

Local Government Administration and Rural Development in Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State (2015 - 2023)

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Abstract

It has been observed that the Local Governments in Nigeria appear limited in exercising their developmental functions, which seems to negatively affect the development of the rural areas. This study investigated the interplay between local government administration and rural development in Eket Local Government Area. The survey design was adopted for the study, with the population of the study being the 220,600 indigenes of Eket Local Government Area. A sample size of 399 was drawn from this population. The simple random sampling method was adopted, with the questionnaire as an instrument for data gathering from the primary source. The simple percentage method was used for data analysis, as Chi-Square was used to test the three hypotheses formulated for the study. The findings of the study indicated that there is a positive impact of local government administration on rural development in Eket Local Government Area, with the local government's achievement on infrastructural development, educational development and healthcare development. The study therefore recommended that the Eket Local Government should prioritize the completion of ongoing projects and embark on new ones to address the infrastructural gap, increase funding on education to provide adequate resources for schools, establish programs to attract and retain qualified teachers for basic education, prioritize the upgrading of healthcare facilities and equipment as well as establish monitoring and evaluation framework to ensure that development projects are implemented effectively and efficiently in the area.

Introduction

Nigeria is a federal republic with three tiers of government: federal, state, and local government (Abdullahi & Mahuta, 2012). The local government is the third tier of government and is responsible for providing basic services to the grassroots population (Abe, 2010). Local Government Administration is responsible for the day-to-day management of the local government and is headed by a chairman or mayor (Ajayi, 2003). It is saddled with the responsibility of

providing services such as water supply, healthcare, education, sanitation, and road maintenance to the rural communities (Aluko, 2006).

Rural development is a key aspect of local government administration. It involves the provision of infrastructure and services to rural communities to improve their standard of living (Bamidele, 2011). Rural development is essential for reducing poverty, improving healthcare, increasing access to education, and promoting economic growth (Ezeani, 2011). The Nigerian government has implemented various programs and policies aimed at promoting rural development, including the National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Igwe, 2013). The relationship between local government administration and rural development is crucial (Ojo, 2012). Effective local government administration can lead to improved rural development, while ineffective administration can hinder development (Okoli, 2011; Umoh et al., 2018). However, the local government administration in Nigeria faces numerous challenges, including inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, and corruption, which have hindered the provision of services to rural communities (Ezeani, 2011; Atakpa & Igboeche, 2019).

Statement of the Problem

Eket Local Government Area is one of the 31 local government areas in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria (Ojo, 2012). It has a population of over 200,000 people and is predominantly rural (Okoli, 2011). The local government area has been experiencing inadequate infrastructural development, poor educational outcomes, and inadequate primary healthcare facilities, despite the presence of a local administration that is responsible for providing these basic services. The communities lack access to good roads, healthcare facilities, and educational institutions, which has led to a decline in the standard of living and a lack of economic opportunities. The poor state of infrastructure, education, and healthcare in Eket Local Government Area raises questions about the effectiveness of the local government administration in addressing the needs of the community. This study aims to investigate the impact of local government administration on infrastructural development, educational development, and healthcare development in Eket Local Government Area, in order to identify areas of improvement and make recommendations for better service delivery."

Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study is to examine the interplay between local government administration and rural development in Eket Local Government Area between 2015 and 2023.

The subsidiary objectives include:

1. Investigate the impact of local government administration on infrastructural development in Eket Local Government Area.
2. Examine the effect of local government administration on educational development in Eket Local Government Area.
3. Investigate the impact of local government administration on healthcare development in Eket Local Government Area.

Research Questions

1. What is the impact of local government administration on infrastructural development in Eket Local Government Area?
2. How does local government administration affect educational development in Eket Local Government Area?

3. What is the relationship between local government administration and healthcare development in Eket Local Government Area?

