

The Effectiveness of Palm Oil Policies in Nigeria: An Experience from Malaysian Palm Oil Policies

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ABSTRACT

The tropical forest of West Africa is initially the first area where the oil palm was discovered before the 14th century. In particular, Nigeria was one of the places where this fruit was uncovered. Palm oil is ranked as the major vegetable oil in the world. In the 1960s, Nigeria was rated as the largest palm oil-producing and exporting country globally. However, the production was completely unsuccessful as a result of the government's failure to formulate good policies, while the local consumption increases. Oil palm production in Malaysia became a contributing sector to the national economy. It alleviates poverty, provides employment, allocates resources, generates incomes, and leads to economic development. Due to good and sustainable palm oil policies in this sector, Malaysia achieved global recognition. This paper's objective is to disclose the ineffective policies on palm oil in Nigeria and its sustainability in Malaysia. This paper is a qualitative design, it used primary and secondary methods. The primary method is based on a semi-structured interview, while the secondary method is based on documents. It adopted inductive thematic analysis for analysing interview data with the help of ATLAS.ti. This paper's finding is the unsuccessful palm oil policies in Nigeria and the sustainable palm oil policies in Malaysia. In conclusion, there is a need for Nigeria, to learn from the Malaysian experience.

Keywords: Oil palm, palm oil, sustained malaysian policies, unsuccessful nigerian policies

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria heavily depended on agriculture in 1960s, and later petroleum was explored which led to negligence of agricultural sector, particularly palm oil production which made Nigeria the major global palm oil producing and exporting country in 1960s. Nigeria now became dependent heavily on petroleum as major source of income. Palm oil is a top crop in the world for yielding more oil than other vegetable oils. Palm oil can be used naturally for a long time without any problem due to being an essential global

diet. The increase in bio-energy demand and industries of oleochemicals, rapid growth in population, and increase in palm oil consumption led to its price to sustain. Nigeria is ranked as the most populous country in Africa with over 200 million people. It is the largest consumer of palm oil in Africa, it annually consumes almost three million metric tonnes of oils and fats, and in 2018 palm oil was the main consumed oil in Nigeria with 44.7%. In 2018, Nigeria is the major palm oil consumer in Africa, with the consumptions of 1.34 million metric tonnes. While its production of palm oil, has stagnated at

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only 1.02 million metric tonnes, and this resulted in supplying of 0.32 million metric tonnes as a deficit to bridge the gap (World Bank PwC analysis, n.d.). Nigeria was rated as the major global palm oil producing and exporting country in 1960s. But the production completely declined as a result of improper policies. Nigeria lost its position as a world leader in palm oil production to Malaysia (PIND 2011). Now it produces a meagre 1.7% of total world production which is insufficient for local consumption.

Oil palm is originally from West Africa brought to Malaysia in the late 19th century. Palm oil also serves as a source of biodiesel. Most of the products parceled in a mall or supermarkets contained palm oil. Palm oil is good for human body health, and has more advantages than other vegetable oils. The palm oil consumption increased to 8 kg per person globally without decrease. The development of oil palm started in Africa and later shifted to Southeast Asia. According to statistics from FAO, Indonesia produces 53% of world production, while Malaysia produces 29%, Thailand 4%, Nigeria 2%, and finally Ecuador 1%. Palm oil is good in frying and it resists oxidation (Russell 2020). The problem that this paper tries to solve is: how Nigerian policies on palm oil became unsuccessful, and what are the policies that led to Malaysian sustainability on palm oil? Nigeria in 1960s was the largest palm oil producing country, but it was unsuccessful due to improper policies. Unlike in Malaysia whereby all the policies sustained and worked accordingly. The palm oil sector rose as the main source of income, which generates revenue, promotes economic development and alleviates poverty (Ismail 2013). The manufacture of palm oil in the global context enlarged in 2009 to 45.1 million tonnes if compared to 1980, as a result of supplying to key markets in the China, EU, Pakistan and India. Indonesia and Malaysia accounted for the 85% of the palm oil world production (Bek-Nielsen 2010). The main purpose of this paper, is to explore the unsuccessful Nigerian palm

