

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The historical evolution of local government administration has been shaped by political, economic, and social changes throughout the centuries. In ancient civilizations such as Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Greece, local administrative structures were already in place (Brown, 2017). The Roman Empire introduced a more formal system with provinces governed by appointed officials responsible for taxation, law, and order. During the medieval period, the feudal system dominated Europe, where local governance was decentralized and controlled by feudal lords. Towns and cities began to receive charters granting them self-governance, marking the beginning of municipal administration (Jones, 2019). The rise of nation-states in the early modern period led to more standardized local governance, with systems like England's shires and counties managed by appointed sheriffs becoming models for local administration (Taylor, 2016).

European colonial powers established local governments in their colonies, often replicating their home country's administrative structures (Mamdani, 2015). The Industrial Revolution in the 19th century brought rapid urbanization, creating new demands for local services and infrastructure, leading to significant reforms in local government structures to address urban issues (Green, 2020). The movement towards democracy in the 19th century also led to greater local self-governance, with municipalities gaining elected councils and mayors, increasing local accountability (Smith, 2018). The post-World War II era saw decolonization and the establishment of new local government systems in emerging nations, with local governments taking on essential service delivery and promoting local development (Johnson, 2022). The welfare state era in Western countries expanded the role of local governments in providing welfare services, making them significant players in education, health, and social services (Davis, 2020).

The late 20th and early 21st centuries have been marked by global trends towards decentralization, with national governments devolving powers to local levels. Local governments gained more responsibility for economic development, environmental management, and cultural promotion (Rondinelli, 2018). The rise of information technology has transformed local governance through e-governance and increased public participation, leading to innovations such as participatory budgeting and public-private partnerships (Holzer & Schwester, 2019). Contemporary local governments are increasingly focusing on sustainable development and building resilience to climate change, with urban planning and smart city initiatives becoming central to local administration (Khan, 2021). They also face the challenge of balancing the pressures of globalization with the preservation of local identity and culture, enhancing local economic competitiveness while ensuring inclusivity and equity (Castells, 2020). The evolution of local government administration reflects broader historical trends and continues to adapt to the changing needs and complexities of societies worldwide, playing a crucial role in shaping the lives of citizens and the development of communities (Hambleton, 2021).

The historical evolution of local government administration in Nigeria has been marked by a series of transformative phases. The colonial era laid the foundation for local administration, primarily serving the interests of the British Empire. Post-independence, efforts were made to decentralize power and resources, culminating in the 1976 Local Government Reform, a crucial step toward enhancing local autonomy and fostering grassroots development (Tobi and Oikhala, 2021). However, the subsequent years have witnessed a nuanced interplay of successes and challenges in achieving the intended objectives. The constitutional framework, as outlined in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, plays a pivotal role in shaping local government administration. The Fourth Schedule of the Constitution delineates the functions of local governments, emphasizing their responsibilities in providing essential services such as education, healthcare, agriculture, and infrastructure (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). This legal framework establishes the parameters within which local governments operate and underscores their significance in the broader governance structure.

The essence of local government administration, therefore, is to provide for the needs of the people at the grassroots (Akhakpe, 2012). The expediency for the creation of local government anywhere in the world stems from the need to facilitate development at the grassroots. The socio-economic impact of local government administrations, however, cannot be understated. Initiatives in infrastructure development, education, healthcare, and agriculture have positively influenced communities, elevating living standards and contributing to economic growth. Such contributions highlight the potential of local governments as catalysts for development in Nigeria (Olusola, 2011).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the constitutional provisions and various local government reforms on socio-economic development in Nigerian local government, the Ilorin West local government council presumably still suffers from inadequate finance, inadequate drugs, lack of technical manpower, and denial of autonomy. The local government faces significant challenges including inadequate finance, inadequate healthcare resources, shortage of technical manpower, and lack of autonomy (Edeh, 2017). These challenges are exacerbated by fiscal dependency on central government allocations, corruption, political instability, and inadequate institutional capacity (Berman & Wang, 2019; Christensen & Læg Reid, 2020; Manuela, 2021). Insufficient financial resources hinder local governments' ability to provide essential services and infrastructure, impacting healthcare, education, and infrastructure development (Smith, 2018).

