

Local Government Caretaker Committees and Service Delivery in Anambra State: A Study of Aguata Local Government Council 2018-2024

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Abstract

The impact of Local Government Caretaker Committees on service delivery in Aguata Local Government Council was investigated in this study, employing a mixed-methods research design that integrates both qualitative and quantitative approaches. By combining numerical data with in-depth stakeholder insights, the research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how these committees influence public service quality and accessibility. The qualitative component involves semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with key stakeholders, including local officials and community members, to explore their views and experiences. On the other hand, the quantitative part employed structured surveys to measure specific outcomes associated with service delivery, such as healthcare access and other related variables. With 384 samples size drawn from the study population with the aid of Cochran's formula, the stratified random sampling method was utilized in the data collection phase to ensure representation across diverse demographic groups. Utilizing the principal-agent theory as its framework for interpretation and analysis, the study employs various analytical techniques, including descriptive statistics and inferential analysis, to evaluate the data obtained from the field. The findings indicate a general perception of improvement in service delivery, but also reveal skepticism among a notable portion of the population, highlighting the need for further work to realize the committee's potential and emphasizing the importance of strict financial management to enhance accountability in infrastructure projects.

Keywords: Local Government Caretaker Committees, Service Delivery, Quality of Service, Access to Service, Perceptions of Effectiveness

Introduction

Aguata Local Government Council, located in Anambra State, Nigeria, has a rich historical and cultural heritage that reflects the dynamics of the region. Predominantly inhabited by the Igbo people, Aguata has deep-rooted traditions and strong community ties that date back to pre-colonial times (Nwafor-Ejelinma, 2024). Before colonial rule, the area was organized into various autonomous communities, each governed by traditional rulers and councils of elders, engaging in agricultural activities and trade that defined their identity (Nwabueze, 2018). During the colonial period, British administrators introduced new governance structures that disrupted traditional leadership. The imposition of indirect rule affected local authority, causing tensions between colonial administrators and indigenous leaders. This disruption laid the groundwork for future governance challenges in Aguata, influencing its political landscape (Ogunna, 2019). Following Nigeria's independence in 1960, the need for effective local governance became increasingly apparent. The 1976 Local Government Reform was therefore, aimed to establish structured local government systems across the country. Consequently, Aguata was officially recognized as a local government area in that reform, and its administrative structure was formalized to better address the needs of its constituents (Umeokafor, 2021). In other words, the local government was officially established in 1976, enabling it to enhance grassroots development and improve service delivery in the region (Akinyemi, 2020). The administration of local governments plays a crucial role in the governance framework of Nigeria, significantly impacting service delivery at the grassroots level. In Anambra State, the establishment of Local Government

Caretaker Committees (LGCCs) has garnered attention as a mechanism for promoting efficient governance and improving public services. These committees were instituted in response to various challenges faced by elected local government councils, including political instability, corruption, and inefficiency.

This study focuses on the Aguata Local Government Council, examining the impact of LGCCs in enhancing service delivery from 2018 to 2024. Local government in Nigeria is constitutionally recognized as the third tier of government, essential for promoting grassroots development and ensuring the welfare of citizens (Akinyemi, 2020). The 1999 Constitution of Nigeria provides a framework for local governance, emphasizing the need for local councils to serve as agents of development and service delivery (Nwabueze, 2018). However, the effectiveness of local governments has often been hampered by various challenges, including inadequate funding, poor leadership, and a lack of accountability (Ogunna, 2019). These issues have led to public disillusionment with local governance, prompting calls for reforms and alternative governance structures.

In recent years, LGCCs have emerged as temporary solutions to the governance crises in local governments across Nigeria. Appointed by state governors, these committees are meant to oversee local administration and ensure that essential services such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure are effectively delivered to the populace (Umeokafor, 2021). The appointment of caretaker committees has sparked debates regarding their legitimacy, effectiveness, and impact on local governance. Critics argue that LGCCs lack the democratic legitimacy of elected councils, which may affect their ability to mobilize support and effectively implement policies (Okeke, 2022). This skepticism

raises questions about the extent to which LGCCs can fulfill their mandates and improve service delivery. The Aguata Local Government Council, located in Anambra State, serves as an interesting case for examining the role of LGCCs in service delivery. This area has a rich history and diverse socio-economic dynamics, making it a significant site for studying the implications of caretaker governance. Aguata is known for its agricultural productivity and vibrant community life, but it also faces challenges such as inadequate infrastructure and limited access to basic services. Understanding how LGCCs operate within this context can provide valuable insights into the broader challenges and opportunities faced by local governments in Nigeria.

