

Public policy evaluation process

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Abstract:

The study focuses on the importance of objective and accurate evaluation of public policies implemented by the government to achieve specific goals. The process of evaluating public policies is based on objective and methodological criteria and scientific indicators to measure the impact and effects of the resulting outcomes. The study concludes that the process of evaluating public policies contributes to improving the quality of government performance, achieving citizen satisfaction, and fairness in wealth distribution and its rationalization.

Keywords: Public policy; Objective and accurate evaluation; Government performance; Public policy evaluation; Criteria and indicators.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Countries and political entities, with their diverse political, economic, and social structures, nations and political entities have made an effort to implement more development-related programs and plans, despite differences in potential and developmental elements. This is the process by which the wants and demands of the people are met and solidified into broad policies. Thus, the ultimate objective of many general policies is to produce a sense of contentment among citizens, which, on the other hand, adds to the legitimacy and stability of institutions. All of this can only be accomplished by putting various general policies under reference standards and instruments that allow the multiple bodies, officials, and agencies who rely on them to carry out an extensive and coordinated assessment meant to gauge the success and efficacy of many broad policies.

As a result, both scholars and decision-makers view the evaluation of general policies as an essential and significant step. From this vantage point, the following issue can be brought up: What impact does the precise and impartial assessment of public policy have on the functioning of government?

Investigate hypothesis: A method for enhancing government performance and making it more effective and efficient is public policy evaluation. As a result, we have decided to address the issue and disprove the claim using the following strategy:

2. Evaluating public policy...Conceptual dimension.

2.1 Definition of evaluating public policy.

2.2 Definition of evaluation:

In the realm of language, evaluation is the act of estimating the value of something, Terminologically, Scriven, Mark, Henry, Jonson, and Tzak have described evaluation as "the process of calculating the value of each result obtained from the application of a certain entity."⁽¹⁾

* **Evaluation:** It is a process that ensures that programs (policy) have successfully attained their intended goals in a manner that aligns with the intentions of policy makers. It can also serve as a tool that focuses on the operational processes of the program, providing feedback to participants

involved in public policy-making processes. This feedback aids in the modification of policy content, even during the implementation phase, if necessary, with the aim of enhancing its effectiveness and efficiency ⁽²⁾.

Evaluation according to the glossary of basic evaluation terms, evaluation is defined as a systematic and objective assessment of a project, program, or policy (ongoing or completed) and its design, implementation, and results. In some cases, evaluation includes the identification of appropriate criteria, examining performance in light of those criteria, assessing expected and actual results, and drawing the most suitable lessons ⁽³⁾.

Jean Pierre Nioche sees policy evaluation as having two aspects, where evaluation is considered an administrative political system, linked to specific activities on one hand, and as a unit of analysis for those activities on the other. He adds that public policy evaluation or evaluative research falls under the methods and research of the social sciences that determine the effects of policy, which are viewed as specific activities ⁽⁴⁾.

As for **Mara. Sidney & Gerald J. Miller & Franck Fischer**, public policy evaluation is defined as a procedural or methodological approach aimed at doing two things: first, evaluation research as an analytical tool involving investigating policy programs to collect information relevant to evaluating ⁽⁵⁾.

2.3 Definition of the public policy evaluation process:

It can be defined as "a systematic endeavor grounded in scientific methodology, aimed at understanding the intricacies of processes associated with public policies, their impacts, and the tangible programs linked to their execution. It is imperative to possess a precise scientific comprehension of the positive and negative consequences stemming from the establishment and implementation of public policies, their outputs, impacts, efficiency, and effectiveness in achieving goals, while avoiding arbitrary actions and improvisation. This process should accompany every stage that public policy undergoes." ⁽⁶⁾ Thus, from the aforementioned information, it becomes evident that public policy evaluation fundamentally involves striking a balance between the plans, projects, and policies adopted and

what has been accomplished or can be accomplished in light of the available resources.

