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Local Government Administration and Rural Infrastructural Development: Evidence from Ife Central Local Government Area

Esther Olapeju Fagbewesa
Department of Local Government and Development Studies, Faculty of Administration,
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Osun State, Nigeria
E-mail: efagbewesa@oauife.edu.ng

Abstract
This study investigates the impact of local government administration on rural infrastructure development in Ife Central Local Government Area, Osun State, Nigeria. Local governments, being the tier closest to the grassroots, are constitutionally mandated to drive rural development through the provision of basic amenities. The research focused on assessing the extent to which Ife Central Local Government has fulfilled this role in improving the welfare of rural dwellers. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. Data were collected from seventy-six (76) respondents through a structured questionnaire, while frequency counts and percentages were used for analysis. This approach ensured adequate representation of the views and experiences of the local population. Findings revealed that the local government has contributed to rural infrastructure development with notable achievements in road grading and repairs (67%), provision of primary health centres (51%), construction of culverts and drainage (34.6%), public water supply (30.7%), and schools (26.7%). Despite these contributions, challenges such as inadequate funding, poor maintenance, political interference, corruption, and weak community participation limit the effectiveness and sustainability of these efforts. The study concludes that while local governments remain central to grassroots development, their impact in Ife Central has not been fully maximized. It recommends financial autonomy, enhanced accountability, participatory planning, and a stronger maintenance culture to improve service delivery. By addressing these constraints, local governments can better drive rural infrastructure development and contribute to national growth.

Keywords: Contemporary Development, Local Government, Rural Development, Service Delivery, Infrastructure Development

1. Introduction

Local governments in Nigeria serve as the third tier of government, created to bring governance and development closer to the people at the grassroots level. The landmark 1976 Local Government Reform institutionalized the current local government system, aiming to promote rural transformation and broaden democratic participation. One of the critical responsibilities assigned to local governments is the provision and maintenance of basic infrastructure in rural communities. These infrastructures include access roads, schools, health care centres, potable water, rural electrification, markets, and other facilities that are essential for social and economic development. The importance of rural infrastructure cannot be overstated—it facilitates agricultural productivity, access to health and education, mobility, and general quality of life. Inadequate rural infrastructure results in persistent poverty, rural-urban migration, and underdevelopment. Over the years, both the federal and state

governments have devolved responsibilities and resources to local governments to meet these challenges. Yet, many rural areas remain largely undeveloped. The causes often include poor planning, mismanagement of resources, corruption, and weak capacity at the local government level.

Ife Central Local Government Area in Osun State is one of such areas where the impact of local government on rural infrastructure needs critical examination. Despite its proximity to urban areas and its strategic location, many communities within the LGA still suffer from lack of access to good roads, water, and primary healthcare. This study, therefore, seeks to explore the role and performance of the local government in infrastructure provision and its implications for grassroots development.
The development of rural infrastructure is essential for achieving economic growth, poverty reduction, and inclusive development. Yet, in Nigeria, many rural communities continue to experience neglect, underfunding, and poor access to basic social amenities. In Ife Central LGA, despite the constitutional provisions and annual allocations from both federal and state sources, several communities are still plagued by dilapidated primary schools, impassable roads, and lack of potable water. These shortcomings have adverse effects on agricultural production, educational outcomes, health indicators, and general well-being.

Furthermore, local governments often face operational challenges such as political interference, low internally generated revenue, and inadequate technical capacity. There is also the problem of poor monitoring and evaluation, leading to abandoned or poorly executed projects. Given these concerns, this research seeks to investigate the actual impact of local government administration in Ife Central on the development of rural infrastructure. Are the resources being effectively utilized? What specific projects have been executed? What are the community perceptions of local governance in this area?

2. Literature Review

The local government is a political authority established by law to manage the affairs of a particular geographical area within a country. It is the closest tier of government to the people and is responsible for grassroots development, including the provision of basic services such as healthcare, education, and rural infrastructure. According to Ajayi (2000), local governments play a crucial role in bridging the gap between the government and the governed. Infrastructure refers to the physical systems and structures that support the functioning of a society. In rural contexts, this includes transportation systems, communication networks, water supply, energy facilities, and public institutions like schools and clinics (Eboh, 2009). Rural Development: This refers to strategies and processes aimed at improving the standard of living in rural areas. It encompasses aspects such as income generation, poverty reduction, education, healthcare, and the provision of social amenities (Arowolo, 2011).

