CONTROL MECHANISMS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTONOMY IN KOGI STATE, NIGERIA: AN ASSESSMENT

WADA ENEJO

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
UNIVERSITI UTARA MALAYSIA
2025

CONTROL MECHANISMS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTONOMY IN KOGI STATE, NIGERIA: AN ASSESSMENT

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A thesis submitted to the Ghazali Shafie Graduate School of Government in fulfilment of the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Universiti Utara Malaysia

UUM

Kolej Undang-Undang, Kerajaan dan Pengajian Antarabangsa
(College of Law, Government and International Studies)
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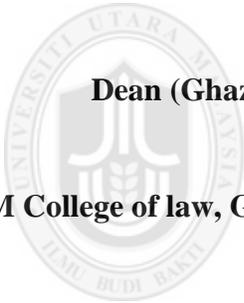
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ABSTRACT

Local government authority in Nigeria, particularly in Kogi State, is constrained by inadequate funds, political interference, corruption, mismanagement and administrative control issues. These constraints lead to ineffective service delivery, underdevelopment and loss of accountability and transparency in the governance system of the local government. Therefore, this study examined the control mechanisms affecting local government autonomy in Kogi State, Nigeria. The objective of this study was to explore how various control mechanisms, such as financial oversight, political influence, and administrative constraints, affect the ability of the local governments to perform their constitutional functions and achieve autonomy. This study employed a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research to comprehensively analyze the relationship between control mechanisms and local government autonomy in Kogi State. The study employed a case study design and the qualitative data were analyzed using content analysis and thematic analysis. For quantitative data, the cross-sectional survey research design was employed and the data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The research identified several key challenges faced by local governments in Kogi State, including corruption, inadequate funding, undue political interference, and the elite capture of local government administration. Through an in-depth analysis, the study highlighted the implications of these challenges for local governance, particularly their effects on democratic processes and service delivery. The findings suggested that despite constitutional provisions for local government autonomy, state government interference continued to undermine the effectiveness of local councils' administration in Kogi State. Theoretically, this study contributed to the use of the system and structural functionalism theory in studying the context of control mechanisms in improving local government authority. From a practical point of view, the study proposed several recommendations to enhance local government autonomy, including improved budgetary allocations, stronger financial oversight mechanisms, reduced political interference, and anti-corruption measures to safeguard local government functions. These recommendations aim to improve governance, promote decentralization, and ensure better service delivery to the citizens of Kogi State.

Keywords: Local Government Autonomy, Financial Oversight, Political Influence, Administrative Constraints, Good Governance.

ABSTRAK

Pihak berkuasa kerajaan tempatan di Nigeria, terutamanya di Negeri Kogi, menghadapi masalah kekurangan dana, campur tangan politik, rasuah, salah urus dan masalah kawalan pentadbiran. Kekangan-kekangan ini membawa kepada penyampaian perkhidmatan yang tidak berkesan, kemunduran dan kehilangan akauntabiliti serta ketelusan sistem tadbir urus kerajaan tempatan. Oleh itu, kajian ini akan mengkaji pengaruh mekanisma kawalan ke atas autonomi kerajaan tempatan di Negeri Kogi, Nigeria. Objektif kajian ini adalah untuk menerokai bagaimana pelbagai mekanisma kawalan seperti pengawasan kewangan, pengaruh politik dan kekangan pentadbiran mempengaruhi keupayaan kerajaan tempatan untuk melaksanakan fungsi perlembagaan mereka dan mencapai autonomi dalam pentadbiran. Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan *mixed method* dengan menggabungkan penyelidikan kualitatif dan kuantitatif untuk memberikan analisis menyeluruh mengenai hubungan antara mekanisma kawalan dan autonomi kerajaan tempatan di Negeri Kogi. Kajian ini menggunakan reka bentuk kajian kes dan data kualitatif dianalisis menggunakan analisis kandungan dan analisis tematik. Bagi data kuantitatif, reka bentuk kajian tinjauan keratan rentas telah digunakan dan data dianalisis menggunakan perisian *Statistical Package for Social Sciences* (SPSS). Kajian ini mengenal pasti beberapa cabaran utama yang dihadapi oleh kerajaan tempatan di Negeri Kogi, termasuk rasuah, pembiayaan yang tidak mencukupi, campur tangan politik yang tidak wajar dan penangkapan penyalahgunaan kuasa pentadbiran kerajaan tempatan oleh golongan elit. Berdasarkan analisis yang mendalam, kajian ini mendapati cabaran-cabaran dalam tadbir urus kerajaan tempatan ini memberikan implikasi terhadap proses demokrasi dan penyampaian perkhidmatan. Dapatan kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa walaupun terdapat peruntukan perlembagaan untuk autonomi kerajaan tempatan, campur tangan kerajaan negeri terus menjejaskan keberkesanan pentadbiran kerajaan tempatan di Negeri Kogi. Secara teorinya, kajian ini menyumbang kepada penggunaan teori sistem dan *functionalism* struktur dalam mengkaji konteks mekanisma kawalan untuk meningkatkan autonomi kerajaan tempatan. Dari sudut praktikal, kajian ini mencadangkan beberapa saranan untuk meningkatkan autonomi kerajaan tempatan, termasuk peruntukan bajet yang lebih tinggi, mekanisma pengawasan kewangan yang lebih kukuh, pengurangan campur tangan politik dan pelaksanaan langkah-langkah anti-rasuah untuk melindungi fungsi kerajaan tempatan. Cadangan-cadangan ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan tadbir urus, mempromosikan desentralisasi dan memastikan penyampaian perkhidmatan yang lebih baik kepada rakyat Negeri Kogi.

Kata Kunci: Autonomi Kerajaan Tempatan, Pengawasan Kewangan, Pengaruh Politik, Kekangan Pentadbiran, Tadbir Urus Yang Baik.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Finally, my appreciation goes to my late father Joshua Wada Okolo for laying a solid foundation of western education for me and my siblings. My appreciation also goes to my mother late Daina Omeko Wada who died at the verge of the completion of this programme. This acknowledgement would not be complete without mentioning the efforts of my loving wife Mrs Martina Wada for her understanding, continued support and encouragement throughout the thick and thin of this programme. I am also grateful to my children, Godswill, Gladys and Victory for their understanding throughout the period of this study.

In conclusion, I thank my friends and well-wishers that contributed in one way or the other to the success of my programme.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

FGN	Federal Government Nigeria
GL	Grade Level
LGA	Local Government Area
LGC	Local Government Council
SJLGA	State Joint Local Government Account
DLG	Director of Local Government
DPM	Director of Personnel Management

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Governance within federal systems presents complex challenges, particularly in the context of balancing autonomy and oversight among the different tiers of government. In Nigeria, these challenges are deeply rooted in the constitutional and institutional frameworks that define the relationship between federal, state, and local governments. Local governments, established as the third tier of government, are constitutionally mandated to operate with autonomy, serving as a critical platform for grassroots governance, service delivery, and development. However, the practical realities of their functioning reveal significant deviations from these constitutional ideals, a phenomenon that has sparked extensive debates within the academic, legal, and governance communities.

A key area of contention lies in the mechanisms through which state governments exert control over local government operations. These control mechanisms, ranging from financial constraints to personnel oversight and politically motivated appointments, undermine the capacity of local governments to function effectively. Such practices not only erode the constitutional promise of autonomy but also impede the broader objectives of federalism, which include promoting democratic governance, fostering local development, and ensuring responsiveness to community needs. The state of Kogi exemplifies these challenges, presenting a case where state interference has severely constrained the operational autonomy of local government councils. This interference manifests in the mismanagement of statutory allocations, delays in fund disbursement, and the appointment of administrators who may prioritize political loyalty over governance efficiency. Consequently, the ability of local governments in Kogi State to implement developmental initiatives and provide essential services has been significantly compromised. These issues underscore a pressing need to critically examine the dynamics of state-local relations within Nigeria's federal framework.

This study situates itself within the broader discourse on federalism and governance in Nigeria, aiming to analyze the extent and implications of state control over local government autonomy, with a specific focus on Kogi State. By interrogating the alignment of these control practices with constitutional provisions and their impact on governance outcomes, the research seeks to contribute to the ongoing debates on federalism and decentralization. The findings of this study are expected to offer actionable insights into how governance structures can be strengthened to ensure that local governments operate

as effective, autonomous entities capable of addressing the needs of their constituencies. In doing so, this research not only engages with theoretical discussions on federalism but also addresses practical governance challenges, providing a foundation for policy recommendations aimed at enhancing the sustainability of local government autonomy in Nigeria.

1.2 Background of the Study

Nigeria's governance structure has undergone various reform initiatives aimed at redefining the relationships between federal, state, and local governments. These reforms, particularly the 1976 Local Government Reforms, elevated local governments to the status of the third tier of administration, granting them autonomous powers. The intention was to enable local governments to provide essential social services and spearhead grassroots developmental initiatives (Ezeanokwasa and Omena, 2022). Despite this, the practical realization of autonomy remains fraught with challenges.

Local government autonomy in Nigeria is enshrined in the 1999 Constitution, which underscores the importance of representative councils with significant authority over local matters. This framework was intended to enhance service delivery and project implementation, complementing efforts at the state and federal levels. Nigeria's federal structure is unique, comparable to Brazil's, in designating local governments as the third tier of governance (Agboeze, M. U., Eze, G. C., Nweke, P. O., Igwe, N. J., Imo, O. C., Okop, E. O., ... &Otu, M. S. (2021). This designation theoretically limits state governments' control over local governance. However, the implementation of autonomy

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continues to face significant barriers, particularly in areas such as personnel management, institutional administration, financial management, and developmental planning. These limitations have undermined the effectiveness of local governance in Nigeria, including Kogi State.

The governance framework for local governments in Nigeria includes constitutional provisions, statutory regulations, and administrative practices. Local governments derive their funding primarily from the Federation Account but rely on the State Joint Local Government Account that is been managed by state governments. Furthermore, local government elections are supervised by State Independent Electoral Commissions, which limits their independence. This governance framework creates ambiguities that state governments have exploited, eroding the autonomy of local councils.

Kogi State, located in the North-Central region of Nigeria, has 21 local government areas. These councils are tasked with implementing grassroots development initiatives, managing primary healthcare systems, and ensuring local economic development. However, these councils face significant structural and operational challenges, including political interference, inadequate funding, and limited administrative capacity. Local governments in Kogi State also contend with issues such as poor revenue generation, over-reliance on federal allocations, and the imposition of handpicked leaders by state governments.

The characteristics of these councils reflect broader national trends but are exacerbated by unique local factors. For instance, data reveals that less than 30% of local government budgets in Kogi State are allocated to developmental projects, while administrative costs dominate expenditures.

Table 1.1 provides a comparative overview of the budget allocations, governance structures, and project implementation outcomes of selected local government councils in Kogi State.

Table 1.1 Overview of Governance Characteristics in Local Government Councils in Kogi State

Indicator	Council A	Council B	Council C	State Average
Annual Budget (USD)	1,000,000	850,000	900,000	916,666
Percentage Allocation to Development	25%	30%	20%	25%
Revenue from Local Sources	10%	15%	12%	12.30%
Projects Completed (2023)	3	4	2	3
State – Appointed Officials (%)	80%	70%	75%	75%

Source: Kogi State Local Government Fiscal White Paper, 2021

The governance framework of local governments in Nigeria encompasses control mechanisms such as financial oversight, jurisdictional boundaries, and state-level regulations. Local governments are expected to operate as self-governing entities under federalism. According to Nwabueze (cited in Adeyemo, 2005), autonomy in federalism necessitates that each level of government conducts its affairs independently, without undue interference from other levels. However, in practice, state governments often encroach upon local government jurisdictions, undermining this autonomy. For example, state governments frequently control local government finances and appointments, reducing their capacity to function effectively.

Historically, the 1976 Local Government Reforms and subsequent constitutional provisions sought to establish a robust framework for local governance. The 1979 Constitution reaffirmed the statutory nature of local governments, emphasizing democratically elected councils. However, the civilian government between 1979 and 1983 and subsequent military regimes compromised this autonomy. Efforts by the Babangida administration in the late 1980s to abolish State Ministries of Local Government and strengthen council independence marked a significant attempt to restore autonomy. Despite these efforts, the 1999 Constitution linked local governments to state governments, creating a dependency that undermines their functionality.

In recent years, local governments have reverted to pre-1976 configurations, with state governments determining the tenure and operational frameworks for local councils. This erosion of autonomy is further exacerbated by state-controlled elections, where governors appoint party loyalists as council chairpersons rather than conducting transparent elections.

1.3   Problem Statement

Local government autonomy in Nigeria, particularly in Kogi State, is constrained by numerous factors that hinder the effective functioning of these institutions. Despite constitutional provisions meant to empower local governments, their autonomy remains limited, largely due to existing control mechanisms and systemic challenges. This has raised concerns about governance, service delivery, and the overall effectiveness of local governments in fulfilling their mandates.

One of the significant constraints is the financial control mechanism enshrined in Section 162(6) of the 1999 Constitution, which governs the allocation and management of funds for local governments. This provision restricts financial independence, subjecting local governments to the oversight and control of state governments. Consequently, the limited financial autonomy curtails the ability of local governments to execute development projects and deliver essential services effectively.

In addition to financial constraints, the following issues exacerbated the problem: Weaknesses in Existing Control Mechanisms: The lack of clarity and enforcement of control measures has further led to ambiguities in the roles and responsibilities of local and state governments, fostering inefficiencies. Legislative, administrative, and financial control mechanisms designed to ensure accountability and efficiency are often ineffective or misapplied. These mechanisms tend to centralize power, creating an imbalance that undermines local government autonomy.

State Government Interference: State government interference over local government affairs is a significant issue in Kogi State, Nigeria. The local governments are often crippled by state government control, which hinders their ability to function effectively. This interference takes many forms, including financial control, administrative control and electoral interference. This interference has serious consequences on the local government system in Kogi state. These consequences include amongst others ineffective service delivery, underdevelopment, loss of accountability and transparency of the governance system of the local government. Frequent political interference by state governments erodes local decision-making authority. This interference is manifested in the appointment of caretaker committees and the manipulation of budgetary processes, which reduces the operational independence of local government councils.

Corruption and Mismanagement: Corruptions and mismanagement are significant challenges facing local government in Kogi State. These issues manifest itself in embezzlement of funds. Local government officials always divert funds meant for

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development projects into personal accounts or use them for non-essential activities. Contract inflation is another aspect of corruption in the local government system of Kogi state. Officials at the local government level most times inflate contract values and demand kickbacks from contractors in exchange for awarding contracts.

Local government usually mismanage resources such as land, water and infrastructure leading to underdevelopment and poverty. Corruption within local governments, coupled with the embezzlement of public funds, have contributed to governance failures. These issues have diminished public trust and weakened the institutional integrity of local governments. Institutional and Capacity Deficiencies: These twin issues constitute significant challenges facing local government system in Kogi state, Nigeria and this is demonstrated in weak governance structures. Local government in Nigeria often have weak governance structures which includes inadequate council systems, ineffective committee systems, and poor oversight mechanisms. Inadequate legislative framework is another teething challenge of local government in Kogi state. The legislative framework governing local government in Nigeria is usually inadequate with outdated laws and regulations that hinders effective governance. Capacity deficiencies on the other hand manifest itself in limited human resource capacity, inadequate training, limited access to technology and poor infrastructure.

Government officials normally receive inadequate training and development opportunities and this hinders their ability to effectively perform their duties. Many local governments in Kogi State lack the institutional capacity, skilled workforce, and adequate resources to plan, implement, and monitor development initiatives effectively. This weakness exacerbates governance inefficiencies and limits service delivery.

Impact on Governance and Service Delivery: The cumulative effect of these challenges have been poor service delivery, infrastructure decay, underdevelopment, corruption, lack of accountability and increasing social unrest. The inability of local governments to meet the expectations of the populace has highlighted the need for structural reforms. The core problem lies in the inadequacies and controversies of the current control mechanisms and their adverse relationship with local government autonomy. This thesis aims to investigate these challenges comprehensively by: Evaluating the effectiveness of local governments in Kogi State in the delivery of good governance and public services to the people, analyzing the existing legislative, administrative, and financial control mechanisms focusing on their impact on local government functionality, measuring the relationship between control mechanisms and local government autonomy specifically in areas such as decision-making power, budgetary independence, and administrative functions, proposing actionable recommendations to address state government interference, strengthen local government autonomy, and promote governance transparency and accountability.

In addressing these gaps, this research seeks to contribute to the discourse on local governance reforms in Nigeria, with a particular focus on improving the autonomy and effectiveness of local governments in Kogi State.

1.4 Research Questions

This study seeks to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges facing control mechanisms and local government autonomy in Kogi State, with a particular emphasis on how these challenges impact governance and service delivery. The following research questions are proposed:

i. What factors limit Kogi State local governments' ability to perform their constitutional functions?

ii. How does the control mechanisms imposed by Kogi State Government affect the autonomy of local governments in the state?

iii. To what extent do the existing control mechanisms impact the autonomy and decision-making power of local governments in Kogi State?

iv. Why have local governments in Kogi State struggled to provide essential social services to their constituents, despite constitutional mandates?

v. What frameworks or mechanisms can be developed to effectively check the excesses of the state government in local government affairs within Kogi State?

1.5 Research Objectives

The overarching goal of this study is to analyze the interplay between control mechanisms and local government autonomy in Kogi State. The following specific objectives are outlined to guide the research process:

i.   To assess the effectiveness of local governments in Kogi State in fulfilling their constitutional mandates, by evaluating the extent to which local governments meet the required standards of governance and service delivery.

ii.   To identify and analyze the existing control mechanisms on local governments in Kogi State, including legislative, administrative, and financial controls, and how these mechanisms influence local government functioning.

iii. To evaluate the relationship between control mechanisms and local government autonomy in Kogi State, with a focus on how these mechanisms influence decision-making, budgetary independence, and administrative functions.

iv.   To develop actionable frameworks and recommendations to reduce state government interference in local government affairs, aiming to strengthen local government autonomy and enhance governance transparency and accountability in Kogi State.

1.6   Research Scope

This study focuses on assessing control mechanisms and local government autonomy in Kogi State, Nigeria. The scope is outlined as follows to ensure a focused and comprehensive investigation:

i.   Geographical Focus

This research is confined to Kogi State, Nigeria, with a particular emphasis on the local government councils operating within the state. The study examines the operational dynamics of these councils and evaluates the degree of autonomy they possess within the broader framework of Nigeria's federal structure.

ii.   Temporal Scope

The study spans a decade, from 2012 to 2022, encompassing significant political and administrative transitions. This timeframe includes the governance periods of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) administration under President Goodluck Jonathan and the All-Progressives Congress (APC) administration under President Muhammadu Buhari. By focusing on this period, the research captures evolving trends and reforms in local government administration and their implications for autonomy.

iii.   Thematic Focus

The core focus of this study is the interaction between control mechanisms and local government autonomy. It investigates the extent to which political control, administrative oversight, and policy decisions have influenced the functionality and independence of local governments in Kogi State. The research further explores how political transitions and leadership changes during the specified period have impacted local governance.

iv. Theoretical Framework

The study employs relevant theories of local government administration, including decentralization theory and fiscal federalism, to analyze the degree of autonomy exercised by local councils. These theories provide a foundation for evaluating the structure, roles, and limitations of local governments within the political and administrative context of Kogi State.

v. Scope Limitations

While acknowledging historical developments before 2012, the research remains primarily focused on the 2012–2022 period. It does not extend its analysis to local governments in other Nigerian states or other countries. However, insights drawn from Kogi State's local governance are intended to contribute to the broader discourse on local government autonomy within Nigeria.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This research holds substantial implications and potential contributions to various stakeholders, knowledge advancement, policy formulation, and practical applications within the field of local government autonomy in Nigeria, particularly in Kogi State. The significance of this study lies in its potential to advance academic understanding of the complex relationship between control mechanisms and local government autonomy, which remains a critical area of political science, public administration, and governance studies.

By examining the issue of local government autonomy within the specific context of Kogi State, this study aims to provide in-depth insights that would enrich the existing body of knowledge. The findings would enhance understanding of the dynamics at play between central government control and local government autonomy, offering an important perspective on governance practices in Nigeria. The various aspects of its significance include the following:

i. Policy Implications: The findings of this study are expected to offer valuable insights for policymakers and government officials at both the state and federal levels in Nigeria. The study would provide evidence-based recommendations to strengthen local government autonomy, optimize control mechanisms, and improve the delivery of essential services at the grassroots level. These findings would help inform policy decisions aimed at empowering local governments, which is crucial for fostering democratic governance in Nigeria.

i. Empowering Communities: Greater autonomy for local governments is vital to empowering communities. This research would contribute to the creation of an environment that promotes active citizen engagement in decision-making processes and local development projects. Such empowerment can lead to better local governance, where communities take ownership of their development, ultimately contributing to the strengthening of democratic practices at the grassroots level.

ii. Benefit to Local Government Administrators: Local government administrators and officials in Kogi State would benefit significantly from this research. The findings would provide them with a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities they face within their jurisdiction. This knowledge would be critical in identifying areas that require improvement and in developing more effective strategies for managing local government affairs.

iii. Accountability and Transparency: This research also aims to address gaps in accountability by rigorously analyzing the existing control mechanisms. Through identifying and addressing these gaps, the study would contribute to enhancing transparency and accountability in local government operations. This would ultimately improve service delivery to citizens who rely on these essential services, thereby fostering trust in government institutions.

iv. Public Awareness and Citizen Engagement: By sharing the research findings, this study would play an essential role in enhancing public understanding of the importance of local government autonomy in Nigeria. This awareness can empower citizens, civil society organizations, and advocacy groups to advocate for reforms that strengthen local governance systems. It would also contribute to ensuring that local governments are better able to fulfill their constitutional responsibilities, benefiting Nigerian citizens at large.

In conclusion, this research has the potential to significantly advance knowledge in political science and public administration, inform policy development, empower local communities, benefit local government officials, foster accountability, and raise public awareness of the critical role local government autonomy plays in Nigeria. Ultimately, it aims to contribute to the improvement of governance and service delivery at the grassroots level, benefiting the citizens of Kogi State and serving as a reference material for similar studies in other regions of Nigeria.

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

To enhance clarity and establish a consistent understanding of the concepts central to this research, the following key terms are operationally defined.

Local Government

Local government, as distinct from local administration, refers to an independent governance structure established under the Nigerian Constitution. It operates as the third tier of government, directly interacting with the grassroots to harness human and material resources for sustainable development. Local government serves as a platform for the formulation and implementation of policies aimed at improving the socio-economic and political well-being of citizens. In the Nigerian context, it is vested with constitutional functions such as service delivery, community governance, and infrastructure development, ensuring alignment with the cultural, traditional, and constitutional framework of the nation.

Control Mechanisms

Control mechanisms refer to the regulatory and supervisory frameworks instituted by state-level government agencies to oversee the activities of local governments. In Kogi State, such mechanisms include oversight by the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, the Local Government Service Commission, and the Office of the Auditor General for Local Government. These mechanisms are designed to ensure accountability, compliance with standards, and effective coordination, but they often raise questions about their impact on local government autonomy.

Autonomy of Nigerian Local Government

Local government autonomy denotes the extent to which local government councils can independently define their operational scope, manage resources, and make decisions without undue interference from higher levels of government. In this research, autonomy specifically refers to the ability of Kogi State's local governments to exercise self-governance in fiscal, administrative, and political matters, as enshrined in the Nigerian Constitution. The study examines the tension between autonomy and control mechanisms, focusing on how these dynamics influence governance outcomes at the grassroots level.

Ineffectiveness

Ineffectiveness, in the context of this research, describes a condition where local governments fail to achieve their intended objectives. This may manifest in poor service delivery, inadequate resource management, or an inability to foster development at the grassroots. In Kogi State, ineffectiveness is analyzed as a consequence of constrained

autonomy, systemic inefficiencies, and challenges in implementing constitutional mandates.

1.9   Organization of Chapters

This study is structured into five chapters:

Chapter One provides the Introduction to the research, outlining the study's background, the Problem Statement, Research Questions, Research Objectives, and Research Scope. It also details the Significance of the Study and offers clear Definitions of Key Terms, including Local Government, Control Mechanisms, Autonomy of Nigerian Local Government, Inability, and Ineffectiveness.

Chapter Two presents a comprehensive Literature Review, critically examining key concepts related to the study. Topics discussed include the History of Local Government in Nigeria, the Establishment and Evolution of Nigeria's Local Government System, and a detailed analysis of Kogi State's Local Governments. This chapter further explores Local Government Autonomy, addressing challenges such as Balancing Powers and Responsibilities, the Quest for Autonomy, and the Limitations to Local Government Autonomy in Nigeria. The review covers Control Mechanisms on local government operations, with a specific focus on Kogi State, examining the Factors Affecting the Effectiveness of Control Mechanisms and their Consequences on Service Delivery. The chapter also explores Good Governance indicators within Kogi State, drawing comparisons with other states in Nigeria, and provides an empirical and theoretical framework for understanding the issues. Additionally, a Conceptual Framework

discussing factors contributing to the failure of local governments to meet constitutional obligations, including theoretical perspectives such as System Theory and Structural Functionalism, were explored. A summary of the gaps in existing literature is also provided.

Chapter Three focuses on the Research Methodology, detailing the Research Design, Population and Sampling Techniques, and Unit of Analysis. The chapter elaborates on the Data Collection Methods, encompassing both Primary and Secondary Data. It also covers the Method of Data Analysis, which includes Descriptive Statistics and Qualitative Methods. Ethical considerations related to the study are also addressed.

Chapter Four presents the Data Presentation and Analysis, starting with an overview of the Demographic Data Analysis. It then moves on to the Discussion of Findings, interpreting the results in the light of the research objectives and relevant literature. The chapter addresses Unexpected or Contradictory Findings, their potential explanations, and discusses the Practical and Theoretical Implications of the results. It also highlights the Policy Implications of the findings and concludes with a summary of the study's relevance.

Chapter Five concludes the study with a Summary of Findings, Conclusion, and Recommendations. It offers Suggestions for Future Research and outlines the limitations and implications of the study for further exploration.

1.10 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter provides an introduction to the study, which aims to assess the impact of control mechanisms on local government autonomy in Nigeria, with a specific focus on Kogi State. It presents the background and context of the study, highlighting the key issues related to the subject matter. The problem statement, carefully formulated, outlines the challenges surrounding local government autonomy in Kogi State and the influence of control mechanisms, both from state and federal levels. Following the problem statement, the study sets forth the research questions and objectives designed to address the identified issues. These research objectives are central to understanding how control mechanisms either strengthen or undermine the autonomy of local governments in Nigeria, specifically within Kogi State. The significance of the study is discussed, emphasizing its contribution to the ongoing discourse on governance and decentralization in Nigeria, and its potential to inform policy recommendations. Additionally, this chapter provides a clear scope of the study, outlining the geographical and temporal boundaries within which the research is conducted. Critical terms integral to the study are defined, ensuring clarity and consistency in their application throughout the research. In conclusion, this chapter offers an overview of the structure of the thesis. The next chapter review s the existing literature and theoretical frameworks that inform this study, addressing gaps identified in previous research and establishing the foundation for the subsequent analysis.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter critically explores the literature on local government autonomy and control mechanisms in Nigeria, with a particular focus on Kogi State. The review transitions from a descriptive to a discussion-based approach, analyzing key themes such as Control Mechanisms in Local Governance, Local Government Autonomy, and Challenges of Local Governance in Nigeria. These themes are synthesized to present a nuanced understanding of the interplay between autonomy and control, highlighting areas of agreement, debate, and research gaps.

2.2 The Concept of Local Government

It is widely accepted that local governments, being closest to the people, can better understand and address the specific challenges within their communities. When autonomous, local governments have the authority to tailor development projects to their unique contexts, from infrastructure to social services. Studies such as those by Atisa, G., Zemrani, A., & Weiss, M. (2021 argue that local governments, by responding directly to

local needs, can enhance community development, which cumulatively contributes to national progress. However, there are contradictions in the literature regarding the effectiveness of these initiatives. While some studies highlight successful outcomes, others, such as Olamide (2021), point out that local governments often lack the capacity to fully implement projects due to resource constraints or political interference.

Akinwale, A. A. (2020).) describes local government as a public body vested with authority over local affairs, including policymaking and implementation within a defined territory. This perspective emphasizes the legal and functional autonomy of local governments. However, a critical analysis reveals that the extent of this autonomy is often constrained by overarching national policies, raising questions about the true independence of local authorities.

Similarly, Adetiba, T. C. (2017) highlights the United Nations' definition of local government as a geographical community without sovereignty but possessing legal authority for self-governance. While this underscores the decentralized nature of local governments, it also exposes inherent limitations, such as dependency on higher levels of government for resources and legislative backing.

The literature acknowledges local governments as essential for efficient service delivery due to their proximity to communities (Anikeze, N. (2012). This view aligns with Adeyemi's (2019) assertion that local governments serve as collaborative entities bridging residents and central authorities.

However, this collaborative model often faces challenges related to overlapping responsibilities and resource allocation, which merit further exploration. From a structural perspective, local governments are often described as the third tier of government, situated below national and state levels (Bolatito, S. & Ibrahim, B. S. (2014). This positioning enables them to exercise political authority through representative councils. However, this hierarchical arrangement may dilute their decision-making power, particularly in federal systems where state governments exert significant influence.

The role of local governments in unitary and federal systems is a recurring theme. Boris, O. H. (2015) argue that decentralizing government activities promotes equitable resource distribution and community engagement. However, excessive centralization—whether political or administrative—can stifle local initiatives and hinder development, suggesting a need for balanced governance structures. Atisa, G., Zemrani, A., & Weiss, M. (2021) differentiates between councils serving smaller towns ("local") and those resembling governmental entities ("government"). While this distinction offers clarity, it also highlights disparities in capacity and authority among local councils, which may affect their ability to address community needs effectively. Decentralization frameworks, such as devolution and de-concentration, further illustrate the complexities of local governance (Asaju, K. (2010). Devolution transfers political and administrative authority to local entities, empowering them with decision-making capabilities.

In contrast, de-concentration focuses on administrative decentralization without substantial political autonomy. Nigeria's historical preference for administrative extensions rather than devolved governance highlights a systemic challenge in achieving true local autonomy. Local government operates as the lowest tier of governance, characterized by administrative independence and a defined geographic area. While its role varies globally, its unique attributes in Nigeria warrant critical examination.

One of the fundamental characteristics is its constitutionally guaranteed autonomy, which ensures its legal recognition and permanence (Arugu, L. O., & Eke, D. I. (2019). However, this autonomy is often contested by oversight from higher government levels, raising questions about the balance between independence and control. Scholars such as Eme (2009) argue that while autonomy enables local governments to address grassroots needs effectively, excessive oversight can undermine their capacity to function independently. This tension invites further discussion about the optimal framework for local government operations in Nigeria.

Another distinctive feature is the localized nature of its governance. Local governments are designed to cater to specific populations within defined geographic boundaries. This setup theoretically allows for tailored service delivery. However, discrepancies in population size and resource distribution among local governments often lead to inefficiencies, posing significant challenges to equity and service delivery. This discussion aligns with Anikeze, N. (2012) observations about structural disparities.

Moreover, local government structures typically involve elected councils and administrative units. While these structures aim to enhance accountability and streamline operations, the effectiveness of elected officials in representing community interests often varies. This raises critical questions about electoral processes and their impact on governance at the local level.

2.3 Local Government Autonomy

The concept of autonomy, derived from the Greek words "auto" (self) and "nomos" (law), has evolved across various disciplines, notably in political science, law, and the natural sciences. While autonomy in the natural sciences emphasizes organic freedom and the self-management of entities within predefined rules, its application in political science and law presents more intricate dimensions, particularly concerning governance structures like local governments.

The term 'autonomy' is frequently discussed in the realms of governance and local government reforms, yet it remains a complex and multifaceted concept that is often misunderstood. While it is widely used, a comprehensive, universally accepted definition of autonomy remains elusive, which results in varying interpretations and confusion among scholars, policymakers, and the general public. This is particularly problematic in discussions of local government autonomy, where the idea of self-governance is often equated with local democracy, but is also subject to different ideological and practical constraints.

A significant debate in the literature centers around the meaning and scope of autonomy in governance. Some scholars, such as Anayochukwu, G.I. Anayochukwu, V.A. & Nsah B. (2022), emphasize autonomy as the ability of an entity to manage itself independently, arguing that an autonomous body is one that has full judicial, executive, and legislative powers—similar to sovereignty. This perspective aligns with the notion of autonomy in a federal system, where each level of government should be able to function independently of others. Akpan, F. & Ekanem, O. (2013).) reinforces this view by asserting that autonomy only holds value when one level of government is not compelled to accept dictates from another, highlighting the importance of independence in governance structures.

In the Nigerian context, local government autonomy cannot be seen as absolute. While the concept of local autonomy implies a separation of powers, in reality, the interdependence among federal, state, and local governments complicates the achievement of full autonomy. The three levels of government govern the same population, making it necessary to delineate clear boundaries to prevent overlap and ensure efficient governance. Local governments must balance the desire for autonomy with the need for coordination to optimize resource use and meet the broader goals of national governance.

The struggle for local government autonomy in Nigeria has evolved through several key phases, each shaped by historical, political, and social dynamics. The evolution of local government autonomy in Nigeria highlights the tension between central control and the

push for local self-governance. Each phase of reform has attempted to address this tension, but the progress has been uneven, with reforms often falling short of fully empowering local governments.

The first phase of local government autonomy in Nigeria occurred in the 1950s, during the early efforts of regional governments to democratize local administration. While laws such as the Northern Nigeria Local Government Law of 1954 sought to decentralize power and promote local democracy, these reforms were ultimately limited by regional political interests. Local governments were still controlled by regional authorities, meaning that the ideal of local self-government remained unfulfilled. This period of reform reveals a common challenge in many post-colonial states: the tension between local autonomy and regional or national political control.

The 1976 Local Government Reforms marked a critical moment in the evolution of local government autonomy in Nigeria. These reforms officially elevated local governments to the third tier of government, with a focus on empowering local authorities to manage local affairs. This represented a significant step towards decentralization, but it also exposed the limitations of such reforms in a context where local governments were still heavily dependent on state and federal governments for funding and policy direction.

The constitutional recognition of local government autonomy in the 1979 Constitution, specifically Section 7(1), was another milestone. However, this constitutional guarantee was not enough to prevent political interference in local governance, especially during the

periods of military rule. Military regimes, such as the Babangida administration in the 1980s, recognized the importance of local government autonomy and made strides toward restoring grassroots democracy, notably through the abolition of state ministries of local government. Despite these efforts, local governments were still subject to the whims of the federal government, undermining the full realization of autonomy.

