



Policy Design and E-Passport Service Delivery in South-South Nigeria

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Abstract

Although Nigeria has digitised its passport administration through online applications, electronic payment and appointment scheduling, passport applicants in the South-South zone continue to experience delays, network failures and limited access to biometric capture. This paper examined the relationship between policy design and e-passport service delivery in South-South Nigeria from 2015 to 2026, focusing on ease of applications and processing efficiency, accessibility of services and implementation challenges. Anchored on Policy Cycle Theory and E-Governance Theory, the paper adopted the explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. A sample of 380 respondents, comprising 46 Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) staff and 334 passport applicants, was drawn from 7,500 in Rivers, Akwa Ibom and Bayelsa States, using Taro Yamane formula; 357 valid four-point Likert questionnaires were analysed alongside interviews with NIS officials. Data were analysed with mean scores and simple linear regression at the 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that policy design had a significant positive relationship with ease of applications and processing efficiency ($\beta = .600, p < .001$) and with the availability and accessibility of services ($\beta = .496, p < .001$), but only a weak relationship with implementation challenges ($\beta = .133, p = .012$), led by poor connectivity, inadequate infrastructure and unstable power supply. Stakeholder involvement was absent as there was no feedback, and offices still operate two modes because applicants come physically for biometrics, defeating the contactless design. The study concluded that policy design has made passport services easier, faster and more accessible, but that its benefits are constrained by infrastructure deficits and the absence of feedback. The paper recommends among others, that passport production be decentralised, biometric centres expanded and every passport office be provided with backup internet connectivity and independent power supply to enhance efficient and effective e-passport service delivery in the South-South, Nigeria.

Keywords: Policy design, e-passport, service delivery, processing efficiency, accessibility, Nigeria Immigration Service

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I. Introduction

Governments increasingly rely on digital technologies to simplify administrative procedures, shorten waiting times and bring public services closer to citizens. Online portals, electronic payment and automated scheduling have changed how citizens apply for licences, identity documents and permits, and the quality of the policies that introduce these tools has become a central concern of public administration. A digital reform may be technically sound and still fail to improve service delivery if its objectives, instruments and implementation arrangements are poorly matched to the capacity of the agencies that must deliver it.

Passport administration in Nigeria illustrates this challenge. The Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) replaced manual passports with machine-readable passports, introduced the biometric e-passport in 2007 and launched the enhanced e-passport in 2019. These reforms were accompanied by online application, electronic payment, appointment scheduling, integration with the National Identification Number (NIN) and, from 2024, contactless online applications. Together, they were intended to make passport applications easier and faster and to widen access to passport services across the country.

The South-South geopolitical zone is a useful setting for assessing these service outcomes. Its oil and gas industry, maritime activities, expatriate population and strong migration links generate heavy demand for passport services at the NIS commands in Port Harcourt, Uyo and Yenagoa. This paper therefore examines how the design of the e-passport reform has affected the efficiency and accessibility of passport services in the zone, and how far the challenges of implementation can be traced to the design of the policy.

Statement of the Problem

The e-passport reform was designed to reduce bureaucratic delays, eliminate touts and make passport services available to applicants with minimal physical contact. In practice, applicants in Rivers, Akwa Ibom and Bayelsa States continue to report long intervals between payment and biometric capture, failed online sessions, inadequate capture centres and the activities of agents who charge unofficial fees. Some applicants travel long distances to passport offices, while production of passport booklets remains centralised outside the zone. Even applicants who complete the contactless online application must still attend a passport office in person for biometric capture, so that the offices continue to run a physical channel alongside the digital one. There is also little evidence that stakeholders have been able to feed their experiences back into the review of the policy.

Studies of the NIS have generally found that digital reforms improved service delivery. Okunola (2015) and Okunola et al. (2017) showed that users valued the convenience of the NIS portal but were constrained by intermittent electricity, the cost of internet access and a multi-dimensional digital divide. Abimiku et al. (2020) and Atobatele et al. (2024) reported improvements in accountability, reliability and responsiveness at the NIS headquarters and at two commands in Ogun State, while Akujuru and Enaife (2025), Alokpa and Nwagbo (2026) and Benson et al. (2026) found that e-governance reduced processing times and bottlenecks, but that unreliable internet, power and system downtime persisted. Studies of online passport systems in Ghana and Indonesia reached similar conclusions (Fauzan & Putri, 2023; Napodow, 2025).

