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RESEARCH ARTICLE

An Investigation into the Factors Influencing Public Sector Financial Management Reforms in Enugu, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study delves into the intricate relationship between political and institutional factors and their influence on the design and implementation of public sector financial management reforms. Utilizing the PLS-SEM methodology and analyzing data through SmartPLS 4.0, the research provides a comprehensive perspective on how these determinants shape the course of financial reforms within the public sector. Key findings reveal a statistically significant positive effect of institutional factors, encompassing organizational structure, internal control systems, and staff competence, on reform design and implementation. Surprisingly, political factors, despite their perceived centrality in policy changes, showed no significant effect on these reforms. The research thus underscores the pivotal role of institutional robustness in fostering transformative financial management reforms, while also suggesting a potential recalibration in how political dynamics are factored into such initiatives. This study serves as a pivotal guide for policymakers, illuminating the pathways for sustainable, effective, and impactful public sector financial management reforms.

Keywords	*Public Sector Financial Management Reforms; Institutional Factors; Political Influences; PLS-SEM Methodology; Reform Implementation*
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Introduction

Financial management remains a cornerstone of an effective public sector (Kristensen et al., 2019), providing the necessary foundation for delivering public services in an effective and efficient manner. In many regions worldwide, and especially in developing countries, the nuances of public sector financial management can dictate the trajectory of progress. One such region is Enugu, a significant city and state in Nigeria, which has experienced its distinctive challenges and breakthroughs in public financial management. The ongoing quest for regional development and robust governance in Enugu amplifies the importance of comprehending the forces that mold public sector financial management reforms therein.

The political landscape, no matter the scale, whether national or regional, significantly affects the adoption and sustainability of reforms (Biermann et al., 2022). Aspects like political stability, the caliber of leadership, and the nature of the regulatory environment can either promote or obstruct the initiation and implementation of financial reforms. In parallel, the institutional underpinnings within the public sector—spanning organizational structures, internal control mechanisms, and the proficiency of the workforce—can determine the viability and success of proposed financial changes.

This research seeks to unearth the complexities of public sector financial management reforms in Enugu, Nigeria. It endeavors to discern how political factors weigh on the planning and actualization of these reforms in this regional context. Simultaneously, it explores the potential influence of institutional attributes, including the organizational framework, control methodologies, and employee competence, on the design and execution of public sector financial management reforms.

With these considerations, the study proposes two central hypotheses: Firstly, political elements, including aspects of stability, leadership acumen, and regulatory nuances, significantly shape the design and fruition of public sector financial management reforms in Enugu. Secondly, it hypothesizes that specific institutional factors, such as the organizational layout, governance mechanisms, and staff expertise, play a pivotal role in guiding and implementing these reforms within the public sector of Enugu.

Unraveling these factors holds more than just theoretical significance; it presents practical insights for regional policy-making, governance strategies, and the overarching goal of fostering sustainable development in Enugu.

Research Problem

In recent times, public sector financial management reforms have become pivotal in promoting transparency, accountability, and efficiency, especially in regions undergoing rapid socio-economic transformation. Enugu, a notable state in Nigeria, is no exception to this trend. While there has been a visible drive towards reforming financial management in its public sector, the success and direction of these reforms seem to be determined by an intricate interplay of both political and institutional factors.

The political terrain in Enugu, with its unique political dynamics, leadership changes, and evolving regulatory stipulations, might either accelerate or impede these reforms. Concurrently, the internal workings of public institutions in Enugu – their organizational frameworks, the robustness of internal controls, and the expertise of their staff – might offer either catalysts or barriers to these changes.

Thus, the core research problem this study aims to address is: "To what extent, and in what ways, do political and institutional factors in Enugu, Nigeria, influence the design and implementation of public sector financial management reforms?" Understanding this problem is essential, as its solutions could inform better policy decisions, drive meaningful reforms, and ultimately lead to improved financial management in the public sector of Enugu.

Research Questions:

1. How do Political factors influence on the design and implementation of public sector financial management reforms.
2. What impact do Institutional factors such as organizational structure, internal control systems, and staff competence significantly influence the design and implementation of public sector financial management reforms.?

