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# An evaluation of the 2022 Central Bank of Nigeria's Naira redesign policy: implications on Nigerians' standard of living

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## Abstract

Central banks around the world are charged with the mandate to institute and implement monetary reforms aimed at combating crimes, improving economic growth, and enhancing the security of a country's currency. The 2022 Naira redesign policy of the Central Bank of Nigeria failed to achieve its 100% cashless economy and fell short of its objectives. This study, designed as expository qualitative desk research, relied on the documentary method of data collection and thematic analysis coupled with the top/bottom approach to investigate how the implementation of the naira redesign policy affected Nigerians as regards accessibility to food, healthcare services, and education. The study found that the rubrics of trust, which formed the social contract between the government and the citizen, were hampered since many Nigerians' livelihoods were undermined through the prevalence of untold hardship, loss of jobs, and denial of access to food, health care, and education. The study recommends, among others, that the Nigerian government should adopt global best practices as well as incorporate palliatives in order to bridge the gap between monetary policy aspirations and socioeconomic realities in Nigeria.

## Key words

Naira redesign, Central Bank of Nigeria, livelihood, living standard, hardship, Nigeria

## Key dates

Submitted February 2025; Accepted May 2025

## How to cite this article using ASWDNet style

Emordi, P J, Utulu A A and Egbule V (2025). An evaluation of the 2022 Central Bank of Nigeria's Naira redesign policy: implications on Nigerians' standard of living. *People centred – The Journal of Development Administration (JDA)*, 10(1), 24-37. <https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/jda.v10i1.3>

## Background and Rationale

Central banks around the world are saddled with the cardinal responsibility of initiating currency-related policies that can transition the financial sector into a globally competitive one that has the capacity to transform the economy and the lives of its citizens positively. Countries like China, Kenya, Somalia, Sierra Leone, the USA, and the United Kingdom have, over the years, implemented one form of currency redesigning as well as cashless policies aimed at improving the currency features and reducing the amount of cash in circulation that is needed as a legal tender for the exchange of goods and services. For example, the United Kingdom has redesigned the pound upon the demise of Queen Elizabeth II to reflect the portrait of King Charles III (Prasad, 2021; Onyango, 2023).

The Nigerian state, alongside its apex bank, known as the Central Bank of Nigeria, has, between 1965, 1968, 1973, 2007, and 2022, implemented a series of currency redesigns to reflect the historical epochs and contemporary demands that characterised these years, as epitomised by events such as the republican era, civil war, post-civil war, and return to democracy, which is the current dispensation that is well remembered as the post-pandemic recovery era (Nwanma, 2023; Iwedi & Nwachuku, 2022).

The naira is the epitome of national identity, and as such, it constitutes a psychological and aesthetic rallying beacon of hope and pride for the citizens. The Naira redesign policy of the Central Bank of Nigeria was implemented on November 26, 2022, when the newly redesigned Naira notes were launched by the former president, Buhari, and were expected to phase out the old notes within the denominations of N200, N500, and N1000 by January 31, 2023. The 2022 Naira redesign policy manifested in the physical alteration of the colour of the naira in the denominations of N200, N500, and N1000. This differentiates the old ones from the new ones (Punch, 2023).

Prior to its implementation, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) press briefing by the former CBN Governor, Godwin Emefiele, on October 26, 2022, it was observed that the naira redesign policy was a major drive towards entrenching a cashless economy by fuelling the minting of the digital version of the physical naira known as the eNaira. It was also expected to tackle the menace of hoarding, counterfeiting, and the sponsorship and financing of terrorism, as well as the booming illegal business of kidnapping for ransom activities of terrorists and bandits. This policy briefing birthed the full implementation of the cashless policy by the CBN through the naira redesign policy, which was targeted to kick-start on January 9, 2023 (Otituju, Dirisu, Ojokojo & Abdul, 2023).

The livelihoods of Nigerians have declined due to the Covid-19 pandemic shocks that were occasioned by challenges such as recessions, inflation, insecurity, food insecurity, illiteracy, high debt burden, floods, corruption, and bad governance (Daily Trust, 2023). Hence, the implementation of the naira redesign policy to reposition the country to be globally competitive so as to achieve economic growth and development is likely to further undermine the livelihoods of many Nigerians who depend on the cash-based informal sector to earn their daily living (Otituju, Dirisu, Ojokojo & Abdul, 2023).

