



# Challenges of Participatory Development in West Africa: A Study of Nigeria’s Vision 20:2020 Economic Blueprint

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## Abstract

The formulation and implementation of development plans serve as the benchmark for evaluating economic progress in different sectors of an economy. Since independence, successive administrations in Nigeria have paraded different economic development plans. At the continental level also, several development programmes have been articulated for driving development in the countries of Africa. Many times, supposed laudable economic programmes have failed to identify with the interest of citizens, largely due to poor communication of such programmes. This study investigated citizens’ participation in the implementation of Nigeria’s Vision 20:2020. Among others, the study asked the following questions: to what extent are Nigerian citizens aware goals of Vision 20:2020 economic blueprint? What were the media used in popularising Nigeria’s Vision 20:2020 economic blue print? The study was anchored on the Participatory Development theory. The survey research design was used to study a population of 84, 004, 084 from which a sample size of 384 respondents was drawn. The sample was based on Keyton’s sampling system. Findings of the study showed that many citizens of Nigeria do not understand the goals of Vision 20:2020. It was also found out that many citizens of Nigeria cannot identify development projects executed in line with the goals of Vision 20:2020. Based on these findings, the study recommended, among other things, that Nigerian government should partner with civil society organisations to popularise the goals of Vision 20:2020. It was also recommended that citizens of Nigeria should be encouraged to participate in the formulation and implementation of development programmes.

**Keywords:** Economic framework; Human development; Nigeria’s vision 20:2020; Goals of Nigeria’s vision 20:2020; Participatory development.

## 1. Introduction

Globally, the articulation and implementation of development plans serves as the benchmark for evaluating progress in different sectors of the economy. No nation drives a development or economic policy without a plan which serves as the guide to implementation. The articulation of an economic development plan derives from specific objectives the government of a country desires to achieve and the identification and implementation of the right strategic plan can accelerate the pace of growth of a nation and the mass of its people. This is because economic development plans are based on development priorities that are either targeted at responding to identified development challenges or responding to the dynamics of the economy.

Member countries of the West African sub –region, among other countries of the Third World, share peculiar development features, such as poverty, low literacy, unemployment, rural-urban migration, poor health and poor infrastructure in varying degrees (Todaro, 1997). These economic challenges manifest in hunger, disease and crimes in many countries of West Africa. The compelling necessity of solving these challenges in order to achieve a stable and progressive society underlies the articulation and implementation of development or economic plans.

In Nigeria, successive administrations have paraded different economic plans targeted at facilitating socio-economic growth and providing sustainable means of livelihood for citizens. Some of these economic plans are short-term, medium-term and long-term plans Project Writing Nigeria (2016). Nigeria’s Vision 20:2020 is an economic development plan that mirrors the growth of the country’s economy and the creation of viable opportunities for citizens through conscious exploitation of Nigeria’s abundant human and material endowments. Vision 20:2020 states that:

By 2020, Nigeria will have a large, strong, diversified, sustainable and competitive economy that effectively harnesses the talents and energies of its people to guarantee a high standard of living and quality of life to its citizens (p. 14).

The Vision reflects the desire of the Nigerian government to become one of the first 20 leading economies, hence the name of the economic development policy, Vision 20: 2020. This economic development policy also targets the creation of better economic opportunities for citizens of Nigeria through strategic exploitation of the country's human and material resources (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2009).

Nigeria's Vision 20:20 encapsulates eight strategic goals that when actualised should move the nation's economy from 158 out of 177 economies on the Human Development Index as at year 2009 when the economic development policy was published to one of the first 20 leading economies by year 2020. The strategic goals of Vision 20: 2020 are to:

- i. eradicate extreme hunger and poverty;
- ii. enhance access to quality healthcare;
- iii. provide sustainable access to portable water and basic sanitation;
- iv. provide accessible and affordable housing;
- v. build human capacity for sustainable livelihoods and national development;
- vi. improve access to micro-credit;
- vii. promote gender equality and empower women; and
- viii. foster a culture of recreation and entertainment for enhanced productivity (p. 28).

The goals of Nigeria's Vision 20:2020 reflect the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), especially as it concerns the eradication of poverty, improvement of healthcare, access to potable water and the empowerment of women to ensure gender equality. Vision 20:2020 also stipulates the actions that will able the realisation of its goals by the government, such as the adoption of decentralised approach to development, provision of quality and affordable education, access to finance, promotion of environmentally-friendly agricultural practices and changing the economic role and status of women.

