

EFFECT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL INFORMATION COMMUNICATION ON TRANSPARENCY, CITIZENRY PARTICIPATION AND INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN IMO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Financial information communication is a deterrent to mismanagement of funds and leads to transparency. The aim of this survey was to determine the effect of financial information dissemination by the local governments in Imo State, Nigeria on infrastructural development, empowerment of the citizens and their participation in developmental issues, and the local government's transparency in the utilization of funds allocated to and generated by the local governments. Questionnaire was used in data collection while Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for the analysis of the data and test of the hypotheses. Spearman Correlation statistics was utilized to test all the three hypotheses at 95% (0.05) significance level. Result was represented in discrete figures, percentages, graphs and tables. The research discovered that there is a positive interrelationship between financial information communication and infrastructural development, citizens' participation and development. The research recommended that a body be empowered by the federal government to ensure that the local governments disseminate financial information to the citizens since it helps in development of the local governments.

Keywords: Financial information; Infrastructural development; Citizenry empowerment; Local government.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Nigeria has a population of about 150, 000, 000 and a heavenly blessed environment devoid of natural calamities. Nigeria has lots of natural resources including crude oil. Despite all these endowments Nigeria is grouped among the poorest countries of the world. Nigeria has an equitable way of sharing its resources among its 774 Local governments. The local governments share 20% allocation from the Federation Account and 10% from their respective States in addition to internally generated revenue, yet the citizens are not empowered to be independent through infrastructural development. Proper management of the resources accrued to each local government could result into infrastructural development and generate employment for the citizens.

Financial Information dissemination is perceived to be a deterrent to financial transparency imbroglio that is noticed in some Nigerian Local Governments. Citizens' participation in the affairs of the local governments could be another way to ensure transparency. Nigeria has many policies and agencies to fight corruption but appears to lack a preventive measure to corruption. Nigeria has the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practice and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), Code of

Conduct Bureau (CCB), Budget Monitoring and Price Intelligence Unit (BNMPIU), Public Complaints Commission (PCC), National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), even the Nigerian Police and Nigeria Customs and Immigration Services are all policies and agencies to promote an equitable society. These commissions and agencies are punitive in function. Prevention is better than cure is an old axiom which Nigeria pays little or no attention or lip service to when it comes to financial accountability and transparency. Citizens' participation in governance and financial information dissemination could be a deterrent to financial mismanagement in the local governments.

Accountability and transparency are two pillars that can move any country from the quagmire of underdevelopment to become an economic giant. In recognition of this, the world leaders and international development organizations initiated measures aimed at promoting transparency and accountability. Some of them are (as enumerated and described by Ribadu (2006).

1. The IMF's new Guide on Resource Revenue Transparency- this guide is part of the IMF's framework on best practices in fiscal transparency.
2. Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, commonly referred to by its acronym "EITI". Launched in September 2002, the EITI encourages governments, companies, international organizations and other interested parties to work together to develop a framework to promote transparency in payment and revenues arising from extractive natural resources.
3. The declaration of the Group of Eight countries (G8) on "Fighting Corruption and Improving Transparency". Among other things, the declaration encouraged countries to volunteer for fiscal transparency assessments.
4. Fourth, and very importantly, there are also multilateral initiatives in Africa itself. These include aspects of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), with its emphasis on good governance and accountability.

All these initiatives, and more, are means to check and instil accountability and transparency. Transparency can only be seen if information is available to be used to measure governments' performance.

Another cogent way to ensure Local Governments' development is by provision of adequate social infrastructure (Oviasuyi, Idada, and Isiraojie 2010). Transportation infrastructure helps move people and goods to markets, improves business competitiveness, and allows the economy to grow and prosper. Other public infrastructure, such as cultural and recreational facilities, clean drinking water systems, and health facilities, improve public health and enhance the quality of life (World Bank 1984). Generally, infrastructure which includes, but not limited to housing, roads, bridges, schools, markets, health facilities, electricity, water treatment, parks, and other facilities enumerated in Nigerian constitution as the duties of Local Governments (Constitution FRN, 1999) are effective means to boost economic activity and create employment for the unemployed. The Western World understands this and it is one of the major reasons "why the first phase of Canada's Economic Action Plan is providing close to \$15 billion to modernize a broad range of infrastructure including our roads, bridges, public transit, parks and water treatment facilities" among others in Canada in 2010 – 2011 fiscal year. (Canada 2011). Provision of infrastructure in many local government areas in Imo State is treated with levity. The intention of the Federal Government in creation of Local Governments is to develop the rural areas (Oviasuyi, Idada and Isiraojie, (2010); Nigerian 1979 Consitution; Agbakoba and Ogbonna (2004). Local governments are government of the rural dwellers, government of the grassroots.