These studies, however, treated e-government or information technology as the explanatory variable and were conducted mainly at the headquarters or in commands outside the South-South zone. Little is known about whether the design of the e-passport policy itself explains the efficiency and accessibility of passport services, or whether the challenges of implementation arise from the design of the policy or from the conditions in which it is implemented. This paper addresses that gap.

Aim and Objectives

The aim of this paper is to examine the relationship between policy design and e-passport service delivery in South-South Nigeria, 2015–2026. The specific objectives include to:

- i. Examine how policy design influences ease of applications and processing efficiency in e-passport reform implementation in South-South Nigeria.
- ii. Evaluate policy design and availability of and accessibility to e-passport reform services in South-South Nigeria.
- iii. Determine policy design and implementation challenges of e-passport reform in South-South Nigeria.

Research Questions

The research questions of the study are:

- i. How does policy design influence ease of applications and e-passport reform processing efficiency in South-South Nigeria?
- ii. To what extent does policy design influence the availability of and accessibility to e-passport reform services in South-South Nigeria?
- iii. How does policy design influence the implementation challenges of e-passport reform in South-South Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide this study:

H₀₁: Policy design has no significant relationship with ease of applications and e-passport reform processing efficiency in South-South Nigeria.

H₀₂: Policy design has no significant influence on the availability and accessibility of e-passport reform services in South-South Nigeria.

H₀₃: Policy design does not significantly influence the implementation challenges of the e-passport in South-South Nigeria.

Research Methodology and Theoretical Review

The paper adopted a mixed-method research design. The study was conducted at the NIS commands in Port Harcourt, Uyo and Yenagoa, in Rivers, Akwa Ibom and Bayelsa States, which were selected by simple

random sampling from the six South-South states. From a population of 7,500 NIS staff and passport applicants, a sample of 380 was determined using Taro Yamane (1967) formula and allocated proportionately to staff (46) and applicants (334) and to the three states. Staff were selected purposively and applicants by simple random sampling. Data were collected with a structured questionnaire rated on a four-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree = 4 to Strongly Disagree = 1) and with semi-structured interviews of NIS officials. Of the 380 copies distributed, 357 were returned valid, a return rate of 93.9%. The research questions were answered with frequencies, percentages and mean scores, with 2.50 as the criterion mean, and the hypotheses were tested with simple linear regression at the 0.05 level of significance. The interviews were analysed thematically.

This paper is anchored on Policy Cycle Theory and E-Governance Theory. Policy Cycle Theory, associated with Lasswell (1956) and developed by Howlett and Ramesh (2003), presents public policy as a sequence of agenda setting, formulation, decision making, implementation and evaluation. Its central insight for this paper is that the quality of formulation conditions the success of implementation, and that evaluation should feed back into the redesign of the policy. The theory therefore helps to explain how weaknesses in the design of the e-passport reform, including limited stakeholder input, can surface at the implementation stage as delays and access problems.

E-Governance Theory, drawing on Layne and Lee (2001), Fang (2002) and Heeks (2006), holds that the strategic use of ICT improves the efficiency and accessibility of public services by automating procedures, reducing paperwork and reducing citizens' dependence on physical proximity to government offices. The theory also cautions that these benefits depend on infrastructure, digital skills and institutional capacity, and that reforms underperform when the assumptions built into their design do not match the realities in which they are implemented. It is relevant to this paper because it explains both the expected service gains of the e-passport reform and the conditions that constrain them.

Conceptual Explication

Policy Design

Policy design refers to the deliberate process of matching policy goals with the instruments, resources and institutional arrangements needed to achieve them (Howlett, 2019). A well-designed policy is clear about what it seeks to achieve, selects instruments capable of producing those results and assigns responsibility to agencies with the capacity to implement them. In this paper, policy design refers to the guidelines, procedures, technological instruments and institutional arrangements through which the e-passport reform was introduced and operated by the NIS.

E-Passport Service Delivery

E-passport service delivery refers to the process through which applicants obtain an electronic passport, from online application and payment to biometric capture, production and collection. In this paper, it is examined through three dimensions. Ease of applications and processing efficiency concerns the simplicity of the procedures and the speed with which applications are processed. Availability and accessibility concern the extent to which passport services can be obtained when and where applicants need them. Implementation challenges are the technical, institutional and financial constraints that limit the delivery of the service. The Nigeria E-Passport Policy (NEPP) constitute a major component of migration management and digital governance reforms in Nigeria (Kalagbor, 2026).