Achieving a 100% cashless economy in Nigeria, as targeted by the Naira redesign policy, is particularly challenging given the country's reliance on cash-driven informal sectors and limited digital infrastructure. Even Sweden, the first country to use banknotes for transactions in 1661, has yet to achieve a cashless economy compliance rate of 100%; the same is applicable to other countries like the United Kingdom and the United States of America (Odedra & Cooper, 2021; The Guardian, 2023; Bryant, 2024).

This study aims to investigate how the naira redesign policy of the CBN has impacted the livelihoods of Nigerians in the informal sector by conducting a human-centred situational analysis of documentary evidence, specifically interviews obtained from secondary sources. This is because existing literature glosses over the impacts of these reforms from the grassroots perspective using a top bottom approach to policy initiation and implementation.

## Theoretical framework

This study relied on the top/bottom approach of policy implementation to illustrate the CBN 2022 naira redesign policy with the aim of unravelling how the policy impacted the living standards of Nigerians as regards accessibility to food, health care, and education, as well as its consequential outcomes in undermining public trust between the government and the governed.

### The top-down approach

Over the years, the top-down approach to policy initiation and implementation has maintained an elitist characteristic. This is because it preserves the central decision-making structure and the idea that policy initiators must adhere to established processes without consulting lower-level stakeholders or considering necessary safety nets, evaluation mechanisms, and feedback loops that could mitigate the effects of policy implementation (Sabatier & Mazmanian, 1981; Matland, 1995). The assumption is that central decision-makers play a

pivotal role, with other stakeholders often regarded as potential barriers. This was the exact case study of the CBN's old currency phase-out policy in which the then CBN governor hurriedly implemented dual monetary policies in the form of redesigning the naira with the aim of entrenching a cashless economy so as to tame counterfeiting, inflation, money laundering, vote buying and selling, kidnapping and ransom payments between terrorists, bandits, and their victim's families, and finally, to bridge the financial inclusion gap between the urban banked populations and the rural unbanked populations while having absolute control of the money in the financial system by destroying hoarding of the naira notes by a few individuals.

Behind these laudable objectives of the naira redesign policy lies the heavy burden of pains, hardship, trauma, penury, and the loss of livelihoods for Nigerians whose scorecards in terms of poverty eradication have deteriorated over the years. According to Premium Times (2023), the failures of the top/bottom approach as regards the CBN monetary reforms were well captured in the interviews granted to rural farmers in the Saimani community.

The Saimani community is a rural community domiciled by rural farmers. It is inwardly situated from Abaji within the Lokoja-Abuja express road and a three-hour journey from the Presidency, which lies in the Aso Rock Villa. The topography of the terrain makes it suitable for agricultural activities since it is widely inhabited by rural farmers. However, the community lacks the presence of the government in terms of social amenities such as clean water, electricity, and network connectivity for effective communications and digital transactions.

Mr Yakubu and his wife narrated how the naira redesign policy pushed their family and millions of other families into poverty and destitution since the sale of perishable farm products and firewood as their source of livelihood has been deprived them due to the scarcity of the new naira notes and the inability to make use of the old notes. They further noted that many customers preferred cashless transactions, and this made them outsource such services to a POS operator in a neighbouring community. This method of exchanging goods and services has robbed them of goods worth thousands of naira due to the poor connectivity that has enabled fake transfers and alerts to occur.

From another point of view, the hasty implementation of the policy without adequate palliatives in place to cushion the pain and suffering it inflicted on the citizens necessitated a high rate of resistance, as epitomised by the protests and riots that rocked eight states. These series of protests

brought about the loss of lives and the destruction of bank halls and ATMs with an estimated worth of N5 billion naira. Also, the trust and confidence level of Nigerians in the state to provide for their safety and welfare in exchange for their loyalty and trust were all bastardised (Abdulkareem, 2023). It further brought about the escalation of inflation, hunger, loss of jobs, and poverty due to the induced pressures on the already declining standard of living in Nigeria (Oyedokun, 2024). Although the government fined nine banks that failed to disburse cash for the sum of N1.35 billion, cash scarcity persists to this day, paving more opportunities for POS transactions to thrive at the expense of banks in Nigeria.

Based on the analysis so far, it is pertinent to state that the use of the top/bottom approach in the execution of the currency redesign in order to entrench a cashless economy represents an elitist imposition of anti-welfarist public policies since the same policy favoured the elites, their collaborators and cronies, street-level bureaucrats, and formal and informal sector actors. This is because many Nigerians had enough money in their bank accounts to afford whatever their daily needs are, but the scarcity of the new notes and the invalidation of the old notes, coupled with the network glitches as regards transfers, alongside the fact that not all service providers in the formal and informal sectors of Nigeria accept digital payment systems, all crippled the accessibility and affordability of essential services like food, health care, and education. Reports have it that many students missed lectures and examinations, and their welfare was undermined while on campus; some patients who are dependent on drugs for survival died due to lack of cash to access medications, while hunger and destitution became the companions of many households. Beggars and those vulnerable pregnant women, children, and elderly people in the internally displaced persons camps were not left behind (Akinrinade, 2023).

