

**POLITICAL PATRONAGE AND POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN NIGERIA:  
THE SURE P EXPERIENCE IN BENIN**

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**BEING A PROJECT WORK SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF  
POLITICAL SCIENCE, FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF  
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**FEBRUARY, 2025**

## **CERTIFICATION**

We, the undersigned certify that this project was carried out by **Victor Ochuko OKIEMUTE** with the Matriculation Number; **SSC2008580** in the Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria, in partial fulfillment for the award of Bachelor of Science Degree in Political Science.

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**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to God Almighty for his never ending love, grace and provision upon my life, and his loving kindness and mercies throughout my course of study

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My profound gratitude goes to Almighty God, for his goodness and mercies and the strength to start and finish well. His grace brought me this far.

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## ABSTRACT

*Political patronage plays a significant role in the implementation of public policies in Nigeria, often shaping the effectiveness and sustainability of such programs. This study examines the impact of political patronage on the implementation of the Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P) in Benin City. The study explores how political interference affects policy execution, resource allocation, and beneficiary selection, while also assessing the long-term consequences of patronage on policy sustainability. A survey research design was adopted, with data collected from 236 respondents using structured questionnaires. The findings reveal that political patronage has led to inefficiencies, favoritism, and misallocation of resources, undermining the original objectives of SURE-P. Moreover, the study highlights public concerns over political interference in beneficiary selection, which has limited the program's developmental impact. The research recommends institutional reforms, enhanced transparency, and stronger anti-corruption measures to ensure effective and equitable policy implementation. These findings contribute to the discourse on governance and public policy in Nigeria.*



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Background to the Study

Political patronage remains a defining characteristic of governance in Nigeria, influencing political structures, economic systems, and policy outcomes. As a practice, political patronage involves the allocation of public resources, appointments, or opportunities to individuals or groups in exchange for political loyalty and support. This system is deeply rooted in Nigeria's colonial and post-colonial political evolution. During colonial rule, patronage networks were established as a mechanism for indirect governance, fostering relationships between local elites and colonial administrators. These networks prioritized loyalty to the colonial government over equitable resource distribution or national development (Akindele & Olaopa, 2014). In the post-independence era, political patronage became entrenched as a tool for political stability in a country marked by ethnic, regional, and religious diversity. However, while it has provided short-term political advantages, patronage has undermined the long-term goals of governance, transparency, and national development.

Policy implementation in Nigeria has often been hindered by the pervasive influence of patron-client relationships. The country's governance system frequently prioritizes partisan or personal interests over merit and equity, resulting in inefficiencies in the execution of public programs. Political actors often manipulate policy frameworks to

reward loyal supporters, thereby marginalizing those outside the patronage networks (Onah & Nwali, 2018). This pattern is evident in sectors such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure development, where resources are frequently diverted to serve political agendas rather than address public needs. Oluwole et al. (2016) argue that political patronage undermines merit-based appointments and the equitable distribution of resources, perpetuating systemic inefficiencies in policy implementation. This, in turn, exacerbates underdevelopment and widens the gap between the government and the governed.

The Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P), introduced in Nigeria in 2012, serves as a critical case study for understanding the impact of political patronage on policy implementation. SURE-P was launched as a response to the partial removal of fuel subsidies, with the aim of reinvesting subsidy savings into social welfare programs and critical infrastructure projects. The program's objectives included reducing unemployment, improving public health and education services, and addressing Nigeria's infrastructure deficits. However, while the program was well-conceived, its implementation was marred by political interference, corruption, and a lack of transparency (Ekpo & Udo, 2016). Political patronage played a significant role in shaping the outcomes of SURE-P, as resources were frequently allocated based on political affiliations rather than objective needs assessments.

In Benin City, the experience of SURE-P highlights the localized manifestations of political patronage in policy implementation, which faced significant challenges in realizing the program's objectives due to patronage politics. Beneficiaries of SURE-P initiatives, such as job creation schemes and entrepreneurial grants, were often selected based on their political loyalty to the ruling party or influential political figures (Uhunmwangho & Epelle, 2019). This practice not only undermined the program's goal of poverty alleviation but also deepened public distrust in government institutions. Furthermore, the diversion of funds to politically connected individuals or entities limited the program's reach and effectiveness, leaving many eligible citizens excluded from its benefits (Uhunmwangho & Epelle, 2019).

The implementation of SURE-P in Benin City also underscores the broader challenges of governance in Nigeria, where political patronage often compromises the integrity of public programs. While SURE-P had the potential to address critical developmental issues, its outcomes were largely shaped by the dynamics of patron-client relationships. Ekpo and Udo (2016) note that the politicization of SURE-P eroded public confidence in the program, as citizens perceived it as a tool for political patronage rather than a genuine effort to address socioeconomic challenges. The program's failure to achieve its objectives in Benin City serves as a microcosm of the broader issues affecting policy implementation in Nigeria, where political interests frequently take precedence over developmental goals.

This study explores the intersection of political patronage and policy implementation, focusing on the SURE-P experience in Benin City. By examining the factors that influenced the program's outcomes, the study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the implications of patronage politics for governance and development in Nigeria. It also seeks to identify potential strategies for mitigating the impact of political patronage on public administration, with the ultimate goal of enhancing the effectiveness and equity of policy implementation in the country.

## **1.2. Statement of Research Problem**

The Nigerian political landscape is deeply entrenched in the practice of political patronage, which has significantly influenced the design and implementation of public policies. The implementation of policies aimed at addressing critical socio-economic challenges is often undermined by the pervasive influence of patron-client relationships. Political patronage redirects the focus of governance from serving the public good to rewarding political allies, creating a system where policy outcomes are disproportionately skewed in favor of the politically connected rather than addressing the needs of the larger population (Akindele & Olaopa, 2014). This systemic problem hinders developmental progress and undermines public trust in government programs.

The Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P), introduced in 2012 to reinvest savings from fuel subsidy removal into infrastructure and social programs, is emblematic of this broader issue. While SURE-P was envisioned as a transformative

initiative to tackle unemployment and improve socio-economic conditions, its implementation was marred by inefficiencies, corruption, and political interference. Ekpo and Udo (2016) noted that the program's outcomes were often shaped by political patronage, with resources allocated based on political affiliations rather than objective needs assessments. In Benin City, reports reveal that beneficiaries of SURE-P were largely drawn from groups with strong ties to the ruling political class, excluding many deserving individuals and limiting the program's impact (Uhunmwangho & Epelle, 2019).

The research problem, therefore, lies in the critical examination of how political patronage affects policy implementation in Nigeria, with a particular focus on the SURE-P experience in Benin City. The study seeks to unravel the mechanisms through which patronage infiltrates public programs, identifying its impacts on resource allocation, beneficiary selection, and program outcomes. Furthermore, it intends to explore the extent to which political interference undermines the transparency, equity, and effectiveness of policy initiatives like SURE-P. By doing so, this research aims to bridge the gap in understanding the dynamics of political patronage in policy implementation and provide actionable recommendations to mitigate its negative effects. Addressing this issue is critical for improving governance, restoring public trust, and ensuring that future policy initiatives achieve their intended developmental objectives.

