

The Impact of Politicization of State Government on Personnel Management of Local Government Staff in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the impact polarization of state government on personnel management of local government staff in Nigeria. State government politicization of local government staff leads to poor administrative characterised by inadequate staffing, lack of training and appointment of unqualified personnel, resulting in inefficient service delivery and compromising of overall quality of local government service delivery for the benefit of political class. The study adopted quantitative survey research design. Using Simple random sampling technique of the probability sampling to select the samples from the various departments. The data was collected using closed-ended Liker scale questionnaire. The data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The finding revealed that state government polarization is responsible for the poor performance of personnel in Nigeria local governments which leads to poor service delivery. In conclusion study revealed that review the constitution and delineate areas of inter-governmental frictions in the administrative management of local governments especially in the areas of employment, selection, and posting of personnel.

Key Words: State government, Polarization, Local Governments, Local government staff personnel management

INTRODUCTION

Political interference occurs when political leader(s) interfere with decision making in public administrative matters such as planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting as well as allocation and use of public funds. Consequently Dixit, and Shen, (2019) reported that in the supply of roads, schools, hospitals in the developing countries, politics plays a role. Among various leadership challenges facing low developing democratic countries especially African countries is the political interference in administrations (Ugwu, 2022).

In many African countries, the public becomes a platform and the politicians want to maintain their faction and try to extend their domain in every other section of the public administration. Thus because of the political activities in the administration and the undue influence of the politicians the public and administration institution gets politicized (Blair, et al 2020). According to Bevir et al (2021) politicization of the public administration institution involves the appropriation of administrative structures and resources and the displacement of administrative goals by organized political and community interests.

The local government's major problem is political interference on personnel management, leading to the politicization of appointments and general human resource management at the local government level. Nigeria's local government has become a politically polarized organization where employees are very likely to a large extent owe their employment to political interference rather than competence (Asaju, 2021). Although local government has a direct relationship with Local Government Service Commissions (LGSCs), the state government constitutes the commission to conduct recruitment, appointment, promotions, and posting of local government staff with all the negative consequences in the process; that is why politically connected people are likely the ones securing employment with the local governments. They do this in connivance with recruitment officers of LGSC. This scenario obtains because LGSC officials are appointed by the governor,

who expect them to be loyal to him (takes dictates from him (the governor) and act accordingly) and his party, thereby denying qualified members of employment into the local government system. Administratively, the state determines, discipline, recruit, and promote, etc. the local government staff and thereby denying administrative autonomy over personnel management (Habibu, 2019). Furthermore, most chairman, caretaker committee members, and sole administrators recruit and place their relatives, friends, and political sympathizers or party members without due regard to rules and regulation or in keeping with manpower requirements.

Objective

To examine the impact of state government politicization on personnel management on local government staff

Hypothesis

There are significance impact of state government politicization on personnel management local government staff in Nigeria

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Local Government

In Nigeria and other federal systems that operate three levels of government, the Local Government is sometimes referred to as the last and third tiers of government. In order to exercise and carry out its constitutionally mandated responsibilities and duties, it is an independent level of government established by the constitution that collaborates with higher levels of government, particularly the state. Popular among the definition of Local Government is the submission of Alo (2021) that Local Government is the lower level of government in modern state that is legally distinct and has powers to raise revenue and undertake constitutionally assigned responsibilities under a leadership that is elected and answerable to the local population.

The accurate definition or meaning of concepts has varied across many scholars particularly in social sciences. Because of this context, it attracted the attention of numerous well-known and widely respected researchers who have studied and characterized it. Ola (2018) in his contribution defined local government as a political sub-division of a nation, which is constituted by law and has substantial control of local affairs including the powers to impose taxes or to exact labor for prescribed purpose. According to Maggio (2019), local government is rather a resident population occupying a defined area that has a locally authorized and governing body; a separate legal entity, the power to provide certain public or governmental services, and a substantial degree of autonomy adding legal or actual power to raise part of its revenue. The Guidelines for Local Government reform (1976), defined local government as government at the local level established by law to exercise specific powers within defined areas (and) to initiate and direct the provision of services and to determine and implement project so as to complement the activities of the state and federal government in their areas, and to ensure that local initiative and response to local needs and conditions are maximized. In this case therefore, much emphasis is placed on peculiarity of the tier, and the capacity based on knowledge of the area to initiate and execute services that are much needed by the people in that locality.

The United Nation (UN) defines local government as a political subdivision of a nation in a federal system that exist within a state, which is constituted by law to have a substantial control of local affairs, including the power of impose taxes, or exact labour for prescribed purposes. The governing body of such an entity is elected or otherwise locally selected. According to Agagu (2020), the concept of local government represents a grassroots level of administration meant for meeting peculiar needs of the people at the local level. It is the lowest unit of administration with laws and regulations the communities to which a group of people who live with common social and politicalities, are subject.

