
Evaluation of Local Government Chairmen in Akwa Ibom State for Better Performance

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to evaluate the Performance of local Government chairmen in Akwa Ibom State. Ex-post facto research design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted in Akwa Ibom State. The population of the study comprised of acting Local Government Councils and teachers in each of the Local Government Areas within the three senatorial districts in Akwa Ibom State. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 180 teachers and 30 Local Government Councils in the State giving the total of 210 respondents that constituted the sample size for the study. The Instrument used in this study for data collection was a questionnaire titled “An Evaluation of Local Government Chairmen in Akwa Ibom State for Better Performance Questionnaire (ELGCBPQ)”. Face and content validation of the instrument was carried out by an expert in test, measurement and evaluation from University of Uyo to ensure that the instrument has the accuracy, appropriateness and completeness for the study. Cronbach Alpha technique was used to determine the level of reliability of the instrument. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.80 and this was high enough to justify the use of the instrument. The researcher subjected the data generated for this study to appropriate statistical techniques such as independent t-test analysis. The test for significance was done at 0.05 alpha levels. The study concluded that the challenges relating to better performance of local government chairmen are not insurmountable given the sincerity of purpose on the part of the Federal and State government. The study also recommended that local government chairmen should invigorate their extractive functions in order to boost internally generated revenues to enable them support community development initiatives and activities effectively.

KEYWORDS: Local Government Chairmen, Evaluation, Duties, Performance and Akwa Ibom State

Introduction

Local government administrations (LG) globally vary in size and structure and operate under different arrangements based on the system of government in different nations. However as observed by Mello, (2012) local governments globally strive to meet peoples’ demands for goods and services in a cost effective manner particularly at the lowest level of government or government at the grass root. Among the characteristics generally manifested by local government include that it is a subordinate system of government or subunit of a federal/central or state

government and charged with powers to perform legislative, administrative and quasi-judicial functions as the case may be. It also has the power to formulate policies, prepare budgets and a measure of control over its own staff, with a view that it is rightly position to ensure unhindered and efficient service delivery (Chukwuemeka et al, 2014, Otinche, 2014, Ezeani, 2012 and Tumini 2011). Ajayi (2000), Kolawole (1997) and Adewale (1990) argued that among other reasons for the existence of local government are the needs to toy in line with modern administrative practices. This position finds expression in the need for decentralization, democratic participation, speedy socio-economic development at the grassroot, bridging of communication gap and serving as a platform for training of future leaders.

Among previous related studies is Kyenge (2013) that focused on reasons for poor performance. He listed indiscipline, misplaced priority, unskilled staff, financial challenges and autonomy. On the other hand, Ejike, (2014), Adeyemi, (2012), Aina (2006) and Aluko (2006) partly focused on corruption while Gboyega (2001) among others concentrated on undue interference by the state Government and the personnel challenges. Ibok (2014) argued among other reasons that inadequate funding constituted a huge challenge. The focus of this paper is to examine lessons that could be learnt from comparative study of local government as to be able to overcome the challenges faced by local government administration in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The so-called third world is a rural world where any meaningful discussion of community development means not only “talking of overall national development,” but because “it is in the community that the problems of inequitable distribution of resources and lack of purchasing power arise in which the wretched members of such community stagnate and stare in the face with brutal clarity. Therefore, this paper will serve as a palliative for better performance of Local Government Chairmanship.

Research Objectives

The main objective of the study was to evaluate the performance of the local government chairmen in Akwa Ibom State. The study specifically sought to:

1. To find out the functions of Local Government chairmen actually executed in Akwa Ibom State
2. To find out the extent of performance of the Local Government chairmen in Akwa Ibom State

Research Questions

1. What are the functions of Local Government chairmen actually executed in Akwa Ibom State?
2. To what extent is the performance of Local Government chairmen in Akwa Ibom State?