oil policies and sustainable Malaysian palm oil policies, and what experience Nigeria will learn from Malaysian sustainable palm oil policies. This paper is not comparing between Malaysia and Nigeria on palm oil; Malaysia is far better than Nigeria in terms of palm oil production. However, in 1960s Nigeria is ahead of Malaysia, but now it declined due to improper implementation of its palm oil policies. For Nigeria to recover its past glory on palm oil, it has to adopt a best oil palm production; and learn the experience from Malaysia oil palm production.

The main objective of this paper, is to explore the unsuccessful Nigerian policies on palm oil, and the sustained policies adopted by Malaysia on palm oil which led to its sustainability. This paper tries to bridge the gap and add to the body of knowledge so as to explore these unsuccessful Nigerian policies on palm oil and sustainable Malaysian policies on palm oil.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research methodology is used for data obtaining and analysing. Study is usually conducted for explaining a particular phenomenon (Creswell 2012). The research employed qualitative method for understanding the research problem. It is exploratory approach, and systematically used for data collection and analysis (Zhang and Wildemuth 2009). Qualitative document analysis generally relied on explaining the data, analyzing it and making a conclusion (Manheim *et al.* 2002). The study used both primary and secondary data. The primary data were collected from interviews, and the secondary data were collected from documents such as: journals, seminar papers, books, articles, dissertations, and magazines. The interview is open-ended interview. Six participants both from Nigeria and Malaysia were selected to provide their views. The interviewees from Malaysia responded based on this study face to face, while the interviewees from Nigeria responded through telephone. This study is

non-probability which is purposive sampling (Creswell 2012). It used inductive thematic analysis for analysing the interview, it was immediately coded after it was conducted and analysed, and critically interpreted based on the information from the participants (Cohen *et al.* 2007). This study employed ATLAS.ti for interview data analysis. This software is used in qualitative study for analysing, coding, and organizing qualitative data (Zhang and Wildemuth 2009).

Oil Palm and Palm Oil

Oil palm is a tree originally from the west African tropical forest, it has been taken to Southeast Asia, it was grown to yield and develop agriculture. For many years, the oil palm was cultivated in Africa for food consumption. Trade in palm oil began during the Industrial Revolution, and it was used to lubricate machines. In 1917, it was firstly planted for commercial usage hundred years ago. Its massive plantations began during the technological advancement. Oil palm trees grow with sufficient heavy raining, sunshine and warm temperature. It grows in equator, which supplies warm temperature and sunshine. Malaysia and Nigeria have enough heavy raining, warm temperature, and tropical forests to grow oil palm trees). Palm oil is a vegetable oil extracted from mesocarp of oil palm fruit. It is used in making various food and non-food products (Anthony and Ogalie 2014). Palm oil is a valuable vegetable oil, it is more economic and profitable than other vegetable oils in the world. Palm oil global demand for human consumption has increased. Palm oil is useful to make food products, while palm kernel oil is used to make non-food products such as soaps, cosmetics, and toiletries (MGCC 2017).

Literature Review on Palm Oil Policies in Nigeria and Malaysia

The areas with available lands for oil palm plantation in Nigeria were located in eastern region (presently Cross River State), but the majority of the areas were heavily populated with high density. In 1952

to 1962, thirty-six plantations were formed for oil palm and cocoa cultivations such as: Kwa Falls located in present state of Cross River; in 1955 it was renamed as the Eastern Nigerian Development Corporation (ENDC) (Kilby 1967). The ENDC and Eastern Regional Development Board (ERDB) seconded the government program to enhance the oil palm industry, whereby the majority of the farmers were small holders. The policy came into being coincidentally at the time whereby, the marketing board made a decision of not accepting a low-quality oil produced by the farmers. The government provided the farmers with subsidy on seedlings and fertilizer for recovering the palm grove. Later, they were unfortunately given the subsidy very late. This delay impacted negatively on the farmers, and failed their target (Kilby 1967). The government dissolved the ENDC in 1976, and handed over the estates control to Cross River.

