

Unbundling Socio-Political Dynamics Underpinning the Nigerian Energy crisis - Case study of South-South and South-Eastern Nigeria

Reuben Okereke, Emmanuel Ukanwa and Christian Eze (Nigeria)

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SUMMARY

Energy is important to economic growth, progress, development, and security of any nation. Nigeria is experiencing energy poverty as a result of her detrimental low income, high-energy costs, low energy-efficiency and developmental indices; hence this paper explored the socio-political dynamics underpinning Nigeria's energy crisis, using a multistage sampling approach across nine power distribution companies in the country. A total of 900 participants (270 distributors and 630 consumers) in South South and South Eastern Nigeria were surveyed using structured questionnaires, and data were analyzed with SPSS and Jamovi, employing descriptive statistics, factor analysis, and structural equation modeling (SEM). The findings highlight key challenges in Nigeria's energy sector, such as unreliable electricity supply, with 66% of respondents indicating frequent availability but 45.8% rating its quality as unreliable. Notably, 94.6% of respondents believe energy poverty negatively impacts employment opportunities, while 68.9% report disruptions to their businesses, and 69.1% attribute rising inflation to energy poverty. Governance issues are a significant concern, with 81.3% rating governance management as ineffective and 91.9% identifying corruption as a major factor. Structural Equation Model (SEM) outcomes show political patronage to be the largest contributor to the crisis ($\beta = 0.99$), followed by infrastructural decay ($\beta = 0.65$) and regulatory challenges ($\beta = 0.58$). However, consistent government policies ($\beta = 0.96$), involvement of international investors due to friendly policies ($\beta = 0.46$), creation of awareness campaigns on energy consumption (, regulatory support for growth of distributors(, adequate implementation of energy distribution infrastructure (, government support for expansion (and, timely and efficient regulatory changes (, respectively, were uncovered to be significant factors for mitigating the socio-political problems of the Nigerian energy sector. The findings suggest an urgent need for comprehensive policy reforms to tackle challenges in Nigeria's energy sector.

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