

**ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
NIGERIA'S TELECOMMUNICATIONS POLICY**

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TP/08/09/R/0037

B.Sc. Electronic and Electrical Engineering (OAU)

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF DEGREE OF
MASTERS OF SCIENCE IN TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT**

**AFRICAN INSTITUTE FOR SCIENCE POLICY AND INNOVATIONS,
FACULTY OF TECHNOLOGY,
OBAFEMI AWOLOWO UNIVERSITY, ILE-IFE NIGERIA**

2013

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TITLE: ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NIGERIA'S
TELECOMMUNICATIONS POLICY

DEGREE: M.Sc (Technology Management)

YEAR: 2013

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the Glory of the ALMIGHTY God.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To God be the glory for this project. I am grateful to the following sets of people for being there all through the stages of this programme.

My supervisor, Prof. T.O. Oyebisi, has been a caring father, teacher, and much more an encourager in seeing this thesis to completion. I am very grateful to you for tolerating me throughout the study. My co-supervisor, Dr. A.I. Oluwaranti for his encouragement, he is a mentor, a guide and a God sent facilitator for this research work. May the Lord bless you both.

My unreserved thanks to Professors M.O. Ilori, J.B. Akarakiri ,F.E. Ogbimi, Dr. Irefin, B.A. Oluwale, Dr. (Mrs) Olaposi and G.O. Binuyo of the African Institute for Science Policy and Innovation (AISPI) for their contributions, guides, support and impacting in me knowledge throughout my course in the Institute. I also want to thank Mr. A. Olayinka (AISPI) for his immense support, guidance, and fatherly encouragement in the course of this study. May the Lord bless you and all that pertains to you.

My thanks also go to Mr. and Mrs. Oladipo, Bamidele, Dr. and Dr. (Mrs) Ogunusi, Mrs. Victoria Tanimonure, Mr. Biodun Olosunde for their encouragement, support and prayers. I want to specially thank my pastor Rev. Prof. G.E. Erhabor. His daily encouragement and prayers is indeed great over me. May the Lord continue to lift you up.

I am eternally grateful to my late parents Mr. and Mrs. L.A. Bolarinwa. I cannot quantify your labour over my life. How I wish you are alive to reap the reward of your bottomless efforts. I am grateful to my siblings Mr. Femi Ojedodun, Mrs Gbemi Sulola, Mrs. Toke Opasina and Bola, Johnson, and my uncle Mr. S.O. Okeleye. Lastly, I really appreciate my wife and my love, Gbemi for her all round understanding, support and sacrifices. May the Lord continue to make you my reliable help in time of need. I want to appreciate my little

boy; Toluwani for bearing my many absences from home during the course of this study and work travels.

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ABSTRACT

The study appraised the level of implementation of Nigeria's National Telecommunications Policy (NNTP) and investigated factors influencing the implementation. It also developed a framework that can enhance a more effective implementation of the policy with a view to improving the service delivery in the Nigerian Telecommunications industry.

The samples for the study were selected from Lagos and Abuja (FCT) where most of the telecommunications key players were concentrated. The study utilized questionnaire to elicit information on the objectives. Three sets of questionnaire were used to collect information from different institutions/organizations and telecommunications service subscribers. A total of 250 questionnaires were administered on Ministry of Communications Technology, Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), thirteen telecommunications service providers, and telecommunications services subscribers. The questionnaire elicited information on the level of implementation of the NNTP and factors affecting the policy implementation. A total of 219 (87.6%) questionnaires were retrieved. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Results showed that, on a five point Likert rating scale, the policy have engendered the availability of the following telecommunications services: mobile cellular network (4.67), microwave network (4.00), international gateway (4.22), data communications (4.28) and computer networking (4.06), respectively. The findings also showed that there was no significant difference ($F=9.83$; $p>0.05$) in the effectiveness of policy regulations such as method of license approvals (3.88), telecommunications service provision (3.29), and frequency spectrum management (3.44) used by the regulators. In addition, the study showed that there was low level

of knowledge of the policy ($F=7.20$; $p<0.05$) in Lagos (1.84) and Abuja (1.52). Likewise, the study also showed that there was no significant difference ($F=15.04$; $p<0.05$) in the mean rank of the impact of the policy on employment generation (4.22), attraction of international investment (4.28), creation of competitive services (3.83) and promotion of better regulatory environment (3.33), respectively. Furthermore, the result revealed that there was no significant difference ($F=6.72$; $P<0.05$) in the mean rank of the factors influencing the implementation of the policy with population density distribution (3.87), funding/investment (2.75), indigenous capacity development (2.86), national tax regime (3.37), national security (3.62), government policies (3.47), socio-economic problems (3.21), regulatory interventions (3.00), and availability of scarce resources (3.14). The study proposed a framework based on multi-regulatory approach that will involve the merger of NCC, NBC, NITDA and other relevant stakeholders into one body to better address the emerging convergence of technologies within the telecommunications sector.

