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MANAGEMENT, ACCOUNTABILITY AND ELECTORAL PROCESS FOR SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Dr. Obi, Chioma; Dr. Abara, Chinenye Gladys; Okoligwe, Chinyere Seraphine
[1,2&3]Department of Business Administration and Management
Federal Polytechnic Nekede Owerri.

Corresponding Author
Dr. Obi, Chioma
obichioma2016@gmail.com.

Abstract

This study examined the relationship between management, accountability, electoral process and economic development. The study was carried out using selected legislative staff from six local government in Imo State; two local government were selected from each senatorial zones of Imo State. The study formulated three research questions and hypotheses. Data for the study was generated from the primary source as the questionnaire was the major instrument used in generating the data. From a population size of 195 the researcher derived a sample size of 131 using Yamene's formula The hypotheses were tested with Theil-Sen regression technique so as to measure the "significance" of the degree of relationships existing between the dependent and independent variables. The findings showed that there is a significant nexus between management and economic development. Further findings showed that accountability significantly relate to economic development. Also, there is a significant relationship between electoral process and economic development. Based on the findings, the study recommends that in order to enhance economic development, good governance practices, implementing prudent economic policies, Long-term strategic planning, and innovation should be encouraged. The study further recommended that establishing transparent processes, accountability mechanisms, and regulatory oversight ensure responsible economic management and reduce corruption risks. The study went further to recommend that free, fair, and transparent electoral processes are foundational for democracy, political stability, and the protection of individual rights, which are essential for sustainable economic development.

Keywords: Economic Development, Accountability, and Electoral process.

Introduction

Despite the fact that legitimate elections are essential to democratic government, it is disheartening to note that in Nigeria, electoral malpractice has come to be associated with them. Yusuf and Zaheruddin (2015) claimed that fraudulent schemes have marred elections, undermining the public's desire for democracy. Yusuf and Zaheruddin (2015) have observed that the results of numerous elections in Africa have been so contentious that the conditions necessary for the survival of democratic values have been compromised, making the democratic characteristic hopeless and unpromising. According to Imobighe (2013), the tragic aspect of the nation's democratic experience since the return of civilian rule in 1999 has been the crazily manipulative electoral process, which has left voters extremely irritated as election riggers end up being the process's main beneficiaries. For example, those in positions of political authority who gained their position through corruption mostly utilize their time to build up further wealth in order to obtain it again during the next election. They do not even effectively manage the office and do not feel obligated to answer to the person which has caused a setback in the direction of sustainable economic development.

"Elections are means of selecting representative of the people in different public positions within the polity," (Ighodalo, 2012). He pointed out that elections are essential to modern political nations' democratic administration. Within the liberal democratic paradigm, which has emerged as the predominant democratic form in the current globalized period, elections are anticipated to facilitate the smooth transition between civilian regimes and to make the process of legitimizing incumbent administrations easier. Odusote (2014) pointed out that the electoral process is a cornerstone of democracy since it enables the consent-based form of government.

In the context of sustainable economic development, effective management practices, accountability mechanisms, and a transparent electoral process play crucial roles in fostering growth, stability, and inclusivity within an economy. Empirical work of Allan

Muchemi Kuri (2012) showed that there is a significant relationship between management, accountability, electoral processes and sustainable economic development in other regions of the world like Kenya. This quest has driven the researcher to examine the level of relationship that exist between management, accountability and electoral processes and their relationship with economic development.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study is to examine the relationship that exists between management, accountability and electoral process for sustainable economic development. Specifically; this study;

(a) examine the nexus between management and economic development.

(b) determine the association between accountability and economic development.

(c) ascertain the relationship between electoral process and economic development.

Formulated Hypotheses

Ho$_1$: There is no significant nexus between management and economic development.

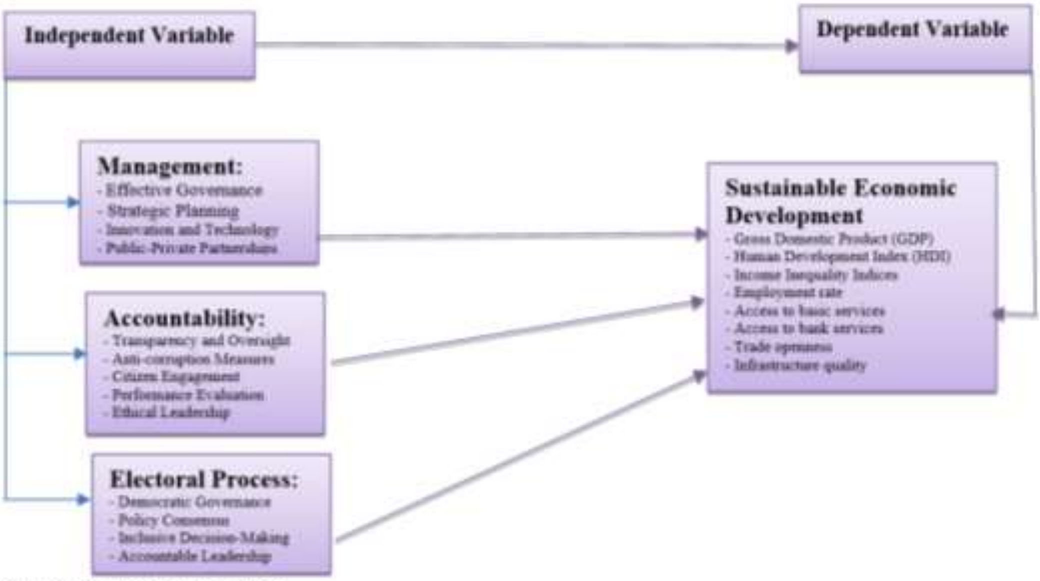
Ho$_2$: Accountability does not significantly relate to economic development.

