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Do Community Development efforts influence Local Government efficiency? Practices from Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Local governments in Nigeria were created to bring the government closer to the people at the grassroots level and is financed by the federal government through the state government. However, due to years of corruption, elitism and godfatherism, the LG has been denied by greedy state governors. This has led to the rise of community actors to carry out similar acts of the LG. This research seeks to understand the citizen's perception towards the activities of the LG and to find out if community development efforts reduce LG efficiency towards development activities. The work adopted a mixed method of research and data collection was quantitative means through 375 administered questionnaires to citizens of Offa LG and interviews with LG representatives and community development organization. The research finds that community development efforts have broadened through several factors affecting the LG. The research recommends further research to understand this relationship.

Keywords: Local Government, Community, development, Nigeria, Government, performance.

Introduction

One of the focal points to the emergence of the Local Government (LG) in Nigeria is to create a synergy between the actions and responsiveness of the government and the people who are primarily meant to be the major beneficiaries. LG ensures that the power in any democratic system of government is devolved and decentralized to guarantee meticulous redistribution of the state wealth to the community. Therefore, considerable attention must be focused on the administration of the LG. The LG is unique through its concise ability to ensure a sense of camaraderie, security, and contentment amongst its inhabitants. The realization of these goals has been the focus of all forms of government. It is imperative to assert that the LG has been the driving force for actualizing national integration and development (Olley, 2018).

On the one hand, the LG in Nigeria is the third tier of government backed by statutory law of democratic state to legal discharge functions within specified or

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limited geographical area (Olley, 2018). It involves the philosophical commitment to the idea of grassroot participation in government at community level. Abugu (2014) further expresses that LG could be viewed as a compartment of government equipped with the required statutory powers to translate the objectives and plans of other arms of government into reality for the people at the local level, as well as informing the yearnings and needs of the rural populace to those at the other arms of government i.e., state government, federal government, etc. Instructively, the LG represents the eye-watch organ as well as the medium channel through which the dividends of governance are allocated to all and sundry within the territorial confine of a given area in a country. This explains why the LG has since time immemorial been depicted as a pathway to community development.

Community development on the other hand, can be seen as the required measures which may be installed either by the government, community efforts or relevant stakeholders with the sole purpose of driving social and economic development in a community. Illumination of the community, motorable roads, improvement in the educational sector, clean water supply circulation, creation of social welfare and empowerment, are amongst the notable objectives of community development. Unequivocally, these programs and needs are at the forefront of ensuring the desirable change to the community. Abugu (2014) noted that the concept of community development at different times has been attributed with various nomenclature such as social education, mass education, functional education, and rural constructive work. Anikeze (2014) asserts that development is gradual phase of social action in which requires taking actions that commensurate those needs which require self-reliance for resources, supplemented with assistance in any government and non-governmental organization. Nonetheless, it is an amalgamation of community organization and economic development. Momodu (2017) identified that the efforts of community development should be targeted towards improving communal productivity and encouraging social, economic, and political participation of the populace. This will help create an atmosphere full of self-confidence and sense of collective collaboration required in attending to the swarming affairs of the community in the areas of health, security, and education welfare. This is the moral, statutory, and ethical responsibility binding on all LG administrators. It is pertinent that maximum effort must be deployed towards the achievement of these goals. Anikeze, (2014) summarily highlights the primary objectives of community development in Nigeria as follow:

- i. Improvement in the quality of human life to meet with the globally acceptable standards
- ii. To ensure even and equal developmental strides in all regions of the LG area
- iii. To promote and create an enabling environment for independent industrialization at the micro level.
- iv. To alleviate suffering and eradicate poverty through empowerment schemes at the grassroot levels

- v. To be in constant collaboration with the relevant bodies such as the regional and central governments particularly in terms of national and state development plans.

