

Local Government Councils and Infrastructural Development in Rivers State, 2015 – 2025

Gabriel, Deborah Onyinyechi

Deborah.gabriel@rsu.edu.ng

Department of Political Science,
Faculty of Social Sciences,
Rivers State University,
Nkpolu- Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt

O. J. Osai, PhD

Osai.ojason@ust.edu.ng

Department of Political Science,
Faculty of Social Sciences,
Rivers State University,
Nkpolu- Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt

Nathan. O. Owzor, PhD

Department of Political Science,
Faculty of Social Sciences,
Rivers State University,
Nkpolu- Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt
nathan.owzor@rsu.edu.ng

<https://doi.org/10.56201/jpslr.vol.12.no10.2026.pg45.68>

Abstract

This empirical investigation examined the local government councils and infrastructural development in Rivers State, spanning the period 2015-2025. The study was guided by two research objectives, namely: to examine the role of local government councils on the construction of feeder roads; to investigate the contribution of local government councils in human capital development; The theoretical framework was anchored on the systems theory A survey research design was adopted, entailing the utilization of both primary and secondary data. Primary data were sourced through questionnaires and interviews, while secondary data were derived from extant literature, including textbooks, academic journals, and online resources. Data analysis was conducted using simple percentage statistical methods, and chi-square tests were employed to test hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that fiscal constraints, malfeasance, implementation impediments, deficient technical expertise, inadequate civic engagement, and onerous bureaucratic processes cumulatively hindered the development of rural road infrastructure in the specified local government areas of Rivers State. Furthermore, primary healthcare services were found to be grossly inadequate due to inadequate funding, poor infrastructural facilities, cultural and religious obstacles, and limited accessibility. Consequent

upon these findings, the study recommended that local government councils should augment budgetary allocations to address fiscal constraints, ensure transparent management, strengthen accountability, and reduce bureaucratic impediments to facilitate the construction and maintenance of feeder roads, thereby boosting infrastructural development. Additionally, local government councils should ameliorate the prevailing deficiencies in primary healthcare services by augmenting funding allocations and facilitating the enhancement of infrastructural facilities to bolster healthcare services in Rivers State.

Keywords: *Local Government Councils, Infrastructural Development, Human Capital Development, Rivers State.*

Introduction

Infrastructural development is fundamental to economic growth, social welfare, and sustainable development. It encompasses the provision and maintenance of roads, healthcare facilities, schools, electricity, water supply, transportation, and other social amenities that improve living conditions and support local economic activities (Eboh, Asor, & Etah, 2024; Ekpo, 2026). In Nigeria, local governments are constitutionally positioned to contribute to grassroots development through the provision and maintenance of basic social infrastructure and services. However, their capacity to fulfil these responsibilities has been constrained by financial, administrative, and political challenges (Hassan, 2021). Local government remains an important institution for promoting development at the grassroots because of its proximity to local communities and its knowledge of their specific needs. Effective local government services can create opportunities for rural development and complement the efforts of state and federal governments (Akpan & Ekanem, 2013; Ajieh, 2018). In Rivers State, local councils are expected to support the provision of feeder roads, primary healthcare, electricity, markets, educational facilities, and other community infrastructure. Their effectiveness, however, depends substantially on adequate financial resources, administrative capacity, accountability, and operational autonomy.

Despite various reforms intended to strengthen local government administration, infrastructural deficits remain evident in many rural communities. Limited financial resources, inadequate planning, shortage of skilled personnel, corruption, poor accountability, and political interference have been identified as major constraints on local government performance. The dependence of local governments on state-controlled financial arrangements has also generated concerns about their fiscal and administrative autonomy, thereby limiting their capacity to independently initiate and sustain development projects (Akpan & Ekanem, 2013; Ajieh, 2018).

These challenges have important implications for rural communities, where inadequate roads, healthcare facilities, electricity, and other social amenities can constrain economic activities and worsen socioeconomic conditions. Banigo, Ugben, and Amadi (2024) argue that weaknesses in local government administration have contributed to inadequate infrastructural development, while Effiong, Imoh-Ita, and Atakpa (2025) highlight continuing concerns about the delivery of healthcare services at the rural level. Consequently, strengthening local government capacity and accountability remains important for improving grassroots infrastructure and community welfare. Although previous studies have examined local government administration and rural development in Nigeria, there remains a need for empirical assessment of the extent to which local government councils have contributed to infrastructural development in specific local government areas of Rivers State. This study therefore examines the relationship between local government councils and infrastructural development in Ahoada East, Oyigbo, and Obio/Akpor Local Government

Areas of Rivers State from 2015 to 2025, with particular attention to feeder roads, healthcare programmes, human capital development, and rural electrification.

Infrastructural development remains a major challenge in many rural communities in Rivers State despite the constitutional responsibilities assigned to local governments. Deficiencies in feeder roads, electricity, primary healthcare, education, and other social amenities continue to affect socioeconomic wellbeing and limit local economic activities. These infrastructure gaps can contribute to unemployment, poverty, poor access to healthcare, and other social problems (Banigo, Ugben, & Amadi, 2024; Effiong, Imoh-Ita, & Atakpa, 2025).

The effectiveness of local government councils in addressing these deficiencies has been questioned because of persistent financial constraints, weak administrative capacity, corruption, political patronage, inadequate planning, and limited autonomy (Akpan & Ekanem, 2013; Gauba, 2014). State government interference in local government finances and administration has also been identified as a constraint on councils' ability to independently plan, finance, and execute development projects. These challenges may result in poorly implemented, abandoned, or inadequately documented infrastructural projects.

In Rivers State, these problems raise concerns about whether local government councils have adequately contributed to the provision of basic infrastructure required by rural communities. In particular, limited evidence exists on the extent to which councils in Ahoada East, Oyigbo, and Obio/Akpor have contributed to feeder-road construction, healthcare programmes, human capital development, and rural electrification within the 2015–2025 period.

The problem, therefore, is not merely the existence of infrastructural deficits but the uncertainty regarding the effectiveness of local government councils in addressing them. This study consequently examines local government councils and infrastructural development in Rivers State, focusing on Ahoada East, Oyigbo, and Obio/Akpor Local Government Areas between 2015 and 2025.

This study aims to examine local government councils and infrastructural development in Ahoada East, Oyigbo and Obio'Akpor local government areas of Rivers State from 2015 - 2025. The objectives of the study are to:

- i. Examine the impact of local government councils on the construction of feeder roads in Rivers State.
- ii. Investigate the role of local government councils in human capital development in Rivers State.

Based on the objectives of the study, the following questions were raised to guide the study:

- i. What is the impact of local government councils on the construction of feeder roads in Rivers State?
- ii. What is the role of local government councils in human capital development in Rivers State?

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between local government administration and construction of feeder roads in Rivers State.

H₀₂: Local government councils has not impacted human capital development in Rivers State.

Theoretical Framework

Systems Theory

The general systems theory serves as the primary framework for this research. Ludwig von Bertalanffy proposed the hypothesis in 1930. Easton adopted the idea in 1965 to analyse political systems. According to David Easton, a political system is a collection of interconnected and reciprocally controlled patterns of actions and orientations that cluster together in equilibrium and

have specific demands for maintenance and survival. According to Ugben and Egobueze (2021), it is a phenomenon of any type, including physical, biological, social, and political, that is an organised whole with identifiable, interconnected structures that distinguish it from the environment (super system) in which it is located and interacts, processing inputs into outputs for it.

