Accountability and Public Policy Outcomes in Nigeria: A Stewardship Theory-Based Approach

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Abstract

The significance of accountability in specific areas of public sector management in numerous public organizations around the world has been shown by academic works. It is referred to as an important tool for assisting organizations in improving the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery and public sector management. The amount of literature on the subject of public policy outcomes is, however, very limited. Consequently, using the case study of the Delta State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission (DESOPADEC), this paper investigated the relationship between public accountability and policy outcomes, as well as policy implementation challenges confronting DESOPADEC in achieving its goals

in oil-producing communities. An interview and a pre-structured questionnaire were used in the research survey. Additionally, a stratified sampling method was used to select the 359 respondents from the Oil Producing Community Area of Delta State, which made up 89.97% of the 399 participants in the sample. Thomas Jones's Stewardship Theory serves as the study's theoretical analysis. Data were gathered and analysed using frequency, percentage, and the Pearson correlation coefficient in order to test the hypothesis. The study's findings indicate that accountability significantly affects the results of public policy. A positive 35.5% increase in policy outcomes as a result of accountability considerations served to support this. It was determined that accountability significantly predicts or explains the results of policy. According to the study, accountability can make sure that public organisations meet their performance goals by acting as a check and balance during the implementation of public policies.

Keywords

public sector, public accountability, Policy outcome, stewardship theory, Nigeria

Introduction

Over the past twenty years, the discussion regarding the purpose, scope, and efficiency of institutions and organisations in Nigeria's public sectors has intensified. The main metrics for rating and evaluating the performance of these organisations were efficiency and effectiveness (Oloruntoba & Gbemigun, 2019). Consequently, there is increased pressure on developing countries' public sectors, including Nigeria's, to provide excellent public services that meet citizens' needs while also holding them accountable for their choices and deeds.

Ibietan (2013) explains that public accountability is founded on the reality that public office holders hold power and position in trust for the general public which are expectedly their masters and are entitled to accurate and timely accounts of successes and reasons for failures. It is, therefore, necessary that public officials and the institution they represent be accountable to the general public. However, this is far from reality in developing countries like Nigeria.

Since independence, Nigeria's public accountability situation has been extremely troubling. In reality, it is rhetoric. The more attention it receives, the more concerning it becomes. Nigeria's since the first republic in 1966 has had a significant public accountability issue which can be traced to the discovered crude oil at commercial quantity as evaluated using performance-responsibility parameters (Matthew, Babajide, Adeniji, Ewetan et al, 2020). Over the years there are sufficient resources to backup this claim which has placed Nigeria in this present economic and socio-political level (Ezeajughu, 2021). The present administration which came into power on the platform of anti-corruption, transparency and accountability has not done any better as public officials' accountability has steadily been on the decrease in relations to managing public affairs. The financial

transparency policy alongside its robust web portal which became operational on December 9, 2019 has not had the expected positive impact on good governance, as evidenced by the continued decline in public officials' accountability (FRN, 2019). There are significant challenges when putting accountability reforms into place this is because unlike the strategies and methods that have increased openness, the issue of accountability amongst public officials is this not easily amended (Itodo and O'Regan, 2018)

According to Ikelegbe (2016:23), "no nation can achieve its goals of improving people's living standards without sound and implementable public policies that are properly formulated and based on the principle of accountability practise." Without accountability, it will be impossible for public servants to uphold moral standards, carry out the will of the government, or accomplish objectives that will benefit the general populace. The difficulties Nigeria faces as a developing nation also hurt accountability practises. To name a few, these challenges include a lack of political will, inadequate infrastructure, a shaky power supply, theft of public funds, and corruption. In the nation, lack of accountability (corrupt practises and unethical behaviour in agencies and commissions) has become pervasive and even institutionalised to the point were discussing concerns about unaccountability in the Nigerian public sector is no longer a taboo subject (Mahmood, 2016). It is important to point out that accountability and quality service delivery which are the cornerstones of good governance cannot be achieved without high level of ethical conduct by government representatives (Oni, Abasali, Dele-dada and Osarumwense, 2022). However, due to a lack of accountability by government representatives' Nigerian citizens are finding it difficult to access good government plans and programmes as accountable government produce sound public policies which results to better satisfied populace (Ofoegbu and Odoemelam, 2018).

Accountability is crucial to the art and practices of governance as accountability is an essential key to creating wealth and maintaining a free society (Iyoha and Oyerinde, 2010). Hence, there is a need for leaders to be accountable for choices made and decision taken which in industrialised nations is not something to be trifled with. Individuals in position of authority in such nations are accountable to the general populace and when necessary are required to explain reasons for decision made. Over the years in industrialised nations sound leadership, effective management and good governance are essential qualities that have helped to foster trust between the leaders and the general public. The persistence of effective and sound institutions, stewardship, high-quality agencies, and fiscal integrity brought about by accountability are the main explanations for the manifestations (Akhigbe, 2017).

Public accountability and policy outcomes are thus described by interactions between the ruled and the government. Influential people and how they use a specified benchmark to defend or account for a specific action to a higher authority are also covered. The effective implementation of public policies and programmes is necessary for the government to achieve its societal development goals and

objectives (Gberevbie, 2017).

Therefore, the ability of government policy to garner public support for its plans and initiatives determines its success.