Ofoeze's (1997 and 2003) assertion that local government areas are created to solve rural developmental problems and Late Shehu Musa Yar'Adua's confirmation that local governments are created to harness local resources for rapid development and to enshrine the principle of participatory democracy would be tested in Imo State. In spite of this adequate and clear developmental and participatory structure of the local governments, the local governments have failed to develop the economy of the citizens. This is evident in

the rural decay, mass unemployment and underemployment; illiteracy; lack of basic amenities such as health centres, pipe-borne water, electricity; hunger and malnutrition; poor sanitary conditions; high rate of preventable diseases; low life expectancy of the rural population; high rate of infant and maternal mortality; lack of educational institutions; the decay and collapse of the existing schools, etc., all of which have led to high rate of rural-urban migration with all its negative implication for national development such as the congestion of the cities, armed robbery, prostitution and general decay in social infrastructural facilities. (Ofoeze, 2003: 124)

This paper aims at testing the effect of local governments' financial information dissemination on infrastructural development and citizens' empowerment in Imo State.

Imo State is one of the 36 states of Nigeria. It occupies an area of 5,530 sq. km. of the land mass of Nigeria. It is traversed by Imo River covering a length of 225.3 km. Its capital is Owerri which is 533 km. to Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory. Its population is 3, 934, 899. The inhabitants of Imo State are the Igbos whose native language is Igbo, while English is their official language of transaction and documentation. Imo State's indigenes are predominantly Christians. It was created on February 3, 1976 out from the old East Central State (when Nigeria was made up of only 12 States). (Source: National Population Commission, 2008). As at 2012 Imo State is made up of 27 local government areas divided into three Senatorial zones namely Owerri Senatorial Zone made up of nine local governments; Okigwe Senatorial Zone made up of six local governments; and Orlu Senatorial Zone made up of twelve local governments. His Excellency Chief Rochas Okorocha is the executive governor. Major towns in Imo State includes Owerri - the capital, Oguta, Nkwere, Orlu, Aboh Mbaise, Mbano, Mbieri, Awo-Idemili, Ohaji, Obowo, Uzoagba, Emekuku, Orodo, and Mgbidi. (Nigeria Galleria .com, 2012). The state has abundant mineral resources and agricultural produce.

Statement of the Problem

Observation showed that Imo State's local government areas are underdeveloped. Rate of development seem not to be proportionate to the rumoured allocations made to the local governments. The publics' speculation is that funds allocated to the local government areas had either been misappropriated or embezzled. Communities suffered lack of amenities for good living such as electricity, good water supply, good road networks and other developmental infrastructures. Indigenes were disgusted with their condition of living. There is a high level of unemployment evidenced in high poverty rate noticed among the citizenry. These outcries informed this research: to survey and to investigate the allegations.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to delineate the essence of financial information in the empowerment of the citizens in the development of Imo State, Nigeria.

The specific objectives were to:

1. Investigate the effect of financial information communication on citizens' participation on local governments' development.
2. Determine whether citizens' awareness of local governments' finances could lead to infrastructural development.
3. Investigate the effect of citizens' knowledge of local governments' income on the provision of social infrastructures in the local government.

Research questions were drafted in line with the objectives to collect data.

Research Hypothesis

This research was based on the following three null hypotheses.