Research Hypotheses:

1. H_{01}: Political factors such as political stability, leadership, and the regulatory environment have a significant influence on the design and implementation of public sector financial management reforms.
2. H_{02}: Institutional factors such as organizational structure, internal control systems, and staff competence significantly influence the design and implementation of public sector financial management reforms.

Theoretical Review: Factors Influencing Public Sector Financial Management Reforms in Enugu, Nigeria

The study on the factors influencing public sector financial management reforms in Enugu, Nigeria, can be deeply rooted in various theoretical foundations. However, for the purpose of this study, the emphasis will be placed on the **Institutional Theory**, a prominent lens through which reforms, especially in the public sector, are often examined.

Institutional theory can provide a useful framework for studying the impact of institutional and political factors on the design and implementation of public sector financial management reforms. According to institutional theory, institutions are the rules, norms, and beliefs that shape the behavior of individuals and organizations within a society (Fritz et al., 2017). In the context of public sector financial management reforms, institutional theory can help us understand how institutional pressures, such as those exerted by external stakeholders like the World Bank, can influence a government's decision to adopt, implement, and use integrated financial management information systems (IFMIS) for the management of public financial resources (Tetteh et al., 2021).

Political factors also play a crucial role in the success of public sector financial management reforms. For example, political leadership and commitment to professionalization are important factors for sustaining PFM reforms over time (IFAC, 2022). The success of PFM reform is not only linked to the culture and context of an individual country but also to senior management commitment and political will (Swarbrick, 2021). When there is political determination and engagement among senior managers, the chances of effective implementation and success of reform programs improve (Swarbrick, 2021).

Using institutional theory as a foundation for studying the impact of institutional and political factors on public sector financial management reforms can provide valuable insights into how these factors shape the design and implementation of such reforms. The Institutional Theory offers a comprehensive theoretical lens to understand the adoption, adaptation, and sustainability of public sector financial management reforms, especially in a localized context like Enugu, Nigeria. By emphasizing the role of institutional pressures, norms, and legitimacy, the theory provides a robust framework for dissecting the intricate interplay of political and institutional factors in shaping PSFM reforms.

Empirical Review

Rotimi et al. (2021) delved into the impacts of selected public financial management tools on performance in the Nigerian public sector. They aimed to determine their efficacy as reliable instruments to curb financial leakages in the Nigerian public sector. Using a descriptive survey research design, the study utilized both random and judgmental sampling techniques to pick a sample from the study population, comprising government Ministries, Departments, Agencies, and other economic observers. The research utilized descriptive statistics and correlational analysis to test the formed hypotheses, revealing a strong relationship between the Treasury Single Account (TSA), the Government Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS), the Integrated Personnel Payroll System (IPPIS), and financial performance in the Nigerian Public sector. Despite showing promise, the IPPIS met resistance, especially from tertiary institution workers, due to associated errors. Recommendations include further public enlightenment on these tools and enhanced training for the staff at the offices of the Accountant General.

In Mamidu and Akinola (2020), the authors examined matters concerning financial management and auditing procedures in the Nigerian public sector. The paper was based on the agency theory and made use of an analytical review research design. The study found that various efforts had been made towards public sector financial management reforms by the Nigerian government, aiming to improve accountability, service delivery, and financial reporting. These reforms have also faced resistance in certain areas. The paper recommends a more systematic approach for the institutions responsible for monitoring and enforcing PFM reforms.

Onodugo et al. (2021) assessed the influence of public sector reform programs on human resources management and civil service in Nigeria from 2000 to 2015. They used secondary data supplemented by primary data from stakeholders in public service. The results indicated marginal impact, with the main benefits being improvements in salaries and functionality of pension and retirement plans. However, many policy initiatives aimed at transparency, accountability, and value for money saw policy reversal, delayed implementation, or outright abandonment.

Amah and Okpala (2022) investigated public sector financial management effectiveness in Nigeria in the context of sustainable development goals. Using the World Bank's policy and institutional assessment variables, they analyzed data from 2009 to 2018. Results showed that while there has been some growth in economic output per capita, human development hasn't seen a positive impact. They pointed to declining performance ratings of policy and institution quality variables as a potential setback.

