

Administrative Competence and service delivery in Ogun State Local Government Councils

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Abstract

Service Delivery has to do with the actual delivery of a service or product to the customer, clients, or public. Therefore this study examined the administrative competence and service delivery of administrative staff in Ogun State Local Government Councils. Three Hypotheses were tested for the purpose of this study. One hundred and twenty (120) of the respondents from the total population were sampled. The study employed multi-stage sampling techniques. First stage, the stratified sampling was used to delineate the whole Local Government Councils in Ogun State according to their geo-political zones for proper demarcation of the respondents' area. Simple random sampling was used to select two (2) Local Government Councils from the geo-political zones in Ogun State. The study finds out that there is sharp contrast between administrative competence of employees and service delivery to the people. The study recommends that, the Local Government Commission in Ogun State needs to expose LG employees to relevant and in-service training to ensure that a high standard of efficiency and productivity is maintained at all times.

Keywords: Administrative competence, Service Delivery, Government

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Local Government functions and role have been experiencing development into a better one in recent years and it will continue to change in the coming years. It is in this vein, Ewumi, Igbokwe-Ibeto and Nkomah (2016) submit that, public service of any nation (Local Government inclusive) is an institution of governance and administration established essentially to deliver public good in the most efficient and effective way. Thus, appropriate service delivery is essential for the survival of a modern democracy or government and access to government information by citizens and organizations is therefore a fundamental ingredient in effective service delivery. To this end, utilization of information communication technology facilities will enhance administrative competence.

There is a notion however that, Local Government is fraught with challenges of effective and efficiency in public service delivery to its people. Public service delivery in Nigeria has been labeled as poor, inefficient, ineffective and inconsistent with citizen preference. Statutorily, Local Government is expected to provide significant number of services to its people, such as: health care, education, security, transportation, roads, issuance and delivery of licenses and permissions, commentaries, abattoirs, as well as rates and taxes, among others. Based on this, human capacity deployed for the effective and efficient service delivery in the Local Government comes to question as the employee who are working in the Local Government in ensuring proper deployment and utilisation of other resources handle it with levity (Kumar, 2020).

According to Lovelock & Wright (2002), service delivery has to do with the actual delivery of a service or product to the customer, clients, or public. These services should be delivered in an effective, predictable, reliable and customer-friendly manner (Sigma, 2019). Of course, there is need to improve service delivery while local government should not only improve their environment but also train and engage their workers so as for them to be capable of doing their jobs appropriately (Antwerpen and Ferreira, 2016). A service delivery process is a special process describing a complete and integrated approach for performing a specific project type. It is therefore concerned with the where, when, and how a service is provided or delivered to the consumers or users and whether this is fair or unfair in nature (Martins and Ledimo, 2015).

However, human capital is employed in Local Government to explore and translate other resources into effective and efficient use towards service quality and delivery but lack of up-to-date in-service training, frivolities and lackadaisical attitude of the employee towards job performance has somewhat rendered the Council unproductive which avail citizens to question real existence of Local Government Areas. In the view of Wardhani, Wibowo and Hamidah (2018), improving employees' knowledge through periodic training and rotation and being flexible in responding to work dynamics can make employees perform their work according to organizational goals. This presupposes that, effective and efficient performance of jobs and offering of quality and efficient service requires the expertise, skill or competence of the people in an organisation.

Competence in this sense implies the skill and capacity to perform a given task. Such competence and skills imply an ability which can be developed, not necessarily inborn, and which is manifested in performance, not merely in potential (*Katz, 2014*). Thus, effective administration requires developable competencies and skills which may provide a useful way of looking at and understanding the administrative process.

In this context, an employee is said to have acquired a skill when he can competently, efficiently and professionally finish a given piece of work at a given time with minimum errors. The acquisition of different skills and competence are to be utilized in two main functional areas of administration that are of great significance for day-to-day management of organizational activities especially in public sector like Local Government Councils. These are Staff administration and general administration. Staff administration includes recruitment and work allotment of units and staff in, their attendance and leave management, and performance appraisal.

