
IMPACT OF LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ANAMBRA STATE COMMUNITY – CHOOSE –YOUR - PROJECT INITIATIVE (CCYP).

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Abstract: *It is always common to observe a gap between a policy formulation and its implementation, hence the need for legislative oversight. The study examined how legislative oversight has helped in the implementation of Community- Choose- Your- Project Initiative (CCYP) in Anambra State under Governor Willie Obiano administration. The study was born out of the quest to appraise the level to which the oversight function of the legislature helped in implementation of government policies with focus on the Community – Choose – Your Project Initiative (CCYP). The study utilized mainly quantitative data relying on descriptive survey research design. Taro Yamane method of sample size selection was used to select a sample size of 400 from the study population of 5,527,809. Stratified sampling was used to select the study participants from the three Senatorial Districts of Anambra State. A 10-item, four-point Likert scale questionnaire and Key Informant Interview was used as instruments for data collection. The reliability of the questionnaire was established through a pilot study and tested using Cronbach Alpha. The instrument obtained a coefficient value of 0.85, which indicated its reliability. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 was used to analyze data generated for the study. Descriptive statistics comprising of frequencies, percentages, and mean scores were used to analyze the study data. The study found out that oversight function of the legislature helped in promoting the Community- Choose- Your- Project Initiative (CCYP) in Anambra State. Against this backdrop, the study recommends the strengthening of the legislative arm of government oversight activities and other related functions to ensure that the desired objectives for formulation and implantation of government policies is achieved for the interest of the state.*

Keywords: Legislative oversight, Public policy, Policy implementation, Legislature, Executive

I. INTRODUCTION

Legislative oversight in the global arena refers to the role of national legislatures in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of international agreements, treaties, and conventions. National legislatures play an important role in ensuring that their country's international commitments are implemented in accordance with the law and the public interest. The development of every state is dependent on the extent to which policies are formulated and implemented. It is a major determinant of how a state is organized and conditioned. The need for enhancing the development process in developing countries is ever becoming more critical and urgent. Effective implementation of public policies has thus become one of the most powerful weapons known for achieving socio-political development in modern societies. It is also used to lay the foundation for sustainable growth and development in any country. The pace at which this can be realized is essentially hinged on the ability of the government to formulate appropriate policies and on the capability of the public bureaucracy to effectively implement the formulated policies.

To further articulate the above, Ikechukwu and Chukwuemeka (2018) noted that over the years in Nigeria, numerous brilliant public policies have been formulated and implemented. Yet, there is no apparent and significant development, as evidenced by the fact that Nigeria has continued to remain in the category of the Least Developed Countries in the world. This suggests that the mere formulation of policies should not be the major issue in Nigeria, but rather their effective implementation. It is only through effectively implemented policies that national development can be achieved. Nigeria, as a state, has formulated too many policies, but the end result is jeopardized due to poor implementation. The argument now focuses on the major cause of no or poor policy implementation in Nigeria.

Thus, the emphasis in the literature of policy studies was more on the policy formulation stage. In contemporary times, however, the emphasis has shifted to policy implementation, following the realization that effective implementation of policies is not an automatic affair (Egonmwan, 2015; Ikelegbe, 2006; Nweke, 2006). Again, policy implementation has become of greater concern than its formulation, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria, where the government is increasingly looked upon by the citizens to effectively implement development projects and programs. On the contrary, ineffective implementation of policies has become very critical and worrisome. The pattern and nature of policy implementation are major explanations for the failure or success of any given policy. Poor implementation has been the common answer researchers give to this similar question. For implementation to be successful, it needs to have good organization, interpretation, and application. Implementation problems occur when the desired results on the target beneficiaries are not achieved. Hence, the activities of governance are formulated, expressed, and carried out by different institutions and structures put in place to bring about credible and smooth running of the day-to-day business of government.

Therefore, at that point, the government necessarily encompassed these structures and institutions with differentiated functions but with a common task and purpose. Based on this, harmonious cooperation was essential among them to ensure the success of the entire system. Legislative oversight encouraged checks and balances because it enthroned fiscal discipline, good governance, accountability, and transparency in public offices (Ndoma, 2012). Ndoma (2012) argued that legislative oversight referred to the power of the legislature to review, monitor, and supervise government agencies, programs, activities, and policy implementation strategies of the executive arm of government. The oversight function of the legislature in Nigeria was enshrined in section 88, sub-section 1(a) (b) and 2(a) (b) of the 1999 Constitution

of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Imperatively, Ezeani (2006) noted that despite the importance of legislative oversight in contemporary democratic governance, it had been controversial in all ramifications in the political scene and had remained the major source of executive and legislative conflicts in Nigeria.

