PUBLIC SUPPORT ON POLICY IMPLEMENTATION: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Public support is widely recognised as a crucial factor for effective policy implementation and democratic governance. Despite the increased attention on this topic, the literature exploring the drivers of public support across various policy areas remains broad and fragmented. This study aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the current understanding of public support in policy contexts through a systematic literature review. Following the PRISMA protocol, we reviewed and thematically analysed 25 empirical studies. Our findings indicate that several factors influence public support, including individual values, political trust, perceived policy effectiveness, communication strategies, and demographic characteristics. We identified key themes across different domains, such as environmental, health, social, and governance policies. Additionally, this review highlights the uneven geographical and sectoral focus in the existing literature and the limited integration of psychological, social, and economic dimensions. Based on these insights, we propose a future research agenda and offer practical recommendations for policymakers to create more inclusive and effective public engagement strategies.

Keywords: Public support, policy implementation, systematic review, governance and trust, policy acceptance

INTRODUCTION

Public support is crucial for the successful implementation of policies, forming a foundation for effective governance and societal progress (Fikru & Nguyen, 2024; Hoppe, Patt & Tröndle, 2023; Jijie et al., 2021). Understanding the factors that influence public support is essential for policymakers trying to navigate the complexities of policy implementation. This literature review examines various aspects of public support within policy contexts, focusing on its determinants, dynamics, and implications. By synthesising existing research, this article aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the current understanding of public support and its significance in influencing policy outcomes. Through this exploration, we intend to offer insights that can help enhance public engagement and foster a better alignment between policy goals and societal expectations.

Public support for policies varies across different domains, including environmental, health, social, and governance policies (Lucas et al., 2021; Muth, Weiner, & Lakócai, 2024; Oltra et al., 2021). A combination of psychological, social, and economic factors influences this support. Individual values, political beliefs, trust in institutions, and perceptions of fairness and transparency all play significant roles in shaping public attitudes toward policy initiatives. Additionally, demographic variables such as age, education level, and socioeconomic status can further impact these attitudes (Miura et al., 2023). Therefore, it is crucial to develop tailored communication and engagement strategies. This review aims to explore these multifaceted influences to understand public acceptance and resistance better. It is expected to provide insights that guide more effective policy formulation and implementation.

Another critical aspect of public support is the impact of communication strategies and public awareness campaigns. Effective communication can bridge the gap between policymakers and the public, fostering a better understanding of policy benefits and addressing potential misconceptions. The role of media, the framing of messages, and the involvement of trusted community leaders can significantly enhance or hinder public acceptance (Huber & Wicki, 2021; Levi, 2021). This literature review analyses various communication approaches and their effectiveness in different policy areas, providing a framework for developing strategies that can maximise public support. Through examining successful case studies and identifying common challenges, we aim to offer practical recommendations for policymakers to enhance their outreach and engagement efforts.

Despite recognising the importance of public support for policy success, there is still a significant gap in understanding the intricate mechanisms that drive public acceptance and resistance. Current research often treats public support as a static phenomenon, failing to consider its dynamic and context-dependent nature. Furthermore, there is a need for more comprehensive studies that integrate the psychological, social, and economic dimensions of public support, as well as explore the effectiveness of different communication strategies across various demographic groups. Addressing these gaps is essential for developing more effective and inclusive policies that not only achieve their intended outcomes but also resonate with and gain support from the broader public.

This literature review aims to address existing gaps by providing a comprehensive synthesis of current research, identifying key factors that influence public support, and offering insights into strategies that can enhance public engagement and policy acceptance. By consolidating literature from various domains, this paper presents a holistic understanding of public support and policy implementation, making it valuable for policymakers and researchers.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Conceptualising Public Support

Despite growing scholarly interest in public support and policy implementation, several critical gaps remain. Public support refers to the extent to which citizens endorse, accept, or agree with specific policy initiatives or government actions (McConnell, 2015). It is a multidimensional construct encompassing cognitive (beliefs about effectiveness or fairness), affective (emotional response), and behavioural (willingness to comply or advocate) dimensions. In democratic governance, public support is a cornerstone of legitimacy and effective implementation, as it reflects the alignment between policy decisions and societal values (Bekkers & Edwards, 2013; Haggart & Keller, 2021; Wallner, 2008). Unlike public opinion, which captures general attitudes or preferences, public support is more targeted and policy-specific in nature. It also differs from public compliance, which reflects behaviours sometimes driven by coercion or legal obligation rather than genuine approval. High levels of public support not only enhance the legitimacy of policies but also reduce resistance, facilitate smoother implementation, and foster civic engagement (OECD, 2024; Uster et al., 2025). Recognising and developing public support is, therefore, essential for policy durability, especially in contexts where public trust and political accountability are pivotal to governance success.