A significant aspect of local government autonomy is financial independence. The efforts to directly disburse funds to local governments and increase statutory allocations in the 1990s were steps in the right direction, yet they remain insufficient for ensuring real autonomy. Without a sustainable financial framework, local governments continue to rely on federal and state governments, leaving them vulnerable to external pressures. The professionalization of the local government service, initiated through civil service reforms, was also aimed at strengthening local governance, but these reforms have not been fully effective in fostering accountability and autonomy at the grassroots level.

Local government autonomy, especially in Nigeria, has been a contentious issue due to its potential to address decentralization, grassroots development, and governance challenges. Proponents argue that autonomy allows local governments to better serve their communities by being closer to the people. However, critics point out that many local governments may lack the capacity to manage autonomy effectively, including handling funds and avoiding corruption. The fear of increased corruption at the local level is also a significant concern, with some arguing that without proper oversight, local autonomy could exacerbate mismanagement. However, others believe that corruption is a

consequence of insufficient oversight and that decentralization can improve local development if transparency and accountability mechanisms are in place.

A major concern is the role of state governments as overseers of local governments. Critics argue that state governments often restrict local autonomy by diverting funds and maintaining control. This creates a contradiction in the argument for local autonomy, as state governments fail to provide the necessary support for local authorities to function effectively. Further research is needed to explore how to balance state oversight and local autonomy. Additionally, local government autonomy can foster healthy competition among councils, which could lead to innovative solutions. However, the success of this competition depends on local governments having sufficient resources, infrastructure, and capacity, which is often lacking.

Advocates for autonomy also argue that it supports true federalism by ensuring local governments have the independence to govern without interference. However, Nigeria's current political framework presents challenges, as the roles of federal, state, and local governments remain ambiguous. Without constitutional reforms, true federalism may not be achieved. Another argument is the need to free local governments from political influence, particularly from state governors who often appoint local government chairpersons based on political favor rather than merit. While local autonomy could strengthen democratic processes, the reality of political patronage complicates this ideal.

Empowering the people is another key benefit of local autonomy, as it brings political and financial control closer to the grassroots. This could lead to increased political participation and responsiveness from elected officials.

However, local governments often lack the technical capacity to manage resources effectively, which hinders their ability to empower citizens. To address these challenges, a systemic approach is needed, involving institutional reforms, capacity-building programs, and transparency mechanisms. Local government autonomy should not be seen as a solution in isolation, but as part of a broader strategy to improve governance and tackle issues such as corruption and accountability at all levels.

The local government system in Nigeria continues to face a series of challenges that hamper its ability to deliver effective services, promote development, and ensure accountability. These challenges, which have existed since the local government system was restructured, are exacerbated by limitations in resources, political interference, and administrative capacity. However, while some municipalities have made progress in specific areas, the overall performance remains inconsistent and uneven.

The performance of local governments in Nigeria is not uniform. While certain municipalities manage to meet basic service delivery requirements, such as providing healthcare, education, and infrastructure, others struggle significantly with even the most fundamental tasks. This uneven performance is influenced by multiple factors, including local economic conditions, the availability of human resources, and political stability. It

is crucial to consider these variances when evaluating the capacity of local governments, as they demonstrate that not all local governments face the same challenges, nor do they have the same potential for success.

As noted by scholars, while some municipalities have invested in improving infrastructure and service delivery, many others continue to grapple with financial constraints and weak governance (Adeyemo, D O (2005) Nigeria's Constitution outlines ambitious objectives for local governments, including providing democratic governance, delivering sustainable services, and promoting local economic development. However, achieving these goals remains a significant challenge. Local governments often operate under severe capacity constraints, which hinder their ability to achieve the developmental outcomes expected of them. For instance, while the 1998 White Paper on Local Government emphasizes the need for integrated development planning and local economic empowerment, these initiatives often fail in practice due to the lack of resources and inadequate governance structures. This gap between the constitutional goals and practical implementation has led to debates in the literature about whether the scope of local government powers and functions is truly aligned with the needs of communities (Wilson, G., & Idoniboy-Obu, S. A. (2019).

One of the core debates in Nigerian local government literature centers on the autonomy of local governments. While some argue for greater decentralization to empower local authorities, others suggest that autonomy is a double-edged sword. Local governments in metropolitan areas often have more resources and better infrastructure, allowing them to

exercise greater autonomy in governance. However, municipalities outside urban centers face numerous obstacles, such as inadequate financial resources, poor political support, and a lack of skilled staff. These disparities highlight the complexities of local government autonomy in Nigeria. Researchers like Umoren, F. F., Akujuru, C. A., & Amadi, E. I. (2022) argues that the existing two-tier system, where state governments play a supervisory role, often exacerbates local governments' challenges by imposing excessive regulatory burdens and limiting their capacity to function effectively.

Political interference remains one of the most persistent obstacles to local government autonomy in Nigeria. The frequent meddling of state governments in the operations of local governments undermines their independence and hampers effective governance. Local government chairpersons and councilors are often appointed based on political affiliations rather than merit, leading to poor governance outcomes. In addition, the recruitment and retention of skilled personnel remain major issues, as many local governments struggle to attract qualified staff due to low salaries and poor working conditions (Olayiwola, M. A., Folorunsho, A., & Ayoade, S. D. (2024). Moreover, the administrative capacity of local governments is frequently hindered by outdated systems and inefficiencies that delay service delivery.

Resource allocation is a major point of contention in the literature on local government performance in Nigeria. Local governments are heavily dependent on federal allocations and, to a lesser extent, internally generated revenues. However, the allocation formula, which determines the distribution of funds among local governments, has been criticized

for being inequitable and insufficient to meet the needs of all municipalities. Some local governments, particularly those in rural areas, struggle to generate sufficient revenue internally due to low economic activity and a lack of industries. This financial dependency limits their ability to implement development projects and provide essential services to their communities (Oyedele, O. J., & Oyedele, L. O. (2019).

Accountability and transparency remain significant issues for local governments in Nigeria. While mechanisms like audits and oversight committees exist, they often fail to operate effectively due to corruption, mismanagement, and inadequate enforcement. This undermines public trust in local governance and hampers efforts to improve service delivery. Furthermore, involving communities in decision-making processes is a major challenge. Local governments often struggle to engage citizens in governance, particularly in rural areas where there is a lack of awareness about civic rights and responsibilities. This gap in community engagement has led to criticisms that local governments are out of touch with the needs of their constituents (Osakede, K. O. (2016)

Local government autonomy is often hailed as a cornerstone for effective governance and national development in Nigeria. As the closest tier of government to the people, local governments are uniquely positioned to address local needs, foster community development, and contribute to national growth. However, the degree to which local government autonomy can translate into tangible national development remains a subject of debate. Several studies have underscored the importance of local government

autonomy, yet there are varying perspectives on its actual impact, challenges, and potential for sustainable development.

However, this ideal of autonomy is often challenged by the reality of governance in many nations, particularly in Nigeria. Some scholars argue that true autonomy at the local government level is a misconception, as local governments often remain subordinate to higher levels of authority. Akpan, F. & Ekanem, O. (2013) presents a contrasting view, noting that administrative autonomy, especially in the context of local governments, can be seen as a form of grassroots democracy, where local entities are empowered to make decisions that directly affect their communities. This democratic angle suggests that autonomy is not just about freedom from oversight, but also about enabling active participation in governance by the local populace.

The concept of "local autonomy" thus emerges as a point of contention. While some scholars like Davey (2019) argue that local autonomy involves discretion, accountability, and the capacity to act independently within the framework of the law, others point to the financial and structural limitations faced by local governments. Davey's (2019) definition brings us to the crux of local government autonomy: the ability to manage resources and make decisions without external interference, while ensuring that such actions remain within legal boundaries.

From this standpoint, a critical issue arises regarding the resources necessary for local governments to operate effectively. Akpan, F. & Ekanem, O. (2013) discusses the importance of budgetary and financial autonomy as essential components of administrative autonomy. The ability to generate revenue and manage budgets independently from higher tiers of government is viewed as a vital factor in determining the true degree of autonomy that local governments can exercise. Afolabi, J. O. (2020) argues that financial independence is a key determinant of autonomy, noting that local governments must have the right to determine their own budgets, levy taxes, and incur debts without undue interference. These powers, he suggests, grant local governments a significant degree of freedom from external control.

Doho, A. W., Ahmed, A. &Umar, A. (2018). highlights the interdependence between different levels of government, arguing that absolute autonomy is unachievable in systems where governance is inherently interlinked. This interdependence is particularly visible in Nigeria, where local governments remain subject to the whims of both state and federal governments. Despite constitutional provisions designed to protect local government autonomy, the actual degree of independence varies, with local governments often lacking the necessary resources and authority to fulfill their mandates effectively. Moreover, the argument for financial and administrative autonomy is closely linked to the governance challenges posed by a lack of clear boundaries between the responsibilities of each government tier. Okoli (2013) elaborates on the relationship between authority, finance, and personnel as key indicators of local government autonomy.

The ability of local governments to manage their own personnel, control their finances, and exercise authority without interference from higher levels of government is essential for achieving effective autonomy. Another critical issue in the discussion of local government autonomy is the legal framework that governs it. While autonomy is often defined in terms of financial and administrative freedom, it is equally influenced by legal factors. The extent to which local governments can enact laws, raise funds, and manage their personnel is determined by the constitutional and legal frameworks within which they operate. This legal framework, however, often limits the autonomy of local governments, particularly when federal and state governments retain significant control over local affairs.

A key area of contention in the concept of autonomy lies in its practical limits. Many scholars, such as Eyitayo, A.O., &Alani, B.I., (2019)), argue that government functionaries and policymakers often assume that the concept is universally understood. This assumption leads to the failure of local government initiatives designed to preserve or extend autonomy, as these policies may not take into account the lack of consensus on what autonomy truly entails. This oversight reveals a significant gap in the theoretical foundation of local governance models. Scholars like Davey (2019) provide valuable insights into autonomy, yet they approach the concept from differing perspectives that reflect the tension between idealism and practicality in local governance.

Nwabueze, A. I., & Okechukwu, R. O. (2024) assertion that autonomy means "each government enjoys a separate existence and independence from the control of the other governments" proposes an ideal where local governments function with full independence from higher authorities. This raises the issue of whether such a degree of autonomy is feasible in practice. Nwabueze's model overlooks the realities of intergovernmental relationships that often require collaboration and coordination across levels of government. Local governments, in striving for autonomy, may risk undermining national unity and efficiency by creating fragmentation, as their actions might diverge from federal or state priorities.

On the other hand, Davey (2019) focuses on the practical elements of autonomy, emphasizing discretion and responsibility in local governance. He argues that local autonomy cannot be meaningful without adequate financial resources and the ability to make decisions within a defined legal framework. While Davey's view highlights the importance of local discretion in resource allocation and decision-making, it does not fully address the potential for conflict with state or federal entities when these levels of government share the same responsibilities and resources.

The Centre for Democratic Studies defined local government autonomy as "the relative discretion that local governments enjoy in regulating their own affairs," suggesting that autonomy should be seen as a continuum, dependent on the local context and the relationship between various levels of government. This definition reflects a more flexible and realistic understanding of autonomy, acknowledging that complete independence is

neither feasible nor desirable. In this sense, local autonomy becomes more about negotiating space for decision-making while maintaining essential ties with higher authorities.

Local government autonomy plays a key role in addressing poverty, as autonomous local governments can implement targeted poverty alleviation programs, such as microfinance and skills acquisition. These initiatives have the potential to significantly reduce national poverty rates, as highlighted by Okoh, C. C., Onwe, S. O., & Ofoma, C. V. (2022). However, critics argue that these programs are often poorly managed and lack coordination, resulting in ineffective outcomes, particularly for the most vulnerable populations (Wilson, G., & Idoniboy-Obu, S. A. (2019). This underscores the challenge of ensuring that autonomy leads to real poverty reduction.

In terms of infrastructure development, local governments have the ability to prioritize and manage projects that can stimulate economic activities and improve the quality of life. While such projects, like road construction and school building, can benefit local areas, their impact on national development may be overstated (Tiku, O.T, Obeten, U, Onyenemerem. N (2019). Local governments often struggle to create sustainable job opportunities due to insufficient funding and inadequate support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), limiting the long-term benefits of infrastructure development.

Service delivery is another crucial aspect where local government autonomy is thought to have an impact. Local governments are better positioned to address specific community needs in sectors like healthcare, education, and sanitation. However, the effectiveness of service delivery is mixed. While some local governments have streamlined services successfully, others face challenges such as resource shortages, political interference, and poor management practices, which limit the potential benefits of autonomy (Osakede, K. O. (2016).

Fiscal sustainability is also enhanced by local government autonomy, as it allows for greater resource mobilization. However, the ability of local governments to generate sufficient revenue is debated. Some studies suggest that innovative strategies have been successful in increasing local revenue (Okoh, C. C., Onwe, S. O., & Ofoma, C. V. (2022), while others argue that many local governments remain heavily dependent on federal transfers and have failed to improve revenue generation due to poor fiscal management and corruption (Nwabueze, A. I., & Okechukwu, R. O. (2024).

Local government autonomy has the potential to strengthen democracy by providing citizens with opportunities for participation in decision-making processes. However, local elections are often influenced by state actors, which diminishes the democratic benefits of autonomy (Muhammed, S. (2015). Additionally, social inclusion programs, aimed at reducing inequalities, are often hindered by a lack of political will and resources.

Lastly, local governments can contribute to environmental conservation and cultural preservation through initiatives like waste management, reforestation, and promoting local culture. These efforts not only improve local ecological health but can also support national tourism. However, the effectiveness of these initiatives is inconsistent, as local governments often prioritize competing political interests over environmental and cultural goals (Guga, E. (2018).

2.4 Nigeria's Local Government

The history of local government in Nigeria reflects its complex socio-political evolution across pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial eras. In the pre-colonial era, governance systems varied significantly based on cultural and ethnic contexts. The Sokoto Caliphate in the north had a centralized system rooted in Islamic principles, while Igbo communities in the east practiced egalitarian, participatory governance through village assemblies. The Yoruba kingdoms combined monarchy with councils of chiefs. These diverse systems adapted well to their socio-economic contexts but lacked a unified governance framework, which later posed challenges during colonial and post-colonial integration.

The colonial era (1900–1950) introduced the indirect rule system, leveraging traditional institutions to serve British interests. This system centralized power among traditional rulers, especially in the Hausa/Fulani emirates, fostering authoritarianism and marginalizing broader community participation. While it aimed to preserve indigenous governance, it entrenched inequalities and prioritized law and order for trade over

development. By the 1930s, nationalist movements exposed the system's flaws, highlighting its failure to create inclusive and sustainable governance structures.

The transition to modern local government (1950–1966) saw reforms aimed at decentralization and participatory governance, starting with the Eastern Region's Local Government Ordinance of 1950. This introduced a three-tier structure to enhance community involvement. However, inadequate resources, crime, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and a lack of technical expertise undermined these efforts. The ambitious scope of reforms often exceeded local councils' capacity, revealing the limitations of externally influenced models and underscoring the need for capacity-building and context-specific solutions.

The establishment of local governments in Nigeria aims to address administrative challenges, promote citizen engagement, and drive grassroots development. By creating a decentralized system, local governments enable direct citizen participation in governance, as mandated by the Constitution (Section 7). This fosters a sense of ownership among communities and serves as a platform for nurturing future political leaders. Local governments are strategically positioned to handle administrative tasks, such as tax collection, licensing, and registration of vital statistics, making governance more accessible and efficient across Nigeria's diverse and geographically expansive regions.

Beyond administrative functions, local governments are central to development initiatives. They spearhead infrastructure projects, including roads, markets, schools, and healthcare facilities, thereby improving the quality of life for residents. They also facilitate rural development by ensuring access to clean water, electricity, and other basic needs. Local governments stimulate economic activity by supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), offering financial assistance, and promoting entrepreneurship, contributing to poverty alleviation and job creation. Additionally, they preserve cultural heritage, promote social cohesion, and safeguard local traditions by consolidating communities with shared cultural backgrounds.

Local governments play a vital role in providing essential social services, such as managing primary schools and healthcare centers and implementing welfare programs for vulnerable populations. They also act as mediators in resolving disputes related to land, boundaries, and communal disagreements, ensuring peace and stability necessary for development. Efforts to preserve cultural heritage include organizing festivals, traditional ceremonies, and language preservation programs, maintaining Nigeria's rich cultural diversity for future generations.

Despite their importance, local governments face significant challenges, including insufficient financial resources, poor planning, corruption, inadequate manpower, and state government interference. These issues limit their autonomy and hinder their ability to fulfill their mandates. To address these problems, reforms are needed to strengthen their autonomy, improve accountability through citizen participation, and ensure effective

resource allocation. Transparent budgeting and governance, alongside capacity-building programs, are essential to enhancing the efficiency and impact of local governments in fostering sustainable development and good governance in Nigeria.

2.5 Historical Development and Recommendations for Local Government Reforms

The 1976 Local Government Reforms in Nigeria emphasized the role of customary sovereigns as advisors within structured councils, promoting inclusive governance under the Mohammed/Obasanjo regime. The reforms aimed to delegate developmental activities to local representative bodies, foster democratic self-governance, and mobilize community resources. Although the implementation, including direct council elections in 19 states, marked progress toward decentralization, limitations like low voter turnout and the absence of political party activities hindered its full effectiveness. Nonetheless, the reforms laid the groundwork for a functional local government system.

The transition to civil governance in 1979 further embedded local government as the third tier of governance, supported by constitutional provisions for elected councils and fiscal independence. However, state governments undermined this system through undue interference, political appointments, and failure to remit mandated funds, which strained resources. The proliferation of councils for political motives also weakened the democratic principles of local governance during the Second Republic.

Military regimes between 1984 and 1999 disrupted the local government structure by centralizing control, appointing Sole Officers, and imposing caretaker committees, which eroded autonomy. Despite attempts like the Dasuki Committee recommendations and Babangida's Executive Presidential System, political instability and inconsistent reforms hindered progress. Conflicts over administrative decisions, such as council relocations, further complicated governance during this period. Since 1999, challenges like delayed elections, state interference, and weakened autonomy have persisted, undermining local governance. To address these issues, reforms are needed to strengthen oversight, ensure direct funding for councils, formalize the role of customary authorities, improve administrative capacity, enforce regular electoral timelines, and establish frameworks for resolving inter-community conflicts. These measures aim to restore the effectiveness and integrity of local government as a critical component of democracy.

Table 2.1: Elections to Local Government Councils by States since the Fourth Republic's Inception (1999)

S/No	States	Years Elections were Conducted	No of Times Elections were conducted
1	Abia	2004, 2008, 2016	3
2	Adamawa	2004, 2008, 2012, 2016	4
3	AkwaIbom	2004, 2008, 2012, 2017	4
4	Anambra	2004, 2008, 2018	3
5	Bauchi	2004, 2008, 2018	3
6	Bayelsa	2004, 2010, 2017	3
7	Benue	2004, 2007, 2012, 2017	4
8	Crossriver	2004, 2010, 2013,2017	4
9	Delta	2004, 2008, 2014, 2018	4
10	Ebonyi	2004,2010,2013,2017	4
11	Edo	2004, *2007, 2013, 2018	4
12	Ekiti	2004,2009,2015,2018	4

13	Enugu	2004, 2007, 2011, 2013, 2017	5
14	Borno	2004, 2007	2
15	Gombe	2004, 2013, 2017	3
16	Imo	2004, *2008, 2018	3
17	Jigawa	2004,2010,2018	3
18	Kaduna	2004, 2012, 2018	3
19	Katsina	2004, 2010, 2018 3	3
20	Kano	2004, 2007, 2009, 2014, 2018	5
21	Kebbi	2004, 2008, 2012, 2017	4
22	Kogi	2004, 2008, 2013,2020	4
23	Kwara	2004,2007,2012,2017	4
24	Niger	2004, 2008, 2011, 2016	4
25	Ogun	2004,2007,2012,2017	4
26	Ondo	2004,2007,2016,2018	4
27	Oyo	2004,2007,2018	3
28	Osun	2004,2007,2018	3
29	Nasarawa	2004, 2009, 2014, 2018	4
30	Sokoto	2004, 2008, 2011, 2016	4
31	Plateau	2004, 2008, 2014, 2018	4
32	Lagos	2004,2008,2012,2017	4
33	Yobe	2004, 2009, 2013, 2017	4
24	Taraba	2004, 2007, 2012, 2017	4
35	Rivers	2004, 2011, 2015, 2018	4
36	Zamfara	2004, 2012	2
37	Abuja	2004, 2007, 2010, 2013, 2016,2022	6

Author's Compilation, 2022

2.6 Kogi State and its Local Governments

Kogi State, located in Nigeria's north-central geopolitical zone, is often referred to as the

"middle-belt" region. The state was created in 1991 through the merger of the former

Kwara and Benue states, which also included the historical Kabba Province. Lokoja, the

capital of Kogi State, holds historical significance as Nigeria's first administrative seat.

The state's nickname, "The Confluence State," stems from its unique geographical

location at the confluence of the Niger and Benue Rivers, making it an important hub for trade and commerce. The population of Kogi State is ethnically diverse, with three primary ethnic groups: the Igala, the Ebira, and the Okun (Yoruba). In addition to these major groups, the state is home to several smaller ethnic communities, including the BassaKomo, BassaNge, Kakanda, Ogori-Magongo, Nupe, Oworo, and Gwari, among others. This diverse demographic landscape contributes to the rich cultural fabric of the state.

Kogi State is divided into twenty-one (21) local government areas, each responsible for governing and implementing policies within their respective regions. These local governments play a crucial role in the administration and development of Kogi State, addressing the needs and concerns of the state's diverse communities. However, the effectiveness and performance of these local governments, much like other regions in Nigeria, are often impacted by various political, financial, and administrative challenges. These challenges include inadequate funding, political interference, and inefficiencies in the distribution of resources.

Table 2.2: Names of Local Government Areas in Kogi State and their Headquarters

S/No	NAMES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS	HEADQUARTERS
1	Adavi	Ogaminana
2	Ajaokuta	Adogo
3	Ankpa	Ankpa
4	Bassa	Oguma
5	Dekina	Dekina
6	Ibaji	Onyedega
7	Idah	Idah
8	Igalamela/Odolu	Ajaka
9	Ijumu	Iyara
10	KabbaBunu	Kabba
11	Kogi	Koton-Karfi
12	Lokoja	Lokoja
13	Mopamuro	Mopa
14	Ofu	Ugwolawo
15	Ogori-Magongo	Akpafa
16	Okehi	Obangede
17	Okene	Okene
18	Olamaboro	Okpo
19	Omala	Abejukolo
20	Yagba East	Isanlu
21	Yagba West	Odo-Ire

Source: Author's Compilation, 2022

Ebira, Igala, Nupe, and Yoruba are the major languages widely spoken in the state while

other languages are the minority. Farming is the main occupation of the people of the state

and crops produced include cassava, yam, rice, maize, guinea corn, beans, soya beans,

Asha, and millet. The state is blessed with precious mineral resources like columbite, Iron-

ore, coal, aquamarine, etc.

2.7 Control Mechanisms in Local Governments

Control mechanisms within local governments are critical tools for ensuring accountability, efficiency, and effective service delivery. Broadly, control mechanism can be defined as a system, process, or practice implemented to regulate, direct, or manage the performance and behaviour of entities within an organizational framework. In local government contexts, these mechanisms help ensure that public resources are allocated and utilized according to established laws, policies, and societal expectations (Tippett, J., & Kluvers, R. (2010)

2.7.1 Conceptual Framework of Control Mechanisms

The concept of control mechanisms is rooted in organizational theory, which emphasizes the need for alignment between the goals of an organization and the actions of its members (Onewo I.S. (2012). Local governments, as decentralized units of governance, require robust control systems to maintain alignment between their responsibilities and the public interest. Control mechanisms typically involve a combination of formal and informal strategies, including policies, regulations, performance monitoring, and stakeholder feedback systems (Ibok, E. E. (2014). Control mechanisms can be discussed as bureaucratic control, market-based-control, cultural control and performance-based control.

Bureaucratic control involves formalized rules, procedures, and hierarchical authority structures that dictate organizational activities (Banko, O. H. (2020). It is the most commonly used mechanism in public administration due to its focus on standardization and compliance. Market-based control on the other hand leverages market mechanisms such as competition, pricing, and consumer choice to regulate the delivery of services. For example, local governments may outsource services to private providers to enhance efficiency and reduce costs (Akpan, F. & Ekanem, O. (2013).

Cultural control mechanisms involve the establishment of shared values, norms, and ethical standards within an organization. Such controls are particularly relevant in local governments to ensure that public servants prioritize the common good over personal interests (Akinwale, A. A. (2020).). Performance-based control involves setting measurable performance targets and evaluating outcomes against these benchmarks. Tools such as key performance indicators (KPIs) and balanced scorecards are widely used in local governance to monitor and improve service delivery (Agba, M. S., & Ocholi, S. O. (2013).

Control mechanisms in local governments often face challenges such as resource limitations, political interference, and resistance to change. For instance, overly rigid bureaucratic controls may stifle innovation, while excessive reliance on market-based mechanisms may lead to inequitable service delivery. Therefore, a balanced approach that integrates multiple control strategies is essential to achieving desired outcomes (Amosa, D. U. (2010).

Globally, the design and implementation of control mechanisms vary significantly depending on political, cultural, and institutional contexts. In the United States, performance-based controls, such as the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), emphasize transparency and results-oriented management (Debela, K. W. (2020). In Scandinavian countries, cultural control plays a significant role, fostering high levels of trust and accountability through participatory governance models (Osuebi, K. T., Nwachukwu, K. C., Arinze, A. I., &Nnadi, O. S. (2019). These examples demonstrate the importance of tailoring control mechanisms to local circumstances while drawing on global best practices.

Control mechanisms in local governments can be classified into formal and informal systems. Formal control mechanisms are typically institutionalized through legal frameworks, rules, and regulations. These include regulatory control, budgetary control, internal audits and performance appraisal systems. Regulatory and legal frameworks, such as policies, laws, and government regulations, are established to govern the functioning of local governments. These regulatory controls set boundaries for what is permissible in administrative and financial operations, ensuring that all local government activities are lawful.

Local governments often adopt formal budgeting systems to track financial activities, manage public resources, and ensure the equitable allocation of funds. Budgetary control mechanisms include auditing, accounting systems, and financial reporting procedures.

Internal audit control mechanisms include audit committees and departments that are responsible for reviewing financial operations and assessing compliance with established standards. Regular internal audits promote fiscal accountability, minimize corruption, and enhance the integrity of local government operations (Ezeanokwasa, J., & Omena, K. (2022)

Performance appraisal systems assess the efficiency and effectiveness of local government departments or projects. Through performance reviews, feedback mechanisms, and goal-setting processes, local governments aim to continuously improve public service delivery. Informal control mechanisms, while less tangible, also play a crucial role in local governance. These mechanisms are shaped by cultural values, social norms, and political contexts. Key informal controls include public opinion and media scrutiny and political accountability.

Public awareness, media coverage, and societal expectations act as informal checks on the behavior of local government officials. Citizens and media outlets often hold local government actors accountable, calling attention to any potential mismanagement or corruption. Politically, elected officials in local governments are generally held accountable to their constituents. Political accountability mechanisms such as elections, public forums, and constituent feedback serve to ensure that local governments remain responsive to public needs.

Several theoretical perspectives can be applied to understand control mechanisms in local governments. The principal-Agent Theory, for instance, explains the relationship between elected officials (principals) and government employees or agents. This theory suggests that control mechanisms are essential to align the interests of agents with those of the public, mitigating any potential conflicts of interest or misuse of authority (Akinwale, A. A. (2020)

Another relevant theory is the New Public Management (NPM) approach, which emphasizes the role of control mechanisms in improving efficiency and service delivery. NPM advocates for the adoption of market-driven practices in the public sector, encouraging performance-based control mechanisms that focus on outputs and outcomes. Under NPM, local governments are seen as service providers, with a strong emphasis on accountability, measurement, and the effective use of resources (Adeyemi, O. (2013).

While control mechanisms are crucial for ensuring accountability and effective governance, local governments face several challenges in implementing them. One of such challenge is the resource constraint that often limits the ability of local governments to develop comprehensive monitoring and control systems. Additionally, political interference can undermine the effectiveness of formal controls, as elected officials may manipulate control mechanisms for personal or partisan gains.

2.8 Control Mechanisms on Local Government in Nigeria

In Nigeria, the governance of local governments is heavily influenced by a range of control mechanisms that, despite being intended to ensure efficiency and accountability, often undermine the autonomy of these bodies. These mechanisms, including the Joint Account of the States and Local Governments, the Local Government Service Commission, and various state oversight committees, reflect a complex power dynamic between the central and local levels of government. However, these control systems often create a tension between centralized oversight and local autonomy, raising critical questions about the efficiency and fairness of local governance in Nigeria.

The system of a Joint State-Local Government Account, established under Section 162(6) of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution, is one of the most contentious control mechanisms. While its stated purpose is to streamline the allocation and distribution of federal funds to local governments, it inadvertently gives state governors overwhelming power over local government finances. This centralized control has been widely criticized for its negative impact on local government autonomy.

Critics argue that the system has created a dependency relationship, where local government councils must rely on the state government for their financial allocations. This dependence not only limits the financial autonomy of local councils but also places them under the control of the state governor, who becomes the ultimate arbiter of how funds are distributed. According to Section 162(6), the state government determines how resources are allocated among local councils, often leading to discrepancies between the funds

officially allocated and the actual amounts received. This situation fosters an environment in which local government officials are reduced to mere intermediaries, forced to comply with the dictates of state governors who may manipulate allocations for political gain. This arrangement has been described as a violation of the principles of federalism, which emphasize the autonomy of sub-national governments.

Furthermore, allegations of corruption and financial mismanagement, exemplified by the recovery of N1.92 billion from a former governor's assistant, highlight the vulnerabilities inherent in the Joint Account system. These funds, allegedly misappropriated from local government budgets, underscore the potential for abuse within this centralized financial system. The financial dependence on state governments not only undermines the local governments' ability to function independently but also exposes them to potential exploitation by state authorities.

The power vested in the Local Government Service Commission to appoint, promote, and discipline senior staff in local governments further diminishes local control. While the commission's goal is to ensure that local governments are staffed with qualified individuals, its influence over personnel decisions raises significant concerns regarding loyalty and control. Employees recruited and managed by the commission are, in many cases, more aligned with state interests than with those of the local government, creating a conflict of interest.

This system creates a dual loyalty among local government staff, who are beholden to both the state and the local government. As a result, the local government may struggle to assert control over its workforce, particularly in situations where the state's interests conflict with those of the local council. Critics argue that this structure inhibits the ability of local governments to function effectively, as the loyalty of key personnel is often compromised. Moreover, the commission's authority over personnel matters restricts the local government's ability to manage its workforce independently, further eroding local autonomy.

Some scholars have suggested that the solution lies in allowing local governments to establish their own service commissions, which would better reflect the unique needs and priorities of each council. This would not only foster greater loyalty among employees but also enhance the efficiency and responsiveness of local governments. However, such a shift would require significant structural and legislative changes, which may be politically challenging in a context where state governments have a vested interest in maintaining control.

The establishment of local government departments within the governor's office is another key element of state control. These departments, tasked with ensuring compliance with national and state development goals, are often headed by senior state officials, further consolidating power at the state level. While these departments are intended to assist local governments in planning and executing development programs, their influence over local governance decisions often undermines local autonomy.

The oversight role of the Local Government Department has been a source of tension, as it essentially places local governments under the scrutiny of state authorities. The department's involvement in areas such as development planning, financial oversight, and budget approval means that local governments must constantly align their activities with state-level directives, often at the expense of local priorities. This top-down approach to governance has been criticized for stifling innovation and responsiveness at the local level, as local councils are often forced to adhere to state-imposed frameworks that may not reflect the needs of their communities.

Furthermore, the Department's involvement in monitoring and reporting on local government activities raises concerns about excessive state intervention. While accountability is important, the pervasive oversight by state-appointed officials can diminish the effectiveness of local governance by undermining the capacity of local leaders to make decisions that are in the best interests of their communities.

The creation of the Audit Alarm Committee, tasked with monitoring the financial operations of local governments, is another example of state control over local governance. The committee's role in ensuring compliance with financial regulations is crucial for preventing mismanagement, but its existence also illustrates the limited autonomy of local governments in managing their own finances.

By requiring that local government transactions be cleared by the state auditor-general before any payment is made, the Audit Alarm Committee further reinforces the state's control over local government financial matters. While this system is intended to promote transparency and accountability, it also limits the discretion of local governments in managing their finances, forcing them to seek approval from state-level authorities for even routine financial transactions.

This mechanism has been criticized for creating delays and inefficiencies in local government operations. Local governments, which are supposed to be more responsive to their constituents, are hindered by bureaucratic red tape and state-level oversight. Critics argue that this lack of autonomy prevents local governments from efficiently utilizing their resources and fulfilling their roles in community development.

The role of the state auditor-general for local governments and the Ministry of Local Government Affairs further exemplifies the control mechanisms in place. The state auditor-general's authority to audit local government accounts, combined with the ministry's oversight of local government activities, underscores the limited financial and administrative independence of local governments. While these oversight mechanisms are necessary to ensure that local governments operate within the bounds of the law, they also contribute to a system where local governments are treated as subordinates of the state. This centralized approach to governance has been criticized for creating an environment of dependency and subjugation, where local government officials are unable to make independent decisions or manage their affairs without state intervention.

2.8.1 Critical Analysis on Nigeria's Control Mechanisms for Local Government Funds

In discussing the control mechanisms for local government funds in Nigeria, it is essential to move beyond simply listing the existing regulations and instead critically assess their effectiveness and limitations. The mechanisms outlined in the Revised Financial Memoranda of local governments serve as the foundation for financial management, but they have sparked debates regarding their practical implementation and impact on the efficiency of local government operations.

A central element in the control structure is the role of the Executive Committee. As per Section 1.5, the Committee is required to meet weekly to review and address financial matters. While this is a strong indication of accountability, it raises the question of whether weekly meetings are sufficient or if more frequent interactions are necessary for better financial oversight, especially in a system that faces issues of corruption and mismanagement. Critics argue that such structures, while theoretically sound, often suffer from lapses in execution due to inconsistent adherence to schedules and insufficient capacity at the local government level (Onewo, 2012). Thus, the efficacy of the weekly meetings depends heavily on the commitment and competence of those involved, as well as the availability of adequate resources to conduct in-depth financial analysis.

The mechanisms outlined, such as monthly account reconciliation and bank reconciliation statements (Sections 1.6 and 1.7), reflect a standard approach to ensuring financial transparency. However, the question arises: How reliable are these reconciliations in

practice? Numerous studies have highlighted issues such as incomplete records and lack of timely updates, which undermine the accuracy and usefulness of these documents. Furthermore, the role of the Treasurer, as defined in Sections 1.3 and 1.14, positions them as the chief custodian of financial integrity within the local government. While this centralization of financial oversight is crucial, it also raises concerns about the concentration of power and the potential for misuse. The treasurer's influence can be significant, and without stringent checks, their authority can lead to conflicts of interest or biased financial reporting.

