



## Problem of Policy Co-creation in Birnin Kebbi Local Government of Nigeria

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Previous studies touched on problems of policy implementation in Nigeria without research on policy co-creation using Birnin Kebbi Local Government as a unit of analysis. Thus this research intends to cover the gap. Qualitative research was used. Unstructured interviews were conducted with the stakeholders of the Birnin Kebbi Local Government. The findings show that there were institutional weakness, poverty, lack of trust and education constitute hindrance to policy co-creation in Birnin Kebbi Local Government. The paper recommends promoting good governance, creating trust through transparent government as well as increase in accountability.

**Keywords:** Public policy, co-creation, implementation and local government

**INTRODUCTION:** Policy making is about finding solutions to human problems, ranging from provision of portable water, climate change, education, health care system, security to refuse disposal. The developed countries were able to achieve growth and development through consideration and making policies on the felt needs of their various communities in an efficient and sustainable ways. Co-creation is about users driven innovation, for instance participatory budgeting in Brazil is a clear picture of that. Co-creation is a smart way of incorporating citizens in to policy making and implementation, where people bring their expertise to improve policy quality and giving input to government in order to improve their lives. People bring their skills, capability to improve government (Shulha & Lam, 2015). Co-creation is built on coordination that permit both agencies as well as end users coming together for the achievement of common goods and complementing the effort of government. The Taiwan co-creation irrigation system which is one of the best in the world, citizens enjoys autonomy, they were subject to close supervision and monitoring, there was network of farmers group, government plays vital role in provision of subsidy (Centre for Public Service and Productivity, 2018).

The Co-creation is very low in Birnin Kebbi Local Government due to poverty, poverty is very rampant in the Local Government. The result of it is that people don't have time to contribute to policies affecting their lives.

In another development, level of literacy in Birnin Kebbi Local Government is low, National Population Commission (2010) reported that 58.9% of people in Birnin Kebbi Local Government never attended school, with only 6.6% of the populace that attended tertiary education. The Nigerian Education Data Survey (2015) also shows that 44% of those between 20 to 40 years are not schooling in Kebbi State with only 16% of the same age bracket who either completed primary, secondary, or tertiary education.

Though there are many researches on problems of policy implementation in Nigeria, no research on policy co-creation using Birnin Kebbi Local Government as a unit of analysis that is why the study is closing the gap.

The structural variables include:

1. The group of participants or actors involved;
2. Whether benefits are subtractive or fully shared (i.e., public goods vs common pool resources).
3. The type of participants;
4. Direct communication; and
5. The type of the production function;
6. Evidence about former actions;
7. How individuals are linked; and
8. Whether individuals can enter or exit voluntarily (Cage, 2018).

**Research questions:** The following are the research questions guiding the study: -

1. What are the problems of Policy Co-creation in Birnin Kebbi Local Government?
2. Why is there low Policy Co-creation in Birnin Kebbi Local Government?
3. What are the innovative ways of Policy Co-creation in Birnin Kebbi Local Government?.

**OBJECTIVES:** The following are the research objectives:-

1. To examine the problems of Policy Co-creation in Birnin Kebbi Local Government.
2. To explore the reasons for low Policy Co-creation in Birnin Kebbi Local Government.

To suggests innovative ways of Policy Co-creation in Birnin Kebbi Local Government.

**Research design:** The study was mainly qualitative research.

**Population of the study:** The population of the study comprises the stakeholders of Birnin Kebbi Local Government.

**Sample and sampling techniques:** Convenient sampling was used to gather information from the respondents.

**Methods of data collection:** Both primary and secondary data were used, Primary data was sourced using unstructured interview, 10 respondents were interviews (table 1).

**Method of data analysis:** Thematic analysis was used and MQDA 12 was used to analyse the data.

Informants	Number interviewed
Local Government officials	2
Councilors	2
Community	2
NGOs	2
States officials	2
Total	10

Table 1: Informants interviewed.

**Findings:** From the table 2, ten informants were interviewed and a code was given to them ranges from D1 to D10, the ages of respondent's ranges from 23 to 47, their qualifications ranges from SSCE to MBA and majority of them were married.