1. There is no significant relationship between the citizens' participation in local government management and transparency by local governments in Imo State.
2. Infrastructural development has no effect on citizenry empowerment through job creation in the Local Government Areas.
3. Citizenry awareness of Local Government income has no effect on Local Government's responsibility in the provision of infrastructure in the rural areas.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Development is an encompassing term that involves all aspects of life. Education, good health, social involvement, economic growth and even cultural revival are parts of development. At the root of development is good management of finance. Information on how funds are allocated and raised in the Local Governments is a perceived prerequisite to the judicious and effective use of the funds. Therefore financial information is deemed to be necessary for transparency and accountability in an organization (NEITI, 2005). It is the perceived outcome of use of this financial information upon the provision of infrastructure and eventually the creation of employment as a result of it that this research was carried out.

Sources of Local Governments' Revenue

Section 162 (10) of 1999 Constitution of Nigeria defines revenue as "any income or returns accruing to or derived by the government from any source and includes:

- Any receipt however described arising from the operation of any law,
- Any receipt however described from or in respect of any property held by the government,
- Any returns by way of interest on loans and dividends in respect of shares or interest held by the government in any company or statutory body.

Local government's revenue acquisition is inscribed in the constitution. Generally speaking revenue accruing to the local governments could be classified as recurrent or capital; also described as internal and external sources of revenue. Barber (1978) noted that the principal sources of local government's revenue are local rates, federal government grant (allocation) and trading receipts. Orewa and Adewunmi quoted by Hassan (2001:34) stated that "one of the main reasons why a local council exists is to collect various forms of revenue from its citizens and to use these to provide social services in an efficient manner possible".

Interestingly the generated revenue is to be used to provide “social services”. Has this function been judiciously carried out in Nigeria? The proper dissemination of information in governance was noted by Olowu (2004) who reiterated that for development to be sustained there must be efficient dissemination of appropriate information to the populace.

Financial Accountability, Transparency, and Information

The perception that the public sector is wasteful and corrupt calls for accountability which means answerability for ones actions or behaviour (Hassan 2001; Mead 1995; Ekpe and Awofeso 2003). Accountability falls into two categories, mandatory accountability which is found in democratic regimes, and voluntary accountability or discretionary which is either self-imposed or ideologically-inspired (Ijewere 1999: 12). The former should apply in Nigeria because of her high level of corruption. In this, The World Bank (1984: 27) agreed when it pronounced that accountability in public affairs should be mandatory where there are constitutional, conventional, or legal provisions for ensuring that a person or group of persons that exercise political power over the use of public resources should be made to respond to the people’s wishes failing which the people, without use of force, can remove the one or those involved. This is what obtains in the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, which are incidentally, the most developed group of countries in the world, such countries as the United States of America, Canada, Japan, Australia and others. In discretionary accountability, morals, ethics, statesmanship, patriotism and a general good behaviour of the public servant is the driving force. The person’s ideas and knowledge of development propels him to act in the direction he chooses. Nigerians are yet to attain these laudable virtues.

Infrastructural Development

Nwangwu (1998) carried a research to re-examine theorists’ old assumptions of what constitutes development among slum dwellers in a part of Nigeria. Here is a list of their need: (1) Drinking water (2) better roads (in some to link them with the outside) (3) expand canals to prevent flooding of homes during the rains (4) good drainage (5) electricity and street light (6) good education for their children (7) literacy education for the adults (8) modern equipment for sand dredging from the sea (9) improved fishing systems to boost their fishing activities (10) better buildings (11) a police post for security purposes (12) libraries (13) recreational facilities. These were the needs of the communities surveyed. To the researcher’s dismay none of the 6 communities mentioned health as being important. Perhaps if the other amenities were present life would be free of troubles that result into ill-health. Apart from numbers 8 and 9 which are peculiar to slum dwellers, all the others are general needs of any community. Many other ways to measure development exist, such as Human Poverty Index (HPI) and Human Development Index (HDI).

Financial Information and Development

Harande (2009) posited that “lack of development has a positive correlation with the neglect of rural areas”. Alegbeleye and Aina (1985: 13) reiterated the fact that the third world countries have realized “that unless the rural areas are well developed, hardly will any meaningful development occur in these countries”. Therefore a conscious and sustainable effort should be made to ensure that the majority illiterates in the rural and interior local government communities have access to information especially local governments’ financial information. Similarly Disso (1994) expressed the view that information should be seen as a basic resource for development. Knowledge of information is essential in facilitating rural development which brings about social and economic changes.