The importance of management accountability in the public sector has been demonstrated in the various public organisations around the world by the reviewed scholarly works. It is an essential tool that helps them shape their businesses for the management and delivery of their public services, both in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. During the review of the literature, it was found that numerous works on the topic had been produced by academics on an international and regional scale. Two categories of literature were found in those articles across the various studies. The first was literature that supported accountability with additional variables. Some of the scholars looked into accountability and transparency, the impact of politics on socio-political development, and bureaucratic accountability, while others like "Gabriel, Antonio, Ramos, and Marasigan in 2019; Makinde and Adeoye in 2020; Igbokwe-Ibeto, Osakede, and Nwobi in 2020; Plant in 2018; Hyndman and McConville in 2018; Those who had additional factors supporting outcome-based accountability were included in the second group (Patrick, Plagens, Rollins & Evans, 2018; Iniyavan, 2019; Hogberg & Lindgren, 2020; Orme, 2021; Hyndman & McConville, 2018;Ukeje, Onele, Okezie, Ekwueme, Ogbonnaya & Nwangbo, 2020)." As a result, it became apparent that the concepts of accountability and outcome-based accountability were covered in a significant amount of literature. But no article, whether conceptual, empirical, or theoretical studies, included the research variable used to determine the outcome of public policy.

Numerous studies has been carried out in Nigeria on a variety of topics, including accountability as it relates to sustainable development, performance audit, socioeconomic development, ethical leadership, public participation, good governance, public policy partnership, corruption, and public procurement, service delivery, social outcome and public financial management, control audit (Gberevbie, 2017; Ifaka & Odigie, 2021, Makinde & Adeoye, 2020). (Ifaka & Odigie, 2021; Gasela, 2022). Studies on the effects of accountability on the outcomes of public policy continue to be a significant gap in literature as it relates to Nigerian research, despite the wide and extensive research conducted to promote good governance among Nigerian and non-Nigerian authors. This study effectively closes the gap between public policy theory and practise in Nigeria by offering new empirical postulates in theory and provide current data on role of accountability as it affects public policy outcomes as Nigeria is concern. Consequently, the goal of this study was to look into how public accountability and policy outcomes relate to one another in a Nigerian public sector organisation. The study was organised into the following sections: an introduction, an empirical analysis of the two variables, the study's theoretical framework, the results and analysis of the data, the conclusion, and recommendations.

The Concept of Accountability

Accountability is widely regarded as a positive concept, but it is highly complex, abstract, and frequently applied in a broad sense (Brummel, 2021; Choudhury, 2022). For example, it is the situation where an individual is responsible for the results of a particular activity or the answerability of an individual for the performance of a given task. According to Grossman & Michelitch (2018), accountability refers to the relationship based on taking on a specific responsibility for performance realization and the obligation to disclose it within the framework of agreed-upon targets (Huising & Silbey, 2021). Beyond these definitions made above, there is more to accountability as it is a concept in different perspectives.

According to the definition of accountability in governance, it is a relationship in which two parties hold each other to account. As an illustration, the phrase "A is accountable to B" means that A "is required to inform B about A's past and future actions and decisions, to justify them, to suffer punishment in the case of eventual misconduct, and more" (Martin & Raffler, 2019). When a politician acts in the public interest, the public has the power to commend or condemn the politician (Pierskalla & Sacks, 2020). In Finance, it is the holding of an individual accountable for effectively or non-effectively performing a financial activity. In Public Service, as defined by Fisman & Dieste et al., (2022) accountability means that the government and its representatives have a duty to the public to fulfil previously set objectives and provide public accounts for them. Similarly, Gocer & Semiz (2022) defined it as the explanation of a public institution's activities, defined objectives, tasks, results, and even failure, carried out within the framework of social responsibility. Also, in Law, Oloruntoba, & Gbemigun (2019) noted that any organisations using private or public funds and making decisions that have an impact on people's lives can be held accountable for their actions; accountability is defined as "the legal and reporting framework, organisational structure, strategy, processes, and actions."

Now, in the public sector, accountability complies with due process and includes giving the general public feedback. According to Gasela (2022), accountability is the condition that requires the legislature to closely scrutinise the objective use of resources and method of performance by public officers or employees. It is the consistency and effectiveness of using public funds, as well as their own actions and activities in accordance with the law and public service. Furthermore, Carreri (2018) asserts that preventing the abuse of power for one's own benefit in a government office is a component of accountability. Ezejughu (2021) stated that accountability is needed to report both financial and non-financial information.

The fundamental idea behind accountability is that when decision-making authority shifts from a principal (such as a citizen) to an agent (such as the government), there needs to be a system in place to hold the agent responsible for their actions and, if necessary, to impose sanctions that will eventually result in the

agent being removed from office (Ejiogu, Ejiogu, & Ambituuni, 2019). Accountability is the duty that public servants—elected and appointed officials—must uphold in order to use their position of power and influence over the assets entrusted to them by the general public. This definition covers a wide range of obligations that come with holding any public office, including legal, moral, and ethical ones (Choudhury, 2022). It implies that public servants must constantly be ready to defend their decisions made while carrying out their duties and obligations to the general public and be able to defend their decisions as being morally and ethically right or wrong (Gathenya, 2022). Fagbadebo (2019) asserts that accountability "demands that the public should know when money enters government treasury and how the money is spent and the projects, which the money was spent on and the benefits of the projects to the people."