The appointment of caretaker committees was initially intended to stabilize local governance and restore public trust. However, the effectiveness of these committees in delivering services has been mixed. While some LGCCs have made notable strides in improving local infrastructure and public services, others have been criticized for corruption, inefficiency, and lack of transparency (Umeokafor, 2021). The varying degrees of success among LGCCs raise important questions about the factors that contribute to their effectiveness. Are there specific strategies or practices that enable some LGCCs to succeed where others fail? In addition to these operational challenges, the socio-political context in which LGCCs operate cannot be overlooked. The relationship between state governments and local councils is often fraught with tension, particularly regarding resource allocation and political patronage (Akinyemi, 2020). State governors wield significant power over local governments, and this dynamic can influence the functioning of LGCCs. For instance, the extent to which LGCCs are able to mobilize resources and implement projects may depend heavily on

their alignment with state government priorities.

To analyze the effectiveness of LGCCs in Aguata, this study employed Principal-Agent Theory, which explores the relationship between governing bodies (principals) and those who administer public services (agents). According to this theory, the performance of agents (LGCCs) is contingent upon the clarity of their mandates, the incentives for delivering services, and the mechanisms for accountability (Eisenhardt, 1989). This framework guided the examination of how LGCCs have navigated their roles and responsibilities in Aguata, focusing on their strategies for service delivery and the challenges they face. The impact of LGCCs on service delivery in Aguata can be accessed through various indicators, including the quality and accessibility of essential services such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure. For example, improvements in healthcare facilities, the availability of educational resources, and the state of local roads can serve as measurable outcomes of LGCC effectiveness. Additionally, the perception of residents regarding the performance of LGCCs was an important factor in understanding their impact. Public satisfaction with service delivery can provide insights into the legitimacy and acceptance of LGCCs within the community (Okeke, 2022).

Moreover, analyzing the challenges faced by LGCCs in Aguata offered a comprehensive view of the obstacles that hinder effective governance. These challenges may include inadequate funding, lack of skilled personnel, political interference, and insufficient community engagement. Identifying these barriers is crucial for developing strategies to enhance the performance of LGCCs and improve service delivery outcomes (Nwabueze, 2018). The examination of LGCCs in Aguata also contributes to the broader discourse on local governance in Nigeria.

As the country grapples with issues of governance, accountability, and public service delivery, understanding the role of LGCCs can inform policy discussions and reforms aimed at strengthening local governance structures. The findings of this study may provide valuable lessons for policymakers seeking to enhance the effectiveness of local governments, especially in contexts where traditional elected councils face challenges.

In summary, the administration of Local Government Caretaker Committees in Anambra State, particularly in Aguata Local Government Council, presents an important area of study in understanding local governance and service delivery in Anambra State. This research explored the effectiveness of these committees, the challenges they face, and the perceptions of the local populace regarding their performance. By situating the study within a robust theoretical framework and focusing on contemporary issues, this research aims to provide meaningful insights that contribute to the ongoing discourse on local governance in Nigeria.

Local Government caretaker committee and Service delivery in Nigeria: Empirical Review

Local Government Caretaker Committees (LGCCs) have become increasingly significant in the governance landscape of Nigeria, especially during periods of political instability when elected officials are unable to fulfill their duties. These committees are designed to ensure the continuity of essential services at the local level, making their effectiveness in service delivery a vital area of research. This review synthesizes existing literature on LGCCs, focusing on their aims, methodologies, and findings to provide an in-depth understanding of their impact on service delivery. Research on LGCCs

primarily aims to assess their effectiveness in delivering critical services such as health, education, and infrastructure while identifying the challenges they face in fulfilling these responsibilities. These challenges include political interference, inadequate funding, lack of community engagement, and the need for capacity building among committee members.

Numerous empirical studies have employed diverse methodologies to explore the effectiveness of LGCCs. For instance, Okwu (2020) conducted a quantitative survey in Enugu State, targeting 300 residents to assess health service delivery under LGCCs. The methodology utilized structured questionnaires that measured residents' perceptions of healthcare accessibility and quality before and after the establishment of caretaker committees. The findings revealed that 65% of respondents reported improved access to healthcare services since the inception of LGCCs. However, the study also highlighted persistent issues such as inadequate funding and limited resources, which hampered the sustainability of these improvements. This outcome aligns with the findings of Ezeani and Ezeji (2021), who employed semi-structured interviews with 20 local officials in Anambra State.

Ezeani and Ezeji (2021) focused on educational service delivery in Anambra State, employing semi-structured interviews with 20 local officials. Their research aimed to gather qualitative insights into the operational effectiveness of LGCCs in enhancing educational infrastructure. The findings indicated that LGCCs had positively impacted educational services, leading to increased enrollment rates. Specifically, 70% of respondents acknowledged improvements in school facilities, yet only 40% believed these changes could be sustained without consistent funding and community support. As community engagement emerged as a critical factor influencing the effectiveness of LGCCs, researchers also delved into

dynamics therein. For instance, Nwankwo et al. (2019) conducted a mixed-methods study that combined quantitative surveys and qualitative focus group discussions to explore the relationship between community participation and service delivery effectiveness. Their findings showed that areas with active community engagement experienced higher satisfaction levels regarding service delivery. In their study, 75% of respondents in engaged communities reported feeling involved in decision-making processes, compared to only 30% in less engaged areas. This highlights the necessity of fostering inclusive governance practices to enhance the effectiveness of LGCCs.