Citizenry Empowerment

“Empowerment is the process of enabling or authorizing an individual to think, behave, take action, and control work and decision making in autonomous ways. It is the state of feeling self-empowered to take control of one’s own destiny” (About.com, 2012:1). According to Worldbank.org (2011), “empowerment is the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes”. Deducing from the foregoing definitions one sees empowerment as abilities and powers given to individuals or group of people to make them independent citizens who could sustain themselves economically.

The concept of empowerment has its root on Social Work practice and the essence of social work is to protect the underprivileged and the unemployed by sustaining them till things get better. The idea of empowerment was built from the “theorists of the 1980s and 1990s” and the concept has evolved from philosophical to practice and from works [and] methods” (Mizrahi and Davis 2008: 123). According to Mizrahi and Davis “empowerment is a counter to perceived and objective powerlessness”. This paper contends that availability of local governments’ financial information empowers citizens to react in such a way that enabling environment may be provided for self sustainability.

Citizens’ Participation in Local Government Administration

Tadaro (1977) over 35 years ago saw, in development, life sustaining necessities such as food, shelter, and health care, raising standard of living, and expanding economic and social choice. He also saw citizens’ participation on what goes on in the government as an enhancer to their input. Tandon and Cordeira (1998: 49) agree with Tadaro (1977) that participation is an interactive relationship which impacts on “different stake holders in a society in order to increase stakeholders’ interest over initiatives that affect their lives”. When citizens are involved in what goes on in their locality they pick interest and offer help where needed.

METHODOLOGY

Survey design was employed because it is best used to find out the opinion of a group of people towards a particular issue at a particular time. Since the aim of this research was to seek the opinion of the citizens concerning their local government in the provision of infrastructure to enhance employment, human beings are involved, therefore survey research design was more appropriate.

Imo State has 27 local government areas with a total population of Three Million Nine Hundred and Thirty-four Thousand Eight Hundred and Ninety-nine (3, 934, 899) (NBS 2008; Nigeriamasterweb.com, 2006). Multi-stage sampling was used to 13 local governments from three senatorial zones in Imo state namely, Okigwe (6 LGAs, 3 selected), Orlu (12 LGAs, 6 selected), and Owerri (9 LGAs, 4 selected) making 13 out of the 27 local governments.

Since all the population could not be used because the target group were employable citizens of between the ages 20 to 64 whether employed or not from all works of life. Rough ages of respondents were determined by mere looking at their physical features but where there was doubt they were politely asked of their age range. The age group of 20 – 64 was not statistically available so it was mathematically and statistically worked out from available census figures. The number came to 959, 213 citizens of the 13 selected local governments.

Proportionate random sampling was used to select the finite number to be used. Using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) recommendation of 384 samples for a population of 200, 000; this research was supposed to make use of 1, 841 but for easy calculation one figure was dropped leaving 1, 840 as the figure sampled. This 1, 840 people were proportionally and randomly selected from the 13 local government areas of Imo State.

Table 1: Selected Proportion of Employable Citizens Surveyed from the 13 LGAs

Local Govt. Area	Total Population Of the LGA	Worked Out Pop. No. To be Used (50%)	Finite No. Of Pop. To be Surveyed
Aboh Mbaise	196, 652	98, 326	189
Ahiazu Mbaise	170, 902	85, 451	164
Ehime Mbano	130, 931	65, 465	126
Ezinihitte Mbaise	165, 593	82, 796	159
Ideato North	158, 406	79, 203	152
Ideato South	159, 879	79, 939	153
Isiala Mbano	198, 736	99, 368	190
Owerri Municipal	127, 213	63, 606	122
Nkwere	80, 152	40, 076	77
Obowu	118, 114	59, 057	113
Ohaji/Egbema	182, 538	91, 269	175
Oru East	111, 822	55, 911	107
Oru West	117, 492	58, 746	113

GRAND TOTAL: **1840**

Uzuagulu's statistical formula adopted in Uhegbu's thesis of 2004: 102 is adopted to arrive at the formula used in selecting the population size for each of the 13 local governments.

