Implementation process and objective of the scheme

Evidence from respondents point out flawed implementation with attendant derailed goal. At the implementation stage, the scheme was hijacked by party members, leading to failure of the programme.

> It does not work. They have been talking about it but after everything nothing happens and no pay. I gave up on the scheme long time ago. We spent a lot in going about for registration, leaving our businesses, yet nothing good happened. It brings down our moral and trust about any scheme. We know that the federal government actually released money but such money ended with the market associations. (Respondent 016)
>
> The agents hijacked the policy. This is the problem. The political party members are made the agents who are not eventually evaluated. (Respondent 29)
>
> Here at junction market we were registered for the scheme using our phone numbers and we were told that payment would be made through our phone numbers but since then, nothing has happened, no payment. More than fifty people registered at this location but hardly has anyone admitted receiving anything. It was prior to election time that some people who did the registration then received payment. (Respondent 13)
>
> I was registered but was not paid rather I received a text message saying I should refund N10250 and then get another increased loan of N15000 at any bank. The text message as it is on my mobile phone message in-box reads: "Edozia, Start to dey pay the N10000 wey you collect on 01-Nov-2018 so you fit collect N15000** By now, you suppose don pay N10250 You pay 0.0 ** Go any bank NOW, tell them you wan pay your TraderMoni loan. OR you fit buy TraderMoni scratch card use pay. When you pay, call 07001***200" (Respondent 23)
>
> The Vice President was going from one market to another to ensure that such money reaches the people. However, some claim that it was a campaign strategy. They claim as part and parcel of the campaign promises. Now, after election, there was no TraderMoni again. (Respondent 08)

Theme 3: Selection process and impact

There is correlation between the manner beneficiaries were selected and the impact of improving the welfare of a majority of people living in abject poverty. While people who benefitted had political connections, those without any connections were fraudulently deprived of the empowerment opportunity.

> We went to the meat market traders' association and registered for the scheme. We were told that we would be given the money but as at this date we have not seen anything. It was last year 2018 that we registered for the scheme. (Respondent 25)
>
> Any government of any time favours its party members. That is to say that if you are 'a member' then there is no wahala (problem). Na we we be that. This is sentimental as each party favours its members in its tenure. (Respondent 033)
>
> Empowerment programme cannot circulate in all part of the country because of bias. So, for me, the empowerment should be on the area of improving the amenities, infrastructures and facilities. General empowerment is not feasible because Nigeria does not regulate its population size neither does she utilise it. Improving the situation is to reduce price of infrastructure use. (Respondent 09)

Theme 4: Politicisation of the process and citizens' impression

According to the respondents, the massive elite capture of the scheme created a negative impression of the programme. In their view, it was a sham once the middlemen became part of implementation **process**.

> Forget about the so called federal government money. It has all been lies and deception. (Respondent 15)
>
> I heard about the programme and got registered along with other traders. But with the look of things I think it was a deception because my colleagues and I did not receive any dime. If I may advise the federal government, the best way was to collect the bank account details of traders and issue out the money directly because the government do not even make effort to ensure if the money reaches the traders. (Respondent 31)
>
> TraderMoni is both a strategy by both the political class and the societal elite to exploit and amass wealth. The impact of the TraderMoni has brought little or no usefulness to the traders; rather, it has benefited the chain of few top classes in the society, the coterie of men in the state. In fact, I am very close to a victim who was victimised. They were instructed to register and that they would be given money to trade with. It was my mother and some other persons and these people are not really educated. With the inducement of payment of money, they gave their details including their phone number but without account details. At the end of the day, they did not receive the money nor were any form of empowerment given to them. Whereas money was disbursed by the federal government as I learnt, it did not reach the traders. (Residential area one focus group)

Source: Authors survey, 2019.