The allocation of resources and the desired outcomes to be attained within a specific time frame are key considerations when rationalizing and optimizing public policies from their design stage to their ultimate implementation.

2.4. Types of Public Policy Evaluation:

Furthermore, there are diverse approaches and types of evaluation in public policy, which vary depending on the objectives of the evaluation process and the level of focus in its operations and activities. In the ensuing discussion, we will provide a brief overview of the most significant types of public policy evaluation:

A- Advanced Evaluation: This kind is the first step in approving the start of a new program and entails carrying out a feasibility study before reaching a decision.

B- Strategic Evaluation: It can be used to evaluate how well programs are implemented and help program managers connect planning to performance and close the knowledge gap between theory and practice, which makes it easier to identify required ⁽⁷⁾.

C- Program Implementation Process Evaluation: This stage may be carried either separately or in tandem with earlier phases. It include examining the program's operating procedures, financial implications, and tactics. This kind of evaluation gives a lot of weight to evaluating the people and material resources needed to carry out the program.

D- Effectiveness Evaluation: This kind of evaluation examines how well the program accomplishes the main goals for which it was created.

E- Efficiency Evaluation: It mostly relates to how much prospective costs or expenses are reduced without compromising the efficacy of the program.

F- Results Evaluation: This involves calculating the program's recipients' and public policy's positive and negative impact from its outcomes. It entails determining the causes, contributing elements, and direct and indirect consequences of the program as well as its end results ⁽⁸⁾.

Based on the aforementioned types of evaluation, it can be inferred that they are interconnected and interrelated, with each type encompassing the others in terms of their function and performance. Consequently, it is imperative to include all types of evaluation as they form an integrated chain that operates in a harmonious and cohesive manner.

2.5 The objectives of public policy evaluation:

It is essential to have a clear understanding of the purpose in order to effectively carry out the evaluation function and ensure its success. The objectives that underpin the evaluation function encompass the following:

***Political objectives:** The evaluation focuses on assessing the extent to which justice and wealth distribution have been achieved, which is indicative of the level of impact attained by the political system within society.

***Bureaucratic objectives:** The evaluation centers around the implementation procedures and processes, as well as the level of success attained by the executive apparatus in fulfilling its function.

***Objective goals:** The evaluation is concerned with the subject matter of public policy and its objectives. It assesses the extent to which the approved alternatives contribute to the achievement of the legislator's goals. These goals encompass various areas, including:

1- The success of public policy in providing solutions to the problem at hand.

2- Measuring the effects and outcomes and their influence on the political environment.

3- Assessing both intentional and unintentional effects.

In conclusion, the evaluation of public policy serves a crucial function in ensuring its effectiveness. By comprehensively examining the various types of evaluation and understanding the objectives that guide the evaluation process, policymakers can make informed decisions and enhance the impact of public policies.

The achievement or lack thereof of any of the aforementioned goals cannot be categorically labeled as a total success or failure because the results of the evaluation may show that public policy, government

initiatives, and action plans have significantly succeeded in their political goals but have fallen short in important areas⁽⁹⁾.

3. Criteria and indicators for assessing public policy.

The third axis consists of standards and gauges to evaluate public policy, the standards that can be used to evaluate public policy are not all the same. A multitude of research in this domain have embraced many interrelated standards in order to guarantee a thorough and comprehensive assessment of public policy initiatives.

The following five standards were put forth by Edward Schuman to assess a program's efficacy or inefficacy in the context of public service:

1. An endeavor is the amount and caliber of operations and activities that are required by programming, organization, and inputs.
2. Achievement and results are represented by performance, which should be greater than the amount of effort.
3. Adequacy refers to the program's overall performance level in relation to the overall and quantitative demand for it.
4. Efficiency is about evaluating other approaches and choices based on and in relation to the idea of spending.
5. The procedure describes the program's operation, including when it fails and why. The program's latent qualities that determine its efficacy will be identified, and the effectiveness of the program will be analyzed in relation to the variability of the individuals it strives to serve⁽¹⁰⁾.