Research Hypotheses

1. Local Government administration has a direct positive impact on infrastructural development in Eket Local Government Area.
2. Local Government administration has a significant positive influence on educational development in Eket Local Government Area.
3. Local Government administration has a positive correlation with healthcare development in Eket Local Government Area.

Review of Related Literature

Local Government

Arguments in favour of the existence of local government have been advanced on the basis that it is the foundation for the promotion of political participation in governance, which has enhanced the means for decision-making at the grassroots. No political system is considered complete and democratic if it does not have a system where the local people can participate effectively in governance. The local government is responsible for providing services such as maintenance of law and order, provision of basic socioeconomic infrastructure, and municipal services, among others. Agboko (2004, p. 2) defined a local government as a political administrative unit that is empowered by law to administer a specific locality. The 1976 Local Government Reforms Handbook sees local government as government at the local level, exercised through representative councils established by law to exercise specific powers within defined areas. To drive home some points, section 7(1) of the 1999 Constitution provides that the system of local government by democratically elected Local Government Councils is guaranteed under this Constitution. It is, however, regrettably lugubrious to assert that the reverse seems to be the order of the day, as many local governments in Nigeria are not run via representative councils established by law. Officers of the council who are supposed to be democratically elected are not elected by the people, but are appointed by political godfathers in the State. This practice negates rural development in Nigeria because the so-called local administration is manned through caretaker committees that serve and bow to the whims and caprices of the governor and/or a host of political godfathers.

According to Fatile & Adejuwon (2017, p.784), local governments are local entities, with defined territories, discretionary power, functions, responsibilities and, most importantly, autonomy. In principle, local governments are created with the expectation that their administrative and political officers will exert influence and control the decision-making process at the grassroots level without interruptions from higher tiers of government. Thus, Osakede & Ijimakinwa (2014, p. 302) view the local government "as that tier of government closest to the people, which is vested with certain powers to exercise control over the affairs of people in its domain".

According to Arowolo (2008), local government is the involvement of grassroots people in the provision of social and economic amenities to the local areas. It is based on the principle that local problems and needs can be understood by the people of the locality better than by Central or State government. Agbani & Ugwoke (2014, p.147) contend that "the local government is a tier of government with assigned legislative and executive powers to execute and make policies covering a particular local government area. This implies the existence of a relationship between this and other tiers of government since the same people who live in council areas inhabit states and the federation. A critique of the above definitions shows that local governance entails the

provision of both. The provision of local needs is at the core of the local government system. That is, local governments are created to support the local people with goods and services as well as represent and involve the citizens in determining specific local public needs and how these local needs could be met.

Local Government Administration

Local government administration is often defined as the management and execution of policies, programs, and services at the local level, aiming to address the specific needs of communities within a defined geographical area. The World Bank (2019) views local government administration as the decentralisation of power from central governments to local authorities, enabling them to effectively manage local affairs, including service delivery and infrastructure development. This system allows for more direct engagement with local communities and fosters accountability in governance. Local government administration encompasses various responsibilities such as urban planning, waste management, education, and healthcare services. Similarly, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2020) defines local government administration as a framework that empowers local authorities to execute governance at a closer level to the people, thereby promoting local democracy, participation, and service delivery. It emphasises the role of local governments in fostering sustainable development by providing public services, promoting inclusive growth, and ensuring that the needs of marginalised groups are addressed within their jurisdictions. This decentralised approach is seen as crucial for achieving national development goals while addressing local challenges.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2021) defines local government administration as the structure and function of governing bodies responsible for providing essential public services, managing local resources, and executing policies in cities, towns, and rural areas. It plays a critical role in fostering economic development, ensuring social inclusion, and addressing environmental sustainability through localised governance systems. The Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF, 2022) emphasises that local government administration involves the governance and management of local affairs by elected or appointed local officials. It underscores the principle of subsidiarity, where decisions are made at the lowest practical level closest to the people. CLGF stresses that local governments are essential for achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs) by fostering local economic development, promoting democratic participation, and ensuring the efficient delivery of basic services.