From this, it is seen that government agencies therefore necessitates that the agency be answerable to the people and responsive to their needs. Responsibility is defined as trustworthiness is "being worthy of trust and confidence," answerability is "being called to account," liability is "being legally bound to a debt or obligation," and responsibility is "a duty that binds the course of action (Dong, 2016)."In almost every case, people's needs are continuous with the promotion of development, which refers to the enhancement of the quality of life of the people. That is, meeting the basic needs for shelter, food, education, good health and a general sense of well-being. Ampa (2018) proposed that public officials be held accountable for three things: fiscal stewardship, compliance, and performance. Accountability in the public sector is led by a number of institutions and agencies rather than by a single entity. Accountability, for instance, involved lawmakers, government agencies, courts and tribunals, inquiry organisations, and frequently media and civil society group monitoring (Bach, Verhoest, & Wynen, 2022). Therefore, public officials must be aware of the potential consequences of their proposals when making decisions which results to enforcement of rights to sanction if the information or rationale is deemed inappropriate.

The Concept of Public Policy Outcomes

Hunter & Peckham (2019) posited that policy implementation include outputs and outcomes. Outputs are a policy's immediate, easily measurable effects, whereas outcomes are the long-term changes that a policy produces. Policy outputs (means to an end) are what government does with a particular policy. While policy outcomes (end result) are the effect that policy outputs have on society. According to Oliver, Lorenc, Tinkler, & Bonell (2019), Public policy outcomes are the results of purposeful government action or inaction on society, both planned and unexpected. Similarly, Oni (2016) sees public policy outcomes as intended or unintended consequences of policies for a society that flows from action or inaction of government or its official and agencies. For instance, "intended consequences, the Nigerian government policy on deregulation of the petroleum sector was meant to overcome corruption and wastages in the sector, arising from the payment of

subsidy to marketers by the government for development, particularly in the area of infrastructural development (Mahmood, 2016). While the unintended consequences include high cost of transportation, high cost of the needs of livelihood, such as rent and food. These have actually brought hardship on families, and also made it impossible for the ordinary person in the society to live a comfortable life (Gberevbie, 2017). It is critical to remember that inaction is also an action. Thus, failure to make a decision is a form of public policy in and of itself because the general public is affected by the government's inaction or refusal to make a decision.

Agyepong et al. (2021) affirms that intended policy outcomes are the evaluation on whether it appears that the policy's declared goal is what the policy's results accomplish People are involved, and policies have an effect on the public issue they are intended to address. While unintended policy outcomes may be several organisations operating in the same policy area which is affected by the interacting effects. Policies may have an impact on if they should not be used in settings or people for whom they were not designed. These are referred to as externalities, spillover effects, or third-party impacts. As a result, thinking about policy in terms of outcomes allows us to assess the stated purpose of a policy while also focusing on the impact of that policy's delivery to the targeted population.

Policies and programmes can have symbolic (intangible) or material effects. Symbolic consequences are both significant and difficult to quantify. According to De Silva, Yapa, & Vesty, (2020) "Symbolic policies" include declarations of policy or purpose by political leaders, flag displays, troop and military ceremony visits by royalty or senior officials, and elites' affirmations of principles. As a result, their effectiveness is heavily reliant on capturing the sentiments, feelings, and ambitions of the general public. Symbolic policy results don't actually alter the state of society (Paperbacks, 2021). Its purpose is to win support even if the policies are ineffectual in addressing the issue. It also serves to simplify the issue and appeal to the media by condensing a complicated issue into, for example, a catchy one-liner (a remark in one sentence) (Mulgan, 2016).

In contrast, material or evidence-based policies (EBP) are regarded as authentic policies, which are aimed at making effective and successful policy decisions based on solid data and statistics. This type of policymaking has its roots in the Blair. "What matters is what works" and "government must produce policies that truly deal with problems that are forward-looking and shaped by evidence rather than a reaction to short-term pressures" are the two tenets upon which the British government was founded. The philosophy of public policy is the conviction that better judgments will be made if the procedure is guided by a full comprehension of the relevant problems. According to Yingling & Mallinson (2020), the core of having a reforming administration is material-based policymaking. Evidence-based policies set themselves apart by outlining the backdrop as well as the intervention and anticipated results. This is based on what Bovers & Hoon (2020) in addition to indicating whether a policy is likely to be effective or not,

context mechanism-outcome configurations also demonstrate the conditions under which such policies are most likely to benefit the target population.

For its efficacy, the EBP needs need time, capable individuals, open policymaking environments, and decent people to develop methodology, good data, and evidence that can be scrutinized. Its methodology includes the following steps: testing a theory about what the effects of the policy would be if it were to be successful, as well as why the policy will be effective; contain a counter factual or the outcome if the policy hadn't been put in place. include some impact analysis; Examine the policy's immediate and long-term effects; Separate the unknowns, account for any outside impacts on the outcome, and allow for testing and replication by a third party (Baron, 2018). The strategy helps the government the development and implementation of policies should be based on the best available research evidence in order to help people make well-informed decisions about various programmes, projects, and policies.

Theoretical Framework

The Stewardship theory was used as the theoretical foundation for this essay. Thomas Jones first proposed the stewardship theory in 1995. He described the qualities of a steward, such as honesty, decency, refraining from deceit or theft, and keeping their word (Martin & Butler, 2017). The theory was expanded upon. The management literature was criticised in 1997 by Davis, Schoorman, and Donaldson for assuming agents' avarice and laziness, which may cause "terrible distortion" in the public sector (Maggetti & Papadopoulos 2016). Stewardship theory has been adopted by academics as a promising and competitive alternative method for researching agency governance (Rahmawati, 2018; Schillemans and Bjurstrom, 2019; Wicaksana, Trihatmoko and Suhardjanto, 2019; Rouault and Albertini, 2022). The stewardship theory is predicated on the idea that managers prioritize the organization's interests over personal financial benefits in order to accomplish the strategic goal oranization. This has an impact on internal employee satisfaction. (Rouault & Albertini, 2022). The steward will put the organization ahead of personal interests out of a simple desire to be a good and devoted steward (Boon 2016).