What is unclear in the stipulations of this economic framework is the place of Nigerian citizens in the implementation of its goals, thus seemingly making the economic framework to appear as a government exclusive development affair. The communication component of the Vision which should popularise its goal among Nigerians also appears unclear. These conditions provoked the investigation of the participation of citizens of Nigeria in the implementation of Vision 20:2020

### 1.1. Statement of the Problem

Since post-independent days, successive administrations in Nigeria have paraded different economic policies targeted at transforming the country's economy and improving the living condition of the citizens. Different government ministries and agencies have also executed development projects and programmes across State, Local Government Areas and communities in the Federation. Many times, supposed laudable projects of the government and its agencies do not identify with the development needs of the people. The result of this gap is the presence of numerous government abandoned projects scattered across Nigeria due to inconsistencies between supposed government transformation initiatives and people's development priorities. Sometimes, these projects are abandoned after full execution and at other times mid-way into project execution.

The seeming unclear roles of citizens of Nigeria in the implementation of Vision 20:2020 calls for worry in terms of citizens' understanding of the goals of the Vision and their roles in the realisation of such goals. Since sustainable development is done with the target population, certain question become germane and form the burden of this study. Are Nigerians aware of the goals of Vision 20:2020? Do citizens of Nigeria understand their roles in the implementation of Vision 20:2020? These questions formed the burden of this study.

### 1.2. Objectives of the Study

The study investigated Nigerian citizens' role in the implementation of Vision 20:2020 economic blueprint. The specific objectives of the study were to:

- i. investigate Nigerian citizens' awareness of the goals of Vision 20:2020;
- ii. ascertain the communication platforms adopted in popularising Nigeria's Vision 20:2020 economic blueprint;
- iii. examine Nigerian citizens' role in the implementation of Vision 20:2020; and
- iv. investigate Nigerian citizens' perception of Vision 20:2020.

### 1.3. Research Questions

The study was guided by the following questions:

- i. To what extent are Nigerian citizens aware of the goals of Vision 20:2020?
- ii. What communication platforms were adopted in popularising Nigeria's Vision 20:2020 economic blueprint?
- iii. Do Nigerian citizens understand their roles in the implementation of Vision 20:2020?
- iv. How do Nigerian citizens perceive Vision 20:2020 economic blueprint?

### 1.4. Scope of the Study

This study investigated Nigerian citizens' role in the implementation of Vision 20:2020 economic blueprint. The study was restricted to citizens' participation in the implementation of the objectives of the development plan, especially since its implementation is expected to improve the social and economic well-being of citizens of Nigeria

by eradicating poverty, providing access to quality healthcare, providing affordable housing, enabling access to micro-credit, promoting gender equality and empowering women. The study did not undertake the overt investigation of the accomplishment of the goals of Vision 20:2020.

### 1.5. Operational Definition of Terms

The following terms were defined based on their conceptualisation within the context of this study:

**Awareness of the Goals of Vision 20:2020:** This is concerned with Nigerian citizens' knowledge of the goals of Vision 20:2020. The awareness is premised on knowledge of the goals and targets of Vision 20:2020.

**Economic Blueprint:** This is a development framework that stipulates the proposed actions of the government towards the realisation of specific goals. The economic development blueprint referred to in this study is Nigeria's Vision 20:2020. The term was interchanged with other terms, such as, economic framework, economic development plan and development plan.

**Media of Communication:** These are the communication platforms that were deployed in popularising the goals of Vision 20:2020. As a people-centred development framework, some critical communication platforms that can be useful in propagating the goals of Nigeria's Vision 20:2020 are Civil Society Organisations, opinion leaders, community-based organisations, social media, official webpages of relevant government agencies and the mass media.

**West African Countries:** These are Member States of the West African sub-region. Countries of West Africa are: Benin Republic, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d' Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, The Gambia and Togo. Apart from belonging to the same sub-regional bloc, these countries share peculiar development features such as, low literacy, unemployment, hunger and poor healthcare systems in varying degrees.

**Citizens' role in the implementation of Vision 20:2020:** This is concerned with Nigerian citizens' participation in the implementation of Vision 20:2020 economic blueprint.