Despite this, the LG which has been touted as the fulcrum in the promotion of human and capital development has been adjudged by policy analysts and scholar to have performed woefully in the discharge of its primary duties. This view is in line with the submission of Babarinde and Adeshina (2019) who asserted that rural settlements in Nigeria reveals the regrettable conditions people have been subjected to. This is due to inadequate or absent of basic social amenities, unmotorable roads, dilapidated schools and health centers, lack of portable water and scores of poverties driven problems. However, during elections, ballot boxes and other electoral equipment find their route to these rural settlements, but not basic amenities like water, quality education and motorable roads. This is further worsened by the lack of autonomy for the local government, a feat which has been a setback for the efficiency of the local government. Section 162, subsection 5 and 6 of the 1999 constitution (as amended) proscribes that the allocation allotted to them be paid to the state who is expected to disburse from the ‘State Joint Local Government Account’ (Leadership News, 2022). The LG must rely on the benevolence of the state government headed by the executive governor to get their joint monthly allocation from the federal government of Nigeria. State governments often do withhold part of this allocation which prevents the LG from effectively carrying out its constitutional functions. In 2022, efforts have been made by the national assembly, Nigeria’s highest law-making body to pass a bill on Local Government Autonomy, but this bill still must be passed and ratified by the House of Assembly in each of the 36 states in Nigeria. As of October 2022, only seven states have made this effort, with Kwara state not one of these states (Leadership News, 2022). Coupled with this, Kwara state has been riddled with issues of corruption and godfatherism since the fourth republic began in 1999. Thus, the characteristics of the rural community dwellers in Nigeria vary according to different geographical location. Although the LG has a broad range of responsibilities which includes administration, keeping records, issuing certificates of birth marriage and death among other statutory functions allocated to it. For this research, the responsibility of the LG is explained in the provision of basic amenities to the community which include areas of health, education etc.

While the geography and composition of communities vary, some possess very compassionate members, an example which is the Offa community. The Offa community has a very strong stand towards community development. With scores of highly influential people, boasting of over 100 professors, the town has been able to embark on the planning and implementation of projects in various aspects including a 2-billion-naira emergency hospital, ONE Innovation Hub (for developing the technological prowess of its youths) tons of scholarships which is facilitated by a group of indigenes, Offa Descendants Union (ODU). My institution, Summit University Offa paid a courtesy visit to the town’s monarch, the Olofa of Offa where he disclosed the several projects that the town would be solely embarking on. On behalf of the town, he presented the institution with two cheques of 10 million naira each (\$40,000). The attitude of the town towards its development is one of the reasons why it has several higher institutions of learning in various fields.

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Whereas the LG exists to compliment the shortfalls of the federal and state government in the task of bringing development to the rural communities. In the case of Offa LGA, years of political rivalry between the dominant Saraki ruling dynasty and the Offa political elite class has been described as one of the main reasons for the underdevelopment status of the LG (Sahara Reporters, 2011). Offa was commonly referred to as the home of opposition partisanship. Against this background, this research seeks to find out the perception of indigenes towards the activities of the LG and to find out if the community development efforts influence the efficiency of the LG.

Objectives of the Study

- i.* Examine the views of Offa residents on the performance of Offa LG and community efforts towards community development
- ii.* Examine if community efforts affect LG efficiency towards community development.

Research Methodology

The research adopts a mixed method design. The descriptive survey method will be employed in analyzing the data generated. This will be used to assess the perception of the indigenes of the community towards the activities of the LG. data for the study were collected through a quantitative method. According to citypopulation.com (2021), the population of Kwara State residents is 3, 192,900. A total number of 385 Kwara State residents were selected for this study, according to Krejcie and Morgan table (1970). The figure is sufficient to the study of the population at 95% confidence level and 5% error margin. The sample was randomly picked from the three senatorial districts in Kwara state. A total of 385 copies of questionnaire were distributed to anticipate return.

The sample size (n) is calculated according to the formula:

$$n = [z^2 * p * (1 - p) / e^2] / [1 + (z^2 * p * (1 - p) / (e^2 * N))]$$

Where: z = 1.96 for a confidence level (α) of 95%, p = proportion (expressed as a decimal),

N = population size, e = margin of error.

$$z = 1.96, p = 0.5, N = 7840900, e = 0.05$$

$$n = 385$$

The sample size (with finite population correction) is therefore equal to 385

For research objective one, a convenience sampling technique was used to administer to community inhabitants in Offa local government. A convenience sample simply includes the individuals who happen to be most accessible to the researcher. The questionnaire was used as a means of data collection. This was administered both physically and electronically till the sample target was met. This is to ensure that the views of the local and informal citizens were also captured.

