

Leveraging Technological Innovations for Adaptive Policy Implementation in Response to Disruptions: A Study of Nigeria

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Abstract

Technological innovations are likely to improve communication, data collection, and analysis, as well as enable more efficient and effective decision-making processes. The paper explores the pivotal role of technological innovations in fostering adaptive policy implementation in Nigeria, particularly amidst disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and socio-economic crises. It identifies and analyses the digital platforms, data analytics, and remote monitoring systems that can potentially revolutionise the policy implementation landscape in sectors such as healthcare, education, and environmental management. The research employs a mixed-methods approach, incorporating case studies and expert interviews to evaluate the benefits and challenges of integrating technological innovations into policy implementation processes and presents strategies for promoting their widespread adoption. The findings reveal that digital platforms can significantly enhance policy implementation by facilitating real-time data collection, analysis, and decision-making. However, several challenges impede the full integration of these technological innovations, including limited digital infrastructure, low digital literacy, and inadequate regulatory frameworks. The study concludes by offering a series of recommendations for policy-makers and practitioners seeking to leverage technological innovations for adaptive policy implementation in Nigeria, including investing in digital infrastructure, fostering public-private partnerships, and building capacity through training programmes. By adopting these strategies, Nigeria can strengthen its resilience to disruptions and achieve more effective and responsive policy outcomes. Ultimately, this paper contributes to the ongoing discourse on the transformative potential of technology in public policy, offering valuable insights for other countries facing similar challenges.

Keywords: *Adaptive policy implementation, Technological innovations, Disruptions, Digital transformation, Resilience*

Introduction

The effectiveness of public policy implementation plays a pivotal role in promoting socio-economic development, address inequality, and fostering resilience in the face of various disruptions. However, governments and public sector organisations, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria, often face significant challenges in implementing policies due to a variety of factors, such as limited resources, weak institutional capacities, and insufficient coordination among stakeholders. The occurrence of disruptive events, including pandemics, natural disasters, and political upheavals, can exacerbate these challenges and significantly impact policy implementation processes. In the wake of such events, the need for adaptive policy-making becomes even more crucial to maintain the delivery of public services and minimise negative consequences on society (Brown, Langer, & Stewart, 2020).

Advances technology have the potential to enhance the adaptive capacity of public sector organisations by facilitating innovative strategies for policy implementation. Technological innovations can improve communication, data collection, and analysis, as well as enable more efficient and effective decision-making processes. Several successful examples of technology integration in the public sector have been documented, particularly in countries like Nigeria. However, there remains a need to investigate the application of technological innovations in policy implementation within developing countries like Nigeria, particularly in the context of disruptions. The study has addressed this gap by examining how technological innovations have been leveraged to support adaptive policy implementation in response to disruptions in developing countries like Nigeria.

The importance of effective policy implementation in developing countries cannot be overstated, as it plays a critical role in promoting social welfare, economic growth, and sustainable development. However, disruptive events such as pandemics, natural disasters, and political upheavals can pose significant challenges to policy implementations, calling for adaptive and resilient approaches to ensure the continuation of public service delivery. The paper is justified by the urgent need to understand and improve adaptive policy implementation in developing countries such as Nigeria, in the face of disruptions, leveraging the potential of technological innovations to support this crucial aspect of public sector governance. Through an analysis of case studies and interviews with key stakeholders, the study aims to identify best and significant practices, lessons learned, and potential challenges associated with the adoption of technological tools and platforms in the public sector.

Objective of the Study

The primary objective of this paper is to examine the role of technological innovations in facilitating adaptive policy implementation in response to disruptions within developing countries with a particular focus on Nigeria. To achieve this overarching objective, the following specific objectives will be pursued:

1. To identify and analyse successful cases of technological innovations employed in adaptive policy implementation during disruptive events in developing countries.
2. To explore the challenges and barriers that hinder the adoption and effective utilisation of technological innovations for adaptive policy-making in resource-constrained contexts.
3. To investigate the perspectives and experiences of key stakeholders, including policy-makers, administrators, and technology experts, regarding the role of technology in promoting resilient and adaptive policy implementation.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the investigation into the role of technological innovations in facilitating adaptive policy implementation in response to disruptions within developing countries.

1. What technological innovations have been successful employed in adaptive policy implementation during disruptive events in developing countries like Nigeria, and what factors contributed to their success?
2. What challenges and barriers hinder the adoption and effective utilisation of technological innovations for adaptive policy-making in resource-constrained context?
3. How do the stakeholders, such as policy-makers, administrators, and technology experts, perceive the role of technology in promoting resilient and adaptive policy implementation in developing countries?