## 2. Literature Review

The study was anchored on the Stakeholder theory. Some related concepts were also reviewed to highlight the direction of the study

### 2.1. Stakeholder Theory

The Stakeholder theory was propounded by Edward Freeman in his book "*Strategic Management: A stakeholder approach*" in 1984 (Heath, 2005). The theory emphasises the establishment of mutual understanding between a development facilitator, such as the government, governmental agencies or non-governmental organisations and concerned stakeholders in the articulation and implementation of development projects. This is based on the argument of Freeman (1984) that the development facilitator ought to maintain links with different stakeholders in order to sustain mutual understanding, ensure genuine cooperation and reduce stakeholder conflicts (Ulmer *et al.*, 2005). The theory contends that development objectives must be pursued with the development priorities of benefitting stakeholders in mind.

According to Grunig and Repper (1992), the importance of the stakeholder approach is based on the fact that the implementation of development projects often goes with implications for concerned stakeholders (Heath, 2005). In order to ensure the cooperation of these groups during decision or project implementation, it is instructive to involve them in project planning (Anaeto and Anaeto, 2010; Anyaegbunam *et al.*, 2004; Asadu, 2009). The condition that necessitates this interface in project implementation is due to the fact that the realisation of the goals of a development programme depends on the cooperation of affected stakeholders. If the government, for instance, depends on the cooperation of the members of a host community to realise the goals of a development programme, it becomes imperative to involve the community in the formulation and implementation of such a programme. Heath (2005), argues that "organisations that develop strong instrumental links including communication channels with stakeholders are likely to hold a competitive advantage over organisations that do not" (p. 809). The thesis of the stakeholder theory is that relationship between a development facilitator and the people is an ongoing process of accommodation and that this accommodation can only be strengthened or sustained through stakeholders' participation in strategic planning and implementation processes.

The stakeholder theory has remained a subject of debate between two schools of thought. One of the schools recommends a business approach characterised by stakeholder capitalism and the other emphasises the traditional shareholder development approach (Kotler *et al.*, 2012). The stakeholder theory is also criticised on the account of the difficulty in determining the stakeholders that should be essentially affected by a project. Despite these criticisms, the stakeholder theory is crucial to achieving genuine stakeholders' cooperation towards the realisation of the goals of a development programme (Kotler *et al.*, 2012).

### 2.2. A Look at Nigeria's Vision 20:2020 Economic Blueprint

Vision 20:2020 reflects Nigeria's desire to become one of the first 20 leading economies by year 2020. This economic framework, developed in 2009, is a long-term development plan that is anchored on orchestrating economic development and providing robust means of livelihood for citizens of Nigeria. The framework is indicative of the desire of the Nigerian government to transform the economy by two major means:

1. optimising the country's human and natural resources to achieve rapid and sustained economic growth; and

2. translating economic growth into equitable social development that guarantees a dignified and meaningful existence for citizens of the country (Nigeria's Vision 20:2020, 2009).

Following the stipulations of this economic blueprint as encapsulated in the two broad objectives stated above, Vision 20:2020 can be understood as targeting the following development objectives:

**Economic Development:** According to Seers (1969), cited in [Obette \(2012\)](#), economic development represents the transformation of a country and the mass of its people from a state of backwardness to the point where basic features of under-development, such as, hunger, unemployment, inequality and illiteracy have been substantially conquered ([Obette, 2012](#)). Seers (1969) thus argues that if there has been substantial decline in poverty, unemployment and inequality, a country and its people could be said to have witnessed a period of stable economic growth ([White, 1994](#)). It goes to say that economic development is not simply to generate and sustain increase in Gross National Income (GNI). It is not the growth of per capital income. Economic development should translate into better standard of living and the existence of robust means to enhance livelihood for citizens of a country. The impact of economic development on citizens has remained a debate among economists, policy watchers and government representatives in Nigeria. Many have argued that the implementation of several development programmes in Nigeria have not translated into better living conditions for citizens of the country.

**Human Development:** As the term suggests, human development represents investments into the development or transformation of the citizens of a country. It is an investment that is targeted at building the capacity of the human person and the provision of an enabling environment that enables citizens to maximise conscientiously articulated economic support systems. It is an investment in ensuring that people are informed and enlightened ([Reddi, 2009](#); [Smith, 1996](#)). [Asadu \(2009\)](#), argues that development is not simply the provision of infrastructure, such as roads, water, electricity, hospitals and schools, but building the capacity of the human person to make meaningful use of the infrastructure. Human development involves ensuring that citizens have the capacity to exploit available resources to transform themselves. It is only when the people have the capacity to maximally exploit resources available to them that they can make useful contributions or participate in the task of nation building.