Theoretical Perspectives on Public Support

Several theoretical frameworks provide insight into how public support for policy is formed and maintained. Policy Feedback Theory suggests that past policies shape current public attitudes by influencing citizens' experiences, expectations, and perceptions of government. This dynamic can either reinforce or weaken future support for policies (Pierson, 1993). Social Trust and Legitimacy Theory highlights that trust in political institutions and perceived fairness in procedures are crucial for fostering policy support. When citizens view institutions as transparent, fair, and responsive, they are more likely to endorse policies (Levi & Stoker, 2000). From a psychological perspective, Political Psychology Theories indicate that cognitive biases, emotions, and group identity play significant roles in how individuals process policy information and form their attitudes. This idea often results in motivated reasoning or affect-driven judgments (Taber & Lodge, 2006). Finally, Framing Theory explores how the way policy narratives are presented, such as emphasising benefits or connecting policies to shared values, can significantly influence public interpretation and acceptance. This theory underscores the effectiveness of strategic communication (Arowolo, 2017).

Determinants of Public Support

Public support for policy implementation is shaped by a complex interplay of demographic, psychological, social, and institutional factors. Demographic variables, such as age, education level, income, and geographic location, often influence individuals' policy preferences, with higher levels of education and income generally associated with greater engagement and support (Khaw et al., 2022). Psychological and emotional factors, including personal values, perceived fairness, and emotional responses, significantly affect how people assess policy legitimacy and outcomes (Huijts et al., 2022; Ma et al., 2024). Social and cultural influences, such as community norms, religious beliefs, and cultural traditions, play a pivotal role in shaping collective attitudes toward morally sensitive or lifestyle-related policies. Furthermore, political and institutional trust, rooted in perceptions of government competence, transparency, and legitimacy, is a key determinant of support, as citizens are more likely to endorse policies from institutions they trust (Licht, 2014). Finally, public perceptions of policy effectiveness and the perceived balance between its costs and benefits directly affect acceptance and sustained support.

Public Support in Policy Implementation

Public support is critical to the success of policy implementation, as it enhances legitimacy, encourages compliance, and promotes long-term sustainability. Policies that align with public values and gain widespread support are more likely to be implemented effectively and achieve their intended outcomes. For example, climate policies such as carbon pricing gain higher acceptance when citizens perceive environmental benefits and fairness in cost distribution (Pitkanen et al., 2022). Similarly, public health initiatives like sugar taxes or vaccination mandates are more successful when supported by targeted communication and public trust in health authorities (Tangcharoensathien, 2024). In contrast, policies that lack public backing often face resistance, low compliance, or even public protests, ultimately undermining their goals. The failure to engage and inform the public can lead to misinformation, reduced trust, and policy failure. Thus, cultivating and maintaining public support is essential for achieving policy effectiveness and democratic accountability.

Strategies to Enhance Public Support

Enhancing public support requires deliberate and evidence-based communication strategies that foster trust, transparency, and inclusion. Transparent communication, citizen engagement, and participatory governance have been shown to significantly improve perceptions of legitimacy and fairness, thereby increasing public buy-in (Palmer, 2022). Tailoring policy messages to align with the values, beliefs, and needs of specific demographic groups, such as age, education level, or cultural background, can also improve relevance and resonance, especially in diverse societies (Khaw et al., 2022). Moreover, the credibility of messengers matters; communication delivered through non-partisan and expert sources, rather than political elites, tends to be more effective in depolarising contentious issues and gaining broader acceptance (Marcos et al., 2025). This is particularly important in politically divided contexts, where trust in government may be low. Ultimately, strategic, inclusive, and value-sensitive communication approaches are key to building sustained public support for complex policy reforms.

Gaps in Literature

Despite growing scholarly interest in public support and policy implementation, several critical gaps remain. First, many existing systematic reviews lack cross-sectoral integration, focusing narrowly on domains such as the environment, health, or innovation without offering comparative insights. Second, most studies are regionally skewed, particularly towards Western Europe, limiting the generalisability of findings across different cultural and political contexts. Third, while determinants like trust, fairness, knowledge, and values are well identified, few studies incorporate dynamic analyses of public opinion before and after policy implementation. Moreover, research on communication strategies often overlooks how tailored, non-partisan, and culturally responsive messaging can influence diverse populations. Additionally, empirical evidence on long-term outcomes of public support remains underdeveloped, with most studies lacking post-implementation assessments. Finally, there is a shortage of literature that bridges theoretical and practical perspectives, particularly integrating psychological, social, economic, and governance dimensions. These gaps indicate the need for more comprehensive, comparative, and context-sensitive research on public support in policy processes.