The stewardship theory considers employees to be trustworthy rather than opportunistic agents who will act in the best interest of the organization while taking care of their own needs. Trust is the central idea of this strategy and can be defined as "the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party" ((Boon 2016; Grundei, 2018:142). An underlying behavioural tenet of a trust-based approach to corporate governance runs counter to the notion of opportunistic behaviour. As a result, organisational actors are frequently seen as competent and eager to act in an organizationally beneficial manner (Lohde, Campopiano and Calabro, 2020).

Resources are given to stewards along with the authority of proxy for those with whom they have a direct or indirect legal responsibility towards. Stewards therefore represent all parties involved (Schillemans and Bjurstrom, 2019). In this context, the government's executive branches are referred to as the principals (Superiors), while its departments, agencies, and ministries are referred to as the Agents (Subordinates). The relationship between the Delta State Government (the principal), the Delta State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission (the agency), and the resident of the state is in this case simply explained by the stewardship theory in terms of accountability and the results of public policy. Understanding the characteristics and circumstances of effective stewardship is the aim of stewardship theory (Pierre & Peters 2017).

The theory holds that a manager will make decisions that are best for the company. Because ownership is more concerned with the effort of achieving organisational goals, the agent believes that the common interest and acting in accordance with the principal's behaviour is a rational consideration that the agent will attempt to cooperate rather than engage in conflict when the principal's interest and the agent's interest are not in harmony (Maggetti & Papadopoulos 2016). The stewardship concept holds that there is a direct correlation between an organization's success and the principal's satisfaction. By achieving high organisational performance and maximising the utility function, the representative will safeguard and enhance the organization's prosperity. The stewardship theory makes the important assumption that managers (agents) will align their goals with the owners' (principals).

Methods

In this study the research survey design was used. The plan encourages a thorough and trustworthy evaluation of the connections between the study's variables (Lury et al., 2020). Additionally, descriptions, analyses, interpretations, and inferences of research findings are permitted by the design. The population of this study consisted of the five area groups from the oil producing community areas in the 19 local government areas of Delta State (Ifaka, 2021). They include the Ijaws, Isokos, Itsekiris, Urhobos, and Ndokwa (Boye-Akelemor, 2019; DESOPADEC, 2019). According to the DESOPADEC Statistical Digest, 110,994 people reside in oil-producing areas across Delta State's 19 local government areas (2019). Because the study examines the accountability of public organisations and the implementation of their policies using empirical evidence, it was decided to use the oil-producing regions of Delta State. Using Yamane's (1967) sampling formula, a sample size of 398.56 was chosen for the study, which is not far from the number 399. (400) 399. The formula was chosen because, in the social and management sciences, it is a tried-and-true method for determining sampling adequacy in the target sample. Ijaws (85), Isokos (91), Itsekiris (65), Urhobos (103) and Ndokwas (55), which together make up the 399-sample size, were statistically distributed among the sample selection, using the stratified sampling technique. This

technique is appropriate because it ensures that the population is accurately represented (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). These people were residents of the area at the time and were well-versed in the subject.

The study used a quantitative approach to gather data, which included gathering both primary and secondary data. The secondary sources included pertinent literature reviews from interviews, journal articles, e-books, library books, and policy documents. The primary source was a structured, closed-ended questionnaire. The researcher was able to provide a strong data set for the interpretation of the analysis by combining the two data sources (Ishtiaq, 2019). Rensis Likert created the five-scale Likert Scaling Model in 1932, which was used in the questionnaire, to record the respondents' exact responses. 1 stands for "Strongly Agree" (SA), 2 "Agree," 3 "Undecided," 4 "Disagree," and 5 "Strongly Disagree" (SD). The research instrument's Likert scale design directs respondents in choosing the best option that meets their needs, with a focus on items that measure the study's goal (Mirahmadizadeh, Delam, Seif & Bahrami, 2018). The instrument was thoroughly examined to assess its soundness and internal consistency using content validation and Cronbach Alpha Coefficient (Biddle & Schaff, 2018). For the research tool used in this study, the Cronbach's Alpha result is 0.750, or 75%.

For data analysis, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 was used to compile, code, and impute the survey data. The research objective's demographic and descriptive data were presented using percentages and frequencies. The hypothesis was evaluated using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient at a significance level of 0.05. These were deemed appropriate given the nature of the study, which examined the connection between accountability and the results of public policy. The research was conducted in accordance with ethical standards, and participants were made aware of their right to withdraw at any time or point. It was also made clear that participation was voluntary. In the creation or development of the instruments used to collect data, this study avoided using any language that could be construed as offensive, discriminatory, or otherwise profane.

Table 1: Demographic Information of Respondents

Variables	Item	Frequency N (359)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	201	56
	Female	158	44
Age Bracket	21-30yrs	120	33.4
	31-40yrs	100	27.9
	41-50yrs	95	26.4
	51-60yrs	30	8.4
	Above 60yrs	14	3.9
Area Groups	Ijaws	77	21.4
	Isokos	83	23.1
	Itsekiris	57	15.9
	Urhobos	95	26.5
	Ndokwas	47	13.1