The second research objective adopted the purposive sampling technique was adopted in selecting the respondents. This was due to the busy nature of these public

figures who were caught up with several engagements. Interview was the mode of data collection for this research objective, and this was used in getting answers from the Offa LG chairman. In his absence, due to the upcoming general elections, the Deputy Director for Community Development, Offa LG were equally interviewed. The ODU chairman was also interviewed due to their community development efforts.

Theoretical Framework

For this paper, the theory of decentralization is best suitable. This is so because it explains the need for decentralization and devolution of power to the third tier of government. Often, it is seen as a set of policy restructuring for the purpose of devolving resources or authority from top to bottom levels of government. Decentralization is an utmost effort aimed at reforming the state. Holistically, decentralization does not necessarily involve transfer of authority to non-state actors (as in the case of privatization reforms) but to other tiers of government. Regardless of the given context, the concept of Decentralization is applicable and relevant in almost all societal formations i.e., authoritarian, monarchical, as well as democratic contexts. The concept of decentralization is not only synonymous to democratic system of governance. In contemporary studies, decentralization policies can be structured into three sub- categories (administrative, fiscal, and political). This however is subject to the mode of authority in existence.

Administrative decentralization as its name implies involves the devolution of a portion of administrative power and policies which by law gives the ability to deliver social services such as education, health, social welfare, or housing to sub regional governments i.e., state and or local governments. Administrative decentralization may entail the devolution of decision-making authority over these policies, but this is not a necessary condition. If such administrative decentralization comes with the financial backing of the federal or state government particularly for the execution of projects and goals, then such an arrangement could be referred to as fiscal decentralization. If subnational governments are independent regarding revenue generation from other tiers of government, for the execution of projects and delivery of goods and services, retrospectively, administrative decentralization arrangement is not funded.

Fiscal decentralization in concise terms refers to the set of plans intended to help in increasing the revenues or fiscal autonomy of subnational governments for its day to day running. Fiscal decentralization policies can assume different institutional patterns. Firstly, it may be generated through an increase of revenue transfer from the central government to the devolving units. Secondly, it may be through the creation of new state taxes backed by law. Lastly, through the delegation of tax authority that was previously national. These are all part of the means to achieving fiscal decentralization or fiscal autonomy.

Political decentralization is the set of constitutional amendments and electoral reforms designed to expose new or activate existing but dormant or unproductive spaces for the representation of subnational polities. Political decentralization policies are also designed to devolve electoral capacities to subnational actors. Examples of this type of reform are LG elections conducted by the state. In Nigeria, they are popularly referred to as the State Independent Electoral Commission

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(SIEC). Also is the creation of subnational legislative assemblies, or constitutional reforms that strengthen the political autonomy of state and local governments.

However, there may exist potential consequences of each type of decentralization, administrative decentralization can either have either a positive or negative impact on the autonomy of state or local executives. If administrative decentralization improves local and state bureaucracies, fosters training of local officials, or facilitates learning through the practice of delivering new responsibilities, it will likely increase the organizational capacities of subnational governments. Similarly, fiscal decentralization can have varying degrees of impact on the degree of autonomy of the state or LG level. Prosperous subnational units prefer to collect their own taxes, but poor states are negatively affected every time the collection of taxes is decentralized. Finally, political decentralization should always have a positive impact on the degree of autonomy of LG from the state as well as state government to the centre. Despite the weakness of this theory, the theory of decentralization best explains the role of the LG as agent of community development in Nigeria's democracy.

Literature Review

LG refers to a sub compartment of a whole unit which is coined from a state, just as a state is coined out of a country. This tier is specifically created for the exercise of duties and responsibilities solely delegated to it and backed by law, constitution, edict, or legislative enactments. The 1976 LG Reforms defines the LG as:

“Government at local level exercise through representative council established by law to exercise specific powers within defined areas. These powers should give the council substantial control over local affairs as well as the staff and institutional and financial powers to initiate and direct the provision of services and to determine and implement projects so as to compliment the activities of the state and federal government in their areas and to ensure, through devolution of functions to their councils and through the active participation of the people and traditional institutions, but that local initiative and response to local needs and condition are maximized”, (FRN, 1976 p.2).