Ho$_3$: There is no significant relationship between electoral process and economic development.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This study reviewed relevant literature in relation to this study.

Figure 2.1 Operational Conceptual Framework



Source: Researchers Desk (2024)

The Concept of Management, Accountability and Electoral process

An additional crucial component of election integrity is accountability. Citizens hold their elected authorities accountable through elections, after all. In Nigeria's twenty years of uninterrupted democracy, a reliable electoral process is the most desired democratic experience (Daerego, Dokubo, & Amachree 2020).

Policy makers and election managers are responsible for the kind of electoral process they create and run. Electoral managers are responsible for using public monies for the public good of holding elections. They bear accountability for the choices they make as well as the process by which they arrived at them (Amirize in Kobani & Alozie 2016). They are in charge of overseeing the administration of elections and how it runs. They bear the responsibility of adhering to all legal requirements and establishing sufficient mechanisms to oversee adherence and identify instances of inefficiencies, deception, and misuse.

Elements intersect to drive sustainable economic development:

1. Management for Economic Development: Good governance practices, such as accountability, openness, and the rule of law, are crucial for fostering an atmosphere that supports economic development, claims (Ighodalo 2012). Economic growth and stability can be supported by putting sensible economic policies into practice, such as regulatory frameworks, trade openness, budgetary restraint, and investment incentives. Development of infrastructure, long-term strategic planning, and human capital investment are essential for sustained economic growth. Productivity, competitiveness, and economic diversification can be increased by embracing innovation, adopting new technologies, and putting research and development efforts to use. Partnerships between the public and private sectors can generate sustainable business possibilities and boost economic growth by utilizing resources, knowledge, and creativity.

2. Accountability for Economic Governance: In order to guarantee responsible economic management and lower the danger of corruption, transparent procedures, accountability systems, and regulatory monitoring must be established. Safeguarding public resources and promoting trust in government necessitates the implementation of anti-corruption policies, integrity frameworks, and compliance measures. Initiating proactive public involvement, feedback systems, and stakeholder consultations foster responsiveness, inclusivity, and accountability in the process of making economic decisions. Sustainable economic growth is made possible by data-driven decision-making, performance accountability, and the monitoring and evaluation of development initiatives, fiscal management, and policy consequences. Building public trust and accountability in economic management requires promoting ethical leadership, values-based governance, and commitment to ethical standards (Odusote 2014).

3. Electoral Process and Sustainable Development: Election procedures that are free, equitable, and transparent are fundamental to democracy, political stability, and the defense of individual rights—all of which are necessary for long-term, steady economic growth. Free and fair elections yield electoral mandates and policy platforms that support long-term economic planning, consensus-building, and policy continuity. Upholding inclusivity, diversity, and representation in electoral processes promotes social cohesion, lowers inequality, and guarantees that economic policies cater to the interests of all societal groups. Governance is strengthened, abuses of power are checked, and responsible decision-making is encouraged for sustainable economic progress when elected officials are held accountable through electoral processes, oversight procedures, and transparency measures. Public discussions, political debates, and election campaigns involve citizens, businesses, civil society, and policymakers in forming economic agendas that give priority to sustainable development goals.

By aligning effective management practices, accountability frameworks, and transparent electoral processes, countries can build the foundation for sustainable economic development that promotes prosperity, equity, and resilience in the face of global challenges and opportunities.

Measure of Sustainable Economic Development

In measuring sustainable economic development, a variety of indices and indicators are used to evaluate the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of development. These indices provide insights into the progress, impact, and sustainability of economic activities and policies. Here are key indices commonly used to assess sustainable economic development (Dong Qui & Tingyi 2022):

1. Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

(i) GDP per capita: Measures the economic output per person in a country, reflecting the standard of living and economic well-being of the population.

