Policy Implementation and Effective Management in the Health Sector: An Evaluation of the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

by

Uwa Kingsley and Udoma J. Daniel

Department of Business Management
Akwa Ibom State University, Obio Akpa

Faculty of Management Sciences
National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN)

Abstract

The aim of this study was to examine how effective management of policy implementation has helped to achieve the institutional goals and objectives. The study adopted both historical and descriptive methods in gathering data. Findings of the study revealed that University of Uyo Teaching Hospital has experienced good performance as a result of effective management in the area of training of medical personnel, reduction of stillbirth, support services and effective management of molecular virology among others. The study further revealed that in spite of its achievement, the institution is still sullied with some teething problems such as inadequate medical personnel, low budgetary allocation by the government, disposition and unnecessary delay etc. Based on this, it was recommended among others, that government should train and retrain more medical personnel to enhance efficient and effective service delivery. Also, government should allocate more funds to the institution to enable it actualize its goals and objectives.

Keywords: Policy, Implementation, Effective management, Health Sector, Akwa Ibom State

1. Introduction

Policy is the idea, plans, decisions, proposals, goals, schemes and course of actions that has been agreed and chosen by management, be it private or public for implementation in order to actualize or achieve a desired goal. Policy could emanate from private individuals, where the decision is bound to affect the person alone and not the generality of the people as is termed “private policy”. On the other hand, policy proposal can emanate from government where its actions are bound to affect the general masses, as it is called “public policy” (Olaniyi, 1998).

Policy is a deliberate system of principles to guide decisions and academic rational outcomes. It is a statement of intent, and is implemented as a procedure or
protocol. They are generally adopted by the board or senior governance body within an organization whereas the procedures would be developed and adopted by senior executive officers. Policies can assist in both subjective and objective decision making as senior management saddled with decision making must consider the relative merits of a number of factors before making decision.

Policies tend to have both intended and unintended effects, that is, benefit seeking and waste limiting or standardization as well as unintended effect, negative consequences. Policies are usually promulgated through official written documents with endorsement and signature of the executive powers within an organization to legitimize the policy and demonstrate that it is considered in force. Policy documents comprises purpose, why the policy and its desired effect or outcome, applicability and scope, to focus only on desired target and avoid unintended consequences, effective date, when it comes to force, responsibilities, which parties and organizations are responsible to what part in the policy, policy statement, regulations, requirements or modifications that the policy is creating (Sharkansky, 1978).

Policy implementation is when a policy is enforced and put into practice during which time many obstacles will tend to barricade the policy. Implementation encompasses the activity of developing the organizational structure and climate best suited for the implementation of the chosen or adopted policy. Also, the implementing entity requires clear capabilities and sufficient capacity to successfully implement policies initiatives. This includes strong and ongoing leadership, an inclusive approach, sound processes and effective use of resources.

Management is the utilization of resources to achieve organizational goals effectively and efficiently. Efficiency has to do with the management of outputs and inputs in such a way that outputs are greater than inputs. Effectiveness has to do with achieving the results or the reasons for setting up the institution. It can at this point be adduced that the various government hospitals in Nigeria would be effectively managed if there is decrease in mortality and morbidity rates as well as poor management of patients. To achieve these, government hospitals require good policy as it bothers on good organizational structure, control and accountability procedures as well as performance measures. This article is aimed at ex-raying this situation with specific influence to University of Uyo Teaching Hospital, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State (Ikelegbe, 2006).

2. Objectives
The objective of this work was to assess the effectiveness of health policy implementation in the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital.

3. Conceptual Explanation
The need to enhance the developmental progress of our health sector nationwide is ever becoming more critical and urgent. The pace at which this can be realized hinges essentially on the ability of government to formulate appropriate policies and, very importantly, on the capability of the public bureaucracy to effectively implement the formulated policies. Policy implementation is the process of translating mandates into
action, prescription into results, and goals into reality. It refers to the processes, in reality and activities involved in the application, effectuation and administration of a policy. It is the action taken to carry out, accomplish and fulfil the intents, objectives and expected outcomes of public policies. It is the act and process of converting a policy into reality and enforcing a policy (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1973).