The study concluded that the NNTP implementation was yet to translate to high services satisfaction although it has engendered wide spread access to telecommunications services and that there will be a better policy implementation if a multi-regulatory approach to policy implementation is considered.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Telecommunications is a vital engine of any economy; it is an essential infrastructure that promotes the development of other sectors such as agriculture, education, industry, health, banking, defense, transportation, and tourism. It is indispensable in times of national emergency or natural disasters. It considerably reduces the risks and rigours of travel and rural migration (NNTP, 2000).

The availability of an efficient, reliable, and affordable telecommunications system is a key ingredient for promoting socio-economic and political development of any nation hence the need for such a system to be universally accessible and cost effective. Telecommunications provides the opportunity for a country to share in the wave of science and technology developments, and the general economy in positive ways that account for the remarkable economic growth in advanced countries and the newly industrialized countries (NNTP, 2000).

Telecommunications is any transmission, emission or reception of signs, signals, writings images, and sounds or intelligence of any nature by wire, radio, optical, or other electromagnetic means (International Telecommunications Union, 2012). This incorporates the generally acceptable, though more vague notion of communication at a distance. In earlier times, telecommunications involved the use of visual signals such as beacons, smoke signals, semaphore telegraphs, signal flags, and optical heliographs (Wikipedia, 2013). Pre-modern means of telecommunications include audio messages such as coded drumbeats, long-blown horns, and loud whistles (Wikipedia, 2013). In modern age of electricity and electronics, telecommunications now includes electrical and electromagnetic technologies such as telephone,

teleprinter, the use of radio and microwave transmission, fibre-optics, communications satellites and the internet (Wikipedia, 2013).

The ongoing integration of technologies makes this distinction obsolete. For instance, the videotext system integrates television, telephone, radio, video, film, and communications satellites. The focus of telecommunication is therefore on electronic media and information technology to such extent that this technology is linked to the media (Mosco, 1985). In addition, telecommunications include information technology to the extent that it is used in communication. On the other hand, Information Technology (IT) represents a cluster of associated technologies defined by their functional usage in information access and communication, of which one embodiment is the internet (Hassan, 2010). Computing and telecommunications including areas such as broadcasting and publishing, used to be quite distinct industries, involving distinct technologies. All these have converged around certain key activities, such as use of the internet. Using the same underlying technologies, modern computing and telecommunications devices handle data in digital form. This allows data to be shared between and processed by many different devices and media and used in a vast range of information-processing activities. This convergence is what is referred to today as Information and Communication Technology (ICT) (Ogunsola and Aboyade, 2005). Over the past two decades, telecommunications have grown to be of paramount importance, both at national and international level. Governments of nations have continually enacted policies to regulate the telecommunications sector. However the rapid changing of technology in telecommunications makes it difficult to set long-term policy objectives. It may be appropriate to set short to medium term policy objective. Having identified this phenomenon, governments all over the world are increasingly enacting legislation and policies that would further facilitate the adoption of emerging technologies. Most nations have opted to change their telecommunications sector to a

more liberalized or deregulated market structures in order to survive the pace of globalization that is being driven by development and advancement of ICTs. In view of this rapid move towards a more integrated information society, the availability of internationally competitive telecommunication services is vital. Consequently, at the time of publications, certain prescriptions contained in the NNTP were outdated, noted to be either overtaken by events or required further modifications, in order to be consistent with new developments and emerging industry trends both locally and internationally. The initiative for a new policy for the telecommunications sector in Nigeria therefore became compelling (Arzika, 2000). To enhance domestic and universal acceptability in the anticipated new environment, a steering committee was encouraged by the National Council on Privatization to review the existing policy. The product of deliberations of the steering committee consequently engendered Nigeria's National Policy on Telecommunications (NNTP) in the year 2000.

The difference between the new policy initiative and previous ones by government lies in the following reasons:

- i. The political environment is different with a democratic government in place and therefore arbitrariness and inexplicable inconsistency are deemed not to re-occur.
- ii. In order to be part of the current trend of globalization and convergence in the telecommunications industry, Nigeria needs a more proactive policy that recognizes international best practices.
- iii. A strong political will as reflected in the committed involvement of the political leadership of the country in the initiative underscores the importance the leadership attached to telecommunications development.

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