The formula is expressed as: $\frac{n \times p}{N \times 1}$

$$N \times 1$$

Where in this paper n = Total Sample Size = 1, 840; N = Total Number of Population to Sample = 959, 213; and P = Total Number of Population to be sampled in each of the 13 LGs. So to get the sample size for Aboh Mbaise, the mathematical application becomes:

$$\frac{1\ 840 \times 98, 326}{959, 213 \times 1}$$

$$= 189 \text{ Approx.}$$

This formula was applied to all the 13 local governments to arrive at 1840.

Research Instruments

The questionnaire titled “Questionnaire on Local Government’s Financial Information Management and Citizenry Empowerment” was the instrument applied in this research. Available secondary data of 2006 census was also used. One thousand eight hundred and forty (1, 840) copies of the questionnaire were administered personally and with the help of field assistants who were instructed and guided on what to do. Of the 1840 questionnaires distributed to all the groups of respondents, 1785 were retrieved.

Method of Data Analysis

The filled copies of questionnaire collected from each local government area was collated and labelled accordingly, ready for analysis. Data collected from each local government area was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) analytical package suitable for the type of data collected. Spearman Correlation statistics was utilized to test all the three hypotheses at 95% (0.05) significance level. Data for respondents’ answers to the research questions were represented in charts and tables, in discrete figures and in percentages where appropriate. Correlation test was applied to test the variables. This was so because the paper set out to determine whether infrastructure, funding, and awareness of revenue, either generated or allocated, in the Local government areas had implications on the employment of its citizens and on the development of the local governments in Imo State. Other analytical methods employed were percentages, tables, and graphs.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSES AND DISCUSSION

The results presented in the tables have also been represented in frequencies and percentages, as well as in graphs, for easy understanding. Furthermore, the test of the hypotheses generated for this study was done through analyzed data from Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Spearman Correlation statistics was utilized in the analyses to test the relationships between the variables of interest at 0.05 (2-tailed) significance level. The results of the analyses have also been represented in charts and tables where necessary.

Demographic Data of Respondents

Total numbers of males who responded to the questionnaire were 851 (47.7% \approx 48%) males while 893 (50.0%) were females. The remaining 41 (2.3% \approx 2%) respondents did not indicate their sexes. None of the respondents is below 20 years of age and none above 64 years.

Occupation of Respondents

The respondents had varied occupations but majority of them were, 206 (11.5%) Motorcyclists (popularly known as Okada riders), 291 (16.3%) Hairdressers, 559 (31.3%) Tailors, 542 (30.4) Teachers, and 108 (6.1%) were unemployed people as shown in Figure 1. Almost equal numbers of teachers (30%) and tailors (31%) responded.