Rural development refers to a multidimensional and sustained effort aimed at improving the living standards and economic well-being of people residing in rural areas. It involves the implementation of strategic programs and policies to address the structural inequalities and chronic underdevelopment faced by rural populations. These efforts typically focus on increasing agricultural productivity, creating employment opportunities, improving rural infrastructure, ensuring access to basic social services (such as education and healthcare), and fostering local participation in governance and development initiatives. According to Obasi (2000), rural development encompasses poverty reduction, employment creation, improvement of living standards, and the provision of essential services such as roads, potable water, electricity, healthcare, and education. It represents a comprehensive approach that seeks not only to boost rural economies but also to integrate the rural poor into the national development process. The United Nations (1975) provides a widely cited

definition of rural development as "a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people the rural poor." This definition highlights the need for targeted development efforts that are tailored to the unique needs and realities of rural communities, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria. The emphasis is placed on inclusive growth that uplifts marginalized populations and reduces regional disparities in access to opportunities and services.

In contemporary development literature, rural development is seen as a holistic process that integrates economic, social, environmental, and institutional dimensions. As Arowolo (2008) emphasizes, rural development is not solely about the provision of physical infrastructure or economic investment; it also includes empowering rural communities to participate meaningfully in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of development projects. Participation fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility among rural dwellers, ensuring that projects are better tailored to their actual needs and are more sustainable in the long run. In Nigeria, rural development has been a central component of national development policies since independence. Despite being home to the majority of the country's population, rural areas continue to lag behind in critical human development indices due to decades of neglect, poor governance, and inadequate resource allocation. The responsibility for rural development in Nigeria is shared among the three tiers of government, but local governments are strategically positioned to play the leading role due to their proximity to rural communities.

According to Olasupo and Fayomi (2012), local governments are the most appropriate institutions for implementing rural development programs because they are better positioned to identify local needs, mobilize community resources, and implement tailored solutions. The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) also places emphasis on the local government's role in rural development through responsibilities outlined in the Fourth Schedule, which include the construction and maintenance of roads, markets, and sanitation facilities, as well as the promotion of local economic development. However, the actual performance of local governments in promoting rural development has been mixed, and in many cases, disappointing. Challenges such as political interference from state governments, poor funding, lack of autonomy, corruption, and limited administrative capacity have continued to undermine the effectiveness of local governments in executing rural development programs (Adeyemo, 2010). To overcome these challenges, there is a need for institutional reforms, improved accountability, increased community participation, and better coordination among stakeholders.

Service delivery refers to the process through which public institutions and governments provide essential goods and services to citizens to meet their socio-economic and developmental needs. These services include education, healthcare, water supply, sanitation, transportation, waste management, housing, and security, among others. Effective service delivery is central to governance, as it reflects the ability of government institutions to meet public expectations and uphold the social contract between the state and its citizens. According to Grindle (2007), service delivery is "the mechanism by which public goods are provided to citizens in a timely, efficient, and equitable manner." It involves not only the provision of services but also the establishment of institutions, procedures, and accountability mechanisms that ensure that such services reach the intended beneficiaries.

World Bank (2004) emphasizes that effective service delivery enhances public trust, promotes citizen engagement, reduces inequality, and contributes to sustainable development. Inadequate or ineffective service delivery, on the other hand, often leads to social unrest, erosion of trust in government, and underdevelopment, particularly in rural and underserved communities. Within the framework of decentralization, local governments are seen as the most effective tier of government for delivering basic services to citizens due to their proximity and accessibility to the grassroots. Local

governments are expected to assess community needs, plan and budget for local priorities, and implement development projects. This expectation aligns with the principle of subsidiarity, which holds that responsibilities should be carried out at the lowest possible level of governance closest to the people (UNDP, 2009).