Table 1 Summary of Previous Relevant Review Studies

Author, Year	Period	Dimensions Focused	Limitations
Jugend et al. (2020)	2012-2019 (121 articles)	Financial support for R&D activities, Development through innovation, Support for sectorial programs, University–industry–government collaboration (Triple Helix)	Lack of prior consolidated studies on public support for innovation, especially from an Open Innovation (OI) perspective.
Muhammad et al. (2021)	2000-2020 (60 articles)	Awareness and knowledge of policy effectiveness and content (especially revenue use), Trust in government, Environmental attitudes, Perceived fairness (cost distribution and social equity), Concern for climate change.	Findings are based on studies from varied national contexts and may not be universally applicable without adaptation.
Marzuki et al. (2023)	2015-2021 (14 articles)	Forms of community support, Role of the community in providing care and support, Relationship between community support and the well-being of older adults.	The review is based on only 14 articles, which may limit the generalisability of findings. The study seems to focus on one country, limiting broader applicability.
Conklin et al. (2012)	2000-2010 (19 studies)	Developmental outcomes such as increased awareness, understanding, and competencies among participants, instrumental outcomes relating to policy influence and decision-making effectiveness, and normative perspective such as public involvement as inherently valuable, regardless of measurable outcomes	Limited generalizability due to a small number of eligible studies, and underdeveloped evidence based on public involvement outcomes.
Emodi et al. (2021)	2008-2020 (43 studies)	Knowledge and awareness, Socioeconomic factors, Perceived risks and benefits, Infrastructure-related factors, Community engagement and local capacity, and Policy and governance.	Geographical bias such as dominance of Western European studies; limited global representation.

METHODS

This section outlines the systematic approach used to identify, select, and analyse relevant studies on public support for policy implementation. A Systematic Literature Review (SLR) was adopted as the primary research method, as it enables a structured, transparent, and replicable process for synthesising existing evidence. Given the research objectives —to synthesise existing research, provide comprehensive insights, and develop practical recommendations for policymakers —an SLR is the most appropriate approach. It allows for a critical evaluation of a broad range of empirical studies, helping to uncover patterns, gaps, and emerging themes across disciplines and policy domains. To ensure methodological rigour, the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) protocol developed by Moher et al. (2009) was employed. Widely used in public policy research (Carrus et al., 2021), PRISMA guided each stage of the review, including scope definition, search strategy, inclusion/exclusion criteria, and data extraction. Figure 1 provides a detailed summary of the review process.

Identification

This study employed several key procedures from the systematic review approach to select a substantial body of relevant literature. After identifying the initial keywords, we explored similar terms using dictionaries, thesauri, encyclopaedias, and previous research. We then created search phrases for the Scopus databases, which helped us identify all pertinent terms (see Table 2). In the first phase of the systematic review, we successfully retrieved 221 papers related to the research topic from these three databases.

Table 2 The Search Strings

Scopus	TITLE-ABS-KEY ((policy AND public AND acceptance) AND "Public support") AND (LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2020) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2021) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2022) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2023) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2024)) AND (LIMIT-TO (PUBSTAGE , "final")) AND (LIMIT-TO (SRCTYPE , "j")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , "English")) Date of Access: 5 July 2024

Screening

The screening process involves evaluating a collection of potentially relevant research items to determine their alignment with the predetermined research questions. An example of content-related criteria used during this stage is selecting research topics related to public acceptance and policy implementation. Duplicate papers are removed from the search results at this point. In the first screening stage, thirty articles were eliminated, and in the second stage, 132 papers were further reviewed using specific exclusion and inclusion criteria (see Table 3). Research papers serve as the primary source of actionable advice, making the literature a key criterion for this review. The most recent study did not include reviews, meta-syntheses, meta-analyses, books, book series, chapters, or conference proceedings. Furthermore, this review was restricted to publications in English and focused exclusively on the years 2020 to 2024.