This also includes relevant communication to and from the departments and among staff. Staff administration done through Information and communication technology (ICT) helps in processing of voluminous records in a quick, meticulous, and impeccable manner thereby making data retrieval easier (*Thomas, 2004*). General administration involves the various day-to-day activities of the entire system. Effective running of public organisations rest on many factors and human resource capacity. An important administrative competency issue in management of organisations is information management.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There is growing concern on the debilitating nature of Local Government Councils in relation to its employees' effectiveness, efficiency competence and service delivery to the citizenry. This has resulted in naming government public sector service delivery as unfortunate, wasteful, fruitless, unreliable, and in dissonance to citizen preference. 1999 Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended, outlined functions of Local Government to its people at the grass root in order for them to feel government impact in all their activities. These functions include but not limited to: health care, education, security, transportation, roads, issuance and delivery of licenses and permissions, commentaries, abattoirs, as well as rates and taxes and so on.

Whereas, these functions are expected to be carried out efficiently and effectively by the employees of the Local Government. Observation shows that, lip service, frivolities, negligence, lack of discipline has characterized the administrative competence and service delivery of the employee in the Local Government Councils. Thus, the need for functioning system, quality and better life have drifted away the competent and courteous ones among the Local Government employees, thereby, leaving nonchalant with the service delivery. This has made work force administrative competence and service delivery in the Local Government a focal point of this study, so as to ascertain its effectiveness and efficiency.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective of this study is to ascertain administrative competence of and service delivery of employees of Local Government Council in Ogun State, Nigeria, while specific are:

- a) To know the nature of administrative competence of employees in relation to service delivery in Local Government Council in Ogun State to service delivery.
- b) To find out whether LG employees are being expose to periodic training in enhancing quality of service delivery in LGC in Ogun State.
- c) To ascertain the level of work involvement of employee on service delivery in LGC.

4.1 Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are formulated to establish relationship between the variables.

H₀: There is no significant relationship between administrative competence of employees and service delivery in Local Government Councils (LGC) in Ogun State.

H02: There is no significant relationship between employees' exposure to periodic training and service delivery in Ogun State, LGC.

H03: There is no significant relationship between employees' work involvement and service delivery in LGC.

5. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The issue of poor service delivery has been a prevalence case in the mind of those who patronize Local Government services. In fact, Nigeria is not the only nation experiencing this, other Africa nations have their own share. For example Antwerpen & Ferreira (2016) argue that, South African businesses and impending growth and development is about to be crippled as a result of poor service delivery by the local governments. Corroborating this, Sharp (2012) submits that, since 1967, output per worker per unit of capital in South Africa has fallen from R7,297 to R4,924 a year – a decline of 32.5 per cent.

Parliamentary Leader of Democratic Alliance Party in South African as cited in Mazibuko (2012), explained that, South Africa is less efficient than many of its emerging market competitors. The labour force is uncompetitive. While their labour productivity is much lower compare with rest of the developing world.

Studies have shown different views on the service delivery. According to Schulze and Suharnoko (2014) noted that the level of fiscal endowment of a sub-national organisation explains variations in improved service delivery in Indonesia. Similar arguments were made by Bogere (2013) and Muriisa (2008) who stated that the challenge of Uganda's decentralisation is the issue of inadequate financing for improved service delivery. Again, Banful (2009) attributed the challenges of Ghana's decentralisation to financing difficulties.

The above has shown that, poor service delivery in Local Government Councils is a prevalent issue in the country with Local Government Council system. Significant numbers of studies have been conducted, focusing negative view of employees by the public towards poor service delivery in the global public-service environment (Mazibuko, 2012). While others focus on human capital development for effective and efficient service delivery. The focus of this study is on administrative competence of employee and service delivery. Competence in relation to this study means skill and capacity to carry out specific task with little or no supervision within the appropriate time frame effectively and efficiently.