Osezua, Abdulkareem & Ishola (2018:12) in the same vein define LG “as a unit of government charged with the focal responsibility of law maintenance for the common good of all as well as provision of statutory basic needs within its jurisdiction” Olukotun (2019) further added that the LG refers to ‘a tier of government located at the lowest level with the legal mandate to represent and act in proxy on behalf of the other tiers of government. Ariyo & Gabriel, (2021) rightly opine that the LG as a structural institution which is charged with the responsibility of directing the affairs of the people. However, it is imperative to note that not all governmental service delivery institutions at the rural level can be deemed as local government. Being the governmental tier nearest to the people, the bureaucratic functions of planning, organizing, controlling, and supervising the day-to-day activities of the people resides with the local government. The LG however, through inter-governmental relations enjoins inter-tier collaboration with other levels of government. This collaboration also plays a timely role through the various interventions and subventions it receives.

In the works of Ariyo & Gabriel (2021), the LG in Nigeria has passed through three epochal shifts in its history. Each of these periods had an evolving impact in the journey and purpose of the LG in Nigeria. The colonial era is said to have birthed the LG in Nigeria through the Native Authority system. The structure of the Native Authority was designed to achieve the will and aspiration of the colonial power in the United Kingdom. Such structure was accompanied with economic exploitation, taxation system, transfer of raw materials from the home countries to the colonizing countries, thereby strengthening the economies of the colonial countries at the expense of the colonized regions. Considerable recognition, effort and reforms were made in the second phase spanning between 1952-1966 to indigenize, incorporate and encourage local participation in the management of local affairs of the area. These reforms commenced in the Eastern and Western regions due to the two regions' exposure to western civilization in the early 1950s. The independence and self-rule era between 1966 and 1976 ushered in the third phase which was mostly characterized by the reversal of the erstwhile values which were prevalent in the previously aforementioned phases.

The 1976 LG Reforms

Perhaps the 1976 reforms heralded the emergence of a more visionary focus for the LG administration in Nigeria. The reforms were designed to give a more expansive definitional scope to the role, and functions of LG in Nigeria. Contending issues such as intergovernmental relationships to avoid ultra vires, uniformity in staffing procedure, financial generation, sharing and autonomy, communal relationship with traditional rulers amongst others. These reforms led to the abolishment of Divisional Local Administrative System in Nigeria as well as the enactment of multi-purpose single-tier LG councils. The reforms recommended a 150,000 and 800,000 as the minimum and maximum number of persons respectively for each LG area. As at this material time, Offa LG had not been in creation. The Offa LG came into existence in 1991. Consequently, the LG was backed by law to receive regular financial allocations from the state and federal government (Oyewo, 1993). Vast majority of these reforms were retained and included in the Section 7 of the 1979 Constitution. This inclusion gave a legal recognition to the LG as the third sub-tier of the government of the country, thereby guaranteeing a monthly chunk from the Federation Account as well as the equal right to prepare its annual budget estimate. This was enshrined in section 149 of the 1979 constitution while the statutory functions of LG were contained in the Fourth Schedule of the 1979 Constitution.

The 1984 LG Reforms

On the 1st of October 1979, a newly democratically elected government assumed the mantle of leadership. It was easy to discover the denigrating productivity level of LG system. Efforts at creating a reform committee was however unfortunately truncated by the military junta which took place on the 31st of December 1983. The new regime banned the new LG councils that were created in the Second Republic but retained those created in 1976. The military administration led by Buhari saw the need to retain and improve the LG system as proposed by the previous civilian government. To this end, a LG Reform Committee was set up in 1984 with the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Ibrahim Dasuki as chairman. The Committee, in its findings blamed the poor performance of the LG on so many factors, which included the interference of the state government in the statutory affairs of the LG, ineffective