Another point of debate is the separation of duties outlined in Section 5.2, which mandates that the treasurer should not serve as the cashier. This is an important control designed to prevent fraud and ensure transparency, yet it depends on the competence of other financial officers and the robustness of internal audits. The potential for gaps in oversight exists if other financial personnel lack the necessary skills or if the separation of roles is not clearly enforced. Additionally, Section 7.13's requirement for regular stock inspections is a necessary preventive measure; however, its effectiveness depends on the actual implementation and the integrity of those carrying out the inspections. Research suggests that despite these provisions, local government financial management in Nigeria is often characterized by lax monitoring and a lack of consistency in enforcement (Onewo, 2012).

Sections 14(2-8) of the Revised Financial Memoranda set clear guidelines for financial transactions, such as the preparation of payment vouchers and the verification process. However, these controls have been critiqued for their over-reliance on manual processes,

which are susceptible to errors and manipulation. The requirement for payment vouchers to be verified without consulting other documents, while aimed at simplicity, may lead to insufficient cross-referencing and oversight. The absence of modernized systems for document tracking and payments further complicates the reliability of these financial controls.

The internal auditor's role, as outlined in Section 39.3, is also a key aspect of ensuring financial accountability. However, internal auditing is often hindered by a lack of independence and capacity, which limits its ability to detect irregularities effectively. One of the most frequently reported issues in local government finance is the misappropriation of funds, which internal auditors might fail to flag due to insufficient training or access to comprehensive data. The cases of fraudulent payments, such as the disbursement of funds based on falsified completion certificates or ghost workers (Section 39.3), are indicative of the broader systemic challenges in local government finance. These issues highlight the need for stronger internal auditing practices and more advanced technological tools to monitor and detect discrepancies in real-time.

The Revised Financial Memoranda's Sections 3.2 and 3.12, which focus on budget preparation and revenue estimates, emphasize the importance of well-structured estimates for effective financial control. While this is a positive step towards formalizing financial management processes, research suggests that many local governments struggle with budget adherence and often face budget overruns due to insufficient planning or external

interference. There is a notable gap between the ideal procedural guidelines and the actual execution, which affects the accuracy and reliability of the financial control mechanisms.

2.8.2 Factors Affecting the Control Mechanism for Local Government Funds' Effectiveness

One of the central issues affecting the effectiveness of local government control mechanisms in Nigeria is the interplay of socio-economic factors, political instability, and systemic inefficiencies. Onewo (2012) highlights that these factors significantly influence the functioning of local governments, leading to widespread financial mismanagement. A key factor identified by Onewo is poor supervision, which has been compounded by the country's socio-economic conditions, including high inflation and widespread poverty. These conditions create an environment where financial accountability becomes a secondary concern.

However, it is important to note that while Onewo (2012) attributes the financial mismanagement to these factors, the broader political context cannot be overlooked. The nature of Nigeria's political economy is one of economic distortion and inequality, which exacerbates corruption within local government systems. This argument has been supported by other scholars such as Tiku, O.T, Obeten, U, Onyenemerem. N (2019, who asserts that the Nigerian political elite's focus on personal enrichment rather than public service has led to a culture of corruption. Smith's perspective challenges Onewo's more traditional view by suggesting that the systemic issues extend beyond poor supervision to

include a more entrenched political and economic environment that encourages mismanagement.

Furthermore, Onewo's (2012) analysis of political instability and leadership turnover further illuminates the difficulties in maintaining effective control mechanisms. The frequent changes in leadership—from elected officials to caretaker committees—undermine the continuity of governance and weaken institutional memory, thereby preventing the establishment of long-term policies aimed at improving financial oversight. This aligns with the findings of other scholars, such as Osuebi, K. T., Nwachukwu, K. C., Arinze, A. I., &Nnadi, O. S. (2019), who argues that inconsistent leadership in local governments creates an environment where accountability and transparency are severely hindered. Yet, Olayemi's view has been critiqued for focusing too heavily on leadership turnover, without giving sufficient attention to the broader institutional weaknesses that enable corruption in the first place.

This lack of consistency in leadership and policy implementation is a significant obstacle to improving the financial management of local governments in Nigeria. While Onewo (2012) addresses the implications of political instability, further research could explore how the Nigerian political economy contributes to a pervasive culture of financial mismanagement at the local government level.

2.8.3 The Consequences of Ineffective Control Mechanisms for Local Government Funds

The consequences of ineffective control mechanisms in local government funds in Nigeria are wide-ranging and impact various facets of socio-economic development. However, while these effects are often discussed in isolation, it is crucial to recognize how they are interconnected, forming a vicious cycle that further entrenches poverty, inequality, and underdevelopment.

One of the most immediate consequences of poor financial control is the deterioration of living conditions, especially in rural areas. As noted by Onewo (2012), the failure to properly manage local government funds leads to the neglect of basic infrastructure—such as roads, electricity, and medical facilities—which in turn hampers the quality of life for citizens. This argument is also supported by studies such as that of Onuigbo, R. A. (2015) who found that areas with poor local government financial management often have a higher prevalence of infrastructural decay and lower access to essential services.

Yet, it is not just infrastructure that suffers. Ineffective financial control also limits the potential for job creation, which is critical for economic growth. Local governments, with their resources improperly managed, fail to invest in employment-generating projects. In rural areas, this results in a particularly harsh scenario where unemployment and underdevelopment are compounded. This theme of limited employment opportunities, often discussed in isolation, connects directly to the broader issue of economic mismanagement. Researchers like Eyitayo, A.O., &Alani, B.I., (2019) have noted that

local government funds, if allocated effectively, could significantly reduce rural unemployment, yet this potential is often unrealized due to corruption and inefficiency.

Moreover, another significant consequence of poor financial oversight is the impact on essential services like electricity. As Onewo (2012) points out, erratic power supply in urban areas is not only a consequence of infrastructural neglect but also a direct result of financial mismanagement at the local government level. This phenomenon echoes the findings of Adeyemi, A. A., & Oyedele, O. J. (2019), who argues that the misappropriation of funds within local governments has led to critical infrastructure, such as power grids, falling into disrepair.

Furthermore, mismanagement and corruption within local government administrations can lead to the diversion of resources that would otherwise be used to improve public services. As highlighted by scholars such as Onuigbo, R. A. (2015), this diversion exacerbates socio-economic disparities, creating a situation where those with political or financial connections benefit disproportionately from government resources. This uneven distribution of services, coupled with the diversion of resources, perpetuates inequality and social strain, especially in marginalized communities.

The broader economic impact of mismanagement is also notable. Corruption and financial mismanagement significantly undermine economic growth by reducing investment in critical sectors such as education and healthcare, as well as infrastructure development. Studies such as those by Umoren, F. F., Akujuru, C. A., & Amadi, E. I. (2022) have

emphasized how corruption at the local government level directly contributes to stifled human development, particularly in education and healthcare sectors, where funding is essential for improving outcomes. In this context, the misallocation of funds perpetuates a cycle of poverty, while also limiting future economic growth prospects.

In addition to these economic consequences, the mismanagement of local government funds also has a detrimental effect on public trust. The pervasive corruption and lack of accountability lead to disillusionment among citizens, reducing their willingness to participate in governance and eroding the social contract. Researchers like Eyitayo, A. O., & Alani, B. I. (2019 argues that this erosion of trust is one of the most significant long-term consequences of ineffective financial control, as it leads to disengagement and a breakdown in community cohesion.

2.8.4 Control Mechanisms in Kogi State Local Government

Despite the presence of internal control mechanisms designed to ensure financial accountability within Nigeria's local government system, there are significant challenges in effectively implementing these controls in Kogi State. A key theme emerging from the literature is that financial mismanagement within local governments is often a result of poorly followed or ignored financial protocols. Onewo (2012) highlights that many local governments, including those in Kogi State, fail to operate within the guidelines established in the Revised Financial Memoranda. This failure points to a deeper issue: the disconnect between the financial regulations and the daily practices of local government officials. Studies suggest that the implementation of control mechanisms is often hindered

by a lack of commitment from financial officers, who routinely bypass the processes set forth in these guidelines. For example, investigations have revealed that many local governments finance officials neglect the process of ensuring payments are properly deposited into the government's coffers. This neglect is compounded by the lack of proper checks and balances within the system, leading to a mismanagement of public funds. This situation raises questions about the effectiveness of the existing financial memoranda. Are these documents merely theoretical frameworks, or is there a fundamental flaw in the way they are designed and implemented?

Another critical issue highlighted in the research is the disregard for audit queries and sanctions, particularly when higher-level officials are involved. The fear of retaliation or dismissal, particularly when the actions of influential figures such as the local government Chairmen are questioned, creates a culture of non-compliance and corruption. This aligns with findings from various studies that show how fear of political repercussions often undermines the enforcement of accountability measures. The findings indicate a systemic problem where the lack of transparency and accountability is not just a result of poor governance but also of the power dynamics that inhibit effective oversight.

Moreover, the practice of falsifying revenue receipts in Kogi State provides a striking example of how corruption pervades the local government system. According to reports, many revenue collectors in the state have been found to issue fake receipts to market women instead of authentic local government receipts. This results in skewed revenue projections and a lack of accurate financial reporting, which complicates the management

of public funds. This issue underscores the gap between the design of financial controls and the realities on the ground. It also raises questions about the role of internal auditors, who, instead of serving as watchdogs, are sometimes complicit in the mismanagement. For instance, internal auditors have been implicated in colluding with senior government officials to misappropriate assets, which are fraudulently declared unserviceable and sold for personal gain.

These findings point to a broader issue within the local government system in Kogi State: the undue concentration of power in the hands of local government Chairmen. The ability of these leaders to make unilateral financial decisions without the requisite consultation with the councils is not only a violation of the financial memoranda but also exacerbates the lack of financial oversight. This situation raises critical questions about the extent to which local government officials are held accountable for their actions, and whether the current system is conducive to ensuring that funds are used appropriately for the benefit of the public.

In analyzing these control mechanisms, it becomes clear that while there are formal rules and regulations in place, their implementation is severely limited by a combination of weak institutional frameworks, inadequate enforcement, and corrupt practices. To address these challenges, it is necessary to reconsider the effectiveness of existing financial control mechanisms, strengthen the role of independent auditors, and ensure that power is more evenly distributed within the local government structure to prevent abuse.

2.9 Local Government Service Delivery in Nigeria

Local government service delivery in Nigeria has long been a critical issue, with a significant body of literature highlighting inefficiency and ineffectiveness in fulfilling its responsibilities. Notably, scholars such as Bello-Imam and Roberts (2001) have identified key factors affecting performance, including insufficient revenue, state government interference, and administrative challenges. A deeper exploration of these factors, however, reveals the complexity and interplay of these issues, which collectively undermine the effectiveness of local government service delivery. These critical issues include financial constraints, Corruption, Political Interference and Elite Capture of Local Government Administration.

i.   Financial Constraints

One of the primary challenges faced by local governments in Nigeria is a lack of adequate funding, a theme consistently discussed in the literature. Scholars like Ibok (2014) argue that local councils are severely constrained by limited revenue-generating capacities and insufficient financial allocations from both federal and state governments. These financial challenges are compounded by state-level interference, with local governments often denied their rightful share of revenue, as highlighted by Ibok. The inability of local governments to meet even basic administrative needs or deliver quality services underscores the fiscal autonomy deficit within these institutions.

However, the issue is not simply one of inadequate funding. It is intrinsically linked to the broader political dynamics at both the state and federal levels. The failure of state governments to remit funds allocated to local councils, coupled with frequent interference in the financial autonomy of these councils, reveals a deeper governance problem. This raises the critical question of whether financial constraints alone are responsible for the dysfunctionality of local governments, or if political and governance issues also need to be addressed in order to achieve meaningful improvements in service delivery.

ii. Corruption: A Systemic Barrier

Corruption remains another significant barrier to effective local government service delivery in Nigeria. As noted by Bolatito and Ibrahim (2014), corruption is deeply ingrained within local councils, with local officials often misappropriating funds designated for community development. The "Egunje" culture, representing the normalization of bribery and corrupt practices, exemplifies how systemic corruption erodes the capacity of local governments to function effectively. The prevalence of embezzlement and financial mismanagement, as documented by Agba, Akwara, and Idu (2013), creates a pattern of unethical behavior that diverts resources away from developmental projects and services, ultimately hindering progress at the grassroots level.

Moreover, corruption exacerbates existing socioeconomic disparities, perpetuating cycles of poverty and underdevelopment. By misallocating resources, corruption prevents the effective delivery of services that are crucial for alleviating poverty and improving the quality of life for citizens. The literature often fails to adequately explore the role of

corruption in maintaining inequality and social exclusion within local communities, making it an essential area for further investigation.

iii. Political Interference and Lack of Autonomy

Undue political interference, particularly from state governments, is another critical factor affecting local government service delivery. Adeyemi (2013) and Eboh & Diejomaoh (2010) note that state governors exert substantial influence over local councils, often manipulating political processes to suit their interests. This lack of financial and political autonomy means that local governments are vulnerable to external pressures and cannot operate independently. The dissolution of democratically elected councils and the installation of caretaker committees, as reported by Eboh & Diejomaoh, reflect the broader subjugation of local governments to state authorities, preventing them from addressing the needs of their constituencies effectively.

This interference ultimately reduces local councils to mere appendages of state governments, where their primary role is to serve the political interests of the state rather than the welfare of the people. As Chukwuemeka et al. (2014) argue, the constitutional framework itself further limits the political autonomy of local governments, allowing state authorities to control election timelines and determine local political leadership. This dynamic undermines the potential for local governments to prioritize community needs, perpetuating inefficiency and neglect in service delivery.

iv.   Elite Capture of Local Government Administration

A significant theme in the literature is the hijacking of local government administration by political elites. Despite the 1976 Local Government Reform, aimed at decentralizing power, local governments have remained largely ineffective due to elite manipulation. Studies by Agba, Akwara, and Idu (2013) show that local governments are increasingly controlled by political elites who use the system to serve personal and party interests, rather than the public good. This elite capture leads to the exclusion of ordinary citizens from the decision-making process, thereby reducing accountability and transparency within local government institutions.

As Chukwuemeka and Eneh, (2019) noted, local government officials often exploit their positions for personal gain, undermining the democratic process and public welfare. This elite manipulation not only fails to meet the basic needs of the people but also perpetuates cycles of poverty and disenfranchisement. The consequences of elite capture are far-reaching, as it further deepens the marginalization of the already disadvantaged, leaving local governments incapable of addressing pressing community issues effectively.

Good governance is widely regarded as a cornerstone of sustainable development, especially in developing nations such as Nigeria. Despite possessing abundant human and natural resources, Nigeria has struggled to achieve effective governance, which is crucial for its social and economic progress. Ajibola, O., Segun, B., Olubunmi, O., & Ibrahim, O. A. (2022) emphasizes that Nigeria's governance challenges remain a significant obstacle to the country's development. Various policies and programs have been implemented to

promote transparency, accountability, and resource management, yet the country continues to face systemic governance issues. This chapter explores the principles of good governance in Nigeria, focusing on their application at the local government level and examining the underlying factors contributing to the country's governance challenges.

The core principles of good governance—transparency, accountability, and the equitable distribution of resources—are essential for fostering social justice and public trust. Umoren, F. F., Akujuru, C. A., & Amadi, E. I. (2022) highlights these principles as vital for sustainable development. However, their application within Nigerian governance remains contentious, particularly at the local government level. While Ajibola, O., Segun, B., Olubunmi, O., & Ibrahim, O. A. (2022) argues that good governance is necessary for national development, others suggest that the failure to meet governance standards reflects deeper structural and institutional issues rather than just a lack of political will. At the local government level, these challenges are further exacerbated by weak leadership, which is marked by corruption, inefficiency, and a lack of accountability. These issues undermine the effective use of resources, leading to a loss of public trust. The gap between the ideal principles of good governance and their practical application raises important questions about the nature of political leadership in Nigeria.

A significant issue in Nigerian governance is weak leadership, especially at the local government level. Adegbami, A., Nofiu, O. A., & Ogunlana, G. O. (2022). emphasizes that achievement-seeking behavior among political leaders is necessary for effective governance. Such behavior involves a strong desire to achieve meaningful goals and a

history of success in public office. However, in Nigeria's local governments, there is a noticeable lack of goal-oriented behavior among political officeholders. This absence of clear, results-driven leadership contributes to ineffective governance and the failure to meet public expectations. The lack of goal-oriented leadership, combined with widespread corruption, results in a governance environment where political leaders prioritize personal or partisan interests over public welfare. This disconnects between ideal leadership qualities and the reality of governance in Nigeria highlights the persistent issues within the system.

Political attitudes also play a crucial role in governance. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) underscores that values such as fairness, honesty, and responsibility are integral to effective governance. These values influence how leaders engage with citizens and manage public affairs. However, Ajibola, O., Segun, B., Olubunmi, O., & Ibrahim, O. A. (2022) notes that although these values are vital in theory, their practical impact on governance in Nigeria is often minimal. Many political leaders fail to demonstrate the transparency and accountability needed to maintain public trust, which perpetuates governance failures. The disparity between the theoretical importance of these values and their practical implementation reflects broader challenges within Nigeria's political culture. The lack of these core values among political leaders sustains a system where corruption and inefficiency thrive, deepening the country's governance crisis.

The increasing reliance on technology in governance introduces both opportunities and challenges for Nigeria's political system. Bhati, K., & Sethy, T. (2022) concept of self-efficacy, which emphasizes the importance of technological self-confidence in leadership, is particularly relevant. As digital tools become increasingly central to governance, Nigeria's political leaders' lack of technological competence remains a significant barrier to effective governance. The failure to adopt digital tools and develop the necessary capacity to use them hinders the potential for improving transparency and efficiency in the political system. The rapid pace of technological advancements requires that political leaders not only adapt to digital tools but also utilize them to enhance governance outcomes. Unfortunately, the lack of technological literacy among many Nigerian leaders at both the local and national levels prevent the country from fully harnessing the benefits of technological innovation. Personal Growth Initiative (PGI), as discussed by Suhariadi, F. (2022) plays a crucial role in shaping effective governance. PGI involves a proactive approach to personal and professional development, and its relationship with governance is significant. Weigold, I. K., Weigold, A., Dykema, S. A., Drakeford, N. M., & Ethridge, E. T. (2024) argues that individuals with high PGI are more likely to seek self-improvement opportunities, which can lead to better governance practices. However, the application of PGI in Nigerian local governments remains largely theoretical. Political leaders often lack commitment to personal growth, which further contributes to the failure of governance structures at the grassroots level. While the potential for PGI to enhance leadership performance is clear, its limited application in practice exacerbates the governance challenges faced at the local level.

The governance issues in Nigeria are further compounded by various socio-economic challenges, including widespread corruption, inadequate infrastructure, and ineffective social services. Ajibola, B. S. (2024) argue that these problems have contributed to a decline in public trust and have hindered national development. While these challenges are not unique to Nigeria, their persistence has made good governance even more difficult to achieve. Olaiya, T. A. (2016)) suggests that the country's future prospects remain uncertain without significant reforms in governance practices. He advocates for the adoption of achievement-oriented behaviors, along with the integration of technology and personal growth initiatives, to improve governance outcomes. Without addressing these core issues, Nigeria's governance problems are unlikely to be resolved.

Good governance remains a critical framework for evaluating Nigeria's political system, but its implementation has been inconsistent, particularly at the local government level. As Nwabueze, A. I., & Okechukwu, R. O. (2024) asserts, governance is fundamentally about the exercise of authority through political, social, and economic institutions. Achieving Nigeria's development goals requires a deeper understanding of governance that not only focuses on institutional reforms but also considers the individual behaviors and attitudes of political leaders. While policies aimed at improving governance have been introduced, addressing underlying issues such as weak leadership, corruption, political interference, and a lack of commitment to personal growth is crucial for creating a more effective and sustainable governance system. Only by addressing these fundamental challenges can Nigeria hope to achieve the transparent, accountable, and equitable governance necessary for long-term development.

Table 2.3 Empirical Review

Table 2.3 provides an overview of the opinion of different scholars and writers from different states in Nigeria and beyond on the interrelationship between local government autonomy, control mechanisms and service delivery at the local government level in Nigeria. The authors carried out different studies across the different fabrics of Nigeria local government systems. Each and every one of them uses separate approaches and methodologies to generate and synthesized their data. But on the whole, it was discovered from the various studies conducted that lack of autonomy and excessive state control have an inverse relationship with the delivery of good governance and service delivery at the local government level in Nigeria. Hence, their various studies recommended that the legislative arm of the local government should be made to perform the function of the public account committee (PAC) to enhance the autonomy of the local government, that authority to determine the structure, function, composition and finance of the local government should be embedded in the constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria and not the state government, that office of the Auditor General for local government and directorate of local government should be manned by local government personnel and not the state government, that appropriate sanction be taken against erring officials so as to enhance quality service delivery at the local government level in Nigeria amongst others.

S/N	Authors	Title	Aim(s)	Methodology	Key Findings	Year
1	Dance, A. M., Ibrahim, M., & Dalyop, C. F.	Local Government Autonomy and Rural Development in Kaduna State, Nigeria	The goal of the study is to investigate how Kaduna State's grassroots rural development is impacted by local government autonomy issues.	Descriptive research design. Secondary sources were used to generate data.	The implementation of the Caretaker Committee system and the State-Joint Local Government Account have a detrimental impact on the development of rural communities in Kaduna State. Local government area growth requires autonomy.	2024
2	Ata-Agboni, J. U., Aliyu, A., Usman, Y. I., Ibrahim, Y., Hamza, N., Wahab, O. T., ... & Abdulkerim, Y.	Local Government Autonomy and Democratic Dividend in Nigeria: An Assessment	This study examines the connection between Nigeria's democratic dividends and local government autonomy.	Qualitative methodology, based on structural functionalist theory.	Local government autonomy is necessary for Nigeria to effectively experience the benefits of democracy.	2023
3	Okoh, C. C., Onwe, S. O., & Ofoma, C. V.	Local Government Financial Autonomy and Rural Development in Enugu State	To look into the relationship in Enugu State between rural development and financial autonomy of local governments.	Secondary data and micro-analysis method.	Financial autonomy deficit for local governments in Enugu State due to state government manipulation of the State Joint Local Government Account, hindering rural development.	2022
4	Anayochukwu Grace Ifunanya, Vincent Anayochukwu	Assessment of Local Government Autonomy and Governance:	This paper critically analyses the challenges and prospects facing the local government	Quantitative research approach.	State meddling exacerbates the lack of autonomy and governance in local government, with constitutional provisions	2021

	Ani, & Bernard Nsah	A Case Study in Nigeria	system in Nigeria.		foreshadowing unsolvable intergovernmental issues.	
5	Oluwaseun Bamidele & Olufemi Adewale Aluko	Local Government Autonomy and Service Delivery in Nigeria	This study investigates the connection between service delivery in Nigeria and local government autonomy.	Quantitative research approach.	Local government autonomy improves Nigerian service delivery. The writers advise the Nigerian government to guarantee local governments' true autonomy.	2020
6	Banko, O. H.	Local Government Autonomy in Nigeria and Politics of State Control	The amphibious character of local government autonomy is examined, along with the reasons behind its politicization, attempts to address stakeholder dilemmas, and the impasse's logjam.	Analytical research based on secondary data and content analysis.	To analyse the politics of local government autonomy, focusing on stakeholder dilemmas and the impasse in Nigeria.	2020
7	A. A. Adebayo & O. Oyewole	To investigate how Oyo State, Nigeria's State Joint Local Government Account affects local	The study employs a mixed-methods research design.	The research used pluralist and elite theories. It discovered that while there are movements in Nigeria for local government autonomy from all social classes,		2019

		government autonomy.		efforts are stalled by self-serving ruling elites.		
8	O. J. Oyedele & L. O. Oyedele	To ascertain how the State Joint Local Government Account affects local government autonomy in Nigeria's Ekiti State	This study uses interviews and document analysis in a qualitative research design.	The results show that Ekiti State's local government autonomy has been weakened by the State Joint Local Government Account.		2019
9	A. A. Adeyemi & O. J. Oyedele	To investigate how Osun State, Nigeria's State Joint Local Government Account affects local government autonomy.	The study employs a mixed-methods research design.	The results show that Osun State's local government autonomy has been weakened by the State Joint Local Government Account.		2019
10	O. J. Oyedele & A. A. Adeyemi	To investigate how Ondo State, Nigeria's State Joint Local Government Account affects local government autonomy.	The study adopts a qualitative research design.	The results show that Ondo State's local government autonomy has been weakened by the State Joint Local Government Account.		2019

11	Ogundiya, I. S., & Olaoye, O. A.	Local Government Autonomy and Development of Localities in Nigeria: Issues, Problems, and Suggestions	To investigate current questions regarding local government autonomy in Nigeria considering local community development.	Content analysis and bench work.	The study discovered that local governments in Nigeria have encountered obstacles due to insufficient autonomy, inadequate funding, strained ties between governments, and widespread corruption.	2019
12	Wilson, G., & Idoniboy-Obu, S. A.	Local Government Autonomy as a Strategy for Socio-Economic Development of Rural Communities in Nigeria	This paper aims to elucidate the concept of local government autonomy as a viable approach for rural development in Nigeria.	Quantitative research approach.	The 774 local governments in Nigeria must have political, financial, and administrative autonomy to fulfil their mission of promoting sustainable rural development.	2019
13	Oluwaseun Bamidele & Olufemi Adesina	Local Government Autonomy and Fiscal Sustainability in Nigeria: A Study of Kogi State	It analyses how control methods affect the autonomy of local governments in Nigeria, with a particular emphasis on Kogi State.	Mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative techniques.	Local government sovereignty is undermined by control mechanisms like financial limits and governmental meddling, hindering development and service delivery.	2019
14	O. O. Ogunleye & O. O. Ojo	To investigate how Lagos State, Nigeria's	The study employs a qualitative research design.	The results show that Lagos State's local government autonomy has been reduced by		2019

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		State Joint Local Government Account affects local government autonomy.		the State Joint Local Government Account, enabling improper meddling and manipulation of local government finances.		
15	O. O. Oyedokun & O. O. Oyedokun	It investigates how local government autonomy affects rural development in a few chosen local government districts in Nigeria's Oyo State.	Mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative methodologies.	Local government autonomy promotes rural development. However, gaps in local government representatives' ability, notably in knowledge and assets, hinder efficient administration.		2018
16	Adeyemi et al.	To analyze how control methods affect the autonomy of local governments in Nigeria, specifically concentrating on the local government councils in Kogi State.	Mixed-methods approach, incorporating both primary and secondary data.	Consistent with other studies, showing that political meddling, widespread corruption, and a lack of local government autonomy impair democratic governance and grassroots development.		2018

17	Doho, A. W., Ahmed, A. & Umar, A.	Local Government Autonomy in Nigeria: Struggles and Challenges.	To investigate the evolution, trends, and patterns of Nigeria's local government system.	Secondary data collection.	Local governments in Nigeria find it challenging to function as an independent level of government due to provisions in the 1999 constitution.	2018
18	Adedire, S. A.	Local Government and the Challenges of Rural Development in Nigeria (1999 to date).	This study looked at Nigerian local government and the problems associated with rural development from 1999 to the present.	Secondary data collection.	Local governments face challenges like inadequate funding, corruption, shoddy project execution, a shortage of skilled labour, high illiteracy rates, and state government theft of funds.	2014
19	Odo, L. U.	The challenges of local government autonomy in Nigeria.	To investigate the obstacles to the nation's local government autonomy and the potential benefits for better performance at the local level.	Qualitative research design.	Lack of autonomy is the main obstacle preventing Nigerian local governments from performing to their full potential. They advocate for true autonomy to establish local governments as a third branch of government.	2014
20	Imhanlahimi, J.	Local Government Autonomy and Development of Localities in Nigeria: Issues,	To determine the relevance of local government (LG) autonomy in Nigeria to the local community's	Qualitative research approach.	The study discovered that almost all aforementioned issues remain unaddressed, creating difficulties for LGs' efforts to build	2011

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		Problems, and Suggestions.	development and the LGs' original purpose.		communities, with insufficient autonomy being the main issue.	

A recurring theme across the literature is the critical role of local government autonomy in promoting effective governance and rural development in Nigeria. However, numerous studies point to the significant challenges that undermine this autonomy, especially through financial and political constraints imposed by the state government. A central point of debate in the literature concerns the impact of the State Joint Local Government Account (SJLGA), which has been highlighted by multiple scholars as a key mechanism that erodes local government autonomy (Bamidele & Adesina, 2019; Ogunleye & Ojo, 2019). The argument here is that the SJLGA centralizes control over local government finances, reducing the ability of local governments to independently manage their resources and execute development projects.

Several studies align in their conclusion that the SJLGA leads to significant governance challenges. For instance, Olu-Ogunleye, I., Akinbode, J., Oyelude, O., & Ogunleye, O. (2022) argue that Lagos State has seen a clear reduction in local government autonomy due to state interference in the management of the SJLGA, allowing for financial manipulation. This claim is echoed by Adebayo & Oyewole (2019) for Oyo State, who note similar restrictions on local governance caused by the centralized control of local finances. Notably, Adeyemi & Oyedele (2019) and Oyedele & Adeyemi (2019) point out

that local governments in Osun and Ondo States have suffered similarly due to the SJLGA's impact on autonomy.

However, these findings should not be seen in isolation. There is considerable variation in how local governments experience autonomy across different states. While the SJLGA has been criticized for stifling local governance in several states, the extent of its negative effects varies depending on the local political context. For example, Odo, L. U. (2014 emphasize that, in addition to financial constraints, the lack of autonomy in local governments also arises from weak political structures, corruption, and an inadequate democracy. These factors combine to inhibit local governments' capacity to execute policies effectively, contributing to a cycle of dependency on state governments.

A critical gap in the literature is the lack of comprehensive studies that account for the interplay between political structures and financial control mechanisms in shaping local government autonomy. While studies like those of Odo (2014) and Banko (2020) provide a foundational understanding of these dynamics, there is little in-depth analysis of how local political elites may benefit from perpetuating a system of constrained autonomy. For example, Banko (2020) argues that while local autonomy movements enjoy widespread support across social classes, the ruling elites often resist these changes, seeking to maintain control over local resources. This is a key area for further research, as it suggests that local government autonomy is not just a technical issue of financial control, but a deeply political one.

Interestingly, Wilson and Idoniboy-Obu (2019) present a more optimistic view, arguing that the attainment of effective and sustainable rural development in Nigeria hinges on local governments having political, financial, and administrative autonomy. They suggest that this is essential for the true empowerment of rural communities, providing a counterpoint to the more critical perspectives outlined above. However, Dance et al. (2024) offer a nuanced take, focusing on Kaduna State, where they argue that the combination of state-level political interference and administrative inefficiencies has further undermined local government efforts. These contrasting perspectives highlight the ongoing debate about the potential for local government autonomy to drive development.

Moreover, the literature consistently identifies corruption, inadequate funding, and state intervention as major obstacles to the realization of effective local government autonomy (Adeyemi et al., 2018; Okoh et al., 2022). In particular, Adedire (2014) notes that corruption and the mismanagement of local government funds not only affect service delivery but also lead to poor project execution, further impeding rural development. This suggests that financial autonomy alone may not be sufficient for achieving sustainable development if it is not accompanied by significant reforms to address corruption and improve administrative efficiency.

The key themes emerging from the literature are clear: the relationship between state control, local government autonomy, and rural development is complex and multifaceted. The consistent critique of the SJLGA reflects a widespread consensus that state interference limits the capacity of local governments to contribute meaningfully to

development. However, the variation in how autonomy issues manifest in different states suggests that a one-size-fits-all solution may not be effective.

Furthermore, there is a notable gap in research concerning the role of local elites in perpetuating the system of constrained autonomy. This insight, drawn from Banko (2020), calls for further exploration of the political dynamics that prevent meaningful change at the local government level.

Another area that remains underexplored is the impact of local government autonomy on democratic governance at the grassroots level. Scholars like Oyedokun, G. E., & Adeyemi, A. B. (2018)) argue that local autonomy is essential for the realization of democratic dividends, yet the effectiveness of local governments in promoting democracy remains unclear in many cases due to the lack of robust administrative and financial frameworks.

2.10   Theoretical framework

The theories discussed in this section form the foundation for understanding the dynamics of local government autonomy in Kogi State, Nigeria. While these theories provide insights into control mechanisms, they also highlight the complexities and potential contradictions in governance systems (Figure 2.1). This section critically examines each theory, comparing their perspectives and evaluating their relevance to the study of Kogi State's local government autonomy.

Figure 2. 1 Theoretical Framework
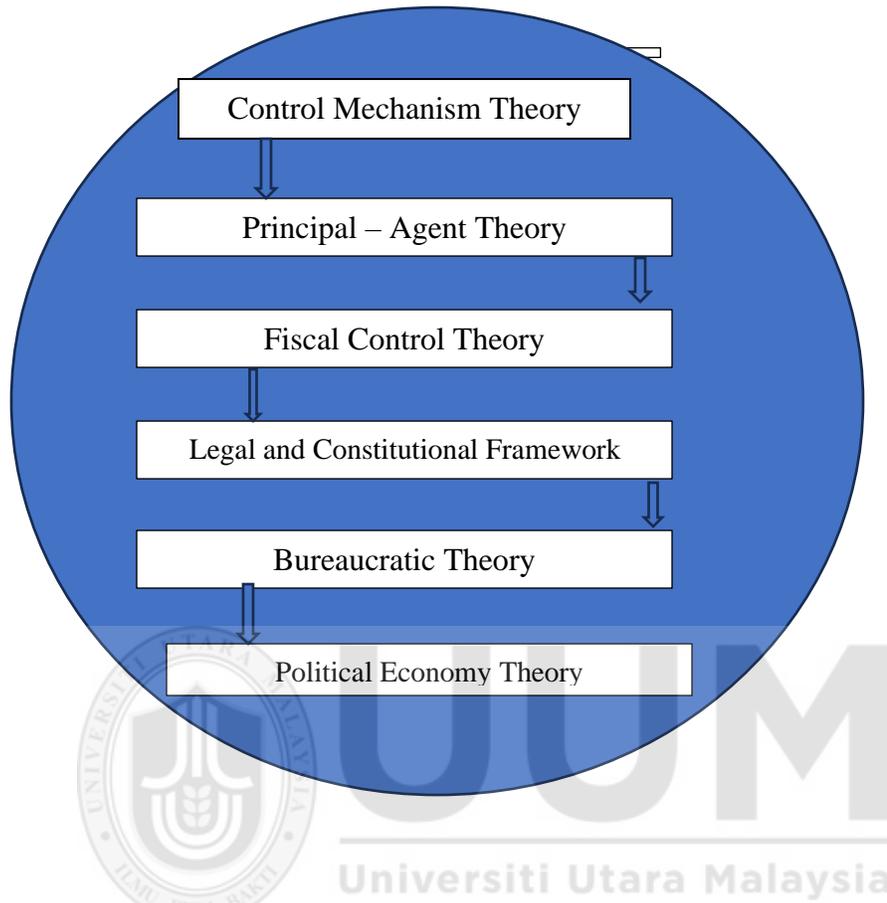
(i) Control Mechanisms Theory

Control mechanisms theory refers to the set of regulatory measures put in place by higher levels of government, such as the state or federal governments, to supervise and control the activities of local government councils. While this theory offers a useful lens to understand the top-down control structures, it assumes that higher government levels are always acting in the best interests of the local governments. However, the application of this theory to Kogi State reveals the inherent tension between autonomy and control.