	Coding	Age	Qualification	Marital status
Informant1	D1	47	Bsc	Married
Informant2	D2	45	MBA	Married
Informant3	D3	40	Bsc	Married
Informant4	D4	36	HND	Married
Informant5	D5	33	Bsc	Married
Informant6	D6	40	NCE	Married
Informant7	D7	25	SSCE	Married
Informant8	D8	28	ND	Married
Informant9	D9	26	Bsc	Married
Informant10	D10	23	SSCE	Single

Table 2: Demographic data of the respondents

From the table above, ten informants were interviewed and a code was given to them ranges from D1 to D10, the ages of respondent's ranges from 23 to 47, their qualifications ranges from SSCE to MBA and majority of them were married. Word cloud was run to determine the most frequent words used by informants and the result is in figure 1.



Figure 1: Word cloud in the current study.

From the figure above, the following themes and sub-themes were formed: -

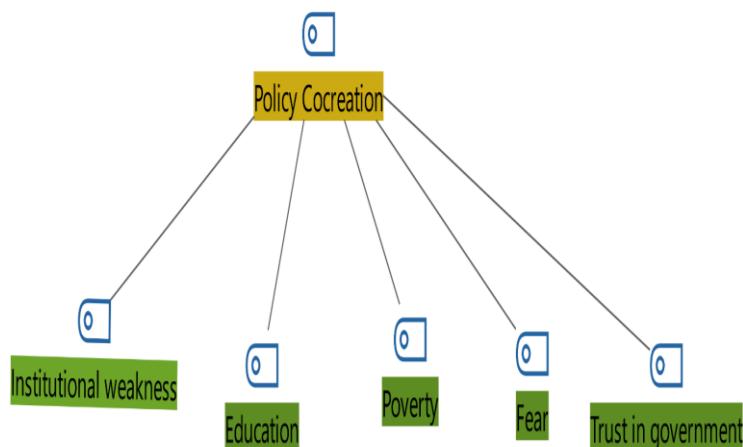


Figure 2: Concept map of the theme and sub-themes

**Institutional weakness:** Weak institution constitute hindrance to policy co-creation in Birnin Kebbi Local Government, the institution that provide services to people is weak, which has negative effect on governance. Lack of commitment on the part of leaders has crippled Local Government as well as problem of transparency in discharge of their duties. In an interviews conducted with the Informants, they reiterated the following: -

Among the Three tiers of government in Nigeria that is the Federal, State and Local Government, there is no tier of government that is worst like Local Government, corruption is very high, they are doing nothing to improve the lively hood of the common man rather than syphoning the money meant for developmental programmes (D1 &D7). An Informant also added that, "people are not supporting co-creation in Birnin Kebbi Local Government due to the fact that the leaders entrusted to manage the affairs of Local Government are diverting money meant for the development project for their personal use, that is why people are not giving them policy input" (D9).

**Poverty:** Poverty is another factor mentioned by Informants, when people are poor, they don't have time to contributes to policy making as well as implementation as some informants observed: - "people are poor, there are some that cannot even afford two times meal per day, they are bothered with what to eat, as a result they don't have time in bringing out ideas toward development of their communities and locality in general" (D4, D9 & D10). In another development, informants added that "poverty constitute little problem to the co-creation in Birnin Kebbi Local Government, the biggest problem is that there is no culture of stakeholders collaboration on issues affecting the populace" (D3 & D6s).

**Fear:** Most of the innovation policy fail to make it to the fullest because of fear of consequences by the Government. Government relies on Public Opinion but because of fear some time affect people coming out to express themselves on a particular policy of Government. As Informants put it "People are afraid of giving their contribution in shaping public policy so that the Local Government office holders and their politicians would not misinterpret their mission, at the same time not to put themselves into problem" (D8 & D4). In addition to the above, some Informants added that "The Local Government officials saw it as a kind of political embarrassment, that is why they don't normally listen to the populace in policy making on a particular issue of government" (D2, D5 & D9).

**Trust in Government:** There is crisis of trust in modern government especially at Birnin Kebbi Local Government due to inability to provide basic services to the generality of the populace, for example some Informants were asked the reason for lack of co-creation in Birnin Kebbi Local Government, they stated that "There are many people who are willing to give policy input toward local Government advancement, but even if you give them input they don't normally listen to such input" (D8 & D10).

In addition to the above, an Informant added that: -

Politicians are selfish, they don't listen to advice, we have been advising them on inputs to government policy through stake holders consultation but at the end of everything, they only bring out policy that enrich them and their families, living masses with no option (D3, D6 & D8).