Emmanson and Ajayi (2021) probed into the effects of public sector entity reforms on transparency and accountability in Nigeria between 2015 and 2020. They looked at specific proxies such as the Ease of Doing Business, Open Budget Initiative, and Corruption Index. Their survey revealed that while some reforms brought moderate results, others had little or no impact on transparency and accountability. They concluded that corruption is a major hindrance to socio-economic growth in Nigeria.

Effiong et al. (2021) explored the impact of public financial management reforms on economic development in Nigeria from 1999 to 2019. Their survey revealed that despite the reforms, corruption and misappropriation of public funds remained significant challenges. The study highlighted factors like weak institutional frameworks, lack of political commitment, and delays in the budgetary process as barriers to Nigeria's economic development.

Adewumi-Audu et al. (2018) examined the critical success factors in implementing public procurement policies within an African emerging economy. The study identified potential influencing factors such as governance structure, budgetary provision, political will, and workforce capability. They proposed further empirical investigation on factors that could either hinder or advance the implementation of effective public procurement policies in Nigeria.

Lastly, Owusu-Akomeah et al. (2022) discussed public sector financial management reforms in developing economies, taking insights from Ghana. They assessed the impact of reforms like Program Based Budgeting (PBB) on fiscal decentralization in a selected Municipal Assembly in Ghana. The results revealed a positive relationship between PFMRs and fiscal decentralization. Challenges such as non-adherence to budgetary allocations and delays in the release of inter-governmental transfers were identified as hindering the implementation of PBB in Municipal Assemblies in developing economies.

Knowledge Gap

Current State of Knowledge:

1. Existing research on public sector financial management reforms has often approached the topic from a technical and procedural standpoint, focusing on the formal elements of design, best practices, and outcomes.

2. Studies have illuminated the broader role of political dynamics in policy formulation and implementation in various sectors, but a nuanced understanding of how these dynamics directly influence the design and execution of public financial management reforms remains partial.

3. Likewise, while the significance of institutional attributes like organizational structure, control systems, and staff competence is acknowledged in the management literature, their interplay and cumulative impact on the intricacies of public sector financial reform design and execution are not exhaustively explored.

Research Gap Aligned with Research Questions/Objectives:

1. **Political Factors:** There is a discernible gap in understanding how specific political factors, such as political will, competing interests, power dynamics, and political stability, directly mold the design and execution of public sector financial management reforms. This aligns with the research question aiming to dissect the influence of political factors on reform design and implementation.

2. **Institutional Factors:** Despite the acknowledgment of institutional attributes in influencing organizational outcomes, there's an inadequately explored intersection between elements like organizational structure, internal control systems, and staff competence, and their combined influence on the design and implementation of public sector financial management reforms. This aligns with the research question that seeks to discern the impact of these institutional factors on reform processes.

Research Method

The population of this study was the staff of some selected public sector in Nigeria. Purposive sampling technique was employed. The sample size was collected for 217 with consideration of the statistical adequacy of the sample to get 0.8 power with 0.05 alpha. Out of 217 respondents (comprising the staff of the selected public sector to whom the research questionnaire was distributed, only 168 pieces of the questionnaire were returned to the researchers. This means that the respondents' response rate is 77.4%. The remaining 22.6% was not feasible to use because there were some question items that were left empty or were not answered by the respondents (missing value). So, the number of questionnaires analyzed in this study was 168 pieces.

Measurement

Measurements in the study used a 4-point Likert scale starting from High (4) to Moderate to No (1). The 4-point Likert scale was used because it was easy to respond and required less time consideration to complete when compared to open-ended questions. To measure the variables of institutional factor the following proxies were used organizational structure, internal structure, staff competence and institutional culture, while political leadership, political stability and political environment are proxies used to measure political factor.

Table 1 shows a summary of the demographic characteristics of the respondents to provide information about the age of respondents, gender of the respondent, educational qualification, professional role and years of working experience as considered for this study. Additionally, in this study, we tested the conceptual underpinnings of the hypothesis using Smart PLS version 4.0. The analysis was presented in a transparent and systematic manner, allowing for comprehension of the conceptual framework and results.