Studies on control mechanisms often focus on how these measures are designed to curb local government corruption or inefficiency. Yet, they may overlook the detrimental impact these mechanisms can have on the autonomy and decision-making capacity of local governments. In the case of Kogi State, the imposition of strict controls may stifle local governance by undermining the flexibility needed for local councils to address specific community needs. Thus, while control mechanisms may promote accountability, they could simultaneously diminish the local governments' ability to function effectively, raising questions about the balance between oversight and autonomy.

(ii) Principal-Agent Theory

Principal-agent theory provides an interesting framework for examining the relationship between higher levels of government (the principal) and local government councils (the agents). This theory highlights the delegation of responsibilities from the state or federal government to local councils and the potential conflicts of interest that arise when local governments act in their own interests rather than those of the principal. When applied to Kogi State, this theory helps us explore how control mechanisms function as instruments for ensuring local governments act in alignment with state or federal priorities.

However, this framework often assumes a clear and cooperative relationship between the principal and the agent, which may not be the case in practice. In Kogi State, the state's control mechanisms may lead to conflicting priorities, where local governments are more responsive to the interests of state leaders rather than the needs of the communities they serve. This discrepancy can lead to inefficiency and misalignment in local governance,

revealing the limitations of principal-agent theory in explaining local government autonomy in such a context.

(iii) Fiscal Control Theory

Fiscal control theory focuses on the regulation of financial activities and budgetary autonomy of local governments. This theory is crucial for understanding the fiscal constraints imposed on local governments by higher levels of government. The central issue in Kogi State is how state and federal authorities have the power to control the allocation of resources, often at the expense of local government decision-making.

While fiscal control measures are intended to ensure proper resource allocation and prevent financial mismanagement, they often result in reduced financial autonomy for local governments. In Kogi State, the state government's control over financial allocations undermines local governments' ability to make independent fiscal decisions. This situation is further complicated by the lack of transparency in financial management, as local councils may have limited access to financial data or influence over budgeting processes. Thus, fiscal control theory's emphasis on regulation overlooks the negative consequences of centralized financial authority, which can weaken local governance and limit the effectiveness of policy implementation.

(iv) Legal and Constitutional Frameworks

The legal and constitutional frameworks governing local government autonomy in Nigeria, particularly the relevant sections of the Nigerian Constitution and state laws, are critical for understanding the formal rules that guide control mechanisms. These frameworks establish the boundaries of local government autonomy, yet their application in Kogi State has been inconsistent.

A key debate in this area concerns the interpretation and implementation of constitutional provisions regarding local government autonomy. While the Nigerian Constitution provides for local government independence, in practice, state governments, including in Kogi State, often find ways to bypass these provisions. This discrepancy between legal texts and actual practice highlights the limitations of the legal framework in ensuring genuine autonomy for local governments. Thus, a deeper analysis is needed to assess how the legal system both supports and constrains local government autonomy, particularly when the state government's interests conflict with constitutional provisions.

(v) Bureaucratic Theory

Bureaucratic theory emphasizes the role of government bureaucracies in policy implementation and decision-making. In the context of Kogi State, this theory is significant for understanding the role of administrative structures in managing local government affairs. Bureaucracies are often seen as essential for maintaining order and consistency in governance, but they can also create barriers to effective governance.

In Kogi State, bureaucratic inefficiencies, coupled with political patronage and administrative delays, can exacerbate the challenges faced by local governments in exercising autonomy. The bureaucracy often acts as a gatekeeper, slowing down the decision-making process and reinforcing the power dynamics that limit local autonomy. Thus, bureaucratic theory, while offering insights into administrative control, must be critically examined in the context of its negative effects on local government flexibility and responsiveness.

(vi) Political Economy Theory

Political economy theory examines the political and economic forces that shape governance, focusing on the power dynamics and economic interests that drive decision-making. In the case of Kogi State, political economy theory can help uncover the broader political and economic motivations behind the control mechanisms imposed on local governments.

Kogi State's political landscape is marked by a concentration of power at the state level, with economic resources often being controlled by political elites. These elites use control mechanisms to maintain their power and influence, which can lead to the marginalization of local governments. By applying political economy theory, we can better understand how economic factors, such as the allocation of state resources, influence the decisions made by higher levels of government. This theoretical perspective helps explain why local governments in Kogi State may be unable to fully exercise their autonomy, as they are constrained by the broader political and economic system that favors centralization.

Figure 2.2 Factors Affecting the Local Government's Failure to Perform its Constitutional Obligations
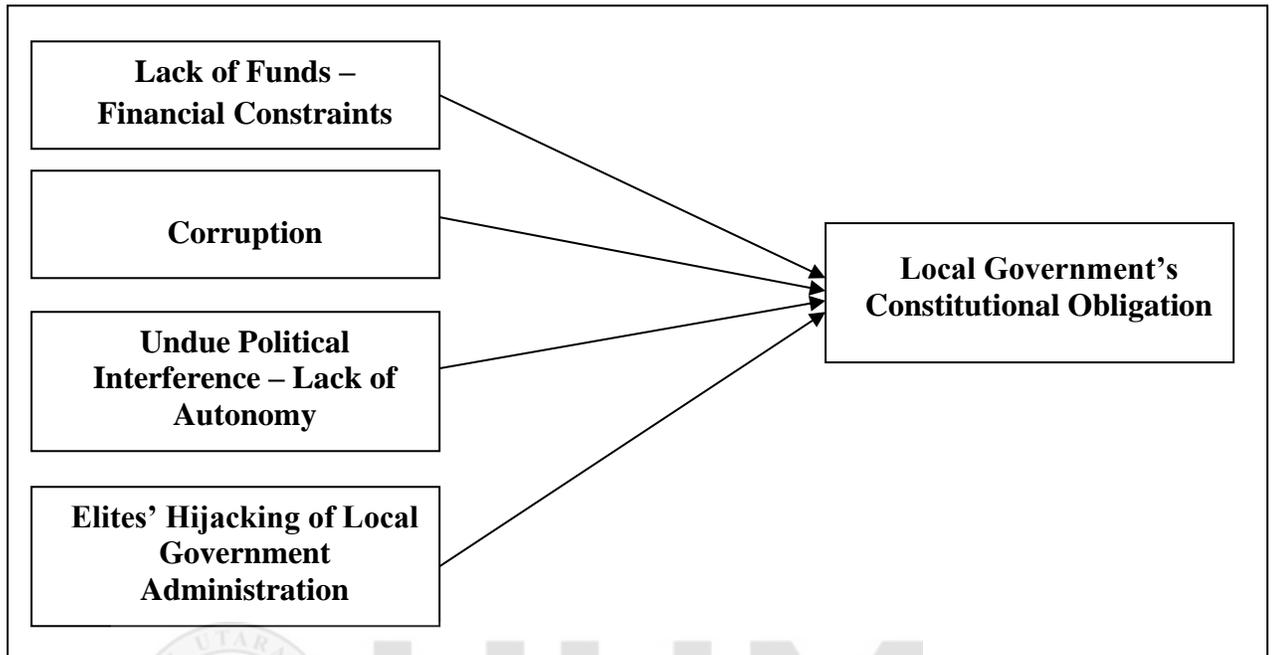
2.11   Theories of Local Government Studies

There are several theories on local government in Nigeria and the world over but for this

study, the researcher adopts the general system theory and structural functionalism theory.

Figure 2.3 Theories of Local Government Studies

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│                                             │
│     Theory of Structural Functionalism       │
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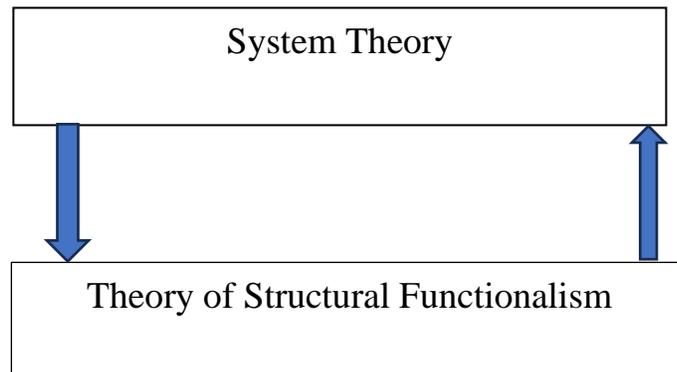
2.11.1 System Theory

Systems theory according to Easton's (1965) is fundamental in understanding political systems, including local government systems (Figure 2.3). Easton posits that a political system is a collection of interconnected and mutually regulated actions and awareness, which maintain equilibrium through input-output processes. While this theory highlights the importance of subsystems within the political system, its application to local governance suggests that local government autonomy is crucial for maintaining political stability and socio-economic development. A critical analysis of this theory raises questions about its applicability in contexts where political systems are highly centralized. Easton's view of a balanced system with clear input-output mechanisms assumes a degree of autonomy for subsystems. However, in practice, the lack of autonomy in local governments can create a dysfunctional political system, as evidenced by Nigeria's challenges in achieving socio-economic stability at the local government level. For instance, in Kogi State, the local government system is often constrained by top-down control, reducing its capacity to foster community-driven development and improving citizens' lives.

The theory's emphasis on input from the environment is also contested, as not all inputs are treated equally in practice. While the system may process various inputs such as public demands and resources, the control exerted by state governments often distorts these inputs, leading to inefficiencies and stunted local development. Furthermore, the idea of homeostasis, or system stability, appears overly optimistic in the context of a fragmented local governance system where political interference undermines local autonomy.

A key debate in the application of Systems Theory is whether local governments can achieve the desired equilibrium in a context where centralized control remains dominant. If autonomy is not achieved, as Easton suggests, the system may not operate optimally. Local governments, when denied the autonomy to make decisions suited to their communities, become less effective in contributing to national stability and socio-economic growth.

2.11.2 Theory of Structural Functionalism

Structural Functionalism, as proposed by scholars like Gabriel Almond and Bingham Powell, views society as a system of interrelated structures that each fulfill a necessary function. This theory offers a compelling lens through which to examine Nigerian local governments, as it highlights the interdependencies of various government structures in service delivery.

However, a critical discussion of this theory in the context of Nigerian local governments reveals that while the theory assumes a harmonious functioning system, in practice, many local governments face dysfunction due to weak institutional frameworks, lack of resources, and poor intergovernmental relations. Almond and Powell's assertion that society's structures must function together in a dynamic context becomes problematic when applied to local governments that are constrained by inadequate funding, political instability, and ineffective intergovernmental collaboration. The dysfunction, which Structural Functionalism identifies as a breakdown in the system, is apparent in Nigeria's local governments, which often struggle to meet the basic needs of their citizens despite the intended interconnectedness of departments and services.

Moreover, while Structural Functionalism emphasizes the importance of a stable and functional system, Nigerian local governments frequently fail to deliver essential services like healthcare, education, and infrastructure. This failure can be traced to the dysfunction within the political system, where local authorities lack the autonomy to execute their functions effectively. This disconnects between the theory's ideal of functional interrelations and the reality of Nigerian local governance raises critical questions about the viability of the Structural Functionalist approach in explaining the performance of local governments in developing countries.

A synthesis of the theory with empirical evidence from Nigeria's local governments suggests that structural imbalances, particularly in the relationships between local, state, and federal governments, hinder effective service delivery. In this regard, the theory's postulation of the system's need for balance may be too simplistic, as it overlooks the complexities and external factors influencing local government performance.

2.12 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework guiding this research is centered around the theory of Local Government Autonomy and Control Mechanisms. This framework is critical because it not only addresses local government autonomy but also acknowledges the control mechanisms that affect the degree of autonomy a local government can exercise. The relationship between autonomy and control mechanisms is vital to understanding the dynamics of local governance in Kogi State.

A key challenge in applying this framework is that the control mechanisms, such as state government influence and financial controls, often undermine the autonomy of local governments. The control mechanisms are intended to ensure accountability and transparency; however, they can sometimes act as barriers to effective governance, especially when they stifle local decision-making. The tension between control and autonomy has been widely debated in the literature, with some scholars arguing that local governments need more autonomy to respond to local needs effectively, while others emphasize the need for oversight to prevent corruption and mismanagement.

The literature reveals a significant gap in understanding how control mechanisms can be designed to strike a balance between autonomy and accountability. Studies suggest that while local governments in Nigeria are constitutionally granted certain degrees of autonomy, state governments often interfere, leading to dysfunctionality. Furthermore, while control mechanisms are necessary for maintaining order, their overbearing nature can undermine the very autonomy that local governments need to function effectively. The framework, as outlined, also offers insight into the socio-political dynamics that mediate the impact of these control mechanisms. Factors such as legal frameworks, political interests, and economic pressures significantly influence how local governments function. The role of local governments in community development is often hampered by these external factors, which limit their ability to make decisions that align with the needs of their communities.

In synthesizing the literature, it becomes clear that while control mechanisms are necessary for the functioning of local governments, an excessive concentration of power at the state or federal level limits the potential for local governments to fully realize their developmental objectives. The effectiveness of local governance depends on the ability of these governments to exercise autonomy while being held accountable through appropriate, non-intrusive control mechanisms.

2.13 Discussion of Gaps in Literature

The existing body of literature on local government autonomy and control mechanisms in Nigeria provides a solid foundation for understanding the relationship between central authority and local governance. However, several gaps remain that underscore the need for further exploration, particularly in the context of Kogi State. These gaps not only limit the scope of current research but also suggest areas where the literature has fallen short in addressing the complexity of local government autonomy.

i.   The Kogi State Context

One of the most glaring gaps in the literature is the neglect of state-specific studies, particularly concerning Kogi State. Despite being one of Nigeria's 36 states, there is a noticeable lack of in-depth research on the experiences of local government councils within Kogi State. Research on local governance in Nigeria tends to focus on larger, more prominent states or general national trends, leaving state-specific contexts largely unexplored. This omission is problematic because local governance dynamics can vary significantly from one state to another due to unique political, social, and economic circumstances. The absence of research on Kogi State limits our understanding of how local governments in this region navigate autonomy and the mechanisms of control imposed by higher authorities. It is crucial to consider local nuances to offer a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities for local governance in this specific context.

ii. Control Mechanisms and Their Impact

Another significant gap in the literature is the lack of focused studies on the control mechanisms imposed by state and federal governments on local governments. While the autonomy of local governments has been a prominent topic of discussion, there has been insufficient exploration of the mechanisms through which central authorities exert control over local governance. Many studies tend to provide a broad overview of autonomy, addressing issues such as legal frameworks and administrative structures without delving deeply into the specific tools or actions used by the state and federal governments to restrict local government powers. This oversight is critical, as it prevents a nuanced understanding of how these control mechanisms function in practice and how they affect the autonomy of local governments. More research is needed to identify and critically assess these mechanisms, their effectiveness, and their implications for local governance.

iii. Outdated Data and Evolving Political Landscape

The existing empirical studies on local government autonomy in Nigeria often rely on outdated data. Given the rapid changes in the political and administrative landscape in Nigeria, it is essential to update this research with more recent data. Over the past decades, there have been significant shifts in political power, governance models, and federal-state relations that directly impact local government autonomy. These changes need to be reflected in contemporary studies to ensure that research accurately captures the current state of local governance. The reliance on outdated studies also means that many of the conclusions drawn in earlier research may no longer be relevant or applicable to the current political and administrative realities of Nigeria.

iv. Limited Exploration of Community Perspectives

Most studies on local government autonomy have focused heavily on legal, institutional, and administrative aspects, often overlooking the perspectives of the local communities themselves. The effectiveness of local governance is ultimately measured by how well it serves the people it is intended to govern. However, community satisfaction with local government services, as well as their perceptions of autonomy, remains underexplored in the literature. The lack of research on this aspect is problematic because it limits our understanding of how local government autonomy translates into tangible benefits for citizens. A more comprehensive exploration of community views on local governance and the services provided by local governments could yield valuable insights into the practical implications of autonomy and control mechanisms.

v. Socioeconomic Impact of Control Mechanisms

While some studies briefly touch on the socioeconomic consequences of control mechanisms, there remains a significant gap in the in-depth analysis of how these mechanisms impact the development and well-being of local communities. The imposition of control mechanisms may hinder the economic and social growth of local areas by restricting the ability of local governments to allocate resources or make independent decisions. Yet, the literature largely neglects to analyze these impacts comprehensively. By investigating how control mechanisms affect the socioeconomic development of local communities, future research could provide a clearer picture of the long-term consequences of limiting local government autonomy.

vi. Policy Recommendations and Practical Insights

One of the most pressing gaps in the literature is the lack of concrete policy recommendations aimed at improving local government autonomy in Nigeria. Although many studies highlight the challenges and limitations of local government autonomy, few provide actionable policy suggestions for reform. This gap is crucial because research findings lose much of their value without the practical application of insights that can inform policy decisions. There is a need for research that bridges the gap between theoretical analysis and policy implementation by offering clear, actionable recommendations that can help enhance local government autonomy and improve governance at the local level.

2.14 Summary of the Chapter

In conclusion, while the literature on local government autonomy in Nigeria offers valuable insights into the challenges faced by local governments, significant gaps remain that must be addressed. The lack of state-specific research, particularly on Kogi State, the under-exploration of control mechanisms, outdated data, and the limited focus on community perspectives and socioeconomic impacts all point to the need for further investigation. By addressing these gaps, this study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of local government autonomy in Nigeria and provide actionable insights that can inform policy reforms to enhance governance at the local level. The next chapter outlines the research methodology employed to explore these issues in greater depth and how it seeks to address the identified gaps in the literature.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology adopted in the study; it is structured in a way that it ensures the reliability and validity of the instruments and procedures used, enabling robust and credible findings.

This chapter begins with an overview of the research design, detailing the approach and rationale behind the selection of methods used to achieve the research objectives. It discusses the instruments developed for data collection, with a focus on ensuring their validity and reliability through rigorous testing and refinement processes, including pilot testing. This is followed by a comprehensive explanation of the research procedure, outlining each phase in detail with specific timelines and steps. A flowchart was also provided to visualize the data collection and analysis process, enhancing clarity and transparency. Hence, it consists of research design, instrument development and validation, research procedure and data collection and analysis process.

3.2 Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-method approach to examine the dynamics of control mechanisms and local government autonomy in Kogi State, Nigeria. The mixed-method design was selected to facilitate a comprehensive exploration of the research problem, integrating both qualitative and quantitative techniques to answer the diverse research questions effectively (Toledo, C., & Shannon-Baker, P. (2023).

Qualitative Approach

The qualitative component addresses Research Questions 1, 2, and 4, focusing on gathering in-depth insights from key stakeholders. The qualitative methods used include semi-structured interviews and open-ended surveys, aimed at collecting detailed and descriptive accounts from local government officials, state representatives, and influential community leaders. This qualitative data is vital for capturing the nuanced perspectives and life experiences of individuals directly engaged in the political and governance processes of Kogi State (Kekeya, J. (2021). This method enables a deeper understanding of the complex, context-specific issues impacting local governance and autonomy, which are often overlooked in purely numerical data.

Quantitative Approach

The quantitative component of the study is employed to address Research Question 3. A structured questionnaire containing closed-ended questions was distributed to a random sample of residents across local government areas in Kogi State. This method aims to collect measurable data to identify trends and patterns related to the impact of control

mechanisms on local government autonomy (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2017). The results were analyzed statistically to establish correlations, trends, and potential causal relationships, which would complement the qualitative findings and offer a more robust understanding of the research issue.

Sampling Strategy and Justification

For the qualitative segment, purposive sampling was employed to ensure that the participants selected have direct and relevant experience with the study's focal issues. This method was chosen because it allows for the deliberate selection of individuals who can provide the most insightful and relevant data for the research objectives (Mulisa, F. (2022) Participants were specifically chosen based on their roles as decision-makers or influencers within local government and the state apparatus, ensuring that their responses would offer the depth of information necessary to address the research questions effectively.

In the quantitative phase, random sampling was utilized to select participants from a broader pool of residents in Kogi State. This method ensures that the sample is representative of the population, minimizing bias and improving the generalizability of the findings. A sample size of 442 respondents was calculated based on statistical principles to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the results. This size is sufficient to provide a high level of confidence in the data while maintaining practical feasibility in terms of data collection.

The rationale for the sample size in both qualitative and quantitative segments was carefully considered. The qualitative sample size is deliberately small, consisting of approximately 18 participants, to allow for detailed, in-depth interviews that capture the complexity of participants' experiences. On the other hand, the larger sample of 442 respondents for the quantitative phase is intended to provide robust, statistically significant data that can be generalized to the larger population of residents in Kogi State.

Justification for the Mixed-Method Design

The mixed-method design was chosen due to its ability to address the multifaceted nature of the research problem. The integration of qualitative and quantitative methods provides complementary insights, where the qualitative findings offer depth and context, while the quantitative data provides breadth and generalizability. This approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the issue at hand, considering both the personal experiences and the measurable impacts of control mechanisms on local government autonomy (Creswell, 2014).

By utilizing both methods, this research ensures that it captures a complete picture of the challenges facing local governments in Kogi State. The triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data enhances the credibility of the findings, as the results from one method can be corroborated by the other, leading to more reliable and valid conclusion (Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2011).

3.3 Instrument Development and Validation

This section describes the step-by-step process of designing the survey and interview instruments used in this study. The instruments were developed based on a thorough literature review and consultation with subject-matter experts to ensure they align with the research objectives. The validity of the instrument was established through content validity, construct validity and pilot testing.

Content validity refers to the extent to which a test, survey, or assessment accurately measures or represents the specific concept or content area it is intended to evaluate. It ensures that the items within a test are relevant and representative of the construct being measured. For example, in local government autonomy, content validity ensures that the constitutional functions of the local government are carried out in a manner that reflect the actual essence of their establishment spelt out by the constitution. Achieving content validity often involves expert judgment, where subject matter experts review the test items to ensure alignment with the intended content domain. It's essential for creating fair and reliable assessments (Silverman, D. (2021).

Content validity is crucial in assessments because it ensures fairness, accuracy, and relevance. It ensures that the assessment accurately measures what it is intended to evaluate. When content validity is high, the results of the assessment are more likely to be trusted by stakeholders such as educators, employers, and policymakers. Ultimately, content validity supports the integrity and usefulness of an assessment (Cabrera-Álvarez, P., & Lynn, P. (2025).

Content validity in social science research describes the degree to which an instrument (e.g., survey, questionnaire, test) accurately represents and measures the construct it is intended to assess. It ensures that the instrument covers all relevant aspects of the concept being studied and excludes irrelevant or unrelated items. This type of validity is particularly important in social science research, where many constructs, like attitudes, behaviours or social phenomena, are abstract and multidimensional. For instance, a questionnaire about "local government autonomy and control mechanism" must include questions on different factors that affects effective service delivery at the local government level. Reviewing past studies and theoretical frameworks helps identify key aspects of the construct and ensures the instrument aligns with existing knowledge. Researchers sometimes quantify content validity using a content validity index (CVI). Experts rate the relevance of each item, and the CVI score indicates how well the instrument covers the intended construct. Content validity determines whether the elements within an assessment instrument comprehensively represent the construct being measured (Mohammadi, E., König, T., & Zimmermann, B. (2025).

Construct validity on the other hand refers to the degree to which a test, assessment, or measurement tool accurately measures the theoretical construct or concept it is intended to measure. In social sciences, constructs are abstract ideas or concepts, such as intelligence, anxiety, motivation, or job satisfaction, that cannot be directly observed. Construct validity ensures that the tool or method used to measure these constructs truly reflects the underlying concept. Construct validity can be broken down into convergent validity and discriminant validity (also called divergent validity). Convergent validity

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assesses whether the measure correlates strongly with other measures that are designed to assess the same or similar constructs. For example, if two different tests aim to measure "self-esteem," they should produce similar results to demonstrate convergent validity. Discriminant validity evaluates whether the measure has low correlations with measures of unrelated constructs. For example, a self-esteem scale should not strongly correlate with a scale measuring academic knowledge, as they are distinct constructs. Both convergent and discriminant validity are essential for establishing robust construct validity. Construct validity is often established through a combination of methods, such as theoretical framework, operationalization, factor analysis, hypothesis testing and comparison with established tools. Construct validity is vital because it ensures that the results of a test are meaningful and applicable. Without construct validity the results might be misleading or inaccurate, Conclusion drawn from research may lack credibility and interventions or decisions based on the test could be ineffective or inappropriate (Putney, L. G., Green, J. L., Dixon, C. N., & Kelly, G. J. (1999).

Pilot testing is a preliminary trial or small-scale test conducted before fully implementing a product, service, project, or initiative. It allows researcher to evaluate the feasibility, usability, and effectiveness of their data in a controlled environment, often with a limited audience or sample size. Administering the instrument to a small, representative sample can help identify gaps, ambiguities, or irrelevant items. By testing on a smaller scale, potential problems or flaws can be discovered and addressed before full-scale implementation. Fixing errors during a pilot phase is often less costly and time-consuming than addressing them after a full launch. A pilot test provides valuable insights from real

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users or stakeholders, helping to refine the solution to better meet their needs. It helps to determine if the solution is practical, scalable, and suitable for the intended audience or environment. By addressing potential failures or obstacles early, pilot testing minimizes the risk of a poor launch. The data and results from a pilot study can guide decisions on whether to proceed, adjust, or abandon the initiative. In essence, pilot testing is like a "dress rehearsal" that ensures everything runs smoothly before taking the final step (Denscombe, M. (2024). In this study a small-scale pilot test was conducted with 54 participants to refine the questions and identify any ambiguities. Reliability was ensured by calculating Cronbach's Alpha for internal consistency, with results exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.7 for all constructs. These steps collectively reinforce the robustness of the data collection instruments.

3.4 Research Procedure

This section provides a detailed and structured outline of the research process. It includes: Preparation Phase which deals with literature review and formulation of research questions and objectives, Development of survey and interview instruments and conducting a pilot test with participants. The next phase was the data collection phase which involves the recruitment of participants using cluster and stratified sampling techniques, administration of the survey and/or interviews and the recording and storing the data in a secure and organized manner.

The data analysis phase entails data cleaning and preparation using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and Statistical and thematic analysis based on the research questions. Lastly, the report writing phase, which involves the synthesizing of findings and drafting of chapters as well as the reviewing of drafts and addressing feedback from supervisors.

3.4.1 Timeline and Flowchart

A timeline was developed to guide each stage of the research, ensuring that milestones are achieved within the allocated time frame (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1 Research Timeline

Research Timeline		
Phase	**Time Period**	**Key Activities**
Preparation Phase	January – June 2022	Literature Review, Instrument Development
Data Collection Phase	June 2022 – February 2023	Participant Recruitment, Survey, Interview Sessions
Data Analysis Phase	March – December 2023	Data Cleaning, Statistical/ Thematic Analysis
Report Writing Phase	January – May 2024	Synthesizing Findings, Drafting and Review

This study employed both qualitative and quantitative instrument to generate data for the study. The researcher decided to use both method because it offers a balanced support to the study without bias. This combination of methods provides a source of well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes on the topic under study.

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A structured questionnaire was the primary tool used for quantitative data collection. The respondents included political office holders and career staff members from the local government councils of Kogi State. To enhance the reliability and consistency of responses, the questionnaires utilized a Likert scale format, which allowed participants to express their level of agreement or disagreement with various statements related to local government autonomy and control mechanisms. The use of a Likert scale ensures that responses can be quantitatively analyzed and compared across respondents.

The sampling method employed for the distribution of the questionnaires was purposive sampling. This method was chosen to specifically target key stakeholders whose roles and responsibilities are directly relevant to the study's objectives. The purposive sampling technique allowed for a focused selection of individuals who possess the necessary knowledge and experience regarding the research topic. A total of 442 questionnaires were distributed across the local government councils, ensuring a diverse and representative set of responses. Given the constraints of the research, the sample size was determined based on a balance between available resources and the need for meaningful data. This method allowed for precision in obtaining responses from those most directly involved in the governance and management of local governments in Kogi State. The questionnaires were administered in person by the researcher, with assistance from research assistants and departmental administrative officers. This approach was intended to ensure a high response rate and to address any concerns or questions participants might have during the completion process. In addition, this method allowed for greater control over the data collection process, minimizing potential issues related to non-response or incomplete data.

To complement the quantitative data, in-depth interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, including local government officials and representatives from the state government. This qualitative method was essential for gaining deeper insights into the complex dynamics of control mechanisms and their influence on local government autonomy. The interviews provided an opportunity for participants to express their views, experiences, and challenges in a more open-ended format, offering a richer understanding of the subject matter.

A total of eighteen (18) in-depth interviews were conducted, with two interviewees selected from each of the nine selected local government areas of Kogi State for eight months June 2022 and February, 2023. The interviewees were purposefully chosen based on their positions and expertise in local government affairs. The interviews were semi-structured, allowing for flexibility in exploring relevant issues while ensuring that key topics related to the research questions were addressed. This qualitative component addressed Research Questions 1, 2, and 4 of the study.

The secondary data in this study include journals from previous researchers and scholars. Various journals are valuable to the researcher to have a clear picture of this subject matter from various perspectives. Likewise, it also provides the researcher with the key variables, theories, and various issues and experiences across different strata of the society. All the journals obtain from the printed material and online. In addition, books also play an important role in this study. The researcher read a range of books since it helps the researcher search out various issues and problems related to this study. Besides

journals and books, sources from the Internet also have been used. The researcher also spent most of the time looking for the information available for the study, especially in terms of statistics, online journals and articles, conference proceedings, and other relevant information. The researcher also uses the internet to observe the government's portal, especially local government websites.

But some of the interviews with the local authorities' officers were easily conducted during their working hours. Therefore, interviewees, especially the local authorities, were free to select an interview location. However, all of the interviews took place at their work location. The workplaces provide favourable environments for interviewing and recording except for minor interruptions such as ringing telephones

Typically, interviews lasted roughly 40 minutes to 70 minutes and were conducted in English Language. Before the start of every interview, interviewees were explained about the nature of the study, and the acknowledgement letter obtained from the Ghazali Shafie Graduate School of Government, Universiti Utara Malaysia was shown. Permission to use a voice recorder at the interview was also verbally sought, to which most of the interviewees agreed. The recorded interview allowed the note-taking to a minimum and pay more attention to the conversation. In addition, all interviews were transcribed from digital voice recordings, which produced transcripts that form the central core of this study.

3.5 Population and Sampling

In research, the population refers to the complete set of individuals or entities that share specific characteristics relevant to the research objectives (Yang, J., & Huang, X. (2021). The concept of the population is crucial in forming the foundation for generalizing findings based on the sample selected (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Therefore, understanding and defining the population is essential for the research methodology. This study focuses on two distinct groups within the population: the target population and the accessible population (Cypress, B. S. (2017).

i)   Target Population

The target population encompasses all individuals or entities who meet the criteria relevant to the study and from whom conclusion are intended to be generalized. For this study, the target population includes various stakeholders involved in the governance of local government institutions, specifically within Kogi State, Nigeria. These stakeholders include members of the Local Government Councils, political officeholders, senior and junior staff of the councils, departments, as well as senior management and administrative officers. These groups are considered central to the study due to their involvement in governance, policy-making, and the implementation of control mechanisms within local government structures.

ii)   Accessible Population

The accessible population refers to a practical subset of the target population from which the researcher can collect data. In this case, the accessible population consists of 15,766

individuals, as provided by the Kogi State Bureau of Statistics. This group includes key figures such as management staff (e.g., Chairmen, Commissioners, Auditor-General for Local Government, Accountant General of the State), Permanent Secretaries, Directors of Personnel Management, Treasurers, Internal Auditors, and leaders of the Nigeria Union of Local Government Employees (NULGE). These individuals play a crucial role in the local government's operations, particularly in areas related to financial control, governance, and autonomy. Their insights and experiences are directly relevant to the research topic, making them the ideal participants for this study.

3.6 Sampling Design

Sampling is a critical component in research methodology, as it involves the careful selection of a representative group of elements from a larger population to ensure the accuracy and relevance of the study findings (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). For this research, a multi-stage sampling approach was employed, combining both to ensure that the sample accurately represents the different segments of Kogi State.

Kogi State is divided into three senatorial districts: Kogi West, Kogi Central, and Kogi East. Kogi West comprises seven local governments (Kabba/Bunu, Kogi/Koton Karfe, Mopa Muro, Ijumu, Yagba East, Yagba West, and Lokoja), Kogi Central includes five local governments (Adavi, Ajaokuta, Okehi, Okene, and Ogori-Mangogo), and Kogi East consists of nine local governments (Idah, Ibaji, Igalamela/Odolu, Ofu, Dekina, Ankpa, Olamaboro, Bassa, and Omala).

To ensure the sample is representative, a random selection of local governments was made from each senatorial district. From Kogi West, three local governments were randomly selected: Mopa Muro, Kogi/Koton Karfe, and Lokoja. From Kogi Central, two local governments Ogori-Mangogo and Ajaokuta were randomly chosen, while four local governments were selected from Kogi East: Igalamela, Idah, Ankpa, and Dekina.

This procedure aligns with the principle of proportionate stratified sampling, where the population is first divided into distinct strata (i.e., the local governments), and participants are randomly selected within each group to ensure that each segment of the population is adequately represented. This sampling method was selected because it offers precision in representation, taking into account the geographical distribution of the population and ensuring a well-rounded analysis of the target area.

For the sample size, the Krejcie and Morgan table (Taylor, S. J., Bogdan, R., & DeVault, M. L. (2015). was utilized to determine an appropriate sample size for a population ranging from 75,000 to 1,000,000, which recommends a sample size of 384. In light of potential challenges such as non-responses or incomplete surveys, an additional 15% was added to the original sample size, as recommended by Ezzy, D. (2013). Therefore, the total number of questionnaires distributed was 442, which includes the original 384 sample size plus an additional 58 to account for non-responses and errors Janesick V. J. (2000)

The multi-stage sampling design involved several steps: firstly, the respondents were grouped into strata based on the nine local governments selected in Kogi State. Secondly, the number of respondents required from each stratum was determined, ensuring proportional representation across all selected local governments. This method was chosen to ensure the sample accurately reflects the demographic and geographical diversity of Kogi State.