Despite the potential benefits of LGCCs, numerous studies have identified significant challenges that hinder their effectiveness. Political instability is often cited as a primary barrier. Ibeanu (2021) noted that frequent changes in leadership disrupt ongoing projects and initiatives, leading to a lack of continuity in service delivery. This sentiment was echoed across multiple studies, with 60% of respondents expressing concerns about the transparency and accountability of LGCC operations. Such political instability can result in a fragmented approach to governance, where new committees may not prioritize or even be aware of the ongoing projects initiated by their predecessors. In addition to political challenges, inadequate funding is a persistent issue for many LGCCs in Nigeria. For instance, research conducted by Nwankwo et al. (2019) found that financial constraints significantly limit the ability of LGCCs to implement comprehensive service delivery programs. The study argued that many LGCCs operate on tight budgets, which restrict their capacity to address pressing community needs effectively. This financial strain is compounded by bureaucratic inefficiencies and corruption, as highlighted by Ezeani and Ezeji (2021) that employed semi-structured interviews with 20 local officials

in Anambra State. They argue that political interference often diverts funds intended for local development, resulting in subpar service delivery outcomes.

The need for community engagement cannot be overstated. A study conducted by Gemade et al. (2019) emphasized that active participation from community members enhances the relevance and effectiveness of local governance. The study contends that when communities are involved in decision-making processes, LGCCs are better positioned to identify and address the most pressing needs of the populace. However, the literature indicates a persistent gap in community engagement, often due to a lack of awareness about governance processes. Obi (2022) highlights that many community members remain uninformed about the roles and responsibilities of LGCCs, which limits their ability to participate actively.

In another study conducted by Obi (2022) the importance of inclusive governance, suggesting that LGCCs must prioritize community input to foster trust and accountability was further emphasized. The study proposes that community forums and stakeholder meetings can serve as platforms for dialogue between LGCCs and the public. Such initiatives not only empower community members but also provide LGCCs with valuable insights into local needs and priorities. The findings of the study indicates that this two-way communication is critical for ensuring that services delivered are aligned with community expectations. Capacity building is another crucial area for improving the effectiveness of LGCCs. Adeoye (2018) asserts that training programs for committee members can enhance their governance skills and improve service delivery outcomes. Well-trained officials are better equipped to navigate the complexities of local governance, including resource allocation and stakeholder engagement. This sentiment is echoed by Ibeanu (2021), who notes that well-trained

local government officials are better positioned to address the challenges inherent in governance and resource management.

Empirical studies have highlighted the need for tailored capacity-building initiatives. For example, Adeoye (2018) found that LGCC members often lack training in essential governance skills, which negatively impacts their ability to manage resources effectively. The study suggested that targeted training programs could significantly enhance the performance of LGCCs and improve service delivery outcomes. Moreover, Ibeanu (2021) emphasized that training should not only focus on technical skills but also on fostering leadership qualities and effective communication strategies among LGCC members. The relationship between LGCCs and community satisfaction is an area of ongoing research. Nwankwo et al. (2019) conducted a survey in multiple Local Government Areas and found that community perceptions of LGCC effectiveness varied widely. While some residents appreciated the initiatives undertaken by LGCCs, others expressed frustration over the lack of transparency and accountability in governance processes. This disparity underscores the need for LGCCs to prioritize community engagement and foster trust among constituents.

Okwu (2020) also examined the impact of LGCCs on health service delivery, specifically focusing on community health programs. The study found that LGCCs had implemented various health initiatives, including immunization campaigns and maternal health programs. However, the sustainability of these programs was often jeopardized by funding limitations and inadequate training for health workers. This highlights the importance of not only initiating programs but also ensuring that they are adequately supported and staffed to achieve desired outcomes. Moreover, the issue of gender representation within

LGCCs has been explored in the literature. Women are often underrepresented in local governance structures, which can limit the effectiveness of LGCCs in addressing gender-specific needs in service delivery. Research indicates that when women are included in decision-making processes, services are more likely to be responsive to the needs of the entire community (Ezeani & Ezeji, 2021). This calls for policies that promote gender equity in local governance, ensuring that LGCCs reflect the diversity of the communities they serve.

In summary, the empirical literature on Local Government Caretaker Committees illustrates a complex landscape of challenges and opportunities in service delivery. While LGCCs have demonstrated potential in improving access to health and education services, their effectiveness is often undermined by inadequate funding, political instability, and insufficient community engagement. The studies reviewed highlight the necessity of capacity building and inclusive governance practices to enhance the performance of LGCCs. Future research should continue to explore these dynamics, providing insights that can inform policy and practice in local governance. Overall, this review underscores the importance of understanding the multifaceted roles of LGCCs in local governance. As Nigeria continues to grapple with political challenges and the need for effective service delivery, LGCCs will remain a focal point for research and policy intervention. By addressing the identified challenges and leveraging the opportunities for improvement, LGCCs can better serve their communities and fulfill their mandate of ensuring continuity in governance and service delivery.