Agagu & Olaopa (2022) describe local government administration in the Nigerian context as the third tier of government responsible for grassroots governance and development. They highlight that local governments are key to rural development, as they are tasked with delivering primary services such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure in their local communities. This form of governance is essential in bridging the gap between the government and the people, especially in rural areas. Also, Ezeani (2021) defines local government administration as the organisation and management of local government councils and their roles in providing public services at the grassroots level. Ezeani highlights the importance of local governments in governance as they provide direct engagement with citizens, allowing for more responsive and accountable management of local affairs. The author also points out that local government administration is critical for addressing local challenges, promoting social justice, and enhancing the democratic process.

On the same note, Agagu (2008) defines local government administration as a framework through which local governance is structured to promote democratic participation, service delivery, and community development. He emphasises that local governments are essential for

effective grassroots governance, acting as a bridge between the central government and the local populace to address local needs and challenges. Ezeani (2012) defines local government administration as the system of governance designed to manage the affairs of local communities within a defined geographical area, focusing on the provision of essential services such as health, education, and infrastructure. Ezeani emphasises that local governments are established to promote local democracy and to act as agents of grassroots development by addressing the needs of the population directly at the local level.

Similarly, Lawal & Oladunjoye (2010) describe local government administration as a critical component of governance that involves the delegation of powers to local authorities for the management of public affairs within a smaller territorial framework. The authors argue that it serves as a platform for effective service delivery and community development by facilitating the direct participation of citizens in the decision-making process and fostering accountability. In a different vein, Awotokun (2016) defines local government administration as a system of governance at the grassroots level, responsible for the implementation of public policies and the provision of services tailored to the needs of local communities. Awotokun highlights that local governments play a vital role in fostering community participation and ensuring that citizens have a voice in governance.

Rural Development

Rural development has been defined by various organisations to encapsulate a wide array of goals aimed at improving the economic and social conditions of rural areas. The World Bank (2018) describes rural development as the process of enhancing the quality of life and economic well-being of people living in rural areas. The focus is often on increasing agricultural productivity, improving infrastructure, and providing essential services like education and healthcare. According to the World Bank, rural development plays a crucial role in reducing poverty and improving the livelihoods of people in isolated and sparsely populated regions. In this regard, rural development is tied to both economic growth and human development, aiming to create sustainable communities. Similarly, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD, 2019) views rural development as a comprehensive approach that addresses poverty reduction and equitable access to resources in rural areas. IFAD emphasises the importance of sustainable agricultural practices, along with developing physical and social infrastructure. For IFAD, rural development is not just about improving agriculture but also about ensuring that rural populations have access to basic services, markets, and opportunities that can uplift their living standards. The organisation's focus is on fostering inclusive growth that leaves no one behind, particularly targeting vulnerable populations such as smallholder farmers.

The European Commission (2020) expands the definition of rural development to include policies that aim at increasing employment opportunities and improving living conditions in rural areas. The Commission highlights the importance of fostering innovation, promoting renewable energy, and ensuring that rural areas can contribute to environmental sustainability. In addition, the European Commission emphasises the role of local governance in shaping rural development policies that reflect the unique needs of different regions. This approach underscores the importance of regional autonomy and tailored solutions for sustainable rural growth. For the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2020), rural development is about transforming rural areas by improving agricultural productivity, infrastructure, and access to essential services like healthcare and education. UNDP's approach is holistic, focusing not only on economic development but also on reducing disparities between rural and urban areas. The organization promotes equitable growth that ensures rural communities are not left behind in national

development plans. Furthermore, UNDP emphasizes the role of governance and policy frameworks in facilitating rural development, advocating for decentralized approaches that empower local communities.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO, 2021) defines rural development in terms of improving livelihoods through sustainable agricultural practices and environmental management. FAO's approach focuses on food security, economic diversification, and environmental sustainability to create resilient rural economies. FAO emphasises the need to address the challenges of climate change and resource depletion by promoting practices that are both economically viable and environmentally sound. This perspective highlights the interconnectedness of rural development with broader global goals, such as those outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Finally, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2022) emphasises rural development as an integrated approach that enhances the economic viability of rural areas by focusing on innovation, infrastructure development, and diversified employment opportunities. The OECD stresses the importance of improving the provision of services and fostering social inclusion in rural areas. It also highlights the role of local governance and the need for policies that promote rural well-being by addressing both economic and social factors, thereby creating sustainable and resilient rural communities.