Successful implementation is not exactly a successful policy outcome (Fischer-Smith, 2018). A policy can be effectively implemented if the intended design is followed (Virani, 2019; Katsonis, 2019, Connell, 2010a). However, effective implementation cannot mean successful policy outcome when the design was poor and was executed that way (Fischer-Smith, 2018). Socio-political, bureaucratic and ideological processes often determine policy failure and success because they frame what policy is made and how it is implemented and evaluated and this area is often outside consideration by evaluators (Grace et al., 2017).

In their analysis of the Friedrich-Finer debate, which was an outgrowth of the prestigious Woodrow Wilson's (1887) politics-administration dichotomy, Jackson (2009) and Ukeje et al., (2019) revealed the character of professional bureaucrats as specialist that could outwit politicians. Cooper (2018) affirmed that depoliticisation of the bureaucrats elevated them as powerful elites existing side by side with the political elite. Hence, he noted that political officials have devised strategy of putting them under control through their right to appoint them particularly those that have similar interest (Cooper, 2018). Notwithstanding, there could be fallouts, as bureaucrats could have indifferent attitude to policies because of their exclusion in its processes and this disposition can hinder policy goal achievement (Tummers, 2017). The 'repoliticisation' of bureaucracy (Cooper, 2018), tendency also leads to corruption by policy actors (Ankamah & Khoda, 2017). Further elaborated, policy environment affects policy success or survival and failure of governance will eventually lead to policy failure (Olavarria-Gambi, 2018). Observations further suggest that political factors impede and hinder Nigerian public sector from rise up to the task of sustainable development (Ewuim et al., 2020; Ndukwe et al., 2021). This reemphasizes massive elite capture and corruption, which define social intervention outcome.

The TMS design and implementation indicate massive deviation from sound governance prescriptions. This observation interrogates its methodological leaning. Sound governance, inter alia, is favourably predisposed to a multi-stakeholder approach, which has significance for SDGs attainment (Fowler & Biekert, 2017). The federal government initiated the programme and retained the prerogative power to design it. Looking at the timing of the programme, few weeks and few months to some states' elections and the general elections, respectively, it was a political subterfuge to screw the elections against opposition parties. This lends credence to the factor that determined the discontinuation of the scheme policy processes through monitoring and evaluation, which was reason for the failure (see figure 1). Granted that requirements for registration fell short of merit and credibility, the design lacked clarity of purpose.That neither the petty traders and artisans nor their representatives (local market union leaders) took part at the design stage negates what Vickers, Lyon, Sepulveda & McMullin (2019) describe as prioritization of a user's culture in all sector engagement. Engagement of the people is a practical way they shape their life goals. It is in this realm of understanding that most empowerment programs are based on a multi-stakeholder and bottom-up model. Evidence from interviews and FGD shows direct relationship between TMS design and its implementation. For instance, 17% of non-beneficiary respondents who came to the knowledge of the program only at the point of registration expressed their displeasure over noninvolvement of the target sets, directly and indirectly, in the conception and other pre-implementation activities. So, how far it fared bears much on the questionable design. The

design did not specify post-implementation activities of monitoring and evaluation. For instance, through the use of banks and other financial institutions (Abugwu, Kur, Urama & Abbah, 2022), as a strategic policy intelligence model and regulatory framework in the policy-making process that can alternatively facilitate policy success (Ukeje, Nnaji, Nwangbo & Obi, 2022). More so, although it outlined program sustainability framework (from #10,000 to #100,000) and promise of continuity, it failed to provide measures to ensure accountability of implementing agents and deterrence.