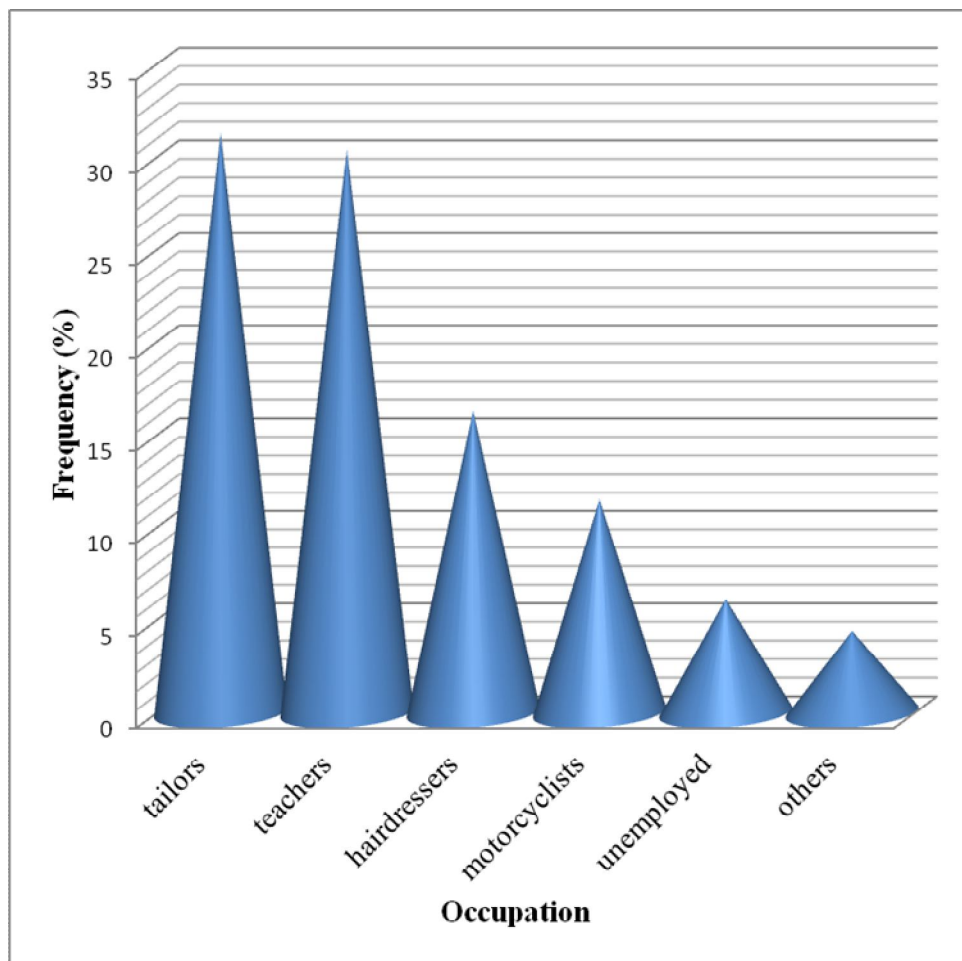


Fig. 1: Major Occupation of Respondents

Infrastructural adequacy in the local governments

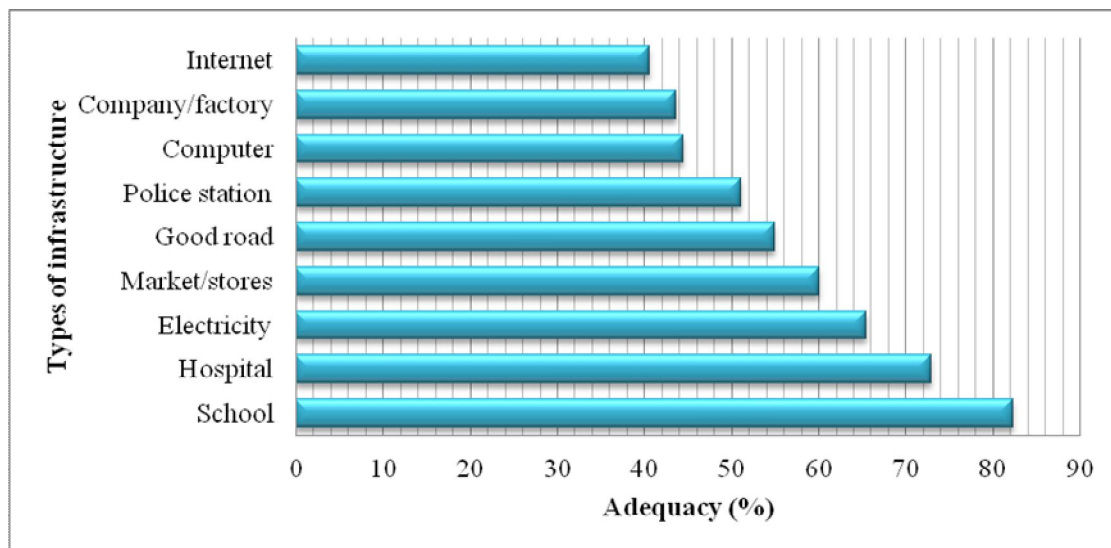


Fig. 2: Adequacy of Infrastructure in the Local Government

Of 13 infrastructures listed only four scored 60% and above adequacy and they were schools, hospitals, electricity, and market stores. Good road and police station followed. These facilities were available but were they viable? The researcher passed through the communities and realized that the citizens were merely excited at the sight of these amenities. Electricity was epileptic and many of the citizens owned private generators.