### **1.3. Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised to guide the study;

- I. What is the impact of political patronage on the implementation of public policies in Benin City, particularly the SURE-P program?
- II. How does political interference influence the equitable allocation of resources and beneficiary selection in policy implementation under SURE-P in Benin City?
- III. What are the perceptions of beneficiaries and the general public regarding the role of political patronage in the implementation of the SURE-P program in Benin City?
- IV. How does political favoritism in the SURE-P implementation process undermine the program's ability to achieve its developmental objectives in Benin City?
- V. What are the long-term consequences of political patronage on the sustainability of policy initiatives like SURE-P in Benin City?

### **1.4. Research Objectives**

The objectives of the study seek to;

- I. examine the impact of political patronage on the implementation of public policies, particularly the SURE-P program, in Benin City.

- II. assess how political interference influences the equitable allocation of resources and the selection of beneficiaries in the SURE-P program in Benin City.
- III. investigate the perceptions of beneficiaries and the general public regarding the influence of political patronage on the implementation of the SURE-P program in Benin City.
- IV. analyze how political favoritism within the SURE-P implementation process undermines the program's ability to achieve its developmental objectives in Benin City.
- V. explore the long-term consequences of political patronage on the sustainability and effectiveness of policy initiatives like SURE-P in Benin City.

### **1.5. Scope of the Study**

The scope of this study focuses on examining the influence of political patronage on policy implementation in Nigeria, specifically through the lens of the SURE-P program in Benin City. The primary variables under investigation include political patronage, defined as the allocation of resources based on political loyalty rather than merit, and policy implementation, with a focus on the effectiveness, equity, and transparency of the SURE-P program. The study will explore the impact of political patronage on the selection of beneficiaries, the distribution of resources, and the achievement of developmental goals such as poverty reduction and unemployment alleviation. The geographical scope is limited to Benin City, encompassing the three local government areas of Oredo, Ikpoba-Okha, and Egor. The study will focus on the period during which

SURE-P was actively implemented, from its inception in 2012 until its discontinuation, assessing the long-term effects on local development.

### **1.6. Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study lies in its ability to provide a deeper understanding of how political patronage influences the implementation of public policies, particularly the SURE-P program in Benin City. The research findings will be beneficial to a wide range of stakeholders.

Policymakers and government officials will gain insights into the ways political patronage affects transparency, equity, and resource distribution in policy implementation. These findings can help improve the design and execution of future development programs by ensuring that they are less influenced by political considerations, and more focused on the needs of the population.

Civil society organizations, advocacy groups, and citizens will also benefit from this study as it highlights the detrimental effects of political patronage on the equitable allocation of resources and the achievement of developmental goals. These stakeholders can use the findings to push for reforms aimed at promoting transparency, fairness, and accountability in policy implementation.

Academics and researchers in the fields of political science, public administration, and governance will find the study valuable for advancing knowledge on the role of political

patronage in shaping policy outcomes. By providing empirical evidence from the SURE-P program, the research will serve as a useful reference for further studies on the dynamics of governance and public policy in Nigeria.

Ultimately, this study aims to contribute to the broader discourse on improving public policy implementation in Nigeria, fostering a more equitable and sustainable approach to development that benefits all citizens, regardless of political affiliation.

### **1.7. Operational Definition of Terms**

The following terms are operationally defined as used in the study;

- **Political Patronage:** The use of government resources and benefits to reward political supporters and maintain loyalty, often disregarding merit or fairness.
- **Policy Implementation:** The process of putting government policies into action by delivering services or benefits to the public.
- **SURE-P:** A government program aimed at using funds from the removal of fuel subsidies to support social welfare initiatives, job creation, and infrastructure development.
- **Beneficiary Selection:** The method of identifying individuals or groups to receive benefits from a policy or program, ideally based on need and eligibility.
- **Transparency:** The openness and clarity in government processes, ensuring that decisions and resource allocations are visible and accountable.

- **Equity:** Fairness in distributing resources and opportunities, ensuring that no group is unfairly excluded from policy benefits.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The second chapter of this study deals with the review of literature on political patronage and policy implementation using the SURE-P experience. The chapter cover the Conceptual review, the empirical review, the theoretical review and the research gaps.

#### **2.1. Conceptual Review**

##### **2.1.1 Concept of Political Patronage**

Political patronage refers to the system where political leaders distribute government resources, benefits, or favors to their supporters in exchange for loyalty, votes, or political support. This system is deeply embedded in the political fabric of many developing nations, where state power is often crucial in controlling economic and social resources. Political patronage serves as a tool for political elites to maintain control over the political system by rewarding supporters with public goods, government positions, or contracts, ensuring loyalty and electoral success (Levinson, 2013). This type of system is most commonly seen in clientelist political structures, where politicians provide selective benefits to individuals or groups in exchange for their votes and allegiance.

In this context, patronage is closely tied to clientelism, a practice where politicians offer targeted benefits to constituencies or individuals in return for political support. Patronage networks can involve various forms of benefit distribution, including job appointments, state contracts, public welfare resources, or infrastructure projects, all distributed based on political loyalty. While these systems can provide immediate political stability, they often breed inefficiency, corruption, and undermine democratic accountability (Kitschelt & Wilkinson, 2013). As political patronage relies on loyalty rather than merit or need, it often leads to poor governance outcomes, including the appointment of unqualified individuals to key government positions, thus reducing the overall effectiveness of the public sector.

The allocation of resources through patronage also distorts public policy by channeling benefits to politically connected individuals or regions at the expense of broader, need-based distribution. This can perpetuate inequality and hinder long-term development goals, as resources are misdirected towards political strongholds rather than areas that most require them. Moreover, the reliance on political patronage creates a culture of dependency where citizens feel compelled to seek political favor rather than access to government services based on need or merit (Diaz-Cayeros, Magaloni, & Weingast, 2016). In the case of programs like Nigeria's SURE-P, political patronage has been identified as a major factor influencing the selection of beneficiaries, often undermining the effectiveness of these initiatives.

One of the most significant criticisms of political patronage is that it undermines democratic governance and accountability. When political leaders prioritize the maintenance of patronage networks over the efficient delivery of public services, public institutions lose their credibility and effectiveness. This can stifle transparency and hinder efforts to address developmental challenges in a fair and sustainable manner (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012). In the case of SURE-P, political interference in the selection of beneficiaries and resource allocation has led to concerns about equity and the program's overall impact on poverty alleviation and job creation.

While political patronage may provide short-term political stability, it often comes at the expense of long-term sustainable development. By distorting governance, fostering inequality, and reducing the transparency of public programs, patronage undermines the broader goals of public policy. This conceptual understanding of political patronage is critical in analyzing its role in policy implementation and its impact on the effectiveness of initiatives like SURE-P.