Later in 1982, the government shifted ENDC activities to the Agricultural Development Corporation. Mismanagement was discovered in the all plantations, and the estates were abandoned, this made the state government to regain its control (Schoneveld 2014). Agricultural sector declined to 26% in 1970s due to boom and high demand of petroleum in global market, it led government neglected agriculture and focused more on petroleum. As a result of this, unfortunately, palm oil production speedily declined. The Structural Adjustment Program was forcibly implemented in Nigeria, participation by government was discouraged, partnership between private and public sectors was encouraged, the oil palm estates were privatized to private individuals that could invest (Schoneveld 2014).

The government collaborated with the Vegetable Oil Development Programme (VODEP) on palm oil policy. It formulated the policy based on partnership between public and private sectors to develop palm oil production. The policy was unsuccessful due to poor funding, lack of frequent power supply, obsolete and local processing machines, and poor roads (Anyanwu *et al.*

2011) The smallholders were given 4120 ha in 2010 to plant oil palm, they utilized only 452 due to mismanagement, corruption, and lack of technical skill. This program became unsuccessful (Schooneveld 2014).

Malaysian national and international policies on sustainable palm oil came up with positive change, and expanded oil palm production with sustainable practice. They certified oil palm industries to continue with plantation on the degraded areas or previously converted. In Malaysia, the National Forestry Act (1984) has been formed and it helped government to formulate policies on conserving forest reserves and protecting forest estates (Government of Malaysia 2015). The National Commodities Policy (NCP) 2011–2020 was formulated for guiding palm oil industry in Malaysia, predicting oil palm areas expansion from 2011 to 2020 and to regulate the increasing rate of 1.6% annually (Government of Malaysia 2015). The Sime Darby became the major producer of palm oil in Malaysia in 2008. The company formulated a policy to prevent the expansion of new plantation on deep peat. The policy was later in 2013 applied on the entire new expansion on peat regardless of peat depth.

The Malaysian National Policy on the Environment is a policy which was formulated in 2002 to integrate the three essentials of sustainable development which includes: economic, social and cultural development. This policy was meant to conserve the environment and improve the Malaysians' life quality economically, socially, culturally and environmentally for sustainable development.

The National Biofuel Policy was a policy formulated to serve as one among the five Malaysian energy sources. This policy was meant to enhance the well-being of Malaysians and the people's prosperity. In addition, to reduce the Malaysian dependency and consumption of fossil fuels, to promote palm oil demand nationally and internationally, and to stabilize its price. The National Policy on

Biological Diversity 2016–2025 is a Malaysian policy formulated to direct and structure the procedure for conserving biodiversity for sustainable development and to solve the complicated challenges facing the biodiversity. This policy serves as a plan for Malaysian response to the agreement on Biological Diversity 2011–2020. The policy was empowered to achieve major five objectives which are: to reduce putting pressure on biodiversity, to protect species and genetic diversity, to safeguard ecosystems, to ensure fair sharing of biodiversity benefits, and build capability for all shareholders. These different policies mentioned above are the policies that supported the major Malaysian sustainable policies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Unsuccessful Nigerian Policies on Palm Oil

This explains the unsuccessful palm oil policies that were adopted by state and federal governments in Nigeria. These policies were meant to develop palm oil production. Unfortunately, the policies became unsuccessful due to improper implementation.