The scarcity of healthcare resources, including drugs and medical supplies, contributes to poor health outcomes and undermines efforts to improve public health (Taylor, 2020). The shortage of technical manpower limits effective governance and service delivery, stemming from

insufficient training and the migration of skilled professionals (Picchi, 2018). Denial of autonomy and fiscal dependency on federal allocations restricts local governments' decision-making power and financial stability (Shortall & Shucksmith, 2015). Corruption within local administrations further erodes public trust and misappropriates resources meant for development (Anazodo, Igbokwe-Ibeto, Osawe & Nkah, 2014). Political instability and inadequate capacity exacerbate these challenges, hindering long-term planning and effective governance (Rondinelli, 2018).

1.3 Research Objective

The objective of this study is to identify the challenges of local government administration on socio-economic transformation in Ilorin West local government area, Kwara State.

1.4 Research question.

What are the obstacles of local government administration on socio-economic transformation in Ilorin West local government area, Kwara state?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is of great significance as it addresses the persistent challenges confronting local government administration and their implications for socio-economic development in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State. It is expected to provide valuable insights for policymakers, administrators, and stakeholders involved in grassroots governance. By identifying specific issues such as inadequate funding, corruption, political interference, and lack of autonomy, the study will inform the formulation and implementation of effective policies that can enhance administrative efficiency and developmental outcomes. Moreover, the study contributes to academic literature by offering empirical evidence on how local governments operate in a Nigerian context, particularly in Ilorin West. It will also raise public awareness regarding the responsibilities of local governments and the need for active civic participation in local governance.

1.6 Scope and Limitations

The scope of this study is limited to Ilorin West Local Government Area in Kwara State. It focuses specifically on the administrative challenges encountered by the local government and how these challenges impact the socio-economic development of the area. The study examines key sectors such as education, healthcare, infrastructure, and employment, all of which are critical to improving the living standards of the people. The time frame covered in the study spans from 2015 to 2024, a period marked by various political, economic, and institutional changes in Nigeria. However, the study is not without limitations.

One major limitation is the potential lack of access to comprehensive and reliable data from government sources, which may affect the depth of the analysis. Additionally, some respondents may be reluctant to disclose full information due to fear of reprisal or political sensitivities, leading to response bias. Time constraints also limited the extent of fieldwork and data validation, and the findings, while insightful, may not be entirely generalizable to other local government areas due to differences in socio-political contexts and administrative structures.

1.7 Definition of Terms

- i. Local Government Administration: The third tier of government closest to the people, responsible for grassroots governance and service delivery within a defined geographical area.
- ii. Socio-Economic Development: Improvement in both social and economic aspects of human life, including education, healthcare, employment, and income levels.
- iii. Governance: The processes and structures used to make decisions, exercise authority, and manage resources at the local level.
- iv. Ilorin West Local Government Area: One of the sixteen local government areas in Kwara State, Nigeria, known for its dense population and commercial activities.
- v. Challenges: Obstacles or difficulties faced by local governments in performing their

constitutional and developmental functions.

- vi. Stakeholders: Individuals or groups (e.g., government officials, community leaders, civil society) affected by or involved in local government operations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of existing literature relevant to the study on the challenges of local government administration and its impact on socio-economic development. The review explores scholarly perspectives, empirical studies, and policy reports that provide insights into the structure, functions, and performance of local government systems, particularly within the Nigerian context. Emphasis is placed on identifying the key administrative, financial, political, and institutional barriers that hinder effective service delivery and development at the local level. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the relationship between local governance and socio-economic development indicators such as education, healthcare, infrastructure, and employment. In addition, the chapter outlines the theoretical framework guiding the study, drawing on relevant administrative and development theories to explain the dynamics of local governance and development outcomes.

2.2 Conceptual Clarification

2.2.1 Local Government

Olukotun (2019) asserts that local government encompasses public sector institutions recognized and mandated by legal and constitutional means to perform specific functions at the community level, representing the lowest sub-national level of government. According to Iyoha, Ubhehin, and Aiya (2005), local government involves the administration of local affairs by the residents of a particular locality. Local government refers to government at the local level exercised through a representative council established by law to exercise specific powers within defined areas. These powers are intended to grant the council significant influence over local affairs, providing the necessary control over staff, institutions, and financial resources. This control enables the initiation and direction of service provision and the planning and execution of projects to complement the efforts of state and federal governments in their respective areas. The aim is to ensure that, through the devolution of functions to local councils and active involvement of the people and traditional institutions, local initiatives and responses to local needs and conditions are maximized. (FRN, 1976).

2.2.2 Local Government Administration

Local Government Administration refers to the process through which essential resources to local areas are effectively mobilized, controlled and utilized to ensure grassroots development (Amin & Olowookere, 2023).

