11. Public Policy and Sustainable Development: Assessment of The Roles of Research Output In Nigeria

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Abstract

Research output, in terms of scientific studies and data analysis, plays a critical role that significantly influences, drives and shapes public policy decisions, especially on sustainable development in any society. As far as Nigeria is concerned, there is the absence of coordination between different research institutions in the country, likewise, there is a paucity of research findings and a lack of capacity to utilise these findings by policymakers. All these have posed serious challenges to national growth and development in Nigeria. This study assesses the role of research outputs on public policy and sustainable development in Nigeria. The study was anchored on evidence-based and policy cycle theories. It employed the interpretivism philosophy and a qualitative research approach in data collection and analysis. Secondary data were sourced from journals, the internet, newspaper publications, and editorial reports. The findings of the study revealed that research output plays a critical role in the public policy process and sustainable development as it helps not only to identify but also to address the root causes of problems and develop innovative solutions to the challenges of sustainable development in developing nations like Nigeria. Also, research output provides policymakers with evidence-based information that can be used to make informed decisions. The study concludes that although there has been a growing emphasis on research in recent years in Nigeria as the government has established many research institutes and universities and increased research funding, such efforts have not led to a significant increase in research outputs that could enhance sustainable development in the country. The study recommends among others that there should be collaboration between researchers and policymakers, as well as data accessibility, and the willingness of policymakers to engage with research findings. It is therefore crucial to create mechanisms that promote the use of research in policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation to maximise its impact on sustainable development in Nigeria.

Keywords: Nigeria; Public Policy; Public Policy Process; Research Output and Sustainable Development.

Introduction

Research output plays a multifaceted function in driving sustainable development by providing knowledge, informing policy, fostering innovation, and addressing specific challenges across various sectors of the economy (Jegede, 2023). In Nigeria, research output plays a germane role in public policy through the provision of evidence-based information to help policymakers make better decisions about a wide range of issues ranging from education, social, and healthcare to economic development and environmental protection (Okonkwo, 2022). It serves as a foundational pillar for the country's progress toward a more sustainable future. More so, research output plays an important role in public policymaking in Nigeria. It can be used to identify problems, develop solutions, and evaluate the effectiveness of policies (Adesina and Ogunsanwo, 2022). Research output is essential for sustainable development in Nigeria as it helps to identify and address the country's most pressing challenges, such as poverty, unemployment, climate change, and environmental degradation (Jegede, 2022). UNESCO (2021) studies reveal that research output has shown that the conditional cash transfer program in Nigeria has been effective in reducing poverty and improving school attendance. This information can be used to

design and implement other social programs in Nigeria. Okonkwo (2022) opines that research output can help to identify the most pressing problems facing Nigeria and to prioritize the allocation of resources to address them. Similarly, Afolabi and Adedeji (2022) study contends that Nigeria has a high rate of maternal mortality and research information can be used to inform policies to improve maternal health care. Thus, research can also help to develop new technologies and solutions that can improve the lives of Nigerians.

It is instructive to note that research outputs have been used to make informed public policy decisions by the Nigerian government on issues such as causes of conflicts and strategies to prevent conflicts (Jegede, 2023). Also, the output of research on the impact of poverty has been used to develop programs to alleviate poverty in the country. Similarly, research output on the effectiveness of different educational methods has been used to improve the quality of education in Nigeria. IPCC (2019) also claimed that research on the impact of climate change has been used to develop policies to mitigate climate change. This, no doubt, can lead to more effective and efficient policies that improve the lives of Nigerians. In addition, research outputs identify opportunities for economic growth and diversification. By studying industries like agriculture, technology, and manufacturing, researchers help to identify ways to stimulate economic growth and create jobs, contributing to long-term sustainability (Salawu and Ogundele, 2021). Thus, research output can identify opportunities for economic growth and diversification in Nigeria. Adebayo, Abiodun and Ogundele (2023) also asserted that research outputs are useful in generating new knowledge, technologies, and innovations that can lead to improved agricultural practices, renewable energy solutions, and healthcare advancements, all of which contribute to sustainable development. Furthermore, it is important to state that research outputs inform evidence-based policymaking because whenever policymakers have access to well-researched data and analysis, they can create policies that address specific sustainable development challenges, such as high-rate poverty reduction, falling standard of education, and environmental conservation problems (Salawu and Ogundele, 2021). Not only that. Research outputs help in identifying and addressing environmental issues like deforestation, pollution, and climate change. Thus, without doubt, research output can lead to the development of sustainable practices and technologies that reduce environmental impact.