Table 3.2 The Proportionate Stratified Sampling of Respondents

Local Governments	Population	Stratum	Sample
MopaMuro	43,760	43,760/972724 x 442	20
Kogi/Koton Karfe	115,100	115,100/972724 x 442	52
Lokoja	196,643	19 6,643/972724 x 442	89
Ogori-Mangogo	39,807	39,807/972724 x 442	18
Ajaokuta	122,432	122,432/972724 x 442	56
Igalamela/ Odolu	127,572	127,572/972724 x 442	58
Idah	79,755	797,55/972724 x 442	36
Ankpa	107,968	107,968/972724 x 442	49
Dekina	139,687	139,687/972724 x 442	64
Total	972,724		**442**

Table 3.2 provides further details on the stratified sampling process, illustrating how the sample was drawn from each local government to ensure comprehensive representation.

3.7 Sampling Methodology and Rationale

For this study, a proportionate stratified sampling technique was employed to ensure the sample represents various sub-groups or strata within Kogi State's local government areas. Stratified sampling was specifically chosen to enhance the precision of the study by ensuring that each local government area, based on its population size and characteristics, is adequately represented. This approach is particularly suitable when the population under study exhibits significant diversity across strata, ensuring that smaller groups are not underrepresented while larger groups are given the necessary weight in the findings (Maltezos, V., Luhtakallio, E., & Meriluoto, T. (2024).

In this context, the application of proportionate stratified sampling is critical as it allows for a fair and equitable distribution of respondents across the different local governments in Kogi State. Given that some local governments may have more respondents due to their larger size, this method ensures that each stratum is represented in proportion to its actual size, thus avoiding bias that may arise from underrepresentation or overrepresentation of specific localities. The rationale behind selecting this sampling method lies in the need for accuracy and representation across the diverse local governments of Kogi State. As each local government has different administrative and governance characteristics, stratified sampling allows for a deeper analysis of control mechanisms and local government autonomy across varied contexts. This method is also highly appropriate considering the qualitative nature of this study, which focuses on gathering detailed insights through interviews with experienced staff members from each of the nine selected local government areas in Kogi State.

In addition to the quantitative approach, the qualitative aspect of this study involves conducting interviews with the most experienced staff in each of the nine selected local governments. These interviews would provide in-depth perspectives on the issues relating to control mechanisms and local government autonomy, thereby complementing the quantitative data collected through the stratified sampling technique.

Regarding sample size, the choice was made to ensure that a sufficient number of respondents from each local government area participated in the study, providing meaningful data for analysis while considering logistical and resource constraints. The study's sample size was determined based on the need for robust, representative data that accurately reflects the characteristics of each local government area, as well as the study's objectives of exploring control mechanisms and autonomy at the local government level.

3.8 Unit of Analysis

This study identifies the Local Government Councils in Kogi State, Nigeria, as the unit of analysis. Specifically, the research focuses on management staff members of these councils as key participants. The selection of management staff as the target respondents is based on several strategic and practical considerations.

To begin with, management staff possess specialized knowledge regarding the strategic objectives and operational dynamics of the Local Government Councils. As noted by Abe, T., & Omotoso, F. (2021) these individuals are well-versed in the intricacies of local governance, which positions them as reliable sources of information for the research.

Their extensive involvement in the administrative and operational processes of the councils ensures that they are equipped to offer informed responses to the study's research questions.

Furthermore, management staff occupy pivotal positions within the local government framework, with significant involvement in decision-making processes that influence policy formation and the execution of government initiatives (Lee, E., Li, X., & Jung, K. (2019). Their central role in shaping both policy and practice in local governance makes them indispensable for understanding the nuances of local government autonomy in Kogi State.

By selecting management staff as the unit of analysis, this study seeks to comprehensively explore the influence of control mechanisms on the autonomy of local governments in Kogi State. Their perspectives are crucial in uncovering the challenges and complexities that local government councils face in maintaining autonomy, especially in the context of local governance dynamics in Nigeria.

3.9 Data Collection Method

This research adopted a mixed-method approach to data collection, integrating both primary and secondary sources to achieve a well-rounded analysis of the subject matter. The combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques ensures the collection of comprehensive and reliable data, enabling a deeper understanding of the research phenomenon.

3.9.1 Primary Data Collection

The primary data for this study was gathered using a range of methods, with careful consideration given to the specific characteristics of the research context. The data collection was designed to provide both breadth and depth in understanding the control mechanisms and local government autonomy in Kogi State.

i.   Questionnaires

A structured questionnaire was the primary tool used for quantitative data collection. The respondents included political office holders and career staff members from the local government councils of Kogi State. To enhance the reliability and consistency of responses, the questionnaires utilized a likert scale format, which allowed participants to express their level of agreement or disagreement with various statements related to local government autonomy and control mechanisms. The use of a Likert scale ensures that responses can be quantitatively analyzed and compared across respondents.

The sampling method employed for the distribution of the questionnaires was purposive sampling. This method was chosen to specifically target key stakeholders whose roles and responsibilities are directly relevant to the study's objectives. The purposive sampling technique allowed for a focused selection of individuals who possess the necessary knowledge and experience regarding the research topic. A total of 442 questionnaires were distributed across the local government councils, ensuring a diverse and representative set of responses. Given the constraints of the research, the sample size was determined based on a balance between available resources and the need for meaningful data. This method

allowed for precision in obtaining responses from those most directly involved in the governance and management of local governments in Kogi State.

The questionnaires were administered in person by the researcher, with assistance from research assistants and departmental administrative officers. This approach was intended to ensure a high response rate and to address any concerns or questions participants might have during the completion process. In addition, this method allowed for greater control over the data collection process, minimizing potential issues related to non-response or incomplete data.

ii.   In-depth Interviews

To complement the quantitative data, in-depth interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, including local government officials and representatives from the state government. This qualitative method was essential for gaining deeper insights into the complex dynamics of control mechanisms and their influence on local government autonomy. The interviews provided an opportunity for participants to express their views, experiences, and challenges in a more open-ended format, offering a richer understanding of the subject matter.

A total of eighteen (18) in-depth interviews were conducted, with two interviewees selected from each of the nine selected local government areas of Kogi State. The interviewees were purposefully chosen based on their positions and expertise in local government affairs. The interviews were semi-structured, allowing for flexibility in

exploring relevant issues while ensuring that key topics related to the research questions were addressed. This qualitative component addressed Research Questions 1, 2, and 4 of the study.

iii.   Direct Observation

In addition to questionnaires and interviews, direct observation was employed as a supplementary data collection method. This involved the researcher and research assistants observing local government activities, interactions, and decision-making processes in real time. The direct observation method provided valuable contextual insights into the practical implementation of control mechanisms and their impact on local government autonomy. This method allowed for the capture of nuanced, real-world data that may not have been reflected in interview responses or survey data.

3.9.2 Secondary Data Collection

For this research, relying solely on primary data would not provide sufficient context or depth. As a result, secondary data plays a crucial role in supplementing the primary data and enhancing the overall comprehensiveness of the study. Secondary data refers to information that has already been collected and published by other researchers or institutions, offering valuable insights into the research topic. These data sources are readily accessible and provide an efficient alternative to primary data, saving both time and financial resources in the data collection process.

In contemporary research, secondary data not only offers a cost-effective solution but also aids in the refinement of primary data collection. By reviewing existing literature, the researcher can identify potential gaps in the available data, ensuring that subsequent primary data collection is more focused and relevant. Furthermore, secondary data provides an essential framework for contrasting new findings with existing research, enriching the analysis and interpretation of the results. According to Management Study Guide (2021), secondary data is instrumental in strengthening research by offering additional context, broader perspectives, and a deeper understanding of the research topic.

The secondary data used in this study includes academic journals and publications authored by scholars and researchers in related fields. These journals, accessed through both online and offline platforms, provide varied perspectives and offer insights into global issues, theories, and concepts that are highly pertinent to the research. By consulting multiple journals, the researcher gains a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter, benefiting from diverse viewpoints and established research.

Books form another significant source of secondary data. The researcher examined a range of literature to uncover various topics and challenges related to the study, ensuring that all aspects of the research topic were explored thoroughly. Additionally, online resources, including statistical data, government reports, and conference proceedings, were utilized to provide updated and relevant information. The researcher specifically focused on accessing government portals, particularly those managed by local governments, which provide official data on governance and policy-related matters.

Moreover, media sources, such as newspapers, magazines, and online news outlets, were reviewed to gain historical and contextual insights into the local government issues in Kogi State. These sources provided valuable perspectives on the socio-political landscape and highlighted the challenges faced by local governments, adding depth to the analysis.

The integration of both primary and secondary data collection methods ensures a robust data triangulation process. This methodological approach helps to reduce potential biases and strengthens the reliability of the dataset, thereby enhancing the validity and credibility of the research findings

3.10 Method of Data Analysis

The data collected through a combination of questionnaires, interviews, and direct observations undergoes thorough and structured analysis to ensure that the research objectives are met with accuracy. The data analysis approach combines both descriptive and inferential statistics, employing advanced statistical software tools alongside Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) techniques.

The primary focus of the analysis was to offer precise insights into the relationships and trends within the data, with a clear alignment to the research questions and the scope of the study. Descriptive statistics was used to summarize and describe the main features of the dataset, providing an overview of the demographic and response patterns. In contrast, inferential statistics was utilized to draw conclusion and make predictions about the broader population from the sample data.

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to evaluate complex relationships between variables and test the hypothesized model. This method is particularly effective in examining the direct and indirect effects between the study's key variables, allowing for a robust analysis of the underlying structures in the dataset.

3.10.1 Quantitative Analysis

Standard deviation is a statistical tool used to measure the extent of variability or dispersion within a dataset. It reflects the degree to which individual data points differ from the mean (average) value of the dataset. Essentially, it reveals the extent of spread in the data points. When the standard deviation is low, it suggests that the data points are tightly clustered around the mean, indicating consistency. In contrast, a high standard deviation signifies that the data points are more widely dispersed, showing greater variability.

Mathematically, standard deviation is represented by the Greek letter sigma (σ) for populations and the letter "s" when calculating for a sample. Understanding the standard deviation allows researchers to assess the degree of variation within the dataset, making it a crucial component for interpreting data in quantitative research.

The formula for calculating the standard deviation is as follows:

For a population: $\sigma = \sqrt{[\Sigma(x_i - \mu)^2 / N]}$

For a sample: $s = \sqrt{[\Sigma(x_i - \bar{x})^2 / (n - 1)]}$

Where:
- σ (or s) is the standard deviation.
- x_i represents each individual data point.
- μ (or $\bar{x}$) is the mean (average) of the data.
- N is the total number of data points in a population.
- n is the total number of data points in a sample.

The initial phase of the data analysis involved a detailed assessment of several key aspects to ensure the integrity and relevance of the data. First, the normality of the data distribution was carefully examined to verify whether it met the assumptions required for parametric statistical methods. Missing data were identified and handled using appropriate imputation techniques, ensuring minimal bias and preserving the representativeness of the data. The data set was meticulously screened for any irregularities or anomalies, which could potentially skew the results.

A critical test for non-response bias was conducted to ensure that any differences between respondents and non-respondents did not significantly affect the validity of the findings. Outliers were detected and systematically addressed, given their potential to distort the outcomes of statistical analysis. The reliability of the data was rigorously evaluated using established measures of internal consistency, ensuring the robustness of the findings.

Additionally, a comprehensive correlation analysis was performed to explore significant relationships among variables. Descriptive statistics, such as mean and standard deviations, were calculated for the key variables, providing a clear and concise summary of their characteristics. This step was essential for ensuring that the data accurately reflected the underlying trends and patterns relevant to the study's objectives.

3.10.2 Qualitative Analysis

In conjunction with the quantitative research approach, this study integrates a qualitative component to provide a comprehensive analysis of the challenges surrounding control mechanisms and local government autonomy in Kogi State, Nigeria. A purposive sampling method is employed for selecting participants, as it enables the researcher to focus on individuals who possess direct experience and relevant insights into the topic under study. This approach is particularly suited to understanding the complex, context-specific issues that may not be fully captured through quantitative data alone.

Purposive sampling was chosen for this study due to its effectiveness in selecting participants who can provide in-depth, detailed information about the challenges faced by local government officials and staff in Kogi State. The selection criteria are based on the participants' roles within the local government system, ensuring that the individuals interviewed have firsthand experience with control mechanisms and governance practices. This targeted approach ensures that the sample is relevant to the research objectives, allowing the study to gather meaningful and context-specific data (Klenke, K. (2016).

The sample size for the qualitative component was determined based on the need for sufficient diversity in perspectives while maintaining feasibility within the constraints of time and resources. A total of 15-20 participants are selected, which is a suitable range for qualitative studies, allowing for the saturation of themes while avoiding excessive data collection. This sample size aligns with established qualitative research standards, ensuring that the data collected would provide a deep and nuanced understanding of the research problem (Putney, L. G., Green, J. L., Dixon, C. N., & Kelly, G. J. (1999).

The rationale for choosing purposive sampling and this specific sample size is grounded in the study's objectives of exploring the experiences, insights, and perceptions of local government officials and senior staff. By focusing on key informants with direct involvement in governance, this approach enhances the relevance and precision of the findings, which is crucial for addressing the research questions on control mechanisms and autonomy. Furthermore, the chosen method enables the researcher to explore both the overarching and localized factors that influence governance in Kogi State.

In addition, qualitative research offers the flexibility needed to explore complex and multifaceted issues that may not be easily quantified. The generic qualitative inquiry method, which does not rely on rigid philosophical assumptions, allows the researcher to adapt the approach as new insights emerge. This flexibility is essential in understanding the real-world dynamics of local governance, making the qualitative phase a valuable complement to the quantitative phase of the study (Taylor, S. J., Bogdan, R., & DeVault, M. L. (2015).

Through semi-structured interviews and open-ended discussions, the qualitative data collection focuses on gathering rich, detailed accounts of the challenges faced by local government officials regarding control mechanisms and autonomy. This process provides a deeper, more contextualized understanding of the issues at hand, enriching the quantitative findings and offering a holistic view of the problem. As such, the qualitative phase is integral to the study's aim of uncovering the nuances of local governance in Kogi State.

3.11   Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are central to ensuring the integrity of the research process and the protection of participants' rights. This study adheres to the ethical guidelines and principles set forth by academic and professional bodies, ensuring that the research is conducted responsibly and in accordance with established standards. It includes:

i.   Voluntary Participation: Participation in this study is entirely voluntary, with participants being fully informed of their right to withdraw from the research at any time without facing any repercussions. All participants were given clear, accessible information about the purpose of the study, the research procedures, potential risks, and benefits, allowing them to make an informed decision about their involvement.

ii. Informed Consent: Prior to participation, all individuals were provided with detailed information about the study, including its scope, methodology, and ethical considerations. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring they understood their rights, including their right to privacy and confidentiality.

iii. Confidentiality and Anonymity: The confidentiality of participants is maintained at all stages of the research process. All data collected is stored securely and is accessible only to the researcher for analysis purposes. Personal identifying information is not disclosed in any reports or publications, ensuring the anonymity of all participants.

iv. Privacy and Sensitivity: The research respects participants' privacy by minimizing any potential intrusion into their personal lives. Their responses are handled with sensitivity and care, ensuring that their dignity and privacy are safeguarded throughout the research.

v. Transparency and Integrity: The research findings are presented transparently, with a commitment to honesty and accuracy in reporting results. Any potential conflicts of interest or biases are disclosed, ensuring that the research process remains objective and credible. The study aims to contribute valuable insights to the academic community and relevant stakeholders, fostering a responsible and ethical approach to research dissemination.

3.12 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter provides a detailed explanation of the research methodology employed to examine the control mechanisms and autonomy of local government in Kogi State, Nigeria. In order to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the research topic, a mixed-method approach was utilized, integrating both qualitative and quantitative methods. This methodology was carefully chosen to capture a wide range of perspectives and ensure a well-rounded analysis of the issues at hand.

The sampling strategy, which combines both purposive and convenience sampling techniques, was specifically selected to align with the study's objectives and the practical constraints encountered during the research process. By targeting key participants who are directly involved in or knowledgeable about the local government in Kogi State, the study ensures that the sample is not only relevant but also reflective of the critical strata within the region. Furthermore, the rationale behind the chosen sample size was driven by the need for precision and representativeness, while acknowledging the limitations posed by time, resources, and accessibility. In contemporary research, it is crucial that the sampling method is directly linked to the research objectives to ensure both the relevance and accuracy of the findings.

A combination of data collection methods such as structured questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and direct observations was employed to facilitate triangulation. This multi-method approach strengthens the credibility of the data and enhances its validity. Moreover, ethical considerations were given utmost priority throughout the research

process. The rights and privacy of participants were safeguarded, ensuring that the study adheres to the ethical standards of academic integrity.

This chapter has laid the groundwork for the subsequent stages of the research, where the collected data was analyzed and interpreted. The next chapter presents the findings, offering a deeper understanding of the control mechanisms at play and the extent of local government autonomy in Kogi State.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the empirical findings derived from the data collected through a combination of questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and open-ended surveys conducted as part of the research. The study focused on political office holders and career staff within the local government councils of Kogi State, with the data collection process strategically designed to ensure comprehensive coverage and reliability.

The researcher, with the assistance of research aides and departmental administrative officers, directly administered the questionnaires to maximize response rates and maintain the integrity of the data. A purposive sampling technique was employed to target nine out of the twenty-one Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Kogi State, ensuring a representative sample of the study population. In addition to the questionnaires, in-depth interviews and open-ended survey techniques provided qualitative insights from key stakeholders, including local government officials and state representatives, thereby enriching the quantitative data with descriptive narratives.

This integrated approach enabled a detailed exploration of control mechanisms and the extent of local government autonomy in Kogi State. The analysis considers the unique perspectives, experiences, and challenges highlighted by respondents, aligning with best practices in mixed-methods research (Cohen et al., 2011). The respondent categorization, as outlined in Chapter Three, is further elaborated in this chapter through detailed tables and thematic analysis.

4.2 Demographic Data Analysis

Demographic characteristics provide foundational insights into the sample population and contextualize the findings.

Table 4.1 illustrates the gender distribution of the study's 442 respondents, with 56.56% identified as male and 43.43% as female. This indicates a slightly higher representation of males, which may influence the interpretation of certain findings.

Table 4.1: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	250	56.56
Female	192	43.43
Total	**442**	**100**

Understanding the demographic composition of the sample is critical for interpreting the findings of this study. Gender-related factors, such as differences in preferences or behaviors, could influence the results and provide valuable context. For example, a higher male representation may lead to certain trends that are not fully reflective of female perspectives.

In addition to gender, the demographic analysis includes a thorough examination of other characteristics such as age, educational background, and professional experience. These factors are analyzed in the following subsections, offering a more comprehensive understanding of the respondent profile. Such demographic insights play a pivotal role in contextualizing the research findings, ensuring that the interpretation of key results is informed by the diverse backgrounds of the participants.

It is important to note that the gender distribution in this sample may impact the broader applicability of the findings. While the sample includes a relatively higher percentage of male respondents, this imbalance could affect the extent to which the results reflect the perspectives and experiences of female participants. The limitations stemming from this gender disparity would be carefully considered and discussed in the upcoming sections of the thesis, particularly in the discussion and conclusion chapters, where their implications for the study's validity and generalizability would be explored in depth.

Table 4.2 presents the age distribution of the respondents, providing a clear depiction of the age demographics within the sample. The data reveals that the largest group of respondents, 33.94%, falls within the 21–30 years age range, followed by the 31–40 years group at 27.15%. Other notable age categories include 41–50 years at 18.10%, 51–60 years at 13.57%, and 7.24% for those aged 61 years and above.

Table 4.2: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Group (Years)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
21 – 30	150	33.94
31 – 40	120	27.15
41 – 50	80	18.1
51 – 60	60	13.57
61 and above	32	7.24
Total	**442**	**100**

The findings suggest a clear dominance of younger respondents, with the largest proportion falling within the 21–30 age group. This trend indicates that the perspectives of this demographic are more heavily represented in the study, which may have implications for the overall interpretation of the results. As the age distribution gradually decreases with age, it becomes evident that older respondents are less represented in the sample.

In the analysis, examining the responses across these various age groups is crucial for understanding how different generations perceive and experience the impact of control mechanisms on local government autonomy. The variations in attitudes and opinions based on age could provide insightful reflections on generational differences in the understanding and application of governance strategies.

Table 4.3 provides the marital status distribution of the respondents. It shows that the majority of respondents are married (45.25%), followed by single (40.72%), widow/widower (7.25%), and divorced (6.78%). This information helps in understanding the marital status demographics of the sample. This breakdown provides understanding into the marital status demographics within the respondent sample. The majority of

respondents are married, with significant representation from the single category as well. Understanding the marital status composition is essential for contextualizing the findings, as it may have implications for perspectives on local government autonomy and control mechanisms.

Table 4.3: Marital Status of the Respondents

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	180	40.72%
Married	200	45.25%
Divorced	30	6.78
Widow/Widower	32	7.25
Total	442	100%

Table 4.4 provides the distribution of respondents across different grade levels. It shows that a significant portion of respondents are in grade level 11 – 13 (29.41%), followed by grade level 07 – 10 (27.15%), grade level 14 – 17 (23.08%), and grade level 01 – 06 (20.36%). This information helps in understanding the grade level demographics of the sample. This breakdown provides insights into the grade level demographics within the respondent sample. A substantial portion of respondents falls within grade levels 11 – 13, followed closely by grade levels 07 – 10. Understanding the distribution across different grade levels is crucial for considering the potential impact of professional experience and seniority on perceptions of local government autonomy and control mechanisms.

Table 4.4: Grade Level of the Respondents

Grade Level	Frequency	Percentage
01 – 06 Level	90	20.36%
07 – 10 Level	120	27.15%
11 – 13 Level	130	29.41%
14 – 17 Level	102	23.08%
Total	442	100%

Table 4.5 provides the distribution of respondents across different levels of education. It shows majority of respondents have HND/BSc (32.76%) and this is followed by those with MSc/MBA (25.34%). A significant portion have NCE/ND (19.23%), while a smaller percentage have SSCE and below (15.83%). A very small percentage holds a PhD (6.76%).

This information helps in understanding the educational background of the sample. This breakdown provides insights into the educational background demographics within the respondent sample. Understanding the educational diversity of the sample is crucial for interpreting how different levels of education influence perceptions and attitudes toward local government autonomy and control mechanisms.

Table 4.5: Level of Education of the Respondents

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage
SSCE and below	70	15.83%
NCE/ND	85	19.23%
HND/BSc	145	32.76%
Msc/MBA	112	25.34%
PhD	30	6.76%
Total	442	100%

Table 4.6 provides the distribution of respondents across different senatorial districts of the local government area. It shows that the highest percentage of respondents are from Kogi East (40.72%), followed by Kogi West (33.94%), and Kogi Central (25.34. This breakdown provides insights into the geographical distribution of the sample in relation to the senatorial districts within the local government area. Understanding the regional distribution of respondents is important for considering potential variations in perspectives on local government autonomy and control mechanisms across different senatorial districts in Kogi State.

Table 4.6: Senatorial Districts of the Local Government Area

Senatorial District	Frequency	Percentage
Kogi East	180	40.72%
Kogi Central	112	25.34%
Kogi West	150	33.94%
Total	442	100%

Table 4.7 provides the distribution of respondents' religious affiliations. It shows that most of the respondents are Christians (56.56%), followed by Muslims (38.46%), and a smaller percentage adhere to Traditional beliefs (4.98%). This information helps in understanding the religious diversity within the sample group. This breakdown provides insights into the religious diversity within the respondent sample. Understanding the religious affiliations of the sample is relevant for considering how cultural and religious factors affects the perspectives of the respondents on local government autonomy and control mechanisms.

Table 4.7: Respondents by Religion

Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Christian	250	56.56%
Muslim	170	38.46%
Traditional	22	4.98%
Total	442	100%

Table 4.8 provides the distribution of respondents based on whether they are political office holders. It shows that 27.15% of the respondents are political office holders, while the majorities (72.85%) are not holding political offices. This information helps in understanding the composition of political office holders within the sample group. This breakdown provides insights into the composition of political office holders within the respondent sample. A notable percentage of respondents are political office holders, while the majority is not holding political offices. Understanding this distribution is important for considering how the perspectives of political office holders may differ from those who are not in political positions, particularly in the context of local government autonomy and control mechanisms.

Table 4.8 Political Office Holder Status

Are you a political office holder?	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	120	27.15%
No	322	72.85%
Total	442	100%

Table 4.9 provides the distribution of respondents based on the length of services in the office. It shows the varying lengths of service among the respondents. The majority of respondents have served in their current positions for 6 to 10 years (32.76%), followed by those serving for 11 to 15 years (21.46%). This breakdown provides insights into the varying lengths of service among the respondents in their current positions. Understanding the distribution of length of service is essential for considering how experience and tenure

may influence perspectives on local government autonomy and control mechanisms considering potential socioeconomic factors that may influence perspectives on local government autonomy and control mechanisms.

Table 4.9: Length of Service of the Respondents

Length of Services in the office	Frequency	Percentage
Below 5 years	78	17.65%
6 – 10 years	145	32.76%
11 – 15 years	95	21.46%
16 – 20 years	50	11.30%
More than 20 years	74	16.74%
Total	442	100%

Table 4.10 provides the distribution of respondents based on their monthly household income. It shows the varying income levels among the respondents. The majority of respondents fall into the ₦50,001 - ₦100,000 income category (33.03%), followed by ₦20,000 - ₦50,000 (26.70%). This breakdown provides insights into the varying income levels among the respondents. The majority have a monthly household income falling within the ₦50,001 - ₦100,000 category, followed by those in the ₦20,000 - ₦50,000 range. Understanding the distribution of income is crucial for considering potential socioeconomic factors that may influence perspectives on local government autonomy and control mechanism.

Table 4.10: Monthly Household Income of Respondents

Monthly Household Income	Frequency	Percentage
Less than ₦20,000	64	14.48%
₦20,000 - ₦50,000	118	26.70%
₦50,001 - ₦100,000	146	33.03%
₦100,001 - ₦200,000	65	14.70%
More than ₦200,000	49	11.08%
Total	442	100%

Table 4.11 provides the distribution of respondents based on the positions they occupy in the political office. It shows that the largest group of respondents falls into the "Others" category (42.07%), followed by "Councilors" (28.51%). This information helps understand the distribution of political positions among the respondents. This breakdown provides insights into the distribution of political positions among the respondents. Understanding the distribution of positions is essential for considering how individuals in different roles may perceive and be affected by issues related to local government autonomy and control mechanisms.

Table 4.11: Position of the Respondents in the Political Office

Position in Political Office	Frequency	Percentage
Local Government Chairman	72	16.29%
Vice Local Government Chairman	58	13.12%
Councilors	126	28.51%
Others	186	42.07%
Total	442	100%

4.3 The ability of the Local Government to perform its constitutional functions

Table 4.12 provides the distribution of respondents' assessments of Kogi State's performance between 2012-2022 in terms of project execution and the delivery of good governance to the people. It shows that the largest group of respondents assessed it as "very poor" (33.94%), followed by "poor" (27.42%). This information helps to understand how the respondents perceive the local government performance during the specified period. This breakdown reveals that a significant majority of respondents (64.48%) believe that the local government has not been able to perform well in terms of service delivery to the people. However, a noteworthy portion (35.52%) expressed a different opinion, suggesting a more positive assessment. Understanding these perceptions is crucial for evaluating public sentiment and identifying potential areas for improvement in local government service delivery.

Table 4.12: Assessment Of Kogi State's Performance (2012-2022)

Assessment of Kogi State's Performance (2012-2022)	Frequency	Percentage
Very Poor	150	33.94%
Poor	121	27.42%
Fair	72	16.29%
Good	64	7.92%
Excellent	35	7.92%
Total	442	100%

Table 4.13 Assessment of Kogi State Local Government's Service Delivery

Assessment of Local Government Performance
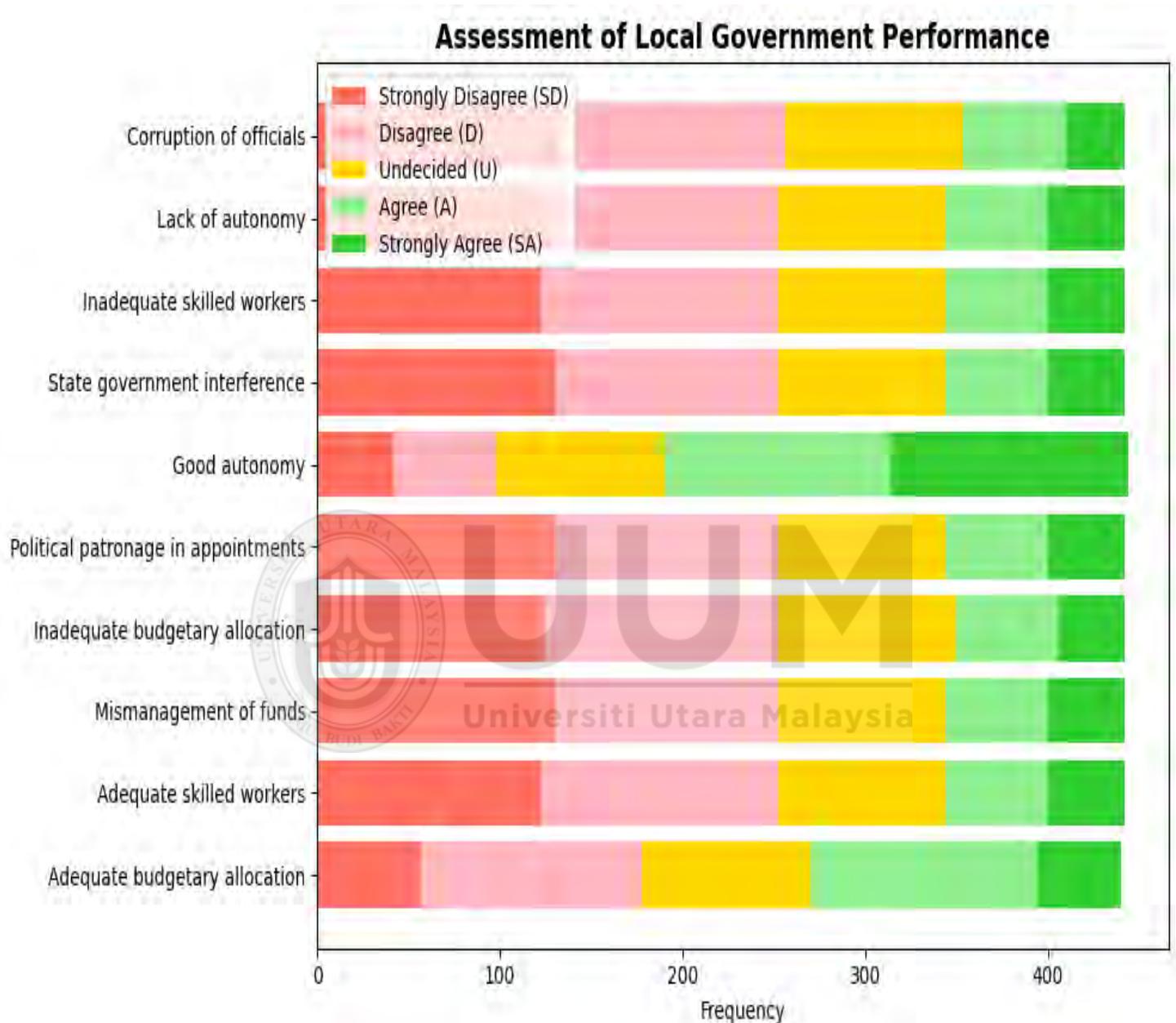
Table 4.13 shows the effectiveness and challenges faced by local government councils. Majority of the respondents expressed mixed sentiments about various aspects of local government operations, which are categorized into several critical areas: budgetary allocation, skilled workforce, mismanagement and corruption, political appointments, state government interference, and autonomy.

Firstly, the perceptions surrounding budgetary allocation reveal a dichotomy of opinions. On one hand, some respondents believe that their local government benefits from adequate and well-managed budgetary allocations. This viewpoint suggests that there is recognition of sufficient financial resources being directed towards local government functions. On the other hand, there are also concerns about inadequate and poor budgetary allocation, indicating that some believe the funds allocated are insufficient or mismanaged. This discrepancy highlights a significant area of concern, where the adequacy of financial resources remains a contentious issue.

Another notable theme is the presence of skilled workers within the local government. While some respondents affirm that there are adequate skilled professionals working in their local government, others counter this by noting lack of skilled workers. This contrast points to a perceived imbalance in the availability of competent personnel necessary for effective governance.

Mismanagement and embezzlement of funds also emerged as prominent issues. Many respondents pointed out that these malpractices are prevalent within local government councils. This feedback underscores a significant problem where financial resources are not being utilized effectively, which could be detrimental to the delivery of public services.

Furthermore, the role of local government as a political tool was a recurring concern. There is a perception that local government positions are often used as a means to reward political loyalists, including the appointment of individuals with questionable qualifications to key positions such as chairman, vice-chairman, or councilors. This practice raises questions about the meritocracy and integrity of local government appointments.

State government interference was another critical issue highlighted by the respondents. The belief that there is undue interference from the state government in the management of local government functions and revenue streams reflects a concern about the autonomy of local governments. This interference is seen as a barrier to the effective functioning of local governments, limiting their ability to operate independently.

Additionally, the lack of autonomy for local governments was a concern for many respondents. This issue is closely linked to the interference of state governments and suggests that local governments struggle to maintain independence in their operations and decision-making processes.

Lastly, corruption among local government officials was identified as a significant problem. The acknowledgment of corruption indicates that there are issues of ethical misconduct and dishonest practices within the local government framework, which further complicates the governance landscape.

In summary, the responses highlighted a complex interplay of perceptions regarding the adequacy of budgetary allocations, the presence of skilled workers, issues of mismanagement and corruption, political appointments, state government interference, and autonomy. These factors collectively shape the effectiveness of local government councils and underscore the need for comprehensive reforms to address these challenges. These statements suggest that there are a number of weaknesses in the ability of local governments in Kogi State to perform their constitutional functions.

