

**Involvement in Policy Adoption and Public policy implementation in Ntoroko District Local Government,
Uganda**

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Abstract

The study examined the effect of Stakeholder involvement on public policy implementation in Local Governments of Uganda. The objectives were: to examine how involvement in problem identification, policy adoption, and policy analysis affects implementation of Prohibition of Counterfeit agricultural inputs in Ntoroko district. The study employed case study design and used qualitative and quantitative paradigms. The sample size was 266 people of Ntoroko District Local Government and other stakeholders and the sampling techniques employed were purposive and simple random sampling. Consequently, the data collection methods were survey, interview and document review. Data was collected using self-administered questionnaires and interview guides as well as reviewing scholarly documents. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics to test the magnitude of effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. Qualitative analysis was done through thematic analysis and generation of themes in a narrative procedure. It was established that involving stakeholders in problem identification, policy adoption and policy analysis has had a positive and significant effect on the implementation of prohibition of counterfeit agricultural inputs in NDL. It was concluded that improvements in stakeholder involvement (problem identification, policy adoption and policy analysis) would lead to improvement in policy implementation of counterfeit agricultural inputs policy in Ntoroko district. The study recommends the following: All stakeholders should be sensitized about the counterfeit agricultural inputs policy and their views should be considered during the counterfeit agricultural inputs policy adoption.

Key words: Involvement, Policy adoption and Public policy implementation

Introduction

So far it has become evident that the management of projects is incredibly challenging, stemming from the unusual risks and issues of great variety that traditional methods cannot process (Christopher, Komunda, et al., 2022). This uncertainty and complexity relate to the defining characteristics of projects, long duration, huge investment and many uncontrollable emergent factors. There are several ways proposed to categorize the risks and issues. Academicians of public administration all over the globe have clearly underpinned that formulated policies must be adopted

by relevant institutions of government in order to be executed (Gracious, 2023).

Similarly, the United Nations disclose that when all suggestions, alternatives and negotiations are consolidated, adoption transpires in a definite and public way (Frank et al., 2023).

Legitimizing is a dominant intervention in public policy implementation to satisfy legal and constitutional obligations (Post, & Preston, 2012). Scholars of public policy such as (Christopher, Muhindo, et al., 2022), Sugawara and Nikaido (2014)

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insinuate that legitimacy has a stout affiliation to political power and authority and often treated as an autonomous clarifying factor behind phenomena such as public policy implementation and as a necessary attribute for actors.

(Alex & Kazaara, 2023) inform that Legitimacy is used to obtain approval from the wider society, claim authority and validate all the necessary activities in public policy implementation congruent with norms, values, beliefs, purposes, practices, or procedures that are widely recognised, hence the assertion by Jagers, Matti, and Nordblom, (2016) that legitimizing ensures propriety, constitutionality, justice, validity and moderation in the public policy implementation.

von Haldenwang (2017) and Matti (2009) pinpoint Legitimizing in Public Policy implementation as a profound intervention since public declarations and actions of bureaucrats, elected and appointed at all levels, have an impression of setting political/state direction.

However, (Isaac et al., 2023) do not concur with the above scholars by arguing that legitimizing in policy execution is a source of constraints and stifle that impact perceptions, affairs, preferences and opinions that exist to suppress innovation, and create barriers to advance the policy implementation process. Israa (2018) explains that effective project communication is the life force of human collaboration, which affects project execution. The author argues that categorizing stakeholders at the initial stage of project

implementation, distinguishing and handling diversity of desires, interests and prospects will be a catalyst for success, as costs and time of project activities can be optimized. (Faridah et al., 2023) notify the increased acknowledgement among scholars of public policy that policy-makers get approvals of different stakeholders and subordinates to certify that implementation of a policy is necessary and appropriate; policy-makers have to concur with the public that the descriptions of authority or actions are suitable, and attained informed consent documents for execution (Matti, 2009).

However, findings from Bekkers and Edwards (2015) reveal that media has provided a quick avenue for policy approvals; it encompasses the participation of citizens, decision-makers and other political players thereby gaining access to the domain of key policy makers, raises tension and persuades implementation of a policy (Faith et al., 2023). The authors recommend engaging stakeholders from different backgrounds and field of skills and knowledge in order to benefit from project feedback. (Wegulo et al., 2023) found that costs can be minimized, project timelines can be achieved and that project stakeholders can trust government projects even in autocratic governance contexts if an effective system for feedback is in place. The authors, therefore, concluded that efficient communication enables better thoughtfulness among all parties within and without the organization.

Statement of the Problem

Ntoroko district has taken on several interventions for stakeholders to involve in public policy implementation which include: Public Private Partnership; Delegation and Tendering of some functions. These are intended to provide a rich view, a strong and sustained ground upon which stakeholder involvement in the implementation of public policies can

be draw (Mark et al., 2023). In spite of the preceding determination, stakeholder involvement in policy processes in Ntoroko district is still a distant reality; the fact that there is inappropriate budgeting for agriculture sector, as the sector had a 10% funding in FY 2019/20 of which Mushemeza and Mushemeza (2019) cite poor resource allocation as a whole 8% of the 10% was spent on salaries and welfare for agriculture officials of Ntoroko district local government than executing policies (Christopher, Komunda, et al., 2022). Therefore, by current commitments and trends, achieving the target of Uganda Vision 2040 and transition from subsistence farming to commercial farming may be dismal (Allan et al., 2023).