Table 3 The Selection Criterion in Searching

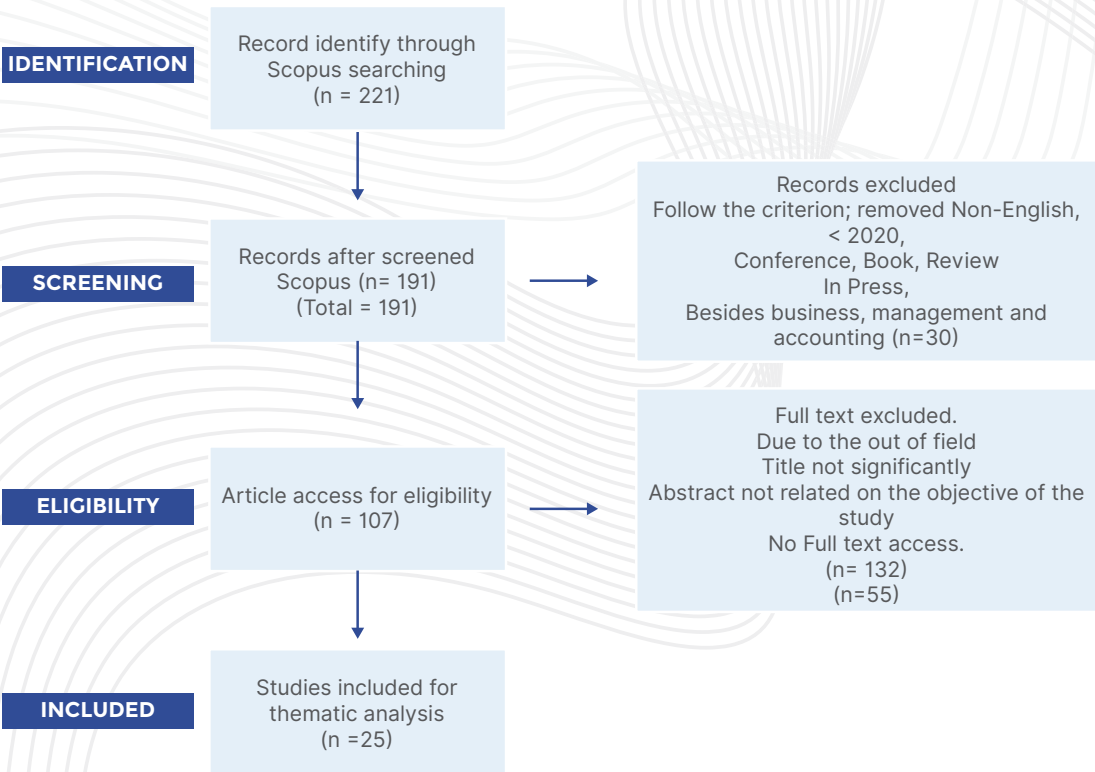| Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Language	English	Non-English
Timeline	2020 – 2024	< 2020
Literature type	Journal (Article)	Conference, Book, Book chapter, Review
Publication Stage	Final	In Press
Subject	Business, management and accounting	None

Eligibility

A collection of 107 articles was compiled during the third stage, known as the eligibility evaluation. To verify that the papers met the inclusion criteria and were relevant to the research goals of the ongoing study, a thorough review of each article's title and body was conducted during this phase. Consequently, a total of 25 articles are still pending review.

Data Abstraction and Analysis

This study examined and synthesised a range of research designs using an integrative analysis as one of the assessment methodologies. The competent study's objective was to pinpoint pertinent subjects and subtopics. The initial phase of the theme's development was the data collection phase. Figure 1 demonstrates how the writers carefully examined a collection of 25 articles to look for claims or information pertinent to the subjects of the current investigation. The authors then assessed the noteworthy research that is currently being conducted on public support and policy execution. Investigations are being conducted into the research findings and the methods applied in all the studies. The author then worked with other co-authors to create themes based on the data in the background of this study. Throughout the data analysis process, observations, opinions, puzzles, and other ideas pertinent to the interpretation of the data were recorded in a log. To determine if the theme design process was inconsistent, the writers finally compared the outcomes. It is important to note that the authors debate any differences in opinion among the notions. The tests were conducted by two specialists with expertise in public support for policy implementations to verify the accuracy of the difficulties. By establishing domain validity, the expert review step helped guarantee the significance, sufficiency, and clarity of each sub-theme. The author has adjusted at his or her discretion in response to expert opinions and input.

Figure 1 Flow Diagram of the Proposed Searching Study

IDENTIFICATION
Record identify through Scopus searching (n = 221)

SCREENING
Records after screened Scopus (n= 191) (Total = 191)

Records excluded
Follow the criterion; removed Non-English, < 2020, Conference, Book, Review In Press, Besides business, management and accounting (n=30)

ELIGIBILITY
Article access for eligibility (n = 107)

Full text excluded.
Due to the out of field
Title not significantly
Abstract not related on the objective of the study
No Full text access.
(n= 132)
(n=55)

INCLUDED
Studies included for thematic analysis (n =25)

Inspired from: Moher, Liberati, & Tetzlaff (2009)

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS
Public Acceptance of Environmental and Climate Policies

Public acceptance of environmental and climate policies, such as carbon pricing and renewable energy incentives, is shaped by a complex interplay of individual values, political beliefs, and the perceived effectiveness of these policies. Several key factors significantly determine public support, including personal concerns about climate change, efforts to reduce energy waste, and individuals' knowledge of the subject. Values that emphasise environmental conservation also play a critical role in garnering support, while demographic factors and social or political values tend to have less influence (Jijie et al., 2021). Additionally, awareness of relevant technologies, perceived costs, and the proximity of projects to residential areas further affect acceptance. Notably, stricter regulations on fossil fuel power plants tend to receive more support compared to subsidies or tax increases (Pianta, Rinscheid, & Weber, 2021). Moreover, the perceived distribution of costs and benefits, direct experiences of positive policy outcomes, and a sense of personal responsibility for climate mitigation also contribute to public acceptance. Socio-economic factors and the effectiveness of revenue-recycling mechanisms are particularly important, with greater support observed for policies that fund public health and education (Muth, Weiner, & Lakócai, 2024; Levi, 2020).