Gaps in Literature

It is understandable that while empirical quantitative and qualitative studies reviewed provides valuable data on service

delivery outcomes in the context of caretaker committees on a general note, there is a notable absence of research that captures community satisfaction and perceptions of effectiveness. Understanding residents' experiences and views is essential for a holistic evaluation of LGCC performance. Although some studies mention challenges faced by LGCCs, there is a lack of in-depth analysis regarding specific obstacles to service delivery. Identifying these challenges is crucial for developing strategies to enhance LGCC effectiveness. Existing literature highlights financial limitations but often fails to connect these constraints to the quality and accessibility of services from the residents' perspectives. A comprehensive understanding of how financial challenges affect service delivery is necessary for effective policy formulation. Much of the literature focuses on broad trends without considering localized contexts. Research on LGCCs should include specific case studies, such as Aguata, to understand how local dynamics influence service delivery and public perception.

Considering these gaps, the research objectives to assess the impact of LGCCs on quality and accessibility of public services, identify challenges faced by LGCCs, and explore residents' perceptions are not only justified but necessary. Additionally, addressing these objectives will contribute to a richer understanding of LGCCs in Aguata, providing insights that can inform policy decisions and improve local governance practices.

Theoretical Framework

The study employed the Michael C. Jensen and William H. Meckling's Principal-Agent theory (PAT) in the analysis of the variables under examination. The theory which was published in 1976 provides a framework for understanding the relationship between two parties: the principal, who delegates authority, and the agent, who acts on behalf of the principal. The core premise of PAT is that the principal must rely on the agent to act in their best interest, which can lead to potential conflicts of interest and inefficiencies (Jensen & Meckling, 1976). A fundamental concept in PAT is information asymmetry, where one party (the agent) possesses more or better information than the other party (the principal). This imbalance can result in adverse selection, meaning the principal may have difficulty assessing the agent's capabilities or intentions before delegating authority.

Another significant aspect of PAT is moral hazard, which occurs when the agent engages in riskier behavior or makes decisions that do not align with the principal's interests, especially after the authority has been delegated. Since the agent may not bear the full consequences of their actions, they might prioritize personal gain over the principal's objectives. For instance, a manager (agent) may take excessive risks with company resources, knowing that any potential losses would largely affect the shareholders (principals) rather than themselves. This misalignment of interests necessitates mechanisms that align the agent's behavior with the principal's goals (Shavell, 1979).

To mitigate problems arising from information asymmetry and moral hazard, principals often establish incentives and contracts that align the interests of agents with those of principals. These contracts may include performance-based bonuses, stock options, or other financial incentives designed to encourage agents to act in the

best interest of the principal. A well-structured contract can significantly reduce agency costs, which are the costs incurred by the principal to monitor and ensure that the agent acts according to the principal's wishes (Holmström, 1979).

In the realm of public administration, elected officials (principals) delegate authority to bureaucrats (agents) to implement policies and deliver services. Ensuring that bureaucrats act in the public interest is crucial for maintaining trust and accountability in government. For instance, governments may establish performance evaluations and oversight committees to monitor bureaucratic behavior and ensure that public officials adhere to ethical standards (Moe, 1984).

Assessing the impact of local government caretaker committees on service delivery in Aguata Local Government Council, Anambra State (2018-2024) through the lens of Principal-Agent Theory (PAT) provides important insights into governance dynamics. The principal-agent relationship in this context involves the state government (the principal) delegating authority to caretaker committees (the agents) to deliver services to local communities. This delegation raises several key challenges that can affect service delivery. Information Asymmetry is a critical issue. Caretaker committees often possess more information about local needs and conditions than the state government. This imbalance can lead to poor decision-making if committees do not accurately report the community's needs or if the state government fails to gather adequate information. For example, if a caretaker committee neglects to inform the state about urgent infrastructure needs, resources may be misallocated, resulting in