[Adeyemi Ijaiya and Kolawole \(2006\)](#) consider the provision of infrastructure without building the capacity of citizens to exploit such infrastructure as an unimpressive development effort ([Obette, 2012](#)). The scholars argue that such unimpressive development effort can only be regarded as political or leadership mediocrity that constantly leave citizens of a country in a state of economic incapacitation. This incapacitation is the foundation of cliental politics of the leadership of many West African countries, including Nigeria. It is the foundation of the prebendal politics where the leader is idolised and is said to have graciously benefitted the masses for undertaking what ordinarily is the responsibility of leadership to the people.

**Sustainable Development:** According to the World Commission on Environment and Development, cited in [Asadu \(2009\)](#), sustainable development is a development approach that pursues the development needs of the present generation without undermining the interest of future generations. It is a development approach that ensures intergenerational equity. It ensures that the needs of the present generation do not undermine the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

This sustainable development approach gives development a people-oriented approach. This people-oriented development approach underscores the social, economic institutional and environmental dimensions of Nigeria's Vision 20:2020. While the Social and Institutional dimensions mirror a peaceful, equitable, harmonies and just society with a stable and functional democracy, the Economic and Environmental dimensions underscore the importance of an environmentally-conscious populace and globally competitive economy that ensure sustainable management of the country's resources. However, with the near absence of basic infrastructure, the decayed state of Nigerian educational and health systems, the high cost of available education and the prebendal politics that enables inequality to flourish, it remains to see how Nigerian citizens can be equipped to participate in the implementation of Vision 20:2020.

### 2.3. Communicating the Development Project – Nigeria's Vision 20:2020

Development communication involves the application of communication strategies and media in driving development-oriented messages. The development that is intended could be the diffusion of an innovation or the motivation of citizens to participate in a project the goals of which are intended to yield some form of transformation. [UNESCO \(1980\)](#) states that if communication is considered in its broadest perspective and not simply as the exchange of news and messages but as an activity that engenders mutualism, it will be realised that its main functions in any social system are "information; socialisation; motivation; debate and discussion; education; cultural promotion; entertainment; and integration (p.14).

The recognition of the critical role of communication in development processes does not simply suggest that the application of communication media and strategies directly translates into the realisation of the goals of a development programme. Communication only plays a counterpart role in the development process since its application must be consistent with the kind of development needs that are to be solved and the social-cultural condition of the target audience, among other variables. [Schramm and Lerner \(1976\)](#) thus define development is the actualisation of the kind of social and economic system which a country chooses ([Asadu, 2009](#)). What this means is that the development facilitator must identify and functionally exploit those communication strategies and media that are consistent with the nature of development programme being advanced and the socio-cultural and economic conditions of the target population. [Grunig \(1971\)](#) thus argues that communication is only a complementary factor to development which can have little effect on the development process except some structural measures are articulated

to align the communication strategies and media adopted with the development needs that are being addressed (Anaeto and Anaeto, 2010).

Development communication is a planned and systematic application of communication resources, channels, approaches and strategies to support the goals of a development project. To this end, such communication activity goes beyond mere passage of information to achieving the participation of the target population in the development project. Quebral (1983) defines development communication as the art and science of human communication which can be applied to facilitate the transformation of a country and the mass of its people from poor economic conditions to a dynamic state of economic growth that engenders greater social equality and the fulfilment of human potentials. Development can only engender greater social equality and the fulfilment of people's aspirations when it is participatory. This is because people do not genuinely participate in a process whose end results are elusive or even unknown.

It goes to say that development is about the people. Thus, the implementation of any development project, such as Nigeria's Vision 20:2020, should help people to realise themselves and to acquire requisite skills they need to improve their living standard. When members of the public are provided with requisite skills, they not only become knowledgeable but possess the capacity to drive their own development process in the manner that is consistent with their development priorities. The outcome of this development approach is the creation of enlightened minds that are capable of charting the development of their society, at least to extent of articulating their development needs and protecting development infrastructure when provided. Udoakah (2004), defines development communication as journalism introduced to meet the development needs of developing countries. He adds that "development communication is corrective, integrative and revolutionary in nature" (p. 7). It is integrative and revolutionary because it involves the people and situates them as the custodians of their choices. This development approach does not mirror the development of a society as the burden of the government but a shared responsibility.