Effective communication strategies and stakeholder engagement are essential for maximising public support for environmental and climate policies (Jijie et al., 2021). To accomplish this, communication should extend beyond traditional media and focus on promoting genuine understanding and engagement through trusted scientific expertise. Transparency is critical; open discussions about the fairness and benefits of these policies need to be encouraged. It is also important to address public concerns regarding the effectiveness and safety of technologies, as well as the associated costs, to gain broader support. Furthermore, it is crucial to consider perceptions of fairness. Thus, policies need to clearly emphasise the tangible benefits they provide while ensuring transparent engagement with stakeholders to build political trust and promote personal responsibility (Levi, 2020; Pianta, Rinscheid, & Weber, 2021). Additionally, familiarity with new technologies and confidence in regulatory measures significantly influence public acceptance. For instance, presenting electric vehicles positively and highlighting their advantages over the downsides of internal combustion engine vehicles can enhance their acceptability (Hoppe, Patt, & Tröndle, 2023).

Trust in scientific expertise and perceptions of fairness are crucial in shaping public attitudes toward environmental and climate policies. To ensure strong public support for these policies, it is important to design them transparently and equitably. Additionally, it is vital to highlight tangible benefits and address local environmental concerns (Choi, Kim, & Lee, 2023). Effective communication strategies should focus on familiarising the public with the technologies involved. Emphasising the benefits of these policies and instilling confidence in regulatory measures are key components. Additionally, leveraging social norms, nurturing skills, and considering regional differences are essential strategies (Lipari et al., 2024). By combining these tactics, policymakers can effectively increase public acceptance of environmental and climate initiatives. Ultimately, this approach will help ensure the successful implementation of these important projects. However, further research is needed to understand how specific demographic factors interact with individual values and political beliefs, influencing public acceptance of environmental and climate policies. Gaining insight into these interactions can lead to more targeted communication strategies and policy designs, ultimately fostering greater public support for critical environmental initiatives.

Public Acceptance of Health and Nutrition Policies

Public acceptance of health and nutrition policies, such as sugar taxes and regulations on unhealthy food advertising, is influenced by various factors. These include

individual dietary habits, perceptions of government intervention, and demographic characteristics. Studies have shown that both individuals who maintain a healthy diet and those who struggle with their dietary habits generally support these policies. This indicates that personal responsibility is less of a barrier to policy acceptance than previously believed. Additionally, socioeconomic status and cultural attitudes also play significant roles in shaping public acceptance. This highlights the importance of implementing strategies such as targeted communication and education to increase support for health initiatives (Jürkenbeck, Zühlsdorf, & Spiller, 2020).

Awareness of nutrition policy interventions and attitudes toward reducing sugar intake play key roles in influencing public support for health and nutrition policies. Individuals who are aware of their sugar intake tend to support policies aimed at reducing sugar consumption, highlighting the importance of personal responsibility in accepting these policies. Moreover, socioeconomic status and cultural attitudes also affect public acceptance, with high support across different demographic groups. This finding indicates that it is imperative for public health campaigns to concentrate on increasing awareness and emphasising the collective advantages of these interventions to gain broader support (Prada et al., 2020).

Demographic characteristics have a significant impact on public support for health and nutrition policies. Specifically, older individuals, females, and indigenous populations tend to show more substantial support for policies such as sugar taxes and regulations on unhealthy food advertising. On the other hand, higher income adequacy is linked to lower support for these policies. Socioeconomic status and cultural attitudes are important determinants, indicating that efforts to increase public support should concentrate on addressing specific concerns through targeted communication and education campaigns. These strategies should emphasise the benefits of these policies to ensure their viability and effectiveness (Quevedo et al., 2023). Despite the existing evidence on the influence of individual dietary habits, perceptions of government intervention, and demographic characteristics on public acceptance of health and nutrition policies, there is a lack of comprehensive understanding of how these factors interact with each other and with broader socioeconomic and cultural contexts to shape policy support.