Consequently, research contributes significantly to education and capacity building by providing insights and knowledge transfer which empowers individuals and communities to participate in sustainable development initiatives (Jegede, 2022). It seeks to identify the specific needs and challenges of local communities, helping organizations and governments tailor development initiatives to meet those needs effectively. It also highlights social inequalities and injustices, prompting action to promote inclusivity and social equity, which are fundamental aspects of sustainable development. It is because of this that the study assesses the role of research outputs in Nigeria on public policy process and sustainable development.

Statement of the Problem

Like many other developing nations, Nigeria faces multifaceted challenges in achieving sustainable development. To achieve sustainable development, it is essential to evaluate whether research output contributes to long-term sustainable solutions or if policies are primarily reactive and short-term (Jegede, 2023). More so, regional disparities in research output and its impact on policy processes and sustainable development efforts must be explored, as Nigeria is a diverse country with varying socio-economic challenges across regions

(Adesina and Ogunsanwo, 2022). It must be emphasised that in most cases, Nigerians are often apathetic about the public policy process. The reasons for this may not be unconnected with many factors, including a lack of trust in the government, and the belief that they cannot make a difference (Adebayo and Azeez, 2022). Also, the government often lacks the necessary data and information to make informed decisions about public policy. Again, the reasons for this include poor data collection and management practices, and a lack of coordination between different government agencies (Salawu and Ogundele, 2021). There is no doubt that insufficient resources and limited capacity-building efforts within the research community hinder the generation of high-quality research output, limiting its potential impact on policy formulation and implementation. It is therefore necessary to assess the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place for tracking the impact of research on policy outcomes and sustainable development initiatives in Nigeria (Adebayo *et al.,* 2023).

Furthermore, the underutilization of research output forms part of the challenges of the public policy process in Nigeria. Despite the presence of numerous research institutions and scholars, there seems to be a significant lacuna between research findings and their incorporation into policy development and implementation (Jegede, 2022). Also, there is a disconnection between researchers and policymakers in Nigeria. Adesina and Osabuohien (2022) asserted that there is a lack of effective collaboration and communication channels that hinder the transfer of research findings into actionable policy recommendations, leading to a gap between evidence-based research and policymaking. Thus, the effectiveness of institutional frameworks and governance structures in facilitating the integration of research output into policy processes needs to be examined.

In addition, the quality and relevance of research conducted in Nigeria need to be assessed. It is important to investigate whether research efforts align with the country's development goals and address pressing socio-economic and environmental issues (Jegede, 2023). Ogunsanwo (2017) argued that the accessibility of research findings to policymakers, civil society organizations, and the public is often restricted. The implication of this is that limited access to research output may hinder informed decision-making and impede sustainable development efforts (Okonkwo, 2022). Even when research findings are incorporated into policies, challenges often arise during the implementation phase. Therefore, understanding the hurdles faced in translating policy recommendations into tangible actions is crucial for achieving sustainable development.

Previous studies by Adebayo and Azeez (2022), Jegede (2023), Afolabi and Adedeji (2022), Adebayo *et al.,* (2023) have addressed the grey areas such as bureaucracy, corruption, and political influence that affect the utilization of research outputs in policymaking process, yet these studies failed to focus on the statutory institutions that are managing research outputs in Nigeria. No doubt addressing the problems requires a comprehensive examination of the role of research outputs in Nigeria's public policy process, identifying bottlenecks, and proposing strategies to enhance the utilization of research for the advancement of sustainable development in Nigeria which form the basis of this study. Thus, the identified gap in knowledge that this study intends to fill is to examine the role of the National Assembly Research Service and the National Research Foundation of Nigeria which provides research support to members of the Nigerian Parliament, responsible for funding and coordinating research in Nigeria as well as the development of public-private partnerships between research institutions and government agencies.