Nevertheless, legislative oversight, being a critical aspect of the functions of the legislature other than law-making, has been severely compromised and often misused to serve personal interests. These lapses have given rise to queries about why legislative oversight, a robust mechanism institutionalized to check the excesses of the executive arm of government and its agencies, to curb waste in governance, corruption, and absolutism in the exercise of political power, has been compromised. Therefore, the central thesis of this study on Legislative Oversight and Policy Implementation focuses on integrity, which has been subjected to questions by critics who contend that oversight has become a political tool for harassment and blackmail of members of the executive branch and perceived political enemies or rivals.

The objective of this study is to understand the dynamics of legislative oversight on policy implementation in Anambra State under the administration of Governor Willie Obiano. The focus will be on the Community Choose Your Project Initiative, which is a major developmental program designed by the Obiano administration. Governor Obiano rolled out the Choose-Your-Project Initiative for the 181 communities in Anambra State. Under this initiative, each community in the state is at liberty to select a development project that is dear to it, which the state government would execute with a sum not exceeding N20m (Eze, 2017). On the premise of this initiative, each of the communities is given the responsibility to develop their various localities by determining where to cite the projects. The state government merely provides the specifications and ensures the strictest compliance with standards and commitment to the contractual terms of each project (Eze, 2017).

Thus, this study examines the extent to which legislative oversight has helped in the implementation of this project by the Obiano administration.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Legislative Oversight

As a key branch of government, the legislature plays a crucial role in upholding democratic principles and ideals in any democratic state. Through its role in budgetary processes and oversight, it holds the executive arm of government accountable for its actions and expenditures, enhancing transparency and reducing corruption. Jooji (2019) provides a concise overview of the legislature's role as an essential component of most governments. The author highlights the legislature's significance in the separation of powers framework, where it is distinct from the executive and judicial branches. In a presidential system, the legislature is considered an independent and coequal branch of government alongside the judiciary and the executive. This perspective aligns with the understanding that the legislature is responsible for formulating laws, making it a crucial organ of government within a democratic system.

Edet and Amadu (2014) emphasize the essential role of the legislature in performing legislative functions and its impact on national development. They highlight how the legislature creates laws that govern society, addresses challenges, and safeguards citizens' interests. The view underscores the intertwined nature of the legislature's activities with national development, as it engages in debates, passes resolutions, and enacts laws that shape policies and initiatives. However, the effectiveness of the legislature in promoting

development depends on various factors. Overall, the statement highlights the legislature's significance as a representative body responsible for shaping policies that contribute to the progress and welfare of the nation.

According to Adebolu (2016), a strong legislature signifies a strong democracy, and democracy cannot exist without a functioning legislature as it is the foundation of democratic principles. In the same vein, Bello-Imam in Adebolu (2016) further emphasizes that any attack on the legislature undermines democracy itself. Therefore, evaluating the legislature becomes essential to determine its contribution to democratic sustainability and its vulnerability to potential threats, particularly in developing nations.

Nwaogwugwu and Ishola (2019) highlight the crucial role of legislatures in democratic systems, emphasizing that democratic governance is widely favoured across the globe. They argue that legislators play a vital function in policy representation by advocating for the interests of their constituents during the policy-making process. Additionally, legislators have a responsibility to oversee and ensure that the actions and expenditures of the executive and other government agencies align with constitutional provisions. However, the study raises concerns about the effectiveness of oversight functions performed by legislators, as some policies that initially appear promising fail to achieve their intended goals during implementation.

According to Ojo and Omotola (2014), legislatures or parliaments are central to governance and are an integral part of the national integrity system entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring that democratic states, guided by the constitution, fulfil their functions in the best interests of citizens. They argue that while government can exist without a legislature, democracy cannot. Popoola (2016) summarizes the role of legislators in policy making as the collection of constituents' views, interests, demands, and problems, and the harmonization and translation of these into policy proposals for legislative action and decision-making.