"The general systems theory seeks to argue that every system, including a political system, has subsystems that make up the entire system" (Onah, 2015, p. 37). They are allocated functions and given supporting powers, such as resources and suitable authority, so that they can carry out their obligations to the best of their abilities. In this circumstance, the political system is considered to have homeostasis (stability). On the other hand, instability reigns in the political system when the opposite is true, and both subsystems and the overall system are unable to operate properly. The input and output analysis of a political system is extremely important (Alao, 2015). A political system is said to obtain its inputs (demands, supports, liberty or autonomy, cooperation, criticisms, resources, information, direct labour, etc.) from the environment, which the subsystems use to discharge their responsibilities, so that the political system can send out its outputs into the environment and obtain further inputs for its operations (Awotokun, 2001).

Easton (1953) defines a political system as any recognisable and interconnected organization and activities in a society that make authoritative allocations of values or judgements that are binding on its members. The fundamental unit of Easton's system analysis is 'interaction'. Interaction is produced by the conduct of system members as they perform their roles. When these numerous interactions are perceived by the researcher to constitute a 'set of interrelations', they are referred to be a 'system'. Easton's study focuses solely on political relations. The theory is based on four fundamental concepts: system, environment, response, and feedback (Onah 2015).

His system is a 'political system', which is the fundamental unit of analysis. It is a "system of interactions in any society through which binding or authoritative allocations are made and implemented." Easton is interested in investigating political life, which is defined as a set of behaviours that operate within and respond to their social context while making binding value allocations (Ugben & Egobueze, 2021). The term "political system" refers to the most inclusive unit of political life, and it is found everywhere. The ability to make binding and authoritative decisions distinguishes the political system from other systems (both within and outside society) that make up its environment.

Easton (1965) examines the nature, circumstances, and life processes of political life using an analytic methodology. Easton has freed Political Science from its conventional, legalistic, institutional, and formal moorings by adopting the idea of 'system' and recommends that it be viewed as it truly is. This 'system' is made up of interactions between people who participate in public life and are involved in the formulation and implementation of public policy. Easton is dissatisfied with the definition of 'political action' as 'direction of man by man' (de Jouvenel), 'relating to control or volition' (Catlin), or 'relation between influencer and the influenced' (Lasswell). It is also inadequate to see politics in terms of authority, power, governance, and rule (Dahl). Akpa and Ekanem's system idea is more inclusive (2013).

In a sense, Banigo, Ugben, and Amadi (2024) note that his concept of 'system' is integrative, involving values, culture, authority, governance, implementation, participation, process, etc. 'System' is a very broad term, encompassing all forms of formal and informal processes, interactions, functions, structures, values, behaviour, etc. The political system determines values for the entire society, and its judgements are binding. A 'system' can thus be any group of variables, regardless of the shape or strength of the interactions or interrelationships that exist between them.

A political system is a subsystem of the sociocultural system, although it has independent binding force. Even a political system has several subsystems (Adedire, 2014).

The political system in Easton is both open and adaptive. There are exchanges within the political system and the environment, and that environment comprises several different systems and their sub-systems, including even para-political systems. “These, and other various events and influences, constitute the conditions within which the members of a political system act and react” (Ajieh, 2014, p.75). This political system finds all these conditions either favourable or not for its survival. It follows, therefore, that it should be able to cope with the obstacles it encounters as well as adapt itself to the conditions prevailing around it. Usually, there is a capacity of a political system to do so.

Ahamba (2017) believes that a political system, like any other, has limitations. These boundaries, which relate to the establishment of political relations, are always shifting. The political system somehow manages to maintain its systemic borders and boundary conditions. In other words, it must carefully monitor and safeguard its life processes or ability to respond efficiently to the external environment or internal forces. It must function as a successful transformational process (Adeyemi, 2018). The Eastonian framework of systems theory is conceptual and analytical (Alao, 2015), and his 'political system' is conceptual or 'constructivist', defined as a set of variables chosen for description, explanation, and research. If it is unable to maintain its boundaries, it may lose its identity or even merge into other systems. An actual, concrete, or natural system. Easton's analytic system consists of abstractions that focus on certain aspects of human activity. His system is therefore a collection of specific interactions connected to the allocation of values that are binding for society and their execution inside that membership or tangible system known as society (Onwuka, 2018). Another distinguishing feature of a political system is the binding nature of its relationships. This abstract analytic system interacts with its surroundings by turning inputs into outputs via processes, inside puts, and feedback (Adeyemi, 2018).

Environment: Easton's political system is a complex series of processes or interactions that translate specific inputs into authoritative policies, choices, and implementations. This conversion occurs in some setting (Onah, 2015). As an open system, it must be resilient enough to respond to its surroundings, overcoming obstacles and adapting to changing conditions. Only by doing so will it be able to survive and exist for an extended length of time. Analytically, the environment can be of two types:

- i. Extra-societal, and
- ii Intra-societal.

Extra-societal environment encompasses international political systems, such diverse political systems, alliances, UNO, etc.; international ecological systems; and international social systems, including cultural, socio-structural, economic, demographic, and other systems. Intra-societal systems include ecological, biological, personality-oriented, social, cultural, socio-structural, and demographic systems operating within the political system. Conflicts, strains, and changes emerging out of the environment can prove functional or dysfunctional to that political system (Azumah & Ugben, 2024). As such, the later must possess a constant ability to adapt to such an environment. Easton rightly lays more stress on the capability of the system to adapt to the environment. Developing countries may learn a lot from the notion of ‘environment’ given by Easton and the requisite ‘capability’ to adapt to it. Moreover, as rightly noted by Easton (1965), the theorists of systems have talked much about the first two concepts, ‘system’ and ‘environment’. However, in the case of the other two concepts, namely, ‘response’ and ‘feedback’, one may say that Easton made his own contribution to systems theory. Actually, the other two concepts rather

than being single ones are a cluster of a number of concepts. The same holds true in the case of the first two concepts also.

Response: According to Alao (2015), a political system must respond to its surroundings while dealing with crises, stressors, and other obstacles. It must also fulfil several additional activities on its own, such as maintaining social order and preserving its own shape and identity in an ever-changing environment. All of them have been grouped under the umbrella term 'response' (Akpan & Ekanem, 2013). Specifically, the political system must execute three major kinds of functions:

- (a) Allocation of values for society,
- (b) To motivate its members to accept the allocations as binding, and
- (c) To cope with stress and challenges coming to the system.

According to Alao (2015, p.3), "the first two are essential parts of political life". These two cannot be found without each other as well as without the political system in itself. According to Easton, it is 'systemic persistence' which plays the most important role and it is usually put under some kind of 'stress' due to several reasons. The political system needs to consider the origins of the stress and the means of coping with them. Political system is a complex of essential variables which have their own interaction and are located within a certain boundary (Awotokun, 2001). The system cannot exceed its own 'critical range'. This system will be under stress when its essential variables will force it to exceed the critical range. The system does everything to stay within that critical range, but sometimes it is forced to go beyond. In order to survive, it needs to react in different ways – either on demand or support level, or output or feedback level. Therefore, it is always necessary to constantly evaluate the nature of stresses, the capacity of the system to cope with them, and the means and methods to do so (Dokubo & Amadi, 2022).

The political system is driven by:

- i Demands and challenges
- ii Support from members

As Amujiri (2017) explains, it is capable of meeting the problem of demands in view of the support, but the system is capable of manipulating and regulating both. The inputs are received in the form of 'inputs' from the environment, the society in general. The inputs are then turned into 'outputs', but the system also monitors the impact of its outputs by means of 'feedback,' which enables it to keep on improving its inputs and outputs. In Easton's political system, there is a sort of conversion process where inputs are transformed into outputs through feedback (Okoye, 2021).

The responses of the system are mainly categorized into two:

- (a) Inputs, and
- (b) Outputs.