Data Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion of Findings

Of the 380 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 357 were returned valid, a return rate of 93.9%. The results for each research question are presented below, followed by the test of the corresponding hypothesis and the related interview evidence.

Research Question One: Policy Design, Ease of Applications and Processing Efficiency

Table 1: Responses on Policy Design, Ease of Applications and Processing Efficiency

S/N	Item Statement	SA(4)	A(3)	D(2)	SD(1)	Mean	Decision
1	The online application system has made passport application easier.	184 (51.5)	150 (42.0)	12 (3.4)	11 (3.1)	3.42	Agreed
2	Policy guidelines for e-passport application are clear and understandable.	176 (49.3)	163 (45.7)	9 (2.5)	9 (2.5)	3.42	Agreed
3	The design of the e-passport system has reduced processing time.	150 (42.0)	152 (42.6)	29 (8.1)	26 (7.3)	3.19	Agreed
4	Appointment scheduling procedures are efficient.	128 (35.9)	192 (53.8)	20 (5.6)	17 (4.8)	3.21	Agreed
5	Digital payment systems have improved passport processing efficiency.	142 (39.8)	181 (50.7)	18 (5.0)	16 (4.5)	3.26	Agreed

6	The policy design minimises bureaucratic delays in passport issuance.	129 (36.1)	172 (48.2)	29 (8.1)	27 (7.6)	3.13	Agreed
	Grand Mean					3.27	Agreed

Source: Fieldwork, 2026

Table 1 shows that all six items recorded mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50, with a grand mean of 3.27. The online application system and the clarity of policy guidelines recorded the highest means (3.42 each), with over 93% of respondents agreeing. The lowest mean was recorded for the minimisation of bureaucratic delays (3.13), which 15.7% of respondents disagreed with. Policy design has therefore eased applications and improved processing efficiency to a high extent, although bureaucratic delays persist.

Test of Hypothesis One

H01: Policy design has no significant relationship with ease of applications and e-passport reform processing efficiency in South-South Nigeria.

Table 2: Simple Linear Regression of Policy Design on Ease of Applications and Processing Efficiency

Table 2a: Model Summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.	Durbin-Watson
1	.600 ^a	.360	.358	.42131	199.738	.000	2.016

a. Predictor: (Constant), Policy design

b. Dependent variable: Ease of Applications and Processing Efficiency

Table 2b: Coefficients

Model		B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.295	.142		9.125	.000
	Policy design	.613	.043	.600	14.133	.000

Dependent variable: Ease of Applications and Processing Efficiency

Source: Fieldwork, 2026

Table 2 shows that policy design has a significant relationship with ease of applications and processing efficiency, $R = .600$, $R^2 = .360$, adjusted $R^2 = .358$, $F(1, 355) = 199.738$, $p < .001$. Policy design accounted for 36.0% of the variance in ease of applications and processing efficiency. The standardised coefficient was positive and significant ($\beta = .600$, $t = 14.133$, $p < .001$). Since the p -value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. The regression equation is $Y = 1.295 + 0.613X$, which indicates that a one-unit improvement in policy design is associated with a 0.613-unit increase in ease of applications and processing efficiency. The Durbin-Watson value of 2.016 indicates that the residuals were independent.

Interview Evidence

The interviews with NIS officials explain the pattern above. Officials described the design of the reform as expert-driven and technology-led. A Rivers official stated that the policy was “designed by a team of experts from the service, technical experts” in consultation with stakeholders, while an Akwa Ibom official described it as “modern, technologically driven, led by the Ministry of Interior and NIS.” This technical orientation accounts for the high ratings of the online platform and the policy guidelines.

However, stakeholder participation in the design stage was limited. One Rivers official estimated that stakeholder contributions “made up to 30%,” and a Bayelsa official observed that consultations were “mostly top-down, with consultation happening more during implementation.” Officials in all three states also acknowledged a gap between design and practice; an Akwa Ibom official summarised it thus: “Policy design is good, but implementation creates gaps.” Assessments of implementation status also differed, ranging from “fully implemented across the South-South Zone” to “the implementation is up to 70%.” These accounts support the quantitative finding that bureaucratic delays remain the weakest aspect of processing efficiency, and suggest that implementation is uneven across commands.