The design exhibited incoherence both in content and outlook; thus, implementation success was at risk. Flowing from lacunas in the design, in particular, clarity of goal, involvement of multiple agents other than the BoI caused worry for successful implementation. While the BoI might have good intention, engagement of political party members swayed this good motive.In the first instance, the BoI was entrusted with the responsibility of carrying out the execution. However, it was obvious that it could not do that alone owing to the spread of the targets in various corners of the country. Therefore, by implication there had to be recruitment of individuals who would serve as agents in various markets. From the interview with traders and artisans in different market locations, it was gathered that three different categories of agents were found attending to the target-beneficiaries. These could have been the personalities recruited for the implementation of the program as the third party executioners (TPEs). Then, the second party executioner (SPE) namely, the BoI might not have foreseen the possibility of these persons diverting the goal of the implementation. Three things are in question here namely, the basis of the choice of those who should be recruited, the orientation given to the recruited agents and the evaluation mechanism adopted to monitor their activities by the SPE. Okonjo and Osafo (2007) observe that about 70% of policy drivers in government institutions had a high diploma or lower, with less than 5% possessing modern computer skills. For example, one can be educated and yet possess insufficient computer skills to handle the role. This point was also stressed in Ukeje et al. (2020a), that hasty recruitment in public sectors results in 'oversized' and under skilled work force (Ndukwe, et al., 2020) with inability to administer required functions.

Obviously, the SPE are new comers in the TMS implementation field with little or no knowledge on whom to engage in the implementation process. Literature observed that deployment of policy drivers outside their place of origin strains their ability to identify real policy targets (Ukeje, Ogbulu & Amaefula, 2020b). So, in most cases when they entered a market or a location, they met the market traders' association resident in the area who then appointed or made recommendations on whom to engage. In other cases, when they reached a location that was not well organised and without traders' and artisans' association, they consulted with informed individuals in the area. Also in another case, before the SPE entered a location, they tried to get recommendations from the political bosses on whom to engage in the location. The political bosses then contacted local party members who showed up for engagement. This was evidenced in Ukeje et al. (2020a) on their concept of 'bio-politics' and 'geo-politics' determinants of who should be engaged following 'kinship' (communal) and 'geographical' political affiliations.There are things that characterised the TPEs: they tried to conceal their identities from each other at some locations namely. One characteristic of the TPEs was nondisclosure of identity and mission in the implementation field location.

Although the agents were given orientation on what to do, there is the tendency that such orientation did not influence their activity or was not thorough or goal-specific. A proper orientation should rather border on a proper definition of goals, plan of action and the expected results. It should have also involved adequate incentive for both negative and positive attitudes. The agents should also have been intimated with the plan and the basis of evaluation after their work. With all these in place, the agents would have been more cautious of their implementation activities. Then, the SPE should have evolved an effective evaluation and monitoring mechanism to reduce a tendency of perverting the cause of the programme.

From the foregoing, the TMS did not achieve its intended objective of sustainable empowerment of petty traders and artisans. Post-TMS review shows that both beneficiaries and excluded target beneficiaries still live on the verge of the economy without improved socio-economic status. This x-rays again the shortcoming of the NPM that its

implementation had no adequate social benefit to the people thereby orchestrating the need for NPG and ultimate sound governance approach (Farazmand, 2017) in public service delivery.

6. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

Though political actors often present clear cut development plan and policy goals, and in most cases informed by national and international development aspirations, the reality is that political actors' socio-economic development concern is underscored by political imperatives. The above point has been established in relation to practice in Nigeria and some other countries that similar studies have been carried out. The implication is that policy processes they sponsor are fixated on denominators of desire to retain political office, succeed in some corrupt activities, escape legal bounds, personalise public property and wealth, dispense patronage to clientele, and engage in other selfish interested activities.

The people - at least the privilege few - who somehow benefit from the arrangement draw from the existing atmosphere and develop a perspective of public empowerment programmes as a way of sharing from "the collective national cake", because they are privy that the politicians have their shares already too. Notwithstanding, as policy scholars, though we have observed this nuances of policy practice in Nigeria and understood the similar cases in other climes, we are kin to making the policy efforts of the Nigerian policy actors relevant and sensible. We test the policy process procedures in the light of global policy models and governance frameworks such as sound governance and others, to reveal their deficiencies and fill the existing gaps. Ultimately, the outstanding features of these models and framework would find expression in the policy practice of Nigeria and other countries. This is possible because the adoption of the models especially the sound governance has the tendency of ensuring compliance by the political actors as the existing loophole through which they leverage on in unpopular practices would be closed.

