

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INFRASTRUCTURE IN NSUKKA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: THE IMPACT OF INFORMAL COMMUNITY LEADERS

Abstract

This research was carried out in order to determine the implementation of community development infrastructure in Nsukka Local Government Area: The impact of informal community leaders. **The main aim of the study was to determine the impact of community leaders in the implementation of community development infrastructure.** The study was guided by three research questions and three hypotheses. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was 441,000 (National Population Commission, 2022). The sample size was 384 (60 community leaders and 324 habitant of the community) in all the six villages with community projects. The formula used to arrive at the sample size was Cochran statistics. The study used purposive and simple sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was The Implementation of Community Development Infrastructure Questionnaire (IICDIQ) with three clusters. The instrument was made up of 24 items. Using Cronbach Alpha, the reliability coefficient of 0.92, 0.82 and 0.79 were obtained on cluster A, B and C **with a general reliability of 0.83.** Out of the 384 instruments administered only 360 were returned and used for data analysis. The 360 returned questionnaires represented 94% which was desirable for the study. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while t-test was used for the hypotheses. The result of the findings shows that community leaders had positive impact in the proper utilization of resources for infrastructural development of the communities. The study also finds out no significant difference in the response rating of community leaders and other members of the community on the impact of proper utilization of resources for community infrastructural development. **The study concluded that informal community leader serves as important machineries in community infrastructure development and their role should not be neglected. The study recommended that informal community leaders should always use the resources gotten from various quarters when implementing community infrastructure development.**

Keywords: Resources Mobilization, Community Leaders, Infrastructural development, Decision Making and Monitoring.

Introduction

It is commonly understood that every developing nation's economic and social success, depends on the establishment of self-sustaining rural communities. Without finding ways to considerably speed development in rural regions, where more than 80% of Nigeria's population resides, our national goal of self-sufficiency and resource management may continue to elude us (Guardian Newspapers, 2008). According to Ozor and Nwankwo (2008), the resources already exist; what is needed is the leadership required to harness their potential via practical knowledge and technology.

The main argument in favor of community-based development is that communities are believed to better understand current local conditions, including which projects are more necessary in the community and who is responsible and deserving of assistance (Platteau and Gaspart, 2003). Communities are also thought to have a better ability to enforce rules, monitor behavior, and verify intervention actions.

By fostering community development, people's living conditions can be improved. Community development, according to Ajayi (1995), is a social process that individuals may use to enhance their capacity to manage and adapt to local circumstances and the changing global environment. When all stakeholders engage and share their ideas, visions, and responsibilities in guiding and implementing their community or village development initiatives fairly and democratically, sustainable community development is more likely to occur (Ajayi & Otuya, 2006). According to Orapin (1996), one approach to fostering sustainable rural development is to provide the key players (villagers living in the community) with an equal chance to think and create their own destiny. This underlines the significance of effective local community

leadership in directing rural people's efforts toward their own development, which may be accomplished through the construction of local infrastructure.

If a community has all the required social amenities and infrastructure in place for its residents to use, it may readily grow. It makes sense why Olufemi, Olatunbosun, Olasode, and Adeniran (2013) claimed that infrastructure development is the primary cause of rural region underdevelopment. Urban regions are typically associated with suitable amenities or core infrastructure, in contrast to rural areas, which are still hampered by scanty, inadequate infrastructure (Manggat, Zain, & Jamaluddin, 2018).

The supply of and improvement of basic facilities in rural regions are among the infrastructure development projects that the government has long studied. In order to guarantee that urgently required development takes place, a number of measures have been pushed for and passed. A community's well-being, especially in rural regions, depends on having access to basic infrastructure, including roads, a clean water supply, and communication (Yusoff, Talib, & Pon, 2011).

Community infrastructure development refers to the establishment of small-scale basic buildings, technological facilities, and systems at the community level that are essential for the survival of the lives and livelihoods of the population resident in a community. These are small-scale, low-cost infrastructures that are gradually built by community-led initiatives in response to the needs and aspirations of the community.

These micro-infrastructure initiatives are viewed as essential lifelines for the community's existence since they are socially, economically, and operationally tied to community lifestyles and livelihood opportunities and offer basic services to the community's

residents. The monarch and his ministers, as well as other informal community leaders, must correctly oversee the majority of the things on the above list.