Table 1: Sample Characteristics

Variable	*Category*	*Frequency*	*Percent*
Gender	Male	112	66.7%
	Female	56	33.3%
Age(yrs.)	<25	27	16.1%
	25-34	61	36.3%
	35-44	51	30.4%
	>45	29	17.3%
Educational Qualification			
	NCE/OND	47	27.9%

	B.Sc./HND	84	50%
	Post Graduate	37	22.1%
Professional Role			
		33	19.6%
		93	55.4%
		42	25%
Years of experience			
	1-5yrs	71	42.3%
	6-10yrs	45	26.8%
	11-15yrs	32	19%
	>15yrs	20	11.9%

Results and Discussion

The research used PLS-SEM based on primary data collected to find out a direct relationship between the institutional and political factors on the design and implementation of public sector financial management reforms. SmartPLS 4.0 was used to analyze structural equation models. Measurement of the model through an algorithm to explain the variance of the dependent construct. In the first step, the construction score was estimated. Then the final estimation from external loading was also calculated as the structural model of the path coefficient, which results in the R-Squared value of the endogenous latent variable.

Table 2: Validity and Reliability Test

Latent Variables	*Cronbach's Alpha*	*rho_A*	*Composite reliability*	*Average variance extracted (AVE)*
Design and implementation of public sector fin. Mgt reform.	0.696	0.701	0.831	0.622
Institutional Factor	0.782	0.787	0.859	0.604
Political Factor	0.735	0.739	0.827	0.618

Three primary findings are provided by Smart PLS: latent variable R-Squared values, path coefficients for the structural model, and outer loadings for the measurement model. Additionally, the reliability of individual indicators, the average extracted variance, and the composite reliability of internal consistency testing are all considered in the assessment of the measurement.

In order to determine whether a construct is valid and reliable, hypothesis testing examines the structural relationships between the constructs. Since the Cronbach alpha, or composite reliability, value is larger than 0.7, the result is considered high quality and reliable. When the reliability test yields a result larger than 0.7, it indicates that the value is high and satisfactory. To establish convergent validity, look at the AVE. In table 2 it can be seen that the AVE value is greater than 0.5, which means that the results are acceptable.

To evaluate the discriminant validity of the 3-variables is used in the study, Heterotrait-and Monotrait (HTMT) in table 3 analysis was executed, while the Fornell-Larcker criterion were examined in table 4.

Model Assessment

Table 3: Heterotrait-Monotraiat ratio (HTMT)

S/N		Heterotrait-Monotraiat ratio
1	Political factor <-> Design and implementation of public sector financial management reforms	0.541
2	Institutional factor <-> Design and implementation of public sector financial management reforms	0.427

Table 4: Fornell-Larcker criterion

	Design and implementation of public sector fin. Mgt reform.	*Institutional Factor*	*Political Factor*
Design and implementation of public sector fin. Mgt reform.	0.789		
Institutional Factor	0.682	0.777	
Political Factor	0.234	0.354	0.417

The confirmatory factor analysis's findings, which are presented in table 3, support the empirical evidence for the majority of the variables' uniqueness. It is important to note that the aforementioned table does not show discriminant validity issues by the $HTMT_{0.85}$ criterion. This suggests that collinearity issues between latent constructs were not detected by the HTMT criteria.

The Relationship between political and institutional factors on the design and implementation of public sector financial management reforms