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Table 1 displays the frequency breakdown of respondents by gender, age range, and geographic area. The respondents' demographic information has practical implications for the study. Male respondents made up 201 (or 56%) and female respondents made up 158 (or 44%) of the respondents. Only 120 respondents (33.4%), or only 12.4%, were between the ages of 21 and 30. 100 respondents, or 27.9%, were in this age range (between 31 and 40). 95 respondents (or 26.4%) who self-identified as being between the ages of 41 and 50 did so. Only 14 respondents (representing 3.9%) said they were between the ages of 60 and over, while 30 respondents (representing 8.4%) said they were between the ages of 51 and 60. This demonstrates that people between the ages of 21 and 30 make up the majority of the sampled population, followed by people between the ages of 31 and 40. As a result, it can be said that the ages together demonstrate their level of responsibility for acting responsibly in responding to the research questions. The area groups of study participants were a final variable of interest in the investigation of respondent's personal data. Only 77 respondents (representing 21.4% of respondents) identified as Ijaws, 83 respondents (representing 23.1% of respondents), Itsekiris were identified by 57 respondents with a representation of 15.9%, Urhobos by 47 respondents with a representation of 26.5%, and the Ndokwa area group by only 47 respondents with a representation of 13.1%. Inferring that the area groups were chosen fairly, the study population was able to be more accurately representative of the area groups.

Data Result and Analysis
Respondent Demography

An examination of the respondents' demographic data is provided in this section. In this section, frequencies and percentages were used as descriptive tools. Out of the 399 questionnaires that were distributed, 359 were returned to the researcher with all required information, yielding an analysis response rate of 89.97%.

The Relationship between Accountability and Public Policy Outcomes in DESOPADEC

This section's goal is to present the research objective's descriptive statistics. The Delta State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission's survey respondents provided their opinions on a scale of 5 for strongly agree, 4 for agreed, 3 for undecided, 2 for disagreed, and 1 for strongly disagreed regarding the relationship between accountability and the outcomes of public policy (DESOPADEC).

By asking respondents to provide answers to eight different questions, Table 2 highlights the evaluation of the impact of DESOPADEC's accountability on the outcomes of public policy. The first question probed respondents' understanding of whether or not performance of DESOPADEC staff should be guaranteed based on

accountability. Only a small percentage of respondents (7.2%) disagreed, followed by 3.9% were undecided, followed by 40.9% who agreed, 37.9% who strongly agreed, and 10.9% who strongly disagreed. This leads to the conclusion that there is a high level of agreement regarding this variable, and accountability can help to ensure that DESOPADEC employees meet performance standards. The idea that accountability promotes integrity in the implementation of DESOPADEC public policies was strongly disagreed with by 14.2% of respondents, according to another dimension. When examined more closely, it can be seen that 13.1% of respondents disagreed, 38.4% agreed, 25.3% strongly agreed, and only 8.9% were undecided. As a result, it is clear that a significant portion of respondents believe that accountability promotes integrity in the execution of DESOPADEC public policies and, as a result, that accountability is a key tool in such execution.

Table 2: Respondents' Responses to Research Questions

S/N	Variable	SD		D		U		A		SA		TOTAL	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Accountability ensures that DESOPADEC employees meet their performance expectations.	39	10.9	26	7.2	14	3.9	147	40.9	133	37.0	359	100.0
2	Accountability encourages integrity in the application of DESOPADEC public policies.	51	14.2	47	13.1	32	8.9	138	38.4	91	25.3	359	100.0
3	Officials from DESOPADEC fully implement the government budget to raise people's standards of living.	95	26.5	117	32.6	50	13.9	74	20.6	23	6.4	359	100.0
4	The government budget is fully implemented by DESOPADEC officials to raise the standard of living.	134	37.3	64	17.8	36	10.0	91	25.3	34	9.5	359	100.0
5	The living conditions of those living in oil host communities are impacted by outcome-based accountability for DESOPADEC policy implementation.	60	16.7	57	15.9	45	12.5	136	37.9	61	17.0	359	100.0
6	Over time, accountability practises in the commission's policy implementation have decreased resource mismanagement in the communities that host oil.	108	30.1	103	28.7	40	11.1	72	20.1	36	10.0	359	100.0
7	It is the responsibility of DESOPADEC to ensure adequate public accountability within the organisation.	118	32.9	96	26.7	50	13.9	67	18.7	28	7.8	359	100.0
8	Over time, DESOPADEC's accountability practises have increased people's confidence in the commission.	113	31.5	106	29.5	39	10.9	72	20.1	29	8.1	359	100.0

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Inspecting the role of budgetary compliance and execution in DESOPADEC's policy execution. The purpose of the inquiry was to determine whether DESOPADEC officials were fully implementing the government budget to raise the standard of living of the populace. Only 13.9% of respondents were undecided, compared to 6.4% who strongly agreed, 20.6% who agreed, 32.6% who disagreed, and 26.5% who strongly disagreed, according to the results in Table 4.4. As a result, it can be inferred that DESOPADEC officials do not fully implement the government budget to raise the standard of living for the populace and that there is an excessive amount of disagreement overall with regard to this variable. Maintaining everyone's progress toward achieving the organization's common goals is the ultimate goal of accountability. Thus, the question of whether DESOPADEC officials ensure that their work is in line with important outcomes was put to the respondents. The results showed that 25.3% of respondents agreed and 9.5% strongly agreed. Only 10% of respondents were unsure, while a sizable portion of respondents disagreed with 17.8% and strongly disagreed with 37.3%. Due to the high cumulative level of disagreement, it can be assumed that DESOPADEC officials do not ensure that their work is in line with significant results.