2.2.3 Socio-Economic Transformation

Socio-economic transformation refers to a progression wherein a growing share of economic output and employment originates from sectors beyond agriculture. This transformative process signifies the transition from agrarian societies to urban, industrial, or service-oriented economies, marked by sustained high GDP growth rates. The combination of GDP growth and a decrease in population growth rates, stemming from advancements in educational access and quality, contributes to an elevation in GDP per capita, ultimately leading to a reduction in poverty (Mpango, 2013).

2.3 Empirical Review

Amin (2018) studied on the impact of internally generated revenue on community development in Asa Local Government Area, Kwara State. The study employed both primary and secondary data sources to investigate the revenue generation capacity of Asa Local Government and its effectiveness in financing community development. The findings revealed that while Asa Local Government receives revenue from statutory

federal allocations and internally generated sources particularly market rates, levies, and permit fees it continues to face significant developmental challenges including underdevelopment, irregular staff salary payments, and overall stunted growth. The study recommended the need for enhanced training, autonomy, and motivation of revenue collectors to boost their performance and accountability. The establishment of a transparent and community-inclusive revenue utilization framework is crucial to building taxpayer trust and encouraging compliance.

Myint (2000) conducted a study on corruption, its causes, consequences, and remedies. The article emphasized the imperative of consistently addressing the issue of corruption within the development agenda. It explores the causes and repercussions of corruption, particularly in the context of a least-developed country characterized by extensive regulation and centralized direction. The study identified factors such as the absence of transparency, accountability, consistency, and institutional weaknesses in legislative and judicial systems, as conducive to the proliferation of rent-seeking activities in such a nation. Additionally, the study underscores the emergence of an underground economy and the substantial social costs associated with corruption. It examines the adverse effects of corruption on income distribution, consumption patterns, investment, government budgets, and economic reforms. Furthermore, the paper touches upon the supply side of bribery, and its international dimensions, and offers insights on addressing the corruption issue to bring it under control.

Edeh (2017) addressed corruption in the Nigerian local government system and the way forward. The study revealed that corruption has permeated various sectors of the Nigerian economy, posing a significant threat to socio-economic development. The blatant mismanagement and looting of public financial resources contribute to the widespread poverty experienced by many Nigerians. This study delves into corrupt practices within the Nigerian local government system, utilizing the prebendalism theory. Employing content analysis, the researcher explores corruption issues, particularly at the local government level. The study identifies factors such as an unsettled value system, lack of commitment to the public good, poverty, greed, and the monetization of official positions as root causes of corruption in Nigeria. The study recommended strengthening institutions responsible for anti-corruption efforts, such as the EFCC and ICPC. It emphasizes the need for an inclusive approach, with no exemptions for those involved in corrupt practices. The study suggested promoting vigilant monitoring of financial activities within the local government system as part of a multifaceted strategy to curb corruption.

Ijewereme (2015) unravelling corruption in the Nigerian public sector that corruption poses a significant impediment to progress in Nigeria, consistently thwarting the achievement of national objectives despite the country's abundant natural and human resources. This article critically examines the concept of corruption, encompassing its various forms and its impact on the Nigerian State. It delves into the historical context, exploring corruption in public service from the era of Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa to President Goodluck Jonathan's administration. The article evaluates several theoretical frameworks, including idealistic, resource curse, two public, low risk–high benefit, and anomie theories. Ultimately, it adopts the resource curse and low risk–high benefit theories to elucidate the causes of corruption in Nigeria. Incorporating personal observations and data from Transparency International, the article sheds light on corrupt practices within the country. It concludes that corruption persists in the Nigerian Public Sector due to societal pressure, tribalism, nepotism, and the perceived low-risk–high benefits associated with engaging in corrupt activities. The article suggests various measures to counteract corruption in Nigeria.

Augustine (2020) studied financial management in local government: the challenges and prospects of the 21st century -Nigeria perspective. The study revealed that globally, governments have pursued various forms of public Financial Management (FM) reforms to improve the performance of Local Government (LG). Inadequate FM has contributed to the failure and inefficiency of LGs in achieving substantial development, with many facing challenges related to a significant gap between citizens' needs and available financial resources. Therefore, there is a need for a better understanding of the concept, challenges, steps, and roles of FM in LG. The study concluded that LG administrators should emulate their counterparts in the private sector by adopting modern FM practices. This approach can lead to increased efficiency, financial capability, transparency, and accountability in the delivery of goods and services. The study emphasized the importance of implementing a robust internal control mechanism to minimize fraud, corruption, and wastage affecting the LG system and grassroots development. Additionally, LGs are encouraged to consistently prepare accurate and reliable annual budgets, recognizing financial planning and control as crucial aspects of effective FM.