Public Acceptance of Social and Gender Policies

Public acceptance of social and gender policies, including gender quota policies, is influenced by various factors, such as attitudes towards gender equality, perceptions of sexism, and views on government intervention. The main factors that shape public acceptance of gender quota policies include both hostile and benevolent sexism, which have different effects on support for these measures. Modern sexism, characterised by the belief that women's underrepresentation is due to disinterest or lack of qualifications, plays a critical role in shaping public opinion. Additionally, perceptions of representational quality and concerns about government overreach further complicate public acceptance. It is important to note that different forms of state intervention, such as the implementation of gender quotas, have different impacts on public support, highlighting the complex interplay between societal attitudes and policy acceptance.

Public acceptance of gender quota policies is affected by various factors, including attitudes towards gender equality, sexism, and perceptions of government intervention. Two main types of sexism play a significant role in shaping public opinion; hostile sexism and benevolent sexism. Hostile sexism refers to opposition to gender quotas, while benevolent sexism involves support for quotas based on the belief that women require protection and assistance to succeed in politics. These attitudes reflect underlying beliefs about women's capabilities and the role of the state in promoting gender equality. Hostile sexists generally see quotas as unnecessary and intrusive, whereas benevolent sexists view them as a way to help women overcome perceived obstacles (Katrine & Jill, 2021).

Modern sexism also plays a critical role in the public's acceptance of gender quota policies. This kind of sexism suggests that women's underrepresentation in politics is due to their lack of interest or competence. As a result, there are concerns that quotas will lead to the promotion of unqualified candidates. Opposition to government intervention in gender affairs also stems from concerns about overreach and the appropriateness of such measures. It is important to address these misperceptions in order to increase public support for gender quotas. Trust in government is a key factor, as higher levels of trust can help alleviate concerns about the negative consequences of state intervention and foster acceptance of policies aimed at reducing gender disparities (Miura, McElwain, & Kaneko, 2023).

Different forms of state intervention, such as the implementation of gender quotas, have varying impacts on public support. These impacts are influenced by the degree of sexism present in society and the level of trust in government institutions. When interventions effectively communicate the structural barriers that women face and the positive outcomes of quotas, public acceptance is higher. It is crucial to ensure that the public understands these issues to reduce resistance to gender quotas and other social policies aimed at reducing gender disparities. Therefore, policymakers must focus on correcting misperceptions and enhancing trust in government. This will foster greater acceptance of gender quota policies and other interventions designed to promote gender equality (Miura, McElwain, & Kaneko, 2023). A critical research gap exists in understanding how different forms of sexism, particularly hostile and benevolent sexism, interact with modern sexism and perceptions of government intervention to shape public acceptance of gender quota policies.

Public Acceptance of Policy and Governance Reforms

Several key factors influence public acceptance of policy and governance reforms. These factors include political trust, perceived fairness, and the effectiveness of communication strategies. Political trust is a crucial determinant. Perceived uncertainty and negative emotions detract from acceptance. To improve public engagement and acceptance of reforms, transparent and inclusive governance practices are essential. These practices can foster positive emotions and reduce uncertainty. Communication strategies and political trust is important in influencing public attitudes. Fair access to information and equitable distribution of policy costs are crucial in gaining public support. Policies that prioritise transparency and inclusiveness, while also employing clear and transparent communication, are more widely accepted. Additionally, identity of communicators and the framing of policies around moral values such as fairness and loyalty significantly impact public support. Neutral and non-partisan communicators, who refrain from using competitive moral framing, can help enhance the acceptance of governance reforms by reducing partisan divisions.

Economic concerns and social aspects also play critical roles in shaping public acceptance of governance reforms. Economic worries, both general and personal, significantly affect support for climate policies. Financial hardships tend to reduce acceptance, while identification with socially oriented policies positively influences support for measures that benefit underprivileged groups. Trust in the government's ability to manage climate issues consistently predicted policy support. Effective communication that addresses economic and financial concerns, emphasises procedural fairness, and highlights the social benefits of policy measures is essential for enhancing public engagement and acceptance of governance reforms. There is a critical research gap in understanding how the interplay between political trust, perceived fairness, and economic concerns collectively influences public acceptance of policy and governance reforms across diverse demographic and socio-economic groups.

Public Acceptance of COVID-19-Related Policies

Public acceptance of COVID-19-related policies, particularly mandatory vaccination, depends on several key factors. Confidence in vaccine safety and a sense of collective responsibility are crucial. When people trust that vaccines are safe and feel a responsibility towards their community, they are more likely to support vaccination mandates. Trust in the government also plays a significant role. People who have greater confidence in their government are more likely to endorse mandatory vaccination policies. On the other hand, anticipated practical barriers can reduce support for such mandates. These dynamics highlight the importance of maintaining and enhancing public trust in government institutions. It is also essential to ensure transparent and effective communication about vaccine safety (Sprengholz et al., 2022; Flores et al., 2022).