Literature Review

In this section, attempt is made to do brief conceptual and theoretical reviews and critically review, assess and evaluate the nexus between policy process, research output and sustainable development in Nigeria.

Conceptual Review

The public policy process is the process by which the government makes decisions about the allocation of resources and the implementation of programmes and policies (Adeoti and Salawu, 2020). Public policy is the course of action taken by governments to address public issues and challenges. It encompasses laws, regulations, programmes, and initiatives aimed at achieving specific goals in areas like education, healthcare, the environment, and economic development (Ajulor, 2016). The significance of public policies is to shape the lives of citizens, influencing their opportunities, well-being, and environmental sustainability. Effective policies can drive positive change, while poorly designed ones can have detrimental consequences (Ogunsanwo, 2017). It is a complex and often fragmented process, involving a wide range of actors, including government agencies, interest groups, and the public. Also, the policy process typically involves several stages, including agenda setting, policy formulation, policy adoption, implementation, and evaluation (Adebayo *et al.,* 2023). Each stage involves various actors, like government officials, experts, stakeholders, and citizens. The policy process can be complex, with competing interests, information gaps, and political pressures influencing outcomes (Afolabi and Adedeji, 2022). It ensures transparency, inclusivity, and evidence-based decision-making, which is crucial for effective policy development.

More so, sustainable development refers to the balanced and inclusive growth of a country that meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Jegede, 2022). Hence, it aims to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Adebayo and Azeez (2022) assert that the goal of sustainable development provides a framework for evaluating and designing public policies, ensuring they consider long-term consequences and intergenerational equity (Adebayo *et al*., 2023). In Nigeria, achieving sustainable development necessitates addressing issues like poverty, inequality, environmental degradation, and climate change. Public policies should be designed with a long-term perspective and integrate environmental, social, and economic considerations, as they serve as critical tools for promoting sustainable development (Jegede, 2023). Policies can incentivize renewable energy, protect ecosystems, promote social equity, and foster economic growth that respects environmental limits.

Theoretical Underpinning

This paper is situated within the context of evidence-based and policy cycle theories which are considered suitable for the analysis of the research.

Evidence-based theory emphasises the relevance of employing research to guide policy decisions (Akinwale and Adegboye, 2018). According to this theory, policymakers should be influenced by credible, relevant, and high-quality research evidence (Adeoti and Salawu, 2020). It argues that policies based on evidence are more likely to be successful, equitable, effective, and efficient. This means that politicians should evaluate the best available evidence when developing and implementing policies, rather than relying solely on intuition, ideology, or special interests. In the context of Nigeria, evidence-based policymaking is critical for addressing the country's

numerous challenges, including poverty, inequality, environmental degradation, and insecurity (Adebayo *et al.,* 2023). Research outputs from Nigerian universities, research institutions, and civil society organisations' can provide valuable insights into these challenges and potential solutions.

On the other hand, policy cycle theory describes the different stages of the policymaking process, from agenda-setting to policy implementation and evaluation (Jegede, 2022). This theory presents the policymaking process as a cyclical sequence of stages: problem identification, agenda setting, policy formulation, implementation, assessment, and feedback. Understanding these stages can help us identify the points at which research outputs can have the most impact on policy (Akinwale and Adegboye, 2018). In Nigeria, the policy cycle is frequently characterised by weak linkages between research outputs and public policy (Onwuchekwa, 2017). Research outputs often fail to reach policymakers or are misapplied as they are not used effectively in the policymaking process by policymakers. This can be attributed to many factors, including poor communication and collaboration between academics and policymakers, unawareness among policymakers of the value of research evidence (Akinwale and Adegboye, 2018), inadequate capacity within government agencies to translate research findings into policy recommendations, as well as political and bureaucratic obstacles to evidence-based policymaking.

Furthermore, low institutional ability and coordination impede successful evidence-based assessment implementation. Corruption has the potential to alter policy goals and execution, but a lack of openness can impede public scrutiny and accountability (Okolo and Okoye, 2012). Short-term political pressures, political cycles, and interests can jeopardise long-term sustainable growth. To close the gap, the government can use tactics such as investing in research infrastructure, financing, and researcher training to increase the quality and quantity of research.