Okafor and Okafor (2023) delved into the autonomy of the Local Government System in Nigeria. The debate revolves around whether there is a legitimate need to grant substantial autonomy to this tier of government, allowing it to fulfil its constitutional roles and access funds, as outlined in sections 7, 162(5), and the 4th schedule of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended). On one hand, proponents argue in favour of autonomy, emphasizing the constitutional provisions; on the other hand, sceptics believe that pursuing absolute autonomy for any tier of government may be misguided. In contrast to Nigeria, some developed nations such as Brazil, Argentina, and the United States of America afford relative autonomy to their Local Governments. However, the scenario is different for Nigerian Local Government Councils. Despite being tasked with providing essential services to the local population, the controversy surrounding their autonomy raises questions about how effectively they can fulfil this role. This study critically examines the autonomy of the Nigerian Local Government to determine its utility or lack thereof for the Nigerian populace.

Lawal and Oladunjoye (2010) explored the interplay of local government, corruption, and democracy in Nigeria. The primary purpose of local government is to facilitate meaningful grassroots development through a participatory approach, with democracy serving as a crucial means to achieve this objective. However, in Nigeria, democracy has faced challenges at the grassroots level, primarily due to pervasive corruption. This study critically assessed the impact of corruption on grassroots democracy and development, concluding that curbing and penalizing corruption within the local government system is essential to enhance democratic participation among citizens and ensure effective service delivery.

Babaita and Amin (2024) explored the challenges facing local government administration in facilitating socio-economic development in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State. It utilized both primary and secondary sources of data. The findings revealed a consensus among respondents that fiscal dependence on higher tiers of government significantly undermines the financial autonomy of local governments. Furthermore, the study found that political instability characterized by frequent leadership changes hinders the continuity and sustainability of development initiatives. Additionally, respondents agreed that institutional weaknesses, including inadequate skilled personnel and fragile

administrative structures, constrain effective planning and execution of development projects. The study recommended regular and continuous capacity building for local government staff through training and retraining programs. It also advocates for the establishment and strengthening of financial control mechanisms to enhance transparency, ensure accountability, and enforce anti-corruption regulations within the council.

Amin and Babaita (2024) investigated the role of local government administration in promoting socio-economic transformation within Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State, utilizing the decentralization theory as the theoretical framework. The study employed both primary and secondary data sources. Findings indicated that respondents acknowledged that community input is generally considered in the planning and implementation of socio-economic initiatives. Moreover, the constitutional framework provides local governments with the authority to address the socio-economic needs of their communities.

Agbodike, Igbokwe-Ibeto, and Nkah, B.C (2014) conducted a study on Local Government Administration and the Hurdles in Achieving Sustainable Development in Nigeria. Local government administration plays a pivotal role as the primary tool for advancing and sustaining rural development, encompassing functions such as political education and mobilization. The study adopted the Basic Needs Approach (BNA) framework, the paper scrutinized the intricacies of local government administration and the impediments to achieving sustainable development in Nigeria. The analysis contends that local government administration grapples with issues such as interventions by federal and state governments in the constitutional responsibilities of local government, often serving as a conduit for dispensing political patronage to party loyalists. These challenges, among others, have hindered local government administration from delivering good governance and democratic dividends to the citizens. Drawing insights from experiences in both developed and developing countries in the globalized era, the study concludes that addressing the hurdles to sustainable rural development in Nigeria requires a return to true federalism, the establishment of positive leadership anchored on the rule of law, transparency, and accountability.

However, the local authorities also attempted to provide and improve social development once they gained autonomy (Reinikka, 2000). Formulating and implementing good local government administration requires enormous effort, and success depends on how this implementation and formulation are organized (Berman & Wang, 2019; Christensen & Lægveid, 2020). Most leaders at the local government level have a sit-tight mentality, which does not allow for new ideas, fresh initiatives, and innovation. Rather than concentrating on developmental efforts, some local government chairmen are busily boot-licking state governors and donors/donor agencies (Anazodo *et al* 2014). Shortall and Shucksmith (2015) emphasized that development is not just about increasing the goods and services provided and consumed by society. It also involves enabling communities to take control of their environment through empowerment, capacity building, carefully designed social animation, and the provision of suitable training and development institutions through central policies. Picchi (2018) stated that certain political institutional arrangements can help in development patterns, such as a rich network of services provided by local administrations for economic sectors and planning mechanisms aimed at strengthening development.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