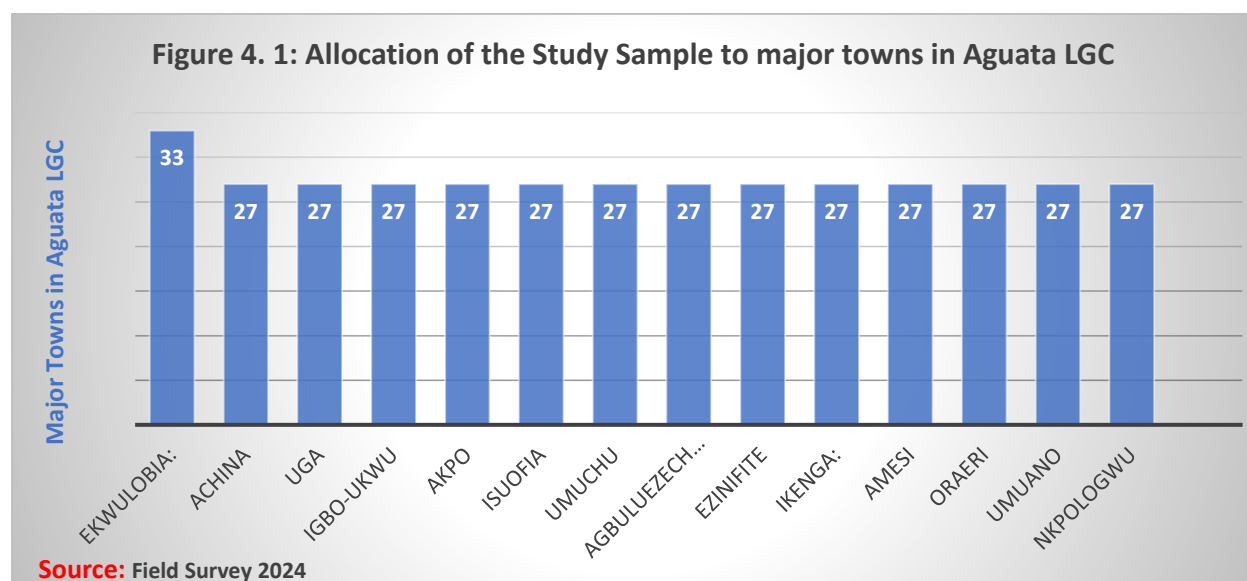
inadequate service delivery (Akerlof, 1970).

In summary, applying Principal-Agent Theory to the assessment of local government caretaker committees in Aguata reveals critical insights about the challenges and dynamics of service delivery. Addressing issues of information asymmetry, moral hazard, and the need for robust accountability mechanisms can enhance the effectiveness of these committees and ensure that they meet the needs of the community.

Research Design

The study employed a mixed-methods research design, combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The design allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the impact of local government caretaker committees on service delivery by integrating numerical data with in-depth insights from community perspectives. The area of this study is Aguata Local Government Council, where the study on the impact of caretaker committee on service delivery was conducted. This specific locality in Anambra State serves as the primary site for the research, allowing for an in-depth examination of the local governance. The population for this study includes all the residents of Aguata Local Government Council. This comprises all individuals living in Aguata who are affected by the services provided by the local government. The population of the local government was 527200 persons in 2022 as projected by Nigeria Population Commission (NPC), and the current projection is 548,499. Utilizing Cochran's sample size determining formula, we arrived at 384 as our sample size. The sourced data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis.

Data Presentation and Analyses



Using the Cochran's formula, we determined a total sample size of 384, which was allocated to the 14 major towns in the study area, we are expected to use a proportional allocation method for this allocation, but since the populations of these major towns are unknown, we allocated the sample equally among the towns or based on a predetermined criterion, as presented in the figure 4.1 above. In other words, from figure 4.1, above it is shown that the sample size of the study is totaling approximately three hundred and eighty-four (384), with each of the fourteen major towns in Aguata local government council as presented above represented by 27 percipients with the exception of Ekwulobia, which got 33 participants instead of 27 due to the

predetermined size of its population which is presumed to be the higher than others. The 'Stratified Random Sampling Approach' was utilized to ensure representation across key demographic groups, such as age, gender, and socioeconomic status, which involves dividing the population into strata (subgroups) and randomly selecting participants from each stratum. This approach enhances the representativeness of the sample and allows for more nuanced analysis of differences between groups. However, out of the 384 questionnaires that was sent out only 355 was returned, still from the 355 that was returned we rejected 5 because they were not properly completed. In other wards a total of 350 questionnaires were used for this study

Analysis of Questionnaire

Section A

Table 1: Sex Distribution of the Respondents

Gender	Respondents	% of Respondents By Sex
Male	130	37.14%
Female	220	62.86%
Total	350	100%

Source: Field Survey 2024.

The gender of the respondents from Aguata Local Government Area was studied in order to ascertain the pattern of distribution of the respondents according to their sex. From the analysis of table 1, out of 350 respondents, 220 representing 62.86% were

females while 130 representing 37.14% were males. This implies that there were more female respondents in Aguata Local Government Area than males in the sample under study from the council area.

Table 2: Marital Status of Respondents

Options	Respondents	% of Respondents by Marital Status
Married	131	37.4%
Single	187	53.4%
Divorced	13	3.7%
Widowed	18	5.1%
Separated	2	0.6%
Total	350	100%

Source: Field Survey 2024.

As table 2 reveals, 131 respondents out of the 350 sample representing 37.4% were married people while 187 people representing 53.4% of the sample were single, 13 people, representing 3.7% were divorced, 18 representing 5.1% were widowed and finally, 2 respondents representing 0.57% of the study sample were separated. This means that there are more single participants in Aguata Local

Government Area than the married ones, including the divorced, the widowed and the separated put together. Probably because the ever increasing inflation that is constantly devaluing the salary strength of local government workers and other related issue are discouraging people from getting married or perhaps the fear of family commitment under such environment.