The situation is only worsening with concerns of extreme corruption and authoritarian rule. Government officials come up with policies to favour their interests such as the NAADS programme, Operation Wealth Creation that have not been of substance to the beneficiaries, like the Public Order Management Act, 2013, the Private Member's Bill of Constitutional Amendment 2017 of Article 102 (b) of the Constitution. Several policies in Ntoroko district local government and Uganda at large have only remained on paper and the few that have been implemented have not been impactful to the societies. Hence, the interest of the researcher was to investigate stakeholder involvement and implementation of public policies in Local governments of Uganda using the case of Ntoroko District.

Study Objective

To assess how involvement in policy adoption affects implementation of the prohibition of counterfeit agricultural inputs ordinance in Ntoroko District local government.

Study Question

How does involvement in policy adoption affect implementation of prohibition of counterfeit agricultural inputs ordinance in Ntoroko district local government?

Study Hypothesis

Stakeholder involvement in policy adoption has a significant effect on implementation of prohibition of counterfeit agricultural inputs ordinance in Ntoroko district local government.

Methodology

Research design is a framework for integrating components of the study coherently and logically to effectively address the research problem. It constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data (Odoh & Chinedum, 2014). The study used a case study research design. The study adopted both qualitative and quantitative research paradigms. Naughton, Hopewell, Lathia, Schalbroeck, Brown, Mascolo, and Sutton (2016) broadly disclose that the prime motive for using the emergent methodology in research is to harness the benefits of qualitative and quantitative research approaches; reducing flaws of the two approaches to get logical and dependable conclusions. The sample size was determined using statistical tables of Krejcie and Morgan (1970) as cited from Adam (2020).

Table 1: Sample Size and sampling procedures

No.	Population Category	Access Population	Sample Size	Sampling Technique
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1	Top management	4	4	Purposive sampling
2	Senior Management	25	24	Purposive sampling
3	Agri-based Civil Society Organisations	90	73	Simple random sampling
4	Agri-input Suppliers	7	7	Purposive sampling
5	Leaders of Famers' groups & associations	194	129	Simple random sampling
6	Committee Councillors	33	29	Simple random sampling
	TOTAL	353	266	

Source: (ULRC Report, 2017)

Walliman (2011) refers to sampling as the procedure of selecting a representative group of cases from a larger group. To Pandey and Pandey (2015), the benefits of sampling include helping a researcher to acquire correct and dependable data concerning the population with at least a minimum cost in terms of time and energy. Creswell (2012) says that the choice of sampling techniques is contingent on the amount of rigour desired, the features of the population that is targeted, and the availability of participants. The investigator used both non-probability (purposive) and probability (simple random) sampling techniques to choose the respondents for this study. Data was analyzed in form of tables, frequencies and percentages using SPSS & STATA (Nelson et al., 2022)

Findings

Table 1: Policy adoption and public policy implementation

Statements measuring policy adoption	SA		A		NS		D		SD	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
I was sensitised about the counterfeit agricultural inputs policy	82	34.7	37	15.7	15	6.4	48	20.3	54	22.9
My views were considered during the counterfeit agricultural inputs policy adoption	4	1.7	13	5.5	20	8.5	103	43.6	96	40.7
The counterfeit agricultural inputs policy passed through proper procedures	19	8.1	32	13.6	23	9.7	116	49.2	46	19.5
I support the implementation of this ordinance	26	11	35	14.8	13	5.5	123	52.1	39	16.5

Source: Primary data

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, N=Non-committal, D=Disagreed, SD=Strongly Disagreed,

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Table 1 shows that when respondents were asked whether they were sensitised about the counterfeit agricultural inputs policy, the majority, 50.4%, were in agreement; 34.7% strongly agreed and 15.7% agreed. This means that the majority of the respondents were sensitised about the counterfeit agricultural inputs policy.

On whether their views were considered during the counterfeit agricultural inputs policy adoption, the majority, 84.3%, were in disagreement; 40.7% strongly disagreed and 43.6% disagreed. This means that the majority of the respondents' views were not considered during the counterfeit agricultural inputs policy adoption. In regard to whether the counterfeit agricultural inputs policy passed through proper procedures, the majority, 68.7% were in disagreement; 19.5% strongly disagreed and 49.2% disagreed. This means that the majority of the respondents were of the view that the counterfeit agricultural inputs policy did not pass through proper procedures.

Furthermore, on whether they support the implementation of this ordinance, the majority, 68.6%, were in disagreement; 16.5% strongly disagreed and 52.1% disagreed. This means that the majority of the respondents did not support the implementation of this ordinance.