(a) Inputs: Inputs are responses entering into the system. They consist of:

- (1) Demands, and
- (2) Supports.

According to Olasupo (2013), demands inflict strain or stress on the system, whereas support gives energy to keep it running. Though the two are of distinct natures, they belong to the same category of 'inputs' that are turned into 'outputs' via within-puts or the conversion process. Easton makes no mention of the type or form of within-puts. Society or the environment places demands on the political system as well as supports it. It is fuelled by needs and perpetuated by resources (Ehiri, 2010). Demand is defined as 'an statement of opinion that an authoritative allocation of a certain subject matter should or should not be made by those responsible for doing so'. It might manifest as stress, effects, demands, agitations, crises, and so on, all of which originate in the environment. They all seek to influence, alter, modify, or transform the political system, and might be

undifferentiated desires, stated recognisable demands, or particular concerns. Most of them are collaborative or public in character. Demands are met when they have been determined by 'allocation of values' (Pooja, 2024).

According to Ajulor and Ibikunle (2016), Demands can take several forms, such as providing for specific products, services, and conveniences; regulating public conduct; engaging in the political system, creating symbolic representations, and so on. A system may not be capable of converting all requests into outputs. It examines the quantity, nature of the contents, source, kind, volume, intensity, and so on. Only a few requests make it to the output stage (Diejomah and Eboh, 2010). Excessive demands place stress on the system and produce 'overload'. Overload may 'be due to the volume, intensity, velocity, urgency, and contents of the demand (Ajieh, 2014). In order to deal with the problem of overload or excessive demands, the political system can make use of several 'regulatory mechanisms':

Structural mechanism: It is located at the boundary of the system and regulates the flow of articulation of demands. Unimportant demands are scrutinised and regulated by and through various gate-keeping roles. They may not even be allowed to enter the system (Dokubo & Amadi, 2022). **Cultural mechanism:** On the basis of prevailing socio-cultural norms, certain demands can be designated as incompatible with them, thus, lessened in considerable manner, if not rejected altogether. Sometimes they become the basis or constraints of political demands (Jamo, 2018).

Communication channels: Through the use of TV, radio, correspondence, press, etc. demands may be strengthened or weakened or diluted to a considerable extent (Okoye, 2021).

Reduction processes: Demands may be reduced to a limited number through a process-selection, scrutiny, grouping, etc. Some criteria, general or restricted, may be added to it (Alao, 2015).

Demands are every output from the external environment that presses its needs on the political system (Akpan & Ekanem, 2013). It is also referred to as claims for action that are pressed on the political system by individuals and groups, in pushing for their interests. These demands emerge during the political system's interaction with its environment. However, the external environment does not relate with the system by simply pushing demands; it also pushes support by being law abiding, paying local rates and revenues, accepting election results and the decisions and actions proposed by the political system in response to demands (Onah, 2015). The degree of support gives a basis for evaluating the legitimacy of a political system or government. The Environment constitutes every phenomenon that is external to the political system. It could be social or economic (Ahamba, 2017). It refers to the boundary or borderline of the system itself.

Support: In system support, Ugben and Egobueze (2021) opined that a political system also receives support from its environment. After subtracting demands from inputs, we get supports which operate between the system and its environment. They are positive responses towards specific objects or level of a political system. Support can be towards:

- (a) The political community which means the acceptance of political division of labour;
- (b) The regime which embodies basic values, political structures, and norms underlying the political system; and
- (c) The political authorities or persons holding power in the given context. Support can be given at some particular or all levels.

Support to political community reflects paying regard to the general form and arrangement of power in the society, and acceptance of the demarcation between the political and non-political. Support to a regime broadly means legitimacy of the system, its constitutionality, basic structure, and inherent values. The last level invokes holding of respect, loyalty, and obedience to the

particular persons wielding political authority. It includes administrators and officials (Banigo, Ugben & Amadi, 2024).

On his part, Ahamba (2017) argued that the system support can be rendered in many ways – by paying taxes, obedience to law, participation in the form of voting, discussion, comments, and constructive suggestions, or deference towards public authorities. The form and style of expressing support can be overt or covert, positive or negative, diffuse or specific, and so on. Often the political system obtains support by and through allocation values and implementation thereof, manipulation of outputs, socialisation, and other political means (Gauda, 2014). Without support at a certain minimum level, no political system can persist. There can be many causes of failure, as is the case with some Third World countries for not getting support from their populace, such as inadequate use of regulatory mechanism, non-generation of support, and neglect of outputs (Oluwatobi, 2019). Outputs: Outputs are the decisions and actions of the authorities (Okonkwo, 2018). They produce effects and consequences which have direct relation with the members' attitude and behaviour for the system. Easton calls them as 'authoritative allocation of values', 'binding decisions and actions', or 'exchange between the system and its environment'. According to Ugben and Egobueze (2021), outputs are the outcomes of the political system's transformation process. They are either finished goods or inputs that have been converted into outputs. Political authorities can also take the initiative to create outputs.

Onuorah (2016) asserted that outputs take various forms like realization of taxes, regulation of behavior and conduct of the public, awarding honors, goods, and services, allocation of values, showing symbolic outputs, and many others. These can be found in words or writing from the authorities as well as in the actions. They can be the effects or results of immediately authorized decisions. If they are related to decisions made in the distant past, they will be referred to as 'outcome'. In the case if they are not binding, they will be referred to as co-outputs. The outputs can be inter or intra systemic. In all cases, they give rise to support-stress. They can be considered as the main source for getting support specifically, but the regular flow of outputs over a period of time makes sure of getting full or diffuse support. There are many aspects of outputs – economic, social, cultural, political, and so on (Ozor, 2003). From the perspective of political system, the political aspect of the outputs becomes the most significant one. It affects the wider society or environment, as well as determines the requirement and form of the succeeding round of inputs.

Feedback: Feedback is yet another essential concept in Easton's theory of systems. The ability of a political system to survive in the long run lies in feedback (Thapa, 2020). It is a process through which information concerning the outputs and the environment is communicated back to the system resulting in modification of the system in the future. The demands and supports information can be fed into the system in normal course. But when information concerning the converted inputs or the outputs is received, there occurs a sort of recirculation of information or re-inputation of already converted inputs (Wison & Sakiemi, 2019). This way, the political system can be provided with the opportunity to modify itself according to the received feedback.

Idakwoji (2015) observed that in the lack of input, it is likely to function in an unresponsive manner and lose support. Information about the environment that is normally received as inputs may arrive too late in the system. It may arrive there in a distorted shape, as it occurred with Indira Gandhi Government (1977) and the Shah of Iran (1979)- 'Loop' indicates a bend that rejoins the main line farther on. The term 'feedback loop' refers to a process in which information is gathered, actions, reactions, or responses are taken on it, the result is seen and re-collected, and the outcome is used to achieve the objective. It entails the configuration and connection of information channels for the aforementioned aim. Feedback entails a continuous process of acquiring information, reacting,

and understanding the impacts in order to improve system behaviour and reactions. Agagu (2004) describes it as a 'output-information-reinputation-recommunication-reoutputation' process.

In this sense, the feedback process is concerned with the sequence of inputs, the demands and support that emerge from the environment, the conversion processes, the outputs, and the feedback mechanisms. Its processes transfer the impacts and repercussions of the outputs back into the system as inputs. They make the system dynamic, purposeful, and goal-driven. Interactions in their different forms within a system address stress, maintenance, and other problems by counterbalancing, reducing, or eliminating them. However, their interaction circuits may remain incomplete or fail at any time, such as a standstill at the level of demand. A demand must accompany the extended conversion process (Amujiri, 2017).