On the other hand, the inherent contradictions of the top-down approach necessitate applying a hybrid policy implementation strategy that incorporates elements of the bottom-up approach, which focuses on people-centred policy reform initiation and implementation. To this end, the hybrid approach has the propensity of yielding a better result with less resistance from the masses, which in the long run would guarantee the citizens' trust and confidence in the government.

## Methodology

The qualitative expository research design was utilised in this study by relying on secondary sources in order to unravel how the naira redesign monetary

policy of the Central Bank of Nigeria impacted the living standard of Nigerians as regards access to food, health, and education, among others. Expository research design is situated within the qualitative research paradigm. This design entails exposing and explaining a given phenomenon under scrutiny with the aim of unveiling useful or mixed insights (McNabb, 2015). The qualitative approach is chosen for its ability to provide richer information with deeper insights into complex social phenomena, such as the naira redesign and living standard of Nigerians (Patton, 2002; Bowen, 2009; Ezeibe, Aniche, & Iwuoha, 2015).

### Data collection method

This study relied on the scooping literature review technique to gather documentary data from both white and grey literature. White literature refers to formally published materials that have undergone the academic rigours of peer review before circulation. They include academic journal articles, standard textbooks, book chapters, among others. Publications that did not undergo thorough peer review before entering circulation are considered grey literature. Newspapers, letters, diaries, and so on are examples of grey literature. Thus, this study made use of both grey and white literature by incorporating academic journal articles, government reports, media publications, and case studies relevant to the research topic. We included sources based on criteria such as the relevance of the source, the trustworthiness of the source, and how current the sources are, as well as the accessibility of the sources. The following databases were utilised in generating our data, and they include Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and other online newspaper websites. Search terms included “2022 currency redesign”, “naira redesign,” “naira crunch”, “standard of living”, and “cost of living”.

*See table at the end*

### Data analysis method

The data were analysed using thematic content analysis, a qualitative method that involves identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This method is suitable for systematically synthesising secondary data, allowing the study to uncover recurring themes related to the impact of currency redesign on Nigerians' living standards.

## Findings

1. Disruption of livelihood in the informal sector
2. Undermined students' welfare and their education

3. Thwarted farmers livelihood and agricultural activities
4. Hindered food accessibility and affordability
5. Health care denial and mortality

The above findings are discussed in detail under major themes below.

### Nigerians' living standard amid the 2022 Naira redesign policy

Over the years, the declining standard of living in Nigeria has stirred a series of protests as a way of indicating the dissatisfaction perceived by the citizens against government policies and programmes that undermined their welfare and fundamental human rights. The naira redesign policy is not the first or last of such policies of the Nigerian government that have necessitated resistance through protests. The recent Endbadgovernance protest was because of the fuel subsidy removal and the increasing rate of cost of living that followed (Nwoko & Ofor, 2024).

Based on the deteriorating nature of the Nigeria living standard as discussed above, it was expected that the CBN would engage in wider consultations, sensitisation, opinion sampling, and trial testing of the said policy in the same way it did 15 years ago. Again, Nigerian citizens are compliance-orientated in nature. The majority deposited their old notes with high optimism about getting the new naira notes. Failure to access these new notes instigated the protests that brought about the loss of lives and properties in eight states and the federal capital territory, Abuja (Daily Trust, 2023; BBC, 2023).

Reports from BBC (2023) indicated the penury encountered by many Nigerians. Some people slept outside banks to be among the first to access the new naira notes when the opportunity arose. In the words of Abraham Osundiran, a 36-year-old Nigerian interviewed by BBC News, he revealed that he has not eaten for very long hours after being unable to access his workplace at the construction site due to the shortage of cash to pay for transport fare. A hairstylist named Lillian Ineh narrated how she resorted to trekking long distances to purchase things from the market. She lamented that the cash crunch destroyed her business, as customers no longer came to patronise her since many of them lacked the cash at their disposal to feed and transport themselves, let alone make their own hair. Also interviewed was Kingsley, a phone seller who opined that for days he was unable to make any sales because many people do not have much cash to purchase phones or phone accessories. The same frustrating feedback was derived from Osarenoma Kolowole, a telesales personnel who was unable to access her salary due to the inability of banks to



dispense cash and network glitches preventing the use of electronic transfers. This made her end up buying eggs instead of fish due to the scarcity of cash needed to buy the desired item.