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appointment, LG flawed structures, and weak commitment of the council political functionaries, delay and partial release of statutory funds for the LG by the state government and the transfer of the functions of the state government to the LG without a equivalent transfer of funds (Aransi, 2017). Some other findings included the different roles played by the Ministry of LG Affairs and the low skill of the councils' workforce coupled with their weak commitment to their official duties (Iyoha, Ubhenin, & Aiya, 2015). The committee in its findings also indicted the state governors for exploiting the contradictions of the 1979 Constitution on the relations between the state and LGs to undermine the activities of the latter. Ariyo & Gabriel, (2021) noted that the committee made very striking recommendations to make the LG perform its functions well. These included the view that the creation of new LG areas should be undertaken on a ten-year interval, that the creation of new LG should be based on a population in the range of 100,000 and 150,000 with the intended area to have a minimum tax-paying population of 20,000 people. Other recommendations included that the creation of a new LG and its administration should focus on administrative convenience, and economic vibrancy of the area and that it must be based on the wishes of traditional associations, and it must be based on the community request.

LG Reforms in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

The restoration to democratic rule in 1999 brought about a wide range of reform to various public institution and parastatals in Nigeria and the LG was not left out. (Ariyo & Gabriel, 2021). A 13-man technical committee which was chaired by the Etsu Nupe, Alhaji Usman Sanda Ndayako was established to look critically in the topical issues accounting for the inefficiency of the LG. Chiefly among these issues were the possibility and need for the appraisal of the efficiency of local governments and to equally suggest the reasons (where available) why it should be retained as the third tier of government. Unsurprisingly, it was discovered that the functions of the LG have been greatly influenced by the two tiers of government. Hence, this greatly affect its autonomy in its dispensation of statutory duties. Inadequate funding was also discovered to have been one of the banes affecting the productivity ratio of the LG. It was however recommended that the establishment of the State Independent Electoral Commission (SIEC) should be deem as priority to ensure transparency in the electoral process of the LG administration (Aransi, 2017).

Data Presentation

For this research, 385 questionnaires were distributed to collect all required data for furtherance of this research, 375 copies were retrieved and used for the study.

Section A

This section presents the demographic information of respondents and the data here is presented using simple tables. Out of the 300 responses were generated through online survey, while 85 copies of questionnaires were shared physically. However, only 75 copies of physical questionnaire were retrieved and used for the study.

Data Analysis and Interpretation**Table 4.1.** *Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents*

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Individual	Frequency	Percentage
Sex of Respondents		
Male	202	53.9
Female	173	46.1
Total	375	100.0
Age of Respondents		
20-29 years	146	38.9
30-39 years	168	44.8
40-49 years	57	15.2
Above 50 years	4	1.1
Total	375	100.0
Cultural Background of Respondents		
Yoruba	301	80.3
Igbo	40	10.7
Hausa/Fulani	34	9.1
Total	375	100.0
Occupational Sector		
Formal	80	21.3
Artisan/ Informal	295	78.7
Total	375	100.0

Source: Author's Computation (2023)

It was showed that 202 (53.9%) of the respondents were male while 173 (46.1%) were female. This implies that they were more males than females. This is an indication that both genders were involved in the respondents.

Furthermore, the ages of the respondents also show that 4(1.1%) were above 50 years, followed by 57(15.2%) who were between 40-49 years, followed by 168(44.8%) who were between 30-39years, lastly 146(38.9%) were between 20-29 above. This indicate that majority of the respondents were between the ages 30 to 39 years and active work force of the community who were directly affected by the efforts of the LG.

The cultural background of the respondents shows that 301(80.3%) of the respondents were of the Yoruba tribe, while 40(10.7%) of them were Igbo. 34(9.1%) of them were Hausa/Fulani tribe. This shows that majority of the respondents were of the Yoruba tribe, and they accounted for 80% of the entire population. Although, Offa is geographically located in the North-Central zone which dominantly comprises the Hausa/Fulani tribe, it maintains cultural ancestry with the Yoruba race

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in the South-Western zone. Yoruba language of the South-Western is the community's most spoken language.

Similarly, the occupational sector classification of the respondents indicated that 80(21.3%) of them were placed in the formal sector, while 295 (78.7%) of them were either artisans or worked informally (this includes students). This shows that majority of the respondents were either artisans, students or worked informally. Offa is a town, and its primary source of livelihood is agriculture. However, due to the goodwill of the community, it has several educational institutions including 9 institutions of higher learning.