The Plantations, innovations and settlements policies from 1950s to mid-1960s

During the colonial government in 1952, the entire economic activities and development were based on regional governments of north, east and west. The eastern region government recovered the anti-plantations policy. It came into being at the time of rapid growth of oil palm, the plantations in Malaysia and Indonesia due to competition to expand oil palm plantations. It was witnessed that, good seeds yield more fruits than before with good mills 95% of palm oil could be extracted from the fruits instead of 50% which is traditionally extracted (Udo 1965). After independence in 1960, there was a new agricultural innovation which was regarded as agricultural revolution, declared by first premier of eastern region.

There was an establishment of five ENDC plantations in 1964 for planting 47,000 ha of oil palm tree (Kilby 1967). The ENDC plantation was certified in 1966 to plant additional 60,000 ha (Schoneveld 2014). During that time, the present area of Cross River state was the major area which contained the 80% of oil palm plantations in Nigeria. Many companies from Europe paid their attentions to this area and established oil palm plantations. Later, these European companies relocated to other countries due to low price from Nigerian marketing board (Udo 1965).

The Nigerian government policy was implemented in form of African socialism for funding agricultural sector, improving farming and formation of farm settlements. The farm settlements were located in eastern region, and proposed oil palm farming to be mixed with rubber and food crops as the main priority and emphasis (Korieh 2010). This farm settlement policy became unfamiliar to the local farmers due to its restriction to their traditional way of daily life. The farm settlements entirely developed crops for export and little for local consumption. This led to increase in production of cash crops, and the farmers with interest and motivation in farming were not positively considered by the government. This farm settlement has similarities from Israeli scheme, and Malaysian FELDA. In Nigeria, the government collectively engaged oil palm farmers, trained and assisted them with seedlings. However, the farmers preferred to process oil palm fruits traditionally rather than to be processed in the mills due to high transport cost compared to Malaysian smallholders' settlements, and the policy became unsuccessful (Kajisa *et al.* 1997).

Military/Civil rule policies from 1967 to 1999: Civil war, petroleum and the SAP

Nigeria faced a civil war which started in 1967 and ended in 1970 due to petroleum discovery in the eastern region. The eastern region was the main dominant area of oil palm plantations, and the war took place in this region which spoiled oil palm plantations and interrupted its boom.

This led to private estates became out of control and collapsed entirely, and led to decline in palm oil and palm kernel oil exports, and decline in economic development (Schoneveld 2014). Due to the civil war and petroleum boom in 1970s, Nigeria faced a problem of agricultural decline, and trade in palm oil and palm kernels speedily died. Military regimes ruled Nigeria since 1967 up to 1999 with different policies to improve agriculture, but food imports sustained to be rising (Kajisa *et al.* 1997).

The Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) was implemented in Nigeria in 1986. This program devaluated Naira (Nigerian currency) with 80%, it spoiled the urban areas salary level, and inflated the price of agricultural yields. The SAP hidden policy led to the abandon of palm oil marketing board, and spoiled the Nigerian economy by declining palm grove plantations. The Nigerian economy was spoiled due to SAP implementation, it gradually inflated the necessity goods price, and threw the economy in decadence. The food price could no longer be controlled, and doubles gradually without government intervention and control. The big oil palm plantations were owned and controlled by retired officers' wives through illegal and improper way. This led the policies became unsuccessful (Von-Hellerman 2007).

Civilian government policies from 1999 to present-day

There was a transitional government in 1999 from military regime to civilian rule. The fourth president was Obasanjo; he was elected for two-term-tenure from 1999 to 2007. The policy of privatization was sustainable under the federal government, whereby the resources owned by a state were privatized. The private sector played a vital role on agriculture (Iwuchukwu and Igbokwe 2012). During the 1999 to 2007 under the civil government, there was a programme on poverty alleviation to boost agriculture to a higher level which it had before the oil discovery. The main target was to achieve food security within the country so that poverty and food insecurity should be eradicated. The government

came up with the Vegetable Oil Development Program (VODEP) to develop palm oil production in Nigeria. It formulated a policy to make partnership between public and private sectors to expand oil palm production. This policy became unsuccessful due to lack of enough funds, insufficient frequent power supply, locally made and outdated processing machines, and poor roads (Anyanwu *et al.* 2011). The commercial smallholders were given 10 to 20 ha from the government empty lands together with planting materials in 2010. They used only 452 ha out of 4120 ha given to them. This programme became unsuccessful due to smallholders' mismanagement, corruption, and improper technical skills (Schoneveld 2014).