The above responses recorded depict the level of hardship and denials the citizens endured. Some had to sacrifice productive hours to stand in the long queues with the hope of getting the new naira note, which most times ended up in frustration, anger, and disappointment. Many who tried using the digital platform for transactions encountered hitches, such as being debited without the debited amount credited to the receiving account for days and sometimes weeks without any reversal being made after passing through the hurdles of lodging complaints. Many traders in rural areas lost their goods through fake alerts, a new criminal act that was birthed through the digital infrastructural loopholes that existed alongside the implementation of the naira redesign policy (Nwoko & Ofor, 2024; Imoke, Ogola, Ene, Salihu, Jombo, & Isaiah, 2024).

In the opinion of Wahab (2023), the CBN naira redesign policy increased the level of hardship endured by Nigerians, as many families have been pushed into the poverty line. Many have lost their jobs, while some cannot access or afford food for their families, which has resulted in the unleashing of aggressive behaviour, as exemplified by the burning down of many banks and the destruction of properties as well as the loss of lives. Survey reports from SB Morgen Intelligence as captured by The Cable (2023) disclosed that about 37% of businesses in Nigeria cut jobs while 44% had to reduce working hours in order to survive the cash scarcity crisis amid the naira redesign. It was also documented that the Nigerian economy and the disruptive economic activities that accompanied the CBN monetary policy accounted for the loss of N20 trillion.

It should be noted that over 60% of Nigerians rely on the informal sector for their daily bread. This population includes both graduates and non-graduates who are self-employed or hawking and selling things along the roadside. These categories of Nigerians live from hand to mouth and thereby do not have much interest in owning and operating a bank account since the informal sector encouraged cash-based operations with few cashless operations before now. Hence, many food-related hawkers were affected the most by this policy, given the fact that they relied on the cash made from sales to purchase their daily needs to feed and settle other issues requiring cash in their respective households. The same cash is also needed to purchase ingredients used for further production (Rabiu, 2023; Hassan, Bala, & Marafa, 2024).

Entertainers in the line of cash bouquets and surprise organisers are not left out of the ripple effects of the

Naira redesign policy. According to an interview with Abolaji Olabisi, the founder of AT&T Gift Items and Surprise Enterprise, she lamented that before the new naira scarcity came into reality, she used to have up to four engagements capable of fetching her good dividends. However, since the implementation of the policy, she has yet to record any patronage.

Interestingly, band performers in nightclubs are not left out of the shock therapy experience of the CBN's naira redesign policy. Abiodun Awesola, a performer, observed in an interview by Punch (2023) that his fans usually sprayed his band performers up to ₦100,000 in cash. Unfortunately, the current scarcity of the naira has necessitated them to transfer nothing less than N20,000, which constitutes a deficit of N80,000. This deficit has reduced their purchasing power and limited what they can do for many relations that depend on them. In the same vein, the manufacturing sector recorded 8,500 job losses amid the old naira note phase-out exercise of the CBN.

### **Impact of Naira redesign on student welfare and education accessibility**

Education remains a key catalyst for progress. Without education, the sustainability of development will become unreal. Nigeria has maintained a high rate of out-of-school children on the African continent. This is partly due to the decades of neglect of the education sector, the pandemic disasters and their setbacks, as well as the internal security challenges confronting Nigeria for over a decade now.

Scholarly enquiry has revealed that students' welfare was compromised by the implementation of the naira redesign public policy, and this will worsen the crisis in the education system in respect to the accessibility of education in defeating illiteracy, which is yet to be achieved in Nigeria. An interview performed by Oluwadola (2023) indicated that some students of Usmanu Danfodio University in Sokoto state had to starve for three days due to the scarcity of the new naira note and the expiration of the legal tender capacity of the old notes that are still in their possession, which prevented them from accessing food. The students exposed the illicit activities of some bank security personnel who aided POS operators that bribed them access to the new naira notes while preventing students from gaining such privileges.

The impact of the CBN monetary policy on students' healthcare was documented in an interview by the Nigerian Tribune (2023). Based on the interview, a particular student fell ill during the exam and missed it due to the unavailability of the new notes and the unacceptability of the old Naira notes as legal tender. As such, the student was unable to access

laboratory services and the corresponding treatment that was needed. Alternatively, the student trekked and visited the school clinic for medical attention. The student also lamented how the naira crunch deprived him of food for a whole day, which also prevented him from taking his medications.