Besides, limited institutional capacity and coordination impede the effective implementation of evidence-based evaluation. Corruption has the potential to alter policy goals and execution, while a lack of transparency can impede public scrutiny and accountability (Okolo and Okoye, 2012). Short-term political pressures, short-sighted political cycles, and interests can jeopardise long-term sustainable development. To close the gap, the government can employ strategies such as investing in research infrastructure, financing, and researcher training to increase the quality and quantity of research outputs (Akinwale and Adegboye, 2018). This has the potential to improve communication and knowledge translation.

Public Policy Process and Sustainable Development in Nigeria.

Public policy process in Nigeria plays a pivotal role in advancing sustainable development. No wonder that Ajulor (2016) asserted that achieving sustainable development requires a well-structured public policy process that incorporates economic, social, and environmental considerations. Ojo and Adeyemi (2022) also opined that the public policy process and sustainable development are critical aspects of the governance and development efforts in Nigeria. Hence, effective policy formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation are essential for achieving sustainable and inclusive development in Nigeria. Afolabi and Adedeji (2022) also argued that the public policy process and sustainable development are intertwined in Nigeria as it can be divided into the following stages.

1.   **Problem identification:** The first step is to identify the environmental and social problems that need to be

addressed. This can be done through a variety of methods, such as surveys, interviews, and focus groups.

2. **Policy Formulation:** Once the problems have been identified, the next step is to develop policy options to address them, and this can be achieved through government agencies and stakeholder engagement (Ajulor, 2016). The Nigerian government, through various ministries, agencies, and commissions, plays a pivotal role in policy formulation. These organisations conduct research, gather data, and analyse information to identify areas where sustainable development is needed (Ojo and Adeyemi, 2022). Also, policymakers often engage with stakeholders, including civil society organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), private sector actors, and local communities, to gather input and perspectives on sustainable development issues (Adebayo *et al.*, 2023). Consulting with stakeholders will promote a range of different solutions by weighing the costs and benefits of each.

3. **Policy adoption:** For a policy to be adopted, it has to be analysed to assess its potential economic, social, and environmental impacts. This analysis helps ensure that policies align with sustainable development goals which makes it the third stage of the policy process (Adesina & Okeke, 2022). Cost-benefit analysis (CBA) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) are considered for policies to evaluate and mitigate any adverse effects, and this is done by the government, usually through a legislative process (Jegede, 2023).

4. **Policy implementation:** Once a policy has been adopted, it needs to be implemented. This can be achieved through capacity building and ensuring that resource allocation is carried out effectively and efficiently. Adebayo and Azeez (2022) stated that implementing sustainable development policies often requires building the capacity of government agencies and other stakeholders to execute programs effectively. Also, adequate budget allocation and resource management are essential for policy implementation (Adeoti and Salawu, 2020). Hence, Nigeria's budget process should prioritize sustainable development policy into practice as this can assure a better research output.

5. **Policy monitoring and evaluation:** This involves assessing whether the policy has achieved its intended objectives and identifying any unintended consequences, and this can be actualised through data collection and accountability (Adebayo *et al.,* 2023). Regular data collection and analysis are crucial to track progress toward sustainable development goals. This includes economic indicators, social development metrics, and environmental data. Jegede (2023) stated that effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms hold policymakers accountable for achieving sustainable development targets.

6. **Adaptation and Review:** The final stage is to adapt and review the policy for flexibility. Sustainable development policies should be adaptable to changing circumstances and emerging challenges (Jegede, 2022). Afolabi and Adedeji (2022) emphasised on the need to review policy periodically to ensure that the policies remain relevant and effective in achieving sustainable development objectives.

It is instructive to note that the National Renewable Energy Policy (2015), National Sustainable Development Strategy (2015), and National Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Implementation Plan (2016) are few examples of the many public policies that have been implemented in Nigeria to promote sustainable development.

Public Policy and Sustainable Development: Assessment of the roles of Research Output in Nigeria.