#### 2.4. Citizens' Perception of a Development Project – Nigeria' Vision 20:2020

Perception can be defined as the different ways different individuals and groups think about or understand a particular phenomenon or idea. What this means is that different individuals or people can perceive a particular idea in different ways. McCombs and Shaw (1972) define perception as the different ways people perceive or interpret a particular idea based on differences in psychological makeup, ideological construct, world view and exposure (Ndimele and Innocent, 2006). It goes to say that people who have a similar exposure or experience are likely to perceive and interpret a particular phenomenon in a similar way.

Some social scientists do not do not share the notion that individuals with a similar experience or exposure could be consensual in their perception of a given phenomenon. The argument is that different individuals have different psychological constructs which serve as a defence mechanism that filter information to affect individuals' unique view of phenomena. Baran and Davis (2015) thus define perception as a selective process that underlies the interpretations people accord a given phenomenon. To this end, two persons can perceive a given idea unlike despite the likeness of their experience or training. This accounts for why two lawyers could interpret a given law or matter in different ways.

Perception serves as a sensory stimulus that underlines individual's idiosyncrasies. This is why the perception is a crucial factor that must be taken into consideration by a development facilitator, such as, the government or government agency. Perception can result in the success or failure of a development programme. This is especially since development is about people. The provision of infrastructure, such as, roads, electricity, schools and water may not translate into development. Such infrastructure only enable development when they identify with people's development priorities (Asadu, 2009; Obette, 2012). What this means is that Nigerian citizens' perception of Vision 20:2020 could be antithetical or supportive to realisation of the goals of the economic plan. It also means that Nigerian citizens' perception of the government can support or undermine the realisation of the goals of Vision 20:2020.

### 3. Methodology

The nature of this study necessitated the use of the survey research design. Survey involves the investigation of the characteristics of a sample which can be attributed to a larger population from which the sample was drawn (Ihejirika and Omego, 2011; Wimmer and Dominick, 2011). The population of the study was 84, 004, 084. This is the figure of registered voters in the six geo political zones of Nigeria according to the 2019 report of the Independent National Electoral Commission (2019), which was adopted as the population of the study, being the population of adult citizens of Nigeria. The distribution of registered voters in the six geo-political zones of Nigeria is presented as follows:

- North- East: 20, 158, 100 (24%)
- South-West: 16, 292, 212 (19%)
- North-Central: 13, 366, 070 (16%)
- South-South: 12, 841, 279 (15%)
- North-East: 11, 289, 293 (14%) and
- South- East: 10, 057, 130 (12%)

A combination of registered voters in the six geo-political zones put the population of the study at 84, 004, 084.

From this population, a sample size of 384 respondents was drawn based on the sampling system of Keyton (2001).

To administer the questionnaire on the sample, the multi-style sampling procedure was adopted. The first stage introduced the cluster sampling technique which was used to divide the six geo-political zones of Nigeria into clusters. The second stage involved the proportionate sampling system which enabled the allocation of samples to the different clusters based on their percentage representation in the overall population of the study. Thus, the six geo-political zones of Nigeria received samples as follows: North-West: 92 samples; South-West: 73 samples; North Central: 61 samples; South-South: 57 samples; North East: 54 samples; and South East: 47 samples. The actual administration of copies of the questionnaire (the research instrument) adopted the convenience sampling technique. Six research assistants were briefly trained and used in administering and retrieving copies of the questionnaire. Data were presented in table using the weighted mean score (WMS) based on a four –point Likert scale.

**Decisions for Weighted Mean Score:** When the calculated value from the Likert Scale is equal to or greater than the mean, the proposition was held in the affirmative. When the calculated value is less than the mean, the proposition was considered to be negative. The mean is 2.5. The formula for the calculation is:

$$\frac{AR \times W}{R \times NO}$$

$$R \times NO$$

Where:

AR = Aggregate Response

W = Weighting

R = Total number of Response

NO = Number of options in the scale (4)

Using the four-points Likert Scale, responses to the items in the questionnaire were weighted as follows:

Strongly Agreed (SA) = 4

Agreed (A) = 3

Strongly Disagreed (SD) = 2

Disagreed (D) = 1

#### 4. Data Presentation and Analysis

To obtain data for the study, 384 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the sample. Responses to the items in the questionnaire formed the basis for data representation and analysis. Data were presented in statistical tables using the weighted mean score (WMS), with the following response notations: SA= Strongly Agreed; A= Agreed; SD= Strongly Disagreed; and D= Disagreed.