The policy was also reported to have affected many self-employed students that relied on the informal sector to earn a living while sponsoring their education. The cash crunch stalled their business, making them unable to pay for their rents, accommodation, transportation, and feeding. Alternatively, some of these students must rely on borrowing loans from some loan bank applications in order to survive temporarily.

Another more critical experience was shared by Reille Oluwole, a student of the Federal University of Oyo Ekiti, who lamented the sorry state of students in the school who relied on a bank that was serving them and six other neighbouring communities. She stated that limiting one's expenses and trekking more to school were some of the strategies devised by students to survive the economic hurdles created by the naira redesign policy. In contrast, Daniel Eniola, a student at the Federal University of Technology, Akure, Ondo State, narrated how the scarcity of the new naira notes amid the dispensing of old naira notes that were rejected by traders caused untold hardship for students. Students have to spend ₦300 for every ₦1000 in new notes withdrawn using POS. However, many students had no option but to download and use online banking applications as a coping mechanism (Oluwadola, 2023).

### **Farmers' livelihoods and the disruption of agricultural activities amid the Naira redesign policy in Nigeria**

Farmers constitute major stakeholders in the quest to achieve food security, which is a vital weapon to defeat hunger and enhance the realisation of sustainable development goals. Food is essential for human survival because it meets dietary needs. Thus, the implementation of the currency redesign policy without providing some palliatives for rural farmers whose environment might be constrained by poor network and electricity is likely to have their standard of living and livelihood threatened, which in the short and long run leads to food shortages, food inflation, and general food insecurity since most of these farmers have encountered the persistent occurrences of floods, insecurity, and the politicisation of agricultural empowerment programmes over the years (Premium Times, 2023).

The rural areas of northern Nigeria and the middle belt are well known for their cash-based agricultural activities. Only a small number of educated farmers are willing to adopt cashless transactions. Thus, the

acute shortage of the redesigned naira notes, coupled with the inability to spend the old notes, has the tendency of thwarting the easy flow in the purchase of seedlings for planting, labour, harvesting, and transportation of farm products. In the same way, the exchange of these products between the farmers and the consumers will be hampered too (Premium Times, 2023).

An interview with Musa Alheri revealed that most rural farmers residing in areas with limited electricity and network coverage encountered great difficulties in accessing cash for their wards and their students. Instead of allowing the naira crunch to further push their children into the out-of-school malady, they resorted to striking a deal with the school authorities, which resulted in the exchange of commensurate grains for tuition fees to pay their children's school fees (The Nation, 2023).

Many farmers that relied on irrigation farming were unable to have access to water generation and other mechanised activities that followed because it is capital intensive, and the cash needed for such was not accessible due to the naira crunch. As such, their efforts were thwarted, and this also affected productivity, thereby resulting in total starvation for their various family households while exacerbating food insecurity and inflation for the whole country since there are few farmers who engage in dry-season irrigation farming. Most farmers had to adopt the manual irrigation method that was labour-intensive and time-consuming, which hindered them from covering many land spaces and, on the other hand, deprived them of a bountiful harvest (Premium Times, 2023).

The redesign of the naira, which led to a shortage of new notes, made it difficult for farmers to access transportation, paid labour, and farm inputs. This resulted in a significant loss of livelihood, preventing many from repaying any bank loans they may have taken out. These are compounded by their geographical locations, which are devoid of good road infrastructure, viable storage facilities, and bank services in close proximity, as well as network challenges and farmer illiteracy that have also affected many farmers, thereby limiting their ability to improvise and adapt to the new norm of online transactions within the time frame specified by the CBN.

Premium Times (2023) interviewed some poultry farmers, revealing that they were not immune to the shock therapies of the CBN's monetary reforms. This is because egg production is also liable to spoilage over a period of two weeks after the initial production of eggs by the birds has taken place. Consequently, the scarcity of naira led to a surge in feed and transportation prices. This also hindered the sourcing and payment of labourers, inhibited

customer patronage, and led to many poultry farms collapsing. In the words of Peter Ogbeide, a Nasarawa State-based poultry farmer who remarked that many poultry farmers discontinued their birds from feeds that would enable them to lay eggs since the demands for eggs declined, and this forced some poultry farmers to sell off their birds. He argued further that some egg production-related companies had to slash the prices of a crate of eggs, which sold between N500 and N800 as against the actual price of N1500, which is because of low demands for eggs due to the scarcity of the naira currency as a medium of exchange, since many farmers are yet to join the cashless economy bandwagon.