Five criteria were developed by Nakamura and his colleague Smallwood to be used in the assessment of public policy. These criteria mix qualitative and quantitative methods.

1. The public policy accommodation criterion.
2. The efficiency criterion.
3. The voter satisfaction criterion.
4. The responsibility standard for subordinates.
5. The need to keep the current political and governmental structure in place⁽¹¹⁾.

3.1. Techniques for evaluating public policy.

The following are some of the most important and well-known techniques and instruments used to assess public policy:

Firstly, SWOT analysis, which is one of the most extensively utilized evaluation tools and focuses on studying the causal connections between public policy and the environment in which it is implemented in a systematic manner, and is carried out according to the following stages:

- *Thorough examination of the program environment by listing as many problems as possible that constitute a source of threat.

- *Compilation of possible actions.

- *External analysis of opportunities and threats by identifying the opportunities provided by the environment that can be capitalized upon, and on the other hand, identifying external obstacles that might impede the program or policy.

- *Internal analysis of strengths and weaknesses.

- *Arranging potential actions with the aim of achieving greater revenues and gains, in return for a reduction in the percentage of losses.

- *The evaluation of the strategy, at this stage, aims to ensure the appropriateness of a specific strategy for a particular policy, whether it has been previously applied or currently adopted by the evaluation team⁽¹²⁾

Furthermore, individual and group interviews serve as methods for researchers to gather data by directly engaging with participants and obtaining information and responses from them.⁽¹³⁾ The evaluative interview is conducted to assess the effectiveness of programs, projects, or any corrective measures in achieving their objectives. It can also be utilized in evaluative research, such as group discussions⁽¹⁴⁾.

Additionally, a case study is a comprehensive and in-depth analysis that seeks to comprehend the unit or phenomenon under examination, while examining the intricate factors involved in the study site. This approach aids in understanding political phenomena and the rationale for selecting specific policies over others⁽¹⁵⁾.

Moreover, questionnaires are valuable tools in the realm of public policy as they enable us to acquire necessary information directly from the

information source. The data obtained through questionnaires is both new and serves the intended purpose⁽¹⁶⁾.

An expert panel consists of esteemed independent specialists in the field of public policy evaluation who convene to collectively assess a program. The experts evaluate the potential impacts of public policy programs using standardized procedures employed in pre-evaluation.

Moreover, multi-criteria analysis is used to identify the best options and approaches for public policy action. This tool assists in reviewing public policy programs and the measures put in place based on a variety of criteria by analyzing the varied capacities of programs and subsequent evaluation.

Similarly, **cost-benefit analysis** is used to measure the anticipated total costs and compare them with the expected total benefits of a project or public policy. This analysis facilitates the selection of the optimal and most advantageous options⁽¹⁷⁾.

Likewise, **cost-effectiveness analysis** is a decision-making tool utilized to identify the most economically effective ways of achieving a specific goal. Within the context of evaluation, this tool allows for the examination of the economic efficiency of public policy programs and projects by utilizing a set of comparison criteria⁽¹⁸⁾.

4. The impact of the lack of objective and accurate evaluation of public policy on government performance in Arab countries:

Is a very important factor. Prior to exploring the ramifications of not having a true assessment that is based on truth and objectivity, regarding government performance, it's critical to first pinpoint the main challenges and issues that obstruct the effective achievement of policy objectives, hence impeding the realization of the intended results:

4.1. Factors that hinder the achievement of the stated public policy goals:

1. One of the things that prevents developed public policy objectives from being achieved is the lack of resources allotted to handle the issue or phenomenon at hand. This needs to be resolved.

