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EVALUATION OF THE DETERMINANTS OF URBAN GOVERNANCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICE DELIVERY IN AWKA SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract
This study evaluated the determinants of urban governance and infrastructure service delivery in Awka South Local Government Area, Anambra State. The study was guided by five objectives and corresponding research questions, focusing on identifying key infrastructure services, evaluating governance strategies, examining influencing factors, assessing challenges, and proposing improvement strategies. A descriptive survey design was employed. From a projected 2022 population of 270,300 residents, a sample of 399 respondents (comprising civil servants, retirees, private sector workers, students, and community leaders) was drawn using stratified sampling. Data collection was conducted using a structured questionnaire with a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.75. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Spearman correlation, and ANOVA. Findings revealed that most infrastructure services (Like as water, electricity, and waste management, etc) were rated fair to poor by over 60% of respondents. Significant governance strategies that influenced service delivery included increased government funding, transparency, and improved maintenance culture. Conversely, community involvement and public-private partnerships were statistically insignificant, suggesting low adoption or ineffective application. Key determinants of governance effectiveness were identified as funding, political will, transparency, and planning efficiency, while major challenges included poor funding, corruption, and limited technological integration. The study concludes that despite policy frameworks, urban governance in Awka South remains weak in participatory practice and responsive infrastructure management. It recommends strengthening participatory mechanisms, adopting digital governance tools, increasing funding transparency, and building local institutional capacity. These measures are essential for achieving sustainable, inclusive, and accountable urban development in the LGA.

Keywords: urban governance, determinants, participatory governance, infrastructure service delivery.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

Urban governance has increasingly become central to addressing the complex and multifaceted challenges of rapid urbanisation,

especially in developing regions like sub-Saharan Africa. According to UN-Habitat (2016), over 90% of global urban growth since the 1950s has occurred in developing countries, with projections estimating that by 2050, nearly 70% of the global population will reside in urban areas. This shift is accompanied by critical demands for infrastructure, housing, and essential services, particularly in urbanising areas like Awka South L.G.A. of Anambra State, Nigeria (World Bank, 2015). Urban governance refers to the mechanisms, processes, and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations, and mediate their differences (UN-Habitat, 2017). It extends beyond traditional government structures, encompassing participatory decision-making, transparency, accountability, and stakeholder engagement in service delivery (Azu, 2018; Rao, 2014). Effective urban governance is thus critical in ensuring the sustainable delivery of infrastructure services such as roads, water, sanitation, and power.

In Nigeria, governance reforms and global commitments such as the Rio Declaration (1992), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the Habitat Agenda have led to national policy revisions targeting improved infrastructure and urban development (Oladunjoye, 2014; UN-Habitat, 2017). Despite these initiatives, implementation remains marred by governance failures, inefficient service delivery, and widening infrastructural deficits (Igbokwe-Ibeto & Osakede, 2022; Obi, Nwobi & Chukwurah, 2021). The interplay between governance and infrastructure is particularly crucial in Awka South L.G.A., a fast-growing urban locality comprising towns such as Awka, Amawbia, Nise, and others. The area faces pressures from population growth, housing expansion, and demand for basic services, necessitating a critical evaluation of governance determinants in relation to infrastructure service outcomes (UNEP, 2017; McNulty & Wampler, 2015). Hence, examining the determinants of urban governance and how they influence infrastructure delivery will contribute to understanding policy failures and recommending improvements for sustainable urban management in the study area.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Urban governance is a crucial component for effective infrastructure service delivery, yet in many developing countries, including Nigeria, this linkage remains inefficient, fragmented, and unresponsive to the actual needs of the people (Ndukwe, 2017). In Awka South Local Government Area, the increasing pace of urbanization has led to mounting demands for basic infrastructure—such as roads, water supply, electricity, sanitation, and healthcare—which have not been met proportionately due to lapses in participatory governance, funding limitations, and planning bottlenecks (UNEP, 2017; Obi et al., 2021). Despite substantial investments and budget allocations, delivery remains below optimal levels. Public trust is eroded when infrastructure projects are implemented with little community input, resulting in misaligned priorities, poor project maintenance, and eventual infrastructural decay (Agada et al., 2014). Inadequate transparency, weak institutional coordination, and top-down

planning models have also marginalized local voices in the governance process (Calabrese, 2008; Enserink et al., 2017). The consequence is a mismatch between government actions and public expectations, contributing to rising urban poverty, informal settlements, and environmental degradation.

In Awka South, the symptoms of poor urban governance are evident: unreliable power supply, traffic congestion, substandard road networks, lack of public toilets, waste management issues, and increasing slum proliferation. Furthermore, the overlapping roles between State and Local Governments have undermined the LGA's capacity to plan and execute infrastructure policies efficiently (Obeng-Odoom, 2013). Given these realities, a detailed evaluation of governance determinants and how they affect infrastructure delivery is critical for identifying gaps and restructuring decision-making frameworks to be more inclusive, accountable, and sustainable.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to evaluate the determinants of urban governance and infrastructure service delivery in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State, with the objective of identifying governance strategies that enhance service efficiency and recommending inclusive approaches for improved infrastructure development.