The study adopts Decentralization Theory attributed to Rondinelli (1981), who provided one of the foundational frameworks analyzing government decentralization in developing countries. However, the broader concepts of fiscal decentralization and local governance trace back to earlier economists such as William E. Oates (1972), often considered the father of fiscal federalism theory, which closely relates to decentralization. The theory posits that transferring authority and resources from central to local governments enhances governance, service delivery, and socio-economic development (Rondinelli, 1981; Smoke, 2015). The theory assumes that local governments are better positioned to understand and meet their communities' specific needs due to their proximity, and that fiscal autonomy, political empowerment, and administrative capacity at the local level lead to greater efficiency and accountability (Faguet, 2014; Oates, 1972). It also assumes that decentralization encourages participatory governance and reduces bureaucratic delays (Tiebout, 1956).

However, challenges such as corruption, political interference, and weak institutional capacity can undermine these benefits, although such issues may be addressed through reforms and capacity building (Manor, 1999). The theory is particularly relevant to this study as it provides a framework to examine the fiscal dependency, corruption, political instability, and administrative weaknesses impacting local government administration in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State. It helps explain how limited local autonomy restricts the ability to initiate development projects and deliver public services effectively. Despite its widespread acceptance, decentralization theory has been critiqued for sometimes idealizing local governments as inherently more efficient, overlooking the potential for local elite capture, corruption, and inequality exacerbation (Bardhan & Mookherjee, 2006; Faguet, 2012). Moreover, persistent political interference from higher government levels and informal socio-political dynamics often limit true decentralization (Rondinelli, 1981; Crook & Manor, 1998). The applicability of this theory to the study lies in its capacity to highlight the gap between the ideal of local government autonomy and the practical realities faced by Ilorin West Local Government, particularly regarding financial dependence, corruption, and administrative capacity. Understanding these gaps through the lens of decentralization theory enables a critical assessment of how local governance can be improved to foster socio-economic development.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology employed in the study. It describes the research design, population of the study, sample size and sampling techniques, method of data collection, instrument used, validity and reliability of the instrument, and method of data analysis. The methodology was carefully structured to ensure accurate, reliable, and relevant data collection on the challenges of local government administration and socio-economic development in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State.

3.2 Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This design was considered appropriate because it allows the researcher to systematically collect and analyze data from a segment of the population to describe the current issues and challenges related to local government administration. It also provides room for the integration of both quantitative and qualitative data to gain a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

3.3 Population of the Study

The population of this study comprised eight hundred and thirty (830) individuals drawn from various departments in Ilorin West Local Government Area. This includes local government officials, administrative personnel, and other key stakeholders relevant to the research topic.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

In determining the sample size, Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size determination table was used. According to the table, a population of 830 requires a sample size of two hundred and sixty (260) respondents. Therefore, a total of 260 questionnaires were distributed across seven (7) departments within the Ilorin West Local Government Area using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure each department was adequately represented. Out of the 260 questionnaires distributed, 239 were successfully retrieved and used for analysis, representing a 92% response rate.

3.5 Method of Data Collection

The study utilized primary data, which was collected through the administration of structured questionnaires. The questionnaire was designed to obtain relevant information on administrative practices, challenges, and the impact of local government activities on socio-economic development. The questionnaire was distributed in person to ensure proper delivery and clarification of any ambiguities.

3.6 Instrument for Data Collection

The major instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire comprising both closed and open-ended questions. The questionnaire was divided into sections to capture demographic data, respondents' views on administrative challenges, and their perspectives on socio-economic development outcomes in the area. The structure of the instrument ensured that relevant and diverse aspects of the research objectives were addressed.

3.7 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

To ensure the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was reviewed by experts in local governance and public administration who evaluated its content, clarity, and relevance to the research objectives. A pilot test was conducted among 20 staff in a nearby local government area to test for ambiguity and consistency. For reliability, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient was calculated using SPSS version 21, yielding a reliability index of 0.78, which indicates a good level of internal consistency.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

The data collected from the 239 completed questionnaires were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. The analysis involved descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and mean scores to present respondents' views in a clear

and concise manner. Additionally, inferential statistics such as chi-square tests were employed where appropriate to examine relationships between variables. Data from open-ended responses were subjected to content analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of data collected through the administration of 260 questionnaires, out of which 239 were successfully retrieved and analyzed, representing a 92% response rate. The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. The analysis is presented in tables and interpreted accordingly to reflect the views of respondents on the challenges facing local government administration and its impact on socio-economic development in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State. The chapter includes analysis of demographic information, major findings related to the research objectives, and test of hypotheses where necessary.