It may take a number of shapes and sizes before reaching the output stage. In some cases, it would be totally exhausted at this point. The same is true of the information received from the environment, which does not necessarily qualify as a 'demand'. In the end, it will be up to the authorities to determine if an allocation of values must be made to satisfy this demand or not. However, reaction or response to all instances of circuit malfunction must be taken into account (Awotokun, 2001).

According to Easton, the notion of "feedback loop" is the key that explains how the outputs create particular supports (Adeola, 2009). It links the consequences of the outputs to the flow of inputs: demands and supports. Therefore, it creates the circular link between the inputs and outputs. The feedback process affects all of the above-listed aspects of the dynamics – support, stress, survival, and persistence. It makes up the political circuit because of its input-output-feedback process. In politics, many feedback processes exist at different levels. However, Easton considers only those processes which relate to the whole political system (Gaubu, 2014). There are two kinds of feedback for analysis:

a. Negative feedback – it deals with the information about the system and the error control; and

b. Goal-transforming feedback – it involves the deliberate redirection of the system.

In any case, feedback is the regulatory demand of political systems (Egobueze, 2024).

However, feedback can suffer from a variety of diseases, including accuracy, responsiveness, and temporal latency. Several errors might occur throughout the process of communication. Even delayed knowledge can be detrimental to the sustainability of a political system (Ehiri, 2010). The feedback loop may be analysed from several perspectives. With regard to system-maintenance or getting particular support, its functioning may be categorized into four phases:

(1) There are instances of feedbacks which may emanate from authorized directions, association outputs, or outcomes. All these constitute parts of the political system. However, its evaluation lies in its perception or observation (Ezeani, 2012).

(2) There are responses of feedback which could take the form of satisfaction of demands, or support whether positive or negative.

(3) In the third phase, responses of feedback are fed back to political authorities.

(4) In the final phase, after the completion of the feedback circuit, the authorities discuss and make certain decisions. A lot hinges on such factors as responsiveness of authorities, time-lag, availability of information resources for decision making, among others. Resources of the whole system become involved in this phase. The feedback loop, in Easton's input-output approach, integrates the authorities and its members in a way that the former would act immediately after receiving feedback through the process (Egobueze, 2024).

Although Easton's system theory is not an empirical political theory, it can give a valuable conceptual framework for analysing, understanding, and comparing Third World politics (Ahamba 2017). It provides individuals with a systematic view on their surroundings and its relationships to other inter and intra systems. Most of these countries are in transition and do not want to retain the status quo. They have certain goals that they seek to achieve without facing severe crises, disagreements, or breakdowns.

According to Bassey, Bassey, and Francis (2019), rulers often lack comprehension of the political system and its forces. Concepts such as feedback, output, and assistance can be extremely beneficial to them. According to Ugben and Egobueze (2024), the equilibrium technique was clearly ineffective. The systems approach allows them to identify stressors and develop solutions to them. It is critical that rulers have fundamental assistance at all three levels. It enables them to change their internal structures and other regulatory systems to attain desired goals, which may then be recast to cope with the current environment. It just serves a limited purpose for them. Developing countries aim to implement significant political, social, economic, and cultural reforms. They even favour extreme reforms (Hassan, 2024).

They believe that perseverance is insufficient. The countries seek fundamental and rapid structural reforms, but they lack direction. There is internal upheaval and strife, even violent confrontation among diverse elements of society. Some of them are not very 'open' or 'adaptive' political systems (Ehiri, 2010). Political authority is restricted to the elite, whether conventional or modern. The elite sometimes fear that 'if they loosen their hold over the power-structure, more backward and conservative forces may take over the system'. Even their administrative system is in the making. With a backward economy, the people are unprepared to live with the prevailing socioeconomic structure (Gboyega, 2001).

Moreover, Easton's theory is not empirical, and hence unable to generate confidence, guidance and support to the ruling elite to deal with actual politics (Oluwatobi, 2019). It is merely a conceptual framework for doing research and analysis. That too is born of the experience of advanced countries like the USA. The elites play a critical role which finds no place in his systems approach. There is neither consensus on available scarce values, nor on their acceptable or binding allocations, nor on their proper implementation. Sometimes, para-political systems or subsystems appear to be more powerful than the political system (Thapa, 2020). When the environment to them appears more compelling than their own political system, what sort of help or explanation can Easton's theory render to them?

Often the problem for them is to find out ways and means to adjust under the umbrella of a super political system, yet claim survival and independence. Obviously, Easton's systems theory has a limited and restricted capacity to speak on their problems. But it certainly paves the way for them to make their own political theory. In recent years Easton has turned to structural constraints as a second major element underlying political systems. He has recently completed a book about the influence of political structure on various aspects of political life. He has also been associated with a project inquiring into the effects that variations in the structure and organization of democratic political systems have on the effectiveness of their public policies (Idakwoji, 2015).

Applying this theory of systems analysis to local government and socio-economic development, the local government system in the country constitutes the sub-systems. The local government must be well handled in terms of being given adequate autonomy so they can contribute to the socio-economic development of the local areas, which will appropriately guarantee the optimality of the whole (country) political system, as well as its homeostasis. If the reverse is the case, that is, if the local government system does not have the required autonomy to operate, then the much-

vaunted socio-economic development of the local areas cannot be achieved (Banigo, Ugben & Amadi, 2024). Thus, local government autonomy should aim at:

- i) Decongesting government at the centre, thereby freeing state leaders from onerous details and unnecessary involvement in local issues.
- ii) Increasing people's comprehension as well as economic development;
- iii) Making programmes to foster social and economic betterment
- iv) Training people in the art of government,
- v) Strengthening unity and cohesion

This requirement would imply the reduction of concentrated power at the centre. The local level will be involved in implementing socio-economic programmes which attempt to reconstruct the infrastructure necessary for an approved way of life. The consideration is that local government, given its autonomy, is in a better position than the state government to stimulate initiatives as well as inculcate the feeling of state consciousness and encourage drive and experimentation in the local people. The argument is that the role of the local government in infrastructural development should be such that it promotes better life, improves means of livelihood, socially as well as economically and a means to a better share in the state wealth (Ugben, Onya & Owhor, 2024).

Systems theory of local government holds that the local government is a political system (Ugben & Egobueze, 2019). Thus, systems theory is concerned with how the political system responds or adjusts to the demands emerging from its external environment. The key words here are political system, demands and environment. The local government is, therefore, a political system in that it interacts with its external environment in a way that demands are pushed into as inputs and they are in turn converted into outputs in the form of policies. In this flow of input and output within the political system (of a local government council precisely) there is feedback by which output alters not only the environment but also the demands from the environment and the political system (the local government councils) itself (Azumah & Ugben, 2024). This cycle of output producing new demands resulting in new forms of output, thereby altering the environment, continues infinitely. It is by this infinite process of output-input inflow that the local government maintains and sustains itself as a political system (Onah, 2015).

The fourth schedule of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is very clear on the functions of and expectations from Local Government Councils (Rivers State Local Government) as the closest tier of government to the grassroots (Egobueze, 2024). These functions by which Rivers State Local Government must be interrogated include provision and maintenance of infrastructure such as roads, public conveniences and formulation of economic planning and development schemes, to mention but a few. These have been termed as exclusive and mandatory functions of local government by Nwachukwu in Ibietan and Ndukwe (2014). Rivers State local government councils also have concurrent functions with the Rivers State Government in areas such as provision and maintenance of primary, adult and vocational education; development of agriculture and natural resources; provision and maintenance of health services. There are also extractive functions through which they can boost internally generated revenues; Distributive functions which deal with allocation of values and benefits to the local populace; Regulative and protective functions aimed at maintaining law, order and public safety; Educative functions which are directed at changing negative traditional attitudes and dispositions which drive social and economic progress (Adeyemi, 2018).