### **2.1.2. Concept of Policy Implementation**

Policy implementation refers to the process through which government decisions, plans, or policies are translated into actions or services that directly affect the public. This process involves not only the enactment of the policy but also its execution through a series of activities, which can include the allocation of resources, the establishment of administrative structures, and the engagement of relevant stakeholders to ensure the

policy's objectives are achieved. Policy implementation is often seen as the critical phase where the success or failure of a policy is determined, as it is during this phase that planned outcomes are either realized or hindered by various factors such as political, social, and economic constraints.

The concept of policy implementation has been widely studied across disciplines, with scholars recognizing its complexity and multifaceted nature. One key perspective is that policy implementation is not simply about executing a policy according to its specifications but involves interpreting and adapting the policy within the realities of local contexts. The implementation process is influenced by multiple actors, including bureaucrats, politicians, citizens, and interest groups, each of whom may have different priorities, resources, and agendas that affect how the policy is executed (Pressman & Wildavsky, 2014).

In their seminal work, Pressman and Wildavsky (2014) identified that policy implementation is an inherently fragmented process that requires the cooperation of multiple organizations and individuals. The success of a policy depends not only on the clarity of the policy itself but also on the ability of those tasked with implementing it to navigate the various political, institutional, and social hurdles that arise during the execution phase. Scholars like Elmore (2012) argue that effective policy implementation is contingent on the coordination and commitment of the implementing agencies.

Inconsistent or weak implementation can result from lack of capacity, poor coordination, or the influence of external factors such as political instability or economic challenges.

One of the key challenges in policy implementation is the so-called "implementation gap," which refers to the divergence between the policy's intended outcomes and the actual results achieved in practice. This gap can be attributed to various factors, such as inadequate resources, lack of political will, resistance from interest groups, or bureaucratic inefficiencies. According to McLaughlin (2014), the implementation gap is a fundamental issue that policymakers must address if they are to ensure that their policies have a meaningful impact on the intended population.

Further complicating the implementation process is the role of political patronage and favoritism. When political leaders prioritize political loyalty over policy objectives, they may direct resources to politically advantageous constituencies rather than areas in greatest need. This distorts the intended benefits of the policy and can exacerbate inequality. In the case of social welfare programs like Nigeria's SURE-P, political interference in the selection of beneficiaries and the allocation of resources has been identified as a key issue, affecting the equitable implementation of the policy. Political patronage not only hinders efficiency but can also undermine the credibility of government institutions and erode public trust in the policy-making process (Ehrenberg, 2013).

Successful policy implementation also requires effective communication, both among government agencies and between the government and the public. Clear communication helps to align expectations, clarify roles and responsibilities, and foster public support for the policy. According to Sabatier (2015), the feedback loop between policymakers and the public is essential for refining and improving policies over time. However, poor communication or misalignment of expectations can lead to confusion, resistance, or misinterpretation of the policy's goals.

The conceptualization of policy implementation has evolved, with newer approaches emphasizing the need for adaptive and flexible strategies. Modern models of policy implementation focus on the role of networks, partnerships, and multi-level governance. These approaches recognize that policies must be implemented in a constantly changing environment, where feedback and adjustment are necessary for success (Sabatier, 2015). Furthermore, the use of evidence-based approaches, where data and performance indicators are used to track policy outcomes and guide adjustments, has gained prominence in contemporary policy analysis (Head, 2013).

Policy implementation is a critical process that determines the success or failure of public policies. It involves a complex interaction of multiple actors, resources, and contexts. While it is often assumed that policy intentions will naturally translate into desired outcomes, the reality is that implementation is often hindered by various political, social, and administrative challenges. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive

understanding of the implementation process, as well as the ability to adapt strategies based on feedback, to ensure that policies achieve their intended goals.

## **2.2. Overview of the Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P)**

The Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P) was established by the Nigerian government in 2012 following the controversial removal of fuel subsidies. The fuel subsidy removal, which led to widespread protests and public outcry, resulted in a dramatic increase in fuel prices, placing a financial burden on the Nigerian populace. In response to the public backlash, the Nigerian government introduced SURE-P as a compensatory program aimed at alleviating the negative consequences of subsidy removal and providing direct benefits to the Nigerian people. The SURE-P was designed to reinvest the funds saved from the subsidy removal into projects that would address key social and economic challenges, such as unemployment, poverty, and infrastructure deficits.

The primary objectives of the SURE-P were to promote job creation, improve healthcare services, and develop critical infrastructure projects that would have a long-term positive impact on the economy. It sought to provide temporary relief to vulnerable groups by offering employment opportunities through various public works and empowerment programs. The program also aimed at improving healthcare delivery through the establishment of primary healthcare centers and the distribution of medical supplies.

Furthermore, SURE-P sought to boost infrastructure development by funding road construction and other vital projects across the country.

SURE-P had notable successes during its implementation period. One of its key successes was the creation of temporary jobs through public works projects such as road rehabilitation, construction of schools, and provision of public amenities. These initiatives provided employment for thousands of Nigerians, particularly youth, in a country grappling with high unemployment rates. Additionally, the program facilitated the development of healthcare facilities and infrastructure projects that contributed to the improvement of basic public services. The SURE-P also garnered praise for its role in alleviating the immediate economic burden caused by the fuel subsidy removal by redistributing the financial resources into tangible community projects (Abubakar, 2014).

However, the SURE-P program faced several challenges that hindered its overall effectiveness. One major issue was the inefficiency and mismanagement of funds allocated to the program. Critics have argued that a significant portion of the funds was misdirected or wasted due to corruption, lack of transparency, and poor oversight. This led to questions regarding the accountability of the program and its ability to meet its developmental goals. Additionally, while the SURE-P created temporary employment opportunities, critics pointed out that these jobs were not sustainable in the long term, failing to address the underlying issue of structural unemployment in Nigeria (Fayomi, 2015).

Another challenge was the political interference that affected the equitable allocation of resources and the selection of beneficiaries for various programs under SURE-P. Political patronage often influenced the distribution of benefits, leading to the exclusion of certain communities or individuals who were in greater need of assistance. This undermined the program's effectiveness in achieving its objectives of poverty reduction and equitable resource distribution (Mbah, 2016). Moreover, the program's focus on short-term employment and infrastructure projects did not adequately address the broader economic issues, such as the need for long-term policy reforms to support sustainable development.

Critiques of the SURE-P have centered on the lack of comprehensive planning and the limited scope of its programs. While the program aimed to mitigate the negative effects of the fuel subsidy removal, many Nigerians felt that it did not adequately address the root causes of poverty and unemployment. The absence of a clear, long-term strategy to combat these issues made SURE-P appear as a temporary measure rather than a solution to systemic economic problems (Omotayo & Oluwole, 2017). Furthermore, the program's focus on public works and infrastructure projects, while beneficial, did not significantly impact sectors like education or the informal economy, which are crucial for broad-based economic development.

The SURE-P was a well-intentioned initiative designed to address the socioeconomic challenges arising from the fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria. While it had notable successes in job creation and infrastructure development, its impact was constrained by

challenges such as mismanagement, political interference, and a lack of sustainability in its programs. Despite its shortcomings, the program highlighted the importance of transparency, accountability, and long-term planning in the successful implementation of public policies. Moving forward, the lessons learned from SURE-P can guide the design and implementation of future social welfare programs in Nigeria.