The specific objectives are to:

1. Identify the focus economic and social infrastructure services in Awka South Local Government Area.
2. Evaluate the existing urban governance strategies employed in the area.
3. Identify the key determinants influencing urban governance and infrastructure service delivery.
4. Examine the challenges facing urban governance and infrastructure provision in Awka South.
5. Propose actionable strategies to enhance participatory urban governance and improve infrastructure service delivery.

2.1 Literature Review

Urban governance refers to the frameworks and mechanisms by which city authorities and stakeholders coordinate to plan, deliver, and monitor infrastructure and services. According to UN-Habitat (2004), effective urban governance is built on pillars of participation, accountability, efficiency, equity, and security. These principles shape infrastructure outcomes, particularly in developing cities where urbanization outpaces public service provision (Jones, Clench, & Harris, 2014). The Nigerian context is complex. Urban governance often suffers from weak institutional capacity, corruption, and top-down planning, limiting infrastructure delivery (Ndukwe, 2017; Akpan, 2016). Despite democratic reforms, many local governments in Nigeria lack the autonomy and resources to function effectively. Urban areas like Awka South grapple with basic service provision, ranging from waste disposal to reliable electricity, due to ineffective governance strategies (Obi, Nwobi, & Chukwurah, 2021).

2.2 Literature Gaps

Empirical studies, including those by Daramola and Olowopoku (2017), have shown that political leadership, transparency, and citizen engagement are essential determinants of successful infrastructure governance. However, gaps remain. First and foremost, most studies emphasize national urban centers, while sub-national LGA-focused governance assessments are rare. Secondly, although participatory budgeting and community involvement have been recommended, limited evaluations exist on their real-world impacts in LGAs like Awka South (McNulty & Wampler, 2015). Furthermore, the intersection between governance models and emerging technologies—such as digital service platforms or smart city applications—is underexplored in southeastern Nigeria. While some works (Igbokwe-Ibeto & Osakede, 2022) examine the effect of digital systems on housing services, the broader implications on infrastructure management remain poorly documented. This study aims to fill these gaps by evaluating the actual determinants of urban governance and their influence on infrastructure delivery in Awka South.

2.3 Study Area

Awka South Local Government Area is one of the 21 LGAs in Anambra State, Nigeria. It comprises nine towns: Awka, Amawbia, Nibo, Nise, Okpuno, Mbaukwu, Umuawulu, Isiagu, and Ezinato. Awka, the state capital, lies within this LGA and plays a critical administrative and economic role. Awka South is situated on the Awka-Orlu uplands, characterized by undulating topography and iron-rich ferruginous soil suitable for farming (UN-Habitat, 2013). According to the 2006 Nigerian census, the population of Awka South was over 300,000, with estimates rising above 2.5 million by 2018 (City Population, 2024). The area features government institutions, schools, markets, and housing estates, making it a focal point for infrastructural development. However, the LGA also faces challenges such as urban sprawl, erosion, and waste management inefficiencies (NEWMAP, 2018). The presence of the State Government House, Ministries, and Nnamdi Azikiwe University increases the area's infrastructural demand, hence making it an ideal location to study the determinants of urban governance and infrastructure service delivery.

3.1 Methodology of the Study

This study adopted a descriptive survey design to evaluate the determinants of urban governance and infrastructure service delivery. This method was chosen for its suitability in gathering data from a large, heterogeneous population and identifying patterns and relationships among variables (Creswell, 2014). The target population consists of residents, public officials, civil society actors, and private sector representatives in Awka South LGA. A total population of approximately 270,000 was estimated based on projections from the 2006 census (City Population, 2024). Using Taro Yamane's formula, a sample size of 399 respondents was determined.

Sampling was conducted using stratified random sampling, ensuring representation across key groups: civil servants, retirees,

private sector employees, students, women leaders, and town union officials. Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire divided into sections on:

- Respondents' demographics,
- Perceived quality of infrastructure services,
- Awareness and assessment of governance strategies,
- Challenges and improvement strategies.

The questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale and open-ended items. Its internal consistency was confirmed using Cronbach's Alpha (α = 0.75).

Data was analyzed using Descriptive statistics (mean, percentage) for demographic and service quality ratings, Spearman correlation for evaluating relationships between governance strategies and infrastructure service quality, ANOVA and Hotelling's T-squared test for construct validity, and Chi-square test to examine associations among categorical variables. This analytical strategy ensured each research objective was addressed systematically, and hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 significance level.

3.2 Ethical Considerations

All participants were informed of the study's purpose and participated voluntarily. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout.