**Education:** Education has become one of the major preoccupations, vital to people's life-chances, central to any strategy for economic

prosperity and social cohesion. But the challenges facing people as they become adults are more complex and demanding than ever before. Inputs giving to government by citizens depends on their educational attainment. As some Informants rightly said: -

For Local Government to be effective in twenty first century, people must come out to support as well as giving government input, but illiteracy constitute problem to Co-creation in Birnin Kebbi Local Government, some people have the zeal of input but they are not educated and are not aware of the channel of communication as well as who to channel their inputs through leading to low participation in decision making (D2, D5 & D10). The results were presented in table 3:

Code System	Frequency
Code System	37
Fear	7
Institutional weakness	8
Education	10
Poverty	6
Trust in government	6

Table 3: Coding summary table

**The findings:** However, from the research carried out in Birnin Kebbi Local Government, it was discovered that: -

1. Weak institution such as corruption hinders Co-creation in Birnin Kebbi Local Government. Corruption is very rampant in the Local Government which is affecting service delivery in the Local Government, recruitment was not based on merits, award of contract has been jeopardized etc.
2. The findings also show that poverty is very high, people are bothered with the immediate needs such as food rather than contributing to decision making.
3. The analysis shows that people are fearing the consequence of giving input to the Local Government, avoiding conflict as well as misinterpretation of ideas.
4. More important, the findings demonstrated that citizens have lost confidence in the Local Government that is why they are not contributing to decision making.
5. Finally, low level of education is affecting people as a result contributing to decision making in Local Government was very difficult.

The proponent of the theory include Ostrom (2005).The theory postulates that there is need to examine the actors in studying policy formulation and implementation such as the family, neighborhood, community, governments (federal, state and local government), nations and alliance of nations and payoff if all of them cooperate to implement the policy. The theory emphasize the identification of problem as well as building trust. The collective action problem is view as public good game. It is also known as common pool resource. The basic trust of the theory is that:-

1. Decisions about strategies are made independently and simultaneously.
2. All participants have common knowledge of the exogenously fixed structure of the situation and of the payoffs to be received by all individuals under all combinations of strategies.
3. No external actor (or central authority) is present to enforce agreements among participants about their choices.

If such a game is finitely repeated, and everyone shares complete information about the structure of the situation, the predicted outcome of non-cooperative game theory for each iteration of the game is again the Nash equilibrium of the constituent game. The assumption is that if people would not cooperate in the last game of a series, they would not cooperate in the second-to-last game, the third-to-last game. All the way back to the initial game. The extensive tentative research has shown that collaboration in finitely repeated social dilemmas is much higher than predicted using backward induction while it does decay over time as the last iteration of the series is approached (Ostrom, 2005; Amy, 2019). Wade (2017) has gone so far as to assert that subjects are not complex in or capable of backward induction. A rich array of theoretical speculations, formal game-theoretic models, and computer models of evolutionary processes have generated a long list of structural variables that are frequently postulated to affect the likelihood that a set of participants will be able to achieve outcomes greater than the deficient Nash equilibrium—or, the cooperators' dividend

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION:** From the research conducted in Birnin Kebbi Local Government, the study

demonstrated that corruption is very prevalence in the Local Government which is creating problem to Co-creation, the findings also shows that poverty is very high in the local government, as a result people are bothered with fulfilling their basic needs rather than contributing to the decision making. The result also shows fear of misinterpretation of people's inputs is also affecting Co-creation in Birnin Kebbi Local Government as well as Illiteracy.

The following are some of the recommendations with the hope that if put in place will help in addressing problems of Co-creation in Birnin Kebbi Local Government and indeed Nigeria at large.

1. Corruption is one of the problems facing Birnin Kebbi Local Government, therefore for effective Local Government in 21<sup>st</sup> Century, there is need to reduce the rate of corrupt practices in the Local Government.
2. Also the administrative and political office holders in the Local Government need to be transparent in their activities.
3. Another recommendation is that government should create opportunity for people both at Federal, State and Local Government to reduce the unemployment rate in the Local Government.
4. In addition to the above, Governments both at Local, State and Federal should invest in education so that the educated citizens can contributes immensely to Co-creation in the Local Government.
5. Also, Birnin Kebbi Local Government needs to build trust on citizens by way of running transparent government and citizens involvement in decision making etc
6. Finally, there is need for stake holder's engagement in the Local Government Affairs by way of calling for town hall meeting, asking citizens their felt needs so that to put it as part of policy of Local Government.

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