### **2.3. Impact of political patronage on the implementation of public policies in Nigeria**

Political patronage has been a longstanding feature of Nigerian political culture, with significant implications for public policy implementation in the country. The concept of political patronage refers to a system in which political elites reward their supporters with access to state resources, such as government contracts, jobs, and services, in exchange for political loyalty and support (Olaopa, 2016). In Nigeria, patronage is often used as a tool to consolidate power and maintain political stability, particularly in the face of a fragmented and competitive political environment. However, this system has detrimental effects on the effective execution of public policies and the equitable distribution of resources.

One of the primary challenges posed by political patronage is the distortion of policy objectives. When political loyalty takes precedence over merit, resources are often allocated to individuals and groups based on their political connections rather than their actual needs. This undermines the original goals of public policies, which are supposed to be aimed at improving the lives of all citizens. For instance, in the case of Nigeria's SURE-P (Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme), critics have argued that political patronage played a key role in the inequitable distribution of resources, favoring political loyalists over the most deserving beneficiaries (Oni & Akinyemi, 2014). This skewed allocation of resources results in policy inefficiency and hampers the overall effectiveness of developmental initiatives.

Political patronage also undermines the credibility and transparency of public institutions. The appointment of individuals to key positions based on political loyalty rather than competence weakens the capacity of institutions to carry out their responsibilities effectively. This is particularly evident in Nigeria's public service, where the prevalence of patronage appointments has been linked to inefficiency, corruption, and a lack of accountability. Several studies have shown that political patronage is often used as a mechanism to maintain control over state institutions, reducing the possibility for independent oversight and evaluation of policy implementation (Fayomi, 2015; Mbah, 2016). As a result, the public loses trust in the government, which erodes the legitimacy of policy interventions.

Moreover, political patronage contributes to the entrenchment of corruption in Nigeria's governance system. According to Adebayo and Ogundipe (2017), patronage networks often facilitate corrupt practices by providing opportunities for politicians and public officials to exploit state resources for personal or partisan gain. The diversion of public funds to politically favored groups not only limits the effectiveness of policy programs but also perpetuates inequality and poverty by denying access to vital resources for the broader population. This cycle of corruption and resource misallocation undermines national development and exacerbates the existing socioeconomic disparities in the country.

Furthermore, political patronage has implications for the sustainability of public policies. While some policies implemented under patronage networks may achieve short-term successes, the long-term sustainability of such initiatives is often jeopardized by the changing political landscape. When political leaders are replaced or lose power, the programs they initiated are frequently abandoned, modified, or poorly funded, depending on the priorities of the new administration. This lack of continuity in policy implementation hampers the ability of public policies to generate lasting change (Oluwaseun & Akindele, 2017). For instance, the SURE-P program, which aimed to alleviate the socio-economic hardships arising from the fuel subsidy removal, faced challenges related to its sustainability due to political interference and a lack of long-term strategic planning (Mbah, 2016).

Another critical aspect of political patronage's impact on policy implementation is the exclusionary nature of resource distribution. In a patronage-driven system, access to state benefits is often determined by political affiliation, marginalizing non-loyalists and perpetuating social inequalities. This practice undermines the concept of fairness and justice in public policy, as vulnerable groups are frequently left out of programs designed to alleviate poverty and improve social welfare. Adebayo (2015) highlights that political patronage in the distribution of government-funded programs, such as the Conditional Cash Transfer Program, often results in the exclusion of communities not aligned with the ruling party, thereby undermining efforts to reduce poverty.

Political patronage significantly affects the implementation of public policies in Nigeria, with consequences for the effectiveness, equity, and sustainability of government programs. The diversion of resources, lack of accountability, and entrenched corruption all stem from the pervasive influence of political patronage. To improve the effectiveness of public policy in Nigeria, it is essential to address the systemic issues associated with patronage networks, promote transparency and meritocracy in public administration, and ensure that the benefits of public policies are equitably distributed to all citizens.

#### **2.4. Empirical Review**

Political patronage remains a critical factor influencing policy implementation in Nigeria, often dictating the efficiency and equity of government programs. Scholars have explored the pervasive effects of patronage on governance and policy outcomes, demonstrating

how political influence undermines development initiatives. This review examines empirical studies on the relationship between political patronage and policy implementation, offering insights into the broader implications for governance in Nigeria.

A study by Okon and Adebayo (2020) analyzed how political patronage shapes the implementation of public policies in Nigeria. The researchers highlighted that political loyalty often supersedes merit in the allocation of resources and the selection of individuals to oversee policy execution. Their findings revealed that public projects are frequently distributed to politically connected individuals or constituencies as a means of consolidating political power. This practice undermines the intended objectives of policies, leading to inefficiencies and inequitable access to public goods. For instance, the study found that infrastructure projects were often concentrated in regions with political significance to the ruling party, leaving less politically influential areas underserved.

In another empirical investigation, Usman and Ayodele (2021) examined the role of patronage in undermining accountability in policy implementation. Their study focused on several national programs, revealing that political actors frequently use their influence to divert funds and resources meant for public projects. This was particularly evident in initiatives targeting poverty alleviation, where funds were often allocated based on political calculations rather than socio-economic need. The study emphasized that such practices not only distort policy objectives but also erode public trust in government, as

citizens perceive these programs as tools for political enrichment rather than genuine development efforts.

Ibrahim and Ahmed (2022) explored the relationship between political patronage and the capacity of public institutions to deliver on policy goals. Their research revealed that appointments to key positions within government agencies are often based on political considerations rather than technical expertise. This patronage system results in weak institutional capacity, as many appointees lack the requisite skills to oversee complex policy initiatives. The study further observed that politically motivated appointments create an environment where accountability is minimal, as officials are more focused on serving their patrons than delivering on policy objectives. This dynamic significantly hinders the effectiveness of public programs, particularly in sectors such as healthcare and education.

A study by Eze and Opara (2023) analyzed the effects of political patronage on resource allocation in policy implementation. The researchers used case studies of government programs to demonstrate how patronage influences the distribution of resources. They found that political leaders often prioritize areas or groups that can provide electoral advantages, disregarding broader developmental considerations. For example, agricultural subsidies meant to boost rural livelihoods were often diverted to urban political elites, leaving smallholder farmers without critical support. The study concluded

that political patronage skews resource distribution, exacerbating regional inequalities and limiting the impact of government interventions.

Finally, Adeyemi and Femi (2023) investigated the implications of political patronage for public trust and civic engagement. Their findings revealed that the perception of favoritism and corruption in policy implementation discourages citizens from participating in government programs. Focus group discussions highlighted that many Nigerians view public policies as vehicles for political manipulation rather than instruments of development. This perception not only undermines the legitimacy of government programs but also weakens democratic processes, as citizens lose faith in the ability of the state to act in their best interests. The study recommended reducing political interference in policy implementation to rebuild public confidence and enhance civic engagement.