Participation of Citizens in Local Government Management

Table 2: Citizenry participation in local government management

S/N	Questions	Yes	No
1	Do you attend local government meetings?	679 (38.0%)	1106 (62%)
2	Have you been invited to a LG meeting before?	630 (35.3%)	1155 (64.7%)
3	Have you requested anything from the LG before?	932 (52.2%)	853 (47.8%)
4	If the citizens are involved in LG management, will it enhance LG infrastructural provision?	1275 (71.4%)	510 (28.6%)
5	If the citizens are involved in LG administration will there be transparency?	1175 (65.8%)	610 (34.2%)

Table 2 showed that 679 (38.0%) respondents attended local government meetings while 1106 (62%) respondents did not. 630 (35.3%), and 932 (52.2%) populations of respondents had been sometimes, respectively, invited to their local government meetings, and had sometimes made requests from their local governments. 1275 (71.4%) respondents thought that infrastructural provision would be enhanced if the citizens were involved in the management of their local governments, but, 510 (28.6%) of the respondents did not think so. While 1175 (65.8%) respondents thought that there would be transparency if the citizens were involved in the administration of their local governments, 610 (34.2%) did not think so.

Local governments should be open to their citizens so that those who are handy could help in the development of the local governments. Only 35% of the citizens had at one time or the other been invited to local government's meetings. Openness to citizens, by informing and inviting them to local government meetings to make inputs, translates to transparency.

TEST OF THE HYPOTHESES

The results on the following tables revealed the test of the hypotheses generated for this study. They also present the analyzed data from the SPSS software. Pearson Correlation analysis method was utilized to test the relationships between the paired variables of the hypotheses at 0.05 significance level.

The rule for deciding which hypothesis to accept after the tests is as followed: Accept the null hypothesis if the calculated Pearson Correlation coefficient (r) was zero (0) and the derived p -value was greater than ($>$) the level of significance (0.05; 2-tailed test) and vice versa. The implications were made after each of the four null hypotheses had been tested.

Test of the First Hypothesis: *There is no significant relationship between the citizens’ participation in local government management and transparency of local governments in Imo State.*

Table 3: Correlation Test of the First Hypothesis

Variable	Statistics	Citizens’ participation	Transparency
Citizens’ participation	Pearson correlation	1	.069 (*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
	N	1785	1785
Transparency	Pearson correlation	.069 (*)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	
	N	1785	1785

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

From Table 3 above, the calculated Pearson Correlation coefficient $r = 0.069$ while $p\text{-value} = 0.04$. The value of $r = 0.069$ at $p = 0.04$ implied that the association was positive and significant, but weak. Following the stated rule, the null hypothesis was rejected. Thus, there was significant relationship between the citizens’ participation in local government management and transparency by local government executives in Imo State.

This finding agreed with 2 of the 3 reasons NEITI (2005) gave, though in Nigerian Oil Sector setting, for forming Nigerian Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative which are (1) to increase the comprehensiveness, reliability, and integrity of information pertaining to financial transactions, policies and practices (2) to increase the public ability to access, understand and analyze complex information. Ijewere (1999) also asserted this when he found out that information dissemination discloses unforeseen possibility of mismanagement or misappropriation or embezzlement. When citizens participate in local government management there would be the awareness of the government’s income and the fear of misuse of the funds by the government officials because the citizens would ask.

Test of the Second Hypothesis: *Infrastructural development has no effect on citizenry empowerment through job creation in the local government areas.*

Table 4: Correlation Test of the Second Hypothesis

Variable	Statistics	Infrastructural development	Citizenry empowerment
Infrastructural development	Pearson Correlation	1	0.145(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	1785	1785
Citizenry	Pearson Correlation	0.145(**)	1

empowerment			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	1785	1785

**Correlation is insignificant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

According to data on Table 4, the calculated Pearson Correlation coefficient $r = 0.145$, while $p = 0.000$. The value of $r = 0.145$ at $p = 0.000$ was an indication of positive, but insignificant association between infrastructural development and citizenry empowerment through job creation in the understudied local governments. According to the stated rules, therefore, the assumed alternate hypothesis was accepted. Thus, infrastructural development has a positive, weak, and insignificant effect on citizenry empowerment through job creation in the understudied local government areas.