This study used semi-structured interview to investigate the unsuccessful Nigerian policies on palm oil. These six participants are from Nigeria, they have expertise in this area, and responded to this interview. All are Nigerians with the age grades from 40 to 50 years, and they are professionally educated. First participant is a chief agriculture superintendent; he holds Master degree. The second participant holds Master's degree and research officer one. The third participant is a senior technical officer in production and processing sector, he is a degree holder. All are from Nigeria Institute of Oil Palm Research (NIFOR). Participant four is a degree holder and senior quality assurance in production and processing sector from West African Soil Industrial Limited (WASIL), Nigeria. The fifth participant is from Northwest University, Kano. He is a PhD holder and lecturer. And the sixth participant is a PhD holder, and lecturer from Federal University, Gashua, Yobe State, Nigeria. This selection is based on the participants' will and knowledge. These interviewees were interviewed on the unsuccessful Nigerian policies on palm oil.

The following figure represents the result from the interview. From the above Figure 1, the first participant said that, Nigerian government has policies on palm oil such as: giving loans to oil palm farmers, but most of the farmers are not given the

loans from government, it is offered to non farmers who do not refund money due to politics. The second participant explained that government have good policies on how to improve palm oil sector in Nigeria, but the policies are on paper and not implemented due to lack of proper funding. That's why the policies failed. The participant three exposed that the main problem, is lack of good government policies due to corruption. In reality, corruption destroyed everything in Nigeria. The fourth participant highlighted that, Nigerian government do not give much emphasis on palm oil, that's why the palm oil policies are not influential. The participant five explained that, the palm oil policies are on paper, but not on real ground. The real farmers are small scale farmers making the 70% of the farming. There is no successful policy which will encourage them to transform from substance farming to commercial farming. The sixth participant confirmed that in Nigeria, there are a lot of palm oil policies on paper which are very weak. They will neither be implemented or partially implemented. Because the agricultural sector was neglected, that's why the palm oil policies became unsuccessful. All the participants confirmed that, Nigerian policies on palm oil are unsuccessful.

Sustained Malaysian Policies on Palm Oil

The MPOB is a government influential institute, take care of conducting research production growth and industry rules and regulation. This institution develop oil palm production, it improves the quality of the production, and it formulates policies on export for global markets. These policies concentrated to ETP and formulated to make Malaysia a country with high income in the year of 2020. In the year 2020, oil palm as a significant to GDP, to contribute USD 57.4 billion to Gross National Income (GNI).

First Industrial Master Plan (IMP1)

As a result of implementation of Malaysian Industrial Master Plan (IMP), the

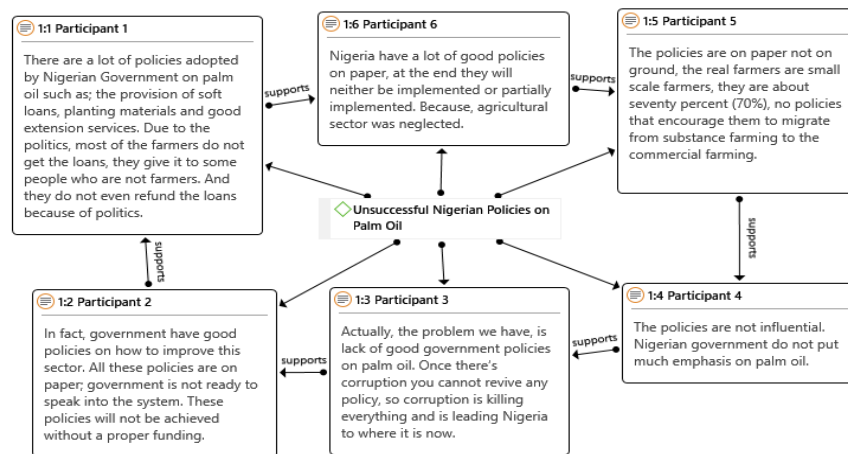


Figure 1 Unsuccessful Nigerian policies on palm oil.