1. Policy actors in the space are provided with the tool to enhance their role in moderating public policies between the politicians and the people.
2. The politicians and the people would get a better perspective (knowledge, understanding, education and orientation) of the public policy and development imperative following global trends and domestic priorities.
3. The institutionalization of sound governance principles in the design, implementation and monitoring of the TMS will no doubt provide an intervention's sustainability assessment framework and pathways for the attainment of the SDGs in Nigeria's public administration (see figure 2), as well as restoration of transparency, accountability, responsibility and responsiveness in public sector governance and development processes of developing countries.

7. CONTRIBUTIONS TO SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Importantly, this paper fuels ongoing scholarly debates about the challenges and dynamics of policy interventions for sustainable development particularly in an emerging economy, since the Nigerian economy is a mixed economy (Okeke, Oku & Ikeh, 2021). Thus, it is hoped that research findings provided in this paper may be used by various stakeholders both at the local, state and national levels to re-design an inclusive and sustainable economic policy strategies for successful and impactful development interventions in Nigeria and enhance the Nigerian economy tomorrow (Kur, Abugwu, Abbah & Anyanwu, 2021).

8. CONCLUSION

The assessment of TMS provides an opportunity to test an analytical model that may lead to in-depth understanding of why social program fails or succeeds, in the hope of learning some lesson. Bearing this in mind, the study applied a "sound governance approach" as formulated by Ali Farazmand in 2004. The sound governance dimensions explored, and research data analysed and discussion, show that TMS failed significantly. There is serious doubt over the credibility and sincerity of the TMS given the events that surrounded it. When subjected to the rigor of policy processes flaws were immediately seen in its phase of implementation. Not only that, the policy space was eroded

by the prevailing politics of the time thereby infiltrating the policy design with the philosophies of transitional political elite. It also revealed that varied levels of massive elite capture and corruption underlay the stages of the policy, major reasons for its failure. This condition permitted the loophole that allowed the unprofessional implementers' presence in the field of implementation. The result was the defeat of the overall objective of the scheme. Given the fact that the scheme was initiated in the countdown to the 2019 general elections, it might have been motivated by electoral exigency. Thus, the policy implication is that the sound governance lacuna, as evidenced in the TMS poses a threat to attainment of SDGs in Nigeria.

A prominent reason for this failure is politicization of policy process by the implementing agents. Thus, this paper makes important contribution in the sound governance debate with regards to the need for citizens' engagements and ICT-compliant public administration (PA) in Nigeria. This becomes necessary since policy reform path in Nigeria seems to be somewhat problem-reactive and regime-dependent. Thus, Community-Based Organisations (CBOs), Town Unions, Market Unions, Cooperative Societies and ICT instruments like Bank Verification Number, Bio-Nigeria platforms should be factored into the TMS design to enhance its performance and sustainability. This will help to provide exhaustive resources for both policy design and execution and further enhance programme sustainability without attracting additional governance costs in the long-run – a major scare for "small economies"

Considering the role PA plays "as the keystone of success not only in policy implementation, but also in study and development of public policies" (Farazmand, Danaeefard, Mostafazadeh & Sadeghi, 2019), it is vital to analyse policy failure from governance functioning approach to extract knowledge that could aide in forestalling similar problems in the future (Olavarria-Gambi, 2018). A way to do this is to reinforce PA through transformational citizenship, from "captive audience" (on-lookers, in Nigerian parlance) to "active audience" (Farazmand, 2017) in Nigeria. Thus, the institutionalisation of sound governance framework will help to reposition Nigerian citizens from the status of "captive audience" to the one of "active audience" in this "change era" by the All Progressives Congress administration. It will help to translate President Mohammad Buhari's administrative philosophy since strong national will with authentic leadership and PA capacity building will take the change promise from mere rhetoric to real results in the attainment of 2030 SDGs targets.

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