Policy implementation is one and of course the most outstanding parameter in the policy process of any organization. The first and stepping stone in the policy making process is policy generation. The policy process itself is the pattern of activities, interactions, procedures and methods of making policies at the level of international organization, national government, and state government and at other sectors level like health, education and agriculture (Ikelegbe, 2006, Khan, 2016).

Policy implementation is an important stage of the policy-making process. It means the execution of the law in which various stakeholders, organizations, procedures, and techniques work together to put policies into effect with a view to attaining policy goals. It can equally be viewed as a process, an output and an outcome, and it involves a number of actors, organizations and techniques of control. It is the process of the interactions between setting goals and the actions directed towards achieving them (Simon, 2010, Stewart et al, 2008).

Implementation refers to the process of converting human and material inputs, including information, finance, technical knowledge, human demand and supports, etc. into outputs in the form of goods and services (Honadle and Klauss, 1979). Grindle in Ibok (2015) saw implementation as a process of “moving forward a policy objective by means of administrative and political steps”. Ikelegbe (2006) viewed implementation as the committal of funds, the establishment of structures and methods, the hiring of personnel, the administering or executing of activities, and the securing of policy goods, services and other intended outcomes”.

McClintock as quoted in Ibok (2012), observed that the implementation stage poses a major problem to developing countries. “The successful implementation of public policy is difficult in first world countries; it is more difficult in the third world and it may be most difficult for reform-orientated governments in the third world”. This therefore entails that implementation or management of health policy is the exercise of professional, economic, political and administrative or management authority to manage the country’s health affairs at all levels. Federal, State and Local Government Areas as well as mechanisms, processes, and institutions that give citizens and groups the opportunity to articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences, (Ibok, 2015 and UNDP, 2008).

Generally, it can be deduced that implementation is the process of translating policy mandate into action, prescription into results and goals into reality. It is the linkage between a formulated policy objective and a concrete and tangible executed policy. It is therefore the major explanation for the failures or success of public policies. The truth is that the difficulties of administration or management rather than the nature of the policy, programmes or projects, have been the main problems with public policy especially health policy (Ikelegbe, 2006).
Commenting on effective management and policy implementation, Hornby, (2010) saw the word effective as producing the results that is wanted or intended or producing a successful result. In this context, effective management, therefore, entails managing an organization in such a way as to produce, attain or realize the goals and objectives the organization was set up to achieve.

On the other hand, management is the utilization of resources to achieve organizational goals efficiently, economically and effectively. Efficiency has to do with the management of output and inputs in such a way that outputs are greater than inputs. Economical operations are based on purchasing the right quality for the right price, while effectiveness entails achieving the results. Going by this, the various government hospitals would be effective if there is decrease in mortality and morbidity, poor management of patients etc. To achieve these, government hospitals require good organizational structure, control and accountability procedures as well as performance measures.

The above is anchored on the fact that the manager is the chief executive of government institutions or chief medical director as in the health sector who supervises the operational functions of governmental institutions. The chief executive plays a vital role in the success or failure of such organizations. He is the person who comes in direct touch with all the corporation’s staff, and he can take a wide range of decisions on his own initiative in order to ensure that the corporation is functioning smoothly and effectively. It is also pertinent to add that several heads of departments who are in charge of various departments; divisions, units and sectors of public organizations usually assist the chief executive or the general manager/chief medical director.

For any policy to be effectively implemented, clarity and specificity are a prerequisite. Besides, the structure of the implementation organization, the nature of its leadership, the quality of its personnel, the organization’s executive capacity in relation to the nature and scope of the policy to be implemented, are also important. It is worth mentioning that whether the target group is organized or institutionalized, the nature of its leadership and its previous experience (if any) with the introduction of new policies matter. Additionally, factors in the environment that will influence how the policy is implemented and that will be influenced by implementation of the policy must equally be taken into consideration (Eminue, 2009).

4. **Theoretical Framework**

This work is anchored on basic need theory as propounded by Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1943). This theory is based on the idea that individuals work to satisfy human needs such as food and complex psychosocial needs such as self-esteem. He coined the phrase hierarchy of needs to account for the roots of human motivation. To him, motivation depends on the realization of needs. He opined further that if the needs and the desire of individuals are realized, they will be motivated.