Research output plays a vital role in public policy and sustainable development in Nigeria. It can help to make

informed policy decisions, identify challenges and opportunities, and develop solutions to complex problems (Ojo and Adeyemi, 2022). The role of research output in Nigeria's public policy and sustainable development efforts is significant. Research serves as a crucial foundation for informed decision-making, policy formulation, and the attainment of sustainable development policies (Ogunlade, 2021). However, it is essential to acknowledge that for research to have a meaningful impact on public policy and sustainable development in Nigeria, several challenges must be addressed. These challenges include funding constraints, capacity-building needs, data availability and quality, and the translation of research findings into actionable policies (Jegede, 2023). Addressing these challenges is essential to maximize the positive role of research in Nigeria's development journey.

However, Adesina and Okeke (2022) identified areas where research output plays significant roles in Nigeria's public policy and sustainable development. In their view, these include:

1.   **Informed Policy Formulation**: Research output helps to form policy decisions by providing evidence-based information on the likely impacts of different policy options. Research provides policymakers with valuable data, evidence, and insights to understand the current state of affairs and identify priority areas for sustainable development (Jegede, 2023). Also, policy proposals and recommendations based on well-conducted research are more likely to be effective and targeted towards addressing specific challenges (Adebayo *et al*., 2023). In Nigeria, research output has been used to form the development of the National Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework.

2.   **Identifying Challenges and Opportunities**: Research output also helps to identify the challenges and opportunities facing Nigeria in terms of sustainable development (Jegede, 2022). Output of research in environmental science and ecology is crucial for designing policies that address environmental degradation, climate change, and natural resource management which will promote environmental sustainability (Afolabi and Adedeji, 2022). Adebayo and Azeez (2022) asserted that environmental impact assessments and studies on sustainable practices inform policies aimed at reducing environmental harm and promoting sustainability. For example, research has shown that Nigeria is facing many environmental challenges, such as climate change, deforestation, and pollution. Research output helps to identify opportunities for sustainable development, such as the potential for renewable energy and agricultural development.

3.   **Developing Solutions to Complex Problems:** Research output equally helps to develop solutions to complex problems that are facing Nigeria. It has helped to build capacity for sustainable development by training researchers, policymakers, and other stakeholders (Jegede, 2023). The Nigerian government has established many research institutions and training programs to develop new methods for waste management, agricultural production, and water purification with the goal of supporting sustainable development. This doubt will encourage evidence-based decision-making at all levels of government and fosters transparency and accountability in the policy process.

4.   **Socio-economic Development:** Research output also contributes to the design of social policies that address issues like healthcare, education, and social welfare. It aids in understanding demographic trends, gender disparities, and inequalities, helping to design policies that promote inclusivity and social equity (Ojo and Adeyemi, 2022). Adesina and Okeke (2022) asserted that research output on social welfare helps to understand

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poverty dynamics to make informed social safety net policies aimed at poverty reduction and improving the welfare of vulnerable populations. As for education, research output helps make informed policies on curriculum development, teacher training, and access to quality education leading to quality human capital development. It helps to create policies that focus on skill-building and workforce development (Afolabi and Adedeji, 2022). Also, the output of the research helps in assessing the economic impact of policies, projects, and investments. Jegede (2022) opined that it aids in the identification of economic growth opportunities, resource allocation, and strategies for poverty reduction. Research in the areas of agriculture, industry, and trade can inform policies that promote economic diversification reduce dependency on oil revenue and consequently reduce the problem of unemployment in the country.

5. **Infrastructure and Urban Planning:** Research output on infrastructure needs and urbanization trends informs urban planning on development policies. It helps to create sustainable and resilient cities by addressing issues like housing, transportation, and access to basic services.

6. **Healthcare and Disease Control:** Medical and health research output is vital also for developing strategies to combat diseases, improve healthcare systems, and promote public health. Thus, it helps in the allocation of resources to healthcare infrastructure and the development of effective healthcare policies.