Empirical literature

The effect of local government administration on rural development is a critical area of study, emphasising how local governance structures influence economic and social progress in rural areas. Recent literature provides valuable insights into these dynamics. Jibril & Abdulrahman (2021) assessed the impact of local government administration on rural development in Nigeria, utilising a mixed-methods approach. The research found that effective local governance significantly enhances rural development, particularly in areas like agriculture, infrastructure, and education. It was recommended that local governments should prioritise participatory planning to ensure that development projects align with the actual needs of rural communities.

Oyekan & Abiola (2022) explored the role of local government in facilitating rural development in Nigeria, employing a qualitative methodology that involved in-depth interviews with local government officials and rural dwellers. Their findings indicated that local governments play a pivotal role in promoting rural development through the implementation of policies aimed at improving agricultural productivity and rural infrastructure. However, the study noted challenges such as inadequate funding and bureaucratic inefficiencies that hinder effective service delivery. The authors recommended enhancing inter-governmental collaboration and increasing budgetary allocations for rural development projects.

The impact of local government administration on infrastructural development has been a crucial topic of research, shedding light on both advancements and ongoing challenges faced by various localities. Ahmed (2021) investigated how infrastructural development is undertaken by Zaria Local Government in Kaduna State, Nigeria, using a mixed-methods approach. The findings indicated a significant positive influence of local governance on certain infrastructure initiatives, noting that many rural areas still faced considerable deficits in essential infrastructure, including roads and sanitation facilities. The study recommended enhancing accountability and transparency within local government structures to optimise resource allocation and project execution, emphasising the need for effective monitoring systems to ensure that funds are utilised efficiently.

Ajani & Ojo (2020) investigated the role of local government in rural development in Lafia Local Government Area of Nasarawa State. Their research utilised both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, employing structured questionnaires and interviews with selected

rural community members. The study revealed that local governments have made strides in infrastructural development, but significant challenges remain, particularly regarding water supply and road maintenance. The authors pointed out that these deficiencies often stem from inadequate funding and the lack of a clear strategic framework for infrastructural development. They advocated increased budget allocations and the establishment of public-private partnerships to leverage additional resources for infrastructural improvements, emphasising community involvement in the planning and execution of projects to ensure they meet local needs.

Ologun and Babatunde (2020) analysed the influence of local government administration on infrastructural development in Nigeria. This study employed a survey methodology to gather data from residents regarding their perceptions of infrastructure quality and accessibility within their communities. The results underscored the critical barriers to effective infrastructural development, including inadequate funding, lack of political will, and insufficient maintenance of existing infrastructure. The authors highlighted that these challenges significantly impede the potential for local governments to deliver on their infrastructural promises. They recommended developing a sustainable maintenance strategy and improving fiscal responsibility within local governments to ensure that infrastructural investments yield long-term benefits for communities.

Oyo & Oluwaseun (2021) investigated the roles of local government in educational development in their study titled "Local Government and Educational Development in Nigeria: A Review of the Challenges." Utilising qualitative methodologies, including interviews with local government officials and educators, their findings indicated that while local governments established numerous primary schools, the quality of education remained a concern due to limited resources and support. They recommended reevaluating funding mechanisms to enhance educational infrastructure and ensure the provision of adequate learning materials and facilities. Jibrin (2019) studied the impact of local government on educational development in Nigeria, utilising a survey methodology to collect data from various local government areas, focusing on school enrollment rates and educational quality. The findings indicated a positive relationship between local government initiatives and increased school enrollment. The study emphasised the need for targeted interventions aimed at improving educational quality, such as teacher training programs and infrastructure development, to ensure that educational institutions can effectively meet the needs of students.