Political polarisation and communication strategies have a significant impact on public support for broader COVID-19 management policies, such as lockdowns, mask mandates, and social distancing measures. In highly polarised political environments, public attitudes towards these policies often align with their political affiliations, resulting in a deep division. Communication strategies that rely on cues from political elites can worsen this polarisation and reduce compliance with health measures. However, policies proposed by bipartisan coalitions and nonpartisan experts tend to garner more widespread support. This suggests that inclusive and depolarised communication strategies can help alleviate the adverse effects of polarisation. By emphasising the role of nonpartisan experts and cross-party coalitions, we can encourage greater public adherence to COVID-19 management policies (Flores et al., 2022; Sprengholz et al., 2022). There is a notable research gap in understanding how political polarisation and the perceived effectiveness of nonpartisan communication strategies influence public acceptance of mandatory vaccination and other COVID-19-related policies across different socio-political contexts.

General Public Support and Acceptance Studies

The psychological and social factors that influence public support and acceptance of new policies and technologies are complex. These factors include misconceptions, insufficient awareness, values, and perceptions of economic risk and fairness. It is important to address misconceptions and use effective communication strategies to promote acceptance, especially among demographic groups who may have less knowledge about renewable energy (Lucas et al., 2021). Values also play a significant role in shaping public opinion. Environmentalism, collectivism, and post-materialism support policies that promote sustainable growth. On the other hand, disadvantaged groups, who often hold values such as hierarchy, meritocracy, and individualism, may have lower support for these initiatives due to perceived conflicts with their immediate needs and priorities (Paulson & Büchs, 2022). Perceptions of economic risk and fairness are also influential factors. Social insurance programmes can help alleviate these concerns and foster support for policies such as carbon taxes among different demographic groups (Nordbrandt, Peterson & Mårtensson, 2023).

Policymakers can enhance public acceptance and support for controversial or unfamiliar policies and technologies by implementing clear and transparent communication and engagement strategies. This can be achieved by addressing public concerns through targeted awareness campaigns and fostering active participation, which can empower citizens and reduce misconceptions. For example, providing comprehensive information about the benefits and practical implications of renewable energy can enhance public understanding and acceptance (Lucas et al., 2021). Additionally, emphasising redistribution and improving opportunities for disadvantaged groups can align policy goals with public values, especially in the context of post-growth policies, ensuring that these policies are perceived as fair and beneficial to all (Paulson & Büchs, 2022).

Furthermore, designing social protection measures that address economic risks and ensure fairness can significantly boost public support for policies like carbon taxes. Broad social insurance coverage and high replacement rates can alleviate concerns about economic impacts, particularly among economically vulnerable groups. This fosters a sense of security and fairness. Transparent communication and active stakeholder involvement are critical in building trust and aligning policy goals with public values. This ensures that policies are well-understood, widely accepted, and supported. They are essential in building trust and aligning policy goals with public values, ensuring that policies are well-understood, widely accepted, and supported (Nordbrandt, Peterson & Mårtensson, 2023).

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Practical Recommendations

Building on the current understanding of factors that influence public acceptance of environmental and climate policies, it is evident that a more in-depth exploration of demographic influences is essential. Therefore, future researchers should focus on examining the interactions between demographic factors, such as age, education level, geographic location, and individual values and political beliefs. By doing so, scholars can offer more focused insights into efficient communication tactics and policy designs by examining how these interactions affect public support for environmental and climate policies. For example, a longitudinal study could track the fluctuations in public support for renewable energy incentives before, during, and after significant political events, such as elections, economic crises, or major climate-related disasters. This would provide valuable insights into how these contexts influence public attitudes and help policymakers adjust their strategies accordingly. Ultimately, such research will help policymakers develop more tailored and practical approaches to garnering public support for critical environmental initiatives.

Despite the existing evidence on the influence of individual dietary habits, perceptions of government intervention, and demographic characteristics on public acceptance of health and nutrition policies, there is a lack of comprehensive understanding of how these factors interact with each other and with broader socio-economic and cultural contexts to shape policy support. Therefore, future researchers should focus on exploring the intricate interactions between individual dietary habits, demographic characteristics, and socio-economic and cultural contexts to understand better their combined impact on public acceptance of health and nutrition policies. Specifically, longitudinal studies that track changes in public attitudes over time, particularly in response to significant political, economic, and public health events, provide valuable insights into the dynamics of policy support.