In Nigeria, the Fourth Schedule of the 1999 Constitution outlines the responsibilities of local governments in service delivery. These include the provision and maintenance of roads, streets,drains, public highways, parks, and gardens; waste disposal; primary education; health centers; and markets, among others. Despite these statutory responsibilities, the capacity of many local governments to deliver services effectively has been constrained by various institutional and systemic challenges. Agba et al. (2013) note that issues such as poor funding, corruption, weak institutional capacity, political interference, and lack of autonomy have significantly hindered effective service delivery in Nigerian local governments. In many instances, state governments interfere in the financial and administrative autonomy of local councils, particularly through the manipulation of State Joint Local Government Accounts (SJLGA), thereby undermining the ability of local governments to implement developmental projects and services.

Additionally, the absence of transparency and citizen participation in planning and budgeting processes further weakens service delivery outcomes. Where citizens are not involved in identifying their priorities or monitoring service delivery, there is often a mismatch between community needs and the services provided. Nevertheless, numerous reform efforts and donor-supported initiatives have aimed to strengthen service delivery at the local level in Nigeria. These include capacity-building programs, fiscal decentralization policies, and participatory governance mechanisms intended to improve accountability and enhance the responsiveness of local institutions. It can thus be said that effective service delivery is a cornerstone of local governance and a key determinant of public satisfaction with government. Strengthening the capacity of local governments through financial autonomy, institutional reforms, transparency, and citizen engagement is essential for improving service delivery, promoting inclusive development, and reducing poverty, especially in rural areas. This is the ability of government institutions to provide quality and timely services to their citizens. Effective service delivery is a measure of good governance and enhances the legitimacy of local government authorities (Adeyemo, 2005).

2.1 Theoretical Explanation

This study adopts multiple theoretical lenses to examine the role of local government in rural infrastructure development. Specifically, it draws on Decentralization Theory, Developmental State Theory, Public Choice Theory, and Participatory Development Theory. Together, these frameworks provide a comprehensive understanding of how local government administration shapes rural infrastructure outcomes.

2.1.1 Decentralization Theory

Decentralization Theory refers to the process by which central governments transfer authority, responsibilities, and resources to lower tiers of government—such as regional or local authorities. The theory argues that decentralized governance enhances efficiency, accountability, and responsiveness by bringing decision-making closer to the people. According to Rondinelli (1981), decentralization involves "the transfer of planning, decision-making or administrative authority from central government to its field organizations, local administrative units, or non- governmental organizations." This theory supports the view that local governments are better positioned to identify the needs of their communities, design appropriate responses, and deliver public services more effectively due to

their proximity to the grassroots. In developing countries like Nigeria, decentralization is often viewed as a strategy for fostering local development, strengthening democracy, and improving public service delivery (Olowu & Wunsch, 2004).

2.1.2 Developmental State Theory

Developmental State Theory emerged from the experiences of East Asian countries such as South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore, where the state played a central and proactive role in guiding economic development and infrastructure expansion. The theory emphasizes state-led planning, strategic investment, and bureaucratic competence as essential drivers of national development (Leftwich, 2000). Applied to Nigeria's local government system, this theory suggests that for rural infrastructure development to be effective, local governments must be seen as developmental agents, not just administrative units. They must be equipped with the vision, capacity, and autonomy to plan long- term infrastructure projects, mobilize resources, and implement programs tailored to the needs of their rural constituencies.

2.1.3 Public Choice Theory

Public Choice Theory provides another useful lens by focusing on the incentives, behaviors, and interactions of public officials within governmental institutions. It argues that individuals in government are motivated by self-interest, which can sometimes lead to inefficiency, corruption, or misallocation of resources (Buchanan & Tullock, 1962). Within the context of Nigerian local governments, this theory helps explain the challenges of political interference, mismanagement, and poor service delivery. It highlights the need for institutional checks, transparency, and accountability mechanisms to ensure that local officials act in the public interest and prioritize rural infrastructure development rather than personal or political gains.

2.1.4 Participatory Development Theory

Participatory Development Theory emphasizes the active involvement of local communities in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of development projects. It argues that when communities are engaged, projects are more likely to reflect their real needs, gain their support, and become sustainable (Chambers, 1997). In the context of local government administration in Nigeria, this theory underscores the importance of grassroots participation in infrastructure planning and service delivery. It suggests that without citizen engagement, rural projects risk being misaligned with local priorities, poorly maintained, or rejected by the intended beneficiaries.