Table 3: The Distribution of Respondents by Age

Options	Respondents	% of Respondents By Age
Less than 20 year	30	8.57%
21-30 years	142	40.57%
31- 40 years	71	20.29%
41- 50 years	60	17.14%
50 – 60 years	30	8.57%
60 years and above	17	4.86%
Total	350	100%

Source: Field Survey 2024

Table 3 above again reveals that out of 350 respondents, 40 (8.57%) were less than 20 years, 142 (40.57%) were in the age group of 21-30 years, 71 (20.29%) were within the age 31-40 years, 60 (17.14%) were in the age bracket 41-50 years, 30 (8.57%) are in

the age group of 51-60 years while 17 (4.86%) were above 60 year. This reveals that more of the participants fall within the age bracket of 21-30 years at Aguata Local Government Area.

Table 4: Educational Qualifications of Respondents

Options	Respondents	% of Respondents By Educational Qualification
FSLC	10	2.9 %
SSCE/NECO	61	17.4%
OND/NCE	68	19.4 %
B.Sc/HND	78	22.3%
MBA/M.Sc	93	26.6 %
P.h D	40	11.4 %
Total	350	100 %

Source: Field Survey 2024

The educational qualification of the respondents was studied in order to find their literacy level of the participants considering their contribution to the Local Government Area. The result of the analysis as shown in table 4 reveals that 10 respondents representing 2.9% has FSLC, 61(17.4%) respondents had SSCE/NECO, 68 (19.4%) respondents had OND/NCE, 92 (26.3%) of the respondents were university

undergraduates while, 78 (22.3%) were holders of B.Sc/HND. As indicated above the Local Government Area under study also has 40(11.4%) MBA/M.Sc degree holders with (26.56%) PhD holders. This result demonstrates that the respondents had an appreciable level of education as about 34.0% of the sample had B.Sc/HND and above.

Section B.

This section analyzed the questionnaire instruments drawn from the research questions and hypotheses bordering on the independent and dependent variables of the study topic. The decision criterion is to accept any higher percentage value, % as the direction of such a respondent. The five-

point scale of strongly agreed (SA). Agreed (A), undecided (U), disagreed (D), and strongly disagreed (SD) are used with the weight averages of 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1, respectively, as already indicated in the methodology.

Table 5: Impact of Local Government Caretaker Committees on Public Services

S/n	Variables	SA (5)	A (4)	U (3)	D (2)	SD (1)
1	The overall quality of public services in Aguata has improved since the establishment of Local Government Caretaker Committees.	115 (33%)	95 (27%)	80 (23%)	40 (11%)	20 (6%)
2	Public services in Aguata have not changed significantly due to Local Government Caretaker Committees.	27 (8%)	38 (11%)	76 (22%)	99 (28%)	110 (31%)
3	Accessing public services in Aguata has become easier since the formation of Local Government Caretaker Committees	110 (31%)	75 (21%)	40 (11%)	100 (29%)	25 (7%)
4	There are still significant barriers to accessing public services, despite the involvement of Local Government Caretaker Committees.	20 (6%)	40 (11%)	76 (22)	98 (28)	116 (33)
5	Local Government Caretaker Committees have enhanced both the quality and accessibility of healthcare and educational services in Aguata.	120 (34%)	90 (26%)	75 (21%)	30 (9%)	35 (10%)

Table 5 above shows responses related to hypothesis one which states that Local Government Caretaker Committees have a positive impact on the quality and accessibility of public services in Aguata. For the question on whether the overall quality of public services in Aguata has improved since the establishment of Local Government Caretaker Committees, 115 respondents (33%) strongly agreed, 95 respondents (27%) agreed, 80 respondents (23%) were undecided, 40 respondents (11%) disagreed while 20 respondents (6%) strongly disagreed. The highest percentage

value exists in SA with 33% frequency, which means that the overall quality of public services in Aguata has improved since the establishment of Local Government Caretaker Committees. Secondly, for the question on whether 'public services in Aguata have not changed significantly due to Local Government Caretaker Committees'. 27 respondents (8%) strongly agreed, 38 respondents (11%) agreed, 76 respondents (22%) were undecided, 99 respondents (28%) disagreed while 110 respondents (31%) strongly disagreed. The highest

frequency in the situation is SD with 31% hence; ‘public services in Aguata have not changed significantly due to Local Government Caretaker Committees’. In addition, on the question on whether ‘accessing public services in Aguata has become easier since the formation of Local Government Caretaker Committees, 110 respondents (31%) strongly agreed, 75 respondents (21%) agreed, 40 respondents (11%) were undecided 100 respondents (29%) disagreed while 25 respondents 7% strongly disagreed. it means that ‘accessing public services in Aguata has become easier since the formation of Local Government Caretaker Committees’ with 31% frequency. Furthermore, on the question on whether “there are still significant barriers to accessing public services, despite the involvement of Local Government Caretaker Committees’, 20 respondents (6%) strongly agreed, 40 respondents

(11%) agreed, 76 respondents (22%) were undecided, 98 respondents (28%) disagreed while 116 respondents (33%) strongly disagreed. The SD has highest percentage frequency of 33% in other words; ‘there are no significant barriers to accessing public services, with the involvement of Local Government Caretaker Committees’ finally, on whether ‘Local Government Caretaker Committees have enhanced both the quality and accessibility of healthcare and educational services in Aguata’, 120 respondents (34%) strongly agreed, 90 respondents (26%) agreed, 75 respondents (21%) undecided, while 30 respondents (9%) disagreed, while 35 respondents (10%) strongly disagreed. The highest percentage frequency was SA with 34% hence; Local Government Caretaker Committees have enhanced both the quality and accessibility of healthcare and educational services in Aguata.