Overall, the data table suggests that the ability of local governments in Kogi State to perform their constitutional function is mixed. There are some strengths, such as adequate budgetary allocation and skilled workers, but there are also a number of weaknesses, such as mismanagement, embezzlement, political interference, and lack of autonomy.
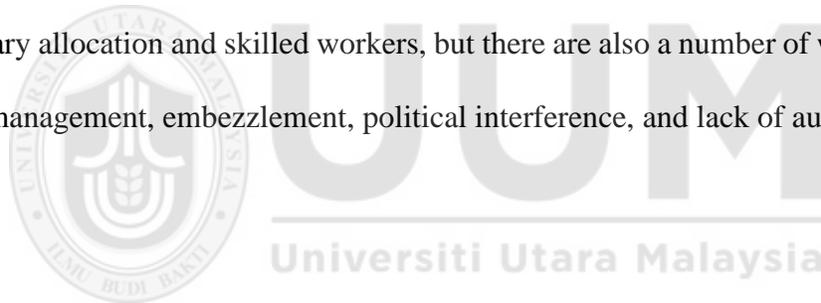
Table 4.14 The Ability of the Local Government to Perform its Constitutional Functions

S/ N	The ability of your local government to perform its constitutional functions	SD	D	U	A	SA	Frequency	Percentage
1	My local government has Adequate and good budgetary allocation	56	122	92	124	46	442	100%
2	Adequate skilled workers exist in my local government	122	130	92	56	42	442	100%
3	There are Mismanagement and embezzlement of funds by my local government councils.	130	122	92	56	42	442	100%
4	My local government has inadequate and poor budgetary allocation	124	128	98	56	36	442	100%
5	The local government has become an avenue to settle political loyalists (thugs) with appointments either as chairman, vice-chairman, or	130	122	92	56	42	442	100%
	Councilors amongst others by the state Governor.							
6	My local government has good and robust autonomy	42	56	92	124	130	442	100%
7	Undue Interference of State Government in the management of functions and revenue streams exists in my local government	130	122	92	56	42	442	100%
8	Inadequate skilled workers exist in my local government	122	130	92	56	42	442	100%
9	Lack of autonomy exists in my local government	130	122	92	56	42	442	100%
10	Corruption of local government officials exists in my local government.	132	124	98	56	32	442	100%

The Ability of the local government to perform its constitutional functions has a mean score of 3.28 (SD = 1.60) this indicates that local governments in Kogi State have a moderate capacity to perform their constitutional duties. This suggests that while they are somewhat effective, there are notable areas for improvement. However, the presence of control mechanisms is a variable with a mean score of 2.41. These mechanisms exert a moderate negative impact on local government autonomy, as evidenced by a mean effect

score of 2.28. Respondents expressed a moderate need for steps to prevent state government meddling, reflected in a mean score of 3.29.

Table 4. 15 Correlation Analysis

Variables	Pearson Correlation	Significance (2-tailed)
Objective 1: Ability to Perform Constitutional Functions		
Existing Control Mechanisms in Kogi State	0.531**	< 0.001
Effects of Control Mechanisms on Autonomy	-0.066	0.164
Issues on Local Government Autonomy	-0.694**	< 0.001
Steps to Prevent State Government Meddling	-0.329**	< 0.001
Objective 2: Existing Control Mechanisms in Kogi State		
Effects of Control Mechanisms on Autonomy	0.259**	< 0.001
Issues on Local Government Autonomy	-0.622**	< 0.001
Steps to Prevent State Government Meddling	-0.064	0.180
Objective 3: Effects of Control Mechanisms on Autonomy		
Issues on Local Government Autonomy	0.349**	< 0.001
Steps to Prevent State Government Meddling	-0.430**	< 0.001
Objective 4: Issues on Local Government Autonomy		
- Steps to Prevent State Government Meddling	-0.225**	< 0.001

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Key findings of the research are as below:

Objectives	Key Findings
Evaluate the ability of the local government to perform its constitutional functions	The local government in Kogi State has a mean ability score of 3.29 (SD = 1.60), indicating moderate effectiveness in performing its constitutional functions.
Identify existing control mechanisms on local government in Kogi State	Existing control mechanisms have a mean score of 2.41 (SD = 1.02), suggesting that these mechanisms are present but vary in strength and influence.
Measure the relationship between existing control mechanisms and weakened autonomy of local government councils	Control mechanisms have a mean effect score of 2.28 (SD = 1.16) on the autonomy of local governments, indicating a moderate negative impact.
Recommend steps to prevent state government meddling in local government activities	Measures to prevent state government interference scored a mean of 3.29 (SD = 1.11), highlighting the perceived need for such steps by respondents.

The analysis reveals a statistically significant and moderately positive correlation between the ability of the local government to perform its constitutional functions and the presence of existing control mechanisms ($r = 0.531$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that while control mechanisms exist, they may not necessarily hinder local governments' ability to function; instead, they might support or enhance it to some extent. However, the significant negative correlation with issues related to local government autonomy ($r = -0.694$, $p < 0.01$) suggests that these control mechanisms could simultaneously limit autonomy, possibly affecting decision-making processes and the effectiveness of governance. Additionally, the correlation between the ability to perform constitutional functions and the steps to prevent state government meddling is also negative ($r = -0.329$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that perceived meddling might further complicate or weaken the performance capacity of local governments.

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4.4   Issues on Local Government Autonomy in Kogi State.

The data table 4.15 shows that majority of the respondents (over 50%) agreed with all of the statements about the issues on autonomy of local government councils in Kogi State, except for the following two statements: Political instability has positive impact on local government autonomy in Kogi State. Poor financial accountability has not weakened the autonomy of my local government.

These two statements were disagreed with by majority of the respondents, suggesting that they do not see these as being major issues with the autonomy of local government councils in Kogi State. The data also shows that there is a high level of variability in respondents' opinions on some of the issues. For example, the statement Political instability has negative impact on local government autonomy in Kogi State was agreed with by 57% of respondents and disagreed with by 43% of respondents. This suggests that there is lack of consensus on the impact of political instability on local government autonomy. Overall, the data table provides a valuable overview of the opinions of local government employees on the issues on autonomy of local government councils in Kogi State. The findings suggest that there are some areas where there is a need for improvement.

Issues on Local Government Autonomy in Kogi State: The mean score of 3.88 (SD = 1.14) suggests that there are significant concerns regarding the autonomy of local governments. The relatively high score indicates widespread recognition of these issues, though the variation in responses suggests that the severity of these concerns differs among respondents.

Table 4.16: Issues on Local Government Autonomy in Kogi State

S./N	Issues on Autonomy of Local Government Councils	SD	D	U	A	SA	Frequency	Percentage
1	Poor financial accountability has weakened the autonomy of my local government	132	124	98	56	32	442	100%
2	Political instability has positive impact on local government autonomy in Kogi State	42	56	92	124	128	442	100%
3	Patron/godfatherism syndrome in Kogi State local government system has become a cog in the wheel of the delivery of good governance in my local government.	122	130	92	56	42	442	100%
4	Political instability has negative impact on local government autonomy in Kogi State	128	124	98	56	36	442	100%
5	Poor financial accountability has not weakened the autonomy of my local government	32	46	98	124	142	442	100%
6	Patron/godfatherism syndrome in Kogi State local government system is not a cog in the wheel of the delivery of good governance in my local government	42	56	92	124	130	442	100%

Patron/godfatherism syndrome is a major problem in the state, and it has a significant impact on the ability of local governments to function effectively. Poor financial accountability is another major issue, and it may lead to corruption and mismanagement. Political instability can also have a negative impact on local government autonomy, as it may make it difficult for local governments to plan and implement long-term projects. The other three items on the list are also important, but they are not as important as the three items listed above. The use of Financial Memoranda and circulars from the state and federal government may have a positive or negative impact on local government autonomy, depending on the specific content of the memoranda and circulars.

Table 4.17 Pearson Correlation on Issues of Local Government Autonomy in Kogi State.

Variables	Pearson Correlation	Significance (2-tailed)
Objective 4: Issues on Local Government Autonomy		
Steps to Prevent State Government Meddling	-0.225**	< 0.001

4.5 Existing Control Mechanisms on Local Government in Kogi State.

This section identifies existing control mechanisms on local government in Kogi State. Hence, table 4.16 shows the existing control mechanisms on local government in Kogi State. Majority of the respondents (over 50%) agreed with all of the control mechanisms listed on the table as discussed.

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Firstly, the table pointed out that Joint account relationship between the State and Local Government has weakened the performance of local government in Kogi State. The joint account system between the state and local governments was intended to enhance oversight and ensure that local government funds are used effectively. However, this arrangement has often been criticized for its negative impact on the performance of local governments, particularly in Kogi State. The joint account system, established through the 1999 Nigerian Constitution, mandates that state governments manage and oversee local government funds. While the system was designed to ensure that resources are used for their intended purposes and to prevent mismanagement at the local level, evidence suggests that it has had several adverse effects on local government performance.

A key issue with the joint account system is that it leads to delays in the disbursement of funds. According to Ozughalu (2012), the involvement of multiple administrative layers often results in bureaucratic delays and inefficiencies in fund distribution. This delay affects the ability of the local governments to meet their obligations and implement developmental projects effectively. Moreover, the joint account system undermined the autonomy of local governments. Local governments may find themselves constrained by state-level decisions and political considerations, which can divert funds away from local priorities. As highlighted by Afolabi, J. O. (2020), this centralization of financial control result in misallocation of resources and reduced local government effectiveness. In Kogi State, there have been instances where the state government's control over local government funds has led to conflicts of interest, with state officials prioritizing their own agendas over local needs (Akanbi & Suleiman, 2018).

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To address these issues, it is essential to re-evaluate the joint account system and consider reforms that balance state oversight with local government autonomy. Options include increasing transparency in the fund management process and establishing mechanisms for more direct access to funds by local governments (Lamidi, O.K. & Fagbohun, F.O. (2013).

An unwarranted imposition of local government officials on local government authorities by the state government is another significant issue affecting the performance of local governments in Kogi State. This practice involves the state government appointing individuals to local government positions without proper consideration of merit or local needs. The imposition of local government officials by the state government undermines the principles of democratic governance and local government autonomy. According to Banko, (2020)), such impositions often result in the appointment of individuals who are politically loyal rather than competent or experienced. This practice erodes the legitimacy of local government institutions and hampers their ability to effectively serve the local communities.

The negative impacts of these impositions are evident in several ways. Firstly, appointed officials may lack the necessary skills and knowledge to address local issues effectively, leading to poor governance and ineffective service delivery (Boris, O. H. (2015). Secondly, political loyalty rather than merit-based selection may lead to the misuse of resources and corruption as officials may prioritize personal or party interests over public welfare (Chukwuemeka and Eneh, (2019)). The presence of political thugs and unqualified appointees into local government positions has been a concern in Kogi State,

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where the state government's influence over appointments has often resulted in the selection of individuals who are more aligned with political agendas than with community development objectives (Eyitayo, A. O., & Alani, B. I. (2019). This situation not only affects the efficiency of local government operations but also undermines public trust in local institutions.

To address the problem of unwarranted impositions, it is crucial to advocate for reforms that promote merit-based appointments and ensure that local government positions are filled through transparent and democratic processes. Strengthening the legal frameworks for local government elections and appointments, as well as establishing independent oversight bodies, are essential steps in restoring the integrity of local governance (Ezeanokwasa, J., &Omena, K. (2022).

The table also shows that there is a high level of variability in respondents' opinions on some of the control mechanisms. For example, the statement control by audit alarm committee disciplines the local government financial system is agreed with by 57% of respondents and disagreed with by 43% of respondents. This suggests that there is lack of consensus on the effectiveness of this particular control mechanism.

Table 4.17 provides a valuable overview of the opinions of local government employees on the current system of local government control in Kogi State. The findings suggest that there are some areas where the system is working well, but there are also some areas where there is a need for improvement.

Table 4. 18 Existing Control Mechanisms in Kogi State.

Control Mechanism	SD	D	N	A	SA	Percentage
Joint account relationship between the state and the local government has weakened the performance of local government in Kogi State	108	124	96	68	46	100
The activities of the Ministry of Local Government in Kogi State affect the performance of my local government negatively	123	112	98	52	57	100
The interference of local government service commission on personnel management of the local government exists	132	106	92	56	56	100
Joint account relationship between the state and the local government has not weakened the performance of local government in Kogi State	46	52	98	124	122	100
State government oversight on auditing of local government finances always happens	56	52	92	112	130	100
The interference of local government service commission on personnel management of the local government does not exist	52	46	98	124	122	100
State government oversight on auditing of local government finances does not always happens	130	122	92	52	46	100
Control by audit alarm committee disciplines the local government financial system	57	56	96	123	110	100
Multiple arrays of departments and agencies to deal with specific functions exist in my local government	122	130	92	56	42	100
Control by audit alarm committee does not disciplines the local government financial system	110	122	96	52	57	
There are unwarranted impositions of local government officials on local government authorities by the state government.	132	124	98	56	32	100
Multiple arrays of departments and agencies to deal with specific functions does not exists in my local government	42	56	92	124	130	100

Existing control mechanisms in Kogi State with a mean score of 2.42 (SD = 1.02), the

data suggests that there is a moderate level of control mechanisms imposed by the state

government on local governments. This reflects the significant presence of these

mechanisms and their influence on local governance.

Table 4. 19 Pearson Correlation on Existing Control Mechanisms in Kogi State

Variable	Pearson Correlation	Significance (2 Tailed)
Objective 2: Existing Control Mechanisms in Kogi State		
Effects of Control Mechanisms on Autonomy	0.259**	< 0.001
Issues on Local Government Autonomy	-0.622**	< 0.001
Steps to prevent State Government Meddling	-0.064	0.180

Existing control mechanisms in Kogi State shows a strong positive correlation with the effects these mechanisms have on local government autonomy (r = 0.259, p < 0.01). This relationship indicates that the more these control mechanisms are enforced, the more they are perceived to negatively impact the autonomy of local governments. Interestingly, the negative correlations with the issues on local government autonomy (r = -0.622, p < 0.01) and the ability of local governments to perform their functions (r = -0.694, p < 0.01) further highlight the restrictive nature of these mechanisms. This finding supports the argument that while control mechanisms are necessary for oversight, they should be balanced to avoid undermining local government autonomy and performance.

4.6 The Relationship between the Existing Control Mechanisms and the Weakened Performance of Local Government in Kogi State

This section discusses about the relationship between the Existing Control mechanisms and the weakened Performance of Local Government in Kogi State.

4.6.1 Effects of Joint Account Relationship between the State and Local Government on the Performance of Local Government in Kogi State

The joint account system between the state and local governments was intended to enhance oversight and ensure that local government funds are used effectively. However, this arrangement has often been criticized for its negative impact on the performance of local governments, particularly in Kogi State. The joint account system, established through the 1999 Nigerian Constitution, mandates that state governments manage and oversee local government funds. While the system was designed to ensure that resources are used for their intended purposes and to prevent mismanagement at the local level, evidence suggests that it has had several adverse effects on local government performance. A key issue with the joint account system is that it leads to delays in the disbursement of funds. According to Imhanlahimi, (2011), the involvement of multiple administrative layers often results in bureaucratic delays and inefficiencies in fund distribution. This delay affects the ability of local governments to meet their obligations and implement development projects effectively. Moreover, the joint account system can undermine the autonomy of local governments. Local governments may find themselves constrained by

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state-level decisions and political considerations, which can divert funds away from local priorities. As highlighted by Muhammed, (2015).), this centralization of financial control can result in misallocation of resources and reduced local government effectiveness. In Kogi State, there have been instances where the state government's control over local government funds has led to conflicts of interest, with state officials prioritizing their own agendas over local needs (Lewis, B. D. (2018). To address these issues, it is essential to re-evaluate the joint account system and consider reforms that balance state oversight with local autonomy. Options include increasing transparency in the fund management process and establishing mechanisms for more direct access to funds by local governments (Okoh, C. C., Onwe, S. O., & Ofoma, C. V. (2022).

Another significant issue affecting the performance of local governments in Kogi State is the unwarranted imposition of local government officials by the state government. This practice involves the state government appointing individuals to local government positions without proper consideration of merit or local needs. The imposition of local government officials by the state government undermines the principles of democratic governance and local autonomy. According to Adedire, (2014)), such impositions often result in the appointment of individuals who are politically loyal rather than competent or experienced. This practice erodes the legitimacy of local government institutions and hampers their ability to effectively serve the community. The negative impacts of these impositions are evident in several ways. Firstly, appointed officials may lack the necessary skills and knowledge to address local issues effectively, leading to poor governance and ineffective service delivery (Adetiba, T. C. (2017).). Secondly, political loyalty rather than

merit-based selection can lead to the misuse of resources and corruption, as officials may prioritize personal or party interests over public welfare (Akpan, F. & Ekanem, O. (2013). The presence of political thugs and unqualified appointees in local government positions has been a concern in Kogi State, where the state government's influence over appointments has often resulted in the selection of individuals who are more aligned with political agendas than with community development objectives (Arugu, L.O.& Eke, D.I. (2019).). This situation not only affects the efficiency of local government operations but also undermines public trust in local institutions.

To address the problem of unwarranted impositions, it is crucial to advocate for reforms that promote merit-based appointments and ensure that local government positions are filled through transparent and democratic processes. Strengthening the legal frameworks for local government elections and appointments, as well as establishing independent oversight bodies, are essential steps in restoring the integrity of local governance (Banko, O. H. (2020).). These two statements are disagreed with by a majority of respondents, suggesting that they see these as being major problems with the current system of local government control in Kogi State. The table also shows that there is a high level of variability in respondents' opinions on some of the control mechanisms. For example, the statement Control by audit alarm committee disciplines the local government financial system is agreed with by 57% of respondents and disagreed with by 43% of respondents. This suggests that there is a lack of consensus on the effectiveness of this particular control mechanism. Overall, the table provides a valuable overview of the opinions of local government employees on the current system of the local government control in Kogi

State. The findings suggest that there are some areas where the system is working well, but there are also some areas where there is a need for improvement.

These three issues are the most important factors that affect the autonomy of local government councils in Kogi State. Patron/godfatherism syndrome is a major problem in the state, and it has a significant impact on the ability of local governments to function effectively. Poor financial accountability is another major issue, and it can lead to corruption and mismanagement. Political instability can also have a negative impact on local government autonomy, as it can make it difficult for local governments to plan and implement long term projects. The other three items on the list are also important, but they are not as important as the three items listed above. The use of Financial Memoranda and circulars from the state and federal government can have a positive or negative impact on local government autonomy, depending on the specific content of the memoranda and circulars.

4.6.2 Effects of Control Mechanisms on Local Government Autonomy in Kogi State

The data table 4.19 shows that the majority of respondents (over 50%) agreed with all of the statements about the effects of control mechanisms on the autonomy of local government councils in Kogi State, except for the following two statements:

i. The instrument of Federal allocation for Local Government through State/Local Government Account has negatively affected autonomy of Local Government in Kogi State.

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ii. External financial control mechanisms used by state and federal government has affected Local Government performance negatively.

These two statements were disagreed with by the majority of the respondents, suggesting that they do not see these as being the major problems with the current system of local government control in Kogi State.

The data collected from respondents shows a notable variability in opinions regarding the impact of the Federal allocation mechanism through the State/Local Government Account on the autonomy of local governments in Kogi State. Specifically, while 56% of respondents agreed that this mechanism has positively affected local government autonomy, 44% disagreed. This discrepancy highlights a significant division in perceptions about the effectiveness of the State/Local Government Account system as a control mechanism for local governance.

Table 4. 20 Effects of Control Mechanisms on Local Government Autonomy

S.N	Control Mechanisms	SD	D	U	A	SA	N	%
1	The constitutional powers granted State House of Assembly to make laws for Government has reduced the Autonomy of Local Government Councils in Kogi State	108	124	96	92	122	442	100%
2	The powers of the State House of Assembly to regulate the Financial Administration of Local Government through Public Account committee activities has promoted the autonomy of Local Government councils in Kogi State	122	130	92	56	42	442	100%
3	Internal Financial control mechanisms has not enhanced internal working systems and local government autonomy in Kogi State	132	124	98	56	32	442	100%
4	The instrument of Federal allocation for Local Government through State/Local Government Account has positively affected autonomy of Local Government in Kogi State	92	124	98	56	72	442	100%
5	The instrument of Federal allocation for Local Government through State/Local Government Account has negatively affected autonomy of Local Government in Kogi State	130	122	92	52	46	442	100%
6	External financial control mechanisms used by state and federal government has affected Local Government performance Positively	56	52	92	112	130	442	100%
7	External financial control mechanisms used by state and federal government has affected Local Government performance negatively	130	122	92	52	46	442	100%
8	The financial technique of operations of Auditor-General office, and Directorate of local government has impacted positively on autonomy of local government in Kogi State.	122	130	92	56	42	442	100%

Overall, table 4.20 provides a valuable overview of the opinions of local government employees on the effects of control mechanisms on the autonomy of local government councils in Kogi State. The findings suggest that there are some areas where the system is working well, but there are also some areas where there is a need for improvement.

Effects of control mechanisms on local government autonomy has a mean score of 2.28 (SD = 1.16) this reflects a perception that control mechanisms negatively impact local government autonomy. The standard deviation indicates a wide range of opinions on this issue, highlighting varying perceptions of the extent to which these mechanisms affect autonomy. The correlation between existing control mechanisms and the effects on local government autonomy is positive and significant (r = 0.259, p < 0.01), indicating that increased control is perceived to lead to weakened autonomy. Additionally, the analysis found a significant negative relationship between issues on local government autonomy and the steps taken to prevent state government meddling (r = -0.430, p < 0.01). This suggests that the existing control mechanisms have the potential necessary to contribute to the weakening of local government autonomy by complicating or undermining efforts to maintain independence from state-level interference.

Table 4. 21 Pearson Correlation on Effects of Control Mechanisms on Autonomy

Variables	Pearson Correlation	Significance (2-Tailed)
Objective 3: Effects of Control Mechanisms on Autonomy		
Issues on Local Government Autonomy	0.349**	< 0.001
Steps to prevent State Government Meddling	-0.430**	< 0.001

4.7 Recommended Steps to Prevent State Government Meddling with Local Government Activities.

Table 4.21 shows that the majority of respondents (over 50%) agreed with all of the steps to prevent state government meddling in local government activities. This suggests that there is a strong consensus among local government employees on the steps that need to be taken to address this issue. The data also shows that there is a high level of variability in respondents' opinions on some of the steps. For example, the statement abolition of state and local government account.

Table 4. 22 Recommended Steps to Prevent State Government Meddling with Local Government Activities.

S/.N	Steps to prevent state government meddling in local government activities	SD	D	U	A	SA	n	%
1	The authority to determine the structure, composition, finance and functions of the local government should rest in the constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria and not the state government.	46	52	92	124	130	442	100%
2	Presence of skilled workers with adequate experience in local government is paramount	52	46	92	124	130	442	100%
3	Empowerment of local government through direct allocation from Federation account to Local authorities and removal of multiple agencies on local government Control	56	52	92	112	130	442	100%
4	Abolition of state and local government joint account to allow autonomy for the local council with in-built mechanism to check financial recklessness by council leaders.	122	130	92	56	42	442	100%
5	Reduction of corruption in local government system by identifying and punishing those found culpable of corrupt practices to serve as deterrents to others.	124	128	98	56	36	442	100%
6	Equip local government officials with better education and training and a sound orientation about value system and democratic cultures	128	124	98	56	36	442	100%
7	Reduction of poverty and inequality through economic empowerment of the local Populace.	130	122	92	56	42	442	100%

4.8 Findings from the Interview of the Informants

The findings from the selected nine local governments' areas of Kogi State identifies financial constraints, low staff morale, poor working conditions, divided loyalty, political interference, hijacking of local government finance through the state and local government joint account as the main factors that limit Kogi state local government ability to perform its constitutional functions.

4.8.1 Factors that Limit Kogi State Local Governments' Ability to Perform their Constitutional Functions

Financial constraints, personnel issues, and limited autonomy emerged as critical factors impeding local governments' ability to fulfill their constitutional mandates. As highlighted by respondents and supported by existing literature, inadequate funding, particularly due to the state government's control over the joint local government account, severely limited the capacity of local governments to invest in essential services.

Moreover, low staff morale, insufficient training, and inadequate personnel compounded these challenges. The overbearing influence of state governments on local government affairs further constrained their autonomy, hindering effective decision-making. These interconnected factors created a complex environment that undermined local governance. To enhance local government performance, concerted efforts are necessary to increase financial resources, improve human capital development, and strengthen local autonomy.

This was corroborated by the informants from the nine local government interviewed. For instance:

> *"Lack of funds affects service delivery in my LGA" (Idah LGA Admin Officer)*

> *"Inadequate funds in my LGA is the reason for poor performance of my LGA" (Information Officer Koton Karfe LGA)*

> *"Paucity of funds and lack of autonomy is affecting my LGA negatively" (Lokoja LGA DPM)*

4.8.2. Control Mechanisms and their Effects on the Autonomy of Kogi State Local Government Councils

This section analyzes the control mechanisms put in place by the Kogi State Government and their effects on the autonomy of Kogi State Local Government Councils (LGAs). The analysis is based on interviews conducted with informants from the selected Local Government Areas of Idah, Igalamela/Odolu, Ankpa, Dekina, Ogorimangogo, Ajaokuta, Koton Karfe, Mopa Muro and Lokoja LGA's) and relevant literature.

4.8.3 Control Mechanisms

State Joint Local Government Account (SJLGA) is one of the control measures on local government in Kogi State Nigeria. The SJLGA centralizes local government funds, restricting their access and control over resources needed to fulfill their constitutional functions (Ogunleye & Ojo, 2019). Interviews with Kogi LGAs confirm this as a major constraint.

> *"The joint account relationship made the state government decide who gets what and how over local government allocation." (Idah LGA (Admin Officer)*

> *"The joint account system puts the local government at a disadvantage position in the disbursement of statutory allocation." (Igalamela/Odolu LGA (Chief Accountant)).*

> *"The joint account did not allow the local government to perform its constitutional functions." (Lokoja LGA (Main Respondent & Legal Officer).*

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Limited Legislative and Judicial Oversight also hinders the performance of local government in Kogi State, Nigeria. The current framework may not provide adequate legislative and judicial safeguards to check state government control and ensure local government autonomy (Adeyemi et al., 2018). This lack of oversight was explicitly mentioned in interviews, and it aligns with broader concerns about limited autonomy. Respondent's position from Ankpa LGA and Ajaokuta LGA confirms this claim.

"A *situation where the House of Assembly of the state controls the expenditure and tenure of elected officials of LGA's ties the apron string of the local government to the state and this negatively affects service delivery at the local government level"*
(DLG Ankpa LGA)

"The House of Assembly of the state has power to determine the structure and finance of the local government. This invariably limits the power of the local government to function as expected"
(DPM Ajaokuta LGA)

Political Interference of the state government exerts political pressure on local governments, hindering their ability to make independent decisions and prioritize local needs. Though not directly mentioned in interviews, this is a potential concern given the centralized control structure of the local government system in Kogi State.

"State government interference into local Government revenue streams" and "Governor's interference over the leadership of the local government officials affects local government negatively in terms of provision of social services to the people." (Idah LGA (Admin Officer).

Budget approval processes: The state government influences local government budgets, limiting their financial autonomy.

> *"The approval process for budgets further limits local government's financial independence." (Lokoja LGA (Main Respondent)).*

> *"The ministry of local government and chieftaincy affairs is the agency of the state that approves local government budget annually and this to a large extent denies the LGA free budgetary process" (Ankpa LGA respondent).*

4.8.4 Effects of Control Mechanisms on Local Government Autonomy in Kogi State

Control mechanisms reduced decision-making Power of the local government. Control over finances and limited legislative oversight restrict local governments' decision-making power regarding resource allocation and service delivery. Interviews across LGAs Confirmed that reduced decision-making power is a significant constraint to the effectiveness of local government performance in Kogi State, Nigeria. Financial constraints and restricted decision-making power hinders the ability of the local governments to effectively deliver essential social services. Interviews across LGAs Corroborated the negative impact of these variables on service delivery in the local government system.

Lack of accountability and overly centralized control has weakened accountability mechanisms, as local governments become less accountable to their citizens and more beholden to the state government. While not explicitly mentioned in interviews, this concern is evident in the structure and management of the local government in Kogi state.

4.9 Factors Responsible for Kogi State Local Government Councils' Ineffectiveness in Providing Social Services to the People

Financial constraints have been identified as the most significant factor affecting the effectiveness of social service delivery by Kogi State LGAs. Evidence from Interviews includes the following:

> *Ankpa LGA (DLG): Limited funds are a major barrier to service provision.*
>
> *Ogorimangogo LGA (Special Adviser): Financial limitations restrict the ability to invest in essential services.*
>
> *Koton-Karfe LGA (Information Officer): Insufficient funds hinder the delivery of social services.*
>
> *Lokoja LGA (Main Respondent): Financial constraints impact the ability of the local government to effectively provide services.*

Studies by Saibu, O., & Adewumi, O. (2015). and Adeyemi et al. (2018) highlight that financial limitations imposed by control mechanisms restrict local governments' service delivery capabilities.

The   State Joint Local Government Account (SJLGA) system centralizes local government funds, further restricting access to necessary resources for services like healthcare, education, and infrastructure (Ogunleye & Ojo, 2019). Limited funding is a critical issue that hampers the LGAs' ability to invest in essential social services.

Personnel issues and challenges relating to the workforce were frequently mentioned as factors affecting service delivery at the local government level. Evidence from Interviews shows that low morale factors like fractional salary payments lead to low staff morale and this to a large extent affects their performance.

> *Mopa Muro LGA (Respondent), Dekina LGA (Staff), Ankpa LGA (staff Inadequate training limits staff effectiveness. Ogori Mangogo LGA (Respondents) Shortage of qualified or sufficient personnel affects service delivery capacity of the local government. (Idah LGA (Admin Officer)*

Oyedokun and Oyedokun (2018)   emphasize that resource scarcity affects employee morale and performance. Adeyemi et al. (2018)   call for capacity-building initiatives to address deficiencies in staff training and effectiveness. Oyedokun and Oyedokun (2018) argue that lack of qualified personnel hinders local government effectiveness. Personnel issues, including low staff morale, lack of training, and inadequate staffing, are significant barriers to effective service delivery.

Inadequate resources and poor working conditions are additional factors affecting the effectiveness of social services at the local government level in Kogi State. The broader literature on resource constraints underscores the impact of poor working conditions on service delivery effectiveness.

"Poor working conditions hinder service delivery due to inadequate resources". (Igala mela/Odolu LGA (Admin Officer)).

Poor working conditions due to inadequate resources contribute to the challenges faced by LGAs in delivering social services at the local government level.

Overall, the findings from interviews and the literature review indicate that the ineffectiveness of Kogi State Local Government Councils in providing social services is primarily due to a combination of financial constraints and personnel issues. Limited funds, exacerbated by the SJLGA system, restrict the LGAs' ability to provide essential services. Low staff morale, insufficient training, and inadequate staffing hinder service delivery effectiveness. Inadequate resources and poor working conditions further exacerbated service delivery challenges. These factors collectively contribute to the inability of Kogi State LGAs to effectively deliver social services to the people.

The analysis demonstrates that the effectiveness of Kogi State Local Government Councils in delivering social services is severely limited by financial constraints, personnel issues, and poor working conditions. Addressing these issues is crucial for improving the quality and efficiency of social service delivery at the local government level in Kogi State, Nigeria.

4.10. Mechanisms to Check State Government Control Over Local Government Affairs

This section explores the mechanisms available to check state government control over local government affairs in Kogi State and presents the findings from interviews

conducted with representatives from nine Local Government Areas (LGAs): Idah, Igala mela/Odolu, Koton-Karfe, Mopa-Muro, Dekina, Koton Karfe, Ajaokuta, Ogori-Mangogo, and Lokoja. It also integrates insights from the literature to offer a comprehensive analysis of the current challenges and potential solutions for enhancing local government autonomy.

Limited mechanisms to check state government control. Respondents from all LGAs indicated that there are few effective mechanisms to check the state government's control over local government affairs. Evidence from Interviews:

> *"Lack of effective mechanisms to challenge state government control is a common cause of state government impunity over local government affairs.*
> *" (Koton Karfe LGA (Info. Officer)).*

> *"Absence of mechanisms to ensure local government autonomy is prevalent in the local government system in Kogi State." (Igala mela/Odolu LGA (Chief Accountant)).*
> *"Inadequate structures to limit state government influence over local governments affairs is the reason for the state government free ride over local government affairs." (Lokoja LGA (Legal Officer)).*

Adeyemi et al. (2018) and Ata-Agboni et al. (2017) critique the lack of autonomy granted to local governments in Nigeria and highlight the inadequacy of existing mechanisms. The findings reveal a significant gap in effective mechanisms to check state government control, which undermines local government autonomy in Kogi State.

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Another key finding is constitutional barriers. The current constitutional framework is viewed as a major barrier to achieving local government autonomy. Evidence from interviews:

> *Dekina LGA (Legal Officer): "Constitutional provisions hinder*
> *local government independence".*

> *Lokoja LGA (Legal Officer): "The SJLGA system and other*
> *mechanisms are constitutionally entrenched, making them*
> *difficult to challenge".*

Sanusi et al. (2019)   argue that the SJLGA system is embedded within the Nigerian constitution, which undermines local government autonomy. Ogunleye & Ojo (2019) discuss how constitutional barriers reinforce centralized control. The constitutionally entrenched mechanisms limit local government autonomy, posing a significant obstacle to achieving effective local governance.

4.11   Suggested Solutions for Enhancing Local Government Autonomy

Interviewees proposed several solutions to address the limitations of current mechanisms and enhance local government autonomy. Proposed solutions include constitutional amendment: Amending the constitution to grant financial autonomy and greater control over resource allocation to local governments was alluded to by most interviewees. Evidence from respondents were;

> *Idah LGA (Admin Officer): "Advocates for constitutional changes".*

> *Igalamela/Odolu LGA (Chief Accountant): "Supports the idea of constitutional reforms".*

> *Lokoja LGA (Legal Officer): "Recommends amending the constitution to enhance autonomy".*

Adeyemi et al. (2018) and Ata-Agboni et al. (2017) recommend constitutional reforms to provide local governments with greater financial independence and control.

Direct Allocation of Funds: Bypassing the SJLGA system by allocating funds directly from the federation account to local governments.

> *Ankpa LGA (DLG): "Proposes direct allocation as a solution".*

> *Koton-Karfe LGA (Information Officer): "Supports the direct allocation model".*

Banko, O. H. (2020) discuss alternative models of intergovernmental fiscal relations, including direct fund allocation to enhance local government efficiency.

Strengthened Anti-Corruption Measures: Implementing anti-corruption measures to ensure effective use of allocated funds.

> *Igalamela/Odolu LGA (Chief Accountant): "Calls for stronger anti-corruption initiatives".*

Afolabi et al. (2020) emphasize the need for anti-corruption strategies to improve local governance and service delivery. Proposed solutions focus on constitutional amendments, direct fund allocations, and anti-corruption measures as essential steps towards improving local government autonomy and effectiveness. The analysis indicates that there are significant barriers to checking state government control over local governments in Kogi State. The lack of effective mechanisms and the constitutional barriers limit local government autonomy and hinder the ability to check state government influence.