Literature Review

The literature on leveraging technological innovations for adaptive policy implementation in developing countries like Nigeria, particularly in the context of disruptions, is relatively nascent. However, several related areas of study provide a foundation for understanding the study.

Digital Government and Public Sector

Digital government transformation has been a key focus in public sector reform efforts globally. Scholars have highlighted the potential benefits of digital technologies in improving public service delivery, increasing transparency, and enhancing efficiency (Brown, Langer, & Stewart, 2020; Bwalya & Mutula 2018). However, there is limited research on the specific application of digital technologies in adaptive policy implementation during disruptions, particularly in countries like Nigeria.

E-Governance and Adaptive Policy-making

Research on e-governance and adaptive policy-making has emphasised the importance of leveraging technology to facilitate collaboration, stakeholder engagement, and real-time decision-making (Okuneye & Ebohon, 2022; Muresan & Sabau, 2021). However, there is a need for context-specific studies on how technological innovations can support adaptive policy implementation during disruptive events in Nigeria.

Policy Innovation and Adaptive Capacity

Ballejos & Montagna, (2021) have examined the role of policy innovation in enhancing the adaptive capacity of governments and public sector organisations. The concept of policy labs, for instance, has emerged as a promising approach for fostering collaboration and experimentation in policy-making. Further research is needed on how technological innovations can contribute to these policy innovation efforts, particularly in nations like Nigeria facing disruptions.

Technology and Resilience in Public Administration

Research on resilience in public administration according to Chen & Miller-Hooks (2017) highlights the importance of adaptive capacity and innovation in responding to crises and disruptions. The role of technological innovations in fostering resilience remains an under-explored area, especially in the context of Nigeria.

Digital Divide and Inclusive Policy-making

The digital divide in developing countries such as Nigeria presents a significant challenge for leveraging technological innovations in adaptive policy implementation. Several scholars such as Puron-Cid, Quiroga-Vega, & Sanchez-Rodriguez, (2021). However, there is limited research on how to bridge the digital divide and promote inclusivity in the context of leveraging technological innovations for adaptive policy-making during disruptions.

Artificial Intelligence and Public Policy

The application of artificial intelligence (AI) in public policy, according to Saumya & Purkayastha (2020), gained increasing attention due to its potential for improving decision-making and service delivery. Despite its promise, the ethical and governance challenges associated with Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the public sector, especially in Nigeria, require further investigation.

Open Data and Collaborative Governance

Open data initiatives have been recognised for their potential to facilitate collaborative governance-based policy-making (Attard, Orlandi, & Auer, (2021). However, there is limited understanding of how open data can be effectively utilised for adaptive policy implementation during disruptions in Nigeria.

Disruptions and Public Adaptation

Research, according to Bidwell, Casey, & Chu (2020) on public sector adaptation to disruptions has highlighted the importance of organisational learning, leadership, and stakeholder engagement. The role of technological innovations in supporting these adaptive processes warrants further exploration, particularly in the context of Nigeria.

Policy Diffusion and Technological Innovation

Karch & Mennicken (2021) examined policy diffusion on how technological innovations can spread across jurisdictions and influence policy change. However, there is limited research on the

diffusion of technological innovations for adaptive policy-making during disruptions within and between developing countries like Nigeria.

The literature reviewed on leveraging technological innovations for adaptive policy implementation in Nigeria during disruptions reveals several overarching themes and gaps. Technological innovations hold significant potential for enhancing public service delivery, transparency, and decision-making processes in the context of adaptive policy-making. However, several challenges must be addressed to fully realise these benefits, including the digital divide, ethical considerations surrounding Artificial Intelligence (AI), and effective utilisation of open data.

Public sector adaptation to disruptions requires a focus on organisational learning, leadership, and stakeholder engagement. Technological innovations can play a supporting role in facilitating these processes, although their specific impact on adaptive policy implementation during disruptions in Nigeria remains under-explored. Additionally, understanding the diffusion of technological innovations across jurisdictions is crucial for informing policy change and innovation. In summary, while the existing literature provides a foundation for understanding the role of technological innovations in adaptive policy-making, further research is needed to explore the strategies, barriers, and outcomes of leveraging these tools during disruptions in Nigeria. This knowledge is essential for informing evidence-based policy recommendations and enhancing public sector resilience and effectiveness in resource-constrained contexts.

Theoretical Frameworks

Several theoretical frameworks can be applied to understand the role of technological innovations in adaptive policy implementation during disruptions in Nigeria. Among such several theoretical frameworks are: diffusion of innovations theory, technology acceptance model, institutional theory, complex adaptive system theory, resource dependence theory, among several others. However, the most suitable for this study includes diffusion of innovations theory and technology acceptance model.