Also, the classification of the respondents in the formal sector shows that 40(60%) worked in the civil service, while 20(40%) of them were public servants, while 20 (40%) of them worked with the private firms in Offa. This shows that majority of the respondents from the formal sector were civil servants.

Section B: This section presents the result of the questionnaires administered and the responses of the respondents.

Data Presentation and Analysis of Research questionnaire

Table 4.2. *Community Development and Local Government Efficacy*

S/N	Community Development	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	Do you feel the presence of the Offa LG in the discharge of their duties?	3.16	1.334
2	Do you think that the most development projects embarked upon by the LG are beneficial to the community?"	3.40	1.370
3	Do you think that there is widespread corruption in the LG system?	3.61	1.333
4	Do you think that you are satisfied with the performance of the LG in terms of community development?	3.45	1.301
5	Do you think that there is a positive relationship between Offa inhabitants and the Offa LG administration?	3.34	1.325
6	Do you think there is favoritism within the LG regarding where to establish development projects in the community?	3.34	1.325
7	Do you think that granting the Offa LG fiscal autonomy will lead to high performance output	3.35	1.348
8	Do you think that proper consultation will bring about the effective synergy between the LG and Offa citizens	3.61	1.333
9	Are satisfied with the performance of the ODU towards community development?	3.37	1.295

Source: Author's Computation (2023)

Question 1 shows the view of respondents on if they felt the presence of Offa LG in the discharge of their duties. The mean ratio pooled at 3.16. However, this implies majority of the respondents strongly agreed with this. Question 2 shows the view of respondents on if they thought that most development projects embarked upon by the LG were beneficial to the community. To this effect the mean ratio derived was 3.40. This implies that majority of the respondents strongly agreed. Question 4 shows the view of respondents on if they thought that there is widespread corruption in the LG system. The mean ratio was 3.61. However, this implies majority of the respondents agreed to the question. Question 5 shows the view of respondents on if they felt that exists a positive relationship between Offa inhabitants and the Offa LG administration. The mean ratio was at 3.34. However, this implies majority of the respondents strongly agreed to this question. Question 6 shows the view of respondents on if they felt that there was favoritism within the LG on where to establish development projects in the community. The mean derived was at 3.34. However, this implies majority of the respondents strongly agreed to this question. Question 7 shows the view of respondents on if they thought that granting the Offa LGA fiscal autonomy would lead to high performance output. The mean ratio is at 3.35. However, this implies majority of the respondents agreed to this question. Question 8 shows the view of respondents on if they thought that proper consultation will bring about effective synergy between the LG and Offa citizens. The mean ratio is at 3.61. However, this implies majority of the respondents strongly agreed to this question. Question 9 shows the view of respondents on if they were satisfied with the performance of the ODU towards community development. The mean ratio pooled at 3.37. However, this implies majority of the respondents agreed to this question.

Findings for Research Objective One

Majority of the respondents of the entire population sample strongly agreed to feeling the presence of the Offa LG in the discharge of their duties. Similarly, majority of the respondents believed most of the developmental projects embarked upon by the LG were beneficial to the community. Also, the majority of the population sample agreed to the existence of pervasive corruption in the LG system. majority of the respondent in the population sample size strongly agreed to the presence of favoritism from the LG particularly in terms of where to establish communal projects within the community. Unequivocally, the response of the respondents showed that granting the Offa LG fiscal autonomy will lead to high performance output. The political rivalry that occurred over the last decade between the erstwhile state governments and the Offa LG administration has been touted as one of the main reasons for the local governments' retrogressive developmental status over the years. This perhaps explains why majority of the locals resulted to self-funded communal developmental projects to alleviate the sufferings of the indigents as well as provide necessary infrastructure required for growth and development. Therefore, majority of the respondents strongly agree to having been satisfied with the performance of the Offa Descendant Union (ODU) especially in the provision of primary health care facilities, communal basic and primary education, socio-economic welfare programs, road repair, electricity improvement policies amongst others. Despite not been funded by the government, the ODU continues to rise to the occasion in terms of the welfare of its people. Despite majority of the population sample strongly agreeing that there exists a positive

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relationship between Offa inhabitants and the LG administration, some of the respondents still strongly agreed on the need for a more proper consultation channel between from the LG to the citizens, especially in communal project citation and establishment. This, they believe will help guide the LG in ensuring that the intended projects are a true reflection of the peoples' yearnings and needs.