2. It is possible to administer public policy in a way that lessens their impact.
3. Public problems frequently have a variety of root causes, some of which are addressed by certain measures while others are ignored.
4. The public might react or change in a way that lessens the effects and confines the ramifications.
5. The goals of public policies might occasionally be incompatible or conflicting, which makes it challenging to implement them all at once⁽¹⁹⁾.
6. There exist certain issues whose solutions are by nature unsolvable.
7. Some remedies to problems can come at a cost higher than the problems themselves.
8. During the legislative and policy-development processes, certain policies that address these issues may undergo changes in content⁽²⁰⁾.

4.2. The impact of the absence of objective and accurate evaluation of public policy on government performance in Arab countries:

Arab governments are in charge of creating and carrying out a vast array of financial, economic, and social policies; however, because of the structure of the local and national bureaucratic apparatuses, the processes involved in creating these policies are frequently obscured and vulnerable to distortions when put into action. Seldom are these policies the subject of a precise and impartial assessment of their costs and effects on the environment, society, economy, and finances.

It is a given that political forces and conflicting demands influence policymakers' decisions in any nation. Nonetheless, three key characteristics set democratic nations apart from others and help to rationalize the formulation of public policy.

The procedure for establishing policies:

Firstly, and foremost, everyone has the freedom to join political and civic groups in order to have an impact on the formulation of public policy. Governments have frequently backed down from enacting laws that further the objectives of powerful interest groups as a result of opposition from little local organizations that generated broad support for their cause.

Secondly, unbiased media, discussion boards, academic institutions, and centers for scientific research all have a role in educating the public and subsequently influencing the formulation of public policy.

Thirdly, it is accurate to say that a lot of governmental policies result in benefit redistribution, which means that they place costs on one group in return for benefits being transferred to another, potentially improving the wellbeing of some people at the expense of others.⁽²¹⁾

The policy-making process in Arab countries is typified by excessive centralization, obscurity, and minimal participation, even from those who are directly impacted by policies, these three qualities are generally absent from Arab countries. It is clear that the responsible entities are weak in providing relevant, unbiased justifications for their decisions, this is frequently because accountability is lacking, which is a crucial component in enhancing policy-making and, eventually, in carrying it out and assessing its results.

In order to maximize their gains, policy makers in Arab countries turn to scientifically erroneous and even misleading indicators, which are more akin to populist propaganda than to legitimate policy evaluation. The intricate organizational framework and dearth of current and relevant information regarding the expenses, Public policy's implications and results have great weight since they might result in the allocation of blame and the waste of scarce resources across nations.

Arab countries should thoroughly and seriously reevaluate their approach to the evaluation of public policies. While some have established bodies like parliamentary committees or audit bureaus that are tasked with this task, these bodies are still weak, and their primary function is to generate publicity for political and public consumption rather than to carry out substantive follow-up actions, this ought to entail both institutional changes and enhancements to social governance.

It is crucial to have candid conversations in society on public policy with the goal of with the intention of improving the discourse, involvement, and accountability culture, Policymakers and stakeholders should create programs for managing public policies and rely on scientifically objective

evaluations carried out by universities and independent research institutions rather than depending on assertions that are based on intuition or selective experiences⁽²²⁾.

5. CONCLUSION

At the end of our research, we conclude from all of the above that public policy evaluation is one of the most important stages that any policy must go through, as it contributes significantly to rationalizing policies and rationalizing resources and thus making public policy efficient and effective. This in turn is reflected in government performance to become more satisfied with citizens.

Public policy evaluation is a necessary and required mechanism at all stages of public policymaking, as it involves choosing the appropriate alternative, i.e. (policy) that reduces costs and maximizes profits in a specific period. The bodies authorized to evaluate must enjoy independence and effectiveness. On the other hand, we note that most public policies in Arab countries are weak, ineffective and rarely respond to the needs and requirements of citizens. This is due primarily to the absence of a real, objective and accurate evaluation of various policies and projects, in addition to the lack of sufficient awareness of the importance of research centers and what they provide in this field.

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