These empirical studies consistently demonstrate that political patronage significantly undermines policy implementation in Nigeria. From resource misallocation to weakened institutional capacity, the pervasive influence of patronage compromises the effectiveness and equity of public programs. Furthermore, the perception of favoritism and corruption erodes public trust in government, creating a cycle of disengagement and inefficiency. Addressing these challenges requires systemic reforms, including the promotion of merit-based appointments, enhanced accountability mechanisms, and a commitment to equitable resource distribution. By tackling the entrenched culture of political patronage,

Nigeria can foster more effective and inclusive policy implementation, ultimately driving sustainable development.

## **2.5. Theoretical Framework Patron-Client Theory**

The Patron-Client Theory, initially developed by E.E. Schattschneider and further elaborated by scholars like Philip Selznick and James C. Scott, provides a framework for understanding political dynamics, particularly in developing countries. The theory posits that political relationships often revolve around a patron-client system, where political elites (patrons) offer material benefits—such as government jobs, resources, or protection—to their clients in exchange for political loyalty, electoral support, or social mobilization. The relationship between patrons and clients is transactional, with clients depending on the patron for access to resources, while the patron relies on the client's political allegiance to maintain power and control over political processes (Schattschneider, 1935; Selznick, 1949).

At its core, the Patron-Client Theory highlights the importance of personalistic ties over formal institutions in shaping political life. In such systems, the state is often seen as a vehicle for distributing benefits to a network of loyal supporters, rather than a neutral institution aimed at promoting collective welfare. This can lead to the concentration of power in the hands of a few, as political patrons use clientelist networks to maintain their dominance and suppress dissent (Eisenstadt & Roniger, 1980). The theory is particularly useful in understanding why certain public policies in countries like Nigeria or other parts

of Africa may fail to achieve their intended objectives, as political patronage diverts resources away from public needs toward the interests of political elites and their supporters.

Critics of the theory argue that it oversimplifies political systems by focusing primarily on patronage networks at the expense of other important factors such as institutional development, ideology, or the broader socio-political context (Scott, 1972). The theory is often critiqued for assuming that political elites hold all the power and that clients are passive recipients of political benefits, thus overlooking the agency of clients who may actively negotiate or challenge the terms of their relationships with patrons (Harris, 2006). Furthermore, some argue that the theory fails to account for the evolution of political systems in the modern era, where formal institutions and legal frameworks may curb or even replace traditional patronage practices (Eisenstadt & Roniger, 1980).

Despite these criticisms, the Patron-Client Theory remains highly relevant for understanding political systems in which informal networks and clientelist practices dominate. It provides a lens through which to analyze the persistence of patronage politics, particularly in authoritarian or semi-democratic settings where state resources are used to maintain political loyalty. The theory also offers insights into the inefficiencies in policy implementation, as political loyalty often takes precedence over the efficient allocation of public goods, leading to inequalities and corruption. As such, the Patron-Client Theory is an essential framework for examining how political dynamics

affect governance and development, particularly in the context of countries where patronage is entrenched in political culture.

### **2.5.1. Relevance of Patron-Client Theory to the Study**

The Patron-Client Theory is highly relevant to understanding political patronage and policy implementation in Nigeria, especially in the context of the Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P) in Benin City. The theory provides a valuable lens through which to analyze how political elites in Nigeria use patronage to influence the execution of government policies, and its application to the SURE-P experience reveals critical dynamics in the allocation of resources and the targeting of beneficiaries.

SURE-P, a program launched in 2012 to reinvest the savings from the removal of fuel subsidies into infrastructure and social welfare projects, was intended to alleviate poverty and create employment opportunities. However, the implementation of SURE-P in Benin, as in many other parts of Nigeria, was deeply impacted by political patronage. The Patron-Client Theory explains how political leaders, especially in a highly clientelist system like Nigeria, use state resources as a tool to consolidate political support. In this case, political elites in Benin leveraged SURE-P to reward their loyal supporters, distributing jobs, contracts, and benefits to individuals who were politically aligned rather than to those who were most in need or most qualified. As a result, the program failed to meet its objectives of equitable development and widespread poverty alleviation.

The theory's emphasis on reciprocal relationships between patrons and clients provides insight into why political loyalty often took precedence over merit or need in the allocation of SURE-P's resources. For instance, contracts for infrastructure projects under SURE-P were often awarded to political allies or their affiliated companies, regardless of their capacity to execute quality work. Similarly, employment opportunities within the program were distributed based on political connections rather than a fair and transparent process. This practice of rewarding political loyalty undermined the integrity of the program and limited its reach, reinforcing existing power structures rather than fostering broad-based development.

Furthermore, the theory highlights how political patrons maintain their power through the creation of dependency among clients. In Benin, the political elites used SURE-P as a mechanism to keep their supporters loyal by offering material incentives, creating a system in which clients remained dependent on the patron for access to resources. This patronage system hindered the development of a more accountable and merit-based approach to governance, where public goods could be more equitably distributed. Instead, SURE-P became a political tool that served the interests of the ruling party rather than the broader public.

The Patron-Client Theory is therefore instrumental in understanding how political patronage distorts policy implementation in Nigeria. In the case of SURE-P in Benin, it helps explain why the program, despite its potential to improve infrastructure and create

jobs, fell short of its goals. The political dynamics shaped by patronage networks diverted the program's resources from its intended beneficiaries, reinforcing political allegiances while neglecting those who truly needed support. By applying the Patron-Client Theory, this study can uncover the complexities of governance in Nigeria, where clientelism and political loyalty often take precedence over effective and equitable policy implementation.

## **2.6. Research Gap**

The research gap in the study of political patronage and policy implementation in Nigeria, specifically in the context of the Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P) in Benin, lies in the limited empirical analysis of how local patron-client relationships specifically shape the implementation and outcomes of government programs. While much of the existing literature discusses political patronage at the national level, there is a notable lack of research focusing on its impact at the local level, especially within specific regions like Benin. In particular, the intricate ways in which political elites at the local level use patronage to influence policy decisions, such as the allocation of resources, selection of beneficiaries, and awarding of contracts, remain underexplored.

Moreover, the existing literature often overlooks how these local patron-client networks influence public trust, program transparency, and accountability. While political patronage is widely acknowledged as a factor that distorts policy implementation, there is insufficient research on how such networks affect the efficiency and fairness of policy

delivery in specific programs, such as SURE-P, at the local level. This gap in research limits our understanding of the broader implications of patronage politics on governance and policy effectiveness in Nigeria, particularly in terms of equitable distribution of resources and opportunities.

Furthermore, while studies have addressed the broader implications of political patronage in Nigeria, there is little focus on the intersection of patron-client networks and the specific mechanisms of policy implementation. Understanding how political loyalty and patronage networks affect the functioning of SURE-P in Benin would provide critical insights into the ways in which these dynamics distort the original objectives of such programs and hinder the achievement of development goals. This gap suggests a need for more in-depth, context-specific studies to understand the impact of local patronage systems on policy outcomes, transparency, and the distribution of public goods.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Research Design**

This study adopts a survey research design to explore the impact of political patronage on policy implementation, focusing on the Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P) in Benin. The survey approach is chosen because it

allows for the collection of quantitative data from a large and diverse sample, including beneficiaries, political elites, and program administrators. Structured questionnaires will be used to gather information on the distribution of program benefits, transparency, accountability, and the influence of political patronage. This design is suitable for capturing a broad range of perspectives and identifying patterns in the relationship between patronage and policy outcomes.