A policy's consequences cannot be disregarded. As a result, the researcher carefully examined how the implementation of DESOPADEC policy affected the living conditions of those living in oil host communities. According to the analysis, 16.7% of respondents strongly disagreed with DESOPADEC policy outcomes based on accountability, only 12.5% were unsure, 15.9% disagreed, 37.9% agreed, 17% strongly agreed, and 17% agreed. The living conditions of the residents of the communities where oil is produced are affected by these findings both now and in the future. There is more agreement than disagreement regarding this variable. It was determined that the policy outcomes of DESOPADEC, which are based on accountability practise, as a result, have an effect on the living conditions of the citizens of the oil host communities of this higher difference in agreement over disagreement, it was determined from the sum of the responses' high level of disagreement that the commission's policy implementation over the years had not decreased the mismanagement of resources in

As a follow-up to the investigation into how accountability practises in the commission's policy implementation over the years have decreased the mismanagement of resources in the oil host communities, the impact of accountability on the commission's policy resource management was also evaluated. In response to the question of whether the commission's policy implementation over the years had reduced resource mismanagement in oil host communities, the results showed that 30, 1% of respondents strongly disagreed, 28, 7% disagreed, 20, 1% agreed, 10% strongly agreed, and only 11, 1% were undecided.

Officials must ensure effective and efficient public participation in the agency's affairs in order to carry out their duties effectively and efficiently. According to the responses, 7.8% of respondents strongly agreed, 18.7% agreed,

26.7% disagreed, 32.9% strongly disagreed, and only 13.9% were unsure. The officials are not responsible for ensuring effective or efficient public accountability in the government agency, which hinders citizen participation in policy activities and public awareness. As a result, it can be concluded that there is a cumulatively high level of disagreement with regard to this variable. It was also investigated how accountability practises affected public confidence in DESOPADEC as an organisation. According to the findings in regard to question 8, 31.5% of respondents strongly disagreed, 29.5% disagreed, 20.1% agreed, 8.1% strongly agreed, and only 10.9% were undecided. Because a significant portion of respondents opposed the concept of this variable, it was clear that DESOPADEC's accountability practises over time had little effect and did not increase public trust in the commission.

Test of Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant relationship between accountability and public policy outcomes in DESOPADEC

Product-Moment Pearson This hypothesis was assessed using correlation analysis. This made it possible for the researcher to evaluate how Accountability, an independent variable, affected the dependent variable (public policy outcomes in DESOPADEC).

Correlations			
		Accountability	Policy outcomes in DESOPADEC.
Accountability	Pearson Correlation	1	0.355**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	359	359
Policy Outcomes in DESOPADEC.	Pearson Correlation	0.355**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	359	359
**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).			

Source: Author's compilation (from SPSS Output, Ver. 21), 2022

The results of a correlational test of the relationship between Accountability and the results of public policy in DESOPADEC are shown in Table 3. The correlation coefficient must be calculated in order to statistically identify the relationship between or among variables. By displaying a weak, strong, or no correlation, the correlation coefficient, which has a range from -1 to +1 (where r is the coefficient of correlation), indicates whether there is a relationship. According to Table 4.3's findings, there is a weakly positive correlation between accountability and the results of public policy in DESOPADEC, with a correlation coefficient of r=0.355 (n=359, p=0.000). The test is significant, though, because the p-value is below the accepted threshold of 0.05. A weaker correlation between two variables is indicated by a low correlation. As a result, in DESOPADEC, there is little correlation between accountability and the results of public policy.

As a result, the null hypothesis, which states that there is no meaningful

connection between accountability and the results of public policy, is rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis. The results of this hypothesis test show that accountability and the results of public policy in Nigeria have a significant relationship. The accountability co-efficient is 0.355, which indicates that thinking about accountability has a positive effect on policy outcomes by increasing them positively by 35.5%. Conclusion: Policy outcomes are significantly predicted or explained by accountability.

Challenges affecting the implementation of public policies of DESOPADEC

S/N	Variable	SD		D		U		A		SA		TOTAL	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Frequent government interference negatively affects policy outcomes of DESOPADEC	24	6.7	9	2.5	23	6.4	134	37.3	169	47.1	359	100.0
2	There is no room for feedback from oil host communities for service rendered by DESOPADEC	21	5.8	30	8.4	54	15.0	190	52.9	64	17.8	359	100.0
3	There is policy inconsistency on the part of government which affects the commission performance over the years	26	7.2	25	7.0	44	12.3	147	40.9	117	32.6	359	100.0
4	There is lack of political will and abuse of power for personal benefit among commission personnel	26	7.2	37	10.3	23	6.4	169	47.1	104	29.0	359	100.0
5	Corruption and wastages among the commission staff have led to high cost of social amenities in oil host communities	2	14.5	19	5.3	8	2.2	105	29.2	175	48.7	359	100.0

Source: Field Survey (2022)

The results of the investigation into the issues that affect how DESOPADEC's public policies are implemented are presented in Table 4.5.

It was deduced from the table that, when it came to the variable "Frequent government interference negatively affects policy outcomes of DESOPADEC," 6.7% strongly disagreed, 2.5% disagreed, 37.3% agreed, 47.1% strongly agreed, and only 6.4% were undecided. This implies that frequent government interference has a detrimental impact on DESOPADEC's policy outcomes. As a result, one of the challenges to the implementation of DESOPADEC's public policies is frequent government interference.

Feedback is a crucial component of observation. The researcher investigated whether a problem hindering the implementation of DESOPADEC public policies is a lack of feedback. Only 15% of respondents were unsure, compared to 5.8% who

strongly disagreed, 8.4% who disagreed, 52.9% who agreed, and 17.8% who strongly agreed. Oil host communities still have the opportunity to provide feedback on the work that DESOPADEC has done. In light of how the question was written, this response was unclear. There was a suspicion that the wording of the question, such as "there is no room for feedback by oil host communities for service rendered by DESOPADEC," had left the respondents with a negative impression. In this way, a challenge that affects how DESOPADEC's public policies are implemented could be the absence of feedback. Therefore, it is assumed that the respondents thought the question about this variable was unanswerable. As a result, the large amount of concordant agreement demonstrated that the absence of feedback poses a problem for the execution of DESOPADEC's public policies.