Oversight as one of the primary responsibilities of every legislature plays a fundamental role in enhancing democracy by ensuring transparency, accountability, and checks and balances within a government system. As such, the concept has attracted diverse academic interpretations among scholars and public affairs experts. The Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC) defines legislative oversight as the ongoing process through which a legislative body continuously monitors, scrutinizes, reviews, and evaluates the performance of the executive branch of government or its agencies. PLAC maintains that the purpose of oversight is to ensure effectiveness, efficiency, and good performance, while also informing the public about the actions of the executive branch and giving the electorate the opportunity to assess whether public servants are truly serving their collective interests. This oversight is necessary to uphold the principles of good governance, promote responsiveness, transparency, and accountability to the electorate.

Kraai, Holtzhausen, and Malan (2017) state that oversight encompasses a variety of actions employed by legislatures to scrutinize executive actions, serving as an active interface between the legislature and executive and administrative structures to enhance the achievement of government objectives. They maintain that legislative oversight involves the surveillance of executive agencies, primarily conducted by the legislature, based on its role in enacting laws that establish administrative agencies and governance frameworks for managing state affairs. Through oversight functions, legislative committees, including Special, Standing, and Ad-hoc Committees, effectively monitor the prudent management of funds and governance practices within executive branch departments, ministries, and

agencies (Egobueze, 2018). This ensures accountability and efficiency in the implementation of laws and policies, as well as assessing their impact on citizens.

Malapane (2016) emphasizes the importance of ensuring that government policies align with the needs of the people through legislative oversight. The author argues that the legislature, whether it is parliament, Congress, or a National Assembly, should actively perform its oversight function for the benefit of all citizens. The purposes of legislative oversight, as outlined by Malapane, include improving the efficiency, economy, and effectiveness of government operations, evaluating programs and performance, investigating and preventing poor administration, avoiding waste and abuse of power, protecting civil liberties and constitutional rights, and ensuring that executive policies reflect public interest. The study highlights that legislators possess power over various areas such as policy, budget, security issues, and procurement of defence equipment, investigating armed forces activities, and the deployment of the military during a state of emergency. However, the political system, constitutional framework, and legal structure often marginalize the legislature's role, giving more power to the executive in formulating and implementing policies.

Finally, Nwagwu (2014) highlights that the oversight function of legislators, particularly in Nigeria, has been significantly compromised. He observes that modern-day legislators seem to prioritize the oversight function over their traditional law-making responsibilities. This shift in focus suggests that the oversight function holds greater importance within legislative assemblies. Unfortunately, the author notes that instead of utilizing this function to hold the executive branch accountable and combat corruption, inefficiency, and misuse of public funds, many legislators resort to using it as a tool for political witch-hunting and blackmailing their opponents. Nwagwu's study draws attention to the erosion of legislative effectiveness in Nigeria's National Assembly and raises concerns about the potential misuse and diversion of the oversight function from its intended purpose.

Policy Implementation

Policy implementation as an important aspect of democratic governance involves of putting policies into action, involving the practical execution of policy decisions through resource allocation, coordination, and regulation enforcement. It requires effective communication, planning, stakeholder involvement, and ongoing monitoring and evaluation. Successful implementation is vital for achieving desired outcomes and addressing societal challenges. Policy implementation as a concept, particularly in the public sphere continues to attract diverse academic interpretations.

Policy implementation is a crucial stage in the policy-making process that involves the collaboration of diverse organizations, stakeholders, procedures, and techniques to achieve policy goals. Studies in this area analyse factors influencing policy outcomes and conditions contributing to success or failure. Effective implementation of public policy has wide-ranging impacts, including improved social care delivery, industrialization, job growth, social security, environmental conservation, urban infrastructure modernization, reduced unemployment rates, enhanced access to healthcare, and progress in education (Adam, Hurka, Knill, Peters, & Steinebach, 2019). Mechanisms affecting decision-makers and implementers are also considered in understanding implementation processes and outcomes (Bridwell-Mitchell and Sherer, 2017).