Hence Decentralization Theory will be adopted as the most appropriate framework for this study because it explains the transfer of authority, responsibilities and resources from central to local governments to enhance efficiency, accountability and responsiveness at the grassroots. Nigeria's 1976 Local Government Reform and the Fourth Schedule of the 1999 Constitution were based on this principle, assigning local councils responsibilities for rural roads, markets, health care and other basic services. Since this research assesses how Ife Central Local Government implements and maintains such infrastructure, Decentralization Theory provides a clear lens for evaluating whether these devolved powers are translating into improved service delivery and what institutional or governance factors may strengthen or weaken its effectiveness.

2.2 Empirical Review

Several scholars have investigated the relationship between local government administration and rural development, particularly within the context of Nigeria and other developing countries. These studies provide empirical insights into the operational realities, successes, and challenges facing local

governments in their quest to facilitate infrastructural growth and community development at the grassroots level. For instance, Arowolo (2008) conducted a study on Local Government Administration and the Challenges of Rural Development in Nigeria, where he found that although local governments are strategically positioned to drive development, their effectiveness is largely hindered by over-centralization, poor funding, and political interference from higher levels of government. His findings emphasized that for local governments to function as development agents, there must be an institutional framework that guarantees financial autonomy and grassroots participation. In a related study, Adeyemo (2010) explored the role of local government in service delivery and discovered a direct correlation between administrative capacity and the level of rural infrastructure development. His study, based on survey research conducted in Oyo State, Nigeria, showed that when local governments have skilled personnel, efficient planning mechanisms, and community support, they perform significantly better in delivering social amenities such as roads, boreholes, health centers, and market structures.

Similarly, Olasupo and Fayomi (2012) examined local government performance in Osun State and reported that while the councils showed a basic understanding of developmental priorities, their efforts were undermined by inadequate funding and lack of technical expertise. They recommended greater devolution of responsibilities and improved fiscal arrangements to enhance infrastructure development in rural communities. Another empirical study by Eboh et al. (2006) assessed the contribution of local governments to rural development in the South-East region of Nigeria. Their research employed a mixed-method approach and found that although most local governments had development plans on paper, the implementation was often poor due to weak institutional capacity and high levels of corruption. This study concluded that for local governments to meaningfully contribute to rural infrastructure development, governance reforms and capacity-building are essential.

Furthermore, Ogunrotifa (2017) carried out a study titled Challenges of Local Government in Nigeria: A Case Study of Ife Central Local Government. His research highlighted a gap between policy and practice. Although local government councils were charged with responsibilities for rural development, limited internally generated revenue and heavy dependence on statutory allocations constrained their operations. The study also pointed to the need for participatory governance to bridge the development deficit. In addition, Mbah and Nwangwu (2014) assessed rural infrastructure development in Anambra State and concluded that while some local governments have recorded success in certain projects (like rural electrification and primary education), the majority failed to meet the development expectations of rural residents due to lack of transparency and community engagement. These empirical studies collectively indicate that while local government administration has the potential to catalyze rural development, several structural and operational challenges hinder their optimal performance. These include limited financial autonomy, political manipulation, poor human capital, and inefficient service delivery mechanisms. Therefore, effective local governance, participatory development, and adequate funding are crucial factors in determining whether or not local governments can fulfill their mandate in rural infrastructure provision.

3. Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design, which is suitable for obtaining information on the opinions, attitudes, and experiences of a population. It enabled the researcher to collect quantitative data through questionnaires and qualitative insights through interviews, providing a comprehensive understanding of the impact of local government administration on rural infrastructure

development in Ife Central Local Government Area. The study was conducted in Ife Central Local Government Area of Osun State, Nigeria. The LGA is located in the southwestern part of the country and is known for its cultural heritage and economic activities such as farming, trading, schooling, and artisan work. It has several communities, including urban and rural settlements, and is home to diverse socio-economic groups.