Conceptual Review

Concept of Performance

According to (Quinn and Rohrbaugh, 1983; Venkatraman and Ramanujam, 1986; Henri, 2004), the word “Performance” is considered to be a construction and the purpose of defining this concept is to determine its properties and dimensions. The notion of performance has an abstract character and its definition is made by reference to other concepts, on which we believe that performance is built. A concept is itself an abstraction of observable or measurable facts; certain concepts are at a

high level of abstraction, and their explanation is achieved through other concepts, so they are called constructions (Quinn and Rohrbaugh, 1983). Since 1950, studies in organizational theory are based on the concept of effectiveness, and the terms of efficiency and performance are considered interchangeable (Venkatraman and Ramanujam, 1986), because issues related to defining, measuring and explaining them are identical (Dalton et al., 1980, Thomson and Abernethy, 2000; Henri, 2004). In addition, early studies on firms did not analyzing performance, but organizational behavior (Dalton et al., 1980), which demonstrates, on the one hand, the dynamic nature of the concept, and on the other hand, all the variables related to organizational behavior. Moreover, performance is difficult to define, but it can have at least three meanings or connotations: (1) a successful outcome of an action or the action itself; (2) performance shows the ability to move, thanks to the constant efforts; (3) the word performance is the carrier of an ideology of progress, effort, always make better (Bourguignon, 1997). This definition of Bourguignon (1997) assimilates performance with an “action”, with a certain “behavior” (in terms of a dynamic view, meaning “to perform”) and not just as a “result” (in terms of a static view). A result is nothing if considered alone, because it cannot be separated from means of its activities and objectives: performance is based on logical action stages, starting with the intention and going till the actual result. Furthermore, we can make a distinction between “performance” and “being efficient” (Vilain, 2003), due to the fact that performance can be described more as a result of the past, while being efficient means to achieve the objectives in the future.

Concept of Evaluation

Evaluation is a [systematic](#) determination of a subject's merit, worth and significance, using criteria governed by a set of [standards](#). It can assist an organization, program, design, project or any other intervention or initiative to assess any aim, realisable concept/proposal, or any alternative, to help in [decision-making](#); or to ascertain the degree of achievement or value in regard to the aim and [objectives](#) and results of any such action that has been completed (*Staff 2012*). According to *Sarah (2002)*, the primary purpose of evaluation, in addition to gaining [insight](#) into prior or existing initiatives, is to enable [reflection](#) and assist in the identification of future change. Evaluation is often used to characterize and appraise subjects of interest in a wide range of human enterprises, including the arts, criminal justice, foundations, non-profit organizations, government, health care, and other human services. It is long term and done at the end of a period of time. Evaluation is inherently a theoretically informed approach (whether explicitly or not), and consequently any particular definition of evaluation would have been tailored to its context – the theory, needs, purpose, and methodology of the evaluation process itself. Having said this, evaluation has been defined as:

- A systematic, rigorous, and meticulous application of scientific methods to assess the design, implementation, improvement, or outcomes of a program. It is a resource-intensive process, frequently requiring resources, such as, evaluate expertise, labor, time, and a sizable budget *Ross (2004)*
- "The critical assessment, as in objecting a manner as possible, or the degree to which a service or its component parts fulfills stated goals". *Ross (2004)*. The focus of this definition is on attaining objective knowledge, and scientifically or quantitatively measuring predetermined and external concepts.

- "A study designed to assist some audience to assess an object's merit and worth". Reeve (2007). In this definition, the focus is on facts as well as value laden judgments of the programs outcomes and worth.

Concept of Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisal may be defined as a structured formal interaction between a subordinate and supervisor, that usually takes the form of a periodic interview (annual or semiannual), in which the work performance of the subordinate is examined and discussed, with a view to identifying weaknesses and strengths as well as opportunities for improvement and skills development. According to Levinson (1976), Performance Appraisal has three functions:

- a) It seeks to provide an adequate feedback to each individual for his or her performance.
- b) It purports to serve as a basis for improving or changing behaviour toward some more effective working habits.
- c) It aims at providing data to managers with which they may judge future job assignments and compensation.