**Table-1.** Citizens' awareness of the Objectives of the Vision 20:2020

S/N	Questionnaire Items	SA	A	SD	D	Total	WMS	Remarks
1.	I am aware of Nigeria's Vision 20:2020 economic blueprint	876	444	12	11	1,343	3.4	Accepted
2.	I understand the objectives of Vision 20:2020	264	120	228	164	776	2.0	Rejected
3.	I also understand the targets of Vision 20:2020	252	153	178	181	764	1.9	Rejected

The presentation in [Table 1](#) indicates that many Nigerians were aware of Vision 20:2020 economic blueprint to the extent of the existence of the blueprint. This is because many citizens of the country barely knew the objectives and targets of Vision 20:2020 based on the weighted mean scores of 2.0 and 1.9 obtained by items 2 and 3 of the questionnaire.

**Table-2.** Sources of awareness of Vision 20:2020 economic blueprint

Indicate your source of awareness of Vision 20:2020	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Radio/Television talk-shows, discussions and adverts	212	55%
Radio/ Television Jingles	58	15%
Newspaper	62	16%
Workshops and seminars on Vision 20:2020	0	0%
Conferences and rallies by Civil Society Organisations	0	0%
Internet/Social media	29	8%
Friends, colleagues, parent, community chief	0	0%
Not aware of Vision 20:2020	23	6%
Total	384	100%

On the sources of awareness of Vision 20:2020, data presented in [Table 2](#) indicate that many citizens of Nigeria became aware of Vision 20:2020 through media-related channels and media products. The table shows that Civil Society Organisations and interpersonal channels were not engaged in propagating the objectives of Vision 20:2020.

**Table-3.** Media for sensitising Nigerians of the Objectives of Vision 20:2020

S/N	Questionnaire Items	SA	A	SD	D	Total	WMS	Remarks
5.	Radio/television messages are regularly used to sensitise people of the objectives of Vision 20:2020	168	81	276	177	702	1.8	Rejected
6.	Several conferences/workshops have been held around my senatorial district to sensitise the populace of the objectives of Vision 20:2020	52	27	582	71	732	1.9	Rejected
7.	Rallies and town hall meetings have also been held around my senatorial district to sensitise people of the objectives of Vision 20:2020	44	42	612	53	751	1.9	Rejected

The representation in [Table 3](#) indicates that the objectives of Vision 20:2020 is yet to be substantially sold to many Nigerian citizens. This report is based on the weighted mean scores of 1.8, 1.9 and 1.9, respectively obtained by items 5, 6, 7 of the questionnaire. The table shows the substantial neglect of the contributions of Civil Society Groups, opinion leaders and other interpersonal platforms in popularising and encouraging citizens' participation in the implementation of Vision 20:2020 development plan.

**Table-4.** Nigerian Citizens' roles in the implementation of Vision 20:2020 economic blueprint

S/N	Questionnaire Items	SA	A	SD	D	Total	WNS	Remarks
8.	As a citizens of Nigeria, I understand my role in the implementation of Vision 20:2020	0	93	232	237	562	1.4	Rejected
9.	I have participated in the implementation of Vision 20:2020	0	63	234	246	543	1.4	Rejected
10.	I can identify some development projects executed in line with the goals of Vision 20: 2020	0	93	232	237	562	1.4	Rejected

On Nigerian citizens' role in the implementation of Vision 20: 2020, data presented in [Table 4](#) indicate that many citizens of Nigeria did not understand their roles in the implementation of the economic blueprint. The table also shows that many citizens of Nigeria can hardly identify development projects executed in their areas in line with the goals of Vision 20: 2020. This report is evident from the weighted mean scores of 1.4 apiece obtained by items 8, 9 and 10 of the questionnaire.