The view of this study is that the theory represents an ideal but not the real situation in Rivers State, as the local government system has not robustly proved that they are efficient agent for providing services that are local in character. To underscore this, especially with reference to the

performance of local government councils in Nigeria's fourth republic, Adamolekun (2009) posited that since the return to civilian rule in 1999, the LGs are widely perceived as failed institutions. He identified several acts of corruption, mismanagement of monumental proportions and consistent practice of undermining local government autonomy as explanatory factors.

Similarly, Ajieh (2014) noted that these are the very issues militating against the Rivers State local government system. The latter part of this averment is attributed to the phenomenon of military hangover in governance and the public administration system, which superimposed the military unitaristic principles and bifurcated federal practice, thus circumscribing the "coordinate and independent" position of sub-state units as advocated by theorists on federalism (Dokubo & Amadi, 2022). In addition, there is a disconnection between the governing elite and the populace, manifesting in low levels of people-oriented services and functions that can impact the livelihood of the masses. This is the paradox of governance in Rivers State, occasioned by the tragic irony of the electoral process and system that catapults mediocrity into leadership. By virtue of their proximity to the grassroots, it can be argued that this position should make the local government impact on their citizenry, especially under civilian rule (Alao, 2015).

However, the narrative shows that their leading personnel, policy outcomes and political/administrative environments present debit entries on the balance sheet (Ugben & Egobueze, 2024). The extent to which they satisfy the yearnings of the populace is open to debate, and the Nigerian situation has been laid bare as the foregoing analysis testifies. Furthermore, to judge the Rivers State local government system by the standard set by "state inspectorate" gives a connotation of local administration. This presents a view of local government as field administration, deconcentration or administrative decentralization. Rivers State local government councils in this sense become agents of the central/state governments, devoid of autonomy; financial and human resources independence; and they lack legal personality as core attributes of devolution, which is the essence and ideal of a functional local government system (Ugben, Onya & Owhor, 2024).

The trajectory of local government in Rivers State shows that these essentials of devolution have been absent and partly explains the failure of the local government system to live up to its billing. It is consistent with good reasoning that for Nigeria to achieve the development it aspires for, and this must be qualified as people-centred with trickling effects, the country must travel the route of recognizing the indispensable functions of the third tier of governance, thus capacitating them for efficient service delivery. Only through these propositions can meaning be given to the lives of the ordinary people in the local government.

Methodology

The study adopted a survey research design, combining primary and secondary data to provide a broader assessment of local government councils and infrastructural development in Rivers State. The study was conducted in Ahoada East, Oyigbo, and Obio/Akpor Local Government Areas of Rivers State, selected to reflect different parts of the state and their experiences with grassroots infrastructural development.

The study population comprised 718,005, based on the 2006 National Population Census figures for the three selected local government areas. Using the Taro Yamane formula at a 5% level of significance, a sample size of 400 respondents was determined. Proportional sampling was used to distribute the sample across the selected LGAs: Ahoada East (92), Oyigbo (72), and Obio/Akpor (236).

Both primary and secondary data were utilised. Primary data were obtained through structured questionnaires and key-person interviews, while secondary data were sourced from government publications, official documents, journal articles, books, reports, and relevant online materials. The questionnaire was structured on a four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1), and covered local government administration, infrastructural development, healthcare, human capital development, and related challenges. The instruments were subjected to face and content validity through review by the researcher's supervisor and other knowledgeable persons, while a pilot study was conducted to improve clarity and suitability. Reliability was established using Cronbach's alpha, with a threshold of 0.70 considered acceptable.

Data were analysed using frequencies, percentages, and Likert-scale statistics, while the hypotheses were tested using the chi-square (χ^2) test at the 0.05 level of significance. The null hypotheses were rejected where the calculated chi-square value exceeded the critical value.

Data Presentation

This section presents and analyses the outcomes of the questionnaire. Out of a total number of four hundred (400) questionnaires that were distributed, three hundred and eighty (380) questionnaires were retrieved; twenty (20) were roughly handled, and ten (10) were torn, making it difficult to ascertain their responses. Meanwhile, three hundred and fifty (350) questionnaires, which were properly filled by the respondents, form the basis of our analysis.

Demographic Background and Questionnaire Response

Variables	Categories	Frequency (F)	Percentages (%)
Age bracket	18 – 35	102	29
	36 – 55	225	64
	56 - Above	23	7
	Total	350	100
Gender distribution	Male	240	69
	Female	110	31
	Total	350	100
Educational qualifications	FSLC	10	3
	SSCE/ND/NCE	60	17
	HND/BA/B.Sc/PGD	230	66
	MBA/MPA/M.Sc/Ph.D	50	14
	Total	350	100
Category of respondents	Community leaders	75	21
	Community members	70	20
	NULGE	105	30

Local proprietors	100	29
Total	350	100

Source: Field Work, 2026.

The above table shows the social and demographic background of all respondents. The table reveals that 102 respondents representing 29% are within the age bracket of 18-35 years, 225 respondents representing 64% of the entire respondents are within the age bracket of 36-55 years, while 23 respondents representing 7% fall within the age bracket of 56 years and above. It is important to state that the study has a productive number of respondents within the age brackets of 18-35 and 36-55 years in terms of age and years of experience. This indicates that they are all adults who understand the issues under study. Their responses are highly regarded.

Also, the table above shows that 240 questionnaires representing 69% were administered to male while 110 questionnaires representing 31% were female. These demographic statistics reveal that the staff of the respondents who attended to the questionnaires are mainly males. Notwithstanding, responses from both genders are analyzed for a valid judgment.

The table above depicts that 3% of the respondents have FSLC; 60(17%) have SSCE/ND/NCE; 230(66%) respondents possess HND/BA/B.SC/PGD, while 50 respondents representing 14% are holders of MBA/MPA/M.SC/Ph.D. This shows that the respondents are dominated by different levels of graduates with various certificate holders. This suggests that the respondents have good knowledge about the role of local government councils in promoting socioeconomic development in Rivers State.

The table also shows that 75 (21%) of the respondents are chiefs, 70 (20%) of the respondents are community managers and members, 105 respondents representing 30% are NULGE, while 100 (29%) are business proprietors.

Data Analysis

Research Question 1: What is the role of local government administration in the construction of feeder roads in Rivers State?

Analysis of the response rate of the role of local government councils in the construction of feeder roads.

Questionnaires	Gender	Strongly Agreed f (%)	Agreed f (%)	Disagreed f (%)	Strongly Disagreed f (%)	Total
Poor rural roads maintenance often makes some rural roads become off-roads especially during the rainy season	Male	55 (16%)	40(11%)	95(27%)	60(17%)	240(69%)
	Female	10 (3%)	5 (1%)	60 (17%)	35(10%)	110(31%)
	Total	65(19%)	45 (12%)	155(44%)	95(27%)	350(100%)
The rural road has been generally poor due to under-funding and technical expertise	Male	85(24%)	75 (21%)	50 (14%)	30 (9%)	240(69%)
	Female	35 (10%)	35 (10%)	25(7%)	15 (4%)	110(31%)
	Total	120(34%)	110(31%)	75(21%)	45(13%)	350(100%)
Local participation	Male	95 (27%)	55 (16%)	55 (16%)	35 (10%)	240(69%)
	Female	55 (16%)	25 (7%)	20 (6%)	10(3%)	110(31%)

weakens revenue basis, technical skills, insufficient support of the State Government	Total	150(43%)	80(23%)	70(22%)	45(13%)	350(100%)
Sustainable maintenance of rural roads therefore requires good governance and the adoption of effective strategies.	Male	75 (21%)	75 (21%)	55 (16%)	35 (10%)	240(69%)
	Female	30 (9%)	45 (13%)	20 (6%)	15 (4%)	110(31%)
	Total	105(30%)	120(34%)	75(22%)	50(14%)	350(100%)
The failure of government in rural road construction has led to community participation and collective action	Male	85 (24%)	85 (24%)	45 (13%)	25 (7%)	240(69%)
	Female	42 (12%)	41 (12%)	17 (5%)	10 (3%)	110(31%)
	Total	127(36%)	126(36%)	62(18%)	35 (10%)	350(100%)