Horrande (2009); Alegbeleye and Aina (1985); and Disso (1994) succumbed to this outcome; that “lack of development has a positive correlation with the neglect of rural areas”. Alegbeleye and Aina specifically stated “that unless the rural areas are well developed, hardly will any meaningful development occur”. Citizens are empowered when amenities or infrastructures for gainful employment are available. Ascertaining this finding also were Pigg and Bradshaw in RSS Issue Brief (2006) where they emphasized that infrastructural service encouraged self-help effort by the citizens.

Test of the Third Hypothesis: *Citizenry awareness of local government income has no effect on local government’s responsibility in the provision of infrastructure in the rural areas.*

Table 5: Correlation Test of the Third Hypothesis

Variable	Statistics	Citizenry awareness	Provision of infrastructure
Citizenry awareness	Pearson Correlation	1	.232(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	1785	1785
Provision of infrastructure	Pearson Correlation	.232(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	1785	1785

Data on Table 5 showed that the calculated Pearson Correlation coefficient $r = 0.232$, while $p = 0.000$. The value of $r = 0.232$ at $p = 0.000$ is an indication of a positive, significant, but weak association between citizenry awareness of local government income and local governments’ responsibility in the provision of infrastructure in the rural areas of the understudied local governments. According to the stated rules, therefore, the alternate

hypothesis was accepted. Thus, citizenry awareness of local governments' income has a positive, significant, but weak, effect on local governments' responsibility in the provision of infrastructure in the rural areas of the understudied local government areas.

The citizens were very positive that awareness of local government income has a very high positive correlation on government's provision of infrastructure. So, awareness of financial information by the citizens leads to provision of, and maintenance of available infrastructure.

Balit, Calvelo, and Masias (1996); Issa and Sunday (2007); Olowo (2004); and Davidson (2001) in their respective researches were all in agreement to this finding: that infrastructure has a positive effect on the development and eventual employment of citizens.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Citizens' participation in local governments' administration, though limited, is perceived to yield some positive results to the citizenry. Ignorance of the local governments' intentions and activities by the citizens could prevent some of them from assisting the local governments.

The citizens were aware that availability of the identified infrastructure would provide employment for them in addition to making life pleasurable. So, the citizens of the understudied local government areas were very convinced of the high potentials embedded in infrastructure to provide employment for them.

Citizenry awareness of local governments' income had a positive, significant, but weak, effect on local governments' responsibility in the provision of infrastructure in the rural areas of the understudied local government areas.

The research also found out that there was a significant relationship between citizenry participation in local government management and transparency. The research further discovered that there was a positive relationship between infrastructural development and citizens' empowerment in Imo State. But information was limited and so was the expected empowerment.

Recommendation

From the findings, the following recommendations have become necessary.

Although the results of the survey suggested that there is adequate provision of infrastructure in the understudied local governments, the rate at which the citizens desired improvement in infrastructural provision in order for them to stay and work in their villages is an indication that the provision is actually inadequate. Moreover, it suggested that the available infrastructures might not be in ultimate useful condition. Therefore, it is recommended that more infrastructures be provided by the local governments and that the available ones be reasonably maintained.

To avoid anarchy, the following five infrastructures, which were indicated to be most needed according to the respondents' ratings, must be adequately provided by the local government. They included hospitals, good roads, police stations, companies/factories, schools, and market stores. Therefore every autonomous community in the local government in Imo State should, at least, have one of hospital, company/factory, school, and market. Where the amenities mentioned above exist, they should be improved upon. The local governments

should provide needed infrastructures for the citizenry's empowerment and eventual development.

The federal government should make it mandatory that all incomes to the local governments should be made public to the stakeholders. Newspaper publication of federal allocations excludes internally generated incomes from the local governments.

In conclusion, financial information communication to the citizens from the local governments can lead to infrastructural provision in the rural areas and consequent citizenry empowerment in Imo State.

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