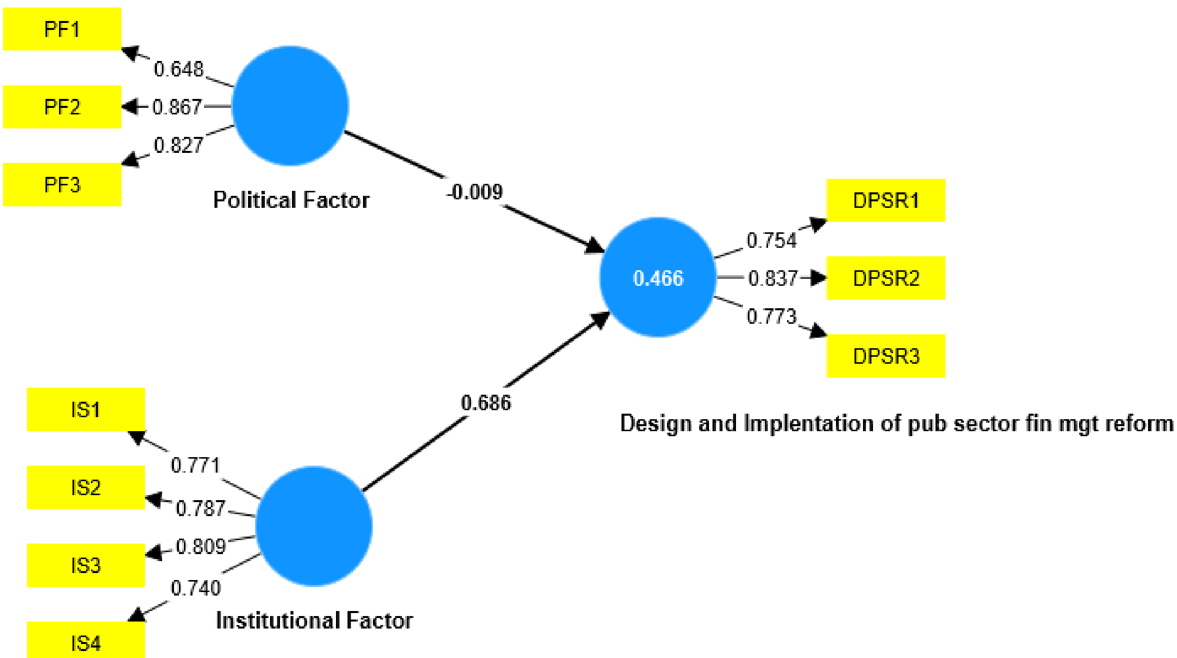

Figure 1 shows the factor loading of individual items and confirms the confirmatory factor analysis as for the study.

Structural Equation Modelling

In Smart-PLS, the measurement model and structural model are often the first two stages used in order to observe the impact of predictor variables on the outcome variable. A few of the criteria, such construct validity and dependability, have already been covered. In addition to that in the structural modelling equation R square also shown for the predictive ability of predictors variables on the outcome variables. The value of R-Squared for the model are 0.497 indicates that 49.7% variation in design and implementation of public sector financial Management reform is caused by institutional factor and political factor.

The model fit was tested for the model using SRMR value which is 0.028 respectively. This means that the model is a good fit.

Table 5: The Direct Effect of Institutional and Political Factor on Design and Implementation of Public Sector Financial Management Reforms

	Original sample (O)	*Sample mean (M)*	*Standard deviation (STDEV)*	*T-statistics (|O/STDEV|)*	*P values*
Institutional factor<-> Design and implementation of public sector financial management reforms	0.686	0.683	0.084	8.193	0.000
Political factor <-> Design and implementation of public sector financial management reforms	-0.009	0.020	0.081	0.106	0.916