4.2 Brief History of the Study Area

Ilorin West Local Government Area is one of the sixteen (16) local government areas in Kwara State, Nigeria. It was carved out of the former Ilorin Local Government in 1991 as part of efforts by the federal government to decentralize governance and bring development closer to the grassroots. The local government has its headquarters at Oja-Oba, an area known for its historical and traditional significance, including the Emir's Palace which serves as a major cultural landmark.

Ilorin West is the most urbanized and commercially active local government in Kwara State. It is strategically located within the state capital and comprises several well-known communities such as Oko-Erin, Adewole, Oloje, Ogidi, Ita-Amodu, Sabo-Oke, and Gaa Akanbi. The local government benefits from a blend of urban and traditional settlements, which has fostered a diverse socio-economic environment. According to the 2006 National Population Census, Ilorin West had a population of 365,221, and current estimates put the figure at over 500,000 due to steady urban growth and migration. The area is ethnically diverse but predominantly occupied by the Yoruba people. Other ethnic groups such as the Hausa, Fulani, Nupe, Igbo, and Tapa also reside in the area, contributing to its multicultural character.

The major language spoken in Ilorin West is Yoruba, particularly the Ilorin dialect. However, Hausa, English, and Arabic are also widely spoken due to the area's Islamic heritage and its role as a melting pot of various Nigerian cultures. Ilorin West is also noted for being a center of Islamic scholarship and culture, playing a historical role in the spread of Islam in Yorubaland. The local government area hosts a wide range of commercial activities, government institutions, markets, educational centers, and health facilities. Despite its developmental advantages, Ilorin West Local Government continues to grapple with administrative challenges such as poor funding, political interference, and infrastructural deficits, which have hindered its full socio-economic potential.

4.3. Data Presentation and Interpretation

Table 4.3.1. Bio Data

Sex	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Male	99	41.4%
Female	140	58.6
Staff categories	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Junior	8	3.3%
	142	59.4%
Senior	89	37.2%
Management		

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2025

The gender distribution of the respondents shows that out of the 239 participants, 99 were male, representing 41.4%, while 140 were female, accounting for 58.6%. This indicates that there were more female respondents than male, suggesting a female-majority participation in the study. In terms of staff categories, 8 respondents (3.3%) were junior staff, 142 respondents (59.4%) were senior staff, and 89 respondents (37.2%) were management staff. This reveals that the majority of the responses were obtained from senior and management staff who are more likely to be involved in administrative functions and decision-making processes within the local government, while junior staff had minimal representation.

Table 4.3.2. Challenges of Socio-Economic Transformation in Ilorin West Local

Government Area

S/N	Items	SD	D	U	A	S A	Total	Remark
1	Fiscal dependency on higher tiers of government limits the financial autonomy of local government.			8 (3.3%)	91 (38.1%)	140 (58.6%)	239 (100%)	Strongly Agree
2	Limited financial autonomy hampers the ability of local government to initiate and sustain development projects independently.	11 (4.6%)	9 (3.8%)	9 (3.8%)	60 (25.1%)	150 (62.8%)	239 (100%)	Strongly Agree
3	Corruption within local government administration, including misappropriation of funds, negatively impacts public trust.	21 (8.8%)	55 (23%)	28 (11.7%)	110 (46%)	25 (10.5%)	239 (100%)	Agree
4	Corruption fosters a culture of inefficiency, nepotism, and malpractice within local government operations.	21 (8.8%)	54 (22.6%)	37 (15.5%)	53 (22.2%)	74 (31%)	(100%)	Strongly Agree
5	Political instability, marked by frequent changes in leadership, disrupts the continuity of development initiatives within local governments.	Nil	9 (3.8%)	44 (18.4%)	116 (48.5%)	70 (29.3%)	239 (100%)	Strongly Agree
6	Inadequate capacity, including a lack of skilled personnel and weak administrative structures, impairs the planning and implementation of development projects.	47 (19.7%)	36 (15.1%)	11 (4.6%)	82 (34.3%)	63 (26.4%)	239 (100%)	Agree
7	The lack of administrative capacity limits the ability of local governments to effectively address the diverse and evolving needs of their communities.	58 (24.3%)	28 (11.7%)	24 (10%)	61 (25.5%)	68 (28.5%)	239 (100%)	Strongly Agree

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2025

The table reveals that an overwhelming majority of respondents strongly agree that fiscal dependency on higher tiers of government significantly limits the financial autonomy of local governments, with 58.6% strongly agreeing and 38.1% agreeing. Similarly, 62.8% strongly agree that limited financial autonomy hampers the ability of local governments to independently initiate and sustain development projects. Corruption within local government administration, particularly misappropriation of funds, is seen as a major problem by respondents, with 46% agreeing and 10.5% strongly agreeing that it negatively impacts public trust.