A leader directs the followers and inspires them to work together to achieve the organization's objectives. Any community, whether it be a corporate company, an institution, or society at large, needs strong leadership to grow or succeed. Effective leadership must be provided by both individuals and organizations. When good leadership is demonstrated, people actively engage in the attainment of predetermined goals. Informal community leaders have been described in a variety of ways by academics. According to Baba, Senchi, Hassan, and Yelwa (2014), informal community leaders are individuals who have the ability to command and influence the actions of a group of people in order to achieve their desired objectives. They have a significant role in the power dynamics of the neighborhood. Manju (2012) defined informal community leaders as those who make sure that development is made in line with community needs.

Mgbada (2006) defined informal community leaders as those who exercise some influence in the community while not holding an official position. [Bramantyo, Pujiono, and Normasar \(2023\)](#), stated that informal community leaders as a traditional stakeholders have an important role in terms of creating conditions and social engineering so that a community can become a tourist location that is neatly organized with acculturation of customary rules and national laws that work well in synergy. In rural regions, others look up to them for leadership and advice, while others work to rein them in. Mgbada views them as local and emphasizes some qualities of local leaders, including their gregarious nature, willingness to get involved in solving problems that affect the community, reputation for integrity and honesty, and popularity and trust among the populace. The deployment of community development infrastructure also benefits from the resource mobilization, decision-making, monitoring, and evaluation provided by informal community leaders.

Resource mobilization refers to any actions taken by a community to acquire new and more human, financial, and material resources to achieve its goal. Resource mobilization actions carried out by unofficial community leaders are inherently tied to the need for community development. Chiter (2012) asserts that resource mobilization includes not only the use of financial resources but also the process of accomplishing community goals through the mobilization of people's expertise, skills, tools, and services.

Making the greatest use of the resources on hand while simultaneously seeking new sources of resource mobilization is also required (Musyoka, 2014). In accordance with the definition of resource mobilization, it is widely known that the objective of researching the various structures and areas of resource mobilization is to identify resources that are required and that may be used to ensure the successful implementation of community development infrastructure. Money is one of the important resources that any community requires in order to function and carry out its community development. A well meaningful decision making policy could also help in community infrastructure development.

Decision making is an iterative process comprising issue formulation, intelligence collecting, reaching conclusions, and learning from past mistakes. Decision-making is the process through which a person, group, or organization comes to a decision about what future actions to take in light of a set of objectives and resource constraints (Paul, Schoemaker & Edward, 2017). Community leaders' decision-making interventions can be effective in fending off threats to the community (living) environment, maintaining and improving local conditions, resisting the 'hollowing out' of neighborhood services and facilities, and attracting infrastructure development to improve living conditions. The positive effects were seen in a variety of well-known social determinants of health and wellbeing, such as physical living circumstances, social

interactions, individual physical and mental health, community health, individual wellbeing, and communitywide levels of wellbeing.

Monitoring and evaluation are not something that most people perform on a regular basis. However, if development efforts are to improve over time, it appears that this must be provided for. Participation, according to Burky (1993), provides a theoretical mechanism for people to have an equal say in decision-making regarding issues that impact them. In a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system, the goal of any community level is to assist stakeholders in discussing and developing actions on issues related to their work performance and expected outputs. Community development failures and the significant issues facing project execution and administration in the community, according to Cousins and Earl (1992), have been blamed on the prior neglect of community members in the monitoring and evaluation of development initiatives. Community leaders in Nsukka education zone do not need to sit in the king's palace to monitor community infrastructure development projects. The eventual beneficiaries of community infrastructure development, who are also community members, must be involved in project monitoring and assessment. Because the role of informal community leaders in the implementation of community infrastructure development impacts the growth of a community, such a role should not be taken lightly by diverse informal community leaders. The researcher investigated the impact of informal community leaders on the implementation of community development infrastructure in the Nsukka Local Government Area.

The aim of the study was to determine the impact of community leaders in the implementation of community development infrastructure. Specifically, the study sought to:

- Determine the impact of resource mobilization by informal community leaders in the implementation of community development infrastructure.

- Determine the impact of decision making by informal community leaders in the implementation of community development infrastructure.
- Determine the impact of monitoring and evaluation by informal community leaders in the implementation of community development infrastructure.

The following research questions guided the study.