### **Food accessibility and affordability amid the 2022 Naira Redesign Policy**

Accessibility and affordability of food are crucial elements needed to be fulfilled to achieve the sustainable development goal of no hunger. The food system in Nigeria is vulnerable to external shocks such as those posed by the Russian-Ukrainian war that have distorted the inflow of food supplies from both countries. While internal factors like the shocks endured during the covid-19 lockdown era were further compounded by the persistent occurrence of floods, the incessant attacks, killings, kidnappings, and stealing of farm produce from farmers by bandits and other terrorist groups have further threatened both government and non-governmental efforts to achieve food security in Nigeria.

Consequent on the existence of these aforementioned challenges confronting the attainment of food security in Nigeria, it is expected that the unplanned monetary reforms, such as the redesigning of the naira note by the CBN, will worsen the food accessibility and affordability crisis. According to Karigidi (2023), the cash scarcity that occurred during the naira redesign accounted for direct and indirect increases in the prices of food. This is because people were forced to buy the new legal tender to access food. In fact, millions of households adopted strategies to reduce spending on essential goods that required daily cash, including food. This, in essence, increased the rate of hunger and malnutrition. Similarly, Adaugo, a respondent with Business Day (2023), narrated her inability to stockpile her household with foodstuff since old notes are no longer accepted as legal tender and the new notes are out of reach in the banks.

Inflation rose to 22.4% in March 2023. The introduction of the newly redesigned notes in December 2022 led to a 3.2% increase in inflation. Food prices also experienced a 0.45% increase between February and March of 2023. These statistics align with the findings of Muhammed and Abdulmajeed (2022) that the experimentation of

currency redesign in Nigeria brought about rising inflation rates. This data further validates the postulations of the Food and Agricultural Organisation's projections that 25.3 million people are likely to face acute food insecurity in August 2023. This figure constitutes a 5.85 million increase from the same projections for the year 2022, which was estimated at 19.45 million. The report further attributed such an increase in Nigerians who are food insecure to the inability of many farmers to participate in dry-season irrigation farming due to the hike in the price of fuel and the scarcity of new naira notes, which have limited farmers' access to farm inputs and indirectly reduced outputs (Mohammed, 2023; & Okojie, 2023).

### **Accessibility of healthcare services amid Naira redesign policy in Nigeria**

Most Nigerians amid the naira crunch crisis had no access to health-care services. For instance, most healthcare facilities in Nigeria, whether public or private, operate within the neoliberal framework of out-of-pocket sponsorship. Ironically, since many Nigerians cannot afford some of the private healthcare facilities that are likely to accept cashless transactions, the public ones that lack the needed facilities for adequate healthcare services and cashless transaction facilities failed to offer services without cash (Karigidi, 2023). Similarly, Assheton (2023) reported that countless people have died, and pregnant women and children are also susceptible to accessing health care services amid the cash scarcity that marred the naira redesign policy. Some pregnant women who failed to provide cash for delivery, having been turned away, delivered at home and died, as there was no cash either to get the services of care givers.

Patients who are critically ill or those on life support without providing the needed cash will end as a catastrophe. Those who rely on drugs but lack access to cash for their medications also face the risk of losing their lives. Few hospitals in urban areas of Abuja, Kano, and Lagos have experienced network glitches in trying to accept cashless transactions, which have also resulted in the demise of some patients who were unfortunate. Furthermore, emergency health-related cases that are based on referrals and transfers have left many patients in a dire situation, as many hospitals turned most referrals and transfers down based on non-possession of cash. These patients either die while their families are rallying around for cash deposits, or their condition deteriorates further as they wait longer.

Furthermore, treatment of patients was no longer prioritised based on the emergency and urgency of saving human life first but rather on the transfer of the treatment as well as other sundry out-of-pocket

health care fees; upon receipt of alert and payment confirmation, it will go a long way to determine who gets treated first, when, and how such treatment and attention will be given. Similarly, this attitude of some healthcare facilities encouraged many ill Nigerians to source home treatment from quacks, resulting in loss of lives (Salako, Sogbesan & Bakare, 2024).

Findings by Daily Trust (2023) revealed that many patients were unable to access the prescribed drugs needed for their treatment; consultancy as well as laboratory and diagnostic services were inaccessible. Likewise, even when most Nigerians could afford them, the preferred medium of payment was cash since other cashless transaction mediums underperformed consistently. Reports indicated further that most hospitals in Kano operate a cash-based medical transaction system. Thus, many admitted patients that failed to pay up were all discharged.