Table 6: Challenges Faced by Local Government Caretaker Committees

S/n	Variables	SA (5)	A (4)	U (3)	D (2)	SD (1)
6	Local Government Caretaker Committees encounter significant challenges that hinder their ability to deliver public services effectively.	102 (29%)	97 (27%))	75 (21%))	27 (7%)	49 (13%))
7	The Local Government Caretaker Committees have the resources they need to implement service delivery initiatives successfully	49 (13%)	27 (7%)	72 (20%))	97 (27%)	105 (29%))
8	Bureaucratic obstacles significantly impede the work of Local Government Caretaker Committees in Aguata	106 (30%)	96 (27%))	70 (19%))	28 (7%)	50 (13%))
9	Communication between Local Government Caretaker Committees and the community is effective and supports service delivery.	75 (21%)	27 (7%)	49 (13%))	102 (29%)	97 (27%))

10	Local Government Caretaker Committees face inadequate support from higher levels of government, impacting their service delivery initiatives	110 (31%)	90 (26%))	80 (23%))	30 (9%)	40 (11%))
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Table 6 above shows responses related to hypothesis two which states that Local Government Caretaker Committees faces significant challenges that hinders the effective implementation of service delivery initiatives within Aguata Local Government Council. From the responses on the questionnaires as presented above on whether ‘Local Government Caretaker Committees encounter significant challenges that hinder their ability to deliver public services effectively’, 100 respondents (29%) strongly agreed, 95 respondents (27%) agreed, 73 respondents (21%) were undecided, 25 respondents (7%) disagreed, while 47 respondents (13%) strongly disagreed. which means that SA has the most frequency with 29%, in other words, ‘Local Government Caretaker Committees encounter significant challenges that hinder their ability to deliver public services effectively’. furthermore, for the question on whether ‘the Local Government Caretaker Committees have the resources they need to implement service delivery initiatives successfully’, 47 respondents (13%) strongly agreed, 25 respondents (7%) agreed, 70 respondents (20%) were undecided, 95 respondents (27%) disagreed, while 103 respondents (29%) strongly disagreed. This means that ‘the Local Government Caretaker Committees do not have the resources they need to implement service delivery initiatives successfully since SD has 29% frequency. On whether ‘bureaucratic obstacles significantly impede the work of Local Government Caretaker Committees in

Aguata’, 104 respondents (30%) strongly agreed, 94 respondents (27%) agreed, 68 respondents (19%) were undecided, 26 respondents (7%) disagreed, while 48 respondents (13%) strongly disagreed. With SA frequency on 30%, the response is that ‘bureaucratic obstacles significantly impede the work of Local Government Caretaker Committees in Aguata’. For the question on whether ‘communication between Local Government Caretaker Committees and the community is effective and supports service delivery’, 73 respondents (21%) strongly agreed, 25 respondents (7%) agreed, 47 respondents (13%) were undecided, 100 respondents (29%) disagreed, while 95 respondents (27%) strongly disagreed. The distribution of percentage response indicates that ‘communication between Local Government Caretaker Committees and the community is not effective and do not supports service delivery’, with 29% D and 27% SD respectively. Finally, on whether the ‘Local Government Caretaker Committees face inadequate support from higher levels of government, impacting their service delivery initiatives’, 110 respondents (31%) strongly agreed, 90 respondents (26%) agreed, 80 respondents (23%) were undecided, 30 respondents (9%) disagreed, while 40 respondents (11%) strongly disagreed. ‘In other words, Local Government Caretaker Committees face inadequate support from higher levels of government, impacting their service delivery initiatives’ with the 31% SA affirmative response frequency

Table 7: Strict Management Protocols and challenges faced by Aguata Local Government Caretaker Committees						
S/ n	Variables	SA (5)	A (4)	U (3)	D (2)	SD (1)
1	The financial management protocols established for infrastructure projects are perceived workable by committee members.	115 (33%)	95 (27%)	80 (23%)	40 (11%)	20 (6%)
2	Enforcing strict financial management protocols does not significantly enhance accountability in the use of funds for infrastructure projects.	27 (8%)	38 (11%)	76 (22%)	99 (28%)	110 (31%)
3	The implementation of financial management protocols will address the challenges faced by Local Government Caretaker Committees in project execution	110 (31%)	75 (21%)	40 (11%)	100 (29%)	25 (7%)
4	Training and resources provided are sufficient for ensuring compliance with financial management protocols	20 (6%)	40 (11%)	76 (22%)	98 (28%)	116 (33%)
5	The enforcement of strict financial management protocols will contribute positively to the success of infrastructure projects in Aguata	120 (34%)	90 (26%)	75 (21%)	30 (9%)	35 (10%)