The population of the study comprised all residents of Ife Central Local Government Area, including local government officials, traditional rulers, market women, youth leaders, religious leaders, and general residents who are directly or indirectly affected by rural infrastructure projects. The estimated population, based on the National Population Commission (2006) and current projections, is about 150,000 people. Hence the population of the study will consist of 76 respondents which will be purposely from each department of the local government council. Due to the large population, it was impractical to study everyone. A stratified random sampling technique was used, dividing the population into subgroups such as: Local government officials, Traditional rulers, Community development members, Market women, Youth leaders, General residents. Random sampling was then applied within each stratum to ensure equal chances of selection and representation of all relevant groups.

3.1 Social-Demographic Information of the Respondents

Table 1: Demographic Statistics

Gender	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Male	44	58.7%
Female	32	41.3%
Total	**76**	**100%**
Marital Status	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Single	42	56%
Married	34	44%
Divorced	-	-
Total	**76**	**100%**
Age	**Frequency**	**Percent**
18-29	38	50.7%
30-39	18	22.7%
40-49	20	26.6%
50 and above	-	-
Total	**76**	**100%**
Qualification	**Frequency**	**Percent**
SSCE	9	12%
OND/NCE	15	20%
Bsc/Hnd	52	68%
Total	**76**	**100%**

Occupation	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Civil Servant	24	32%
Trader	17	20%
Religious Leader	6	8%
Student	14	19%
Others	16	21%
Total	**76**	**100%**
Years	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Less than 5 years	18	24%
5–10 years	42	56%
More than 10 years	16	20%
Total	**76**	**100%**

Table 1. The above table shows that majority of the respondents are male with 44 (58.7%) and male with 31 (41.3%). It Shows analysis of respondents on marital status. 56% of the respondents are single, while 44% of the respondent are married, and there is no record for divorce. The above table also indicates that there are 38 respondents in the 18-29 age group, making up 50.7%, 17 respondents in the 30-39 age group, making up 22.7%, 20 respondents in the 25-28 age group, making up 26.6% and there is no record for 50 and above. The table reveals that majority of the respondent holds a Bachelor's degree or Higher National Diploma (68%). A significant number have completed OND/NCE qualifications (20%), while fewer have secondary school certificates (12%). It also displays the analysis of respondents on occupation. 32% of the respondents are civil servant, 20% are trader, 8% are religious leader, 19% are student and 21% fall under others. It indicates that 24% of the respondents have lived in Ife Central LGA for less than 5 years, 56% for 5–10 years, and 20% for more than 10 years.

Table 2: Rural Infrastructure Projects executed in Ife Central LGA and the Effectiveness of the Projects

S/N	Benefit	Responses	Frequency	Percent
1	Graded/repaired of Roads	Strongly Agree	22	29
		Agree	28	38
		Neutral	16	21
		Disagree	4	5
		Strongly Disagree	5	7
2	Construction of culverts and drainage	Strongly Agree	14	18.6
		Agree	12	16
		Neutral	29	38.7
		Disagree	11	14.7

		Strongly Disagree	9	12
3	Provision of public water (boreholes/well)	Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree	12 11 31 12 9	16 14.7 41.3 16 12
4	Construction/renovation of primary health centers	Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree	17 21 26 7 4	23 28 34 10 5
5	Construction or renovation of primary schools	Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree	8 12 35 13 7	10.7 16 46.7 17.3 9.3
6	Building/maintenance of local markets	Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree	5 9 39 12 10	6.7 12 52 16 13.3

Table 2 shows the types of projects from which respondents reported benefiting in the Local Government Area (LGA). A majority (67%) indicated they benefited from road grading or repairs, while 21% were neutral and 12% disagreed. For the construction of culverts and drainage, 18.6% strongly agreed and 16% agreed that they had benefited. However, 38.7% remained neutral, while 26.7% disagreed or strongly disagreed. On the provision of public water (boreholes/wells), 41.3% of respondents were neutral, 30.7% strongly agreed or agreed, and 28% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Regarding the construction or renovation of primary health centers, 51% of respondents agreed they had benefited, 34% were neutral, and 15% disagreed or strongly disagreed. In the case of primary schools, only 26.7% strongly agreed or agreed that they had benefited, while 46.7% were neutral and 26.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Finally, for local markets, 52% of respondents were neutral,

while 18.7% strongly agreed or agreed, and 29.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Table 3: Effectiveness of the Local Government in the Following Areas of Infrastructure Development