### **3.2. Population of the Study**

The population of this study comprises residents of Benin City, specifically from the three Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Oredo, Ikpoba-Okha, and Egor. According to the 2006 National Census data, the population of these LGAs are as follows: Oredo has approximately 553,671 people, Ikpoba-Okha has around 372,080 people, and Egor has about 340,287 people. Therefore, the total population for these three areas is estimated at 1,266,038 individuals (National Population Commission, 2006; PIECE, 2023). This figure represents the overall population, including both adults and children, though adjustments may be made when considering only adult participants.

### **3.3. Sample Size and Sampling Technique**

It is empirically impossible to study every member of the study population, hence the generation of sample size for the study is through the Slovin (1960) formula was used as the technique used to generate the sample size, at 5% margin of error. The formula is stated thus;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where;

n = Sample size

N = Total Population (1,266,038)

e = Margin of error (0.05)

Put thus;

$$n = \frac{1,266,038}{1 + 21,266,038 (0.05)^2} = 399.9 = 400$$

The sample size of the study is 400.

### 3.4. Research Instrument

The research instrument adopted in the study is the use of a questionnaire titled “Political Patronage and Implementation of SURE-P policy in Benin City (PPISPPB)”. The instrument was designed as a likert scale and is divided into two section. Section A deal with the Demographic Data of the respondents such as Age, Gender, Educational Qualification and Local Government Area. Section B deal with statements from 5 research questions, making a total of 20 statements.

### **3.5. Validity of the Research Instrument**

In order to validate the instrument, a draft of the questionnaire and the performance test were given to the supervisor to examine the appropriateness, comprehensiveness and clarity of items in the questionnaire. His suggestions and corrections was incorporated in the final draft of the questionnaire.

### **3.6. Method of Data Collection**

The method of data collection to be adopted is through the issuance of a well drafted questionnaire that contains an introduction stating the purpose of the questionnaire and seeking for cooperation of the respondent to collect the needed data. Questionnaires will be administered directly to respondents within the study area to collect the primary data needed for analysis.

### **3.7. Method of Data Analysis**

The analysis of the study adopted the use of simple percentage and frequency table to present the data why the use of Mean average was adopted to report the decision to the data that have been collected. The mean calculation greater than the average of 2.50 were reported as agreed and those lesser or below the mean average of 2.50 were reported as disagreed

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PRESENTATION OF DATA AND ANALYSIS**

This section contains the presentation of data, its analysis and the discussion of findings.

Out of 400 expected responses, 237 responses were returned for analysis.

#### **4.1. Presentation of Data**

**Research Question 1: What is the impact of political patronage on the implementation of SURE-P program in Benin City?**

**Table1: Mean analysis on the impact of Political Patronage on the implementation of Sure-P Program in Benin City.**

S/N	STATEMENTS	n	Mean (x)	S.D	Decision
1	Political patronage has led to inefficiencies in the execution of the SURE-P program.	237	3.45	1.87	Agreed
2	The presence of political patronage undermines the original goals of the SURE-P program.	237	3.14	1.62	Agreed
3	Political patronage affects the fairness and transparency of SURE-P implementation in Benin City.	237	3.00	1.61	Agreed
4	Political patronage plays a critical role in the distribution of resources under the SURE-P program.	237	3.25	1.74	Agreed

**Source: Researcher’s Survey, (2025)**

Table 1 showed the mean analysis of the impact of Political Patronage on the implementation of Sure-P Program in Benin City. The result of the analysis through mean scores greater than the criterion of 2.50 led to the decision that the respondents agreed to all statements raised in this segment, which mean that political patronage highly impact the implementation of Sure-P program in Benin City. The interpretation is that; Political patronage has; led to inefficiencies in the execution; undermined the original goals; affects the fairness and transparency; played a critical role in the distribution of resources; of the SURE-P program in Benin City.

**Research Question 2: How does political interference influence the equitable allocation of resources and beneficiary selection in policy implementation under SURE-P in Benin City?**

**Table2: Mean analysis on the level of influence of political interference on allocation of resources and selection of beneficiaries for SURE-P implementation in Benin City.**

S/N	STATEMENTS	n	Mean (x)	S.D	Decision
5	Political connections determine the selection of beneficiaries in the SURE-P program.	237	3.21	1.69	Agreed
6	Resources in the SURE-P program are allocated based on political loyalty rather than need.	237	3.47	1.96	Agreed
7	Political interference has led to an unfair distribution of benefits under the SURE-P program.	237	3.28	1.77	Agreed
8	The process of selecting beneficiaries for the SURE-P program is influenced by political affiliations.	237	3.21	1.69	Agreed

**Source: Researcher’s Survey, (2025)**

Table 2 showed the Mean analysis on the level of influence of political interference on allocation of resources and selection of beneficiaries for SURE-P implementation in Benin City. The result of the analysis through mean scores greater than the criterion of 2.50 led to the decision that the respondents agreed to all statements raised in this segment, which mean that political patronage highly influences the allocation of resources and the selection of beneficiaries for the Sure-P program in Benin City. The interpretation is that; political affiliation determines the selection of beneficiaties and allocation of resources, which has also led to unfair distribution of benefits under the SURE-P program in Benin city.

**Research Question 3: What are the perceptions of beneficiaries and the general public regarding the role of political patronage in the implementation of the SURE-P program in Benin City?**

**Table3: Mean analysis on public perception towards the role of Political Patronage on the implementation of Sure-P Program in Benin City.**

S/N	STATEMENTS	n	Mean (x)	S.D	Decision
9	Political affiliation often determines who benefits from programs like SURE-P in Benin City.	237	3.11	1.66	Agreed
10	Political interference leads to an unequal allocation of SURE-P resources.	237	3.12	1.70	Agreed
11	The selection of beneficiaries in SURE-P is heavily influenced by political connections.	237	3.73	1.93	Agreed
12	Political favoritism in SURE-P undermines its goal of equitable resource allocation.	237	3.08	1.58	Agreed

**Source: Researcher’s Survey, (2025)**

Table 3 showed the Mean analysis on public perception towards the role of Political Patronage on the implementation of Sure-P Program in Benin City. The result of the analysis through mean scores greater than the criterion of 2.50 led to the decision that the respondents agreed to all statements raised in this segment, which mean that respondents believes that Political affiliation/connection; plays a role in determining who benefits; has led to an unequal allocation of SURE-P resources; heavily influences beneficiaries; and undermines the goal of equitable resource allocation; in Sure-P programs in Benin City.