Source: Field Work, 2026

Table 4.2 shows the views of respondents on the role of local government councils in promoting socioeconomic development in Rivers State. The table shows that 65 respondents, which represent 19% of the 350 respondents, strongly agreed, while 45 respondents, representing 12%, agreed that poor rural roads maintenance often makes some rural roads become off-roads, especially during the rainy season. However, 155 (44%) “disagreed” while 95 (27%) “strongly disagreed” that poor rural roads maintenance often makes some rural roads become off-roads, especially during the rainy season. This implies that poor rural roads maintenance often makes some rural roads become off-roads, especially during the rainy season.

The table also reveals that 120 (34%) respondents confirmed to “strongly agree” that rural roads have been generally poor due to under-funding and technical expertise, and 110 (31%) “agreed” that rural roads have been generally poor due to under-funding and technical expertise. Meanwhile, 75 respondents representing 21% disagreed that rural roads have been generally poor due to under-funding and technical expertise, with 45 respondents, which represents 13%, strongly disagreeing that rural roads have been generally poor due to under-funding and technical expertise. It indicates that rural roads have been generally poor due to under-funding and technical expertise.

Furthermore, 150 (43%) respondents strongly agreed, with 80 respondents representing 23% agreeing, that local participation weakens revenue basis, technical skills, and insufficient support of the State Government, while 70 respondents representing 22% disagreed, with 45 respondents representing 13% strongly disagreed that local participation weakens revenue basis, technical skills, and insufficient support of the State Government. This implies that local participation weakens revenue basis, technical skills, and insufficient support of the State Government.

The table above also displays 105 respondents representing 30% who “strongly agreed” that sustainable maintenance of rural roads therefore requires good governance and the adoption of effective strategies, and 120, which represents 34%, who “agreed” that sustainable maintenance of rural roads therefore requires good governance and the adoption of effective strategies. Meanwhile, 75 respondents, which represent 22%, disagreed that sustainable maintenance of rural roads therefore requires good governance and the adoption of effective strategies, while 50

respondents representing 14% strongly disagreed that sustainable maintenance of rural roads therefore requires good governance and the adoption of effective strategies. The majority of the respondents agreed that sustainable maintenance of rural roads therefore requires good governance and the adoption of effective strategies.

Finally, the table above shows that 127 (36%) respondents strongly agreed that failure of government in rural road construction has led to community participation and collective action and 126 (36%) agreed that failure of government in rural road construction has led to community participation and collective action. Meanwhile, 62 respondents representing 18% revealed that failure of government in rural road construction has led to community participation and collective action, and 35 respondents representing 10% of the respondents disagreed that failure of government in rural road construction has led to community participation and collective action. This implies that failure of government in rural road construction has led to community participation and collective action.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between local government councilss and the construction of feeder roads in Rivers State. Item 1, research question 1, which states that poor rural roads maintenance often makes some rural roads become off-roads especially during the rainy season, is used to test this hypothesis. Table 4.7: Shows the various responses for calculating Expected Frequency (Fe)

Variables	Frequency of Response				Total
	SA	A	D	SD	
Male	55	40	95	60	240
Female	10	5	60	35	110
Total	65	45	155	95	350

Expected Frequency (Fe) = $\frac{(\text{Row total})(\text{Column total})}{\text{Cumulative total}}$

Computation of Expected Frequency (Fe)

a.	Fe	=	(65 × 240)	÷	350	= 44.6
b.	Fe	=	(65 × 110)	÷	350	= 20.4
c.	Fe	=	(45 × 240)	÷	350	= 30.9
d.	Fe	=	(45 × 110)	÷	350	= 14.1
e.	Fe	=	(155 × 240)	÷	350	= 106.3
f.	Fe	=	(155 × 110)	÷	350	= 48.7
g.	Fe	=	(95 × 240)	÷	350	= 65.1
h.	Fe	=	(95 × 110)	÷	350	= 29.9

Computation of Chi-Square (X²)

Cells	Fo	Fe	Fo - Fe	(Fo - Fe) ²	$\sum (Fo - Fe)^2 \div Fe$
A	55	45	10	100	2.22
B	10	20	-10	100	5
C	40	31	9	81	2.61
D	5	14	-9	81	5.79
E	95	106	-11	121	1.14
F	60	49	11	121	2.47
G	60	65	-5	25	0.38

H	35	30	5	25	0.83
X ²					20.44

Degree of freedom (df) = (R-1)(C-1) = (2-1)(4-1) = 3.

A table value of 5% (0.05) = 7.815 level of significance is used to compare the X²=20.44.

Decision Rule: The null hypothesis is rejected if the value of X² is greater than the table value. However, the result of this hypothesis indicates that there is a relationship between local government administration and the construction of feeder roads in Rivers State.

Research Question 2: What is the role of local government councils and human capital development in Rivers State?

Analysis of the response rate of the role of local government councils and human capital development.

Questionnaires	Gender	Strongly Agreed f (%)	Agreed f (%)	Disagreed f (%)	Strongly Disagreed f (%)	Total
There is an adequate local government programme that interfaces with welding and fabrication services in socioeconomic development through skill initiative.	Male	125 (36%)	20 (6%)	50 (14%)	45 (13%)	240(69%)
	Female	15 (4%)	10 (3%)	50 (14%)	35 (10%)	110(31%)
	Total	140 (40%)	30 (9%)	100(28%)	80 (23%)	350(100%)
Skill acquisition programme is shared among stakeholders in the fashion and design component to enhance socioeconomic development.	Male	160 (46%)	50 (15%)	5 (1%)	25 (7%)	240(69%)
	Female	50 (14%)	50 (15%)	5 (1%)	5 (1%)	110(31%)
	Total	210 (60%)	100(30%)	10(2%)	30(8%)	350(100%)
Local government councilss embark on electrical installation skill programme to enhance socioeconomic development.	Male	170 (49%)	40 (12%)	5 (1%)	25 (7%)	240(69%)
	Female	60 (17%)	20 (6%)	5 (1%)	25 (7%)	110(31%)
	Total	230 (66%)	60 (18%)	10(2%)	50 (14%)	350(100%)
Livestock farming in skill acquisition was a vital component in community development introduced by local government councilss.	Male	150 (42%)	50 (14%)	30 (9%)	10 (3%)	240(69%)
	Female	40 (12%)	45 (13%)	15 (4%)	10 (3%)	110(31%)
	Total	190(54%)	95(27%)	45(13%)	20 (6%)	350(100%)
Local government has trained carpentry and	Male	160 (46%)	65 (18%)	10 (3%)	5 (1%)	240(69%)

woodwork technicians	Female	40 (12%)	60 (17%)	10 (3%)	0	110(31%)
to enhance socioeconomic development.	Total	200 (58%)	125(35%)	20(6%)	5(1%)	350(100%)

Source: Field Work, 2026

The table above reveals that out of 350 respondents, 140 (40%) respondents strongly agreed, and 30 (9%) respondents agreed that there is local government interface in welding and fabrication services in socioeconomic development through skill initiative while 100 (28%) respondents strongly disagreed with 80 (23%) respondents disagreed that there is local government interface in welding and fabrication services in socioeconomic development through skill initiative. This indicates that there is a local government interface in welding and fabrication services in socioeconomic development through skill initiative.