This theory believes that needs are of hierarchy and priority which is classified into five levels thus: physiological needs or requirement for human survival. If these requirements are not met, the human body cannot function properly and will ultimately
Physiological needs are thought to be most important which should be met first such as air, water, clothing, shelter, health etc. Safety and security needs include: personal security, financial security, health and wellbeing and safety against accident/illness and their adverse effect (Ibok and Unwanabasi, 2017).

The theory is suitable for this study because physiological needs form the lowest order needs which Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs hold that we must satisfy each need in turn, starting from the first need which deals with most obvious needs for survival itself. Conversely, if the things that satisfy our lowest needs are swept away, we are no longer concerned about the maintenance of our higher order of needs (Maslow, 1943). In tandem with this study, improved health status or healthful living falls among the physiological needs, meaning that where the health status of the people is not improved, it becomes a waste of time and resources if any other need is being tried to meet since “health is wealth”. *This therefore informed why government established hospitals to ensure that this need is met, hence, the* establishment of University of Uyo Teaching Hospitals, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

### 6. Materials and Methods

This entails the basic principles and assumptions of inquiry. It shapes and inform the process of this study. This study adapted historical and descriptive method in gathering data. Data analysis for this work were based on statistical tends from secondary sources. They were collected mainly through review of documents such as annual reports of the teaching hospital, medical journal of the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital, newspapers, historical records, internet sources. The authors also visited University of Uyo Teaching Hospitals for personal observation as well as intertwined some patients and staff for unbiased and objective conclusion (Obasi, 1999).

### 6. Result and Discussion

**6.1 Policy Implementation and Effective Management in the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital**

The University of Uyo Teaching Hospital is one of the Federal Hospitals in Nigeria. The hospital was converted in 1994 by the Akwa Ibom State Government as Akwa Ibom State Specialist Hospital, and was later renamed Sani Abacha Specialist Hospital in 1996 before it was taken over by the Federal Government in 1997 and was renamed Federal Medical Centre, Uyo, a name it is bearing in conjunction with its operational name, University of Uyo Teaching Hospital, which was conferred on it following establishment of the College of Health Sciences at the University of Uyo and its consequent transformation to cater for the clinical training of the medical students ((Idobo, 2015).

The University of Uyo Teaching Hospital was established for grooming upcoming medical students, provide specialized health care services and a third level referral centre for medical conditions that defied capability of personnel and equipment of both secondary and private health care institutions within and around the state as obtained in other parts of the country and the world at large.
In line with the mission of the institution, the hospital is committed to providing quality health care services, manpower development through teaching and research for Akwa Ibom people and beyond in a compassionate and dignifying manner. The available facts shows that with the establishment of University of Uyo Teaching Hospital, the health status of the people both within outside the state, have witnessed great improvement in the reduction, if not, eradication of stillbirth including death within the first week of life, reduction in the birth of babies whose gestational age is between 28 and 37 weeks, reduction in the birth of a baby that weighs less than 2500 grams, reduction in the death of a mother arising from complications of child birth, regulate and bring the population of the state under control, thus preventing population explosion and its attendance effects, other specialized medical services and training of more medical personnel for the state in particular and Nigeria at large (Harrison, 2009, Ibok and Unwanabasi, 2017).

It is also noteworthy that the presence of this teaching hospital has rendered referral services. Referral is a process by which a health worker transfers the responsibility of care temporary or permanently to another health professional. By this, there is a good linkage among levels of care. This linkage has made it possible for a smooth transition of patients from other levels of care in the state namely, primary and secondary, to tertiary which University of Uyo Teaching Hospital represents (Labaran, 2009 and Ibok, 2015, Ojo, Ransom-Kuti, Sorungbe, Oyegbire, and Bamisaiye, 1991).

The management of the Teaching Hospital is applauded for its effective management of molecular virology (PCR) retroviral laboratory unit. Retroviral laboratory was established in 2017 by joint collaboration between the Federal Government and donor agencies/implementing partners namely Clinton Foundations HIV/AIDS initiative and institute of Human Virology Nigeria as part of the strategy of the Federal Government’s Strategy of the HIV diagnosis, treatment and care. This unit serves as referral centre for Early Infant Diagnosis of HIV in the south-south geopolitical zone serving Akwa Ibom and the neighbouring States (Umofia, 2015).