There is no consensus on the definition of the term local government. Each definition derives its substance from the nature of subdivision of administrative units in a country, the type of political institutions and

authority system put in place, or of course, the nature of legal instrument, how it applies to units of authority and the layers of governance process in the State. Essentially, Izueke (2019) argues that local government is a system of local administration under local communities that are organized to maintain law and order, provide some limited range of social services and encourage cooperation and participation of the inhabitants towards the improvement of their conditions of living.

Buttressing the foregoing definition, Abada (2022) posits that local government is the tier of government closest to the people and it has constitutional powers to exercise control over the affairs of people in its area of jurisdiction. The powers exercised by local government gained first and foremost recognition from the Guidelines for Implementation of 1976 Local Government Reform (Erero, 2021).

In essence, local government provides the community with a formal organizational framework, which enables them to conduct their affairs effectively for the general good. What it portends, according to Abubakar (2019) is that local government is governmental administrative units' closest to the people, or in general parlance, the grassroots. The additional implication is that power devolves from the national and state governments to the localities in order to accommodate the interests of the local setting in governance and development. Alo (2021) alludes to the foregoing assertion and notes that, States or nations that aspire for development have to ensure decentralization of functions and power to lower levels to accommodate grassroots needs and interests.

Local government is an institution or subdivision of a state, with independent, power, ruling over localities and administration of public of such localities (Kazeem, 2013). In addition, the constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria refers to local government as the third tier of government in the Nigerian political system which conceives rule-governed process through which residents of a defined area participate in governance in locally important matters in the area of service delivery such as provision of education, health, employment generation, security and infrastructural development to members of the communities.

State Government and Politicization on Personnel management local government's staff

Political interference in the personnel management of local government has been on the rise leading to a high rate of corruption and adverse performance. According to Salawu (2019), political interference constituted one of the major problems and is responsible for the poor performance of personnel in Nigeria local governments. This interference gives room to administrative corruption and other irregularities characterizing local governments in Nigeria. This situation has given concern to successive governments particularly in Nigeria on ways of reducing this dilemma to enhance effective personnel management of local governments. According to Bevir (2021) politicization of the personnel management of local government involves the appropriation of administrative structures and the displacement of administrative goals by organized political interests. Boschken (2018), noted that when the administrative institution is politicized, chances for corruption increase and the appointments to key posts are made not based on merit but extraneous considerations.

This interference in the running of local government affairs influences against the effective performance of personnel function. According to Eme (2020), one such problem is the politicization of recruitment, selection, and placement. Charlton (2021) opined that politicization is a process by which politicians control bureaucracy by means of manipulating recruitment, education, training, and promotions to imbue bureaucracies with overt explicit commitments to the political goals of the government. This problem has been noted by Ola(2022), for instance, since the inception of the democratic local government system in the former eastern region of Nigeria in 1950, early recruitment into the local government service were mainly “sons of the soil”, party stalwarts, or relations of counselors. Based on the above literature review hypothesis is developed; the hypothesis that postulates that there are significance effects of politicization of state government on personnel management local government staff, is accepted

Theoretical Framework

The politics of local government autonomy, deriving from its diverse nature, is better illustrated with pluralism theory, although in some respects, the explanation could draw some significant meaning from the perspective of elite theory of politics. Generally, elitism assumes that a community's affairs are best handled by a small

subset of its members and in modern societies; such an arrangement is in fact inevitable (Hoque, 2020). Admittedly, elites play leadership roles in a society and decide what happens in the economy and the polity. It is for similar reason that the elite class is basically more pronounced in the agitation and surreptitious politics surrounding the quests for local government creation and consequently, strategically position themselves to control the local government leadership for their pecuniary interests. They front this agenda and make significant impact based on the fact that:

- i. their power is concentrated;
- ii. the elites are unified;
- iii. the non-elites are diverse and powerless;
- iv. elites' interests are unified due to common backgrounds; and
- v. Positions and the defining characteristic of power is institutional position.

Although many interferences in local government administration and leadership are driven by elites, there are irrefutable evidences that show a contrary perspective on the issue of politics of local government autonomy in contemporary Nigeria which comes from diverse sources, comprising elites and the general public. The diversity of actors situates and rationalizes pluralism theory for the discourse. Pluralism theory depicts the system as functioning based on clusters of competing forces that emanate from combination of elites and non-elites alike. It proposes more than one system of power, a tradition that emphasizes how multiple major social groups and interests have influence upon and various forms of representation within more powerful sets of rulers, contributing to decently representative political outcomes that reflect the collective needs of a society (Elliott, 2017).