Table 7 above shows responses related to hypothesis three which states that 'enforcing strict financial management protocols to ensure accountability can address challenges faced by Local Government Caretaker Committees in implementing infrastructure projects in Aguata LGC'. For the question on whether 'the financial management protocols established for infrastructure projects are perceived workable by committee members', 115 respondents (33%) strongly agreed, 95 respondents (27%) agreed, 80 respondents (23%) were undecided, 40 respondents (11%) disagreed while 20 respondents (6%) strongly disagreed. The highest percentage value exists in SA with 33% frequency, which means that 'the financial management protocols established for infrastructure projects are

perceived workable by committee members'. Secondly, for the question on whether 'enforcing strict financial management protocols does not significantly enhance accountability in the use of funds for infrastructure projects.', 27 respondents (8%) strongly agreed, 38 respondents (11%) agreed, 76 respondents (22%) were undecided, 99 respondents (28%) disagreed while 110 respondents (31%) strongly disagreed. The highest frequency in the situation is SD with 31% hence; 'enforcing strict financial management protocols significantly enhance accountability in the use of funds for infrastructure projects'. In addition, on the question on whether 'the implementation of financial management protocols will address the challenges faced by Local Government Caretaker

Committees in project execution' 110 respondents (31%) strongly agreed (SA), 75 respondents (21%) agreed, 40 respondents (11%) were undecided 100 respondents (29%) disagreed while 25 respondents 7% strongly disagreed. it means 'that the implementation of financial management protocols will address the challenges faced by Local Government Caretaker Committees in project execution' with 31% frequency level. Furthermore, on the question on whether 'training and resources provided are sufficient for ensuring compliance with financial management protocols', 20 respondents (6%) strongly agreed, 40 respondents (11%) agreed, 76 respondents (22%) were undecided, 98 respondents (28%) disagreed while 116 respondents (33%) strongly disagreed. The SD has highest percentage frequency of 33% in other words; the 'training and resources provided are not sufficient for ensuring compliance with financial management protocols'. Finally, on whether 'the enforcement of strict financial management protocols will contribute positively to the success of infrastructure projects in Aguata', 120 respondents (34%) strongly agreed, 90 respondents (26%) agreed, 75 respondents (21%) undecided, while 30 respondents (9%) disagreed, while 35 respondents (10%) strongly disagreed. The highest percentage frequency was SA with 34% hence; 'the enforcement of strict financial management protocols will contribute positively to the success of infrastructure projects in Aguata'.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study provides significant insights into the role of Local Government Caretaker Committees in enhancing the quality and accessibility of public services in Aguata Local Government Council (LGC). The findings indicate a general perception of improvement in service delivery, evidenced by a substantial percentage of respondents acknowledging positive changes since the establishment of these committees. However, the presence of skepticism

among a notable portion of the population suggests that there is still work to be done to fully realize the committees' potential. The research reveals critical challenges faced by these committees, particularly regarding resource availability and bureaucratic hurdles. The low mean scores associated with resource adequacy highlight a pressing need for targeted interventions from higher levels of government. Addressing these challenges is imperative for empowering the committees to effectively fulfill their mandates and improve public service delivery.

Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of enforcing strict financial management protocols to enhance accountability in infrastructure projects. The findings indicate that committee members largely perceive these protocols as workable and essential for ensuring responsible financial practices. Strengthening these financial management frameworks can lead to improved project outcomes, thereby fostering greater public trust in local governance.

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations emerge:

First, local government authorities should prioritize resource allocation to Local Government Caretaker Committees. This could involve increasing funding, providing necessary equipment, and ensuring access to training programs that equip committee members with the skills needed for effective service delivery.

Second, efforts should be made to streamline bureaucratic processes that hinder the committees' effectiveness. Simplifying administrative procedures and fostering a more collaborative relationship between the committees and higher government entities can facilitate quicker decision-making and implementation of initiatives. Third, continuous community engagement is vital. Establishing regular forums for feedback and dialogue between the committees and constituents can help

identify specific barriers to service access and improve community trust. This engagement should aim to educate the public about the committees' roles and achievements, addressing any misconceptions that may contribute to skepticism. Lastly, ongoing evaluation and research should be conducted to assess the effectiveness of the committees in real-time and to adapt strategies as needed. This could involve periodic surveys and performance audits to monitor progress and identify areas for improvement.

In conclusion, while Local Government Caretaker Committees play a crucial role in enhancing public service delivery in Aguata LGC, addressing the existing challenges and reinforcing effective practices are essential steps toward maximizing their impact. By implementing these recommendations, local governance can be strengthened, ultimately leading to improved service quality and greater community satisfaction.

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