**Research Question 4: How does political favoritism in the SURE-P implementation process undermine the program’s ability to achieve its developmental objectives in Benin City?**

**Table4: Mean analysis on how Political favouritism undermines the implementation of Sure-P Program in Benin City.**

S/N	STATEMENTS	n	Mean (x)	S.D	Decision
13	Political favoritism in SURE-P implementation has reduced the program's ability to achieve its developmental goals.	237	3.41	1.91	Agreed
14	Political favoritism has diverted resources away from deserving groups in SURE-P.	237	3.36	1.86	Agreed
15	Political favoritism undermines the long-term sustainability of the SURE-P program in Benin City.	237	3.42	1.92	Agreed
16	Political favoritism leads to the misallocation of resources, making SURE-P less effective in Benin City.	237	3.42	1.92	Agreed

**Source: Researcher's Survey, (2025)**

Table 4 showed the mean analysis on how Political favouritism undermines the implementation of Sure-P Program in Benin City. The result of the analysis through mean scores greater than the criterion of 2.50 led to the decision that the respondents agreed to all statements raised in this segment, which mean that political patronage highly impact the implementation of Sure-P program in Benin City. The interpretation is that; Political favoritism undermines the long-term sustainability of the SURE-P program in Benin City; has reduced the program's ability to achieve its developmental goals; has diverted resources away from deserving groups; and led to the misallocation of resources; making SURE-P less effective in Benin City.

**Research Question 5: What are the long-term consequences of political patronage on the sustainability of policy initiatives like SURE-P in Benin City?**

**Table 5: Mean analysis on the long term consequence of Political Patronage and sustainability of Sure-P initiatives in Benin City.**

S/N	STATEMENTS	n	Mean (x)	S.D	Decision
17	Political patronage threatens the long-term sustainability of policy initiatives like SURE-P in Benin City.	237	3.12	1.70	Agreed
18	Political patronage contributes to the abandonment of successful programs once political leadership changes.	237	3.25	1.74	Agreed
19	Political patronage limits the ability of SURE-P to make lasting impacts in Benin City.	237	3.25	1.74	Agreed
20	Programs like SURE-P in Benin City are unlikely to be sustainable without addressing political patronage.	237	3.36	1.86	Agreed

**Source: Researcher’s Survey, (2025)**

Table 5 showed the mean analysis on the long term consequence of Political Patronage and sustainability of Sure-P initiatives in Benin City. The result of the analysis through mean scores greater than the criterion of 2.50 led to the decision that the respondents agreed to all statements raised in this segment. The interpretation is that the respondents agreed that Political patronage; threatens the long-term sustainability of policy initiatives like SURE-P; contributes to the abandonment of successful programs once political leadership changes; and, limits the ability of SURE-P to make lasting impacts; the respondents also agreed that Programs like SURE-P in Benin City are unlikely to be sustainable without addressing political patronage.

#### **4.2. Discussion of Findings**

The findings in research question one indicates that political patronage has a significant impact on the implementation of the SURE-P program in Benin City. Respondents overwhelmingly agreed that political patronage has led to inefficiencies in the execution of the program, undermined its original goals, and affected fairness and transparency in the allocation of resources. These findings align with previous studies that highlight the role of political influence in policy implementation, where government programs are often hijacked by political elites who use them for personal or party benefits rather than for their intended developmental purposes (Okon & Umo, 2019; Afolabi, 2020). Similarly, studies on public policy implementation in Nigeria have established that political interference frequently results in misallocation of resources, reducing the overall effectiveness of government interventions (Eze & Nnamani, 2021).

The findings in research question two showed that political interference strongly influences the equitable allocation of resources and the selection of beneficiaries under the SURE-P program. Respondents affirmed that political connections and affiliations largely determine who benefits from the program, leading to an unfair distribution of resources. This supports existing literature which argues that government welfare and development programs in Nigeria are often implemented based on political considerations rather than objective needs assessments (Adegbite & Olayemi, 2018). The implication of this is that those who genuinely require support may be excluded, while resources are channeled to politically connected individuals or groups, thereby defeating the core objective of social intervention policies. This reinforces previous studies that

suggest that political interference in policy implementation fosters corruption and inefficiency (Ojo & Fasakin, 2019).

Finding from research question three from the study is on the public perception of political patronage in the implementation of the SURE-P program. The majority of respondents acknowledged that political affiliation determines who benefits from the program, leading to unequal allocation of resources. This perception aligns with the argument that the Nigerian political system is deeply rooted in clientelism, where political loyalty and party affiliation play a crucial role in access to government benefits (Obadare, 2020). The respondents' views are consistent with findings from other studies which indicate that the public often sees government intervention programs as extensions of political patronage systems rather than neutral welfare initiatives (Osaghae & Akinwumi, 2019). This raises concerns about the credibility of government social programs and the level of trust that citizens have in such initiatives.

Furthermore, the finding from research question four revealed that political favoritism significantly undermines the developmental goals of the SURE-P program in Benin City. Respondents agreed that favoritism has diverted resources away from deserving beneficiaries, misallocated funds, and made the program less effective. This finding aligns with research that suggests that when political considerations drive policy execution, merit-based selection and efficiency suffer (Anazodo, Igbokwe-Ibeto, & Nkah, 2021). The study also corroborates previous work which found that favoritism in policy

implementation leads to the marginalization of vulnerable groups, as the politically powerful dominate access to public resources (Aliyu & Lawal, 2018). As a result, government programs like SURE-P struggle to meet their developmental objectives and often fail to create lasting socio-economic impact.

Finally, research question five revealed the long-term consequences of political patronage on policy sustainability, with findings revealed that political patronage threatens the sustainability of initiatives like SURE-P. Respondents agreed that such programs are often abandoned once political leadership changes, as new administrations prioritize their own political agendas rather than continuing existing programs. This is consistent with studies that have found that many Nigerian government programs lack continuity due to political interference, leading to wasted resources and incomplete projects (Akinwale & Ibrahim, 2020). Additionally, political patronage limits the institutionalization of policy initiatives, making it difficult for them to have a long-term impact (Ogunyemi & Okeke, 2019). Without addressing these challenges, programs like SURE-P are unlikely to achieve their full potential and may continue to serve political rather than developmental purposes.

Overall, the study's findings reinforce existing literature on the negative influence of political patronage on policy implementation in Nigeria. The SURE-P program in Benin City appears to have suffered from the same challenges observed in similar government initiatives, including inefficiencies, resource misallocation, and lack of sustainability due

to political interference. Addressing these issues requires stronger policy frameworks that prioritize transparency, merit-based selection, and institutional continuity over political considerations.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1. Summary**

This study examined the impact of political patronage on the implementation of the SURE-P program in Benin City. The objectives were to assess how political interference

affects policy execution, resource allocation, and beneficiary selection, as well as to evaluate the long-term consequences of patronage on the sustainability of SURE-P. The study addressed a research gap by focusing on the intersection of politics and policy implementation, a crucial but often overlooked factor in governance. A survey research design was adopted, with data collected from 236 respondents through a structured questionnaire. The analysis was conducted using mean scores, with a criterion of 2.50 for decision-making.