7. **Technology and Innovation:** Research output in science and technology informs policies related to innovation, research and development (R&D) funding, and technology transfer. This can be achieved through collaborative research with international partners and institutions that allow Nigeria to access global expertise, resources, and best practices, contributing to sustainable development. Hence, the output of the research will promote technological advancement and enhance Nigeria's competitiveness in the global market.

The Role of Research Output in Addressing the Challenges of Public Policy Process and Sustainable Development in Nigeria.

The challenges of the public policy process and sustainable development in Nigeria are complex and multifaceted. Research outputs play a crucial role in addressing these challenges by providing evidence-based insights and recommendations. Adebayo and Azeez (2022) examined the role of research output in addressing the challenges of public policy and sustainable development in Nigeria. In their view, these roles include the following:

1. **Data and Evidence Generation:** Even when research produces evidence-based recommendations, there may be a gap between policy formulation and implementation due to bureaucratic challenges, corruption, or lack of political will. Ogunlade and Arowojolu, (2021) argued that sometimes, political interests override evidence-based policymaking, leading to sub-optimal policy decisions. Afolabi and Adedeji (2022) also stated that the research outputs contribute significantly to data and evidence generation, which is vital for effective policy formulation and implementation, and it helps policymakers understand the current state of various sectors, identify trends, and assess the impact of existing policies.

2. **Policy Formulation:** Sustainable development often requires long-term planning and commitment, but political cycles and short-term priorities can hinder sustained efforts. Inaccurate or incomplete data and the lack of a robust data infrastructure can compromise the quality and reliability of research findings. Research outputs provide valuable information and analysis that can guide the development of sound policies. They can identify

gaps and opportunities in different areas of sustainable development, leading to better-targeted policies.

3.   Policy Evaluation: Research output helps in the evaluation of existing policies and programmes. Through impact assessments and evaluations, research outputs can inform policymakers about the effectiveness of their initiatives, allowing for adjustments and improvements.

4.   Capacity Building: Many research institutions and universities in Nigeria face capacity constraints in terms of skilled researchers, equipment, and facilities, which can impede research quality. Afolabi and Adedeji (2022) stated that Nigeria's research capacity is relatively weak due to several factors, including a lack of qualified researchers, poor infrastructure, and a shortage of funding. Not only that, but insufficient funding for research has also hindered the generation of relevant data and evidence, limiting the impact of research outputs on policymaking (Jegede, 2023). Hence, the output of the research activities can enhance the capacity of government agencies, think tanks, and universities to engage in evidence-based policymaking. This, in turn, will strengthen the overall policy process in Nigeria.

5.   Public Awareness: Research findings are not always effectively communicated to policymakers, and there is also the need for better dissemination strategies to ensure their uptake. Afolabi and Adedeji (2022) observed that there is often a lack of communication between researchers and policymakers in Nigeria. This can make it difficult for policymakers to access and use research findings. The government should improve communication between researchers and policymakers. This can be done by creating platforms for researchers and policymakers to interact, and by providing training for policymakers on how to use research findings (Jegede, 2022). The outputs, no doubt, can help raise public awareness and understanding of key sustainable development issues. When findings are communicated effectively, they can mobilize public support and participation in policymaking processes.

6.   International Collaboration: Research output fosters international collaborations and partnerships, allowing Nigeria to tap into global knowledge networks and benefit from international experiences in sustainable development (Ojo and Adeyemi, 2022). Collaborative research projects involving Nigerian institutions and international partners can bring in external expertise and resources, enriching the knowledge base and facilitating the adoption of global best practices.

It is instructive to note that addressing the challenges of public policy and sustainable development in Nigeria requires concerted efforts from various stakeholders, including government, academia, civil society, and international partners. It must be acknowledged based on the foregoing that the role of research outputs in this regard cannot be underestimated. Prioritizing research funding, improving data infrastructure, enhancing research capacity, and promoting a culture of evidence-based policymaking are essential steps in harnessing the full potential of research outputs for sustainable development in Nigeria. Additionally, fostering collaboration between researchers and policymakers can facilitate the translation of research findings into actionable policies.

Institutional Setting for Managing Research Outputs in Nigeria.