**Table-5.** Nigerian citizens' perception of Vision 20:2020 economic blueprint

S/N	Questionnaire Items	SA	A	SD	D	Total	WMS	Remarks
11.	The planning and execution of Vision 20:2020 is simply a government affair.	412	717	46	19	1,194	3.1	Accepted
12.	I can categorically state that Vision 20:2020 has enhanced my wellbeing and the nation.	44	21	404	164	633	1.6	Rejected

The representation in [Table 5](#) indicates that many citizens of Nigeria perceive Vision 20:2020 economic blueprint as government affair based on the weighted mean score of 3.1 obtained by item 11 of the questionnaire. The table also shows that many Nigerian could not categorically state that Nigeria's Vision 20:2020 national development plan enhanced the wellbeing of the nation and its people. This report is evident from the weighted mean score 1.6 obtained by item 12 of the questionnaire.

## 5. Discussion of Findings

The discussion was based on the research questions.

### 5.1. Research Question 1: To what Extent are Nigerian Citizens Aware of the Goals of Vision 20:2020?

Determining citizens' extent of awareness or understanding of the goals of a development framework is fundamental in measuring their participation in the programme. Thus, research question 1 investigated Nigerian citizens' extent of awareness of Vision 20:2020 economic blueprint. Responses to the question indicated the absence of awareness of the goals and targets of Vision 20:2020 by many Nigerians. A substantial adult population of Nigeria were aware of Vision 20:2020 economic blueprint to the extent of its existence. This report is evident from the weighted mean scores of 3.4, 2.0 and 1.9, respectively obtained by items 1, 2, and 3 of the questionnaire ([Table 1](#)).

That many Nigerians unaware of the goals and targets of Vision 20:2020 is an indication that the implementation of the economic framework may have encountered setbacks. This is due to the importance of citizen participation in the implementation of development programmes, especially development programmes that are people-centred (Asadu, 2009; Obette, 2012; White, 1994). Heath (2005), in the articulation of the Stakeholder theory, argued that except citizens are accorded recognition in planning and implementing a development programme, there is no amount of resources expended on the project that can affect their wellbeing in a sustainable manner. The substantial low level of awareness of the goals of Vision 20:2020 among Nigerian citizens also demonstrates lack of commitment by the Nigerian government to ensure participatory implementation of the goals of the economic blueprint. This is especially when one of the pillars of Vision 20:2020 rests on the optimisation of the country's human and material resources (Nigeria's Vision 20:2020, 2009). If the people upon whom the realisation of the goals of Vision 20:2020 greatly lies do not understand the goals and target of the economic framework, the successful implementation of the Vision is endangered.

## **5.2. Research Question 2: What Communication Platforms were Adopted in Popularising Nigeria's Vision 20:2020 Economic Blueprint?**

Ideally, every development programme should have a communication component which consists of the media or platforms through the goals of the programme are sold to the target population. Research question 2 investigated the media used in popularising Nigeria's Vision 20:2020 among its citizens. Some media of development communication were provided for respondents' identification. Responses to research question 2 indicated lack of commitment by the Nigeria government to popularise Vision 20:2020. Apart from media-related programme by which many Nigerians became aware of the economic blueprint, not much was done by the government to propagate the goals of Vision 20:2020. The sheer absence of a communication component of Vision 20:2020 resonates in the substantial low level of understanding of the goals of the development plan by many Nigerians. It also demonstrates lack of participatory development approach by the Nigerian government. It is this non-participatory approach to development that has hampered the realisation of the goals of several development programmes in Africa (Asadu (2009), Obette (2012)). Thus, Adeyemi, Ijaiya and Kolawole (2006) state that the articulation of development programmes and provision of infrastructures without building the capacity of citizens to exploit such resources is simply an unimpressive development effort (Obette (2012)). What this means is that development can only be sustainable when the target population is conscientiously engaged and empowered to drive their development priorities.

## **5.3. Research Question 3: Do Nigerian Citizens Understand their Roles in the Implementation of Vision 20:2020?**

Responses to research question 3 indicated that many citizens of Nigeria did not understand their roles in the implementation of the Vision 20:2020 development plan. This report is evident from the weighted mean score of 1.4 obtained by 8 of the questionnaire (Table 4). Responses to research question 3 also showed that many of the respondents could not identify development projects that have been executed in their area in line with the goals of Vision 20:2020 based on the weighted mean score of 1.4 obtained by item 9 of the questionnaire (Table 4).