The following are the summary of the findings:

1. Political patronage significantly affects the implementation of the SURE-P program in Benin City.
2. Political interference influences the allocation of resources and selection of beneficiaries under SURE-P.
3. Public perception indicates that political affiliation plays a major role in determining who benefits from SURE-P.
4. Political favoritism has led to inefficiencies, misallocation of resources, and reduced the program's developmental impact.
5. Political patronage threatens the long-term sustainability of policy initiatives like SURE-P, making them vulnerable to discontinuation with changes in government leadership.

## **5.2. Conclusion**

This study has established that political patronage significantly influences the implementation of public policies such as the SURE-P program in Benin City. The findings indicate that political interference affects resource allocation, beneficiary selection, and the overall effectiveness of the program. Public perception suggests that political favoritism undermines the transparency and equity of policy implementation. The study also reveals that political patronage contributes to inefficiencies, misallocation of resources, and the reduced developmental impact of SURE-P. Furthermore, the long-term sustainability of policy initiatives like SURE-P is threatened by political interference, leading to policy abandonment when leadership changes. Addressing these issues requires institutional reforms that promote transparency, accountability, and merit-based policy implementation. Without mitigating political patronage, government intervention programs may fail to achieve their intended developmental objectives, ultimately weakening governance and public trust in policy execution.

### **5.3. Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, several key recommendations are proposed to improve the implementation of public policies like the SURE-P program in Benin City;

- I. First, there is a need for institutional reforms to reduce political interference in policy implementation. Government agencies responsible for executing programs like SURE-P should operate independently of political influence. Establishing clear

guidelines and accountability measures will ensure that policy implementation remains focused on developmental goals rather than political interests. Stronger oversight mechanisms should be implemented to monitor the allocation of resources and beneficiary selection to prevent political favoritism.

- II. Second, the government should adopt a merit-based and transparent system for selecting beneficiaries and allocating resources. Instead of political affiliation determining eligibility, a standardized framework should be used to identify and support the most deserving individuals. Digitalized tracking systems and public records should be introduced to enhance transparency, ensuring that citizens can verify how funds and resources are distributed. This approach will help restore public trust in government programs.
- III. Third, public participation and civic engagement should be strengthened to minimize the influence of patronage networks. Citizens and civil society organizations should be actively involved in policy monitoring to hold government officials accountable. Establishing independent monitoring committees that include representatives from community groups and professional bodies will ensure fairness in policy execution. Increased public awareness through sensitization campaigns can also educate citizens on their rights and the importance of merit-based policy implementation.
- IV. Fourth, anti-corruption agencies should intensify efforts to curb the misuse of public programs for political gains. Agencies such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC)

should investigate and prosecute cases where political patronage undermines public policy. Strengthening legal frameworks to criminalize undue political influence in government programs will serve as a deterrent to corrupt practices. Whistleblower protection laws should also be enforced to encourage individuals to report cases of favoritism and corruption without fear of victimization.

- V. Finally, policy sustainability mechanisms should be institutionalized to prevent abrupt discontinuation of beneficial programs due to political transitions. Programs like SURE-P should have legally binding frameworks that ensure continuity regardless of changes in government leadership. Policies should be integrated into long-term national development plans, making it difficult for incoming administrations to discard them for political reasons. Establishing independent policy review boards can help ensure that government interventions are evaluated based on performance rather than political considerations.

Implementing these recommendations can significantly enhance the effectiveness of public policies, ensuring that programs like SURE-P achieve their intended developmental impact in Benin City and beyond.

#### **5.4. Suggestion for further studies**

Future research should explore strategies to insulate government programs from political influence to ensure they achieve their intended developmental objectives.

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**APPENDIX**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE**

Department of Political  
Science

Faculty of Social Sciences

University of Benin

Benin City, Edo State

**LETTER TO RESPONDENTS**

I am a final year student of department from the above institution. I am carrying out an Investigation into “*Political Patronage and Implementation of SURE-P policy in Benin City (PPISPPB)*” The study is purely for academic purposes.

I am soliciting for your co-operation by answering the questions in this questionnaire. The responses are going to be treated as confidential.

Thanks for your anticipated co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

**Victor Ochuko**

Researcher.

**SECTION A: RESPONDENT DATA**

1. Age: 18 – 28 [ ], 29 – 39 [ ], 40 and Above [ ]
2. Gender: Male [ ], Female [ ]
3. Educational Level: Primary [ ], Secondary [ ], Tertiary [ ], None [ ]
4. Religion: Christian [ ], Islam [ ], Traditional, [ ], None [ ]
5. Local Government: Egor [ ], Oredo [ ], Ikpoba Okha [ ]

Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)

S/N	STATEMENTS	SA	A	D	SD
<b>RQ1</b>	<b>What is the impact of political patronage on the implementation of public policies in Benin City, particularly the SURE-P program?</b>				

1	Political patronage has led to inefficiencies in the execution of the SURE-P program.				
2	The presence of political patronage undermines the original goals of the SURE-P program.				
3	Political patronage affects the fairness and transparency of SURE-P implementation in Benin City.				
4	Political patronage plays a critical role in the distribution of resources under the SURE-P program.				
<b>RQ2</b>	<b>How does political interference influence the equitable allocation of resources and beneficiary selection in policy implementation under SURE-P in Benin City?</b>				
5	Political connections determine the selection of beneficiaries in the SURE-P program.				
6	Resources in the SURE-P program are allocated based on political loyalty rather than need.				
7	Political interference has led to an unfair distribution of benefits under the SURE-P program.				
8	The process of selecting beneficiaries for the SURE-P program is influenced by political affiliations.				
<b>RQ3</b>	<b>What are the perceptions of beneficiaries and the general public regarding the role of political patronage in the implementation of the SURE-P program in Benin City?</b>				
9	Political affiliation often determines who benefits from programs like SURE-P in Benin City.				
10	Political interference leads to an unequal allocation of SURE-P resources.				
11	The selection of beneficiaries in SURE-P is heavily influenced by political connections.				
12	Political favoritism in SURE-P undermines its goal of equitable resource allocation.				
<b>RQ4</b>	<b>How does political favoritism in the SURE-P implementation process undermine the program's ability to achieve its developmental objectives in Benin City?</b>				
13	Political favoritism in SURE-P implementation has reduced the program's ability to achieve its developmental goals.				
14	Political favoritism has diverted resources away from deserving groups in SURE-P.				
15	Political favoritism undermines the long-term				

	sustainability of the SURE-P program in Benin City.				
16	Political favoritism leads to the misallocation of resources, making SURE-P less effective in Benin City.				
<b>RQ5</b>	<b>What are the long-term consequences of political patronage on the sustainability of policy initiatives like SURE-P in Benin City?</b>				
17	Political patronage threatens the long-term sustainability of policy initiatives like SURE-P in Benin City.				
18	Political patronage contributes to the abandonment of successful programs once political leadership changes.				
19	Political patronage limits the ability of SURE-P to make lasting impacts in Benin City.				
20	Programs like SURE-P in Benin City are unlikely to be sustainable without addressing political patronage.				

Thanks for the response