- What is the impact of resource mobilization by informal community leaders in the implementation of community development infrastructure?
- What is the impact of decision making by informal community leaders in the implementation of community development infrastructure?
- What is the impact of monitoring and evaluation by informal community leaders in the implementation of community development infrastructure?

The following null hypotheses which were tested at 0.05 level of significant guided the study.

Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of community leaders and other members of the community on the impact of resource mobilization by community leaders in the implementation of community development infrastructure.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of community leaders and other members of the community on the impact of decision making by community leaders in the implementation of community development infrastructure.

Ho₃: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of community leaders and other members of the community on the impact monitoring and evaluation by community leaders in the implementation of community development infrastructure.

Methods

The design of this study was a descriptive survey research design. Descriptive research is a design meant to describe the behaviour of a particular population in an accurate fashion (Ezeudu,

Jolaosho, & Dajan, 2020). The study was carried out in Nsukka Local Government Area. Nsukka local government has a total area of 3,321.08km². The population of the study is 222,317 (2006 population census) people in Nsukka education zone. The sample size is 384 (60 community leaders and 324 habitant of the community) in all the six villages with community projects. The formula used to arrive at the sample was Cochran statistics while the sampling technique used was purposive sampling and simple random sampling techniques. The instrument used for data collection was the Impact Implementation of Community Development Infrastructure Questionnaire (IICDIQ) with three clusters. The IICDIQ was a positively skewed 24 items questionnaire. The instrument was face validated by two experts in community development and one expert in measurement and evaluation making a total of three experts. All the experts who validated the instrument are from the faculty of education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The experts were asked to validate the instrument based on the clarity, structuring and appropriateness of the instrument. Their suggestions were used in drafting the final copy of the instrument that was administered on the respondents. To ascertain the reliability coefficient level of the instrument used for the data collection, the instrument was trial tested on 50 community leaders outside the study area. Using Cronbach Alpha the reliability coefficient of 0.92, 0.82 and 0.79 were obtained on cluster A, B and C which the general reliability of 0.83 was obtained through a pilot study that was conducted in Onitsha South which is not in any way under the study area. The research instrument (IICDIQ) was administered to the respondents by the researcher and three research assistants. The questionnaire used was a rating scale questionnaire of Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1). The instrument was administered to the respondents in the study area with the help of three research assistants. The research assistants explained what was not clear to the respondents in the instrument to them. The instrument was collected on the spot of administration to ensure high rate of return and well

filled questionnaires. Out of the 384 instruments administered only 360 (58 from community leaders and 302 from other members of the community) were returned and used for data analysis. The 346 returned questionnaires represented 94% which is desirable for a study. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the three research questions that guided the study while t-test was used to test all the three null hypotheses formulated to guide the study at 0.05 significant level. Mean below 2.5 was considered as low extent while those above 2.5 were regarded as high extent. Also, any hypothesis less than 0.05 were rejected while those greater than 0.05 were accepted.

Results

Research Question One:

What is the impact of resource mobilization by informal community leaders in the implementation of community development infrastructure?

Table 1 Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Informal Community Leaders and Community Members on the impact of Resource Mobilization in the Implementation of Community Development Infrastructure

N = 360

S/N	Items	Respondents	N	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Sourcing for money for community infrastructure development.	ICL	58	3.08	.65	Agreed
		CM	302	3.32	.62	Agreed
2	Asking volunteers to donate materials for community infrastructure development.	ICL	58	3.17	.62	Agreed
		CM	302	3.13	.61	Agreed
3	Tasking every adult member in the community to contribute money for community infrastructure development.	ICL	58	3.29	.60	Agreed
		CM	302	3.04	.62	Agreed

4	Generating money through market levies.	ICL	58	3.37	.62	Agreed
		CM	302	3.49	.64	Agreed
5	Seeking for financial support from neighboring communities.	ICL	58	2.92	.61	Agreed
		CM	302	3.28	.59	Agreed
6	Sourcing for assistance from government officials in monetary or materials for community infrastructure development.	ICL	58	3.36	.58	Agreed
		CM	302	3.20	.56	Agree
7	Sourcing for financial and non-financial assistance from non-governmental organization within and outside the community.	ICL	58	3.02	.62	Agreed
		CM	302	3.37	.63	Agreed
8	Gathering of community members to work on community projects as labourers without pay.	ICL	58	3.07	.58	Agreed
		CM	302	2.96	.61	Agreed
Grand Mean and Standard Deviation		ICL	58	3.16	.61	Agreed
		CM	302	3.22	.61	Agreed