Research Objective Two

The second research question sought to assess the activities of the Offa LG and community efforts towards community development. This is to examine if the efforts of the community through the ODU have affected the efficiency of the LG towards developmental activities. This was done through interview with relevant stakeholders in the Offa LG and the community activities anchored by the ODU. In the LG, the deputy director for Community Development was interviewed alongside the chairman of the ODU who answered a series of questions relating to the subject matter.

The deputy director stressed the importance of the LG as a bridge between the community and the government, serving both sides of the coin and making sure both parties are kept abreast of the needs and grievances. The LG has carried out several projects in the last 4 years¹ but recently in the past year, they have worked on rehabilitation of bad roads in the suburb areas include Igosun, Obamomo, Adesoye etc, repair of damaged boreholes, support program for physically challenged citizens and widows, construction of bridges linking several communities (Atari North, South and Lamadi areas), provision of electric transformers to different areas. The LG determines the community needs through various ways which may be via inspection around the community and consultation with the people on their needs.

While the LG also acknowledges that there are several challenges which includes the paucity of funds, budgeting she believes that the LG is on course to deliver the dividends of good governance to the citizens of the Offa community but insists that only the citizens may accurately assess their level of efficiency towards the discharge of their duties. Corroborating this claim, over 65 percent of the respondents claim to be satisfied with the performance of the LG in terms of community development. However, majority of the citizens in their questionnaire believe there are elements of favoritism in the allocation of LG projects in the community. This may be attributed to the prevalence of godfatherism in Kwara state and the need to appease the political elites in the community. The eradication of godfatherism in the state in the aftermath of the 2019 general elections meant that there now exists a better relationship between the local and state governments which has translated into a better service delivery by the government at both levels. This is further exacerbated by the support that the LG receives from the community, particularly the ODU which has played a huge impact in complementing the roles of the government. However, the Director disagreed that the activities of the ODU can overshadow that of the LG. she believes it is just an organization that can complement the activities of the LG. Although she agrees that the LG should do more, they are restrained by several challenges and think the continued support of the citizens would spur them on to do more.

Despite all of this, the ODU also maintains that it has worked on series of projects in the community. However, the most prominent of their activities is the

development of community schools. The development of these schools has been solely facilitated by the ODU to improve and give every child equal access to education. The ODU maintains that they have had a lot of work to do, which would not have been so had the LG been responsive to their responsibilities of developmental activities. The ODU also shares sympathy with the era of godfatherism in Kwara state that has led to the paucity of funds for the LG, they however believe that the current administration ushered in 2019 has had significant changes in the funding of the LG. This is expected to have translated in more significant activities for the community. The Chairman declined to comment on the claims that there is favoritism within the LG regarding where to establish development projects in the community. He rates the efforts of the LG just below average (45%) because of the developmental gap in the community. Poor or non-existent basic social amenities have become the order of the day in the community. Finally, he states that the comparisons between the ODU and the LG is in terms of developmental projects 'not far from the truth' given the fact that the ODU is more of a voluntary organization without government backing unlike the LG which is statutorily backed by law

Conclusion

This research work sought to examine if role of the LG is affected by the role of the community organization in Offa, Kwara state, Nigeria. The LG is charged with several responsibilities as the third tier of government. However, the roles of the LG have been hindered by several claims of corrupt activities and the superiority of the State governments who are the funders of the LG. In a bid to bring the government closer to the people or to the grassroot level, there are currently 774 LGs in Nigeria, and this distribution varies across the sizes of states. Due to the inefficiency of the LG, some community efforts have been geared towards ensuring that the lapses of the government are felt by the community. In Offa, this community effort is headed by the ODU which is responsible for developmental activities in the state ranging from education, health to social amenities like pipe-borne water etc. The study assessed LG as an agent of community, using Offa LG as case study. This research work is based on survey design, where questionnaires were administered to the residents of Kwara State. Hybrid method were used in sharing the questionnaires. Responses were filled to show residents perception towards the ODU and the LG works and the citizenry regarding the subject topic. It is glaring that despite the challenges of fiscal autonomy, the LG in Offa is widely appreciated and enjoys firm collaboration with the Offa citizenry especially in the aspect of community development. The ODU equally plays a viable role in assisting the role of the LG, especially in the aspect of health and community education. Without LG autonomy, the LG will continue to be at the mercy of state government and will not be duly equipped to perform its responsibilities. The federal government should also strengthen its relationship with the LG in terms of intergovernmental relations. Notable areas should include the health, education, security, and agriculture sector. However, there is need for further research to determine factors responsible for the reduction in the efficiency of the LG due to community efforts as established by this research work.