Elenwa (2020) affirms that policy implementation requires cooperation, coordination, understanding, and commitment at all levels of the implementing machinery. Success in policy implementation depends not only on the support of policy formulators but also on

those responsible for implementation and consumption. The author explains that policy implementation involves the creation of a policy delivery system with specific mechanisms designed to achieve desired goals. The author defines policy implementation as the actions, processes, or activities directed towards achieving predetermined goals and objectives of policy decisions. It is seen as the link between formulated policy and its objectives, transforming policy decisions into operational terms to accomplish organizational objectives.

Iyanda and Bello (2016) highlight the importance of public policy implementation in translating policy objectives into tangible outcomes. They affirm that public policy implementation involves translating policy objectives into concrete reality. However, the authors argue that in Nigeria, implementation has been a major challenge, hindering national development. The authors observe that policymakers often overlook the significance of policy implementation, assuming that once a policy is adopted, it will automatically achieve its intended goals. Consequently, insufficient attention is given to the complexities and problems associated with executing policies. The text emphasizes the widening gap between policy intentions and actual results, suggesting that a significant amount of energy and resources are devoted to designing and preparing plans, while neglecting the intricate interplay of factors required for successful implementation.

Furthermore, Sager and Gofen (2022) state the importance of policy implementation as a formative stage in the policy process. The authors emphasize that policy implementation not only determines the shape and impact of a policy but also exists at the crossroads of politics, policy, and the public. This implies that the successful implementation of policies requires careful consideration of various stakeholders and their interests. Furthermore, the study acknowledges that policy implementation occurs within a specific institutional framework. This suggests that the effectiveness of implementation relies on the existing structures and organizations that are responsible for carrying out the policy. These structures play a vital role in allocating decisionmaking power and defining specific roles within the implementation process. The implication is that well-designed structures and clear role delineation can enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of policy implementation.

In conclusion, policy implementation refers to the process of translating policy intentions into action and achieving the desired outcomes. It involves the practical application of policies, programs, and measures by government agencies, organizations, and individuals responsible for carrying out the policy directives. Effective policy implementation requires clear goals, adequate resources, coordination among stakeholders, and effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. It encompasses activities such as rule-making, resource allocation, capacity building, enforcement, and stakeholder engagement. Policy implementation is a complex and dynamic process that can be influenced by various factors, including political will, administrative capacity, public support, and external influences. Successful implementation is crucial for policy effectiveness and the achievement of desired societal changes, as it ensures that policies have a tangible impact on the ground and contribute to the overall well-being of individuals and communities.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study adopted contingency theory as its framework of analysis. The major proponents of this theory are: Fred fielder and Joan Woodinard.

The contingency theory states that a leader's effectiveness is contingent on how well the leader's style matches a specific setting or situation, the theory further suggests that there is no one best way of organizing or conducting political activities or processes. Instead the most

effective approach depends on the situation or context and there are several possible situations that can be chosen based on the circumstances at hand.

The contingency theory also posits, that effectiveness of leadership and organizational structure depends on the fit between the characteristics of the leader, the organization and the situation at hand, that is to say that the effectiveness of a leader is contingent upon the interaction between their leadership style and the situation and the situation they are in.

In reconciling the contingency theory with the study, it's pertinent to consider the fit between the characteristics of the legislative oversight, the community – choose – your – project initiative (CCYP) and the situation of Anambra state. The key considerations that could impact the effectiveness of legislative oversight include the level of cooperation between different stakeholders, the availability of resources, the political climate and the presence of other competing government programmes and activities.

IV. RESEARCH METHOD

The study adopted descriptive research design. Taro Yamane method of sample size selection was used to select a sample size of 400 from the study population of 5,527,809. Stratified sampling was used to select the study participants from the three Senatorial Districts of Anambra State. The study adopted both the primary and secondary methods of data collection which involved the use of a 10-item, four-point Likert scale questionnaire and Key Informant Interview Guide as instruments for data collection as well as academic journals, books, research workshops, government publications, etc.. The reliability of the questionnaire was established through a pilot study and tested using Cronbach Alpha. The instrument obtained a coefficient value of 0.85, which indicated its reliability. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 was used to analyze data generated for the study. Descriptive statistics comprising of frequencies, percentages, and mean scores were used to analyze the study data.

V. ANALYSIS OF DATA

Table 1: Respondents on the extent oversight function of the legislature helped in promoting the Community Choose Your Project Initiative in Anambra State.