Even though the government frequently intervenes in the commission, there is one factor that is inconsistent. Here, policy is the inconsistency. The researcher examines how government policy inconsistencies have affected the commission's performance over time. The results show that 7.2% of respondents strongly disagreed with the policy, compared to 7% of respondents who strongly agreed, 40.9% who agreed, 32.6% who strongly agreed, and 40.9% who agreed that the government's inconsistency affects the performance of the commission over time. The conclusion that there is policy inconsistency on the part of the government, which affects the commission performance over time, is made as a result of the overwhelming percentage of agreement to the variable.

It was questioned whether political corruption and strong political will had a negative impact on DEESOPADEC's ability to implement its policies. The results of the poll showed that 7.2% of respondents strongly disagreed that the commission's staff lacks political will and abuses their positions of power for personal gain, while 47.1% of respondents agreed and 29% strongly agreed. Only 6.4% of respondents were undecided. As a result, it was concluded from the responses' high levels of consensus that the commission's staff lacked political will and abused their positions of authority in order to enrich themselves.

The common courtesy of corruption in government administrations was then looked at. The results of this survey indicated that 14.5% of respondents strongly disagreed, another 5.3% disagreed, 29.2% agreed, and 48.7% strongly agreed, while only 2.2% of respondents were unsure whether corruption and waste among the commission staff were to blame for the high cost of social amenities in oil host communities. It is sufficient to say that the high cost of social amenities in oil host communities is a result of corruption and waste among the commission staff based on the unevenly high number of respondents who expressed agreement.

In conclusion, it can be seen from the results of the responses in Table 4.5 that DESOPADEC in Delta State's oil-producing areas faced real policy implementation challenges due to frequent government interference, inconsistent government policy, lack of feedback from oil host communities, lack of political will, corruption, the misuse of power for personal enrichment, and wastages among the commission staff.

During the interview, the respondents commented on what they felt militate against the effective implementation of DESOPADEC public policy in their area community beyond and those that emanate from the dwellers of the area.

It follows that respondents isolate constraint against adequate budget allocation as a factor that limit the implementation of the commission public policy. It was captured that

"DESOPADEC *budget is strictly tied to the 13% derivation fund" (Participant A3).*

This reflects that DESOPADEC were faced with the challenges of inadequate provision of funds which emanates or begins from defective budget allocation. Other challenges relating to this were rightly captured in the words of the below mentioned respondents

"There was infrastructural decay" (Participant C3).
This indicated that there were vandalism of infrastructures, improper care and displaced appreciation for the provision of infrastructures by DESOPADEC.

To cite examples, form the transcript of data gotten from respondents residing and working in Oil Producing communists, the following are provided. Pipeline vandalisation distracted the commission's resolve to concentrate on policy implementation. This is accruing from the fact that the infrastructures they have channelled their resources, time, and effort on were being destroyed by locals in an effort to get back at them. Captured in the words of one of the respondents, *"The years of militancy oil production drained to the barest minimum where there is pipeline vandalisation" (Participant A2).*

Despite all other factors being directly involving the commission, here is one challenge that is directly not influenced by DESOPADEC. It is the peoples' attitude to drainage infrastructure. The dwellers often disrupt the flow of drainage system and ultimately blame it on the commission's lack of maintenance culture. It was so challenging for the commission as to the feeling by the onlookers (dwellers, staff, and the general public) that their policies were not resulting in fruitful outcomes in the community. Though, this was the aftermath of policy implementation, but it was still counted on to the commission as failure in policy outcomes.

The following provided a brief recount from the interview.

"DESOPADEC help [in the] construction of drainage but once it's done, they will use the drainage as a dumping ground and this will cause blockage of the water channel thereby causing havoc and when this happens, the people will blame DESOPADEC meanwhile they caused it due to lack of maintenance" (Participant B2).

Not only that but lack of political will, abuse of power, selfishness, and greed of the officials of DESOPADEC was lauded as a challenge that impede policy implementations in the commission according to the comments below.

"It is the same high political *will and abuse of power that has gotten DESOPADEC to its present state that they are in now" (Participant B3).*
"Selfishness and greed, I will say is the problem" (Participant C1).

Ho: There are no tangible policy implementation challenges confronting DESOPADEC from achieving its goals in the oil-producing communities of Delta State.

Product-Moment Pearson, hypothesis was examined using correlation analysis. This made it possible for the researcher to evaluate how the challenges associated with policy implementation, an independent variable, affected the dependent variable (policy outcomes in DESOPADEC).

Table 4.14: Relationship between challenges of policy implementation and public policy outcomes in DESOPADEC

Correlations			
		Challenges of policy implementation	Policy Outcomes in DESOPADEC
Challenges of policy implementation	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.130**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.014
	N	359	359
Policy Outcomes in DESOPADEC	Pearson Correlation	-0.130**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.014	
	N	359	359
**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).			