Accordingly, Katz, (1994) contends that, competence and skill suggest an ability which can be developed, not necessarily inborn, and which is manifested in performance, not merely in potential. So the principal criterion of skillfulness must be effective action under varying conditions. This approach suggests that effective administration rests on three basic developable competencies and skills which may provide a useful way of looking at and understanding the administrative process. Successful administration could be linked to three basic skills, which are *technical, human, and conceptual*.

Umeh and Andranovich (2005), identify the following skills as very important: technical, writing, knowledge of procedures, financial management, negotiation, supervision, analytical management, organisational flexibility, communication and bureaucratic politics. However, these skills are mostly related to management positions and the research on which this study focused only on those skills applicable to the administrative employee and his or her direct working environment.

Similarly, Ezeji and Okorie (1999) identified three major categories of skill that are needed to ensure efficiency and effectiveness within a work organisation. These are *technical skills, human skills and conceptual skills*. Technical skills encompass the understanding and proficiency in specific activities, especially one involving methods and procedures. It is the ability to use knowledge, methods, techniques and equipment necessary for the performance of specific tasks. The technical skills are acquired from experience, education and training in specialised fields, such as medicine, engineering, music, office administration, and accounting among others.

Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2008) in the National Policy on Education (NPE) stated that technical skills are for empowering and preparing youths for the world of work. On the other hand, human skills refer to the ability of an individual to work effectively to encourage co-operative effort within the group of which he is member of the team. Conceptual ability involves the ability to recognize the interdependence of the various functions of an organisation. Conceptual skills draw heavily on one's analytical and diagnostics capacities to identify problems and opportunities, gather and interpret relevant information, and make good problem solving decisions that serve the organizational purpose.

Administrative competency in this sense, could be seen as representing specific expertise or accomplishment; the capacity of an organization; mean specific behaviors contributing to

excellence; and acceptable minimal level of job proficiency, and underlying characteristics which are causally related to effective job performance within the context of organisational administration (Marijani, 2017). The acquisition of different skills and competence are to be utilized in two main functional areas of administration that are of great significance for day-to-day management of organizational activities especially in public sector organisations.

These are staff administration and general administration. Staff administration includes recruitment and work allotment of units and staff in, their attendance and leave management, and performance appraisal. This also includes relevant communication to and from the departments and among staff. Staff administration done through Information and communication technology (ICT) helps in processing of voluminous records in a quick, meticulous, and impeccable manner thereby making data retrieval easier (Thomas, 2004). General administration involves the various day-to-day activities of the entire system.

Governments globally want a skilled and adaptable workforce to maintain or improve national prosperity and the delivery of social services. Organisations are interested in a workforce capable of responding to the changing work requirements in ways pertinent to their workplace needs, in order to sustain the effective provision of their goods and services (Harteis & Billet 2008:209).

5.1 Organisational Learning Theory

This study is underscored by organisational learning. The theory is believed to be propounded by Max Weber. The main tenets of this theory is that, organisations are made of people. As stated in Elozieuwa (2012), learning organisation is an organisation where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together. It is of good note to state however, that, administrative competence of employee rest on the emergence of this theory.

This theory however, stresses that one of the fundamental of personnel management is to invest on staff either individually or collectively so as to make them perform optimally, efficiently and effectively as well as to generate knowledge and skills in other to meet up with organisational objectives. Elozieuwa (2012) citing Ehronberg and Smith (1994) submits that the knowledge and skills a worker has most often comes from education training, including the years of input to the work and organisation, practically improves the

staff. In addition, periodic training and seminars also contribute to efficient and effective performance of a worker which will reflect in the way he handles customers and service delivery.

As explained by Ndibe (2014), learning is essential ingredient if organisation is to survive, that learning at operational, policy and strategic levels needs to be conscious, continuous and integrated. Likewise, management is responsible for creating an emotional climate in which all staff can learn continuously.