Additionally, 31% strongly agree that corruption fosters inefficiency, nepotism, and malpractice. Political instability characterized by frequent leadership changes was also strongly agreed upon (77.8%) as a factor disrupting the continuity of development initiatives. On capacity issues, although a smaller percentage (26.4%) strongly agreed that inadequate skilled personnel and weak administrative structures impair project planning and implementation, 34.3% agreed overall. Furthermore, 28.5% strongly agree and 25.5% agree that lack of administrative capacity limits local governments' ability to effectively address the evolving needs of their communities. These results highlight financial dependency, corruption, political instability, and administrative weaknesses as major challenges undermining local government effectiveness and socio-economic development in Ilorin West.

4.4. Discussion of Findings

Findings from the study showed that the majority of the respondents (58.6%) agreed that fiscal dependency on higher tiers of government limits the financial autonomy of local government. The finding is in line with Gauba (2014) who says Local government autonomy has been perceived as a panacea for the diverse challenges of the divergent people with different cultures. Fiscal autonomy is important for local government units to provide better services for the community and allocate funds based on local preferences. The degree of fiscal autonomy can be measured by the extent to which resources and responsibilities are under the control of local and regional governments. High dependency of municipalities on the central government is considered a limitation of local autonomy, making municipalities more dependent on central government funds

The majority of the respondents (62.8%) agreed that the limited financial autonomy hampers the ability of local government to initiate and sustain development projects independently. The result is similar to Manuela (2021) that financial autonomy is integral to local self-government, and restrictions on adequate financial resources prevent local governments from exercising their powers with the necessary autonomy. Pawel (2014) posited that the financial autonomy of local self-government is expressed through independence in obtaining funds and the independence of their spending. However, many local governments do not yet have the financial autonomy anticipated by the Charter, as they do not have adequate financial resources commensurate with their responsibilities that they may dispose of independently Manuela (2021). State governments release money to local governments only to pay staff salaries and in some instances, their staff are owed for months. Yet, financial paucity in local government administration could be blamed on a lack of seriousness on the part of local government administrators to explore internal sources of revenue generation (Agbodike, *et al*, 2014).

The majority of the respondents (46%) agreed that corruption within local government administration, including misappropriation of funds, negatively impacts public trust. The finding is in line with a previous study by Edeh (2017) that the prevalent forms of corruption within the local government include political, economic, and bureaucratic corruption. These manifest prominently through the mismanagement of financial resources, embezzlement, looting, kickbacks, inflation of contract terms, fraud, nepotism, and favouritism. Ijewereme (2015). asserted that cases of corruption inefficiency, nepotism, and embezzlement of public funds have been noticed in all parts of local government corruption involves the misuse of public office and resources by individuals in positions of power at the local level for personal gain or the benefit of select groups.

Lawal and Oladunjoye (2010) admitted that corruption stands as the primary obstacle to effective local government administration in Nigeria. At the grassroots level, corruption has become deeply ingrained, tolerated, and even celebrated within the system. Within the local government context, corruption is euphemistically termed "EGUNJE," a slogan that essentially signifies an "illegal offer" in Nigeria. Unfortunately, despite the assumption that democracy serves as a remedy for corruption, its effective practice is lacking at the grassroots level. Consequently, there is a prevalent sense of apathy, cynicism, and poverty among rural dwellers. Lawal and Oladunjoye (2010) believed that this situation, asserting that despite the establishment of the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), corruption still thrives in our society. In his analysis/ They contended that the hindrance to local government performance is no longer merely a lack of funds but rather the mismanagement and misappropriation of the funds allocated to it (Lawal, and Oladunjoye(2010). Odey (2002) mentioned that corruption in Nigeria is the air which every living person breathes in and out. According to him, nobody makes any effort to breathe in the air; it comes naturally. Corruption, in Nigeria, has become so naturalized that many of us simply become corrupt without making any effort and often even without knowing it.