(ii) GDP growth rate: Indicates the rate at which the economy is expanding over time, essential for assessing economic progress and sustainability.

2. Human Development Index (HDI)

(i) Combines indicators of life expectancy, education (literacy and school enrollment), and income to provide a broader measure of human well-being and development.

3. Income Inequality Indices

(i) Gini Coefficient: Measures income distribution within a country, with lower numbers indicating more equal distribution.

(ii) Palma Ratio: Compares the income share of the top 10% to the bottom 40% of the population, highlighting income disparities.

4. Employment Indices

(i) Employment Rate: Percentage of the working-age population that is employed, indicating labor market dynamics and inclusion.

(ii) Unemployment Rate: Percentage of the workforce that is unemployed, reflecting economic health and labor market conditions.

5. Social Inclusion Metrics

(i) Access to Basic Services: Evaluates access to healthcare, education, water, sanitation, and other essential services.

Theoretical Framework

The transformational leadership theory is used in this paper to examine ways to address difficulties related to leadership in Nigeria and sustainable development responsibility. Leadership at different levels in Nigeria (federal, state, and local governments) is faced with the difficulty of the incapacity to command respect and trust of the population essential for successful implementation of government programs for development (Jimoh, 2017). The theory's underlying assumption is that transformational leaders—a quality currently lacking in Nigeria—who possess innovative ideas and are free from corrupt tendencies are necessary to combat incompetent resource management, a lack of accountability, unethical behavior in governance, and the creation and implementation of narrowly focused ethnic and religious policies by the political leadership at the federal and state levels to the detriment of the people. Adoption of this theory is predicated on the supposition that, in order to overcome inadequate resource management, a lack of accountability, unethical behavior in governance, and the creation and execution of narrowly focused ethnic and religious policies by the political leadership at the national and state levels at the expense of the overall goals of development, transformational leaders possessing creative ideas and free from corrupt tendencies—a quality that is currently lacking in Nigeria. Furthermore, in a nation like Nigeria, an authoritarian approach to policymaking devoid of citizen involvement will impede sustained growth (Imoke, 2014).

Empirical Review

In their 2019 study, Karenzi, Namusonge, and Irav investigated how accountability affected the effectiveness of socioeconomic development initiatives in Rwanda. To address certain study issues, data triangulation (a process of collecting both qualitative and quantitative data) was carried out. Multiple sampling approaches were employed in this study to choose study participants. The study incorporated a sample of households and respondents' homes through the application of purposive, judgmental, and simple random sampling techniques. Cronbach's alpha was used to test for internal reliability of each variable used in the study. Data analysis was done using descriptive statistics, correlation and regression analysis. The study found that accountability had a significant influence on performance of socioeconomic development projects and that institution factors had significant influence on the relationship between accountability and performance of socioeconomic development projects.

The core intent of this research by Allan (2012) was to understand the Effects of Political Process on the Economic Performance of a Country and how key economic variables such as the stock market performance, foreign direct investment, interest rates and inflation rates are affected by political processes. The paper employed a secondary research design. The sample size of this research was estimated at 12 years. The data was analyzed using standard software. The variables were measured using correlation analysis. A major finding of the research showed that election trends have a strong impact on the performance and stability of an economy.

3. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The survey research design was considered most appropriate for the study because of its strengths.

Population of the Study

The population of this study is 195 staff from the six 6 local government staff selected. The selection was based on three geo-political zones of the state. The researcher used in the legislative department of each of the Local government Area of the state. Owerri zone-Owerri Municipal LGA (N_1=45), Owerri North LGA (N_2=28), from Orlu zone-Orlu LGA (N_3=35), Nkwerre LGA (N_4=32), from Okigwe zone- Okigwe LGA (N_5=29), Onuimo LGA (N_6=26).

Sample Size Determination

The sample size of respondents is hereunder determined by the use of the Taro Yamene's formula.

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

Where: n = Sample size sought, e = Level of significance, N = Population size,

1 = the theoretical constant.

$$\frac{195}{}$$

n = 1 + 195(0.05)^2

$$n = \frac{195}{1 + 195\,(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{195}{1.4875}$$

The sample size is 131 respondents using Bowley's proportionate formula:

$$n_h = \frac{nN_h}{N}$$

where

N_h = number allotted to each stratum

n = Sample size

n_h = population of each stratum

N = Population

Owerri Municipal LGA: $n_1 = \frac{nN_1}{N}$ $n_1 = \frac{131 \times 45}{195} \approx 30$

Owerri North LGA: $n_2 = \frac{nN_2}{N}$ $n_2 = \frac{131 \times 28}{195} \approx 19$

Orlu LGA: $n_3 = \frac{nN_3}{N}$ $n_3 = \frac{131 \times 35}{195} \approx 24$

Nkwerre LGA: $n_4 = \frac{nN_4}{N}$ $n_4 = \frac{131 \times 32}{195} \approx 22$

Okigwe LGA: $n_5 = \frac{nN_5}{N}$ $n_5 = \frac{131 \times 29}{195} \approx 19$

Onuimo LGA: $n_6 = \frac{nN_6}{N}$ $n6 = \frac{131 \times 26}{195} \approx 17$

Sources of Data

The study adopted the use of questionnaire. Out of a total of 131 distributed to respondents, 129 questionnaires were returned and 2 questionnaires were not returned. However, none of the questionnaire was damaged. The questionnaire was validated by research experts who effected corrections and made some inputs. The reliability of the instrument was done using a test-retest method.