processing of oil palm in the upstream and downstream obtained supports from government different policies. First Industrial Master Plan (IMP1) came into being in 1986 to provide a developmental structure in Malaysian production. The IMP1 planned to shift the economy from agricultural and primary stage to the more of production. IMP1 itemized twelve subsectors of the industry as part of palm oil subsectors to be developed. IMP1 gave much emphasis on refining the palm oil and fractionating it so as to improve and develop different sectors of the value chain as well as competing in the global markets (Rasiah and Shahrin 2006).

The Second Industrial Master Plan (IMP2)

The Second Industrial Master Plan (IMP2) came into being to cover from 1996–2005 for developing the sector and enhance the industrial linkages, increase productivity and value-added activities as well as sufficient and sustainable supply of raw material through imports (Rasiah and Shahrin 2006). However, in this time Malaysian processing capability surpassed the CPO supply. The IMP2 extended to Sarawak and Sabah and presented inducements for industries of agro processing and labour. The processing in down-stream has been encouraged by the IMP2 to add value and focus on mechanisation and biotechnology such as genetic engineering, mass tissue culture

and cloning (Rasiah and Shahrin 2006).

The Third Industrial Master Plan (IMP3)

The Third Industrial Master Plan (IMP3) came into being to cover from 2006–2020. The emphasis to be given on the downstream manufacturing activities, and add value on the products by conducting research and develop commercial sector. Also to collaborate between oil palm industries and government research agencies. In 2010, the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) has been introduced by the Malaysian government, which planned for economic policies of 10 years, for energising Malaysia to be a country with high income in 2020. The industry of oil palm has achieved special recognition for emerging the economy of Malaysia under the 12 National Key Economic Areas (NKEA). The sector of palm oil under NKEA, was to improve the productivity in the upstream, increase downstream enlargement as well as focus on the oil palm industry sustainable development (May 2012). ETP's 2012 Report on Eight Entry Point Projects. I. Speeding up replanting of new oil palm; II. Enhancing fresh fruit bunches; III. Increasing worker output; IV. The oil extraction rate (OER) Improvement; V. Intensifying biogas amenities with the mills; VI. Growth of biobased chemicals and high value oleoproducts; VII. Commercializing second-generation biofuels; and VIII. Accelerating health and food development.

This study used semi-structured interview to explore Malaysian sustainable. The participants age grade started from 40 to 50-year-old. They are professionally educated. Participant one is holder of Master degree, and Deputy Director-General Services, Malaysian Palm Oil Board (MPOB), Ministry of Primary Industry. Participant two is a Master degree holder, and he is Manager Research Development from FELDA Global Ventures Holdings Berhad (FGV Holdings Berhad), Malaysia. The third participant is a Master's holder and Director, Profes Lipid Sdn. Bhd., Malaysia. Participant four holds Master's degree, and he is Head of Marketing from Oliq Trade Sdn. Bhd., Malaysia. The participant five is Professor and Dean Faculty of Social Sciences from University of Sultan Zainal Abidin, Terengganu, Malaysia. Participant six is an Associate Professor, Faculty of Bio-resources and Food Industry, from University of Sultan Zainal Abidin, Malaysia. There panelists were selected based on the participants' knowledge and will of participating in this research paper. From Figure 2, the participant one highlighted that, Malaysia achieved sustainability due to good policies on palm oil. He further explained that, Malaysia diversified from tin and rubber previously, instead to depend only on rubber and tin with low price. It moved into industry whereby it could achieve more values, then the industry was given self-control, but with compulsory rules and regulations to follow. The second participant explained that, the Malaysian policies on palm oil are: RSPO, policy on

policies on palm oil from the view of six Malaysian participants.