Under Table 1, observation as shown from the responses of the respondents (informal community leaders and community members) in the communities indicate that all the 8 items were rated above the acceptable mean scores of 2.50 in agreement with the statement. The grand mean and standard deviation of informal community leaders (ICL) were 3.16 and 0.61 while that of community members were 3.22 and .61 showing respondents positive reactions on resources mobilization by informal community leaders in the implementation of community infrastructure development (CID). Both grand mean and standard deviation of the ICL and CM slightly varied showing small differences in the scores.

Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of community leaders and other members of the community on the impact of resource mobilization by community leaders in the implementation of community development infrastructure

Table 2 t-test Comparison of no Significant Difference between the Mean Ratings of community leaders and other members of the community on the impact of resource mobilization by community leaders in the implementation of community development infrastructure.

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df	t-Cal	Sig	Decision
ICL	52	3.16	.61	358	2.419	.000	S
CM	294	3.22	.61				

Table 2 reveals that there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of community leaders and other members of the community on the impact of resource mobilization by community leaders in the implementation of community development infrastructure, $t(358) = 2.419, p = 0.000$. This implies that the null hypothesis formulated was rejected since the associated probability value of 0.000 was greater than the 0.05 significant level set for taking decision.

Research Question Two:

What is the impact of decision making by informal community leaders in the implementation of community development infrastructure?

Table 3 Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Informal Community Leaders and Community Members on the Impact of Decision Making in the Implementation of Community Development Infrastructure

N = 360

S/N	Items	Respondents	N	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Informal community leaders engaged in intelligence-gathering on the implementation of community infrastructure development.	ICL	58	3.37	.63	Agreed
		CM	302	3.28	.77	Agreed
2	Informal community leaders learn from past experience when making decision on the implementation of community infrastructure development.	ICL	58	3.23	.57	Agreed
		CM	302	3.28	.58	Agreed
3	Informal community leaders always ensure that decision making goes in line with the choice of the people on community infrastructure development.	ICL	58	3.38	.56	Agreed
		CM	302	3.24	.66	Agreed

4	Informal community leaders avoid cognitive biases when making decision on community infrastructure development.	ICL	58	3.49	.57	Agreed
		CM	302	3.02	.62	Agreed
5	Informal community leaders do think of the outcome of their decision before making any decision on community infrastructure development.	ICL	58	3.25	.47	Agreed
		CM	302	3.03	.59	Agreed
6	Informal community leaders carry along members of the community in decision making on community infrastructure development.	ICL	58	3.08	.67	Agreed
		CM	302	3.13	.63	Agreed
7	Informal community leaders seek advices from experts and professionals when making decision on community infrastructure development.	ICL	58	3.36	.61	Agreed
		CM	302	3.29	.58	Agreed
8	Informal community leaders set aside personal interest when making decision on community infrastructure development.	ICL	58	3.12	.45	Agreed
		CM	302	3.29	.57	Agreed
Grand Mean and Standard Deviation		ICL	58	3.29	.57	Agreed
		CM	302	3.20	.63	Agreed

Under Table 3, observation as shown from the responses of the respondents (informal community leaders and community members) in the communities indicate that all the 8 items were rated above the acceptable mean scores of 2.50 in agreement with the statement. The grand mean and standard deviation of informal community leaders (ICL) were 3.29 and 0.57 while that of community members were 3.20 and .63 showing respondents positive reactions on decision making by informal community leaders in the implementation of community infrastructure development (CID).

Ho₂: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of community leaders and other members of the community on the impact of decision making by community leaders in the implementation of community development infrastructure.

Table 4 t-test Comparison of no Significant Difference between the Mean Ratings of community leaders and other members of the community on the impact of decision making by community leaders in the implementation of community development infrastructure.

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df	t-Cal	Sig	Decision
ICL	58	3.29	.57	358	2.344	.153	NS
CM	302	3.20	.63				

Table 4 reveals that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of community leaders and other members of the community on the impact of resource mobilization by community leaders in the implementation of community development infrastructure, $t(358) = 2.344, p = 0.153$. This implies that the null hypothesis formulated was not rejected since the associated probability value of 0.153 was greater than the 0.05 significant level set for taking decision.