The table also indicates those 210 (60%) respondents “strongly agreed” that skill acquisition programme is shared among stakeholders in fashion and designing component to enhance socioeconomic development with 100 (28%) of the respondents “agreed” that skill acquisition programme is shared among stakeholders in fashion and designing component to enhance socioeconomic development while 10 (3%) “disagreed” that skill acquisition programme is shared among stakeholders in fashion and designing component to enhance socioeconomic development with 30 (9%) of the respondents “strongly disagreed” that skill acquisition programme is shared among stakeholders in fashion and designing component to enhance socioeconomic development. This indicates that the skill acquisition programme is shared among stakeholders in the fashion and designing component to enhance socioeconomic development.

Furthermore, it is observed that 230 respondents representing 66% “strongly agreed” that local government councilss embark on electrical installation skill programme to enhance socioeconomic development and 60 representing 18% of the respondents and “agreed” that local government councilss embark on electrical installation skill programme to enhance socioeconomic development while 10 respondents representing 3% “disagreed” that local government councilss embark on electrical installation skill programme to enhance socioeconomic development with 50 respondents representing 14% “strongly disagreed” that local government councilss embark on electrical installation skill programme to enhance socioeconomic development.

Discussing the table above, livestock farming in skill acquisition was a vital component in community development introduced by local government councilss. This is strongly agreed by 190 respondents representing 55%, who revealed that livestock farming in skill acquisition was a vital component in community development introduced by local government councilss, with 95 respondents representing 27% agreeing that livestock farming in skill acquisition was a vital component in community development introduced by local government councilss. Meanwhile, 45 respondents representing 13% “disagreed” that livestock farming in skill acquisition was a vital component in community development introduced by local government councilss, while 20 respondents, which represent 6%, “strongly disagreed” that livestock farming in skill acquisition was a vital component in community development introduced by local government councilss. This implies that livestock farming in skill acquisition was a vital component in community development introduced by local government councilss.

Stating further, the table also indicates that 200 (58%) of the respondents strongly agreed that local government has trained carpentry and woodwork technicians to enhance socioeconomic development; 125 respondents, representing 35%, also agreed that local government has trained carpentry and woodwork technicians to enhance socioeconomic development. However, 20 (6%)

of the respondents disagreed that local government has trained carpentry and woodwork technicians to enhance socioeconomic development, with 5 respondents, representing 1%, strongly disagreeing that local government has trained carpentry and woodwork technicians to enhance socioeconomic development. This implies that local government has trained carpentry and woodwork technicians to enhance socioeconomic development.

Hypothesis 2: Local government councils has not impacted human capital development in Rivers State.

Item 2, research question 2, which states that skill acquisition programme is shared among stakeholders in the fashion and design component to enhance socioeconomic development, is used to test this hypothesis. Table 4.8 shows the various responses for calculating Expected Frequency (Fe)

Variables	Frequency of Response				Total
	SA	A	D	SD	
Male	160	50	5	25	240
Female	50	50	5	5	110
Total	210	100	10	30	350

Expected Frequency (Fe) = $\frac{(\text{Row total})(\text{Column total})}{\text{Cumulative total}}$

Computation of Expected Frequency (Fe)

a.	Fe	=	(210 × 240)	÷	350	= 144
b.	Fe	=	(210 × 110)	÷	350	= 66
c.	Fe	=	(100 × 240)	÷	350	= 68.6
d.	Fe	=	(100 × 110)	÷	350	= 31.4
e.	Fe	=	(10 × 240)	÷	350	= 6.9
f.	Fe	=	(10 × 110)	÷	350	= 3.1
g.	Fe	=	(30 × 240)	÷	350	= 20.6
h.	Fe	=	(30 × 110)	÷	350	= 9.4

Computation of Chi-Square (X²)

Cells	Fo	Fe	Fo - Fe	(Fo - Fe) ²	Σ(Fo - Fe) ² ÷ Fe
A	160	144	16	256	1.78
B	50	66	-16	256	3.88
C	50	69	-19	361	5.23
D	50	31	19	361	11.65
E	5	7	2	4	0.57
F	5	3	2	4	1.33
G	25	21	4	16	0.76
H	5	9	-4	16	1.78
X²					26.98

Degree of freedom (df) = (R-1) (C-1) = (2-1)(4-1) = 3.

Decision Rule: The hypothesis is rejected if the value of X^2 is greater than the table value. However, the hypothesis is accepted if the X^2 value is less than the table value. This indicates that Local government administration has not impacted human capital development in Rivers State since the calculated value of X^2 (26.98) is less than the table value of 1.762.

Discussion of Findings

Local government councils and construction of feeder roads in Rivers State

The data analysis yielded several key findings. Firstly, 31% of respondents (110 out of 350) concurred that inadequate maintenance of rural roads often renders them impassable, particularly during the rainy season. Furthermore, a substantial majority (65%, $n=230$) attributed the generally poor state of rural roads to insufficient funding and a dearth of technical expertise. Additionally, 230 making 66% of respondents agreed that local participation is often hampered by a weak revenue base, limited technical skills, and inadequate support from state governments. The data also revealed that approximately 64% of respondents ($n=225$) recognized the importance of good governance and effective strategies in ensuring the sustainable maintenance of rural roads. Notably, a significant proportion (72%, $n=253$) acknowledged that the government's shortcomings in rural road construction have catalyzed community-led initiatives and collective action. In line with respondents' claims, rural roads often become impassable during the rainy season due to poor maintenance, effectively turning them into off-roads

The role of local government councils in human capital development in Rivers State

Findings revealed that there is a relationship between local government policies and programmes and skill acquisition, youth empowerment and community development. Findings reveals that out of 350 respondents, 225 respondents strongly agreed, and 52 respondents agreed that there is a local government interface in welding and fabrication services in socioeconomic development through skill initiative. The table also indicates that those respondents "strongly agreed" that the skill acquisition programme is shared among stakeholders in the fashion and designing component to enhance socioeconomic development, with 100 of the respondents "agreed" that the skill acquisition programme is shared among stakeholders in the fashion and designing component to enhance socioeconomic development. Furthermore, it is observed that 130 respondents "strongly agreed" that local government councilss embark on electrical installation skill programmes to enhance socioeconomic development and 60 respondents "agreed" that local government councilss embark on electrical installation skill programmes to enhance socioeconomic development. Discussing the table further, livestock farming in skill acquisition was a vital component in community development introduced by local government councils. This is strongly agreed by 90 respondents, who revealed that livestock farming in skill acquisition was a vital component in community development introduced by local government councils, with 95 respondents agreeing that livestock farming in skill acquisition was a vital component in community development introduced by local government councils. Stating further, the table also indicates that 100 of the respondents strongly agreed that local government has trained carpentry and woodwork technicians to enhance socioeconomic development; 125 respondents also agreed that local government has trained carpentry and woodwork technicians to enhance socioeconomic development.