Consequently and in recognition of the benefits of organisational learning theory, administrative competence of employees is second to none due to the fact that, the survival and best practice of the administrative work lies in the proper development and competency of the staff. This act alone guarantees avoidance of negative perception on the service delivery. The above justify the appropriateness of the theory.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6.1 Methodology

This study adopted survey method while the populations of the study are the administrative staff of Local Government Councils in Ogun State. The employees, according to Local Government Service Commission, were 7,325. This is where the subject matter is often found. One hundred and twenty (120) of the respondents from the total population were sampled. The study employed multi-stage sampling techniques. First stage, the stratified sampling was used to delineate the whole Local Government Councils in Ogun State according to their geo-political zones for proper demarcation of the respondents' area. Simple random sampling was used to select two (2) Local Government Councils from the geo-political zones (Ogun West: Yewa South and Ipokia, Ogun East: Ijebu-Ode and Ijebu North East; Ogun Central: Abeokuta South and Odeda Local Governments Councils respectively). After which Purposive sampling was used to select 20 respondents {Admin Officers, Principal Executive Officer (PEO) and Executive Officer (GD) from each LGC making it 20 per LGC and 120 across the LGC in Ogun State.

The criterion for the last selection was based on respondents who were core administrative staff of LGC in order to achieve the objective of the study. Therefore, a sample size of 120 respondents comprises: Admin Officers, Principal Executive Officer (PEO) and Executive

Officer (GD) from each LGC were used for the study that is 20 respondents per LGC and 120 across the LGC in Ogun State. The instrument for the study was questionnaire. The questionnaire was in two parts, “A and B”. Part A featured demographic variables while Part B featured contextual variables. The study adopted the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential method, which include frequencies and percentages as well as Pearson correlation method.

7. ANALYSIS AND RESULT

7.1 Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion

Table 1: Descriptive Analysis for Competency Variables.

Variables	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age	25 – 30	30	27.7
	31 – 36	25	23.2
	37 - 42	28	25.9
	43 – 48	12	11.1
	49 and above	13	12.1
	Total	108	100.0
Academic Qualification	SSCE	50	53.7
	Graduate	30	33.3
	Post Graduate	28	13.0
	Total	108	100.0
Length of service	1 - 10years	20	18.5
	11- 20 years	32	29.6
	21 - 30 years	34	31.5
	31 years	22	20.4
	Total	108	100.0
Designation	Admin Officers,	39	36.1
	Principal Executive Officer (PEO)	36	33.3
	Executive Officer (GD)	33	30.6
	Total	108	100.0
Other Job-related Training	Yes	25	23.1
	No	83	76.9
	Total	108	100.0

[Source: Field Survey, 2020]

As shown on the table 1 about (27.7%) respondents were within age bracket 25-30, followed by 23.2% who were within 31 – 36; 25.9% were within 37-42 age bracket while 11.1% were 43-48 and 12.1% were between 49 years and above. On academic qualification, more than half (53.7%) of the respondents were secondary school leveler except 33.3% who were graduates and 13.0% had post graduates. On the length of service, however, there

more of the respondents (31.5%) who had stayed in the service between 21-30years. 29.6% of them had been in the service between 11-20years while 20.4% of them had been in the service for 31years and above and 18.5% had been in the service between 1 -10 years. As regard designation, 36.1% of the respondents were Admin Officers, 33.3% Principal Executive (PEO) and 30.6% were Executive Officer (GD). On the other job – related training, majority 76.9% of the respondents acknowledged that other job – related training were not provided and 23.1% remarked that they were being provided with other job related training.

7.2 Test of Hypotheses

The thrust of this study is in the various hypotheses formulated to give direction to the study. To achieve this, the hypotheses are re-stated; the variables involved in them are identified while Pearson Correlation was adopted as the statistical tool.

Hypothesis: One

H0: There is no significant relationship between administrative competence of employees and service delivery in Local Government Councils (LGC) in Ogun State.

Table 2: Correlations

		Respondents qualification	Need for additional
Respondents qualification	Pearson Correlation	1	.894**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.0526
	N	108	108
Need for additional	Pearson Correlation	.894**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.0526	
	N	108	108

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Interpretation of Correlation Result and Decision

As shown in the Table 2, the correlation value of the relationship between administrative competence of employee and service delivery was 8.94. Since the P – value = 0.526 is greater than a = 0.05, the study accept null hypothesis. By accepting the null hypothesis, the study concludes that, there is no statistical significance relationship between administrative competences of employee and service.