Emmanuel & Obinna (2021) investigated how local government administration is used for healthcare delivery in Nigeria, utilising a descriptive survey design. Data were generated from healthcare providers and community members through structured questionnaires. Findings revealed that local government administration significantly affects healthcare delivery, with challenges such as inadequate facilities, insufficient healthcare personnel, and funding shortfalls hindering effective service provision. The study recommended increasing funding for local health initiatives and improving resource management practices to enhance healthcare service delivery and ensure that communities have access to quality healthcare services. Similarly, Oyekan & Osunmade (2020) assessed local government efforts in health service delivery in Nigeria. The mixed-methods approach was combined with surveys and interviews to gather information from healthcare professionals. The study found that insufficient funding and poor infrastructure were major barriers to effective healthcare delivery. The authors suggested that local governments should actively seek partnerships with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to leverage additional resources and expertise in improving health initiatives, emphasising the need for a collaborative approach to healthcare service delivery.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopted both development administration as well as new public administration theories to strengthen the research.

Development Administration Theory

Development administration theory emerged in the mid-20th century as nations sought to address the complexities of development amidst challenges like poverty, inequality, and inadequate governance structures. Proponents such as Edward Weidner and others emphasised the importance of effective administrative frameworks to facilitate development. Ndoh (2002) in Udoh [2014] defines development as “a dialectical phenomenon in which the individual society interacts with their physical, biological and inter-human environment.”

The major tenets of development administration theory include:

Focus on Development Goals: This prioritises achieving specific development objectives, such as poverty alleviation, economic growth, and social welfare. Development administration is seen as instrumental in achieving these goals through the efficient allocation and management of resources (Weidner, 1995; Cheema & Rondinelli, 2007).

Role of Institutions: This underscores the importance of strong institutions and governance structures in fostering development. It posits that effective administrative systems are crucial for implementing policies and programs that drive development (Haque, 1999; Kiggundu, 1989).

Participatory Governance: There is emphasis on participatory governance, where stakeholders, including citizens, local communities, and civil society, are actively involved in the development process. This participation is essential for ensuring that development initiatives are relevant and address the actual needs of the population (Gaventa, 2004; Mchombu, 2010).

Capacity Building: This emphasises capacity building within governmental and non-governmental organisations. It involves enhancing the skills, knowledge, and resources of administrators and local leaders to improve the effectiveness of development programs (UNDP, 1997; Van derMolen, 2013).

Contextual Relevance: This advocates context-sensitive approaches that consider local conditions, cultures, and needs. This understanding is crucial for designing and implementing effective development strategies that resonate with local populations (Elliott, 2012; McGann, 2014).

The relevance of Development Administration Theory to the study of local government administration and rural development is substantial. It provides a framework for analysing how local governments can effectively facilitate development initiatives by fostering strong institutions and encouraging participatory governance. This theory sheds light on how local governments can build capacity and adapt strategies to meet the unique challenges faced by rural communities, ultimately leading to more sustainable and impactful development outcomes in rural areas in Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State.

Methodology

The research design for this study was survey research design. The population of the study was the population of Eket Local Government Area, which is 220,600, going by the Akwa Ibom State Annual Population Projection (2022). The sample size for this study was 399, using the Taro Yamane sampling formula. The simple random sampling technique was adopted to ensure that all members of the local government would have an equal chance of participation. Out of 399 copies of the questionnaire distributed, three hundred and ninety were returned, but a total of three

hundred and fifty (350) questionnaires were found properly filled and useful for the study. Chi-Square was used in testing the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance.