4.12 Key Issues Identified

This section synthesizes the critical issues from the findings, emphasizing their contributions to literature, implications for policymakers, and reasons for differing outcomes.

4.12.1 Limited Mechanisms to Challenge State Control

A recurring theme from interviews and the literature is the absence of effective tools to check state government control over local government affairs. Centralized mechanisms such as the State Joint Local Government Account (SJLGA) and state interference in local leadership limit autonomy and prevent local governments from functioning effectively.

Interview Evidence: Respondents highlighted the state's significant influence over decision-making at the local level. For instance: "Lack of effective mechanisms to challenge state government control is a common cause of state government impunity over local government affairs." *(Koton Karfe LGA (Info Officer)).*

"The state government dictates what comes to the local government and this does not allow local government free hand to operate." *(Lokoja LGA (Legal Officer)).*

4.12.2 Constitutional Barriers to Autonomy

The constitution enshrines centralized fiscal and administrative mechanisms, reinforcing state government control. The embeddedness of systems such as the SJLGA within the Nigerian Constitution presents a structural challenge to achieving autonomy. Evidence from the interview indicates that "Constitutional provisions hinder local government independence." *(Dekina LGA (Legal Officer)).* 'The SJLGA system is constitutionally entrenched, making it difficult to challenge." *(Lokoja LGA (Legal Officer)).*

4.12.3 Key Factors Limiting Service Delivery

The ineffectiveness of Kogi State local governments in providing essential services stems from multiple interconnected factors which includes the following:

i) Financial Constraints:

    The SJLGA system centralizes funds, depriving local governments of resources needed for essential services like healthcare and infrastructure. Respondents reported that limited fund was the most significant barrier to service delivery.

     "The joint account relationship made the state government decide who gets what over local government allocation." *(Dekina LGA (Special Adviser)).*

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ii)   Personnel and Workforce Issues:

Inadequate staffing, lack of training, and low morale—exacerbated by fractional salary payments—further hinder service delivery. (Ogori-*Mangogo LGA Respondent)*

"Low morale due to inadequate pay affects performance." *(Mopa Muro LGA (Respondent)).*

iii)   Inadequate Resources and Poor Working Conditions:

Respondents noted that poor infrastructure and working environments undermine staff productivity and service delivery capacity. (Lokoja *LGA Respondent)*

Studies such as Adeyemi et al. (2018) and Ogunleye & Ojo (2019) corroborated these findings, linking financial and workforce constraints to ineffective governance.

4.12.4 Proposed Solutions and Practical Implications

Key recommendations to address these challenges include constitutional reforms. Amending the constitution to ensure financial autonomy for local governments and reduce state control over resources. "Advocates for constitutional changes." *(Idah LGA (Admin Officer)).*

Direct Fund Allocation: Disbursing allocations directly from the federal government to local governments, bypassing the SJLGA system. Literature by Banko, O. H. (2020). supports this model for enhancing local government efficiency and strengthening Anti-

Corruption Measures. Implementing robust mechanisms to ensure proper utilization of funds and prevent mismanagement is germane.

4.12.5 Implications for Policymakers

Policymakers must recognize the systemic nature of these issues and prioritize structural reforms to enhance local government autonomy and efficiency. The findings suggest that addressing financial constraints, personnel challenges, and constitutional barriers can significantly improve service delivery.

4.13 Key Findings

The key findings from the study include the following amongst others;

Demographic Factors and Perceptions of Local Government Autonomy. Older respondents tend to hold more conservative views on local government autonomy, shaped by a history of political practices emphasizing centralized control. In contrast, younger respondents advocate for progressive reforms and increased autonomy.

Education: Higher educational attainment correlates with a nuanced understanding of governance structures. Educated respondents are more likely to support reforms enhancing transparency and accountability. Religious Affiliation: Religious identity significantly influences perceptions. Respondents from communities with strong religious institutions often prefer centralized control to preserve traditional values, while others support autonomy to address governance challenges.

Regional Disparities in Attitudes toward Autonomy: Those from the Central District demonstrate strong support for local government autonomy, likely driven by its more developed infrastructure and governance capacity. While Western District exhibits resistance to autonomy, attributing it to historical governance challenges and a preference for centralized mechanisms to address inefficiencies. Eastern District Displays mixed attitudes, shaped by recent political changes and varying satisfaction levels with local government performance. Political Officeholders and Control Mechanisms. Long term-serving officials often favour centralized control to maintain stability and the status quo, whereas newer officeholders advocate for autonomy, driven by a reformist outlook and contemporary governance issues.

Professional Factors and Autonomy Perspectives. Respondents working within local government departments, due to their firsthand exposure to administrative inefficiencies, often highlight the need for reforms that empower local entities. Policy-makers, on the other hand, emphasize autonomy as a means of enhancing governance and policy implementation. Local Government Performance and Public Attitudes. Respondents who view local governments as effective are more supportive of increased autonomy, linking it to improved responsiveness and governance outcomes while those with negative perception view local government performance to a preference for centralized control, reflecting expectations of greater oversight to mitigate inefficiencies and corruption. Kogi state government implements various control mechanisms that limit local government autonomy. These mechanisms include Joint account management, budget approval processes and influence over local government leadership.

These control mechanisms have a negative impact on local government autonomy because it restricts decision-making power regarding resource allocation limiting access to financial resources. This was the opinion of most of the respondents interviewed across LGA's in Kogi state, Nigeria.

> *"State government interference into local Government revenue streams does not allow local to fare well in service delivery." (Ajaokuta LGA (Admin Officer)).*
>
> *"Governor's interference over the leadership of the local government officials does not allow competent persons into position of authority at the local government level." (Koton Karfe LGA (Info Officer)).*
>
> *"The joint account relationship made the state government decide who gets what and how over local government allocation." (Dekina LGA (Special Adviser).*
>
> *"Hijacking of the local government activities by the state government affects the performance of the local government negatively." (Ankpa LGA (Respondent)*
>
> *"The joint account system puts the local government at a disadvantage position in the disbursement of statutory allocation." (Igalamela/Odolu LGA (Chief Accountant))*
>
> *"The joint account did not allow the local government to perform its constitutional functions." (Lokoja LGA (Main Respondent & Legal Officer)).*
>
> *"The state government dictates what comes to the local government and this to a large extent does not allow local government free hand to operate." (Lokoja LGA (Main Respondent & Legal Officer)).*

What could be gathered from this finding is that the interviews and literature review indicate that the control mechanisms put in place by the Kogi State Government significantly limit the autonomy of the local government councils. The centralized control over finances and the political influence exerted by the state government restricts the ability of local governments to make independent decisions, thereby affecting their effectiveness in delivering social services and being accountable to their citizens.

4.14 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has illuminated the significant challenges hindering local government autonomy and effectiveness in Kogi State, Nigeria. The findings from interviews and literature review revealed that centralized control mechanisms, such as the State Joint Local Government Account (SJLGA), and state government interference severely restrict the financial independence and decision-making power of local governments. This control not only hampers the delivery of essential social services but also undermines the accountability and capacity of local governments to meet the needs of their citizens. Financial constraints emerged as the most critical barrier, exacerbated by the SJLGA system, which centralizes and limits access to funds. Additionally, personnel issues, including low staff morale, inadequate training, and insufficient workforce capacity, further diminish the ability of local governments to effectively serve their communities. Poor working conditions and lack of resources compounded these challenges, leading to widespread inefficiencies in governance and service delivery.

The absence of effective mechanisms to check state government control, coupled with constitutional barriers, entrenches these issues. The findings indicate that the current constitutional framework reinforces centralized control, leaving local governments with limited autonomy to execute their constitutional responsibilities. Despite these challenges, the study highlights promising solutions proposed by stakeholders and supported by the literature. These include constitutional amendments to grant financial autonomy, direct allocation of funds from the federation account to local governments, and the implementation of robust anti-corruption measures to ensure effective resource management.

In conclusion, addressing the systemic barriers identified in this chapter is essential for empowering local governments in Kogi State. By pursuing constitutional reforms, enhancing financial independence, and strengthening workforce capacity, local governments can become more effective in delivering social services and fulfilling their mandate. The findings underscore the urgent need for a paradigm shift towards decentralized governance that prioritizes accountability, efficiency, and the well-being of citizens.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter synthesizes the key findings from Chapter Four, emphasizing their significance in advancing the understanding of local government autonomy in Kogi State, Nigeria. It critically evaluates how these findings contribute to existing literature and outlines their practical implications for policymakers and stakeholders. Additionally, the chapter addresses areas of divergence from prior studies and provides suggestions for future research. The discussion concludes by highlighting the limitations of the study and offering actionable recommendations aimed at strengthening local governance frameworks.

5.2 Summary of Findings

This chapter summarizes the findings, implications, and contributions of the study, titled Control Mechanisms and Local Government Autonomy in Kogi State, Nigeria: An Assessment. The research examined the factors influencing respondents' perceptions and attitudes toward local government autonomy and control mechanisms, with a focus on demographic, regional, and professional influences. This study investigates how control mechanisms employed by the Kogi State government affects the administration of local government and its autonomy. The findings demonstrate that the State Joint Local Government Account (SJLGA) system centralizes financial control, restricting local governments' access to resources needed to fulfill their constitutional mandates. The lack of effective legislative and judicial oversight further consolidates state government power, allowing unchecked interference in local affairs. Political factors exacerbate these challenges, limiting local governments' decision-making capacity and their ability to deliver essential services to citizens. These findings underscore a persistent pattern of reduced autonomy, hindered service delivery, and compromised accountability to the public. Moreover, the study identifies financial constraints and personnel issues as pivotal factors contributing to local government inefficiencies in Kogi State. Financial limitations, particularly those driven by the SJLGA system, hinder investments in essential sectors such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure. Personnel challenges including low staff morale, insufficient training, and inadequate staffing further constrain service delivery and weaken operational capacity. These combined factors significantly diminish local governments' ability to serve their communities effectively.

The analysis also highlights the lack of effective mechanisms to challenge state government control. Constitutional provisions further entrench centralization, making it difficult for local governments to assert autonomy. Interview data suggest several solutions to these challenges, including constitutional amendments for greater financial autonomy, direct fund allocations from the federation account, and enhanced anti-corruption frameworks. These solutions align with global recommendations for improving local governance and strengthening autonomy at the grassroots level.

Political interference emerged as another critical barrier to local government autonomy in Kogi State. The study found that state governments routinely undermine elected local councils by appointing caretaker committees. These committees, often composed of political allies, lack legitimacy and accountability, leading to poor governance outcomes. As one civil servant lamented, *"Local government chairmen are more accountable to the governor than to the people they serve."* This practice violates Section 7 of the Nigerian 1999 Constitution, which guarantees a democratically elected local government system. However, the absence of enforcement mechanisms renders this provision ineffective. The findings align with Olowu's (2019) critique of Nigeria's "democratic façade," where sub national governments mimic decentralization while concentrating power. This is particularly evident in Kogi State, where regional and ethnic politics exacerbate state-local tensions. For example, local governments in predominantly Igala areas (Kogi East) and Okun areas (Kogi West) often face greater interference than those in Ebira district (Kogi Central) reflecting the state's polarized political landscape.

This study also highlights the role of political parties in undermining local autonomy. In Kogi State, the ruling party (All Progressive Congress) (APC) uses local governments as patronage tools, rewarding loyalists with appointments and contracts. This politicization of local governance is not unique to Nigeria; similar trends have been observed in Kenya (Olatunji, Moshood A. (2021). However, the Nigerian case is distinguished by the scale of interference and its impact on service delivery. For instance, local governments in Kogi State are often unable to recruit qualified staff due to political considerations, leading to inefficiencies and public disillusionment. Beyond financial and political barriers, the study identified structural inefficiencies as a major impediment to local government autonomy. These include inadequate staffing, low morale, and skill gaps, which collectively cripple service delivery. Over 70% of surveyed staff reported lacking training in project management or public finance, hindering their ability to execute mandates. This contrasts sharply with Ghana's Local Government Service, which mandates continuous capacity-building for staff (Okoh, C. C., Onwe, S. O., & Ofoma, C. V. (2022).

The absence of performance evaluation systems in Kogi State further entrenches inefficiency. Unlike Rwanda, where local governments are assessed based on clear metrics (Okudolo, I. T. P., Ntsikelelo, B. B., &Mekoa, I. (2021), Kogi's local governments operate without accountability frameworks. This lack of oversight creates a culture of impunity, where underperformance is normalized. For example, one interviewee noted, *"There's no consequence for failing to deliver projects; the system rewards loyalty over competence." (Lokoja LGA Respondent)*

The study also highlights the impact of these structural challenges on public trust. Citizens in Kogi State perceive local governments as ineffective and corrupt, further eroding their legitimacy. This perception is exacerbated by the lack of citizen engagement mechanisms. Unlike Uganda's "Baraza" model, where town halls enable communities to track projects and hold officials accountable (Osakede, K. O. (2016), Kogi's local governments operate in isolation from the people they serve.

5.3 Contributions of the Study to Literature

This research significantly contributes to the global discourse on local government autonomy, offering valuable insights into the specific mechanisms that undermine local government independence in the Nigerian context. The findings diverge from existing studies by not only focusing on financial mismanagement but also highlighting the structural barriers imposed by the SJLGA system and the political interference that stifles local government effectiveness. This thesis bridges a gap in literature by integrating constitutional, financial, and personnel challenges that impact local governance in Kogi State, providing a comprehensive framework for addressing these issues. Internationally, the findings contribute to the broader conversation on decentralization and local government autonomy, particularly in countries where local governments face centralizing pressures. This study emphasizes the importance of financial autonomy, transparency, and accountability in local governance, themes that are increasingly relevant in global debates on strengthening democratic structures and governance systems at the local level were discussed to provide robust information on local government systems in Nigeria and beyond.

This study makes several significant contributions to the literature on decentralization and local governance. First, it advances decentralization theory by integrating financial, political, and structural dimensions into a unified framework. While existing literature often isolates fiscal autonomy (Taamneh, M. M., & Alqdha, H. M. (2020) or political interference (Thapa, I. (2020), this research demonstrates their *interdependence* in undermining local governance. For example, the SJLGA system's financial control enables political domination, which in turn perpetuates structural decay a tripartite nexus previously underexplored in African contexts.

Secondly, the study challenges the "efficiency argument" for centralization (Treisman, 2022), showing that state control in Kogi State exacerbates, rather than mitigates, governance failures. By highlighting constitutional contradictions (e.g., federal guarantees of autonomy versus state-level sabotage), the study contributes to legal scholarship on Nigeria's federalism, offering a template for analyzing subnational dynamics in similar jurisdictions like Kenya or India.

Thirdly, the study bridges the gap between theory and practice by incorporating grassroots perspectives. Unlike top-down analyses that focus on institutional frameworks, this research captures the lived experiences of local government staff and citizens, providing a more holistic understanding of autonomy challenges.

5.4 Practical Implications for Policymakers

The findings have important implications for policymakers in Kogi State and other regions in Nigeria, particularly those grappling with similar challenges in local governance. The research underscores the urgent need for reforms that address financial constraints, enhance legislative and judicial oversight, and curb political interference. By implementing constitutional amendments that grant local governments greater control over their finances and resources, and by promoting transparent and accountable governance, policymakers can significantly improve local governance and service delivery. In addition, the study offers practical recommendations for improving service delivery and empowering local governments to better meet the needs of their communities. These recommendations have broader applicability to other regions of Nigeria and may provide insights into overcoming challenges faced by local governments in other parts of the developing world.
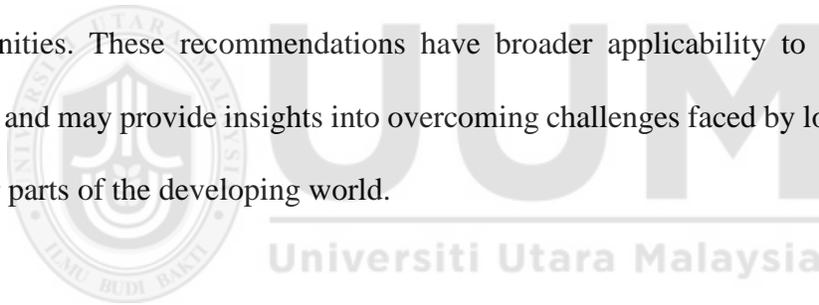
5.5 Divergences from Existing Studies

This research reveals key divergences from existing studies on local government autonomy, particularly in terms of the mechanisms of state control. While many previous studies primarily attribute local government inefficiencies to financial mismanagement, this thesis underscores the interplay between centralized control, political interference, and structural financial constraints. The SJLGA system's role in stifling local government autonomy has not been extensively explored in the literature, making this research a unique contribution to the field.

The differences between this study and others may arise from the unique socio-political context of Kogi State, where the state's centralized control mechanisms have a particularly pronounced effect on local governance. The findings suggest that localized solutions, such as direct fund allocation models and stronger oversight frameworks, may be necessary to address these challenges effectively.

5.6 Future Research Possibilities

This study lays the foundation for several important avenues of future research:

Comparative studies on the effectiveness of direct fund allocation models in different Nigerian states or in other developing countries facing similar challenges should be explored. Exploring the role of civil society and citizen participation in strengthening local government accountability and autonomy. The role of civil society in strengthening local government accountability and autonomy in Nigeria is crucial. Civil society organizations (CSOs) can play a significant role in promoting transparency, accountability, and good governance at the local level.

These roles include advocacy and awareness, monitoring and evaluation, community engagement, capacity building amongst others. CSOs can raise awareness about the importance of local government accountability and autonomy, and advocate for policies and reforms that promote these values. CSOs can also monitor local government activities, track budget implementation, and evaluate the impact of policies and programs. This helps to identify areas of inefficiency, corruption, or mismanagement. They can engage with local communities, facilitate public debates, and provide platforms for citizens to express

their concerns and expectations from local government. CSOs can provide training and capacity-building programs for local government officials, councilors, and community leaders to enhance their skills and knowledge on governance, budgeting, and service delivery.

In Nigeria, some notable civil society organizations that are working to strengthen local government accountability and autonomy include: Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC), Nigerian Institute of Legislative Studies (NILS), Partnership to Engage, Reform and Learn (PERL), ActionAid Nigeria and Oxfam in Nigeria. These organizations, among others, are working to promote good governance, transparency, and accountability at the local level, and to support the development of more autonomous and effective local governments in Nigeria. To strengthen the autonomy of local government in Nigeria, civil society can advocate for Constitutional Reforms, Support Decentralization, Promote Fiscal Autonomy, Encourage Local Economic Development and Strengthen Local Government Institutions.

Investigating the impact of constitutional reforms on local government operations, particularly in countries with similar political and fiscal centralization issues. Constitutional reforms can have a significant impact on local government operations, especially in countries with similar political and fiscal centralization issues. In Nigeria, for instance, the 1999 Constitution guarantees the existence of local governments, but they are still heavily dependent on state governments for funding and decision-making. This has led to a lack of autonomy and accountability at the local level, hindering the delivery

of basic services to citizens. The concept of local government autonomy is crucial in ensuring that local communities have the power to manage their own affairs, make decisions, and allocate resources effectively. However, in many countries, including Nigeria, the central government often exercises significant control over local governments, limiting their ability to operate independently. This can lead to inefficiencies, corruption, and a lack of responsiveness to local needs.

In countries with similar political and fiscal centralization issues, constitutional reforms can help address these challenges by devolving more power and resources to local governments. For example, reforms can establish clear guidelines for local government funding, ensure greater autonomy in decision-making, and provide mechanisms for citizen participation and accountability. Some key aspects of constitutional reforms that can impact local government operations include: Decentralization of power, Fiscal autonomy, Citizen Participation and Accountability mechanisms. Ultimately, constitutional reforms can have a profound impact on local government operations, enabling them to become more effective, accountable, and responsive to citizen needs by devolving power, ensuring fiscal autonomy, and promoting citizen participation, countries can strengthen local governance and improve the overall quality of life for their citizens.

Examining regional variations in the implementation of the SJLGA system and its impact on local government autonomy across Nigeria. The State Joint Local Government Account (SJLGA) system has been a subject of controversy in Nigeria, with many arguing that its implementation has negatively impacted local government autonomy. Essentially,

the SJLGA system is a joint account between the state and local governments, where funds allocated to local governments from the federal government are paid into this account. However, the problem lies in the fact that state governments have been known to wield significant control over these funds, often using them for their own purposes rather than allowing local governments to access them directly.

This has led to a significant reduction in the autonomy of local governments, as they are unable to manage their own finances and make decisions on how to allocate resources. The implementation of the SJLGA system has also been criticized for being opaque, with many local governments lacking access to information on how their allocated funds are being used. As a result, rural development has suffered, and the delivery of basic services to grassroots communities has been severely impacted.

Studies have shown that the SJLGA system has brought about abysmal failure in facilitating funds to local governments for rural development, due to the wrong implementation process by state governments. The system has also been found to have negative effects on local governments, as it has led to a loss of financial autonomy and the ability to deliver services to the grassroots. To address this issue, there have been calls for a review of the SJLGA system, with some advocating for local governments to be allowed to access their funds directly from the federal government.

Overall, the variations in the implementation of the SJLGA system have had a significant impact on local government autonomy across Nigeria, and it is essential that steps are taken to address these issues and ensure that local governments are able to manage their own finances and deliver services to their communities effectively. These areas of future research would build upon the findings of this thesis and expand the scope of understanding regarding local governance challenges and potential solutions.

5.7 Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations were proposed to strengthen local government autonomy in Kogi State, Nigeria:

Adequate Budgetary Allocations: The state and federal government should allocate well-structured and sufficient budgets to local governments, ensuring that they have the resources to fulfill their constitutional functions. A collaborative approach between local and state governments should be promoted to ensure efficient resource utilization. Adequate budgetary allocations are critical for ensuring efficient governance, development, and the provision of public services. When budgets are properly allocated, they empower governments especially at the local level to address infrastructural needs, social services, and community development projects effectively. This can only be achieved through equitable distribution. Allocations to local government should reflect the population size and needs of each local government.

Budgetary allocations should support long-term development plans, balancing immediate needs with future goals. Allowing local governments or entities the freedom to directly access and manage allocated funds can enhance efficiency and innovation. Equitable distribution in budget allocations has profound implications on governance, development, and social equity as well as poverty reduction, balanced development, social cohesion, efficiency in public services, transparency and trust amongst others.

Investment in Human Capital: Investing in human capital at the local government level in Nigeria is essential for fostering sustainable development and improving service delivery. Human capital development enhances capacity building. Training and development programs for local government employees can enhance their skills and efficiency, leading to better governance and service delivery. Investments in education and healthcare at the grassroots level empower communities, reduce poverty, and improve overall quality of life. A well-trained and healthy workforce contributes to local economic development by attracting investments and fostering entrepreneurship.

Local governments should prioritize training and development programs for their staff. This will enhance the capacity of local government officials and improve the quality of public services. The state government should facilitate such initiatives.

Strengthening of the Financial Oversight: Strengthening financial oversight at the local government level in Nigeria is crucial for ensuring transparency, accountability, and effective use of resources. To achieve these, efforts should be made to ensure that funds are allocated directly to local governments without interference from the state

governments. Training of local government officials in financial management and auditing would improve their ability to manage resources effectively. Concerted effort should be made to adopt digital tools for budgeting, revenue collection, and expenditure tracking to reduce corruption and improve efficiency. Regular audits by independent bodies would help to identify and address financial irregularities. Citizen participation in budget planning and monitoring should be encouraged to foster transparency and accountability in the local government financial system. Strengthening of the legal frameworks to enforce laws and regulations that promote financial accountability is essential for financial adequacy of the local government and this to a large extent promote effective service delivery.
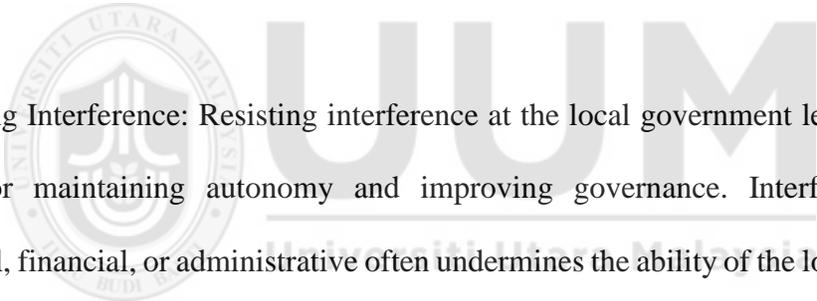
Resisting Interference: Resisting interference at the local government level in Nigeria is vital for maintaining autonomy and improving governance. Interference, whether political, financial, or administrative often undermines the ability of the local governments to effectively serve their communities. To accomplish the task of resisting interference from the state government direct allocation of funds should be made to the local government in such a way that would bypass the state joint local government account. Fostering greater community involvement in local governance is key to reducing interference at the local government level.

Transparent communication with citizens empowers them to demand accountability and protect their local governments from external interference. Focusing on these measures would empower local governments to function more effectively and independently. The

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state government should refrain from interfering with local governments' revenue streams and administrative functions. Both levels of government must respect the autonomy of local governments and allow them to manage their affairs independently.

Advocacy for Equitable Budget Distribution: Advocating for equitable budget distribution is essential for promoting fairness, reducing inequality, and fostering balanced development. To ensure equitable budget distribution citizens should be educated on the importance of equitable budget distribution and this by extension empower them to demand transparency and accountability from their local government. Civil society and community-based organizations should be allowed to play vital role in monitoring budget allocations and this would achieve fair distribution. Appropriate mechanisms should be strengthened for tracking and reporting budget allocations that ensures that funds are used effectively in a manner that would reach the intended beneficiaries. Local governments should advocate for a more equitable distribution of resources, ensuring that all districts including marginalized areas, receive fair allocations for development projects.

Inclusivity in Local Government Initiatives: Inclusivity in local government initiatives is essential for fostering equitable and representative communities. Disability inclusion frameworks should be put in place to incorporate less privilege members of the society into the decision-making body of the local government. In Nigeria, the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD) should partner with the Association of Local Governments of Nigeria (ALGON) to launch a framework that ensures persons with disabilities are integrated into the local government policies and services. Inclusive

outreach strategies, such as multilingual materials and collaborative decision-making processes, would empower diverse community voices in the local government. These initiatives would not only create fairer systems but also lead to innovative solutions and stronger community relationships. Local governments should adopt inclusive governance practices, engaging all religious and cultural groups. This would foster unity and cooperation among diverse communities. Religious leaders should be included in decision-making processes to reflect the diverse makeup of the population.

Community Engagement: Community engagement is a cornerstone of inclusive local governance, ensuring that diverse voices are heard and represented in decision-making. Involving community members in decisions about how to allocate funds can help address the unique needs of different groups. For instance, some cities create forums where citizens vote on projects to fund. Regular town halls in accessible locations would give people an opportunity to voice their opinions and concerns. Virtual options would ensure wider participation, especially in rural or underserved areas. Empowering young people through mentorship initiatives, civic education, and leadership workshops can create a generation that values inclusivity and participation.

Providing information in multiple languages and formats would ensures that language barriers do not prevent individuals from participating in community activities or decision-making in the local government. Partnering with local non-profits, religious organizations, or community leaders would help reach marginalized populations effectively. By embedding community engagement into local government practices,

leaders would build trust, foster collaboration, and create policies that truly reflect the community's needs. Political officeholders at the local government level should prioritize engagement with their constituents. This will ensure that the concerns of the people are effectively addressed and that local governance is responsive to the needs of the community.

Capacity Building and Long-Term Service: Capacity building and long-term service are essential for sustainable and impactful local governance. Offering continuous professional development opportunities, such as workshops on leadership, project management, and technology adoption, enhances efficiency. Pairing experienced leaders with emerging ones ensures knowledge transfer and cultivates future leaders. Partnering with universities or vocational centers can provide specialized training on topics like environmental sustainability or social welfare. Embedding sustainability goals into local policies ensures lasting impact, especially in sectors like health, education, and infrastructure. Embedding sustainability goals into local policies ensures lasting impact, especially in sectors like health, education, and infrastructure. Local governments should encourage continuous professional development for their staff. Promoting long-term service within local governments will ensure a stable, experienced workforce, capable of delivering quality services.

Anti-Corruption Measures: Anti-corruption measures are strategies and actions designed to prevent, detect, and combat corruption in various aspects of the local government system. It entails enacting strict anti-corruption laws and policies to hold individuals and the local government accountable. It promotes open access to information, such as public spending and government contracts, to reduce opportunities for corruption. It safeguards individuals who report corrupt practices from retaliation and it establishes agencies like anti-corruption commissions to investigate and prosecute corruption cases as well as educating citizens about the negative impacts of corruption and encouraging ethical behaviours. The use of digital tools technology to enhance transparency, such as e-governance platforms that reduce human interaction in processes prone to corruption should be enhanced to guide against financial irregularities in the local government system. The state and federal government should introduce effective anti-corruption measures at the local government level, including transparency initiatives, reporting mechanisms, and whistleblower protection.

Performance Evaluation Systems: Performance evaluation systems are structured frameworks used to assess and improve individual or organizational performance. These systems help in measuring progress, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and fostering growth in the local government system. It uses measurable indicators (quantitative or qualitative) to assess achievements and providing continuous feedback for improvement and motivation. It encourages fair assessment that ensures impartiality and eliminating biases in evaluations. It uses predefined metrics to track successes over a period of time.

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Local governments should establish comprehensive performance evaluation systems to assess service delivery and identify areas for improvement.

These recommendations are aimed at improving local government autonomy and governance in Kogi State. They are relevant for local government authorities, state government agencies, and policymakers. By implementing these measures, the welfare of Kogi State citizens can be significantly enhanced.

5.8 Suggestions for Further Study

While this study has contributed valuable insights into the control mechanisms and local government autonomy in Kogi State, Nigeria, there are several areas that merit further investigation which includes the following:

Comparative Analysis across Nigerian States: A comparative analysis across Nigerian states can cover various dimensions such as economic performance, education, healthcare, infrastructure, and governance. Future research could conduct a comparative analysis of local government autonomy and control mechanisms across different Nigerian states. This would offer a broader understanding of how control mechanisms vary and their impact on autonomy in different states in Nigeria.

Longitudinal Studies: Longitudinal studies are research methods that involve repeated observations of the same variables over a period of time. In the context of Nigerian states, such studies can provide valuable insights into trends and changes across various states in

Nigeria. For instance, this could cover healthcare, education, tax reforms and gender disparity. Longitudinal studies could provide insights into the evolution of control mechanisms and their effects on local government autonomy over time. Such research could help identify trends and changes in governance practices.

Grassroots Perspectives: Grassroots perspectives in Nigeria often highlight the challenges and opportunities faced by local communities in areas such as governance, development, and participation. Grassroots democracy in Nigeria has been a topic of debate. While local governments are meant to promote democratic values like representation and accountability, challenges such as corruption and lack of autonomy often hinder their effectiveness. Grassroots initiatives have played a significant role in fostering development. Local actors, including traditional institutions and civic organizations, have contributed to innovative responses to development programs, despite the broader challenges faced by the state. Since the 1976 Local Government Reform, local governments were expected to serve as a training ground for politicians and drive development. However, issues like political interference and lack of resources have limited their impact.

Investigating the perceptions and experiences of local communities regarding local government autonomy would deepen our understanding of the challenges and opportunities at the grassroots level. It would also inform more effective reforms.

Financial Autonomy of Local Governments: Financial autonomy for local governments in Nigeria is a critical issue that impacts governance, development, and service delivery at the grassroots level. Many local governments depend heavily on federal allocations, which limits their financial independence. State governments often exert control over local government finances, undermining their autonomy. Local governments face challenges in generating internal revenue due to limited resources and capacity. Further studies on financial autonomy would enhance community development by addressing local needs more effectively. Further research could focus on the financial autonomy of local governments, exploring how resources are allocated and utilized, and how this impacts service delivery and governance.

Impact of Governance Reforms: Governance reforms would have profound effects on various aspects of society, including economic growth, public trust, and service delivery. Reforms often aim to streamline processes, reduce corruption, and improve efficiency, which would lead to increased investments and economic stability. For instance, reforms in taxation or public spending can directly influence the local government fiscal health. Addressing inefficiencies in the local government services through reforms would enhance the delivery of public services. For example, Akwa Ibom State in Nigeria has implemented reforms that prioritize workers welfare, resulting in timely salary payments and improved public trust. Governance reforms would address systemic inequalities by ensuring fair distribution of resources and opportunities. This is particularly evident in policies aimed at reducing poverty or improving access to education and healthcare. Evaluating the effectiveness of governance reforms aimed at enhancing local government

autonomy in Kogi State and other regions would offer insights into the success or failure of policy interventions.

Citizen Participation and Decentralization: Involving citizens in decision-making empowers individuals and communities, giving them a sense of ownership over policies and outcome. When citizens actively participate, they can hold governments accountable for their actions, ensuring transparency and ethical governance. Broader participation brings in diverse viewpoints, leading to more inclusive and effective policies. For example, participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil, is a successful model where citizens decide how public funds are spent, improving transparency and trust. Future studies could examine the level of citizen participation in local government decision-making and how this influences local government autonomy. Additionally, research on decentralization and devolution processes within Nigeria could provide valuable insights. Economic and Social Impact: Policies such as investment in infrastructure, trade liberalization, and innovation foster economic growth, create jobs, and reduce poverty. Economic reforms would narrow or widen the gap between the rich and the poor, depending on how equitable the policies are. Governance reforms that prioritize health, education, and welfare improve citizens' standard of living. Equitable policies reduce social tensions and foster unity within diverse populations. Economic reforms often influence societal norms and lifestyles, bringing about shifts in values and behaviours. This would ensure high-quality education and healthcare, boosting overall happiness and social cohesion in the local government. Further research could explore the economic and

social impacts of local government autonomy on communities, particularly in areas such as poverty alleviation, healthcare, and education.

Corruption and Autonomy: Corruption and autonomy are two critical factors that significantly influence governance, development, and the well-being of societies. Corruption undermines trust in public institutions, hinders economic growth, and diverts resources away from essential services like education and healthcare. It deters foreign investment and fosters inefficiency, creating obstacles to progress in both public and private sectors. Corruption exacerbates inequalities and deepens poverty, as resources meant for public welfare are siphoned off for private gain. Measures such as transparency initiatives, whistleblower protections, and independent anti-corruption agencies can help curb corruption. In-depth studies on the prevalence of corruption at the local government level and its impact on autonomy and service delivery would provide valuable insights into improving governance.

Gender and Local Governance: Gender and local governance are interconnected areas that play a pivotal role in achieving inclusive and equitable development. Ensuring gender parity in local governance fosters diverse perspectives, enabling more inclusive decision-making. Women in local governance tend to advocate for policies that prioritize community welfare, such as healthcare, education, and water supply. Gender-sensitive approaches in local governance would lead to programs focused on empowering women economically and socially. Future studies could examine how gender dynamics influence

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local government autonomy, particularly focusing on the participation and representation of women in local government decision-making.