The institutional setting for managing research outputs in Nigeria is complex and fragmented. Several different institutions are involved in managing research outputs, including universities, research institutes, and government agencies. An attempt is made here to critically assess the effectiveness of these institutions in managing research outputs in Nigeria.

National Assembly Research Service (NARS): The NARS was established in 2004 to provide research support to the National Assembly. It has over 100 researchers and analysts, who conduct research on a variety of topics, including economic development, security, and social welfare (Adebayo *et al*., 2023). The NARS also publishes many research reports and journals. NARS is the primary institution responsible for managing research output within the Nigerian National Assembly (Jegede, 2023). It is a specialized unit established to assist lawmakers in making informed decisions by providing them with high-quality research, analysis, and information.

Managing research outputs in Nigeria, especially in the context of the National Assembly Research Service, involves various institutional settings and processes. The National Assembly Research Service (NARS) is tasked with providing research support to members of the National Assembly in Nigeria by identifying research priorities, facilitating collaboration between researchers, and disseminating research findings (Adeoti and Salawu, 2020). Jegede (2022), however, argued that the research quality assurance of NARS should have a system in place to ensure the quality and accuracy of research output. This may involve peer review processes, fact-checking, and adherence to research ethics. There is no doubt that periodic evaluations and assessments of NARS's performance can help maintain high standards.

Adesina and Okeke (2022) also highlighted the roles and responsibilities of the National Assembly Research Service (NARS) which include:

a)   **Research Support:** NARS research various legislative matters, policy issues, and other subjects of relevance to the National Assembly members.

b)   **Information Dissemination:** NARS disseminates research reports, policy briefs, and other informational materials to lawmakers to aid them in their legislative work.

c)   **Training and Capacity Building:** NARS may organize training sessions, workshops, and seminars to enhance the research skills of National Assembly members and their staff.

d)   **Database Management:** NARS should have robust data and information management systems in place to store, retrieve, and disseminate research output effectively. This can be actualised by maintaining a repository of research reports and other documents for easy access by legislators. Also, they must ensure that data security and confidentiality is crucial, particularly when dealing with sensitive legislative information.

e)   **Institutional Collaboration:** NARS also collaborates with other research institutions such as the National Research Council of Nigeria (NRCN), Nigerian Institute of Science and Technology (NIST), Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC) and universities within Nigeria to leverage their expertise and resources (Ogunlade and Arowojolu, 2021). The NRCN is a statutory body responsible for coordinating and promoting research in Nigeria and NIST is a research and development institute that conducts research in a variety of fields, including engineering, agriculture, and medicine. In the same vein, NUC is responsible for the accreditation of universities in Nigeria as they also play a role in promoting research in universities (Adebayo and Azeez, 2022). This collaboration can lead to more comprehensive and well-informed research outputs.

f)   **Budgetary Support:** Adequate budgetary allocation is essential for the effective functioning of NARS. It needs funding for research activities, staff salaries, capacity building, and the maintenance of research databases.

g)   **Policy Advocacy:** NARS can also play an important role in advocating for evidence-based policymaking within the National Assembly, emphasizing the importance of utilizing research output in legislative decision-making.

h)   **Public Engagement**: NARS may also engage with the public, civil society organizations, and the media to disseminate research findings, promote transparency, and encourage public input in the legislative process.

i)   **Legislative Oversight:** The National Assembly itself should be able to exercise oversight over NARS to ensure that it fulfils its mandate effectively and efficiently.

Thus, managing research output within the National Assembly Research Service in Nigeria involves a structured institutional framework, collaboration with other research institutions, adherence to research quality standards, effective data and information management, budgetary support, and advocacy for evidence-based policymaking. This ensures that lawmakers have access to accurate and timely research to inform their legislative decisions.

National Research Foundation of Nigeria (NRF): The National Research Foundation of Nigeria is a government agency established to promote and coordinate research activities in Nigeria. It is tasked with funding research projects and initiatives across various disciplines (Adesina & Ogunsanwo, 2022). NRF supports research through grants, scholarships, and funding for both basic and applied research. It plays a vital role in facilitating research activities by providing financial support to researchers and institutions.