Conclusion

The study revealed that local government has a strong and positive relationship with rural development, and that local policies and programmes have a positive impact on skill development in Rivers State. The study also indicated that local government councils perform effective roles in service delivery. The positive relationships are demonstrated in the discussion of findings where beneficiaries revealed that the agency has provided a few infrastructural facilities, education, healthcare facilities, skill acquisition programmes, and reduced poverty. However, the study also revealed that rural development programmes were not properly coordinated by the councils due to several factors such as change of administration, lack of funds, incompetent staff, embezzlement of funds, implementation problems, etc. These factors undermine the impact of local government councils in infrastructural development in Rivers State. In a nutshell, the study concludes that there exists a positive relationship between local government councils and infrastructural development in Rivers State, but the connections are negatively and visibly demonstrated by poor service delivery.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends the following:

- 1.The local government councils should increase estimates and budgetary allocation to deal with issues of fiscal constraints. The government should source alternative funding, ensure transparent management of funds, strengthen accountability, reduce bureaucratic impediments, hire experienced staff and ensure the establishment and collaboration between community-led project management committees and government agencies saddled with the responsibility of feeder road construction and maintenance to boost infrastructural development.
- 2.The local government councils should ensure that human capital development programmes are packaged to sufficiently tackle issues of skill acquisition, employment, empowerment, and infrastructural development. Both staff and members of the local government areas must be trained to become agro-based experts, information technology/computer experts, and other technical skills. This approach would make them competent enough to address human capital development gaps in operations such as welding and fabrication services, fashion and design components, electrical installation, livestock farming and carpentry and woodwork technicians to enhance infrastructural development.

References

- Adamolekun, L. (2009). *Nigeria notes on governance and development: An overview*. Vanguard.
- Adedire, S. A. (2014). Local government and the challenges of rural development in Nigeria (1999 to date). *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 19(4), 21–32.
- Adeola, O. (2009). Local government and the challenges of service delivery: The Nigerian experience. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 15(7), 84–98.
- Adeyemi, O. O. (2018). Amalgamation and the crisis of governance: The Nigerian experience. *Journal of Public Administration and Governance*.
- Agagu, A. A. (2004). Continuity and change in local government administration and politics of underdevelopment. In A. A. Agagu & R. O. F. Ola (Eds.), *Development agenda of Nigerians state*. Flag Publisher.
- Ahamba, H. (2017). Local government autonomy: Key to sustainable grassroots development. Vanguard.
- Ajieh, C. J. T. (2014). *Praxis of local government administration in Nigeria: The practitioner's companion*. Pearls Publishers.
- Ajieh, C. J. T. (2018). *Reference details not provided in the master list. Kindly supply the complete source details or replace with Ajieh (2014) if that was the intended citation.*
- Ajulor, O. V., & Ibikunle, B. Q. (2016). Theories of local government and their relevance to Nigeria experience. *Abuja Journal of Administration and Management*, 9(2).
- Akpan, F., & Ekanem, O. (2013). The politics of local government autonomy in Nigeria. *European Scientific Journal*, 9(35), 193–205.
- Akpan, F., & Ekanem, O. (2013). The politics of local government autonomy in Nigeria. *European Scientific Journal*, 9(35), 193–205.
- Alao, D. O. (2015). Challenges of local government in Nigeria: Lessons from comparative analysis. *Interstate Journal of Development and Economic Sustainability*, 2(3), 3–4.
- Amujiri, D. A. (2017). *Local government administrations*. NOUN University Press.
- Awotokun, K. (2001). Constitutional roles and responsibilities of local government councils under current dispensation. In T. Orekoya & T. Agbugba (Eds.), *Local government administration in Nigeria*. Pure Language Communication Limited.
- Azumah, C. U., & Ugben, O. G. E. (2024). Women assembly and rural development in Nigeria: A study of Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni local government areas in Rivers State. *International Journal of Innovative Social Sciences & Humanities Research*, 12(4), 82–93.
- Banigo, I. I., Ugben, O. G. E., & Amadi, E. I. (2024). Local government and socioeconomic development of Rivers State: A study of Okrika Local Government Area of Rivers State, 2011–2021. *International Journal of Innovative Development and Policy Studies*, 12(1), 8–18.
- Banigo, I. I., Ugben, O. G. E., & Amadi, E. I. (2024). Local government and socioeconomic development of Rivers State: A study of Okrika Local Government Area of Rivers State, 2011–2021. *International Journal of Innovative Development and Policy Studies*, 12(1), 8–18.
- Bassey, E. I., Bassey, N. E., & Francis, J. S. (2019). Local government administration and the challenges of sustainable socio-economic and rural development in Nigeria: A study of Akwa Ibom State. *International Journal of Education Humanities and Social Science*, 2(6).
- Diejomaoh, I., & Eboh, E. (2010). Local government in Nigeria: Relevance and effectiveness in poverty reduction and economic development. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development*, 1(1).

- Dokubo, C., & Amadi, C. P. (2022). Socio-economic factors affecting fisherfolk participation in community development in Okrika Local Government Area of Rivers State. *International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews*, 3(11), 1316–1322.
- Eboh, Asor, and Etah. (2024). *Reference details not provided in the master list. Kindly supply the complete source information.*
- Effiong, Imoh-Ita, and Atakpa. (2025). *Reference details not provided in the master list. Kindly supply the complete source information.*
- Ehiri, T. G. (2010). *Comparative issues in local government administration*. Baaj International Company.
- Ekpo, U. N. (2026). Infrastructural development, poverty reduction and national development in Nigeria: An empirical exploration. *AKSU Journal of Management Sciences*, 11(3), 314–331.
- Ezeani, E. O. (2012). *Delivering the goods: Repositioning local governments in Nigeria to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)*. The 66th Inaugural Lecture of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Gauba, M. (2014). *Rural communities: Legacy and change*. Westview Press.
- Gauba, M. (2014). *Rural communities: Legacy and change*. Westview Press.
- Gboyega, A. (2001). Local autonomy in federal politics: The Nigerian local government system in historical perspective. *Interstate Conference on New Directions: Federalism in Africa*, Abuja, Nigeria.
- Hassan, G. (2024). *A discussion of local government as agent of socio-economic development*. E. T. Research Consultancy.
- Hassan, M. (2021). Local government and social infrastructural delivery in Nigeria. *Social and Administrative Science Review*, 7(1).
- Hassan, M. (2021). Local government and social infrastructural delivery in Nigeria. *Social and Administrative Science Review*, 7(1).
- Idakwoji, S. P. (2015). *Socio-economic development*. Odoma Press.
- Jamo, I. A. (2018). Local government autonomy in Nigeria. *Daily Trust*.
- Okonkwo, J. K. J. (2008). *Development administration and management of development*. Ugub's Printing and Publishing Co. Ltd.
- Okoye, M. (2021). Local government autonomy and rural socio-economic development in Nigeria. *International Journal of Academic Accounting, Finance & Management Research*, 5(8), 75–82.
- Olasupo, F. A. (2013). The scope and future of local government autonomy in Nigeria. *Advances in Applied Sociology*, 3(5), 207–214.
- Onuorah, E. (2016). *Public service delivery: Local government perspective*. McMillan Publishers.
- Onwuka, P. C. (2018). *Community and rural development in Nigeria: An historical discourse*. Elite Publications.
- Ozor, E. (2003). *Third tier government in Nigeria*. University Press.
- Pooja. (2024). Political development: Conceptual explanation. *Political Science Notes*.
- Thapa, I. (2020). *Local government: Concept, roles and importance for contemporary society*. Public Administration Campus, Tribhuvan University, Nepal.
- Ugben, O. G. E., & Egobueze, A. (2021). Bureaucracy and service delivery in the Nigerian public service: A study of the Rivers State University, Nkpulu-Orowukwo, Port Harcourt, 2008–2018. *Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science*, 9(8), 14–24.

- Ugben, O. G. E., Onya, R., & Owbor, N. (2024). N-Power programme, poverty alleviation and socio-economic development in the Niger Delta. *International Journal of Innovative Development and Policy Studies*, 12(4), 53–65.
- Wilson, G., & Sakiemi, A. (2019). Local government autonomy as a strategy for socio-economic development of rural communities in Nigeria. *KIU Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(1), 117–126.