environmental conservation, and policy for the employees. The government now enforces full scale and would be compulsory by 2021. The participant three stated that, Malaysia achieved sustainability on palm oil due to sustained policies. Malaysia has given much emphasis on the Malaysian Sustainable Palm Oil (MSPO) that, all the palm oil they produce is sustainable. The fourth participant said that, Malaysia have a lot of policies and a lot of certifications. Experts are called to join the board for palm oil trip. The fifth participant exposed that, Malaysian government have policies on palm oil which includes: capping of oil palm cultivated area up to 6.5 million acres, stopping the planting of oil palm in peat land areas, strengthening the regulation of existing oil palm cultivation on peat land, and ban the conversion of forest reserved areas for oil palm cultivation. Participant sixth discoursed on the Malaysian master plans which are the three main plans that diversified the economy. These are: First Industrial Master Plan (IMP1) from 1986 to 1995 to shift the economy from primary product-based to the manufacturing sector, Second Industrial Master Plan (IMP2) from 1996 to 2005 to develop the sector, and Third Industrial Master Plan (IMP3) much emphasis on the manufacturing activities from downstream as well as value-added products through research. All the three participants confirmed that, Malaysia achieved sustainability on palm oil due to good and sustained policies.

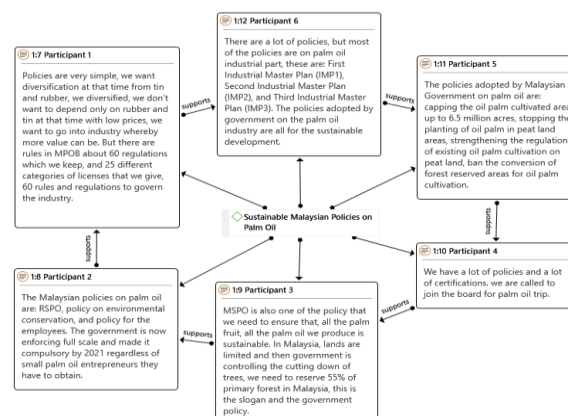


Figure 2 Sustainable Malaysian policies on palm oil

CONCLUSION

This paper briefly explained palm oil background in Nigeria and Malaysia, oil palm and palm oil. It exposed unsuccessful palm oil policies in Nigeria from both military and civil governments for diversifying Nigerian economy particularly palm oil. While in Malaysia, the palm oil policies are well formulated and implemented. The policies sustained due to good diversification and sustainability such as: IMP1, IMP2, and IMP3. The contribution of this paper, is to show the unsuccessful palm oil policies in Nigeria, and its proper formulation and sustainable implementation in Malaysia, and how Nigeria will learn from Malaysian experience through its palm oil policies. Nigeria have to really learn a lesson from Malaysian palm oil policies, to diversify its economy and to allocate huge amount of their annual budget to agriculture. There is need to have more investment on palm oil internally and externally, especially from Malaysia. Malaysia have to come up with more policies to protect the image of palm oil due to the global challenges. Malaysia have to look for more lands especially in Nigeria to expand its plantations due to limited land in Malaysia. If Nigeria can adopt modern farming based on global practices and to improve agricultural sector, especially palm oil, it will revive its past glory on palm oil production. Nigeria has to formulate good economic policy on palm oil, and implement it accordingly bit by bit. Malaysia was a country that Nigeria assisted with the oil palm seedlings, but it utilized it and used the golden opportunity and developed as the major second global palm oil-producing and first exporting country. At the same time, Nigeria still serves as the palm oil net importer, while it produces a meagre of 1.7 which is not enough for local consumption.

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