METHODOLOGY

Research design

Research design is the detailed blue print on the required data, the methods to be applied to collect, analyse, interpret and report the data in the research studies to answer the research question (Grey, 2014). The research design employed in this study was a quantitative survey research design. Creswell (2014) described survey research design as a design of data collection using questionnaire to collect data from a sample that has been selected to represent a population to which the findings of the data analysis can be generalized.

Population of the study

The population for this study consists of 360 staff of local governments According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970) the sample size of total population of 360 is 189 using 95% confidence. The Population Consist of Internal Audit Department, Corporate Responsibility and Service Department, Human Resource Management department, Accounting and Finance Department, Executives cadre

The paper used Taro Yamane (1960) formula to determine the sample from the population. The formula is given as.

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where; n = sample size

N = Total population of the study

e = 0.05 level of significance

Therefore

$$n = \frac{360}{1+360(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{360}{1+360 (0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{360}{1+0.9}$$

$$n = 189$$

Sampling Technique

Simple random sampling technique of the probability sampling technique was used to select the samples from the various departments. The choice of this technique is basically to avoid bias and it gives every element/member of the population equal and independent chance of being selected, these is to make it more representatives and allow the study to make generalization of the findings on the entire sample size.

Method of Data Collection

The primary sources of data used for the study was through the administration of questionnaire. The questionnaire was adopted using closed-ended Liker scale of strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree, to recognize the degree of intensity in the respondents ‘feelings and perceptions. The paper used normal Liker scale range of 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 for computing the data.

Methods of Data Analysis

The data collected was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 21. The research questions were answered using frequency and percentage while, the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using simple regression analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 4.1: Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	100	56.4	56.4	56.4
	Female	77	43.5	43.5	100.0
	Total	177	100.0	100.0	

Source; Field survey (2024)

Table 4.1 Indicated that 100(56.4%) of the respondents are male while 77(43.5%) of the respondents are female. This means that the study has gathered the opinions of the two gender groups with male gender as the dominant respondents.

Table 4.2: Marital Status

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Single	60	33.8	33.8	33.8

Married	90	50.8	50.8	50.8
Divorce	7	3.9	15.4	15.4
Widowed	20	11.2	11.2	100.0
Total	177	100.0	100.0	

Source; Field survey (2024)

Table 4.2 Indicated that 60(33.8%) of the respondents were single, 90(50.8%) of the respondents were married, 7(3.9%) of the respondents were divorce and 20(11.2%) of the respondents were widowed. This means that the study has gathered the opinions of various marital groups with married personnel as the dominant respondents.

Table 4.3: Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18 – 25	40	22.5	22.5	22.5
	26 – 30	47	26.5	26.5	26.5
	Above 36	90	50.8	50.8	100.0
	Total	177	100.0	100.0	

Source; Field survey (2024)

Table 4.3 indicated that 40(22.5%) of the respondents were within the age of 18 – 25years, 47(26.5%) of the respondents were within the age of 26 – 30years and 90(50.8%) of the respondents were above 36years. This result shows that pension staff within the ages of 36 years and above participated more than any other age group in the study.

Table 4.4: Level of Education

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Masters	20	11.2	11.2	11.2
Degree	60	33.8	33.8	74.1
Diploma	90	50.8	50.8	50.8
Certificate	7	3.9	3.9	100.0
Total	177	100.0	100.0	

Source; Field survey (2024)

Table 4.4 indicated that 20(11.2%) of the respondents were having Masters, 60(33.8%) of the respondents were having Degree, 90(50.8%) of the respondents were having Diploma and 7(3.9%) of the respondents were having certificate. This result shows that the pension scheme staff are dominated by Diploma holder personnel's.

Result

Responses for the impact of state government politicization on personnel management of local government staff

Table 4.5: Level of Education

	Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	75	42.38	42.38	42.38
	Agree	53	29.94	29.94	72.32
	Undecided	27	15.25	15.25	87.57
	Disagree	12	6.78	6.78	94.35
	Strongly disagree	10	5.65	5.65	100
		177	100	100	

Source; Field survey (2024)

Result of the responses from the field on the statement that, what is the impact of state government politicization on personnel management local government staff is presented in table 4.5. The responses indicated that, the majority of the respondents 75 (42.38%) respondents strongly agreed with a view that Politicization is Necessarily Related to Corruption and incompetence of staff from state government that take charge of affairs is one of the most impact of politicization of state government on personnel management local governments staff, 53 (29.94%) respondents agreed with a view Politicization influence managers' recruitment in the office. The minority of the respondents 12 (6.78%) disagreed with a view that It can be attributed to the increasing demands on executive government, heightened partisanship and polarization, 10 (5.65%) respondents strongly disagreed. 27 (15.25%) of the respondents are undecided. Therefore, finding from majority of the respondents 125 (72.32%) respondents agreed that, the impact of politicization of state government on personnel management local government staff.