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Table 4.9 presents the findings of a correlation test of the relationship between implementation challenges and policy outcomes in DESOPADEC. The correlation coefficient must be determined because correlation aids in the statistical identification of the correlation between variables. The correlation coefficient, which has a range of values from -1 to +1, where r is the coefficient of correlation, shows whether there is a relationship by indicating a weak, strong, or no correlation. Based on the results of Table 4.9, the correlation coefficient r=-0.130 (where n=359, p=0.014) indicates that there is a low but negative correlation between the difficulties in implementing policies and the results of those policies in DESOPADEC. Despite this, the test is significant because the p-value is under the 0.05 accepted cut-off. A weaker correlation between two variables is indicated by a low correlation. As a result, there is a weak negative correlation between DESOPADEC's policy outcomes and implementation challenges.

In light of this, the alternative hypothesis accepts the null hypothesis that there is no strong correlation between Policy Outcomes in DESOPADEC and Implementation Challenges, is thus rejected. So, according to the findings of this hypothesis test, there is a strong but negative correlation between   challenges of policy implementation and Policy Outcomes in DESOPADEC.

Discussion of Findings

DESOPADEC was used as a case study to examine how accountability affects public policy outcomes and the implementation issues that prevent DESOPADEC from accomplishing its objectives in the oil-producing communities. According to the study, accountability serves as a check and balance in the execution of DESOPADEC public policies and can ensure that staff members perform to standards. The study proved that DESOPADEC's public policies are implemented with integrity and accountability. According to DESOPADEC, the standard of living in the communities that host the oil industry is raised by the full compliance of an accountable implementation of the government budget. The research revealed that accountability keeps employees on track to fulfil mandated goals or objectives by ensuring that their tasks are well aligned with important outcomes. Additionally, accountability procedures have an effect on resource management, which is crucial for the implementation of any policy and has an impact on its results. All of this points to the fact that outcome-based accountability is crucial because it affects and reflects on people's living conditions. More importantly, it promotes confidence or trust between the populace and their commission or government.

The aforementioned is true the study found that DESOPADEC officials do not fully implement government budget in order to raise the standard of living of the population, which is a problem for any organisation that wishes to achieve adequate policy results. Additionally, neither effective nor efficient are the organisations tasked with ensuring effective public accountability in Nigerian government institutions. It is understandable why DESOPADEC's accountability procedures have not improved the public's trust in the commission over time. More intriguingly, it was discovered that DESOPADEC policy decisions have an impact on how residents of oil host communities will live in the future. In order to achieve this, neither the performance expectations of the commission's staff nor the level of resource mismanagement in the communities that host the oil industry have been guaranteed by the implementation of DESOPADEC policy. In a similar vein, interview findings showing that accountability has not affected public policy implementation added to the commission's unbelievable claims and helped many people understand them. The interview made it clear that accountability hasn't worked to increase the credibility of the commission overseeing the implementation of public policies.

However, the test of hypothesis revealed DESOPADEC's policy outcomes are affected by accountability as a result of the coefficient of determination and significant p-value. Simply put, accountability significantly explains policy outcomes in DESOPADEC, and the result is statistically significant according to the significant p-value. The findings also revealed that DESOPADEC's policy outcomes have improved as a result of taking accountability into account. Thus, it can be said that accountability significantly forecasts or explains the results of policy based on the descriptive data and interview findings. According to previously published research,

Lewis et al. (2020) discovered that public policy outcomes should raise peoples' standards of living, which just happens to be the study's finding. Furthermore, Boye- Akelemor's (2019) showed that it was coincidental with this one. In addition, Ukeje et al. (2020) identified accountability as a tool that can influence the results of public policy in any organisation, including DESOPADEC.

Conclusion

For governmental organisations and citizens to continue to exist, grow, and advance, public policies must be successful. As part of enforcing accountability in government, citizens and communities participate in the policy implementation structure so that the actions and decisions of those in positions of power are made public and open to criticism. This not only improves governance, but also helps policies be implemented properly, which leads to better service delivery, community growth, and ultimately good policy outcomes that have an impact on the socioeconomic well-being of the society. The results of this study suggest that accountability procedures have a significant impact on how successfully government policies are implemented. In a country like Nigeria and other countries overall, outcome-based accountability in governmental policies has the potential to significantly contribute to the socioeconomic development of any community, society, or state.

One could draw the conclusion that accountability affects public policy outcomes in the same way that it affects a society's socioeconomic well-being. Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) in Nigeria should be aware of the crucial role that accountability plays in producing lasting public policy outcomes. These results also have an impact on the socioeconomic development of the oil host communities. In order to improve outcomes for its citizens, it is crucial that the agency incorporate ethical practises into every process, from the creation to the application of its policies. The start of the public accountability process involves seven crucial questions that are posed and responded to by the organisations in charge of providing services. The goals for good public policy are outlined in these questions: What results are wanted for the residents of our community? How would we react if we knew the result? How can these conditions be measured? What are our results for the most important metrics? Who are the participants in the partnership? What strategies—including free and inexpensive ones—work to boost performance? What do we have planned? And the following three queries must be posed and responded to in order to evaluate the efficacy of interventions: What did we actually achieve? How well did we perform in terms of (the amount of work completed)? (Work quality) Has anyone gained anything? (Real-world effects of work).

The most important actions to take into account are those requiring the commitment of leaders, administrators, and citizens in order to effectively check and decrease policy inconsistency to the lowest possible level. Both leaders and followers must refocus on values because doing so results in a product of higher

quality than rigid adherence to rules and regulations. Rigid adherence to rules is ineffective because of the absence of value reorientation. No policy will be based on the aspirations of the citizenry and last, corruption will be pervasive, the enormous income disparity will persist, and any outrage at those unethical actions will only add to frustrations and turn dreams into illusions as long as leadership is defined by cultural or regional alliances or success is measured by "what" rather than "how."

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