	RATING					
Area of Administration	Very Ineffective	Ineffective	Neutral	Effective	Very Effective	Mean
Planning of new projects	21 (28)	11 (15)	23 (30.6)	16 (21)	4 (5.3)	2.67
Implementation of projects	17 (22.7)	21 (28)	16 (21)	15 (20)	6 (8)	2.62
Maintenance of existing infrastructure	18 (24)	16 (21)	18 (24)	12 (16)	11 (15)	2.76
	Weighted Mean					2.68

Table 3 shows the effectiveness of the LGA in infrastructure development. The results reveal that planning of new projects ($\bar{x}$ = 2.67), implementation of projects ($\bar{x}$ = 2.62), and maintenance of existing infrastructure ($\bar{x}$ = 2.76) all fall within the low effectiveness range. This indicates that, overall, the local government is perceived as not being highly effective in the planning, implementation, and maintenance of infrastructural projects. With a weighted mean of 2.68, the general perception of residents is that infrastructural development activities are below satisfactory levels.

Table 4: Community Perception, Satisfaction and Strategies That Can Enhance Rural Infrastructure

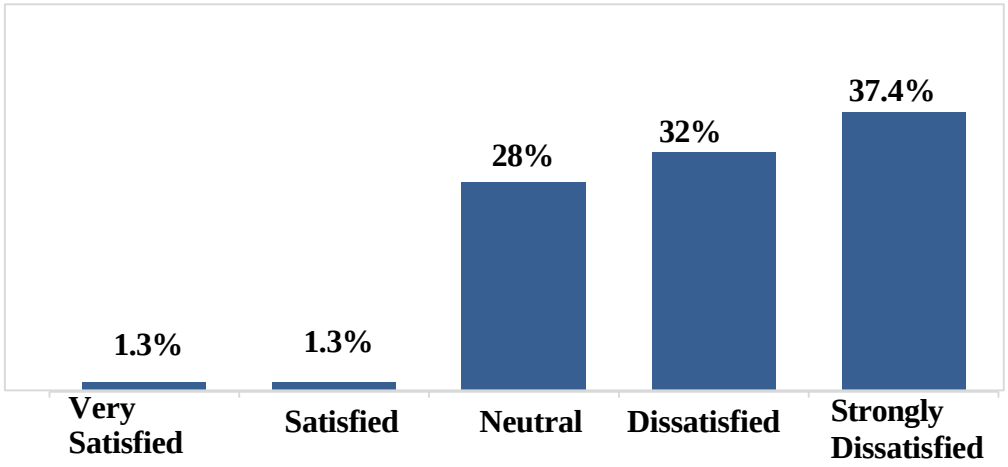
	RATING					
Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
The local government consults the community before starting projects.	21 (28)	19 (25)	25 (34)	4 (5)	6 (8)	2.4
The projects executed reflect the actual needs of our community.	4 (5.3)	16 (21.3)	26 (34.7)	19 (25)	10 (13.3)	3.2
The quality of completed infrastructure is generally good.	11 (14.7)	21 (28)	28 (37.3)	10 (13.3)	5 (6.7)	2.7

There is transparency in how project funds are managed.	18 (24)	24 (32)	26 (34)	6 (8)	1 (2)	2.3
	Weighted Mean					2.7

Decision Value: 0.00 – 2.99 = Low Perception, 3.00 – 5.00 = High Perception.

Table 4 reveals the perception of the residents in the LGA**.** As reveal in the table, consulting the community before starting projects ($\bar{x}$ =2.4), projects executed reflect the actual needs of the community ($\bar{x}$ =3.2), quality of completed infrastructure ($\bar{x}$ =2.7) and project funds transparency ($\bar{x}$ =2.3). This shows that the perception of residents on the local government's performance is low with overall weighted mean of 2.7.

Figure 1: Level of Satisfaction



In Figure 1: The above chart shows that 37.4% of respondents are strongly dissatisfied with the rural infrastructure, 32% are dissatisfied, 28% (122) are neutral, 1.3% satisfied and 1.3% is very satisfied.