4.0 Presentation of Results and Findings

This section presents and interprets findings in relation to the five research objectives. The data were collected from 399 respondents and analyzed using Spearman's correlation, Chi-square tests, and descriptive statistics.

4.1 Focus Economic and Social Infrastructure Services in Awka South Local Government Area

The study revealed that the major infrastructure services considered essential by respondents included water supply, electricity, waste management, public transportation, health facilities, road networks, and internet and telecommunications. Respondents rated the quality of these services differently.

Table 4.1: Respondents' Ratings of Infrastructure Services in Awka South L.G.A.

Infrastructure Service	Excellent (%)	Good (%)	Fair (%)	Poor (%)	Undecided (%)
Water Supply	9.5	24.3	33.6	26.4	6.2
Electricity	7.2	21.1	32.8	31.8	7.1
Waste Management	5.1	18.9	36.1	33.0	6.9
Health Facilities	11.8	28.5	30.4	21.7	7.6
Road Network	10.3	22.6	34.2	25.3	7.6
Internet and Telecom Services	13.1	25.5	30.1	21.2	10.1

From Table 4.1, Over 60% of the respondents rated most infrastructure services as either fair or poor, suggesting dissatisfaction. Water and electricity had the highest negative feedback, indicating the need for improved investment and governance oversight in these sectors.

4.2 Existing Urban Governance Strategies in Awka South Local Government Area

Governance strategies assessed include funding, maintenance culture, transparency and accountability, public-private partnerships, and use of modern technology.

Table 4.2: Governance Strategy Correlation with Infrastructure Services

Governance Strategy	Infrastructure Service	Correlation Coefficient	p-value	Significance
Increased Government Funding	Electricity	0.219	0.010	Significant
Transparency and Accountability	Water Supply	0.219	0.010	Significant
Improved Maintenance Culture	Waste Management	-0.190	0.027	Significant
Collaboration with Private Sector	All Services	< 0.15	> 0.05	Not Significant
Community Involvement	All Services	< 0.10	> 0.05	Not Significant

From table 4.2, the most effective governance strategies appear to be increased government funding and accountability, particularly for electricity and water supply. However, community involvement and partnerships are underutilized and statistically insignificant in this context.

4.3 Determining Factors of Urban Governance and Infrastructure Service Delivery

Findings from Spearman's correlation and survey responses identified the following key factors:

1. Funding availability
2. Leadership and political will
3. Transparency in resource allocation
4. Skilled personnel and efficient planning

A Chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 1.186$, $p = 0.276$) showed no significant association between perceived funding gaps and staff competency, implying that the funding issue is systemic and not merely personnel-based.

4.4 Challenges of Urban Governance and Infrastructure Service Delivery in Awka South

Respondents identified the following major challenges:

- Lack of funding (reported by 75% of respondents)
- Corruption and mismanagement (67%)
- Poor maintenance culture (64%)
- Limited technological application (58%)

These responses align with the low significance of strategies like community involvement and PPPs in actual infrastructure outcomes.

Conclusion of Objective 4: Governance is not effectively participatory or innovation-driven. Many strategies exist only on paper and are yet to show measurable outcomes in infrastructure development.

4.5 Strategies to Improve Urban Governance and Infrastructure Service Delivery

Proposed strategies by respondents include: Transparent governance (78%), Increased government funding (72%), Technological upgrades (63%), Collaboration with universities and tech innovators (58%), Public engagement mechanisms (surveys, forums). These findings support the need to realign governance models to include measurable public feedback and better resource accountability frameworks.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The evaluation reveals that while infrastructure services exist in Awka South, their quality is substandard, with electricity, waste management, and water services performing below acceptable levels. Governance strategies such as increased funding and accountability show significant correlations with improved service delivery. However, strategies like public-private partnerships and community involvement remain underutilized or ineffective due to poor institutionalization.

The findings highlight that successful infrastructure delivery in Awka South is contingent on:

- Transparent and accountable governance,
- Sufficient funding,
- Efficient project planning, and
- Integration of community feedback.

5.2 Recommendations

1. Strengthen Participatory Governance: Establish inclusive platforms (town hall meetings, citizen scorecards, and feedback apps) to facilitate continuous public input into governance processes.
2. Increase Public Sector Funding Efficiency: Expand fiscal transparency through online budget tracking and enforce the implementation of project timelines, especially for electricity and water services.
3. Revamp Maintenance Culture: Institutionalize routine audits and invest in preventive maintenance programs. This could reverse the negative correlation observed in waste management service delivery.
4. Promote Innovation and Technology Use: Adopt smart city frameworks by

integrating GIS mapping for infrastructure monitoring, digital dashboards for project tracking, and SMS alert systems for citizen engagement.

5. Enhance Capacity Building: Train local officials in evidence-based decision-making and urban management, possibly in partnership with academic institutions and international donors.

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