Beyond the formulation stage, the interviews revealed that stakeholder involvement was absent, as there was no feedback mechanism through which frontline officers, applicants and other stakeholders could report their experience of the reform or learn how their complaints had been addressed. Problems observed at the counters, such as long intervals between payment and biometric appointments, were therefore not systematically communicated to those responsible for reviewing the policy. The absence of feedback helps to explain why the minimisation of bureaucratic delays remained the lowest-rated item in this cluster.

Research Question Two: Policy Design and Availability/Accessibility of E-Passport Services

Table 3: Responses on Policy Design and Availability/Accessibility of E-Passport Services

S/N	Item Statement	SA(4)	A(3)	D(2)	SD(1)	Mean	Decision
7	E-passport services are readily available in my state.	166 (46.5)	170 (47.6)	11 (3.1)	10 (2.8)	3.38	Agreed
8	Applicants can easily access e-passport services when needed.	185 (51.8)	147 (41.2)	14 (3.9)	11 (3.1)	3.42	Agreed

9	The number of biometric capture centres is adequate.	99 (27.7)	182 (51.0)	38 (10.6)	38 (10.6)	2.96	Agreed
10	Online application platforms are accessible to users.	142 (39.8)	192 (53.8)	12 (3.4)	11 (3.1)	3.30	Agreed
11	The policy design promotes equitable access to passport services.	138 (38.7)	192 (53.8)	15 (4.2)	12 (3.4)	3.28	Agreed
12	Service availability has improved since the introduction of the enhanced e-passport.	147 (41.2)	162 (45.4)	24 (6.7)	24 (6.7)	3.21	Agreed
	Grand Mean					3.26	Agreed

Source: Fieldwork, 2026

Table 3 shows that all six items were agreed upon, with a grand mean of 3.26. Applicants' ability to access services when needed (3.42) and the ready availability of services in their states (3.38) were rated highest. The adequacy of biometric capture centres recorded the lowest mean (2.96), with 21.3% of respondents disagreeing, the highest level of disagreement in the cluster. Policy design has therefore improved the availability of and accessibility to passport services, but capture centres remain inadequate.

Test of Hypothesis Two

H02: Policy design has no significant influence on the availability and accessibility of e-passport reform services in South-South Nigeria.

Table 4: Simple Linear Regression of Policy Design on Availability and Accessibility of E-Passport Services

Table 4a: Model Summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.	Durbin-Watson
1	.496 ^a	.246	.244	.40334	115.637	.000	2.062

a. Predictor: (Constant), Policy design

b. Dependent variable: Availability and Accessibility of E-Passport Services

Table 4b: Coefficients

Model		B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.821	.136		13.430	.000
	Policy design	.447	.042	.496	10.753	.000

Dependent variable: Availability and Accessibility of E-Passport Services

Source: Fieldwork, 2026

Table 4 shows that the regression model was significant, $R = .496$, $R^2 = .246$, adjusted $R^2 = .244$, $F(1, 355) = 115.637$, $p < .001$. Policy design explained 24.6% of the variance in the availability and accessibility of e-passport services. The standardised coefficient was positive and significant ($\beta = .496$, $t = 10.753$, $p < .001$). The null hypothesis is therefore rejected: policy design has a significant positive influence on the availability and accessibility of e-passport services. The regression equation is $Y = 1.821 + 0.447X$.

Interview Evidence

The interviews show that the availability of passport booklets has improved considerably. An Akwa Ibom official reported the "availability of passport booklets, no more backlogs of applications," and a Rivers official noted that short processing times had made it easier for business travellers to obtain their documents.

Accessibility, however, is constrained by the centralised production arrangement. A Bayelsa official cited "distance and lack of production machines across states," and another referred to the risk of theft of passports in transit, the cost of lodging officers and transport fares as "extra avoidable cost." An Akwa Ibom official observed that a fault in the Port Harcourt generating set "will surely affect passport production in the other states that depend on the central server in Port Harcourt." Officials also identified the digital divide as a barrier: because of limited internet literacy, "some applicants still resort to patronizing agents," creating room for unofficial charges. Accessibility also varied by state; Akwa Ibom officials cited the appointment system, contactless applications and home delivery, while Bayelsa officials emphasised infrastructure shortages. These accounts are consistent with the lower rating of biometric capture centres and the lower cluster mean for Bayelsa.