Diffusion of Innovations Theory

Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) Theory, was developed by Everett Rogers in 1962 with the aim to explain how innovations spread within a society or organisation. Rogers defined an innovation as an idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption (Rogers, 2003). The theory posits that the adoption of innovations follows a predictable pattern, where individuals within a social system can be categorised into different adopter categories based on their willingness to embrace new ideas or practices. In the context of adaptive policy implementation during disruptions in developing countries, DOI Theory can help understand the factors that influence the adoption of technological innovations, as well as the role of different actors and social networks in the diffusion process. By understanding these dynamics, policy-makers can develop more effective strategies for promoting the adoption of innovative technologies and improving public service delivery in resource-constrained contexts. However, DOI Theory identifies five key factors that influence an individual's decision to adopt or reject an

innovation. These five factors include relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability.

The Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) Theory is highly relevant and appropriate for studying the adoption and spread of technological innovations in adaptive policy implementation during disruptions, particularly in the context of developing countries like Nigeria. However, the theory provides a valuable framework for understanding the adoption and diffusion of technological innovations in the context of adaptive policy implementation during disruptions. By applying this theory, the study can offer valuable insights and recommendations for policy-makers seeking to leverage technological innovations in resource-constrained environments. The application of the theory can inform policy-making processes and contribute to improved adaptive policy implementation during disruptions, ultimately enhancing public service delivery and resilience in resource-constrained contexts.

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is a model which deals with an information systems theory developed by Fred Davis in 1989. The model was adapted from the Theory of Ransomed Action (TRA) to explain and predict user acceptance and usage of technology. The core premise of TAM is that user acceptance and usage of technology are determined by two primary factors which include perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. “Perceived Usefulness” refers to the extent to which an individual believes that using a particular technology will enhance their job performance or personal outcomes. The more useful a technology is perceived to be, the more likely an individual will adopt and use it. Also, “Perceived Ease of Use” (PEOU), represents the degree to which an individual believes that using a technology will be effortless and free from difficulty. A positive perception of ease of use can directly influence the acceptance and usage of a technology.

By justification, the model is a widely adopted and well-established theoretical framework for understanding user acceptance and usage of technology. Its relevance and significance can be justified based on several factors to include theoretical foundation, empirical validation, parsimony, extensibility, and actionable insights among several others. In a nutshell, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) provides a robust framework for understanding the factors that drive user acceptance and usage of technology. Its insights have been applied across various contexts and domains to inform the design, implementation, and evaluation of technology-based systems and solutions.

Methodology

The paper employs a qualitative research approach to explore the role of technological innovations in facilitating adaptive policy implementation during disruptions in Nigeria. The qualitative method is suitably chosen for the study as a result of its ability to provide an in-depth understanding of the experiences, perspectives, and strategies of key stakeholders in this context. However, case studies were conducted on selected instances of successful technological innovations employed in adaptive policy implementation during disruptive events in Nigeria. These case studies involved a review of relevant documents, reports, and media articles to gain insights into the strategies,

challenges, and outcomes associated with these innovations. Similarly, in-depth interviews were conducted with the use of semi-structured approach as the study engaged the stakeholders involved in the policy implementation process, including policy-makers, administrators, technology experts, and representatives of civil society organisations. The interviews were aims to gather perspectives and experiences on the role of technological innovations in adaptive policy-making, the challenges encountered, and the strategies employed to address them.

More importantly, a purposive sampling technique was used to select case studies and interview participants. The aim was to ensure the inclusion of diverse perspectives and experiences, representing different sectors from the Southwestern region of Nigeria. Qualitative data from case studies and interviews were analysed using thematic analysis. This involved identifying the key themes and patterns within the data, triangulating information from different sources, and interpreting the findings in light of the research objectives and existing literature on the study. This qualitative approach has enabled a comprehensive understanding of the experiences, challenges, and strategies associated with leveraging technological innovations for adaptive policy implementation during disruptions in Nigeria.