Mean rating of respondents on the extent oversight function of the legislature helped in promoting the Community Choose Your Project Initiative in Anambra State							
S/N	Initiative in Anambra State	SA	A	D	SD	N	Mean Remark
1	Anambra State Assembly effectiveness in reviewing the proposal of Governor Willie Obiano's Community Choose Your Project Initiative to know its usefulness to the people helped to promote the programme	81	245	18	9	353	3.1275 Agreed

2	Anambra State Assembly efforts to approve budget proposal for Community Choose Your Project Initiative ensured the speedy implementation of the programme	55	273	9	16	353	3.0397	Agreed
3	Community Choose Your Project Initiative was effective because Anambra State Assembly carefully monitored the budget expenditure by the executive to make public funds are spent efficiently	77	268	4	4	353	3.1841	Agreed
4	Anambra State Assembly Committee investigations and hearing ensured that government agencies involved in the implementation of the Community Choose Your Project Initiative were performing their functions as expected	116	231	3	3	353	3.3031	Agreed
5	Legislators raising debates concerning the implementation of the Community Choose Your Project Initiative during legislative session of Anambra State Assembly helped to hold the executive arm of government accountable for the programme	123	216	11	3	353	3.3003	Agreed
6	Legislators of Anambra State Assembly visit to project sites under the Community Choose Your Project Initiative in communities of their constituencies helped to ensure the completion of the projects started	127	217	9	-	353	3.3343	Agreed
7	Legislators Anambra State Assembly regular meetings with the President Generals and other community leaders of their constituencies helped ensure accountability in the implementation of the Community Choose Your Project Initiative	95	256	95	-	353	3.2635	Agreed
8	Regular engagement of constituency members by Anambra State Assembly legislators helped to ensure that projects under the Community Choose Your Project Initiative reflected the needs of their people	111	241	1	-	353	3.3116	Agreed

9	Anambra State Assembly utilising audit institution to conduct independent evaluation of the Community Choose Your Project Initiative helped ensure executive compliance with legal and financial regulations for the programme	89	260	3	1	353	3.2380	Agreed
10	Oversight activities of Anambra State Assembly on the Community Choose Your Project Initiative has led to the improvement of existing laws to guarantee accountability in government	88	264	1	-	353	3.2465	Agreed
Cluster Mean							3.20513	Agreed

From the table above ten (10) instruments were utilised to get the respondents view on the extent oversight function of the legislature helped in promoting the Community Choose Your Project Initiative in Anambra State, it shows that the people concurred that house members have contributed meaningfully in the support of the initiative to make sure that development is taken to the grass root. What it means is that there is synergy in the workings of the executive and legislature under the Willie Obiano administration in making sure that the initiative thrived in the state. Looking at the table, it reveals the big margin at which the respondents accepted the representatives have done well in their discharge of oversight function. This is attributed to what Respondents 1 and 2 opined that the initiative was successful because they see the project as their own and wanted to be part of the success story. Though others differ in their opinion where they noted that house member were not so committed to the projected in some areas due to clash between them and the president generals. Thus, the cluster mean at **3.205** is in acceptance that state legislators helped in promoting the Community Choose Your Project Initiative in Anambra State.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study examined how legislative oversight has helped in the implementation of Community Choose Your Project Initiative in Anambra State under Governor Willie Obiano administration. The study was born out of the quest to investigate how the executive and legislative arms of government in Anambra State interact in the course of legislative oversight and policy implementation of the Anambra State Community-Choose-Your-Project Initiative (CCYP). In other words, having carried out this study guided by empirical evidence through questionnaires and interviews, we are led to conclude that Governor's initiative to encourage communities to come up with projects of their choice while the state government implements it was laudable and productive. Despite some hitches due to human factors, the members of the House of Assembly should also be given credit in their effort at overseeing to the supervision and implementation of the project. Thus, this study was able to show that the state house members were carried along in the project and they demonstrated their oversight sight function by ensuring that the money released were utilised and some projects implemented in the various communities in Anambra State. Nevertheless, State Assembly has also partially failed in ensuring effective and efficient utilization of the allocated money for the project due to their personal interest.

Against this backdrop, the study recommends the strengthening of the legislative arm of government's oversight activities and other related functions to ensure that the desired objectives for formulation and implementation of government policies are achieved for the interest of the state.

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