The interviews further revealed that, despite e-governance, the passport offices still operate two modes of operation. Although application, payment and appointment booking are completed online under the contactless application, applicants must still come physically to a passport office for their biometrics (fingerprints, facial image and signature). The offices therefore run a digital channel and a physical channel side by side, and the queues, face-to-face contact with officials and opportunities for unofficial payments that the

contactless design sought to eliminate reappear at the biometric stage. This dual mode of operation defeats the absence of human contact which the contactless application was intended to achieve, and it is consistent with the low rating of the adequacy of biometric capture centres (Mean = 2.96).

Research Question Three: Policy Design and Implementation Challenges

Table 5: Responses on Policy Design and Implementation Challenges

S/N	Item Statement	SA(4)	A(3)	D(2)	SD(1)	Mean	Decision
13	Inadequate technological infrastructure affects implementation of the e-passport policy.	152 (42.6)	165 (46.2)	21 (5.9)	19 (5.3)	3.26	Agreed
14	Poor internet connectivity contributes to delays in passport processing.	159 (44.5)	174 (48.7)	12 (3.4)	12 (3.4)	3.34	Agreed
15	Corruption and unofficial payments undermine e-passport implementation.	131 (36.7)	164 (45.9)	32 (9.0)	30 (8.4)	3.11	Agreed
16	Insufficient personnel training affects service delivery.	126 (35.3)	167 (46.8)	32 (9.0)	32 (9.0)	3.08	Agreed
17	Bureaucratic bottlenecks remain a major challenge despite reforms.	122 (34.2)	176 (49.3)	30 (8.4)	29 (8.1)	3.10	Agreed
18	Weak database harmonisation affects effective identity verification.	101 (28.3)	175 (49.0)	42 (11.8)	39 (10.9)	2.95	Agreed
19	Power supply challenges affect the operation of e-passport services.	150 (42.0)	156 (43.7)	26 (7.3)	25 (7.0)	3.21	Agreed
20	The implementation challenges significantly reduce public satisfaction with e-passport services.	121 (33.9)	176 (49.3)	31 (8.7)	29 (8.1)	3.09	Agreed
	Grand Mean					3.14	Agreed

Source: Fieldwork, 2026

In Table 5, a higher mean indicates stronger agreement that the factor is a challenge. All eight items recorded means above 2.50, with a grand mean of 3.14. Poor internet connectivity (3.34), inadequate technological infrastructure (3.26) and power supply problems (3.21) were the leading challenges, followed by corruption and unofficial payments (3.11) and bureaucratic bottlenecks (3.10). Respondents also agreed that these challenges reduce public satisfaction with the service (3.09).

Test of Hypothesis Three

H03: Policy design does not significantly influence the implementation challenges of the e-passport in South-South Nigeria.

Table 6: Simple Linear Regression of Policy Design on Implementation Challenges

Table 6a: Model Summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.	Durbin-Watson
1	.133 ^a	.018	.015	.56212	6.373	.012	1.755

a. Predictor: (Constant), Policy design

b. Dependent variable: Implementation Challenges

Table 6b: Coefficients

Model		B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.674	.189		14.145	.000
	Policy design	.146	.058	.133	2.524	.012

Dependent variable: Implementation Challenges

Source: Fieldwork, 2026

Table 6 shows that the regression model was significant, $R = .133$, $R^2 = .018$, adjusted $R^2 = .015$, $F(1, 355) = 6.373$, $p = .012$. Since the p -value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. The standardised coefficient was positive ($\beta = .133$, $t = 2.524$, $p < .05$), and the regression equation is $Y = 2.674 + 0.146X$. However, policy design explained only 1.8% of the variance in implementation challenges, which indicates that the relationship, although statistically significant, is weak. This implies that the challenges of implementation are driven largely by factors outside policy design, such as infrastructure, power supply, funding and staff welfare.

Interview Evidence

The interviews confirm that infrastructure deficits are the most frequently cited barrier in all three states. Officials referred to “power supply and poor internet/network issue” (Rivers), “weak ICT network issues” (Akwa Ibom) and “network connectivity” (Bayelsa). They also identified centralised production as a structural barrier and called for decentralisation, with one Akwa Ibom official urging “total decentralisation: every land should produce the e-passport.”