Data Presentation

Infrastructure Development in Eket Local Government Area

According to Ikott (2023), Eket Local Government has undertaken significant infrastructure projects to enhance the commercial and social life of the area. These initiatives are aimed at boosting economic activities, improving market facilities, and providing modern amenities for community events and conferences. An example is the lock-up shops that have been constructed at Eket Main Motor Park. The first phase of the construction had 150 lock-up shops, which is ongoing, with 63 shops already built up to roofing level. The shops are expected to provide secure and well-structured spaces for 150 traders, improved market facilities to attract more vendors and shoppers, thereby (Eket Local Government, 2023).

The Eket Unity Hall and Events Centre is one of the signature projects of the Local Government. The centre, which was inaugurated in late 2024, houses a main auditorium with a 2,500-seating capacity, a conference hall with 100 seating capacity, an outdoor area with over 3000 seating capacity, office spaces with toilets and stores, and over 400 parking lots. The Unity Hall and Events Centre can host up to 5,000 attendees at a time. The event and conference centre has become a focal point for economic activities and social gatherings, and is estimated to attract over 50 events annually and generate significant economic activity for the local government area. Moreover, the centre is expected to generate significant revenue through rentals, event hosting fees, and associated services, contributing to the local government's income. That is aside from the creation of direct and indirect jobs, including construction workers, commercial staff, security personnel, and maintenance workers, providing employment opportunities for residents (Ikott, 2023).

Local Government Administration and Healthcare Development in Eket LGA

According to the Director, Primary Health Care Department, Eket Local Government Area, the local government council, each of the 11 political wards is served by one or more health facilities. The local government health team is usually on routine supervisory visits to all the health facilities in the local government area; the Logistics Management Committee Unit (LMCU) is responsible for co-ordinating and ensuring effective logistics management of all commodities supplied to the Local Government Area; the Ward Health Development Committee (WHDC) meets and deliberates on health issues affecting the local government area; the Local Government Action Committee on AIDS (LACA) co-ordinates HTS activities with other partners to ensure effective and smooth running of the programmes, and effectively participate in World Malaria Day and other Health Planning meetings in the State e.g. NTD for soil Transmitted Helminthiasis, ISS etc.

Date Analysis**Question 1**

The local government administration has impacted positively on the infrastructural development of Eket LGA

Table 1: Questionnaire Response Analysis for Question 1

OPTIONS	RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
YES	150	42.86%
NO	110	31.43%
UNDECIDED	90	25.71%
TOTAL	350	100%

Source: Field Survey 2024

Test of Hypothesis 1

Local government administration has a direct positive impact on infrastructural development in Eket LGA

Table 2: Test of Hypothesis 1

OPTIONS	Fo	Fe	fo-fe	(fo-fe) ²	$\frac{(fo-fe)^2}{Fe}$
YES	150	42.86	107.14	11478.9	267.82
NO	110	31.43	78.57	6173.24	196.41
UNDECIDED	90	25.71	64.29	4133.2	160.7
TOTAL	350				624.93/625

Since the calculated chi-square value (χ^2) of 625 is greater than the table value of 5.99 at a significant level of 0.05, at a degree of freedom of 2, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate. This implies that local government administration has a direct positive impact on infrastructural development in Eket LGA.

Question 2

Has the local government administration impacted positively on the educational development of Eket LGA?

Table 3: Questionnaire Response Analysis for Question 2

OPTIONS	RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
YES	150	42.86%
NO	100	28.57%
UNDECIDED	100	28.57%
TOTAL	350	100%

Source: Field Survey 2024

Test for Hypothesis 2

Local Government administration has a significant positive influence on educational development in Eket Local Government Area.