Research Question Three:

What is the impact of monitoring and evaluation by informal community leaders in the implementation of community development infrastructure?

Table 5 Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Informal Community Leaders and Community Members on the Impact of Monitoring and Evaluation in the Implementation of Community Development Infrastructure

N = 346

S/N	Items	Respondents	N	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Sourcing for money for community infrastructure development.	ICL	58	3.54	.52	Agreed
		CM	302	3.23	.47	Agreed
2	Asking volunteers to donate materials for community infrastructure development.	ICL	58	3.38	.61	Agreed
		CM	302	3.26	.58	Agreed
3	Tasking every adult member in the community to contribute money for community infrastructure development.	ICL	58	2.94	.47	Agreed
		CM	302	3.34	.52	Agreed
4	Generating money through market levies.	ICL	58	2.84	.59	Agreed
		CM	302	3.27	.61	Agreed
5	Seeking for financial support from	ICL	58	3.43	.58	Agreed

	neighboring communities.	CM	302	3.12	.53	Agreed
6	Sourcing for assistance from government officials in monetary or materials for community infrastructure development.	ICL	58	3.21	.52	Agreed
		CM	302	3.22	.58	Agreed
7	Sourcing for financial and non-financial assistance from non-governmental organization within and outside the community.	ICL	58	3.23	.62	Agreed
		CM	302	2.93	.68	Agreed
8	Gathering of community members to work on community projects as labourers without pay.	ICL	58	3.26	.45	Agreed
		CM	302	2.84	.54	Agreed
	Grand Mean and Standard Deviation	ICL	58	3.23	.55	Agreed
		CM	302	3.15	.64	Agreed

Under Table 5, observation as shown from the responses of the respondents (informal community leaders and community members) in the communities indicate that all the 8 items were rated above the acceptable mean scores of 2.50 in agreement with the statement. The grand mean and standard deviation of informal community leaders (ICL) were 3.23 and 0.55 while that of community members were 3.15 and .64 showing respondents positive reactions on monitoring and evaluation by informal community leaders in the implementation of community infrastructure development (CID).

Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of community leaders and other community members on the impact of monitoring and evaluation by community leaders in the implementation of community development infrastructure

Table 6 t-test Comparison of no Significant Difference between the Mean Ratings of community leaders and other members of the community on the impact of monitoring and evaluation by community leaders in the implementation of community development infrastructure.

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df	t-Cal	Sig	Decision
ICL	52	3.23	.55	358	1.453	.234	NS
CM	294	3.15	.64				

Table 6 reveals that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of community leaders and other members of the community on the extent of monitoring and evaluation by informal

community leaders in the implementation of community development infrastructure, $t(358) = 1.453$, $p = 0.234$. This implies that the null hypothesis formulated was accepted since the associated probability value of 0.234 was greater than the 0.05 significant level set for taking decision.

Discussion

The result of the findings revealed that both informal community leaders and community members agreed that informal community leaders have impact on resources mobilization in the implementation of community infrastructure development. This is in line with the finding of Chiter (2012) that community uses the resources sort for properly in other to attain development. Also in line with this study is the finding of Alexander, Guy, David, Melitta, William and Dyna (2021) which show positive side of resource mobilization. The result of the findings revealed that both informal community leaders and community members agreed that informal community leaders have impact on the decision making in the implementation of community infrastructure development. This is in line with the finding of Baba, Senchi, Hassan, and Yelwa (2014), which shows that informal community leaders impact and direct the activities of a group of people toward the accomplishment of the community desired goals.

Conclusion

Informal community leader serves as important machineries in community infrastructure development. Without committed and dedicated informal community leaders who are willing to encourage members of the community in contributing towards the development of the community, the community will be underdeveloped. Therefore, it is on this ground that the study submitted that informal community leaders have high impact on resources mobilization, decision making and monitoring and evaluation in the implementation of community infrastructure development.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made.

1. Informal community leaders should always use the resources gotten from various quarters when implementing community infrastructure development.
2. Informal community leaders should always ensure that advices from well educated and professional have impact on the community infrastructure development.
3. Informal community leaders should appoint delegate from both the chiefs and the subjects in the monitoring and evaluation of community projects.

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