Officials further linked corruption to poor staff welfare and recommended “proper welfare packages for NIS officers to curb corruption.” They called for more personnel training, including training NIS staff “to fully manage database and production without vendor dependency.” Inadequate funding and weak political will were also cited; a Rivers official stated that “some policies haven’t been implemented due to lack of funds and political will of leaders to uphold and reform NIS.” The interviews thus show that the implementation challenges are technical, institutional, financial and political in character, and that they reinforce one another.

II. Discussion of Findings

The first finding shows that policy design has significantly improved the ease and efficiency of passport applications. This agrees with Alokpa and Nwagbo (2026), Akujuru and Enaife (2025) and Benson et al. (2026), who reported reduced processing times and bottlenecks in NIS commands. It supports the assumption of E-Governance Theory that digital procedures increase administrative efficiency (Fang, 2002; Layne & Lee, 2001). The persistence of bureaucratic delays, however, reflects the concern of Policy Cycle Theory with formulation: officials interviewed noted that stakeholder contributions at the design stage were limited and that consultation took place mainly during implementation, so problems not anticipated in the design surfaced later as delays. The study further found that stakeholder involvement was absent after formulation because there was no feedback mechanism. In Policy Cycle terms, the cycle has run as a linear, top-down sequence rather than an iterative one (Howlett & Ramesh, 2003), so that the delays experienced at the counters could not inform the revision of the policy.

The second finding shows that policy design has improved the availability of and accessibility to passport services, consistent with Ishola et al. (2021) and with Eros et al. (2026), who found that Indonesia’s M-Paspor application reduced queues and the use of middlemen. The inadequacy of biometric capture centres, the centralised production of booklets and the reliance of less digitally literate applicants on agents show, however, that online access does not guarantee physical access. This agrees with Okunola et al. (2017) on the digital divide among NIS portal users and reflects the tension within E-Governance Theory between efficiency and digital exclusion. The dual mode of operation, in which applicants who apply online must still come physically for their biometrics, also defeats the absence of human contact that the contactless application was designed to achieve. In terms of E-Governance Theory, the reform has digitised the front end of the process without transforming its back end (Layne & Lee, 2001).

The third finding shows that implementation challenges are significant but only weakly related to policy design. This corroborates Alokpa and Nwagbo (2026), Benson et al. (2026) and Lawan et al. (2020), who identified poor connectivity, inadequate infrastructure and power failure as the main barriers to digital service delivery in Nigeria. In terms of Policy Cycle Theory, the weak explanatory power of policy design indicates that these challenges arise at the implementation stage itself, while E-Governance Theory explains them as a gap between the assumptions of the reform and the infrastructure available to support it (Heeks, 2006).

III. Conclusion

The study established that policy design is a significant determinant of the efficiency and accessibility of e-passport services in South-South Nigeria. The online application system, clear guidelines and digital payment have made passport applications easier and faster, and services have become more widely available. The study also established that these gains are limited by persistent bureaucratic delays, inadequate biometric capture centres and centralised production, and that the leading challenges of the reform, namely poor internet connectivity, inadequate infrastructure and unstable power supply, arise largely at the implementation stage rather than from the design of the policy. It further established that stakeholder involvement was absent because there was no feedback mechanism, and that the requirement of physical attendance for biometric capture keeps passport offices on two modes of operation, which defeats the absence of human contact that the contactless application was designed to achieve.

IV. Recommendations

In the light of the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are hereby made;

- i. The Nigeria Immigration Service and the Federal Ministry of Interior should institutionalise stakeholder consultation and a functional feedback mechanism, such as an online feedback portal, help lines and periodic stakeholder forums, in future reviews of the e-passport policy and publish service standards for each stage of processing, especially the interval between payment and biometric capture.
- ii. The Federal Government should decentralise passport production to zonal or state commands, and the NIS should establish additional biometric capture centres and assisted-application help desks for applicants with limited digital literacy. To realise the contactless design, the NIS should also use the biometric data held by the NIMC for verification and limit physical attendance to cases in which fresh capture is unavoidable.

- iii. The Federal Government should provide every passport office with backup internet connectivity and an independent power supply, including solar-hybrid systems, supported by a dedicated budget for the maintenance of e-passport infrastructure.

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