Table 5: Strategies to Enhance Effectiveness

	RATING					
Constraints	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
Holding regular town hall meetings to discuss community needs	3 (4)	3 (4)	14 (18.7)	27 (36)	28 (37.3)	4.0
Being more transparent about how money is spent on projects	11 (14.7)	14 (18.7)	15 (20)	20 (26.6)	15 (20)	3.2
Ensuring projects are given to competent contractors.	12 (16)	14 (18.7)	28 (37.3)	11 (14.7)	10 (13.3)	2.9
Involving community members in monitoring projects.	6 (8)	11 (14.7)	12 (16)	29 (38.7)	17 (22.6)	3.5

Focusing on maintaining old projects, not just starting new ones.	7 (9.3)	12 (16)	9 (12)	23 (30.7)	24 (32)	3.6
Creating a dedicated phone line or office for complaints.	11 (14.7)	23 (30.7)	28 (37.3)	12 (16)	1 (1.3)	2.6
	Weighted Mean					3.3

Table 5 reveals the strategies to enhance effectiveness in LGA in infrastructure delivery**.** As reveal in the table Holding regular town hall meetings to discuss community needs ($\bar{x}$ =4.0), being more transparent about how money is spent on projects ($\bar{x}$ =3.2), ensuring projects are given to competent contractors ($\bar{x}$ =2.9), involving community members in monitoring projects ($\bar{x}$ =3.5), focusing on maintaining old projects, not just starting new ones ($\bar{x}$ =3.6), and creating a dedicated phone line or office for complaints ($\bar{x}$ =2.6).

Table 6: Main Constraints Facing Local Government in Providing Rural Infrastructure

	RATING					
Constraints/Challenges	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
Inadequate funding from federal/state Government	22 (29.3)	28 (37.3)	16 (21.3)	3 (4)	6 (8)	2.4
Corruption and mismanagement of funds	- (0)	- (0)	8 (10.7)	41 (54.6)	26 (34.7)	4.2
Political interference	2 (2.6)	1 (1.3)	8 (10.7)	26 (34.7)	38 (50.7)	4.3
Lack of skilled technical staff	21 (28)	24 (32)	19 (25.3)	8 (10.3)	3 (4)	2.3
Poor community participation in projects	- (0)	1 (1.3)	12 (16)	25 (33.3)	37 (49.4)	4.3
Lack of modern equipment and machinery	2 (2.6)	2 (2.6)	15 (20)	37 (49.4)	19 (25.3)	3.9
	Weighted Mean					3.6

Decision Value: 0.00 – 2.99 = Low Constraints, 3.00 – 5.00 = High Constraints

Table 6 reveals the constraints of the LGA in infrastructure delivery**.** As reveal in the table, Inadequate funding from federal/state government ($\bar{x}$ =2.4), corruption and mismanagement of funds ($\bar{x}$ =4.2), Political interference ($\bar{x}$ =4.3), Lack of skilled technical staff ($\bar{x}$ =2.3), Poor community ($\bar{x}$ =4.3) and Lack of modern equipment and machinery with ($\bar{x}$ =3.9).

4 Discussion of Findings

The first objective reveal that among the projects examined, road grading and repairs were identified

as the most beneficial, with a majority (67%) of respondents acknowledging improvements in this area. This suggests that road infrastructure remains a key priority for residents, likely due to its direct impact on transportation, access to markets, and economic activities within the community. This result supports the submission of Adewumi (2018), who emphasized that road construction and maintenance are often the most visible indicators of government presence in rural areas. The construction of culverts and drainage recorded limited perceived benefits, with only 34.6%. On health infrastructure, more than half of the respondents 51% confirmed benefiting from the construction or renovation of primary health centers. This aligns with the importance of healthcare facilities in rural development and highlights a relatively stronger performance of the LGA in this sector compared to others. The finding corroborates the study of Eze and Onah (2019), who found that access to primary health facilities significantly improves community satisfaction with local government performance. By contrast, primary school projects were perceived less favorably. While 26.7% agreed that they had benefited and nearly half (46.7%) of the respondents remained neutral. The effectiveness of the LGA in infrastructure development as generally low. This finding highlight concerns that, while infrastructure development is a core responsibility of local governments, residents do not perceive significant progress. Agagu (2004) argued that corruption, mismanagement of funds, and weak institutional frameworks have consistently undermined local governments' ability to deliver essential services.