Table 4: Test of Hypothesis 2

OPTIONS	Fo	Fe	fo-fe	(fo-fe) ²	$\frac{(fo-fe)^2}{Fe}$
YES	150	42.86	107.14	11478.9	267.82
NO	100	28.57	71.43	5102.24	178.59
UNDECIDED	100	28.57	71.43	5102.24	178.59
TOTAL	350				625

Since the calculated chi-square value (χ^2) of 625 is greater than the table value of 5.99 at a significant level of 0.05, at a degree of freedom of 2, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate. This implies that local government administration has a significant positive influence on educational development in Eket Local Government Area.

Question 3 Response Analysis

Has the local government administration impacted positively on the healthcare development of Eket LGA?

Table 5: Questionnaire Response Analysis for Question 3

OPTIONS	RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
YES	135	38.57%
NO	125	35.71%
UNDECIDED	90	25.71%
TOTAL	350	100%

Source: Field Survey 2024

Table 6: Test for Hypothesis 3

Local Government administration has a positive correlation with healthcare development in Eket Local Government Area.

Hypothesis 3 Test Table

OPTIONS	Fo	Fe	fo-fe	(fo-fe) ²	$\frac{(fo-fe)^2}{fe}$
Yes	135	38.57	96.43	11478.9	267.82
No	125	35.71	89.29	5102.24	178.59
Undecided	90	25.71	64.29	5102.24	178.59
Total	350				625

Since the calculated chi-square value (χ^2) of 625 is greater than the table value of 5.99 at a significant level of 0.05, at a degree of freedom of 2, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate. This implies that Local Government administration has a positive correlation with healthcare development in Eket Local Government Area.

4.2 Discussion of Findings

On hypothesis one, the study found that the local government administration has made significant efforts in improving infrastructural development in Eket Local Government Area. The construction of new roads, bridges, electrification of rural communities and public buildings have improved access to basic services and enhanced the quality of life for residents. For example, the construction of a new road network has improved access to public transportation, and the building of a new market has improved access to goods and services. However, some areas still lack adequate infrastructure, highlighting the need for continued investment in infrastructure

development. For instance, some residents still lack access to clean water and sanitation facilities, and some areas still experience frequent power outages. This finding is supported by the assertion of Ahmed (2021) and Ajani & Ojo (2020), who observed that the local governments have a significant impact on infrastructural development, including improvements in road network, water supply, and electricity.

On hypothesis 2, the study found that the local government administration has made notable contributions to educational development in Eket Local Government Area. The Local Government Council has constructed new schools and renovated existing ones, totalling 29 primary schools in Eket LGA (Eket Local Government, 2018). The construction of adult education centres, the construction and renovation of primary and secondary schools, the provision of educational resources such as textbooks and computers and other educational resources have improved the quality of education for indigenes. This finding aligns with that of Jibrin (2019) and Adebayo & Okewole (2020) that the local government administration had a significant positive impact on educational development, including improvement in access to education, quality of education and quality educational infrastructure.

On hypothesis 3, the study found that the local government administration has made significant efforts toward primary healthcare development in Eket Local Government Area. For example, the local government authority's construction of a new hospital and other healthcare facilities has improved access to healthcare services, and the provision of healthcare resources such as medicines and equipment has improved the quality of healthcare. A compendium published by Eket Local Government lists such healthcare facilities to include 15 healthcare facilities across all wards. This finding is the same as that reported by Adeyemi & Shakiru (2019) and Oyekan & Osunmade (2020) to the effect that local government administration has a significant positive impact on healthcare development, through improved access to healthcare, quality healthcare, and provision of quality healthcare infrastructure.

5.1 Conclusion

The study examined the impact of local government administration on infrastructural development, educational development, and healthcare development in Eket Local Government Area. The study found that local government administration had a significant positive impact on infrastructural development, educational development, and healthcare development in Eket Local Government Area, sustaining all three hypotheses raised. Overall, the study found that the local government administration's efforts have had a significant positive impact on infrastructural development, educational development, and healthcare development in Eket Local Government Area. The study's findings highlight the importance of effective local government administration in promoting sustainable development and improving the well-being of residents in the area.