International Comparative Studies**:** International comparative studies offer valuable insights into how different countries address shared challenges and achieve progress in governance, economics, education, and more. By analyzing policies and practices in various countries, decision-makers can identify what works and adapt it to their own contexts. Comparative studies inspire innovative solutions to problems by showcasing diverse approaches. They provide a framework for measuring a country's performance against global standards. Conducting comparative studies with local governments in neighboring countries could help identify best practices and innovations in local governance, which could be adopted in Nigeria.

5.9 Limitations and Future Research Implications

This study faced several limitations, which should be considered when designing future research:

Sample Size and Scope: Sample size and scope are fundamental concepts in research and analysis, determining the reliability and applicability of findings. The number of observations or data points included in a study directly impacts the statistical significance and generalizability of results. Larger sample sizes are required for detailed studies, while smaller sizes may suffice for exploratory research. If the target population is vast, a larger sample size is usually needed to represent it accurately. If data points show high

variability, larger sample sizes help ensure accuracy. The sample size used in this study was limited to a specific group of political officeholders and civil servants in Kogi State. Future studies could incorporate a larger and more diverse sample, including local community members and civil society organizations.

Context-Specific Findings: Context-specific findings are crucial in research and decision-making as they provide insights tailored to a particular situation or environment. Findings are more applicable and actionable when grounded in the specific context. Decision-makers rely on these findings to craft targeted strategies and interventions. The findings of this study are specific to Kogi State and may not be entirely applicable to other regions in Nigeria or internationally. Future research could explore regional variations in local government autonomy and control mechanisms.

Data Collection Methods: Data collection methods are fundamental tools in research and analysis, it helps to gather accurate and relevant information. They are broadly categorized into qualitative and quantitative approaches. This study relied primarily on survey data. Future studies could integrate qualitative methods in detail or focus groups, to gain deeper insights into local governance and autonomy.

Time Constraints: In research, time constraints often refer to the limited amount of time available to conduct a study or project. These constraints can impact various aspects of the research process. Insufficient time may lead to smaller sample sizes or limited data collection, potentially affecting the reliability and generalizability of results. Time

pressure can hinder the opportunity to revisit and improve research design, methodology, or findings. With tight deadlines, researchers may rely on simpler analytical methods rather than more comprehensive approaches. Limited time may also affect the quality of the final write-up or the ability to address feedback thoroughly. Due to time limitations, this study offers a snapshot of the current situation. Longitudinal studies could provide a more dynamic view of the evolving relationship between control mechanisms and local government autonomy. Complex Interactions: When multiple independent variables interact to impact a dependent variable, understanding their combined effects can be difficult. Interactions between individuals or groups, influenced by culture, policies, or economics, often create layers of complexity. The relationship between control mechanisms and local government autonomy is complex. Future research could employ advanced analytical methods to better understand these interactions and their implications.

5.10 Summary of the Chapter

This research provides an in-depth examination of the relationship between control mechanisms and local government autonomy in Kogi State, Nigeria. Through comprehensive analysis guided by the research objectives, the study identifies key factors influencing local government autonomy, including demographic, regional, and professional variables. Additionally, the study highlights how these factors shape perceptions of local government performance and autonomy, offering new insights into local governance dynamics in Nigeria.

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The findings of this research contribute significantly to the broader literature on local government autonomy. By examining the specific context of Kogi State, this study enhances our understanding of how different variables interact to shape governance at the local level. The connection between local government performance and citizens' perceptions underscores the complexity of local governance and the importance of considering diverse factors when formulating policies aimed at improving local governance.

From a practical standpoint, the findings offer valuable insights for policymakers in Kogi State and beyond. The study emphasizes the need for a nuanced approach to governance reforms, one that takes into account the varied influences on public perceptions of local government autonomy. This research suggests that policymakers should not only focus on administrative efficiency but also on creating an environment where local government autonomy is respected and reinforced. The implications extend beyond Kogi State, with relevance for other regions in Nigeria and countries with similar governance structures.

In terms of the theoretical contributions, this study adds to the body of knowledge by offering a unique perspective on the intersection of local government autonomy and control mechanisms. By addressing gaps in the existing literature, it provides a solid foundati0on for future research in the field of local governance. In conclusion, while this research has contributed to the understanding of local government autonomy in Kogi State, there remain numerous avenues for future exploration. Addressing the limitations outlined above and expanding research into the suggested areas will help advance the field and contribute to the improvement of local governance in Nigeria.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRES

UNIVERSITI UTARA MALAYSIA

ACADEMIC RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF CONTROL MECHANISMS ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTONOMY IN NIGERIA: A CASE STUDY OF KOGI STATE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCILS

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a PhD student of Universiti Utara Malaysia that is carrying out research on, **"An Assessment of the Impact of Control Mechanisms on Local Government Autonomy in Nigeria: A Case Study of Kogi State Local Government Councils"**. This is in partial fulfillment of the requirements, for the award of doctorate degree in Development Management. This study is purely for academic purpose only and requires your kind and sincere responses. Please be assured that all the information provided will be used solely for the purpose of this study and will be treated as strictly confidential.

You are required to supply the needed information by ticking the space provided for the option which best conveys your opinion.

Thank you for your kind co-operation.

Yours Faithfully,

Wada Enejo

INFORMATION

The questionnaire consists of five sections (A-E). Section A elicit information about the respondents with the aim of determining the demographic data and socioeconomic status of the respondents while section B-E is aimed at gathering information that will be instrumental to the achievement of the stated objectives of the study.

N.B: Complete the questionnaire by ticking (√) appropriately the option which best represents your status and conveys your opinion. You can also make comments where necessary.

PART I: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

✓

Please tick ☐ the option that correctly and accurately describes your circumstance:

1. Gender of the Respondent?

    ☐☐Male

    ☐☐Female

2. Age of the Respondents?

    ☐☐21 – 30 years

    ☐☐31 – 40years

    ☐☐41 – 50years

    ☐☐51 – 60 years

    ☐☐61years and above

3. Marital Status?

    ☐☐Single

    ☐☐Married

    ☐☐Divorced

    ☐☐Widow/Widower

4. Grade Level?

    ☐☐01 – 06 Level

    ☐☐07 – 10 Level

    ☐☐11 – 13 Level

    ☐☐14 – 17 Level

5. Level of Education?

☐☐SSCE and below

☐☐NCE/ND

☐☐HND/BSc

☐☐MSc/MBA

☐☐PhD

6. Respondents by Department?

☐☐Agriculture

☐☐Health

☐☐Personnel Management

☐☐Education and Social Department

☐☐Finance

7. Senatorial districts of the local government area?

☐☐ Kogi East

☐☐ Kogi Central

☐☐ Kogi West

8. Religion?

☐☐Christian

☐☐Muslim

☐☐Traditional

9. Are you a political office holder?

☐☐Yes

☐☐No

10. Length of Services in the office?

      ☐☐Below 5 years

      ☐☐6 – 10 years

      ☐☐11 – 15 years

      ☐☐16 – 20 years

      ☐☐More than 20 years

11. How much is your monthly household income?

12. What position do you occupy in the political office?

13. How would you assess Kogi State performance between 2012-2022 in terms of project execution and the delivery of good governance to the people?

14. Has Kogi State local government been able to perform well in terms of service delivery to the people?
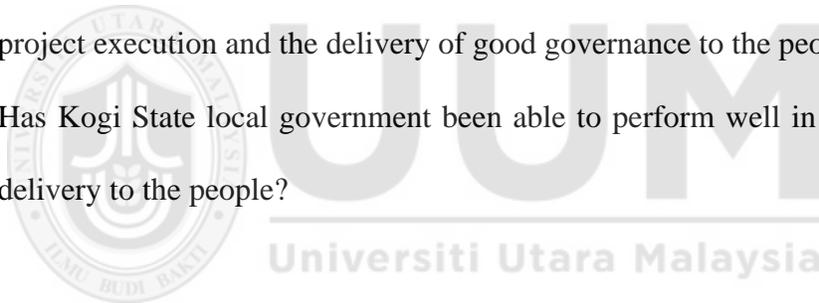
SECTION A

The ability of your Local Government to perform its constitutional functions

GUIDELINES: The ability of your local government to perform its constitutional functions. Respondents are asked to indicate the extent to which they strongly agree or strongly disagree with each statement using the five points Likert scale response framework. Likert scale indicator: SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, SA =Strongly Agree

Question: To what extent do you agree on how the following have impact on local government performance of its constitutional functions?

S.N	The ability of your Local Governments to perform its constitutional functions.	SD	D	N	A	SA
1	My local government has adequate and good budgetary allocation	1	2	3	4	5
2	Adequate skilled workers exist in my local government	1	2	3	4	5
3	There are Mismanagement and embezzlement of funds by my local government councils.	1	2	3	4	5

4	My local government has inadequate and poor budgetary allocation	1	2	3	4	5
5	The local government has become an avenue to settle political loyalists (thugs) with appointments either as chairman, vice-chairman, or councilors amongst others by the state Governor.	1	2	3	4	5
6	My local government has good and robust autonomy	1	2	3	4	5
7	Undue Interference of State Government in the management of functions and revenue streams exists in my local government	1	2	3	4	5
8	Inadequate skilled workers exists in my local government	1	2	3	4	5
9	Lack of autonomy exists in my local government	1	2	3	4	5
10	Corruption of local government officials exists in my local government.	1	2	3	4	5

This section identifies existing control mechanisms on local government in Kogi state.

Respondents are asked to indicate the extent to which they strongly agree or strongly disagree with each statement using the five points Likert scale response framework. Likert scale indicator: SD = Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, N = Neutral, A= Agree, SA =Strongly Agree.

■ In your opinion, how would you rate these items in order of importance as there affects autonomy of Kogi State local government councils?

■ Do you agree that the autonomy of your local government is affected by existing control mechanisms?

Question: To what extent do you agree on the impact of the following control mechanisms on local government operations in Kogi state?

S/N	Control Mechanisms in Local Governments	SD	D	N	A	SA
1	Joint account relationship between the state and the local government has weakened the performance of local government in Kogi State	1	2	3	4	5
2	The activities of the Ministry of Local Government in Kogi State affects the performance of my local government negatively	1	2	3	4	5

3	The interference of local government service commission on personnel management of the local government exists	1	2	3	4	5
4	Joint account relationship between the state and the local government has not weakened the performance of local government in Kogi State	1	2	3	4	5
5	State government oversight on auditing of local government finances always happens	1	2	3	4	5
6	The interference of local government service commission on personnel management of the local government does not exists	1	2	3	4	5
7	State government oversight on auditing of local government finances does not always happens	1	2	3	4	5
8	Control by audit alarm committee disciplines the local government financial system	1	2	3	4	5
9	Multiple arrays of departments and agencies to deal with specific functions exist in my local government	1	2	3	4	5

S.N		1	2	3	4	5
10	Control by audit alarm committee does not disciplines the local government financial system	1	2	3	4	5
11	There are unwarranted impositions of local government officials on local government authorities by the state government.	1	2	3	4	5
12	Multiple arrays of departments and agencies to deal with specific functions does not exists in my local government	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION C:

What effects do control mechanisms have on autonomy of local government councils in Kogi State?

GUIDELINES: In section C, please rate your level of agreement with the following statements as all questions have the same options (1= Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 = Disagree (D), 3 = Neutral (N), 4 = Agree (A), 5 = Strongly Agree (SD)):

S.N		SD	D	N	A	SA

1	The constitutional powers granted State House of Assembly to make laws for Local Government has reduced the Autonomy of Local Government Councils in Kogi State	1	2	3	4	5
2	The powers of the State House of Assembly to regulate the Financial Administration of Local Government through Public Account committee activities has promoted the autonomy of Local Government councils in Kogi State	1	2	3	4	5
3	Internal Financial control mechanisms has not enhanced internal working systems and local government autonomy in Kogi State	1	2	3	4	5
4	The instrument of Federal allocation for Local Government through State/Local Government					
	Accounts have positively affected autonomy of Local Government in Kogi State	1	2	3	4	5
5	The instrument of Federal allocation for Local Government through State/Local Government Account has negatively affected autonomy of Local Government in Kogi State	1	2	3	4	5

6	External financial control mechanisms used by state and federal government has affected Local Government performance positively	1	2	3	4	5
7	External financial control mechanisms used by state and federal government has affected Local Government performance negatively					
8	The financial technique of operations of Auditor-General office, and Directorate of local government has impacted positively on autonomy of local government in Kogi State.	1	2	3	4	
9	The financial technique of operations of Auditor-General office and Directorate of local government has impacted negatively on autonomy of local government in Kogi State.	1	2	3	4	

SECTION D:

This section identifies the issues on autonomy of local government councils in Kogi State.

Respondents are asked to indicate the extent to which they strongly disagree or agree with each statement using the five-point Likert scale response framework. Likert scale indicator: SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, N = Neutral, A=Agree, SA =Strongly Agree

- If greater autonomy is granted local government in Nigeria, what do you think are the likely implications for the delivery of good governance in Kogi State?
- What effects do you think control mechanisms have on autonomy and the delivery of good governance in Kogi State local government councils?

Question: To what extent do the following variables affect the autonomy of Kogi State local government councils?

S.N	Poor financial accountability has weakened the autonomy of my local government	SD	D	N	A	SA
1	Political instability has positive impact on local government autonomy in Kogi State	1	2	3	4	5
2	Patron/godfatherism syndrome in Kogi State local government system has become a cog in the	1	2	3	4	5

	wheel of the delivery of good governance in my local government.					
3	Political instability has negative impact on local government autonomy in Kogi State	1	2	3	4	5
4	Poor financial accountability has not weakened the autonomy of my local government	1	2	3	4	5
5	Patron/godfatherism syndrome in Kogi State local government system is not a cog in the wheel of the delivery of good governance in my local government	1	2	3	4	5
6	The use of Financial Memoranda and circulars from the state and federal government has positively affected the autonomy of local governments in Kogi State	1	2	3	4	5

This section recommends the steps to prevent state government meddling in local government activities in Kogi State.

Respondents are asked to indicate the extent to which they strongly disagree or agree with each statement using the five-point Likert scale response framework. Likert scale indicator: SD = Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, SA =Strongly Agree

■ **Are these suggested measures capable of ameliorating the negative effects of control mechanisms on efficient delivery of good governance and autonomy in Kogi State?**

Questions: How do you agree with the following points aimed at addressing the meddling of the state government on local government affairs in Nigeria in general and Kogi State in particular?

S.N	Steps to prevent state government from meddling in local government activities	SD	D	N	A	SA
1	The authority to determine the structure, composition, finance and functions of the local government should rest in the	1	2	3	4	5

	constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria and not the state government.					
2	Presence of skilled workers with adequate experience in local government is paramount	1	2	3	4	5
3	Empowerment of local government through direct allocation from Federation account to Local authorities and removal of multiple agencies on local government control	1	2	3	4	5
4	Abolition of state and local government joint account to allow autonomy for the local council with in-built mechanism to check financial recklessness by council leaders.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Reduction of corruption in local government system by identifying and punishing those found culpable of corrupt practices to serve as deterrents to others.	1	2	3	4	5

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6	Equip local government officials with better education and training and a sound orientation about value system and democratic cultures	1	2	3	4	5
7	Reduction of poverty and inequality through economic empowerment of the local populace.	1	2	3	4	5

Please indicate any comments you have that can prevent state government from meddling with local government activities in Kogi State :

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…………………………………………………………………………………………

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Please, feel free to contact me on any issue(s) regarding this questionnaire.

Thank you for your participation in answering this questionnaire.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTERVIEW GUIDE

STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF CONTROL MECHANISMS ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTONOMY IN NIGERIA: A CASE STUDY OF KOGI STATE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCILS

CONFIDENTIALITY

Research ethics will be observed at all times in the interview and analysis to which the data may be put. This interview is solely for the academic purpose. The data from the interview will only be available to the concerned staff for my PhD programme at the Universiti Utara Malaysia. All information provided shall be treated with utmost confidentiality with the researcher and the Supervisor. Excerpts from the interview may be included as part of the final thesis as well as journal publications. I undertake to report the result in such a way that

About You

1) What is the name of your local government and your position as well as your role in

this LGA?

2) Your educational background and for how long you have been working in this local government?

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF CONTROL MECHANISMS ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTONOMY IN NIGERIA

1. What are the factors affecting the inability of the local government to Perform its constitutional functions?

   a. How has the financial constraints, corruption, undue political interference, and hijacking of local government administration by elites affect the performance of local government constitutional functions?

   b. How has the Joint account relationship between the state and the local government weakened the performance of local government in Kogi State?

2. What are the control mechanisms put in place by Kogi State Government and what effects do they have on the autonomy of Kogi State Local Government Councils?

   a. What are the control mechanisms put in place by Kogi State Government in the area of joint account of the states and local government, alarm committee for LG audit, Chieftaincy affairs ministry, and the local government service commission?

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b. What are the effects of those control mechanisms on the autonomy of Kogi State Local Government Councils?

3. Why has Kogi State's local government councils been ineffective in providing social services to the people?

a. How would you assess Kogi State performance between 2012-2022 in terms of project execution and the delivery of good governance to the people?

b. Has Kogi State local government been able to perform well in terms of service delivery to the people?

4 What are the mechanisms put in place to check the excesses of state government over local government affairs in Kogi State?

a. What are the possible solutions to the issue of LG autonomy towards service delivery?

b. Are the suggested control measures capable of ameliorating the negative effects of control mechanisms on efficient delivery of good governance and autonomy in Kogi State?

THANK YOU for granting this interview

APPENDIX C

EXTRACTS OF INTERVIEW ACROSS THE LGA's IN KOGI STATE

LGA 1

EXTRACTS OF INTERVIEW FROM AJAOKUTA LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL OF KOGI STATE ON 30TH MAY, 2023.

DETAILS OF THE RESPONDENT

Name of the Local Government – Ajaokuta

Position of the Respondent – Director of Personnel Management (DPM)

Role of the Respondent – Management of all Staff matters in the Local Government.

Educational Background – Master's in Public Administration

Length of Service of the Respondent – 25 years

QUESTION 1: What are the factors affecting the inability of the Local Government to perform its constitutional functions?

RESPONDENT: The main factor is inadequate funds.

    a. This inadequate fund's affects the performance of the Local Government negatively.

b. It deprives the Local Government of adequate funds to deliver social services to the people.

QUESTIONS 2: What are the control mechanisms put in place by Kogi State Government and what effects do they have on the autonomy of Kogi State Local Government Councils?

RESPONDENT: There are:

i. Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy affairs.

ii. Local Government Service Commission

iii. Local Government Pension Board etc.

The above-mentioned agencies affect the Local Government positively.

a. The House of Assembly of Kogi State provides the Control mechanisms framework in the area of joint account of the state and local government alarm committee for local government audit, chieftaincy affairs ministry and the local government service commission.

b. The effects of these control mechanisms have been affecting effective operation of the local government system in Nigeria and Kogi State in particular.

QUESTION 3: Why has Kogi State Local Government Councils been ineffective in providing Social Services to the people?

RESPONDENT: It is mainly because of inadequate funds

a. The performance of Kogi State local government councils between 2012 and 2022 have been satisfactory.

b. It has not been able to perform well in forms of service delivery to the people because of lack of funds.

QUESTION 4: What are the mechanisms put in place to check the excesses of state government over local government affairs in Kogi State.

RESPONDENT: There is no control mechanism put in place to check the excesses of state government over local government affairs in Nigeria.

    a. The possible solutions may include:

        i.   Direct allocation to local government i.e. financial autonomy.

        ii.   Constitutional amendment etc.

    b. The suggested measures are capable of ameliorating the negative effects of control mechanisms on efficient delivery of good governance and autonomy in Kogi State.

LGA 2

EXTRACTS OF INTERVIEW FROM ANKPA LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL OF KOGI STATE ON 26TH MAY, 2023

DETAILS OF THE RESPONDENT:

Name of the local Government- Ankpa

Position of the respondent-Director to the local government (DLG)

Role of the respondent – Head of Administration

Educational Background-B.Sc Public Administration

Length of service of the respondent: 33 years.

QUESTION 1: what are the factors affecting the inability of the Local Government to perform its constitutional functions?

RESPONDENTS: the factors are as follows

    i.   Corruption

    ii.   Inadequate Funds

    iii.   Unskilled manpower amongst others

    a. It affects the local government performance negatively

    b. It deprives the local government of adequate finance to deliver social services to the people.

QUESTION 2: What are the control mechanisms put in place by Kogi State government and what effects do they have on the autonomy of Kogi state local government councils?

RESPONDENT: these are as follows:

    i.   Local government service commission

    ii.   Ministry of local government and chieftaincy affairs

    iii.   Office of Auditor –General for local government amongst others

  -   Their effects are that they deprive local government freedom to operate as provided by the constitution.

    a. The various standing committee of Kogi state house of assembly represents the control mechanisms framework in the area of joint account of the state and local

government audit, chieftaincy affairs ministry, and the local government service commission.

b. The effects of those control mechanisms have been halting effective operation of the local government system in Kogi state.

QUESTION 3: Why has Kogi state local government councils been ineffective in providing social services to the people?

Respondent: Their ineffectiveness are as a result of the following:

i. Inadequate funds

ii. Low morale of personnel as a result of fractional payment of salaries

iii. Poor working conditions etc.

a. The performances of Kogi state local government councils over the last ten years have been unsatisfactory.

b. It has not been able to perform well in terms of service delivery to the people because of the reasons given in question 1 and 2 of this interview.

QUESTION 4: what are the mechanisms put in place to check the excesses of state government over local government affairs in Kogi state.

RESPONDENT: There is virtually no control mechanisms put in place to check the excess of state government over local government affairs.

a. The possible solution are:

i. Constitutional amendment to free local government from the apron strings of the state government

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ii.   Statutory allocation should go directly to the local government

iii.   Joint account of state and local government should be scrapped etc

b. The suggested measures are capable of ameliorating the negative effects of control mechanisms on efficient delivery of good governance and autonomy in kogi state.

LGA 3

EXTRACTS OF INTERVIEW FROM IDAH LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL OF KOGI STATE ON 24TH MAY 2023

DETAILS OF THE RESPONDENT

Name of the Local Government – Idah

Position of the respondent- Admin officer

Role of the respondent – discharging of administrative duties

Educational background – B.Sc political science

Length of service of the respondent – 33 years

QUESTION 1: What are the factors affecting the inability of the local Government to perform its constitutional functions?

RESPONDENT: The following are the factors affecting the inability of my local government to perform its constitutional functions: -

i.   Lack of funds i.e. shortage of revenue

ii.   Corruption i.e. misappropriation of funds

iii.   State government interference into local Government revenue streams

iv.   Governor's interference over the leadership of the local government officials.

v.   Faulty election/selection process of local Government officials.

a. Financial constraints, corruption, undue political interference and hijacking of local government administration by elites are negatively affecting the performance of local government constitutional functions in Idah Local government council.

b. The joint account relationship between the state and the local government has made the state government decides who get what and how over local government allocation that comes from the federation account. This deprives the local government of funds to deliver social services to the people.

QUESTION 2: what are the control mechanisms put in place by Kogi state government and what affect do they have on the autonomy of Kogi state local government councils.

RESPONDENT: The following are the control mechanism put in place by kogi state government over local government council.

i.   Joint account relationship: this negatively affects the disbursement of funds to local government council.

ii.   Ministry of local government and chieftaincy affairs: - it controls the budget of the local government and this put the local government at a disadvantage position in the management of its financial resources.

iii.   Local government service commission: this deals with the recruitment, promotion and discipline of senior staff. This supposed to be an advantage to

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the local government but its encroachment into the management of junior staff is depriving the local government free hand to operate as a tier of government.

iv. Local government audit alarm committee: - it checks the financial transaction of the local government, hence, it put them on their toes in the discharge of their duties.

a. The control mechanism put in place by Kogi state government in the area of Joint account of the state and local government, alarm committee of the local government audit, chieftaincy affairs ministry and the local government service commission is the establishment of various standing committees of Kogi state House of assembly to oversee the affairs of the local government.

b. The effects of those control mechanisms on the autonomy of Kogi state local Government council have been largely negative than positive.

QUESTION 3: Why have Kogi state Local Government Councils been ineffective in providing social services to the people?

Respondent: There are as a result of the following:

i. Inadequate funds.

ii. Percentage payment of salaries to workers

iii. Lack of motivation

iv. Lack of staff training

v. Low morale as a result of inconsistent payment of salaries and allowances.

vi. Poor working condition: - No tools to work in some places no furniture or broken-down furniture's in offices amongst others.

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a. The performance of Kogi state Local Government council between 2012-2022 in terms of project execution and the delivery of good governance to the people is nothing to write home about because the local government has been relegated to the background i.e. total poor performance.

b. Kogi state local government has not been able to perform well in terms of service delivery to the people at the grassroot.

QUESTION 4: What are the mechanisms put in place to check the excesses of state government over local government affairs in Kogi State.

RESPONDENT: there are no concrete mechanisms to check the excesses of state government over local Government affairs in Kogi state because the state government is an autonomous entity in its own right.

a. The possible solutions to the issue of local government autonomy towards service delivery should include the following: -

    i.   Direct statutory allocation should be made to the local government

    ii.   There should be concise constitutional amendment that remove the local government from the apron string of the state government

        Punishment for corrupt official should be enhanced to serve as deterrent to others

b. If all the suggested measures are adhered to it would go a long way in ameliorating the negative effects of control mechanisms on efficient delivery of good governance and autonomy in Kogi state.

LGA 4

EXTRACTS OF INTERVIEW FROM IGALAMELA/ODOLU LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL OF KOGI STATE ON 24-05-2023

DETAILS OF THE RESPONDENT

Name of the local government: Igala mela/Odolu

Position of the respondent: Chief Accountant

Role of the respondent: Performing financial and accounting duties

Educational background: B.Sc. Accounting (Head of Account)

Length of service of the respondent: 25 Years

QUESTION 1: What are the factors affecting the inability of the local government to perform its constitutional functions?

Respondent: Outlined the following as the factors affecting the inability of the local government to perform its constitutional functions:

i.   Corruption: It hampers service delivery

ii.   Hijacking of the local government activities by the state government.

iii.   Inadequate finance deprives local government of the service delivery

iv.   Ineptitude of the political class of the local government prevents the delivery of good governance of the local government level.

v.   Imposition of political office holders on the local government is another serious factor that affects the performance of local government constitutional functions.

a. Financial constraints, corruption, undue political interference and hijacking of local government administration by elites has done more harm than good to the performance of local government constitutional functions.

b. The relationship between the state and the local government in the area of joint account has made the state government a superior partner in the relationship i.e it is only the state government that is signatory to the account. Hence, it allocates the bulk of the revenue that accrues to the account to itself thereby starving the local government of adequate funds which by extension affects service delivery and good governance.

QUESTION 2: What are the control mechanisms put in place by kogi state government and what effects do they have on the autonomy of Kogi State local government councils:

Respondent: Below are the control mechanisms put in place by kogi state government:

i.   Ministry of local government and chieftaincy affairs: It is a state government agency that supervises the activities of the local government most especially in the area of budget approval and control. This by extension limits the performance of the local government.

ii.   Local government service commission: This handles the senior personnel management of the local government in terms of recruitment, promotion, discipline and the like.

iii.   Local government audit alarm committee controls the financial transaction of the local government through affective and efficient auditing of their books of account.

iv.   Joint account relationship: The relationship inversely put the local government at a disadvantage position in the disbursement of statutory allocation.

a. The control mechanisms put in place by Kogi state government in the area of joint account of the state and local government, alarm committee of the local government audit, chieftaincy affairs ministry and the local government service commission falls within the legislative ambit of the state government i.e standing committees of Kogi state house of assembly.

b. The effects of those control mechanisms on the autonomy of Kogi state local government councils have been massively negative.

QUESTION 3: why has Kogi state local government councils been ineffective in providing social services to the people?

RESPONDENT: Kogi state local government councils have been ineffective in providing social services to the people because of the following:

i.   Lacks of funds

ii.   Fractional payment of salaries and allowances

iii.   Low morale of personnel

iv.   Lack of trained personnel

v.   Inadequate qualified staff

vi.   Poor working condition

a. Kogi state local government performance between 2012-2022 in terms of project execution and the delivery of governance to the people have been generally unsatisfactory because of the above-mentioned factors in the course of this interview.

b. Kogi state local government councils have not been able to perform well or effective in terms of service delivery to the people.

QUESTION 4: What are the mechanisms put in place to check the excesses of state government over local government affairs in Kogi state?

Respondent: By the provision of the 1999 constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria. There is no well cut out mechanisms to check the excesses of state government over local government affairs rather it ties the apron string of local government to the state government.

a. The possible solutions to the issue of local government autonomy towards service delivery may include the following:

i.   Removal of the controversial provision in the 1999 constitution that ties the apron string of local government to the state government (i.e. constitutional amendment)

ii.   Joint account of the state and local government should be scrapped to allow direct allocation to the local government.

iii.   Anti-corruption agencies should be empowered to punish corrupt officers.

b. The suggested measures are capable of ameliorating the negative effects of control mechanisms on efficient delivery of good governance and autonomy in kogi state.

LGA 5

EXTRACTS OF INTERVIEW FROM KOTON –KARFE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL OF KOGI STATE ON 30TH MAY, 2023

DETAILS OF THE RESPONDENT

Name of the local government –koton –karfe

Position of the respondent – Information officer

Role of the respondent: dissemination of information

Education background (qualification) –HND mass communication

Length of service of the respondent: 28 years

QUESTION 1: what are the factors affecting the inability of the local government to perform its constitutional functions?

RESPONDENT: Inadequate finance – without adequate finance one can hardly do anything.

a. Financial constraints, corruption, undue political interference and hijacking of local government administration by elites are not helping effective performance of constitutional function of the local government.

b. The joint account relationship between the state and the local government affects the local government negatively ie you don't expect what is supposed to come to you to come to you.

QUESTION 2: what are the control mechanisms put in place by Kogi State government and what effect do they have on the autonomy of Kogi State Local government councils?

RESPONDENT: there are: Joint account committee amongst others

Their effect is sometimes positive on one hand and negative on the other hand

a. The state house of assembly standing and adhoc committee provides a check or exercise control over the various agencies that co-ordinates the activities of the local government in Kogi state.

b. Their effect is sometimes positive and another time negative

QUESTION 3: why have Kogi state local government councils been ineffective in providing social services to the people?

RESPONDENT: There are ineffective because of lack of finance without finance nothing can be done smoothly

a. The performance of local government between 2012/2022 can be rated as 40/100 because of inadequate finance

b. It has not been able to perform well in terms of delivery of social service to the people because of inadequate finance

QUESTION 4: what are the mechanisms put in place to check the excesses of state government over local government affairs in Kogi state?

a. The solution to the problem of local government in Nigeria is direct allocation from the federation account should go directly to the local government.

b. The suggested measures amongst others are capable of ameliorating the negative effect of control mechanism on efficient delivery of good governance and autonomy in Kogi state.

LGA 6

EXTRACTS OF INTERVIEW FROM LOKOJA LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL OF KOGI STATE ON 15TH JUNE, 2023

Details of the Respondents

Name of the local government: Lokoja

Main Respondent: Director Admin and General Services

Respondent II: legal officer

Respondent III: Admin Officer

Role of the Main Respondent: Co-ordination of activities of heads of department in the local government and other personnel matters in the local government

Educational background: B.sc administration and planning

Length of Service of the Respondent: 20 years

Question: what are the factors affecting the inability of the local government to perform its constitutional functions?

Main Respondent: a) Paucity of funds

  b) Constitutional matters (Obstacles)

  c) Lack of financial autonomy

Respondent II: Mentioned joint account allocation committee. That the joint account did not allow the local government to perform its constitutional functions because what is due to the local government does not come to it as at when due. State government dictates what comes to the local government.

Question: - How does the joint account relationship affect the performance of the local government?

Respondent II: The joint account relationship of the state and local government affects the performance of the local government negatively.

Question: - In your opinion what do you think are the possible solution to the issue of local government autonomy in Nigeria

Respondent II: If autonomy of the local government must be in place the president of the country must support the move to lobby the legislature to amend the provision of the constitution that guarantee local government autonomy. The presidency can also toe the political party line to influence the different state governors to support the autonomy of the local government. That different state governors may not allow the local government autonomy to sail through because they are feeding fat from it. President should parley with the state governors to achieved local government autonomy.

Question: What are the control mechanisms put in place by Kogi state government and what effects do have on the autonomy of Kogi state local government council?

Main Respondent: Mentioned local government service commission: That it deals with employment, promotion, and discipline of senior staff of the local government. Another agency that controls local government in Kogi state is the Local government department which was transformed into ministry of local government and chieftaincy affairs.

Question: How does their activities affect the performance of the local government?

Main Respondent: These two agencies control the operations of the local government. Their effects still boil down to the Constitutional clause; the role the local government supposed to perform have been hijacked by the ministry of local government and chieftaincy affairs. Thus, any allocation that comes to the local government are been managed by the ministry without due consultation with the respective local government. That there should be constitutional amendment if not the friction between the state and local government will continue to linger on.

Question: How would you assess Kogi State local government performance between 2012 to 2022 in terms of project execution and the delivery of good governors to the people?

Main Respondent: It is obvious to state that no local government in Nigeria is faring well in terms of project execution and the delivery of good governance to the people. That the degree of their wellbeing varies from state to states. That the sorry state of the local government is almost the same all over Nigeria.

Question: Given this absolute authority of the state over local government affairs, what control mechanisms have been put in place by the federal to checkmate the activities of the state government over their encroachment on local government affairs:

Respondent III: There is check from the federal government through NFIU i.e. Nigeria financial intelligence unit is a branch of Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) that regulates the financial spending of the local government. It was established by order 10 of the presidency in 2021 to monitor funds that accrues to the local government from the federation account. This agency (NFIU) supposed to work to ensure that local governments funds get to them as at when due. But because of the constitutional constraints it has been ineffective since its establishment in 2021. That the constitution is the bane of the problem. That the constitution is the Lacuna.

Question: On the final note what do you think should be done if local is to be effective, functional and discharge its constitutional functions, what do you think is the way forward?

Respondent III: It boils down to constitutional matters. That there should be constitutional amendment that allows local government to access funds from the federation account directly.

Secondly, there should be awareness through the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) to drum support for local government autonomy in Nigeria.

Thirdly, there should be collaboration between the different trade unions to pacify the governors to allow local government autonomy in Nigeria. It is only then; Local government can be effective and efficient in the delivery of good governance to the people.

Closing Remark by the Main Respondent: Remarked that the story of local government ineffectiveness and inefficiency is not peculiar to Kogi State Local Government Councils alone but that it permeates all other local government councils in Nigeria. That the degree of their problem varies from states to states. That if local government must be effective autonomy must be granted to it most fundamentally financial autonomy