Hypothesis Two

H02: There is no significant relationship between employees' exposure to periodic training and service delivery in Ogun State LGC.

Table 3: Correlations

		Lack of adequate	job related training
Lack of adequate	Pearson Correlation	1	.595 ^{**}
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	108	108
job related training	Pearson Correlation	.595 ^{**}	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	108	108

****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Interpretation of Correlation Result and Decision

As observed from the table, the correlation value of the relationship between employees' exposure to periodic training and service delivery in LGC in Ogun State was 595^{**}. Since the $p = .000 < 0.05$, the study rejects null hypothesis. By accepting the alternative hypothesis, the study conclude that, there is positive relationship between employees' exposure to periodic training and service delivery in the LGC.

Hypothesis Three

H03: There is no significant relationship between employees' involvement of employees and service delivery in LGC.

Table 4: Correlations

		Respondents' Designation	Commitment
Respondents' Designation	Pearson Correlation	1	.796 ^{**}
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.054
	N	108	108
Commitment	Pearson Correlation	.796 ^{**}	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.054	
	N	108	108

****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Interpretation of Correlation Result and Decision

The expected value as indicated on the table 4 was $.796^{**}$ while $p = .054$ is greater than $\alpha = 0.05$, the study accept null hypothesis. By accepting the null hypothesis, the study concludes there is no significant relationship between level of work involvement of employees and service delivery in LGC.

7.3 Discussion of Result

As shown on the table 1, many of the respondents 36.8% of 42 respondents were within 37-42, reflecting the fact that, the respondents were not too young in administrative environment. Significant number of the employee had been in the public service for an appropriate year which is supposed to reflect in their qualification but refers is the case. This study revealed that majority of the employees in Local Government Councils in Ogun State was holder of secondary school certificates which reflect in the handling of public service. This also coincide with the fact that employee were not provided with other job related training. As regards designations, the respondents cut across the core staff in the administrative departments in all the Local Government Council surveyed. This made the response to be valid with the objectives of the study. Unfortunately, job related training was not given to the employees as acknowledged by the majority of the respondents.

In relation to the hypotheses formulated to ascertain relationship between the variables. Findings indicated that two out of the null hypotheses were validated. As shown on the hypotheses tables, $p=0.526 > \alpha = 0.05$, implies that, there is no positive relationships between administrative competence of employees and service delivery. This further confirmed on the table 1 above which indicated that despite the longer stay in the public service, employees have not been able to equip themselves with necessary related jobs that can make them render the service efficiently. This finding is supported by Doh (2017), who found that alternative approaches to improving performance for service delivery needs to be sought which include staff quality within the context of technical or academic competences and individual-level internal motivation towards public service delivery

Likewise, the second hypothesis indicated that the $p = .000 < 0.05$. This also means that, there is positive relationship between employees' exposure to periodic training and service delivery. This presupposes that, if LGCs continue to starve employees of periodic training public will continue to experience poor service delivery as they used to. The third

hypothesis revealed that $p = .054 > 0.05$. This showed that there is no significant relationship between level of work involvement of employees and service delivery in LGC. This simply means that the employees are not committed to the public service thereby showing negative attitudes towards citizen who has one or two things to do in the LGC. This finding is in contrast the work of Antwerpen & Ferreira (2016). According to them, most of the respondents indicated their loyalty and were satisfied with the service they were employed in at the time.

8. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, there is sharp contrast between administrative competence of employees and service delivery to the people.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are suggested:

- a) Local Government Commission in Ogun State needs to expose LG employees to in-service training and ensure that a high standard of efficiency and productivity is maintained at all times.
- b) There is also a need for Local Government Commissions to equip all councils in Ogun State with information communication technologies (ICTs) and train staff in the use of it so as to make their work efficient.
- c) The LG commission needs to ensure that, larger percentage of the employees in administrative department have appropriate qualification so as to discourage disservice to the people.

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