5.2 Recommendations

1. The Eket Local Government should engage with the Akwa Ibom State and Federal Government to access more funding opportunities for infrastructural development as well as prioritise the completion of ongoing projects and embark on new ones to address the remaining infrastructural gap in the area.
2. The Eket Local Government should increase funding for education to provide adequate resources for schools in the area and establish programs to attract and retain qualified teachers for basic education in the area.

3. The Eket Local Government should prioritise the upgrading of healthcare facilities and equipment in the area, as well as establish a monitoring and evaluation framework to ensure that development projects are implemented effectively and efficiently in the area.

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Appendix 1

**EKET LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL
COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF PROJECTS EXECUTED BETWEEN
2015 – 2023**

S/N	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	PROJECT TYPE	EXECUTOR	STATUS
1	Construction of Open Market Stalls at Urua Udoinyang and Urua Fiongetuk in Eket	Direct Labour	Works Department	Completed
2	Rehabilitation of Toilet Facilities/Provision of additional Septic/Soakaway at Urban Market, Urua Nka, Eket	Direct Labour	Works Department	Completed
3	Construction/Provision of Solar Driven Water Supply Scheme at Urban Market, Urua Nka, Eket	Direct Labour	Works Department	Completed
4	Renovation of Adult Education Centre Building at Idua-Eket	Direct Labour	Works Department	Completed
5	Training of Youths in Oil & Gas related Skills – Indigenes of Eket	Direct Labour	Works Department	Completed
6	Acquisition of Land from Isung Uyo Family in Nduo Eduo Village to construct an Ultra-Modern Primary/Health Centre at Nduo Eduo – Eket	Direct Labour	Office of the Executive Chairman, Eket Local Govt. Council	Completed
7	Renovation of Primary School Assembly Hall at St. Paul Primary School, Ikot Ibiok	Direct Labour	Works Department	Completed
8	Rehabilitation of Nduo Eduo Town Hall/Health Centre	Direct Labour	Works Department	Completed
9	Opening/Grading of Rural Roads within Eket Local Government Area	Direct Labour	Works Department	Completed

10	Grading of Urban Roads within Eket Urban/Patching	Direct Labour	Works Department	Completed
11	Construction of Ultra Model Primary Health Centre building at Nduo Eduo, Okon Dev. 1 Eket	Direct Labour	Works Department	Completed
12	Re-roofing/Renovation of VIP Grand Stand at Eket Local Government Sports Stadium, Eket	Direct Labour	Works Department	Completed
13	Re-roofing/Renovation of Eket Magistrate Court at Eket	Direct Labour	Works Department	Completed
14	Opening/Maintenance of Rural Road within Eket Local government Area	Direct Labour	Works Department	Completed
15	Opening/Maintenance of Urban Road 2013 within Eket Urban	Direct Labour	Works Department	Completed
16	Training of two (2) Drivers at the International Marine Contractors Association (IMCA) Certificate at Saldanha Bay in South Africa	Direct Labour	Office of the Executive Chairman, Eket Local Govt. Council	Completed
17	Fencing of Eket Police Station at Eket	Direct Labour	Works Department	Completed
18	Purchase of Pay Loader	Direct Labour	Works Department	Completed
19	Handling of additional works and variation cost of the construction of the Health Centre, Nduo Eduo	Direct Labour	Works Department	Completed
20	Provision of portable water supply in thirteen Wards in Eket Local Government Area	Direct Labour	Works Department	Completed
21	Construction of Staff Canteen in the Local Government Secretariat, Eket	Direct Labour	Works Department	Completed

22	Renovation of Education Block in the Local Government Secretariat, Eket	Direct Labour	Works Department	Completed
23	Construction of Eket City Hall (Unity Hall) in Eket Urban	Direct Labour	Works Department	Completed
24	Renovation of Central Stores building in Eket Local Government Secretariat	Direct Labour	Works Department	Completed

Source: Office of the Head of Service, Eket L.G.A. (2024).