The University of Uyo Teaching Hospital Molecular Virology Laboratory was activated from 21 – 30 September, 2009 by the institute of Human Virology, Nigeria (IHVN), supported by CDC/PEPFAR funding for national coverage of early infant diagnosis (EID) of HIV and Viral land testing for monitoring of HIV treatment. The level of performance shows that, this unit has rendered services to one hundred and eighty (180) sites in Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Rivers, Bayelsa, and Abia States for early infant diagnosis of HIV using PCR methods. This unit has performed well especially in the external proficiency testing programme organized by International Laboratory Branch Centres for Disease Control and Prevention Division of Global HIV/AIDS. As a result of the institution’s performance, series of Certificates of Excellence have been awarded to University of Uyo Teaching Hospital PCR Laboratory for 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014. It is also good to note that this same unit has made four star (4) in the National Laboratory Accreditation for services, mentored by the Medical Laboratory Council of Nigeria in collaboration with Centres of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (Umofia, 2015).
Effective management is also evidenced in the Department of Radiology. Radiology is especially important today because nearly every patient has an imaging study while in the hospital. Radiology helps in making the diagnosis in almost 70 – 90 percent of cases besides offering many therapeutic guided procedures. The Teaching Hospital is not lagging behind. With the purchase and installation of a 16 multi-slice spiral CT scanner has raised radiology services in the hospital from the traditional game of shadows with conventional imaging into a realm of high technology. With this new technological tool, measurable improvement in medical diagnosis, research and training has been witnessed in the hospital (Ekeh, 2015). Aside, the Teaching Hospital has witnessed great improvement in the areas of out-patient, paediatrics, pharmacy, dietetic, family medicine, community health, physiotherapy, nursing services, accident and emergency, health information management, gynaecology, National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), infrastructural development, manpower development etc.

However, notwithstanding the above mentioned achievements occasioned by its effective management, the institution’s abysmal performance is quite glaring in the following areas; shortage of drugs, inadequate number of doctors to manage parents, poor services as patient have to spent a whole day before being attended to, lack of stable power supply, long queue, nepotism due to preferential treatment, use of consultants who only appear once a week or every two weeks due to paucity of medical personnel, infrastructural decay, lack of standard mortuary, poor attitude of nurses and other medical personnel to work and patients, lack of funds occasioned by low budgetary allocation to the institution, poor working environment among others (Effiong, 2015, Udoma 2017).

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

The University of Uyo Teaching Hospital is synonymous with effective management as it has helped to enhance healthy living within and outside the State. Effective management of organizational policies leads to goal attainment and development. With effective management in University of Uyo Teaching Hospital available facts and records revealed that there has been a remarkable reduction if not complete eradication of many maladies especially the infectious, non-communicable diseases and other special cases referred to it. Also, mortality rate has drastically reduced, longevity has enhanced a realization of one’s full potentiality for increased productivity in the state. Also, the institution has saved the Akwa Ibom people the trouble, heartache, huge and unaffordable cost of seeking specialized medical attention outside the state and the country. Above all, University of Uyo Teaching Hospital is one of the health institutions to reckon with in the country as a result of effective management. Although the institution just like other institutions is sullied with few teething problems, but we can convincingly that its good performance outweighs the problems which given the necessary support by the government and the general public, it can be surmounted.

In order to reposition University of Uyo Teaching Hospital for enhance performance, the following recommendations are made:

1. That the government should train and retrain more medical personnel in various specialties to ease congestion and time wastage by patients.
2. Government should allocate more funds to this institution to enable it meet its aims and objectives.
3. Government should provide generating set as well as solar power plan for steady power supply.
4. Government should provide good office accommodation for staff as well as modern wards for patients.
5. Government should establish quality control/monitoring unit to ensure quality service delivery.
6. To decongest the hospital, people should be enlightened on the need to patronize state owned hospitals and primary care services in the state.
7. Government should strengthen SERVICOM to ensure fair and equal treatment of patients devoid of favouritism.

8. References


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