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Notes

The headship of the LG known as the Local Government Chairman is an elective position that is held for a term of 4 years. It requires political partisanship.

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Appendix
Interview Questions
**An Assessment of Local Government as an Agent of Community
Development (A Case Study of Offa Local Government Area Council)**

Department of Political Science
Summit University,

Offa,
Kwara State,

Nigeria.

Dear respondents,

This study aims to investigate the role of Offa local government in community development. For this reason, the researcher seeks to gather genuine information from the staffers of Offa Local Government Area Council.

Your prompt response will be highly appreciated and shall be strictly used for academic purpose only. The researcher promises to keep every information provided confidential.

Thanks, in anticipation

Yours faithfully,

Ibrahim Salawu

Section A: Demographic Statistics

1. Sex of Respondents

Male [] Female []

2. Age of Respondents

20 – 29 years [] 30 – 39 years [] 40 – 49 years [] Above 50 years []

3. Marital Status

Single [] Married [] Divorced []

4. Educational Qualification

SSCE [] OND [] HND [] B.SC. [] M.SC []
Others []

5. Religion of Respondents

Christianity [] Islam [] Others []

6. Cultural Background of Respondents

Yoruba [] Igbo [] Hausa/Fulani [] Others (Specify)

7. Occupational Sector

Formal [] Informal [] Artisan []
Civil servant **Student** **carpenter, Tailor etc.**

Section B

What are the views of Offa residents on the performance of Local government towards community development?

Likert scale

Statement	Research Question 2	SA	A	U	D	SD
1.	Do you feel the presence of the Offa local government in the discharge of their duties?					
2.	Do you think that the most development projects embarked upon by the local government are beneficial to the community					
3.	Do you think that there is widespread corruption in the local government system					
4.	Do you think that you are satisfied with the performance of the local government in terms of community development?					
5.	Does the Offa local government use a proper channel for feedbacks on development projects?					
6.	Do you think that the projects embarked upon are a true reflection of the people needs?					
7.	Do you think that there is a positive relationship between Offa inhabitants and the Offa local government administration?					
8.	Do you think that the dividends of democracy have been enjoyed through Offa local government as the third tier of government?					
9.	Do you think there is favoritism within the local government regarding where to establish development projects in the community?					
10.	Do you think Offa local government has been in the discharge of their duties?					
11.	Do you think that granting the Offa Local government fiscal autonomy will lead to high performance output					
12.	Do you think that proper consultation will bring about the effective synergy between the Local government and Offa citizens will facilitate the location of the project					
13.	Are satisfied with the performance of the ODU towards community development?					

What recommendations would you give to solve some of the issues?

Please kindly rate the quality of questions raised in the questionnaire

Good [] Average [] Bad []

Thank you.

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Interview Questions

1. What are the community projects you have done in the last 4 years?
2. How does the local government determine the need for community project?
3. From your own perspective, has the local been responsive to the need of the people?
4. What are some of the challenges faced by Offa local government in terms of community development project?
5. What are the probable solutions to these challenges?
6. What could be the possible reasons for not attending or completing community projects in some situations?
7. Has the local government regime been affected by political rivalry with the state government?
8. Has there been an effective collaboration between the local government administration and the state government in terms of community development projects?
9. Does the local government receive adequate support from the wealthy Offa citizens in respect to community development projects execution?
10. If yes, in what ways?
11. Do you think that there is favoritism within the local government regarding where to establish development projects in the community?
12. Do you think that the local government is properly funded to carry out development projects?
13. What is the assessment of the Offa LGA towards community development?