Method of Data Analysis

The hypotheses were tested with Theil-Sen regression technique so as to measure the "significance" of the degree of relationships existing between the dependent and independent variables.

4. Data Presentation and Analysis

This section contains the analysis of data collected by the researcher for the study. The presentation of the result is according to the research questions and hypotheses.

4.1 Analysis and Results of Hypothesis One

Ho_1: There is no significant nexus between management and economic development.

Table 4.1: **ANOVA Summary for Theil-Sen Regression of Management and Economic development**

Response: Economic development	Df	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F-value	p-value
Management	1	736.94	736.94	68.049	0.000
Residuals	129	1397.00	10.83		

Source: Extracted from R-Studio Output 2024

The result in Table 4.1 shows the mean squares of 736.94 for management and 10.83 for residuals, F-calculation value of 68.049 and a p-value of 0.000 which is less than 0.05. This indicates statistically significant result. Hence, the study concludes that there is significant nexus between management and economic development which is in agreement with(Allan 2012) that examined the effect of Political Process on the Economic Performance. The major finding of the research showed that election trends have a strong impact on the performance and stability of an economy.

4.2 Analysis and Results of Hypothesis Two

Ho2: Accountability does not significantly relate to economic development.

Table 4.2: **ANOVA Summary for Theil-Sen Regression of Accountability and economic development**

Response: Economic development	Df	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F-value	p-value
Accountability	1	546.45	546.45	73.648	0.000
Residuals	129	957.15	7.42		

Source: Extracted from R-Studio Output 2024

The result in table 4.2 shows the mean squares of 546.45 for network design and 7.42 for residuals, F-calculation value of 73.648 and a p-value of 0.000 which is less than 0.05. This indicates statistically significant result. Hence, the study concludes that accountability significantly relate to economic development which is in agreement with the empirical work of (Karenzi, Namusonge&Irav 2019).

4.3 Analysis and Results of Hypothesis Three

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between electoral process and economic development.

Table 4.3: **ANOVA Summary for Theil-Sen Regression of Electoral process and economic development**

Response: Economic Development	Df	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F-value	p-value
Electoral process	1	546.45	546.45	73.648	0.000
Residuals	129	957.15	7.42		

Source: Extracted from R-Studio Output 2024

The result in Table 4.3 shows the mean squares of 546.45 for network design and 7.42 for residuals, F-calculation value of 73.648 and a p-value of 0.000 which is less than 0.05. This indicates statistically significant result. Hence, the study concludes that there is a significant relationship between electoral process and economic development which is agreement with the study conducted by (Allan 2012).

Discussion of Findings

The findings from analyzed hypotheses revealed a significant relationship that for sustainable economic development, our electoral process should be reformed, electorates should identify those personalities who are accountable to the public and can manage the limited resources to the best of their ability. This is obtainable as the hypothesis one, two and three showed a significant relationship between management, accountability, and electoral process and their relationship with economic development; with a p-value of 0.000 which is less than 0.05 the study accepted the alternative hypotheses. These findings are in agreement with empirical study conducted by The study carried out by (Karenzi, Namusonge&Irav 2019) were they examined the implication of accountability on performance of socio-economic development projectsin Rwanda. The studyconcluded that accountability had a significant influence on performance of socioeconomic developmentprojects and that institution factors had significant influence on the relationship between accountability andperformance of socioeconomic development projects. The findings as well are in agreement with the empirical study conducted by (Allan 2012) as his major finding of the research showed that election trends have a strong impact on the performance and stability of an economy.

5. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Findings

Based on the analyses, the study summarized the findings as follows;

1. There is a significant nexus between management and economic development.

2. Accountability significantly relates to economic development.

3. There is significant relationship between electoral process and economic development.

Conclusion

The study concludes that management, accountability and electoral process is essential for a viable economy. There is no national development that those not make accountability, management and electoral processes a priority.

Recommendations

1. In order to enhance economic development, good governance practices, implementing prudent economic policies, Long-term strategic planning, and innovation should be encouraged.

2. Establishing transparent processes, accountability mechanisms, and regulatory oversight ensure responsible economic management and reduce corruption risks.

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