In line with the descriptive findings above, key responses from interviews also gave effect to the same position. In an interview to describe whether the stakeholders were involved in the adoption of the ordinance, interviews were analysed and described as indicated below:

One of the key informants noted:

"After gathering the problems faced by our people, the appropriate committee looked at the problem for an intervention. However, it should be noted that when you go out in the communities to gather information not all the information received is useful. Therefore, after receiving all information, the committee sat down with some technical people and looked out for what was exactly useful for the policy and therefore some views were taken and others left out".

Another key informant added:

"We made all effort to sensitize the people about the counterfeit agricultural inputs policy before it was adopted but also before its implementation but many Ugandans look at all policies with a political perspective. Their view sometimes depends on their political lineage. So, it isn't surprising that many of them don't support the implementation of this ordinance".

Generally, the analysis of the information above indicates that the committee of Ntoroko local government tried their best to involve stakeholders during the adoption of the policy and these included councillors, local leaders and farmers. *"Invitations were also done for some key people for instance general meetings of society elites, technocrats and prospective funders (NGOs) were convened followed by a technical meeting as well as Technical Planning Committee of the district".*

Based on the above, it is clear that some stakeholders were involved in policy adoption and this linked with the respondents who agreed with the statements on sensitisation about the policy and support for the implementation of

the ordinance. However, not all stakeholders participated in such meetings and this may be the reason why many of them did not support the implementation of this ordinance.

Hypothesis Number 2: Stakeholder involvement in policy adoption has a significant effect on implementation of prohibition of counterfeit agricultural inputs ordinance in Ntoroko district local government.

To establish the effect of policy adoption on implementation of prohibition of counterfeit agricultural inputs ordinance in Ntoroko district local government, the researcher considered the corresponding Standard Beta – value for policy adoption. A Standard Beta value = 0.386 means that every one unit increase in policy adoption shall lead to an increase of 0.386 units of implementation of prohibition of counterfeit agricultural inputs ordinance in Ntoroko district local government. The researcher therefore accepted hypothesis number 2 and concluded that policy adoption has a positive significant effect on public policy implementation in local governments of Uganda.

Discussion

The findings revealed that there was a significant relationship between stakeholder involvement in policy adoption and implementation of the prohibition of Counterfeit agricultural inputs. Data obtained indicates that involving stakeholders in policy adoption such as: sensitisation on the policy, consideration of the stakeholders' views, passing through proper procedures and stakeholders' implementation of the policy is likely to bring about effective implementation of the prohibition of counterfeit Agricultural inputs. These findings indicate that for policy adoption to be successful, stakeholder involvement needs should be considered first, to increase value for them. This clearly shows that there was holistic involvement of the stakeholders in all stages of policy implementation. These findings are in agreement with Graham, Dust, and Ziegert, (2018) who informed that Legitimacy is used to obtain approval from the wider society, claim authority and validate all the necessary activities in public policy implementation congruent with norms, values, beliefs, purposes, practices, or procedures that are widely recognised, hence the assertion by Jagers, Matti, & Nordblom (2016) that legitimizing ensures propriety, constitutionality, justice, validity and moderation in public policy implementation. The current study findings also agreed with scholars of public policy such as Gasper and Aphorpe (1996), Mulyanyuma (2013), Sugawara and Nikaido (2014) who insinuate that legitimacy in policy adoption has a stout affiliation to political power and authority and often treated as an autonomous clarifying factor behind phenomena such as public policy implementation and as a necessary attribute for actors. However, Meehan, Menzies, and Michaelides (2017) do not concur with the above scholars and argue that legitimizing in policy execution is a source of constraints and stifle that impact perceptions, affairs, preferences and opinions that exist to suppress innovation and create barriers to advancing the policy implementation process.

Israa (2018) explains that effective project communication is the life force of human collaboration, which affects project execution. The author argues that categorizing stakeholders at the initial stage of project implementation, distinguishing and handling diversity of desires, interests and prospects will be a catalyst for success, as costs and time of project activities can be optimized.

Conclusions

Conclusions on this investigation were arrived at after scrutiny of the study findings.

The study established that involving stakeholders in policy adoption has a significant effect on policy implementation of the prohibition of counterfeit agricultural inputs in Ntoroko District. The study therefore concluded that improvement in policy adoption in terms of legitimacy and approvals shall lead to improvements in policy implementation of prohibition of counterfeit agricultural inputs in terms of project cost, timeliness, project quality, project output and stakeholder satisfaction.

Recommendations

Based on the study findings and for stakeholder involvement in policy adoption to have an improved effect on the implementation of the prohibition of counterfeit agricultural inputs, the study makes the following recommendations:

- All stakeholders should be sensitised about the counterfeit agricultural inputs policy.
- All stakeholders' views should be considered during the counterfeit agricultural inputs policy adoption.
- The counterfeit agricultural inputs policy should have been passed through proper procedures and future policies should therefore pass through proper procedures to be accepted by all stakeholders.

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