In the light of the above definitions, we understand that a performance appraisal system is used to evaluate the traits or qualities of an employee systematically at regular intervals. Adequate and ample opportunities are provided to the employees to enable them to the maximum utilization of their strong qualities Thus performance appraisal plays a vital role such as “unity in Diversity” in the utilization of organisation. It contributes indirectly to the growth of GDP and per capita income through the development of employee as well as organisation. It is the powerful instrument of the Human Resource personnel to take right decisions with respect to labour turnover and other related aspects. It helps the organisation in the 3 ‘R’ process like Recruitment, Retention and Retirement.

Objectives of Performance Appraisal

It is obvious that the overall objective of performance appraisal is to improve the efficiency of an enterprise by attempting to mobilise the best possible efforts from individuals employed in it. Such appraisals achieve four objectives including the salary reviews, the development and training of individuals, planning job rotation and assistance promotions.”

Major objectives of performance appraisal are summarised below:

- (i) To assist in promotions, transfers and lay off decisions.
- (ii) To make aware the employee about his actual performance.
- (iii) To meet organizational expectations with employees’ objectives.
- (iv) To assess the training and development needs of the employees.
- (v) To plan job rotation.
- (vi) To improve communication between managers and subordinates.
- (vii) To assist in decisions regarding salary increases.
- (viii) To provide feedback and guidelines for employees for better performance.
- (ix) To instill activeness and inspiration or higher goals in employees.
- (x) To determine programmes for selection, training and development and to evaluate their effectiveness.

Duties of Local Government Chairmen

As an agent of development, the major priorities of any local government should include reduction of poverty in the community, increasing the standard of living of the local dwellers, provision of social amenities, enhancing the participation of the local citizens in political activities that concern them, enhancing their individual human capabilities, boosting nationalism, inspiring creativity and innovation as well as educating the local people (Bello-Imam, 2007).

The Functions of Local Governments are detailed in the Nigerian Constitution and include:

- Collection of taxes and fees;
- Licensing of bicycles, trucks (other than mechanically propelled trucks), canoes, wheel barrows and carts;
- Establishment, maintenance and regulation of markets, motor parks and public conveniences;
- Naming of roads and streets and numbering of houses;
- Provision and maintenance of public transportation and refuse disposal;
- Registration of births, deaths and marriages;
- Control and regulation of out-door advertising, movement and keeping of pets of all descriptions, shops and kiosks, restaurants and other places for sale of food to the public, and laundries.

Akwa Ibom State has 31 local government areas (L.G.As). Each local government area is administered by a Local Government Council consisting of a chairman who is the Chief Executive of the LGA, and other elected members who are referred to as Councillors. Each of the areas is further subdivided into wards with a minimum of ten and a maximum of fifteen for each area. Each Ward is being looked after by the councillor responsible for it. Just like the state and federal government, the councillor report directly to the chairman of the local government. The councillors are under the legislative arms of government.

List of Local Government Areas in Akwa Ibom State

- | | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1. Abak | 2. Eastern Obolo | 3. Eket | 4. Esit-Eket |
| 5. Essien Udim | 6. Etim-Ekpo | 7. Etinan | 8. Ibeno |
| 9. Ibesikpo-Asutan | 10. Ibiono-Ibom | 11. Ika | 12. Ikono |
| 13. Ikot Abasi | 14. Ikot Ekpene | 15. Ini | 16. Itu |
| 17. Mbo | 18. Mkpat-Enin | 19. Nsit-Atai | 20. Nsit-Ibom |
| 21. Nsit-Ubium | 22. Obot-Akara | 23. Okobo | 24. Onna |
| 25. Oron | 26. Oruk Anam | 27. Ukanafun | 28. Udung-Uko |
| 29. Uruan | 30. Urue-Offong/Oruko | 31. Uyo | |

Methods

Ex-post facto research design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted in Akwa Ibom State. The population of the study comprised of acting Local Government Councils and teachers in each of the Local Government Areas within the three senatorial districts in Akwa Ibom State.

Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 180 teachers and 30 Local Government Councils in the State giving the total of 210 respondents that constituted the sample size for the study. The Instrument used in this study for data collection was a questionnaire titled “An Evaluation of Local Government Chairmen in Akwa Ibom State for Better Performance Questionnaire “(*ELGCBPQ*)”. Face and content validation of the instrument was carried out by an expert in test, measurement and evaluation from University of Uyo to ensure that the instrument has the accuracy, appropriateness and completeness for the study. Cronbach Alpha technique was used to determine the level of reliability of the instrument. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.80 and this was high enough to justify the use of the instrument. The researcher subjected the data generated for this study to appropriate statistical techniques such as independent t-test analysis. The test for significance was done at 0.05 alpha levels.

Results

Research Question One: The research question sought to find out the functions of Local Government chairmen actually executed in Akwa Ibom State. To answer the research question, percentage analysis was performed as can be seen in table 1.

Table 1: Percentage analysis of the functions of Local Government chairmen actually executed in Akwa Ibom State

Functions of Local Government chairmen	Freq.	Percentage (%)
Collection of taxes and fees	21	19.09
Licensing of bicycles, trucks (other than mechanically propelled trucks), canoes, wheel barrows and carts;	25	22.73**
Establishment, maintenance and regulation of markets, motor parks and public convenience	15	13.64
Provision and maintenance of public transportation and refuse disposal	9	8.18
Registration of births, deaths and marriages	4	3.64*
Naming of roads and streets and numbering of houses	17	15.45
Control and regulation of out-door advertising, movement and keeping of pets of all descriptions, shops and kiosks, restaurants and other places for sale of food to the public, and laundries.	19	17.27
TOTAL	110	100

** The highest percentage frequency

* The least percentage frequency

The above table 1 presents the percentage analysis of the functions of Local Government chairmen actually executed in Akwa Ibom State. From the result, it was observed that the highest percentage of the respondent 25(22.73%) said licensing of bicycles, trucks (other than mechanically propelled trucks), canoes, wheel barrows and carts, second to the highest respondents

on the subject matter 21(19.09%) said collection of taxes and fees, while the third to the highest number of respondents 19(17.27%) said that control and regulation of out-door advertising, movement and keeping of pets of all descriptions, shops and kiosks, restaurants and other places for sale of food to the public, and laundries, the fourth to the highest number of respondents 17(15.45%) said naming of roads and streets and numbering of houses while the fifth to the highest number of respondents 15(13.64%) affirmed that establishment, maintenance and regulation of markets, motor parks and public conveniences, the sixth to the highest number of the respondents 9(8.18%) said provision and maintenance of public transportation and refuse disposal, while the least to the highest number of respondents 4(3.64%)

Research Question Two: The research question sought to find out the extent of performance of the Local Government chairmen in Akwa Ibom State. To answer the research question, percentage analysis was performed as can be seen in table 2.

Table 2: Percentage analysis of the extent of performance of the Local Government chairmen in Akwa Ibom State

Performance Level	Freq.	Percentage (%)
HIGH EXTENT	7	6.36
LOW EXTENT	24	21.82
VERY LOW EXTENT	79	71.82
TOTAL	110	100%

SOURCE: Field survey

The above table 2 presents the percentage analysis of the extent of performance of the Local Government chairmen in Akwa Ibom State. From the result, it was observed that the highest percentage of the respondent 79(71.82%) said very low extent, second to the highest respondents on the subject matter affirmed low extent 24(21.82%), while the least number of respondents 7(6.36%) said high extent.

Conclusion

The paper concludes that the challenge of local government chairmen for better performance is an enviable study for democratic participation and socio-economic development. These challenges are not insurmountable given the sincerity of purpose on the part of the Federal and State government to genuinely allow the spirit of the 1999 Constitution to work by curbing overbearing attitude of the State government, minimize corruption and make the system accountable. It is on this premise this study is carried out with an expectation for improved performance of the Local Government chairmen in Akwa Ibom State.

Recommendation

1. Local government chairmen should invigorate their extractive functions in order to boost internally generated revenues to enable them support community development initiatives and activities effectively.
2. The appropriate agencies responsible for mobilisation, civic reorientation and election (National Orientation Agency and INEC) should continually improve citizen awareness

and ensure credible and transparent processes that can produce accountable and good local government chairmen in the community.

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