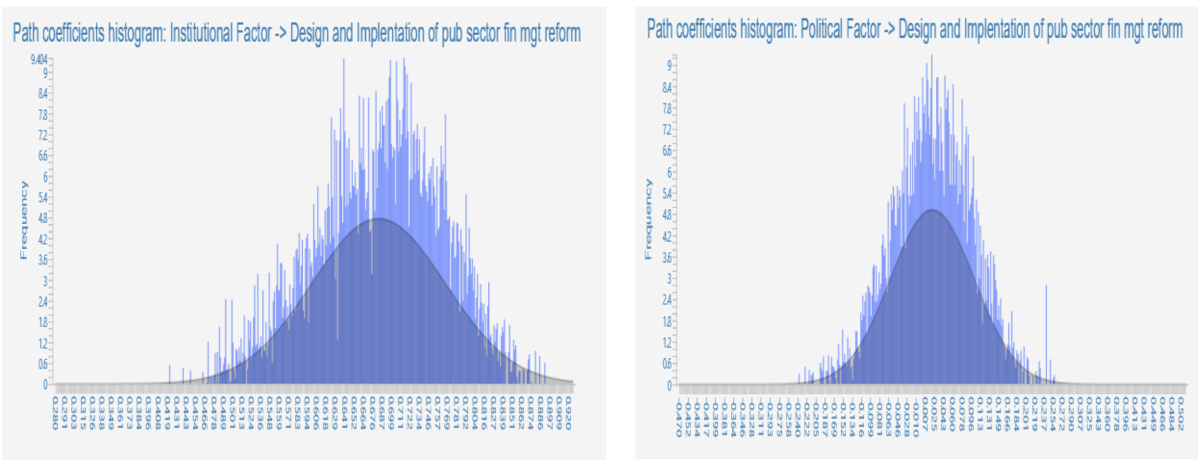

Fig 3: Total Effect Histogram for model 1 & 2

The study aimed at identifying the effect of institutional and political factors on the design and implementation of public sector financial management reforms. The result of HTMT in table 3 indicates that the variables are correlated however there was no presence of multicollinearity within the variables. Table 5 indicates that at 5% level of significance there is statistically significance positive effect of institutional factor on the design and implementation of public sector financial management reform. Also, the result indicate that political factor has no statistically significant effect on the design and implementation of public sector financial management reforms.

Key Findings

1. Institutional factor and selection have significant positive effect on design and implementation of public health financial management reforms. [β=0.686; T-Statistic = 8.193; P values < 0.001]
2. Political factor and selection have no significant effect on design and implementation of public health financial management reforms. [β=-0.009; T-Statistic = 0.106; P values < 0.0001]

Discussion of Findings

Positive Impact of Institutional Factors on Reforms:

The finding that institutional factors have a statistically significant positive effect on the design and implementation of public sector financial management reforms is pivotal. This suggests that the inner workings of an institution, including its organizational structure, internal control systems, and the competence of its staff, can be influential determinants of the success of financial reforms. Such a result underscores the essence of the "institutional backbone" in driving meaningful change in the public sector.

In practical terms, it means that for reforms to be successful, there might be a need to strengthen the institution from within. This could involve investing in training programs to enhance staff competence, revisiting and optimizing the organizational hierarchy to ensure clear communication and responsibility channels, and fortifying internal control systems to prevent financial mismanagement and encourage accountability.

Moreover, this finding aligns with institutional theory, which posits that organizations are more likely to succeed when their internal structures, processes, and capabilities are robust. It suggests that policymakers and stakeholders keen on implementing financial management reforms should perhaps focus more on these institutional aspects, ensuring they are well-optimized for the desired reform outcomes.

No Significant Impact of Political Factors on Reforms:

The absence of a significant relationship between political factors and the design and implementation of public sector financial management reforms is both surprising and enlightening. Conventional wisdom often positions political will, stability, and governance as core drivers (or inhibitors) of public sector reforms. The thinking has typically been that without political support or in the face of political interference, reforms can be hard to initiate, much less implement effectively.

However, this finding throws a curveball, suggesting that, at least in the context of this study, political dynamics may not have had a significant bearing on reform outcomes. This could be interpreted in several ways. It might be possible that the reforms studied were designed in a manner that reduced political interference or that the political environment during the time of the study was neutral, hence not affecting the reforms significantly.

Alternatively, it could also suggest that while political factors are undeniably essential in some contexts, they might not always be the dominant force determining reform success or failure. This has significant implications for policymakers, suggesting that while political considerations are essential, other factors, like institutional ones, might sometimes play an even more critical role.

In sum, while both findings are insightful, they also stress the complex and multifaceted nature of public sector financial management reforms, where various factors, both institutional and political, interplay in diverse ways to shape outcomes.

Implication of Findings

Implication of Institutional Factors' Significance: The positive and statistically significant relationship between institutional factors and the design and implementation of public sector financial management reforms underscores the critical importance of organizational structure, internal control systems, and staff competence in reform processes. It suggests that for successful reforms, there's a need to prioritize strengthening these institutional components. Policymakers, when designing and implementing financial reforms, should give considerable attention to the inherent systems and structures within the public sector. This might entail investing in capacity building, streamlining internal control systems, and ensuring that organizational structures are conducive to the efficient management of public finances.