Even though ordinary citizens of a country do not enjoy the overt execution of development projects, the fact that the project is located in a community and executed for a target population makes people's identification with the project a necessary condition. This identification is to the extent of the prioritisation of the project. It is this identification that creates a sense of ownership of the project and this sense of ownership is fundamental for the project to be protected by the people. Omotola (2010) states that African leaders should encourage partnership in the development process through a democratically articulated development pact. Bojang (2017) corroborates the importance of citizen participation in government development policies in Africa as he emphasises that people in all sectors of the economy should be encouraged to participate in decisions that affect their interest. He adds that "minority groups and marginalised groups should be involved in public policy decision-making process as this will increase a sense of ownership in government projects" (p. 50).

The implication of the prioritisation and ownership of government development projects is that projects that do not share the development needs of a community could be vehemently opposed or sabotaged. If members of the community do not have the will to oppose execution, they may reject such a project after its execution. Nwodu (2007) argues that when people do not identify with a project, they may even work against it. This is the condition that accounts for the abandonment of several development projects in several communities across Nigeria, especially those development projects that failed to meet the need of the people. One could identify several electricity, water, school, health and skill acquisition centres, some of which have been fully completed, abandoned in bushes around communities in Nigeria due to non-prioritisation of such projects by the target population. This is the likely situation when development is done for and not with the people.

## **5.4. Research Question 4: How do Nigerian Citizens Perceive Vision 20:2020 Economic Blueprint?**

People's perception of a development project or programme is one of the conditions that affect the prioritisation or otherwise of the project. If a development project meets the development priority of a community, for instance, it is certain that the community would work to realise the goals of such a project. Thus, research question 4 investigated Nigerian citizens' perception of Vision 20:2020. Responses to the question indicated that many citizens



of Nigeria perceived Vision 20:2020 as the business of the government. This report is evident from the weighted mean score of 3.1 obtained by item 11 of the questionnaire (Table 5). Responses to the research question also indicated that many citizens of Nigeria could not state categorically that Vision 20:2020 had impacted on their wellbeing and the well-being of the nation.

Determining people's perception of a project is a crucial condition that must be certified before investing scarce resources into such a project. This is because perception affects identification and the protection of a project by a target population. When people do not share the usefulness of a project, such project could be rejected or even vandalised. Asadu (2009) and Obette (2012) observe that the execution of any project can only translate into development when such a project identifies with people's development priorities. It is certain that any development process that identifies the development priorities of a community must embrace a participatory approach.

## 6. Conclusion

The successful implementation and realisation of the goals of Nigeria's Vision 20:2020 economic blueprint is challenged by citizen's perception of the development framework and its implementation as the business of the government. Many citizens of Nigeria do not understand their roles in the implementation of the goals of the development plan. Also, many citizens of Nigeria could not identify development projects executed in their areas in line with the goals of Vision 20:2020. This gulf is essentially due to the failure of the government to functionally sell Vision 20:2020 economic blueprint to engender citizen participation in realising the goals of the development plan. The Nigerian government also failed to partner with critical stakeholders, such as, Civil Society Organisations, opinion leaders and community-based groups in diffusing the goals of Vision 20:2020 towards setting the agenda for wider stakeholder participation. The result of these gaps is the observable governmental-affair outlook of Vision 20:2020 economic blueprint.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations will be useful in addressing the intrinsic shortcomings of Nigeria's Vision 20:2020 economic blueprint:

1. The Nigerian government should partner with critical stakeholders, such as Civil Society Organisations, opinion leaders, community-based organisations and the mass media in popularising the goals of Vision 20:2020. Genuine partnership with these stakeholders will not only help to educate different constituents of the goals of Vision 20:2020 but also engender participatory implementation.
2. Interpersonal forums, such as, conferences and workshops should be exploited to educate and encourage citizen participation in the implementation of Vision 20:2020. The date, venue and time of such conferences should be effectively communicated and citizens encouraged to participate. The provision of incentives and assignment of roles with some compensatory rewards to attendees may also encourage citizen participation in the implementation of Vision 20:2020.
3. Nigerian government should accord priority to people's perception of development programmes. Since Vision 20:2020 economic blueprint is targeted at optimising the country's human and natural resources towards guaranteeing a dignified and meaningful existence, citizens' perception of the economic blueprint is fundamental to the realisation of the goals of the Vision.

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