The majority of the respondents (31%) agreed that corruption fosters a culture of inefficiency, nepotism, and malpractice within local government operations. The result is in line with Oru, Ude and Nnanemerem (2019) said that as significant as this tier of government has been, its autonomy has been a huge impediment which infringes on its performance as well as function ability in current times. This impediment is hinged on political but undue interference of the higher levels of government such as federal and state governments, coupled with the issue of corruption to embezzlement as well as gross inadequacy of well-trained and qualified personnel to bring about the much desired socio-economic development of local areas. These challenges range from political but undue interference of federal and state governments, coupled with the high rate of bribery and corruption to embezzlement and gross inadequacy of well-trained and qualified human resources among others (Akhakpe, Fatile&Igbokwe-Ibeto, 2012).

The majority of the respondents (48.5%) agreed that political instability, marked by frequent changes in leadership, disrupts the continuity of development initiatives within local governments. The finding is similar to Ademolekum (1983) who posited that official corruption in local governments, procedures for managing local government funds, incompetence and ignorance of both political and appointed officials and the prevailing attitude in the society which appears to be tolerant of corrupt behaviour on the part of elected and appointed leaders at every level of government.

The majority of the respondents (34.3%) agreed that inadequate capacity, including a lack of skilled personnel and weak administrative structures, impairs the planning and implementation of development projects. The result is in line with Akhakpe (2012) who stated that most public administrators are ill-trained and abhor training where available. The majority of the respondents (28.5%) agreed that lack of administrative capacity limits the ability of local governments to effectively address the diverse and evolving needs of their communities. Despite the constitutional provision which defined functions and sources of funding of the system, local governments in the country have not been able to extricate themselves from the apron string of state governments. State governors appoint Caretaker Committees to whom they dictate and direct how to run the operations of local governments in their respective states. Yet, these committees are dissolved at will (Agbodike et al 2014).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

The study revealed that the majority of respondents agreed that fiscal dependency on higher tiers of government significantly limits the financial autonomy of local governments. Fiscal autonomy is crucial for local governments to effectively meet the needs of their communities by controlling resources and making independent decisions. Similarly, most respondents agreed that limited financial autonomy hampers the ability of local governments to initiate and sustain development projects independently, highlighting the importance of adequate financial resources for effective local governance. Corruption was identified as a major challenge, with many respondents agreeing that misappropriation of funds damages public trust. Corruption within local government manifests through embezzlement, nepotism, inefficiency, and favoritism, which undermines the overall effectiveness of local administration.

Furthermore, respondents noted that corruption fosters a culture of inefficiency and malpractice, hindering socio-economic development. Political instability, characterized by frequent changes in leadership, was also seen as a factor disrupting the continuity of development initiatives within local governments. Inadequate administrative capacity, including a lack of skilled personnel and weak organizational structures, was found to impair the planning and implementation of development projects. Respondents agreed that these limitations reduce the ability of local governments to address the evolving needs of their communities effectively. Additionally, the dominance of state governments over local councils limits local autonomy and contributes to administrative inefficiencies.

5.2. Conclusion

The paper examined the challenges of local government administration in socio-economic transformation in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State. The paper concluded that fiscal dependency on higher tiers of government limits the financial autonomy of local government, and political instability and inadequate capacity are identified as the challenges of the Ilorin West Local Government Area.

5.3 Recommendations

Ilorin West local government staff should train and retrain frequently to improve skills and ensure greater efficiency. The local government autonomy should be activated to forestall the undue state governments' interference in the management of Ilorin West Local Government Council as stated in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Financial control mechanisms in the council should be

activated and reinforced to promote transparency and accountability. Grant greater fiscal autonomy to the local government to enable it to generate and manage its revenue effectively. The council should invest in training and capacity-building programs for local government officials to enhance their skills in governance, administration, and service delivery instead of hiring and engaging service consultants. There should be enforcement of laws against corrupt practices in the council. There is a need for recruitment of more staff with proper placement.

There should be implementation of transparent financial management practices to curb misappropriation and enhance accountability. Establish mechanisms for regular community engagement to involve citizens in decision-making processes. Encourage public participation in local development projects and initiatives to ensure they align with community needs and priorities. The government should prioritize and invest in critical infrastructure projects that address the specific needs of the local community. Develop and implement a comprehensive infrastructure development plan to enhance the socio-economic well-being of the residents. There is a need to integrate modern technology into local government operations for better data management, service delivery, and citizen engagement. Lastly, develop programs and initiatives that empower and engage the youth in skill acquisition and entrepreneurship.

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