## Recommendations

Based on the conclusion so far, the study offers the following recommendations:

1. Implement Global Standard Monetary Implementation Period: The Central Bank, in collaboration with other sister agencies, should ensure that future monetary policies, such as the Naira redesign, could include a more phased strategy, like a 12- to 36-month period. This approach will enable all and sundry to be prepared enough for the gradual phasing off of the old currencies without much shock to their livelihoods.
2. Consultation of stakeholders and the masses at the grass-root level: the apex bank and the ministry of finance should adopt an inclusive approach that will accommodate wider consultations of stakeholders and the masses at the grass-root level whenever a major monetary reform that is likely to affect them is to be implemented. This will foster accountability and transparency in the adoption of the top-down approach to policy implementation.
3. Adequate provision of palliatives: The Central Bank of Nigeria, alongside the Humanitarian affairs ministry, should be proactive in providing adequate palliatives whenever economic reforms that are likely to impact the livelihoods of Nigerians are implemented.
4. Foster Financial Literacy: The National Orientation Agency should be charged with a decentralised approach to financial literacy awareness that will cut across the 774 local government areas in Nigeria. Through this means, unbanked Nigerians in the rural areas will be

educated and easily integrated into the cashless economy plan.

5. Strengthen the check mechanism among institutions: There should be strict adherence to the dictates of the constitution in order to achieve proper checks and balances among the executive, judicial, and legislative institutions of government. In Nigeria, the judiciary must be independent if the executive branch is to follow court rulings.

6. The government can also provide avenues to get people's feedback on the impact of future policy and facilitate real-time adjustments. This can be done through the use of a hybrid people-centred approach to policy formulation and implementation, which will guarantee adaptation and learning for unforeseen problems.

## Conclusion

The study adopted a top-down approach to assess the impact of the CBN's naira redesign policy on Nigerians' living standards, with a focus on access to food, healthcare, and education among Nigerians in the informal sector. The policy was intended to address problems like cash hoarding, naira counterfeiting, and corruption. However, the findings highlighted that the policy's rushed implementation without proper consultation with affected stakeholders or adequate palliative planning resulted in significant challenges. These challenges included job losses, business closures, and difficulties accessing essential services such as education, healthcare, and food, which were caused by the cash scarcity induced by the policy's implementation. Additionally, the policy resulted in a decline in public trust because many Nigerians lost faith in the government and its institutions.

## Acknowledgement

*The author wishes to acknowledge Salimot, Bukola Olawale, a Graduate Teaching Assistant, in the Department of Political Science at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, for painstakingly reviewing the manuscript and providing quality literature that supported the theoretical stance of this paper.*



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1.	BBC	2023	Nigeria's naira shortage: Anger and chaos outside banks.	Grey literature	BBC news. <a href="https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-64626127">https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-64626127</a>
2.	Assehton, R.	2023	Patients dying as Nigerian cash crisis hits health services before election.	Grey literature	The Guardian <a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/feb/21/vulnerable-patients-hit-hard-by-nigerian-cash-shortages-as-election-looms">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/feb/21/vulnerable-patients-hit-hard-by-nigerian-cash-shortages-as-election-looms</a>
3.	Business Day	2023	Insider abuse, hoarding leave banks with cash shortage.	Grey literature	Business Day Newspaper <a href="https://businessday.ng/business-economy/article/insider-abuse-hoarding-leave-banks-with-cash-shortage/">https://businessday.ng/business-economy/article/insider-abuse-hoarding-leave-banks-with-cash-shortage/</a>
4.	Daily Trust	2023	Naira devaluation: How neighbouring countries, others feast on Nigeria's cheap grains.	Grey literature	Daily Trust Newspaper <a href="https://dailytrust.com/naira-devaluation-how-neighbouring-countries-others-feast-on-nigerias-cheap-grains/">https://dailytrust.com/naira-devaluation-how-neighbouring-countries-others-feast-on-nigerias-cheap-grains/</a>
5.	Daily Trust	2023	Naira scarcity: Death figures spike in hospitals.	Grey literature	Daily Trust Newspaper <a href="https://dailytrust.com/naira-scarcity-death-figures-spike-in-hospitals/">https://dailytrust.com/naira-scarcity-death-figures-spike-in-hospitals/</a>
6.	Daily Trust	2023	Naira scarcity: Traders reduce prices of goods for cash payment.	Grey literature	Daily Trust Newspaper <a href="https://dailytrust.com/naira-scarcity-traders-reduce-prices-of-goods-for-cash-payment/">https://dailytrust.com/naira-scarcity-traders-reduce-prices-of-goods-for-cash-payment/</a>
7.	Imoke, I. D., Ogola, A. I., Ene, E. E., Salihu, B., Jombo, O. O., & Isaiah, O. A.	2024	A Study on Digital Economy, Naira Redesign and Domestic Livelihoods in Nigeria	White literature	ResearchGate
8.	Nwoko, K., & Offor, O. G.	2024	Unpopular Public Policies and the Escalation of Civil Demonstrations in Nigeria: The Case of the Naira Redesign/Cashless Policy of the Muhammadu Buhari Administration.	White literature	Google Scholar
10.	Muhammed, A. B., & Abdulmajee d, A. T.	2022	Impact of naira redesign and monetary policy on Nigeria economy.	White literature	Google Scholar
11.	Muhammed, K.	2023	Winners and losers of Nigeria's currency redesign policy	Grey literature	Business Insider Africa <a href="https://africa.businessinsider.com/winners-and-losers-">https://africa.businessinsider.com/winners-and-losers-</a>