Public-private partnerships between research institutions and government agencies: Nigeria has numerous universities and research institutions, both public and private that conduct research in various fields. These institutions often receive funding from the government and external sources to carry out research projects (Adeoti and Salawu, 2020). Universities also have research offices and departments responsible for managing and coordinating research activities, including research output, publications, and collaboration with other institutions (Ojo and Adeyemi, 2022). Also, various government ministries and agencies in Nigeria have research units or departments dedicated to specific sectors, such as agriculture, health, education, and technology. These entities conduct research to address sector-specific challenges and improve policymaking (Jegede, 2022). The findings of research conducted by government agencies can contribute to the country's development and are often published as reports or policy documents. Adebayo and Azeez (2022) asserted that efforts have been made to promote open access to research findings in Nigeria. This includes initiatives to encourage researchers to publish in open-access journals and repositories to make research output more accessible to the public.

Lastly, Nigeria may need to invest more in research and development, strengthen research institutions, and promote a culture of research excellence. Additionally, improving access to research findings and promoting interdisciplinary collaboration can contribute to the growth of the research ecosystem in the country.

METHODOLOGY

The study examined the role of research output on public policy and sustainable development in Nigeria. The study employed the interpretivism philosophy and a qualitative approach in data collection and analysis. An exploratory research design was considered appropriate because of its flexibility to consider many different

aspects of the phenomenon. Similarly, newspaper reports and opinions were content analyzed as the study adhered to the qualitative model of social research, which included textbooks, journals, articles, newspapers, and other publications. Multiple secondary sources were used to reduce the risk of error and improve the study's reliability and validity.

Discussion of Findings

The study examined the role of research output on public policy and sustainable development in Nigeria. It revealed that for the Nigerian government to achieve progressive strides in research output that will lead to sustainable development, the role of the National Assembly Research Service (NARS) and the National Research Foundation of Nigeria (NRF) should go beyond research support for members of parliament. These institutions must be able to integrate and collaborate with other research institutions in the country to be able to analyse policy options and give evidence-based information and analysis to Nigerian lawmakers to guide them in the decision-making process. Also, these institutions must play a pivotal role in facilitating public-private partnerships (PPPs) between research institutions and government agencies. They must be able to organise conferences and workshops that bring together scholars and politicians to discuss potential PPPs that will promote sustainable development in health, education, transportation, and other social services. This can help in the funding of joint research initiatives between universities and government agencies, as well as offer grants to private companies that are collaborating with research institutions. The findings of the study reflect the analytical data analyses based on the data gathered from the extant literature. Thus, the above finding is in line with the views of Adesina and Okeke (2022), Jegede (2023), as well as Ojo and Adeyemi (2022) on public policy and sustainable development in Nigeria: the policy gap and action dilemma. They argued that research and innovation are for the people, and the need to democratise them for prosperity is crucial for sustainable development. This can be achieved through funding and by building tech and innovation parks by the government and universities via the sovereign wealth fund and research grants from internal and external donors. This viewpoint is consistent with the research findings of the study.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that there has been a growing emphasis on research in recent years in Nigeria as the government has established several research institutes and universities. The government has also increased funding, although this has not led to a significant increase in research outputs in Nigeria. Based on this conclusion, it is recommended that research outputs should be communicated effectively to policymakers, communities, and the public in accessible and relevant formats. Also, there is the need to establish evidence-informed policymaking practices that will institutionalise mechanisms for incorporating evidence into policy decisions at all stages of the policy cycle. Researchers may also actively interact with policymakers, communities, and the media to amplify the impact of their findings, as well as promote transparency and accountability that can foster open access to research data and policy deliberations to strengthen public confidence, trust, and participation. Nigeria can establish a more conducive environment for research to generate evidence-based policies that promote sustainable development and enhance the lives of its population by addressing the challenges and implementing these strategies.

In addition, there should be collaboration between researchers and policymakers, data accessibility, and the willingness of policymakers to engage with research findings. It is therefore crucial to create mechanisms that promote the use of research in policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation to maximise its impact on sustainable development in Nigeria.

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The study has a lot of merit in its objectives. There is a need to look through for minor corrections that may derail the original intentions of the author. The research output in my opinion should be presented in reported tense.

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