Test of Hypothesis

Regression Model Summary impact of politicization of state government on personnel management local government staff

Table 4.6:

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.186 ^a	.035	.029	.36867	.035	6.278	1	175	.013	1.642
a. Predictors: (Constant), personnel management local government staff										
b. Dependent Variable: politicization of state government										

Table 4.7: ANOVA impact of politicization of state government on personnel management local government staff

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.853	1	.853	6.278	.013 ^b
	Residual	23.786	175	.136		
	Total	24.639	176			
a. Dependent Variable: politicization of state government						
b. Predictors: (Constant), personnel management local government staff						

Table 4.8: Regression Coefficients between impacts of politicization of state government on personnel management local government staff

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	2.848	.223		12.780	.000	2.408	3.288		
	politicization of state government	.154	.062	.186	2.506	.013	.033	.276	1.000	1.000
a. Dependent Variable: politicization of state government										

Tables 4.6, 4.7 and 4.8 presented simple regression analysis with personnel management local government staff as independent and politicization of state government as dependent variable. The result revealed that a significant regression model was found $F(1, 175) = 6.278, P < 0.05$. Since the P-value of 0.013 is less than 0.05 level of significance. This indicated that the effects of politicization of state government on personnel management of local government staff has significant effects on local government. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significance impact of politicization of state government on personnel management local government staff is rejected. This implies that politicization of state government on personnel management local government staff has significant impacts on local government. This further proved that, impact politicization of state government will bring about setback to local governments.

Table 4.8 revealed that the Beta value for politicization of state government on personnel management local government staff has significant impact on local government in such a way that, politicization of state government on personnel management local government staff accounts for 0.154. Every increase of one unit of personnel management local government staff will accounted for 19% increase in the case of local governments.

Discussion

The results from hypothesis one in table 4.6, 4.7 and 4.8 indicated that the impact of politicization of state

government on personnel management local government staff. This finding corresponds to that Orewa (2020), political interference constituted one of the major problems and is responsible for the poor performance of personnel in Nigeria. This interference gives room to administrative corruption and other irregularities characterizing local governments in Nigeria. This situation has given concern to successive governments particularly in Nigeria on ways of reducing this dilemma to enhance effective personnel management of local governments. According to Duch *et al.* (2020) politicization of the personnel management of local government involves the appropriation of administrative structures and the displacement of administrative goals by organized political interests. Blair (2021, cited in Allan *et al.*, 2022) noted that when the administrative institution is politicized, chances for corruption increase and the appointments to key posts are made not based on merit but extraneous considerations.

Connolly (2019) opined that politicization is a process by which politicians control bureaucracy by means of manipulating recruitment, education, training, and promotions to imbue bureaucracies with overt explicit commitments to the political goals of the government. This problem has been noted by Ola (2018), for instance, since the inception of the democratic local government system in the former eastern region of Nigeria in 1950, early recruitment into the local government service were mainly “sons of the soil”, party stalwarts, or relations of counsellors. The finding also correspond with agitation of elite theory in which believe that elites play leadership roles in a society and decide what happens in the economy and the polity. It is for similar reason that the elite class is basically more pronounced in the agitation and surreptitious politics surrounding the quests for local government creation and consequently, strategically position themselves to control the local government leadership for their pecuniary interests.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, literature and experience have made it clear that political interference is undermining local government administrative autonomy over personnel management. The degree of external influence and intrusion in the local government personnel management by politicians and the higher levels of government is worrisome and needs to be addressed. One finds a situation where intellectually weak personnel with no exposure are employed through party affiliation to occupy sensitive positions in the local government. One cannot give what he/she does not have. The result has always been a failure in performance and an increase in the suffering of those who are meant to benefit from their services. The performance of politically induced appointments always leads to poor productivity, inefficiency, and ineffectiveness to the local government.

Therefore, the local government personnel management should be allowed a free hand to carry out its constitutional assigned function of recruitment, appointment, promotions, and posting of its staff. Constant interference in the issue of recruitment, appointment, promotions, and posting by political office holders and other top government functionaries should be minimized or completely stopped to ensure formidable recruitment, appointment, promotions, and posting that will lead to good governance in local governments and also ensures effective formulation and execution of government policies geared towards the betterment of the living condition of the populace.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Sequel to the findings of this study and the conclusion drawn above, the following recommendations were offered:

Review the constitution and delineate areas of inter-governmental frictions in the administrative management of local government especially in the areas of employment, selection, and posting of personnel.

Give local government its full administrative autonomy.

Strengthen the process of recruitment, selection, and posting by way of giving the function an enabling environment for enhanced competence and this can provide the needed buffer to guide against unnecessary interference from politicians and higher government officials.

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