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12.	Okojie, J.	2023	Food insecurity risk high on naira crunch.	Grey literature	Business Day <a href="https://businessday.ng/agriculture/article/food-insecurity-risk-high-on-naira-crunch/">https://businessday.ng/agriculture/article/food-insecurity-risk-high-on-naira-crunch/</a>
13.	Salako, J., Bakare, D., Sogbesan, A., & Bakare, A. A.	2023	Assessment of Perception of the Cashless Policy and Its Perceived Impact on Livelihood and Healthcare Access in Nigeria.	White literature	Google Scholar
14.	Karigid, M.	2023.	Lessons of the naira redesign for development policymaking.	Grey literature	Financial Nigeria Magazine <a href="https://www.financialnigeria.com/lessons-of-the-naira-redesign-for-development-policymaking-blog-768.html">https://www.financialnigeria.com/lessons-of-the-naira-redesign-for-development-policymaking-blog-768.html</a>
15.	Oluwadola, E.	2023.	Students lament scarcity of new naira notes, seek deadline extension.	Grey literature	Nigeria Grassroot News <a href="https://nigeriagrassrootnews.com/2023/02/07/students-lament-scarcity-of-new-naira-notes-seek-deadline-extension/">https://nigeriagrassrootnews.com/2023/02/07/students-lament-scarcity-of-new-naira-notes-seek-deadline-extension/</a>
16.	Hassan, A., Bala, M., & Marafa, M.	2024	Impact of Currency Redesign and Cashless Policy on Household Standard of Living in Sokoto Metropolis.	White literature	ResearchGate
17.	Rabiu, A.	2023	Nigeria's nascent financial threat: Where is the cash? Premium Times.	Grey literature	Premium Times Newspaper <a href="https://www.premiumtimesng.com/opinion/653230-nigerias-nascent-financial-threat-where-is-the-cash-by-adamu-rabiu.html">https://www.premiumtimesng.com/opinion/653230-nigerias-nascent-financial-threat-where-is-the-cash-by-adamu-rabiu.html</a>
18.	Wahab, H.	2023	How CBN's naira redesign policy takes a toll on students, businesses	Grey literature	Tribune Newspaper Tribune. <a href="https://tribuneonline.ng.com/how-cbns-naira-redesign-policy-takes-a-toll-on-students-businesses/">https://tribuneonline.ng.com/how-cbns-naira-redesign-policy-takes-a-toll-on-students-businesses/</a>
19.	Punch	2023	Niger family rejects old naira notes as bride price.	Grey literature	Punch Newspaper <a href="https://punchng.com/niger-family-rejects-old-naira-notes-as-bride-price/">https://punchng.com/niger-family-rejects-old-naira-notes-as-bride-price/</a>
20.	Premium Times	2023	Naira scarcity: How CBN policy caused suffering for Nigeria's poultry farmers.	Grey literature	Premium Times Newspaper <a href="https://www.premiumtimesng.com/business/business-news/591136-naira-scarcity-how-cbn-policy-caused-suffering-for-">https://www.premiumtimesng.com/business/business-news/591136-naira-scarcity-how-cbn-policy-caused-suffering-for-</a>

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21.	The Nation	2023	Our naira scarcity woes, by students.	Grey literature	The Nations Newspaper <a href="https://thenationonline.ng.net/our-naira-scarcity-woesby-students/">https://thenationonline.ng.net/our-naira-scarcity-woesby-students/</a>