Implication of Political Factors' Lack of Significance: The absence of a statistically significant relationship between political factors and the design and implementation of the reforms is intriguing. It implies that, within the context of this study, political factors such as political will, political stability, and governance may not play as pivotal a role in financial management reform outcomes as previously thought. This challenges the conventional wisdom that political dynamics are paramount in public sector reforms. However, it's crucial to exercise caution when interpreting this finding. It does not negate the importance of political factors altogether but indicates that in the studied context, they may not be the driving force behind reform successes or failures. Practitioners should, therefore, balance the weight they give to political considerations with other potential determinants when planning or evaluating reforms.

Conclusion

In this research, we embarked on a journey to ascertain the influence of political and institutional factors on the design and implementation of public sector financial management reforms. Leveraging the advanced analytical tools of SmartPLS 4.0 and the PLS-SEM methodology, the study unveiled some pivotal insights. Institutional factors, encompassing organizational structure, internal control systems, and staff competence, were found to significantly and positively impact the design and implementation of such reforms. This underlines the paramount importance of institutional robustness and effectiveness in driving transformative change within the public sector's financial management landscape.

Contrastingly, political factors, often considered the linchpin in policy changes and reforms, were found to have a negligible impact. This surprising revelation nudges us towards a deeper reflection on the autonomy of financial reforms and the potential need to shield them from transitory political dynamics.

For policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders, these findings are not just observations but crucial guideposts. They highlight the need to prioritize institutional strengthening, capacity building, and transparent system deployment when considering sustainable and impactful reforms. At the same time, the limited role of political factors in this domain suggests a call for neutral, evidence-based, and broad-based stakeholder-engaged policy formulation and implementation.

In sum, the essence of impactful public sector financial management reforms lies not in the corridors of political power but in the foundational and functional strength of institutional frameworks. As nations and states evolve, the lessons from this study will remain instrumental in shaping reforms that stand the test of time and serve the broader public good.

Policy Recommendation

1. Strengthen Institutional Frameworks:

a. **Capacity Building**: There should be a significant emphasis on continuous training and capacity building of staff in public institutions. Enhancing the skills and competence of employees can significantly influence the successful design and rollout of reforms.
b. **Revamp Internal Control Systems**: Modernize and make transparent the internal control systems. Effective and transparent systems can minimize errors, fraud, and mismanagement, leading to successful reform implementation.
c. **Organizational Structure Review**: Periodically review and, if necessary, restructure the organizational setup to ensure that roles, responsibilities, and communication channels are clear, efficient, and conducive to the implementation of reforms.

2. De-politicize Financial Management Reforms:

a. **Neutrality**: Given the negligible impact of political factors on reforms, policymakers should endeavor to design reforms that are politically neutral, ensuring they are not heavily swayed by the changing political climate or perceived as serving particular political interests.

b. **Stakeholder Engagement**: Engage a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector, when designing reforms. This inclusion can serve to buffer the reforms from political interference and give them broader legitimacy.

3. Continuous Evaluation and Feedback Mechanisms:

a. **Performance Metrics**: Establish clear performance metrics for reforms. This allows for periodic assessment, ensuring that any drift from intended outcomes can be quickly identified and corrected.

b. **Feedback Loops**: Create mechanisms where feedback from ground-level implementers and beneficiaries of reforms can be easily collected and acted upon. This can ensure that reforms are continually refined based on real-world experiences.

4. Broaden Research and Data Collection:

a. **Diverse Factors**: Given that political factors were found to be non-significant in this study, there's a need for further research to understand other potential influencers. Diverse socio-cultural or economic factors might come into play, and it's essential to understand these in future studies.

b. **Localized Contexts**: Recognize that the influence of both political and institutional factors may vary across different regions or countries. Tailor reforms to local contexts by conducting localized research before implementation.

5. Collaborative Approach:

a. **Inter-agency Collaboration**: Foster greater collaboration between different government agencies. Sharing best practices, challenges, and solutions can result in more effective reform design and implementation.

b. **International Collaboration**: Learn from international best practices. Collaborate with international bodies and other countries to understand successful public sector financial management reforms and the factors that drove their success.

In conclusion, while the study sheds light on the significance of institutional over political factors, it's essential that policymakers adopt a holistic, adaptive, and collaborative approach, taking into account the complex interplay of various elements in the public sector environment.

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