Furthermore, the findings reveal the Community Perception, a significant 72% of respondents either disagreed or remained neutral towards the statement. This indicates a deeply entrenched top-down approach to development planning, where projects are conceived and designed with minimal input from the intended beneficiaries. The data also, reveals critical failures in project execution and sustainability, with 80% of respondents not agreeing with the quality of completed infrastructure is generally good. While the public's perception of transparency in fund management is overwhelming with 90% of respondents disputed the statement. This result strongly supports Ukiwo's (2007) assertion that a lack of fiscal accountability at the local level creates fertile ground for corruption, leading to the award of contracts to unqualified contractors who inevitably use substandard materials. Furthermore, the findings show the level of satisfaction of infrastructure in the LGA. This reveals a profound and widespread dissatisfaction among residents in the LGA. With 69.4% of respondents either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, this is a stark indicator of significant service delivery failure. This overwhelming citizen dissatisfaction corroborates the findings of Agba, Akwara, and Idu (2013), who documented the deplorable state of rural infrastructure across Nigeria and the corresponding low public opinion of local government performance.

The data reveals a strong preference for strategies centered on holding regular meetings to discuss community needs**,** involving community members in projects**,** and focusing on maintaining old projects, not just starting new ones. The overall weighted mean of 3.3 suggests a moderate to high level of agreement on the proposed strategies, but the variations between individual items are highly instructive. The most highly endorsed strategy, with a mean score of 4.0, was holding regular town hall meetings to discuss community needs. This result powerfully underscores a significant public demand for a more inclusive and bottom-up approach to development. This finding is in strong alignment with the scholarly consensus in Nigerian development studies. Agba, Akwara, & Idu (2013) argue that the historical failure of many rural development projects is directly attributable to a top-down, exclusionary planning process.

The results further indicate that institutional and governance-related factors are the most critical barriers to rural infrastructure development in Ife Central LGA. Specifically, corruption and political

interference emerged as the strongest challenges with over 60%. This corroborates the arguments of Agba, Akwara, and Idu (2013), who emphasized that corruption and political patronage remain persistent threats to effective local governance in Nigeria.

Lastly, the findings reveal that respondents identified several major constraints affecting infrastructure delivery in Ife Central LGA. Overall, the weighted mean of 3.6 places these constraints in the high category. The evidence highlights systemic weaknesses, particularly corruption, political interference, and exclusion of the community, as the central challenges to rural infrastructure delivery. This aligns with Agba, Akwara, and Idu (2013), who reported that corruption and political patronage significantly hinder local government performance in Nigeria.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This research concludes that local government administration is central to rural infrastructure development in Nigeria, as it brings governance closer to the grassroots. In Ife Central Local Government Area, the contributions made so far have improved the socio-economic lives of residents, particularly through road rehabilitation and healthcare facilities. However, these efforts remain inadequate when compared with the increasing needs of the population. The study underscores that for local governments to fulfil their constitutional mandate of promoting grassroots development, there must be a deliberate effort to strengthen their autonomy, ensure adequate funding, and improve accountability in resource management. Without addressing these underlying issues, the role of local governments in fostering sustainable rural infrastructure development will continue to be undermined.

Based on the findings and conclusion, this paper proposed that the federal and state governments should ensure that local governments receive their allocations directly, free from undue interference. Adequate financial resources will enable them to embark on more people-oriented projects. Local governments should adopt participatory planning approaches by involving community members in identifying priority projects. This will help ensure that resources are channeled to areas of real need. Measures should be put in place to curb corruption and mismanagement of funds at the local government level. This can be achieved through regular audits, open budgeting, and community monitoring of projects. Training and retraining of staff should be encouraged to improve competence in planning, implementing, and maintaining rural infrastructure projects. Beyond the provision of new infrastructure, there should be deliberate policies for the maintenance and sustainability of existing projects. This will prevent the rapid deterioration of facilities and ensure long-term service delivery. Local governments should not depend solely on statutory allocations but should explore internally generated revenue (IGR) through taxes, levies, and partnerships with the private sector. The activities of local governments should be shielded from excessive political influence that often leads to misplaced priorities and abandoned projects. Policies should strictly enforce separation of administrative duties from partisan interests.

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