Additionally, experimental research designs testing the effectiveness of various communication and education strategies in diverse demographic groups could identify the most effective approaches to increasing public support. For instance, a potential approach could involve creating multiple versions of educational materials, each specifically designed for different demographic groups based on factors such as age, socioeconomic status, and cultural background. One version could utilise social media influencers popular among younger audiences to promote the benefits of reducing sugar intake. In contrast, another version could feature community leaders and local events to engage older adults and indigenous populations. To evaluate the impact of these strategies, researchers could randomly assign participants from diverse demographic groups to these different campaign versions. They would then measure changes in participants' attitudes towards sugar taxes and regulations on unhealthy food advertising before and after the intervention. By comparing the effectiveness of these strategies, researchers could identify which approaches are most successful in

increasing public support for health and nutrition policies among different demographic segments. Ultimately, by filling in these gaps, researchers can provide decision-makers with evidence-based suggestions for developing and implementing more effective and widely accepted health and nutrition programmes.

Future researchers could also prioritise exploring the complex interactions between different forms of sexism, such as hostile, benevolent, and modern sexism, and how these interactions collectively affect the public's acceptance of gender quota policies. This exploration could involve analysing how these attitudes vary across various demographic groups and cultural contexts, as well as uncovering the underlying reasons for resistance or support. Moreover, researchers should investigate the impact of trust in government and the effectiveness of communication strategies in mitigating negative perceptions of gender quotas. Longitudinal studies that track changes in public attitudes over time would also provide valuable insights into how political, economic, and social environments influence support for gender equality policies. By addressing these areas of research, scholars can contribute to developing more effective and targeted strategies to promote gender equality and enhance public acceptance of gender quota policies.

There is a critical research gap in understanding how the interplay between political trust, perceived fairness, and economic concerns collectively influences public acceptance of policy and governance reforms across diverse demographic and socio-economic groups. Future researchers should focus on investigating the combined impact of political trust, perceived fairness, and economic concerns on public acceptance of policy and governance reforms. This research could involve examining how these factors interact and influence different demographic groups, as well as how they vary across cultural and socio-economic contexts. Additionally, it is important to explore the role of effective communication strategies that address economic worries, emphasise procedural fairness, and highlight social benefits. Longitudinal studies tracking changes in public attitudes over time could provide deeper insights into how shifts in political, economic, and social environments affect policy acceptance. By addressing these areas, scholars can develop more targeted and practical strategies to foster public engagement and support for governance reforms.

There is a notable research gap in understanding how political polarisation and the perceived effectiveness of nonpartisan communication strategies influence public acceptance of mandatory vaccination and other COVID-19-related policies across different socio-political contexts. Future researchers could explore the effects of political polarisation on the public acceptance of COVID-19-related policies, particularly mandatory vaccination, and other public health measures. This involves investigating how communication strategies from nonpartisan experts and bipartisan coalitions can mitigate the negative impact of political polarisation on policy acceptance. Longitudinal studies could track changes in public attitudes about shifts in political rhetoric and communication strategies over time. Additionally, examining the role of government trust and perceived vaccine safety in various demographic and cultural settings will provide deeper insights into the factors that drive or delay public support. By addressing these areas, researchers can develop more effective communication and policy strategies that enhance public compliance and trust in health interventions during pandemics.

There is a need for in-depth research on how different values and socio-economic factors interact to influence the public's acceptance of renewable energy policies, particularly among disadvantaged groups who may perceive such policies as conflicting with their immediate needs and priorities. It is imperative for future researchers to investigate the interplay between values, socio-economic factors, and public acceptance of renewable energy policies. This includes exploring how different demographic groups, especially disadvantaged populations, perceive the economic risks and fairness associated with these policies. Longitudinal studies could provide

insights into how public attitudes evolve with changes in economic conditions and policy communication strategies. It is also essential for researchers to examine the effectiveness of targeted awareness campaigns and social protection measures in addressing misconceptions and economic concerns. By focusing on transparent and inclusive engagement strategies, future studies can offer practical recommendations for policymakers to design and implement renewable energy policies that are perceived as fair, beneficial, and aligned with the public's values and priorities.

CONCLUSION

Public acceptance of various policies, ranging from environmental and climate initiatives to health, social, and governance reforms, is influenced by a range of factors. Specifically, these factors include individual values, political beliefs, and perceived policy effectiveness. Furthermore, support is consistently determined by factors such as transparency, fairness in the decision-making process, and trust in the institutions across various policy domains. Additionally, personal responsibility, awareness of benefits, and effective communication strategies also play crucial roles in shaping public attitudes. Moreover, socioeconomic status and cultural attitudes significantly impact acceptance, indicating the need for tailored approaches to address specific demographic concerns. Consequently, addressing misconceptions and fostering trust through transparent and inclusive engagement can enhance the public's support for necessary reforms and interventions. In summary, these insights highlight the complexity of public policy acceptance and emphasise the importance of adopting multifaceted strategies to foster broad-based support.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest to report regarding the present study.

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