Data Analysis

Table 1: Impact of Technological Innovations on Adaptive Policy Implementation

Theme	Frequency
Improved Service Delivery	19
Challenges in Implementation	12
Opportunities for Collaboration	8

Table 2: Barriers and Facilitators of Technological Innovations in Nigeria

Theme	Frequency
Barriers	20
Facilitators	12

Table 3: Strategies for Promoting Technological Innovations in Adaptive Policy Implementation

Theme	Frequency
Capacity Building	18
Stakeholder Engagement	15
Regulatory	10

Table 4: Sub-themes for Improved Service Delivery, Challenges in Implementation, and Opportunities for Collaboration

Sub-theme	Improved Service Delivery	Challenges in Implementation	Opportunities for Collaboration
Increased Efficiency	12	Infrastructure limitations (7)	Public-private partnerships (5)
Enhanced transparency	5	Digital literacy gaps (3)	Knowledge sharing (2)
Expanded access	8	Regulatory barriers (6)	Capacity building (3)
Reduced costs	6		

Table 5: Sub-themes for Barriers, Facilitators, Capacity Building, Stakeholder Engagement, and Regulatory Reforms

Sub-theme	Barriers	Facilitators	Capacity Building	Stakeholder Engagement	Regular Reforms
Resource constraints	10	Local champions (7)	Training programmes (8)	Collaborative decision-making (7)	Streamlined policies (5)
Political instability	4	Tailored solutions (3)	Skill development (5)	Participatory design (5)	Supportive legal frameworks (3)
Cultural resistance	3	Mobile technology penetration (4)	Knowledge sharing (5)	Public awareness campaigns (6)	Incentives for innovation (4)
Digital divide	6				

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the relationship between technological innovation and adaptive policy implementation in Nigeria. Our analysis reveals that the integration of technology in policy implementation plays a crucial role in shaping the adaptiveness of Nigeria to disruptions. The qualitative findings from the interviews and focus group discussions incorporate the potential benefits of leveraging technological innovations in policy implementation. These can be found in the areas of using technology to streamline administrative processes, expedite decision-making, and reduce bureaucratic inefficiencies, facilitating quicker policy adaptations in response to disruptions. Again, advanced data analytics and real-time monitoring can provide policy-makers with valuable insights into the effectiveness of policies, enabling timely adjustments and evidence-based decision-making. More so, digital platforms and online engagement tools can as well promote citizen participation, fostering a more inclusive and

representative approach to addressing disruptions. Specifically, the use of technology in policy implementation can also enhance transparency and public oversight, ensuring that policy adaptations align with the needs and expectations of citizens.

However, the study also identifies potential challenges and risks associated with integrating technology into policy implementation in Nigeria. These may include inequalities in access to digital technologies and infrastructure may exacerbate existing socio-economic disparities and limit the inclusivity of policy implementation. Also, the adoption of technology may raise concerns about data privacy, cyber-security, and the potential mis-use of personal information. More importantly, Nigeria may lack the necessary technical expertise and resources to effectively harness the potential of technology in policy implementation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study has examined the role of technological innovations in fostering adaptive policy implementation in Nigeria in response to disruptions. Through a mixed-methods approach, the study has provided valuable insights into the potential benefits, challenges, and implications of integrating technology into the policy implementation process. The study demonstrates the potential of technological innovations to enhance adaptive policy implementation in Nigeria, enabling the country to respond more effectively to disruptions. While acknowledging the associated challenges and risks, policy-makers should embrace the opportunities offered by technology and implement appropriate measures to harness its potential while safeguarding the public interest. The paper, however, contributes to the ongoing discourse on the role of technology in public policy and administration, particularly within the context of Nigeria. The findings provide the policy-makers with a nuanced understanding of the opportunities and challenges associated with technological innovations and offer valuable recommendations for harnessing their potential to foster adaptive policy implementation in response to disruptions.

Despite the valuable insights generated by the study, the study is limited by several factors. Understanding these factors is crucial for interpreting the findings and identifying opportunities for further investigations. However, the study is limited by sample representativeness which only focuses on a selected group of people in Nigeria context, particularly those with distinct socio-economic and political contexts. Additionally, the selection of participants for interviews and focus group discussions may not be entirely representative of all stakeholders involved in policy implementation, potentially introducing biases in the qualitative findings. More so, the study primarily focuses on a broad understanding of technological innovations without delving into the specific types of technologies and their differential impacts on policy implementation. Due to these limitations, the future study could address these limitations by expanding the scope of investigation to include a more diverse range of countries, employing longitudinal data, and incorporating a broader range of contextual factors and technology types in the analysis.

Recommendations

Considering these findings, it is crucial for policy-makers in Nigeria to balance the opportunities and risks associated with leveraging technological innovations for adaptive policy implementation. However, to address these challenges, the Nigerian government can invest in digital infrastructure

and skills development to bridge the digital divide and build institutional capacity. The government can as well develop robust data protection frameworks and cyber-security protocol to safeguard citizens' privacy and ensure use of technology in policy implementation. Also, the government may establish effective oversight mechanisms to monitor the integration of technology and ensure its alignment with democratic principles and human rights.

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